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Magazine cover:
President Alex Caruana led the Association in attending the National Police Memorial to pay respect to those fallen

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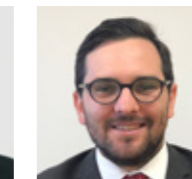


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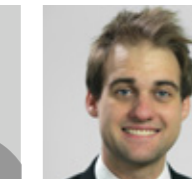
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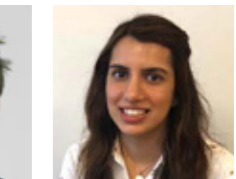
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

December 2020 issue

Regular items

- 6 President's Report
- 8 Legal and Industrial Report

Special features

- 12 National Police Remembrance Day 2020
- 18 A game a day keeps the doctor away
- 21 Why we need an extra level of protection
- 22 2020 AFP All Staff Survey

Member welfare

- 26 Surviving Christmas
- 28 ACT Policing Musters
- 29 A sit-down with DC Neil Gaughan

Entertainment

- 34 Film Review: The Girl On The Bridge
- 36 Book Review: Mummy Wears Blue Shoes



Australian Federal Police Association is proudly sponsored by Police Bank and Police Health

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18

A game a day keeps the doctor away
Taking the first step into a larger world



28

ACT Policing Musters
Engaging with the front line



12

National Police Remembrance Day 2020
Pausing to honour those who have made the ultimate sacrifice



President
Alex Caruana

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Alex Caruana, President

► We're nearing the end of a long and arduous year, which has paradoxically still seemed to rocket past. The last few months in particular have seen me, the Executive and the rest of the team focussed on a few critical tasks and processes.

ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT, AND DETERMINATION 2 OF 2020

I am disappointed to say the least about the Federal Government's decision to impose a wage freeze on the AFP. Other non-APS Commonwealth employers such as the ABC, SBS and ACIC all allowed their employees to vote on whether a freeze would go ahead.

The government was petty in its refusal to allow the AFP to do the same – the reason given that we had received a 1% increase earlier this year.

This being said, 2% annually over three years with no loss of pay and conditions is, I feel, the best possible outcome we would have been able to achieve. We will work with (and against) the AFP to ensure that the interpretations of policy that surround the EA are tightened up and become consistent, with no ambiguity.

It was pleasing to hear DC Gaughan acknowledge that the AFP is one of the two equally worst-paid police forces in Australia; this was the first time a member of the Executive has made this admission on record. This is an important first step and aligns with the aims of **Operation Recognition**.

We continue to agitate to be removed from the Public Sector Workplace Relations Policy (the new name for the Workplace Bargaining Policy). By now you would have hopefully had the opportunity to visit our new campaigns page www.afpa.org.au/campaigns/. Here, you'll find explanatory material and general background information on the Policy, as well as a tool allowing you to send a prepopulated email to your local Member about the issue.

We strongly urge you, and your loved ones, to take advantage of this tool and make yourself heard.

The accepted convention for Members of Parliament is that they respond to all correspondence, both mailed and electronic.

Both directly through our discussions with the government and the AFP Executive, and indirectly through your own involvement in our communications strategies, we will continue to lobby to have you recognised appropriately and remunerated fairly.

This will enable meaningful and constructive negotiations for the next and future agreements.

AFPA COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS

You've probably seen the presence of the Association ramping up recently, both online and in media coverage, as well noticed a higher frequency of direct messaging via email. This is a result of a deliberate and new approach to our external communications, structured to ensure our membership is sufficiently well-informed at all times. So how exactly is this new approach structured? And why do we use each of these platforms?

REGULAR CONTENT

BlueStar magazine. This is our flagship publication for our members. Every three months, the magazine is published both digitally and in print (distributed to stations across Australia). Within it, we'll feature in-depth looks at both long-term issues relevant to the AFP and policing in general, as well as discussion around topical issues affecting you at work. Each edition has an address from me, as well as regular input from our Legal and Industrial Manager and our major sponsors. The content from our sponsors (Police Bank, Police Health and Carroll O'Dea Law) outlines ways in which they are positioned to help and improve members' lives, and details current incentives and offers they may be offering. We also try to include one

or two feature articles on topics relevant to work in the AFP, but not relating to an urgent industrial issue. Check out this issue's article on virtual reality and policing.

Ask Alex. This is a new initiative from me and involves answering some of the many questions I receive directly and indirectly. Absolutely nothing is off the table; if you have a difficult question (we're happy to keep it anonymous), I'll answer it. We cannot promise we will be able to publish every question – however any and all questions will be answered, offline if necessary.

The first "Ask Alex" was published in October, and I am planning to release the next one in time for Christmas. These dispatches are emailed directly to members.

Legal Dispatch. This dispatch comes out once or twice a month, usually guided by how urgent the issues within it are. In the dispatch, Legal and Industrial Manager Matt Peterson and his team interpret the current EA and provide specialist advice on protections and processes for members in their work life. The dispatch is distributed by direct email.

Website. The Association's website is a public-facing repository of information relating to our purpose, history, and future aims. All our operations and functions are represented and outlined, and our major sponsors each have a separate presence on the site.

We also maintain specific landing pages for significant issues and campaigns. Our EA landing page (www.afpa.org.au/enterprise-agreement/) and campaign page (www.afpa.org.au/campaigns/) are two regularly-maintained examples of these. Both contain explanatory material and FAQs to assist members, and we use a variety of media to convey this information (text, video and infographics).

INTERNAL

Hot Issues Brief. The purpose of this regular dispatch is to assist our network of Delegates in helping you at work, and also act as a conduit between members and the Association's National Office. There is a myriad of different issues affecting members at each of the organisation's offices; it's often the case that an issue affecting one work area or cohort doesn't affect any others. Peculiarities in a particular office, or a political/social/media issue relevant to only one state or city, have necessitated a tiered approach from us in the advice we roll out through our Delegates. We aim to have an up-to-date dispatch sent to Delegates each quarter and supplement this with regular phone contact, in-person visits and email.

EDMs (Electronic Direct Mail). We maintain regular contact using direct emails and urge you to read them. The messages are important and relevant to you, and we'll send them to the address you nominate. Just give us a call if you'd like them sent to a personal account instead of your work account. We acknowledge that there have been a markedly higher amount of emails recently, and we hope that the volume becomes more manageable soon with the Determination being signed. However, these messages needed to be sent out; we would rather that you were over-informed than under-informed.

SOCIAL MEDIA

We're on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn. We regularly post content on each channel, so follow us today.

We're also very interested in conducting discussions with industry figures in a public forum; for this reason, we plan to start a regular series of podcasts and vodcasts in the short to medium term.

MEMBER WELFARE

We have been overwhelmed with calls about health and welfare issues.

We encourage members to practise self-care and utilise the AFP's welfare tools. It is important that these challenges are addressed early. As we've seen with South Australia, COVID-19 is still around, and its psycho-social effects have not lessened. With this in mind, I welcome Gerry O'Connor, our new Membership Services Officer to the AFPA national office. Gerry is a retired member of the New South Wales Police, and was an active member and delegate for the Police Association of New South Wales. He's hit the ground running and has already been reaching out to quite a few members in need, to offer assistance and just see how they are going.

Please call us if things seem to be getting on top of you, and we will do our best to help.

CHRISTMAS

Christmas is only a few weeks away. It's time for a well-earned break with family, friends and loved ones. Those that won't be getting a break have our full support and respect.

Please stay safe, drive safe and drink in moderation.

Thank you to former President Angela Smith, all Delegates, the AFPA Executive and all of the hard-working AFPA staff for their ongoing support and commitment during what has been a challenging year with bush fires, COVID-19 and the move to the next industrial agreement.

Lastly and most importantly, thank you to all members. Your strength, dedication and solidarity keep the community and Australia safe.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas. Best wishes and in unity,

Alex Caruana

President ◀



LEGAL AND INDUSTRIAL

Matthew Peterson, Manager, Legal & Industrial

Manager,
Legal & Industrial
Matthew Peterson

Time and time again, we are struck by the complete misunderstanding and hypocrisy of the Federal Government's view and treatment of the Australian Federal Police, our members, and the important work you all do. They don't understand what you do, or the sacrifices you make day-to-day and how they make your work harder and harder.

▶ The Federal Government wants you to be like all other Public Service Departments and Agencies. Repressed wages and conditions, with a fundamentally undermined collective bargaining process that prevents us from making necessary and fundamental changes to the current enterprise agreements.

All members want is fair pay for recognition of the work they do, with that pay comparable to wages received by other policing organisations across Australia.

This situation is the consequence of the draconian Workplace Bargaining Policy (which has recently been amended and retitled the Public Sector Workplace Relations Policy); a policy that fails to uphold its own key principles – that enterprise agreements are not to contain restrictive work practices, unduly limit flexibility, or otherwise impede workplace reform.

The Federal Government expects your behaviour to be of the highest standard, over and above the standards imposed on other Commonwealth departments.

Currently, you are all subject to intense scrutiny through both Professional Standards and the Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner. No such scrutiny exists for the broader Commonwealth Public Service. In fact, no such scrutiny exists at all for Federal politicians.

This double standard has been compounded by Attorney-General Porter's recent announcement of the Commonwealth Integrity Commission Bill. This bill sees the prospect of members being subjected to public hearings, but with Members of Parliament shielded from any form of meaningful scrutiny.

The last time I checked, AFP members could not even accept a discount on a meal without the prospect of being referred to ACLEI for investigation. Meanwhile, Parliamentarians can accept any gifts as long as they are disclosed. There are currently no processes to question why such gifts are given, or the impact that such actions have on preferential treatment politicians may give to the gift giver.

What's more likely to be fodder for untoward preferential treatment – a police officer receiving a discounted meal from a local restaurant, or a Minister accepting a free lounge membership from a major airline when that Minister has portfolio responsibilities relating to that airline?

