



# Perspective:

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AFP Deputy Commissioner Capability

## Arriving early to the future

### Introduction

It would be a brave person to predict what law enforcement will look like in 10 years' time. We know the operating environment will continue to be more complex and faster paced. Criminality will continue to evolve. Criminals are not constrained by legislation or government procurement processes or similar governance. They can quickly adopt the most cutting-edge technology. Criminals will keep evolving and they will keep using the best tools they can to obfuscate their activity from authorities.

Law enforcement needs to similarly adapt and evolve to meet the threat or harm to the community. That means the AFP needs a workforce that is as adaptable as the criminals and which employs contemporary technology and practice. Accordingly, that is why the AFP's Future Directions project, established by Commissioner Andrew Colvin in 2015 through the Strategic Context Paper, is of fundamental importance for the AFP's future capability.

Constant adaptation to new circumstances is part of business as usual. But to just maintain current capability at current capability means that the AFP, in 10 years' time, will

have degraded. The AFP needs to evolve its capability now to meet the operating environment of 2026. That is what the Future Directions project is about.

### Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to the AFP's capability and success; whether they are partnerships with state and territory police; with commonwealth agencies concerning crime or national security; or with international partners. All partnerships are fundamentally important.

We are at a precipice now and starting to look much more broadly with the private sector than probably we have in the past. We will explore how commercial partnerships might do more for us in a business delivery sense.

By establishing relationships with the commercial sector, commercial agencies can alert us when they start to see phenomena in those spaces. The sooner they can alert us the better placed we are to respond and, in time, to disrupt criminal activity.

A police agency of the future will need to go where the crime or harm is. That means we need to ask whether



AFP Deputy Commissioner Capability Ramzi Jabbour says the AFP needs to adapt and evolve to meet the future threats to the community

our workforce is equipped to meet those challenges. By 'equipped' I mean tools/skills members need to work effectively in that future environment. So how do we start to imagine that and design a workforce that can be adaptive as we go forward?

## Diversity, people & ideas

While I would not like to predict the magnitude of change – big or small – change is required. The AFP in 10 years will be very different by necessity. Being equipped also means that we have people with the skills and qualities we need to foster and encourage cohesion with the community.

Certainly the Commissioner's exploration of diversity and having Ms Elizabeth Broderick work with the AFP is an indication of that. That necessarily means the AFP future workforce will include a significantly changed gender element to it. Efficiency is not a choice – it's a requirement. The drivers are around us: technology, crime,

telecommunications, and government's requirements as examples. Doing more with less is something Western governments have embraced in recent years and there is no reason to conclude that the continual thirst for efficiencies will abate.

The solution is likely to include a more flexible workforce, a budget model that provides the Commissioner maximum flexibility, strong working relationships at home and overseas and capabilities that enable us to compete with high end criminals and violent extremists – any entity that would do harm to Australians and Australia's interests.

If we do not try to evolve, to enhance our capability, then it is likely the AFP will become decreasingly effective. So change is inevitable. What we are talking about is how the AFP imagines the future and how we shape and manage that change by design rather than change being forced upon us by circumstance.