

COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE

SHORTLY after taking office, I received representations from many people, both inside and outside of the force, concerning their perception that policing in the Australian Capital Territory had been neglected for a number of years. Much of this concern seemed to be based on an assessment of the increasing crime rate in Canberra. However, the reality is that crime is increasing throughout Australia and to some extent the situation in the ACT was more a reflection of this trend than a deficiency in policing generally.

As to the more general question of neglect, I addressed the priorities set by Government several years ago and came quickly to the conclusion that management philosophy had been very much in line with these priorities. However, the factors that bear on policing considerations are ever changing and require a dynamic and flexible response. A low priority does not mean no priority at all. Accordingly I decided to review the policing arrangements in the ACT.

It seems to me that growth in Canberra has been met by progressively opening medium sized police stations in the main suburbs. My examination revealed that although this had some elements of decentralisation, police services are now delivered in a fragmented and somewhat unco-ordinated way.

Given the present size of Canberra, it is not inconceivable that at this point a good quality service could be delivered from one centrally located purpose-built facility, supported by a number of small shop fronts (strategically located to give a convenient array of over-the-counter services with a consequent high profile for police activities). However, the simple fact is that such a central facility does not exist and long before it could be provided the further growth of the city would demand a degree of effective decentralisation. Accepting this inevitability I have decided that a process of decentralisation, co-ordinated with an effective accommodation strategy, is the only viable solution if we are to be in a position to maintain a quality service in the future.

Platypus 22, July 1988

None of what I have said implies a criticism of the efficiency of our members. What we have is an organisation which tends to duplicate administrative functions resulting in a wasteful deployment of human resources.

We are currently examining a variety of options to identify the most efficient way of implementing this decentralisation policy.

In the process of this review we have decided that our patrol activities would be considerably enhanced by the provision of a Computer Aided Despatch (CAD) system. I am pleased to announce that the design of such a system is well in hand and should be in place early in the new year.

In a busy schedule, I have also had the opportunity to visit other Regions. I found the frank exchange of views with personnel at all levels both interesting and informative. I am examining the feasibility of a number of suggestions which were made during these discussions.

We are pursuing a policy of trying to keep you all well informed of any



changes which are contemplated. Appropriate mechanism for this level of communication is not easily achieved. Recently I sent to every member a questionnaire concerning the possible changes in rank titles in the event that we accept ultimately the recommendations of the Career Structure Review. I have been pleased by the level of response thus far, but it is interesting to note that some people have reacted by saying that they have not got time to mess around with stupid questionnaires. I wonder if these are the same people who on earlier occasions have expressed concern that they were not being kept informed. Fortunately this type of attitude is very much in the minority.

My warmest regards to each and every one of you.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R. McAulay'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

R. (Peter) McAulay
Commissioner of Police

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