

SPECIAL POLICE RECOGNITION PASSES 50,000



April 2024 marks 10 years since Her Majesty the Queen, agreed to a change to the eligibility for the **National Police Service Medal (NPSM)**, to extend eligible service back to 14 February 1975, the date on which the Australian Honours system was established. This extension came almost three years after the initial announcement of the NPSM applying to eligible members who were still serving on or after 30 October 2008. Since the initial medals were presented in 2011, over 50,000 NPSM's have been awarded to current and former officers.

The establishment of this award and its later extension back to 1975, took a number of decades to be achieved and a number of past and present members had a significant hand in its development.

The Police Federation of Australia (PFA) with the strong support of its state, territory and federal police association and union branches played the leading role and were well supported by current NSW Chief Inspector Rick Steinborn APM and AFP Detective Inspector James Cheshire, the designers respectively of the medal and the medals ribbon, and retired NSW Sergeant Paul Biscoe OAM and Superintendent Peter Rankin, who represented the respective retired police associations.

Our underpinning arguments for the awarding of a specific medal to sworn police officers, is that it would be a substantial acknowledgement of the unique role that sworn police officers play in the preservation of peace, the protection of life and property and the maintenance of law and order throughout Australia and overseas. The medal was ultimately awarded in *"recognition for the unique contribution and significant commitment of those persons who have given ethical and diligent service as a sworn member of an Australian police service."*

The medal is awarded to all sworn members of Australia's police forces upon completion of 15 years *ethical and diligent service*. Importantly, we ensured that the medal's regulations included the ability to award the NPSM to members with a lesser period of service, if that service was terminated due to the member's death or to an impairment related to the discharge of their duties as a Constable of Police.

The NPSM also sets an uncommonly high standard for its award and retention. Although a police officer may qualify for the award and be presented with same, should their service be later found to be unethical or not diligent, in an act either before or after the NPSM was awarded to them, then the award may be cancelled at any time on the advice of their Commissioner of Police.

It was also fitting that the Award received bipartisan support from the major political parties, with the initial award being supported and announced in 2008 by the then Prime Minister, the Hon Kevin Rudd and the extension of the medal back to 1975, by the then Prime Minister the Hon Tony Abbott, in April 2014.

The first 16 NPSMs were presented on 19 September 2011 in a ceremony at Parliament House Canberra, by the then Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard. On that day, two members, one male and one female, from each of the state, territory and federal police forces, who were eligible for the medal and had been nominated by their respective jurisdiction, were honoured.

Since then, over 50,000 NPSMs have been presented to current and former officers recognising the special contribution police make to Australian communities.