Fund the frontline – or is it find the frontline?

Outnumbered... Wellington police were caught short when protesters attacked National Front leader, Kyle Chapman, in Wellington last year. – (Photo courtesy of Wellington Police Forensic Photography).

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Public support still strong

We still have great support out there in the community. Reading recent newspaper articles, in which Editors seem to be out-headlining each other as they trawl the Police round for the latest supposed “stuff up”, one could start to believe otherwise.

But, as we have worked with New Zealanders at every level alerting them to our frontline staffing shortages, we have unearthed a wealth of goodwill and understanding of our situation.

New Zealanders want to, and do, support us. But not being the most demonstrative people in the world, that support can often be muted or overwhelmed by headlines and criticisms from detractors. But support is still there. From top business people, media celebrities and local body politicians, down to the people at the bottom of the socio-economic scale, who suffer most if police are not present in their neighbourhood, there is a pride that the New Zealand Police is among the best. And there is a desire to keep us that way.

From the President

“Our people are our greatest asset” used to be an oft-heard phrase in Police, now replaced by much more lofty corporate mantras.

By pointing out to these people the reality of modern policing, whereby frontline police are being expected to do considerably more with considerably less in a far more critically demanding and unforgiving environment, they understand the real impact of an under-resourced frontline. They are invariably shocked at the amount of compliance translated into a myriad of forms and procedures which police officers must navigate their way through each shift and, increasingly, after it.

“Our people are our greatest asset” used to be an oft-heard phrase in Police, now replaced by much more lofty corporate mantras.

Having watched how impressed those we have spoken to are by frontline Association members simply telling us how it is, and seeing their dedication and commonsense, I can say that our people remain by far our best asset.

We rely heavily on goodwill to police this country, both within Police and among the public. Maintaining that goodwill is essential and not delivering to either group is detrimental to both.

This round of negativity will run its course before the needs of frontline police to adequately deliver and the public demand for service are aligned.

In the meantime mischief will continue to be made in the gap, which exists between the two.

Association looking at work/life balance options for members

By Tracey MacLennan, Association Delegate

Deferred salary schemes and purchase leave arrangements are becoming common practice throughout Australia, as employees strive to achieve healthier work/life balances.

The same schemes may also be of value to our sworn and non-sworn members.

If there is sufficient support, the Association will commence discussions with the Police over the possible introduction of these schemes.

The two schemes work as follows:

**Purchase Leave:** The employer and member may agree to enter into an arrangement whereby the member can purchase up to four weeks additional leave by spreading a lesser pay over 52 weeks.

Each week of extra leave, equals 2% of salary. For example, if a member’s salary is $50,000 then an extra weeks’ leave would have the effect of dropping his or her salary by $1000. After tax this would equate to a $26 reduction in fortnightly disposable income.

A maximum of four weeks leave could be purchased, which would cost the member 8% of his or her salary; again spread evenly over the course of the year to lessen the impact and assist with budgeting.

**Deferred Salary Scheme:** The member may elect to take 80% of his or her salary over a four-year period and then take the fifth year as paid leave at 80% of his or her salary. The member could either take the money in a lump sum or elect a fortnightly payment.

There are provisos and extra points, which cover how each scheme works.

The schemes would benefit all members male and female, sworn and non-sworn and would provide flexibility while the employee still remains in fulltime work. This would be especially beneficial to members with family and childcare commitments, or even other commitments such as recreational or sporting interests.

The deferred scheme provides an option for staff to plan their OE, take maternity leave, attend training or tertiary institutions or simply take a career break without added financial burden.

In November 2003, The Western Australian Police Department included both schemes in their collective agreement and other Australian Police States appear likely to follow suit.

In the first year in Western Australia, 55 police members took advantage of the schemes. Thirty-five members were male and the majority entered into the purchase leave arrangement (mainly purchasing two or four extra weeks leave).

If you believe the introduction of these schemes has merit or if you are opposed to the idea, please contact Tracey MacLennan by Email at maclennans@clear.net.nz

Tracey is a NZ Police Association Secretary for Invercargill. Conference delegate committee member and representative on the Police Federation of Australia Women’s Advisory Committee.
Footwear – a health and safety issue

By Amanda Craig, Association Industrial Officer

Last year the Association raised the provision of safety footwear for frontline operational staff with Police. The Association asked Police to supply safety footwear to these staff.

Given the operational nature of the policing environment, the issue is one of health and safety.

Constable Doug Peach, the Association’s health and safety representative for North Shore-Waitakere, first raised safety footwear at his District health and safety committee. The matter was then raised with the Association’s National Office who formally raised the issue with the Employee Wellness Group at OoC (Office of the Commissioner).

The Association stated that the operational environment has a number of hazards, which need to be minimised by the provision of safety footwear.

Members will be well aware that frontline staff are often subject to working in varying conditions (i.e. slippery or muddy surfaces) and this work may bring them into contact with sharp objects and various liquids and chemicals. The physical nature of Police work also means that members are running, jumping and climbing, dealing with resistant people and are often around moving vehicles.

Many members have recognised these hazardous working conditions and effectively ‘voted with their feet’ by purchasing their own boots.

Health and Safety Act

The Health and Safety Act requires Police to actively manage workplace hazards.

In managing hazards, they must be assessed to see if they are “significant”. The potential or actual harm from a foot or ankle injury, or an injury caused by a slip or fall, can be serious. The risk involved is faced on a daily basis and the Association is of the opinion that these factors make it imperative that frontline staff be supplied with appropriate safety footwear.

Under the Health and Safety Act, the employer is responsible for providing protective clothing and equipment.

Police already provide safety footwear for specialist squads such as AOS, team policing, CVIU and dog sections. It seems that the only operational groups that are not provided with safety footwear are GDB, road policing staff and some crash analyst groups.

When raising the issue of safety footwear, the Association pointed out that while GDB and road policing staff are not provided with safety footwear, they are usually the first groups to arrive at an incident.

The Board of Commissioners (BOC) considered the provision of safety footwear early this year. They authorised a working party to investigate:

- the need for safety footwear;
- the positions in Police that should be provided with safety footwear;
- suitable types of footwear;
- the cost of providing footwear.

Constable Doug Peach and I are on the working party as Association representatives.

Taskforce to police Internet chat rooms

Police around the world plan to patrol Internet chat rooms to stop paedophiles grooming victims over the web, according to a BBC News report.

A London summit of the International Virtual Global Taskforce also formed plans to work with credit card firms to tackle pay-per-view child pornography. The taskforce’s different agencies will also work together to seize the assets of people profiting from child pornography websites.

The NCS in the UK and the US’s FBI are heading the effort, which will utilise different time zones to monitor the web 24 hours a day. US Customs, the Canadian Mounted Police, Australian Federal Police and Interpol are also involved.

IMPORTANT:
Resigning or taking LWOP? - then tell us

If you are an Association member who is resigning, taking LWOP (leave without pay), parental/maternity leave or retiring please remember that you must inform us of your intentions. When you do so we will forward some forms for you to fill out so we can alter your deductions accordingly.

When you return to work, immediately notify us of your start date and your station. REMEMBER – notifying Police Human Resources Section does not constitute telling us. It is not their job to inform us you’ve left – it’s yours.

If you don’t inform us about these matters then membership dues, which you may have wanted to alter, remain the same until you do – effectively costing you unnecessary expense and possibly incurring arrears.

If any of the above circumstances apply to you please inform the Association by:
Emailing: enquiries@policeassn.org.nz or membership@policeassn.org.nz or by phoning the Member Services Centre on our freephone line: 0800 500 122.

* Police Commissioner Rob Robinson with Detective Sergeant (Ruth) Jeanette Park after she received the NZ Bravery Star in a ceremony at Government House recently. Ms Park was among seven officers who received various awards for bravery. She was seriously injured when shot in an incident at Rongotea in July 2002. Her police partner, Constable Duncan Taylor, was shot and killed in the same incident. Mr Taylor received the NZ Bravery Medal posthumously.

(Photo courtesy of Wellington Police Forensic Photography).
How not to rob a gun shop

A would-be robber in Renton, Washington recently found he wasn’t cut out for a life of crime on his first and, as it transpired, last job.

1. His target was H & J Leather & Firearms, a gun shop specializing in handguns.
2. The shop was full of customers – firearms customers.
3. To enter the shop, the robber had to step around a marked police patrol car parked outside the front door.
4. A uniformed officer was standing at the counter, having coffee before work.

Upon seeing the officer, the would-be robber announced a hold-up and fired a few wild shots from a .22 target pistol. The officer and a clerk promptly returned fire, the police officer with a 9mm Glock 17, the clerk with a .50 Desert Eagle, assisted by several customers who also drew their guns and fired.

The robber died. Crime scene investigators located 47 expended cartridge cases in the shop. An autopsy revealed 23 gunshot wounds. Ballistics identified rounds from seven different weapons. No one else was hurt in the exchange of fire.

Mounties remember their own

Royal Canadian Mounted Police march to the funeral of four colleagues who were shot dead during a drug raid operation in Alberta recently. (Photo courtesy of the Peace Officers’ Memorial Ribbon Society).

Recruit pay and non-sworn sick leave disputes to be decided by mediator

By Leeanne Peden, Association Industrial Officer

The Association and NZ Police attended mediation in mid-March over two issues – recruit pay and non-sworn sick leave.

Mediator Colleen Hicks conducted the hearing.

The first issue related to the question of whether the general wage increases negotiated during the 2003 pay round and expressed in the Heads of Agreement, dated 24 June 2003, apply to recruits employed during the term of the agreement.

Police and the Association put their arguments to Ms Hicks and she will make a binding decision on the matters. The Association is optimistic that the decision will support the Association’s argument that recruits are entitled to the general wage increases. We anticipate a decision on this matter in the near future.

Non-sworn sick leave

In the 2003 pay round changes were made to non-sworn leave entitlements. The Association and the Police agreed that the changes involve moving away from bulk to annual entitlements.

However, we disagree on one point - Police are applying an accrual approach. In essence, Police are saying that you can’t use sick leave until you have accrued (earned) it. The Association argues that it is an annual entitlement that members should be able to access and use from day one.

We are currently continuing to debate this issue in an attempt to reach an agreement. However, if that is not possible, the Association will seek a binding decision from the mediator.

We will keep members updated as to progress.

Victorian detectives lodge $1 million back pay claim

Victoria Police is facing a payout of at least $1 million to specialist detectives who are claiming six years’ worth of back pay for being on call, according to a recent Melbourne Age report.

