



IMPORTANT NOTICE LETTER FROM AFPA VICE PRESIDENT

11th July 2007 – IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

CANBERRA TIMES ARTICLE MISREPRESENTS UNION AND MEMBERS (Tuesday 10 July 2007) (Letter from AFPA Vice President Peter Engler)

The Canberra Times article "Officers masquerading as police, unions say" grossly misrepresents the position of the Australian Federal Police Association (and the Police Federation of Australia) and devalues the critical, frontline role of AFP employees in Aviation Counter-Terrorism First Response and Uniform Protection roles.

The suggestion in the article that the officers themselves are pretending to be police is highly offensive and inaccurate. This is simply not the case. The suggestion that these frontline roles at vital sites around the country, including all major airports, are "security" roles also misunderstands the depth of the roles played by AFP personnel in these functions at home and abroad. In the event of an incident occurring that affects any of these sites these highly skilled members will be providing the first response.

Where the Association(s) have clear concerns are attempts by the AFP (not the officers themselves) to blur the distinction between these frontline response roles and community policing roles in what appears to be an attempt to convey to the public that there are substantially more sworn police members than there actually are. This is misleading to the general public and potentially highly dangerous.

In the past the Association has expressed concerns that members deployed to the Solomon Islands and other locations have been made Special Constables in local police forces without appropriate AFP police training. It is a tribute to all the members involved that they have provided a quality service in these roles despite lack of adequate support in high risk environments.

The Association believes that Aviation CTFR and Uniform Protection members would benefit from clearer statutory powers, including the protections of the "independent office of Constable", and the training that goes with an expansion

of powers. We believe that members in these functions have the potential to provide a policing role alongside their primary duties but that the AFP has a duty of care to provide appropriate training to members before thrusting them in such roles.

This is a path that we have urged the AFP to take rather than playing games with staffing numbers.

Yours sincerely

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Aviation
Vice President
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If you have concerns about issues raised in this bulletin, please contact the AFPA at afpa.industrial@afpa.org.au

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