



AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE PLATYPUS ANNUAL



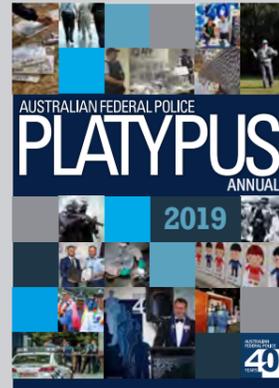


The platypus has been adopted by the Australian Federal Police as a symbol representing the diverse requirements placed on members in the execution of their duties.

This unique and tenacious Australian animal is a survivor against increasing pressure from today's environment. It leaves no stone unturned in its daily pursuits and has equipped itself with a range of features to adapt to changes over many years.

It is capable of passing unnoticed if required, yet it demonstrates an unfailing dedication to explore all possibilities in an effort to maintain its special place in Australia's environment.

Although generally a peaceful animal, the platypus is able to defend itself, if necessary, with a venomous spur. This is done, at times, against larger and more powerful opponents—a quality admired and respected by members of the Australian Federal Police.



Cover images: Selected photos from this edition.

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE
PLATYPUS
MAGAZINE

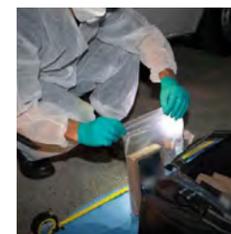
Edition 124

Editor: Dom Byrne
Design: Metka Kosec
AFP Media and Engagement
Contributors: Alexia Boland, Gab Knowles, Dominic Lavers, Shelby Houghton & Joe Marsden (AFP National Media). Terry Browne (AFP Museum). Emma Bailey (ACT Policing)
ISSN 1441-8061
AFP Platypus Magazine is the journal of the Australian Federal Police.

Requests for permission to reprint material appearing in *Platypus*, and all general correspondence, should be addressed to:

The Editor
AFP Platypus Magazine
AFP Media and Engagement
GPO Box 401
Canberra ACT 2601
Telephone (02) 5126 0000
Email: news@afp.gov.au

Opinions expressed in published articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect AFP policy.



Contents

- Commissioner's message **5**
- Keeping Australia Safe: Joint Counter Terrorism Team foil Christmas plot **6**
- Keeping Australia Safe: Protecting children drives investigators **10**
- ACT Policing Snapshot **14**
- Busy 40th for AFP **16**
- The AFP 1979 - 2019 timeline **22**
- Keeping Australia Safe: AFP tracks down financial fraudsters **26**
- Keeping Australia Safe: The largest meth seizure that almost never was **30**
- Surprise gift for the AFP's 40th **34**
- Staying on track: AFP family honours Detective Sergeant Mark Scott **42**
- Keeping Australia Safe: Child protection team closes Manila net **44**
- Keeping Australia Safe: Cocaine import not smooth sailing **48**
- Fly in, fly out **52**
- Platypus marks 40 years **58**



National Police Remembrance Day

Tuesday, 29 September 2020

Commissioner's message



Welcome to the 2019 Platypus Annual.

As I write this, AFP teams across the country are serving our community and assisting partner agencies with Australia's response to COVID-19. These are challenging times, and it is great to see a police force that can rise to that challenge.

The Platypus Annual gives us a chance to look back on the previous year, celebrate our successes, and reflect on who we are as an organisation.

When I look at the AFP, I see a police force full of passionate, dedicated people, looking to make a difference to their community. Sworn or unsworn, we choose to work in law enforcement for a reason. This passion drives us and unites us, and when we reflect on our achievements, together, we build our shared identity.

2019 was a significant year. We celebrated the AFP's 40th anniversary, with our members commemorating this significant milestone in a variety of ways, notably the 2019 AFP Legacy Ball and 40th anniversary awards ceremony held in November.

Operationally, we had many successes across the board. The Victorian Joint Counter Terrorism Team had a successful outcome in the sentencing of four Melbourne men who attempted to plot a Christmas terror attack in 2016. The work of the Joint Anti Child Exploitation Team resulted in the global rescue of 50 children and the arrest of several predators, with work ongoing to help another 100 suspected victims. We also played a key role in the largest-ever methamphetamine seizure on US soil, which was also the largest-ever shipment bound for Australia, and prevented 1.7 tonnes from reaching our community.

We remember Detective Sergeant Mark Scott, who passed away in 2007 after a plane crash in Indonesia, together with Commander Brice Steel. In this Annual, we tell the story of Mark's wife Sally and two daughters Emily and Stephanie, who walked the 146km Kokoda Trail in his honour during April 2019.

In October 2019 I was appointed as the AFP's eighth Commissioner. All AFP members, sworn and unsworn, were invited to contribute to a journey of organisational reform — at its heart, a '100 Day Plan of Action'. We commenced three key reviews to support reform: one into sensitive AFP investigations, conducted by Mr John Lawler AM APM; one into AFP organisational design, by Ernst and Young; and a review of the structure of the Office of Commissioner and the establishment of the National Operations and State Services Centre. As we move into 2020 the AFP is surging ahead with implementing the recommendations made by these reviews.

I am no fan of reform for reform's sake, and in everything we do I ask that we consider three key principles: support the front line, reduce red tape, and enhance relationships with our state and territory partners. The situation in Australia and the world today will test us, and we need to seize the opportunity to see how we respond. How do the actions we take, as individuals and teams, strive towards our principles? How do we come out of these challenges as a stronger police force? Ask yourself: how do my actions today, make a better AFP tomorrow?

Join me as we reflect on some of the AFP's significant achievements throughout the past year. The Platypus 2019 Annual is part of the story of how we got to where we are today. Next year, we will look back at the achievements that we have made under great adversity, and how we used those to make us even stronger.

Commissioner Reece Kershaw

Joint Counter Terrorism Team's swift action praised over foiled Christmas terror plot

By Alexia Boland, AFP National Media

Four Melbourne men who attempted to plot a Christmas terror attack in public will collectively spend at least 122 years behind bars, having been sentenced in 2019 thanks to the efforts of the Victorian Joint Counter Terrorism Team (JCTT).

The AFP, Victoria Police and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), were among the agencies involved in the JCTT investigation known as 'Operation Kastelholm'.

Investigators carried out covert surveillance on the men as they sat at Melbourne's iconic Federation Square plotting the holiday terror

attack, while crowds passed them by on the evening December 20, 2016.

AFP Counter Terrorism Federal Agent Lindsay Hall said that the group's blatant daylight meeting and obvious gesturing towards the Melbourne landmarks was "chilling" and highlighted their determination to inflict maximum violence on the Australian public.



Investigators carried out covert surveillance on the men as they sat at Melbourne's iconic Federation Square plotting the holiday terror attack, while crowds passed them by.

“Understanding a serious attack was imminent, investigators were working around the clock to monitor the situation. We were there watching as the four carried out reconnaissance of Flinders Street, Federation Square and St Paul's Cathedral in the Melbourne CBD.”

“Unbeknown to these would-be terrorists, we were already watching and gathering evidence ready to foil their plans,” he said.

The fast-acting Melbourne-based JCTT had already sprung into action just days earlier on December 16. They were swiftly working to investigate and track the men identified as Ahmed Mohamed, brothers Hamza Abbas and Ibrahim Abbas, and their cousin Abdullah Chaarani, all aged in their twenties.

“These men shared significant support for violent jihad and frequently discussed, downloaded and circulated terrorist propaganda materials. They were sympathetic to Islamic State (IS) and in the months leading up to their planned attack had viewed a number of violent videos and articles encouraging terrorist acts, including one specifically encouraging attacks at Melbourne Airport and St Paul's Cathedral.

“During the investigation of Operation Kastelholm we discovered that just weeks earlier the same group had been involved in two suspicious blazes and vandalism acts at a Melbourne mosque. They were brought to our attention as the main suspects in the destruction of the mosque in what was also an Islamic State-motivated attack.”

In addition, the JCTT identified that both Mohamed and Chaarani had separately attempted to travel to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in mid-2015. Investigators believe the pair would have each continued onto Syria in hopes of joining IS, should they have been permitted to travel.

“Our intelligence indicated that these men had the intention to carry out an attack using improvised explosive devices (IEDs), machetes, knives and firearms, with the aim of killing as many citizens as possible,” Federal Agent Hall said.

The group's blatant daylight meeting and obvious gesturing towards the Melbourne landmarks was "chilling".



Evidence presented in court showed the men were motivated to carry out the attack in pursuit of their ideological and religious objectives to wage violent jihad against those they considered to be disbelievers and enemies.

"Understanding a serious attack was imminent, investigators were working around the clock to monitor the situation. We were there watching as the four carried out reconnaissance of Flinders Street, Federation Square and St Paul's Cathedral in the Melbourne CBD," he explained.

"Our evidence shows the men thoroughly researched instructions on constructing IEDs along with the materials required to do so. We also know the group travelled to several remote sites in regional Victoria in an attempt to test their homemade explosives in the days and month leading up to their planned attack."

Federal Agent Hall said the group's behaviour continued to escalate.

On December 21, Abbas and Chaarani purchased machetes, with the men also making return trips to hardware stores to collect galvanised pipes and 'power load cartridges', along with chemicals from chemists. The group

continued to view more Islamic State propaganda videos.

By December 22, the group's preparations continued to ramp up with the purchase of more materials.

"We knew the threat was imminent and it was time to act."

By that evening, just days before Christmas, the Joint Counter Terrorism Team swooped.

"We intercepted Ahmed Mohamed and Abdullah Chaarani driving through Springvale. Minutes later our teams arrested Ibrahim Abbas at his Campbellfield home, along with Hamza Abbas in Flemington."

Following their arrests, Operation Kastelholm detectives executed search warrants on their homes across Melbourne's north-western suburbs.

"We found and seized machetes, partly constructed IEDs, electronic devices containing Islamic State propaganda material and bomb-making instructions, along with a collection of chemicals."

Within hours, the four were formally interviewed, charged and remanded in custody.

Federal Agent Hall said that during formal police interview, Ibrahim Abbas admitted that the group's attack had been imminent, while also shedding light on their motivation.

"He made admissions in relation to the planned terrorist act. He stated that it was intended to achieve maximum bloodshed in order to bring as much fear as possible to the community, in response for military action supported by the Australian Government in Muslim communities overseas," he said.

"Meanwhile, during their plea hearings, Chaarani and Mohamed admitted to travelling to remote locations in regional Victoria to test their IEDs in the days and weeks before Christmas."

On November 29, 2019, the men were all jailed, with each convicted over the foiled plan to use improvised bombs and machetes in a Christmas terror attack in Melbourne's CBD. Ibrahim Abbas earlier pleaded guilty to his role in the terror plot and was sentenced to 24 years' jail with a non-parole period of 20 years.



Intelligence showed that the men intended to carry out an attack using improvised explosives, machetes, knives and firearms, with the aim of killing as many citizens as possible.

"We found and seized machetes, partly constructed IEDs, electronic devices containing Islamic State propaganda material and bomb-making instructions, along with a collection of chemicals."

"We remain vigilant and together will continue to identify and prosecute those who pose a threat to the Australian community."

The remaining trio, Ahmed Mohamed, Hamza Abbas and Abdullah Chaarani were all found guilty by a jury in November 2018, after a 10-week trial. The group were convicted of one count each of conspiracy to undertake acts in preparation for or planning a terrorist act, contrary to section 101.6 of the *Criminal Code (Cth)*.

Twenty-four-year-old Hamza Abbas was sentenced to 22 years' imprisonment, with a non-parole period of 16 years, while 25-year-old Abdullah Chaarani and 27 year old Ahmed Mohamed were each sentenced to 26 years' imprisonment.

"Those two men, Chaarani and Mohamed, were already serving a separate 22 year jail term after being sentenced for engaging in a terrorist act, following their arson and vandalism attacks on the Imam Ali Islamic Centre in Fawkner. These incidents were driven by their hatred for Shia Muslims," Federal Agent Hall said.

