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Executive Editor

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Magazine cover

October
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Alex Caruana, President, Australian Federal Police Association

President Report

The past three months have been another busy and important period for the Australian Federal Police Association and, most importantly, for our members.

Across the organisation, the AFPA has continued to advocate strongly for better pay and conditions, safer workplaces, appropriate resourcing and recognition of the unique role performed by Australian Federal Police members.

“Our focus remains straightforward: to ensure our members are supported, heard and properly recognised for the work they do protecting Australia and Australians.”

Enterprise Agreement and pay and conditions

The AFP Enterprise Agreement remains one of our most important priorities.

Our members continue to face significant cost-of-living pressures while working in an organisation where pay and conditions must remain competitive with other policing jurisdictions and the broader public sector.

The AFPA has continued preparations for the next bargaining campaign, including member engagement, surveys, focus groups and discussions with delegates and convenors across the country.

The feedback from members has been clear. Pay matters, but so do workload, staffing, career progression, workplace flexibility, allowances, employment security and the ability to maintain a reasonable quality of life while performing demanding work.

We have also continued to pursue issues arising under the current Enterprise Agreement, including delayed pay and promotion outcomes and claims being progressed through the appropriate processes.



The recent successes achieved by the AFPA through the Fair Work Commission demonstrate the importance of having a strong association prepared to stand up for members when existing arrangements are not being properly applied.

The next bargaining campaign will be about more than simply negotiating a percentage increase. It will be about securing an agreement that properly recognises the work performed by AFP employees and provides appropriate safeguards for members across both sworn and unsworn workforces.

Taking the member agenda directly to Government

During the past three months, the AFPA has also taken our members' concerns directly to the Prime Minister's Office.

We recently met with representatives of the Prime Minister's Office to discuss the Enterprise Agreement, Blue Card and practical ways the Australian Government can support current and former AFP members.

The discussion recognised that there are measures governments can take outside the Enterprise Agreement that can provide meaningful assistance to members, particularly at a time when cost-of-living pressures continue to affect households across Australia.

The AFPA raised opportunities including greater access to Fringe Benefits Tax exemptions, improved salary-sacrifice arrangements and expanding government welfare and support schemes to include AFP members and former AFP members.

In particular, we discussed the potential for schemes such as the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and the Australian Hearing Program to be made available more broadly to current and former AFP members where appropriate.

These are practical initiatives that could make a genuine difference to members and their families without necessarily requiring significant additional expenditure through wages.

Our message to Government was clear: if the Australian Government values the work performed by AFP members, there are practical ways it can demonstrate that support.

The AFPA will continue pursuing these opportunities and engaging directly with Government to turn discussions into tangible outcomes for members.





“Members should never have to accept an unsafe or unhealthy workplace as simply part of the job.”

Supporting members in difficult workplaces

The AFPA has continued to receive concerns from members about staffing levels, workloads, workplace facilities and health and safety.

Understaffing cannot simply become the accepted operating model.

Where members are routinely required to perform the work of vacant positions, work excessive overtime or carry unreasonable workloads because teams are operating below establishment, there must be appropriate recognition and safeguards.

We are examining how future Enterprise Agreement provisions could better protect members working in understrength teams, particularly unsworn members who can often find themselves carrying significant workloads without the same operational allowances or protections available elsewhere.

Workplace safety has also remained a priority.

Concerns about mould, water ingress, deteriorating facilities and other workplace hazards have reinforced the need for the AFP to take workplace health and safety seriously and respond promptly when hazards are identified.

Members should never have to accept an unsafe or unhealthy workplace as simply part of the job.

Supporting AFP operational members

The AFPA has continued to stand behind members involved in some of the most challenging policing and investigative work undertaken by the AFP.

Policing decisions are often made in seconds, under pressure and with incomplete information. It is very easy for people to analyse those decisions months or years later with the benefit of hindsight.

The AFPA will continue to advocate for members who acted in good faith to protect the community and their colleagues.

That does not mean the Association believes police officers should be above scrutiny. It means that scrutiny must properly recognise the circumstances in which operational decisions are made.

Our members deserve procedural fairness, appropriate representation and an organisation that will stand beside them when they face difficult circumstances.

Procedural fairness

Appropriate representation

Support when it matters



“Supporting our members must mean supporting them throughout their careers and, where appropriate, after they leave the organisation.”

Mental health and member welfare

The wellbeing of current and former AFP members continues to be a significant concern.

The AFPA has continued to advocate for better access to psychological and medical support for operational members, including through our work on the proposed Blue Card initiative.

Our position remains that current and former AFP operational members should have access to timely, government-funded support that recognises the unique occupational pressures associated with federal policing.

Blue Card should complement, rather than replace, existing Comcare arrangements.

We also continue to hear from former members who have experienced difficulties navigating retrospective workers' compensation processes after leaving the AFP.

The system should not make it unnecessarily difficult for people to access support simply because they have reached the end of their AFP career.

Supporting our members must mean supporting them throughout their careers and, where appropriate, after they leave the organisation.

Recognition of the AFP's role

The AFPA has continued to make the case that the AFP must be properly funded and resourced to meet the responsibilities placed upon it by the Australian Government.

The AFP is a Commonwealth agency performing a unique national policing and law enforcement role. Its members are expected to respond to increasingly complex threats, investigate serious and organised crime, protect national institutions and infrastructure, undertake international and transnational operations and provide specialist capabilities that do not exist elsewhere.

Those expectations require appropriate investment.

The AFPA has also continued to raise concerns about the impact of funding constraints and efficiency measures on the organisation's ability to maintain capability.

If governments want the AFP to fight increasingly sophisticated organised crime, terrorism, cybercrime, illicit tobacco networks and other serious threats, then the organisation must have the resources, people and remuneration necessary to do that work.

Our members are ready to meet those challenges. They should not be expected to do so while carrying the burden of inadequate resourcing or remuneration that fails to recognise the complexity of their work.

Fighting organised crime

The AFPA has continued to highlight the significant contribution made by AFP members in targeting organised crime and removing the financial incentives that drive criminal activity.

The seizure of criminal assets, disruption of organised crime networks and targeting of illicit markets demonstrate that policing is not simply about arrests.

Taking the money and assets out of organised crime can strike directly at the business model that allows criminal enterprises to grow.

This is particularly important in areas such as illicit tobacco, where organised crime groups can exploit significant financial returns while using established criminal networks to facilitate other forms of offending.

The AFPA will continue to advocate for the AFP and its members to have the powers, resources and specialist capabilities necessary to target these networks effectively.

Illicit tobacco

Illicit tobacco has remained an important policy issue for the Association.

The scale and organised nature of the illicit tobacco market demonstrates that this is not simply a question of individuals avoiding tobacco excise.

There are significant organised crime implications, including the involvement of established criminal networks, money laundering and the potential for violence and intimidation.

The AFPA supports measures that reduce the profitability of illicit tobacco while ensuring that enforcement agencies have the resources necessary to target the criminal organisations behind the trade.

