

Improving awareness of Aboriginal culture

DETECTIVE Constable Jim Manno has turned his interest in Australian history into a valuable resource for the AFP.

He is currently the AFP's national co-ordinator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander projects and owes his position to his curiosity about Australian history and a desire to study at tertiary level.

In 1989 Detective Constable Manno started an associate diploma by correspondence to ease back into tertiary studies. He chose to concentrate on Aboriginal Studies and Adult Education. With the establishment of the Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody, his studies became relevant to the AFP's training needs.

As part of the associate diploma, Detective Constable Manno developed a training package with the view of introducing it to the AFP's training program. He has gone on to further his associate diploma studies with a Bachelor of Arts in Aboriginal Studies which he will complete this year.

His former boss, Commander Morrie Blaylock, returned to Canberra for a stint at Barton College and it wasn't long before Detective Constable Manno was called on to run an Aboriginal Cultural Awareness course.

The first workshop took place at Barton College on 11 and 12 May 1993. Representatives from all Australian police services attended with their counterparts from the Aboriginal community. Detective Constable Manno said that the workshop seemed to have been successful with useful strategies and ideas emerging from those who attended.

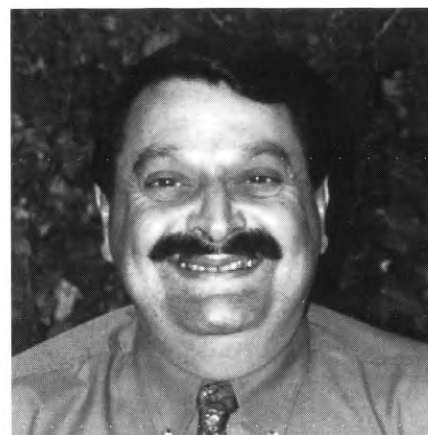
"One of the things that came out of the Royal Commission was the recommendation that all police officers should be trained in Aboriginal cultural awareness and that this

training be done by Aboriginal lecturers," he said.

Accordingly, in June, the AFP began the process with a two-day program in Southern Region being run by the Koorie Research Centre from Monash University and co-ordinated by Dr Eve Fesl.

Detective Constable Manno said that this is the start of creating Aboriginal cultural awareness in the AFP and he is looking to introduce into the curriculum at Barton College a two-day unit on the subject so that it becomes part of all recruit, sergeant and officer courses.

He sees this program as the start of



D/Const. Jim Manno

what he hopes will be the establishment of a multicultural office within the AFP and that this office could aid where cultural awareness was necessary to result in successful investigations.

A week of celebration

THE AFP is showing its support of The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Week and the Year of Indigenous People through a series of displays on Aboriginal culture that will appear around the regions throughout the year.

Observed from 5-11 July, NAIDOC week's peak day of observance is National Aborigines' Day celebrated this year on 9 July. This special day has been celebrated for over 20 years and is the focus of a week of activities organised by Aboriginal people for all Australians to celebrate.

The event offers an opportunity to learn about the rich cultural heritage of the original Australians and the positive contribution which they have made to the identity of this nation. Contributions which are particularly noticeable in the fields of sport and the arts in which Aboriginal people have obtained world prominence.

Funds have been contributed by the AFP towards the travel of Aboriginal

delegates to the National Police/Aboriginal Conference in June aimed at promoting better liaison between Aboriginal groups and Australian police forces.

Three AFP delegates will attend the conference maintaining the links established during AFP sponsored workshops on Aboriginal cultural awareness that have been conducted in several regions and will continue throughout the year.

For the AFP, the task of reporting on progress towards achieving the police related recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody is underway. The information will feed into an annual State of the Nation Report to be tabled in Parliament.

This report will measure changes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in relation to Australia's international human rights commitments and progress with the scope of recognition for self-determination and land rights.