

# The road to the AFP

The AFP's international reputation of excellence begins at the AFP College and continues throughout a police officer's career.





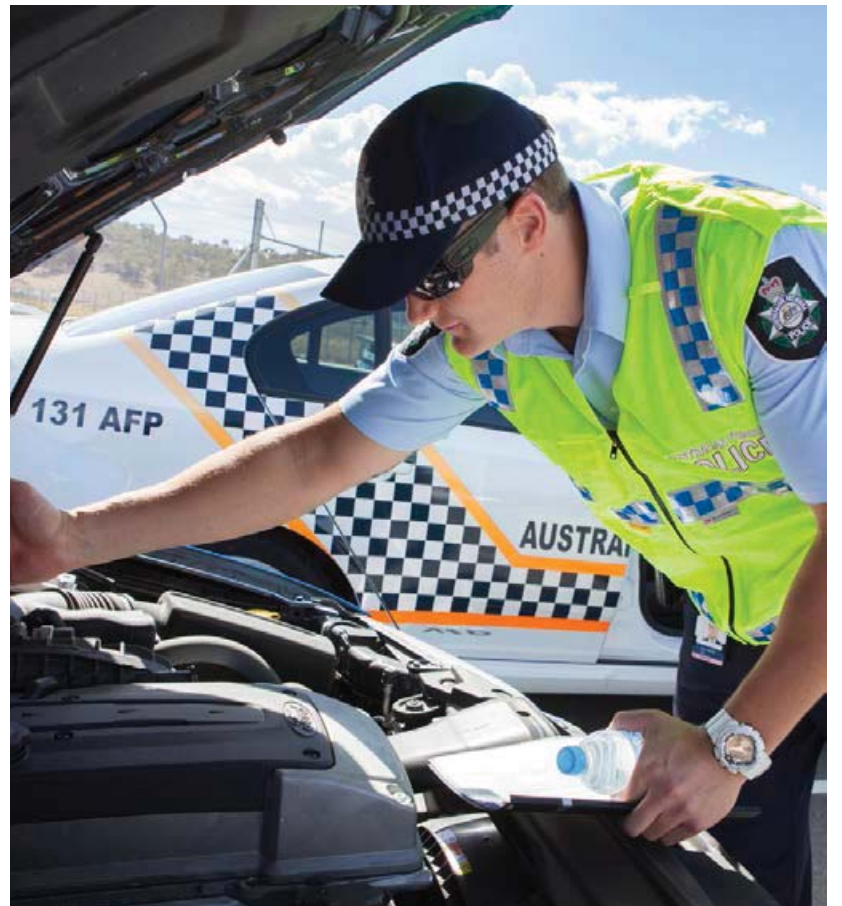
Graduation day after 24 weeks of training.



Constable El Hewitt practises pistol drills before live firing the Glock standard police firearm during her recruit course.



Constable El Hewitt prepares for training.



Constable Saxon Martin does an initial vehicle check during the Driver Training Module of his recruit course.

“We are trying to find the right people, with the right skills for the right job at the right time.”

It was a long and winding road that brought Constable El Hewitt through the doors of the AFP College as a recruit in February this year. The British-born 41-year-old single parent had dreamed of coming to Australia as an eight-year-old when waving off an auntie bound for Melbourne. El finally realised her ambition in 2005 when she arrived in Australia as a teacher on a government sponsorship.

In the course of her journey, Constable Hewitt cultivated and developed a community-service ethic that would prove to be the bedrock of her values as a future police officer. She trained as a teacher in Britain and gravitated to working with children with troubled backgrounds.

Her respect for law enforcement was first nurtured in Council housing in Britain, where a constant police presence made her feel safe despite a problematic community environment. In Australia she worked in the judicial system and prison management systems in Victoria, which brought her in contact with police officers. Ultimately, she began her recruit course in January.

“Human behaviour really fascinates me,” Constable Hewitt says. Her experiences with children with troubled backgrounds, working in the justice system and her own concerns as a parent raised her concern over drugs in society. “Most people that came through the doors had some sort of relationship with drugs — either they were addicted or took them. I don’t want to suggest I can change the world or anything like that but I just want to do my bit.”