The officers, from specialised units, including the major drug investigation division and special operations group, have not been paid for being on call round the clock.

The allowance is worth $4.17 an hour on top of normal pay for each shift an officer is on call. It is worth $8.34 an hour if they are on call on rest days.

One officer is believed to have already settled with the department for $71,000 and another for a smaller amount.

The Victoria Police Association has lodged claims on behalf of 63 former and serving special operations group officers in the Melbourne Magistrates’ Court.

The Victorian Police Association has indicated that more claims are likely to follow.

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Commissioner receives draft report on Comms Centres and acknowledges “there is a fair bit of work to be done”

The Commissioner of Police, Rob Robinson, has received the draft report from the independent review panel, which was set up following concerns raised about Police Communications Centres. It is believed that the review recommends a major overall of the 111 network.

Superintendent Michael Corboy headed the review panel. He was assisted in his investigation by Superintendent Ruth Purdie from North Wales, Acting Deputy Chief, Emory Gilbert, from Toronto Police and Kevin McKenna from Pricewaterhouse Coopers.

The Commissioner said that the report indicated, “there is a fair bit of work to be done”.

The panel reviewed all three Police Communications Centres – in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. It took into account a wide range of issues affecting Comms Centres – staffing, structures, workloads, technology and management and it was required to make recommendations on the interaction and impact of these things on the overall operation of the Police Communications network.

Interaction the “key issue”

Mr Robinson said the “key issue” was interaction between Communications Centres and police districts.

Deputy Commissioner, Steve Long, said detailed discussions had taken place about the link between district managers and Communications Centres “to make sure there are enough police staff available to do the jobs”.

Second body armour trial starts 31 May

A second trial of stab resistant body armour (SRBA) starts on 31 May.

The purpose of this trial is to identify the most appropriate SRBA for New Zealand police officers. The first trial (held last year) looked at the feasibility of SRBA in the New Zealand environment, not the particular type of SRBA.

Three suppliers are part of the second trial. As overt and covert armour is being trialled each supplier will provide both types of SRBA.

SRBA from each supplier is being trialled for a month. The trial is a “blind trial”, which means the trialists will not know the brand of vest they are wearing. This approach has been taken to ensure complete objectivity.

Assessment

Operational requirements (including comfort and wearability) are key components of the assessments.

Participants will complete assessment sheets throughout the trial. The sheets are designed to make sure that all issues are captured and included in the final assessment.

Eighteen members from Wellington and Auckland, along with two rural members, are participating in the trial.

The trialists in Wellington and Auckland are drawn from a number of policing groups - GDB, dog section, airport, road policing, CVIU, STU, DFS and CIB. The aim of having such a range is to ensure that each set of SRBA is tested over a variety of policing activities.

There are six women and 12 men in the trial – so as the individual fitting requirements for each gender can be assessed.

All of the vests will be personal issue and each participant’s vest has been individually sized.

Watching the watchdog

The Australian Government has announced the creation of a powerful new body to investigate corruption in Commonwealth organisations, including the Federal Police and the Australian Crime Commission, according to an Australian Associated Press report.

The new body will have the powers of a standing Royal Commission, similar to those of the NSW Police Integrity Commission and Queensland’s Crime and Misconduct Commission.

Its charter will include powers to intercept telephone calls and other communications.

The decision to create the body, ratified last year by Cabinet, came at the same time as fresh allegations surfaced about corruption within the Australian Crime Commission.

Crime Commission rejected

It also came as the Victorian Government continued to resist pressure to set up its own standing Crime Commission despite allegations concerning police corruption and its links to Melbourne’s gangland wars. In Victoria, the corruption investigation functions are now being performed by Ombudsman, George Brouwer, and Chief Commissioner, Christine Nixon, who have been given increased powers by the State Government.

The Australian Government acted after ministers expressed alarm that there was no standing body to investigate corruption in federal policing agencies. This shortcoming was highlighted in an ABC Four Corners television program that focused on two officers, seconded from state police forces to the Australian Crime Commission, who have been charged with corruption.

The Victorian Attorney-General Rob Hulls recently wrote to his federal counterpart, Philip Ruddock, renewing his calls for police tapping and surveillance powers to be given to the state Ombudsman to allow him to carry out the anti-corruption role.

Earlier this month Mr Ruddock had rejected a Victorian proposal to give the Ombudsman power to tap telephones in its pursuit of corrupt police.
New Zealand Police Association

May 2005

**Former Association Branch Secretary was aboard the HMS Achilles at the Battle of the River Plate**

Former Senior Constable, Eddie Edwardson, a former long-serving Secretary of the Auckland branch of the NZ Police Association was on hand with another former Association member, George Wood, at the opening of a recent exhibition of the Royal New Zealand Navy in Auckland.

Mr Edwardson is a veteran of the Battle of the River Plate, an epic Second World War confrontation, which resulted in the sinking of the German pocket battleship, Graf Spee. Eddie served as a Royal Marine aboard the Achilles during the battle.

Great Britain’s South American Naval Division was made up of four cruisers – the HMS Ajax, the HMS Exeter, the HMS Cumberland and the HMS Achilles.

Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay all allowed ships to use their harbours – as all three countries had declared themselves neutral.

The Battle of the River Plate eventuated after the SS Graf Spee had sunk the merchant ship, Doric Star, and The Tairoa.

**Awesome opponent**

The German vessel looked heavily outnumbered but the Graf Spee was an awesome opponent and, even with four cruisers, the British knew from past experience not to underestimate her ability to despatch them all to Davy Jones’ locker.

The Graf Spee was faster than any battleship, had six 11 inch guns, numerous anti-aircraft guns and six 21-inch torpedo tubes at her stern. She had superior weaponry to the British cruisers.

In the ensuing battle, the Exeter was fired upon by the Graf Spee and hit amidships, sustaining damage. A salvo from the Graf Spee did a great deal of damage and killed all but three officers in the wheelhouse. In a retaliatory strike by the Exeter, the Graf Spee was hit near its turrets. The Exeter continued to be hit and sustained massive damage, being forced to withdraw to the Falkland Islands while the Ajax and the Achilles took up the fight. The Graf Spee had been hit 17 times with 37 crewmen killed and 57 wounded from a complement of 1100. By comparison, the Exeter had lost 61 crewmen and could only use a ship’s compass for navigation with shouted orders to ensure that those orders were carried out.

**Safe harbour**

The Graf Spee made for the River Plate - the Plate estuary is a huge bay 120 miles across – and eventually found safe harbour in Montevideo. The two remaining cruisers, Ajax and Achilles, patrolled the estuary to ensure that the Graf Spee could not slip out back into the Atlantic under the cover of darkness. The Graf Spee eventually left Montevideo with a skeleton crew aboard – having left behind an estimated 800 sailors. Three miles out to sea, she stopped and in the evening a large explosion was seen on board. The ship was still burning four days later. Langsdorff had scuttled the ship and placed explosives in such a manner that the sinking would set them off after the remaining crew had abandoned ship.

 Shortly afterward, Captain Lansdorff shot himself in his hotel room. The rest of the Graf Spee’s crew was interned and many stayed in Uruguay or Argentina even after the Second World War had ended.

*With thanks to Chris Trueman of www.historylearningsite.co.uk/*

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**Insurance Council calls for more police**

The Insurance Council of New Zealand has backed the NZ Police Association’s call for the Government to significantly increase frontline police numbers. The council also said that Police needed “a dramatic increase in funding to contain the growth in organised crime”.

The council has called for an extra 600 police officers within the next two years.

The council said NZ Police were “exposed” in relation to the fight against organised crime rings and their involvement in the methamphetamine/P trade.

**Enormous pressures**

The council said “a continued dramatic increase in the importation and availability of these drugs will place enormous pressure on Police to contain the associated crime over the coming year”.

The Insurance Council called on the Government to increase funding specifically targeting organised crime and to crack down on methamphetamine and ‘ice’ importation and distribution. It said that these were “the new danger areas in 2005 for New Zealand’s society and economy”. It also called upon the government to increase Police resources with a view to combating burglary and theft, saying that these criminal activities were “breeding grounds” for criminal careers.

Insurance companies pay out over $20 million a month to compensate policyholders for the effects of crime. Last year, Insurance Council members paid out just under $1.5 billion in claims - $230 million being related to property crime.
Misuse of Drugs Amendment Bill seeks to strengthen Police and Customs in fight against illicit drugs

By Steve Plowman, Editor, Police News

Associate Health Minister, Jim Anderton, is seeking to strengthen the arm of Police and Customs in their fight against the misuse of illicit drugs.

Mr Anderton’s Misuse of Drugs Amendment Bill (No 3) gained its first reading in Parliament in September.

The Act crosses over two areas of responsibility – Mr Anderton’s and Minister of Justice, Phil Goff. Mr Anderton is responsible for the principal part – the Misuse of Drugs Act (1975), while Mr Goff is responsible for the second part – the Misuse of Drugs Amendment Act (1978).

The Bill, proposed by Mr Anderton, will make several key changes to the principal part of the legislation. These are:

- Moving presumption of supply matters from the provisions of the Misuse of Drugs Act (1975) to its schedules, so they can be altered more quickly and flexibly by Order in Council;
- Setting the presumption of supply amount for methamphetamine at five grams, rather than the current 56 grams; and
- Expanding the membership of the Expert Advisory Committee on Drugs to include a Ministry of Justice official.

Lowering of threshold for supply

The change to lower the threshold for presumption of supply comes as a direct result of recommendations made by the Expert Advisory Committee on Drugs.

The Bill also seeks to strengthen legislation relating to dealing with precursor substances such as ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, which are key substances used in the manufacture of methamphetamine.

Currently, there is no offence relating to the import or export of precursors for the manufacture of illicit drugs.

Furthermore, Customs officers who discover precursor materials are somewhat hamstrung by current law. A charge of possession is the only charge that can be laid.

This is further complicated by the fact that possession is impossible to prove in court and mail interception, as there may not be any person in physical possession or control of the substance.

Two new offences aimed at closing these loopholes are contained in the new amendment.

Importation of precursors

The first offence is for the importation or exportation of precursors, which could be used to produce or manufacture illicit drugs. This offence will carry a maximum term of imprisonment of seven years.

The second offence will enable Customs officers to seize and detain precursor substances, imported into New Zealand or exported from New Zealand without reasonable excuse. This offence will carry a maximum penalty of a year’s imprisonment.

