

LIFE IN SOUTHERN REGION

Southern Region is an important operational area of the AFP. Keith Livingston, the Region's Media Liaison Officer, prepared this series of articles on the Region and its officers.

SOUTHERN Region encompasses the State of Victoria, the "Garden State", and as a result of the recent reorganisation, includes the former Tasmania Region, under the new title "Tasmania Division".

Regional headquarters is located in Melbourne.

Just an hour's drive from the city are magnificent surf beaches and it's only two hours to the winter snowfalls.

Ten minutes' drive and the generally more peaceful, safer waters of Port Phillip Bay beckon, which during summer are ideal for a young family.

Night clubs and discos abound and Melbourne's restaurants are known nationally.

In September and November the city hosts the two biggest sporting attractions in Australia — the V.F.L. Grand Final and the Melbourne Cup. Both events attract crowds of 100,000 or more.

More than a quarter of the nation's population live in Southern Region and of those more than 75% live in and around Melbourne.

Melbourne's average maximum temperature during winter is 14.0 degrees, while the summer average top temperature is 25.2 degrees. That, in anyone's language, is a very temperate climate.

Growth

During the recent state election campaign the incumbent Premier, John Cain, stated: "When we (the Government) came to office in 1982, there was one crane on the city skyline. That was the Rialto building (55 storeys) and now there are 57 cranes silhouetted against the same skyline."

One of those relatively recently completed buildings is Southern Region Headquarters in La Trobe Street (featured in the April 1988 edition of *Platypus*). The headquarters provides 9000 square metres of floor space and gives members a pleasant working environment.

Those who visit Melbourne have been extremely impressed by the facility enjoyed by their colleagues in Victoria. Those based in Southern Region have found very little to complain about during the first 12 months of occupancy.

Active social and sporting committees have worked extremely hard over the years to encourage closer camaraderie between Southern Region's members. This was extremely difficult prior to the move because operational areas were so fragmented but the dedication and efforts of those committees are now bearing the fruits of success.

A tribute to the members of those committees was the outstanding success of this year's inaugural Australian Federal Police Games. (A feature article about the Games is carried in this issue of *Platypus*).

Assistant Commissioner (Commander, Southern Region) Brian Bates actively supports the committees' members and their aims.

Airport

Beyond the walls of Southern Region HQ the AFP has a station at Melbourne International Airport.

Although not as new as the Regional HQ building, the Airport Station is a modern structure and has recently undergone a facelift with new furniture and carpet throughout.

About 55 members are attached to the airport and they are seeing a proportionately increasing number of passengers passing through the terminal buildings as the airport handles more and more flights.

Geelong, the State's second biggest city (population 150,000) 90 kilometres south of Melbourne, also boasts an AFP station, handling mainly Fraud and General Crime matters.

Members working in Geelong extend their field of operations throughout the south-western area of Victoria, taking them as far west as Mt Gambier, just across the South Australian border.

continued ►



Assistant Commissioner (Southern Region) Brian Bates

Platypus 24, December 1988

Specialists

Melbourne is known as the "financial capital of Australia", housing the head office of Australia's biggest company, BHP.

Also based in Melbourne is the centre of operations for other notable companies.

The AFP bases its currency investigation in Melbourne. A small but extremely effective team of investigators tackling infringements against the Crimes (Currency) Act is kept busy investigating reports of counterfeiting around Australia.

A Joint Task Force (JTF), established in 1979, sees AFP detectives working side by side with their Victoria Police colleagues on a day-to-day basis.

Since its inception the JTF has had a substantial impact on several criminal enterprises.

In its first case, codenamed Operation "T-Bone", the team investigated a conspiracy to import heroin under newly proclaimed legislation. One of the principals was imprisoned for 25 years and another for 20 years. Two others received lesser sentences.

The operation also saw for the first time, the AFP giving protection to witnesses and resulted in the establishment of the Witness Protection Division.

Success

Operations "Torch", "Guinness" and "Rock" are also high of the list of successes, each having resulted in the seizure of a kilo of heroin and the arrests and sentencing of those responsible.

As a consequence of the close co-operation between the police forces, 330 kilograms of cannabis resin, worth (in 1983) about \$9 million, which had been air freighted to Australia, was seized and those responsible were successfully prosecuted.

Southern Region's total inquiry figures — including those of the JTF — for the fiscal year 1987-88 show there were 3630 investigations into offences involving \$6,735,931.

Tasmania

One of the smaller State-based operations is centred in Hobart.

The team is led by Inspector Floyd Ballard.

They were kept busy last year looking into more than 400 reports and as a result, uncovered offences against the Commonwealth costed at more than \$466,000. (Tasmania was covered in *Platypus* No. 18 of September 1987)

Platypus 24, December 1988

SORROW AT VICPOL DEATHS

The AFP joined police forces around Australia in expressing their outrage at the murder of two young Victorian Police Officers in Melbourne on the morning of October 12.

To: Deputy Commissioner Newnham
VICPOL

The Commissioner and Members of the AFP extend their sincere condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of your two members who were murdered in Melbourne this morning. The extreme danger under which Australian Police Officers work has again been highlighted by this atrocious crime.

The resources of the Australian Federal Police are of course available to your Officers responsible for this investigation.

The Commander of the Australian Federal Police Southern Region, Assistant Commissioner Bates, has

been advised accordingly. Deputy Commissioner J.C. Johnson
AFP Canberra

Mr Newnham replied in the following terms:

Thank you for your telex concerning the deaths of Constables Damian Eyre and Steven Tynan at South Yarra.

It is a tragedy that these young lives, with so much to look forward to and contribute to society, should have ended in this way. Indeed, it is a sad reflection on our increasingly violent society and certainly illustrates the dangers inherent in today's policing.

Notwithstanding an awareness of these dangers, this incident is still an immense shock to us all. It is, however, especially comforting to receive condolences and expressions of support from our colleagues in the Australian Federal Police.

You can be assured that I will pass on your kind words to the families of these members.

THE DONALD MACKAY CHURCHILL FELLOWSHIP

The Donald Mackay Churchill Fellowship for the study of organised crime and its suppression is a perpetual fellowship to commemorate the man who gave his life fighting for what he believed was right. It is again offered for tenure in 1990.

The first Donald Mackay Churchill Fellowship was awarded to Mr Andrew Keenan of Mosman in Sydney, who was presented with his Certificate of Award by His Excellency the Governor of NSW, Air Marshal Sir James Rowland, in Sydney on 5 August. Mr Keenan is a Journalist with the *Sydney Morning Herald* who has become known for his investigative skills and commitment to his profession. He will undertake a 7-week visit to Hong Kong and the USA to study current methods of understanding, investigating and tackling corruption, with particular emphasis on organised crime's dependence on corruption.

The chosen Fellow might be a police officer, journalist, author, customs officer, doctor, computer analyst — someone with a project directly aimed at reducing the power of criminals to act against Australian society. He or she will receive a living allowance to cover expenses anywhere in the world, usually for about three months — longer or shorter if the project calls for it — plus air fares and fees.

For information about all Churchill Fellowships, of which about 50 are awarded each year, send a stamped, addressed envelope to:

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust
218 Northbourne Avenue
BRADDON ACT 2601

Applications, including references, must be forwarded not later than Tuesday, 28 February 1989.