"The charges relating to the planning of the Christmas terror plot resulted in a new head sentence of 38 years each, with a minimum non-parole period of 28 years and six months."

He said Operation Kastelholm was another example of the JCTT's commitment to protecting the Australian community from extremist ideologies and the severe threats they pose.

"Community safety is the prime consideration for all of our investigations.

"We commend the efforts of all of the JCTT for their work. Our team is working every day, around the clock, in order to intervene as early as possible and prevent any community harm and this investigation is another example of that success.

"The message couldn't be clearer – there is no place for violent extremism in our community, and the AFP along with our law enforcement agency partners will continue to work together in a bid to identify and prosecute individuals involved in these activities.

"We remain vigilant and together will continue to identify and prosecute those who pose a threat to the Australian community."

Protecting children drives dedicated investigators

By Gab Knowles, AFP National Media

“Alarming the appetite for child exploitation material is increasing and there are people in our community who will abuse vulnerable children to facilitate this vile industry.” –

Detective Acting Superintendent Joshua Walsh.

Adelaide predator Ruecha Tokputza was sentenced in May 2019 to 40 years and three months’ jail – with a non-parole period of 28 years – for abusing several children, the youngest just 15 months old. It is the longest prison term imposed in Australia for a child sex offender.

It is the children they protect from harm or help rescue from unimaginable suffering that motivates AFP investigators in the agency’s Joint Anti-Child Exploitation Teams (JACET).

“It is heartbreaking that children are the target of this abhorrent crime but every child we help strengthens our resolve to hunt down perpetrators and bring them to justice,” team member Detective Acting Superintendent Joshua Walsh said.

The South Australian JACET team (SA JACET) – comprised of AFP and South Australian Police officers – helped take down a global child exploitation ring and put Australia’s worst child sex offender behind bars in 2019.

Adelaide predator Ruecha Tokputza was sentenced in May 2019 to 40 years and three months’ jail – with a non-parole period of 28 years – for abusing several children, the youngest just 15 months old. It is the longest prison term imposed in Australia for a child sex offender, with the judge describing Tokputza as “every child’s worst nightmare” and “every parent’s horror”.

SA JACET launched ‘Operation Bayldon’ in November 2017 after an alert via INTERPOL about a South Australian-based IP address detected accessing child exploitation material.

The Adelaide link was discovered during an INTERPOL-led operation, codenamed Blackwrist, which was started earlier that year when its Crimes Against Children unit discovered abusive photos and videos on a subscription-based website on the dark web.

SA JACET worked closely with INTERPOL, Europol and law enforcement agencies in countries

including Thailand, the United States and New Zealand to gather evidence about the person using that IP address – later found to be Tokputza – then identify other predators and child victims.

During the operation, AFP Detective Leading Senior Constable Danielle Leske, Federal Agent Jonathan Coats and Detective Brevet Sergeant Stephen Hegarty – who were the lead SA JACET investigators – had to analyse approximately 900,000 video and images kept by Tokputza of babies and young children being sexually abused.

“We’re no longer surprised by the depths of human depravity but it is always traumatic to see the torment that children and infants are put through by these predators,” Detective Acting Superintendent Walsh said.

“Rescuing children – wherever they live – is our focus and thinking of the difference we can make to their lives is what keeps us motivated.

“The AFP also has a strong support system in place to ensure that investigators are coping and do not burn out from having to view this vile material.”

To remind themselves of the lives they change, the team has a ‘rescue wall’, with a cartoon of a smiling child to signify each successful rescue.

Operation Bayldon was instrumental in identifying five serious child sex offenders and more than 26 victims, assisting to remove 11 children from immediate harm.

The international efforts resulted in the global rescue of 50 children and arrest of several predators, with work ongoing to help another 100 suspected victims.

AFP Detective Leading Senior Constable Leske was honoured for her



To remind themselves of the lives they change, the South Australian Joint Anti-Child Exploitation Team has a 'rescue wall', with a cartoon of a smiling child to signify each successful rescue.

“It is heartbreaking that children are the target of this abhorrent crime but every child we help strengthens our resolve to hunt down perpetrators and bring them to justice,” team member Detective Acting Superintendent Joshua Walsh said.

innovation, tenacity and leadership during Operation Bayldon.

She was awarded the Australasian Council of Women and Policing’s Most Outstanding Female Investigator in September 2019 and then in November 2019 was named by AFP Commissioner Reece Kershaw as one of the two recipients of the 2018 Detective of the Year Award.

Since the SA JACET was formed in 2015, its dedicated investigators have charged 224 people with child exploitation-related offences and helped to rescue 120 children globally. Among that total, the efforts of the SA JACET has led to 48 children rescued and 81 arrests in the 12 months to October 2019.

Combatting child exploitation within Australia and offshore is a key priority for AFP officers across Australia and internationally.

The AFP investigates online child exploitation which occurs using a telecommunications service – such as a mobile phone or computer. Grooming and procuring of children over the internet is also investigated by the AFP.

Priorities for the AFP investigators in the JACET are to remove children from harm of sexual exploitation, target offenders who travel for the purposes of abusing children, and prosecute Australians who produce and supply child exploitation material.

In the 2018-19 financial year, the AFP received 14,285 reports of child exploitation from the United States’ National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, members of the public, foreign law enforcement and Commonwealth and partner agencies. It also shares intelligence about suspected offenders or victims outside Australia to law enforcement agencies in those jurisdictions.

Advances in technology and increased internet access are believed to have contributed to a rise in production and distribution of child abuse images and videos.

“Alarmingly the appetite for child exploitation material is increasing and there are people in our community who will abuse vulnerable children to facilitate this vile industry,” Detective Acting Superintendent Joshua Walsh said.

Since the SA JACET was formed in 2015, its dedicated investigators have charged 224 people with child exploitation-related offences and helped to rescue 120 children globally.

“International borders are no boundary for this crime type. But the number of arrests are a warning to those who are abusing children and sharing child exploitation material — they are not anonymous online.

“It does not matter where they are, or if their victims are in a different country, the AFP actively works with our state and international law enforcement partners to identify perpetrators and bring them to justice and ensure children are safe.

“International co-operation is the key to success — and there are passionate, skilful investigators around the world like us who are committed to sharing information and resources to combat this horrific crime.”

The Federal Government is also aiding efforts, launching the AFP-led Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE) in September 2018.

ACCCE brings together specialist expertise from across the public and private sectors to support investigations and to develop prevention strategies focused on creating a safer online environment.

Parental and guardian supervision for children is a critical factor in preventing self-produced child exploitation material and online grooming.

A lack of awareness and education to the risks posed by using online technologies is regarded as another contributing factor to the increase in online child exploitation. The AFP urges parents and carers to talk to their children about the apps, social media and games they are accessing online. Offenders regularly use chat rooms and online apps to approach and lure children because they believe they are unsupervised and vulnerable.

More information about how to prevent cybercrime and the risk of online grooming can be found on the ‘ThinkUKnow’ website.



**FEBRUARY:
More than 180 cannabis plants seized**

A 56-year-old man faced court after a search warrant in the Canberra suburb of Downer uncovered 182 cannabis plants, approximately 300 cannabis seeds and two kilograms of dried cannabis.

**JULY:
384 kilograms of cocaine seized and two charged**

A joint operation between ACT Policing and the Australian Border Force resulted in ACT Policing's largest ever drug seizure. The operation began early in 2019 when ACT Policing received information relating to a crime syndicate operating in southern NSW and the ACT.

When the operation began, members examined a second-hand excavator at Port Botany in Sydney — it was subsequently discovered that the arm of the excavator contained approximately 384 kilograms of cocaine - worth an estimated \$144 million.

That's 384 kilograms of cocaine will never hit the streets, which was a great result for the Canberra community.



Snapshot 2019: looking back on the significant wins for ACT Policing

By Emma Bailey, Communications Officer, ACT Policing

2019 marked another full year for ACT Policing, with many operational success stories across the board. From large haul cocaine and cannabis jobs to firearms confiscation and investigating daylight shootings – there was more than enough to keep officers busy.



**MARCH:
Safe return of missing children**

ACT Policing issued an AMBER alert seeking the public's assistance to locate four missing children and a male known to those children.

As a result of the AMBER alert social media post, information was provided by the public within 45 minutes, leading to police locating the vehicle. A short time later, more information came in and police located and arrested the man. The children were located safe and well.

ACT Policing's Facebook post was shared over 1,000 times within 25 minutes of publishing, which was an incredible result.

**JULY:
Tattoo business restrained**

ACT Policing's Financial Investigations Team successfully applied to the court for the restraint of a tattoo business in the Canberra suburb of Belconnen.

In June police started proceedings in the ACT Supreme Court alleging that the business was laundering money for Outlaw Motor Cycle Gang members. The court granted approval for the business to be restrained and on 4 July it was closed by police.



**SEPTEMBER:
Illicit firearms targeted during national week of action**

ACT Policing joined police jurisdictions across Australia in a national week of action targeting illicit firearms and safe storage by licensed owners. A number of search warrants were executed and resulted in the seizure of firearms and ammunition.

Across the week ACT Policing conducted 67 checks at properties in the ACT where a total of 365 firearms were stored.

One man was arrested and charged with two firearms-related offences. Police also examined the suitability for a number of individuals to continue to hold firearms. Five license holders were sent to be reviewed by the Registrar.



**NOVEMBER:
Forrest shooting**

In response to a serious incident involving the shooting of a member of the community in the Canberra suburb of Forrest, significant resources across ACT Policing were deployed with outstanding success.

Within three hours of the shooting on Tuesday 5 November, the alleged offender was arrested and the firearm believed to have been used in the incident was recovered.

From the moment the incident was called in, significant resources were allocated and deployed to firstly assist the victim, to manage the two crime scenes and then arrest those responsible. The incident started when a man fired at a woman's vehicle through the driver's window.

The woman, who had sustained gunshot and shrapnel wounds, drove to Manuka Oval where she called for help and a security officer provided her with first aid.

This incident pulled together resources from the ACT's Woden and Gungahlin Patrols, AFP Forensics, Specialist Response Group-Tactical Response, Criminal Investigations (Nemesis, Homicide, Woden and City Crime), ACT Policing Video Operations, ACT Policing Traffic Operations, ACT Policing Intelligence, Media and Public Engagement and ACT Policing Communications.



**NOVEMBER:
Cook Islands visit**

It was all hands on deck when the Cook Islands Prime Minister, accompanied by the Cook Islands Police Commissioner, conducted an official visit to Canberra.

The visit consisted of 20 motorcade movements in three days. Emergency Management and Planning took the lead in overseeing the event, including motorcade routes, staffing, logistics and welfare. Traffic Operations including Road Safety Operations Team members made up the motorcade, including the pilot car, outriders and rear escorts.

40th anniversary creates a busy social year

By Terry Browne, AFP History, Traditions and Museum

A member for each year was assembled in front of AFP Headquarters for a photograph to mark the 40th anniversary.



AFP Museum curator Chris Cranston displays an anniversary quilt when interviewed by a press gallery member at Parliament House in Canberra. *Image courtesy of AAP.*



Senior Officer Kuala Lumpur Post Superintendent Jason Byrnes, retired AFP Superintendent Mick Jarratt, and Royal Malaysia Police Senior Assistant Commissioner Datuk join in cutting the Kuala Lumpur anniversary cake.

The AFP's 40th anniversary year produced a variety of events that included formal dinners, morning teas, reunions and displays to acknowledge the pride that current and former members have in the success of the AFP over the past four decades.

Most events took place during September, October or November 2019, clustered around the anniversary date of 19 October. However, there was one project that demanded a long lead time, so it began in late 2018.

