



# AFPA BULLETIN FOR ALL MEMBERS

28<sup>th</sup> September 2007 – IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

## AFP ATTEMPTS TO “WORKCHOICE” CHAPLAIN

*Dear Members*

*The following information has previously been provided to WA members only but the gravity of them is such that we believe you should all be made aware of them.*

The Australian Federal Police Association has expressed concerns with the attempt to terminate a hardworking, well respected chaplain by Australian Federal Police management despite his ongoing delivery of high quality services in an organisation that supposedly values such pastoral support.

This is WorkChoices at its worst. Where a Government organisation supposedly bound to a framework grounded in ethics and integrity is prepared to consider termination of a highly valued worker without anything that is close to a reasonable justification.

The suggestion that the services of the Chaplain are excess to requirements is absurd. If anything the AFP, despite growth in many functions is desperately understrength in relation to the delivery of chaplaincy services particularly when compared to other police services and the defence forces.

At a time where the AFP is sending more and more members to high risk locations within the region there is a greater need for stronger support services such as the chaplaincy framework.

The Chaplain, an integral part of the Perth Office, was provided with 5 days (including a weekend) to provide a response as to why he should not be terminated as the result of chaplaincy services being “restructured.”

The Association has seen no evidence of this purported restructure and fails to understand how the only chaplaincy service in the West could be regarded as excess to requirements.

The Association understands there has been no formal consultation with the various denominations that provide chaplaincy services and can verify that the Association has not been consulted on any restructure.

The decision maker has provided no detail to support this decision.

The Association suspects that the real motivation behind this move is to undermine the remuneration of all chaplaincy services with no consideration for the damage this does to

the dedicated individual employees affected, the quality of the services delivered and the value that all members place on this fundamental resource.

It is also another attack on a regional office, an office that is already understrength in terms of its operational numbers and has now received a kick in the teeth through the loss of this important support service.

This decision is unethical, unjustified and shameful and the Association calls on the Commissioner to immediately reconsider this decision by the Manager People Services.

Some quotes from members about this decision:

*"I have seen first hand the commitment the Chaplain has to his role, and it would be a very sad day when Perth did not have the opportunity to have a Chaplain available when needed."*

*"The service a chaplain provides is a necessity, looking after our psychological "well being", this is a basic OHS Issue apart from an obvious common sense need."*

*"Do not remove this valuable support resource from the members in Perth."*

*"To dismiss the Chaplain is to dismiss us all. We have a valuable resource here and it would be a travesty to lose him. He provides a very valuable service to us all."*

*"The Chaplain has built up tremendous rapport with people here in Perth office and is an ideal person and fits in extremely well."*

*"He has the respect of the office and is an integral part of the region."*

The treatment of the Chaplain is a matter of serious concern to the Association. We will not resile from protecting our members who are most vulnerable and strongly advocating that they deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

**If you have any concerns about the issues in this bulletin or other industrial queries please contact your local representatives or the AFPA National Office on [afpa.industrial@afpa.org.au](mailto:afpa.industrial@afpa.org.au) for more information.**