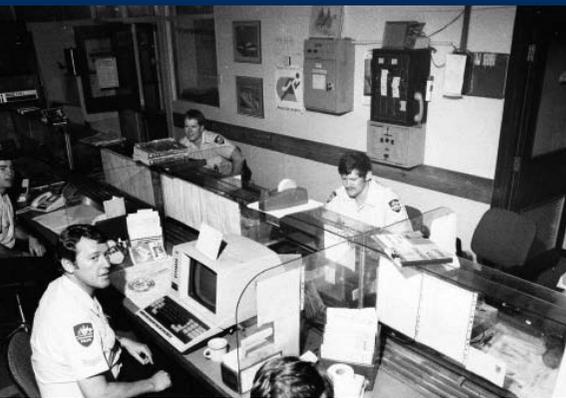


Chapter 2: The Grey Years

1983–1988



YEAR IN REVIEW

1982–83

Ron Grey, a Major General with the Australian Army, became AFP Commissioner on 16 February 1983 and within a month put into effect a reorganisation to create a functional command structure with, as he saw it, clear lines of authority, responsibility and accountability.

Also within a month, the Fraser Coalition Government was replaced with the Hawke Labor Government, with Kim Beazley appointed Special Minister of State, making him the AFP's minister.

Commissioner Grey set about creating departments for Investigations, General Policing, Training and Personnel and Services, each under the command of an assistant commissioner. Command responsibility for operations in the ACT was now in the hands of the Deputy Commissioner. He also created the Office of the Commissioner of Police reporting to the Chief of Staff.

Commissioner Grey was quick to point out in his first annual report to Minister Beazley that there were "deficiencies in resources" particularly the constant demand placed on the AFP by the Government and the community to investigate crimes under Commonwealth



23 December 1982: A damaged vehicle at the Sydney Hakoah Club which was bombed shortly after the Israeli Consulate-General also in Sydney. – *Australian Bomb Data Centre Collection*

criminal law and providing police services to the ACT.

In the wake of several royal commissions, the AFP was experiencing a flood of investigations into organised crime and drug trafficking. There was also a growing awareness of a rising levels of social security fraud and fraud against the Government-funded health insurance scheme Medibank that demanded substantially greater police investigative resources than first anticipated.

The AFP was also being depleted of skilled investigators who were being attracted to investigation arms of other departments offering higher salaries. More work with fewer officers meant, for the 1982–83

financial year, the AFP's workload generated an overtime bill of \$11 million as part of a total salaries bill of \$85.935 million.

Commissioner Grey also found the AFP's accommodation was piecemeal. In Canberra alone, its members were spread through 17 buildings with the standard of some being so "appalling" that he said: "Unless an adequate standard and centralisation of accommodation for the Force is achieved, we will not be in a position to deliver the standard of police services I expect and I believe the Government requires."

Regardless, the AFP's performance on drug seizures and convictions was impressive, as was its performance in fraud investigation

with the AFP recovering \$17 million for one sales tax evasion scheme alone that meant a boost to Commonwealth revenue by some \$750,000 per month as a result.

Similar successful investigations were also contributing to a substantial return to Government with Commissioner Grey suggesting that as the AFP expanded its investigations into fraud against Medibank (introduced in 1975) and illegal currency dealings, it could result in a gain of many millions of dollars to Commonwealth revenue.

Overseas Representation

By mid 1983 the AFP had liaison posts in London, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Los Angeles and New Zealand all primarily concerned with cooperating with local authorities on major drug and organised crime aspects affecting Australia and the host countries.

While Commissioner Grey had only been in the job a few months when he submitted the 1982–83 annual report, he quickly expressed the same degree of frustration of his predecessor about the AFP's role in providing a protective service to the Commonwealth. While the investigative arm of the Commonwealth Police and the ACT Police had much in common in role and rank structure, the guarding function was not proving to be such a neat fit.

Commissioner Grey also shared Commissioner Woods' enthusiasm for quality training and said: "Only by making the appropriate effort in the area [training] can we hope to consistently meet the high standards demanded of the policing profession. If training was not adequate, the force has no future."

After his first full year as head of the AFP, Commissioner Grey was now reporting to the Special Minister of State, Mick Young, and primarily concerned with adjusting the senior command structure to meet the constantly increasing importance of the investigations being undertaken by the AFP.

This required the existing Deputy Commissioner to assume control of the Investigations Department and the creation of a second Deputy Commissioner to take over administration.