A call-out was made in November 2018 to AFP members and friends by the AFP Museum for assistance in creating a commemorative quilt. The responses were rapid, numerous and enthusiastic, resulting in the need to produce four quilts to accommodate the magnitude of the interest shown.

The quilts were displayed in public for the first time at the 2019 Australasian Council of Women and Policing Conference held in Canberra in early September. They then appeared at the AFP Legacy Ball at Parliament House, followed by the Brisbane Office Ball.

Morning teas and the cutting of cakes

Many AFP locations opted for a simple anniversary morning tea and a cake cutting ceremony. Photographs of such ceremonies began arriving for publication in early October as the spirit of the anniversary began to spread.

'40 years, 40 members' commemorative photo

Also in September, a group photograph was organised in front of the 'AFP Globe' at headquarters. The group was a mix of serving sworn and unsworn members representing the unique year in which they joined the AFP, the earliest being Steve Turnbull from 1979 through to a 2019 starter Simon Smith.

In Federation Mall

At the same time as the AFP Legacy Ball was being set up in the Great Hall at Parliament House, a mini AFP exhibition was staged at the edge of the Parliament House forecourt. Teams



Assisting with the AFP Headquarters festivities were the AFP's current longest serving member Sergeant Peter Theodore and AFP recruit trainee Grace Gopez.



Australian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom George Brandis affirmed with AFP members in London his continued affiliation with and respect for the AFP.



AFP Commissioner Reece Kershaw welcomes guests to the 2019 AFP Legacy Ball at Parliament House in Canberra.



The official party, including Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton, was piped in to the ballroom at the Emporium Hotel to begin the formalities of the Brisbane Office Ball.



AFP Commissioner Reece Kershaw addresses guests to the Brisbane Office Ball.

The AFP Legacy Ball attracted almost 500 guests who had an entertaining night of dining and dancing.



Former members in Canberra for the AFP Legacy Ball also visited the AFP Museum's heritage collection.



AFP Commissioner Reece Kershaw presented Peter Theodore, Ashley Redman and Stephen Turnbull with 40-year clasps to the AFP Service Medal at the AFP Legacy Ball in Canberra.

from Missing Persons, ThinkUKnow, the AFP Museum, Protection, ACT Traffic and the Canine group engaged with the passing public from 10am to midday. Passing visitors expressed surprise in the range of police work done by the AFP shown in the mini display presented by the AFP Museum.

The Anniversary Ball at Parliament House

The Great Hall of Parliament House provided a grand venue for the 2019 AFP Legacy Charity Ball which was a co-hosted event between the AFP and AFP Legacy.

The AFP's eighth commissioner and newest AFP Legacy Patron, Reece Kershaw, and wife Michelle, joined other distinguished guests and 14 legatee families at a pre-ball reception before welcoming everyone to the function in the Great Hall.

Almost 500 guests attended in their best outfits to be part of one of the anniversary's high profile events.

Dozens of members travelled from interstate to take part in the gala event, in particular there were about

20 former members representing the newly formed AFP Former Members Association, who had travelled as far afield as Melbourne, the Gold Coast, Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast.

The formalities began with a video message of congratulations from Prime Minister Scott Morrison followed by an address by Commissioner Kershaw.

AFP Legacy President Shane McLennan gave an overview of the night's events and encouraged everyone to participate in the fundraising events scheduled throughout the evening.

Day One staffing list

Former member David Willson put in a tremendous effort in researching and collating a list of the names of officers on duty on 19 October 1979. Three of those 'Day One' officers who were still serving were special guests at the Ball and received their 40 year clasps to the AFP Service Medal from Commissioner Kershaw. The recipients were Superintendent Stephen Turnbull, Detective Sergeant Peter Theodore and Leading Senior Constable Ashley Redman.

The Brisbane Office Ball

The Brisbane Office Ball was hosted by AFP Assistant Commissioner Jamie Strauss and attracted more than 150 guests including special guests Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton, AFP Commissioner Reece Kershaw, and Queensland Police Commissioner Katarina Carroll.

The formalities began with an inspirational address from Minister Dutton. He spoke to the great work done by the AFP, particularly in Australia's north. He looked forward to hearing more "good stories" of the AFP's successes into the future.

Commissioner Kershaw followed up with supporting comments and spoke to the long heritage of federal policing in Queensland, referencing the 'egg attack' on Prime Minister Billy Hughes at Warwick in 1917 and the subsequent creation of the first Commonwealth Police two weeks later under the *War Precautions Act*.



Visitors to the 10th floor of the Sydney office are able to see the history of investigations conducted out of the Sydney Office presented in a timeline researched and designed by Susan Buck.



Many AFP peacekeepers were invited to the launch of *The Courage for Peace* exhibition which opened on 18 October 2019 at the Australian War Memorial.



Members of the AFP Pipes and Drums supported the 2019 Remembrance Day Last Post Service at the Australian War Memorial, joined in the photo by Vice Admiral Michael Noonan, who delivered the oratory in memory of the Unknown Soldier.



Acting AFP Assistant Commissioner People Safety and Security David McLean with Ms Susan Buck and the 40th anniversary cake in Sydney Office.

Commissioner Kershaw went on to speak of the similarities and important differences between his past role of Northern Territory Police Commissioner and his future role with the AFP.

Sydney Office award ceremony

AFP Sydney Office hosted a combined awards ceremony and 40th anniversary celebration on 28 November 2019. Awards were presented to 70 recipients from the AFP, New South Wales Police and partner agencies.

display and also invited in former members to its anniversary social. The Melbourne Office has a strong tradition in keeping in touch with its former members.

At the Australian War Memorial

The anniversary year coincided with the publication of two additional volumes of the *Official History of Peacekeeping* series. The AFP has assisted Australian War Memorial (AWM) researchers to access information about its peacekeeping missions including Cambodia (1992) and Mozambique (1994). These missions are featured in Volume 4 published in March 2019.

The AWM's exhibition curators have also included significant references to the AFP's peacekeeping missions in their latest feature gallery exhibition *Courage for Peace*, launched on 18 October 2019 and open until 3 September 2020.

The exhibition tells the stories of Australians from a variety of agencies who have served in diverse rolls around the world, from Somalia and Rwanda to

Cambodia, East Timor, Bougainville and the Solomon Islands. The exhibition includes artefacts from many AFP overseas missions along with objects, images and stories from Defence, Foreign Affairs and other departments who have contributed to peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

In the same week as the opening *Courage for Peace*, the long-awaited Volume 1 of the *Official Peacekeeping, Humanitarian and Post-Cold War Operations* was launched. Authored by renowned historians Peter Londey, Rhys Crawley and David Horner, this 900-page tome covers Australian peacekeeping missions that between 1947 and 1982.

While it is the first volume, it is also the last of the series of six to be published. Covering a large number of Defence Force missions, the Australian police role with the United Nations mission in Cyprus is extensively covered. The other volumes of the set cover Australia's commitment to peacekeeping and reference the many missions the AFP has undertaken.

And the band played on

Perhaps the last event on the AFP anniversary year program was the AFP Pipes and Drums at the Australian War Memorial. The band appeared in their alternate guise of the Canberra City Pipes and Drums, but the AFP anniversary drum skin was prominent as the band provided the ceremonial music for the 2019 Remembrance Day Last Post Ceremony.

The AFP Pipes and Drums provide ceremonial music for a range of AFP ceremonies — in particular they set the beat for the National Police Remembrance Day march. It has been a busy year for the band, accepting invitations to perform at international events including the Dubai Police Graduation parade and Basel Military Tattoo in Switzerland.

Locally the AFP Pipes and Drums also played at multiple AFP Graduations, award ceremonies, Commissioner's dinners and police funerals.

The AFP's 50th anniversary will take place on 19 October 2029.



AFP Deputy Commissioner Karl Kent presented awards to around 70 recipients from the AFP, New South Wales Police and partner agencies at a combined awards and 40th anniversary ceremony on 28 November 2019.



Former members Ian Hill, Gerry Fletcher and Shanan White enjoyed catching up at the Sydney Office 40 Year anniversary celebration.

Melbourne heritage display

For the anniversary period the Melbourne Office added a set of timeline banners to its existing foyer

The Australian Federal Police 1979 - 2019

1979

Sir Colin Woods sworn in as AFP Commissioner



1982

The need for increased numbers of female officers saw some early recruit training courses comprised of significantly more women than men. There were 16 women and 7 men in this intake.

1983

Ron Grey sworn in as AFP Commissioner



1988

Kathy Burdett, first AFP female in Cyprus



Peter McAulay sworn in as AFP Commissioner.



1994

Mick Palmer sworn in as AFP Commissioner



1997

Thredbo landslide AFP was among the first responders.



2001

Mick Keelty sworn in as AFP Commissioner



2003

The AFP component of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) arrived in Honiara to begin Operation Helpem Fren.



1978

In the early hours of 13 February 1978, a bomb exploded outside the Sydney Hilton Hotel which was the venue for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting.

HILTON BOMBING

In the 40 years since the formation of the AFP, it has evolved from a small agency with a defined remit to a \$1.4 billion enterprise with a broad range of responsibilities.

The AFP's policing and law enforcement responsibilities range from countering international organised crime to community policing, and from deterring and prosecuting terrorists to international peacekeeping.

The AFP has explored, and will continue to explore, both opportunities and challenges in the current and future global environment.

AFP Futures Centre

1987

Prime Minister Bob Hawke visits Cyprus



1989

Acting Commissioner Colin Winchester killed on duty



1993

Superintendent Bob Shepherd was among 132 people killed in a plane crash in South America on 19 May 1993. At the time, he was the AFP's liaison officer in Buenos Aires.



2002

Terror bombings in Bali AFP invited to assist Indonesian National Police



1998

Operation Linnet 390kg of heroin seized near Port Macquarie on the NSW mid-north coast



2004

The AFP arrives in Papua New Guinea for the Enhanced Cooperation Program



Looking back: 40 years of the AFP



2005

\$2.8 million International Deployment Group training complex was opened by Prime Minister John Howard.



2006

2000 people attended the opening of the National Police Memorial

2007

The AFP became the first policing agency in the Asia-Pacific, and only the second in the Southern Hemisphere, to sign an agreement with Europol.



Mark Scott

Brice Steele

AFP members Brice Steele and Mark Scott were two of five Australians afforded a repatriation ceremony at Fairbairn Airport following their deaths in the Garuda Airlines crash landing in Yogyakarta on 7 March 2007.



2008

A 12-month investigation by a range of law enforcement agencies resulted in the world's largest single seizure of ecstasy worth \$440 million concealed in a shipment of 3000 tomato tins. The investigation led to 16 arrests in Australia.

2009

Operational Response Group members being briefed in situ on their tasks in wake of the Black Saturday bush fires in Victoria.



Tony Negus sworn in as AFP Commissioner



2010

First Wall to Wall Ride for Remembrance



2013

Operation Delphinium People smuggling ring smashed



2012

SRG launch 1st July with the amalgamation of the AFP's Operational Response Group and the ACT Policing's Specialist Response and Security teams.



2015

Seizure of \$8.5 million worth of assets, including a 2014 Ferrari, a 2015 Range Rover, six properties and \$180,000 in cash



Andrew Colvin APM OAM, sworn in as AFP Commissioner



2018

Australian Federal Police dive team at Tham Luang Cave.



2019

2014

Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur was downed on 17 July 2014, killing all 298 passengers and crew, including 38 Australians. Operation Arew is the AFP's contribution to Australia's whole-of-government response to the incident.



Reece P Kershaw APM, sworn in as AFP Commissioner

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

40 YEARS

Australia, the US, elsewhere? — the AFP and its partners will track down financial fraudsters

By Gab Knowles, AFP National Media

It can often be dismissed as a 'victimless' crime but the dedicated AFP investigators who pursue tax offences and other financial frauds against the Commonwealth know the cost of such felonies.

