



TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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**NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY
CANBERRA
MONDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2016**

Andrew Colvin: Can I just say a couple of words to start; firstly can I echo the comments of Carmel about acknowledging the traditional owners of land on which we gather Ngunnawal people, the elders past, present, as well as their future elders that are emerging. Can I say thank you very much to the ACT division of the IPAA. I don't know whether a Police Commissioner has spoken in IPAA forums before, if we haven't, we should because I think it's a very relevant forum for law enforcement, more broadly, but particularly the AFP to have a voice and to be heard. Thank you very much for thinking of me. Thank you to everybody that decided that to come out this morning, I hope I don't disappoint. I am pleased to see some people, so many of my colleagues, particularly, both from AFP, but across the Commonwealth more directly.

Many things that I wanted to say when Carmel approached me and Drew said why don't you come talk about culture and change. There's a million things going through my head and there's a million things that I could say and I could talk about. What I'd like to do today is say a few prepared words, and properly debunk a few myths, and address a few issues head on. Then what I really look forward to is a little bit of question and answer.

Before I do, of course, thank you Carmel, for your comments about our member in Melbourne. Of course, the AFP family is still in mourning for a loss of a dear and very long serving colleague in Melbourne, and I guess it says a lot about the pressures of policing in many ways. Without wanting to talk too much about the circumstances of that one out of respect for the family, there is something in that for all of us to think about and reflect on. Let me put my glasses on.

Let me be clear up front, the AFP is a great organisation. In fact, we are so much more than that. We are an organisation that is central to our national security. We're central to the confidence that the Australian community has in government, and the confidence they have in their own safety. We are a national institution that should, and I would like to think does, show leadership on issues of national importance.

The reforms and changes I want to talk to you about today are not about fixing the AFP. We're not broken. It's about making us the very best organisation that we can be. It's about making sure we're as good as we can be. We're also an organisation that I'm immensely proud of. We're an organisation that I will defend against criticism. We're an organisation whose members deserve my support, the leadership support, and government support. I think they know that they get that.

That's why August 22, 2016 was a really good day for the AFP. It was a day, of course, that along with Elizabeth Broderick, whose very well known to you all, I launched and announced the results of the culture and inclusiveness review into the AFP. It was a day that we decided not to take the easy path anymore, but to show genuine leadership as an organisation, and as individuals and to say that as good as we felt that we were, we can be better. And better starts with being prepared to look deep into yourselves and asked the really difficult questions that we did.

Now it's not that the AFP's culture was terrible. In fact, Elizabeth found that we had an organisation that was engaged. We had members who were motivated, passionate

about our role. Importantly for me, they were ready for change. Our attrition rate is low, it's almost unhealthily low. People don't want to leave the organisation. We know that our members enjoy the work they do. They enjoy coming to work every day. After all it, is really important work that we do.

In 2016, we were again voted the top public sector employer and ninth overall out of all employers in Australia for LGBTI inclusion. We're clearly getting some things right, but as I said earlier, this was about getting things better. Equally, I think over time what we found as we'd become complacent. We'd allowed bad behaviours to become normalised and not to be questioned. I don't think the AFP alone in the space. I think the challenge that I'd like to put out to all government sector leaders is to ask honest questions of your own organisations. Make sure that we're not just normalising behaviour that we shouldn't be accepting.

We can't pretend these aren't issues more broadly across society and therefore across organisations. Now while the report launched on the 22nd of August created some terrible headlines and it contained many facts and statistics that I'm not proud of and I'm sure my colleagues in the AFP aren't proud of.

The real benefit of the report lies deep down beneath those headlines when you start to look at what were the causes that were identified. The real substance of the report pointed to elements of our culture that have been allowed to slip to a point where members no longer were prepared to question. Bad practise, sloppy process by systems, and bad behaviour, that was accepted as normal. That for me, as Commissioner, is the terminal part of this report.

Essentially this report was about how we treat each other though, both as individuals. But also as an organisation. It was about respect, the respect that we have for ourselves, and the respect that we have, and should have for each other. Left unaddressed, these normalised behaviours would eventually be the undoing of what is otherwise a fantastic and outstanding organisation.

organisation is my key theme that I keep thinking about. The AFP is a structured and disciplined organisation. We need to be to do the work, but an over-reliance from leadership on structure and discipline to change culture will always fail. What we have to do is focus on the role of integrity, the role of identity, and the role of organisational health if we want to build and change culture. Now fundamental to this is identifying and accepting the drive and the role that diversity plays in culture and organisations in society, is critically important.

