

# TECHNICAL OFFICERS

"Ninety-eight percent of people in the AFP don't know we exist but they would soon know about it if we disappeared," Len Fahey said.

Len is the AFP's Canberra-based Principal Technical Officer, Electronic Services, responsible for the team that keeps the force's communications system going.

Electronic Services has 23 officers around the country.

"The biggest part of our work is keeping the AFP's voice communications operating nationally and one of our biggest problems is monitoring by the media and criminal elements," Len said.

"A problem we face as a police force is that we have so many modes of communication and they all have to be maintained. We run the communications equipment used in AFP cars nationally and handle about 500 electronic repairs a month. We buy and supply equipment to the AFP around the country and manage its servicing.

"A lot of our work is confidential — such as processing information from audio tapes from surveillance operations — and we have close liaison with other government departments as well as providing support to AFP technical units."

The AFP's technical officers have the runs on the board when it comes to technical expertise. "We are in the process of transferring to private industry the technology we developed for our Standard Telephone Activity Recording System (STARS)," Len said.

"It records information obtained from legally authorised intercepts. STARS was undertaken as a special project because we couldn't find anything in the world to satisfy our requirements"

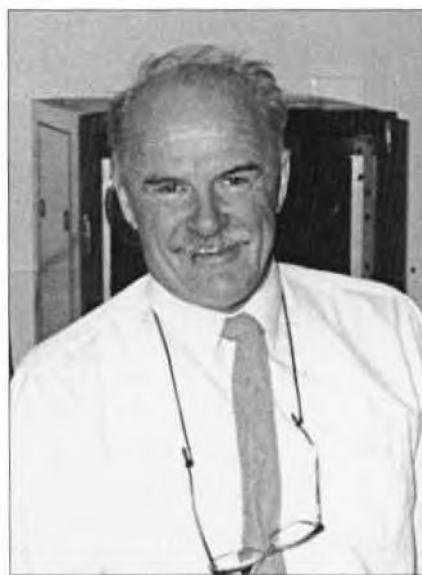
It's not the only time the AFP's technical officers have shown what they can do. As part of a review of satellite technology four years ago they built an amateur satellite tracking station which was licensed to operate for the AFP on an experimental basis.

Contact was made via a US satellite with police forces as far away as the West Coast of the United States.

Police work was quite a change for Len, who joined the technical services section of the ACT Police in 1978.

"I was in airborne electronic systems for missiles with the Department of Defence and one of my last jobs was as project officer for a remote controlled pilotless aircraft for the Royal Australian Navy.

"I had been a warrant officer in the Royal Australian Air Force and I spent



Mr Len Fahey

eight years doing development work at Woomera with missiles and remote controlled aircraft."

Len added that part of the work of the section was to evaluate electronic equipment used by criminals.

"We could spend more money on research to counter the intelligence used by criminals to transfer information," he said.

"Criminals can communicate via public paging networks and fax networks . . . we need testing equipment which can cost up to \$100,000 and be obsolete in five years."

Len is also active in the union movement through the Association of Drafting, Supervisory and Technical Employees and is the ACTU delegate on the National Consultative Council, representing Public Service unions.



*The AFP relinquished control of the Coastwatch operation to the Australian Customs Service on July 31. The AFP had operated Coastwatch for four years. The unit's staff members have now been redeployed, with four Public Service transfers to Customs.*

*Back Row: L to R: Mr K. Gascoigne (Executive Director) Chief Inspector D. Bosman, Chief Superintendent R.E. Dixon, Deputy Commission (Operations) Mr R. Farmer, Mr B. Williamson (Customs), Chief Inspector J. Murray, Mr J. Myszka.*

*Centre Row: Mr W. Kathage, Senior Constable B. Young, Mr F. Rule, Sergeant R. Gresham.*

*Front Row: Miss K. Thurkettle, Mrs K. Kearney.*