**Entry type:** Person
**Entry ID:** AWE2703

# Fagan, Audrey Ann

(1962 - 2007)

| | |
|---|---|
| **Born** | 19620101, Dublin Ireland |
| **Died** | 20070401, Hayman Island Australia |
| **Occupation** | Policewoman |

## Summary

In 2005, Audrey Fagan was Canberra's chief police officer, an assistant commissioner of the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and Australia's second-highest ranking policewoman. She took her own life in 2007.

## Details

Audrey Fagan was nine when she emigrated to South Australia with her parents, Arthur and Jenny, in 1971. Aged 18 she travelled to Canberra to try out as a police recruit. She spent five years there on the beat, including stints in the areas of juvenile crime and fraud, before working on Christmas Island for a further two. Fagan was highly accomplished, and began training detectives and investigating internal corruption. She served as a liaison officer to government. In 2004, she was awarded the Australian Police Medal for her work helping to coordinate counter-terrorism capabilities and for enhancing and promoting the role of women in law enforcement. Fagan became chief of staff to Australian Federal Police chief, Mick Keelty.

When John Davies resigned as Canberra police chief, Fagan stepped into the role, bringing 'vigour to the challenges of organisational rust' in a force that had lost many of its better officers to international postings. Soon, though, she became the subject of sustained attacks by journalists at The Canberra Times, who felt that there were serious flaws in the AFP's media management, and that Canberra police kept Canberrans in the dark on matters of public safety. No journalist predicted the disastrous effect of such constant criticism. Fagan turned to professional support to relieve job stress, and took a holiday to Hayman Island where her husband, Chris Rowell, was attending a conference. There, Fagan hanged herself in her hotel room, leaving two suicide notes for her family. Fagan was 44 years old. She is survived by her husband, her daughter Clair, and two stepchildren.

## Published resources

**Resource**
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

**Site Exhibition**
From Lady Denman to Katy Gallagher: A Century of Women's Contributions to Canberra, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2013,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/ldkg

The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders

**Author Details**
Barbara Lemon

**Created** 24 May 2007
**Last modified** 16 April 2019