Does anyone honestly believe those who enforce the laws are more susceptible to corruption than those who create the laws? Academics, legal experts, public opinion, and almost all political parties beg to differ.

This is purely and simply one set of rules for the rulers, and another for the ruled.

PUBLIC SECTOR WORKPLACE RELATIONS POLICY

You would all now be aware that arrangements have been put in place regarding the extension of the Australian Federal Police Enterprise Agreement 2017 – 2020 ("the EA") and the Australian Federal Police Executive Level Agreement 2019 – 2021 ("the ELEA") until May 2023.

An overwhelming majority of members voted to approve the extension of the EA and the ELEA, which will see three 2% salary increase occur between November 2021 and May 2023. The view of our Executive was that the offer put forward by the AFP was the best that could be achieved under the current harsh economic climate and severe restrictions of the Federal Government's *Workplace Bargaining Policy*.

The position adopted by our Executive was strengthened with the announcement by the Federal Government of further restrictions within the now titled *Public Sector Workplace Relations Policy* on salary increases (which are now capped at the average salary increases occurring within the private sector for the preceding year). All sensible commentary by experts is that we are entering a low wage environment for the next few years that will see increases in the private sector of less than 2%. Noting the complete contempt the Federal Government has had for collective bargaining in the Public Sector for some time, it is no surprise they would take steps to further limit and repress wages. The Policy has always set out to disenfranchise employees and unions from collective bargaining on terms and conditions. Through this disenfranchisement, the Policy has created an environment where wages are constrained, and terms and conditions are eroded. This erosion of terms and conditions funds mediocre wage increases, with these increases being made subject to departments demonstrating "productivity gains" (i.e. **you** are doing more for less).

**The Policy is bad for you.
It's bad for the AFP.
And it's ultimately bad for the community.**

Now that the industrial framework is set for the next few years (with salary increases secured and no loss of terms and conditions), the AFPA will refocus our efforts on being removed from the Policy. Removal from the Policy will hopefully allow the AFPA to properly engage in collective bargaining with the AFP to allow a fairer and more appropriate way of compensating all members.

Over the last few years, we have made significant progress through our lobbying against the Policy. When we first raised this issue with federal parliamentarians and the AFP in 2015, there was little appetite from any influential decision-makers to admit that this Policy is not fit for purpose for an operational police force. Since 2015, we have gained the support of several Federal politicians and key members of the AFP SES. We will continue to utilise this support to apply pressure and try to persuade the Coalition to unite on the AFP's exemption from the Policy.

Salary growth has stagnated within the AFP. Since the 2012 enterprise agreement, salaries have increased by just over 2% on average per year. In the same period, federal parliamentarians' salaries have increased by nearly 5% on average per year. And our counterparts in other jurisdictions have soared past us in terms of average salary.

The lack of equitable increases to salaries is just one issue with the current industrial framework that needs addressing. Far too often, we hear from members being burned by the EA, whether it's financially, mentally or physically.

Much of the reason AFP operations haven't fallen over is that the organisation relies on your professionalism and pride in doing a good job, whether you are paid or not. You don't want to see an operation fall over just because "there isn't any overtime budget left". You do the job because you understand your role in keeping Australia safe. However, the reliance on this goodwill has become business as usual.

The current industrial framework needs to be examined and reinvented. This isn't possible while we are re confined by the Public Sector Workplace Relations Policy.

COMMONWEALTH INTEGRITY COMMISSION BILL

The Federal Government recently announced a proposal for a Commonwealth Integrity Commission, which will include oversight of law enforcement agencies such as the AFP. It is proposed that the new Integrity Commission will assume management of corruption-related issues from ACLEI.

We certainly recognise the need for an independent body to investigate allegations of corruption. However, the model proposed by the Federal Government does not address the fundamental flaws of the existing ACLEI model. They include the requirement that some forms of conduct that must be reported to ACLEI by the AFP, even the allegation's severity does not warrant such a referral. We have seen examples in the past of members being referred to ACLEI by the AFP as a consequence of ACLEI process and procedures, for things as minor as a uniformed member receiving a (unsolicited) discount on their meal.

The CIC model also defines two classes of accusee. Law enforcement employees will be at the mercy of public hearings and extensive powers resembling those of a Royal Commission, under a very broad definition of "corruption" (including issues as minor as accepting a discount from McDonald's). Meanwhile, parliamentarians and public servants can only be investigated if the Commission can prove criminal conduct. Even in such instances, politicians will be protected, as all hearings will be conducted behind closed doors.

Additionally, non-law enforcement employees would only be referred for investigation if the relevant Minister believed it to be warranted. Anonymous tip-offs by members of the public would only be allowed for cases against police, PSOs and other AFP employees. Under the CIC model, if Eddie Obeid (whose corruption investigation was initiated due to an anonymous phone call to ICAC) had been a federal MP, his conduct would never have been discovered, and the taxpayer would have continued to fill his family's coffers illegitimately.

The distinction is unnecessary and contrived. The distinction simply treats law enforcement members as second class, and the inference is easily discernible – they think you are more likely to engage in corrupt conduct, and that's why you need more scrutiny. The consultation paper circulated by the Government in December 2018 regarding the proposed bill says as much.

However, the assertion that police officers are more likely to engage in corrupt behaviour is entirely unfounded. The Australia Institute, in their paper in response to the government's consultation paper, stated in response to the assertion that there was a heightened risk of corrupt behaviour in law enforcement that there was no independent research to support this. Further, they went on to state that:

"...common sense and State-based experience suggest that corruption in the public sector will be more deeply concealed, more prevalent and difficult to detect than in the law enforcement area. A comparison of the results achieved when examining the work of the Police Integrity Commission and ICAC in New South Wales shows a startlingly higher level of serious corruption in the public sector than in the New South Wales Police Force."

The artificiality in treatment is likely to create unnecessary administrative issues and hinder the Integrity Commission from doing its job.

We do believe that there is some benefit in having independent bodies investigate different cohorts of people.

There is a need to tailor how corruption is prevented and investigated to the particular kind of organisation and the specific function performed by that organisation. Rigidity assists no one in tackling the complex problems associated with corruption prevention, detection and prosecution. However, this doesn't mean standards should be any different across cohorts.

Establishing an independent corruption and integrity body at the federal level is well overdue. Its establishment would benefit the AFP. Currently, corruption matters involving MPs are invariably referred to the AFP for investigation as to whether a criminal offence has been committed.

When the evidence is insufficient to pursue someone criminally, the AFP and its employees are often then denounced as political apparatuses of the government of the day and of being complicit in the alleged wrongdoing. This is an entirely unfair criticism of the AFP and the professionalism of members in investigating allegations they receive. As members are acutely aware, having sufficient evidence to charge someone is different from there potentially being grounds to investigate someone for potential wrongdoing under civil law.

What we would like to see through this process is some meaningful change in how ACLEI handles allegations of corruption regarding AFP members.

First, the kinds of matters referred to ACLEI must be revisited. Time and time again, we see incredibly minor matters being mandatorily referred to ACLEI under the agreement between the AFP Commissioner and the Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner. We recognise that all allegations must be investigated, however common sense should also prevail, with a shifted subsequent focus to the potential harm or damage caused if the allegation is actually established.

Secondly, we would also like to see further resourcing provided to ACLEI. The length of time taken for investigations undertaken by ACLEI is simply not good enough, and much of this is down to inadequate resourcing at ACLEI. We recognise that corruption allegations need and should be investigated, and these are usually complicated and frequently intertwined with criminal allegations. But members are entitled to as expeditious a process as possible, particularly when the allegations are unsubstantiated. It should not take years for an investigation to finalise. We have also seen matters referred to ACLEI, who will consider whether to investigate for a number of years, only to then advise the AFP that the issue is not a significant corruption issue. This often results in the matter being referred back to the AFP for investigation by PRS – a process, as you can appreciate, causing extreme stress and anxiety for members.

The AFPA is currently in the process of drafting a submission in response to the proposed bill. Over the coming weeks, we will be asking for members feedback about the proposal.

We are also hoping to engage with the government about the proposed bill to achieve some fundamental changes to its proposed structure and scope.

The AFPA has also been fortunate enough in recent weeks to meet with Helen Haines MP, who has proposed an alternate model. We look forward to continuing to engage with her about her proposal. ◀



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We will remember them

Special feature

National Police Remembrance Day 2020 National Police Memorial, Parkes ACT

On the 29th September, members of Australia's policing community, dignitaries, and private citizens all gathered to pause in respect to honour the fallen members of the Australian Federal Police.

It is always a solemn and saddening task to try to fully recognise the sacrifices made, at almost unfathomable cost to members and members' families. The National Police Memorial, on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin, is a beautiful and fitting location to commemorate our heroes.

This year, we honour the four members of Victoria Police who lost their lives in tragic circumstances:

- Constable Glen Humphris
- Senior Constable Kevin King
- Leading Senior Constable Lynette Taylor
- Constable Joshua Prestney

In the morning, the entire AFPA office paid their respects at the National Police Memorial Wall, laying a wreath and reciting the Police Ode as a mark of respect to the now 798 names recorded on the wall.

President Alex Caruana attended the Dusk Service, laying another wreath as part of the official contingent representing Australian and New Zealand police associations.



Small photo above: Governor-General His Excellency the Honourable David Hurley is welcome upon his arrival at the National Police Memorial for the Dusk Service.

Full page photo: A beautiful Canberra springtime morning saw AFPA staff members paying their respects.

Senator the Honourable Kristina Keneally lays a wreath at the Dusk Service.



