



PANSW President Tony King and Southern Region Executive member Roger Campton inspect conditions at the Moama border checkpoint. Also in the photo are Sergeant Rob Gallagher of Leichhardt and Sergeant Brent Hawkins of the Professional Standards Command. Photo courtesy of Riverine Herald.

## TURNING A BORDER BLUE

Whilst NSW Police again lead the protection of the community during the COVID 19 Pandemic, PANSW staff lock in deployment conditions

By Jon Goddard & Kirsty Membreno

Policing careers are traditionally littered by firsts. Most would remember their first arrest, their first-time giving evidence and no one ever forgets their first call to that 40 plus degree day job where to quote the VKG dispatcher, "Concern for welfare, 93-year-old lives alone has not been seen for a week".

At 12.01am Wednesday 8 July 2020, following the concerning spread of COVID-19 in Melbourne, 535 members became involved in a policing first that has not occurred in over 100 years.

With the Queensland border already closed, members were tasked not to lock down a hotel, a street or even a suburb. They were called upon to the lock down the state. As the clock struck that 12.01am deadline, they closed off the border to Victoria.

The closure required another ongoing large-scale operation to manage the 25 plus full-time checkpoints, numerous smaller reduced hours check points and border point closures that span the 1400-kilometre land border of New South Wales and Victoria.

For the second time during the pandemic PANSW members would work hand in hand with the Australian Defence Force.

From the time of the Premier's announcement your Association, just as was done with the quarantine hotel operations, commenced advocating on behalf of the members. Hundreds of members were to be deployed from outside of the border policing districts, those same members needed to be away from their homes for an extended period and were deploying into a cold

weather climate for which they had not been issued with uniform previously.

High level meetings around accommodation, travel and transport, meals and most importantly equipment were held from day one of the operation with the NSW Police Force.

Plans were made to allow two-way communication between the parties for the duration of the operation.

The ongoing relationship between the PANSW and the State Planning Unit within NSW Police is strong. There is daily communication between both to identify and fix any issues that may be raised by the membership in the field. Oversights and issues occur on any operational deployment. The PANSW works with the NSW Police to make sure they are rectified and strategies put in place to reduce the chance of reoccurrence.



We're not in North West Metro any more Toto: T&HWP vehicle at an alpine checkpoint



Beanies, neck warmers, thermals, and cold climate gloves were needed at the Barry Way Border checkpoint.

PANSW Field Organisers were also deployed to the region to deal with any issues that were identified in the first few days of the operation. The second week of the operation also saw the inspection of check point conditions by PANSW staff and Executive including President Tony King and Southern Region executive member Sergeant Roger Campton who spent time in both the Southern and Western regions visiting check points.

**WHAT PANSW LOCKED IN FOR MEMBERS**

Your Association understands the impact that this kind of deployment has on its members. That is why the PANSW immediately advocated for and secured a \$79.06 per day special operations allowance for members participating

in the deployment. This amount includes the incidental allowance and is payable on work and rest days during the deployment.

**MEALS AND ACCOMMODATION**

We secured agreement that meals would be provided to an agreed standard. When that is not possible, meal claims are to be paid at the award rate of \$31.25. Rest day meal claims are also covered under the travelling provisions and is payable at a higher award rate.

Accommodation as per the award must meet the three star/three diamond standard. When members are being compensated with the special operations allowance as in this case, it does allow for accommodation to be dormitory style but only if necessary.

However if suitable accommodation is available members should be provided with their own separate room and separate bathroom. At the time of writing no member is in a dormitory style accommodation.

PANSW staff have reviewed all 28 nominated accommodation providers across both regions to make sure that members are well accommodated during deployments.

**COLD CLIMATE CONDITIONS**

For many members, this deployment was their first experience of policing a cold climate. For most of those members they were not in possession of cold climate equipment such as thermals, fleece/snow jackets, neck warmers, gloves and cold climate head gear. The New South Wales Police have sourced high quality clothing from known outdoor suppliers to supplement current uniform. The PANSW have reviewed each item and ensured it has been allocated to every officer on deployment.

**PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT SUPPLY**

PANSW has ensured that Members have an adequate supply of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) available on-site and are able to use them as per operational requirements and the NSW Police Force's decision-making guidelines when dealing with COVID-19.

**ROSTERS**

As members are being deployed on a 9.5-hour roster cycle, we have identified that members especially from the initial deployment all have unique circumstances around travel, 10-hour breaks between shifts, overtime, cancelled rest days and hours worked. We ask you to remain vigilant around your hours, overtime claims and check upcoming pay slips for accuracy.

**TRAVEL TIME**

We understand a number of members were required to travel for lengthy periods for this deployment. Our Award defines travel time as the, "... time spent in the movement of a Non Commissioned Officer from one locality to another where the primary objective of the journey is the movement of that Non Commissioned Officer to the latter locality and no specific task other than travelling is directed in advance to be

performed by that Non Commissioned Officer during that period.”

