

Operation Themis by Sandra Mitchell

In June this year, Northern Territory Police were called upon to provide an unprecedented policing response.

On 21 June the Australian Government announced it would intervene in the Northern Territory, following the release of the 'Little Children Are Sacred' report, from authors Rex Wild and Pat Anderson.

From that point, NT Police has provided the policing components of a response being rolled out at a rapid pace.

On the Monday after the announcement by the Australian Government, Commissioner Paul White met with AFP representatives to begin the roll out of the policing initiatives. Within five days, the NTPFES College had prepared a training program for the first 11 AFP deployment members, who arrived six days after the announcement.

Those members, along with experienced NT Police members who put up their hands to be a part of the response – which was soon to be known as Task Force Themis – were deployed to the first community on 6 July (Mutitjulu), followed by five other communities during the week commencing 9 July (Imanpa, Haasts Bluff, Arlparra, Nyirripi and Santa Teresa) and a seventh on 13 July (Willowra).

Commissioner Paul White has acknowledged the commitment and dedication of staff involved in the project to date to achieve such results so quickly.

“To gather police personnel and deploy them remotely is no easy issue – there are so many considerations including accommodation, communications and not least of all transportation,” he said.

The Commissioner said members who had put their hands up to be part of the response and had gone to the communities must also be recognised.

“In some locations they're doing it tough in relation to facilities, living conditions and the like and they're getting on with the job without complaint.”

NT Police is using crime reports and intelligence as well as information from the NT Department of Health and Community Services, through its remote health and

FACS areas, in its consideration of centres for the future deployment of police.

While all of this has gone on, negotiations have continued with other states who have given a commitment to send police as part of the response.

Those jurisdictions are Queensland (10), New South Wales (10), South Australia (5) and Tasmania (2).

In fact, by the time of publication of *The Drum*, at least the Queensland contingent is expected to have arrived and been trained through the College and ready for deployment if adequate infrastructure had been identified.

A second contingent of AFP members arrived and were trained during August and will be utilised to relieve those members currently in communities.

“We will draw on the experience of NT Police officers throughout this operation to ensure police who join us have the necessary support and guidance to capitalise on the opportunities this operation provides to continue the work of NT Police including some of the nationally-recognised strategies,” Commissioner White said.

A brief outline of NT Police's work to date:

- **Thursday, 21 June** – Australian Government announces task force in response to the 'Little Children are Sacred' Report.
- **Monday, 25 June** – Commissioner meets with AFP representatives to discuss commitment and deployment of AFP members.
- **Wednesday, 27 June** – AFP members arrive and begin training prepared by NTPFES College.
- **Friday, 6 July** – One NT Police officer and two AFP officers take up duties at Mutitjulu to support the ACPO presence and work of Yulara Police.
- **Monday, 9 July** – Over the next week, members are stationed to five other communities, including Santa Teresa, Imanpa, Haasts Bluff, Utopia (Arlparra) and Nyirripi.
- **Friday, 13 July** – One NT Police officer and two AFP officers deployed to Willowra.



A/Sergeant Peter Stowers with young men at Willowra - photo courtesy of Renee Nowytarger, The Australian

APEC Energy Ministers' meeting

by Sandra Mitchell

NT Police undertook an unprecedented planning process for the APEC Energy Ministers meeting in Darwin in May.

Commander of Greater Darwin Region, Kate Vanderlaan was in charge of the process and part of meetings that began in August 2006 and a planning team headed by Superintendent Mark Setter was established in January this year.

The arrangements involved every facet required for the security in larger jurisdictions and the successful completion of the APEC range of meetings without incident was a credit to the security arrangements and officers involved.

A large number of police were involved and some training was conducted to provide some skill sets, such as Public Order Response Team training, undertaken by around 60 members.

The meetings were able to be conducted free of security incidents, with several small and peaceful demonstrations conducted and bomb technicians on hand to disrupt a small pipe bomb device discovered in an area unrelated to

the APEC events but was brought into the CBD to the police station.

The success of the security arrangements were a credit to a coordinated approach by NT Police and associated agencies and also provided an opportunity to display the professional standards of all members involved.



NT Police members conduct vehicle checks in the vicinity of Parliament House during the APEC events in Darwin.

Highway Patrol - Katherine Launch

By Sarah Combe

Katherine and Alice Springs Police have welcomed two new Highway Patrol and Remote Area Traffic Patrol units that build on NT Police capabilities to educate and enforce road traffic laws on major roads, highways and remote roads in the Territory.

At their launch in Katherine on 11 July, Police Commissioner Paul White said that these units give a comprehensive approach to policing our road laws in remote locations and educating remote residents about road safety.

"The existence of these Units patrolling the highways will raise an awareness of their presence, and be a deterrent

and a positive reminder to road users that road rules will be enforced," he said.