Special feature

Captions



- From top to bottom:
1. The Australian Federal Police Pipes and Drums (AFPPD) again distinguished themselves as a central part of the AFP's official ceremonies.
 2. Members laid wreaths for those unable to attend.
 3. Both the Governor-General and Commissioner Kershaw addressed those gathered at the Dusk Service.
 4. After the service, members from all over Australia came together at the National Police Memorial Wall to reminisce and remember, either by themselves or with old mates.

"From my perspective, Police Health has always been a part of our family, from when I joined the job in the early 1970s."

Luckily, during our early years we didn't have a lot of claims to make, just little claims on Extras benefits, births of the kids and stuff like that. It wasn't until my wife Chris retired from nursing in the early 2000s that the years of wear-and-tear caused her to need a major back operation. That was our first experience. Since then she's had two hip replacements and a knee replacement.

"The beauty, I found, about our private health is that while other people were going on about how much it costs, that they couldn't get the specialist they needed, they couldn't get the medical support, they couldn't go to the hospital they wanted, and they had long waiting times... Well, we went straight to a specialist. We were seen and guided through the process when it mattered, when we needed to make decisions about Chris going through with the operations.

"The big claim, and I think this is where we realised how Police Health is such a benefit to us, was in January 2019 for the second hip replacement. The journey started out the same way as the first hip replacement. Technology is great, though, so this time, they were making a custom hip joint for Chris which would be designed to fit her actual hip and minimise the effect of what could happen. We thought that was great!

Unfortunately, at the end of the day, this was the start of our horrifying journey.

"The operation itself went really well and on discharge we said 'Is there any gap or any fee?' and the girl in accounts said 'No, you're with Police Health, you're in a good health fund - you have no gaps or fees to pay', and we walked out and said 'Gee, that's a really good feeling!

"Anyway, we were having a wonderful time until about 13-14 days post-op when my wife woke up in the early hours of the morning with extreme pain in her hip. Rather than going to A&E and sitting there for the next 10-12 hours we rang up our specialist and he said come straight into the hospital.

"There were no external indications of infection, but blood tests showed Chris was in a very advanced stage of sepsis and was immediately admitted to the ICU. The

news we were given was that if we hadn't walked into hospital that day, Chris would have been dead because the sepsis was so far advanced.

"It was a lengthy process of trial and error to kill the infection, with Chris in and out of theatre and ICU. She had the normal specialist who did the hip operation, another specialist who was like the advanced physician type of thing, and another, I called him a 'germologist' as a joke, but I think he was a microbiologist, because they were trying to work out what the bug was.

"Finally, doctors suggested a temporary hip made out of a compound of very high strong antibiotics to target and kill the germ. This would be a non-weight bearing, restrictive movement hip. We discussed our options and decided to go ahead.

"We were going okay until she got out of bed one day and slipped, they took an x-ray and found that the temporary hip had bent and twisted. The specialist offered two options: continue the current treatment or move to a rehab centre. We sat on it for about a week or two, and she was having blood test and all these other tests, and you can't help thinking, you know, what's the cost of all this?"

"Everybody kept on saying it's about quality of life, it's about getting on top of your medical condition. Don't worry about all the cost and everything else. But every night I'd go home and wonder. Finally, doctors decided Chris's body was strong enough for a permanent hip joint to be inserted.



Kym and his wife Chris have claimed over \$335,000 in benefits from their Police Health cover since 1996.

"So, it was back into theatre, back into ICU for three or four days, back into a ward and because of her journey the recovery was a bit longer, so we had a longer stay in hospital. I think all up it was January, February, March and towards April, and one of the things that was on our mind as we walked out was 'What's this going to cost?'. Well, the girl in accounts said 'There'll be no charge'.

"We looked at it; we had one of the highest recommended physicians, we had one of the best experts at the hospital, we had this microbiologist who was doing the germ analysis and everything else, yet we paid nothing.

"So once things settled down, out of interest I thought I'd go into Police Health and look at the claims and the costs. We got into three figures.

Kym and his wife Chris have claimed over \$335,000 in benefits from their Police Health cover since 1996.

"You go home and you worry about your wife; you worry about what's going on, you're worried about the medical support.

But with Police Health we weren't a number on the wall. It made that horror journey a little bit more acceptable.

"We noticed over the years that every time there was an increase in fees people would comment 'Oh it's going up \$2 or \$3'. I would always reflect on the increase, but I'd also go out and have a look at what other health funds offered and you'd come back and you'd say 'Hang on, this increase is only a coffee, you're only going to have to give up a coffee, give up a beer. But what do you give up if you actually walk away from what I call 'the family organisation'?"

"It is so relieving to say that your health fund, Police Health, is there alongside you. It's like your health fund is family so you don't want to give it up."

"When you're not in those crisis type aspects of medical care, Police Health is also a good maintenance scheduler,

because maintenance of your body is important. Use the Extras benefits. We have regular podiatrist visits and we have our teeth check-up at the dentist twice a year, and the girl there always says exactly the same thing - 'You are in Police Health, you are supported far greater than anything else'.

"It's about health, wellbeing and finding that you've got peace of mind that if things do come up, you don't need to go to a public hospital and wait for the next one, two or three years to have something done. I can make the decision to have something done, and in most cases, I'll be supported and reimbursed financially to a great extent.

"I think if you tell your story people then reflect and go 'Gee, I never thought about that, I never thought I'd be in that position.' Well, Chris and I never thought we'd ever walk down that pathway either."

Caption



A game a day keeps the doctor away: Practical applications of VR in the policing and defence industries

What if you could play *Fortnite* to **prepare** for work? **Instead** of work? **During** work? What if gaming technology evolved to a point where it merged with corporate training or physical rehabilitation in terms of its potential applications? Think of how immersive a game would be if, instead of sitting at your desk clicking and staring at a screen, you were actually inside that world running around, collecting, and exploring. And then later on, recording all game-time as a work expense.

► This is the story of how it's a question of when, not if.

SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF

I remember the first time I pulled on a virtual reality (VR) helmet. Lines and lines of space invaders started streaming across my field of vision. My guns were set to auto-fire, and the aim was controlled by moving my head. It would have (and did) looked hilarious to anyone walking past, but I wasn't thinking about "that" world at all. The graphics weren't that amazing, but all I could see was the game. Even in that early iteration of VR, I felt that I could step forward and keep walking in that world forever. It was the same extreme environment as scuba diving or a long-haul flight; you feel a little uneasy, but the mental fog of everyday life is instantly lifted. Time stands still, and you feel awake.

THE RISE OF VIDEO GAMES

In the mid-90s, games got bigger and more realistic alongside technological advances. Improvements in graphics, audio and gameplay led to arcade games like *Time Crisis* allowing people to aim a plastic weapon at enemies on the screen, and pop up or crouch down using a pedal at their feet. Players' success was a direct result of their physical coordination, reflexes and judgement.

Fast forward another twenty years, and games like *Star Wars: The Old Republic* gave players access to a massive world based on the Star Wars movie franchise.

People could explore an entire planet, interact with in-universe characters and creatures, and team up with other players to defeat particularly difficult enemies.

Another few years later, and the line between VR and computer games is getting close to disappearing... but what exactly is virtual reality?

HISTORY

The ability to virtually stimulate our senses can be traced back to the work of Charles Wheatstone, who in 1838 demonstrated that our ability to see things in three dimensions is a function of our brain's ability to process different two-dimensional images in each eye. His findings led to the development in the late 1930s of the View-Master stereoscope, with subsequent popular variants providing virtual experiences in areas such as tourism, entertainment, and educational insights.

Over time, technological development has seen the emergence of:

- virtual reality (VR),
- augmented reality (AR),
- mixed reality (MR, the combination of both VR and AR), and
- spatial augmented reality (SAR), the use of projection on to real-world objects, to create highly immersive experiences that simulate reality.

The ways in which these four technologies can be applied to policing is dizzying.

SITUATIONAL TRAINING

The Australian Research Centre for Virtual and Interactive Environments (IVE), based at the University of South Australia, is a world leader in the advancement of these immersive technologies; particularly their emergence as a tool that can support emergency services workers and future industries.

“These technologies have now reached a level of maturity that sees their use being explored across a broad range of industries – from enhancing training outcomes to better preparing first responders to deal with stressful situations and supporting rehabilitation”.

Professor Bruce Thomas,
Director of IVE

IVE are currently working closely with firefighters to understand how these technologies can better prepare them for the variety of experiences they may be exposed to. *“We are interested in supporting first responders using advancing technologies to provide a new training tool, that will better prepare future recruits with simulated scenarios and improve their resilience.”* says IVE



Associate Professor Ross Smith. Immersive training techniques that deliver a multi-sensory experience have the potential to provide greater levels of information retention, better preparing a person to be ready to perform an activity or task.



Figure 1 (left): Firefighters helmet using augmented reality to help firefighters see in smoky situations

Figure 2 (right): Ruggedised mixed reality display www.singularityhub.com/2017/06/28/this-augmented-reality-helmet-helps-firefighters-see-through-smoke-to-save-lives/

University of Melbourne PhD student Sara Khorasani, a researcher from the School of Engineering's Human-Computer Interact Team, explains that first responders have been at the forefront of training delivered by VR for some time now.

“The police and military are some of the first users of VR technology, particularly in driving simulations. They have made significant contributions to the development of VR in training for emergency driving, for example. Formula 1 drivers have been using racing simulators to train for years, and the military and flight

simulation industries are some of the first users of VR. These industries are expensive and risky, which makes VR the ideal solution. Not only does it provide a safe space to train, reducing instances of injuries sustained during training, it also provides a venue to train for scenarios that would be almost impossible to do in conventional environments. For example, most new drivers never learn how to handle a tire blowout. In a simulated emergency driving experience, a tire blowout is a click away”.

“The police and military are some of the first users of VR technology, particularly in driving simulations. They have made significant contributions to the development of VR in training for emergency driving, for example.”