Consequently, the position of Commander Eastern Region was upgraded to Assistant Commissioner, with additional supervisory responsibility for Northern and Northern Territory Regions. The Assistant Commissioner ACT Region also assumed supervisory responsibility over Southern, Central, Western and Tasmania Regions. These changes were made to enhance the control and balance of the AFP and provide an improved command structure.

Commissioner Grey said: "The refinement is ongoing, but there is a constant dilemma between the emergencies of today and the



1 December 1984: First Constable Peter Middelhuis finds himself escorting two anti-nuclear protestors from the Naval establishment HMAS *Stirling* in Perth.
– AFP Museum Collection

need to think of the future; both contend for attention and both are equally important."

He also commissioned a management review of the AFP to be undertaken jointly by Price Waterhouse Associates and AFP personnel. The review recommended further organisational changes, among legislative and other proposals.

Objectives and Priorities

Commissioner Grey considered the original AFP charter needed revision to reflect both the policies of the Government and the significant changes in the law enforcement environment since the AFP's inception. This revision was even more pressing given the Government had eventually agreed to the separation of the protective service component from the AFP. Also to be

considered was the inevitable approach of ACT self-government and the continuing increases in AFP responsibilities.

Commissioner Grey proposed that a review of the charter with a redefined, updated set of objectives and priorities be developed during 1984–85.

Resources

In the 1983–84 Budget, the Australian Government approved an allocation to the AFP of \$4 million for additional personnel, acknowledging the increased demands on the AFP.

Commissioner Grey's point of view was that when additional and quite separate functions were imposed on the AFP, such as Federal Law Court protection and coastal surveillance, the spread

of resources was at risk of becoming dangerously thin.

He said: "To date, demands have had to be finely balanced against existing resources, which were already marginal. If increased requests on the use of the AFP continue to grow, we run a very real risk of standards deteriorating. Our manpower is the critical factor and must increase commensurate with our tasks. For example, the coastal surveillance role is not just a perpetuation of existing procedures."

As an example of the ongoing and anticipated stress on staffing levels Commissioner Grey cited the Beazley Report, which made quite clear the need to upgrade the quality of coastal surveillance.

The 1983 Beazley Report placed the focus of coastal surveillance on drug smuggling, a stance that was accepted by the Government. The Coastal Protection Unit was set up in the AFP to manage and coordinate the overall national coastal surveillance and protection system.

To cope with the task of upgrading coordination, direction and control Australia wide, Commissioner Grey said he

would require more than the 37 personnel authorised for the role adding: "It should be said, looking to the future, that effective surveillance must be accompanied by effective law enforcement response."

This new role in coastal surveillance caused Commissioner Grey to comment on the broader topic of maintaining effective staffing levels. "I must stress again that trained manpower is not an inexhaustible resource," he said.

While there had been no problems in obtaining suitable recruits for the AFP – in fact, there were waiting lists for intakes – induction and recruit training, could not be rushed if it was to be done well. The progression through more advanced selective training and the acquisition of essential in-service experience was something that also took time.

Commissioner Grey said: "No force can operate efficiently while continually deploying personnel from 'normal' areas to fight outbreaks anywhere else."

The Burden of Public Protests

Large public demonstrations did not cease in Australia with the end of the war in



14 December 1983: The Hawke Government announced initiatives to separate the protective service component from the roles undertaken by the AFP. This was achieved by 20 October 1984 with the transfer of the majority of officers involved in protection work to the newly created Australian Protective Service. – *Courtesy of ACT Heritage Library: Canberra Times Collection*

Vietnam in 1973. Peace and anti-nuclear activist along with those supporting the women's movement, Aboriginal land rights, the conservation movement and those wanting to bring an end to gender discrimination were just a sample of the interest groups continuing to take to the streets in large numbers.

Such events were a tremendous drain on resources for the AFP to police, because the AFP attended demonstrations not only in Canberra, but also at any number of Commonwealth establishments throughout Australia. In Commissioner Grey's opinion there was no likelihood of the number of protests diminishing and so policing them would remain a burden on AFP resources. This burden extended to all new areas of

law enforcement that the Government was directing to the AFP which were not supported by additional staffing.

Commissioner Grey called for the Government to consider the staffing implications for each of the new duties it found for the AFP to police. His obvious aim was to secure sufficient officers to maintain a force of sufficient strength and expertise to meet its charter.

