



The new Jervis Bay police station. Video photo by the AFP Video Unit.

A cell block with a view

By Frank Brown

ON 22 December 1992 the AFP moved into its new purpose-built police station at Jervis Bay in Commonwealth Territory on the NSW south coast.

The new station replaces a 30-year-old one-man station, which had been modified over the years, but which was inadequate to policing needs in the 1990s.

As early as 1988 it was recognised that the existing station and cells would not satisfy the requirements of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. When the Report of the Commission was presented in 1991, the AFP considered it important to implement the recommendations as fully as possible, and commenced planning for a completely new building.

The design for the new station was developed by the AFP's Building and Accommodation Branch (BAAB), in close consultation with Jervis Bay police, ACT Region management and the local Aboriginal community. The BAAB Project Officer for the station, Mr George Kayaba, attended a workshop on aboriginal deaths in custody held in Alice Springs in July 1992.

A particular innovation is the new cell block, featuring a double cell with no bars. Instead the cell boasts windows facing east across Jervis Bay. The windows are of a special toughened glass, fixed from the outside. The cell has a light fitting flush with the ceiling to eliminate 'anchor points', a surveillance system to keep the area monitored, alarms to allow people in custody to summon police quickly, and many other features

specifically designed to prevent attempted suicides in custody.

The AFP is now the envy of NSW police from Eden to Nowra. It has a new station with state-of-the-art communication and security facilities, and a cell-block which will provide a model for future buildings of its kind.

AFP members at Jervis Bay are justifiably proud of their new facility.



The view from the cells at Jervis Bay police station.