"When people abuse the tax system it affects the whole community," AFP Detective Sergeant John Whitehead said. "It reduces the revenue the Government has to provide services and it can be linked to other crimes."

The pursuit of a former Western Australian financier accused of ripping off almost \$800,000 from

the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) in false GST refunds highlights the AFP's commitment to combatting financial crimes.

For 11 years, AFP and ATO investigators meticulously built a case against Gary Andrew Parsons before he was extradited to Perth from the United States to face justice in a WA court.

The New York City apartment building where Gary Parsons lived and ran his business.



Gary Parsons arrives back in Perth in 2017 after being arrested in the US.

He was sentenced to five years' jail in late 2018 after admitting to seven counts of obtaining a financial advantage from the Commonwealth by deception and four counts of attempting to obtain a financial advantage by deception.

In a deal with prosecutors, Parsons pleaded guilty to a reduced number of charges relating to a fraud of almost \$520,000.

Prosecutors described his offending behaviour as "calculated" and "systemic". The WA District Court Judge who sent him behind bars said financial frauds hurt the community and were not victimless crimes.

Parsons had worked as a stockbroker in Perth before moving to America in 2003. The father of three claimed to be running a global hedge fund involved in futures trading.

In reality he was holed up in his New York apartment lodging false business activity statements in Australia on behalf of numerous business entities, claiming between \$3,000 and \$4,000 a month that was deposited into his Australian bank accounts.

He even advertised in *The New York Times* and on *Craigslist* — an American classified advertisements website — offering unwitting US citizens \$75,000 in return for being his 'agent' and completing refund applications for him.

Between 2004 and 2006, Parsons lodged more than 220 GST rebate claims with the ATO to which he was not entitled.

Alarm bells were set off in late 2006 when the ATO identified a number of seemingly separate registered business entities sharing common bank account and address data.

Payment on thousands of dollars of lodged claims was then stopped by the ATO as an audit was launched into the suspicious dealings.

Detective Sergeant Whitehead was out-posted to the ATO in Perth when an inquiry was started to identify who controlled the bank accounts and the extent of the linked claims.

Parsons had no idea then that the criminal investigation also launched — codenamed 'Operation Devoir' — would stay with him for more than a decade.

Despite moves to different roles within the AFP — including a stint in uniform at Perth Airport — Detective Sergeant Whitehead kept hold of the growing boxes of documents detailing Parsons' fraudulent business dealings and worked on the case whenever he could.

He said he had gathered so much knowledge during the initial years of the inquiry that it would have been difficult for someone else to take over.

"It just became this case that I wanted to see through to the end," he said. "It was an interesting challenge and while it wasn't in itself an overly complex matter, it had a lot of complicating issues."

Australian investigators needed the help of their US counterparts to get access to bank records and other financial information about Parsons and the US citizens he had recruited as

his 'agents'. The two countries have a good intelligence-sharing relationship but competing requests about large-scale drug and counter-terrorism matters meant it took two years to get back some initial bank records.

When Parsons was first questioned in early 2007 over the suspicious rebates, he told ATO auditors he had done nothing wrong but had lost all his records when his computer died.

Investigators kept gathering evidence that tax fraud was Parsons' sole source of income. They followed the money trail, collected financial data and sought to identify evidence of trading activity in Australia through licensed Australian securities and futures trading firms, to determine whether any had dealings with Parsons and issued invoices where they had charged him GST for brokerage services.

They also contacted the managers of the properties listed by Parsons as business addresses for the organisations he claimed to represent, to check if anyone knew of those entities.

"The biggest difficulty in a case like this is trying to prove a negative," Detective Sergeant Whitehead explained.

"Essentially, we had 26 entities over this period that were allegedly trading in Australia and we were trying to show they hadn't traded in Australia."

In 2010, the AFP with the assistance of the FBI, executed a search warrant at Parsons' Manhattan apartment and seized documentary and electronic evidence. No charges were laid at that time and after returning to Australia, he worked with prosecutors on a brief to extradite Parsons to Western Australia.

Until Parsons was arrested in the US and extradited in 2017, Detective Sergeant Whitehead did his best to keep tabs on him — hoping he did not disappear and frustrate the long-running inquiry. Parsons did

not fight being returned to Perth but initially seemed determined to make investigators prove every allegation.

It was a demanding task. The trial would have involved more than 70 witnesses — many of whom lived overseas — and about 4,500 pages of data and about 800 exhibits. But Detective Sergeant Whitehead said they had all the witnesses ready to attend court to give evidence and Parsons, a high-stakes poker player, realised authorities had the winning hand.

On the second day of a planned six-week District Court trial in late 2018, the 53-year-old changed his plea to guilty. None of the stolen money was recovered and authorities believe Parsons blew it living the high life in New York, gambling in Las Vegas and investing in real estate deals that failed during the US housing collapse.

He was ordered by the District Court to repay the funds.

Detective Sergeant Whitehead said he hoped the case would serve as a warning to anyone contemplating abusing the tax system that authorities had the ability to identify them and track them down.

"It does not matter if you are not in Australia, the AFP works closely with the ATO and our foreign law enforcement partners to pursue any offenders who are trying to evade tax or defraud the system," he said.

"Financial crimes can be complex and require significant time and resources to investigate — but this case shows we have the dedication and the techniques to successfully prosecute."

Money laundering, foreign bribery, insider trading, proceeds of crime and unexplained wealth are among the other financial crimes investigated by the AFP. Australia is also in an alliance with the US, Britain, Canada and the Netherlands to better combat international and transnational tax crime and money laundering.



Gary Parsons had worked as a stockbroker in Perth before moving to America in 2003. The father of three claimed to be running a global hedge fund involved in futures trading.

Earn \$75,000 Tax Free - Risk Free

Completing Paperwork for Australian Investment Bank

No cost to set up
No bs, no intellectual property required
No capital required
No knowledge required

All work done via simple paperwork once a month for around 2 hours

Phone 917 977 0328 to find out more

or email australia771967@yahoo.com

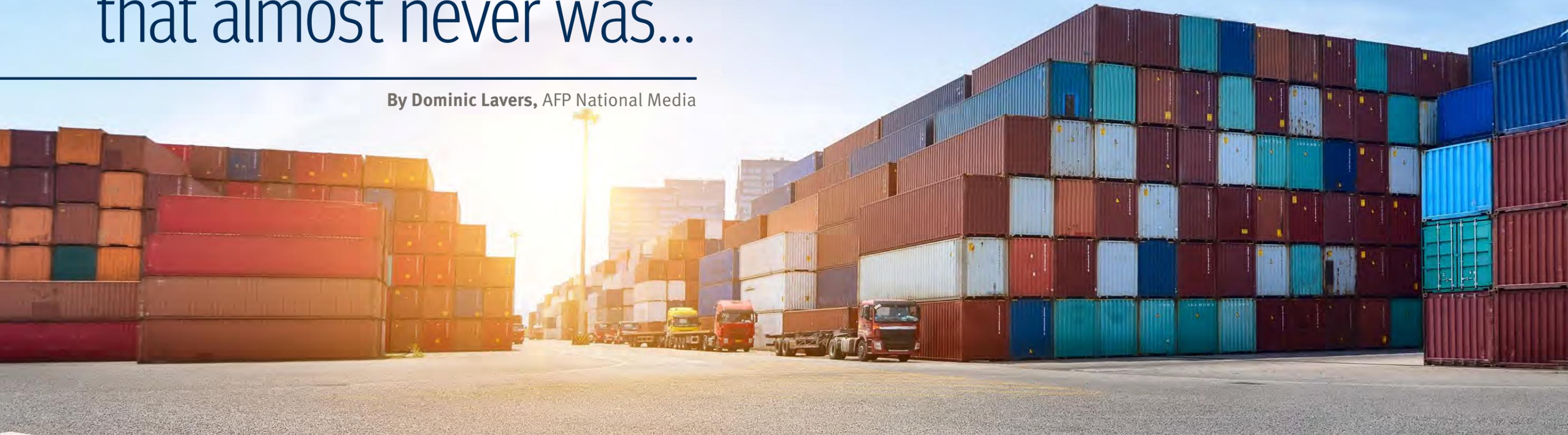
WOLF HEDGE FUND
720 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10019
T - 917 977 0328

Gary Parsons even advertised in *The New York Times* and on *Craigslist* — an American classified advertisements website — offering unwitting US citizens \$75,000 in return for being his 'agent' and completing refund applications for him.

“Financial crimes can be complex and require significant time and resources to investigate — but this case shows we have the dedication and the techniques to successfully prosecute.”

The largest US seizure of methylamphetamine that almost never was...

By Dominic Lavers, AFP National Media



It took eight hours for a joint taskforce of United States authorities to cut through a shipping container's-worth of car audio capacitors at the request of the Victorian Joint Organised Crime Taskforce (JOCTF), looking for a veritable motherlode of narcotics.

With industrial metal-cutting equipment borrowed from the US Coast Guard, they systematically examined

cargo that Australian authorities believed to contain a large and complex concealment of illicit drugs.

The team found nothing.

It was 9 January 2019 – halfway through the longest US government shutdown in history – and they went on working without pay and necessary resources.

Victorian JOCTF investigator and AFP Federal Agent Mandy Sutherland said she wouldn't have blamed her American counterparts for giving up on 'Operation Hoth'.

"They could have said 'nah, we're done. We've spent a whole day going through a shipping container and it's empty. Your intel is wrong'.

"But," she said with both relief and admiration, "they didn't."

The US authorities moved onto the second of three shipping containers identified by JOCTF investigators and, shortly after, Federal Agent Sutherland received a message confirming that a suspicious package had been found in one of the car audio capacitors. Then they found another, and another.

It was a sleepless night for her and fellow case officer Detective Senior Constable Dave Nolan (Victoria Police) — and the beginning of a seemingly endless series of updates from California over the next 24 hours to confirm drug types and estimated weights.

It was the largest-ever methylamphetamine (ice) seizure on US soil, and the largest-ever shipment bound for Australia. The authorities discovered 1.7 tonnes of ice, 25 kilograms of cocaine and 5 kilograms of heroin.

Federal Agent Sutherland recalled coming into work and telling the rest of the team what US authorities had discovered in the two remaining shipping containers.

"It was amazing briefing the team. This had been a 24/7 job for the Victorian JOCTF Team 3's seven members for the previous six months — in addition to previous work undertaken by Victoria Police's Echo Taskforce and the National Anti-Gangs Squad — so the outcome was recognition for many long hours on the job."

The Victorian JOCTF comprises members of the AFP, Victoria Police, The Australian Border Force, the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) and the Department of Home Affairs.

"The seizure was about six times larger than what we had anticipated, an amount equating to what ACIC reporting estimates is more than 80 per cent of about Victoria's yearly consumption of ice. When you consider the impact this would have had on the community, it makes the time we spent away from our families, particularly around Christmas, worth it."



Above: US authorities spent days cutting through three shipping container's-worth of car audio capacitors looking for a veritable motherlode of narcotics.

Following the removal of the drugs, the US authorities allowed the containers to be shipped to Australia, where the JOCTF investigation continued.

On 7-8 February 2019, the AFP and Victoria Police executed search warrants in Victoria and NSW, targeting people allegedly involved in the California-based organised crime syndicate believed to be behind the shipment. Five people were charged with numerous offences.

These arrests also coincided with operational activity in Canada and Los Angeles.

In Canada the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's Federal Serious and Organised Crime Unit executed five search warrants in Burnaby, British Columbia, on 7 February. These search warrants resulted in the seizure of \$3.5 million of suspected proceeds of crime.

The Canadian authorities had to wait for the JOCTF activity in Australia to be safely underway before giving Canadian investigators the green light to move in. Ensuring the integrity of the operational activity in each country reduced the likelihood of evidence being destroyed or any suspects slipping through a drag net that literally spanned the globe.

