

Valedictory – Audrey Fagan

Delivered by AFP Commissioner Mick Keelty APM

"It is with much sadness that we join together today to farewell a dear friend and one of the AFP's finest police officers – Assistant Commissioner Audrey Ann Fagan.

It is testament to Audrey's distinguished career and commitment to the Canberra community that the AFP is joined today by so many of the community's leaders to pay their respects.

During her 26-year career with the AFP, Audrey made an indelible mark on our organisation, not only in an operational sense but as a leader and a fine role model to women, not just within the AFP but the broader community.

She was a dedicated mother and wife who will be fondly remembered for her compassion and strong commitment to all elements of her life.

Audrey first joined the Australian Federal Police Protective Service Branch when she was just 19, on 23 February 1981. At the time, Audrey had lived in Australia for about 11 years following her arrival from her native Ireland.

Prior to commencing with the AFP, Audrey was already an accomplished swimmer and had a keen interest in sports.

Audrey transferred to the General Policing area of the AFP soon after joining and in the following year was appointed to the Juvenile Aid Bureau – a specialist section of ACT Community Policing dealing with juveniles. During this early phase of Audrey's career she attracted

many positive comments from parents of juveniles about her caring and professional approach to her duties. During 1982, Audrey was also sworn in as a Special Constable of the NSW Police.

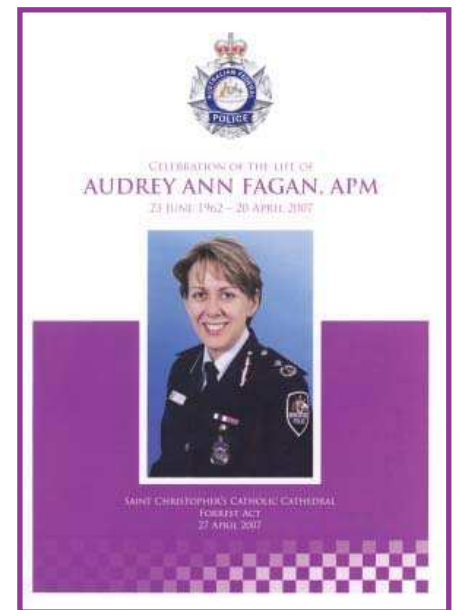
Audrey soon displayed her capability as an investigator and the following year was temporarily moved to the National Criminal Investigation Branch where she investigated specialist fraud offences as part of the Medifraud Squad in the AFP's Central Region of South Australia.

In September 1985, Audrey commenced duties as a detective at the Woden CIB and in August 1986 Audrey transferred to Christmas Island where she undertook specialist community policing and national policing duties for the AFP. Audrey's role in the investigation of a murder on the Island attracted praise from her fellow officers and members of the community.

In 1987, Audrey returned to criminal investigation duties in ACT Policing and the following year was transferred to the International Division Investigations Section. At that time, Audrey was already undertaking a Bachelor of Science Degree at the Australian National University demonstrating a commitment not only to her work but also to improve her qualifications and experience at a professional level.

Audrey had also completed tertiary studies in computer sciences and in 1989 began working with the Computer Training Section of the AFP College.

In 1990, Audrey was promoted to Sergeant in the Personnel and Training



Department and in the same year completed her training to be designated as a detective. In 1992 Audrey took up duties in the Internal Investigation Branch.

The 1990s saw Audrey undertake more challenging roles in management in the AFP. In September 1995 she was appointed as a commissioned officer, becoming a superintendent in the Personnel and Industrial Relations Division.

It was about the same time that Audrey was selected by the then Commissioner to undertake a special investigation at the direction of the Commonwealth Attorney-General and the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

Following that investigation, Audrey was permanently transferred to the Commissioner's Office where she was soon appointed as the AFP's Law Enforcement Liaison Officer to the office of the Federal Attorney-General and

Minister for Justice. It was at the time of the 1996 Federal Election and Audrey in typical apolitical fashion worked briefly for the Labor Government in the offices of Michael Lavarch and Duncan Kerr and soon after for the new Liberal Attorney General, Daryl Williams. As portfolio changes were made, Audrey then worked for the Minister for Justice and Customs at the time, Senator Amanda Vanstone.

