

# Policing rewards beyond the front line

The diversity of roles in the AFP means members can find themselves working in an amazing variety of places. There really are no boundaries when it comes to the geography of the AFP.

Since it began in 1979, the AFP has had members deployed to a variety of diverse and challenging locations. From the desolation of remote outback Australia to the teeming streets of Washington and London and everywhere in between, the AFP has worked to uphold human rights, the rule of law and values including integrity, fairness and trust.

There are nearly 100 AFP officers stationed in more than 30 countries as part of the AFP's International Network. The International Deployment Group, which supports the Australian Government's international stability and security operations, has members deployed to 13 countries. The AFP also has members seconded to international bodies such as the United Nations and

Interpol, and Protective Services Officers stationed at a variety of remote locations across Australia.

The depth and reach of activities can be surprising, and a new exhibition on display at the Edmund Barton Building headquarters in Canberra is providing a real insight into some of the most remote and challenging postings ever offered by the AFP.

International and remote postings are an important aspect of the organisation and National Manager Operations Support Mandy Newton said they should be recognised.

"It's very easy to get caught up in managing our everyday business," she said.

"This exhibition helps us to recognise that even our day-to-

day tasks play an important role in ensuring the AFP is able to perform its duties and uphold Australia's national interests at home and abroad."

The exhibition explores elements of the AFP's history through the places it has worked, and includes photographs and memorabilia from a range of missions.

"It's easy to see that a sense of humour is an essential element of working in remote or challenging places," Assistant Commissioner Newton said.





“From hosting barbeques at Radiation City’s Mara-Hilton beer garden in 50 degree heat, to realising the deadly seriousness of a sign which advises that armed conflict is a health risk, our members have taken all sorts of situations in their stride.”

The beauty of the world’s wildest places is also on display, from the fast-flowing tropical rivers of the Solomon Islands to the awe-inspiring might of the Sudanese Haboob. Throughout the exhibition there is also a sense of how important the AFP’s work is to local communities in countries that have been ravaged by war, conflict or natural disaster.

“Many people think of policing in terms of fighting tangible crimes such as drug smuggling or people trafficking,” Assistant Commissioner Newton said.

“But it has become increasingly obvious that this is only the tip of

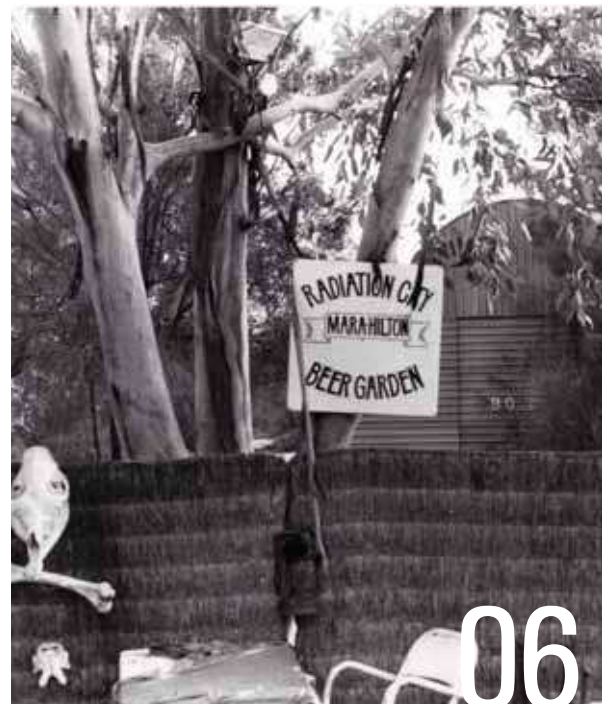
the iceberg. Bringing stability and the rule of law to a conflict-affected area can make an enormous difference in the lives of the community. It gives them a chance to rebuild the foundations of what we take for granted: homes, families and regular employment.”

In addition to creating the initial conditions where law and order can flourish, the AFP is also committed to working with local law enforcement agencies to ensure they have the skills and capacity to maintain stability and an effective civilian policing presence into the future.

This can take many years, and AFP members must commit to spending significant periods of time away from their families and friends. While this is often difficult, the exhibition highlights some of the positive aspects of living in areas where it is difficult to communicate with those back home.

Some members have been able to get their own communities involved in sharing their experiences. One recent example saw AFP members stationed in the Solomon Islands deliver equipment such as books and desks to a primary school in

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**01:** Deployed member Sharlene Whyte policing a neighbourhood in Sudan, 2007. **02:** Afghanistan 2008 - 2009.  
**03:** Two members deployed to the Solomon Islands in 2003. **04:** A Timor-Leste villager, 2000. **05:** A control gate at Pimba near Woomera in South Australia, 1960s. Photo courtesy of Peter Donovan. **06:** Maralinga, South Australia, 1960s - 1970s.  
**07:** Australian Cyprus Headquarters, 1979.

Honiara which had been destroyed during the 2006 riots. The materials had been donated by a Brisbane primary school, and the relationship between the two schools is now growing.

“We sometimes forget that the programs we are involved in provide benefits to the broader Australian community as well as the communities in the countries where we are deployed,” Assistant Commissioner Newton said.

“It’s not just about us providing aid or assistance, it’s about forging relationships that will have an impact on those involved for many years. The pen-pals of primary

school may evolve into business partnerships or provide the inspiration for a career in policing or international aid.”

Through the use of photographs and objects collected by members stationed at AFP posts in remote and challenging locations, the exhibition is designed to encourage all members to think about the AFP’s role in a broader context and to understand how they are contributing to its strategic objectives, core values and overall mission.