Canadian investigators waited in their cars on a day when temperatures hit -6° celsius for their colleagues in Australia to give them the all-

clear. It was another example of the commitment of partner agencies to the investigation.

In Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Border Enforcement Security Taskforce (LA BEST) executed a search warrant at a warehouse in Anaheim, which resulted in the seizure of three unregistered firearms.

While Federal Agent Sutherland said the Victorian JOCTF is a tight-knit and well-oiled machine, she admitted the international component of operations can pose challenges around communication, working styles and timing. However, she believes this type of international collaboration is formidable in combatting organised crime.

"This operation is the perfect example of how law enforcement can achieve results across borders. It shows that international syndicates can't win when we all work together," she said.

Federal Agent Sutherland highlighted that trust is the most important element when it comes to such investigations.

"In this instance our work with US authorities came down to about 90 per cent trust and 10 per cent reliance on the intelligence. For our American counterparts to continue with what seemed a fruitless task — and in the middle of the government shutdown — it can only be due to the trust they had in us.

"The foundations built by our AFP liaison officer in Los Angeles were critical and we have been able to make his relationships stronger."

But the success of this operation extends far beyond the 17 million drug deals that will never occur in Australia because of this seizure.

"The US authorities have now been able to justify the purchase of additional equipment that will no

AFP members guard a small exhibit of seized drugs and cash during a media conference in Melbourne.

doubt result in many more seizures in the coming years," Federal Agent Sutherland said. "This operation has also given our agencies a chance to learn from each other and better understand the collective impact we can make."

In the media, it quickly spread across the world that authorities had avoided a 'tidal wave of ice' coming to Australia, and that our country's insatiable appetite for drugs was emboldening drug cartels to target our community with bigger shipments and more complex concealment methods. But Australian authorities and our international partners are getting better all the time too.

As a Victorian JOCTF member — someone who lived and breathed this investigation — Federal Agent Sutherland said she was thrilled to see the strong message being sent to organised crime syndicates about international police collaboration and the risks they are taking.

"The world's getting pretty small, and we will catch you in the end."

Outstanding result: AFP Assistant Commissioner Bruce Hill leads a joint media conference in Melbourne announcing the seizure of the drugs.

Cooperation always the key

US authorities involved in Operation Hoth included those comprising the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement — HSI BEST. These are the US Drug Enforcement Administration, US Customs and Border Protection Los Angeles Field Office, US Coast Guard, Los Angeles Police Department, Long Beach Police Department, Los Angeles Port Police, Los Angeles Sherriff's Department and the Orange County Sheriff's Department.

The Victorian Joint Organised Crime Taskforce (JOCTF) investigation was commenced as a result of Victoria Police's Taskforce Echo seizing 25 kilograms of ice during a vehicle

search in May 2018. This resulted in the National Anti-Gangs Squad (NAGS) Victoria conducting two search warrants in Wollongong, NSW which resulted in seizing two tonnes of precursors.

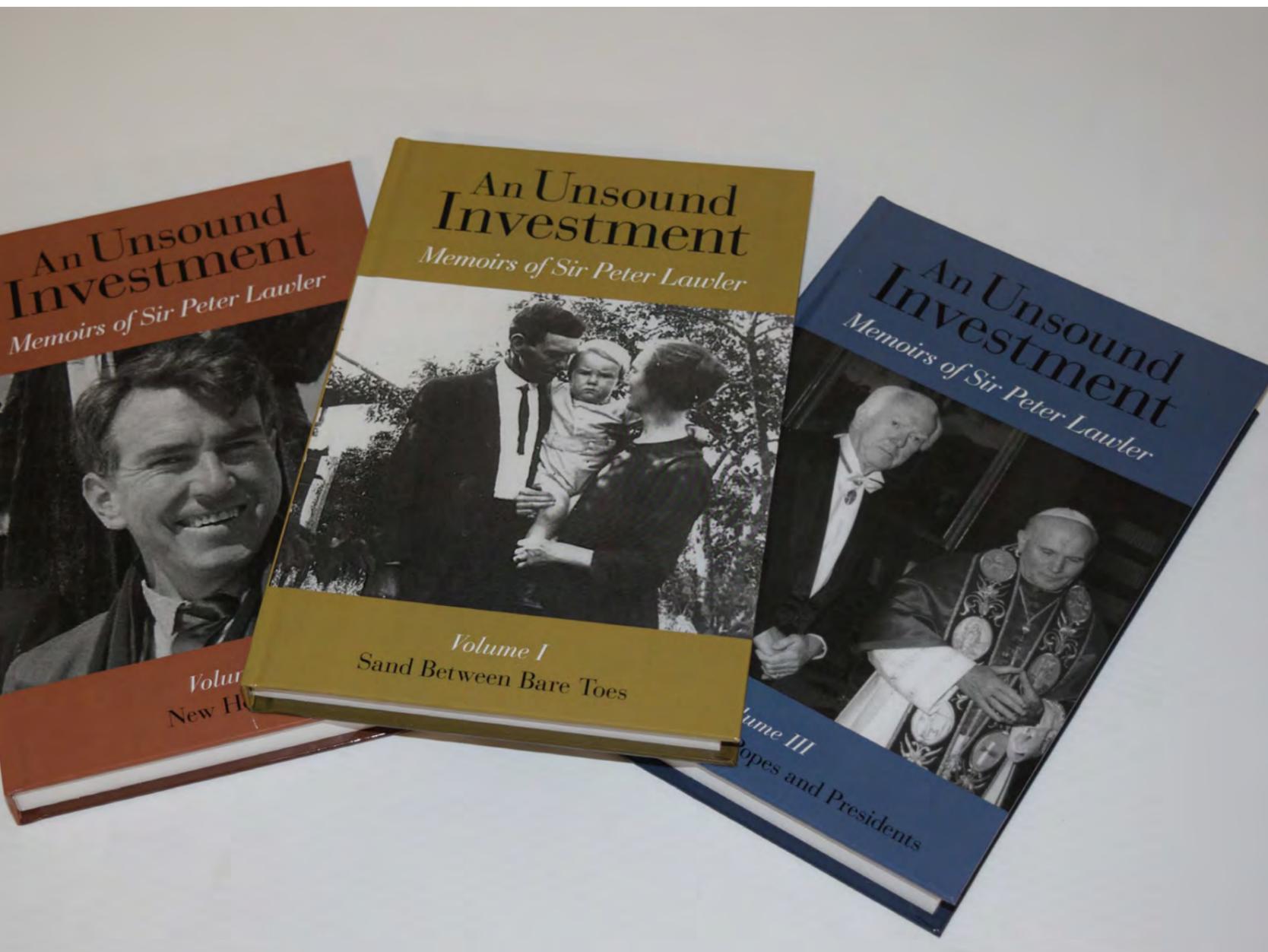
This led to further NAGS investigative work that identified people and locations — both in Australian and overseas — with alleged links to the drug syndicate operating out of California.

The Victorian JOCTF took management of the matter in July 2018, commencing Operation Hoth. This involved further investigations in Australia, engaging with international law enforcement agencies to locate and seize the record consignment of ice, and making the 7 February 2019 arrests in NSW and Victoria.

It was the largest-ever methylamphetamine (ice) seizure on US soil, and the largest-ever shipment bound for Australia. The authorities discovered 1.7 tonnes of ice, 25 kilograms of cocaine and 5 kilograms of heroin.



It was the largest-ever ice seizure on US soil, and the largest-ever shipment bound for Australia. The authorities discovered 1.7 tonnes of ice, 25 kilograms of cocaine and 5 kilograms of heroin.



A surprise gift for the AFP's 40th anniversary

By Terry Browne, AFP History, Traditions and Museum

The AFP's 40th anniversary included reunions, exhibitions and black tie dinners but there was one event that the anniversary committee had not anticipated.

A three-volume boxed set of the memoirs of Sir Peter Lawler was presented to the AFP by the Lawler family during a media event held at AFP Headquarters on 13 September 2019.

The memoirs were particularly relevant to the AFP because Sir Peter chaired the committee that brought about the launch of the AFP on 19 October 1979.

Two chapters in the memoir specifically deal with the AFP's formation.

Titled *An Unsound Investment* the memoirs chronicle Sir Peter's journey from a childhood spent on a struggling NSW south coast farm, through to establishing himself as one of the most noted leaders in the Australian Public Service.

A three-volume boxed set of the memoirs of Sir Peter Lawler was presented to the AFP by the Lawler family during a media event held at AFP Headquarters in Canberra on 13 September 2019.



In a Q&A session after the presentation of the memoirs it was made clear by Chris, Geraldine and John Lawler that their father considered his playing a role in the creation of the AFP a high point of his career.

Representing the Lawler family at the event were four of Sir Peter's children — Geraldine, Chris, Peter and John and their spouses — all of whom spoke lovingly of their father, their family life and his achievements.

John was an AFP Deputy Commissioner between 2004 and 2009, having joined the AFP as a recruit in 1980. He left the AFP in 2009 to become CEO of the Australian Crime Commission until October 2013. John more recently conducted a review into *The AFP's, response to and management of sensitive investigations* at the request of AFP Commissioner Reece Kershaw.

In turn, Chris, Geraldine and John told stories of their father that confirmed Sir Peter's status as one of the most influential and effective public servants in what were 'golden times' for the public service in Australia. By the time Sir Peter retired in 1987 he had served 11 prime ministers.

Sir Peter was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1965 and received a Knighthood from the Queen in 1981. A Papal Knighthood followed in 1986.

Speaking about his father's life John said: "There is a lesson in the memoirs that's relevant to every woman and man in the Australian Federal Police. It's a master-class of resilience and strategic thinking."

The memoirs also provide a detailed account of the AFP's ill-fated forerunner, the Australia Police — an organisation developed between 1973 and 1975 — only to be abandoned by the incoming Fraser Government following the 11 November 1975 dismissal of the Whitlam Government.

While campaigning for the 1973 election Gough Whitlam had proposed the re-invention of the Commonwealth Police that was created in 1960. His proposal raised resistance from the federal opposition and from members of the State police forces who assumed their policing role would be diminished.

Whitlam promised that the Commonwealth Police Force would be upgraded with better training, pay, and conditions to meet the growing threat of terrorism and organised crime.

Having won the *'It's Time'* election Whitlam set in motion arrangements to create the Australia Police by combining the functions of the Commonwealth Police, Northern Territory Police, the Australian Capital Territory Police, and the Customs' Narcotics Bureau.

Preparations included creation of the Department of Police and Customs, and developments in the establishment of the portfolio were supported by regular editions of the newsletter CONTACT.

However the dismissal of the Whitlam Government in November 1975 was followed by an electoral win that established the Fraser Government. The Department of Police and Customs was quickly dissolved and the Commonwealth Police found itself relocated to the Department of Administrative Services, with Sir Peter as its Secretary.

Sir Peter wrote: "It was the fact of the 'wallopers', the Commonwealth Police, being allocated to the Administrative Services portfolio in January 1976, that forced me to think about the need for Australia to have a top class federal police force."

However, for the time being, thoughts of such a police force would need to remain in the background.

Sir Peter leaves no doubt that the 1978 bombing outside the Sydney Hilton was the catalyst for the government revisiting the idea of a consolidated national police force.

In February 1978 the Sydney Hilton was the venue for a Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting and was primarily under the security of the NSW Police with 'Compol', ASIO, and Defence playing relevant supporting roles.

At 12.40am on 13 February the explosion of a bomb concealed in a kerbside garbage bin killed two

council workers and a nearby police officer as it was being collected.

Aside from the NSW Police investigation to find the perpetrators of the bombing, federal interest in a consolidated national police was rekindled.

Directed to attend the scene of the explosion Sir Peter recalled: "the whole Hilton area was being doubly secured, including by evacuation and temporary closure of all shops in its arcades" and the delegates were evacuated to a retreat in the Southern Highlands.

