



**NEW BLOOD
AND A LONG-
AWAITED FIRST**

Recent Police Association elections have elevated two delegates to the committee of management and the now former vice-president to an office no woman has ever held.



By Brett Williams

Bernadette Zimmermann has become the first woman in the 100-year history of the Police Association to rise to the office of deputy president. Elected in October, she outpolled her only fellow candidate, Allan Cannon, by 135 votes.

And her victory came just six years after she had won the vice-presidency, a position only one other woman had ever held.

Zimmermann, 47, is now one of the three most experienced association committee members, after the retirements of her predecessor, Trevor Haskell, and three others in the last 14 months.

And, by the rules of the association, she stands as second in line to the top job. She would have to step in and run the union if, for any reason, both the president and secretary were unable to discharge their duties.

With this responsibility, and her long record of voter endorsement and association service, Zimmermann has become one of the most significant figures in the Australian police labour movement.

But she rejects the trailblazer and other tags observers have applied to her; and she has no preoccupation with her status as the association's first female deputy president.

"I don't think about that at all," she says. "It's great for other women in terms of the message that this is completely possible. But the job has got nothing to do with being the first woman."

"It's a job that I respect greatly and, whether you're the first, last or in the middle means nothing, because the job itself is bigger than all of that."

"I would prefer to think that it (my election) was just part of the normal situation, that there'll be men and women in all these positions."

Zimmermann, a wife and mother of four, ran for the deputy presidency because she saw the move up from vice-president

as a natural step to take.

She also considered that, as a long-time front-line cop, she would bring to the role an "in-depth understanding" of police officers and their frustrations.

"I have that understanding of not just their working lives but also their home lives, raising children, and how hard life can be in the job, especially for women," she says.

"And I think I bring to the role a certain sort of confidence and strength."

After getting through the tenseness of the election process, Zimmermann received news of her victory from association president Mark Carroll. She delighted in not only the content of his call but also hearing it from him – her younger brother.

But, in a more sombre context, thoughts of her late father and retired police officer John Carroll came to her mind, too. She reflected on the great pride with which she knew he would have beamed.

"He just wasn't there for us to see his reaction, and I miss that," she says.

The Zimmermann approach to industrial relations has not changed from what she described to the *Police Journal* in 2005, after winning the vice-presidency. She remains just as willing to take a hard line with association adversaries whenever necessary.

But, at the same time, she recognizes the importance of, and the need to use, diplomacy – even if, at first, it seems unlikely to succeed.

"I know that with some of these things, you become a little bit more polished," she says, "just from experience."

That polish likely assists Zimmermann when she questions issues of concern to her, such as member safety and the best use of Tasers, ballistic vests and other equipment.

Her experience of equipment, and all other aspects of police work, goes back to 1981, when she joined SAPOL

as a 17-year-old. She had decided to follow in the footsteps of two previous generations of the Carroll family.

After graduating in 1983, she served as an Adelaide patrol officer before a six-year stint in Port Augusta.

After returning to Adelaide, she would, over the ensuing years, work as a prosecutor, a Hindley St youth officer, a City Watch House sergeant and an Adelaide patrol supervisor.

In 2005, Zimmermann transferred to Nuriootpa where she continues to work on the front line.

Of all the critical incidents she has responded to, a plane crash at Stonefield Airport, east of Nuriootpa, looms large in her memory. The family of a 17-year-old saw the aircraft come down and the body of their son and brother burning in its cabin.

As a journalist tried to cover the incident, the family responded with extreme anger, almost violence, and Zimmermann had to intervene.

Today, she is far too experienced as a copper and an elected office-holder not to understand how ruthlessly some critics strike. "It does occur," she says.

"I just gave a presentation to Victorian women delegates and that was one of my points: 'Don't expect to stick your head up without getting it lopped off. People will want to do that. That's because you've stood up.'"

"So my message to them was: 'Expect it. That's going to happen and you can't run or shy away from it, otherwise you won't last, or you won't even stand in the first place.'"

The extension of her relaxed attitude toward criticism is her ease in responding to those who make it.

"If you're wrong about something, you need to be told," she says. "I don't have a problem with that. But I have a very good understanding of what police need and want, so I'm confident that I'm not going to get that wrong."

One of his grandfathers was a wharfie and the other a state Labor government minister. So the assumption was probably that, with their influence in his life, Port Adelaide-born Daryl Mundy was always destined to find a place in industrial relations.

And he has – on the Police Association committee of management – but not because of grandfatherly influences. Indeed, his maternal grandfather and former member for Ascot Park, Geoff Virgo, never even talked politics to him.

Trade unionism just happened to interest the former St Michael's college boy, who became a Metro North Branch delegate representing Salisbury members in 1999.

Mundy, 42, ran for office as a committee member thinking that his worth to the boardroom would be his Generation-X perspective and his recent experience of a "very busy LSA". That was Port Adelaide, where he worked in the CIB and served as a delegate from 2007.

As he holidayed in Cairns with his wife and two children in October, he got a phone call from Adelaide. It was Police Association president Mark Carroll, who told him he had won one of three vacancies on the committee of management.

