

# Commissioner's Message

AS the year draws to a close, I believe we should all look back upon our collective achievements with pride in the face of expanding demands at a time when all Government organisations have suffered major funding reductions.

This year we have achieved more with less, evidenced by successful fraud investigations, major drug seizures and in the Australian Capital Territory, higher public sup-

port in the community policing environment.

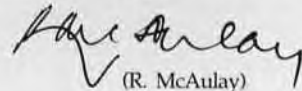
Our successes, both overseas and nationally, have been publicly acknowledged in various forums culminating in us receiving the inaugural national award for innovative management from the Royal Institute of Public Administration of Australia.

In a shrinking financial environment I can assure you the AFP will, in the New Year, face increased demands for its serv-

ices which will test the commitment of each individual. Our priorities will reflect this.

I am confident in the difficult times ahead that you will respond in such a way as to ensure the AFP's viability and continued success.

I wish you all the very best for a safe and happy Christmas.



(R. McAulay)  
Commissioner of Police

# Federal Police at break-even point

At the National Press Club in Canberra on 2 December, Commissioner McAulay emphasised that the organisational and industrial changes put in place in the AFP over the past four years were made with the objective of bringing about higher productivity and efficiency and he is confident that the Federal Police now does more with less.

But he emphasised, "At this point, however, I should add a note of caution. Doing more with less has a break-even point beyond which organisations quickly lose effectiveness. The AFP is, in my view, at that break-even point now.

Mr McAulay said that he had always resisted change for the sake of change but pointed out that he had made many radical changes to the Federal Police, the Northern Territory Police and to the South Australia Police while serving with those organisations.

He said that even from his days as a police cadet in South Australia



Commissioner McAulay speaking at the National Press Club

he drove his instructors to the point of frustration by constantly asking, 'why?' in an attempt to marry the theoretical aspects of policing to the practical.

It was this questioning of traditional practises and his practical

experience as a police officer that lay behind the changes he has made to those police organisations with which he has served.

This applies particularly to those changes to the AFP. He summarised the changes to the AFP as being:

- the introduction of fixed-term contracts for all employees;
- the creation of a uniform workforce where the only real difference between employees being that some have the power to arrest and some do not;
- the contraction of industrial awards from 22 to one;
- the reduction of union and staff associations from nine to one;
- the contraction of 11 levels of rank under the rank of Assistant Commissioner to five;
- the establishment of merit-based promotion;
- lateral entry to enable recruitment of qualified specialists;
- the elimination of seniority as the basis for both remuneration or promotion;
- the ability to match starting salaries commensurate with qualifications and experience;
- the ability to reduce superannuation payouts by the amount of the government's contribution in cases where employees are convicted of a criminal offence where corruption in the course of duty is an element;
- the movement towards a tertiary trained workforce, with all recruits by the end of 1994 being university graduates, other than in exceptional circumstances;
- the establishment of an undergraduate scheme with a number of universities so that potential recruits are being trained and qualified in industry relevant degrees; and,
- as part of the revised training philosophy, the AFP will provide opportunities for existing staff to update their qualifications;

Mr McAulay said that, viewed in isolation, it could be surmised that the changes would have had a very corrosive effect on the morale of members.

"Apart from making me the most unpopular person in the organisation, that certainly has not been the case," he said. "Obviously we have disgruntled employees, the same as every other organisation."

He emphasised the fact that the

Federal Police at one time had just about the worst Comcare record in the Commonwealth, with that record relating to the inordinately high number of invalidity retirements. Based on the current low number of medical invalidities, the AFP is now regarded as a model for the Commonwealth.

Mr McAulay said that the AFP could not let matters rest there. "To keep one step ahead we are:

- Improving our international liaison network because of the internationalisation of crime, especially white collar crime;
- increasing our assistance to our

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colleagues in the immediate South Pacific area, because we seem to have driven some of Australia's organised crime offshore; and

- enhancing our strategic assessment capacity, because of the need to identify future threats."

About the AFP's performance Mr McAulay said, "It is a very knotty problem of how close to reality is the public perception of police performance. This in turn is linked to image.

The results of a recent survey by consultants revealed that while in the Australian Capital Territory we have a high public profile, at the national level the Federal Police has almost no image at all, either good or bad. But strangely enough I have the impression that internationally the AFP enjoys a very high reputation.

"What is quite apparent to me is that the perception that journalists, bureaucrats and politicians have of the Federal Police, and indeed of police elsewhere, is at odds with the public perception.

"Why then is the public perception so high when almost everything we read about the police is negative? It would be easy

to make sweeping statements as to all the causes, but I am sure that the public is generally influenced by at least three factors.

"Firstly, irrespective of the bad publicity, most of the contact members of the public have with police officers is positive.

"Secondly, there is a growing community concern about the state of law and order in this country and indeed the whole industrialised world.

"Thirdly, the public believes that the police effort is not being matched by other parts of the Criminal Justice System."

Turning his attention to the Criminal Justice System he said, "In this regard the conduct of trials can be seen as unnecessarily protracted and expensive, with uncertain outcomes and inadequate penalties. I do not agree with some of the arguments about the inadequacy of penalties, but it is not my opinion which counts. However, I do feel very strongly that justice delayed is justice denied."

He cited charges laid by the National Crime Authority in 1984 and 1985 which had only just come to trial and one committal proceeding in the ACT which has been running on and off for five or six years.

He said that at a recent National Crime Authority conference various ideas of how to streamline and accelerate trials in complex fraud were discussed.

"All Attorneys-General in Australia are considering the recommendations and I believe that there is a will to act upon them.

"However, personally, I believe that if fraud trials can be streamlined there is no reason why other trials cannot be streamlined also.

"Some cynics say that the delay in this type of law reform is because streamlining and accelerating trials would reduce the earnings of Barristers. Of course I am not cynical enough to believe that!" the Commissioner concluded. ■