This initiative met two recommendations of the NT Road Safety Task force Report namely the formation of Highway Patrol Units (Recommendation 16) and Remote Area Traffic Patrol Units (Recommendation 17) to operate in Katherine and Alice Springs.

Four new members and two vehicles were allocated to run the patrols. The Highway Patrol vehicles are Holden SS V8s fitted with the Holden National Police Pack and they are specifically badged as Highway Patrols.

The Alice Springs patrols have become part of the Southern Traffic Operations and they liaise with traffic members on traffic enforcement and education in towns and communities throughout the region.

The Highway Patrols patrol the major roads throughout the Territory and work in with local members and police stations in rural and remote locations. They aim to work cooperatively to provide support and a policing presence at local festivals, carnivals and community events.

The Rural Area Traffic Patrols work with remote communities on traffic education and enforcement issues and helping to plan a policing presence at regional events.

The Commissioner, Paul White, Commander Greg Dowd and new Highway Patrol Officers





Senior Constable David Young with Prowler

Prowler joins the service

by Marilyn Lehmann

The NT Police dog handling unit has welcomed its newest recruit, a black German shepherd called Prowler. This multi-talented canine is set to revolutionise some aspects of policing in the Territory.

A general purpose dog, he can track people, stolen articles and hold and detain offenders. He is ready to go to work and his handler Senior Constable David Young is keen to ensure that all members are aware of his skills and don't hesitate to call on him.

"There are many instances in which a dog is the most effective tool members can have," said Senior Constable Young, "but it is imperative that everyone knows what to do before the dog arrives so that he can do the job for which he has been trained.

"Prowler will track by the most recent scent but he is not able to tell the difference between the good guy and the bad guy. In the past a dog has tracked an officer from the front of a property to the rear where he went to check the perimeter. This happened because the officer inadvertently crossed the offender's path.

"The very best thing members can do to assist us is for patrol cars to form a cordon around the area with officers remaining in their cars and to call the Dog Operations Unit immediately."

Senior Constable Young added that it was also important for the members forming the cordon to make sure the offender knew they were there. Ensuring maximum illumination would force the offender to go to ground thus allowing the dog team the best opportunity for capture. The longer the offender remained in hiding the stronger the emanating scent would be.

"I can't emphasise enough that the key to successful dog operations applications is proper containment and scene preservation. The dog operations unit is only half the equation – patrol officers are the other half and success rests on a whole of team effort," he said.

Bruce Wyatt QPM receives NT Police Valour Medal

By Sandra Mitchell

In May a well-deserved award was presented to retired Assistant Commissioner Bruce Wyatt – a Northern Territory Police Officer for 32 years before his retirement in December 1996.

Assistant Commissioner Wyatt was presented with the NT Police Valour Medal for his courageous actions in the face of danger during an incident in Katherine in March 1977, which resulted in himself and his partner, Senior Constable John Rowe being shot by a gunman.

The shooting followed an incident when the armed offender (John Plunkett) had been threatening police two days earlier – he had attempted to shoot another officer however his rifle had jammed. Plunkett fled into the bush and evaded the police searchers.

On 16 March Army personnel from the Tindal base reported a person answering Plunkett's description armed with a rifle near the Tindal aerodrome. Police continued to search into the night and also needed to reassure the civilian community at Tindal.

The next morning Plunkett was sighted in the long grass between the Stuart Highway and the railway track. Commissioner McLaren reported that Inspector Wyatt and Senior Constable Rowe drove some distance then ran along the highway for a further 90 metres, believing they would be well in front of Plunkett. On entering the scrub



Deputy Commissioner Bruce Wernham, Ben Wyatt, Bruce Wyatt and Commissioner Paul White

and long grass, Inspector Wyatt and Senior Constable Rowe came across Plunkett who was five metres away and armed with a rifle.

The Inspector called on Plunkett to put down his rifle and said that he would not be hurt. He repeated this at least three times, to no avail, as Plunkett then opened fire. His first shots missed both officers who returned fire and missed. Plunkett again opened fire and hit Senior Constable Rowe in the right foot and knocked him to the ground. Inspector Wyatt also was hit on the left arm, but, fortunately, had reloaded his rifle and was able to return fire, holding the rifle with his uninjured arm. The Inspector's second shot hit Plunkett on the left thigh, knocked him to the ground and stopped him firing any further shots.

John Plunkett was later charged with attempted murder.

A visit to Darwin in May with his son, Ben, 19, provided a perfect opportunity for the presentation of the award by Commissioner Paul White.

Mr Wyatt moved to Adelaide with his family in 1999, but was proud to accept the award in the presence of his son, Ben.

