

Team-based approach to future operations

A report by the Change Implementation Team

Like many organisations aiming to improve effectiveness, the AFP has been restructuring itself to meet the challenges of the future. Having flattened its structure and created a unified workforce of police and staff members, it is now jettisoning traditional operational practices in favour of team-based methods of discovering new solutions to emerging law enforcement problems.

Background to Change

While the AFP has achieved many law enforcement successes since its formation in 1979, a record of past achievement is no guarantee of future success.

Today the AFP is being challenged by:

- a rapidly changing and uncertain international social, political, economic and criminal environment. (For example, the effect of the collapse of the Eastern European borders. While criminal elements and their financial systems may have been relatively contained before, an environment now exists that creates the opportunity for crime);
- a recognition by the federal government of the importance of effective law enforcement to the wider social political and economic stability of Australia, particularly in terms of maintaining international credibility and respect;
- a specific direction from the federal government to change, to improve and to deliver effective law enforcement in a global environment; and
- increasing community expectation that law enforcement agencies work within the law to preserve the quality of life Australians enjoy.

To meet these challenges, the AFP is now focusing its attention specifically on the matters that the federal government sees as the AFP's core business priorities, which include:

- investigation of the more serious levels of fraud against the Commonwealth;
- investigation of major organised crime, with a prime emphasis on the items agreed as priority NCA/AFP targets;
- international drug trafficking; and
- undertaking special references from the federal government; including the provision of ACT Community Policing, Close Protection and United Nations peacekeeping commitments.

Also, a priority is the mandate to meet AFP obligations under the Commonwealth Fraud Control Policy.

The AFP also recognises that while the federal government accepts that the AFP is not going to be able to meet these challenges alone, in addition to the AFP alliance with the National Crime Authority, it expects the AFP to have strong and open alliances with other law enforcement agencies. The AFP is positioning itself to provide the type of relationship being sought by its key strategic partners.

The AFP is seen by the federal government as an important and integral part of its criminal justice and law enforcement strategy. While the AFP continues to prove that it has the commitment and capacity to respond to the federal government's challenges, the AFP is refining the focus of the business it does and also rationalising the extent of work it performs. Therefore it will only undertake the large and, or complex operations that attack the structure of criminal enterprises. Small, less complex investigations will remain the responsibility of federal departments and, or agencies in accordance with the *Elliott Report* requirements; noting that the AFP will provide training and support as required.

Change is never easy, but change is crucial if the AFP is to maintain an effective role in law enforcement.

Shape of change

Representative groups from across the AFP have developed an operational structure to achieve 'best practice' goals in investigations. Through this process, an agreed model ensures that the prime focus is operational, with all accepted investigations being undertaken and conducted by flexible, empowered operational teams.

The key elements underpinning this model are TRUST, FLEXIBILITY, and ACCOUNTABILITY.

Trust

As part of the strategy to facilitate increasing trust throughout the organisation, extensive work is being undertaken to remove work regulations which stifle innovation and initiative, and to replace them with less prescriptive operational guidelines. However, this strategy will require the adoption of a new way of thinking and managing by AFP leadership.

Complementary to trust, is the acceptance and tolerance throughout the organisation of individual differences. These differences are valued and accepted as a desirable and an integral part of organisational health.

Flexibility

The AFP is becoming sufficiently adaptable to focus on new and changing priorities as a matter of course, and is able to respond quickly to new references. Also it is developing enhanced monitoring/action reports which provide management teams with the capacity to use people and resources more effectively. The benefits this approach will bring to operational staff include:

- increased job satisfaction and variety by being involved in, and completing the whole of an operation;
- allowing innovation; and
- enhanced shared learning at team level.

Accountability

In establishing flexible, empowered teams, the AFP also needs to instil personal accountability as the hallmark of professionalism in the AFP.

Accountability should not be underpinned by punishment. This is a response which should only be administered as a last resort. A shift in emphasis from a disciplinary-based form of accountability to one which recognises and rewards innovative performers is occurring. It is also important to link accountability to a process of developing better work practices by applying lessons learned from mistakes and successes.

Personal accountability requires the values and priorities articulated at the most senior level to be clearly understood and accepted by all AFP employees.

This has commenced with the decision to move away from the paramilitary command-and-control structure towards operating in the form of empowered teams. This move is being supported through the development of operational guidelines which will replace the existing General Orders and Instructions.