At its very best and as a core principle of policing, we are and we should be a reflection of the community that we serve. We should actually mirror society. We are often the earliest indicators of societal change and we often see things before the community has even realised that it's impacting them. That's how adaptable crime has become in the modern era.

Now I could give you many reasons why working on gender parity or diversity and inclusiveness as an example is imperative for an organisation, not just policing. For a

start the law says that we need to address this. There's ample law that says we need to address these issues. Company bottom line's say that we need to address these issues. Talent management objectives, leadership objectives tell us that we need to address these issues. For me, importantly in the AFP, capability goals; to be the most capable organisation we can, tells me that we need to address some of these issues.

The truth is, of course, our own moral compass should tell us that we need to address these issues. For the AFP, each and every one of those issues is relevant. Each and every one of them in isolation should be enough to motivate me to want to make the reforms across the organisation. I can tell you that it all played a really strong role in my own personal motivation, but they're also very practical reasons for change in the AFP.

Diversity of thought is one that I want to talk about. Crime has become increasingly complex and the traditional law enforcement solutions and responses are beginning to be shown for the limitations. We can't keep doing things the way we always done it. We need new thinking. Thinking that reflects the community's views and the community's expectations. Thinking that reflects the diversity of the community.

Now while gender is the focus of much of the work that we're currently doing, the truth is this is simply a starting point. It's only the first step. If I cannot achieve greater parity in the AFP for a group that represents over 50% of the community, how can I possibly hope to build a culture that encourages diversity in thought? Diversity of language? Diversity of education? Diversity of skill? Diversity of culture? The list, of course, can go on. An inclusive culture that more appropriately reflects the community that we serve and the challenges we face. That's what we have to strive for.

Now we haven't been sitting on our hands this last few years and many of the changes that we need to make, and I'm making, before were evident to us before Elizabeth did her review. What we needed was a unity of purpose and we needed fresh ideas if we were going to make this work and were going to make it stick. Elizabeth's report did just that.

It galvanised the organisation into action. We've already instituted many changes and many others will follow. Core amongst these reforms are principles designed to improve leadership at all levels of the organisation, not just in the senior levels. To remove notions of nepotism and cronyism from our system. To reform our promotion system and our performance evaluation models. To strengthen transparent and importantly consistent decision-making across the organisation particularly if it relates to individual's deployments or individual mobility. To introduce an all roles flex model; something that seems odd in a policing organisation. To ensure that we have the best mechanisms possible to attract and retain the best talent that we can get our hands on.

Now many of these reforms, you would say, are common sense. Of course, they are. Why wouldn't we want to make sure that we maintain regular contact with members who are on long-term leave? Members who have taken time off to raise a family? Members who have taken time off to pursue other vocations? Members who have taken time off to learn new skills? Why wouldn't we want to ensure that a member's journey through the AFP seasoned with the very best opportunity to excel, to progress, to

achieve their own objectives, their own goals? Why wouldn't I want to ensure that we are treating the symptoms of bigger problems in an organisation; unexplained absences for one, early and comprehensively rather than just on the surface.

The immediate change that we made after the release of the report was the introduction of the AFP Safe Place Concept. Now we weren't unique in this, we modelled what we're doing on successful concepts seen elsewhere. The Safe Place is just that. It's a safe place. It's victim focused and it provides holistic support and advice to members who are experiencing, have experienced, or even if they're aware of sexual harassment, sexual assault, serious bullying, serious harassment that is within the AFP, or even connected to the AFP.

The Safe Place provides an opportunity for members to be heard, to be provided with various options, to be given a voice, and to be listened to. It gives them a way forward. The irony, I think to me of the safe place concept is that it actually mirrors so much of how modern policing, ourselves included, treat victims outside of the AFP, or outside of our organisations. We hadn't developed our own internal practises to match what we had been doing for many, many years to victims outside of the organisation.

The report told us that the lived experience for too many of our members was they were victimised, time and time again by the processes that we were asking them to step through in order to have their cases heard. Now in the five short months since the Safe Place commenced operation, we seen many members reach out to report bad behaviour, but also to seek advice on how to avoid bad situations. How best to manage poor performance. How to manage workplace conflict appropriately, which is the cause of so many of these issues. In that time, the Safe Place has received 167 referrals and over 120 phone calls for advice. Of those 167 referrals, 40 have already been resolved to the satisfaction of the victim, or from the complainant.