Sara Khorasani,
Researcher, School of Engineering's
Human-Computer Interact Team

VIRTUAL REALITY AND PTSD

Virtual reality exposure therapy (VRET) uses the power of recreating worlds and environments that may not be safe in real life. If you read our article on the Tharwa Valley Forge a few issues ago, you'll remember reading about “exposure

therapy” for people living with PTSD – a way to get used to stressors and phobias in a controlled environment. But instead of just bashing pieces of superheated metal in a busy knifemaking forge to drown out stressful conversation, VRET can allow a much freer and ultimately more lasting treatment for unusual or complex cases.

The original causes of an individual's PTSD need to be considered during treatment; PTSD acquired through a combat situation would not feasibly be able to be treated with conventional exposure therapy. You couldn't recreate wartime in real life just for therapeutic purposes.

Enter VR and immersive worlds. Aural and visual hallmarks of a particular environment linked to the onset of PTSD can be accurately recreated (the desert, the jungle, distinctive vehicle sounds, foreign language) in a safe environment.

A study of Vietnam veterans who had PTSD showed that 8-16 sessions of VRET measurably reduced their symptoms. Six months after the study, participants reported reductions of 15-67% (source: psycnet.apa.org/record/2001-18714-007).

PREPARATORY TRAINING

But recreating a (potentially) hazardous environment doesn't only have benefits for people living with PTSD. What if you wanted to recruit someone who was a potential high-performing future member

but was terrified of flying? Or a current member who needed to deploy to a remote location but was scared of local venomous wildlife? These are two instances where VRET could measurably reduce the impact of their phobias.

VIRTUAL PHYSIOTHERAPY (PROSTHETICS AND REHABILITATION)

VR also can have tangible benefits on a person's physical recovery from injury.

Some applications of VR for rehabilitation and prosthetic limbs training include using simulations to immerse the user in an environment where they get real-time visual feedback on their movements, and adapting the experience to provide them with a personalized "optimal goal motion". This has the potential to create a "virtual fingerprint" of the user, and use their performance metrics to adapt the training experience to their specific needs.

Patients using VR therapy typically enjoy less physical irritation of their amputation sites while they are still getting used to their prosthesis.

Physiotherapy exercise translates well to the capabilities of VR by providing a virtual personal trainer to guide you through specific exercise routines for your injury. One of the most challenging things of any exercise schedule is to stick to the plan. Immersive technologies provide a new platform to make the exercise fun and engaging. Improving adherence is beneficial to recovery time, and will help people return to work faster.

COVID-19, SOCIAL DISTANCING AND THE NEW TRAINING PARADIGM

With the advent of COVID-19, working from home, teleconferencing and cloud technology have become the most visible examples of what future jobs may look like. The federal government has finally committed to rolling out fibre to the premises for every household, meaning that the NBN's potential full speeds should be available to everyone. At the same time, 5G is getting closer and closer to becoming a reality, with 6G only just a little bit further down the track.

In 5-10 years, bandwidth and speed won't be able to be understood or measured using conventional reckoning. Things will just be that fast. So what are some of the ways this capability could be harnessed?

Facebook Reality Labs is researching a concept they call "Social Teleportation". They believe that this will represent the future of both social and work life – a future where people from all around the world will "teleport" into each other's offices.

This is an emerging field of study, with many potential roadblocks. At the moment, avatars (your digital self a la *The Matrix*) do not have facial expressions, which makes communication less immersive and fluid. This is a big area for development. If (and when) they can get this to work, we'll be able to meet anyone, anywhere and find out whether they really laugh out loud at our jokes.

When you consider the potential applications of this to policing, the possibilities are endless and slightly thrilling.

It's only a matter of time. ⚡

Why we need an extra level of protection

Sgt Mick Woodburn's story

For far too long, there was no distinction under ACT law between assaulting a member of the public, and a member of ACT Policing. Members were, are and will always be targeted just for being identifiable as a police officer or PSO.

▶ The AFPA has spent years pushing to have appropriate legislation passed to at least partially mitigate the impact of members being assaulted. Earlier this year, we finally had success in having these laws drafted and enacted.

Sergeant Mick Woodburn is the first officer to be assaulted with the offender subsequently being punished under the new laws. A family man and career cop, Mick was simply responding to a call about a domestic dispute in Canberra's north when he had the displeasure of meeting Jesse Palmer.

How this arrest affected Mick, both at the time and afterwards, is best explained in his own words; what follows is his Victim Impact statement as read out in court, unabridged and in full.

Hearing such a powerful testimony (see below) highlights the reason why we needed these laws, but also why they do not go far enough.

The maximum sentence for assault police is two years, while "assault" on a police vehicle carries a maximum of five years' imprisonment. This is an inherently inadequate and lacking punishment, and we will be keenly watching the actions of the new Labor-Greens Cabinet in the ACT. Whether the Police Minister is incumbent or incoming, we expect that they make the increase to the sentencing provisions an urgent priority.

We would like to thank Mick for letting us publish his statement. ⚡

Caption



The AFPA wishes to thank Mr Dino Rossi, and the rest of the Australian Research Centre for Interactive and Virtual Environments (based at the University of South Australia) for their assistance in preparing this article.

ACT Magistrates Court Matter of Police v Jesse PALMER (14/04/1991)	CC2020/9232 – Assault Frontline Community Service Provider Victim Impact Statement – Sergeant Mick WOODBURN	
Mr Palmer, Early on the morning of Sunday 2 August 2020, I was working as a community police officer here in Canberra. I have performed this role for 12 years and take great pride in helping to keep our community safe. That night, you assaulted your neighbour, threatened to kill him while brandishing a knife and damaged his property, resulting in my attendance at your residence. I deal with members of the public every day. And like them, I treated you with courtesy, respect and dignity despite your behaviour and the circumstances of the call for service from your neighbour. I maintained my professionalism in the face of your aggression while you and your brother challenged me to fight, called me a dickhead, a faggot, a f***ing retard, a c**t and a dog c**t before you eventually spat in my face in an entirely unprovoked attack.	I consider spitting in someone's face to be both a disgusting and inherently disrespectful act. As we all deal with the Covid-19 global pandemic and resurgence of positive cases here in Australia, I have no doubt these factors were in your mind at the time that you first blew in my face and subsequently spat in my face. Within days of being spat on by you, I developed flu like symptoms which required Covid-19 testing and two days of isolation from my workplace and family. Thankfully my test result was negative and although it is not likely you made me sick, I find it challenging to disassociate the assault from my subsequent illness. I am a committed worker, husband, father and colleague and deserve to be extended basic common decency of any person doing	their job. I do not believe that our community respects the challenging work of a community police officer. This was reflected in your actions that morning and is also reflected in the Territory's offence provisions which provide no difference in the statutory penalty regime between a common assault and the assault of a frontline community service provider just doing their job. Both of these are minor offences punishable by a maximum term of imprisonment of two years. I believe this is inadequate recognition of the dangers faced by our frontline workers when keeping our community safe. I respectfully ask that the court refer to the AFP Body Worn Camera (BWC) footage which has been made available in order to understand the challenges we face on a day to day basis. Respectfully, Mick WOODBURN - AFP Sergeant

Sergeant Mick Woodburn's Victim Impact Statement as read out in the ACT Magistrates Court

2020 AFP All Staff Survey:

What's next?

The results are in – 61 per cent of the workforce participated in the 2020 AFP All Staff Survey, with more than 4200 responses received. The staff survey is an important and critical mechanism that allows ongoing conversation between the workforce and Senior Executives.

▶ Much of the survey findings are consistent with 2018 outcomes, however there are improvements around recognition of employees, and the direction set by the Commissioner in respect to the 2020 and Beyond strategy (particularly supporting the frontline and reducing red tape).

The survey findings highlighted key strengths perceived by the workforce to include execution of roles, visibility of the Commissioner's leadership, trust in supervisors and work group performance. However, opportunities for improvement include trust in senior leadership (including stability in roles), fairness and transparency in recruitment processes, inclusive culture, negative unsworn sentiment in respect to their value, and career development. The need to continue red tape reduction initiatives was also strongly emphasised.

The survey results provide a baseline on which to measure the AFP's performance over the course of the next twelve months as the organisation works toward the AFP's Cultural Health Framework. This framework is committed to achieving an AFP that advocates and showcases growth and learning; is inclusive of leadership at all levels; promotes values-based behaviour; and one that has sound workforce composition and design.

On publishing the results in November, Commissioner Kershaw thanked all members who 'took 20' and participated in the survey. He said "I will take the time to reflect on your comments, and I will commit to coming back to you to consider further strategies and initiatives to address issues raised, which we will again measure in 2021 when we once again ask you to have your say."