Our members see the consequences of organised crime firsthand. Policy responses need to recognise the broader law enforcement implications rather than treating illicit tobacco solely as an excise issue.

“Our members see the consequences of organised crime firsthand.”

ACT Policing and member support

The AFPA has also continued to advocate strongly for ACT Policing members.

Concerns about police facilities, staffing, workloads and operational pressures remain significant.

Recent issues involving the ACT Watch House, water ingress and other workplace facilities demonstrate why investment in policing infrastructure cannot be deferred indefinitely.

Our members should not have to work in facilities that compromise their health, safety or ability to perform their duties.

The AFPA has continued to engage with ACT Government and ACT Policing stakeholders on these matters and will maintain pressure for practical improvements.

We have also continued to support members involved in difficult operational incidents and investigations, including ensuring that the public discussion surrounding policing incidents recognises the realities faced by frontline officers.

Putting the AFPA closer to members

One of the important steps the AFPA has taken during this period has been to strengthen our capacity to support members directly in their workplaces.

We have employed Ryan Hodshon as an AFPA Organiser to help provide members with greater on-the-ground support.

Ryan brings significant experience as an organiser and will be an important addition to the AFPA team. His role is about getting out from behind the desk and being where our members are, listening to their concerns, understanding the issues they are facing and helping delegates and members navigate workplace issues.

Over the coming weeks, Ryan will be travelling across Australia to meet with members and delegates.

This is an important investment in our membership and reflects a simple principle: the AFPA needs to be accessible to members wherever they work.

We want members to know that their Association is not just an organisation they contact when something goes wrong. We want the AFPA to have a regular presence in workplaces, to understand the issues before they become problems and to ensure members have a strong voice within their workplace.

I look forward to Ryan meeting members across the country and bringing their experiences and concerns back to the Association.

Engagement with government and Parliament

The AFPA has maintained an active engagement program with federal and territory politicians, government departments, agencies and other stakeholders.

Our message has remained consistent: policing policy must be informed by the experiences of the people actually doing the work.

The AFPA brings a frontline perspective to debates about crime, national security, organised crime, policing powers, workplace safety and public safety.

Our engagement with decision-makers is not about politics for politics' sake. It is about ensuring that when governments make decisions that affect AFP members, they understand the operational and workplace consequences of those decisions.

We will continue to engage constructively with governments and opposition parties while advocating strongly for our members.



“The AFP cannot be expected to do more with less indefinitely.”

Looking ahead

The next three months will be particularly important.

We will continue preparations for the next Enterprise Agreement campaign, expand engagement with delegates and members, and build the evidence necessary to support our bargaining claims.

We will continue advocating for better member welfare, stronger workplace protections and appropriate recognition of the work performed by AFP employees.

We will continue to support ACT Policing members and advocate for improved facilities and resources.

We will continue making the case that the AFP cannot be expected to do more with less indefinitely.

And, through Ryan's work, we will be increasing our direct engagement with members across the country.

The AFPA is at its strongest when members are engaged, delegates are supported and the Association speaks with a clear and united voice.

I want to thank our delegates, convenors, staff and, most importantly, our members for their continued commitment.

The work performed by AFP members is often difficult, sometimes dangerous and rarely straightforward. Whether working on the frontline, investigating organised crime, protecting people and places, undertaking specialist operations or keeping the organisation functioning behind the scenes, every member contributes to the AFP's mission.

The AFPA will continue to fight for those members.

Our job is to make sure their voice is heard, their work is valued and they have an Association prepared to stand beside them when it matters most.

Alex Caruana

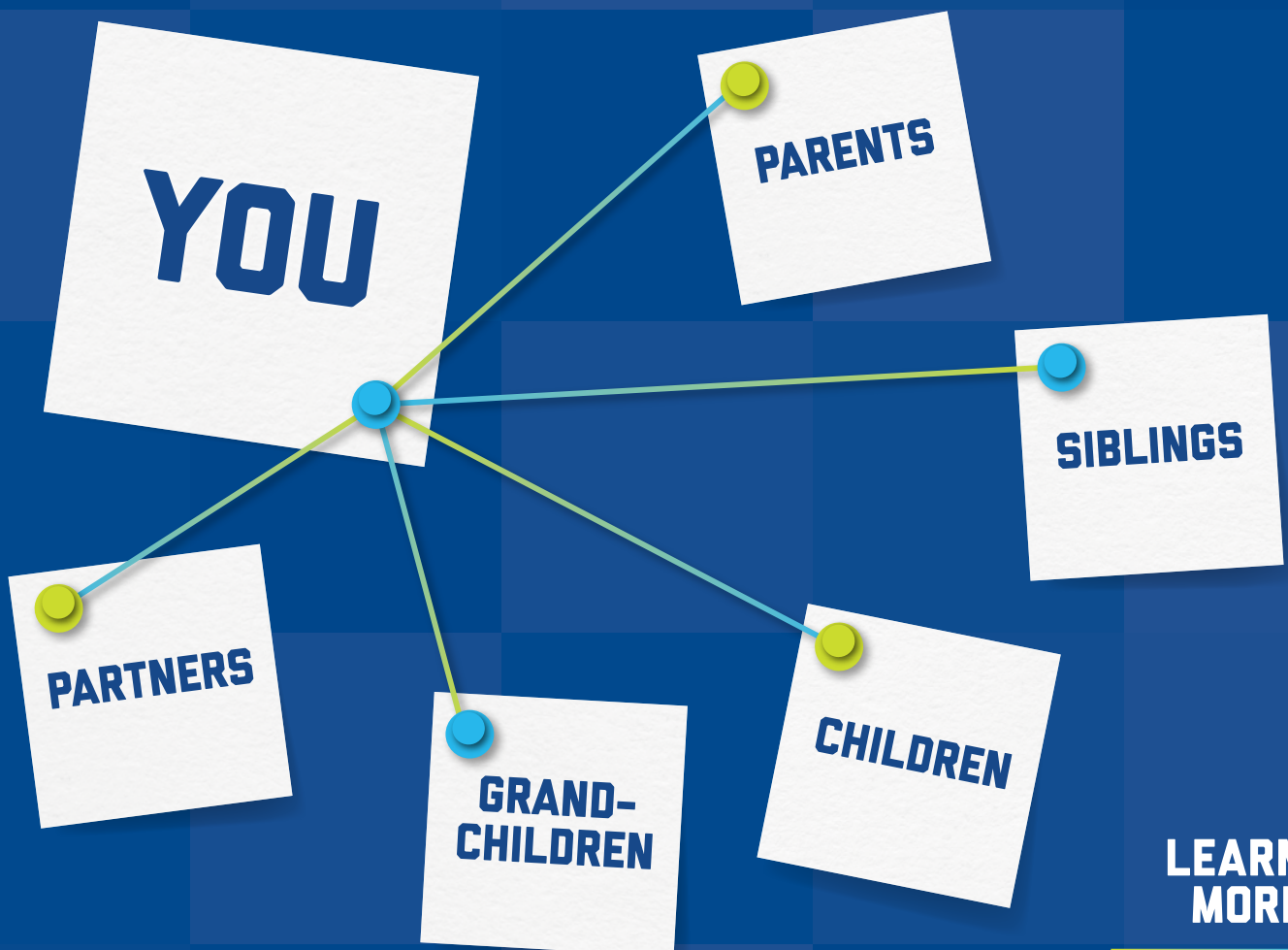
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Australian Federal Police Association**



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POLICE HEALTH

Grow your brain with food

As a police officer, you know the value of maintaining a strong body. Most of the time, the outlet to achieve this is through exercise.

