



Fact Sheet



October 2004

Protective Service merges into the AFP

On 1 July 2004, via amendments to the Australian Federal Police Act 1979, the APS ceased to exist and became an operating division of the Australian Federal Police (AFP).

This integration ensures greater coordination between the AFP's close personal protection function and the APS's guarding and counter-terrorist first response functions, therefore strengthening the whole organisations' ability to fulfill counter-terrorism responsibilities.

The Protection portfolio, incorporating Protective Service, has grown significantly since 2001 to become a major part of AFP business. It has primary responsibility for providing specialised protective security services to the Commonwealth, and contributes to the Commonwealth's counter-terrorism arrangements, notably in the aviation sector.

The work of the Protection Portfolio is extensive, and includes the protection of Commonwealth assets, critical infrastructure, diplomatic missions and high office holders. In addition, personal protection is provided to high office holders and their families, visiting internationally protected persons and witnesses involved in criminal matters.

Commonwealth establishments afforded protective security include: The Lodge and Kirribilli House (residence of the Prime Minister); Government House and Admiralty House (residence of the Governor-General); Parliament House, diplomatic and consular premises and Defence installations.

Rapid response teams, involving bicycle patrols to improve mobility and response times have been established at Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport and Parliament House to enhance existing capabilities.

The portfolio provides a number of capabilities which contribute to the security of the aviation industry including:

- the Air Security Officer program for Australian registered commercial aircraft which provides an anti-hijacking capacity;
- counter terrorism first response capability at major Australian airports; and
- will soon provide the recently announced rapid deployment capability for regional airports, further enhancing Australia's aviation security framework.

Protection also contributes to the specialised protective security requirements of major community events in which there is a Commonwealth interest, such as the 2000 Sydney Olympics and the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games. The portfolio has a protective security intelligence capacity and a network of liaison officers, intelligence officers and analysts to support its functions.

The counter terrorism first response capability at major airports and stations across Australia is a proactive, flexible, outcome focused deterrent that requires Protective Service Officers to respond, cordon and contain any threat. It includes a number of specialised areas including explosive detection dogs and bomb appraisal officers. It is intelligence led and supported by the Protective Security Liaison network with officers operating in and around the airport precincts providing one layer in the Federal Government's multi-layered approach to Aviation Security.

Regional Rapid Deployment Teams will be based in a number of capital cities and will deploy to regional airports to enhance regional airport security plans and participate in security training programs. Each team includes bomb appraisal officers who respond to potential security threats created by suspicious or unattended items and motor vehicles and explosive detection dogs which have the capacity to detect in excess of 19,000 different explosive compounds. These teams will work closely with state and local law enforcement authorities, the aviation industry and other relevant agencies to ensure a coordinated response to security incidents.

For more information:

AFP National Media (Canberra): (02) 6275 7100