



Commissioner's Message

It is ironic indeed that Australian policing is much more highly regarded overseas than it is in our own country. One only has to pick up any edition of any newspaper article on any day in Australia to find an article critical of police. Some of that criticism is justified no doubt. It is a manifestation of our free society that all institutions may be subject to adverse public comment. This is as it should be. However, much of the carping criticism that we are exposed to is as unjustified as it is demoralising.

Therefore it comes as a pleasant surprise to know that in the international forum of law enforcement agencies we are judged as competent, honest and progressive. It is even more gratifying to find that our opinions on a whole range of policing subjects are both sought and respected.

The Asian Regional Conference of Interpol, which was held in Canberra from 28 February to 1 March, gave Australian policing another opportunity to reinforce our standing internationally. I emphasise deliberately the term "Australian policing", because the Commissioners of every Police Force in Australia and the Australian Customs Service combined in hosting this very important conference.

The topics attracted wide ranging discussion. The subsequent resolutions reflected the unanimity of view and the determination of all law enforcement agencies in this region to co-operate in the enforcement of laws in the most effective manner which can be achieved, given the economic and geographic constraints which operate on us all.

I was particularly pleased that the Prime Minister himself attached sufficient importance to the conference to make himself available to give the opening address. Our own Minister, Senator the Hon. Michael Tate, also spoke at the conference on the occasion of the Conference Dinner. In his inimitable style Senator Tate spoke without the benefit of a prepared speech which demonstrated his very comprehensive grasp of the issues facing international law enforcement. His speech was so well received that Ray Kendall, the Secretary General of Interpol, asked that the speech be incorporated into the Conference minutes. Fortunately we were able to do this because it had been recorded.

It would be remiss of me in speaking about this Conference not to mention

the outstanding efforts put in by so many members of the AFP in ensuring that the Conference ran without a hitch. Whether our members participated in transport, security, media or social arrangements, they all displayed a high degree of professionalism which was commented on by many of the Conference participants.

However, important as this conference may have been, it represents only a small proportion of our involvement in international law enforcement. In terms of Interpol we recently established a Sub-Regional Communications Network for the South Pacific and are currently arranging the placement of one of our Superintendents with the Interpol Secretariat based in Lyons.

Additionally, there is our on-going commitment to UN Peacekeeping, principally in Cyprus, but also in the border camps in Thailand. Our highly respected liaison officer network is now operating in many countries overseas. Closer to home, we have people seconded to Papua New Guinea and advisers in Vanuatu and the Solomons. Of course, we also provide community policing services in Norfolk Island and Christmas Island.

All together a pretty comprehensive world-wide contribution - one of which you ought all to be proud.

Cover picture - Interpol Secretary General, Mr Ray Kendall, welcomes the Prime Minister to the 11th Asian Regional Conference.

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The Platypus has been adopted by the Australian Federal Police as a symbol representing the diverse requirements placed upon members in the execution of their duty. This unique and tenacious Australian mammal is a survivor against increasing pressure from today's environment. It leaves no stone unturned in its daily pursuits and has equipped itself with a range of features to adapt to changes over many years. It is capable of passing unnoticed, if required, yet demonstrates an unfailing dedication to explore all possibilities in an effort to maintain its special place in Australia's wildlife, at times against large and more powerful opponents — a quality admired and respected by members of the Australian Federal Police.

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