Accommodation

Commissioner Grey felt that a single headquarters building was the key to bringing a higher degree of coherency to the organisation. His argument was clear; to deliver the standard of police services expected of it, the AFP needed

a centralised headquarters in Canberra adequately appointed to bring together a workforce that was widely dispersed throughout Canberra in buildings that in some cases had been built in the 1940s.

A former government hostel, Havelock House on Northbourne Avenue in Canberra, was allocated to the AFP for office space, but only after prolonged, interdepartmental negotiations under the pressure of persistent public protests. Protesters demanded that the building be used for low-cost community accommodation. Diagonally opposite Havelock House, the second and third floors of NRMA House were also made available to the AFP enabling some concentration of essential elements for efficient functioning and control. Nevertheless, Commissioner Grey hoped that the scheduled 1985 start to construction of the proposed AFP headquarters building had neither lessened in priority nor would be unduly delayed.

"A national force deserves a national headquarters, readily identified as such in the national capital, not leased premises in the NRMA building," he said.

1983–84

Fighting Crime

Aside from increasing operational and administrative pressures, in 1983–84 there were significant achievements in combating major crime.

This included the total drug seizures for the year of 112kg of heroin, 12kg of cocaine and close to 3 tonnes of cannabis products as well as major investigations into medical insurance fraud and the infamous bottom-of-the-harbour tax avoidance scheme.

Commissioner Grey contended that the AFP had achieved a better use of resources by more effective screening, targeting and surveillance. A number of substantial drug importations had been intercepted with resultant arrests and convictions of the principals involved.

Like Commissioner Woods, Commissioner Grey was a proponent of interagency cooperation and asked the Minister to note that a large number of seizures had been made possible by the vigilance and efficiency of Customs at Australia's international barriers.

"Cooperation in the field with investigators in the Australian Taxation Office (ATO),

Australian Customs Service, and the Departments of Social Security and Health is close, successful and ongoing and has yielded pleasing and significant results. Our continuing work with the special prosecutors set up to pursue matters stemming from the Costigan and Stewart Royal Commissions is also effective. Liaison with the state police continues to be harmonious, cooperative and productive," he said.

Turning his comments to policing in the ACT, Commissioner Grey addressed, as all subsequent commissioners have in turn, the thorny issue of calls for a separate force to police the nation's capital saying: "The media and some local bodies periodically expound the view that the ACT is disadvantaged by not having its own police force and that in the event of self-government, the situation will be exacerbated further. It has been said that as the AFP has taken on a wider national role, the public and police [in Canberra] have grown apart and further to that a problem has been the concern of the AFP with national police issues."

Commissioner Grey insisted that the facts did not support such an argument saying

it was true that the AFP was a federal force with a national role, but this was not to the detriment of its general policing responsibilities in the Australian Capital Territory.

"It is not insignificant that out of a total strength of approximately 2,400 general policing officers, on average 800 had been in the ACT Region.

"At the time of amalgamation into the AFP the strength of the ACT Police Force was approximately 500; the ACT is better served now in police strength than it has been in the past, even allowing for the population increase," he said.

He argued that the logistic, training and general support infrastructure of the larger AFP was of obvious benefit [to the ACT] enhancing the standard of policing within the Territory and the value of the AFP providing the general policing services to the ACT was often neither fully appreciated nor understood by the critics.

"The experience gained by working in close contact with the public provided the basis of responsibility and service which is inherent in a police force of integrity. Conversely, the opportunity to serve in

other states and overseas provides a broad experience unique to the AFP for officers, and which in turn reflects to the advantage of the ACT.

"I refute any suggestion that the ACT is either disadvantaged, or has an inadequate level of policing," he said.

Looking to a national arena, Commissioner Grey welcomed the impending creation of the NCA and welcomed the prospect of the AFP working with such an authority.

Family Law Court Judges

With the escalation of attacks against the Family Court, yet another unanticipated responsibility came the AFP's way. The outbreak of threats and violence specifically directed against certain judges was a relatively new event. Commissioner Grey called these actions reprehensible, but knew that providing officers to protect the homes and vehicles of all judges throughout Australia and their families would only be possible if other tasks were either markedly reduced in priority or cancelled.

The only practical solution was to work in conjunction with state police and to

1983–84

respond quickly to specific or assessed threats. This was the approach being used for certain VIPs and diplomatic persons.

Training

In Commissioner Grey's view, the Training Department, re-organised in March 1983, had responded well to the demands placed on it to develop and improve the standard of recruit and in-service specialist training. A record 138 recruits graduated in one passing-out parade at the AFP College at Weston on 31 May 1984.