Now some of them are historical, some of them are contemporary, but they're all relevant. What I'm pleased about is we're vastly improving our responsiveness, because that's the basic principle of natural justice. The Safe Place has also facilitated many storytelling sessions, designed to give members the opportunity to share their story safely and to give AFP members and particular AFP Executive Members, a true sense of the corrosive impact that bad behaviour has within an organisation.

These stories haven't necessarily been the worst of the worst, sometimes they can be simple behaviours that otherwise go unnoticed that have such an enormous impact on the individual concerned. Having been through this myself and sat down and spoke to many members in the organisation about their stories, it's compelling. If it doesn't galvanise you to action, there's something wrong.

It's still early. It is very early; we're five months into something that is years, if not decades, in the making. The feedback has been positive. I've received comments from members about feeling empowered to call out bad behaviours. I've received comments and feedback about people feeling valued and that people are feeling supported. These are small steps, but they're important confidence building steps. I never thought the change would occur overnight and I never thought that it would be easy.

Now of course, the other major reform that we've already instituted prior to the report was the introduction of gender targets. Controversial, I get that. Yes, it is, but it's necessary in my mind for one very simple reason. If we don't change something, then nothing is going to change. We have to make change if we expect something to change. We haven't been doing that.

We've previously tried to address, in my time in the AFP, gender inequity and inequality across the organisation many times. Especially in terms of trying to balance the numbers, but despite best efforts and I know best intentions as well, nothing ever changed. We're forcing that change. We've introduced or we are introducing gender targets and gender-based policies across all of the AFP's business. In our recruitment, our course opportunities, our promotion opportunities, everything that we can do. We want balance in our teams, our investigational teams. We need to get proper balance across all the AFP.

Now I know I can hear the quiet gasps that say this isn't fair. Not meritorious and I even know and let me confront this upfront, that there are women in the AFP and women more broadly; possibly some of you are sitting out there now saying that you don't want to be seen as being successful just because you are female. I understand all of that.

Let me say this, it is fair. What's not fair about trying to correct 200+ years of systemic bias that's been built into our systems that have created a patently unlevel playing field. Let everyone get to start line at the same time and the same place with the same opportunity. Then just let competition thrive. We all joke that women need to be twice as good to prove themselves twice as much, but the truth is, it's not a joke. It's actually reality in so many ways and we should be ashamed of that. There is nothing contradictory about being a merit based organisation and having gender targets. We've claimed to be a merit-based organisation since our inception, but if we are honest, it has not served our diversity very well at all.

If that is true, we need to redefine what we mean by merit. It's not about looking in the mirror each day as you get up to go into some process and going, no I'm going to take two more that, thanks very much. It's not about that at all. It's about making sure the best person gets the job regardless of the conscious and unconscious biases that sit in our systems. Regardless of whether they followed the same path that you did, whether they did the same things in the job that you did, or that they have been through the same furnace that you did. It's got nothing to do with that.

That's not merit, that's replication. In the AFP, and I suspect in many organisations, merit has just effectively sustained the status quo. We've used it to just repeat what we've already got, because we all think that what we got is the best. For merit to exist, we must ensure that everyone gets an equal chance to compete and that we're being open-minded and inclusive about what the outcome might be.

Now I'm not naïve to the concerns of the many women across the AFP who feel uncomfortable with some of these changes. I get that, however the truth is I need courageous women and courageous men for that matter, to stand up with the organisation and take this journey with us. I have to say, in the five months since we've

put this report out there and a little bit longer since we've been making some of the significant changes, the early signs are that women are coming forward in greater numbers than previously and putting their hands up.

If that's any indication of their willingness to participate, then we are going to be in good shape. Gender targets and gender policies are not designed to discriminate. The path for promotion, the path for opportunity in organisations still exists, but now competition's going to be on a level playing field. What's not fair about that?

We need to rethink what has gotten us into the position that we are in, and that this is about changing our personal attitudes, and the organisational systems to ensure that the best talent moves through the organisation. Not just the traditional talent, because those two things are very often different. At the end of the day it's about ensuring that we genuinely do have the right person in the right job, at the right time. To the sceptics of some of this and some of the change that we're going through, I asked two things and I make no apologies.

One, that you take a moment to consider the very real position of prejudice that your opposition likely comes from and think about that. The other one is don't wait me out because we're not just going to give up on this one. We're going to see this through and we will drive these reforms through the organisation. If you think you can wait it out, don't. This change will continue and we will see it through.

