

Night watch

Air Wing helps prevent bushfire

Night vision goggles (NVG) have been proving their worth at Police Air Wing for almost two years and recently helped the police helicopter crew prevent a potential bushfire and assist in the arrest of a group of car thieves.

While on patrol over the metropolitan area late at night recently, a crew member noticed a fire about 2km away – barely visible to the naked eye, but through NVG very noticeable.

Police Air Wing Operations Manager Sergeant Clint Oversby said wearing NVG was standard practice for all air crew when conducting night operations.

Coming in for a closer look

“In this case the fire was a stolen car that had been set alight near bushland and that fire would have become much larger before anyone noticed if the air crew hadn’t spotted it with their NVG,” he said. “They were able to alert Fire and Emergency Services to the fire and they detected a vehicle leaving the scene at speed when they came in for a closer look.”

“*...It demonstrates the impact air operations can have with quick response from units on the ground...*”

The Polair 61 crew were able to direct Canning Vale police onto the vehicle leaving the scene, which was stopped and the occupants questioned.

Returning to the fire scene, the crew noticed two other vehicles in the area, one operating without any lights at all. Police vehicles on the ground were subsequently directed on to each vehicle and the occupants questioned. At the same time, FESA crews were directed to the off-road fire scene to extinguish the blaze.

NVG makes the difference

“It’s a great example of the effectiveness of our NVG capability, but it also demonstrates the impact air operations can have with quick response from units on the ground – very little would have been achieved in this instance without the efforts of Canning Vale police,” Sergeant Oversby said.

On the ground, Constable Dean Kelland – among the responding officers from Canning Vale Police Station – followed Polair directions to a service station where he and his partner, First Class Constable Nathan Cohen, questioned the occupants of the vehicle seen leaving the fire.

“Follow-up investigations established that the vehicle had been stolen and we arrested the offender on several charges the next day,” Constable Kelland said.



Crew member Tactical Flight Officer Senior Constable Ian Davison.



The WA Police helicopter as seen through the night vision goggles.

No booze

'Drunken yobbos' kept away

The agency's strong no-drinking message has been credited with making this year's Australia Day Skyworks event on the Perth foreshore the most family friendly of recent years, with antisocial behaviour and hospital admissions significantly reduced.

Strength in numbers

Police officers from throughout the metropolitan area converged on the foreshore area to show a strong presence and deter troublemakers.

Following an early-intervention strategy aimed at cutting out violent and antisocial behaviour when the first warning signs appeared, police made 47 arrests at the Skyworks event, issued 119 move on notices and 356 liquor cautions, mostly to adults drinking illegally in public places.



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Heading up the operation, Commander (State Traffic Operations) Michelle Fyfe said although widespread publicity regarding Western Australia (WA) Police's zero-tolerance approach to public drinking and antisocial behaviour may have kept away some revellers, the event was a resounding success.

"If our policing approach kept drunken yobbos at home and kept them from ruining the event for families, then I'm very happy with that," she said. "Our strategy for the event dealt with potential problems early, usually with cautions, and that kept things from getting out of control."

The plan for next year

Commander Fyfe said planning for the policing of the event had been underway since March last year and she expected a similar high-publicity no-drinking campaign to precede next year's Skyworks.

Each year more than 250,000 people attend Perth Skyworks and although numbers were down this year, many have predicted the low incident rate will attract more families to next year's event.



South Metropolitan Traffic's First Class Constable Karen Efferille empties a beer bottle at Skyworks.



Mounted police also patrolled the foreshore.



Heavy police presence and a strategy of early intervention made 2010's Skyworks the safest in recent years.

Early morning highway patrol

Traffic Enforcement Group's (TEG's) motorcycle officers and the Camera Section have issued more than 3000 infringements in two months while targeting speeding motorists on major roads in the early hours.

Operation Earlybird, underway since 23 November last year, involved motorcycle officers working 10-hour shifts from Monday to Friday, conducting laser actions at two locations on major metropolitan arterial carriageways.

Five phases

TEG Officer-in-Charge Acting Senior Sergeant Steve Scott said the operation had been broken into three five-day phases during the new-year period.

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...the early-morning time period is one that a lot of drivers see as an opportunity to break the law.

