

A unique venue for a unique exhibition

By Terry Browne,
AFP Marketing and Communications

Since its installation at Old Parliament House (OPH), the Operation Alliance exhibition *When the Roof Became Stars* has attracted a new group of visitors.

According to Michael Richards, acting Director of Public Programs at OPH, the currency and emotive issues within the exhibition was a departure from previous themes, and has attracted high school and college legal studies students, particularly from Canberra-based schools.

“Local students would normally come to an exhibition here with their parents on a weekend, so it is unusual to see organised school groups turning up during the week specifically to see the Bali exhibition,” he said.

When the Roof Became Stars has been installed in the Strangers’ Gallery located one level below Kings Hall – a space reserved for exhibitions generated outside OPH.

At the opening in October last year, OPH acting General Manager Kate Cowie said it was the function of the House to tell the stories of Australia and that the bombings in Bali were now an important part of our social fabric.

Told from the investigator’s point of view, the AFP’s role in support of the Indonesian National Police (INP) is told with objects, photos and text panels that provide context for the key steps that led to the arrests of more than 30 suspects.

A feature of the exhibition is a 15-minute video presentation of a cross section of AFP members who took part in the investigation both in Bali and Australia.

The exhibition was created by the AFP’s Museum staff, led by Allison Bartlett. The process effectively began the day after the bombings, according to the Museum curator Christine Cranston.

“This was always going to be a very important and historical operation for the AFP, and it is the Museum’s role to capture the details surrounding such events,” she said.

Visitors to the exhibition are given the opportunity to leave written comments, which have been collated by Assistant Curator Margaret Tyrie.

“The exhibition was designed specifically around the investigation. That approach seems to have struck a chord with the visitors, many of whom were unaware of the role played by the AFP in the investigation,” she said.

“The vast majority of comments reflect on the tragedy of the event and how these acts of terrorism have affected all Australians. They applaud the quick response from the AFP and State police, and the level of expertise and cooperation that was offered to the Indonesian Police. Many also ask that this exhibition be made more widely available to people all over Australia.”

Notable visitors to the exhibition have included members of the Indonesian Parliament and INP members who were principal investigators in the aftermath of the explosions.

The exhibition is open every day at Old Parliament House, Canberra from 9am to 5pm and runs through to 23 April, 2004.

WHEN
THE
ROOF
BECAME
STARS

The Australian Federal Police
Investigation into the
Bali bombings

