

Family Law

A tough job for special people

THE Family Law squad has one of the most unenviable jobs in the Region simply because its members work with citizens often in a highly emotional state.

The Squad's function is to carry out the orders of the Family Court of Australia and in many cases the matters involve child custody. That, with few exceptions, generates awkward and highly emotional situations.

The carefully selected members of the Family Law Squad need to be firm, but understanding; compassion-

ate but steadfast; able to see an often difficult job through to the end.

There are, of course, rewards.

Many grateful parents have been appreciative of the Squad members and have expressed their feelings both verbally and in letters of thanks.

The Squad members also execute the warrants of the Family Court which can include the arrests of individuals who have breached a Court Order and the eviction of people occupying homes in contravention of an Order.

Physical Evidence Unit

Experts in the field

A small but essential component of the Region's operations is the Physical Evidence Unit (PEU).

The Unit works at the crime scene and included in its responsibilities is the provision of photographic support for the Region.

The Unit has a fully-equipped processing laboratory to develop films taken during surveillance activities and maintains a pictorial record of evidence seized during

the course of an investigation.

Sergeant Andy Wall, who heads the Unit, and two constables are kept busy working on drug substitutions for controlled deliveries, crime scene examinations including the fingerprinting of exhibits and the maintenance and supply of photographic equipment to the Region's operational Divisions.

A relative newcomer to the Region with eight years' previous service with the Victoria Police is fingerprint expert Tony Nance.

He joined the AFP a year ago and his inclusion in the Unit has increased its effectiveness greatly.

Laboratory technician Sofie Papadopoulos joined the Unit six months ago, bringing to the Region experience gained at the Philip Institute Media Services.

Working with the Unit in document examination is 24-year-old former Victoria Police member Kirsten Lacey. The holder of a Science Degree, she is receiving helpful guidance from Sergeant David Dick, an AFP member of nine years' experience and a recognised expert in document examination, who has been with Southern Region for 12 months.

fore 1930, or built in Australia before 1945, thus qualifying as Australian protected objects. During the past 10 years these trams have ended up in the USA and New Zealand.

Of recent times there has been a strong emphasis placed within the Division on achieving an improvement in productivity. Initial results, confirmed by DPP Melbourne reveal an increase of 15 per cent in the number of briefs submitted in the first half of 1992. However there is a recognition by the Division's 165 personnel that such major improvements require continued effort over several years.

prolonged and complex investigation for Mike, culminating in Esso being fined a total of \$15,000 and ordered to pay \$100,000 costs.

Then Mike became responsible for the successful prosecution of the Caltex Tanker Company and the master of the vessel MT *Arthur Phillip* for the discharge of an estimated 24 tonnes of oil into the sea off Cape Otway. At the same time nearly 300 fairy penguins died in a spillage. The matter is currently adjourned awaiting sentence by the Supreme Court.

Also possessed of a high level of enthusiasm and a commitment to the work of investigating fraud are Detective Constable Michael Phelan and Constable Ian McCartney of Branch One. In conjunction with Department of Taxation auditors, this pair is currently investigating a \$4 million tax avoidance case.

Mike is 25, with just seven years' service. Ian is 24 and, although he was only recently confirmed, possesses experience in the accountancy arena which has proven invaluable to an investigation of this complexity. Ian has a Bachelor of Business Degree, majoring in accountancy, and was an accountant prior to joining the AFP. Meanwhile, not wishing to appear complacent, he continues with Certified Practising Accountancy (CPA) studies.

One of the most junior of the Division's members to prosecute a substantial fraud is Constable Kylie Flower of Branch Three. Kylie, 22, and a graduate in criminal justice administration, joined the AFP in March 1991. By June 1992, she had completed a complex investigation into offences committed against the Department of Social Security. Kylie's inquiries took her to banks, building societies, insurance companies, a school and a builder. As a result two people have now been charged by Kylie for fraudulently obtaining more than \$81,000.

Also of Branch Three is 26-year-old Detective Constable Keryn Reynolds. Keryn is completing what could be described as one of the most unusual offences the AFP has been called upon to investigate. Working in conjunction with the Department of Arts, Sport, the Environment and Territories, Keryn has been making inquiries into the unlawful export of 30 vintage Melbourne trams. They were either in use in Australia be-