

# AFP develops a human resource strategy for the changing times

By Commissioner Mick Palmer



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*A cross section of AFP staff make up the human resources review working party. Its members are working in their home bases to develop goals and strategies for the future development of people in the AFP.*

**T**he success of the AFP is very much dependent on the competence of its people and how they are organised; people are the key to it being a quality organisation delivering a quality service.

At the September 1994 Mollmook executive conference there was widespread recognition that as an organisation the AFP does not always gain maximum value from its greatest asset — its people.

As the implementation of a new operational structure for the AFP begins, I believe we need to ensure that, concurrently, we put in place a human resource strategy which is an integral part of the new structure. The strategy needs to be one that gives staff the opportunity to develop, grow and make maximum use of their skills, knowledge and personal attributes. Above all, it needs to be a strategy that will equip

staff to cope with the significant changes that we are experiencing while at the same time helping them to identify and commit to what will be a substantial change to the AFP's core business, to its way of doing business and to the overall culture, ethos, values and vision of the organisation.

The AFP's approach to human resource management will, of necessity, be multi-faceted and will be aimed at addressing today's problems and directed towards its new way of doing business in the future. Initial steps in this process will include:

- implementing the

recommendations of the Niland Report which focus, in particular, on the ability to value diversity and on matters relating to equity and fairness within the workplace;

- launching an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment strategy which forms part of the AFP's overall recruitment strategy to better reflect the composition of the Australian community;
- implementing a human resource development plan based on the 'learning organisation' concept and containing a framework within which the resolutions made at the executive conference at Mollymook and the Godfrey recommendations can be addressed;
- introducing pre-selection/promotion processes including a 12-month trial of the use of joint selection committees for positions below the Senior Executive Service (SES) level;
- developing a new pay and classification structure that provides flexibility, encourages performance and that recognises the complexity of the task and rewards the gaining of additional skills and competencies;
- introducing a new performance appraisal (PMP) system that is aligned with the AFP's core business and reflects the way we do business; and
- reviewing a range of terms and conditions to make them more applicable to the new operational environment and the ways we will be doing business, specifically revisiting fixed-term appointments, superannuation and the end of contract Australian Federal Police Adjustment Scheme (AFPAS) payment.

While each of the above initiatives will be important components of the AFP's overall human resource strategy, I believe it will also be necessary to do a 'stocktake' of existing AFP resources in order to establish where our strengths, weaknesses and possible skill gaps are and to develop a strategy to bridge those gaps where

necessary. As a first step in this process I asked the Australian Institute of Police Management (AIPM) together with the human resource consulting firm Morgan & Banks to undertake an SES Human Resource Development Program. This process uses assessment centre techniques and face-to-face interviews, and commenced on September 1, 1995. The program is designed to:

- give staff information about their strengths and weaknesses and options for future development;
- provide a framework for the AFP's executive development program;
- provide a focus for attention in assessing performance management;
- provide a spectrum of talent within the AFP by identifying strengths, areas of risk and need; and
- identify personnel capable of exhibiting the values, qualities and attributes which will be essential for the future success of the AFP.

Located away from AFP premises, the assessment centres involve personnel from the AIPM, Morgan & Banks, Ms Niland and experienced senior police officers from other services. At the end of the process each participant will receive oral and written reports about the outcomes.

When the SES Human Resource Development Program has been completed, it is my intention also to introduce a team-building, change-management program which will complement the training initiatives planned for all non-SES staff and which is designed to equip them with the skills and knowledge to manage, lead and participate effectively in teams. It will also draw on external resources and will help all staff to cope with the significant change that we will be experiencing in our move to a team-based operational policing structure. I believe this is a critical element of our human resource strategy and I am confident that it will play a significant part in the smooth transition to the new structure.

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