

# LADY RIDER

by Paul Lewer

**C**ANBERRA'S first woman motor cyclist is finding drivers' reactions an amusing sidelight to the job.

'One man even went to the extent of flagging me down to confirm what he saw,' Constable Louise Denley told 'Platypus'.

'The reactions can vary enormously. The novelty of being booked by a woman seems to ease the pain for some drivers while others question the right of a woman to give them a ticket at all.

'And some people don't even notice the difference!'

Louise will have been in the AFP three years come August and she graduated from the intensive five week motorcycle riders' course last December.

The final part of the course was an eight hour 500 kilometre ride to the South Coast and back.

Louise, 21, said joining the AFP fulfilled a lifelong ambition.

'I had always wanted to join the police. I was always a bit of a tomboy and my family said I would grow out of it, but I grew into it instead.'

Coming originally from a property at Sutton near Canberra, Louise had a lot of experience riding trail bikes.

'I still found the riding course demanding both physically and mentally,' she said

'Riding on the road is a lot different and one of the hardest things was learning about tyre grip on various road surfaces.

'And when you're riding on the dirt you don't have to worry about traffic!'

One of the requirements of the police riding course is being able to pick up the motorcycle from the ground — and a police BMW K100 has a dry weight of 253 kilogrammes.

'That didn't cause me big problems,'



Const. Denley and an aspiring recruit at the Canberra Festival in March. (Picture by Sen. Const. Wayne McConaghy)

Louise said, 'a lot of it is in the technique.'

And entering a previously all-male domain has not been a big problem either.

'I haven't struck any real prejudice, although the fellows do reckon I wear the best fitting pair of jodphurs in the place,' she said.

'I'm not a mad women's libber. Women can't do everything men can but when they are equal to the task they should get a fair go and that's what I've found in the AFP.

'I don't know whether I'll start a trend or not.'

## Life on the Road

The new pursuit rider told 'Platypus'

the greatest hazard in the job was the average Canberra driver.

'They appear to be oblivious to what is going on around them and travel in a daze,' Louise said.

'People also travel much too fast. I booked one doing 135 kph in a 60 kph zone in Canberra's main street, Northbourne Avenue, and those sorts of speeds are by no means uncommon.'

Louise said she would like to go on to do a pursuit driver training course at some stage in the future.

'But at the moment I'm really enjoying myself with the bikes,' Louise said.

'My colleagues say they have pulled over some of my former 'customers' and they've asked how I'm going!'



**T**HE Platypus has been adopted by the Australian Federal Police as a symbol representing the diverse requirements placed upon members in the execution of their duty. This unique and tenacious little Australian mammal is a survivor against increasing pressure from today's environment. It leaves no stone unturned in its daily pursuits and has equipped itself with a range of features to adapt to changes over many years. It is capable of passing unnoticed, if required, yet demonstrates an unflinching dedication to explore all possibilities in an effort to maintain its special place in Australia's wildlife, at times against large and more powerful opponents — a quality admired and respected by members of the Australian Federal Police.

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