

The ACMA awarded for assisting at APEC Leaders' Week 2007

On 20 November, Stephen Allen and Brendan Puckeridge represented the ACMA Field Operations Section at a police award ceremony, where they accepted a Certificate of Appreciation for the section's involvement in, and assistance to, the New South Wales Police Force during APEC Leaders' Week 2007.

The award was presented at the Sydney Police Centre by Assistant Commissioner Robert Waites APM Commander, Operational Communications and Information Command. Also present was Deputy Commissioner Specialist Operations David Hudson APM and Commander David Stewart of the Australian Federal Police.

During APEC Leaders' Week, the ACMA monitored the radiocommunications spectrum and provided field support to the police. The frequency coordination and planning undertaken before the event meant that all interference issues were minor and mainly due to unavoidable faults with equipment.

'The amount of radio spectrum in use during the event was huge. We had a team tracking down an interfering signal on the police frequencies but it stopped just as they narrowed it down. Thankfully it didn't come back,' said Patrick Lopez, a valuable Field Operations member in Sydney.

The ACMA's Field Operations Section is the public face of the organisation at a range of high profile events throughout Australia each year. Resolution of interference to the radiocommunications spectrum is an important part of the ACMA's spectrum management responsibility and large international events present a complex cocktail of radiofrequency use.

In addition to their work at APEC Leaders' Week, Field Operations teams have been assembled to assist at major events including the Sydney Olympic Games, the Melbourne Commonwealth Games, World Youth Day, the 2003 Rugby World Cup, and annually for the Australian Grand Prix and the Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix. Although not contracted to provide services, the team also responded to interference issues reported at this year's Melbourne Spring Racing Carnival and the 2009 Australian Masters.

'Throughout these events we have teams in the field that we coordinate from the Sydney monitoring control room,' said Mr Lopez. 'On the occasions where we have two teams investigating two different matters, we control the remote monitoring receivers at our monitoring sites to analyse the issues and use the two-way radio to stay in contact with the teams.'

During major events, there is significant potential for interference between existing licensees in a high density radio environment and the hundreds of communications systems added to the mix for the duration of the event. The Field Operations Section uses spectrum analysis and radiofrequency direction-finding equipment to identify, locate and resolve any radiofrequency interference sources. The teams must also ensure that networks used for safety and security communications receive immediate attention should interference to, or unlawful use of, these networks occur. 📡

For more information regarding the ACMA's role in interference resolution, please email interference@acma.gov.au.

Left: The ACMA's Stephen Allen, Manager, Field Operations Section, receives the Certificate of Appreciation from Assistant Commissioner Robert Waites.

Below: Patrick Lopez in the Sydney monitoring control room.