Inaugural Patricia Brennan Award

By Hayley Dwyer



Superintendent Anne-Marie Murphy received the inaugural Patricia Brennan award at a ceremony hosted by the Commissioner on 19 July.

The Patricia Brennan Award recognises a significant contribution by an individual male or female officer towards women in the NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services.

“Superintendent Murphy has demonstrated both a personal and professional commitment to advancing and promoting women in the agency. She has led by example and informally mentored many officers,” said Commissioner White.

Superintendent Murphy’s notable achievements include serving on the Executive of the NT Police Association for eight years and becoming the first female President and she is now a life member. Superintendent Murphy was also the first woman appointed as OIC Northern Command, at that time she managed a 65 person branch.

During her tenure, the number of gazetted female investigators increased by approximately 50 per cent. Superintendent Murphy was also the initiator of the Women’s Advisory Committee in 1996 and remains active. She is currently serving as Vice Chair. Superintendent Murphy was also the inaugural NT representative on the Commissioners’ Australasian Women in Policing Advisory Committee.

“I’m honoured to accept this award and I thank Trish’s family for coming along today,” said Superintendent Murphy.

The Patricia Brennan award is named in memory of one of the pioneer women police officers, Patricia (Trish) Brennan who made a strong contribution to women and the service.

Trish and Mick Brennan’s marriage was the first between NT police officers. She was also among the first group of uniformed women police officers and the first female officer to be posted to Arnhem Land.

While still a serving member, sadly, Trish, mother of four young children at the time, lost a battle with cancer in 1991.

Trish Brennan’s family members present at the award ceremony included her mother Mim McGuiness, her husband Mick Brennan, their daughter Constable Laura Brennan who travelled from Queensland and their son James. Unfortunately their other sons David and Thomas could not attend.

Four nominations were received and judging was conducted by Women’s Advisory Committee sponsor Assistant Commissioner Mark McAdie, Tina Lambert from the Office of Women’s Policy and Women’s Advisory Committee Chair, Sue Reaburn.

Denise is Aboriginal Community Police Officer of the Year

By Theresa Kuilboer

This year’s Aboriginal Community Police Officer of the Year, Denise Goddard, has been described by her boss as “inspirational” and an “influential role model”.

Denise has been an ACPO since October 1999 and has served her entire time at Tennant Creek.

OIC of Tennant Creek Police Station, Senior Sergeant Megan Rowe said Denise’s work as an ACPO had been an invaluable asset to NT Police and the Tennant Creek community – especially with regard to relationships between police and the local Indigenous community.

“She has provided the Tennant Creek community and our police members with inspirational service. She has brought keen insight and skills to our relationship with the local Indigenous population, especially Aboriginal elders and respected people,” Senior Sergeant Rowe said.

Earlier this year Denise was seconded to Darwin for three months to assist in training and developing the latest

squad of Aboriginal Community Police Officers who graduated in late May. Her services were requested by [then] Superintendent Jeanette Kerr who recognised the knowledge and experience she could bring to the training experience for the new recruits.

Senior Sergeant Rowe said Denise’s special skills did not simply relate to her job.

“She is a steady, mature and influential role-model to all those who work with her. Not just for the new ACPOs coming to the station, but for all the new members who come through the station. She also brings humour and fun into our building, something sorely needed in a job as difficult and harsh as police work can sometimes be.

“I just wish I had half a dozen staff like her.”



Honours and Awards Investiture

By Sarah Combe

At the Honours and Awards Investiture on 13 July, Police Commissioner Paul White recognised the strengths and dedication of seven of the Northern Territory's exceptional police members.

As he presented Detective Senior Sergeant Scott Pollock with the Commissioner's Outstanding Leadership Medal, the Commissioner praised his decisive and outcome orientated leadership qualities.



Louie Sayson, Andrew Magrath, Commissioner Paul White, Len Turner and Alan Hodge

He said that Scott has always been an outstanding leader who consistently goes the extra yard in every section he has worked and who in recent times has reinvigorated the property crime reduction team.

Detective Sergeant Wendy Schultz received the same award and was commended for her leadership strengths, strong work ethic and 'can-do' attitude.

The Commissioner in particular acknowledged her good judgement and the support and mentorship she gives to her colleagues and peers.

Detective Sergeant Edmund Leonard (Len) Turner, Acting Sergeant Andrew James Magrath, Detective Senior Constable Alan Joseph Hodge and Constable Louie Sayson also received Northern Territory Police Valour Awards at the Investiture.



Wendy Schultz with Commissioner Paul White



Scott Pollock with Commissioner Paul White



Amanda Ruzsicska with Commissioner Paul White

A tribute to Ernest Fong

By Senior Constable Andrew Craven

Ernest Fong was my grandfather (by marriage) and treated me as his own son – largely due to the fact that I was a member of the NT Police.