Equal Opportunity

Among the 370 graduating recruits in 1983–84 were 91 women making female police officers 2.7 per cent of the sworn AFP at the time.

Multiculturalism was also making its presence felt in the AFP; of the graduates mentioned above, 25 were overseas born and 49 had one or both parents born in other countries.

Professionalism and Leadership

In such a young organisation training was concentrated on immediate needs. For two years the AFP gave priority to training recruits and specialist courses at the

expense of officer training. The situation was redressed with an officers' course, but Commissioner Grey was quick to point out that, despite the initial lack of formal officer training, the technical professionalism and leadership displayed throughout the AFP was commendable and satisfying.

Overseas Representation

During the year, liaison officers had been stationed in London (Interpol), Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Los Angeles, Islamabad, Washington and Wellington with arrangements in progress for Manila and Hong Kong. Increased flows of intelligence on organised crime and narcotics with consequent seizures were a practical demonstration of the effectiveness of these officers.

The Cost of Efficient Policing

Gaining a perspective on crime in Australia, Commissioner Grey said that it was worth noting that in most countries, crime increased in proportion to the considerable resources and money poured into its development and that this was true for Australia.

"The Australian crime scene is a growth

industry. Crime is profitable and a tougher line is needed. I believe an increasing number of people see crime as a 'legitimate profession' in which to engage. The best technology and legal advice is available to top criminals, often ahead of that used by or available to law enforcement agencies. The lesson to be drawn from this is that if law enforcement is to maintain the status quo, let alone redress the balance, it is going to cost us as a nation," he said.

"Regrettably this simple fact is not either recognised or admitted by many. The lessening of crime in this country requires the best efforts of all, now and in the immediate future, if Australia is to be worthwhile for generations yet to come."

This again was a sentiment that would be often expressed by subsequent AFP commissioners.

YEAR IN REVIEW

1984–85

Submitting his third annual report, Commissioner Grey announced to Minister Mick Young that the recommendations of the Joint Management Review were nearing completion with a significant aspect of this being the transfer of the protective service component to the Department of Local Government and Administrative Services.

The AFP now had two deputy commissioners; one responsible for operations, the other for administration, along with a new position of Secretary to the AFP established to assume the expanded responsibilities of the former position of Chief Executive Officer.

Drug trafficking and organised crime were now attracting most of the AFP's attention bringing with it the need to train more investigations staff, improve intelligence gathering, surveillance, technical and particularly electronics support and witness protection.

The previous year had been one where there had been increases in the number of investigations into drug importations, large-scale income tax and sales tax evasion.



25 December 1984: The Christmas Day shift in the communications room located on the first floor of City Station. The 'comms' room was located in the middle of the station with no access to outside walls. Shown on duty are (right to left around the bench) First Constable Peter Dawe, Constable Mark Donohue, Constable Michael Chew and Senior Constable Peter Irgang. – *Canberra Times Photo*

Automated Data Processing (ADP), the forerunner to Information Technology, was beginning to pay off by enabling much more effective correlation of criminal intelligence data allowing a more effective long-term targeting of individuals known to be involved at the higher levels of organised crime.

Public debate on organised crime had been spurred by the release of the Costigan Report, the establishment of the NCA and the high public profile of the Hawke Government's Drug Summit. Commissioner Grey expressed concern that these new initiatives would be a further drain on AFP resources to the detriment on ongoing national investigations.

Policing the ACT

In the ACT, where the focus was on housebreakings, armed robberies and thefts from motor vehicles, the AFP had greatly expanded the Neighbourhood Watch program to 19 watch areas. By July 1985 this resulted in a degree of control on the housebreaking problem and at the same time an increased community awareness of other criminal activities. Commissioner Grey was moved to tell the minister: "The ACT Region deserves commendation for its service in policing the ACT, in my view second to none in the effective law-enforcement role of similar size and structured communities within Australia."

Staffing

With demands on the AFP continually increasing, adequate staffing still remained a problem. Commissioner Grey said while he had no argument against providing protection against specific threats, continuing to provide a continuous high level of protection of the Family Law Courts and judges when no specific threat existed was damaging the efficiency and morale of the force.

Airport Security

To add to the AFP's distraction from fundamental policing was the increased public concerns following the publicity given to aircraft hijackings and other terrorist activities overseas.

