

# EXPERIENCE COUNTS FOR SMOOTH SAILING

by Keith Livingston

**"I'M a career public servant", Laurie Allday said, reflecting on 41 years with the Commonwealth.**

As Regional Executive Officer Laurie is the most senior public servant in Southern Region. He joined the AFP in May 1986 and is responsible to the Assistant Commissioner, Southern Region.

Being Regional Executive Officer in one of the AFP's largest regions is quite an achievement for a man who started work at age 14 in 1947 as messenger with the Overseas Telecommunications Commission. After six months with OTC Laurie moved to the (then) Postmaster General's Department, but continued to work as a messenger, being told that every telegraph messenger had a Director General's baton in his telegram bag. "And I've still got my Director General's baton," he said with a chuckle.

The climb to his present senior ranking in the Public Service results from a desire for self-improvement, achieved through study in his own time. He



Mr Laurie Allday

acquired his Leaving Certificate, Diploma of Public Administration through the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, and as a crowning achievement,

Bachelor of Commerce at Melbourne University.

Laurie sees his role as extremely important. He makes perfectly clear his belief that the public servants working alongside the police members in the AFP perform many roles which are vital for the organisation to operate efficiently. Those duties include the payment of salaries and allowances, the ordering and purchase of equipment and stores, the maintaining of equipment in working order and financial and staff level monitoring and advice to the Regional Commanders.

When he's not behind his desk in Southern Command Headquarters, Laurie maintains his interest in several sports, including fishing, cricket and football. "Apart from fishing, mine is a spectator role in most sports these days, although over the years I have been an active participant in many areas of sport," he said.



## SUPPORT SERVICES

The work involved when the AFP moved into its new Canberra headquarters will long be remembered by Peter McEwan (Assistant Director Management and Support Services Division).

"This area did a fine job in co-ordinating the move from several locations around the city," he said.

"Most people know the amount of work involved in moving house — moving the 'home' of the AFP was slightly more complicated! We had to try to upgrade the furniture and equipping the Investigations Department — which was previously in Unit Five at Barton — to a satisfactory standard was a priority."

"Our work with the new building in the early stages included preparing the specifications for the telephone system which is a third generation PABX system. Our aim is to install third generation PABX's in all the headquarters buildings in the regions. Ultimately we are looking at networking telephones — specifically between Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne which are the AFP's largest telephone traffic areas," he said. "With the impending move in Eastern Region to a new headquarters building

we are working on the specifications to upgrade their telephone system and their furniture and fittings. Similar advances have been achieved in Melbourne with Southern Region's move to a new headquarters."

Peter and his eight staff are responsible nationally for controlling much of the AFP's "nuts and bolts"; including building repair and maintenance, telephones, furniture and fittings, office services and purchasing. Overall, the budgeting responsibilities run into hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Peter said his area prepared a furniture and fittings programme for each year and they tried to give consideration to ergonomic requirements — when they knew what they were.

"People should always tell us when they apply for keyboard equipment so that we will be aware of their need for ergonomic furniture," he said.

Peter's face is a familiar one in headquarters and other AFP buildings in Canberra as he ensures that repair work and maintenance is carried out. "The biggest problem is the short notice people give us to get jobs done," he said. "We have to get contractors in from



Mr Peter McEwan

outside which can make it a bit hard to respond quickly. My main request to 'customers' is to give us more notice where possible of work that needs doing. We are returning to quarterly inspections following a restoration of staff numbers. That should allow us to get to problems before they get too big."

Peter's links with the AFP include the sporting variety. He has played with the AFP men's basketball team since 1977

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