When training to get into the force, we bet you did the beep test, commander-style circuits and long, long runs.

And while fitness is important, there's one part of your health that's often overlooked – diet. Eating healthy while on duty isn't easy. Let's all agree on this first.

The nature of shift work means you often miss meal times at home. It's tempting to grab something on the go, when you get hungry driving around.

You don't have time, but you need good food in your body to keep you sustained during those long shifts.

You never know when you must drop everything and, say, break up a fight or direct traffic after a major car accident. You need to be on the ball.

“Once you get into the habit of eating well and feeling great, you’ll begin to look at food as fuel, like nature intended.”

Keep your brain sharp through a healthy diet

One article explores how eating consciously is the critical element for a healthy brain.

The Adelaide University’s Dr Fiona Kerr talks about the fascinating way people can ‘grow new brain’.

“One of the things I look at [in my work] is how to keep your brain healthy, how to grow new brain [neurogenesis] and how to think more nimbly,” she said.

“With neurogenesis, I look at the five ways you build brain and one of them is diet, so it’s really quite critical as it feeds our microbiome.”

Neurotransmitters, neurotrophins and chemicals like serotonin created in the gut effect of how your brain works, now and in the long-term.

Research shows that healthy foods improve levels of brain plasticity and neurogenesis.

This means both its power to adapt, ‘rewire’ and develop new brain cells.

The size of the hippocampus, the part of the brain that controls learning and memory, can also increase as a result of a good diet.

Yep, you read right. You can, in fact, grow your brain just through the foods you consume.

What should I eat?

Here are Kerr’s go-to tips:

She suggests starting each morning with a warm glass of lemon water, with the fermented milk drink kefir straight after.

Fibre, fermented foods, omega 3s, and plant sources rich in polyphenols are wonderful for acting as antioxidants – instead of filling your body with ‘empty’ junk food.

Eat fresh vegetables and different-coloured fruit, a variety of grains, good fats (avocado, grapeseed and olive oil), fish, and probiotics.

All these foods will help nurture your brain.

And best of all, if your diet is high in these foods, your body will be in a better state to handle junk food.

“If you eat polyphenols and you eat good food, then when you eat junk it doesn’t damage your brain or your body or your gut as much, because it can actually mitigate some of the really bad effects of junk food.”

As a society, we think about dieting for physical health. But this research proves that it goes beyond what we see, and into healthy brain functions.

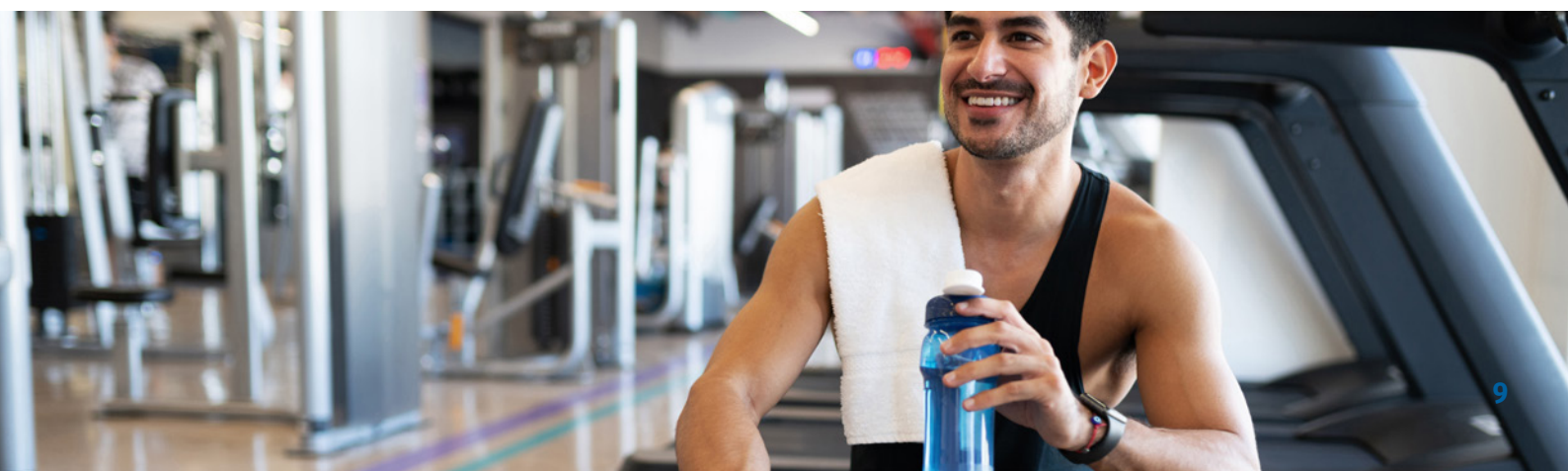
Once you get into the habit of eating well and feeling great, you’ll begin to look at food as fuel, like nature intended.

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Giles Snedker
Legal and Industrial Manager

Fair Work Commission decision strengthens the AFPA's role in the AFP consultative committee

The Fair Work Commission has clarified the role of the AFPA and the CPSU in the establishment and operation of the Australian Federal Police Consultative Committee (ACC), finding that the AFP cannot unilaterally decide the committee's structure, Terms of Reference or representation.

The decision, *Police Federation of Australia v The Commonwealth of Australia*, as represented by the Australian Federal Police [2026] FWC 2283 (C2025/10613), was issued by Commissioner Rogers on 23 June 2026.

What was the dispute about?

The AFPA raised a dispute under the AFP Enterprise Agreement 2024–2027 (Agreement), which provides for the establishment of an AFP Consultative Committee.

The ACC is intended to provide a forum for consultation between the AFP, employees and their unions about workplace matters. The dispute concerned clauses 98(23) and 98(24) of the Agreement. In particular, the AFPA contested the interpretation of the AFP about what the Agreement meant when it required certain matters to be “agreed”.

The AFP argued that the committee could be established by the AFP and that “agreement” to the Terms of Reference and structure of the ACC could potentially arise from an absence of disagreement. Conversely, the AFPA argued that agreement was required between the AFP, the AFPA and the CPSU as parties to the Agreement.

What did the Commission decide?

First, the Commission found that the relevant parties required to reach agreement are the AFP, the AFPA and the CPSU. Importantly, the Commission also held that agreement means “positive agreement”. It is not enough for a party simply not to object or fail to express disagreement.