- Jim Anderton, who is proposing changes to tighten the Misuse of Drugs Act.

Photo courtesy of The Dominion Post

At present, the power to detain, search and seize without warrant is restricted to Classes A, B1 and C1 controlled drugs.

The Government has also agreed that the principal Act be amended to extend the powers of search and seizure without warrant to ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, allowing Police to respond quickly when investigating large purchases of pharmacy-only pseudoephedrine medication.

The last set of changes to the principal Act relates to the offence of possessing needles or syringes.

Under the Health (Needles & Syringes) regulations of 1987, there is a legal defence to the charge of possession of a needle or syringe if the injecting drug user can show the needle and syringe was obtained through the Needle and Syringe Exchange Programme.

At present, the onus of proof in the defence lies with the defendant.

Onus on prosecution

The Bill will amend the principal Act to move the defence to the offence of possessing a needle or syringe from the regulations into the principal Act, and to reverse the onus of proof to the prosecution to prove that the needle and syringe was not obtained through the exchange programme.

The second part of the Misuse of Drugs Act is the Misuse of Drugs Amendment Act 1978.

The changes to the second part of the Act are intended to provide Customs and Police, with powers that enable them to more effectively detect the presence of controlled drugs and take appropriate action. The main changes will be:

- That the provisions in the second part of the Act that relate to controlled deliveries will be extended to include precursor substances;
- That Customs officers and police officers will be able to conduct personal searches without a warrant during any controlled delivery;
- That law enforcement agencies in New Zealand will be able to facilitate international controlled deliveries without the prospect of the liability of the importer and exporter of the illegal substances being affected by the law enforcement agencies’ involvement;

- That Customs officers and police officers will be provided with the power to personally search persons held under the internal concealment provisions of the second part of the Act.

In March 2004, the Expert Advisory Committee on Drugs recommended the creation of a new schedule for the Misuse of Drugs Act.

The purpose of the new schedule is to enable some regulation for legal substances which are subject to abuse but do not warrant, on available evidence, regulation under the current risk Classes A, B or C drug classifications.

An example of such a substance is the ‘legal high’ BZP (Benzylpiperazine).

Restrictions proposed for ‘legal highs’

The regulation proposed will allow restrictions to be placed on such matters as legal age of purchase, retail, supply, marketing or labelling in relation to substances in the new schedule.

Mr Anderton said that such a schedule would not be confined to substances like BZP but would also provide another strategy in the spectrum of measures to reduce the harm associated with volatile substance abuse, which includes solvent abuse.
Emergency department doctors have recently sounded warnings about teenagers who had come to hospital suffering from severe paranoia and dehydration as a result of taking the ‘herbal highs’. Mr Anderton said that it was the Government’s intention to introduce a Supplementary Order Paper providing for such a new schedule in time for it to be considered with the Bill by the select committee.

At time of writing, the Misuse of Drugs Amendment (No 3) Bill had been referred back to the Health Select Committee for consideration but a senior advisor in Mr Anderton’s office told Police News that Mr Anderton was keen to see the legislation enacted and was hoping that the committee would be able to fast-track its report in order to expedite it.

**Customs and Police submissions**

Both Customs and Police put submissions to the Expert Advisory Committee on Drugs last year but at that time the committee found there was insufficient evidence available in the scientific world to suggest that the party pills had an adverse effect on users’ health. A decision on the legal status of the pills was deferred until such time as further evidence came to hand.

In the interim, hospital Accident and Emergency Departments around the country have reported regular incidents of users suffering ill effects after having taken the pills. Police News understands that both Police and Customs are keen to revisit the legal issues around the pills.

“These pills are literally pouring into the country in huge quantities and New Zealand seems to be a unique market for them. In my view this is a clear case of the current regulations not keeping pace with the influx of synthetic designer substances available,” Simon Williamson, Manager for Drug Investigations for Customs, told Police News.

Mr Williamson said that methamphetamine users had said the properties of ‘herbal highs’ are very similar to methamphetamine itself. He said that the people “pushing this stuff” have invariably got a vested interest in its sale. “These people are making a lot of money by arguing that this is a safe alternative to illegal drugs and all I can say to that is it’s bullshit,” Mr Williamson said.

“The pills are central nervous system stimulants and there is evidence becoming available now, which suggests that they are toxic in content and damaging to the brain at high doses,” Mr Williamson said.

A recent Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report said New Zealand has the second highest rate of amphetamine and cannabis use amongst OECD countries. New Zealand ranked fourth in terms of Ecstasy use.

The government recently moved to enforce the provisions of the Medicines Act, which expressly outlaws nitrous oxide without prescription. Under the Act it is an offence to sell nitrous oxide for recreational use. It will be illegal to possess nitrous oxide for inhalation. Inhalation of NOS can cause harm to lungs, freeze-burns to lips from inhaling directly from the nozzle of dispensers, anaesthesia, collapsing and choking on vomit while unconscious.

**NSW Police fined $150,000**

The NSW Police Department has been found guilty of breaching workplace laws and fined $150,000 because it failed to protect the safety of a Highway Patrol officer struck by a car while conducting a roadside speed blitz, according to a *Sydney Morning Herald* report.

Mark Johnson suffered shocking multiple injuries and almost died when he stepped onto a road into an attempt to stop a drunken, speeding driver, five years ago.

The sergeant and his partner had been operating a laser-based speed detection device called a Lidar. A Holden Commodore, travelling at 84 kmh in a 60 kmh zone, swerved towards Mr Johnson as he stood on the road attempting to wave the car down.

But the car hit him, flinging him onto the bonnet and back onto the road. He received severe head injuries.

**Brain injuries**

Mr Johnson, a father of two, has had to undergo a long rehabilitation process. He has left the NSW Police Department.

The court heard the driver, who eventually faced 11 separate charges, including dangerous driving, was under the influence of alcohol and drugs, had been disqualified from driving for previous offences and was driving an unregistered car.

In the NSW Industrial Court recently, Justice Roger Boland found the Police had “failed to ensure the health, safety and welfare” of Mr Johnson.

Justice Boland found that NSW Police failed to maintain “a system of work” that was safe and without risk to its officers and failed to provide adequate instructions and training for Lidar operations.

**Maximum fine**

NSW Police pleaded not guilty to breaching the Occupational, Health and Safety Act. It faced a maximum fine of more than $800,000

Justice Boland was critical of training for Highway Patrol officers and a requirement they must walk on to a roadway to signal drivers to stop.

In his written judgement Justice Boland said the safety training Mr Johnson received was negligible.

“Indeed, what little on-the-job training he did receive regarding stopping procedure actually placed him in a situation of risk. “The risk to officers involved in stepping onto a roadway is, in my opinion, enormous. “I can see no reason that would make it imperative for a police officer involved in speed detection and enforcement duties using a Lidar unit to step onto the carriageway to signal a driver to stop.”

During the hearing, evidence was given that during the one-day training course officers undertook to operate the Lidar system, there was only one reference to safety, on an overhead transparency slide.


**Victorian Govt considers benchmark for police response times**

Victorian police officers may become accountable for the amount of time it takes to respond to emergency calls, similar to the system for paramedics and fire crews.

Metropolitan firefighters are expected to arrive at an emergency within 7.7 minutes and ambulance officers within 14 minutes, according to a recent ABC News online report.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Andre Haermeyer, said the Victorian Government is considering plans to set a benchmark for police response times.

“Oversees police forces do benchmark their turn outs to emergencies that threaten someone’s physical safety, that are life and death type emergencies, and in those circumstances they do benchmark their turn out times,” he said.

“We’ll have a look at whether that is something that is reasonable and feasible here in Victoria.”

However, Opposition spokesman for Police, Kim Wells, says the Government must fix resourcing problems within the force before setting benchmarks. “We have seen very public displays of police shortages at Werribee for example. How can they be expected to respond to a benchmark, for example, if there are no officers available at the time?” he said.
Back to the future?

Emphasis to be put back on beat policing in England and Wales

Every neighbourhood in England and Wales will have its own neighbourhood policing team within the next two years. Under the plan, announced recently by the British Government, residents will be able to contact named local beat officers on their mobile phones and by Email to deal with their complaints, according to a recent BBC News report.

Ministers want to see the widespread use of a North Wales Police website where residents can type in their postcode and see a photo of the neighbourhood beat officer with their Email address and mobile phone number so the officer can be contacted with non-emergency problems.

The changes also include a 10-point “customer commitment charter” that will see community panels given powers to ensure that police and local authorities do something about problems such as anti-social behaviour and abandoned cars.

New relationship

The initiatives are designed to forge a new relationship between the Police and the public based on much better handling of calls from the public.

The return of 1960s-style policing comes after 18 months of trials working with local communities and other agencies. The results from 16 national reassurance policing pilots show that the building of community trust generates local intelligence that in turn helps cut crime. The Government says that the plan is not a return to old style policing though, by countering “there was never a time when there was a police officer on every corner”.

In London, the dedicated beat teams will be made up of a sergeant, two police constables and three community support officers. They will vary across the country and include wardens, according to the BBC report.

In rural areas, a village community support officer will form part of a wider neighbourhood policing team.

Community support officers

But one aspect of the controversial scheme revolves around the Home Office plan to recruit an additional 19,000 community support officers at a cost of £340 million (SN28934 million). There are already 5,000 community support officers. Their numbers will be supplemented by 12,000 constables, who Ministers hope will be released from paperwork duties for beat patrol by the introduction of technology, such as the new generation radio system and hand-held and in-car MDTs (mobile data terminals) linked to the Police national computer.

The scheme is not without its critics, who say that the community support officers represent “policing on the cheap”. A recent Police Federation survey indicated that one in three police officers oppose the community support officer scheme, with many comparing the officers to “problem children”. Only 39% of officers were in favour of CSOs. A large majority of the officers surveyed were against CSOs being given more powers, with 83% saying they should have no power of arrest.

Criminal records

Officers claimed they were aware of CSOs with criminal records, a CSO who took class A drugs, another “suffering from mental health problems”, and one who was recruited without an interview, according to the survey.

Some said CSOs “escalated situations”, putting themselves and police officers at unnecessary risk by becoming involved in scenarios for which they had insufficient training. In one example, a CSO in the West Midlands rugby-tackled a woman suspected of having stolen goods. In another, a CSO in London apparently dragged a suspect off a bus.

