

Intelligence Branch

Detecting crime piece by piece

THE intelligence function is to produce and provide high level information relating to the criminal environment, supported by critical analysis, to enhance the AFP's ability to prevent, detect, investigate and present for prosecution, crimes against the Commonwealth and protect the Commonwealth's interests. This includes a commitment to contribute to national strategic assessments and to identify people involved in criminality on the Commonwealth.

The intelligence function in Northern Region has been structured in such a way as to provide, within the limited resources available, an effective and efficient intelligence capability to provide proactive, strategic, tactical and operational support to the Region and the AFP generally in meeting its responsibility under the Ministerial Direction; AFP's Corporate Plan and with the Commissioner's Policy Directive on Intelligence.

The Intelligence Branch at RHQ includes a Target Identification Section; Response and General Inquiries Section; Project Development Section; Special Projects Section; Ports of Entry Section; and an Analysis Section, supported by staff members.

There are small cells dedicated to intelligence in the Gold Coast, North Queensland and Northern Territory Branches which primarily provide tactical and operational support to their respective Branches but contribute to the overall Regional and national intelligence programs.

These cells also service international airports and seaports in their respective areas, with the Northern Territory Branch also servicing the Combined Drug Enforcement Unit. Superintendent Ed Cox, OIC of the Intelligence Branch said, "The emphasis of the intelligence process has been to focus on the timely

provision of strategic and tactical intelligence and in providing operational support to the numerous operations undertaken within the Region over recent years. The increasing influence of the Strategic Intelligence Division (RHQ) in developing national intelligence collection plans in respect of target groups to ensure the timely provision of intelligence gathered to assist in the development of key strategic assessments to government has placed considerable demand on the resources available in the Region".

This demand has placed considerable pressure on the Region to maintain its tactical and support role to the operational areas of the Region but notwithstanding, the Intelligence areas have identified and developed a number of worth-

while targets which have been the subject of investigation and prosecution by operational units. Some of these targets have been identified from the Region's commitment to the national intelligence projects whilst others have been identified through Regional initiatives.

The Analysis Section provides essential support to not only the Intelligence Branch but also to other operational areas, particularly the Fraud and General Crime, Drug Operations and Organised Crime Branches. These demands, placed on the Section because of the level of expertise developed, provide essential support to the other Branches, including assistance in the development of flow charts, link analysis and other evidentiary material which contributes to the overall efficiency of the Region.

Organised Crime Branch

Identify, disrupt and seize

THE Organised Crime Branch conducts in-depth investigations of major criminal organisations and individuals which are protracted inquiries directed at a particular group. The goal of the Branch is to disrupt the activities of these organisations and individuals by the identification of offenders and offences, the collection of evidence and the seizure of assets.

Organised crime investigations undertaken in Northern Region have been mainly of a drug-related nature, but have also included activities such as major fraud, money laundering, and offences which have crossed international boundaries. The operations conducted by the Organised Crime Branch have been costly in terms of human, fi-

nancial and equipment resources and have also required members to be deployed to diverse locations within Queensland and northern New South Wales for long periods of time. Some investigations have led to a further need for members to travel overseas to gather evidence.

The Officer-in-Charge of the Branch, Detective Superintendent John Robinson said, "With the limited resources of the Organised Crime Branch, we will continue to focus on organised crime and specific references together with pursuing the financial assets of criminal groups or individuals. To achieve this goal, it is important that effective liaison and relationships with other departments and agencies, whether they be Commonwealth or State, be maintained

Superintendent Cox said, "An integral part of any intelligence community is effective liaison with other agencies. The Intelligence Units throughout the Region make every endeavour to promote the AFP's role and responsibility and to ensure high level liaison and working arrangements are maintained. Both formal and informal meetings are regularly held and joint projects/operations have been conducted with many related agencies which considerably enhance the Region's intelligence gathering capabilities. The excellent relationships established within the intelligence community in Northern Region do much to provide a co-ordinated approach to intelligence gathering and often avoid duplication or compromise".

A further demand placed on the Intelligence Units is the recent decision to transfer the Cash Transactions Report Act (CTRA) referrals to that area for preliminary processing and assessment. Suspect CTRA reports are considered initially as an intelligence source which, after preliminary investigation, are either referred to operational Units for investigation

which in turn will enable a co-ordinated effort in countering criminal threats and activities against the Commonwealth."

Organised Crime targeting is conducted within the Region using target development methods by the Regional Intelligence Units or through referrals from Commonwealth departments or agencies. The Branch will continue to target major criminals and organisations by the integrated approach to major investigations and the adoption of a multi-discipline investigation team approach where appropriate.

Some highlights of the Branch's work include:

- The successful extradition of a man from the USA alleged to be a principal offender in a drug importation who avoided prosecution in 1988. The matter has been set down for trial.
- In a matter referred from the Criminal Assets Investigation Section through CTRA reports, an



Among the medal winners at the recent Queensland Police Games were (l to r) Det. Sgt. Ron Cramp, Det. Sgt. Peter Ellis, Ms Lyn Robbins and Det. Sgt. Glen Matinca

or incorporated in the intelligence database for later retrieval and use. The increased focus on money laundering and organised criminal activity now places increasing demand on the already limited resources.

The Region is committed to achieving the overall objectives for the intelligence function in the AFP within the Commissioner's Policy Directive. Much has been achieved and many new initiatives taken to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency in the way the Region approaches its commitment to the intelligence function.

investigation began into suspected fraud and money laundering activities of a Gold Coast solicitor involving in excess of \$3 million, but was terminated when the suspect fled. Queensland Police are continuing inquiries, with no Commonwealth offences (apart from possible passport offences) being disclosed at this point.

- The arrest of a Brisbane businessman in August on charges of alleged fraud of approximately \$9.19 million relating to his business activities including a ship building company. This followed a referral from the Australian Trade Commission in August last year and the earlier execution of search warrants in Sydney and Brisbane. The matter is now before the court.
- After an extensive investigation involving Italian and United States authorities, two people were arrested on foreign extradition warrants in respect to large scale money laundering and cocaine trafficking.

Fit to bust

by Detective Sergeant Mark Ney

WHILE Northern Region is small in numbers it is well represented in most sporting events held for police and government organisation in Queensland.

The Region's members have shown their skills at touch football, rugby union, rugby league, inter-Branch cricket, soccer, netball, volleyball, baseball, and national sporting events such as the Australian and New Zealand Police Games, AFP Games and the Queensland Police Games.

The most recent of national sporting events, the ANZ Police Games, drew competitors from all over the country and the AFP was represented by both Northern Region and competitors from other Regions. AFP members won their share of medals and those who missed out had a good time competing.

Northern Region members participate regularly in police and inter-departmental competitions, enhancing the good relations between all involved and the Bi-annual Golf Day with the Australian Customs Service serves to maintain good working relationships.

Northern Region also boasts the largest proportionate number of participants in the Annual AFP Fitness Competition. The eagerness of the Region's members to participate in sporting activities continues to reflect the Region's unity, both at work and play.