Second, the Commission found that this agreement must be reached before the Consultative Committee can be established in accordance with the Agreement.

Third, the Commission found that although the AFP had purported to have established a committee, it had not been established in accordance with the requirements of the Agreement, because there had not been agreement from the AFPA and CPSU on the Terms of Reference and structure.

Why does this matter for union members?

The decision confirms that consultation provisions in an enterprise agreement are not simply a licence for an employer to establish a consultation structure on its own terms.

In this case, the Commission rejected an interpretation that would have allowed the AFP to effectively determine the ACC's composition and rules, and then have the ACC itself approve those arrangements.

The Commission found that approach would be circular: the representation on the ACC was supposed to be determined under agreed Terms of Reference, but the AFP's interpretation would have required the ACC's members to be determined before those Terms of Reference could be agreed.

The decision therefore gives practical effect to the role of the AFPA and the CPSU expressly recognised in the Agreement.



“Where an enterprise agreement requires the employer and unions to agree on a consultation mechanism, the employer cannot simply substitute unilateral decision-making for agreement.”

“Agreement” means actual agreement

One of the most significant aspects of the decision is the Commission’s treatment of the word “agreed”.

The AFP had argued that agreement could potentially be established where no party had actively disagreed—for example, where proposed arrangements were circulated and no objection was received. The Commission did not accept that interpretation.

Commissioner Rogers concluded that the Agreement requires each of the AFP, AFPA and CPSU to positively agree to the relevant arrangements.

For AFPA members, this is an important distinction. A consultation process and an agreement process are not necessarily the same thing. Where an enterprise agreement expressly requires agreement, an employer cannot necessarily treat silence as consent.

The committee’s structure matters too

The Commission also considered whether “Terms of Reference” were the only matters requiring agreement. It found that the reference to the committee’s “structure” also had to be given meaning. The structure and Terms of Reference were closely connected, and the Commission concluded that both had to be agreed.

The Commission further found that the committee’s representation had to be determined in accordance with agreed Terms of Reference.

On the evidence before it, the Commission therefore concluded that the AFP had established the committee, but not in the manner required by clauses 98(23) and 98(24) of the Agreement.

The broader union significance

For AFPA members, the decision reinforces a straightforward principle: where an enterprise agreement requires the employer and unions to agree on a consultation mechanism, the employer cannot simply substitute unilateral decision-making for agreement.

The AFPA and the CPSU have commenced engaging with the AFP with a view to agreeing on new Terms of Reference so that the ACC can operate and engage in effective consultation with employees.

Agreement Means Agreement

THREE PARTIES

The AFP, AFPA and CPSU must positively agree.

STRUCTURE AND RULES

Both the committee’s structure and Terms of Reference require agreement.

AGREEMENT FIRST

Agreement must be reached before the committee is established under the Enterprise Agreement.

SILENCE IS NOT CONSENT

An absence of objections does not amount to positive agreement.



Courtney Posantzis
Membership Services Manager

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

More than just a pen

Every second Wednesday, you'll find members of the AFPA Membership Services Team downstairs at Edmund Barton Building between 9:00am and 10:00am in Core 6.

Officially, we're there to catch up with members, answer questions, discuss benefits, provide information and generally make ourselves available to anyone who wants a chat.

Unofficially, we're there to replenish our members' supply of AFPA pens.

Over the months we've noticed a trend. Some members make a beeline straight for the table, confidently help themselves to a pen, offer a nod of appreciation and continue on their way. Others stop for a quick chat before remembering they also needed a pen. We've also learned there is a surprisingly loyal following for the AFPA pen. More than once we've been told, "I'm only here because I needed another one." Fortunately, we never take that personally.

*For the record,
they are good pens.*

But while we're always happy to hand one over, what we're really hoping people take away is something less tangible: the reminder that the Association is there to be accessed.

Conversations That Count

One of the best parts of these regular visits is the opportunity to have conversations that might not otherwise happen. Some members stop to ask a quick question about a benefit they've heard about. Others want to better understand what support may be available to them or a colleague. Sometimes it's feedback, a suggestion, or simply an opportunity to put faces to names.

Here for the Wider AFP Community

We also regularly meet AFP appointees who aren't yet members of the Association. In many cases, they're surprised to learn that AFPA membership extends beyond police officers and Protective Service Officers to include unsworn employees as well. What starts as a casual conversation often becomes an opportunity to explain who we represent, how we support members, and the role the Association plays across the AFP.

Those conversations reinforce the importance of being present and approachable. Sometimes all someone needs is the chance to ask a question in an informal setting. Whether they leave with a membership form, an answer to a question, or simply a better understanding of the Association, the connection itself is valuable.



**“Sometimes all it takes
is a pen and a quick chat.”**

Small Questions, Meaningful Connections

Often, those conversations start with something small.

A member might mention a challenge affecting their team. Someone else may ask whether AFPA offers support for a particular situation. Occasionally, a conversation that begins with, “I’m probably asking the wrong person...” ends with exactly the right connection being made.

Not every enquiry requires immediate action, and not every conversation relates to a significant issue. But every interaction helps us better understand what matters to members and where we can provide support. For many people, reaching out to the Association can feel like a big step, particularly when they’re dealing with something stressful or unfamiliar. That’s why opportunities like our EBB table are so valuable. They create a space where members can have an informal conversation without needing to pick up the phone, send an email, or navigate a process.

Sometimes all it takes is a pen and a quick chat.

Come for a Pen, Stay for a Chat

As the Membership Services Team, we spend a lot of time talking about member engagement, connection and support. What we’ve learned is that these things are usually built through simple conversations. The more opportunities we have to connect with members face-to-face, the better we understand how to support them.

So if you see us downstairs at EBB, come and say hello.

Ask a question. Share an idea. Tell us what’s working. Tell us what isn’t.

**...And yes, if you need a new
pen, we’ve probably got you
covered for that too.**



Alexandra Harris

COMCARE CLAIMS CHECK

Are you fully covered?

When looking at an accepted claim, ensuring the full diagnosis is captured is critical to protect your entitlements.

Separate Conditions to the same body system can in some instances mean separate lump sum compensation may be payable.

It can get confusing with psychiatric injury claims, as often there are multiple diagnoses that arise from employment, particularly in relation to first responders who may be suffering from PTSD as well as major depression and anxiety from work.

If you suffer from a psychiatric injury, it is critical to understand if there are separate diagnoses or multiple diagnosable psychiatric conditions affecting you, as if they are formally accepted, you may be entitled to more than one Permanent Impairment (PI) payout.

Often insurers combine multiple psychological conditions into a single assessment. This can in some instances significantly reduce the compensation payable.

You first need to understand what diagnosis has been formally accepted, and then determine whether other diagnoses are also work related and ought to be accepted under the claim.

The next step is to determine if they rate for permanent impairment independent of each other – which is not a straight forward process and comes down to the medical evidence.

