

Pearls in Policing – creating a global policing network

The AFP is uniting with police forces around the world to share knowledge and discuss ideas on how best to address the issues facing law enforcement.

Increasing globalisation has impacted on all issues of safety and security. The rule of law and the effective functioning of governmental organisations have never been more important. Sound policing is essential in shaping both. This begs the question: how can law enforcement organisations assist each other by collaboration at the international level?

Commissioner Mick Keelty gave one solution to this question during his speech to the 2009 Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security Symposium which was held in Sydney in March.

He pointed out that the AFP was a partner in Pearls in Policing – the Dutch-led and Dutch-inspired international policing think-tank which attracts leaders from law enforcement around the world and provides a valuable opportunity to share knowledge and discuss issues facing the law enforcement community.

Pearls in Policing began in 2006 and provides an annual platform for police commissioners and law enforcement agency leaders from around the world to discuss opportunities for learning and development and the implementation of best practices in law enforcement.

Its sub-program, the Pearl Fishers International Action Learning Group (IALG), provides a valuable contribution to executive career development by allowing the emerging leaders of enforcement agencies to explore issues that challenge commissioners and chief executive officers of law enforcement agencies worldwide. The knowledge-sharing and networking achieved in this sub-program is invaluable and contributes to continuity of sound leadership traits.

The AFP, as one of the three countries managing the IALG, contributes by providing a senior member of its executive to mentor the Pearl Fishers over the course of a full year of exploration of issues impacting on police professionals globally. Assistant Commissioner Roman Quaedvlieg took this responsibility over from Assistant Commissioner Andrew Colvin in March 2009, when the AFP hosted a meeting of the IALG in Manly NSW.

Commissioner Keelty and Acting Deputy Commissioner National Security Andrew Colvin were joined by NSW Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione to welcome participants from The Netherlands, Canada, Belgium, United Kingdom, France, Poland, Germany, Singapore, New Zealand, and Australia to the second seminar of the 2009 IALG. The IALG seminar examined scenarios of future developments around the globe that are likely to impact on law enforcement.



Assistant Commissioner Roman Quaedvlieg

The IALG participants were senior officers recognised by their respective organisations for their potential to lead, inspire and make a difference to both those they lead and to the organisation they represent. Their program culminated in a high-level presentation to the Pearls in Policing principals at the annual conference held in The Hague in June 2009.

National Manager Aviation, Assistant Commissioner Roman Quaedvlieg, attended the June 2009 conference both in his capacity as an IALG program manager and as the delegate representing Commissioner Keelty at the Pearls Principals conference this year.

“Participation in Pearls in Policing benefits the AFP in a number of ways,” Assistant Commissioner Quaedvlieg said.

“Firstly it’s an excellent forum in which networks and relationships with police commissioners from around the world are established and maintained. Secondly, the richness of dialogue and the shared experiences of chief executives of policing organisations adds substantial depth and value to the way in which

participants ultimately manage their own organisations. And lastly, the development of the next tier of global police leaders is a critical responsibility in which the AFP takes great pride and will ultimately benefit from well into the future.”

Inspired by the ‘Bilderberg concept’, the annual Pearls in Policing conference includes input from the IALG, presentations, speakers and working groups.

The Bilderberg concept started in the early 1950s, when a number of people world-wide sought a means of bringing together leading citizens for informal discussions of the problems facing the Western world. The meetings were intended to create a better understanding of the forces and trends that affect Western nations.

The first meeting that brought Americans and Europeans together took place under the chairmanship of Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands at the Bilderberg Hotel in Oosterbeek, the Netherlands, in May 1954. Since then, meetings of this type have been called ‘Bilderberg Meetings’.

Each year, the Pearls in Policing participants are selected because of the value they can offer in the search for effective and innovative ways of policing. An annual conference report is issued after the event.

Conferences were held in 2007, 2008 and 2009. International law enforcement and judicial organisations, including Europol, International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), were involved.

The 2010 Pearls in Policing conference will be hosted in Australia by the AFP. This will be the first time the conference has been held outside of The Netherlands and is an opportunity for the AFP to host in excess of 30 commissioners and law enforcement agency heads from around the world. Planning is underway for this conference and an appropriate venue is to be decided in the near future.

Themes for the 2010 conference include public trust, police legitimacy, media management, international cooperation, and leadership.

Pearls in Policing