Both surprised and excited by the news, Mundy shared it first with his wife before returning to Adelaide with her and the children. The day he got back, he took his seat at the board table for the first time at a fortnightly committee meeting.

The experience somewhat daunted Mundy, who immersed himself in the cut and thrust of debate and wound up particularly impressed by what he saw. "It's a well-oiled machine," he says, "but PASA has had great leadership for some time now.

"Fairly quickly I bought into the fact that pay and conditions are core business. It all centres around enterprise bargains. That's what the association is about; and the other side of it is to protect members' rights.

"Those benefits are certainly some of the main advantages of membership – no doubt about it."

Mundy might find his committee role slightly overwhelming now, but he relishes the challenge of representing the entire association membership at the board table. And, in that regard, he has a strong sense of the weight of responsibility on him.

"After serving as a delegate, it (the responsibility) certainly changes now," he says, "with 4,600 members relying on you."

To best serve those members, Mundy intends to draw on the experience of



Mark Carroll and assistant secretaries Tom Scheffler and Darren Cornell. But he understands just how brutally voters can judge those they elect to office, in unionism, politics or any other field.

"It gets back to the communication," he says. "Whatever is presented, you listen to the pros and cons and then make your decision from that. If someone comes up with a justifiable and credible counter-argument, it's only human that you change your position.

"But people will have a go and, if they do, you've got to have a thick hide. And I'm quite happy to explain my justification for whatever way I decide to vote on the issues."

Mundy, now a counter-terrorism investigator, joined SAPOL in 1990 and first worked on the front line in the suburbs. In the mid-1990s he got a taste of country policing in Coober Pedy, where he suffered a fractured skull after an offender threw a rock at the side of his head.

In 2000, he served for six months in East Timor and later joined operations Avatar and Counteract. After that was an

18-month stint with Security Intelligence, followed by four years with Port Adelaide CIB.

In his new role, Mundy does not intend to draw inspiration from mottos or slogans. But he does like the famous line by 18th century politician and philosopher Edmund Burke: "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is that good men do nothing."

Newly elected committee member Chris Walkley reckons the recent enterprise agreement negotiated by the Police Association was "an awesome result". He remembers how impressed he was, when, as a Country South Branch delegate, he received his first briefing on the deal.

The ability to crunch it in the tough economic climate of the time was what stood out most to the then aspiring committee man.

"So," he says, "I hope I can be part of the group that does even half as well as that with the next one, because the last one was awesome. And that makes



New committee members
Chris Walkley and Daryl Mundy

me a little bit apprehensive, a little bit nervous, because there's a bar set pretty high now.

"But I'm sure I'm up to it. I am pretty passionate, and I think I've got the brains to be part of a team that gets results that benefit all association members."

Walkley, 43, polled the highest number of votes (449) in a field of eight candidates for two regular committee positions. The motivation of the Millicent-based detective to run for office was the bigger representative role he could undertake as a committee member.

"I realized that, as a delegate, you really represent a small number," he says, "just those in your workplace. I wanted to make a difference statewide, not just in my local area."

Walkley first got word of his election victory unofficially, from a fellow candidate, just before an official call from association president Mark Carroll. "I felt excited and relieved," he remembers. "It (the election) was certainly nerve-racking.

"I was very happy and honoured that I got as many votes as I did. I had a few

celebratory beers with my wife. And she was excited for me, because she knows that this sort of work, industrial work, is the stuff that gives me real drive."

One issue Walkley has a strong focus on is that of members failing to claim overtime and TOIL. He wants to see an end to it. Another issue is staffing, which he perceives as inadequate and poor by comparison with the front-line numbers of his earliest days in policing.

He recalls that as many as four patrols and a sergeant sometimes covered Henley Beach in the early 1990s.

"The front line is the most important thing," he says. "And that's not just patrols – it's CIB, Prosecution and Crime Scene as well. For all these people, there's more work and less staff.

"I think we need to swing it back to get more numbers doing what is our core police function, which is to protect the community."

Walkley recognizes the contribution of those he and his new colleagues have replaced – former deputy president Trevor Haskell, Barbara Parfitt and Liz McGregor. Accordingly, he considers he

has "some big shoes to fill".

But the former Cabra College boy, second-generation copper and husband and father-of-three, has plenty of life and police experience on which to draw.

He joined SAPOL in 1990 and, after five years as a patrol officer at Henley Beach, went to work for a short time at Vice and Gaming. Then came a five-year stint with Hindley St beats before another short stint back at Vice and Gaming.

He later served with both Adelaide and Port Adelaide CIBs and, in late 2007, transferred to Millicent, where he became a delegate.

Walkley understands, just as his new fellow committee member Daryl Mundy does, how easy voters find it to criticize the office-holders they elect.

"The only thing you can do is try to talk to them about what their issues are," he says, "regardless of whether you agree with their views or not.

"It might be something that needs to be brought up at a committee meeting, so that at least the issue can be addressed. Communication is the key."