In the early 1980s there were regular aircraft hijackings in the northern hemisphere. By 1985 there had been at least two major 'skyjacking' attempts per year perpetrated mostly by individuals or small groups seeking asylum or public attention to perceived political injustices. Several of these hijackings resulted in passenger deaths.

High-profile terrorism incidents included the US Embassy bombing in Beirut, resulting in more than 60 US service personnel

killed and the IRA's bombing of the British Conservative Party conference at the Grand Hotel in Brighton which killed five senior party members connected to the British Cabinet.

In October 1984, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards, and in Italy the Naples–Milan Express train was blown up in a bombing attack attributed to the Mafia.

In February of 1985 an IRA mortar attack killed nine police officers in Newry (Northern Ireland). In the following April, using a remote controlled bomb, the IRA assassinated Lord Justice Maurice Gibson and his wife.

Closer to home, in July 1985, the Greenpeace flagship, *Rainbow Warrior* was bombed in Auckland Harbour resulting in the death of photographer Fernando Pereira.

While the Australian public at large had not experienced this level of terrorism, there was still a call for an increased police presence and more effective security measures at airports.

Commissioner Grey openly admitted that



July 1984: Operation Lavender began in July 1984 and was a coordinated investigation into a major cannabis importation. The operation culminated in August 1985 with the arrest of 20 offenders and the dismantling of a major criminal enterprise. - AFP Museum Collection

there was a minimum police presence at most airports and essentially no counter-terrorist capability provided by the AFP outside the ACT. Response outside the ACT relied on arrangements with state police.

Commissioner Grey had a second area of concern, and one most senior police continually deal with: a constant strain on resources, particularly in the AFP's case with increasing demand from the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions (CDPP) and the newly formed NCA. Both of these organisations were drawing on the AFP for its experienced and high standard officers.

Commissioner Grey's frustration was that

with each investigative success, the AFP's resources were being stretched ever thinner. In 1984–85 there was an unexpected 40 per cent surge in the number public protests in Canberra adding to the continual increase in costs of overtime. He made an impassioned plea to the Minister: "You are aware of my views on the cost of efficient policing. Crime is costing the nation dearly already, and unless the needs of policing in Australia are recognised and effective police counter measures initiated, the loss to our nation will be incalculable. A band-aid approach to the problem must not continue or the AFP will be unable to develop a preventive as well as reactive capability."

Training

As Commissioner Woods had noted, Commissioner Grey saw the foundations of a successful future for the AFP lay in providing high-level and quality training for its members. Three categories of training existed at the time: recruit training, specialist training and career development.

Recruit training was a combination of a basic training course, structured on-the-job training and local procedures training in the regions. The emphasis was on introducing the trainee to investigating skills early in his or her career, considered necessary due to the AFP's role.

Specialist training included detective training, with the emphasis placed on the three major specialist areas associated with AFP investigations: drug operations, fraud and criminal intelligence. Specialist courses in areas such as driver training and firearms continued.

The third category was career development training aimed at qualifying members for promotion. The annual written examinations system was discontinued and formal qualifying courses introduced in which students were assessed by

1984–85

way of assignments, simulations and presentations.

Selected training courses were presented in the regions, enabling more members to attend courses at less cost due to the lower travel and accommodation expenditure. A further benefit of regional training was that the content of some courses could be varied to reflect conditions unique to a particular region.

Overseas Representation

The AFP continued to increase the number of liaison officers stationed overseas in those areas important to the control of the flow of drugs, organised crime and illegal currency transactions. During 1984–85, liaison officers were established in Manila, Hong Kong and Singapore and plans were in place to establish a post in London with responsibility for Western Europe.

Commissioner Grey was convinced the continued success of the AFP's overseas posts in providing intelligence, particularly on drug trafficking and organised crime, had proven their value beyond doubt.

International Conferences

In September 1984, Commissioner Grey led the Australian delegation to the 53rd General Assembly of Interpol, also taking the opportunity while in Europe to visit police forces in the United Kingdom, Italy and the Federal Republic of Germany. He felt the trip was invaluable in serving to emphasise the international nature of crime and the necessity for international efforts to combat it.

The annual Conference of Commissioners of Police of Australasia and the South West Pacific Region was held in Madang, Papua New Guinea (PNG), in June 1985 and focused on the measures introduced by the PNG Government to resolve the country's law-enforcement problems. Stemming from these talks, all Australian police commissioners agreed to identify areas where assistance could be given to the Royal PNG Constabulary, particularly in training support.