Ernest Fong's own father had died when he was very young and police in Pine Creek and Katherine became surrogate fathers to him. During the 1920s they looked after his mother and siblings – and even taught him how to drive and shoot! Even 80-odd years ago the NT Police were outstanding practitioners of crime reduction through community involvement.

Ernest Fong was born in Rock Creek, near Pine Creek on the 5 November 1918 to Chinese immigrant parents. His parents originally came to the Territory to fossick for gold, but eventually established a market garden in Pine Creek and sent their produce to Darwin. He was the brother of George Lim, Charlie On (senior), Harry Fong, Myrtle and William Fong.

As a child, Ernest moved to Katherine following the death of his father. Here he met his first Territory police officer in Katherine and Mataranka in 1928. He always fondly recalled how kind and honourable the police were to a small Chinese boy. His strong sentiment towards the NT Police, was documented in the Darwin Archives. A condensed version can be read at:

www.nt.gov.au/dcis/nta/newsletters/pdf/RecordsTerritory23_Feb2001.pdf

The awards recognise their brave and heroic actions during an incident on 26 August, 2006 where a vehicle crashed into a tree and caught alight on McMillans Road Karama with two males trapped inside.

Len Turner, Andrew Magrath and Alan Hodge who were at a separate incident nearby and heard the crash, responded immediately and worked together to free one of the occupants while the vehicle was already alight.

When Constable Louie Sayson, Senior Constable Amanda Ruzsicska and Constable Glenn Bolger arrived shortly after, Louie Sayson assisted in freeing the second occupant seconds before the car was fully engulfed, while Amanda Ruzsicska and Glenn Stephen attempted to extinguish the fire.

The Commissioner's Certificate of Recognition was presented to Senior Constable Amanda Ruzsicska and Constable Glenn Bolger who now works in Tasmania, for their effort in extinguishing the fire and displaying a dedication to duty beyond what might reasonably be expected.

Ken Flood retires

By Hayley Dwyer



**Senior Constable
First Class Ken
Flood retired
from the Territory
Police Force on
6 June, ending
more than 30
years of service.**

Ken Flood joined the force on 27 September 1976. He served in a number of positions and at various locations including Alice Springs, Tennant Creek,

Papunya, Elliott, Ali Curung and Katherine. He also carried out relief duties at various locations including Yuendumu and Yulara.

“My whole career has been one big highlight of my life in the NT Police, I’ve really enjoyed the challenges of bush stations and some of the jobs I’ve been involved in”, said Mr Flood.

Notably Ken was one of the first members of the Northern Territory Police Force to successfully complete the inaugural

Detective Training Course. While attached to the Criminal Investigation Branch in Alice Springs he gained high respect for his work on the Lindy Chamberlain case.

However, the majority of his career was served in remote areas where he was highly respected among the public and his peers as a police officer of high integrity and professionalism, particularly among the Indigenous community.

He was committed to serving in rural areas and demonstrated leadership and dedication to the communities at which he was stationed.

Ken was farewelled at a presentation by Commander Dowd in Katherine, where Ken served for the past eight years.

“During this period he continued his dedication to policing and ensuring his local community received the highest standard of policing service.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you on behalf of the Northern Territory Police Force for your outstanding service as a police officer,” said Commander Dowd.

“I intend to play a lot of golf; however I have had a few months off and will be looking for a job to keep me busy. I intend to stay in Katherine”, he said.

Charlie and Brian retire in style



Senior Constables Charlie Ortlipp and Brian Harrison recently retired from NT Police accumulating between them almost 70 years service.



Commissioner Paul White and Deputy Commissioner Bruce Wernham joined them at the official send off on the *Beagle Gulf*.

Newest Mobile Police Station



NT Police's newest mobile police station was unveiled in the Smith Street Mall in June.

The Mobile Police Station – the second for Darwin and fourth for NT Police under the Building Our Police Force program – turned heads during the launch at Raintree Park.

The \$100,000 van is the largest of the Mobile Police Station fleet and can be utilised as a command post at incidents, a base for police at public events, or as part of specific operations.

At 7 metres long, the new van is 2.4 metres longer than its predecessors, which allows for more equipment and officers.

Commissioner Paul White, former Police Minister, Dr Chris Burns MLA, Senior Sergeant Craig Ryan and Commander Kate Vanderlaan

New Fire Station for northern suburbs

By Sue Bradley

The Marrara Fire Station was opened recently to replace the ageing Casuarina Fire Station which was built in 1974. It is the NT Fire and Rescue Service's newest fire station.

It consists of sleeping quarters, gymnasium, kitchen/dining/lounge area, workshop and hose repair room, a four vehicle appliance bay, a large training/conference room, offices and reception area.