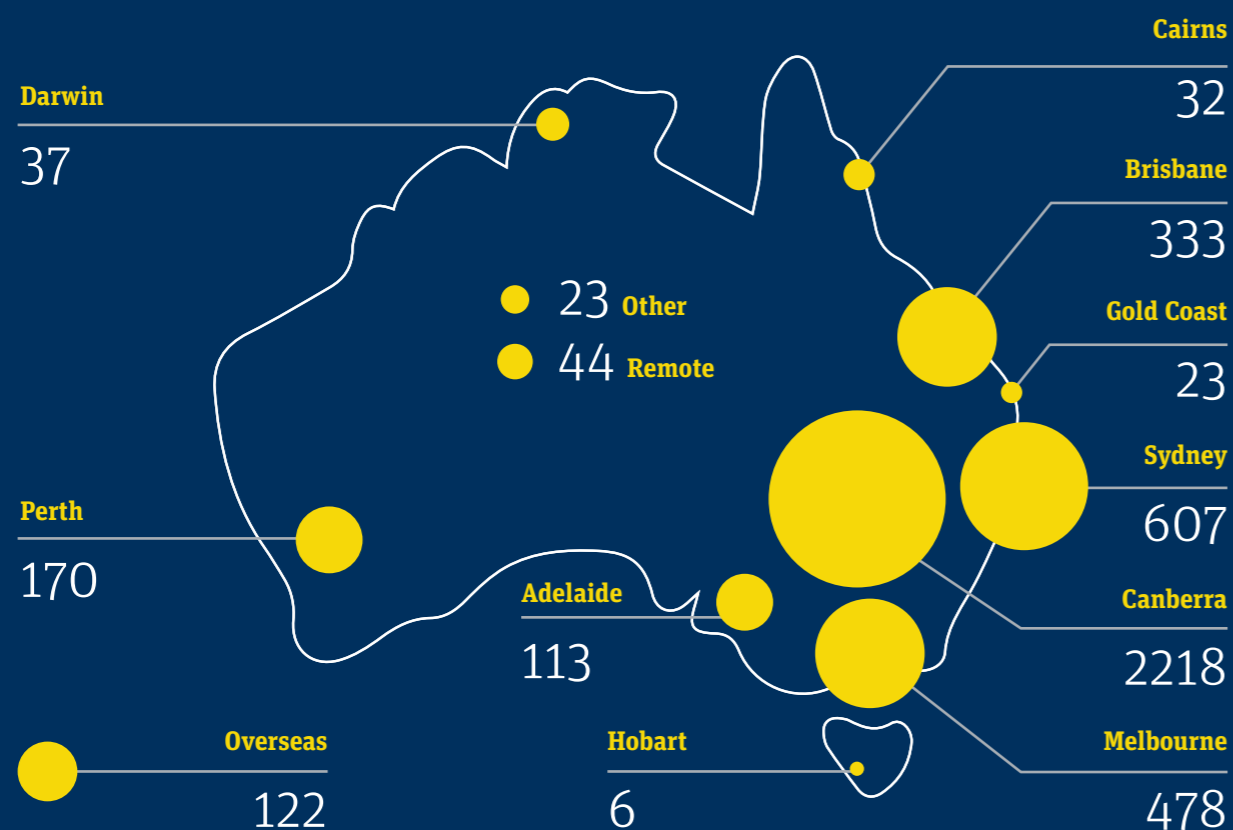
A recommendations paper is near finalisation which will address key issues identified, and the course of action that will be taken. This will include a range of strategies and initiatives, including workforce engagement actions.

To track the progress of initiatives and changes introduced following the 2020 All Staff Survey, pulse surveys and focus groups will also be conducted in 2021. This pulse check will capture a snapshot of the workforce's views post-implementation of recommendations. It will be an opportunity for you to have your say and rate the Senior Executive's performance in response to the 2020 survey, and let them know how they did. ◀

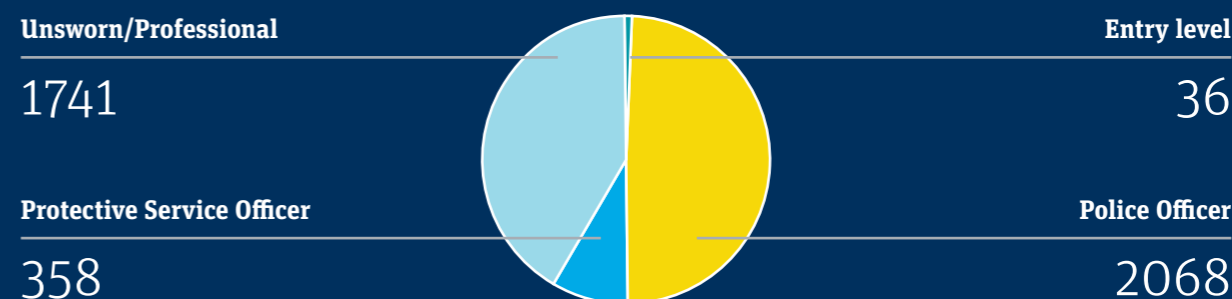
We encourage you to visit the 2020 All Staff Survey hub page for updates.

Total Number of responses: 4,206

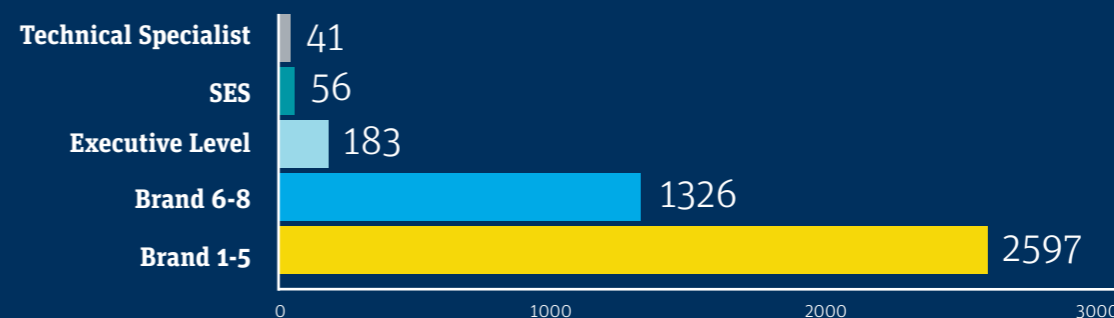
Breakdown of respondents by LOCATION



Breakdown of respondents by EMPLOYEE TYPE*



Breakdown of respondents by RANK*



* Totals by employee type and rank do not equal 4,206 due to blank information fields.

Workplace injuries and compensation claims

What You Need To Know



By Nadia Baker, Compensation Lawyer at Carroll & O'Dea Lawyers

IF I SUFFER AN INJURY DURING TREATMENT FOR A WORK RELATED INJURY, CAN I MAKE A CLAIM?

An AFPA member / Federal Police officer with an existing workers compensation claim who is injured while obtaining a medical certificate; receiving medical treatment; participating in a rehabilitation program; or undertaking a medical examination or rehabilitation assessment may have an entitlement to claim compensation pursuant to the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988.

WHAT IF I AM INJURED UNDERTAKING A GYM PROGRAM FOR MY EXISTING WORKERS COMPENSATION CLAIM?

If the gym program is approved by and arranged by your employer's rehabilitation case manager you may be entitled to make a claim for compensation pursuant to the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 as an AFPA member / Federal Police officer.

WHAT IF I AM INJURED TRAVELLING FROM WORK TO A MEDICAL OR OTHER APPOINTMENT FOR MY WORK RELATED INJURY?

An AFPA member / Federal Police officer with an existing workers compensation claim who is injured while travelling between work and another place for the purpose of obtaining a medical certificate; receiving medical treatment; undergoing a rehabilitation program; or undertaking a medical examination or rehabilitation assessment may make a claim for compensation pursuant to the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988.

WHAT IF I AM INJURED TRAVELLING FROM HOME TO A MEDICAL OR OTHER APPOINTMENT FOR MY WORK RELATED INJURY?

An AFPA member / Federal Police officer with an existing workers compensation claim who is injured while travelling between their home and another place for the purpose of obtaining a medical certificate; receiving medical treatment; undergoing a rehabilitation program; or undertaking a medical examination or rehabilitation assessment may not make a claim for compensation pursuant to the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988.

WHAT IF I CONTRACT COVID-19 WHILE ATTENDING MEDICAL TREATMENT AS PART OF MY EXISTING WORKERS COMPENSATION CLAIM?

It is unlikely you would be entitled to compensation if you contract COVID-19 while attending medical treatment as part of your existing claim.

WHAT CAN I CLAIM?

You may have an entitlement to claim the following:

1. Payment of your reasonable medical treatment and rehabilitation.
2. Payment of weekly payments of compensation where you are suffering a total or partial incapacity to undertake your pre-injury work.
3. A lump sum for permanent impairment and non-economic loss, where the work injury results in a whole person permanent impairment of 10% as medically assessed under the Comcare guidelines. This assessment cannot be made until your injuries have stabilised.
4. In rarer cases, benefits such as the cost of domestic care.

HOW DO I MAKE A CLAIM?

An AFPA member / Federal Police officer should complete the "Workers' Compensation Claim Form" and your doctor would complete a "Certificate of Incapacity". Both forms are available on the Comcare website.

If you are claiming compensation for a psychological injury you must also prepare a statement outlining the events that contributed to your injury.

Both forms and any attached documents should then be submitted to the AFP who will lodge your claim with Comcare.

Comcare will then start investigating your claim.

Comcare will likely require you to attend an independent medical examination prior to a determination being made on your claim.



Have you been left out of a will?

Carroll & O'Dea's Lawyers have extensive experience and expertise in relation to estate disputes, both challenging and defending wills. We also have extensive experience in drafting and reviewing powers of attorney, enduring guardian documents, acting for executors, beneficiaries and claimants, mediations of estate disputes, and disputes regarding superannuation, trusts and other property. A discounted rate on wills and related documents is offered to all AFPA members.

1800 059 278 enquiry@codea.com.au
www.codea.com.au

NO WIN. NO FEE. NO OBLIGATION.

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation. ©Carroll & O'Dea Lawyers
 Level 18, St James Centre, 111 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, New South Wales, 2000

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I HAVE RECEIVED A DETERMINATION FROM COMCARE BUT I DO NOT AGREE WITH IT

If you disagree with Comcare's determination, you can apply to Comcare for a reconsideration of that determination within thirty (30) days.

If you disagree with the decision made following your request for reconsideration, you have sixty (60) days to appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

If you receive a decision in your favour from the AAT you will be entitled to claim part of your costs from Comcare. These costs are known as "Party/Party" costs. In most cases there will be a gap between the Solicitor/Client costs and the Party/party costs, which will be payable by you.

I WAS NOT SUCCESSFUL IN THE AAT – WHAT DO I DO NOW?

