

THEY WRITE TO SAY THANKS

Commissioner

I am writing to express appreciation for the support received from the Australian Federal Police during the visit to Canberra of the Cross Canada Cycle Tour Society.

Sergeant Hend and two motorcycle policemen were at the border to meet the cyclists and to ascertain whether an escort was required, and an escort was also provided for their visit to Parliament House and their departure for Yass.

The personnel involved were most co-operative and courteous and ensured the safety of the cyclists during the busy period.

On behalf of the High Commission, thank you very much for your assistance.

E. Schreyer

High Commissioner for Canada
CANBERRA ACT

DETERRENT

Sir,

At our last school social we had some difficulty with abusive and drunken outsiders. I wish to express my thanks to you and your officers for the assistance and advice given. This is typical of the co-operation we have received

LETTERS

from your Belconnen station and other sections of the police force.

I realise some schools do not encourage the police to come to the school and may be negative towards them. Charnwood High is entirely the opposite — when we have a social or any other event to which we invite police we want them to come in. We are definitely of the opinion that a visible police presence is a deterrent to the louts in the community and a reassurance to parents that the school's activities are well organised and supervised.

Ray Gunn
Principal

Charnwood High School, ACT

FETE

Sir,

Scullin Pre-school Parents Association wishes to extend many thanks to the Federal Police for attending our fete. It was a huge success and so were the two officers who were in attendance. The children really enjoyed the police motorcycle, and the officers were so approachable that I am sure a lot

of the fear that comes with a police uniform has been overcome.

Gayle Mackenzie

Scullin Pre-School P&C Association
Inc.

Scullin, ACT

RECOVERED

Sir,

Earlier this year I had some property stolen from my vehicle while it was parked in the Russell Offices car park. As a result I reported the larceny to the Federal Police and I am now thrilled to advise that through the efforts of your officers I have received the stolen goods back.

In particular, I would like to commend the fine efforts of Constable Craig Petterd who was closely involved with the case. The monetary value of my loss was small but the sentimental value of the items (14 music cassettes purchased in the USA) made their return to me very important. Even so, Constable Petterd displayed diligence, courtesy and professionalism in his investigations and his dealings with me.

Please accept my appreciation for the fine efforts (although sometimes thankless and unnoticed) of

your officers. And while you have officers of the calibre of Constable Petterd I will be a satisfied citizen.

G.R. Schmidt

Holder, ACT.

DEATH

Sir,

I had a telephone call from the Canberra Police advising me of the tragic death of my sister and brother-in-law. The caller, who also requested my wife and I to come that day to Canberra, was Detective Peter Lawler. During that telephone conversation and subsequent personal meetings my wife and I were both impressed with Detective Lawler's kind, helpful and compassionate attitude. We consider that it would not have been possible to handle the matters at hand any more delicately than did Detective Lawler.

May we congratulate you personally on the standard of officers in your force. Our society could do with a lot more people of Detective Lawler's calibre in all walks of life.

S. Prokopovich

Arncliffe, NSW.

Science in fight to beat crime

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"The all-up cost of the centre will be in the vicinity of \$300,000," Chief Inspector Brittliff said. "It is not, however, a fully computerised centre. It is a computer-aided despatch system."

Chief Inspector Brittliff said a number of items were recommended by the conference for referral to either the Police Commissioners' Conference or the National Police Research Unit for resolution or research.

These included:

- the question of police expertise in magnetic tape audio analysis;
- the question of the implications of the proposed Criminal Investigations Bill to police (specifically the recording of interviews);
- the effectiveness of police using horns or other electronic, audible devices on police vehicles;
- co-ordinating police search and rescue communications around Australia;
- the investigation of high frequency radio links and television transmitting systems.

On the questions of taping and the Criminal Investigations Bill, Chief Inspector Brittliff said the ramifications were enormous.

"While the Bill doesn't make it mandatory to tape all interviews, that's certainly the spirit of it," he said. "Just imagine several thousand detectives around Australia taping everything and the resultant ramifications from the points of view of storage, handling, copying, transcription, authentication, plus the massive costs of purchasing new equipment."

The Commissioners' Conference had specifically been asked to consider the need for police forces to train their own experts in magnetic tape audio analysis — or in lay-

men's language, being able to act as expert witnesses in authenticating taped material.

On the questions of horns and sirens on police vehicles, Chief Inspector Brittliff said they had really proved ineffective because in high speed chases, wind pressure pushed sound behind the police vehicle and away from the vehicle being pursued.

Suggested alternatives included such ideas as talking over local commercial radio stations in the immediate vicinity, to flooding a vehicle with laser lights.

"But don't laugh at the laser lights idea — at least lighting, particularly for night use, may have application."

Superintendent John Spurling, who chaired the General Scientific Section, said discussion could be broken down into three interest groups — ballistics, computers and photography.

"It was a particularly busy five days," he said. "The best illustration I can give of that is to say that during the conference 81 separate items were discussed."

"However, many of the discussion points did not warrant recommendations or action — they were principally by way of one delegate updating for others developments in a particular area in his or her force."

Superintendent Spurling said that in relation to ballistics, much

discussion centre around such areas as:

- the latest techniques in the examination of powder residues on victims' clothing to differentiate between homicides and suicides;
- concern at the trend to make weapons with folding stocks which makes them easier to conceal more readily available to the public;
- the emergence of alleged experts, other than police experts or government specialists, in the specialised field of ballistics.

"This last item provoked a recommendation to the NPRU for it to undertake a study of the introduction of a formal register of expert witnesses in the ballistics field," he said.

"This may ultimately open the door to the need for formal guidelines for an accreditation system of such experts."

Superintendent Spurling said that one of the most noticeable occurrences, from his point of view, was the level of co-operation shown between police forces in the general scientific area.

"If it was paralleled in other areas of policing, Australia would be the better for it," he added.

Other recommendations included:

- the possibility of a national registry of dental records.
- the possibility of computer

programs being developed that tracked and stored trajectories and velocities of bullets fired from a wide variety of weapons.

"But discussion didn't stop in the purely scientific areas. It also included useful discussion that police management investigate and seriously consider laying down formal guidelines applicable when officers attend disaster situations such as bushfires," he said.

"This item was raised by Victorian, South Australian and Tasmanian police who have learned in the past that men have been kept in situations continuously for too long with resultant unnecessary stress and anguish."

The third conference section — fingerprints and recording was chaired by Superintendent Phil Baer.

Superintendent Baer said fingerprints were still one of the most important sources of police scientific evidence. It was now possible for police to detect fingerprints on items previously considered impossible, such as multi-coloured paper.

"We are finding that police forces are all using computers much more to help compose evidence, such as partial photographs or to detect shades," he said. "For example, the human eye can detect only about 10 shades of grey. A computer can detect more than 200."



• Some members of the General Scientific section of the conference relax. AFP members are: Greg Starkey and wife (far left), John Goulding, Bob Hanisch and, front row, Superintendent and Mrs John Spurling and (right) Ann See.