Domestic arrangements

Commissioner Grey sought and obtained support from the Australian police commissioners to participate in funding a number of scientific research programs;

in particular an AFP ongoing program on explosives analysis being conducted at the Forensic Science Centre in Adelaide.

The introduction of the long-overdue Australian Police Medal was also discussed. Aspects of the award were considered and agreed recommendations were conveyed to the Secretary of the Special Minister of State. In particular it was emphasised by the commissioners that the award should be introduced at the earliest practicable time—hopefully for the Queen's Birthday Honours List in June 1986.

Accommodation

The AFP's accommodation in Canberra continued to be a problem. Despite its importance to the AFP's future, a start to the construction of a national headquarters building was no closer. Although the planning stage was completed in early 1983, funding for construction kept being postponed.

An interim solution of leasing a commercial office building was adopted, because the ongoing agitation for Havelock House to be turned over to community housing saw the AFP

relinquish the building after occupying it only since mid-1983. The leased building at 68 Northbourne Avenue consolidated the location of many AFP elements of the force but still left other important operational and technical areas in primitive and inadequate accommodation.

Regional offices in Sydney and Melbourne faced similar problems of unsuitable accommodation. The standard of accommodation was particularly acute in Victoria and described as the worst of any Commonwealth department.

Operation Lavender was a cornerstone of the AFP's achievements in 1985–86. It was a drug seizure that culminated in August of 1985 in the arrest of 20 offenders and the dismantling of a major criminal enterprise involved in drug trafficking. Almost one tonne of cannabis resin was seized in Sydney along with \$226,000 worth of vessels and motor vehicles and \$66,000 in cash.

In the annual report to Minister Young, Commissioner Grey pointed out the significance of the AFP's contribution to the national fight against drugs and organised crime as being due to the diligence and professionalism of a relatively small group of investigators.

"I am convinced that the development of this capability is the most cost effective means by which our society can control the evils of drugs and corruption which are ravaging it today. The capability which is needed can only be achieved by sustained Government commitment," he said.

The Hawke Government held its Drug Summit in early 1985, generating publicity



April 1987: A large consignment of cannabis was imported by boat to Byron Bay. AFP officers seized 1.3 tonnes of compressed cannabis heads, a fishing trawler and approximately \$54,000 in cash, and made two arrests. – AFP Museum Collection

and raising public awareness of illicit drugs and their effect on Australian society.

Despite the publicity generated by the summit, Commissioner Grey was clear in telling the Minister that little real progress had been made in the vital area of legislation essential to fight effectively against drug trafficking. He said legislation needed to allow confiscation of assets, permit police access to taxation and banking records, create the offence of sending illicit drugs through the mail, amend the Customs Act and clarify the powers to detain and search persons concealing drugs internally.

Terrorism

Commissioner Grey still maintained concerns for the barely basic level of counter-terrorism

capability at Australian airports maintaining that there was "little capacity to respond to a sudden increase in the level of threat."

Accommodation

Accommodation for much of the AFP's membership did not improve either: "Despite the progress being made, many AFP members continue to work in appalling conditions," Commissioner Grey said.

"Accommodation allocated to the AFP at Sydney and Brisbane Airport is appalling; it is plainly some of the worst accommodation that could be envisaged for anybody serving in government.

"It was only because police were members of a disciplined and dedicated force that the conditions had been tolerated," he said.

Whether it was related to the substandard working conditions or perhaps the growing case load mentioned earlier, Commissioner Grey revealed that during the year there had been "releases and leaks to the press both within and outside the AFP.

"These, in my view, had been counter-productive and I question the ethical position of those AFP members who choose such a course. I cannot think of a single useful result to come from them. On the contrary, from my viewpoint those concerned have looked petty, frustrated and often ridiculous.

"I have clearly stated my position to the AFP: any handover to the media, outside the venue of proper public relations, of documents or information was a breach of integrity and an abuse of the trust and corporate responsibility of commissioned officers, non-commissioned officers and constables as members of the AFP. I further consider the use by the media of the 'Judas with documents' equally unethical."

YEAR IN REVIEW

1986–87

By the time of his fifth annual report, Commissioner Grey confidently expressed to the Minister for Justice and Consumer Affairs, Michael Tate: "I believe the AFP has matured into an effective law enforcement organisation which has clear objectives and is having a significant impact on criminal activities throughout our nation."

