

INDUSTRIAL

NATIONAL WAGE CASE FLOW-ON

The Federal Police Arbitral Tribunal (FPAT) ratified the \$10 per week national wage increase to AFP members. This increase takes effect from 19 March 1987.

SPENDING ALLOWANCE

Pending the outcome of negotiations between the AFP and the AFPA, the FPAT has adjourned this matter to a date to be fixed.

38 HOUR WEEK

When the 38 hour week was introduced in September 1985, the agreement included provisions for a review after 12 months. This review has been completed. The new arrangements are operating effectively, and the cost offsets in the agreement are being realised.

The FPAT has clarified the Dispute Resolving Procedure in the 38 hour week agreement. The AFPA maintained that the procedure applied to 38 hour week matters only, whereas the AFP saw the agreement as affecting all disputed matters. The DRP now applies to all industrial disputes.

INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

The AFP Industrial Democracy program is progressing slowly but surely. A seminar for senior AFP managers on 10 March 1987 evoked some mixed reactions and soul-searching, and had one desired effect, and that was to get participants thinking about Industrial Democracy and Employee Participation.

We are leading up to the inaugural National Consultative Council. The agreed representation on this council will be four AFP and three AFPA representatives.

The OAFP unions will be represented by a nominee of the ACTU who will rotate this position among the appropriate unions.

Although the National Consultative Council will only be the "nuts and bolts" of employee participation, it may encourage the spread of the ideals and philosophy of Industrial Democracy throughout both management and unions of the AFP.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY (OHS)

The Federal Government is currently considering draft legislation on OHS in Government employment. This legisla-

tion is expected to require employee-union participation in a committee system of OHS. With this in mind, and a recognition that unions should be involved in OHS issues, the matter of AFP policy and agreements has been referred to the first meeting of the National Consultative Council.

The Southern Region OHS committee was on the ball with its enquiries regarding drug vaults. They discovered that there were a few uninvited guests in the vault in the form of fungal spores, with potential health hazards. Preventative measures have begun.

SUPERANNUATION

In response to representations from the AFPA the former Special Minister of State and the Minister for Finance agreed early last year to the establishment of an interdepartmental working party to review AFP superannuation and, if necessary, propose alternatives. The working party is being chaired by DOSMOS and includes the Department of Finance, the AFP and the AFPA. The Department of Finance will respond to the AFPA's proposals in the light of a report by the Commonwealth Actuary.

Career Training gets a boost.

by Brian McNamara

WHEN the felons get sharper, the fuzz get smarter. That's the message I got when I spoke to the people at the Australian Federal Police College at Barton, close to Canberra's Parliamentary Triangle. As society changes, as technology advances, police forces have to adopt new techniques, learn new skills for their roles in both national law enforcement and community policing.

A new approach has been adopted for Stage Five of careers training for AFP officers, and some police are not entirely happy with the new methodology.

Stage Five training occurs at that point in an AFP career when proficiency as a Senior Constable has to be established, and when officers wish to qualify for promotion to Sergeant. No longer is selection for the course automatic with seniority. Candidates must apply to attend.

The old system of chalk-and-talk, write an essay, do an exam, has gone. There's still a bit of talk; that's inevitable. But the emphasis is now on participation, the acceptance of responsibility, the development of leadership, and on relating to the job, ones colleagues, and the community.

Here are a few topics I lifted out of the course program for Course 35030:

- Syndicate discussion on scenario relating to members who are poorly motivated
- Fraud syndicate
- In-basket exercise
- Informal verbal critique
- Syndicate on rights of members
- Courtyard seminar
- Public relations syndicate, media articles
- Stress management
- Industrial safety
- Counselling

The group of instructors and coordinators I spoke with were enthusiastic about the new approach. Being a Sergeant, they agreed, was not just about law skills, it was about management and communication. So, in the syndicate process now used, there was lively exchange of knowledge between the members of the syndicate. More than that, there was an active repartee between syndicates. Members not only learned more, they remembered it better.

The process is taken even farther. Each participant is given some supervisory role in the course, so that mem-

bers experience supervision in an academic environment and then have to account for their performance amongst their peers.

Senior Constable Bill Quade did the old Stage Five course in February 1985. He is now a coordinator and syndicate leader at the College. What did he think of the new courses?

'The old course was all law, now it covers a much wider field. I don't feel disadvantaged at having done a narrower course, but the course is now more applicable to what a Sergeant actually does.

'We're now more aware of the whys and wherefores. People used to study things without knowing why', said Bill Quade.

'If you pass the course, do you get to be Sergeant automatically?' I asked the staff. 'If you do the course you have probably acted as Sergeant anyway', they said. But there are advantages. Senior Sergeant Cliff Mitchell, course coordinator, put it this way. 'People who complete the course are much better equipped to assist their supervisors. Some candidates may have been anti-management. Now, having done the course,

they are more understanding, if you like, of the supervisor's problems.'

Is the new course more attractive? The course coordinators were of one mind. People used to come to the career courses as seniority entitled them too. Many were scared of the exam.

'Some people who would never apply for the old-style course are now keen to get in because of the new approach', was one remark.

