

25 June 2002

Ms Sue Morton  
Secretary  
Finance and Public Administration  
References Committee



### APS Recruitment and Training

I refer to your letter to Commissioner Keelty on 7 May 2002, inviting the Australian Federal Police to make a submission to the 'Inquiry into Australian Public Service Recruitment and Training'.

The submission is a response to the relevant terms of reference that the AFP is able to comment on for comparative purposes and includes background information on recruitment and training arrangements.

For further information in relation to this submission, please contact:

Recruitment -  
Federal Agent Cath Grassick  
Coordinator People Strategies  
Australian Federal Police  
GPO Box 401  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Telephone 62757151  
Email: [cathy.grassick@afp.gov.au](mailto:cathy.grassick@afp.gov.au)

Training and Development -  
Ms Lorraine Morgan  
Coordinator Learning and Development  
Australian Federal Police  
GPO Box 401  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Telephone 62754898  
Email: [Lorraine.Morgan@afp.gov.au](mailto:Lorraine.Morgan@afp.gov.au)

Yours sincerely



Marion Cowden  
General Manager  
People and Finance Management

## **Recruitment and Training in the Australian Public Service (APS)**

Submission from the Australian Federal Police dated 17 June 2002.

With reference to the *following* Finance and Public Administration References Committee Terms of Reference:

2.

### **(a) Recruitment**

- (i) the trends in recruitment to the APS over recent years;
- (ii) the trends, in particular, in relation to the recruitment to the APS of young people, both graduates and non-graduates;
- (iii) the employment opportunities for young people in the APS;
- (iv) the efficiency and effectiveness of the devolved arrangements for recruitment in the APS;

### **(b) Training and Development**

- (i) the trends in expenditure on training and development in the APS over recent years;
- (ii) the methods used to identify training needs in the APS;
- (iii) the methods used to evaluate training and development provided in the APS;
- (iv) the extent of accredited/articulated training offered in the APS;
- (v) the processes used in the APS to evaluate training providers and training courses;
- (vi) the adequacy of training and career development opportunities available to APS employees in regional areas;
- (vii) the efficiency and effectiveness of the devolved arrangements for training in the APS;
- (viii) the value for money represented by the training and development dollars spent in the APS;
- (ix) the ways training and development offered to APS employees could be improved in order to enhance the skills of APS employees;

## 2 (a) RECRUITMENT

### (i) the trends in recruitment to the AFP over recent years;

1. Recruitment into the AFP occurs in a number of different ways. Through either:

- o Base police entry;
- o Above base (lateral) police entry;
- o Base staff member entry; or
- o Above base staff entry.

2. Vacancies are open to all Australian citizens and employment is subject to a number of pre-employment tests including the completion of a security vetting process and the meeting of general medical standards. The entire workforce is employed under the provisions of the *Australian Federal Police Act 1979* as amended (*the Act*).

3. In addition to the above, recruitment can also be facilitated through the National Indigenous Cadetship project (NICP) sponsored by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

4. Historically, the majority of recruitment to the AFP has been through bulk advertising for base police entry into the various derivatives of the current Federal Police Development Program (FPDP).

5. Where specialised skills and experience are required, individual recruitment exercises are undertaken with respect to distinct positions such as financial analysts, intelligence analysts, legal practitioners, information technology practitioners and human resource practitioners.

6. While there have been some checks in recruitment growth over the last four years the AFP workforce size has grown from 2630 in June 1998 to 3046 in June 2002. The increase has generally been due to the AFP Reform Program and Ayers funding outcomes.

7. As indicated in paragraph one, the composition of the workforce is generally divided into police members and staff members. In 1998 the distribution between the employment groups was 1931 police members and 699 staff members. In 2002 the distribution was 2012 police members to 1034 staff members. While the employment status of employees is either ongoing or non-ongoing, the majority of employees are ongoing.

8. Although the major employment group remains police members, the higher increase in staff members may be attributed to an increase in recruitment to indirect operational support roles, for example such as Investigative Assistants, Intelligence Analysts and Forensic Accountants.

9. Over the last four years recruitment to the core employment group of police members has been applied through different systems, changing from either non-ongoing police status on commencement to ongoing staff member status (with sworn status declared under *Section 40B of the Act* after the

training period). For this reason, the data is not comparable for trend analysis generally in relation to recruitment into this particular employment stream.

10. However some general distinctions can be drawn in relation to overall commencements into the AFP since 1998 (refer to Tables 1 and 2 below):

- o Between 1999 to 2001 there has been an upward trend in female commencements;
- o While the ratio of overall female to male commencements is not reflected in the ratio of female to male police members, the upward trend in female police members is greater than the overall increase.

