

# Planning underway as AFP anticipates wider implications of Olympics

The end of 1996 brings us another year closer to the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games and for the AFP's Olympic Coordination Team, the first activities could be just one year away with the Australian Institute of Sport being considered for use as a training venue from 1998.

The team reports that the Games have far-reaching implications for Australia on a national level and members, some of whom visited Atlanta for this year's games, are now developing strategies for the year 2000 and beyond.

By Janice Jarrett

*Issues of 'national' importance would take on a new complexity when Australia hosts the Olympic Games in Sydney in the year 2000, according to the AFP's Olympic Co-ordination Team (OCT).*

Olympic-generated growth would affect a broad range of industries from tourism to fishing and the temporary increase in population would provide an ample and perhaps unique 'market place' for entrepreneurial criminal elements, the team has forecast.

*Members of the Olympic Coordination Team at a meeting with the AFP's Olympic Security Communications Intelligence Team recently. Pictured from left: Bill Deane, Federal Agent Vince Pannell, Les Laundon, Donna Austin, Federal Agents Roger Martindale and Jim Cooper, and standing, Federal Agent Dick Courtney with team leader Phil O'Rourke.*



The OCT was established early this year to prepare for what is envisaged to be the wide-ranging implications of the Olympic Games for Australia at both the national and local levels of law enforcement.

Team members will anticipate changes in organised crime trends, security risks and the possibility of terrorist activity, along with the spin-off effects of the massive influx of people into Australia which could include increased drug trafficking, prostitution, illegal immigration, money laundering and credit card fraud, the implications of which might be felt well beyond the Olympic Games. Credit card fraud at the time of the Barcelona Olympics in 1992 totalled \$30 million.

The team, led by Phil O'Rourke, comprises Federal Agents Vince Pannell, Dick Courtney and Jim Cooper.

While NSW Police would assume responsibility for law enforcement in the local sphere, criminal activity would not be confined to





Photo: Dick Courtney

Crowds of 85,000 at the Olympic soccer final between Argentina and Nigeria played at Athens, about 150kms north-east of Atlanta. Canberra may play host to soccer events during the 2000 Games.

Sydney, the team reported in a discussion paper soon after its formation.

“Other states and territories will not be immune from increased criminal activity such as computer crime, counterfeiting, drug importation, passport offences, copyright infringement (‘ambush marketing’), illegal immigrants, money laundering, social security fraud and credit card fraud,” the report said.

It estimated that more than four million people would visit Australia in the period before, during, and after the games, with an obvious impact on airport traffic, immigration, and transport networks, and that the temporary population increase in Sydney would be further extended by Australians visiting from around the nation.

There would be a spill-over effect for some time after the games as many visitors would combine their Olympic visit with the opportunity to see more of Australia, while the

Centenary of Federation – a matter of months after the games – also would be a strong tourist drawcard.

The international political climate also carried a strong element of unpredictability which could influence security risks for athletes and dignitaries and would require ongoing review and assessment in which the AFP’s overseas liaison officers would play a vital role. Federal Agent Vince Pannell said that Australia’s current counter-terrorist arrangements were already well established as were the AFP’s working relationships with other law-enforcement agencies nationally and internationally, but that both areas would be revisited and further enhanced before the games.

The team also was reviewing other major events in Australia and overseas, including previous Commonwealth Games, Australia’s bid to defend the America’s Cup in Perth in 1987, the Bicentennial celebrations in 1988, and would monitor similar sporting events in the lead-up to the games, such as the

Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur in 1998 and the Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan, the same year.

Canberra would probably feel the initial impact of the Olympics by mid-1998 when it was expected that the Australian Institute of Sport would become a training facility exclusively for Australian and overseas athletes. It is anticipated that up to 4000 competitors might use the AIS as well as their support staff and officials. Canberra’s proximity to Sydney would mean it could expect an overflow of tourists and dignitaries with hospitality facilities already being booked in the ACT for international conventions, seminars and conferences because of limited availability in Sydney until after the games.

Coordination, cooperation and commitment would be the key elements to success of the AFP’s management of law enforcement during the Olympic period, Federal Agent Pannell said.

“One of the intangibles of Olympic planning is that we are planning for an event four years out and lack hard data to analyse and plan for it,” he said. “The challenge is to cooperate as much as possible – not as much as necessary.”

“While NSW Police have ultimate responsibility in their jurisdiction for security, the 2000 Olympic Games is not a single event, the exclusive domain of Sydney, and cannot be seen as the sole responsibility of the NSW Police Service.

“It is important that, given the unique mandate of the AFP, the spirit of coordination, cooperation and commitment extends over the AFP’s four identified areas of influence – International, National, Eastern Region and the ACT Region.

“Communication within the AFP and between allied agencies is vital and while it is necessary to look at the big picture, the team will also have to go back to micro-planning.”

“We must be innovative and pro-active in our planning – we cannot afford to be re-active.

“There are lessons to be learnt from Atlanta, but also from Barcelona – and we are still living the lessons from Munich. The Olympics bring with them a world focus on Australia from the political, social and economic perspective”.

Olympic news sold newspapers and the issues of Olympic security

even more so with the media being quick to make an Olympic connection to what might be an isolated incident, said Federal Agent Pannell.

He cited the TWA aircraft tragedy off New York just two days before the opening of Atlanta as being subject to ‘Olympic fever’ and linked immediately to the games in news reports. “But three months after the games we still don’t know the cause.”

Federal Agents Pannell and Courtney attended the final week of the Atlanta Olympics, and visited Olympic coordination centres, the FBI, the United States Secret Service, the Department of State Security, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and the Atlanta Police Department while Phil O’Rourke attended the post-games debriefing.

At the local level, it was the small elements that made a difference to the end result.

“We need to give operational personnel experience in the areas they have been trained in and those in close protection need to be aware of the protocols of the various countries which will be represented.

“People also need local knowledge to do their job effectively. In Atlanta, the organisers brought in very experienced bus drivers, but they weren’t familiar with the area, so there were problems with transport.

“We also need to be aware of problems with burn-out from long

work hours, and inadequate training or equipment and at the same time we have to be smart with our resources.”

Among its liaison work at the industrial level, the team had taken a pro-active role and initiated discussions with a diverse range of organisations including the Australian Fisheries Management Authority which is now examining the implications of the increased numbers of people on Australia’s fishing resources.

“Effective communication is the key to planned coordination and cooperation and fundamental to the success of the AFP’s Olympic strategies will be the people within the organisation who will provide their knowledge, experience and expertise in a collective multi-agency environment”.

Federal Agent Pannell said the enormity of the task ahead really made its impact on him when he attended the closing ceremony of the games in Atlanta.

“It must be remembered that the Olympic Games is not just a 14-day event. The lead-up events are just as critical.

“The approach of the Year 2000 Olympic Games provides challenges of a magnitude not seen before in this country.

“We must accept those challenges and need to be well placed to meet them.”

Photo: Dick Courtney



State Olympic Law Enforcement Command Coordination Centre, Atlanta.