Such guidelines will act as a basis for determining action, but cannot dictate the correct response to every situation. Rather, guidelines will recognise the reality that police work depends on initiative and adaptability rather than precise forms of control and discipline. That is not to say that there will be no process to deal with those who transgress discipline codes.

National/regional management structure

The AFP's new organisational structure will signify the interdependence of operations and support functions, each committed to the corporate objectives, priorities, policies and strategies in safeguarding the Commonwealth's interests.

Intelligence

A critical element in the new operational model is the integration of

The key elements underpinning this model are trust, flexibility and accountability.

Operations Model

The new operations model envisages a flexible, empowered teams taskforce approach to crime with a pooling of investigative resources in each region with:

- investigative teams being formed as new references are received or as operations are developed by the region;
- each investigative team covering the whole investigation of an operation;
- staff competent in tactical intelligence, general surveillance and trained in Proceeds of Crime Assets (POCA) being part of those teams, together with administrative and specialist support such as lawyers and accountants as necessary;
- the size and composition of investigative teams varying as the demands of operations vary but do not continue beyond the life of the operation;
- flexible response team/s that may be used for training new members;
- team leaders being chosen on the basis of the complexity of the investigation and the skills required for the job, rather than the rank they hold;
- operations support being dedicated to servicing the teams; and
- a strengthening of the intelligence capacity to identify criminal enterprise and groups.

Team Co-ordinator

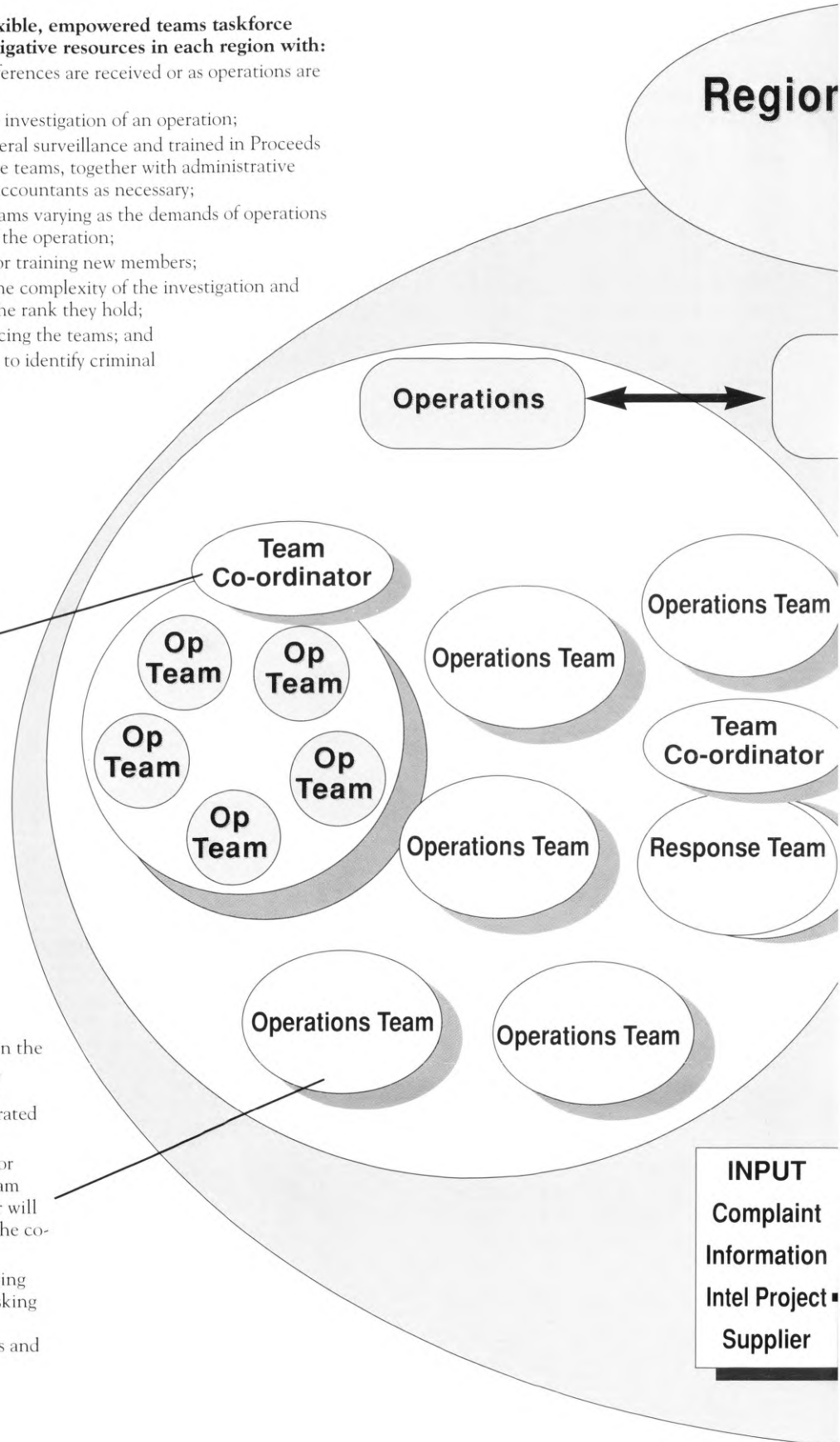
Team co-ordinators manage a cluster of smaller teams by being a team advisor/coach. They ensure the performance of a cluster of teams undertaking investigations across a mixture of core business activities, evaluate target achievement and develop relationships through liaison with other teams and the co-ordination centre.

