

# Office of Police Integrity

**M**embers will all be aware of the recent public hearing conducted on behalf of the Director, Police Integrity ('DPI') where members of The Police Association were obliged to attend and be examined. This was the first public hearing conducted in the 14 months existence of the Office of Police Integrity ('OPI').

The Police Association arranged legal representation for the members attending that hearing. We have made public our position on the way in which those members were treated and on the stated necessity to hold a public, rather than private, hearing.

We have made, and continue to make, appropriate representations over the manner in which matters regarding Police Association members are handled by the DPI.

Members should be aware that examinations conducted by the DPI can be also be held in private.

If a member is served with a summons to be examined by the DPI or his delegate, under Section 17 of the *Evidence Act 1958*, the summons may well be accompanied by a written notice of confidentiality.

Such a (confidentiality) notice is provided for at Section 86KA of the *Police Regulation Act 1958* and places stringent requirements on the recipient, the breaching of which may lead to a criminal charge [under S.86KA (3)]. A conviction for that offence carries a possible fine of 120 penalty units, 12 months imprisonment, or both.

The OPI will also provide a document to Police Association members that outlines their rights to legal representation and the

way in which that representation can be arranged.

***To avoid any possible breach of Section 86KA(3) it is imperative that members implicitly follow those instructions.***

For some time now The Police Association has published articles, in editions of the Journal, that dealt with the OPI. We have explained various provisions of the *Police Regulation Act 1958* that create the OPI and govern its' operations during our visits to police stations and work places.

Members have been encouraged to acquaint themselves fully with the Act, particularly those areas that apply to the OPI and its' interaction with our members.

We reiterate that members must be aware of those provisions – you do not have to be suspected of a criminal or discipline offence to receive a summons to be examined. You may be a witness or a person on the periphery of what may appear a completely innocuous matter. You may not even know anything about the matter to be investigated.

The Police Association urges all members to make themselves aware of the complete details of any legislation that could impact upon you or your employment.

If members are unsure of the issues, require clarification on any aspect of the *Police Regulation Act 1958* or any other legislation or policy that can impact on your employment, please ring the Discipline/Legal Section at the Association, on 9495 6899.

Contact numbers are available for urgent 'after-hours' assistance to members, by dialling the Association switch-board on the above number.

## Meet your delegates

**O**ver the coming months *The Police Association Journal* will be profiling some of the Association Delegates – those men and women who are the voice of the membership.

This month we meet Senior Constable Mark Squires, the Association Delegate for Region 4, Division 3B.



Mark is stationed at Yarra Ranges TMU and his area of responsibility covers the whole of Yarra Ranges – Mt Evelyn, Monbulk, Lilydale, Olinda, Warburton, Belgrave, Healesville, Yarra Glen and Yarra Junction.

During his 15 years with the Victoria Police Force, Mark has experienced the support offered by The Police Association first hand. In 1996 he was involved in a police accident and faced criminal charges. Mark was suspended with pay in June the next year.

The first trial was aborted in April 1998. In December 1998 a

second jury acquitted Mark of all charges and he was back at work the very next week. This experience has shown Mark how important the Association is to all members and the services and support it offers members, particularly those facing charges like Mark.

"The Association was so good and stood by me 100 percent. And Paul Mullett was so supportive," explains Mark. "Now it is time for me to step up to the plate to represent and support the members in my area."

Region 4, Division 3B was ably represented by Terry Avery. When he decided to leave the position Mark was ready to move into the position.

"Terry was a great delegate and we all appreciated what Terry did. When the Delegates' Elections were held last year I didn't want to stand against him because he was doing such a good job. When he stood down I knew it was time."

In his position with the TMU, Mark doesn't like giving tickets – he would rather save lives. And now he is working with the Association for the well-being and conditions of the members in Yarra Ranges.