**Table 1: Total Commencements of Male/Female as per EIS electronically held data.**

|               | July to Dec 1998 |    | 1999 |    | 2000 |    | 2001 |    | Jan to Mar 2002 |    |
|---------------|------------------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|-----------------|----|
|               |                  | %  |      | %  |      | %  |      | %  |                 | %  |
| <b>Female</b> | 46               | 45 | 220  | 45 | 227  | 46 | 113  | 47 | 61              | 47 |
| <b>Male</b>   | 81               | 55 | 274  | 55 | 265  | 54 | 130  | 53 | 70              | 53 |

**Table 2: Percentage of Male/Female Sworn members as per End of Financial Year data reported in the AFP Annual Report.**

|                     | 1997-1998 |    | 1998-1999 |    | 1999-2000 |    | 2001-2002 |    |
|---------------------|-----------|----|-----------|----|-----------|----|-----------|----|
|                     |           | %  |           | %  |           | %  |           | %  |
| <b>Female Sworn</b> | 369       | 19 | 382       | 20 | 426       | 22 | 465       | 23 |
| <b>Male Sworn</b>   | 1562      | 81 | 1505      | 80 | 1550      | 78 | 1567      | 77 |

(ii) **the trends, in particular, in relation to the recruitment to the AFP of young people, both graduates and non-graduates**

11. From 1998 to 2000, the predominant age group for commencements was in the 18 to 29 years cohort. In 2001, this age group spread to include the 30-34 years cohort. Since 2001, the 18 to 34 years cohort made up the majority of commencements to the AFP. (Refer to Table 3).

**Table 3**

|             | 17 | 18-24 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50-54 | 55+ |
|-------------|----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| <b>1998</b> |    | 42    | 38    | 19    | 13    | 4     | 4     | 4     | 1   |
| <b>1999</b> |    | 175   | 143   | 57    | 37    | 31    | 21    | 12    | 12  |
| <b>2000</b> | 2  | 150   | 125   | 49    | 46    | 30    | 26    | 20    | 27  |
| <b>2001</b> |    | 50    | 36    | 35    | 17    | 19    | 17    | 8     | 16  |
| <b>2002</b> |    | 30    | 30    | 28    | 9     | 8     | 9     | 4     | 5   |

12. Generally the average age for base police members in recent years has been 27 years old. This may be attributed to AFP police recruiting parameters requiring applicants to have a combination of work/life experience prior to engagement in base policing roles.

13. There is not a specified graduate recruitment program however a number of graduates are recruited on an ad hoc basis to both police member and staff member roles. This data however is unable to be isolated to determine the breakdown between the two employment groups.

14. While not a specified graduate recruitment program, graduates are recruited through the National Indigenous Cadetship Program (NICP). It is through this program that the AFP offers opportunities for Indigenous people through work experience during the course of study.

15. Prior to 1996, the AFP also participated in an undergraduate scheme in conjunction with a number of universities based around Australia. This program offered employment to successful graduates on the completion of studies. This program was finalised in response to a ceasing of police recruitment and a desire to have a recruitment mix which builds a diverse workforce.

**(iii) the employment opportunities for young people in the AFP**

16. The *Australian Federal Police Act 1979* requires applicants to be 18 years of age and over for engagement as employees.

17. Opportunities exist for younger applicants although there is a preference for police recruits to have a combination of work/life experience prior to applying for this form of entry into the AFP. It should not be assumed however that this restricts employment opportunities for young people. In fact, base police recruits can vary in age generally from approximately 21 years of age up to 55+ as long as they meet pre-screening requirements determined through face to face interview and psychological, medical and security testing.

18. At the staff member entry points, opportunities exist on a regular basis at base level entry into administrative positions for younger people. Entry into the above base level for staff members is generally competitive with successful recruits generally having specialised skills and stronger work experience records.

**(iv) the efficiency and effectiveness of the devolved arrangements for recruitment in the AFP**

19. Police recruitment involves a number of screening stages for recruits to ensure 'best fit' for both the applicant and the AFP. These recruitment processes are delivered both internally and through devolved arrangements.

20. The devolved arrangements specifically apply to psychological assessments and initial security vetting. With the AFP currently in the largest single recruitment drive in its history, the outsourced arrangements are providing efficiencies and overall effectiveness in allowing the current magnitude of recruitment to be undertaken in a shortened time period to ensure government and community expectations are met in the delivery of policing services.