The Marrara Emergency Response Area (ERA) covers an area of approximately 70 square kilometres and takes in Darwin's northern suburbs and includes two large hospitals, the Charles Darwin University campus, and the largest shopping complex in the Territory – Casuarina Shopping Square.

This fire station is the first response station to assist airport firefighting crews to attend aircraft incidents at the Darwin Airport. The Joint Emergency Services Communications Centre (JESCC) at the Peter McAulay Centre is responsible for Police, Ambulance and Fire Service emergency response throughout Darwin and Alice Springs.

The Marrara fire station is staffed 24-hours a day, seven days a week by four crews who work on a 10/14 hour roster system; each crew consists of one station officer and three firefighters. It also houses two firefighting appliances – a large pumping appliance and a smaller four-wheel drive grassfire-fighting vehicle.





Public Safe





Community Expo 2007



Expo wrap-up

By Sharon Hutton

The third Public Safety Expo has been and gone in a flurry of activity and a whirlwind of people. Approximately 5000 people flocked to the Peter McAulay Centre at Berrimah on Saturday 21 July to experience everything Police, Fire and Emergency Services had on offer.

A free showbag of goodies for the kids on entry ensured that the jam-packed day got off to a roaring start. Families participated in the variety of activities on offer, taking the opportunity to try everything from abseiling with the Tactical Response Section officers to casting a fishing line, canoeing and fitness training with the Recruits.

A number of external partners participated in the event to exhibit their services and positively promote their working relationship with Police, Fire and Emergency Services to enhance public safety.

Singing sensation Jessica Mauboy performed on the day and was mobbed by crowds of fans seeking autographs. She also tackled the abseiling wall and posed for photos.

A coordinated rescue attempt demonstration involving Police, Fire, Emergency Services and St John Ambulance proved popular with a simulated explosion being a highlight for the audience. The public marvelled at smoke and flames as rescue teams raced to the scene to save two campers injured whilst cooking in the back of their vehicle.

The most popular display on the day was the car-cutting exercise by the Fire and Rescue Service on the parade ground. In the morning a Holden Astra was cut, demonstrating how a trapped motorist would be freed from a vehicle and later a Commodore. The crowd 'oohed' and 'ahhed' as two very new vehicles were turned to scrap metal!

Rescue course turns into real situation

By Jane Kearney

On the weekend of 14-15 July NT Emergency Services held a General Rescue/Urban Rescue Course, designed to give participants a detailed knowledge of rescue survey, reconnaissance, mapping and casualty location techniques. Twenty voluntary members attended the course held at the Yarrowonga training facility and various locations around Palmerston.

During a break in training at around 5.30 pm on the Saturday afternoon, a call was received from the NTES duty officer to request a team of volunteers to assist in the evacuation of a hunter suffering a diabetic episode in the Gunn Point area.

Information received suggested that the casualty would need to be carried a distance of approximately 6 kilometres out of the area. It was decided that all of the members on the course should attend the rescue operation to gain additional practical knowledge of rescue methods.

Upon arrival at the Gunn Point location, the voluntary Emergency Service crew were met by St John's ambulance who were waiting for the arrival of NTES as they had no resources to physically get to the man's location in thick bushland. The NTES party went into the bush to locate him, then returned and managed to clear a path to transport the St John's paramedic to the scene. The man was then stabilised, and transported back to the ambulance. He recovered quickly with treatment, and was subsequently transported to Royal Darwin Hospital for further observation.

It then became apparent that another member of the hunter's party had become exhausted and disorientated whilst trying to gain assistance for his diabetic friend. A short search was conducted for him, with no success. Since the missing person had food, shelter and water, it

was decided, in consultation with police, to halt the search at around 9.30 pm and commence an air search the next morning.

The missing person was located the next morning in good health, by the Territory Response Section and air search.

Participants on the interrupted general rescue course ended up getting some important hands-on training in rescue techniques and continued their official course during August.



Volunteers' skills put to the test

Station profile: Mataranka

By Sarah Combe



In her famous book *We of the Never Never*, Jeanie Gunn described the area of Mataranka as “a land of dangers and hardships and privations yet loved as few lands are loved – a land that bewitches her people with strange spells and mysteries.”

Officer in Charge of the Mataranka Police Station, Lenora Giles pictured above, who tried to get posted to the station twice before the opportunity arose, is more to the point when she says it is a great place to live and police in the Territory.

“I really enjoy living and working here. It involves varying degrees of policing, from patrolling highways to travelling out to bush communities . . . out here you expand your knowledge and policing experience and learn things you wouldn’t get a chance to learn in Darwin,” she said.

The Mataranka township has all the necessary facilities such as health care, a school, shops, a supermarket, two road-houses, a pub and a post office and is only an hour from the bustle of Katherine, where members can go on their days off to see a movie or go shopping.

