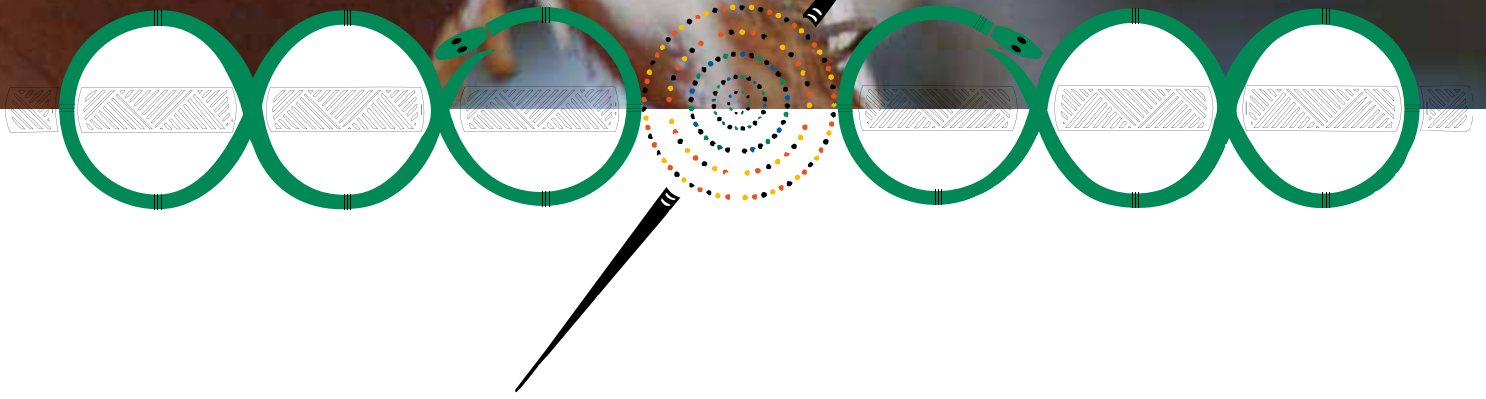


MION celebrate 10 years

The 10th anniversary of the AFP Malunggang Indigenous Officers Network was celebrated in June with a dinner hosted by Worklife Diversity at Barton College in Canberra. During the dinner 10 members of the network were presented with the newly created MION medallion

Below is an edited address by Chief of Staff Audrey Fagan.



Malunggang Indigenous Officers Network

The AFP is very proud to have had a long and fruitful relationship with the Indigenous community, both in Canberra and around the nation.

It is a relationship that has enriched us as an organisation and assisted us in serving not only the local community, but many even beyond our national borders.

At the local level, this relationship has included a close association with Ngunnawal elders Don and Ruth Bell, who we are pleased to have with us here tonight, and who have been close friends of the AFP for many years.

Don and Ruth are both patrons of the AFP and have officiated at many of our own celebrations over time, including our 25th anniversary last October as well as the recent commissioning of our new fleet of water vessels. Ruth also provides cultural awareness training to AFP recruits, an essential component of their training.

It is with great pride that we have within our ranks today a significant number of people of Aboriginal and Torres



Left: MION members presented with the newly created MION Medallion.

Strait Islander descent, who are working in various capacities throughout our organisation.

As many of you would know, MION was formed in response to findings from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

It started off as a workplace support unit for Indigenous members of the AFP, but over the years has become instrumental in promoting cultural awareness and diversity right across our organisation.

This level of awareness has been reflected in much of our operational work. MION, through its support and involvement with the Indigenous Community Liaison Officer Unit and ACT Policing, has helped break down barriers between the Indigenous community and local police, building trust and understanding required for us to carry out our work.

It has also been instrumental in developing cultural awareness programs for the International Deployment Group – a critical component of our pre-deployment training regime for officers before they depart for duty in places like the Solomon Islands.

This is a really important element of the training as it teaches officers much-needed skills in understanding and respecting cultural and social issues and sensitivities, which are critical to achieving our objectives in these international deployments.

Over time, MION has also played a key role in the AFP's recruitment strategy, not only in terms of helping to attract Indigenous people to careers in policing, but also in supporting them throughout their working life, identifying and developing appropriate opportunities and creating a working environment conducive to long and rewarding careers.

Today, the AFP is proud to have Indigenous members represented in all facets of its work – from intelligence, to protective services and investigations at locations right around Australia and beyond.

Many of them have been inspired by the legacy of Ben Blakney, the first Indigenous police officer in the former Commonwealth Police and subsequently the AFP.

Ben enjoyed a long policing career, which saw him not only become the first Indigenous officer to serve overseas on a UN mission, but he also earned the coveted position of official teacher to Australian Governors-General on boomerang throwing!

Ben was also a community leader and a respected elder patron for MION.

Sadly, Ben passed away last year, but his memory lives on at the AFP and tonight we are pleased to honour his contribution to our organisation with the awarding of the inaugural Ben Blakney Memorial Award.

This award will be given annually to the person who, above all others, has demonstrated commitment and drive in support of MION ideals such as strengthening partnerships, promoting diversity and raising awareness of Indigenous issues as well as promoting career advancement for Indigenous employees.

On behalf of the AFP Executive, I'd like to congratulate MION and its former and current membership on reaching such an important milestone; your 10th anniversary.

The network is an important part of the fabric of the AFP, and the values and commitment of its members have helped shape the AFP into the successful and outward-looking organisation that it is today.

