

A changed view for the AFP a year after September 11



By Commissioner Mick Keelty

The AFP's wide range of activities in Australia and overseas demands a high level of commitment from its members and has required the AFP to initiate the organisational change that has taken place during the past decade. The AFP is one of only a few police organisations worldwide that is able to closely identify what people, resources and costs are associated with various forms of operational activity. Its planning closely aligns performance-oriented strategies, implemented at various levels to meet flexibility in desired outcomes that may change in either the short or long term.

It was this level of adaptability that enabled the AFP to react quickly to Australia's heightened security needs following the September 11, 2001 terrorist

attacks in the United States. The impact was almost immediate on Australian security and law enforcement and created the need to engage in additional protection activities, investigations in support of US authorities as well as intelligence gathering and investigation of related matters under Australian law.

The AFP's flexible teams-based structure was instrumental in allowing it to redirect its resources swiftly to emerging higher priorities, while continuing routine investigations. To achieve this, a more rigorous criminal targeting regime was introduced to complement a reassessment of priorities. While this approach met urgent demands placed on the AFP, it was a situation that was unsustainable for an extended period of time. Recognition of this fact came with an increased resource allocation in the 2002-03 Federal Budget.

Following September 11, the AFP conducted an environment scan to support planning activities, including the next iteration of the AFP's corporate-planning processes and to identify key developments in its operating environment.

Looking out on 10 September 2001 at the terrain it would cross in the next two years, the AFP could see a largely recognisable and reasonably well defined landscape. The view is now considerably different.

The key features of the AFP's landscape over the short to medium term flow from:

- changes yet to be manifest in the global law enforcement environment resulting from the shock of September 11 on key global forces that shape that environment;
- changes in the AFP's role and responsibilities flowing from September 11, not all of which are fully known or defined;
- developments relating to its traditional businesses and unconnected to September 11; and
- the dynamic relationship between the above three sets of changes.

The dominant issue by far for the AFP will be making the transition to an organisation redefined by its increased role in all aspects of counter-terrorism. This will impact directly or indirectly on all facets of the AFP and interact with other significant issues generated by the organisation's traditional businesses.

The AFP is in the process of evolving into a substantially different organisation to what it has been. This reflects, in part, the incorporation of the Australian Protective Service (APS) as an operating division of the AFP from July 1, 2002. In addition, during the next 12 months, the AFP will have considerably enhanced roles and responsibilities, stronger legislative support to carry out its functions, changed relationships with key Commonwealth and State partners and clients arising from decisions flowing from the Special Leaders' Summit on Transnational Crime and Terrorism, including the decision to establish the Australian Crime Commission and for the new body to be operational by the end of the year.

Making this transition is the key strategic issue for the AFP. It will present substantial internal and external change management issues. They will be complicated by the fact that the role and responsibility adjustments, such as an enhanced protection and counter-terrorism role, are in a direction that neither the AFP nor some key partners and clients were contemplating before September 11. The main feature article in this edition is an extract from a report by the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism in the United States about the threat that terrorism poses to the world.

Government has high performance expectations of the AFP and this is reflected through substantial support for the AFP Reform Program and record funding allocations of an additional \$397.8 million over four years in the 2002-03 Federal Budget. With this support comes an even greater obligation on the AFP to achieve the strategic outcomes expected by the Government. The combination of the Government's performance expectations and the landscape the AFP is facing, make its environment over the next 12 months arguably more challenging than at any time during the past 10 years. However, the AFP is also as well placed as it has ever been to meet those challenges.

The other main feature in this edition of Platypus magazine is an address by Dr Alan Hawke, Secretary of Defence, about the concept of public service and the trend for the public, Ministers and Parliament to demand greater personal and organisational accountability for those paid from the public purse.

Other articles in this edition include an insight into life as a liaison officer by Federal Agent Kylie

Flower in Hong Kong, our attempt to pursue continuous improvement and innovation in our approach to fraud investigation, the rationale for establishing a Joint Transnational Crime Investigation Team in Cambodia, and a detailed examination of the factors that have led to the current heroin shortage in Australia. The shortage has provided an unparalleled opportunity for insight into the characteristics of the Australian heroin and broader illicit drugs market. The article argues that the shortage supports the value of pursuing drug supply reduction strategies.

At the centrespread is an organisation chart that captures our current structure including the recent transfer of the Australian Protective Service to become an operating division of the AFP from July 1, 2002.

In our next edition we will report on the Women and Policing Globally Conference 2002 that is being held in Canberra from October 20-23 (see page 14 for details). With an anticipated 1000 delegates attending, it is one of the largest conferences held in the national capital and there is something on offer for anyone with an interest in policing. For more details go to the AFP website at www.afp.gov.au