

Commissioner's Overview

I am pleased to present the 2004 Annual Report, which highlights the key achievements of the Queensland Police Service during the 2003-04 financial year. The theme for this year's report is *Community Engagement*, which draws together the key components of my personal vision for the Queensland Police Service: *Performance, Professionalism, People and Partnerships*. While I have commented on the importance of each of these components in previous Annual Reports, this year's theme of *Community Engagement* emphasises what can be achieved through commitment to all four of them. The Service's activities and achievements throughout the year demonstrate how a consistent focus on performance, professionalism, people and partnerships in recent years continues to strengthen its engagement with the community.

In my visits to police establishments across the State during the year, I have constantly been impressed by the strength of police-community relationships and the evidence of effective partnerships between communities and police working to solve local problems. Such partnerships reflect the Service's success in integrating its Problem-Oriented and Partnership Policing (POPP) strategy into everyday operational policing. A noteworthy example of POPP in practice is the Truancy and Graffiti Project in Mareeba, which won a 2003 Premier's Award for Excellence and was featured in Brisbane in a 2004 community engagement showcasing event.

Equally impressive is the diversity of ways in which the Service and its members have engaged their communities. Examples include the Volunteers in Policing (VIP) Program, which recruits and trains local community volunteers to assist police in delivering a range of services designed to reduce crime and help people feel safe. More than 200 Queenslanders are involved as VIPs across the State. Many parents of school students would be aware of the School-Based Policing Program, which is a joint Queensland Police Service and Education Queensland initiative. This program aims to promote positive relationships between school communities and police, and to raise awareness of the law and legal processes, particularly in relation to young people. It is administered within the Service by the Crime Prevention Unit, which also manages several other community programs, including Neighbourhood Watch, Neighbourhood Police Beats and the Adopt-a-Cop Program.

Assisting to increase the Service's engagement with the diverse indigenous and cultural communities across Queensland are Police Liaison Officers (PLOs). The Service employs PLOs across the State, and has recently created several new PLO positions, to help assist communication and to tailor policing strategies to the needs of particular communities, bringing the total number of positions to 135.

The Queensland Police Service has a range of mechanisms and processes in place to ensure community involvement in central and regional planning and decision-making. These include, among others, Community Consultative Committees, a Police Ethnic Advisory Group and an Indigenous Reference Group. Other examples of community engagement include the annual free Carols by Candlelight event at Southbank Parklands, which has become a popular Service tradition. The 2003 concert featured, among others, the Queensland Police Juvenile Pipes and Drums, a group of 30 young people aged 9 to 18 who are tutored by Service members in piping, drumming, dressing and drill. This program, which focuses on 'developing youth through music', is the first of its kind in Australia, and has attracted the interest of police services in New South Wales and South Australia.

A popular venue for school and community group visits is the Queensland Police Museum, which this year celebrated its 110th anniversary. The Museum provides displays on such topics as police heritage, investigative techniques and specialist units of the Service, as well as educational programs and kits for primary and secondary school students.

Every year, the Service has significant involvement in the planning and successful conduct of a variety of community events. As well as Indy 300 and Schoolies Week, this year's events included the Rugby World Cup, which was the biggest sporting event in the world during 2003 and attracted large numbers of overseas visitors to Queensland.

At both corporate and individual levels, the Service and its members are frequently involved in activities to support a range of both high-profile and lesser-known charitable causes. The Queensland Police Service corporate team in the 2003 Bridge to Brisbane event raised \$8000 for the Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland and the Princess Alexandra Research Team. However, the efforts of two Service members of the United Nations Police in East Timor, who assisted in sourcing and constructing playground equipment for a village orphanage, are no less noteworthy.



The strength of community support for police was poignantly highlighted in late August 2003 by the overwhelming public response to the shooting of Senior Sergeant Perry Irwin, Officer in Charge of Caboolture Station. The death of this highly professional and respected officer was yet another reminder of the risks that police face every day as they respond to problems in the community. Its occurrence only a few weeks before Police Remembrance Day on 29 September ensured this day was an especially moving occasion for the Service and community members alike. 2003 also saw the unveiling of two new police memorials, a dawn service on Police Remembrance Day and the wearing of blue ribbons on the day by members of the public. The sale of ribbons raised more than \$7000 for distribution to Community Supporting Police, the Police Legacy Scheme and the Royal Flying Doctor Service. I hope that the widespread wearing of blue ribbons across the community will become a feature of Police Remembrance Day in coming years.

The core business of the Service continues to lie in responding to calls for service and local crime and disorder problems, consistent with its commitment to the Government's community outcome of *Safe and Secure Communities*. However, as always, a key factor in the successful maintenance of public order and community safety is the quality and strength of the Service's relationship with the Queensland community.

Several members of the Service's senior executive retired during the reporting year and deserve particular recognition. July 2003 saw the retirements of Assistant Commissioners Allan Honor APM and Peter Freestone APM, whose distinguished policing careers together totalled more than 75 years. In September 2003, the Service farewelled Dick Warry, Deputy Chief Executive (Resource Management), following his highly valued contribution to the Service since 1993. Assistant Commissioner Allan Roberts APM also retired in January 2004, after a 40-year policing career that began with the Victoria Police. I sincerely thank all four members for their outstanding dedication and commitment to the Queensland Police Service, and to the Queensland community generally.

Bob Atkinson APM
Commissioner