

"SOT officers in Canberra who have tried it have been enthusiastic and say the quick release function is a big advantage. The equipment currently in use is generally felt to be clumsy, noisy and cumbersome — overall, it's just too big."

The device was examined and seen in action by the AFP's SOT Co-Ordinator, Sergeant Ron Learmonth, who reported in the following terms: "From an SOT point of view, the device has merit because it would replace noisy devices currently in use and would provide quick attachment and release. The safety of the device, while not suitable for Search and Rescue, is acceptable to the SOT. The SOT uses single rope techniques as a tactical tool requiring stealth and speed and the device seems to have features suitable for this purpose."

Constable Wilson, who is based at City Station in Canberra, became aware of the shortcomings of the conventional equipment while in the Army for nine years.

"I qualified as a vehicle mechanic in the Army which provided a wide range of engineering skills and I have always been interested in the design and manufacture of tools and machinery.

"I'm a part-time member of SOT and the Diving Squad in the ACT. I thought of the idea for the 'Jet Descender' in May 1987 before I was due to go on a special operations course.

"I took the prototype I made on the course with me and it proved to be most successful," he said.

Aside from looking for help to develop his invention, what does Constable Wilson plan to do with his \$500?

"I've always wanted to learn to fly," he said, "and I think I'll spend the money on my first lessons!"



Commissioner McAulay presents Constable Wilson with an award and a cheque for \$500 from the NPRU.

MONEY FOR GOOD IDEAS

"As far as the National Police Research Unit is concerned, inaction by other AFP officers could be costing them money," the AFP's NPRU Liaison Officer, Chief Superintendent Phil Baer, told "Platypus".

"The NPRU will pay money through the Field Initiative Award Scheme for initiatives developed by police or civilian employees that will improve police efficiency," Mr Baer said.

"To quote from the NPRU Policy Manual, 'the scope of the scheme is wide ranging and embraces policy and

operational matters the crucial criteria being the novelty and relevance of the idea to police practice on a national basis'.

"Submissions for an award are considered by the NPRU and each force NPRU liaison officer at the first liaison officers' meeting each year. The amount which may be awarded for any single initiative ranges between \$10 and \$1000. This year's submissions and accompanying documentation were of a most impressive standard," he said.

Officers who want to get into the money should, as a first step, contact Chief Superintendent Baer on (062) 757623

AFP AND THE NPRU



First Constable Craig Petterd.

Platypus 22, July 1988

An officer from the crime scene section of the Scientific Branch in Canberra is the first member of the AFP to be seconded to work on a research project with the National Police Research Unit in Adelaide.

First Constable Craig Petterd, 26, has been in the AFP for more than five years and grew up in the national capital. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry and computing.

"I joined the AFP to get into the forensic area," he said. "I have been working in the crime scene section of the Scientific Branch for three years after starting in general duties."

The NPRU, which is staffed by academics and officers from the various Australian police forces, undertakes research on all aspects of police work.

"I will be working on an urgent duty driving study which will keep me in

Adelaide until mid-August," Craig said. "The study is being run under the Resident Research Programme and myself and an officer from the South Australian police, Senior Constable Dean Miller, are working on it so far with more officers to come onto the project during the year.

"We will be looking at police driver training methods around the country in relation to pursuit driving and accident levels to find out whether anything can be done to improve safety. My work in the crime scene section in Canberra could prove to be useful to me with the study."

Craig said other projects being undertaken at present under the NPRU's extensive programme included studies into drug driving, crime trend forecasting and the tape recording of interviews.