The government quickly enlisted the aid of Sir Robert Mark, who had been Commissioner of the London Metropolitan Police during many of the 1970's IRA bomb attacks on that city. He was commissioned on 1 March 1978 to report on the organisation of police resources in the Commonwealth area. Sir Robert's report was tabled by the Minister on 13 April 1978.

While there were three options suggested, all pointed towards the amalgamation of Compol and the ACT Police via various formulas.

Sir Peter observed that there were two aspects basic to Sir Robert's concept of policing in a free society.

First, he declared that administratively a police force should be, and be seen to be, accountable to government but operationally it should be, and be seen to be, as free as possible from political influence.

Second, he saw the AFP as accountable to the Minister for Administrative Services whose role would equate broadly to that of the Minister for Home Affairs and the Home Office in Britain. The Government adopted Sir Robert's report and set up a small task force under an inter-departmental committee chaired by Sir Peter Lawler to implement its major recommendation, the creation of the AFP.

The task force was headed by Geoffrey Halliday, a first assistant secretary of the Department of Administrative Services, and had as its members and principal police

advisers, Deputy Commissioner John Johnson (ACT Police) and then Acting Assistant Commissioner Roy Farmer (Commonwealth Police).

In the question and answer session that followed the presentation ceremony, it was made clear by Chris, Geraldine and John that their father considered his playing a role in the creation of the AFP had been a high point of his career.

Sir Peter retired in 1987 with his final three years of service being spent as Ambassador to Ireland and the Holy See (Vatican).

In 2004 he was invited to provide a foreword to the AFP's 25th anniversary publication *Beyond the Call*.

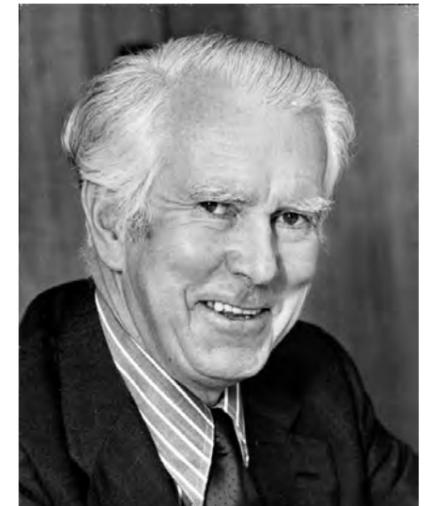
In it he said: "In the years since its creation, the AFP has developed with great success. This shows in the calibre of the women and men who are its serving members and in the quality and scale of its professional reach. The AFP has constantly demonstrated dedication and skills of a high order in the line of duty, dealing with complex, difficult and often dangerous policing tasks.

"In its cooperation with other police forces and agencies in Australia and abroad the AFP has achieved acceptance and stature as a valued colleague. Its own and other Australian governments, and the Australian public, look to it as a guardian of vital national interests."

He concluded his comments with the expression "Ad multos annos, AFP!" (Long live the AFP!)

Sir Peter passed away in March 2017 but through his memoirs provides a record of how one man overcame a number of life's difficulties in his private life while managing to make an incredibly significant contribution to Australia in his public life.

An Unsound Investment: the memoirs of Sir Peter Lawler were published by Halstead Press.



Sir Peter's memoirs chronicle a journey from a childhood spent on a struggling NSW south coast farm, through to establishing himself as one of the most noted leaders in the Australian Public Service.

Sir Peter wrote: "It was the fact of the 'wallopers', the Commonwealth Police, being allocated to the Administrative Services portfolio in January 1976, that forced me to think about the need for Australia to have a top class federal police force."



Staying on track: AFP family honours Detective Sergeant Mark Scott

In 2007, AFP member Mark Scott passed away after a plane accident in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, while he was on posting to Jakarta. Twelve years on his wife Sally, and daughters Emily and Stephanie remembered Mark by walking the 136 kilometre Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea.

From left, Stephanie, Sally and Emily on the bus ride to Kokoda Village.



With the backing of AFP Legacy, it was a fitting tribute to an AFP member who had given so much during his time in the AFP both as Detective Sergeant and a Federal Agent.

Despite the obvious challenges of Kokoda, Sally kept a keen note of all her experiences, expanding on them for *AFP Platypus* on her return home...

Kokoda Arches in sight

After a 35 minute flight north-east from Port Moresby to the capital of the Oro Province, Popondetta, the family embarked on a four-hour bus ride — soon arriving at ‘The Arches’ that mark the beginning of the Kokoda trail. The time it took us to travel from our hotel lobby to reach this point heightened our anticipation and excitement of what was to come.

Kokoda Trek Leader Aiden Grimes then brought us together for a few words before we headed out.

“Everyday people go to work, and everyday people get out of bed,” he said. “Then they put their uniforms on and turn to their kids and say ‘I’ll be back home to help you with your homework’. But, you know, some never make it.

“When you walk the track they will be with you, here with us at all times. These people should never be forgotten.”

Hello, and welcome to the challenge

The day started with an early rise for our group, which included officers from across Australia, a medic team, other servicemen and women, and finally, the legatees.

Although nothing could have prepared us for what was ahead, we received a beautiful welcome at Kokoda Village and met the Legends — our guides — who were going to embark on this trek with us. Through ‘The Arches’ we walked, with a bounce in our steps, soon to realise that the walk was not going to be this flat for long.

Vertical uphill, vertical downhill

Over the next eight days we walked 136 kilometres though some of the toughest terrain we’ve ever encountered. The uphill sections were almost vertical at times and downhill were equally as steep. There was so much mud and everyone was taking tumbles — some more dramatic than others.



Above: The family — and their guide and ‘legend’ Johnathon — at the Kokoda Arches before heading out.

Stephanie carries her pack up a steep section of exposed tree roots.



This 'bridge' was one of the more challenging river crossings.



Amazing who you bump into on the track! Sally with AFP member Mark Laing – who was hiking with a separate group.

“When you walk the track they will be with you, here with us at all times. These people should never be forgotten.” –

Trek leader Aiden Grimes

Fortunately, there were no serious injuries.

Our guides were very mindful of taking us along the safest routes — some of them walked barefoot while we skated clumsily in our hiking boots. In some ways the uphill was easier than the downhill — you could stop to take a few deep breaths — but on the downhill you try and not skate and slide.

Challenges bombarded us in more ways than one.

We crossed rivers and creeks on makeshift bridges constructed from fallen tree trunks. It was tough on many levels and a real test of staying in the present. Aiden taught us to live in the moment, to not worry about the future — and the hills to come. I think he meant literally putting one foot in front of the other.

Many crossings, makeshift bridges

There was certainly no time to take our boots off before we negotiated The Goldie River on the second last day (16 crossings in all!). We squelched into camp that night, carrying what seemed like an extra kilo of mud and water on each foot. It made me think about the WW2 soldiers walking through the horrendous conditions, with no end in sight.

On days that felt tough for us, I thought of the hardship that these men endured, with little resources. It would have been unimaginable for these brave soldiers. At least I knew I only had a couple of days to go after the crossings. Quite literally walking in their footsteps gave me an indescribable sense of admiration and pride.

We were extremely lucky with the weather — only one afternoon of rain. That afternoon comprised walking (falling) down mud-filled, cascading waterfalls. My daughter Emily said that I reminded her of a pinball machine, bouncing off one wall to the other in rapid succession! It was practically a slip-and-slide ride.

That same daughter ironically managed to perform the splits for part of her descent, thanks to the exposed, slippery tree roots. Nonetheless, many laughs came from this messy afternoon. When it's raining it's very humid — you're completely soaked in sweat.

I'm sure we all smelled delightful.

Basic facilities, incredible people

Each afternoon we made camp at or near a village. The bathroom facilities were basic to say the least, but after a day of sweating through the jungle, an ice cold shower piped from the river was wonderful!

Other than that it was rinsing off in the river. We ate carb-loaded meals and were generally in our tents heading to sleep by 7:30-8pm. The best parts of the afternoon? Sitting by the fire after a great meal having conversations with some pretty incredible people.

The younger legatees walked together for most of the track and seemed to have good fun. There was never a dull moment during the walk or in the afternoon at camp. The eruption of laughter during card games and chats was contagious. The bond they made seemed to be a special one.

It was a real break from the modern world — no technology, no hassles or burdens of everyday life. After all, “Life isn't measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away”.

Reflection at sunrise

Each morning started with a beautiful poem about the men who walked this track in WW2, read by one of our leaders, Peter. It was a truly moving way to enjoy the 5am wake ups. Aidan was also passionate about delivering the history of the track during the war — something I knew very little about.

It was fascinating to hear him recount the battles and the amazing story of the Australians, who were outnumbered by the Japanese approximately 10 to 1 — but managed to hold them at bay.

When you walk the track and experience the conditions in which these brave young men fought you realise just how remarkable this feat actually was. Even more remarkable was the work of so called 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels', local men who carried out the injured Australian soldiers on stretchers back to makeshift hospitals or Port Moresby.

I still can't believe they were able to do that. The strength and courage these men held left me speechless.

Dawn service, two-up...and a beer

We finished the track on 24 April and attended the Anzac Day Dawn Service the next day at Bomana cemetery, where over 3,500 Australian soldiers are buried.

This was a very moving experience and something that I will remember forever.

We had breakfast at the police college after the ceremony and then went to the yacht club for some two-up, music and in the true Aussie spirit...a beer...or two.

Walking the track gave me plenty of time for self-reflection and history



Templeton's crossing on the Kokoda Track.



An Anzac Day Dawn Service was held at Bomana cemetery.

“When you walk the track and experience the conditions in which these brave young men fought you realise just how remarkable this feat actually was.” – Sally



136 kilometres later the family reaches the end of the track. Pictured with Acting PNG-Australia Policing Partnership Mission Commander — and AFP Legacy President — Shane McLennan.

appreciation. Every day seemed to bring tears to my eyes. Moving poems and heartfelt songs. At times there just wasn't a single pair of dry eyes in the group.

The Kokoda Track tests endurance, not just the physical strain but the emotional as well. It took me out of my comfort zone, but finishing the walk and seeing those Arches came with an enormous sense of achievement.

Hearing the stories of other police widows and their various journeys was such a beautiful experience. It was amazing to talk to people who have walked a similar path. They are all amazing ladies and I am delighted to have them as friends. We all caught up for a fun weekend in The Hunter Valley. They are all amazing women and we provide great support to one another, I am looking forward to the next catch up.

“Hearing the stories of other police widows and their various journeys was such a beautiful experience. It was amazing to talk to people who have walked a similar path.” — Sally

Closer to Dad

I know this walk meant a lot to my daughters, too. My youngest, Emily, said that it was an opportunity for her to feel closer to her dad, since the trek was something she would have loved to share with him. This was truly something neither she nor Stephanie will ever forget.

For anyone thinking about taking part in the Kokoda Trek, my only advice is to just do it. But don't forget to train as the hills are very unforgiving. My body is still sore but the sense of accomplishment and new formed friendships is something I wouldn't change for the world.

Thank you to everyone who made it possible for me to walk this track with my two daughters — I know their father would be exceptionally proud of them (and me) for accomplishing such a monumental hike, and just a little bit amazed at our strength!

And a massive thank you to all those who donated to our fundraising page.



Supporting AFP families in need

AFP Legacy was set up to provide ongoing support and financial assistance to AFP employees who suffer the death of an immediate family member or who are standing by one battling a terminal illness.

They are always there to help lessen the burden.

AFP Legacy contributes to helping legatee families via the generous support of police members and the wider community, perpetuating the memory of AFP employees.

Should a current member — sworn or professional — pass away on or off duty, whatever the circumstance (accident, injury or illness), sudden or diagnosed, then support will be offered. This support also extends in the instance where a partner of a current employee passes.