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“For phase one, we were using only the motorbikes and we had some good results – we issued 474 speeding infringements,” he said. “Then in phase two and three we included a multanova camera, which increased our capability significantly – in phase two we picked up 1654 people speeding and another 953 in phase three.

“These results show that the early-morning time period is one that a lot of drivers see as an opportunity to break the law.”

Other offences

Although targeting speeding, motorcycle officers on Operation Earlybird have also impounded 17 vehicles, charged 10 offenders with reckless driving, two for drugs and one drink driving excess .08.

Some drivers have been caught travelling more than 70km per hour over the speed limit.



Motorcycle officers target early-morning speeding on the Kwinana Freeway.



A motorcycle patrol passes through the Graham Farmer Freeway tunnel.

Technical difficulties

The tech gurus of crime investigation

An orphaned Nigerian princess is not going to transfer \$20 million into your bank account and split it with you when she escapes the country. The luxury city apartment advertised for \$250 per week does not really exist. And a hitman was not paid to kill you unless you double his fee. This is the message from the Technology Crime Investigation Team's Detective Sergeant Jamie McDonald who, alongside five other detectives, investigates advance-fee scams like those above and a range of other crimes committed using technology.

A rising threat

"Our charter is not based on offence type," Detective Sergeant McDonald said. "It's all about the way the offence is committed and whether specialist technical knowledge or equipment is required for the investigation."

“ *Just as technology helps police and everyday people do their jobs, it can also help people commit crimes...* ”

"A lot of traditional offences are evolving with technology – just as technology helps police and everyday people do their jobs, it can also help people commit crimes, such as fraud, extortion and stalking, in new and more effective ways."

Case in point

A recent advance-fee fraud investigated by the team involved several victims throughout Australia.

"Each of the victims fell for a different version of the scam, but they all ended up sending money to a Nigerian national based in Perth," Detective Sergeant McDonald said. "The offender claimed to be a Malaysian diplomat who was tasked to assist the victims receive their promised windfall, but needed more fees to facilitate the money transfer. Overall, he received more than \$140,000 from the victims. He was found guilty on 51 counts of fraud and passport-related offences and sentenced to six years' imprisonment. He also had to repay each victim."



Detective Sergeant Jamie McDonald is part of the Technology Crime Investigation Team, which investigates a range of crimes committed using technology and provides technical support to the investigations of other specialist crime units.

Community partners

Keeping communities on side

People who come to live in Australia from countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan and regions of Africa do not traditionally view police with confidence and trust, so delivering frontline policing services to these communities can be tough.

In partnership with frontline officers, Western Australia (WA) Police's State Security Investigation Group (SSIG) is continually looking for ways to establish new relationships and enhance existing relationships with WA's culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) communities.

Meeting the leaders

Recently a morning tea was hosted by SSIG and attended by prominent members of WA's Islamic community and WA Police.

Speaking at the event, Counter Terrorism and State Protection's Assistant Commissioner Duane Bell said: "It's my view that WA Police is best placed to serve your community. With more positive community engagement, we'll become further aware of the diverse cultural traits that make up your daily lives."



...we need to work together to encourage your community to report crimes so we can respond quickly.



"Ultimately, we need to work together to encourage your community to report crimes so we can respond quickly. This can only be achieved if your community can place more trust in police and share information with us. Crime towards your community is just as bad as that towards other community groups and none of it is tolerated by WA Police."

SSIG has specially trained investigators, many of whom are multi-lingual and can assist with family liaison or culturally sensitive issues.



More than a hundred police and Islamic community representatives attended the morning tea.



West Metropolitan District Superintendent Mark Gilbert speaks with community representatives.

Off the streets

Small town's drug supply hit hard

Katanning police have taken almost \$30,000 worth of drugs off the streets and made several arrests in two separate seizures recently.

Station Officer-in-Charge, Acting Senior Sergeant Al Keogh said one of the offenders arrested had been on the police radar for a long time.

"This local man was a known distributor of cannabis who we'd been after for several years," he said. "We'd put in a lot of time to catch him and it finally paid off – we apprehended him about 10km south of Arthur River with eight ounces of cannabis packaged up ready for sale."