Each recruit, of course, has their own journey that leads them to a career in law enforcement. But it’s no accident that each recruit finds themselves walking through the doors of the college. The AFP recruitment process is complex and comprehensive. Once inside the doors of the college, the recruits then embark along a common journey toward a career in professional law enforcement.

## Recruitment

The process of selecting the AFP’s next generation of police officer is multifaceted. This process has become even more focused and defined in the past few years. Under the AFP’s Program Saturn, the training and learning philosophy for AFP members from recruitment to retirement has been identified and articulated like never before.

As the former National Manager Human Resources, Assistant Commissioner Shane Connelly was directly involved in bringing Program Saturn into the AFP orbit.

“We are trying to find the right people, with the right skills for the right job at the right time,” Assistant Commissioner Connelly says. “We want to align our people’s skills with capabilities we want to have within the organisation.”

Assistant Commissioner Connelly is quick to add that the AFP has always recruited good people. He says that consistently AFP national managers have been very happy with the standard of constable that graduates from the AFP College. But ever-present change within the modern world demands a management philosophy that factors change into the mix.

The suite of sub-programs under Program Saturn is designed to integrate the capability needs of the AFP into a collaborative whole. With a better understanding of the AFP’s needs, the organisation then can look for the right people for the right job, whether as sworn or unsworn members of the AFP. This philosophy has already shaped significant strategies within the AFP’s approach to recruiting uniformed members.

**Annual recruitment.** The AFP will now recruit every year. This will allow the AFP to continuously seek and find the right people in each year.

**Diversity.** Recruiting annually also allows the AFP to seek a diverse range of people reflective of the Australian community from each new group of people entering the workforce. Assistant Commissioner Connelly emphasises the benefits of diversity, including gender and indigenous recruitment targets.



Recruits do the hard yards at physical training.

It also includes skills diversity such as people from non-English speaking backgrounds that have language skills and also may have other technical skills needed by an increasingly technical world.

“Diversity is so important to us and skills diversity is so important to us because the world is becoming more and more complex with a requirement for more and more specialist skills,” Assistant Commissioner Connelly says.

“You can see that in the ICT area, you can see that in the cybercrime areas, in forensics and for accounting in the proceeds of crime. There are so many areas now requiring specialist skills. So recruiting the right person for that job is so important.”

**University graduates.** Assistant Commissioner Connelly says recruiting every year will also allow the AFP to seek the right people from the available pool of university graduates around Australia. While the AFP does already have a graduate program, targeting small numbers of graduates every year will ensure that key demographics are being maintained.

“So we are looking for young, fit women and men from diverse backgrounds with a diverse range of skills. That’s really what we are after,” Assistant Commissioner Connelly said.



Recruits conduct a training scenario at the AFP’s Majura training facility.

## AFP College

And so ‘Recruit’ Hewitt and 54 other colleagues arrived at the AFP College to begin their careers as police officers. The two courses — Federal Police Development Programs (FPDP) 1 and 2 of 2015 — thus embarked upon 24 weeks of recruit training.

Recruit training consists of eight major learning modules. Recruits need to achieve a pass in each of these modules before moving onto the next phase of training. The early stages of the course do focus largely on theory lessons as the recruits begin to absorb the organisation and law enforcement landscape.

“We started off doing a lot of theory, which is very necessary to give an insight into the organisation and police powers, evidence and the offences,” says Constable Hewitt.

“But the way the course is structured, they break up the theory and give us more practical experience — exposing us to more practical experiences as well.”

Theory does give way to practical exercises as recruits become more tutored in law enforcement. Scenario-based exercises practise the recruits in the theory lessons they are learning. The recruits are trained to conduct interviews and take statements from witnesses and offenders. Recruits access training versions of the technology and management tools they will use once they graduate to process the results of these exercises.

The AFP’s Recruiting Training Superintendent Stewart Allen says the initial weeks of training are an important foundation to future training. He says it is essential that recruits are immersed into the police culture — and this takes time and process. In these crucial first weeks, the recruits not only learn new information but they are having police values demonstrated daily as a way of life.



Constable El Hewitt during operational safety training on her recruit course.



Recruits during training in Canberra.

“Educating recruits about the values of the AFP is a critical part of their education but they also need to understand what it means to be a police officer,” Superintendent Allen says. “We are introducing them to the police lifestyle and bringing them into the police family.