In the past financial year, AFP Legacy paid out more than \$190,000 in welfare assistance to families in extreme need, those needing further assistance and personal development, and in bereavement payments.

In all, they currently support 55 families, including 99 legatees.

AFP Legacy also creates opportunities for legatee families to remain connected to the AFP and to each other, with three annual scholarships valued at \$9,000 in the names of fallen members Adam Dunning, Brice Steele and Mark Scott.

As a not-for-profit organisation, AFP Legacy does not receive government funding and relies on the generosity of payroll deductions, sponsors, fundraising and the sale of merchandise to offer crucial opportunities for legatee families, including major events such as its annual Kokoda Track Adventure and in welfare support services for families dealing with grief and stress.

The AFP Legacy Board of Management comprises of a team of dedicated volunteer AFP employees who represent a broad cross-section of the policing community. They are governed by a constitution and guidelines, and are an Incorporated Association in the ACT.



The search warrant premises in the Philippines.

Sydney child protection team closes the net from Manila to Sydney

By Shelby Houghton, AFP National Media



A Sydney man who was involved in the 'live distant child abuse' of children in the Philippines was sentenced to more than 11 years behind bars in 2019, following an AFP Sydney Joint Anti Child Exploitation Team (JACET) investigation.

For more than five years, the man in his 50s sat at home on his iPad in Tregear, Western Sydney.

He was making video calls over the internet to the province of Cebu, in the Philippines. On the other end of the video, children as young as two years old were being directed to pose in sexualised positions.

Over the years, the man watched the children grow up. He sent money in

exchange for his personalised child abuse material, totalling more than \$25,000 over the period.

The scale of the man's offending, and the investigation by the Sydney child protection investigators, can now be told after the man was sentenced in May 2019. He received a maximum term of 11 years and four months in prison, with a non-parole period of seven years and four months, after pleading guilty last year.

A photo taken of the offender's premises.



A device seized from the offender's premises by the AFP that contained child abuse material.

‘Trawling through this amount of data, from photographs to webcam chats, and working out what we could use as evidence to prove he was actually communicating with the children was an enormous task.’ –

Federal Agent Whelan.

Following the trail

The unravelling of this child exploitation ring began in Queensland, Australia, in November 2015.

Queensland Police Taskforce Argos executed a search warrant, uncovering a large volume of child exploitation material. Once the images were analysed, investigators were able to trace some to the Philippines.

The images were referred to the AFP's Manila post to allow the AFP's international network to engage local law enforcement counterparts to try and locate the children. Soon after, the Philippine National Police (PNP) began an investigation.

In September 2016, the PNP executed warrants and rescued six children, who were taken into protective custody. A Filipino woman was arrested and charged with wilfully, unlawfully and feloniously recruiting, obtaining, hiring, providing and offering a minor, to a foreign customer, for the purposes of prostitution, pornography and sexual exploitation.

During a search of the house, a photograph was uncovered depicting a Caucasian man, and one of the young Filipino girls living there. No one knew his name. But police feared he had done more than just pose for an innocent photograph with this girl.



Two-and-a-half years' worth of conversations captured on electronic devices and other data from photos and webcam chats were among a large amount of evidence for the AFP to process.

Australian investigators from the AFP Manila post then referred this back to their AFP counterparts in Australia for review, and it was then the breakthrough came.

“Someday I will get found out and locked up in jail”

He went by the name ‘wolfbaden45’. The man had been communicating with the Filipino children online for years by this point. The youngest was just two years old when it began. His conversations with the children involved highly sexualised content including references of what the offender would do to the child victims in person.

At one time, one of the child victims discussed how she wanted to marry the man and start a family with him. She was less than 10 years old at the time.

He replied: “I’m just some old man in love with little girls and someday I will get found and locked up in jail.” He was right.

Closing the net

Days after the PNP made arrests in the Philippines in 2016, AFP Sydney Child Protection investigators executed warrants in Western Sydney at the home of the middle aged man depicted in the photos. The then 56-year-old was arrested and charged.

Case officer Federal Agent Nicole Whelan recalls during interview, the man made admissions he had engaged in the online conversations to the Philippines. He claimed, however, his talk was directed to the Filipino woman.

The court didn’t accept this version of events. As Federal Agent Whelan explains, the AFP had uncovered evidence to help the case.

“We had four and a half years’ worth of conversations captured on electronic devices that we had to piece all together. Trawling through this amount of data, from photographs, webcam chats, and working out what we could use as evidence to prove he was actually communicating with the children was an enormous task.

“It was a huge brief and I couldn’t have done it without some of my team mates. Neal Rogers in particular was phenomenal in really going through some of that fine grain detail.”

The painstaking evidence gathering paid off. The man was found guilty, and his case finished in the Campbelltown District Court in May 2019.

The woman in the Philippines had already been sentenced, and is currently serving 20 years in prison.

For Federal Agent Whelan, this sentencing signified the closure of a long process – but it was the removal of children from harm which was the most significant aspect of the operation.

“I think that’s been the most important part of this case,” she said.

“This has genuinely impacted young children’s lives who were being exploited just by virtue of the fact they were in a less developed country with a mother who either didn’t understand, or was just willing, to exploit them. No child, anywhere in the world, should ever have to experience that.”

Cocaine import not smooth sailing

By Joe Marsden, AFP National Media

Three men who attempted to import around 70 kilograms of cocaine to Australia hidden in the body of a luxury yacht in 2015 are currently serving a total of almost 50 years in custody, thanks to the efforts of the AFP-led Queensland Joint Organised Crime Taskforce (QJOCTF).

Queensland investigators commenced the investigation, code-named 'Operation Lamister', in early August 2015, based on intelligence provided through the United Kingdom (UK) National Crime Agency (NCA).

The AFP, Queensland Police Service (QPS) and the Australian Border Force (ABF), were among the agencies involved in the QJOCTF investigation.

AFP Detective Sergeant Brett Chaffey said the group's plan was to hide the

drugs inside the body of the boat for the duration of the voyage, before using power tools to remove the compressed packages of cocaine from the boat's fibreglass hull once it arrived in Australia.

"What they didn't know is that our intelligence teams were already aware of the vessel and our surveillance teams were already watching from early 2015 as they went about their plans," Detective Sergeant Chaffey said.



The group's plan was to hide the drugs inside the body of the boat for the duration of the voyage, before using power tools to remove the compressed packages of cocaine from the boat's fibreglass hull once it arrived in Australia.

The skipper of the vessel, Estonian national Arthur Rivkin, and the Australian shore party, British national Martin Mayers, and Jordan Antic, had previously met in Ecuador during the planning phase of the operation to discuss logistics.

The ABF, with assistance from the QPS, monitored the vessel on its journey to Australia after stops in Ecuador, Fiji and Vanuatu.

The 13-metre yacht, named SV Solay, was identified departing Vanuatu, bound for Brisbane, Australia on Saturday, 15 August 2015. During the night of Sunday, 23 August 2015, as the vessel neared the Queensland Coast, it altered course and stole through the Gold Coast Seaway and into the Coomera River, before mooring at a Coomera pier the following morning.

Rivkin, who had skippered the vessel on the journey across the South Pacific, was greeted on the pier in Coomera by Mayers.

"The group had already been brought to our attention by our partners in from

the National Crime Authority in the United Kingdom in early August 2015," Detective Sergeant Chaffey said.

The NCA is a national law enforcement agency in the UK and the UK's lead agency against organised crime, drug trafficking and crime that goes across regional and international borders. Surveillance teams attached to the operation provided surveillance recordings, photos and phone intercepts of discussions between the skipper and the shore party.

"Our intelligence indicated these men had arranged further meetings with members of a Sydney syndicate who were impatient to take possession of their portion of the consignment," he said.

After the ship arrived at the Coomera Inlet on the Gold Coast, Rivkin and Mayers went to a local hardware store and purchased angle grinders, wrecking bars and power cords, which they then used to cut holes in and dismantle parts of the vessel's hull, in order to access the compressed packages of cocaine.

The next day, at around 5.45pm, the pair loaded the packages into a small grey car and drove it to the carpark of a roadhouse in Coomera, where an exchange was expected to take place.

"We knew the exchange was imminent and that was going to present the perfect time to take the men into custody."

It was during this carpark meeting that officers sprang into action, arresting the men at the scene.

"When we took them into custody the doors of a white van were open and ready for loading, while Mr Mayers was standing near the grey car, which was filled with about 40 kilograms of cocaine."

Following the arrests, Operation Lamister detectives executed a search warrant on the vessel at the Coomera River Marina, where approximately 30 kilograms of cocaine was located on board.

With an estimated street value of \$14.5 million dollars, Detective Sergeant Chaffey said the cocaine was



likely destined for distribution to the Gold Coast and New South Wales — and the seizure and arrest disrupted a number of organised criminal enterprises seeking to profit from the high prices and demand for illegal narcotics in Australia.

The three men were convicted in the Brisbane Supreme Court following an eight day trial.

During sentencing, Justice Helen Bowskill said the men were motivated by cynical and selfish greed while acknowledging the difficulty faced by law enforcement in detecting these kinds of criminal offences.

"Stern and severe punishment is warranted in order to protect society from the deliberate attack made upon it by persons who would commit offences of this kind," Justice Bowskill said.

"The deterrent aspect of this punishment ... is regarded as of primary importance in cases of this kind because of the difficulty in detecting the offence and the great social consequences that follow from its commission."

They were sentenced as follows:

- 62-year-old Martin Mayers was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment.
- 47-year-old Arthur Rivkin was sentenced to 16 years' imprisonment.
- 67-year-old Jordan Antic was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment.

Detective Sergeant Chaffey said it was extremely pleasing that the sentencing reflected the seriousness of the threat posed by organised crime and underscored the importance of investigations like Operation Lamister to deliver maximum damage to the criminal environment.

"Operation Lamister was another example of the AFP's commitment to protecting the Australian community from organised crime and impact of drug addiction within the community. The QJOCTF is very proud of our collaborative approach and outstanding results like this. Organised crime presents a particular challenge in the variety of ways and lengths they will go to in order to avoid detection and prosecution."

The Queensland Joint Organised Crime Task Force maintains strong links with Queensland Police and other Commonwealth agencies, which gives authorities the best possible response to the threat that organised crime poses to the community.

"There is no place for organised crime in our community, and the AFP with our law enforcement partners work together to identify and prosecute individuals involved in these activities."

Australian law enforcement have acknowledged the support provided to this operation by European authorities, including Irish Tax and Customs, the French National Customs Intelligence and Investigations Directorate (DNRED) and the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre-Narcotics (MAOC-N).



Above: With an estimated street value of \$14.5 million dollars, the compressed packages of cocaine were likely destined for distribution to the Gold Coast and New South Wales.

Above left: During sentencing, Brisbane Supreme Court Justice Helen Bowskill said the men were motivated by cynical and selfish greed.

"When we took them into custody the doors of a white van were open and ready for loading, while Mr Mayers was standing near the grey car, which was filled with about 40 kilograms of cocaine."

Fly in, fly out

By Dom Byrne, Editor - Platypus

A senior manager in a former life had a standard 'out of office' email reply when he signed off before holidays. I pretty much knew to expect it, but admit that I came to ignore it. It simply read: "Gone fishin'". I never bothered to ask him why he kept using what seemed just a throwaway line.

Let it fly

Fly casting lessons with Craig Daly from Clearwater Flyfishing Guides are just the start of the experience.



For sworn and unsworn AFP members - the need to have a new perspective on life away from the station or the office is key.



Equipped with waders and boots, AFP members dip into the cold, cold waters of the Thredbo River.



“When you’re walking along a river in the Snowy Mountains, it’s amazing how little everything else seems.”