I make no apologies for the fact that it will upset some people. Real change hurts. Real change is not easy. There will be people who will be detractors. I also though, understand why that opposition exists and I get that as well. Human nature will always view change and the impacts of change through their own individual lens. I do it. Everyone does it. It's human nature. Sometimes this might seem unfair. It might seem that a rightful passage has been made harder, or an opportunity that I thought I had has now be made more difficult, or maybe even a door has been closed. I get that, but if we're to improve as an organisation and show that leadership nationally that I talked about before, then we're going to have to lift ourselves beyond that. These reforms are designed to lift everyone to compete equally and be the very best they can be. Male, female, from linguistically, culturally diverse backgrounds or not.

Real change, genuine change is not easy. The hardest part about these reforms and about accepting our own limitations and acknowledging where our culture is letting us down, is implicit acknowledgement that we've all been part of it in some way. Now I've been part of the AFP for over 27 years. Many in the AFP have been around a long time. I'm as much a part of the culture that we are leaving behind and that we want to jettison, as I am a part of the culture that I want us to get to. That's difficult for us to accept. It's confronting when we look into our own personal histories.

Let me turn quickly to a slightly broader change discussion and leave you with a few thoughts about some other aspects of the AFP Transformation Agenda. As I said earlier, culture is not created simply by structure and discipline. I believe it's created by integrity, identity, and organisational health. Our integrity is strong. We are, of course, a policing organisation whose foundation is built on open, transparent and accountable

practises and operations. This is where our legitimacy comes from with the public.

The nature of the AFP's business means that we will often attract criticism because what we do is controversial, but our integrity is strong and today is not the day to unpack that further. In this, the 100th year of Commonwealth policing; a 100 years of Commonwealth policing, I seek to reimagine the AFP of the future. I look back at 100 years, shows that policing at the Commonwealth level has changed many, many times. Different agencies are being created in that time, they've been merged, they've been folded. All while the Commonwealth remit and expectations have changed.

In the nearly 40 years alone since formation of the AFP, it has evolved from a smaller agency with very sharp remit to a business that is now well over \$1 billion plus in terms of our business, with a broad range of responsibilities. Our place within the Australian psyche, within the Australian Law Enforcement construction is mature and it's secure. We've developed a strong history of success. We've risen to challenges and we've quickly responded to threats to Australians and Australia more broadly. It's a strong heritage of which I know AFP members and the community should rightfully be proud. I know that I am.

The pace of change in society though is rapid and we can't hope to simply evolve in response to the way society is changing, and the environment is evolving. We must be more pre-emptive in shaping the environment of the future and the organisation of the future. This will underpin our identity going forward. That's why we commissioned the AFP Futures paper.

The Futures paper is not about trying to predict the future of crime. We'd do our head in trying to do that, but it's about making informed judgements of the skills, the capabilities and the focus areas for the AFP, or what they need to be, and what we need to prioritise as we move forward. Now this journey commenced with the release of a strategic context paper and a capability focus restructure of the AFP in mid-2015. Many of you, I'm sure, in this room have probably seen the strategic context paper.

Since then, the consultation work we've done surrounding that paper has informed elements of a much broader transformation. It's fair to say that many of our stakeholders were surprised by the true breadth and depth of the AFP's operations and of our responsibilities. These stretch across local, national, and international policing. It makes the AFP unique within Australia and it makes AFP quite unique within world policing. Depending on who you ask about the AFP, you'll get a different response about what we do and who we are.

That's one of our challenges. It's largely because the current operating environment the AFP works in is dynamic, it's complex, but it's also extremely broad. It's very wide. Now our scan of the agency's future operating environment makes it clear that it's just going to be more of the same. It's going to be harder. It's going to be faster and it's going to have technology at its core. We need to adjust our focus to ensure that we're ready to meet these challenges. That we are driven by our capabilities, our technologies, our skills, our people, and our adaptability.

This glimpse into the future AFP, coupled with our own internal reforms to inclusiveness and organisational health, are just some of the many bodies of work we have underway. Work continues towards a foundational capability plan, and towards a technology roadmap. Towards a future orientated education strategy and a workforce plan. All based upon the work we've done to review, reform, and reshape ourselves.

Although I'm unable to talk about it publicly just yet, the AFP has also recently subject to a functional efficiency review by our very own Carmel sitting down there on the end. It's a review that I welcomed and I embraced it. For me, the process of going through such an exercise, a process that saw our business and our operating model scrutinised by external reviewers was illuminating, but it was also encouraging. It's highlighted a number of issues that were not what I expected and it simply underscores the need for the AFP to continue on this transformation journey.