Psychiatric Permanent Impairment Claims – A Comcare Case Law Review

If you have two (or more) separate diagnosable psychiatric conditions, which can clearly be distinguished medically, then you should consider lodging separate Permanent Impairment claims for each condition.

It isn't straight forward, and usually a careful analysis of the medical evidence is required.

Example:

If a worker has accepted claims for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) condition(s) and they can actually be distinguished from one another, which is clearly supported by the medical evidence, then two separate Permanent Impairment applications can be made - if the relevant thresholds for Permanent Impairment of each separate condition are met.

It assists if the medical evidence demonstrates "clear and distinct pathological processes for each separate condition" and if the doctor is able to put a percentage of Permanent Impairment of 10% or more, for each condition.



“When looking at an accepted claim, ensuring the full diagnosis is captured is critical to protect your entitlements.”

Application of the Law:

In *Canute v Comcare* [2006] HCA 47 the High Court held that s 24(5) of the SRC Act requires attention to focus on the degree of permanent impairment ‘resulting from an injury’ and therefore each separate injury suffered by an employee requires a separate assessment of the degree of impairment.

At paragraph 15, the High Court held “...The scheme of the Act proceeds in this way from the occurrence of “an injury”, in the defined sense. As previously remarked, the Act assumes that more than one “injury” may occur. Therefore it is not correct to say that s 24(5) imports a “whole person” approach to the determination of the degree of permanent impairment. That ignores the centrality of “an injury” to the scheme upon which Comcare’s liability to compensate depends.”

This approach was confirmed in the High Court decision of *Fellowes v MRCC* [2009] HCA 38 which held at paragraph 19:

...”In *Canute*, this Court pointed out that the definition of “impairment” in the SRC Act is not expressed in terms that require assessing impairment on a “whole person” basis. Rather, the definition is expressed in terms conveying a disaggregated sense. As the Court said in *Canute*, “[t]extually, the Act assumes that ‘an injury’ may result in more than one ‘impairment’”. Likewise, it must follow that more than one injury may result, (and often will result) in more than one impairment.”

Does your claim capture every injury?



Multiple diagnoses do not automatically mean multiple payouts.

The decision of *Re Robson and MRCC* [2012] AATA 809, involved a situation whereby the Tribunal determined to distinguish Fellowes and held that a single 50% WPI should be awarded for the applicant's mental injuries of PTSD and major depressive disorder (MDD).

In that case, the applicant's two injuries were to the same body part (the brain) and it was at first instance (erroneously) determined that "the features of the two conditions were so inextricably intertwined as to make it practically impossible to make any separate assessment" (at paragraph 65).

The Full Federal Court in *Robson v MRCC* [2013] FCAFC 101 overturned this decision and gave attention to the fact that the medical evidence was clear in that the two conditions were separate clinical conditions which may overlap but were not co-extensive clinically.

The SRC Act requires an injury-based approach, and it is clear that separate injuries and their associated impairments must be assessed separately, independently and in isolation, even if they relate to the same body part, system or function, or there is a causal relationship between the two injuries.

The online 'Comcare Scheme guidance – Assessing permanent impairment where multiple injuries are involved' supports this reasoning, and sets out:

"Assessing permanent impairment when two or more injuries affect the same body part, system or function: Separate injuries and their associated impairments must be assessed separately and in isolation, even if they relate to the same body part, system or function."

Take Away

The Permanent Impairment assessment process is rarely straight forward, and the benefit of seeking legal assistance and advice early in the process is often crucial to ensure it is done correctly.

Get in Touch

If you need advice about a Comcare claim, permanent impairment assessment or disputed decision, TGB can help you understand your rights and next steps.

**Arrange an appointment:
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Comcare Claims

Lodging claims | Disputing decisions affecting payment of medical costs and incapacity payments | Disputing rejected claims | Permanent impairment claims | Reconsideration applications | Filing appeals to the AAT and Federal Court of Australia

Key Contacts

Tim White - Partner
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Tim leads our Comcare Claims team for AFPA, working with 5 other lawyers nationally.

Criminal and Disciplinary

All criminal matters | Protection orders (FVO/PPO) | Discipline/misconduct (PRS matters) | Coronial Inquiries (deaths in custody)

Key Contacts

Luke Officer - Partner
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Luke leads our Criminal & Disciplinary team for AFPA, working with 6 other lawyers nationally.

Family & Divorce

Property settlements | Children's issues | Child Support matters | Pre-nuptial style agreements | Mediation & family dispute resolution | De facto & same sex relationships | Divorce & international divorce

Key Contacts

Dina Paspaliaris - Partner
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Dina leads our Family & Divorce law team for AFPA, working with 15 other lawyers nationally.

Wills & Estates

Estate planning advice & document preparation including: Wills & Testamentary Trusts | Enduring Powers of Attorney | Advance Care Directives | Guardianship & administration matters

Key Contacts

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Adam leads our Wills & Estates team for AFPA, working with 12 other lawyers nationally.

Business, Commercial & Property

General business advice | Real estate & property advice | Conveyancing | Business transactions | Commercial disputes

Key Contacts

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Amanda provides Business & Commercial advice for AFPA, working with 4 other lawyers and a conveyancing team nationally.



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MEDIA RELEASE

In case you missed it...

From funding and frontline safety to infrastructure and national security, the AFPA has continued to speak publicly on the issues affecting our members and the wider policing community. Here are some of the key issues we have weighed in on since the last edition of Blue Star.

More responsibilities, more funding, fairer pay

21 August 2026

With the AFP taking on growing responsibilities across protective security, airports, AUKUS, counterterrorism, organised crime, cybercrime, child exploitation and more, the AFPA called on the Federal Government to ensure funding, staffing and pay keep pace.

While the 2026–27 Federal Budget increases overall AFP resourcing, much of that funding is attached to new or expanded responsibilities. The AFPA warned that continually adding responsibilities without sufficient workforce growth risks greater workloads, overtime, fatigue, burnout and the loss of experienced personnel.

The AFPA also reiterated that the AFP cannot continue to be treated simply as another Commonwealth department, particularly as we look towards the next enterprise agreement.

Supporting members following the ombudsman report

25 August 2026

Following the Commonwealth and ACT Ombudsman's report into the Woden bus incident, the AFPA backed ACT Chief Police Officer Scott Lee and the members involved, while acknowledging the impact of the incident and the need to learn from its findings.

The AFPA supported improvements recommended by the Ombudsman while stressing the importance of assessing frontline decisions in the context in which they were made, particularly during fast-moving incidents involving a potential armed threat.



“Moving people to meet new priorities does not make the work they were previously performing disappear.”

Alex Caruana, AFPA President

Investing in act policing

20 May 2026

The AFPA welcomed investment in police and emergency services through the 2026–27 ACT Budget, including funding towards a new City Police Station and ACT Policing Headquarters.

The announcement followed continued AFPA advocacy around ageing and unsuitable police infrastructure, including concerns about flooding, sewage leaks, water damage and structural failures across ACT Policing facilities.

The AFPA will continue advocating for safe, functional and fit-for-purpose workplaces for members.