It is also home to the beautiful Mataranka thermal pools and there are plenty of natural wonders to explore including the Roper River, Elsey Nature Park and surrounding unique landscapes. There is plenty to do for fishing fanatics, bushwalkers and swimmers.

Mataranka police cover an area of 55 000 square kilometres including twenty cattle stations and four remote communities, namely Hodgson Downs, Jilkmिंगgan, Larrimah and Daly Waters.

This effectively keeps them busy with traffic duties, domestic issues, motor vehicle registering and licensing, drug trafficking, anti-social behaviour, liquor offences and responding to all manner of bizarre instances that occur out of the blue in remote parts of Australia.

“You come out of some of these situations and experiences and think no one would believe that happened.”

Lenora says that is part of the reason why in small stations, such as Mataranka with normally two police members and two Aboriginal Community Police Officers based in Katherine, the friendships you make with colleagues are very important and in her experience become friendships that you keep.

For those looking for a remote posting – that is not overly isolated, there are two ample three bedroom houses allocated to members at Mataranka situated within a short walking distance to the main street and the station.

“I would recommend working in Mataranka to anyone, there is so much variety in the work I do each day and yet I am still close enough to all the creature comforts of a major centre, it doesn’t even feel remote.”

Daly River volunteers

By Jane Kearney

Gary Higgins owns 'Daly River Mango Farm' and is also a valuable voluntary member of the Northern Territory Emergency Service, having served as Daly River's unit officer for nearly five years.

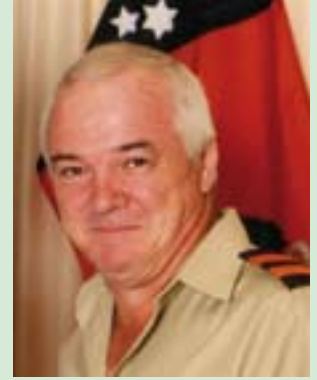
"The first couple of weeks of June were a busy time for our unit with two callouts for search and rescue and one for assistance at a serious road accident," said Gary.

After receiving a request for assistance from Daly River police, the NTES unit set about searching for a missing pest control officer who had managed to make one distress call to authorities before being cut-off.

Daly River NTES members Charles Hilliard and Steve Botterell systematically began searching outstations in the vicinity at the man's last known location.

"After several hours of searching, the missing man was located by NTES members. He was found hiding up a tree in an attempt to avoid wild pigs in the area, after having sunk his vehicle in a creek along with his mobile phone; he was very happy to see us," he explained.

In May another search was initiated after a report of a missing geologist. The police requested the NTES volunteers' assistance in locating the missing man and unit officer Gary Higgins responded along with Steve Botterell and Charles Hilliard. Tipperary Station provided their helicopter and pilot to the search. Charles went up in the helicopter as an air observer and Gary and Steve started a ground search by four-wheel drive.



The geologist was located by Daly River police some eight hours later in a safe condition, oblivious to the search and rescue operation that he had set in motion by not making the required mandatory contact with his employers.

The very next day the NTES unit was called out to assist at a serious motor vehicle accident on the Port Keats Road, 22 kilometres past the Daly River Crossing. A Toyota Landcruiser troop carrier had collided with the back of a road train on the dirt road. Initial reports were that there were eight casualties but on arrival at the scene, the NTES volunteers were surprised to find that there were a total of 17 casualties and one fatality. Daly River police and three staff from the local clinic were on the scene attending to the worst of the casualties. NTES volunteers assisted the medical staff in stabilising the injured and set up lighting to illuminate the scene. Adelaide River Emergency Service volunteers also attended the scene, assisting police and medics with the large casualty count.

The NTES units assisted medical staff and police in caring for the patients until 3.30 am when the last casualty was transported from the scene. The NTES units then removed the deceased person from the troop carrier, before finally arriving back at their homes around 5.00 am.

Gary and his Unit take pride in helping their community in times of crisis. "Living in a small community brings people closer together and we are always happy to help out those in distress," he said.

Thanks to volunteers

By Jane Kearney

The Northern Territory Emergency Service would like to extend a big thankyou to the very dedicated efforts of Darwin and Palmerston units in supporting so many community events this dry season. The community has relied on the volunteers to help out with traffic and crowd control, as well as putting on public displays at events such as the Arafura games, the Public Safety Expo and the Shannon's Motor Show.

More recently, 30 NTES volunteers lent a hand at the Royal Darwin Show. Their main contribution was to take charge of the lost children's tent, reuniting more than 25 lost children with their parents and carers. This was an excellent response from the volunteers.

NTES volunteers were on the job the following day to provide marine safety and first aid assistance to the public at the annual Beer Can Regatta. They deployed two vessels – the *Arnhem* and the *Slogger* and also provided some first aid assistance.