He was confident that the AFP was attracting quality recruits who were well motivated and responsive to the comprehensive training program now in place.

"These young men and women are our greatest asset. The Government and the senior management of the AFP must appreciate the problems these young people face in what was often a hostile work environment and ensure their interests had been protected," he said.

Commissioner Grey was of the opinion that the control of crime depended not only on an efficient police force, but also on Government and community support. He was not the first senior police officer to call to an awakening of the Government and the community to the insidiousness of crime saying: "The



March 1987: Five people were charged with importing 5kg of high quality heroin from Pakistan concealed inside soccer balls. – AFP Museum Collection

Government must be prepared to pass effective legislation and provide adequate resources to its law enforcement arm. The community must recognise the damage inflicted on itself by the criminal element and be prepared to fully support the police in their investigations."

Legislation

During this period, long sought after legislation was introduced that would enable federal authorities to enhance their ability to apprehend and punish major criminals in Australia.

The legislation introduced included:

- *Telecommunications (Interception) Amendment Bill 1987*
- *Proceeds of Crime Bill 1987*
- *Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Bill 1987*
- *Cash Transaction Reports Bill 1987*

Although not yet introduced to Parliament, the Amendment to the *Taxation Administration Act 1953* was being processed. This amendment allowed controlled access to taxation records and would be critical to the solution of many major crimes in the future.

The enactment of this legislation gave access to new and very important sources of both intelligence and evidence. But again Commissioner Grey emphasised that if this legislation was to be used effectively the resource implications could not be ignored. For example, trained personnel in increasing numbers would now be required to follow the money trail authorities now had access to, or analyse the intelligence gained through a telephone intercept.

The increasing incidence of computer crime was of growing concern. With few home-based personal computers available at this time, the Internet had a low public profile and was being used mainly by academics, large corporations and computer enthusiasts. An emerging number of 'hackers' started to find their way into government and big business computer systems, motivated initially for the challenge and then for more sinister reasons.

This was a new and a unique area of criminal activity not adequately covered by existing legislation. The inadequacies included a lack of focus on criminal computer misuse leading to legal uncertainties. Existing penalties were minor when measured against the potential damage that could be caused. In some jurisdictions a person could break into a computer system and read the data, but not be subject to prosecution.

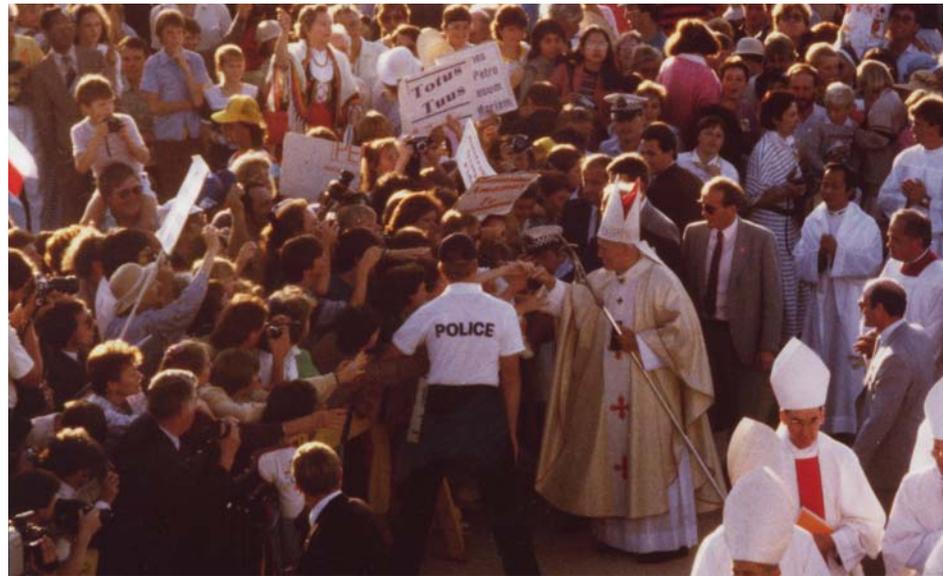
Resourcing the ACT

Commissioner Grey took an opportunity in the 1986–87 annual report to address the resources allocated to policing the ACT community.

“The human resources allocation to Australian Capital Territory policing has only been increased marginally since the Government issued *AFP Objectives and Priorities* in 1985. However, with the rising crime rate and the development of new suburbs, the time is approaching for some increases in human resources to be made to ACT policing.