When healthcare violence becomes a policing issue

27 May 2026

Escalating occupational violence across ACT public health facilities prompted the AFPA to warn that the problem does not stop at the hospital door.

When incidents escalate, ACT Policing members are often called into volatile environments where they may have limited information and little control over the circumstances they are entering.

The AFPA called for stronger prevention and security measures within health facilities to better protect healthcare workers, police and the wider community.

Frontline safety and dangerous vehicle offending

June 2026

A series of dangerous stolen-vehicle incidents again highlighted the risks faced by ACT Policing members and the community.

Following incidents involving allegedly stolen vehicles, dangerous driving, pursuits and police vehicles being struck, the AFPA publicly backed the members involved and called for continued attention to repeat offending and the risks created for police, emergency service workers and members of the public.

National security needs national investment

1 May 2026

Following the Interim Report of the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion, the AFPA supported recommendations aimed at strengthening Australia’s counter-terrorism framework.

But increased expectations must come with increased capability.

The AFPA called for appropriate investment in AFP staffing, intelligence sharing, training, equipment and frontline capability, arguing that the AFP cannot continually be expected to take on greater national security responsibilities without the resources required to deliver them safely and effectively.

Missed something?

AFPA media releases, member updates and the latest news are available throughout the year at afpa.org.au.



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[^] Eligibility criteria: (a) This offer is limited to: • current police* employees and, • retired police* that are existing BankVic members, who refinance a home loan or purchase property and submit a loan application from 15 June 2026. (b) To qualify for the \$4,000 cashback offer, your new loan must be drawn down or funded for an amount of at least \$350,000. (c) The loan must be drawn down and fully funded within 180 days of unconditional approval issued whilst this offer is available. (d) The loan must be fully drawn and settled and have a loan-to-value ratio (LVR) of 80% or less as per BankVic's credit policy. (e) This offer is available for both owner-occupier and investor loans. (f) A cashback may be paid for each eligible mortgaged property offered as new security to BankVic, provided the lending associated with that property meets the minimum eligible loan amount of \$350,000. Where lending is structured across multiple loan accounts or split loans, those amounts may be assessed together for the purpose of determining eligibility. (g) Only one cashback will be paid per eligible new mortgaged property. Where multiple eligible mortgaged properties are offered as new security to BankVic, a separate cashback may be paid for each eligible property, even where the lending is structured across multiple split loan accounts. (h) Split and supplementary loans against one security will be eligible for one cashback only. (i) This includes FastRefi and construction loans to be fully settled and all progressive drawdowns should be completed. (j) Bridging loans will be assessed for cashback eligibility based on the residual debt or the end loan amount, in accordance with BankVic's credit policy. (k) The cashback proceeds will be paid into a BankVic transaction or savings account within 8 weeks of full loan drawdown or settlement. This account must be in the same name/s as the home loan account. If no instructions are received from the borrower/s, the cashback proceeds will alternatively be credited to the loan account. (l) This offer is available until further notice and BankVic may vary or cease this offer at any time. (m) All loan applications are subject to lending and approval criteria. (n) For a limited time, eligible investor home loan applications may receive a waiver of the \$600 investor loan establishment fee for the Special Offer Police Variable Rate. Exclusions: (a) This offer excludes internal refinances or rewrites and other loan purposes and is not compatible with any other cashback offer issued by BankVic. (b) If you have received cashback in the past from BankVic, you may not be eligible for this offer.

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Government support: making home ownership more achievable

Buying your first home can feel like a big step - especially when saving a deposit and covering upfront costs seems out of reach.

The good news is there are government supports designed to help first home buyers get into the market sooner, with less money upfront.

Here's how key supports work, and how they can potentially be used together when buying a first home.

The Australian Government 5% Deposit Scheme: buying with a smaller deposit

One of the biggest hurdles for first home buyers is the deposit. Traditionally, lenders require a deposit of 20% of the purchase price, or if your deposit is less, you may be required to purchase Lenders Mortgage Insurance (LMI) on top of your loan.

The Australian Government 5% Deposit Scheme, previously referred to as the First Home Guarantee or the Home Guarantee Scheme, helps eligible home buyers purchase a home with as little as a 5% deposit for first home buyers, or single parents with a minimum of 2% deposit plus associated costs (eg stamp duty) without paying LMI.

How it works

Instead of providing a full 20% deposit, the government can potentially guarantee up to 15% or 18%, for eligible single parents, of the property value to the lender. This means:

- / First home buyers only need to save a 5% deposit
- / Single parents only need to save a 2% deposit
- / The lender treats your loan as though you've contributed 20%
- / You avoid the cost of LMI.

Importantly, this is not a cash payment. The government doesn't give you money - the guarantee simply reduces the amount of deposit the bank requires.

Refer to the following website for the Property Price Caps for the scheme, www.firsthomebuyers.gov.au/australian-government-5-percent-deposit-scheme/property-price-caps

The takeaway

The government schemes mentioned such as the Australian Government 5% Deposit Scheme, First Home Owners Grant (FHOG), and State Revenue Office's (SRO) stamp duty concessions, which vary by state, can make a big difference to how soon you're able to buy.

- / The Australian Government 5% Deposit Scheme helps you buy with a smaller deposit
- / Stamp duty savings or concessions can reduce upfront costs
- / The FHOG gives extra funds (for example \$10,000 in Victoria) if you're buying a brand-new property or building a new property.

With the right guidance, these supports or schemes can move home ownership from "someday" to sooner than you might think. Refer to the following website for the state revenue office links at different states that might be helpful, <https://www.firsthome.gov.au/>

We're here to help

To understand more about the Australian Government 5% Deposit Scheme, visit www.firsthomebuyers.gov.au/australian-government-5-percent-deposit-scheme. If you have any questions about buying your first home, book an appointment with a BankVic Home Loan Mentor or call us on 13 63 73.



Angela Martin
Financial Wellbeing
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 **BankVic**
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and health workers



Meet Glen McEwen

Interview & Article By Jessica Ward

When Glen McEwen joined the recruit training class 1021 in 1987, policing was still being conducted using manual typewriters. By the end of his career, he was operating in a world of encrypted communications, borderless criminal networks and operations spanning multiple jurisdictions.

During his 35-year career with the Australian Federal Police, Glen progressed from recruit to Commander. He led surveillance during Operation LINNET, involving what was then Australia's largest heroin haul, and Operation CARIBOU which targeted the Australian East Coast Criminal Milieu. He also investigated corruption and misconduct within policing, responded to the Bali and Sri Lankan bombings, served as Mission Commander during the Tham Luang cave rescue and became Commander Asia, based in Beijing.

Now in the wake of a medical retirement, Glen is sharing his experiences in his forthcoming memoir; Crime, Chaos and Controversy. What began as a legacy for his family has instead become an account of the breadth of AFP service and the personal costs that remain after operations end and the uniform comes off.



