



Fact Sheet



October 2004

Providing community policing in the ACT

Background

ACT Policing is an integral part of the Australian Federal Police (AFP). Like the wider AFP, ACT Policing is now a radically different body than that which existed on the day of its inception – October 19, 1979. When the Australian Federal Police (AFP) was formed, the then-ACT Police Force was integrated with the Commonwealth Police and the Narcotics Bureau. It has since evolved from a traditional para-military policing body to one which now exhibits an ever-increasing scholastic level and diversity in its make-up.

ACT Policing traces its origins to the original Peace Officer Guards, formed in October 1927. From less than a dozen original members, the service has developed through various forms and name changes to become the ACT Policing arm of the AFP, employing about 800 personnel today. It is significant to note that a third of today's workforce is women, a vast improvement on the gender imbalance before October 1979. The average age of recruits is now around 29-years, and most have experienced several work roles before choosing a policing career.

The AFP's community policing arm's growth and success can be measured by its response and outcomes to diverse policing issues within the Territory. At the formation of ACT Policing, nobody could have foreseen the very different world in which we now live and operate—including growing demands to deal with crimes that were not even imagined. With these increasing demands, police have had to evolve from a reactionary model towards an intelligence-led organisation.

Role

ACT Policing's goal is to keep the peace and preserve safety in the ACT. There are four main areas of activity to support this goal:

- crime and safety management—providing a safer and more secure ACT so members of the community can go about their daily lives without undue fear of crime;
- traffic law enforcement and road safety—enforcing traffic laws and promoting safer behaviour on ACT roads to reduce injuries and fatalities;
- prosecution and judicial support—supporting the Director of Public Prosecutions to maximise the number of successful prosecutions in court; and,
- crime prevention—targeting the causes of crime, educating the community about personal and property safety, and pursuing inter-agency partnerships.

ACT Policing's ability to call on the wider expertise of other parts of the AFP is a unique feature of the Policing Arrangement for the ACT. This allows the flexibility necessary to reconfigure its operational focus and expand at short notice to provide a definitive response to emerging crime trends.

More and more, ACT Policing is working in partnership with other agencies – both government and private sector – as well as the community generally. It is a testament to all members of ACT Policing that amidst the massive organisational changes and environmental swings, they have remained committed and focused in keeping the ACT the safest place in Australia in which to live.

For more information:

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