Community support officers were introduced in 2002. They were intended as the “eyes and ears” of the Police. As civilian wardens, they are meant to patrol streets and deal with low-level anti-social behaviour.

“Police officers can see the value of community support officers used in non-confrontational roles,” Jan Berry, the Chair of the Police Federation, said. “However, CSOs have neither the skills, training, equipment or accountability to deal with confrontational situations, and this is reflected in the research.

“Police officers can see the value of community support officers used in non-confrontational roles,” Jan Berry, the Chair of the Police Federation, said. “However, CSOs have neither the skills, training, equipment or accountability to deal with confrontational situations, and this is reflected in the research.

“Officers also believe that CSOs should wear a distinctive uniform from that of a police officer, which clarifies their role and prevents any confusion among the public. In the absence of a role profile for community support officers, the Police Federation now proposes their own and believe training should be provided to support that.”

“Not conclusive”

A Home Office spokesman said the report was “not a conclusive look at the part that CSOs are playing in reassuring communities and dealing with anti-social behaviour.”

“It is based on the views of a limited sample of Police Federation members, and does not cover the reactions of the public to CSOs or incorporate the views of senior police officers,” the spokesman added.

The Government’s plan will also give local communities more say in setting policing priorities, including a statutory “trigger” if their local police force refuses to take action.

The Labour Government also intends to make sure that every household will know how to contact local named officers, who, ministers promise, will be in the job long enough to build lasting relationships with their communities.

Labour is hoping that a much-improved response, to issues raised by the public, will result in better local intelligence in targeting crime and hotspots, according to a recent report in The Guardian, which detailed the changes.

“Policing by co-operation”

The old notion of ‘policing by consent’ is to be replaced by ‘policing by co-operation’.

The Labour Government has pledged to have a dedicated team in every neighbourhood by 2008. Half the country is expected to have neighbourhood policing by 2007. The first step is to ensure that each of the 43 police forces has at least one division, which has implemented the plan by this autumn.

Ministers say they are flexible in their definition of “neighbourhood” - it can be a few streets, an estate in big cities, or groups of villages or parishes in the countryside.

Each neighbourhood beat team will have a mix of police constables, community support officers, and other patrolling staff such as neighbourhood wardens.

The Guardian report said that the plan mirrors other public sector reforms, such as the introduction of teaching assistants into the classroom.

Footnote: On occasions over the last 18 months Police Commissioner, Rob Robinson, has raised the idea of volunteer policing but the idea did not gain traction and was viewed by critics as policing on the cheap. New Zealand has its own form of CSOs through the advent of the volunteer organisation CPNZ (Community Patrols New Zealand), which has 75 community patrols. CPNZ Chairperson, Neil Sole, told Police News that CPNZ patrols did not get into confrontational situations and were “only interested in being the eyes and ears for the Police for the duration of a shift while police officers are doing other duties”.

May 2005
Copper’s Crossword
By Constable Cunning

May clues
Across:
1. Annul (10)
7. Serious offence (5)
9. Shatter (7)
10. Meatiest guess (8)
11. Eyewitness (4)
13. Influx (6)
15. Chisel (5)
17. Devastations (4)
20. Delhi (7)
21. Hostile (8)
22. Serenade (7)
23. Onus (6)

Down:
1. Cosmetic (5)
2. Image (6)
4. Tyrant (4)
5. Anaesthetist (7)
6. Entrees (10)
7. Yoyo (7)
8. Stridulation (8)
12. Flashers (6)
14. Feebler (7)
16. Etched (6)
18. Onion (7)
19. Adds (5)

April answers:
Across:
1. Chip
3. Strategy
9. Shatter
10. Aptly
11. Eyewitness
13. Influx
15. Chisel
17. Devastations
20. Delhi
21. Hostile
22. Serenade
23. Onus

Down:
1. Cosmetic
2. Image
4. Tyrant
5. Anaesthetist
6. Entrees
7. Yoyo
8. Stridulation
12. Flashers
14. Feebler
16. Etched
18. Onion
19. Adds

Campsites at Stanmore Bay available in summer

Many members are unaware that there are 11 powered campsites at the Stanmore Bay complex. These campsites will now be available over the summer months from Labour weekend through to Easter.

All of the sites are relatively large and have recently had new “safe” power connection facilities installed. The Police Welfare Fund will also be upgrading the ablution, kitchen and games room facilities before next summer.

“The facilities at Stanmore Bay are tremendous. We have camped here several times over the years with our family and it’s a great place to come,” says Kim Nankivell, the recently appointed Stanmore Bay caretaker.

Over Christmas, the sites will be balloted for three x 14 night periods and the normal ballot rules will apply.

The campsites will be put on the holiday homes booking system in the next month or so. Members should keep a close eye on the website (www.policeassn.org.nz) if they wish to book them or alternatively call the Member Services Centre on 0800 500 122. The sites cost $25 per night, which includes free use of the ablutions, kitchen, laundry, games room and other facilities at Stanmore Bay.
Budget time:
It’s the putting right that counts
By Steve Plowman, Editor, Police News

“The Commissioner is shifting the deckchairs around on the Titanic when there aren’t even enough members in the orchestra to play a decent tune while we’re sinking.”

Those are the words of a frontline police officer, who spoke to Police News recently about the daily pressures he and his colleagues face.

“We’re forever playing fill the gaps with different policing groups and some of them, like CIB, who are backfilling the frontline, don’t have enough resources themselves,” the officer said.

“We’re working long hours and without sufficient back-up,” an officer from Lower Hutt said. “Often there are no meal breaks and we’re working overtime every day.” (Editor’s note: Police officers are not paid for overtime. If an officer works in excess of six hours in a week then he or she accumulates TOIL (time off in lieu) on an hour-for-hour basis after that).

TOIL issues
The catch here is that, with insufficient staff in the first place, actually getting to take the TOIL then becomes another issue as it leaves sections further depleted if an officer takes that leave. Some staff report that they often get flak from superiors for taking TOIL and subsequently feel guilty for having done so.

The officer said that Lower Hutt had two I-cars at any one time “if we’re lucky”. Time constraints meant officers were carrying out “the briefest of investigations possible in order to secure a conviction”.

Officers around the country tell the same story.

They are working in what one officer described as “a rush mentality” because there are often insufficient frontline staff to respond to incidents, which are coming from equally understaffed Communications Centres.

Many say they are drowning in a sea of paperwork.

“What’s the point in filling out overtime on timesheets when you’re not getting paid for it? By the end of a long day the last thing you want to be filling out is a timesheet for overtime, which you won’t be paid for and which, by doing so, just serves to make your day longer anyway. And when do you get to take it if its runs into TOIL?” one officer told Police News.

Lower morale
A sergeant said that morale was being affected by the downturn in frontline policing. “Eighteen months ago, we had a senior sergeant and a sergeant and nine on section. We put out three two-person I-cars and staffing allowed for 4c (correspondence) shifts. Once numbers decreased there was a significant shift in morale. This was brought about by an inability to conclude all work within the allocated 10-hour shifts,” the sergeant said.

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He said staff then found themselves in a vicious cycle. Overtime increased and paperwork doubled because there was not enough time within the shift to complete correspondence. With less staff, individual officers were required to make more arrests per officer and this in turn led to correspondence demands intensifying.

The sergeant said he now had only two I-cars available and that meant him having to make calls on a regular basis as to which jobs to prioritise and attend during a shift. “What people need to understand is that it is not because Police do not want to attend (their incident) but because we cannot. The fact that we haven’t had an incident like the Iaena Asher call here is much more luck than anything. Police staff are constantly working overtime to try and deliver what amounts to average service,” he said.

Safety concerns
The sergeant said he was “very concerned” about his officers’ safety. “It’s one of my biggest concerns. Incident demands mean that often only one officer can attend domestics/violent incidents. He said that if frontline numbers were not increased it is “only a matter of when, not if, an officer is seriously hurt on duty.”

The standard of prosecution files is suffering as a result of resourcing issues. All burglaries, domestics, theft, ex-car and unlawful taking incidents attended on each shift must have those files completed and submitted that day, according to a constable spoken to by Police News. “Prosecution matters are often not being completed until a few days before the hearing,” he said. He said officers were regularly coming to work on days off or commencing their shift hours before their rostered start time in an attempt to complete correspondence related to prosecution matters.

Over the last six years, sworn police numbers have increased by 452. They aren’t on the frontline either. Instead they are tied to ‘tagged’ positions and ring-fenced funding.

The present government inherited a police force decimated by a National government, which reduced police numbers from 1994 through until 1998. During this period, sworn police numbers fell from 6,896 to 6,760.

Up to 100,000 jobs cancelled
In the meantime, the public are feeling less safe now than ever before. It’s hardly surprising – up to 100,000 unattended jobs are cancelled every year. This includes many P1 (Priority One) jobs.

The government and the Commissioner of Police are singing off the same songsheet and the new national anthem is: “Crime is down”. What they are actually saying is that volume crime (burglary, theft ex-car and unlawful taking) is down. The crime that makes communities feel unsafe – serious violent crime – is on the rise.

At a time when New Zealand Police are centralising resources with the closure of outlying community policing bases, overseas police forces (UK and America especially) are moving back out into the suburbs and putting more officers into community bases. The closure of community policing bases in New Zealand has led to a feeling of isolation, alienation and abandonment in some communities.
A different philosophy

In the UK, Police are reaching out to communities by putting more police on the local beat. Their philosophy is to get police out from behind desks and mountains of paperwork and back into their core task - catching criminals.

New Zealand Police officers are under increasing pressure on many fronts. Intelligence capabilities in respect of gangs is being compromised, CIB staff are stretched and units such as the Police Electronic Crime Lab (ECL) are currently not able to analyse some computers linked to frauds due to heavy workloads associated with Operation Tercel (part of a worldwide investigation into the trade of child pornography).

Police are doing a great job under immense pressure.

The public, in the meantime, have clearly sheeted the responsibility for the frontline shortfall at the feet of the Government. This is borne out by a UMR survey, found 78% of New Zealanders felt that there were “not enough” police.

Mayors concerned

Mayors and local government politicians have complained about a lack of frontline police resources in their towns and cities.

Wellington mayor, Kerry Prendergast, recently disclosed that the council is considering cancelling its $35,000 grant to Police to rent a community patrol base in the inner city after it was discovered that it was being used only as a base for the city’s Strategic Response Unit. The base was originally refurbished by the council and set aside for Wellington’s beat section. It originally housed nine police officers but the beat section has since been canned.

