



Police Commissioner Bob Atkinson gets the thumbs up from Mornington Island State School students.

Police Commissioner a Community Champion on Mornington Island

By Simon Kelly, Media and Public Affairs Branch

Mornington Island locals recently met their Community Champion, a newly appointed government role for Police Commissioner Bob Atkinson.

The role, which Commissioner Atkinson also holds for Wujal Wujal, includes developing a positive working relationship with community leaders and groups; becoming familiar with social, cultural and historical aspects of each community; helping communities to develop; and establishing trust through regular visits to these often isolated areas.

During the three-day visit, Commissioner Atkinson met with a number of prominent community groups including the Mornington Shire Council, the Junkuri Laka Justice Association, the Yuenamanda (elder clan women) Aboriginal Corporation and the local men's group, Jigah Gubaman Dunga.

Senior Sergeant Stephen Angus, the Officer in Charge of Mornington Island Police Station, said community members were impressed that Commissioner Atkinson took the time to visit and speak with them.

"A recurring comment has been that he was there for a number

of days. The fact he stayed and didn't fly in and out on the same day was very well received."

The elder women's clan even gave Commissioner Atkinson a nickname which translates as "good man".

The visit capitalised on good work which local police are doing in the Mornington Island community.

Senior Sergeant Angus said recent examples were successful suicide prevention and community health initiatives which had been launched in the past year.

"The suicide intervention program started in February/March 2005 after a number of young people

tragically committed suicide in the community.

"We liaise closely with community groups and have a strong working relationship with them," Senior Sergeant Angus said.

Local police also worked with Education Queensland and Queensland Health to establish Health Week, a period during which young people were educated about the importance of going to school, hygiene, general health and child abuse issues.