This turned out to be a busy day. The volunteers worked alongside St John's Ambulance personnel to treat a few minor medical problems and also organised a search which located a child who had been missing for about an hour.



NTES Volunteers at one of the many events that were held over the dry season

Later in the day, the *Arnhem* responded to a request from a vessel in trouble off Charles Point. The vessel was drifting without fuel and the *Arnhem* was able to tow it back into port.

The Darwin community is very fortunate indeed to have such a dedicated group of volunteers to assist them at community events throughout the Territory.

Blue Light Disco gets new car

By Hayley Dwyer

The Blue Light Disco took delivery of a new car on 31 July as part of Honeycombe Hyundai's official support of the program.

The Commissioner, Paul White accepted the new Hyundai Tucson City with Blue Light badging, in an official handover of keys.

"Blue Light provides safe entertainment for all the Territory's young people and many Territorians have grown up attending Blue Light Discos.

"Blue Light provides a social atmosphere free of drugs and violence, where parents can safely send their children knowing they will be well supervised," said Commissioner White.

"This new car is a valuable addition to the program because of the mobile nature of Blue Light Discos in the NT. The vehicle will be used for transporting police, volunteers and all of the disco equipment to and from each location. It will also be used for touring the remote communities of the Top End to provide the same smoke, drug and alcohol free entertainment



Commissioner Paul White takes delivery of the new Blue Light car

to youths who are sometimes disadvantaged by their remote location."

Blue Light Discos originated in Victoria back in 1976 when two off-duty Victorian Police Officers organised a dance in the local hall after their children had complained about lack of entertainment.

Forensics and Charles Darwin Uni partnership into DNA

By Associate Professor Karen Gibb, School of Science and Primary Industries Leader Bioscience North Australia (BNA)

Charles Darwin University and NT Police Forensic Science Branch recently joined forces to give students an insight into DNA analysis at work.

Students taking an intensive unit called 'DNA analysis and Profiling' at Charles Darwin University in July were given a fascinating insight into forensic science thanks to the generosity of the NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services Forensic Science Branch.

Forensic Scientist Denise Grover explained what it was like to work as a Forensic Scientist and then gave students the opportunity to gather and analyse evidence in mock case studies. The students then had to present their results and defend their conclusions to the group.

The students had just completed an intensive research project involving DNA analysis of local sediment from disturbed and undisturbed habitats so they already had an advanced understanding of the techniques used in forensic science. This then allowed them to make the most of Denise's challenging case studies.

The lively debates and quality of presentations clearly showed how much the students enjoyed Denise's involvement in the unit.

Combining forces with the NT Police Forensic Science Branch really enhanced the learning experience for these

students. The molecular facility Bioscience North Australia (BNA) developed through the CDU-NTG partnership agreement has been pivotal in facilitating this partnership.

Denise Grover and students with case studies



Using Forensic kits to test blood

Photographs are courtesy of Ellie Hayward

Solomon Island Police Exchange

By Sarah Combe

After eight weeks examining juvenile crime prevention and diversion strategies used by Northern Territory Police, Sergeant Ian Vaevaso from the Royal Solomon Islands Police said he would take home many recommendations for change, modelled on what he has learnt.

“I have seen youth in the Solomon Islands who have not been given a second chance. They are arrested and taken to court and there are no other options available to them. I think it would be good to give youth the opportunity to change and take responsibility for what they are doing. I think they will learn from that.”

Sergeant Vaevaso spent time with Northern Territory Police as part of an eight week Australian Scholarships Program aimed at developing ideas for Juvenile Crime Prevention in the Solomon Islands.



Blue Light Disco

He lives and works in West Choiseul and has been serving in the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force for ten years.

In 1996 he began recruitment at the Royal Solomon Islands Police Academy, and started out his service in criminal prosecutions. Since then he has worked in the Professional Standards Unit whose primary role is to conduct internal investigations into criminal disciplinary matters against police officers.

The fellowship provided Ian with an exciting exchange opportunity to work outside this area and develop new ideas for youth crime prevention.

Ian noticed many similarities between youth in the Northern Territory and the Solomon Islands, and their reasons for committing property crime and was really excited about community programs that focus on youth development.

During his time in the Northern Territory he travelled to Groote Eylandt, Angurugu, Umbukumba, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek and spent time with the Juvenile Diversion Unit, Crime Prevention Section, Junior Police Rangers on a camp, School Based Constables, Blue Light Disco and more.



Sergeant Ian Vaevaso outside the Peter McAulay Centre

Ian was particularly impressed with sports programs provided to youth in Groote Eylandt which encourage them to pursue alternative activities and Blue Light Discos which he said were a lot of fun.