Other mayors have added their voice to the need for a much more visible police presence in their towns and cities and demanded the government increase frontline policing resources to meet that need.

Several mayors have said that their council’s “safer streets” initiatives are being stymied by this lack of frontline police.

Policing on the cheap

Some have mooted the formation of civilian-based volunteer policing or local government inspired community patrols, similar to the Walkwise wardens in several cities, but with extended powers. It's basically policing on the cheap but it's a reflection of a perception that central government is abdicating its responsibility to keep the public safe.

Some private security and investigation firms are already suggesting they be given wider powers in order to fill the breach being left by Police. In areas such as insurance fraud, private investigators are completing cases to prosecution stage before handing them on to Police.

This is turn, runs the risk of a further erosion in public confidence – and that's something the Police can certainly do without.

It is high time the Government listened to the voices of frontline police officers, who are expressing their concerns through their Association. As Alan Martin (L.V. Martin and sons) used to say: “It’s the putting right that counts”. It is time the Government put things right and the next Budget, later this month, affords it the perfect opportunity to demonstrate to New Zealand communities that it is not abdicating its responsibility to keep them safe. It can achieve that with a significant injection of frontline police officers through the Vote Police budget. An extra 540 officers would be a good place to start.

Footnote for members: If you are interested in the latest developments on this issue and would like to read up-to-date media comment on it please go to www.policeassn.org.nz and click on the links provided.

New Zealand and Queensland staff comparisons

* Relativity: The case for more police is graphically illustrated below when Queensland and NZ sworn police numbers are compared. Queensland and NZ populations are very similar. In 1994, NZ had 630 more sworn officers than Queensland but by this year the roles were reversed with Queensland boasting 1,622 more officers than NZ.

Note: Non-sworn numbers were not available from Queensland Police prior to 1999.

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<th>Queensland sworn staff</th>
<th>New Zealand sworn staff</th>
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<table>
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<td>2004</td>
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Police the big losers on funding front

As a percentage of both government revenue and expenditure, Vote Police funding fell between 1999 and 2004/05. In 1999, Vote Police was 1.828% of total government revenue but by the 2004/05 Budget this had dropped to 1.656%. Similarly, as a percentage of government expenditure over the same period the respective figures were 1.891% (1999) and 1.856% by 2004/05. Restoring this to 1.891% would need an injection of $20.049 million (or $37.163 million, excluding road policing). In order to retain Vote Police at 1999 levels in respect of government revenue relativities, Finance Minister, Michael Cullen, would need to inject a further $109 million into Vote Police in the upcoming budget.

Over the same timeframe, expenditure on both Health (from 14.718% in 1999 to 16.518% in 2004) and Education (13.850% in 1999 to 15.174% in 2004), as a percentage of government revenue, increased. In terms of total government revenue – both Education (13.388% to 13.538%) and Health (14.227% to 14.737%) increased.

**Government’s priorities**

Education and Health are core responsibilities for any government - but so too is law and order. An injection of $54 million would fund another 540 additional frontline police officers.

Minister of Police, George Hawkins, was recently quoted as saying that there had been significant injections of funds into the Health and Education sectors. He is right. But he went on to say “and Police aren’t far behind” – the figures below tend to suggest otherwise.

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### POLICE, HEALTH & EDUCATION COMPARISONS

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<td>52,044.020</td>
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<td>861.673</td>
<td>888.793</td>
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<td>1013.301</td>
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<td>Vote Police as % Total Govt Revenue</td>
<td>1.828%</td>
<td>1.708%</td>
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<td>13.388%</td>
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<td>14.227%</td>
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<td>Vote Police as % Govt Operating Flows</td>
<td>1.891%</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL EDUCATION</strong></td>
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<td>13.850%</td>
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<td>Vote Health as % Govt Operating Flows</td>
<td>14.718%</td>
<td>14.780%</td>
<td>14.605%</td>
<td>14.747%</td>
<td>15.836%</td>
<td>16.518%</td>
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The life and times of a frontliner…

As I sat filling out my timesheet and working out how my section was going to catch up on the undelivered SAP (Safety Administration Programme) hours, my most recent member of section from Wing 221 breezed into the office with a glint in his eye. “Boss, I’ve just had my first lock up. Went to a domestic, locked him up for assault. He had warrants too! Now what paper work do I need to do?”

“Well, that’s easy,” I said, having by now perfected the illusion that I know what I’m talking about. “Well you will need to interview him. I suggest a video interview. Then start with the charge sheet, notice to person in custody and let’s err on the side of caution and throw in a prisoner management form. Now he has warrants, so you will need to complete a warrant cover sheet, forward a NIA (National Intelligence Application) alert clearance form and don’t forget to request the file. Then I’d get onto the caption summary and we had better do an opposition to bail. Then wrap up with the Pol 400, the Pol 400A and the family violence risk factor check list. And make sure you don’t forget the victim impact statement, the CSV1, the 1060, firearms seizure forms and the prosecution cover sheet. Then when you have done that ask him for DNA.”

Having paused for breath, and noting my newest member doing a fair impression of a stunned mullet, I quickly say: “No it’s okay… (at this point his look lightens as it dawns on him that this could be some kind of initiation prank) …I’ll write it all down for you”. As the now stooped constable shuffles toward the muster room clutching his list I hear Comms calling him out to attend another PI domestic. “Don’t worry,” I yell, “you can do it at the end of your shift.”

Of course, there is always a chance that he will end up in a pursuit before the end of the shift. That’s always good for filling a young constable with enthusiasm. You know, catching the bad guy and all that. I could even hold off asking him for the pursuit 258, the TCR, and the TY report until the next shift. Of course, I would have to insist that the pursuit notification report and the tyre deflation device deployment report were completed before the end of the shift. The driver may not even be disqualified. That will cut out the impound notice, QVR, alert notification report and a copy of the admissions. No sweat. Yes I know the driver might be drunk! Okay, so it was a bad idea. Surely there is something I can do to inspire this fledgling officer.

A good story about the old days perhaps? You know, before intelligence collection for outside agencies became a core function of the Police. When a prosecution file consisted of a 258, a caption summary and an offence report and when the bulk of an officer’s time was spent out on the street.

Perhaps I could tell him that there are a few more officers on the horizon and he may actually be able to spend some proactive time preventing crime before it occurs. Okay, another bad idea.

And just in case there is anyone concerned about the welfare of that poor constable, don’t worry. When he gets back I’ll convince him it really is a great job. - Peter Litherland.

The Police paper war:
Domestic violence – one of the riskiest incidents and then there’s those forms to look forward to

By Steve Plowman, Editor Police News

Police officers know instinctively that when they are called out to a domestic violence incident that their chances of being injured or killed rise. Domestic incidents have claimed the lives of New Zealand police officers in the past – two were killed in one incident alone.

They also know that when they lock up an offender there is a good chance that the spouse will return to the same abusive relationship. On arriving back at the station with the offender, the task of processing and interviewing will begin. Then there are those forms - lots of forms, most of which require name and address details and other double-ups of information. Depending on the co-operation, or not, of the offender and whether pepper spray needed to be used or whether firearms were at the scene, there may be as many as 20 forms to be completed. Police officers spoken to by Police News, say, that on average, they fill out 14 forms for each domestic lock-up.

Here’s a summary of the forms that may have to be used:

1. Family violence risk lethality checklist.
2. Complaint acknowledgement form.
3. Custody charge sheet.
4. Notice to person in custody.
5. Prisoner management assessment.
6. Finger print form.
7. Receipt for person and property.
8. Record of victim contact 1060.
9. CSV1.
10. Family violence report Pol 400.
11. Related offence report.
12. Supplementary sheet.
15. Caption and summary.
17. Arms surrender form.
19. Opposition to bail.

• Forms, forms and more forms…just a sample of what a police officer is required to complete (several for other agencies) as the result of a lock-up for a domestic.
The weight of being on the frontline

At the same time as frontline staffing numbers are stretched so is the workload they are carrying. Additional duties they now have to perform are:

1. Bail checks
These duties involve visiting the addresses of active criminals who are on bail and as part of their bail conditions are on a residential curfew. On a shift this can involve individual officers checking on up to ten different addresses.

2. SAP hours (Traffic Safety Administration Programme)
These are a set number of hours where the Police are required to perform a variety of road policing duties. These SAP hours are funded by the Land Transport Authority. Frontline police officers are required to fulfil a significant proportion of the district allocation.

3. Licensed premises
The number of licensed premises in New Zealand cities has increased substantially (by over 100% in some metropolitan areas) in the last 10 years. Liquor licensing hours have also changed dramatically and many licensed premises are open throughout the night. The drinking age has also been reduced to 18 – all of these are compounding factors for frontliners.

4. Boy racers
The ‘boy racer’ phenomenon has emerged in recent years. Problems with this group generally emerge outside the hours that dedicated road policing units are working. These include dangerous driving incidents, disorder, trespass and property damage.

5. Training
Since 1997, all Police staff are required to complete SSTT (Staff Safety Tactical Training). This training involves the use of firearms, hardcuffs, batons and self-defence initiatives and staff are required to complete three days training per year. Additional mandatory training that has been implemented in recent years includes first aid training, driver training, custodial suicide prevention training and NIA computer training.

6. International airport policing
The number of international flights to New Zealand has increased. There are now regular international flights at a number of provincial airports. Two police officers are required to be present for each international flight in order to meet New Zealand’s international obligations. No additional staffing has been provided for this.

7. Inquiries/investigations
Frontline police staff are also required to complete follow up inquiries for numerous incidents they attend. These include minor assaults, disorder, theft, and domestic violence that do not reach the threshold for investigation by CIB or specialist staff.

8. Burglary and domestic violence
Burglary and domestic violence are now priority crimes. The amount of time and paperwork required in attending and documenting these incidents has increased markedly. The involvement of outside agencies has provided better results for complainants in these areas but it has increased the workload for frontline staff.

9. Disclosure
The requirement for Police to disclose all parts of a Police file to the lawyer of a defendant, before any trial or hearing, has created significant extra work for police officers for every arrest they make.

10. Special operations
Police officers throughout New Zealand are often required to respond to special operations for visiting dignitaries, sporting and entertainment events. The response to the growing demand in this area is met from the frontline, often through shifting staff from other areas. This then means that their normal area of operation is left under strength.