Once you receive a decision from the AAT you have 28 days to file an appeal in the Federal Court of Australia (FCA). An appeal to the FCA can only be made on a question of law. Your solicitor and barrister will advise you whether an appeal of the AAT decision has reasonable prospects of success.

Carroll and O'Dea Lawyers have extensive experience in acting in claims for compensation against Comcare for AFPA members / Federal Police officers and in many cases can act on a no-win-no-fee basis and cover medical report costs.

**Carroll & O'Dea Lawyers | Level 18, St James Centre, 111 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, New South Wales, 2000
 Phone: (02) 9291 7100 | <https://www.codea.com.au>**



Surviving Christmas

when you just don't feel the holiday spirit.

If there's one time of year that's the most trying for police officers (and their families), it's the holidays. All your friends are well and truly in leisure mode, enjoying their two (or more) weeks off. The kids are off school for a couple of months, and the social invites are pouring in.

▶ And because you have to say no to a large portion of them or, at least, watch your family go alone, you feel bad. Guilt is an issue that officers have to deal with year-round, but especially when your people have time off work.

While they all respond, "it's okay, I know you have to work", that doesn't make the feeling of guilt subside. It's important to recognise that it's normal to feel this way and communicate your concerns with your loved ones. While nothing can make up for the sadness you might experience missing out on these special catch ups and Christmas Day, there are strategies that can help you cope.

YOUR 'GUIDE' TO SURVIVING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON.

From the stress of your 'off' days becoming social activities and the financial burden of compensating (with gifts) to manage guilt and planning for the year ahead, there's a lot of moving parts that make Christmas time a challenge for police officers.

Your mates are hanging at the pub and your family is doing activities without you. And the days you do have off, you feel you have to maximise to 'make up' for lost time. This can exacerbate these negative feelings, simply because you're not putting your health first.

If we have one piece of advice, it's this: look after yourself. If you're starting your shifts already tired and not feeling your best, it's going to become way more challenging.

KNOW YOUR 'WHY'... AND BE GRATEFUL FOR IT.

This is a great time to revisit why you got into the force in the first place. To help others, to become an advocate for your

community, and to fight injustice. Even taking 15 minutes at the start of each day is a great way to 'check in' with yourself, think about anything you're struggling with, or resisting, and to empower yourself.

We know that one of the simplest things you can do to increase your happiness is to show gratitude. There have been countless studies about how gratitude can change your perspective and, in turn, your life. In the long list of scientifically-proven benefits*, gratitude improves psychological and physical health, increases empathy (and reduces aggression), and boosts your self-esteem. People who show daily gratitude also sleep better and are open to developing more connections – two extremely important tools for healthy police officers.

PLAN YOUR VERY OWN CHRISTMAS.

We started with focusing on you first for a reason – and it's not just because you step into a community-service role every day. By ensuring you're in a good headspace through a daily practice of gratitude and 'you' time, you can start to break down society's 'rules.'

If you let your mind run in circles every time a friend asks you to meet up but you're working, you'll find yourself fall into victim mode. 'Why do I always have to miss out on all the fun events', you'll think to yourself. Showing gratitude will help mitigate this, so you can realign your thoughts positively.

Ask yourself, 'do I need to miss out on Christmas just because I have to work on Christmas Day'. You don't actually have to 'miss out'. And to help you realise this, make plans. A day is just a day – it's the Christmas spirit you're really yearning

for. So, round up the family (and close friends), and make your own celebrations. Simply by replacing the day won't change the energy of the season.

Communication is your key for getting through this. Encourage your partner and kids to talk about their feelings and concerns. Ask them what they'd like to do and what they miss the most about you working on Christmas Day. Sit your kids down and explain to them the reasons why you have to work during Christmas. Even if they're too young to understand, there are ways to do this – with a little police vs. 'bad guys' role play, for example.

And, you've got a secret wild card that you can pull out: the double Christmas. What kid doesn't want to celebrate Christmas twice? Your partner and kids can enjoy the 25th with the extended family and then have a second one at home, with you there. This is a great way to do it because no one misses out and this will reduce any feelings of guilt. While you might have to reschedule those big group catch ups, you can see your close friends one-on-one.

GRIEF (TANGIBLE & INTANGIBLE) & DEPRESSION.

Christmas takes our minds down memory lane. It can resurrect negative emotions and make us feel alone, especially if you've recently lost a loved one. The holidays can remind us of how great this time of year was when certain people were in our lives. Maybe you've recently lost a parent or are going through a divorce.

Depression and coping with feelings of loss (both tangible and intangible) are common at Christmas time. When they return, it's important to stop and regroup. Take steps to prevent this lull and learn

to recognise your triggers. They could be personal demands, financial pressures or feelings of loneliness.

We suggest trying these strategies.

- ▶ **Acknowledge your feelings:** If you've experienced a recent loss, understand that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. Don't be afraid to express your feelings and reach out for support. You don't need to force yourself to 'be happy', just because it's the holiday season. Seek out community for support and companionship.
- ▶ **Be realistic:** Families grow and change, so do traditions and rituals. Some will always be close to your heart, but make room to create new memories.
- ▶ **Set aside your differences:** Do your best to accept family members and friends just as they are (like you'd expect them to do for you). The holidays tend to increase our stress, so understand if others are upset or out of character.
- ▶ **Stick to a budget:** It's easy to spend a lot during this time of year. The presents, food and drinks, and regular catch ups can blow out your usual budget. Plan to spend a little more this season but know what you can afford. Avoid the avalanche of gifts.
- ▶ **Don't abandon healthy habits:** We know, it's easy to do. But, being conscious about your health during the busiest times of year will help avoid overindulging (and the stress that always follows it). Make sure you have healthy snacks close by, get plenty of sleep and incorporate regular physical activity into each day.

HEALTHY TOOLS TO COPE WITH YOUR EMOTIONS (AND WHAT YOU WITNESS ON THE JOB).

The tragedies you might experience during the holidays carry a heavier weight. Christmas is a time when families unite in love and appreciation for one another. So, nothing will soften the impact of arriving at the scene of a fatality that involves young children. Even more so, at this time of year.

It's critical for officers to learn what coping tools you can tap into to help you process these levels of emotions. Alcohol can seem like a quick resolution, especially as it's a time where we can consume it more often. But a liquid substance will only serve as a temporary distraction and an artificial solution to a deeper problem.

There are various coping strategies that you can adopt that will differ from person to person. For example, some coping tools include educating yourself about PTSD, finding supportive connections, and spending time with people who love you. As for emotional and physical strategies, you can practice mindfulness, exercise, keep a journal, and see a counsellor.

Recognise your triggers, both internal and external, as well as your lifestyle risks. The tips that usually work for everyone include:

- Avoiding drugs & alcohol
- Getting enough sleep
- Exercising everyday
- Eating a balanced, nutritious diet
- Limiting caffeine
- Reducing screen time (particularly social media)
- Keeping good company (not isolating yourself).

*<https://www.forbes.com/sites/amymorin/2014/11/23/7-scientificallly-proven-benefits-of-gratitude-that-will-motivate-you-to-give-thanks-year-round/?sh=670f498c183c>



Police Health CEO Scott Williams is the son of a police officer, and he understands implicitly the need to have a health fund tailored for the policing industry.



Police Health Chairman Peter Shanahan is committed to securing the best value health insurance for AFPA members.

ACT Policing Musters

October 2020

In October, members of the AFPA National Office were able to resume in-person musters across the five ACT Policing stations. We were able to meet with a wide range of members across Bands 1-8, and were supported on the days by our tireless Delegates.

Belconnen Station: Legal Manager Matt Peterson discusses industrial issues with a member.



▶ Canberra's community police stations are quite varied in their layouts and capabilities; some new and spacious, while others are cramped and in dire need of repairs. These differences to some degree dictate members' concerns and priorities, however there were consistent themes and grievances that were discussed during the musters.

We've taken the below list of concerns and formed a series of talking points and questions for our interview with the ACTP CPO, DC Neil Gaughan. We'd also strongly encourage you to read our update on Operation Recognition, for some explanatory material on the EA process.

By the time this issue is published, we will also have conducted musters in the Sydney and Brisbane offices, and we will provide an update from these as well in the next issue. ◀

THE TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ Resourcing, with the talk of new stations
- ▶ "True" staffing levels to be addressed
- ▶ Wages
- ▶ The next Enterprise Agreement
- ▶ Losing staff to National
- ▶ General feeling of being "stuck" in ACTP
- ▶ Mental health / Family Violence jobs and debriefs afterwards
- ▶ Composites to reward / recognise the burden of shift work in ACTP
- ▶ Member welfare, workloads and WHS
- ▶ Training and career progression within ACTP
- ▶ Lack of experience within teams

In between musters, please firstly address any concerns with your Delegate, or otherwise contact the AFPA office on (02) 62851677 or afpa@afpa.org.au.

Tuggeranong Station. A large part of this muster was our presentation on the ACT Election. Members here are seen referring to the ACT Election "traffic lights" prepared by the AFPA, detailing each party's commitments and policies.



A sit-down with DC Neil Gaughan

After our recent ACT Policing musters, we came away with several urgent questions from members relating to their current work environments, and what they could reasonably expect in 2021 and beyond.

▶ As ACT Policing's Chief Police Officer, and the AFP's Lead Negotiator for the next industrial agreement, DC Gaughan wears two very large hats. How exactly has he been managing these roles, and what are his immediate, medium-, and longer-term goals for community policing and the industrial framework of the AFP?

We met DC Gaughan in his office at HQ in early November and would like to thank him for his time in answering the below questions.

Staffing levels for ACT Policing teams are regularly quoted as being at 10 and 1. These figures don't take into account those members on leave, in court, completing paperwork, or otherwise taken away from being on the road. Such absences are part of everyday policing and are unavoidable – so why are staffing levels not adjusted to accommodate them? We have heard reports that the actual figure (for some teams) maybe 3 and 1. Is this something that members just have to accept?