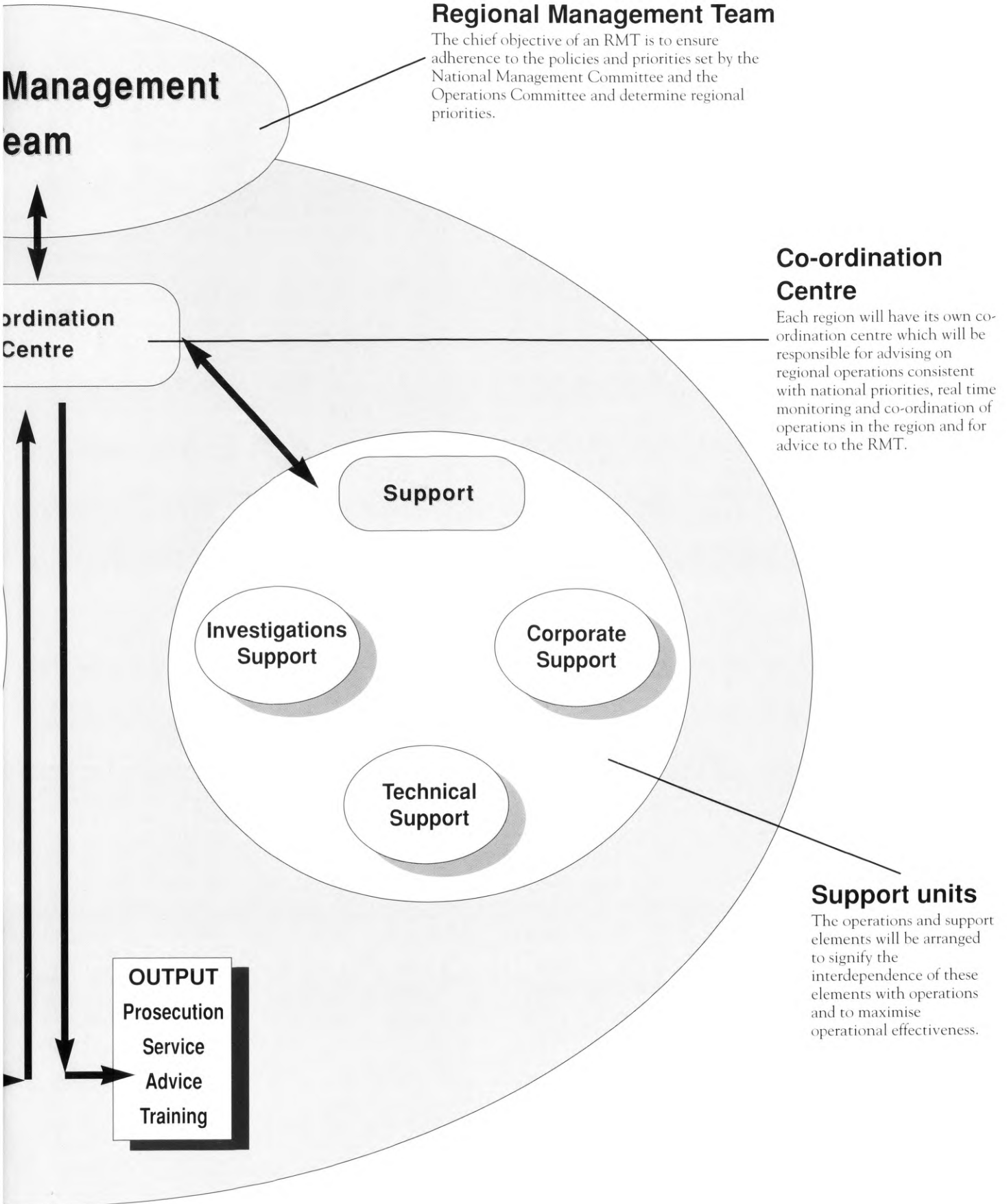
Operations Team

The composition of teams will depend on the nature, size and scope of each operation, assisted as required by support elements (surveillance and PTU etc) either integrated into or assigned to each team.

Operational teams may be either single or multiple target teams and will have a team leader. In a larger team, the team leader will be responsible for liaising directly with the co-ordination centre.

Each team will be responsible for managing the complete investigation including tasking of team members, the oversight, co-ordination and conduct of investigations and the utilisation of allocated resources.





Regional Management Team

The chief objective of an RMT is to ensure adherence to the policies and priorities set by the National Management Committee and the Operations Committee and determine regional priorities.

Management Team

Co-ordination Centre

Co-ordination Centre

Each region will have its own co-ordination centre which will be responsible for advising on regional operations consistent with national priorities, real time monitoring and co-ordination of operations in the region and for advice to the RMT.

Support

Investigations Support

Corporate Support

Technical Support

Support units

The operations and support elements will be arranged to signify the interdependence of these elements with operations and to maximise operational effectiveness.

OUTPUT
 Prosecution
 Service
 Advice
 Training

The size and composition of investigative teams will vary as the demands of operations vary, but will not generally continue beyond the life of an operation.

operations and intelligence. This integration is regarded as essential in developing the priorities, plans and operations to destroy, dismantle or disrupt criminal enterprises and to deprive them of the proceeds of crime.

Operational Teams

Except where the functions dictate a need for continuity and stability of staffing, operational elements are being arranged into flexible, empowered teams. The composition of the teams depends on the nature, size and scope of each operation, assisted as required by support elements either integrated into, or assigned to, each team.

Operational teams may be either single or multiple target teams. Each empowered team is responsible for managing the whole of an investigation including the tasking of team members, the oversight, co-ordination and conduct of investigations and the effective use of allocated resources.

Individual tasking will vary depending on national and, or regional priorities but it is a requirement that, over a period of time, team members have the opportunity to become experienced in each aspect of the AFP's core business.