Some years on and it’s clearer. My boss’s real message is embodied in the work of AFP members Jenna Van der Vlist and Craig Martin, who run the agency’s Fly Fishing Program for Mental Health. And it’s this: take time out for a holiday, long or short, but don’t forget to invest in a ‘thought break’ while you’re at it.

At the AFP — for sworn and unsworn members — the need to have a new perspective on life away from the station or the office is key. Backed by former AFP Commissioner Andrew Colvin and the AFP National Sports Federation, Jenna and Craig have several times taken AFP members to Thredbo in the Snowy Mountains to ‘Let it fly’ — putting rods and reels in the 4WD and heading down the highway.

Once there, the aim is not to cancel out worries or talk in depth about particular issues, it is to re-prioritise where worries are stacked in the mind to gain some perspective before heading back to life as they previously knew it. And fly casting lessons are just the start.

Having worked for almost four years in AFP Child Protection, Craig — like

many people in the organisation — has seen some horrible things.

“You’ve got two sides of the coin here,” he said.

“You’ve got people who are doing a really hard job — and have probably seen things that are outrageous and horrible that a normal person would never contemplate seeing. Then you’ve got those people who are doing those kind of jobs later in their career and may be affected one day.

Both camps are welcome to join the Fly Fishing program — as a reaction to past impact or as a time to mentally ‘upskill’ before things potentially get difficult.

“It really puts things in perspective when you’re walking along those rivers and how little everything else seems when you’re out there,” Craig said.

“That’s what we’ve been able to give to a few AFP members who’ve come along, and we’d love to be able to keep doing that and giving more.

“You know, being out on the river, it’s an amazing feeling — you don’t really think about all the bad things going on anywhere in the world. You’re concentrating on what you are doing

here. It’s something that’s got to be experienced to be believed.”

And there’s proof of that already.

Equipped with waders and boots, members in the first group spent two days away in early May 2019, and were grateful for a warm, sunny day when they first dipped into the frigid waters of the Thredbo River.

The fishing continued in earnest until the last day, with AFP member Garry the ‘last person standing’, chasing some large and active brown trout with Craig. At dinner the previous evening, Craig asked the five AFP members a question: “Did anyone think of work today?” And the quick answer — to most people’s surprise was, quite simply, “No”.

Jenna said: “It’s not all about fishing and catching fish, it’s about getting out there, trying something new, disconnecting and noticing the surroundings.”

The benefit to Craig’s law enforcement career is strong.

“Fly fishing was a tool I didn’t even know I was using to cope. I didn’t even realise the benefits it was giving

me. When I was having a bad day at the AFP and having to view child exploitation material — I could go fishing and get back and feel re-energised and ready to ‘fight’ again.

“I didn’t realise it was having an effect on me until I actually thought about it and had some conversations and started talking. I think I’d spent a few days out fishing and it dawned on me that I hadn’t even thought about work, hadn’t even given it a second thought.

“Fly fishing helped me get through a lot of things and continues to help me now. Having something in my life that I could do, either on my own, or with a friend or group of people, that makes life worthwhile and worth living.

“It’s not a cure to mental health issues, but a way forward and a means to becoming a better person, on the road to recovery.”

The Fly Fishing program is supported by the Australian Federal Police Association, Police Bank and the AFP National Sports Federation.

The way I saw it

The early days of the AFP Fly Fishing program have seen AFP members vocal and positive about its impact within a law enforcement agency...

“Congratulations on the energy, commitment and passion that you both have. It makes me smile every time I think about the Fly Fishing program! Take care and keep up the great work.” — **Former AFP Commissioner Andrew Colvin**

“Just wanted to reach out and thank you both again for putting on an awesome weekend. It was a really nice experience. Your passion, friendship and talents were evident and appreciated. As a result I have purchased a rod and reel and spent some time on Google Earth looking for a good spot to hit.” — **Colin, Counter Terrorism**

It's not all about fishing and catching fish, it's about getting out there, trying something new, disconnecting and noticing the surroundings.

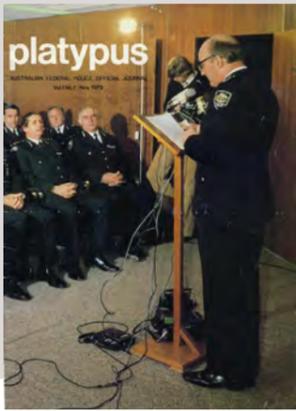
“Work issues are not so big after you’ve walked in the Snowy Mountains along a river bank stalking trout. [It’s] a perfect way to focus on nature, the excitement of the chase, and to get away from cares and worries. This is one of the best mental health initiatives there could be. I found it gave me a chance for reflection and to put things in perspective. I hope that a few others take up the opportunity.” – Garry

“Thanks for a great weekend! I had a great time getting to know everyone and learning to fish, the weekend was both fun and relaxing and I look forward to the next event.” – Madelyn, Forensics

“I managed to catch a tree, and a rock...actually the same rock twice. I did, however, manage to cast my fly directly above a fish, who darted towards it, but chose not to bite! For me though the real fun was just chatting away.” – Romana, AFP Museum

“At the AFP Sports Federation, we’re committed to encouraging participation in sport to promote health and fitness. We welcome all sports and activities that contribute towards the health of our members. Our Fly Fishing program is a great example and I commend Craig and Jenna for approaching the Sports Federation to kick off the initiative.” – Steve, President, AFP National Sports Federation

1979



1980



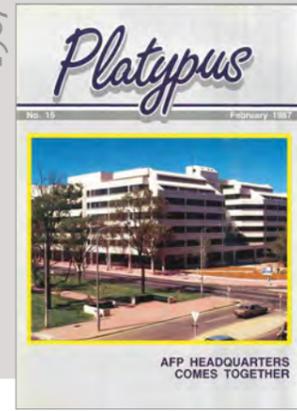
1984



1985



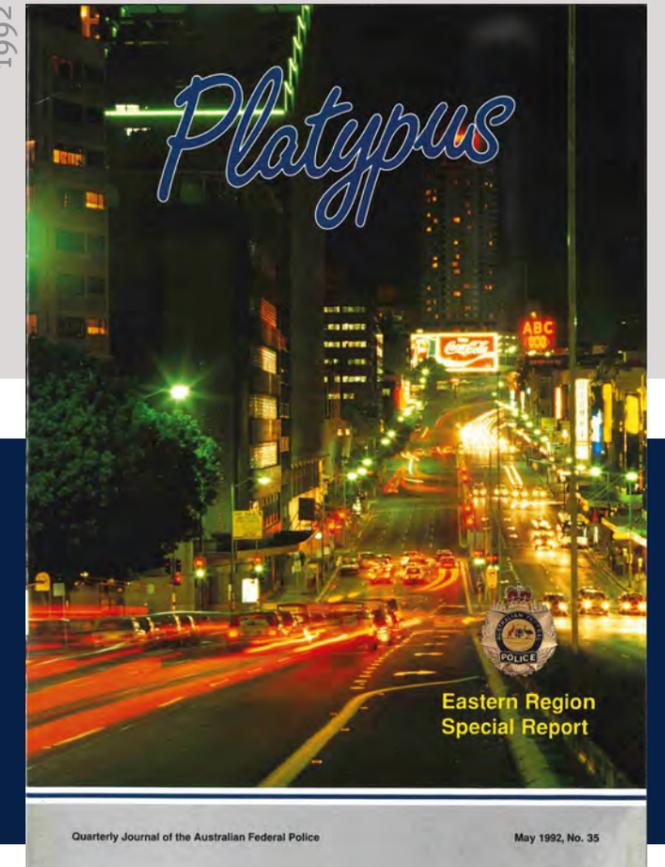
1987



1991



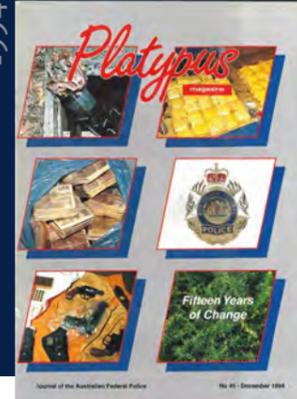
1992



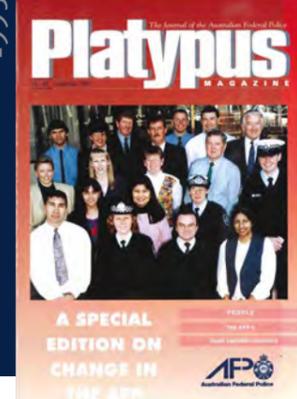
40 Years of Platypus

Since 1979 we've been there. From the dawn of AFP business to the swearing in of our eighth Commissioner, Platypus has reported on what matters to AFP members and our law enforcement allies. While we've gone through a few masthead style changes, the Platypus ethos of service has remained constant. Enjoy this trip back in time...

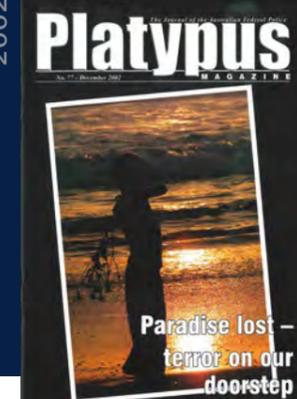
1994



1995



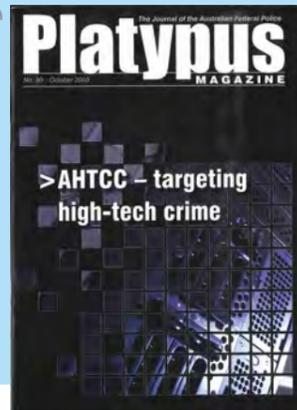
2002



2004



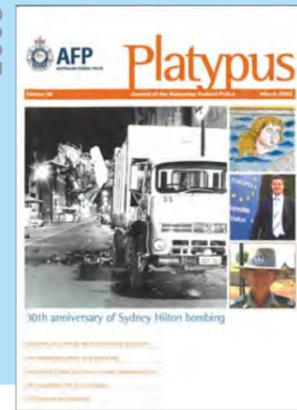
2003



2007



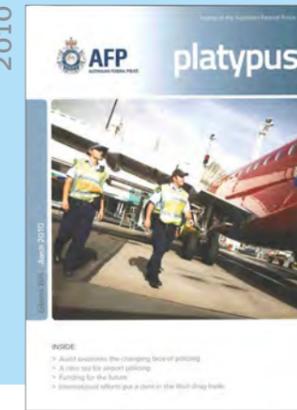
2008



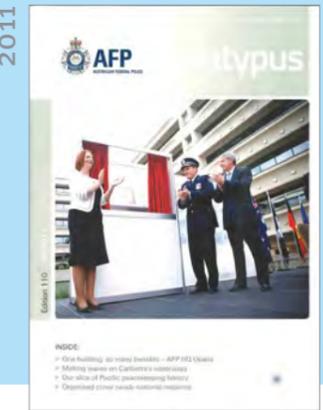
2009



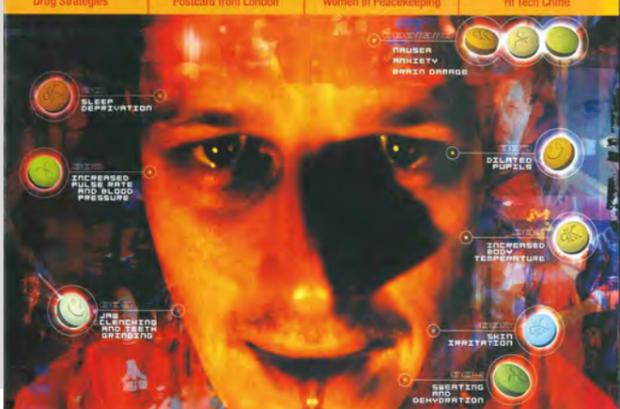
2010



2011



2012



2012



2012



2014



2015



2016



2017





AFP
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

POLICING FOR
A SAFER AUSTRALIA

www.afp.gov.au