



Fact Sheet



October 2004

History of the Australian Federal Police

On 13th February 1978, a bomb exploded outside the Sydney Hilton Hotel, the venue for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting. The explosion killed three people and injured eight.

After the bombing, the Government commissioned Sir Robert Mark—a former head of Scotland Yard—to review Australia's ability to deal with terrorism at a national level and report on how we could best meet our national policing needs.

He found that 'Australia's Commonwealth and State police system was hopelessly outmoded in dealing with modern crime such as terrorism, bombing and hijacking'. In response to his report, the Government incorporated the Commonwealth Police and ACT Police into the new Australian Federal Police (AFP) on 19 October 1979. The Federal Bureau of Narcotics was transferred from the Australian Customs Service the following month.

The AFP has grown from an original staff of 2952 to 4800 and is now Australia's primary law enforcement agency with a proud history of achievements. This October the organisation marks 25 years of policing, a significant milestone for the organisation.

The AFP enforces Commonwealth criminal law and protects Commonwealth and national interests from crime in Australia and overseas. Areas of focus include combating:

- organised crime
- transnational crime
- money laundering
- major fraud
- illicit drug trafficking
- e-crime.

The organisation also provides protection services to dignitaries and crucial witnesses, and community policing services to the people of the Australian Capital Territory, Jervis Bay, and external territories of Norfolk Island, Christmas Island and the Cocos Islands. Following the recent integration with the Australian Protective Service, the AFP now also oversees areas such as aviation security and the protection of high-risk property.

The AFP is Australia's international law enforcement and policing representative and primary adviser to the Australian Government on policing issues. It works closely with other Australian and international law enforcement bodies to enhance safety and security in Australia and provide a secure regional and global environment.

There is an extensive network of AFP liaison officers in 33 overseas posts. AFP officers also contribute to a number overseas peacekeeping missions. The recent contribution to peacekeeping in places like East Timor and the Solomon Islands and the Bali bombing investigation highlighted the AFP's international role and growing profile as a modern, knowledge-based policing organisation with truly global reach.

For more information:

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