Glen's Academy graduating class

A career beyond the ordinary

The idea for Glen's memoir first came from his wife Christine but didn't become a tangible product until a knee replacement in 2020 gave Glen the recovery time to explore the concept in full. In recounting his work, four themes emerged: Crime, Chaos, Controversy and Courage.

Crime covers the organised crime investigations and international operations that defined much of Glen's career. Chaos reflects his response to events including the Bali bombings, Tham Luang cave rescue and Sri Lankan bombings. Controversy explores investigations into wrongdoing and the geopolitical complexities he encountered as Commander Asia.

Courage, the fourth and most personal theme, emerged as Glen wrote about his "Unwanted Farewell" from the AFP and recovery from PTSD.

Together these themes trace Glen's career alongside the transformation of the AFP itself. He watched policing move from the analogue era into the digital age as technology changed the speed, reach and concealment of offending. During the same period, the AFP's responsibilities expanded considerably.

"The AFP is a beast of a different breed, in Australian policing terms, because we operate locally, nationally and internationally as one policing agency."



Glen McEwen, speaker

Crime, chaos and controversy

Much of the AFP's work happens beyond public view. Through his memoir, Glen hopes to give Australians a better understanding of its scale and variety.

However, no period affected Glen more profoundly than 2002, where a slew of personal tragedies was bookended by his posting and work as part of the Bali bombings response team. Bali became an experience of crisis leadership learned in real time, with lessons that would help Glen balance the strategic, tactical and operational requirements of later missions.

"The Bali Bombing was about learning on the run ... and has held me in good stead throughout my career, enabling me to balance and prioritise the strategic, tactical and operational requirements of crisis management."

Those experiences also shaped his understanding of leadership.

"Leadership is not about standing apart. It is knowing when to guide, when to follow and when to simply stand alongside others."

The same clarity guided Glen when investigating wrongdoing within policing, including the high-stakes investigation into Mark Standen. These investigations can disrupt professional relationships and place significant pressure on those responsible for protecting institutional integrity.

For Glen, the principle is simple: "Your integrity is your brand."



Glen meeting international counterparts



Glens photography following the attack



Glen as appearing on 60 Minutes Australia



Glens photography following the attack

The Cost Beyond The Job

Many of the personal costs Glen carried were connected to Indonesia during 2001 and 2002. However, it was not until psychological treatment years later that he fully recognised their lasting effect.

“I obviously carried them throughout my career until I sought treatment in 2024.”

Glen describes his transition into medical retirement as an “Unwanted Farewell”. Leaving the AFP after more than 35 years affected his identity and sense of purpose more deeply than he initially acknowledged.

With time, Glen recognised that both he and the organisation had changed and retirement was ultimately the right outcome. Reaching that acceptance, however, required him to confront injuries accumulated across decades of service.

His message about PTSD, cumulative trauma and psychological injury is simple:

“Don’t be a hero and seek help.”

For Glen, courage is no longer confined to decisive action during an operation. It can also be found in vulnerability, acknowledging an injury and accepting support.

From experience to legacy

Writing *Crime, Chaos and Controversy* has allowed Glen to reflect on the events that shaped his career, their personal consequences and the people who stood alongside him.

The memoir moves beyond familiar policing stereotypes to show the breadth of work undertaken by AFP members across local, national and international environments. By stepping beyond what he calls the “blue curtain”, Glen hopes to place some of that unseen work on the public record.

“We have never been spies, just police working differently!”

For current members, the memoir includes lessons about what not to do when injured, particularly when it comes to mental health. For former members, it demonstrates how sharing their experiences can strengthen public understanding of the AFP and its work.

More than a collection of major operations, the memoir asks readers to consider the uncertainty behind operational decisions, the people behind the headlines and the consequences carried long after the public story has moved on.

EXCLUSIVE EXCERPT

Operation LINNET

In August 1998, an intelligence report from our Hong Kong office initiated what would become one of the most significant maritime interdictions in Australian law enforcement history. A South-East Asian syndicate was coordinating a multi-hundred-kilogram heroin shipment destined for the east coast. Operation LINNET was launched, uniting federal agents, state police, tactical units, and maritime surveillance.

Surveillance at this level is 70 percent anticipation and 30 percent rapid execution. For weeks, physical and electronic teams tracked primary targets around the clock. Operatives logged thousands of hours following suspects from Sydney up the New South Wales mid-north coast, analyzing every countersurveillance drive, vehicle swap, and encrypted communication without raising suspicion. The targets were seasoned, highly paranoid professionals who constantly checked their mirrors and varied their routes. Maintaining a seamless, invisible perimeter across hundreds of kilometers of highway required absolute discipline and flawless tradecraft.

By October, surveillance indicators confirmed the landing was imminent at Grants Beach, an isolated stretch near Port Macquarie. Under total darkness, covert operatives inserted on foot into the sand dunes in freezing conditions. Offshore sat the MV Uniana — a modified 30-metre fishing trawler equipped with long

range fuel tanks and a hidden, flooded compartment beneath its main hold.

Suddenly, movement broke the dark: flashes of light signaled across the water as landing indicators. A heavy inflatable craft dispatched from the mothership, powering through crashing breakers toward the sand.

The moment the hull struck, operatives hidden in the dunes moved in on foot. Miles away on the Pacific Highway, tactical vehicles received the radio call and executed simultaneous interceptions on the inland transport team. On the beach, panic erupted. Realizing they were ambushed, several syndicate members sprinted into the ocean, diving into the heavy surf. Operatives pursued them directly into the water, dragging them back onto the sand. Within minutes, the call came: “All clear, suspects secured.”

Secured aboard the craft were dozens of heavy black carry bags packed with compressed bricks of high-purity heroin—397 kilograms in total, standing at the time as Australia’s largest heroin haul. Offshore, maritime assets intercepted and seized the MV Uniana.

Operation LINNET remains a masterclass in interagency trust and tactical resolve—proving that disciplined intelligence, relentless surveillance, and decisive execution can dismantle even the most sophisticated global syndicates.

CRIME, CHAOS & CONTROVERSY

LISTEN TO THE CONVERSATION. READ THE FULL STORY.



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE

Glen McEwen joins Adam Shand on Real Crime to discuss the stories behind the book and a career inside high-stakes policing.



SCAN TO LISTEN NOW

BOOK RELEASES 27 OCTOBER

Crime, Chaos and Controversy takes readers inside a career of complex cases, operational challenges and the human stories behind the headlines.



SCAN TO BUY THE BOOK





BLUESTAR STORY

Standing behind those who served undercover

Undercover policing asks an extraordinary amount of the people who undertake it.

Australian Federal Police members who perform this work can spend extended periods living under assumed identities, building relationships with dangerous individuals and criminal organisations, and accepting significant personal risk to gather intelligence and achieve operational outcomes in the national interest.

For some members, those risks do not end when an operation finishes.

The Australian Federal Police Association has been supporting a number of current and former AFP members who served as undercover operatives and who

continue to have serious concerns about their safety, welfare and the protection of their families. The AFPA has been directly involved for several years, engaging with the affected members, senior AFP representatives and the processes used to assess and manage the risks arising from their service.