21. The AFP will also shortly be seeking greater efficiencies to meet the increased recruitment demand through the outsourcing of certain 'front end' aspects related to the administration of the recruitment process for police members. Major steps of the recruitment process and overall strategic management will still remain the responsibility of the AFP's People Strategies staff. By outsourcing labour intensive administrative aspects of the recruitment process, valuable internal human resources and expertise will be freed to focus on strategic human resource management specific to the AFP environment and operational demands.

22. Above base staff member recruitment is generally undertaken internally by the AFP, in conjunction with the PSMPC, which supplies convenors for selection panels. The AFP is currently in the process of reviewing these arrangements and examining the use of a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure a more focussed service to meet organisational needs. PSMPC involvement is a key factor in securing transparency, fairness and impartiality in the selection processes.

23. Recruitment of non-ongoing employees is facilitated through a range of external providers who maintain registers of candidates with contemporary skills spanning a range of fields including finance, human resources and general administrative duties. Such employment is limited to filling vacant positions until permanent recruitment processes are finalised or where there is a need to increase capacity for a finite period.

24. Senior Executive recruitment utilises the services of a consulting company with expertise in attracting applicants for executive positions. The consultant also plays a role on the selection panel as well as providing full administrative support for the process. This provides an independent perspective while adding value through expertise in executive selections across a broad range of public and private organisations.

## 2 (a) TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

25. **Background:** The delivery of AFP training and professional development is, in the main, centralised through the Learning and Development (L&D) area of the People and Finance portfolio. L&D has been extensively restructured and refocussed over the last four years allowing the area to effectively exploit emerging educational support technologies and contemporary training practices in delivering to the development needs of the organisation and staff.

26. The majority of training programs delivered by the AFP are researched and developed at the AFP College in Canberra. Training is delivered either at the college or in individual regions through outposted L&D staff. Training programs are generally available to staff regardless of location and accessed through a formal enrolment and approval process. While AFP members in overseas liaison posts are currently unable to participate in Australian based training they will increasingly be afforded access to on-line training through the AFP's e.learning platform.

27. The programs offered by L&D are supplemented, where appropriate, by a range of offerings from external providers.

28. During 2001 – 2002 the number of enrolments in AFP programs totalled 5891 of which 4724 were AFP employees. It is expected that during 2002 – 2003 the number of training places on offer will reach 6000.

29. The AFP provides a range of study assistance to approved members through the Professional Development Scheme.

### (i) **The trends in expenditure on training and development over recent years.**

30. Expenditure on training and development in 2001 – 2002 was \$17M or some 4% of the total AFP budget and in 2000 – 2001 was \$19M or 6.6% of the total budget. It is anticipated that this level of support for training and development within the AFP will continue well into the future.

### (ii) **The methods used to identify training needs in the AFP.**

31. A variety of methods are used to identify both current and emerging training and development needs at an organisational and an individual level.

32. From an organisational perspective emerging training needs are primarily identified through an annual high-level environmental scan which identifies areas of interest to the AFP and indicates a variety of considerations including potential skills gaps. The information from these scans is supplemented by that drawn from other research bodies and a training response developed if appropriate.

33. On-going regionally focussed needs are identified to L&D through the AFP Board of Studies or by the network of L&D consultants.

34. A formal Training Needs Analysis process is also available to more accurately identify the nature of the reported need where appropriate.

35. Individual needs are identified and will increasingly be addressed through the AFP's performance management process.

36. At present training programs are advertised through the AFP intranet. The mandatory enrolment form asks applicants to state their reasons for applying, is endorsed by both the Team Leader and area Coordinator and prioritised by the area Operations Management Team into one of the following 3 categories:

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Priority 1 (Organisational) | Gap identified through competency assessment process.<br>Management initiated/directed learning. |
| Priority 2 (Functional)     | Negotiated learning requirement between team leader and employee.                                |
| Priority 3 (Individual)     | Career development purposes.   |

Training places are allocated on the basis of the priority.

**(iii) The methods used to evaluate training and development in the AFP**

37. A range of strategies exist within the AFP to ensure that training and development programs meet identified standards, whether those standards are prescribed under the National Training Framework or internally agreed. These evaluation strategies also ensure that the training is aligned to organisational outcomes and is underpinned by sound adult learning principles.

38. The curriculum documents that support AFP developed programs are subject to a stringent quality assurance review prior to being submitted to the L&D Training Management Team for endorsement and eventual delivery.