No, it's not something that they just have to accept. Police numbers are a matter for government, and we have an agreement that we're in the process of renegotiating at the moment. So obviously (police numbers) will be a part of that discussion. One thing I've got to do as CPO is free up some of those resources that get tied up in doing things that they shouldn't be doing.

You mentioned court appearances. The Chief Magistrate and I have had a conversation, and she agrees that we need to free up resources. Could that mean we introduce Simple Offence Notices across a broad range of activities, instead of just what we do at the moment? Such as low range PCA, shoplifting, and minor criminal damage?

We're talking about upwards of 700 court attendances that we think we could knock off through SONs. That would certainly free up resources.

The other thing is brief preparation. At the moment we pretty much do a full standard of brief for every criminal offence. Could we instead just do a statement of facts? For example, with instances of suicide, we follow a murder-level standard when preparing

the brief. So, the win here would be process simplification. Do we move to online reporting of crime; instead of attending "minor criminality", we don't send an officer and free up those resources.

Now, the number "3 and 1" hasn't been specifically mentioned to me. I know that frontline officers are concerned about resources, but so is crime. We just need to find the balance.

We will look at this balance over the next couple of months with the incoming ACT government.

With Canberra growing steadily, through new suburbs and redevelopment of existing areas, the number of people living in the Territory is increasing substantially. How will the resourcing of ACT Policing stations be tailored to address this growth and shift, and how will potential new stations be staffed and resourced without negatively impacting existing stations?

Again, the staffing issue is a matter for government. There is an accommodation plan currently being worked on, which will look at police stations across the Territory over the next twenty years. So at the moment, there's no concrete strategic plan. The plan will be finished by the end of this month, and it will then be lodged for discussion and consideration by the government.

You'll note with the fires for instance, they have a pretty good structural plan for when new fire stations are going to be built.

If I look at Canberra's geographical size, comparatively speaking it's not really big. I think five police stations is enough. The question I ask is, are those stations in the right place? Part of the process around the accommodation plan will determine exactly where those police stations should be, noting how much Canberra is growing. If you look at the ACT's borders, we can't go any further north, we really can't go any further west, and we certainly can't go any further east!

So, are they in the right spot? For instance, Woden station is in the centre of the shopping precinct. Is that the right place for it, or should it be further west?

Would it be better located at Weston Creek, or somewhere like that? Same with Belconnen, it's in the town centre but is that where the population is?

So that's what we've got to think through. I think City Station needs to stay where it is - you need a presence in the city. But again, Tuggeranong Station is to the west of Tuggeranong town centre - would it be better-placed somewhere else?

So the accommodation place will look at questions like these. We'll work with ACT Planning around whether there is any vacant land, but I don't think the question is so much the number of police stations, rather it's where they are located.

We are now moving fairly swiftly towards a vote for or against an extension to the EA. Are you committed to getting this in place ASAP? What are some of the factors complicating the move to the next agreement?

I think that the biggest impediment to significant industrial change (in the AFP) is the Workplace Bargaining Policy. It really does lock us into a process. The Enterprise Agreement itself is well over 20 years old. It's probably not fit for purpose in relation to the way the organisation has evolved.

An extension in lieu of bargaining is a good outcome under the current restrictions on the EA (being the WBP). In the current economic environment, a guaranteed 2% annually over three years is not a bad outcome.

The staff will determine what they want, and I think the challenge for us then as an organisation is to work across government to get an exemption for the AFP from the WBP, so in 2023 we can create an industrial agreement reflective of a modern police force.

ACT Policing lost about 80 staff during Taskforce Horizon to National teams. What is being done to replace the numbers and experience lost?

ACT didn't lose any overall. The 80 that we lost were replaced. But there is obviously a question of experience, and that has been a concern since I started with ACTP in 1984. We've always been a bit of a "supplier" of experienced officers to National.

We are looking at whether we can consider a lateral course for ACTP only; this is being worked through at the moment. What that would allow is an influx of experienced officers in one course, about 20 members or so, with 4-5 worked into each ACTP station.

That's the strategy we're considering at the moment - we want to offer people the opportunity of doing things outside of ACT Policing. The other thing we want to do is to start recruiting from the regions. What we find at the moment is there are police all

around Australia who ultimately want to go back to where they came from. If we can recruit people from the region, whether that's down in Albury, Bateman's Bay, Goulburn - if they want to go home, it's only an hour's drive.

So those are the two strategies I believe we need to look at when we're talking about staffing and experience in ACTP. Local recruiting, and potentially a lateral program targeting people who live around here.

We heard from those members who love community policing in Canberra but are still seeing ACTP being treated as the "poor cousin" to National. They've suggested a stint ACTP being a required first stop after the College, with then clear options / pathways to either careers in National or ACTP (depending on the member's own preference), with those choosing to stay in ACTP being recognised with extra composites appropriate to community policing and shift/dangerous work. What would be your comments here?

This gets down to the whole issue of the Enterprise Agreement not being fit for a modern police force. The Commissioner does have a view that frontline officers need to be supported, and he's made that pretty clear through his objectives.

But we can't do that with the current EA. For me, the next few years will be asking "What does a new agreement look like - does it have some clauses or mechanism(s) where we can reward members on shift work, on the frontline?". They're the sort of things we need to have some conversations about.

So, my plan is, after Easter, basically going around talking to staff about what they want. Having "without prejudice" conversations to facilitate open and frank discussions, because we need to get this right and fair for frontline staff.

Members are telling us of their exhaustion with the amount of mental health and family violence jobs they are dealing with. Is there anything you can do as CPO to mitigate this (even partially), in terms of planning or staffing?

That's a really good question, and I think 80% of police attendance doesn't result in a crime (being processed). It just goes to show you how many resources are tied up with those two areas particularly. Mental health - the feedback from the troops is that PACER is perhaps the best thing that has ever happened in that environment. I had a conversation with the Minister last week - there will be a commitment there for the long-term. So I think we can tick off PACER as something that is here to stay, and as something that will have significant benefits to ACT Policing.

Family violence is another real challenge for us, and again something we get dragged into as police officers when it's probably not an issue that we should be dealing with in the first place. So we're looking at a model using a "hub" approach.



It's similar to PACER, insofar that it would be a collaborative approach bringing all of those within the family violence area together to work on a solution to a problem. We've trialled it twice in the last couple of months, and it's had fantastic results.

It's about getting to those victims before they become victims. At this early stage, it's not yet a policing issue, but maybe a housing or health issue. And all of these providers are in this (planned) family violence hub.

The other consideration is dealing with the perpetrators and ensuring they don't just move from one victim to the next (because that's what they do). We've got to put programs in place to deal with them. And that's where we see a role for us in there. The question is then whether we divert them to Menslink (as an example) or some other process that stops them offending, or whether they are arrested and charged.

This is a discussion we are having with the government now, and we hope that they can commit some resources to it.

I want to free up all of the officers that have 80% of their time taken up with things that don't result in a crime or an arrest, so that they can focus on criminality.

Canberra's a safe city, but there is an underlying problem with serious crime committed by the same people over and over again. We're focusing our resources on this top end of criminality.

What do you think the ACTP CPO's role could be like in 5-10 years' time? How do you see Canberra changing?

Canberra is obviously going to become even bigger. The way we police the Territory is going to change substantially in the next 5-10 years. I say that mainly because of urban density and populations living within a relatively small area.

Where I see the role of CPO, particularly if it remains a substantive DC position, is exerting influence across government. I am involved in meetings across all of the Directorates - speaking to other Directors and helping to shape some of the decision-making across the broad ACT government.

Deputy Commissioner Neil Gaughan. Image provided courtesy of ACT Policing



Understanding refinancing

Refinancing is often overlooked because it's seen as too difficult. There may be hidden fees and costs. How do you know that you're saving in the long run? It all comes down to understanding the benefits and challenges of refinancing – the most common ones we've listed below. By having this knowledge you can make the right decision for your circumstances and we will be here to help put more money in your pockets.

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FILM REVIEW

A Conversation About Mental Health: The Girl On The Bridge

How do we talk about suicide?

How do we encourage young people to open up about their mental health? As part of Mental Health Week (Oct 10-17), a new documentary *The Girl On The Bridge* will grace Australian screens, wading headfirst into that important conversation.

▶ The film features twenty-two year old Jazz Thornton, who survived multiple suicide attempts and is now taking on a system she believes is failing her generation, including founding her own charity to support young people struggling as she once did.

The Girl On The Bridge will release for the first time in Australia from October 10 to coincide with Mental Health Week (October 10-17). The film will be available to watch online and in select cinemas nationally, and offers a unique 'way in' for businesses, communities and organisations who wish to have a sensitive discussion about mental health or connect with the struggles of younger people but are unsure how.

"The girl on the bridge is me. I was once attempting to take my life. But now I'm trying to build a bridge between the experience of people who are suffering and the understanding of those around them... Having people who know what you are going through and who are willing to be there for you is key. So, if we can understand what someone needs when they're struggling, then we will feel so much more confident and willing to reach out and help. And that'll make a difference. It's something we can all do."

Jazz Thornton

ABOUT JAZZ THORNTON

Having overcome childhood abuse and 14 suicide attempts, Jazz Thornton has now dedicated her life to speaking hope and creating change in the area of mental health.

She grew up in Timaru, New Zealand, moving to Auckland when she was 16. She struggled with mental health for as long as she can remember. As a child she had trouble regulating her emotions and as she got older this became increasingly worse. Finally when she was 20 she had a conversation that pivoted her life – and her first book, *Stop Surviving Start Fighting*, published by Penguin, is based on this conversation.