“We introduce them to how they will be perceived and how to engage with the public and the expectations that the public will have of them. So we are teaching them what it is to be a police officer — how to survive and cope in the policing role.”

Instructors use a process colloquially called ‘listen, look, do’. New skills are introduced during the theory lessons. They are then demonstrated in practical examples by instructors. Finally, recruits practise these skills in the exercise scenarios. With this new information and new skills embedded as a foundation, recruits then progress to advanced practical modules of core skills required by police officers.

So by mid-course, recruits are actively engaged in skills such as driver training, firearms and operational safety. These new skills build on the practical modules that have gone before and further add to the core skills needed by police in the day-to-day routine of law enforcement.

Constable Hewitt says the operational safety module was one highlight in the course. The two-week operational safety is essential training in the range of response options available to police in the day-to-day performance of police powers. From negotiation to batons and firearms, the recruits are trained to use the equipment they carry in order to establish their own safety, and that of other team members and the public.

“We all make mistakes but I think that everyone would agree that we are not perfect and if we are going to make mistakes then now is the forum to make mistakes and learn from them,” she says.

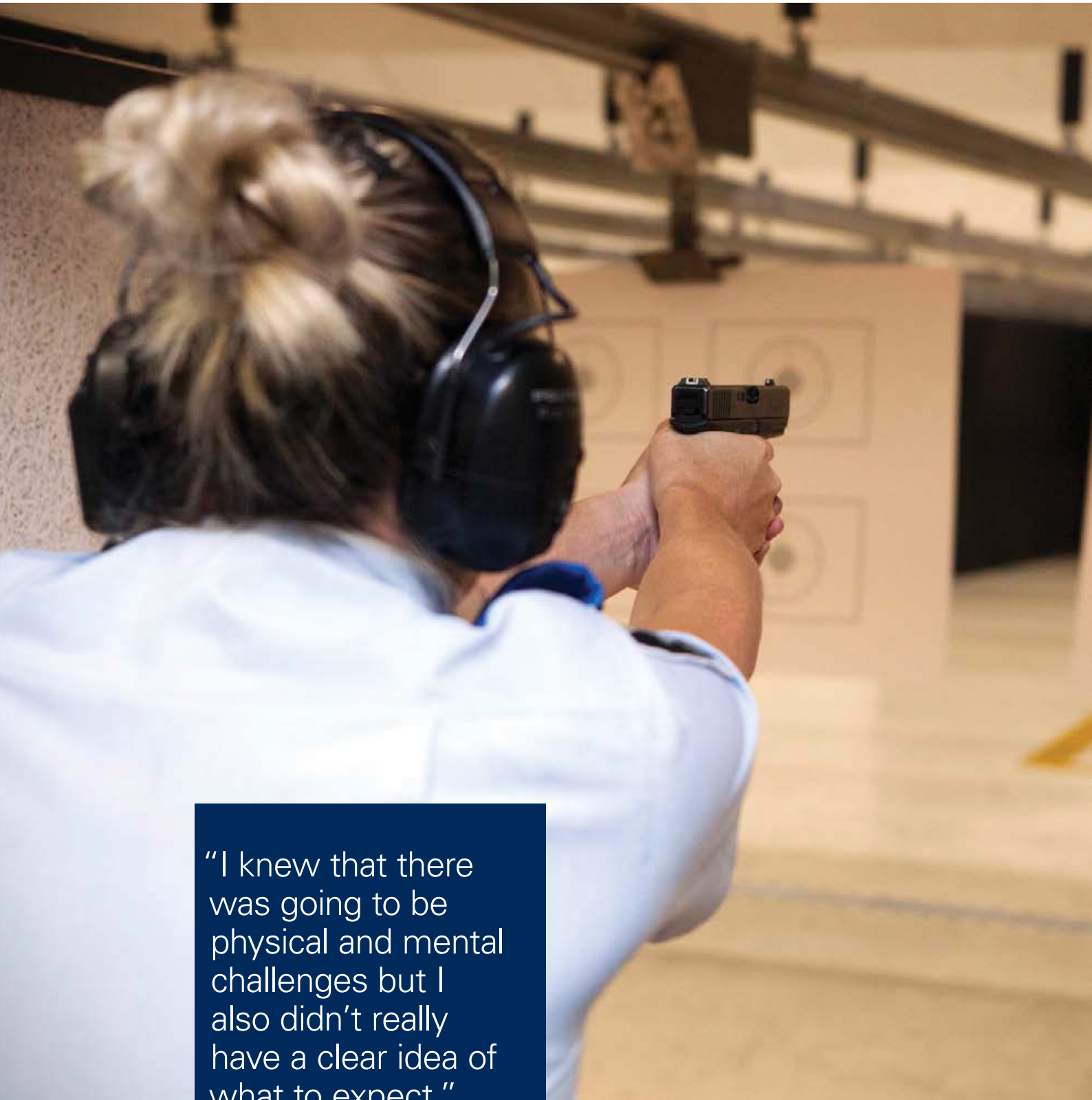
Driver training was also a popular module among recruits. Former defence member Constable Saxon Martin says he particularly enjoyed the driver training. He says the first week of driving was more assessing what level each recruit’s skills were at and ironing out bad habits. The second week was moving on to specialist police driving skills.