39. All programs are supported by reaction/feedback surveys. The majority of programs require some form of participant assessment. Where this is the case assessment instruments are developed in line with the curriculum documents and are used to record participant progress. Following review by program managers, these surveys and instruments are submitted to the Quality Assurance Team. Recommendations for program changes are identified to the Training Management Team.

40. All areas within the AFP are encouraged to provide feedback on program outcomes through the L&D consultant network.

41. The AFP has recently undertaken an extensive staff survey which sought, amongst a range of other matters, views on the efficacy of training. The results from the survey are being used to inform the nature of future development programs.



**(iv) the extent of accredited/articulated training offered in the AFP**

42. The AFP College is a Registered Training Organisation and is currently registered to deliver the Diploma of Public Safety (Policing), the Advanced Diploma of Public Safety (Police Investigation), five units from the Certificate IV in Government (Fraud Control) and four units from the Certificate IV in Workplace Assessment and Training.

42. The AFP is progressing the alignment of a number of other internally accredited programs to the National Training Framework through the Public Safety and Public Sector Training Packages.

**(v) the process used in the AFP to evaluate training providers and training courses**

43. Where the services of external training providers are required the AFP evaluates the providers according to the nature of the training/development being sought primarily through

- Open or restricted tender,
- The Commonwealth Panel of Providers through the PSMPC,

44. The quality and effectiveness of the training delivery is evaluated through processes similar to those identified for internally delivered programs at iii above.

**(vi) the adequacy of training and career development opportunities available to AFP employees in regional areas**

44. The AFP is a national and international business organization with offices in all capital cities of Australia and regional areas such as Townsville, Cairns, Coffs Harbour, Newcastle, Broome and External Territories – Christmas Island, Norfolk Island, Cocos Island and Jervis Bay. Generally the employees in regional areas fill these positions on a term basis to ensure that individual skill development continues through future deployments across the organization. During the periods of deployment, employees are also sponsored by local area management to attend career development opportunities.

44. Police recruitment is driven by business needs. Primarily operational needs dictate resources are currently focussed in the Eastern and ACT operational areas. As police members gain experience, they are deployed to other operational areas including regional areas. Note also, that a number of police applicants are drawn from regional areas with the AFP regularly conducting testing and interview processes in these areas.

45. The AFP also recruits staff members regionally with a particularly effective indigenous cadetship/staff member recruitment program operating in our Northern Operations area (Queensland/Northern Territory).

46. Regional staff are afforded the same opportunities to access training as those centrally located.

**(vii) the efficiency and effectiveness of the devolved arrangements for training in the AFP**

47. The AFP is satisfied that current arrangements allow the degree of flexibility necessary to respond appropriately to current and emerging development needs. Centralisation of the development and delivery of 'core business' training activities promotes national standardisation and consistency in outcomes. Input from the Board of Studies and the L&D consultant network ensures that needs specific to a region are addressed in accordance with nationally agreed standards. The Quality Assurance regime in place within L&D supports a climate of continuous improvement and ensures that training and development activities are directly aligned to organisational outcomes.

**(viii) the value for money represented by the training and development dollars spent in the AFP**

48. Return On Investment exercises are not conducted as a matter of course, however, the AFP is satisfied that the money invested in staff through training and development is essential to the maintenance of an effective workforce. The AFP remains committed to maintaining a strong focus on the provision of quality, credible, outcome aligned training. This commitment recognises that the environment in which the AFP operates is subject to rapid change and that, in order for the organisation to meet the expectations of Government, key stakeholders and the community, the core skills of AFP staff must not only be maintained but also enhanced. It further recognises that the environment often necessitates the development of new skill sets such as those needed to deal effectively with the growth of computer related crime.

49. The quality of the outcomes achieved by the AFP in recent years is perhaps the best indicator of the success and value for money achieved through current training and development arrangements.

**(ix) The ways training and development offered to AFP employees could be improved in order to enhance the skills of AFP employees**

50. The needs identification and evaluation strategies identified above provide a sound basis for continuous improvement in the products currently delivered and are sufficiently robust to deliver an accurate view of emerging needs or existing gaps. The recent staff survey, for example, highlighted a gap in opportunities for non-police members. As a result of this feedback, L&D is reviewing the programs on offer with a view to identifying an extended range of development options for this cohort.

51. The AFP continues to develop the existing suite of flexible programs such as on-line and distance packages with a view to increasing access to a range of training products.

52. The AFP is aware of the criticality of providing staff with appropriate skills to meet increasing environmental demands and remains committed to the continuous improvement in the provision of such.