

A team committed to security at regional airports



Photos by Brian Hartigan

As part of the ongoing program of regional airport security, the Snowy Mountains Airport at Cooma came under the scrutiny of a Regional Rapid Deployment Team (RRDT) earlier this year.

This was a typical day for the RRDT which has for the first half of 2007 undertaken 60 similar deployments.

RRDTs began in August 2004 when the Federal Government launched *Securing our Regional Skies* – a funding package to further enhance Australia’s regional aviation security.

The Australian Government has provided \$20.7 million over five years for Regional Rapid Deployment Teams to increase response capacity for regional airports.

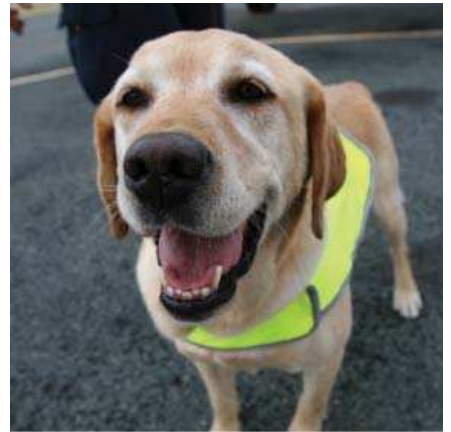
One of the initiatives announced at that time was the provision of \$20.7 million over five years for the introduction of four RRDTs, stationed at Perth, Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne respectively.

The RRDT initiative enables the AFP to provide a rapidly deployable Counter Terrorism First Response (CTFR) capability to undertake highly visible CTFR operations at over 176 Security

Controlled Airports throughout regional Australia.

The objective of the RRDT is two-fold:

- to provide a national response capability to conduct short notice, intelligence-driven, and threat-based operational deployments to regional airports when necessary
- to conduct routine, planned deployments to regional airports



to practise deployment protocols, familiarise other stakeholders with the RRDT capability, and to provide an active deterrence against terrorist threats to regional aviation.

RRDTs are a national response capability and deployments are not restricted by state and territory boundaries.

Each team is made up of eight Protective Service Officers, including a Bomb Appraisal Officer and a Firearms, Explosive and Detection Canine. The RRDT composition allows for deployment at short notice to regional airports, should the need arise.

RRDTs are designed to complement processes already in place at regional airports and, when deployed, the teams have a highly visible presence within the airport community, responding to emerging situations and conducting airside and landside patrols. The RRDTs also participate in activities designed to enhance local security arrangements.

RRDTs work closely with state and territory law enforcement authorities, the regional aviation industry and other relevant agencies to ensure both a coordinated approach to routine deployments, and a coordinated response to aviation security incidents. RRDTs provide assurance to the travelling public that Australia's aviation security measures are a priority.

Since their inception, aside from their normal duties, RRDTs have participated in 11 aviation security exercises at regional airports in partnership with respective state and territory police services.



The role of the state and territory police is not altered by the deployment of RRDT and any law enforcement response to a terrorist incident will continue to be in line with the National Counter Terrorism Handbook, meaning RRDTs do not have a community policing role – this remains the responsibility of local state and territory police services.

The teams will be deployed during APEC Leaders Week in Sydney, to assist NSW Police with security arrangements and continue to play an integral role in strengthening Australia's overall aviation security regime.

