



International training complex opens for business



In late June, after two years of planning, on a day that might be heralded as breaking the drought, the AFP International Training Complex was officially opened by Prime Minister John Howard.

Guests at the opening represented federal, state and international government agencies in Policing, Defence, DFAT, the UN, High Commissions, Embassies, Consulates and Customs.

The address below was given by Commissioner Keelty in the purpose-built 'town hall'.

I'd like to begin by saying that with this weather, it may not feel like Honiara or Dilli, but perhaps outside the visible features of the complex might be similar.

I would first like to acknowledge that we are having this ceremony on Ngunnawal land and I welcome Don and Ruth Bell who are Ngunnawal elders and highlight to everybody that Don and Ruth have been to every recruit graduation and recruit opening in the AFP since I have been Commissioner. I would like to thank you for your commitment to the AFP.

This is not just another training facility. It is a multi-function, purpose-built international training complex, which symbolises a lot about the major changes that have happened in policing in recent years, particularly in capacity building programs.

It is testament to the value of law enforcement partnerships in fighting crime, both at the local and national levels, but also at the international level. And it reminds us of the complex community in which we live, and what much of our future holds.

The idea for this training facility came about in November 2001. There was no precedent or model on which we could go by but we knew that we had to transfer the training from theory into much more practical outcomes in preparing police for overseas missions.

We needed something that could replicate the conditions that we found in developing nations and a facility that could equip our people not only to look at the geography and the sorts of environments they would walk in to, but would allow a major focus on cultural issues that our police will confront in performing capacity building programs overseas.

Construction of the facility cost about \$2.8 million and started in July last year. It was completed in March this year and has been used for scenario-based training in, for example, militia attacks, hostage events, bomb identification, driver training (the driver training track will be rebuilt over the northern side of the complex). We have also had cross-cultural training and navigation training.

The facility is already delivering more than we expected. It contains buildings such as this - the town hall - and it doesn't matter whether you are in Cyprus or Timor or the Solomon Islands, the town hall is the focal point for local communities in the villages. In



fact, even in Timor, the town hall played a role in some of the town centres with trying to return displaced people back into their communities.

This town hall will also be used as a sleeping quarters. As you know the Protective Service role of the AFP is very important to us as well, and it can be used as a makeshift diplomatic premises, highlighting that the idea of the facility is to gain as much flexibility out of the village as possible.

When you came into the complex you would have noticed that there is a cemetery on the right-hand side as you drive in. That might seem strange to you, but in both Timor and also in the Solomon Islands our police have been involved in exhumations and in fact, in the Solomons there was something in the order of 39 exhumations conducted. It is important that police understand how to carry out those exhumations in a way that is culturally sensitive but also in a way that maximises the forensic capability of investigations.

There is also a police station on site that replicates the police stations where we do our capacity building work. In those police stations there are often no computers and even typewriters can be considered high-tech.

The corner store is used for scenario-based training not only for peacekeeping roles, but also for other policing roles; and we also have a burning house which emits smoke and flames and recreates real-life conditions. Many of you would have vivid memories of the burning buildings in East Timor. Civil unrest often has accompanying with it disturbances that result in people being moved out of their houses or their houses are burnt down, and it

is important that our police know how to respond to that sort of situation.

The washing and cooking facilities and the toiletry facilities are very basic. It is important that people actually understand the nature of the conditions that they are going to live in, in some places overseas, so we try to replicate that.

We have a marketplace which is central to many of the activities in places that we now operate. In fact, in Port Moresby the marketplace was one of the first areas to benefit from the presence of the Australian Assistance mission.

The whole village has been created from our own experiences over many missions. In the time that the AFP has been in existence, we have been operating in Cyprus, Cambodia, Haiti, Mozambique and of course more recently, East Timor, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

So far some 124 people have been trained in this complex including 21 police officers from policing agencies in Fiji, Kiribati, following on from makeshift facilities that we had in place in places like Townsville and Darwin where we have trained police

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from countries such as Timor-Leste, Vanuatu, Tuvalu, the Cook Islands, Tonga, Samoa, Kiribati and PNG.

This is also a shared facility. We have already had the Defence Force, the Fire Brigade, public servants, aid workers and our Protective Service officers undergo training through the facility. We want to have the facility used 100 percent of the time so it will be a shared facility, to replicate the whole-of-government approach to many of the policies that we are now involved in.

Importantly for me, it has created an opportunity for us to have a partnership with the Canberra Institute of Technology. Even before the complex was built it was used as a training facility for trades students, allowing them to get valuable hands-on experience in areas such as environmental impact studies, landscaping and events catering.

From the AFP’s perspective, the assistance of the CIT has not only helped get the facility established, but importantly has given us the opportunity to give some of our local Canberra youth a first-hand insight into some of the work police are now involved in, which I think is incredibly valuable in building relationships with members of the community.

This complex encapsulates what the AFP is about today – being strategic, being innovative, prepared for all manner of challenges, working with communities, preventing crime before it reaches our shores; understanding the broader environment, and playing a pivotal role in regional security.

It is already being recognised by international police and the peacekeeping community as a top-shelf training establishment, with interest now from agencies in Canada, China, the United Kingdom, Germany and Indonesia.

In closing, I’d like to thank:

- Rob Hunter, a veteran of two overseas missions who was instrumental in the final design product, working with Manteena;
- Joseph Biggerstaff and Peter McEwan from the AFP’s building and accommodation area who have been managing the project from an AFP perspective;
- Federal Agent Keith White, who has been instrumental in the

development of the training regime, and

- Manteena Project Managers, in particular Danny Agnello, who had responsibility for construction and development of the project.
- Dr Peter Veenker and CIT staff for their support and involvement in the establishment of the complex; and,
- importantly, State and Territory Chiefs of Police for providing support to the various programs that we have put in place but also to the various overseas deployments that we have done.

I’d also like to acknowledge the presence here of the Dunning family – Chris and Mike. We came out here in April this year and named the main street through the complex Adam Dunning Drive as a tribute to Adam but also to let the family know that you are with us and in our memories forever.

This establishment will always be open to you to come and observe what police are doing.