Our concern has always been straightforward. Where members have accepted extraordinary personal risk on behalf of the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth must maintain an equally serious and enduring commitment to their safety after their operational duties have ended.

Years of advocacy and action

Concerns about the management of these members' exposure, security and ongoing safety were first raised with the AFPA by late 2021. In May 2022, those concerns became sufficiently serious for the Association to take formal action under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to examine whether appropriate steps were being taken to protect the affected members.

Since then, the AFPA has pursued the matter through workplace health and safety mechanisms, direct engagement with senior AFP executives, meetings involving the former AFP Commissioner, Professional Standards processes, correspondence with the Australian Government and engagement with the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement.

Confidence in safety assessments

A central issue has been confidence in the threat and risk assessment processes used to determine the danger faced by the members and the protections considered necessary. Questions have arisen about differences between assessments, the methodology used, the information relied upon and whether those processes were consistent with relevant risk management and protective security requirements.

These are not academic questions. Threat and risk assessments can directly influence decisions about security arrangements, protective measures and the level of support provided to a member and their family. Where those decisions concern personal safety, members must have confidence that the process is rigorous, consistent and based on the best available information.

The AFPA recognises that some material involved may be classified, operationally sensitive or otherwise protected. We are not calling for uncontrolled disclosure of sensitive information. There are established ways to protect national security and operational interests while still allowing affected individuals to understand decisions that concern them and obtain appropriate independent advice. Controlled access, security clearances, confidentiality requirements, secure facilities and properly considered redactions can all play a role.

The lasting impact on families

The impact also extends beyond the individual operative. Partners and children do not volunteer to participate in undercover policing, yet they can live with the consequences. Security arrangements at the family home, restrictions on travel, concerns about particular locations and the broader effect of living with uncertainty can continue long after an operation has concluded.

This is why the AFPA does not regard these circumstances as an ordinary employment dispute.

A responsibility beyond service

The members involved performed highly sensitive and dangerous duties in the national interest. Their work provided significant benefits to Australian law enforcement, but it may also have created risks that continue years later.

The Commonwealth's responsibility should not end when the immediate operational objective has been achieved.

There is also a broader issue for the AFP. Current and future undercover operatives need confidence that the organisation will stand behind them if their safety is compromised because of their service. They need to know identified risks will be taken seriously, appropriate protections will follow, and concerns affecting their families will receive timely attention.

Seeking a pathway to resolution

In August, the AFPA wrote to Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke asking him to personally consider the matter and help identify a pathway towards greater transparency, confidence in the members' ongoing safety arrangements and, after several years of unresolved concerns, an appropriate final resolution.

The AFPA is not asking the Minister to determine legal liability or make findings against individual AFP appointees. Those matters belong in the appropriate processes. We are asking the Government to recognise the exceptional circumstances and the legitimate expectation that people who take extraordinary risks for Australia will continue to receive meaningful support when the consequences of that service remain.

These members stood up for Australia when their work demanded it. They are entitled to expect the Commonwealth to continue standing behind them.



More than the pay rise

A new agreement for South Australian police is putting pay, retention, fatigue and work-life balance back in the spotlight. With the AFP's next round of enterprise bargaining approaching, what are police around Australia asking for from a modern workplace?

A proposed new enterprise agreement for South Australian police has attracted attention for its headline figure: a 16 per cent pay increase over four years.

The agreement negotiated by the Police Association of South Australia includes a new retention allowance for experienced frontline shift workers, increased regional incentives, improved overtime, longer minimum breaks between operational shifts and a formal right to disconnect.

Specialist skills are also being recognised. Detectives and STAR Group officers would receive an allowance equivalent to 10.9 per cent of base salary, while prosecutors, bomb response officers, negotiators and other accredited specialists would also receive additional payments.

Keeping people in the job

Police recruitment has received plenty of attention in recent years, not just in Australia but on the global stage. But whilst getting people into the academy is its own challenge, more challenges rise with retention: keeping people within the industry.

PASA President Wade Burns said attracting and retaining police required more than increasing wages, pointing to conditions, career progression, specialist skills, frontline and regional demands and work-life balance being key to keeping experienced officers in the job.

Keeping Experience in Policing

16%

Pay increase over four years.

2.2%

Retention allowance for frontline shift workers with 7+ years in operational roles.

\$7k–\$28.5k

Annual regional allowances proposed for difficult-to-fill locations.

10.9%

Allowance based on base salary for detectives and STAR Group officers.

South Australia's proposed retention allowance makes that particularly clear. Experienced frontline shift workers with at least seven years in operational roles would receive an additional 2.2 per cent of base salary. Regional policing is another focus, with allowances of between \$7,000 and \$28,500 a year proposed for difficult-to-fill locations.

The agreement also includes improved minimum rest periods between operational shifts and a right to disconnect.

Taken together, the package reflects a broader question facing police employers around Australia: what does it take to keep skilled and experienced people in the job?

More than wages

For AFPA members, some of these issues will sound familiar. During negotiations for the current AFP Enterprise Agreement, the AFPA pushed for improved pay, better recognition of specialist skills, stronger career pathways and a right to disconnect.

The current AFP Enterprise Agreement came into operation in December 2024 and runs until 2027. The AFPA made clear from its commencement that preparations for the next agreement would begin well before the current one expires. That work is already underway, with increased member outreach and surveying taking place over recent months.

While what happens in other jurisdictions doesn't automatically determine what should happen in the AFP, developments across the wider policing industry do provide useful benchmarks. New retention payments, changes to allowances, recognition of specialist skills and improved conditions around fatigue and availability all help the AFPA assess where AFP conditions sit against other jurisdictions and identify areas for improvement ahead of the next round of bargaining.

2027 Starts with members

Preparations for the 2027 EA are already underway. Alex and the AFPA legal team have begun visiting some of our more remote locations to hear directly from members, while focus testing and similar research is helping us build a clearer picture of the issues and priorities across the AFP.

As bargaining gets closer, staying connected with members will become even more important. Up-to-date contact and workplace details mean we can keep you informed, invite you to take part in surveys and consultation, and make sure members across the AFP have opportunities to contribute.

We thank everyone who recently completed the update process and encourage those who haven't yet done so to log in to the new AFPA member portal and check that their details are current.

The 2027 EA may still seem a while away, but the work towards it is already underway!



Wall to Wall Riding for Remembrance



Perfect weather set the scene for this year's Wall to Wall Ride for Remembrance, as riders from across Australia came together in Canberra on the 12th of September for yet another fantastic display of mateship, enduring camaraderie and support.



Against a backdrop of clear blue skies, the day was both a celebration of the policing community and a time to pause and remember those amongst us who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

The AFPA was proud to join members, colleagues, families and supporters for a day that continues to demonstrate the strength of the bonds shared across Australia's policing community.



Find out more

Wall to Wall Ride for Remembrance
or the Police Federation of Australia.





AFPA

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