Everything that I've just spoken about today is within our power as an organisation to shift or adjust. This is about us. We just need to make sure that we have a plan and that we have a vision. That we understand that we want to do it differently to what we've done before. We need to refine our focus, understand the demands on the organisation, and make sure our investment is where it needs to be.

Importantly, and this is important because it's not the way police normally do things. It may not always be at the visible end of the organisation where we place the investment, but my commitment is this; it will make us better at doing the important work that we do. Now I know all of this sounds like a lot of reviews and it has been. The thing I'm proudest of is the fact that the AFP continues to perform and achieve incredible results to protect Australians, even while we're prepared to take a look deep down inside ourselves to see how we can do things better.

2016 was a tough year in many ways. We looked inside ourselves more than most organisations would ever be prepared to open themselves up to, but it has set us up well as an organisation to take us forward in both the business and a culture sense. At the end of the day, though we are a police force; we are and we should always be judged on our operational results, but in this respect complacency is our greatest enemy. We will achieve our best operational results when our culture, our identity, and our organisational health is where it should be.

This is where I want finish, by coming full circle. When you strip away the horrible headlines, the really, rightfully disappointing figures that came out of the work that Elizabeth and her team did, and you look beyond that. You delve into those underlying causes of why our culture isn't what it should be. At its core, I believe, are signs of people under pressure, that people are stressed, and that people are tired. To be honest, this is what the FER has told us also.

As Commissioner, as a CEO of any organisation, organisational health and culture has to be front of mind. A well-trained, well-equipped, diverse, inclusive, and skilled workforce is what we must strive for. If we do that, the operational results will take care of themselves. Thanks very much for listening and happy to take whatever questions you've got.

Carmel McGregor: I guess I'm wondering and you've said it five months in, but how are the reforms going and how can you tell progress? You've sort about the Safe Places and there's activity there, but as you've also pointed out, a lot of this is very confronting for people. Change is difficult. It would be tempting to just try and wait you out. What's your genuine sense of how it's going at this point?

Andrew Colvin: Look, we're only five months in and I think we're in that difficult phase now where it would be very easy for the organisation to just slip back into those normalised behaviours. It's just like, well, we did that in August and you know, down front here is Assistant Commissioner Ray Johnson, he's got responsibility and good luck, Ray, we'll watch and we hope you do it successful. We're in that difficult phase now, we've got to keep the motivation and we got to keep the pressure on the organisation. No, you can't slip back in to normalised behaviours, you have to understand that we're not, as I said, you can't wait us one out, this is going to happen.

That comes down to leadership and at the moment, you know, I'm always frustrated with the pace of change. I'd love for this stuff to happen overnight, but the reality is it's entrenched. Any change that's worth doing is going to take a long time. I think now we're in that phase where we just got to grind this through. We're not going to stop and we're going to keep sending the message. If we think that we're losing traction, then we're going to get out there and double-down and we can going a little bit harder, but it really does come down to leadership brief.

Nothing will change in the AFP because I say so. I can change a guideline or a procedure. I can sign off on something, but the truth is unless it makes sense to the person in Sydney, or the person in the Solomon Islands, or whatever it might be down the road here in Canberra. Does it make sense to them and their team leader wants them to do it and their superintendent wants them to do it, it's not going to happen. This is about finding, probably in an organisation of our size ... we're just over, we're about 6,500. I need several thousand people to own, invest in, and believe in this change. Then we'll start to get momentum.

We're in that phase now where we're finding those champions so that this isn't just about Andrew Colvin standing up, banging out about this every now and then or, or Ray, or the executive team. It's about grassroots change in the organisation. My sense from what Elizabeth told us, my own perspective from what I hear, is that the organisation is ready for it, welcoming it. They want stability, but it's going to take time. There's frustration, but that's natural.

Carmel McGregor: One of the things that happens to organisations when this is such a ... well for the large part, quite controversial. You have the commentariat, the media offering helpful insights, such as you've been captured by some feminist folly and now just ordered a [inaudible 00:28:20] crown. How do you respond to that and what impact does that have when you are trying to change hearts and minds of any sort.

Andrew Colvin: I guess a probably wear it as a badge of honour. There are some people out there that are very vocal and ,I won't mention names I think people know the main ones that have been critical of the organisation, critical of me, exactly as you say that I've been

captured. I like the fact that I get put up there with the likes of David Morrison now and I don't say that for me, it's because it's about the organisation. The people who are highlighting and realising what we're doing, then that's a good thing.