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They were all fully developed and ready to go – in another week they would have been harvested and on the market.

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The second bust came two days later when police searched a local property based on intelligence from a range of sources, including Crime Stoppers and local inquiries.

"We found 12 plants in a greenhouse at the back of the house, eight of which were quite large – between six and eight feet tall," Acting Senior Sergeant Keogh said. "They were all fully developed and ready to go – in another week they would have been harvested and on the market."

He said the local cannabis supply had all but dried up completely as a result of the two major busts.

"We do our best to reduce the risk of harm to the community posed by illicit drugs and in these cases we're having some very good results."



Acting Senior Sergeant Al Keogh, who stands 6'6" tall, displays one of the recently seized cannabis plants.



Graffiti offenders will soon be cleaning up after themselves as part of a joint Western Australia (WA) Police, Department of Corrective Services and local government program launched in Joondalup recently.

The Juvenile Clean Up Referral Program, developed by the Office of Crime Prevention's Graffiti Team, links young graffitiists with Perth-based clean-up company Graffiti Force.

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It makes juvenile graffiti offenders take responsibility for their own actions.

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Speaking at the launch of the program, which will initially be trialled in Joondalup and Victoria Park, Minister for Police; Emergency Services; Road Safety the Hon. Rob Johnson MLA said the initiative would tackle the graffiti problem in a number of ways.

“It makes juvenile graffiti offenders take responsibility for their own actions,” he said. “It puts them into activities designed to give training and development opportunities and it shows them the rewards of achieving something positive through hard work.

“The program also demonstrates to the broader community that justice is being served.”

Graffiti clean up in WA costs an estimated \$25 million a year.



Director Strategy and Performance Assistant Commissioner Barbara Etter APM speaks at the Juvenile Clean Up Referral Program launch.



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Fitness fanatics

WA Police Academy physical trainers

All Western Australia (WA) Police Academy training aims to give police officers the skills they need to survive and succeed in their new profession, so the team of four health and fitness experts at the Physical Training Unit (PTU) are a vital part of the academy experience.

A range of skills

“Most recruits come in pretty fit and healthy,” says PTU Manager Clint May, a former police officer with a background in the health and fitness field. “Our fitness training during recruit courses isn’t just about keeping the recruits fit; it’s also about giving them the tools to maintain their health and fitness once they graduate and are into the job.”

Beyond basic recruit fitness training and testing, the PTU conducts self-defence classes, rehabilitation programs for injured officers, job-specific training packages for specialist units, adventure training activities and a range of other services throughout the agency.

A high-performance team

Like the other PTU instructors, Mr May has a Degree in Sports Science as well as a broad range of training and experience that helps him meet the unit’s many and varied obligations. He is also a world-class athlete – placing third in the Australian Triathlon Championship and earning a place to compete in the World Triathlon Championship in Budapest this September.

Mr May is not the only high performer in the PTU team being supported by Physical Training Officer Michelle Pude, a fourth-degree black belt in Taekwondo. Originally from the United Kingdom, Ms Pude has set up and run a number of martial arts clubs over the years, has been English, Scottish and Welsh Taekwondo Champion and placed third in the European Championships. She is currently in training to run the 250km Sahara Race – a gruelling event in which competitors essentially run a marathon every day for six days in the desert carrying all their provisions.



The Physical Training Unit team: (L-R) Clint May, Senior Constable Vini Paduano, Michelle Pude and Shane Wood.

“ *...fitness training during recruit courses isn’t just about keeping the recruits fit; it’s also about giving them the tools to maintain their health and fitness...* ”

The unit’s “young gun”, Physical Training Officer Shane Wood, came to PTU after graduating from a sports science degree. With a background in athletics and a range of intense recreational activities including mountain biking and kayaking, Mr Wood likes to test his own limits rather than competing against others. He did, however, support the WA Police team in a number of events at the recent National Police and Emergency Services Games in Hobart, picking up several gold medals in athletics.

