

obtain evidence, and officers still have to conduct interviews as with any other inquiry. The workload may be less, but at the same time, you still have to be in your toes.

"At the end of the day it is still a conviction and the ill-gained proceeds that you are after," he said.

The usual client departments are Department of Social Security, Department of Education Employment and Training, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and Department of Transport and Communication.

The four response teams handle the minor general crimes also. These crimes may include stealing from Commonwealth offices or the assault of Commonwealth employees.

Acting Superintendent Lalic believes that much of an investigator's skill is learned on the job.

"An investigator must be zealous and fearless and must have a strong resolution to successfully complete an inquiry.

"Tertiary education undoubtedly would be a help and experience in accounting, bookkeeping and commerce is also of help, but education itself is not necessarily a prerequisite for the job. An investigator must have the will to push an investigation to a conclusion. An investigator must maintain a 'lion-like' aggression towards and investigation.

"The current team have been in fraud for most of their careers with a suitable time in drug investigation," he said.

"Generally they are efficient and competent investigators. Stability has had a lot to do with enabling the building of experience and confidence among the team members. This pool of experience takes some of the load off senior officers when experienced junior officers are able to advise the less experienced investigators on routine matters," he said.

Depth of experience

Leader of Fraud Team Six, Detective Sergeant Peter Solomon said that Central Region has a good depth of expertise and experience in

that usually investigations go well because of the availability of an experienced pool from which to draw team members.

"If you are going to slot someone into your team it is usually an experienced person," he said.

Originally from Canberra, Detective Sergeant Solomon has been in Central Region for 13 years. He said that he feels that reasonably good analytical skills are required to be a good investigator and in his team he likes to see people using imagination and innovation.

"There are many ways of attacking problems from job to job, and you

must use the skills and experience available in your team at any one time," he said.

"On one job where most of the team had surveillance skills we were able to use surveillance to gather evidence to carry the job off. Another team with other skills would have done the job a different way, but would still have obtained the desired result," he said.

Detective Sergeant Solomon said that he saw keeping up with technology, especially computer skills, as an ongoing activity in Central Region's investigations as well as being necessary in streamlining the recording and assembly of evidence.

Staff member's efforts invaluable

By Commander Don McCulloch



Part of Central Region's staff member team : back row (l to r,) Trish Roberts, Helen Murray, Bill Fazakerley, Kate Pellew, and front row (l to r) Stephanie Georgoudis, Anne Williams, Megan Gaynor, and Anna Munyard.

THRUST into the Regional Executive Officer's job through unexpected circumstances, Helen Murray has accepted the challenge with relish.

Assisted by her small band of committed enthusiastic workers, Central Region has never been better informed on financial matters nor supported in every-day functions.

Certainly in Central Region it can be said, to paraphrase an old adage, "behind every successful operation are supportive staff members". Without the invaluable efforts of the small number of staff members, Central Region would be

unduly hampered in efforts to achieve regional and corporate objectives.

The very successful changeover to the SPARS system and the proper utilisation of FINEST are but two examples of this application and support. The list could go on and include building maintenance, registry, file archiving and so on.

The often unnoticed, yet so important functions that are performed by the region's staff members are essential if the region and the AFP are to maintain our status as the Commonwealth's Premier Law Enforcement Agency".