There's a couple articles in particular that were in the Daily Tele a little while ago; around Christmas, or just before Christmas. What I was interested was how the organisation reacted to that, and it was really instructive. We have an internal forum in the organisation that, it's probably only 50 people that regularly comment on this forum, but there's hundreds of people who watch what others say. By and large, it's been more just airing and venting some views. It was interesting that article came up on the forum and it got put up there. What I started to see for the first time because I do read the forums, so anyone here from AFP here that gets on the forums, I do read it. I don't comment, but I do watch. I don't have a problem with it, I think it's great. People should air their views, I don't actually have an issue with it at all. I smile a lot at the things that are said and I actually pay attention at the things that are genuine in there.

It was really interesting, people self-corrected. People came out and males and females in the organisation came out and self-corrected on those reports. They said, "Well no, I don't believe that," or "that's got no credibility to with me." I thought, wow, that's really interesting because that's not the way I expected it to go. I thought it might be a bit of a catalyst for more negativity, but it wasn't at all. I took a lot of heart and encouragement from that. It's giving voice to the silent majority as most things are.

Question: Hi Andrew, thanks very much for your talk. I'm Bronwen Overton-Clarke I'm the ACT Governments Public Service Commissioner. You talked about many, many years of inherent bias. You talked about jobs being flexi-jobs. One of the things that I'm very mindful of in ACT Government is that we have a huge number of part-time workers, but even just today in the Canberra Times is a report of a couple of Commonwealth departments where there's an expectation that women won't take maternity leave until they reach a certain level, allegedly, putting off having children. There is I think a huge community bias to the fact that it will be the women who take the time off and look after the kids.

Andrew Colvin: Yep

Question: I just put to you that one of the things that we've all got to tackle is that inherent community bias of, needing to have fathers as much as mothers step up to the plate, it becoming more of a societal norm, that either parent will be returning to the workforce in a part-time role. I really think that's one of the inherent community biases. I just wanted your comments on that.

Andrew Colvin: Look thank you. Yeah you're absolutely right and I think that to me that's why an organisation like the AFP, I believe people pay attention to what we do. I think we're an organisation that has a responsibility to show leadership. Now I'm not naïve, us making these changes aren't going to all of a sudden lead to a wave of societal change about what the role of women, or men in the family environment. But it's got to start somewhere. And the more organisations that start to do it, the more my old leaders particularly, but leaders generally stand up and talk about this the better.

Then we have to get our systems right. Now you could look in the AFP, and by and large, even more than by and large, we have all our systems and processes right. We follow the legislation to the letter of the law, we had some great guidelines about flexibility of work, about what we should be doing when people take long service leave, or maternity leave, or whatever it is. Great provisions. You can have all the provisions in the world, if it's not being followed by the culture of the organisation then it doesn't get through.

So what we were finding was, middle level ranks, and I'm not trying to point to them, had their own biases. So they would be saying things like "I don't want you on my team, because your about to go and have child". We've just got to stop that, so we're trying to flip that on its head now.

So one of the things we've done of course, I guess it's difficult for people to get their head around, how a policing organisation that works on a roster, could be all roles flex. Well we've said, default all roles are flex, and if someone puts in an application for a position to be carried out flexibly or part-time, and the answer is "no", then it's going to be censor checked higher up. So if there's any answers of "no", it's going to bounce straight up and somebody else is going to have a look at that. Whereas what was happening is Sergeants and Team Leaders, because they're worried about what that need to manage. So people were just saying "no" because it was easier. So we've got to change that.

The other thing though with that, we're not going to change society quickly, but we've got to make sure that our role leave practises, and our maternity leave practises are equal for men and women if we can. And that's a legislative issue we've got to tackle in the longer term. But the only thing I want to do in this space, my own experience of my own wife who was in the AFP, and our own journey is probably something to learn from as well.

Taking leave and then coming back, people who take time off to raise a family, don't lose the skills they had before they went off. They actually come back with better skills. They've probably got better time management, patience, and tolerance than they had before they left. But we just naturally, go oh they're moving off for two years, or 18 months or whatever it might be. You've got to go back and prove yourself again. Then those silly, unconscious, conscious I'm not sure, could be conscious biases that were built into our system. So we've got to change that, and that's what we're trying to do and hopefully we might make a broader impact on the community. But I want to get the AFP right.

Question: Thank you very much.