It was during this stage of training that the 28-year-old got his first insight into being a police presence in the community. “Just even being in uniform and being around in the public, seeing it on the other side to being in the car — now you are that person. It’s a weird feeling and it’s hard to describe.”

Constable Kate Wilson-Smith, also a former defence member, also got a lot of value from the driver training.

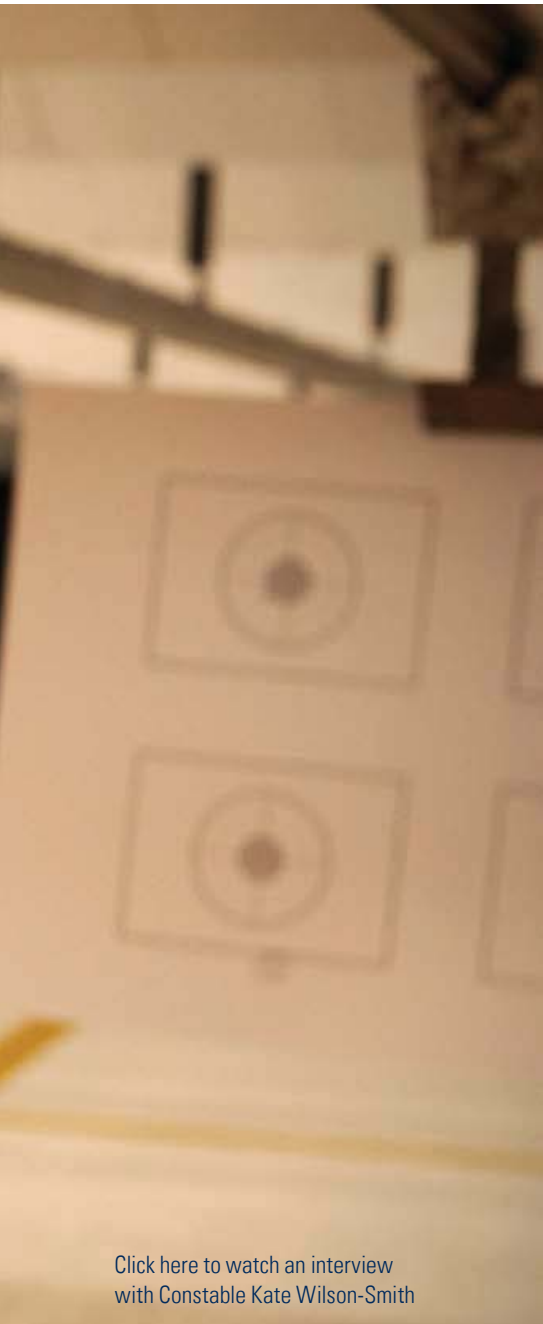
“One of the highlights was learning how to confidently drive the police vehicle fast and getting to that point from being a pretty cautious driver where I felt in control of the vehicle and could drive quickly in pursuit of other vehicles,” she says.

“Diversity is so important to us and skills diversity is so important to us because the world is becoming more and more complex...”



“I knew that there was going to be physical and mental challenges but I also didn’t really have a clear idea of what to expect.”

