

THE SELECTION PROCESS

NEW recruit assessment methods introduced by Brigadier Colin Kahn (Director Recruiting) are proving successful for the AFP.

Sergeant Colin Hall (Recruiting) explains:

Until 18 months ago we used the traditional form of interview where the applicant was questioned for about 40 minutes by two or three staff members.

With the change in emphasis to recruiting for the main role of the AFP, namely investigation, other more searching methods of interview were required to find the people with the necessary oral and written skills and personal characteristics to become detectives.

Brigadier Kahn brought to the AFP his experience of being in charge of recruiting for the Navy, Army and Air Force and a new approach to the interview.

Interviews are now conducted under the Group Selection Procedure. Between eight and ten applicants are now brought in for an entire day with assessment made by a Selection Board of at least five members.

The Board consists of the Director, three AFP members of the Recruiting Directorate, a psychologist and a detective AFP member from the operational region where the Board is sitting.

Unlike the normal job interview, the Selection Board asks no questions of the applicants. The Board's task is to listen and make extensive written comment on the applicants' performance. The applicants are deliberately mixed to represent men and women, 18 up to 35 year olds, those with tertiary degrees and others with the HSC and those without good academic backgrounds but who have the benefit of experience in the workforce.

The group members are given a number of situations to discuss amongst themselves. The topics vary and are chosen from the main news of the day.

The Board listens to how applicants express themselves - do they speak with confidence, assertiveness, can they defend their argument, are they flexible where they should be, are their

views analytical, logical, deductive?

Applicants are also required to speak to their group at times on individual topics for three or four minutes.

A very important part of the proceedings is a written exercise when, from a given scenario, applicants have to write an essay which is correctly structured, analytical and shows good use of grammar and spelling. Many applicants fail to pass this written requirement.

In addition, the Director gives the group a verbal test on spelling, current affairs and knowledge of the AFP.

In order to relax the applicants and to give the Board a chance to know them better, morning tea and lunch are provided. The day ends with an individual interview for each applicant where other personal areas are explored, such as motivation, conduct and previous employment. Applicants are normally told at this stage of their



Brigadier Kahn

success or, if they have failed, of the reasons for failure and what they can do to remedy any shortcomings.

The new interview procedure is very demanding. The AFP this year expects to attract some 15,000 enquiries from which ultimately about 300 recruits will be chosen.

The new procedure is not infallible but is clearly heading in the right direction to upgrade the standard of new recruits entering the Force.

RECRUITING : REAL WORK

Sergeant Hall — a 17 year police veteran — has a few points of his own he wants to get across.

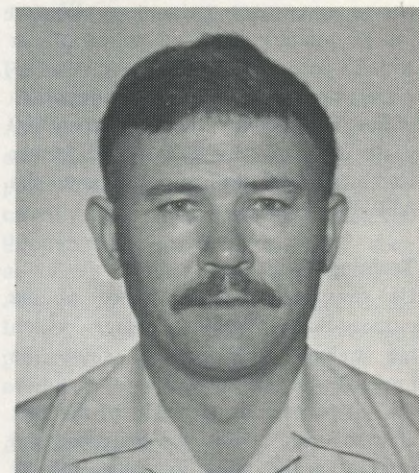
'There's a belief around the place that recruiting is an easy business; that we can pick any number we want out of the unemployed,' he said.

The sad truth is there may be thousands out of work but only a small minority of those people would be suitable for the AFP.

'And the type of people we want makes a seemingly simple problem much more difficult.

'We have to compete quite hard for that small group of people with the right characteristics. We are up against the armed forces, other police forces, insurance companies - in fact all the big firms,' Sergeant Hall said.

The demand for suitable people particularly for the investigative role



Sergeant Colin Hall

could be seen quite easily when AFP recruiters attended careers markets around Australia.

And what sort of people want to change jobs and get into the AFP?

'We seem to get more bank officers than any other group,' Sergeant Hall said.

'There are also ex-servicemen, some people from other police forces and we also get some investigators from fields such as insurance,' he added.