Question: Thank you for your address Andrew, Katrina Cooper from Foreign Affairs. You've talked about being five months now into the implementation, into the tough stuff, and the need for driving cultural change and bringing the leadership and others on board. I'm interested in the practical elements of that, and what level of thought you've given, or what you may have implemented, or put in place just try and drive that cultural change. Things like linking performance or promotion or whatever to demonstrated leadership in this regard, or sponsorship, talent management that requires buy-in from across the

organisation and whether you think they will be effective, or whether you think that the messaging and the leadership itself will be sufficient to drive that cultural change.

Andrew Colvin: Ah, okay. So a couple of things, no one thing is going to resolve that and drive the change alone. We're literally trying to get anything we can and we'll see how it goes. We are working on improving our top-down communication. As I've seen in many musters as I travelled around the organisation lately, they might be getting sick of hearing from me or from the Senior Executive, but they can always hit delete on the message or turn the volume off on the video if they're sick of me. I'd rather them to have the option to know what I'm thinking and what I expect than not know. So we're trying to force information down, that's one thing.

Partly this is about very visible over-signs of support, so all of the SES, we're working through a process, but certainly all the senior leadership group have signed up to a statement about culture and inclusiveness. Yes, it's a statement, yes you could say "well that's great they just signed it", but these are small measures that we're holding ourselves to account for.

We're also changing some processes, so performance evaluations are a really tricky one. I think that drives so many of our problems and our cultural issues. Avoidance of conflict, personal biases against individuals. We don't have the answer on performance evaluation models but we're looking into completely rework ours and bring a more objective, way of looking at it. We haven't got that one worked out.

little things around promotion for instance, so we've recently trialled from the last round of promotions to Superintendent, which I guess in public service talk is about an EL2 level. For us we did it as a blind application process. It wasn't easy. It was not easy for the panel that sat on that, but all of the applications, there was 300 odd of them were clearly de-identified. Now of course we're not that big of an organisation you can sometimes tell who you're reading about, but it made a big difference to the perception that we were going to do this in a transparent and open way. We're absolutely making sure, we always had the policy that panels should be diverse, but what can I say, we become normalised and sloppy and hadn't always done that. So we're being adamant about the diversity on the panel.

The other thing that we're doing very differently is, policing as in many organisations, you often get promoted because you're good at the job you do, not because you're going to be good at a job we want to promote you to. That's a real technical failing of organisations like the AFP. You're a great sergeant and you're a great operation's resource, you're going to be an awesome superintendent. You won't actually be bothered to do superintendent, because you don't have the leadership, and management skills, and communication skills to be at that high level, but you're good as a sergeant. What we've been doing is putting too much emphasis on their technical skills, and their operational abilities and not enough on the management and leadership. So we're rebalancing that now, and there's a very clear focus for all panels whether they be promotions or just opportunities around leadership and management.

Now we can't just say that, we also have to introduce training for people. We've got to

make sure that there's a leadership path left across the whole organisation not just in the executive. I expect leadership out of the recruits on day one out of college. It's different to what they expect from me, but they need to understand what that leadership upward looks like and how it's going change. So there's a wealth of things we're doing in that space, no one, no five are going to resolve it, but it's top and bottom.

Question: Hi Andrew, Fran Freeman from the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. First thing to congratulate you on your talk was really interesting. I was thinking that the AFP is relatively speaking is very public government agency. So I'd be interested to know how you think the public's perception of your performance was. How will you know if any of that get weighed through in terms of the public performance, and how you might manage that?

Andrew Colvin: Yeah, good question. We've debated for quite a while in the AFP whether we should do public confidence testing We haven't generally done that. A lot of similar organisations or police forces do. That would be one way, and we're actively having discussions, should we go out and test the market and see what people think

That aside, you get a pretty good sense from other things as well. Social media is the new way to test the public appetite and the public feelings. We get pretty good responses to that. There's a lot of people who are detractors of course but by and large we get good responses. I think you can look behind headlines in the media, as I do sometimes and get a feel for the way the media is reporting about you, the way the media is treating you. Because that reflects, or maybe it doesn't actually, but it should reflect the communities expectations and the communities views. So there's ways to do that.

But the response to us releasing the report was really quite interesting. There was some really negative, ugly headlines, but most of the commentary and most of the analysis was very positive about the sorts of things we can do. I personally only need one or two positive comments to push aside tens or hundreds of negative comments, because you know that they're coming from the silent majority. And I think the public are on board with this, by and large the public just wants us to do our job of course. So they may not always see how this makes them safer or our response times better, but by and large I think they see the AFP as a national institution of trying to show leadership and leave it at that.