Constable El Hewitt on the firing range during recruit training.



[Click here to watch an interview with Constable Kate Wilson-Smith](#)



## Values

The one constant among the recruits was the ethos of law enforcement. All are motivated by that same community service spirit. The desire to give something back as part of a bigger whole is what attracted them in the first place — and subsequently allows them to thrive in that environment. It was almost like finding home.

Constable Wilson-Smith says teamwork and ethos was actually one of the highlights of the course for her. As a former Australian representative in badminton, the AFP's reputation and commitment to excellence was definitely something she was looking for in a profession.

"I knew I was going to be challenged, I knew that there was going to be physical and mental challenges but I also didn't really have a clear idea of what to expect," Constable Wilson-Smith says. "You can research on the internet and you can read and ask questions but you don't know until you get here. I think everything came together at the RAVC (Recruit Applicant Validation Centre) weekend which was the validation weekend before we started and that was when we finally got to set foot into the college.

"Every day just being part of this group of fellow recruits, plus the instructors, all embraced the AFP values. It's just so easy to get up and come to work every day when you know that you are working with a group of people that have the same beliefs that you do."

Likewise, Constable Martin says the unity of purpose and integrity was something that was very apparent to him early in the course.

"It was just my own observation," he says. "Both my course mates and people involved with the training — everyone seems to be of the same kind of mindset. They are very laid back but very professional when the job requires it to be.

"I think everyone has a sense of humour and they have all been selected on the same sort of criteria and that is to work very hard and work very professionally — but they can also have a joke and it just breeds a good culture."



Constable Luisa Genovese delivers the 'student response', on behalf of both graduating courses, to AFP Commissioner Andrew Colvin's address.

## Graduation

The challenges of recruit training are a milestone in any police officer's career. Still, there is nothing like the reward of graduating. FPDPs 1 & 2 both graduated on 19 June this year in the presence of family, friends and loved ones.

AFP Commissioner Andrew Colvin addressed the new police officers and wished them well.

"On Monday or shortly thereafter you will start your first shift and everything will change," Commissioner Colvin said. "But while it takes only a few moments to turn you from recruits into constables, the reality is that from this point forward the expectations of you are different.

"You are no longer just members of the public, but you are public property. As police officers the expectations on you are different and sometimes those expectations will be hard to meet. The public and I expect that you should show leadership. We demand integrity, we demand values, we demand ethics and we want you to show your discretion."

And so the journey continues for the newly graduated police officers. Both Constables Martin and Wilson-Smith are now working with ACT Police, the national capital's community police service. Constable Hewitt has returned to her adopted home of Melbourne to take up her first posting at Melbourne Airport. Meanwhile, new recruit courses have started on their own journeys at the AFP College.



Constable  
Kate Wilson Smith  
receives the  
Commissioner's Award  
for Excellence



# New AFP members take post



Fifty-two brand new protective service officers had the added distinction of being part of the first outdoor graduation held in the courtyard at AFP headquarters on 22 May.

Protective Service Officer Programs 1 & 2 of 2015 proudly marched onto the parade while family, friends and loved ones cheered them on for their last step before taking active roles within the AFP.

An opportunity for family members to photograph the recruits before the official ceremony began saw a rush to the parade to take a memento of the occasion before the official ceremony began.

Commissioner Andrew Colvin thanked staff for their effort and made special mention of the sacrifices that families make to allow loved ones to pursue their dreams.

Commissioner Colvin then congratulated the soon-to-be AFP's newest members.

"I know from my discussion with the recruit training team that you have been a very good class," Commissioner Colvin said.

"You have shown commitment and dedication and that will also serve you well. You have set high standards for yourself and you should be proud of what you have achieved."

Commissioner Colvin also announced that Recruits Mohammad Joya and Michael Ronan had respectively been awarded the Alan Castles Award, which is chosen by their peers for the positive influence and support shown towards their class mates.

Recruit Johnathon Trott delivered the student response on behalf of both courses before Commissioner Colvin administered the Oath of Office and Affirmation for the 52 new AFP officers.

Recruit Etienne Fabre and Recruit Trott were then announced as the recipients for the Commissioner's Award for Excellence in Recruit Training for courses 1 & 2 respectively.