'The workshop-type experience gives people more confidence. The hands-on approach to problems is more related to their everyday work', was another reaction.

Such topics as 'cultural awareness' and 'media relations' are closer to a police officer's real needs in the field. College staff are very aware of the fact that they have to train candidates for the different functions of the AFP. The national perspective takes in such things as medifraud and the protection of the economy in, say, currency cases. In the Australian Capital Territory the community policing role is ever present.

I was interested to hear how the staff are kept up to the mark in their own jobs. Here, I thought, was a group of people who were well-trained, bright, and committed to their profession. Some had had some academic training (and the value of that is another debate) but all had training in some trade or skill before they joined the AFP. It seemed to me that such highly-motivated people could get stale if they didn't get a 'booster shot' occasionally.

Boosters they get. A Training and Education Adviser ensures course standards are maintained and advanced. The instructors do courses in instructional techniques, writing style, communication skills. They can go to the Australian Services top educational training establishment at RAAF Wagga Wagga to study Training Design.

Remember the old saying, 'You know you're getting old when the policemen look younger'? Well, the police are getting younger at Barton College. One instructor I spoke to had 23 years service. None of the others called him 'Grandpa' but some of them could have.

Course 35029 had an average age around 35, with 11.2 years of service. Course 35030 averages 6.9 years of service and the oldest member was born in 1944, the youngest in 1963.

Women are now about one-fifth of AFP recruits. Of the 23 participants in Course 35030, six are women. As more women in the force gain the experience, we can expect to see more of them on these career courses.

So what's the result of a live-in, three-weeks concentrated course?

The students are assessed, of course. And the course itself is evaluated, the performance of the instructors noted. I imagine that College staff await these evaluations with some trepidation.

Course 35029 answered a questionnaire towards the end of their studies. Here are some of the results.

Course members' expectations varies. Some expected to increase their knowledge, or to obtain a qualification. Others expected to work excessively after hours, some for the course to be the same as the last Stage Five they attempted. Some looked to develop a rapport with members from other regions. Many left with a more positive outlook on Stage Five and training in general, possibly because of the changes in approach.

All participants believed that it prepared them better to perform a Sergeant's duties.

It is worth summarising the recommendations and conclusions of the course evaluation report.

- The participants on this Course were very impressed with the revised format and recommend the continuance of Management and Leadership sessions.
- They did not find the course overly arduous, instead they found it to be a pleasurable, meaningful learning experience.
- The presentation methods used by one lecturer and one adviser may need monitoring, with a view to their attendance on a future M.I.T. Workshop.
- Compared with previous Stage Five courses, the level of criticism has greatly diminished. This appears to be due to changing the methodology used.

I thought this was an honest appraisal, but I wanted to do my own check. AFP College head, Chief Superintendent Peter Dawson, was quite happy for me to talk to people who were on Course 35029. He gave me the names of two people who had done well but who had different views of the course. They talked with me frankly and freely.

Constable Alpha (I give them pseudonyms not because they wanted anonymity but because I think they should have it) was all praise for the new workshop approach, particularly for the management and leadership topics. 'They really got everybody talking', he said. He liked the live-in nature of the course, and gave top marks for the staff and facilities.

And this is where his reservations lie. With such top instructors, in such a well set-up institution, why was the course limited to an eight-to-four day? It seemed a waste of resources. Alpha felt that, in

view of the changing legislation needing to be studied for the national policing function, more emphasis needs to be placed on the law topics, more time devoted to legislation. It was, after all, a Sergeant-qualifying course, and a prospective Sergeant should face a heavier study workload to prepare for the responsibilities of national law enforcement.

Alpha thought that the AFP courses generally were tougher than in other Australian forces, but that they needed to be tougher.

I had detected a little uncertainty amongst the staff members as to the aims of the Stage Five course. Alpha said the participants were confused. 'There was no clear aim in respect of law', he said.

There was confusion about the assessment process. One senior lecturer had told the course that promotion and appeals boards did not generally take into account the assessments of the Stage Five courses. But the message received by participants was that the assessments were very important to their careers. Alpha reckoned that an examination or some other technique should determine fitness for promotion. At present, many were qualifying for promotions which did not exist.

Constable Beta had not done a course or any study for quite a while. He was very impressed by the way the course was conducted, and with the instructors. He felt that the lack of pressure was important. Not having to stay up late studying or doing essays made the course a pleasure to do.

Beta, with a fair amount of experience behind him, welcomed the topics new to him. Freedom of Information, Complaints against Police, Complicity, were subjects he found interesting. He enjoyed the variety.

The syndicate system was stimulating. Beta particularly enjoyed the discussions with people from interstate, and the 'bouncing around' of ideas and interpretations.

Beta is a family man, but reckoned that the 'live in' course was a good idea. People with young children would be subject to fewer distractions.

Being involved with the organization of the formal dinner was educational for Beta.

Beta believed that the course assessment was used for promotion purposes. He thought that this was fairer than doing an examination. He now had a much broader knowledge of police work. He couldn't understand why two participants had failed the course. 'They couldn't have done any study', he said. He is looking forward to the Stage Six course. ●