

Our new face on the web

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The AFP's external website is a critical communication and service delivery channel for the AFP. About 1,500 people visit www.afp.gov.au each day and some 26,000 other websites maintain links to the AFP website, making it one of the most commonly referenced Australian government sites.

The AFP website aims to:

- reflect the diverse functions and roles of the AFP, and promote the AFP's culture and reputation;
- provide up-to-date information on the AFP's work internationally, nationally and in the ACT;
- provide access to online services such as crime reporting and recruitment;
- complement and reinforce messages delivered through other channels;
- inform the general public about their rights and obligations when dealing with the AFP; and
- provide AFP contact information and interactive forms.

The newly redeveloped website presents a fresh, contemporary image of the AFP, a new layout and structure, updated content, simplified navigation and a range of online services.

The need for change

The first AFP Internet site was launched in 1999 and revised in 2001. Since that time, the design and structure had not changed substantially.

The old site provided access and services for government agencies and the wider community, including information on law enforcement, media products, recruitment advice, criminal history checks and general contacts. However, it reflected an outdated version of the AFP's departmental structure, and contained complex navigational structures.

Since the last website redesign in 2001, significant changes have taken place both in the role of the AFP and in the expectations of the general public towards government websites.

Whilst the old site enjoyed a slow but steady increase in traffic over the years, market research and evaluation concluded that the appearance and functionality of the site was no longer meeting the emerging needs of the general public, nor of the AFP itself. In addition, the maintenance process was highly labour intensive, reducing the ability for the web management team to develop the site.

The plan

In 2004, the AFP commissioned a review of the site which resulted in an integrated web management strategy covering both the external and intranet sites.

The proposed redevelopment of the main Internet site included the implementation of a content management system (CMS) and supporting business processes for additional functionality and to automate much of the ongoing maintenance.

Key requirements of the new site were:

- enhanced branding, promoting the AFP's objectives and authority, in line with the planned new AFP branding;
- simplified navigation, with better structured information architecture and improved site search tools;
- improved content with both updated existing material and new content;
- new online services to meet user needs, including online crime reporting and recruitment;
- improved compliance with government electronic publishing and information management standards; and
- new tools, including a CMS to enable the efficient development and ongoing management of content and services.



The new website

The redevelopment project got underway in October 2005, reducing a standard eight-month project to an ambitious six months.

A new interim Home Page design, implemented towards the end of November, helped to create a better initial impression of the site while the project was underway.



The new site

The new site has been organised around the needs of varying AFP audiences including the media, potential recruits, ACT residents and other government agencies.

A thorough analysis of site usage was used to guide the reorganised structure so material and services could be quickly and easily located.

Although the Web Management team was responsible for the project, the redevelopment involved all areas of the AFP. Staff have been actively involved in reviewing and revising content, identifying potential services, contributing to the design, and providing technical advice and support. The Web Management team in

Information Services also worked closely with Marketing and Communications to ensure that the new site would compliment the efforts of the larger AFP re-branding project.

The new site includes a number of online services, building on those available in the original site. These online forms and should improve the level of accessibility and ease of use for the public, businesses and other government agencies who require AFP services. The move to online services will also improve efficiency for AFP staff in many areas.

New online services includes:

- Criminal history check. Over 1,000 checks are ordered every day as part of the employment process for a wide range of roles, including many volunteer positions. The online form will capture information directly, and allow more efficient processing.
- Report a crime. The new online form will provide another way for people to contact CrimeStoppers, with contact details optional for those who wish to remain anonymous.
- Report online child sex exploitation (OCSET). While these reports can already be made online, the new version will provide better information for the investigation team.
- Updating the ACT key holder register. The register holds details on who has business keys after hours for emergency access. ACT business

owners will be able to enter details online for inclusion in the Register, or update previous entries.

- Dispute an ACT traffic infringement. Drivers already use email to dispute notices or request delayed payments, but do not always include relevant details. The new online form will capture the required information and allow AFP staff to process such requests more quickly.
- Order a Bomb Data Awareness Kit. Business owners will be able to order kits online, for rapid dispatch.
- Register for the ABDC conference. The new version of the online form will be simpler to complete for the many national and international participants.

Future development

The site will continue to develop and expand, reflecting the changing roles and functions of the AFP. Additional online services are planned, including a media release subscription service and password-protected areas for external special interest groups, such as alumni from the AFP College and Management of Serious Crime (MOSC) courses.

The Australian High Tech Crime Centre site and National Missing Persons Unit site will also be brought into the new content management system to further improve their efficiency.