On 22 January 1999, Audrey received the National Medal for her service and on 5 October the same year Audrey entered the Senior Executive Service of the AFP after being promoted to the rank of Commander and Director of Commercial Support.

During this time, Audrey also held a position on the ACT Parole Board and in February 2001 Audrey was appointed as the head of the AFP Protective Security command.

During the course of the next two years, Audrey acted for brief periods as both a Deputy Commissioner and Commissioner of the AFP. After the September 11 attacks of 2001, the Federal Government announced changes to its Counter Terrorism and Protection policies including the move of the Australian Protective Service to become an operating division of the AFP. Audrey was placed in charge of the integration project and in 2002 Audrey was again given the role of commanding the AFP's Protection Division.

In January 2004, Audrey was promoted to Assistant Commissioner and appointed Chief of Staff to the Commissioner's Office.

Audrey received the Australian Police Medal in the Australia Day Honours on 2004 for her work in Protection, Counter Terrorism and for the successful integration of the Australian Protective Service into the AFP.

In June 2005, Audrey took up her role as the Chief Police Officer of the ACT. As Chief Police Officer Audrey was responsible to the ACT Minister for

Police and Emergency Services. As the first woman to hold this position Audrey brought to the role a contemporary approach to community policing and worked tirelessly with the Department of Justice and Community Safety to provide an effective policing service to the people of the ACT. Tributes have flowed to the AFP from many community service groups and members of the Canberra community acknowledging Audrey's personal contributions.

In every sense of the word, Audrey was a high achiever and an accomplished police officer, with her academic achievements and additional roles enhancing her impressive career. Audrey held a Bachelor of Science, a Graduate Certificate in Applied Management, a Graduate Diploma in Executive Leadership and had completed the Australian Institute of Company Director's Course and was a Fellow of that institution.

Audrey was a member of the National Community Crime Prevention Advisory Group, a member of the Australian Human Resource Institute, a Board member and member of the Strategic Directions Committee of the Australian Crime Commission as well as being a member of the Crimtrac Board.

Audrey was a former Chair of the Commonwealth Women in Law Enforcement Strategy. She became a role model and mentor to women in law enforcement both in Australia and more widely in our region.

As a member of the AFP's Senior Executive, Audrey was a full-time member of the AFP's Executive Management Board. It is here that Audrey was making her most meaningful contributions to the AFP.

Audrey could deal with both the substance and the vision of the strategic thinking of the AFP's Executive Management Board. Her ability to provide timely and meaningful input into setting the direction of the AFP impressed us all.

In addition to the formal roles, Audrey would often take the time to involve herself in other activities in support of the organisation and the senior management team. Her role as the 'Bow' in the executive's first attempt at a corporate rowing regatta was typical of her commitment to the executive team when balancing her role as mother and Chief Police Officer. Without saying a word Audrey demonstrated to the rest of us that style and timing will win over brute strength every time.

Audrey never let an opportunity to participate in executive activities pass her by which is why her popularity remained until her untimely passing on Friday 20 April, 2007.

Audrey quietly, but effectively, engaged all kinds of people, whether in the AFP or outside, and never forgot those who were facing their own personal challenges. Gwen Winchester, widow of former Assistant Commissioner Colin Winchester, writes that 'Audrey made a point of keeping in touch with my family on a regular basis with afternoon teas in her office and Peter and I were invited recently to view a plaque in the foyer of the Winchester Centre'.

Assistant Commissioner Audrey Fagan leaves a legacy as an outstanding senior executive of the AFP who was also a mentor and caring leader and a role model for both women and men in the Australian Federal Police as well as the wider law enforcement community.

May she rest in peace. "



Photo by Brian Hartigan