

# A new era for airport policing

**Policing at Australia's airports has never been more important to national security, with the threat of terrorist activity and the vast number of people using air travel creating new challenges for law enforcement.**

In December 2009, the Government announced its intention to move forward significant reforms to policing arrangements at Australia's 11 major airports. The changes were based on recommendations made by Roger Beale in his *New Realities: National policing in the 21st Century, Report of the Federal Audit of Police Capabilities* (the Beale Review), and in line with his other findings relating to the organisation's funding arrangements.

Of the review's eight recommendations relating to the AFP's Aviation function, the need for changes to the current Unified Policing Model (UPM) was a key finding. In response, the Australian Government announced the UPM would be replaced by an 'All-In' model. This will allow the Commonwealth to assume responsibility for airport security and policing services by staffing a nationally integrated system.

Over the next three to five years, roles performed by State and Territory police and AFP Protective Service Officers in the UPM will transition to a workforce of sworn AFP police officers. Following transition, Australia's major airports will be policed solely by sworn AFP police officers. The existing Counter-Terrorist First Response function will also be integrated into the new model of aviation security and policing.

Cooperative State and Commonwealth arrangements in place for the Joint Airport Investigation Teams and Joint

Airport Intelligence Groups will remain and the transition to the 'All-In' model will not have an impact on the current operation or status of the Air Security Officer Program. These changes are consistent with the review's finding that an 'All-In' model would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the AFP's airport policing and security services.

In response to the Australian Government's decision, the AFP's Aviation portfolio established Project Macer to develop and manage the implementation plan which will give effect to the future model of airport policing.

The Project Macer team will develop a range of transition options for consideration by stakeholders

and an implementation plan to be considered for endorsement by Minister for Home Affairs Brendan O'Connor. During this process stakeholders and all affected AFP appointees will be extensively consulted. The project team will also travel to regional areas to hold forums with staff to seek their input into the transition strategies.

Options for immediate and long-term legislative changes will be developed which will enable the 'All-In' model to provide sworn AFP police officers with appropriate powers in the relevant State and Territory jurisdictions.

Manager Aviation Infrastructure Deborah Todd said the 'All-In' model would help to create a more flexible and responsive workforce.



“The changes to airport policing will bring new career and learning opportunities for AFP members,” Ms Todd said.

A project Board which has both internal and external stakeholder representation will provide direction to the project. With representation from the Commonwealth Attorney-General’s Department and the Department of Finance and Deregulation, the Board will ensure that it considers broader whole-of-government approaches to national security.

The planning stage is scheduled to be complete by the end of March and the transition process

is expected to begin in July 2010. Implementation dates will be subject to a number of Government decisions and approval by the project Board, the AFP Executive and Minister for Home Affairs Brendan O’Connor.

The changes in airport policing will bring opportunities for AFP Protective Service Officers to consider becoming sworn members. The changes will also allow sworn police officers to consider a move into the aviation sector if they choose to do so.

Over the next three to five years regular reports will be made to

Government on the progress of implementation activities at Australia’s major airports. The Government will also conduct a review in two years. Although still in the initiation phase, the Project Macer team is looking forward to the challenges ahead.

“It’s a real opportunity for the AFP to increase the efficiency of policing at Australia’s airports,” Ms Todd said.

Further information can be found on the AFP website: [http://www.afp.gov.au/national/airport\\_security.html](http://www.afp.gov.au/national/airport_security.html)

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