Central Services

Recognising the importance of maintaining the highest professional standards and independence, Forensic Services and the Police Technical Units will remain centrally controlled corporate services. The final form of other central service units is still being considered.

What the changes will mean

The AFP workplace has traditionally featured defined jobs, a single set of skills, and a command structure. The new operations model that features a team approach will require job flexibility, multi-skilling and a team-based structure.

Teams may comprise staff competent in investigation, tactical intelligence, general surveillance and

Proceeds of Crime Assets (POCA), together with administrative and specialist support such as lawyers and accountants as necessary, and as resources permit.

The size and composition of investigative teams will vary as the demands of operations vary, but will not generally continue beyond the life of an operation.

Response team(s) will respond to ad hoc references, special tasks and for training new members. These teams are also be responsible for undertaking the existing functions such as airports, parcel post, Family Court and protection.

Team leaders are chosen on the basis of both the complexity of the investigation and the level of competency required of the individual to do the job.

Operations support in the regions is dedicated to supporting operational teams in a manner which reflects the priorities set at the national and, or regional levels.

Future roles

The following roles are not designed to be prescriptive to a particular work level nor are they exhaustive.

Operational managers

Role:

- communicating priorities, policies, values, standards and plans consistent with the national approach;
- directing regional effort and resources to meet operational priorities decided by the Operations Committee;
- supporting the development of strategically important alliances; and,
- evaluating regional operational effectiveness and the performance of the teams against operational priorities.

Team co-ordinators

Role:

- managing a cluster of smaller teams by being a team advisor and/or coach.

- ensuring the performance of a cluster of teams undertaking investigations across a mixture of core business activities and, where provided, oversight the services of the cluster's common administrative cell.
- evaluating target achievement and review against operational priorities; and
- developing relationships through liaison with other teams and the co-ordination centre to ensure delivery of quality service to customers and, or clients.

