

Commissioner's Message

Policing is about service to the community and as Christmas approaches, it provides a chance to reflect not only on the year's operational achievements, but also on the AFP's role in a wide range of communities, both domestic and abroad.

In September, the dedication ceremony for the National Police Memorial was a chance to acknowledge the service and sacrifice made by more than 700 Australian police to their respective families. First raised as an idea more than a decade ago, the National Police Memorial project picked up steam in 2001 and is now a reality. This has been a joint jurisdictional task in conjunction with the National Capital Authority, and now takes its pride of place among the national memorials in Canberra.

The photographs and reports in the pages of this edition of *Platypus Magazine* bear testimony to the hard work involved in organising such an event that generated a policing spectacle on a scale never before seen in the national capital.

Many family members of those named on the Memorial travelled from interstate to witness the Dedication Ceremony. Understandably, there was a tangible sense of sorrow, but ultimately a sense of pride in those who have now been recognised fittingly in a national arena.

More recently, on an operational front, we have sent officers to Tonga at the invitation of Tongan authorities to assist in restoring law and order following civil unrest in the wake of the death of their

long-serving monarch, King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV. This is another example of the valuable role the AFP can provide to our regional neighbours.

The readiness of our International Deployment Group to despatch an initial party of 35 officers within two days of the disturbance and then another 27 closely behind validates the Government's confidence in the AFP to provide responsive policing to our regional neighbours.

In the meantime, our people in Timor-Leste are working with police colleagues from around the world and demonstrating an ongoing commitment to bringing stability to a nation that the AFP has had an affiliation with from its formation in 1999.

Personal interaction with a community is the strength behind all policing and it applies equally to our missions overseas. The continuing interaction of AFP members in community programs in the Solomon Islands is reported in the pages of this edition. This highlights that wherever Australian police are working, they inevitably engage with the community they serve, laying down foundations for trust and cooperation to the benefit of all parties.

At home, the AFP has been strengthening relations with our own community. Our participation at the Melbourne Islamic Festival at the end of October was a great success and a fantastic opportunity for members of the AFP to meet members of the Melbourne Islamic community. In addition to that, at the Brisbane Office on 4 December,



Commissioner Mick Keelty, APM

I had the pleasure of meeting with Islamic leaders from Cairns, Mareeba, Townsville, Mackay, Bundaberg and the Gold Coast. It was an opportunity for an open discussion that was welcomed by all participants.

This year has been one of unique challenges for the AFP in all the work we undertake and I congratulate everyone for again rising to the occasion in serving our various communities in the best way possible. I also extend my congratulations and thanks to the network of families and friends who support each of our members in the pursuit of their duties.

Finally, I would like to wish you and your families a very safe and happy festive season, and look forward to working closely with you in 2007.

M J Keelty, APM