In 2017 Jazz began studying film and television where she directed her first short film *Dear Suicidal Me*. The film went viral, being shared on international media around the world and gaining over 80 million views. Not long after that Jazz became the youngest New Zealander to win the annual Doc Edge pitching contest where she pitched her first series idea *Jessica's Tree*, which she went on to direct. The five-part series won the Best Web Series award at the Huawei NZ TV Awards, a gold award at the International New York Film Festival, and festival awards in Barcelona, Copenhagen and Toronto—15 in total.

She co-founded *Voices of Hope*, a non-profit organization which aims to create and implement change for mental health, whilst providing hope through the voices of those with lived experience. Through advocacy, campaigning and storytelling, *Voices of Hope* produces strategy and content with intent to influence global, communal and individual change.

Jazz was a semi-finalist for Young New Zealander of the Year in 2019, spoke at the UN's *Speak Your Mind* event during the General Assembly in September 2019, and had coffee with Prince Harry and Meghan Markle to discuss mental health in 2018. Her unique experience and practical message has gained worldwide recognition, being shared through media, international speaking engagements and now through *The Girl on the Bridge*.



ABOUT THE FILM

Classification: M

Genre: Documentary

Website: thegirlonthebridgefilm.com.au

Trailer: [The Girl on the Bridge | Official Trailer](#) (on YouTube))

Key Demographic: Teenagers and their parents

Director: Leanne Pooley

Synopsis: *The Girl On The Bridge*, directed by award winning New Zealand filmmaker Leanne Pooley is a glimpse into a world few of us comprehend. This documentary is a response to our collective anguish about the suicide crisis in our communities

and our desire to "do something". Twenty-two year old Jazz Thornton survived multiple suicide attempts and is now taking on a system she believes is failing her generation, founding her own charity to support young people struggling as she once did. Shot over a two year period, *Girl On The Bridge* follows Jazz as she increasingly finds herself the face of the suicide epidemic unfolding around her. Young people and their families turn to her in desperation asking her to "save" them. She juggles the pressure of their expectations while doing all she can to change the societal prejudices that helped create the problem in the first place. This is a film about hope. It's a film about redemption. *The Girl On The Bridge* is a challenge to all of us to try to understand.

DIRECTOR'S QUOTE

"[The film gives] a deeper understanding of what it means to BE suicidal and how we as a society can respond to those around us who are struggling... I don't believe *The Girl On The Bridge* answers all the questions we face when discussing suicide, but it goes some way to articulating what those questions are. It is a documentary that finds hope through understanding."

Leanne Pooley

HERITAGE FILMS
— MEDIA RELEASE —

This review has been provided by Heritage Films

Heritage Films are happy to offer AFPA members an exclusive 20% discount off ticket prices for *The Girl on the Bridge*.

Just use the code **AFPA20** when purchasing tickets at www.movieschangepeople.com/titles/the-girl-on-the-bridge

***The Girl On The Bridge* will release for the first time in Australia from October 10 to coincide with Mental Health Week (October 10-17). The film will be available to watch online and in select cinemas nationally.**

 **BOOK REVIEW**

Mummy Wears Blue Shoes

By Scott Furlong

A strong, powerful, illustrated children’s book that looks at how difficult it can be to have to deal with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder within a family unit. A book that shows how to talk about this mental health illness with young children while using shoes as a metaphor for feelings



► Emily is five years old. She wears pink ballerina shoes and wants to be a ballerina when she grows up. Emily’s mummy and daddy are both special police officers called detectives. Lately, Emily has noticed that her mummy hasn’t been spending time with her. She has stopped taking her to dancing lessons and her older brother, Jackson, to his rugby lessons. One night, Emily sees her mummy crying on the sofa being comforted by her daddy. At a family meeting Emily learns that her mummy is poorly with something that the doctor calls Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. **Mummy Wears Blue Shoes** is a heart-warming story about a family who are living with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It is a story written about a family, for families, by a family, by author Scott Furlong with illustrations by his cousin Emma Cahill.

Scott Furlong has written **Mummy Wears Blue Shoes** drawing on his own experiences of PTSD, to provide support for families living with PTSD and depression, to provide a conversation starter that parents can have with their children and family so they can understand why the family dynamic has changed, and that it is going to be alright, and to provide comfort and reassurance to children and families. This book is a good stepping stone into talking to children about PTSD, but also to allow them to understand that it is okay to talk about their feelings in a supportive and safe environment.

Mummy Wears Blue Shoes is the perfect book for families who are living with post-traumatic stress disorder. However, it is also a book that could open up the idea of all mental health issues which is important to tackle at an early stage to break down the stigma. This book would also appeal to families who work in policing and emergency services. ◀

About the Author:

Scott Furlong resides in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia on a 10-acre equine property. He medically retired from the Queensland Police Service after 20 years’ service with PTSD and Depression in December 2019. He was a detective for 18 years and worked in Homicide, Outlaw Motorcycle Gang Task Force, Organised Crime and Officer in Charge of a Criminal Investigation Branch. He is currently studying a Bachelor of Law and a Master of Professional Studies (Research). His love of learning didn’t develop until he was in his early 40s. Scott’s wife was also a detective and worked in child protection. In 2011, she also medically retired from QPS with PTSD. They have one son who is 14 years old. Scott has a great love for reading and writing. He also loves cooking and sports.

Mummy Wears Blue Shoes is Scott’s debut novel.

Mummy Wears Blue Shoes by Scott Furlong (published by Clink Street Publishing 27th August 2020 RRP £9.99 paperback £2.39 e-book) is available to purchase from online retailers including Amazon and to order from all good bookstores.

Be Your Own Super Hero – Stay Super Informed

In your line of work information is key, right? You have the community in mind when you make decisions every day, but when is the last time you thought about your future self, and your superannuation savings?

Super information gives you power! Here’re some useful topics to help you manage and keep track of your super. It’s never too early to start saving for retirement but it’s never too late to take control and grow it! Now is a good time for a refresh, or deep dive into your super.

ATO ONLINE SERVICES – SUPER IN YOUR HANDS

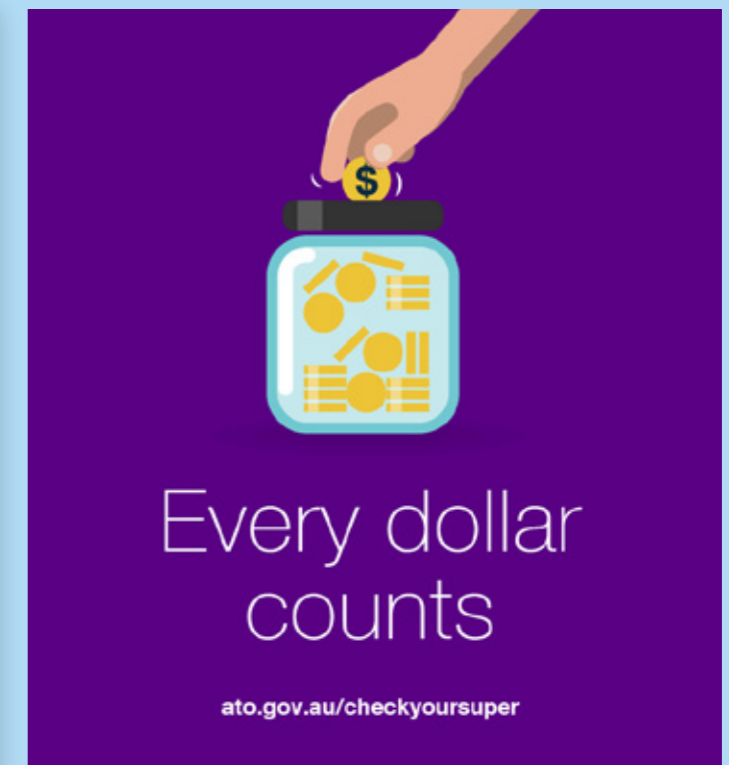
The Australian Tax Office (ATO) manages aspects of Australia’s super system. You can check your super accounts and balances using ATO online services via myGov. If you ever changed your name, moved houses, lived overseas, or changed jobs, you might even find super accounts you have forgotten about.

More than one super account could mean you’re paying multiple unnecessary fees, leaving less money for your future. It’s worth checking how many accounts you have and consider consolidating amounts into one...Simply log on your myGov account linked to the ATO and select ‘Super’ from the menu tab at the top of the ATO online services homepage.

With ATO online services via myGov, it’s quite simple to manage your super.

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Billing Address:	
Postal Address:	
Send via: <input type="checkbox"/> Internal Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Express Post (\$15) <input type="checkbox"/> Hold for Collection	

SECTION 2: ORDER DETAILS

Item	Cost inc. GST (\$)	Qty	Total (\$)
AFP Coloured Shield Plaque	\$70		
AFP Australia Plaque	\$70		
AFP Plaque (Glass)	\$65		
AFP Plaque (Pewter)	\$60		
AFP Coaster Set	\$37		
AFP Cuff Links	\$25		
AFP Gloss Mug	\$20		
AFP Pen	\$20		
AFP Key Ring	\$12		
AFP Stubby Holder	\$9		
AFP Tie Tac (coloured, silver, gold)	\$7		
AFPA Soft Shell vest	\$60		
AFPA Silk Woven Tie	\$25		
AFPA Tie Bar	\$12		
AFPA Lapel Pin	\$7		
AFPA Stubby Holder	\$7		
AFPA Eco Cup	\$15		
		Subtotal:	
		Express Post (\$15):	
		Total (\$):	

SECTION 3: PAYMENT DETAILS

Payment Type: <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> Mastercard <input type="checkbox"/> AMEX <input type="checkbox"/> Please invoice me	
Card Number:	Name on Card:
Expiry:	CCV:

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Tie Tac (coloured, silver, gold) | \$7.00

AFPA Merchandise items



AFPA Soft Shell vest | \$60.00



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