Depending on duty performed including before and after travel, this has an effect on the applicable rate of payment. Circumstances will differ and we encourage all members to check their entitlements with us to ensure they have been paid correctly due to this operation, particularly those members on the first deployment.

**NO 10-HOUR BREAK BETWEEN SHIFTS**

As per the Flexible Rostering Guidelines, Rosters must have regard to work health and safety legislation. However, due to operational requirements members may not receive a 10-hour break before returning to duty at times. This can be as a result of overtime or having rostered shifts so close together that there is no 10-hour break provided between rostered shifts.

Different penalty provisions are payable depending if the 10-hour break was not provided as a result of overtime or due to rostered shifts being rostered within the 10-hour break period. Clause 49.8 and Clause 52.7 of the Award are the relevant clauses. Specific advice should be obtained from the PANSW to ensure the correct entitlement is paid.

**EXCESS B SHIFT PENALTY**

The deployment for some officers required them to work 5 night shifts in a row. This will be in addition to other night shifts already performed prior to the deployment and then again upon their return.

Members should be aware of Clause 50.4 of our Award which states, “A Non Commissioned Officer shall not be required to work a full ‘B’ shift for more than seven shifts in any period of 21 days unless payment is made at rate of time and one half (i.e. a half time in addition to ordinary rate) for the period of each of the rostered shifts exceeding seven and payment is made at the rate of double time for all overtime on any shift.

Members should identify any possible B shifts in excess of the seven and raise these shifts with the Roster Officer and also note that different overtime rates apply.

**REST DAYS**

Operation Border Closure had officers rostered for 7 shifts comprised of two to travel down and back and 5 working shifts. Members are entitled to two rest



Assistant Secretary Organising Paul Hannen with members on Princes Highway Yambulla



The most ironic truck to pass any of the checkpoints

days in each seven calendar days or four rest days in 14. Members should check their rosters to ensure that the entitlements for rest days are met during the 7- and 14-day periods. If not, this will result in 4 days in that period being classed as rest days which will result in cancelled rest day provisions being applied. The applicable rate for working a shift on a cancelled rest day is overtime payable at time and a half for the first 2 hours and double time thereafter.

We also understand that officers were contacted at the commencement of the deployment where their rest day was cancelled and they were required to travel to the deployment with less than 24 hours’ notice. These officers will be paid at the applicable overtime rates for the cancellation of that rest day.

It appears that Operation “Border Closure” will continue for some time.

As long as our members are being deployed the PANSW team will be working away in the background to ensure that the members who are on the ground in the cold keeping this state safe are well looked after whilst away from their families.

Any member with enquiries around any part of their deployment should contact the PANSW by email to covid19@pansw.org.au or call the Information Organising Centre on (02) 9265 6777 E/N 57070. ■

**About the authors:**

Kirsty Membreno is PANSW’s Assistant Secretary, Industrial and Jon Goddard is the Lead Organiser.

Here are some photo highlights from the NSWPF deployment to the NSW–Victoria border. During the first fortnight, police facilitated the movement of over 300,000 vehicles crossing from Victoria into NSW. Operation Border Closure is supported by Australian Defence Force personnel.



These Hawkesbury officers were among the first to be deployed to the NSW border



PANSW Campbelltown City branch Chairperson Senior Constable Hulley-Thomas and the Campbelltown/Auburn crew at a very busy check point on the Hume Highway, Albury. Senior Constable Hulley-Thomas couldn't have asked for a better team. "It was extremely cold at times but this team showed great initiative and resilience. They were all very positive and supportive of each other. One of the highlights in my career."



PANSW President Tony King with a member at the Murray Darling junction



A chilly morning at the Buronga border crossing.



Community gets behind members at Mulwala

JUST TO SAY THANK YOU FOR THE GREAT JOB YOU'RE DOING & A LITTLE SWEETENER FOR YOUR DAY! THIS CAFE IS RUN & OWNED BY A YOUNG COUPLE, AND HAS DELICIOUS FOOD, AND THE BEST COFFEE ON THE BORDER. CHECK IT OUT ON INSTA. ENJOY & THANK YOU. CHEERS ALL ☺



Hume Police District officers enduring a cold dawn



Photo taken near Delegate on the NSW/VIC border when borders were closed due to the Spanish flu epidemic. Photo: NSWPF



L-R PANSW Organiser Marty Evans, Yass Highway Patrol's Ben Kerlake and Tony King at the Nyah Crossing.



In mid-July, Western Region Executive member Chris Jordan was part of a group of New England PD officers and Wagga based highway patrol officers deployed to a cold but scenic spot on the Murray River called Tooleybuc.

Chris said it was a positive experience, with locals donating firewood so those manning the checkpoint could stay warm.

"The local community has really embraced us. Also we've been looked after well with cold weather gear," he added.



Lake Illawarra PD crew at the Barry Way border crossing checkpoint.

