

Consolidating skills with a strong sense of ethics and accountability



Ted Quinlan
ACT Minister for Policing

At a ceremony held on March 25, 2002 held in the Great Hall of Parliament House, ACT Minister for Policing, Ted Quinlan spoke to the graduates about what he saw were the challenges of the careers ahead of them.

It is indeed a pleasure to be with you on this significant occasion in the careers of a large group of young men and women who have chosen to serve their community by upholding and enforcing the law.

I have been present at a few like functions now and am always struck by the obvious pride of office demonstrated by the new, and not so new, members in both their appearance and their manner. It is clear to all of us here today that as a group and as individuals you are proud of your achievements to date and are looking forward to the challenges that lie ahead.

It is my firm view that in order to perform at an optimal level you must enjoy what you are doing. Commitment grows not only from reward and recognition but also from the personal satisfaction you gain from knowing that the tasks you undertake on a daily basis are contributing to making life better for yourselves and for others.

Unfortunately, we live in a world today, which seems plagued by unnecessary violence and division. Increasing numbers of people are experimenting with designer drugs in spite of efforts in the areas of education and awareness. We have high rates of youth unemployment and suicide and, most recently, terrorism has clouded our visions for the future. As governments across the world begin to remodel policy and procedures in response to September 11, organisations such as the AFP have risen to meet the new challenges confronting them.

In the ACT alone, police investigated 77

suspected chemical biological threats following September 11. A new incident codes had to be created for the Computer Aided Dispatch system in order to properly record these events, as nothing of this nature or on this scale had occurred in the past. This was a defining time for law enforcement in this country – a time when the community was anxious and seeking reassurance – a time when we were all apprehensive and when it was in everyone's best interest to be vigilant.

It is important in dealing with events such as these in your professional capacity that you remember what it was like to experience such events from outside the policing profession. As a police officer you may be privy to a level of information and intelligence about the development and response to significant events, which is not available to most people. You



Five of 125 ACT-based graduates display their diplomas at Parliament House.



The community is your partner in solving and preventing crime. Make it a productive partnership and you will reap the rewards – Ted Quinlan, ACT Minister for Police.



Sergeant Bob Sobey receives the Canberra Citizen of the Year award from ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope.

undergo a stringent process of security clearances and integrity vetting to ensure that you are a person who can be trusted with the level of additional information that you will have access to. You will understand the complex processes of the justice system and the reasons for them in a way that others won't. You will have first-hand experience of the need for stringent policies and procedures bordering the admissibility and continuity of evidence. All of

these facts give you an additional insight into the workings of the justice system and the mechanics of the broader government.

At all times, I implore you to project yourselves into the shoes of those you serve. If you can feel empathy whilst preserving professional distance you will have a much greater prospect of serving your community well whether it be an individual, an organisation or the Government.

As Police Minister for the ACT, I receive a considerable number of letters from the people of Canberra about policing issues.

People will write to me if their wheelie bin has been stolen, or their home burgled or their son assaulted. I regularly read letters from people who praise the ACT community police for their professionalism and thoroughness, but I also get some letters about small issues, which have left my constituents feeling disgruntled with policing services. Most of these matters can be resolved

with a simple examination of the circumstances and the reasons for related policy and procedures. For those of you who will continue to perform community policing duties in the ACT, I ask you to take the time, where possible, to stop and talk to members of the public and to understand that they may need a few minutes of your time for you to explain the course of action you are taking. The community is your partner in solving and preventing crime. Make it a productive partnership and you will reap the rewards.

For those of you who will begin your careers in AFP national, I strongly encourage you to think about returning to the grass roots of policing at some stage in your careers. Just as community policing benefits enormously from the intelligence and experience gathered in national and international policing roles, so you will benefit from the opportunities inherent in community policing. On occasions such as this, I think it is of great importance to recognise that the AFP is seen as one organisation with a range of responsibilities encompassing local, national and international law enforcement objectives. Each area of the organisation benefits from the existence of the other and ultimately the success of any element of the organisation is dependent on the support and assistance given by the others.

The ACT Government has traditionally been very supportive of the AFP's role in local and international policing and has been quick to recognise the unique opportunities provided to your community by a multi-skilled and highly trained police service which is world renowned for its professionalism.

I was delighted to note that Sergeant Bob Sobey was awarded the Canberra Citizen of the Year award recently. He is an individual who has maximised the opportunities his career has given him to interact with and assist in making the community a better place – a great example to all of us.

I sincerely wish you well and trust that you will enjoy the challenges that lie ahead.

You come to policing from a myriad of backgrounds and bring with you excellent academic and professional credentials. My sincere hope is that you consolidate these skills with a strong sense of ethics and accountability to the community you serve and that where you are a community police officer or a federal agent you will continue to perceive yourselves as part of the broader community.

I am proud to be the Police Minister of the ACT, and I can see and feel that you are all proud of the uniform you now wear.