When two units become one unit very quickly

Here’s an example of a typical night shift where resources can be stretched by just one time-consuming (actual) incident when there are just two 1-cars available:

An hour after Friday night shift begins at 2300 hours (11pm) Police receive complaints about a drunk Mongrel Mob member on a train. He and his partner, an opiate addict and ex-prostitute, are reported to be having a domestic on the train and upsetting other passengers.

Long criminal history
Police meet the train and arrest the Mongrel Mob member. Further inquiries reveal that he has recently been released from prison. Police find that his ‘rap-sheet’ runs to 25 pages.

Police decide to oppose bail.
The Mob member is due to appear in court on Saturday morning and the paperwork for his court appearance, processing him and interviewing his partner takes up the rest of the shift. This results in one 1-car being left available for the whole area on one of the busiest nights of the week.

Chaplain appointed
Lieutenant Colonel Peter Savage has been appointed as a Police Chaplain in the Police Infringement Bureau. Peter took up his appointment on 17 March.
Obesity – a serious disease

Although we live “down under” we have not escaped international obesity trends nor their associated health risks.

Over the last 100 years, our dietary knowledge has improved immensely as has the understanding of the foods we consume. Preserving of food has advanced well beyond the initial forms of drying and salting, with the variety and availability of food increasing enormously. The result has been increased production and rapid transportation. We now have better diets but greater consumption.

High-speed transportation has made the world a seemingly much smaller place. With an increased pace of life there has come an influx of convenience foods and these have begun to dictate dietary routine. Food portions have taken on a “large” life of their own, and along with the corresponding effect of reduced exercise, the human frame is now beginning to struggle as it carries in some cases, twice it’s desirable weight and even more.

Obesity is generally calculated as a Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI is a measure of body fat based on height and weight that applies to both men and women.

- Under weight 18.5 and less
- Normal 18.5 – 24.9
- Over weight 25.0 – 29.9
- Obese 30.0 and over
- Morbid obesity 39.0 and over

Why has obesity become such an issue?

With obesity comes a whole gamut of health problems, which result in poor health and the possibility of a reduced life span. As an obese person ages they become at risk from:

- diabetes (type 2), hypertension, heart disease, stroke/CVA, certain cancers especially breast and bowel, depression, osteoarthritis (especially of the knees and hips), sleep apnoea, snoring and reproductive difficulties.

Obesity solutions lie with the individual. Surgery is sometimes offered to a small number of individuals. Each surgical process has strict individual health criteria, which will pre-determine whether a patient is suitable for surgery. Here are some of the options:

**Bariatric surgery**

The cost of obesity surgery (Bariatric surgery) is now between NZ$12,000-NZ$22,000. It is important to consider all aspects of the treatments including the risks and complications. (There are no NZ statistics or comparative studies on these).

- 1 in 200 USA patients die from this type of surgery;
- 6 in 200 USA patients develop severe complications;
- 20% of USA patients who have weight loss procedures require surgeries to correct complications such as:
  1. Abdominal hernias.
  2. Breakdown of the staple line and stretched stomach.
  3. More than 30% of these patients develop gallstones.
  4. Nearly 30% develop nutritional deficiencies such as:
     - Anaemia;
     - Metabolic bone disease;
     - Osteoporosis;

There are two main types of Bariatric surgical procedure in the United States

1. Restrictive.
2. Restrictive/malabsorption surgery.

**Restrictive procedures**

The Lap-Band or Adjustable Gastric Banding System is another surgical procedure.

The stomach is formed into a 15cc-30cc pouch by a band. The role of the band is to limit the amount of food in the pouch at any one time. A port, connected to the band is inserted on the outside abdominal wall and sterile saline solution is used to fill the band to tighten it. The band can be tightened or loosened over time to change the size of the passage needed. A smaller stomach allows for less food, so the patient loses weight.

Some of the specific risks and complications are:

- Nausea and/or vomiting;
- Does not establish a “full feeling”;  
- Gastro-oesophageal reflux;
- Gas bloat;
- Heartburn.

**Restrictive/malabsorptive procedure**

Roux-en-Y – this is the most common procedure and is also known as a gastric bypass.

Stapling creates a 15cc-30cc stomach pouch to restrict food intake. The remainder of the stomach is stapled shut and divided from the stomach. A “Y” shaped section of the small intestine is attached to the pouch, allowing it to empty directly into the lower portion of the jejunum (small intestine).

This allows food to bypass the lower stomach, the duodenum (first segment of the small intestine) and the first portion of the jejunum (second segment of the small intestine). This bypass reduces the amount of calories and nutrients the body absorbs. The average weight loss is 72% of excess body weight in the first year, but after a 10-14 year period excess weight loss of 50%-60% is maintained.

Here are some of the specific risks and complications:

- Iron and calcium malabsorption that can lead to metabolic bone disease;
- Protein malabsorption than can lead to tissue swelling, dry skin, and hair loss;
- Chronic anaemia caused by vitamin B12 deficiency;
- Dumping syndrome. Rapid gastric emptying happens when the lower end of the small intestine fills too quickly with undigested food from the stomach. Dumping does not pose a health risk but the symptoms are unpleasant. The symptoms may be nausea, vomiting, bloating, diarrhoea, faintness and sometimes shortness of breath.

These procedures are not the only procedures available in New Zealand but they are the most common.

**Conclusion**

Obesity is a nutritional disorder that spans all ages and is a serious chronic disease that has a marked effect on quality of life and reduces life span.

Surgical assistance in controlling obesity is not foolproof and not without risk and should be an absolute last resort. A commitment to dietary control and an ongoing exercise programme is absolutely necessary to have any chance of being successful.

There are exacting personal and health criteria that have to be met to become a candidate for surgery. These criteria, coupled with the knowledge of risks and complications, should be the starting point of the decision making process for surgical intervention.

The buck really stops with each one of us taking care of ourselves, which includes regular ongoing exercise and self-control with our diets. A well-balanced diet with regular meals should be your focus. Eat only sitting at a table. Avoid the trap of nibbling/snacking between meals and especially in front of TV where, when you are engrossed in viewing, you may not be aware of how much you eat… If you require assistance and/or additional information please contact by Email:

oliver@medilink.co.nz or helenb@medilink.co.nz

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We remember…

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<tr>
<th>Who passed away…</th>
<th>Memorial Wall</th>
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<tr>
<td>AITKEN Erica Josephine 18-Dec-05 Spouse of retired member Ashburton</td>
<td>EENSHUISTRA Klaas 24-Mar-05 Retired member Auckland</td>
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This column is written by a frontline police officer. It does not represent the views or policies of the Police Association.

View From The Bottom

By Constable Iam Keen

View from the bloody bottom is right at the moment...may as well be a bloomin' mushroom if you believed half that brown stuff that's being bandied around at that thing you cake tinnies call the Beehive. What an election she's gonna be with politicians, councillors, coppers (on and off the record) and Joe Public wading into the war of words!

Don’t know if our Greg will be on Robbie and Aunty Helen's Christmas card list this year but if it gets us a few more boys and girls in blue it’ll be worth the arm wrestle. Mind you, I’m told that the starting wages of a copper has only gone up 5k in 15 years so that might be the next big issue, especially if you live in one of the Big Smokes and don’t fancy apartment living!

Pure as the driven snow
I also hear that we have got so besotted with cleansing ourselves to the point of the driven snow that the bosses can’t even be seen in a corporate box these days. Hey, the Lions don’t come that often so if you want to put all our names in a hat and pull a few lucky lads and lasses out this boy wouldn’t turn the opportunity down and I promise you Telecom, or whoever the sponsor may be, will get the same service as everyone else.

A couple of big issues seem to have faded into the background with all this hullaballoo - one being the issue of the new stab vests to all frontline staff waiting... waiting... waiting and the ability to transfer from GSF to PSS is another, though I hear this ain’t far away. Would I be a cynic thinking that the timing of this legislation in an election year is just a tad more than coincidental?

There’s training and there’s training
Now don’t get me wrong, I’m a big believer in being current in all areas but when someone out of the Ivory Tower suggests all frontline staff need 4+ hours on the new Secondhand Dealers’ Act then someone’s not realising how busy the rest of us are and where this would be on the priority scale for that sort of training. Maybe someone should come out after dark and visit their local cop shop for a wee reminder. According to the media, a short walk or car trip will take you to a station or two that are going flat knacker like the rest of us.

Ripley’s believe it or not?
You know there’s something up with the gangs when the thugs and drug dealers you have been seeing go behind bars plenty of times over your career are suddenly driving better cars than most coppers and are checking their rental properties and visiting their sharebroker! Middle-class thuggery has arrived and the 'P' train never sleeps.

The problem with being a juggler of so many balls is that sooner or later the arms get tired and you start to drop a few balls, especially when they keep adding a few. Lucky they aren’t eggs, I say.

Tighten the coats team, as I think we may be in for a chilly one this winter.

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Keen On Wine

by Ricky Collins

Two restaurants, and a tourist attraction

Ever thought that the Queenstown area would be a great place to visit for a holiday, but that it’s just full of expensive restaurants and high priced tourist attractions that will send you broke? Then think again. My wife and I had a weekend there recently, and we were pleasantly surprised with the range of inexpensive things to do and venues to eat out at.

Eating out
We ate at two restaurants, one in Queenstown and one in Arrowtown, and both really impressed us for their range and quality of food, the selection of wine available, and the fact that you didn’t need to consult the bank manager before going in. Along Ramshaw Lane in Arrowtown there is a great little Thai Restaurant called Arrow Thai Foods. The service is very good, the surroundings simple but clean and tidy, and the food is magnificent. We shared the chicken satay sticks as an entrée, and the chicken fried rice and a pork Mattsaman curry as mains, washed down with a glass each of Stoneleigh Riesling. We shouldn’t have really worried about an entrée, as the size of the meals was impressive. We are regular visitors to Thai restaurants, and this one would rate very highly. The Mattsaman curry was the best I’ve tried yet. The whole meal, including wine, cost under $50.

In the heart of Queenstown, along Beach Street, there is a small eatery called Vudu Café that is well worth a visit. It has an interesting selection of noodle and rice-based dishes, and great desserts. My wife ordered the Gado Gado, which is a classic rice based dish that includes coriander, eggplant and various fresh vegetables with a spicy peanut sauce thrown into the mix. It was simply delicious. I went for the chicken and cashew noodle bowl, which was just as tasty. We shared a chocolate brownie sundae for dessert. Enough said. They have carefully selected a range of excellent wines, which all sell for $33 a bottle or $7.50 a glass. However, between 5.30 and 6.30pm happy hour kicks in and it’s a case of two for one. It would have been rude not to try a couple. All up, our meals and four glasses of wine set us back just over $50.

