

## SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP HONOURED WITH AWARD FOR POLICE

By Deanna Nott

Reservists who combine a military and policing career are doing something 'very special' for the community, says Queensland Police Service Commissioner Bob Atkinson.

Commissioner Atkinson made the comments after receiving an Employer Support Award from Major General Greg Melick, Head Cadet, Reserve and Employer Support Division, at a function at Victoria Barracks Brisbane.

"I think it is a wonderful thing in terms of your life's work if you decide to devote it to the service of your community's safety and security," said Commissioner Atkinson.

"If you do that as a member of the Australian Defence Force then that is a marvellous thing to do and equally if you decide to do that in terms of policing then that's also a great thing too.

"Time is the most valuable thing we have. For people who give up their time and actually do both, it is a great credit to them - it is something very special."

Chair of the Defence Reserves Support Council Queensland Committee Mr Tony Behm told ceremony guests that more than 150 of the State's police officers were also Reservists.

"We are honoured to have Commissioner Atkinson here and acknowledge his support and that of his police officers towards the operational capability of the ADF through valued service in the Reserve," said Mr Behm.

Many Army Reservists, who are also police officers, attended the event. These included Majors Graham Ruhle and Brandon Coleman and Bombardier Chris Keenan.

Major Ruhle, who has been in the Army Reserve for 23 years and is currently a Senior Sergeant in the Queensland Police Service (QPS), said the skills he has are transferable 'in both directions'.

"The operational experience you gain as a Queensland Police officer assists you as an infantryman ... and in the reverse, the skills you gain as an Army Officer help you plan, to formulate and give orders in a systematic and logical way," said Major Ruhle, who is a member of 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Queensland Regiment

Major Coleman joined the Army Reserve in 1983 with the aim of becoming a civilian policeman, which he did in 1988.

He is now a Sergeant Supervisor at Mt Ommaney Police Station and said the skills he develops through the military, in particularly weapons training and physical fitness, have assisted him in his policing role.

“Both careers intertwine and complement each other,” said the 25<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Queensland Regiment member, who appreciates the support he receives from the QPS.

“These days there are so many policies and legislation that support people in the Reserves and this has meant I have had a good run in recent years.

“For example, I have deployed to East Timor and Papua New Guinea.”

Bombardier Keenan, who joined the Reserve in 2001 and QPS in 2004, said leadership skills he had developed in the Army Reserve had helped him in his civilian role.

“I am in charge of a gun detachment so I have about seven or eight guys under me and I am solely responsible for everyone on that gun; everyone’s drill, everyone’s safety,” said the 13<sup>th</sup> Field Battery soldier.

“I am at Deception Bay Police Station and I am on general duties, so the people skills I have developed in the Army help me in my role.”

Commissioner Atkinson said from the Police Service’s point of view it was not ‘all one-way traffic’.

“We get a great benefit from our officers being involved in the ADF, regardless of whether it is service in the Navy, Army or Air Force.

“The experience the officers get, particularly when they get an overseas deployment is extremely good in terms of their personal life experience and their breadth of knowledge and understanding. This is very much two-way traffic in terms of the benefits.”