“It would be really good to bring new ideas like this back to the Solomon Islands.”

He also thoroughly enjoyed going out to the communities and said that spending time talking with young people was a very enlightening experience.

On 20 July, Commissioner Paul White presented Ian with a Leadership Award Fellowship Training Staff Attachment.

Ian said that he would like to see these new links between the Solomon Island Police and Northern Territory Police to be continued.

Ian with Junior Police Ranger members



Substance Abuse Intelligence Desk finalist in prestigious awards

By Theresa Kuilboer

The Substance Abuse Intelligence Desk (SAID) based in Alice Springs was chosen as a finalist in the 2007 National Drug and Alcohol Awards.

The SAID was a finalist in the Excellence in Law Enforcement category.

The annual awards attract nominations from all over Australia and are sponsored by the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation Ltd and the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing and the Department of Education, Science and Training.

The Excellence in Law Enforcement category recognises a program, policy or resource that makes a significant contribution to law enforcement efforts designed to reduce the harmful impact of alcohol and other drugs.

The SAID was set up in January 2006 as a tri-state initiative to combat the abuse of licit and illicit substances in remote communities. The Federal Government, through the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, contributed funding to support the Desk.

The creation of the SAID coincided with the roll-out of the non-sniffable Opal fuel to communities in the cross-border region. Petrol sniffing and trafficking presented a major problem to communities in the area and was having a devastating impact. By working with partner agencies in areas such as health, youth workers and women's councils, there has been a dramatic reduction in petrol sniffing in the region.

Commander of the Southern Region Mark Coffey said the aim of the Desk was to disrupt petrol and drug runners into remote communities.



Drug detector dog in action

“The cooperative approach between police jurisdictions in the Territory, Western Australia and South Australia has seen a significant reduction in criminal activity committed by drug dealers and petrol runners,” Commander Coffey said.

“As such the SAID is an excellent example of the importance of information flow and co-operation between agencies.

“Being judged a finalist in these national awards is recognition of all the excellent work done by the members in each jurisdiction, and especially the members of the SAID in Alice Springs.”

The winners were announced at a gala dinner in Sydney with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia being announced the winner in the category for its Project STOP – a project to limit the stockpiling and purchasing of pseudoephedrine.



Supt Peter Anderson (SA Police), Supt Kevin Lobby (WA Police) Commander Mark Coffey, Const Sachin Sharma and Sen Const Beau McNeill

Peace at home brings some stability to families

By Sarah Combe

The Peace at Home project, now in its second year, has successfully worked to decrease incidents of domestic violence and the need for intervention within a number of families in the Katherine/Borroloola region.

The project involves an integrated services team from the Northern Territory Police Force and Northern Territory Family and Children's Services working together to combat cycles of violence and abuse within the home.

The team currently consists of three Constables, Dave Hamlyn, Kim Rolfe and Jamie Lauder, one Community Welfare Worker, Victoria Creevey, one Aboriginal Community Worker, Vicki Lindner and the project officer Alexis Jackson.

Police and Family and Children's Services have integrated their resources to identify families, where family violence incidents including domestic violence and child abuse, is of a recidivist nature.

While the program is voluntary, police members initially approach these families to discuss the reason why these sorts of offences are occurring and provide them with the opportunity to enter the Peace at Home project.

A team consisting of a welfare worker and a police officer then works closely with each of the families who agree to participate and monitors their progress through weekly meetings and visits until the families report noticeable outcomes.

The project refers families to a range of services that are specific to their individual needs and issues including

access to counselling services, rehabilitation, anger management, alcohol related counselling and budgeting programs.

The team is currently working with 16 families.

This process can be a long and intensive road as each recurring abuse or incident of violence can start the family back at the first step of the program again.

However, in the 13 months it has been operating, the project has seen a range of positive outcomes, particularly with a number of families who have reported less incidents of violence and who have continued to reduce their need for assistance or intervention from the program and other services.

Project Officer Alexis Jackson said that the development of this joint Police and FACS integrated service response will provide an opportunity for key service agencies and community representatives to deal more effectively with family violence and other associated offences such as assault, child abuse and sexual assault.

"This joint response will also enable reduction of further trauma for victims as they will be able to access key (police and FACS) agencies at the one time and will also enable relevant government agencies to 'case manage' the causal factors behind family violence incidents so that future episodes are minimised, safety of family members is enhanced, appropriate information is shared between the two agencies and support is given to remote government and community representatives to develop and implement intervention actions plans and services appropriate to their needs," she said.



Vicki Lindner, Aboriginal Community Worker, FACS; Barbara McClelland, Aboriginal Community Police Officer, NT Police; Alexis Jackson, Project Officer, Peace at Home, NT Police; and Linda Locking, Co-ordinator, Good Beginnings