



Paul Mullett
Secretary

by PAUL MULLETT

On 28th September this year, The Police Association met with the Chief Commissioner and her Senior Management Team. This is the first formal meeting between the Association and the Chief Commissioner in more than 12 months. This meeting was conducted in a co-operative atmosphere with a view to re-establishing professional and consultative dialogue for the benefit of our members. The relationship between the Force and the Association has been recently strained. Several issues have led this difficult relationship evolving between the parties.

We agreed to look forward with a positive and co-operative attitude to resolving the issues that exist between us. These include the matters outlined in Police Association Newsletter 103/06, dated 13 September 2006, which lists a number of matters in dispute. The catalyst for our meeting with the Chief Commissioner was the actions of the Office of Police Integrity in relation to the Armed Offenders Squad. The Association, its members, the broader community and the Law Institute were aghast at the 'show trial' of our members attached to that Squad. Following the State election to be held later this month, the Association will be strident in its lobbying of the new government surrounding issues about the method of operation of the Office of Police Integrity. We want its power to conduct public inquiries, when it does not otherwise have the evidence to put people before an open court, removed. The OPI has displayed a misuse of power which needs to be controlled.

Our meeting with the Chief Commissioner has led to agreement between us in relation to the establishment of an "Armed Offences Taskforce". Most members of the previous Armed Offenders Squad will be eligible to apply for positions in that Taskforce. We have now reached a position where the parties, including our members attached to the previous Armed Offenders Squad, are as satisfied with the outcome as is possible, given the circumstances of the disbanding of their Squad.

A further resolution at our meeting was the joint development of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Force and the Association which provides the framework in which the parties

can discuss future issues affecting our profession generally and specifically the working conditions of our members. This Memorandum of Understanding has an objective to establish a joint approach between the Force and the Association to create a culture of openness, trust, mutual support and respect leading to an effective working relationship. The Memorandum of Understanding also includes the creation of an Executive Taskforce consisting of senior members of the Force and the Association, which will oversee the activities of a Working Group which will also be jointly staffed by the Force and the Association to reach proposed positions around issues that are in dispute. The outstanding issues to be dealt with by the Taskforce and the Working Group include, Enterprise Bargaining, rotation of Commissioned Officers and the Victoria Police Service Medal.

The Premier, Steve Bracks, provided an undertaking at the Delegates Conference held on 14 September this year to establish a Police Registration Board in Victoria. The formation of a Police Registration Board will further enhance our status as professionals and may lead eventually to inter jurisdictional mobility, which means that our members will be able to transfer their skills and professional status to other jurisdictions interstate and even overseas.

The state election on 25 November is an important event for all Victorians. The Police Association is an apolitical organisation. However, our members are invited to closely peruse the election undertakings of the various parties, particularly in relation to community safety and police numbers, and cast their vote accordingly.