The tourist attraction
The Queenstown area has any number of superb vineyards to visit, but if you’re pushed for time make sure to call in at the Big Picture, just out of Cromwell. For $15 you are taken on an 18 minute simulated helicopter tour of the Central Otago wine region, stopping off at five vineyards where you get to taste their wine, while the winemakers tell you all about their product, their vineyard and the winemaking process. The complex also includes a restaurant, wine sales, and an aroma room where you can test your sensory perceptions. It’s an excellent way to get to know all about the Central Otago wine industry in one spot.

Wine of the month
Carrick Sauvignon Blanc 2004  RRP $22

This is one of the excellent Central Otago wines on Vudu Café’s wine list. It has wonderful fresh gooseberry and sweet pepper flavours, is medium bodied with excellent length and a fresh crisp mouthfeel. It goes to show that Marlborough doesn’t hold a mortgage over New Zealand sauvignon blanc.
POLICE COUNCIL OF SPORT

SPORTS NEWS

To contact the Police Council of Sport, call Alison Murray at the RNZPC. Ph: (04) 238 3139

Results:

Women:  Men:
1. Sarah Blair  1:08:35  1. Ian Paulin  1:01.16
2. Stephanie de Vere  1:12:19  2. Ted Davidson  1:01.27

Triathlon:

Perfect conditions for Police Triathlon Championships

Approximately 33 Police staff from around the country converged on Christchurch for the 2005 Police Association Triathlon Championships.

The turnout was a little disappointing due to other events and work commitments taking precedence.

Conditions were perfect, slightly overcast and not too warm – a contrast to the weekend weather generally.

There was also a duathlon option for competitors.

Dorothy McPhail was the local coordinator in Christchurch and had combined the Police event with another local triathlon, which meant a few hundred people were on the course.

Dorothy put in a huge amount of effort, doing a lot of the work for the local club too. It was a very successful and smoothly run triathlon. Mike Oxnam, the lynchpin of this annual event, was unfortunately able to attend this year due to work commitments.

The Police Association and Council of Sport provided generous support.

In keeping with tradition, next year’s triathlon will revert back to the North Island, most probably at Ohope.

(Left to right): Craig Prior (3rd), Ian Paulin (1st) and Ted Davidson (2nd) after the men’s race.

(Left to right): Sarah Blair (1st), Kirsty Hurnen (3rd) and Stephanie de Vere (2nd) after the women’s race.

Visit www.policeassn.org.nz for updated contact details for the Police Council of Sport management committee, District Sports Officers and the latest schedule of events.
NI Police Golf Champs a roaring success

The North Island Police Golf Championships were held at Omanu Golf Club, Mt. Maunganui, between 13 and 15 February 2005. The Tauranga Police Golf Club hosted the champs.

The tournament was highly successful with 124 golfers taking part. Sponsorship was generously provided by local businesses, the NZ Police Association and the NZ Council of Sport.

Harry Quinn spoke at the presentation evening in relation to the Association and Council of Sport's major support of Police sport.

Entertainment

Comedian Mike King, who played during the final round, was a special guest. Mike entertained guests at the finals even. He was presented with a Police plaque and a tournament golf shirt as a sign of appreciation. Mike wore the shirt on the ‘Game of Two Halves’ sporting programme on television shortly afterward.

The course provided generally good conditions with the exception of some fairways, which were burnt from recent hot weather. Local club members provided great support, volunteering their time to assist with the entering of cards and the preparation of lunches.

Results:

| Senior Gross | Bob Burns | 303 |
| Allan McCaskie | 304 |
| Brent Bourgeois | 308 |
| Bruce Miller | 309 |
| Intermediate A Gross | Dean Goodall | 334 |
| Ross Kneebone | 334 |
| Todd Hubbard | 338 |
| Brett Shields | 338 |
| Owen O'Brien | 339 |
| Intermediate B Gross | Brian Nicholas | 345 |
| Rob Gordon | 349 |
| Tim Leitch | 353 |
| Alan Baker | 360 |
| Andrew McDonald | 360 |
| Junior Gross | Allan Humphries | 376 |
| Graeme Hill | 377 |
| Antony Callon | 380 |
| Darren Hayes | 382 |
| Don Lee | 383 |
| Senior Nett | Mike Ledger | 285 |
| Allan O’Donnell | 285 |
| Bob Burns | 287 |
| Brent Bourgeois | 292 |
| Bill Sandwick | 295 |
| Intermediate A Nett | Rob Pierce | 284 |
| Todd Hubbard | 286 |
| Dean Goodall | 290 |
| Ross Kneebone | 290 |
| Greg Holmes | 291 |
| Intermediate B Nett | Brian Nicholas | 277 |
| Tim Leitch | 281 |
| Rob Gordon | 285 |
| John Tito | 291 |
| Allan Baker | 296 |
| Junior Nett | Graeme Hill | 269 |
| George Staunton | 269 |
| Todd Pearce | 286 |
| Don Lee | 287 |
| Allan Humphries | 292 |

NZ Police netball team set to play again in September

A New Zealand Police netball team is to be selected to play two fixtures in Wellington on Thursday (1st) and Friday (2nd) September 2005.

The games will be against a Wellington representative netball team on the Thursday evening and the New Zealand Defence Force Team on the Friday.

The New Zealand Police netball team last played the NZDF team in 2001. These fixtures are an opportunity to re-establish netball as a major force within Police sport. The aim is to promote inter-district netball fixtures to reinstate netball as an active sport. Districts with active netball teams are encouraged to contact the netball delegate for the Police Council of Sport, Helen Mahon-Stroud.

Players interested in being part of the New Zealand Police netball team are to forward detailed CV’s of their playing history with referees’ contact details to Helen Mahon-Stroud, Papanui Police. Email can also be contacted via Lotus Notes or by fax on (03) 3521 575. These must be to Helen by 14 May.

Police cross-country Champs in Hamilton

The NZ Police cross-country championships will be run at Minogue Park, Hamilton on 1 June at 2.00 p.m. The Men’s Open and Masters events will be contested over 9,000 metres while the Open Women and Draught Horse (over 95 kgs) races will be run over 6,000 metres. The course is undulating and is expected to be muddy underfoot. For further information contact: Graham Shields, Hamilton Police 79439 or Tamzin Brown, Waikato Highway Patrol.

A betting hole was conducted on the last round, which raised approximately $400 for the Omanu Golf Club Juniors. Not one golfer got within the designated circle to claim a payout.

Canterbury Police Golf Club
In conjunction with Christchurch Police Club
40th Jubilee celebrations
Registration form

For all members and ex-members and their partners it is necessary to pre register for all venues you wish to attend in order to allow for catering numbers etc.

The following charges will apply:

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Charge $</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed 7 Sept. 2005</td>
<td>Police Club</td>
<td>Pay for your own drinks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 9 Sept 2005</td>
<td>Police Club</td>
<td>Pay for your own drinks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu 8 Sept 2005</td>
<td>Golf / dinner at Waitaki</td>
<td>Additional dinner tickets $40.00 pp/ player</td>
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<td>$25.50 pp/person</td>
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I wish to attend the following: (please complete the shaded section)

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<td>Wed 7 Sept - at Police Club</td>
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<td>Thu 8 Sept - Golf and dinner</td>
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<td>$25.50 pp</td>
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<td>Fri 9 Sept - Social function - Police Club</td>
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<td>Pay own drinks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Would you like a Jubilee polo shirt with logo? If yes please specify your size.</td>
<td>Your size?</td>
<td>$30.00 or $28.00 per shirt if prepaid</td>
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Total to pay: $

Cheques payable to ‘Cantebury Police Golf Club’ & mail to D B Stapley PO Box 5286 Christchurch

Please also complete the shaded sections below with your details.

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Should you require further information contact Dave Stapley on 03 352 6987 or dstapley@xtra.co.nz

You may also refer to web sites: www.policeassn.org.nz or www.golf4charity.net

As there is a strong interest in this event, be sure to register early!
Stab resistant vests
Irene Allen's letter (Police News, April issue) on 'Stab resistant vests and safety' has raised several valid points.
I too hope that the incident involving Constable John Dustow was thoroughly investigated. It's not rocket science to work out that had he not been wearing the vest (which he provided) then he would most certainly have been seriously injured. If there's going to be an investigation, then let's investigate why his employer did not provide him with that vest? Had he not had the vest on, perhaps it would be his family rather than OSH that would now be bringing a private prosecution against the Police for failing to provide him with the appropriate equipment to safely carry out his duties.
I'm sure that staff will not see the vests as 'Superman suits' and abandon all good practice, such as carrying out proper searches. But let's not devalue the protection to staff that these vests will provide. Just ask any cop who has faced the pointy end of a knife. And talking of vest trials, how about any cop that these vests will provide. Just ask staff that these vests will provide. Just ask any cop who has faced the pointy end of a knife.

