

Changing approaches to peace operations



Evolution and change are key concepts in developing and planning off-shore operations for the AFP's International Deployment Group (IDG).

The IDG Manager of Planning and Development, Dr Tony Murney, says that the IDG is increasingly being acknowledged in government circles around the world, as a cutting edge police organisation.

"One of the things which is becoming clear to us each day is that we are part of a completely new wave or paradigm for policing and policing's role in development," Dr Tony Murney said. "We are working in what we are starting to refer to here as full spectrum international policing, which allows us to cover pre and post-conflict environments, as well as deal with situations that arise in conflict environments. For example, under the restructured IDG we have a very large Operational Response Group that allows us to operate in higher risk environments than we could have previously."

The recent 2008/2009 Federal Budget has confirmed that the AFP will continue in the long-term to be involved in supporting international development, with programs in Samoa, Nauru and Papua New Guinea. This will be the largest Police Development program ever supported by the Australian Government. Pacific countries will be supported to build

better policing strategies. Funding has also been provided over two years to assist in enhancing the Timor-Leste Police Development Program.

Dr Murney says that extensive research by the IDG shows that there is a very strong association between the rule of law and various dimensions of human development.

"Those dimensions of human development are things like government effectiveness, control and management of corruption and the international human development index," Dr Murney said. "which incorporates but is not limited to literacy, education standards, health of a population, the population's access to wealth, gross domestic product, life expectancy and the failed states index."

"What we found surprising in this analysis is the strength of the associations between the rule of law and these various indices. They're as high as anywhere from 80 to 90 per cent, which is exceptionally high for social data," he said.

The United Nation's (UN) recognition this year of the AFP's pre-deployment training for overseas peace-related operations was a significant milestone in the evolution of the IDG's approach to capacity building in developing countries.

The recognition is the first to be given by the UN to any police service in the world, and followed the IDG's

incorporation of UN Standard Generic Training Modules into its enhanced pre-deployment training.

This recognition also reflects the AFP's focus on meeting the challenge of conducting effective and sustainable peace operations and capacity building in developing countries.

Since late January last year, pre-deployment candidates from Australia and various Pacific Island nations have undertaken a 35 day training course, instead of the 12 day course previously provided. The longer course embraces coaching principles, capacity and confidence development training, cultural awareness, communication skills, humanitarian assistance, civil/military relations, safety and security and UN Standard Generic Training Modules. The course was developed by IDG's Learning and Development Coordinator Superintendent Steve Samuels, who retired in late May this year.

Respect for, and understanding of, a host nation's sovereignty, customs, traditions and culture are vital for the acceptance of policing contributions. Superintendent Steve Samuels said Solomon Island Police Force officers regularly provide cultural awareness training to the IDG course participants.

"Candidates learn how to communicate within other cultures and coach police colleagues through scenario training which adds to the authenticity of the



Photo: Terry Craig

Cultural awareness training is a significant part of IDG Pre-deployment Training. Solomon Islands Police Force Sergeant Colin Pitakesa and Sergeant Rachel Milton share cultural insights with Federal Agents Jason Ford and Shane McLennan, and AFP members Ben Skaines and Chris Rourke at the IDG village in Canberra.

course”, Superintendent Samuels said.

The coaching aspect of pre-deployment training, introduced by Superintendent Samuels, followed the AFP’s move into capacity building in the law and justice sector. The coaching model offers a flexible and relevant approach to conducting capacity building. Some situations may include a deployed AFP member assisting local police by being available to discuss different policing approaches to situations, or actively assisting local investigators in using contemporary policing principles or techniques, or assisting the local police in the development of procedures and systems.

The pre-deployment training program includes an immersion phase where participants spend 10 days living and learning in a purpose-built ‘village’ that boasts all the lack of comfort of a remote community village in a developing country. The participants are asked to focus on the issues of importance to people in developing

countries, such as the need for food and clean water, and are challenged with the practical aspects of living in a developing country.

This immersion in the demanding conditions of ‘village’ life is maintained 24 hours a day for 10 days without a break, and participants are subjected to a range of planned but ‘unannounced’ exercises.



Photo: Michael Punch

Superintendent Steve Samuels

Recognition of service and endeavours

Earlier this year, Superintendent Samuels received the Commissioner’s Medal for Innovation in the Commissioner’s Honours List for 2008. This internal award recognised his identification of quality training solutions and the subsequent development and leadership in the implementation of the AFP’s IDG Pre-deployment Training Program.

The IDG Pre-deployment training team was also awarded a Commissioner’s Group Citation for Conspicuous Conduct in recognition of displaying commitment and dedication to duty in the development and implementation of the AFP’s IDG Pre-deployment Training Program.

