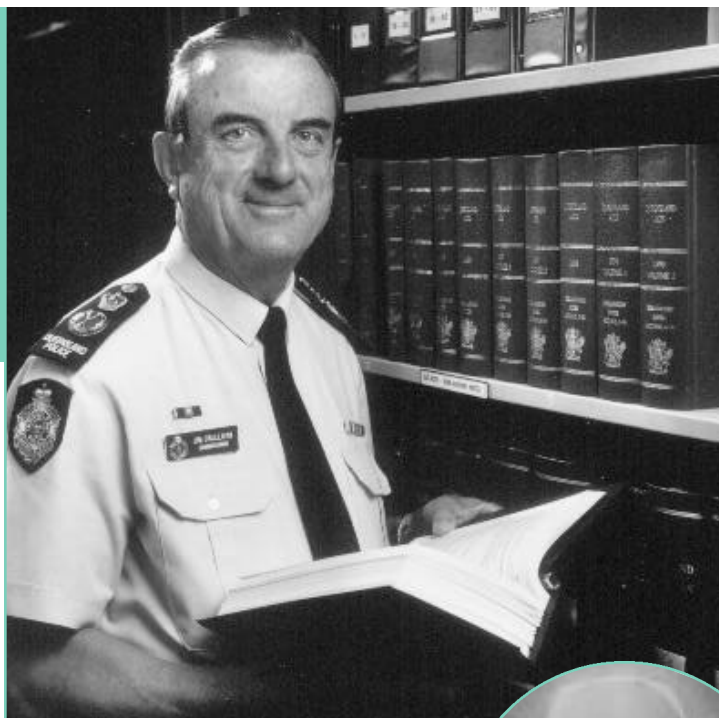


## COMMISSIONER'S OVERVIEW

This is the last Annual Report I shall submit as Commissioner of the Queensland Police Service, and I wish to record my deep appreciation to all members of the Service for their support during my period as Commissioner. As I stated when I announced to staff that I intended to retire on 31 October 2000, it is they who should take credit for the respect and professionalism the Service now enjoys throughout the community. Without the support of both sworn and unsworn staff this could not have been achieved.



*The Police Service which Commissioner Jim O'Sullivan has steered into the new millennium is significantly different to the police force led by Commissioner Seymour around 150 years ago.*



It is too easily forgotten how dangerous policing can be, especially with the increase in violence within the community and, by some, against police. During my period as Commissioner we have suffered the tragic loss of a number of fine officers, and others have been injured during the course of operations. Policing can be a difficult and stressful occupation and the community should be grateful that there are brave police officers prepared not only to face these dangerous situations but also to attend to distressing incidents involving loss of life, serious injury or emotional trauma. This courage should never be taken for granted.

During my career, and particularly as Commissioner, I have seen many changes take place. The Service has placed increasing emphasis on ethical standards, equity and professionalism over the past few years. For example, I am pleased to have established the Ethical Standards Command. I have seen the percentage of female recruits rise to nearly 40 percent; and have established the Cultural Advisory Unit in the Office of the Commissioner to enhance the communication between the Service and a range of indigenous and ethnic communities. These are but a few examples of the great progress made over the past decade.

However, it is the operational officers who are responsible for ensuring that all members of the community are treated equitably and afforded due procedural fairness. That the Service is improving its approval rating in community satisfaction surveys is a demonstration that this ethical, equitable approach is being recognised by the public.

In addition to being my last Annual Report, this reporting period also covers the change from an old to a new millennium and this Report marks this by including a retrospective focus which serves to remind us how far we have progressed since the start of the 20th century.

The Annual Reports published at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century have some interesting parallels with events at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. For example, the Service is currently planning security for a royal tour by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II who will be visiting the State for the Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) meeting in 2001. There was a similar royal visit in 1900, and the Commissioner of the day reported:

On the occasion of the Royal visit to Queensland, all the best energies of the Police Department were called into action. The whole of the Metropolitan land force and the Water Police ... were engaged on arduous duty, and large augmentations from the country districts were brought into the city.

The following year, the Commissioner noted:

In my Annual Report for 1900 I quoted from a general order I had issued in June 1901, anent "the excellent results achieved by the zealous cooperation in the performance of certain special, responsible and arduous duties" by the Police. This had relation to three notable and unique happenings in the history of the State, viz: - The inauguration of the Commonwealth, the arrival here of the Imperial troops, and the visit of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York.

This will strike a chord of recognition with members of the Service who have been involved in organising security for the Queensland activities related to the Olympic Games, CHOGM and the royal visit, and the centenary of Federation as the Commonwealth of Australia. I am pleased to follow the lead of my predecessor and report that at the time of writing this Report, the Olympic Torch Relay has already travelled the State without serious incident and with great goodwill between the community and the escorting police. The Service was congratulated warmly on the efficiency of its contribution to the management of this event.

The Service has made great progress in its use of information technology, with instant communications across the State now almost taken for granted. The statewide electronic mail system, introduced in 1996, has transformed internal communication within the Service, increasing productivity and the speed with which many transactions which previously took place through hard copy communication are conducted. E-mail also largely replaced the telephone as a means of communication. This is a far cry from the situation in 1890, when the Commissioner wrote somewhat wistfully in his Annual Report:

The time is not far off when some improved method of communication between the police on beat duty in the city and their station should be adopted. In some of the cities of the United States ... the "Police Signal System" has been instituted, by which a constable can communicate with and call for aid from the station in case of emergency. In the same manner the station can communicate with the constables through the wires, and if necessity arises concentrate a force in a given locality by the same rapid means. The street signal boxes contain the telephone and automatic signalling instruments, and are placed at proper distances on each beat, and are connected electrically with an instrument at the station which records the signals sent from the streets.

It is not possible here to document all the Service's recent achievements, although the body of the Report will highlight a number of these. However, it is with great confidence in the Service's future, built on this solid base of significant recent achievements, that I submit this, my final Annual Report. I thank all staff, and the senior executive team with whom I have so closely worked, for their contribution to the significant progress made by the Service over the past few years.



J P O'Sullivan APM  
Commissioner