Fitness fanatics

WA Police Academy physical trainers

Rounding out the team is the PTU's only uniformed member, Senior Constable Vini Paduano. A veteran of more than 20 years in WA Police and the team's unofficial mentor, Senior Constable Paduano has been training in martial arts since he was six years old and has nationally accredited black belt instructor qualifications in five different systems. He also holds abseiling and roping qualifications, and in 2006 he won the Toughest Competitor Alive competition at the International Police and Fire Fighter Games in Brazil.

"I have a pure passion for instructing and passing on information to the young recruits who come through the academy," he says. "It's a great team to work with because all the instructors here are very serious about their fitness and very passionate about teaching."

Stirring tribute

Police pipers in Sydney's Edinburgh Tattoo

The Western Australia (WA) Police Pipe Band was front and centre at last week's Sydney Edinburgh Tattoo, which attracted more than 80,000 people over four nights.

The Tattoo – staged at the Sydney Football Stadium – was produced by the Edinburgh Castle management team and is only the second time the show has been taken outside Scotland, the last being in Sydney in 2005.

Great exposure

Band Officer-in-Charge and Drum Major Sergeant Brett Bale said the event showcased WA Police in a huge public forum, which would soon also air around the world on Pay TV.

"It was really pleasing to find the WA Police Pipe Band's standard of musicianship and drillwork compared very favourably with the other international and Australian acts," he said.

“ *The show itself ran for more than two hours and, two days before opening night, we did four full run throughs in one day* ”

Sergeant Bale said rehearsals had been numerous and intense, as the acts learned and practiced the drills involved – all made harder by some language barriers.

"The show itself ran for more than two hours and, two days before opening night, we did four full run throughs in one day, starting at 7am," he said.

International performers

The Tattoo featured the pipes and drums of the Royal Scots Dragoons, Black Watch, Royal Fusiliers, Royal Highland Fusiliers, Her Majesty's Royal Marines and the Royal Air Force Marines. Military bands included the Coldstream Guards, the Royal Marines, Australia's Army Navy and Airforce bands, the Chinese People's Liberation Army Band and the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force Steel Orchestra. Norway, the United States of America and Switzerland were also represented alongside Australian police bands from Tasmania, New South Wales and Queensland.

One end of the Sydney Football Stadium was taken up with a million dollar replica of Edinburgh Castle, complete with turrets, drawbridge and cannon.

The WA Police Pipe Band has performed at two Edinburgh Tattoos in the past – 1975 and 1997. Travel costs to the Sydney event were met by the Pipe Band Supporters' Association.



(L-R) Pipe Major Paul Hughes and Pipe Sergeant Iain Westgate in front of the Edinburgh Castle replica at the Sydney Football Stadium.



Performers rehearse on the stadium grounds.



More than 1500 performers rehearsed for the Tattoo.

Meet Moonlight

New police horse donated

The ranks of Western Australia (WA) Police Mounted Section have been bolstered with the inclusion of a new, one year-old filly named Moonlight, donated from an outback breeding program for Australian heritage horses.

Moonlight is a mixed breed Percheron, Arab, Thoroughbred, Waler and comes from a line of horses bred in central WA in the early 20th century for the police and military.

Years of training

Mounted Section Officer-in-Charge Senior Sergeant Glen Potter said Moonlight was still several years away from entering operational service.

"She'll be allowed to grow and build her strength during the next four to five years," he said. "We'll be training her throughout that period, but the more specific police training won't begin until she's about four years old.



Police Mounted Section Stable Hand Jade Fox gets to know Moonlight.

“ *It's important she's allowed to acclimatise to her new role without placing physical or mental stress on her.* ”



Police horse recruit Moonlight meets senior police horse Clyde at the Mounted Section stables.

"At that time, she'll be introduced to the more unique aspects that face police horses and their riders, such as large crowds, protesters, noise and visual disturbances like flashing lights and fire."

Moonlight will also be gradually introduced to public areas in the later stages of her training.

"It's important she's allowed to acclimatise to her new role without placing physical or mental stress on her," Senior Sergeant Potter said.

A heritage breed

Horse breeders Kevin and Katherine Waddington donated Moonlight and are among the founding members of the Outback Heritage Horse Association of WA, which locates, researches and rescues or, if necessary, relocates at-risk old bloodline horses from outback stations and other remote areas throughout the state.



Moonlight sneaks in a quick feed outside the Mounted Section stables.