Question: Hi Andrew, I'm Steph Boyd from PriceWaterhouseCoopers. Thank you very much for your address. The question I have is around your transformation journey. I think you've got some particular complexities, obviously because of your industrial relations context, and obviously your high retention rates. Most organisations that are on this sort of journey do look at strategies around turnover. So for me I think, one of the things that jumps out is the opportunity to be very considered around the simples as opposed to the systems that potentially sort of got to play with in that sort of workforce, management space. So I'd just like you to maybe provides us an insight into, how those sort of cultural systems' sort of popped up? What are the key issues in that space? What sort of things, I guess levers go you think you've got to pull to gain some traction around

some of those?

Andrew Colvin: Yep, that's a difficult question. Which is why we actually go outside of the organisation a lot, to organisations like yours to ask for help on how to do this.

There's not as many levers in an organisation as you actually think, and our attrition is one of the best ways to inform, reshape, refresh an organisation. And when your attrition rate hovers below 3% you're not getting a lot of turnover. So it's very difficult to change the organisation. So then you're forced down paths of voluntary redundancies and large industrial workplace actions like that. None of us want to do that, because you know from previous experience.

Some of the signs that we have though that we need to do things differently, is one we have an ageing workforce. Average age of an AFP officer is, someone can correct me down the front, I think it's 42. Yep. It's 42. That's fine, that might mean nothing at all but a lot of the policing is done by people younger than 42. It also means that if I look at our executive cadre, our SES cadre, and I look at the next level down our superintendent cadre. Our superintendent cadre's is actually average age the same or older than my SES cadre. My SES cadre is a bulk, in a group moving through the organisation together. So I've got to prepare for the future and work out how to refresh that as well.

Now levers aren't easy, these are discussions around government. I'm not going to obviously talk about those discussion. I guess there's range, there's a couple of things. One the things is that what we need to focus on, Elizabeth and her team brought this to our attention is, too many people in the AFP think they're not valued outside the organisation. That's not right, we are valued outside of the organisation. In fact the desire and quest for our skills go well beyond our policing skills, and we need to understand that. I think it's always that adage that "I'll stay here because I'm safe, and I'm comfortable" rather than take the step out and realise that there's some good things outside. That's one of the things.

I want to improve people's confidence to take a bold step. Part of that though is saying if you take outside, I will want you back at some point, all things being equal. Whereas in the past culture in policing was, there's nothing more ex than an ex-cop. Once, you leave us you're gone. That's old archaic, prehistoric thinking. People want to step outside the organisation, gain new skills, see what they're talents like outside, then good on them. If they want to come back at some point, and they've got skill sets that we need, they'll have them back.

So levers aren't, I can't just pull a lever and drop people out of the organisation. I wish I could, I don't wish I could. No seriously, I wish I had those types of levers that could make the adjustments easily. It just comes back to, well it's going to take a long time.

Carmel McGregor: So I'm also interested in how you prepare for such a big gig, and how when you applied for it, what was in your mind and what has equipped you to take on such a significant and volatile role?

Andrew Colvin: I only expected that question. What prepared me? I think in any career you go through

ups and downs and you think at times, you're dulling, you want to move on and other times you think, "nope, I can see a future here and I want to do something honest, I want a decent career." Depending on where you are on that cycle and when opportunities come along its a reality when people get opportunities and progress [inaudible 00:45:19].

For me, you're within the organisation long enough. I had an opportunity to step outside of the AFP for 12 months and study, and look back into the organisation. It was very enlightening for me and I would recommend it to anybody. Take a break and get some perspective. Policing tunnels your vision, because we do the same thing, deal with same type of people all the time. Taking a break out for me gave me a chance to refresh and see where I thought the AFP could be, and the potential for the organisation.

When it finally came to the stage where Tony said he was leaving, it was for me not about, it was nothing to do with me, it was about did I think I could add value in the organisation. I felt I could. Was I prepared, no. Not at all. You can be a deputy, and I was a deputy for five years, so you get a good feel for what happens and you get to act, and you think that you're doing the job. It's the things you don't see that you're not prepared for. So you're not prepared for the weight of responsibility that sits on you. You feel sort of [inaudible 00:46:28] takes those things very personally. That can be difficult. You're not prepared but, for me I've never woken up and not thought I wanted to come to work. I have far more good days than bad days. That motivates me to keep coming back. It's not very easy.

Carmel McGregor: Thanks again.

END OF TRANSCRIPT