“Resources will be further stretched when the new Parliament House opens. Its size, complex design and landscaped grounds will be difficult to police, particularly during demonstrations. The proposed shedding of the Diplomatic and Consular Protection function will reduce the total number of police available in the ACT for unexpected emergent situations, situations that could well arise forcing the AFP to call on the New South Wales Police for assistance,” he said.

Commissioner Grey was also addressing the AFP’s capital expenditure, particularly with the need to move into the key areas of forensic support, operational equipment and ADP. Again, he drew attention to the drain of experienced investigators to the NCA in increasing



26 November 1986: As part of the Papal visit of John Paul II to Australia in 1986 the AFP provided all layers of protection at mass held at Canberra Race Course.

– AFP Museum Collection

numbers and some to the Attorney-General’s Department on a long-term basis, indicating that some deployments of investigating teams had been made at the request of other Government departments, often on either unnecessary or trivial tasks.

Commissioner Grey gave notice that from that time requests for AFP assistance from Government departments would now be closely vetted before being accepted. His annoyance at political motives for some of the referred investigations caused him to say: “The AFP will not be used to report on matters which result from either inept internal administration or malicious accusations.

“One such referral consumed considerable AFP resources and the allegations had

been proved groundless; another had previously been well investigated several times by departmental officers before referral to the AFP—nothing new was found,” he said.

International Activities

The AFP’s international activities continued to expand. As the Australian representative to Interpol, Commissioner Grey was in a position to promote the AFP internationally and to promote the work of its overseas liaison posts.

During 1986–87, the AFP continued building its international relationships by hosting representatives from overseas law enforcement agencies including the Royal Thai Police, Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary and the FBI.

Of paramount importance was Commissioner Grey’s official visit to the People’s Republic of China at the invitation of the Public Security Ministry, where the initial steps were taken to establish a program of cooperation and possibly staff exchanges aimed at curbing international crime.

Superannuation

On the industrial front, Commissioner Grey said there was considerable room for improvement in existing AFP superannuation arrangements. The trend of increases in invalidity retirements, rather than age retirement, had serious cost implications for Government and operational efficiency considerations for the AFP. He believed it was essential to the AFP’s future operational efficiency that a better retirement formula be developed making optional early age retirement economically attractive and breaking the existing nexus with the Australian Public Service scheme which he believed was inappropriate for a disciplined sworn officer force subject to the AFP Act and the *Complaints (AFP) Act 1981*.

AFP members had been aware of the

growing trend in some other Australian police areas for generous lump-sum retirement schemes, such as that available to members of the Victoria Police.

Accommodation

During the year the AFP occupied the interim National Headquarters facing Veteran's Park on Northbourne Avenue, Canberra. Commissioner Grey expected the building to enable new standards in security and facility integration to be set. Although the building was not ideal, he felt its occupation was an important milestone for the AFP, enabling headquarters functions to be centralised; many for the first time.

Commissioner Grey pointed out that it should be noted that the 1983 plan for a purpose-built facility had not yet been approved and a number of AFP national units were still housed in temporary, sub-standard accommodation within Canberra.

At the same time moves were taking place to find better accommodation for the AFP's state offices.



April 1987: A major development in Australian international police relations took place in when Commissioner Grey toured the People's Republic of China; he was the first Australian Police Commissioner to do so. – AFP Museum Collection

In Melbourne, a leased building was to be fitted out specifically for the AFP Southern Command Headquarters and was expected to be occupied in late 1987. A site for the Northern Command Headquarters in Sydney had been selected in Goulburn St and the new regional headquarters in Brisbane had been occupied since late 1986.

Progress was made in planning for improved AFP accommodation in Sydney and Brisbane airports, but Commissioner Grey maintained that accommodation continued to be sub-standard in those areas, but noted that the standard was "excellent" at Hobart, Perth and Melbourne airports.

Airport Policing

Commissioner Grey was calling for a final decision from Government on who was to provide community policing and security services at airports and the extent of the services to be provided saying: "The current uncertainty benefits nobody", and that the AFP counter-terrorist capability, "remained at a bare minimum with little capacity to respond to a sudden increase in the level of threat still holds true."

This was Commissioner Grey's final annual report. He indicated to Government that he did not wish to renew his contract and the search

began in late 1987 for a replacement Commissioner. The Commissioner for the Northern Territory Police and Emergency Services, Peter McAulay was subsequently selected and took up the position in early 1988 at which time Ron Grey retired.