

British policeman who recommended the creation of the Australian Federal Police in the Mark Report, calls this "policing by consent". I would say the question should be: Is our community by and large able to accept an openly gay person in the role of a police officer?

Keep in mind the type of work a police officer does and the perception that the public has of that officer in each specific task. I think we are both old enough to realise that there would be some people who would find it hard to accept the idea of admitted homosexuals undertaking police tasks. Therefore it follows that our norms — and our attitudes — are dictated by the community. Until such time that it becomes obvious that a large majority within the community would accept a

change in our current position, it is reasonable that we do not seek to alienate sections of the community.

It is a fact of life police are more conservative than most bodies, and I would make no excuses for this, given the realities of the situation we are in. Police may be different things to many people, but from where we stand we are primarily servants of the community. So the best approach for us is to be careful to satisfy that intangible requirement of "contemporary standards" in such a way that we remain accessible to one and all.

What are the arrest figures in the Australian Capital Territory for the past twelve months for offences relating to gay matters?

There were two arrests and convictions, arising from a complaint

about two male persons in a public lavatory in March of this year. The 1976 amendment, known as the Law Reform (Sexual Behaviour) Ordinance, 1976, did make a difference to our figures for this sort of offence. However it goes without saying that a public lavatory could not be regarded as "private" under the provisions of the Act. In a related area, the incidence of assault where the victim is a homosexual has fallen to almost nil since the Amendment became law, and, naturally, the police welcome this.

Ian Fry would like to thank the Federal Police for their efficiency and co-operation in the preparation of this article.



Good luck, Mike!

Detective Senior Sergeant Mike Phelan, the officer-in-charge of the Australian Federal Police Currency Branch left on 14 September for the United States to attend the F.B.I. National Academy in Virginia.

While in the U.S. Det. S./Sgt. Phelan, 38, who has a Diploma in Criminology from Melbourne University, will study organized crime operations in Honolulu and Los Angeles.

He will also study witness protection with the United States Marshall's Service in Virginia and counterfeiting operations with the United States Secret Service.

NEW CHECK ON CHEEKY CHEQUES

from Roy Eccleston of THE AGE.

For too long the Federal Police cheque fraud squad in Melbourne had been "plodding along" with members working individually on separate files.

But a meeting of the nine-man squad under the control of Southern Division CIB chief, Detective Chief Inspector Neville Elkington changed all that. The men threw around ideas and came up with a successful plan which boosted the detection rate by 400 per cent on the first outing.

As one detective put it: "It was a chance to put our ideas up, instead of being told what to do."

For Mr Elkington it is a victory for the time he spent as a chief inspector in police management at the Australian Police College in Sydney.

"I like to give the men a say in how we do it," he said.

Consultative management is all about getting the workers to suggest new ways of getting the job done

—and the results have proved worthwhile. The first weekend 15 arrests were made, compared with the usual four.

Naturally Mr Elkington is not about to give the details of this new plan. But he does say: "It's so simple we wonder that we didn't think of it before."

"Over the years we have been plodding along taking one case at a time," he said.

"Now we operate as a unit in a given area. We hit it with a thud, using all the squad in a purge."

He said there were three main categories that offenders fell into.

- The person who steals a cheque sent to someone else, forges the signature and cashes it.
- The person who is entitled to a cheque, cashes it, and then claims it was not received.
- The person who claims social security or unemployment benefits when he or she is not entitled to do so.

There are some cunning tricks the detectives have to deal with. One persistent fellow would follow the postman, and steal cheques almost immediately they were delivered.

And it is not a case of a thief stealing a cheque and leaving it at that. One person stole \$9000 worth of cheques in nine months, committing 84 offences. On just one day that offender took 15 cheques worth \$463.

Mr. Elkington, a former British policeman, is also an accountant. With 3000 frauds a month worth \$30,000 his skill with figures could come in handy.

"Our method is secret," he said. "But it is a time-saver that gives us quick results."

Whatever the method, not only has it proved beneficial to catching crooks but also, probably as important in the long run, lifted the morale of the men by getting them involved.