

## Commissioner's message

The importance of technology to modern policing cannot be overstated and it was one of the highlights of the Ayers Review recommendations. As a tool of law enforcement, technology has proven that it has much to offer in the detection and prosecution of crime. Unfortunately, technology is just as valuable a tool to criminal enterprises.

This edition of Platypus Magazine highlights the application of new and emerging technologies in law enforcement environment. Dr James Robertson introduces a comprehensive guide to the role played by AFP's Forensic Sciences with emphasis on how current and emerging technologies will support police investigations. The use of technology in police investigations is increasing at an astonishing rate with the move towards equipment miniaturisation and the establishment of mobile laboratories capable of rapid deployment fast becoming a reality.

Technology has also had its impact on illicit drug production. Dr Sandy Gordon presented a paper on my behalf in London at the conference on the Global Economy of Illicit Drugs held in late June. That paper is the basis of the article that appears in the following pages and deals with the growth of the drug problem in Asia. Central to this problem is the growth in production of amphetamine type stimu-



*Commissioner Mick Keelty*

lants, particularly in Burma. This is a situation that shows through the use of technology, drug syndicates can react quickly to changes in demand for specific drugs. Laboratory based production is not subject to the vagaries of crop based drug production. This will require a vastly different approach by not only LEAs but also the United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP).

Commander Barbara Etter of the Australian Centre for Policing Research has contributed a succinct paper on the state of play crime in cyberspace. In a wide-ranging discussion, Commander Etter discusses the nature of the computer crime problem and the challenges presented to law enforcement and also provides an outline what Australasian policing is doing to prevent and

reduce the incidence of this type of crime.

Another major article in this edition is on the legal implications surrounding undercover operations in particular to the suspect's right to silence. Dr David Craig, a federal agent from our Brisbane office, has distilled his doctoral research to provide an insight into the legal ramifications of undercover procedures in the US, Canada and the UK and how lessons learned there might apply to similar situations in Australia.

From the articles contained in this edition I think the message is clear. Technology has an ever increasing impact on how crime is committed and how law enforcement detects and brings to justice such criminal activity.

However, like all tools, technology is a means to an end and we need to ensure that we optimise the opportunities that technology provides to those involved in the front line of operational activity. To this end the AFP is investigating options which will enable remote, mobile, access to our systems. This might mean, for example, that data on a case could be entered into the relevant record while commuting back from an interview. Ultimately, I want the new technology to work for us rather than vice versa and soon I will be bringing you more news on our initiatives for a roll out of better technologies over the coming years.