



# 2019 AFPFMA President's Report

Mike Doroshenko

After 39 years we made it! The long journey to form the Australian Federal Police Former Members Association Incorporated has been a very long time coming. While other former member Police Associations have been around for nearly 90 years, our Journey starts now.

In the very first Presidents Report of the AFPFMA, I'd like to pay tribute to some of our members who started the ball rolling. People like Denis McDermott, Ian Broomby, Dave Kenemore and Terry Browne. During the mid-1990s, these gentlemen laid the foundation for our organisation, and tried to create a group for the benefit of all former AFP members. Many of these goals have been adopted into our ethos as an organisation.

I would also like to thank some current AFP members who have been a great source of support. People like Assistant Commissioners Peter Crozier and Wayne Buchhorn as well as Supt. Mick Travers, and his team at Ceremonial and Recognition who do a wonderful job.

These members have helped us create our vision for all former AFP members and today we are gathered to create a milestone in our history.

## **THE JOURNEY**

Our formative years started on Facebook in 2009 when I created a group where former AFP could gather, swap stories of days gone by and more importantly reconnect with each other. Many of our members at that time had not reconnected with each other for over 30 years and it was a joy to watch this group flourish with nearly 1200 members today.

On 30 May 2018, thirty former members of the Australian Federal Police attended a historical foundation meeting to propose the formation of the AFP Former Members Association. It was unanimously resolved that we push forward with the idea to create such a group and establish a working party to draft our objectives and a constitution. Many of those foundation members are here today, so I thank them for their commitment and attendance today.

On 8 November 2018 the final meeting was held to form a committee of the AFP Former Members Association and adopt our new constitution and form the inaugural committee. I would like to thank and acknowledge the dedication shown to our organisation by our committee members Phil Spence, Dave Savage and Craig Sheehan. In particular our organisation is a success due to the fine work of our Vice-President Greg Ranse and the tireless effort by our Secretary Treasurer Ian Jackson. Thank you gentlemen.

On 21 November 2018, an application was made to the A.C.T. Government to register and incorporate our Association. Then on 13 December 2018 approval was given by the ACT Government to incorporate our Association.

On 11 April 2019 the Australian Federal Police Former Members Association Inc. officially launched in front of AFP headquarters in Barton ACT. Our launch could not have gone so smoothly if it wasn't for the efforts of the Australian Federal Police Association. I particularly want to thank President Angela Smith for her support of the AAFPMA. At every turn the AFPA has been supportive and we are proud to be a partner with them.

Since we launched our membership has rapidly grown. With over 170 members collectively we have over 3,000 years of AFP service amongst our ranks. A select group of AAFPMA members have taken on the role of Ambassadors for the AAFPMA. They will be the forerunners for our organisation to spread the word about the good work we do, and also try to enlist new members to the cause. I thank our Ambassadors for their service, with many of them here today.

We continue to work closely with the AFP Awards and Recognition team as well as the AFP Museum, who do a great job.

Unfortunately, the Wall of Remembrance which I maintain, continues to grow. A sad statistic is that over the last 12 months we have lost 40 Police Veterans with the average age of death of all former AFP members since 1979 at 61.97 years of age. All the names of our fallen colleagues can be found on our new website at [aafpma.org.au](http://aafpma.org.au). You may also be able to grab a bargain as we have an awesome catalogue of merchandise for sale online, with some items on sale here today. Please see Ian Jackson.

## **MY VISION**

The future is bright for the AFP Former Members Association. A future where our State Representatives will eventually become State Presidents with their own boards.

I hope that we will soon be able to have stronger ties with the AFP, so that we can practically assist them as described in our published aims and objectives.

I would like to see a proper transition program for members that leave the AFP. I believe it is important for current members to know that there is an organisation that can help them once they leave the AFP. To know that someone is there for you when you finally hand in your badge and gun at the end of the shift. The AAFPMA is there now, and current serving members need to understand that one day they will all be former members. It is up to them to help us shape that relationship and ask themselves "how do you want this space to look when you leave?"

I would also like to see a mental health strategy, specifically for former AFP members. So many members have left the job for all sorts of reasons, but many suffer in silence from effects of a policing career long after they have left. For this reason, our Government and politicians need to do more to help our Police veterans. For example, we have a system that its insurance company re-injures many people by having them delay compensation, having to prove their claim over and over and they make it so hard to finalise a claim after many years in court battles. Our Police veterans deserve better.

Mental health challenges are faced by many former AFP members. I recently attended the Fearless National Conversation on PTSD and also experienced first hand a wonderful program offered by Petrea King and Quest for Life at Bundanoon. We need to have a structured pathway of help for our former AFP members, one that will produce results. We will soon develop a strategic direction for the AFPFMA, one which will include a pathway for assistance.

There are many avenues for help out there, but no co-ordinated strategies when you compare Police veterans to military veterans and the department of Veterans Affairs. Another example is the recent veterans discount card, and also how our Police Peacekeepers are treated. There is such a stark difference of assistance comparing Police veterans and military veterans which needs to change. Not now, not tomorrow but yesterday.

I hope that our Mates in Blue program will grow and receive funding to allow us to help ALL former AFP members in need, not just AFPFMA members. We have over 100 volunteers based around Australia and even overseas, who are willing to help those in need. Whether it be a regular coffee catch up, hospital visit or mowing the lawn for someone ill, there is a need and there is a will to help. It is a program that can be rolled out to all state police forces, but for now we need to get our model up and running.

Expanding on this service, I have a dream... A dream that one day we will have a retirement village in Canberra for our Police Veterans, similar to the RSL. A place that young recruits can come and interact with a generation that shaped the AFP in its formative years. A place where our Police Veterans can live amongst those who have served their community well, and we show thanks for their service.

We all have to start somewhere and better late than never are just two clichés which come to mind when we think why we are here today.

I am proud to have served this last year as President of the AFPFMA. But please rest assured, the AFP Former Members Association is committed to helping ALL former AFP members. Make no mistake, today we are making history, as we stand together, we are celebrating our past, and strengthening our future. Thank you.

Mike Doroshenko

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