The commander's/superintendent's 'manager/supervisor' role will change from one of direct command and control to one of managing by being a team advisor, facilitator, coach, counsellor and resource provider. As a supporter and advisor to the team, the commander/superintendent is also responsible for providing assistance when the team encounters difficulties, and maintains communication and co-ordination beyond the level of the group.

While they are expected to provide assessments on the appropriateness of resource allocation to teams against operational priorities, they do not have day-to-day control over team resources.

In essence, the difference between supervising a traditional workgroup and a team is that in the former, the supervisor manages each employee and in the latter, the supervisor supports and, or coaches the team and the team itself is responsible for deciding how an investigation is managed on a day-to-day basis. It is important that commanders/superintendents ensure that they have a clear understanding of their new role and the enhanced level of accountability that goes with such a role.

In addition to the liaison role, commanders and superintendents are assigned corporate responsibility for the implementation of the Elliott Committee recommendations and other similar core business activities in the operational role expected of

management and executive members of the AFP.

The role of commanders and superintendents will go through a series of transition steps. The AFP is moving from a traditional structure, in which the commanders and superintendents have full responsibility for directing the work of a group, to a team-based structure where they hand over responsibility and control to a mature team comprising members who will manage their own performance, tasks and resources.

OPERATIONAL TEAMS

Roles:

Includes a team leader (Case Officer), and in larger teams undertaking a complex and, or sensitive investigations, and may include multi-skilled investigators, tactical intelligence, an administrative assistant, and special assistance as necessary.

a. The team leader (case officer)

is responsible for effectively leading and managing all team members and team resources through:

- developing an operational plan;
- motivating the team;
- actively participating in all aspects of the team's activities;
- encouraging open consultation among all team members;
- ensuring team targets are met by encouraging and guiding members to take responsibility for leadership of individual taskings;
- obtaining technical and specialist assistance;
- building teamwork and representing the views of the team to third parties; and
- training new team members.

In a larger team, the team leader liaises directly with the co-ordination centre; that is, a larger team will not have a 'cluster type' team co-ordinator.

b. Team Members will have wider responsibilities than in a hierarchical structure, including:

Rather than being a rules and procedures driven organisation, the AFP must become a purpose and values driven organisation.

- performing a range of jobs;
- achieving quality of result;
- managing and effectively using resources;
- cross-training other team members;
- jointly solving problems;
- monitoring progress; and
- administration issues.

Transition from old to new model

In moving from the old structure to the new, it might be expected that those who have worked in traditional policing environment for an extended period may initially feel uncomfortable with some of the new concepts being introduced, but in time, all will benefit from the changes. The AFP will certainly experience greater pain if it ignores the directions to change, and instead remains anchored to the past.

Extensive education and training programs are essential to support the introduction of the operation team model. While these programs will commence before the introduction of the model, and because the transition to flexible, empowered operational teams will be incremental, these programs will need to continue past the implementation date of July 1, 1995.

The federal government's expectation of the AFP to dismantle higher levels of criminal activity requires effective deployment of AFP investigators. The AFP strategy to use a team-based investigative approach, with team leaders being selected on the basis of their experience, skills, and track record is an important part of achieving effective deployment. Effective monitoring, co-ordination and oversighting of individual performance will assist in identifying those most suitable to be team leaders.

An appropriate reward system in conjunction with a new job

classification system, coupled with a redesigned performance appraisal system will be an integral part of this process. In particular, these systems will focus upon properly assessing individual competencies, against agreed and settled core competencies for each role or position and will ensure an appropriate linkage with the remuneration system. The proposed model will focus the appraisal process at the more senior levels, where the task of leading, prioritising, and co-ordinating operational teams will be a critical responsibility against which assessments are made.

The new working environment will impact on the present infrastructure and it will take time to adapt to the requirements of the proposed model.

Future of unified workforce

Key features of the unified workforce will be a commitment by senior officers to achieve equity throughout the workplace and to recognise the value of all AFP employees.

Effect on culture

Today's command and control process is inappropriate and will not support the AFP's move to flexible and empowered team-based arrangements.

Rather than being a rules and procedures driven organisation, the AFP is becoming a purpose and values driven organisation in which members and staff members understand and accept the strategies and values that will underpin the team-based arrangements.

If the AFP is to create an environment in which trust, flexibility, creativity and accountability can enhance its performance, the new values being articulated must be adopted by all.

The AFP will certainly experience greater pain if it ignores the directions to change, and instead remains anchored to the past.