Courtney Brunt
(Rotorua)

Gob smacked again
When I wrote "Wasting time may one day save my life" (April, Police News) I was well aware of the context of the Minister's statement as the entire statement by him was included in the original article.
For a Minister to comment that the public could "rightfully criticise" Police for attempting to follow a procedure necessary to ensure their own safety, illustrates absolutely in what context the original statement was made.
"Gob Smacked"
(Counties-Manukau)

Stretched resources
There are times when I am truly troubled by the situation that the Police are in at present. It affects everyone, from District Commanders through to sworn and non-sworn.
My day as an Association rep and serving police officer mirrors this crisis.
It started in Prosecutions, not because I work there, but because my six staff work in an office with one computer so I work for the first two hours at the clerk's computer at Prosecutions, until she comes to work.
A long-serving sergeant has been getting increasingly exasperated with the NIA computer and its time consuming mode of operation, which has added more pressure to his day. This morning a missed prisoner transfer was the spark that set off the powder keg. He went to find the custody sergeant, who for recent months has tried to keep a watchhouse functioning with remand prisoners from an overloaded Prison Service, deportees from an under-resourced Immigration Service and a service desk dealing with an overflow from a Comms Centre that cannot carry its load. The row was breathtaking.
I left the station and climbed onto a train. Yes, a train. If I took a car, that would only leave one for the six staff to use, so I take the train. The next job is to examine a constant flow of stolen cars in an effort to identify them and get them back to their owners before there is truly no more room in a shed the size of two football paddocks. One hundred cars per week come in and there is not a single sworn member in the district's car squad.
It is then back to the office at three because I know that one of the administration officers will have left for the day and I will be able to access a computer to do all the work that arises from the impound yard. Any efficient business would have a computer at the yard for the constant flow of SOCOs, detectives and crash investigators that need it, but we are a cash-strapped government department so we continue to operate in the same time-wasting fashion. But I digress…
On arrival back at the station, a typist with decades of service approaches me. She is at her wit's end and near tears. She has two child abuse videos to transcribe. She is fully committed with her assigned work and feels guilty that she has been unable to type an urgent trial file and has watched a detective sergeant spend his day typing it himself. She has just been told that, on top of this load, she is now expected to cover for a sectional typist who is going on six weeks leave. This position also requires the entry of time-sheets for 80 staff. She knows that she cannot cope. With my typing skills I have nowhere to refer her to except Welfare. As soon as I am seated behind the computer, a temporary clerical assistant approaches me. She has been denied access to the computer system, which will allow her to enter firearms licence renewals. This is frustrating for her as she is seeing the abuse the arms officer is taking from people who are paying $65 for a new licence but receiving nothing for months. My first response is that this is a management problem and not something that should involve an Association rep. Her reply:
"I've approached the next two levels of management and they are too busy to sort it out." An hour on the phone, e-mail and I think it's sorted. All the department needs right now is an irate gun owner on the front page.
Next is the distressed victim of a double unlawful taking. Because we cannot keep up with the computer work, his car, which has been located and returned to him without number plates, cannot be issued with new plates: as it is still shown as stolen on the Police computer. He needs a letter of explanation from the Police to the issuing authority. This has prevented him from using his car, which has only added to the distress and indignity of having it stolen twice. More phone calls, Emails and inquiry work has to be undertaken to authenticate his claim. Then, guess who is going to type the letter?
What is really galling is that when I collapse into a chair exhausted at the end of the day, there will be the Commissioner telling the public that we have enough staff and resources. It has never been better.
My reply to that would get me locked up.

Mark Leys
(Papatoetoe)

Police management take the Government line
It's been interesting watching the media recently while they so effortlessly put Police management on the spot.
Coincidentally, no sooner do we get laughed out of the House with our absurd attempt to make the Minister look good with our dodgy crime statistics then up comes the issue of Auckland's 'too busy to investigate your crime' letter.
Although it's been interesting to observe it's also a bit embarrassing for our credibility as a police force.
You've got to wonder why they don't take this great opportunity to tell it like it is.
Yes, we do have a resource problem. We are hundreds of staff under what we need in Auckland.
Auckland has been sending out what the Prime Minister calls the 'ill advised' letter for several years now. There is nothing else we can possibly do for thousands of files.
The reason the Prime Minister can say to the nation that the letter was ill advised is because our managers are foolish enough to keep telling the media that everything is honey-dory. Our managers should be more wary as they are setting themselves up for a sacrifice for this Prime Minister.
Well, thankfully the public isn’t fooled. They know we are letting them down and they think our managers are pathetic for dutifully following along behind their political masters with their heads bowed in defeat.

It seems the only people telling the truth on this issue are from the Association. The President is coming across as quite professional while at the same time exposing our managers to the nation as the Prime Minister’s yes-men. Our management could learn a thing or two there.

Imagine being a member of the public who is having something stolen. For trying to stop this offence you are either frowned upon or charged by us for your efforts (yes, there are people amongst us that charge the good guys). If they report it to us we tell them we can’t do anything because we don’t have the staff. Honestly, why should these people have any faith in us at all?

The public is just going to give in to despair at their lack of options. Then you end up with people having properly considered their options, and their actions result in the saving of a life, it is only right and proper that they receive some official recognition.

Police News | The Voice of Police

Police crime statistics

Ah! Police statistics – it had to come sooner or later.

I had a very smile at the statistics argument that I believe is only just starting…

The bottom line is, really we don’t care about statistics – policing is more interesting than stats.

I have one question for the administration though, why, in this age of accountability, do we tolerate custody clearances?

I am confident that the training in the tactical options framework, along with other aspects of police training, equips officers to make the right decisions in potentially dangerous situations.

It is very much a case-by-case scenario calling on sound judgement as to what action should be taken in any given circumstance.

If police staff take calculated risks, after having properly considered their options, and their actions result in the saving of a life, it is only right and proper that they receive some official recognition.

The public is just going to give in to despair at their lack of options. Then you end up with people thinking...
When they are filled out, some codes used are obsolete or have been changed.

Task/activity combinations don’t always get accepted into the system.

Supervisors check them. Yeah right!

The AMS operator then attempts to enter them. I know we are pretty good, but not all have ESP! First guess - the writing. Second guess - the hours worked. Third guess - the codes. Fourth guess - the combinations.

Send them back you say? Okay, that’s another week before they are returned for entering.

What’s more important, entering timesheets, or catching hardened criminals?

Another point, with regards to the PHRIS system. Every man and his puppy dog are allowed into Wanganui/LESNIA. Only the select few can get into PHRIS, so if there is a relief operator on, either the timesheets don’t get done, or the permanent operator has to leave their QID and password so they can be done! How’s that for security?

Diane Fussell
(Napier Records)

Demerit points for traffic offences?

Bruce Farley wrote suggesting the demerit system be modified. It’s a good idea but let’s take it a step further. The current system fails to acknowledge a driver’s history, i.e. if a motorist has driven for five years “ticket” free or she gets no credit for this. The first mistake/misdemeanour made sees the person treated the same as a regular offender, same line and same demerit points.

Here, as I see it, lies a golden opportunity for the Police to be seen as fair and reasonable to the average citizen by introducing a credit system of lets say five demerit points per year of clean driving, with a maximum total of 35 for seven years of clean driving. (Values are open to debate).

Surely this must be better than just simply overlooking a driver’s previous past clean record, and it may go some way towards removing that “revenue gathering” tag that our road policing staff have inherited from the media.

The reduction of the road toll is paramount to all road users, but not all road users are criminals, therefore they should not be treated the same. Let’s give credit where credit is due.

Food for thought?
Les Maddaford
(Fielding)

What was that you said Minister?

I regularly read the Police News and the Letters to the Editor. Some points of view I agree with, some I don’t.

None of these issues or letters has ever prompted me to put pen to paper before - I don’t normally do that sort of thing. However, I read a couple of letters in the April 2005 issue and decided I had to send a response in.

I read the letter from “Gob smacked” from Counties-Manukau in relation to the quote from Police Minister, George Hawkins, regarding police officers “wasting valuable time contacting Communications Centres to log their arrival.”

I, like “Gob smacked”, was appalled when I read the article in the Jan/Feb edition of Police News. What really got me putting pen to paper though, was the letter following “Gob smacked” from the Minister claiming that he had been taken out of context.

I read that letter, then, I reread it. I may be a slow country cop but for the life of me I couldn’t see any difference in the context of the Minister’s letter to that of the article.

As far as I am concerned, my first priority is my own safety when it comes to any aspect of work. This encompasses everything done when attending any job.

Maybe I missed the lecture or training day when we were told to just turn up to a job and blindly head in without first scoping out what is actually going on at a scene or actually telling Comms and other staff via the radio that you have arrived? Don’t we have staff safety practices drummed into us all the time? Surely, this is one of those practices?

Telling Comms you have arrived and having this logged in to the job starts the ball rolling on the systems that have been implemented whereby Coms can keep a track of you and how long you have been somewhere – and, if they get busy, they are reminded after a period of time by an alarm that they haven’t heard from you. If Comms didn’t know when we went 10/7 at a job the whole system wouldn’t work properly, would it?

As an aside - if we didn’t log our arrival how would they judge these response times anyway?

I work by myself all the time and there is no way that I will not spend time telling Comms that I have arrived at any job I attend, no matter what it might be. How long does it take to say “Comms (insert your call sign here) 10/7”? I am left feeling that the Minister may be putting our safety as secondary to his perception of public criticism of our response times. The real problem lies with the fact that we do not have enough people (on the street and in Comms) to deal with the increasing demands placed upon us all.

The answer is if you put more staff on the streets (the actual frontline) to answer the calls for assistance and more staff in the Comms Centres to man the radios (and phones) and you will be a long way to significantly improving the service we provide (including response times to jobs).

I would encourage all of us who are actually “out there doing it” to continue the safe practice of telling Comms where you are and when you get there whenever you attend a job. If you are anything like me, I’m sure you and your families enjoy you getting to go home in one piece at the end of a shift. Doing this minor task is one small way of helping to achieve that goal.

Mike O’Brien
(Matawai)

Long-serving officer enjoys his road policing duties

I feel obliged to reply to the letter that came from Bougainville from Constable Casson.

I joined the Police in 1973 and worked the General Duties frontline for 26 years including the riot squads of the 1981 Springbok tour. The last three years I have been in the Christchurch Traffic Unit but also dealing with real criminals on the side.

Contrary to myth, we do answer calls for urgent assistance. We arrest lots of burglars and car thieves but I have yet to see a single CID member on an alcohol checkpoint.

The Police/traffic merger was forced on us, so live with it. I am now on the Traffic Unit because the stress is minimal and the roster is the best I have encountered. My old constable companions have mostly left the Police now but I just keep enjoying my new job.

Contrary to Mr Cassons’ letter, the cars I drive look the same as all the rest parked in the yard. I have yet to have a ticket quota placed on me in writing by supervisors. I work the hours required in Selwyn District and I use my discretion and issue many verbal warnings. I get great satisfaction from clocking speeders, stupid drivers and writing boy racers off the road for a month.

Not being on GDB, I no longer have to explain repeatedly to drunks why they are getting arrested. I don’t have to go to family domestics where they expect us to cure their marriages from hell in 15 minutes. I truly feel very sorry for group staff who still have to attend these incidents.

If his rugby friends are going to be negative about Police because they got a traffic ticket, then I suggest Constable Casson chooses his friends better or just stays overseas longer. The same argument was put forward in 1981 when the majority opposed the tour. The public will call when they need us.

Peter Carrington
(Christchurch)
If you are seeking the ultimate in cover or merely require the bare essentials, when it comes to insuring your possessions, Staffpac has the insurance policy that's right for you.