

Bali bombings bring terror to our doorstep



By Commissioner Mick Keelty

To say things have been hectic for the AFP since the bombings in Bali on October 12 would be a severe understatement.

This event has brought world troubles right to our doorstep, but the AFP's heightened focus on terrorism since September 11 made it possible for us to quickly provide investigative, administrative and forensic staff to assist the Indonesian National Police. Within 24 hours, the AFP, ASIO, APS and other key agencies had representatives in Bali to assist where needed. This was just the beginning of what will be a prolonged investigation dedicated to bringing to account all those behind the death and destruction in Kuta.

The tireless commitment of all those who have been working on the investigation with the AFP in Bali and

supporting them at home has been inspirational. In Bali, great progress is being made on the investigation with AFP personnel working tirelessly alongside our Indonesian and international counterparts.

There are also associated stories that have been impressive. While I was in Darwin recently I heard that the partners of our members ran a soup kitchen to support those who were working long hours meeting flights and identifying witnesses immediately after the bombings.

I have also had the honour of handing over donations collected by the Disaster Victim Identification team, from Australians working in Bali, to the Red Cross workers who maintain the victims' bodies awaiting forensic examination.

There is no doubt that the role we are playing in Bali is a truly historic one for Australian law enforcement. This is why the AFP Museum has been tasked to collect documentation, photos, objects, oral histories and other information that will record the AFP's experience in Bali. I would recommend to those members who are able to contribute to this project, to do so. Our history is relatively short, so it makes capturing our achievements all the more important.

This edition of *Platypus Magazine*, while having a Bali focus, has also been able to capture some of the business-as-usual issues of interest to the AFP.

In an article with relevance to Australia's geographical region, Douglas Ranmuthugala examines security in the South Pacific from a law enforcement dimension. Our near neighbours no longer live in the island paradises of their forebears. Transnational crime has found these havens. These nations can sometimes struggle with being subjected to the criminal activities of international crime groups and at times also suffering the difficulties of modern political structures that can be in conflict with long-held traditions.

A major problem for developed and developing nations alike is dealing effectively with money laundering. An extract from a report titled *Countering Money Laundering in the Asian and Pacific Region* prepared for the Asian Development Bank deals with the negative effects of money laundering.

Among other statements the article says, “Money laundering also facilitates crime and corruption within developing economies, which is the antithesis of sustainable economic growth”. This is perhaps one of the most obvious reasons why law enforcement agencies like the AFP concentrate so closely on uncovering money-laundering schemes.

The successful *Women and Policing Globally 2002* conference held during October in Canberra was co-hosted by the AFP, the Australasian Council of Women and Police, and the International Association of Women Police. As this was the first time this conference was held outside the northern hemisphere, the pressure was on the organising committee to deliver a world-class conference – and this they did.

The calibre of the women police officers in attendance was outstanding and included some whose undoubted bravery and commitment was demonstrated by their actions in New York following the September 11 attacks and by others who equally served their communities in the face of institutional and cultural discrimination.

A recurring theme throughout the conference was the relatively low number of women in police services around the world. While it is possible to quote a variety of so-called reasons for this situation, it is difficult to argue with the Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Pru Goward, when she said, “... promoting women to more senior positions within the police force has the potential to change the culture and promote a flexible diversity ... This is because a good female leader in any profession will bring with her, not only an understanding of the needs of more junior women ... but is more likely to understand the needs of female clients ... than her male counterpart and may be more likely to advance these.”

In essence, I take from this quote (in full in the article) that all organisations benefit from encouraging a diverse range of personnel within their management structure. This leads to a greater understanding of the world at large and provides us with a better quality of leadership. This is one of the reasons why we have introduced Islamic awareness lectures into our recruit classes.

On the topic of leadership, it is hard to go past the words of General Peter Cosgrove. The Chief of Defence Force addressed the Advanced Diploma of Investigations course and Senior Leadership Program at the AFP College in August and imparted his thoughts on the qualities of leadership, in particular those qualities that make for great Australian leadership. The article is an excellent reference point for those who are serious about developing their leadership skills.

With reference to the War on Terrorism, Federal Agent Mark Briskey reminds us that there is no value in tarring all people with the same brush. In his article, *Islam and its misrepresentation*, Federal Agent Briskey reflects on stereotyping and bias regarding Muslims post September 11. Having lived in a Muslim community and working towards a PhD researching Islam, Federal Agent Briskey provides some incisive answers to often-asked questions about Islam.

