

# Partnerships help fight terrorism

## The terrorist bombing of the Hilton Hotel in Sydney in 1978 was the catalyst for the formation of the AFP in 1979.

Countering terrorism has been at the core of the AFP's business for the 30 years of its existence. Despite a terrorist act on Australian soil giving rise to the organisation, few Australians would have believed their country was vulnerable. That all changed on 12 October 2002 when two bombs exploded in the nightclub district of Bali's Kuta Beach, leaving 202 people dead, including 88 Australians.

After the bombings the AFP offered its support to Indonesian authorities, and when the Indonesian National Police (INP) accepted the offer, the AFP began one of its most significant operations. AFP members were involved in setting up a command post and the AFP provided specialists in forensics, financial investigations and high tech crime.

In a collaborative effort that involved 500 Australian police officers from a number of jurisdictions, investigators obtained more than 600 witness statements and debriefed more than 7000 visitors who were leaving Bali. AFP specialists collected nearly 3000 forensic samples.

Following the investigation, 71 people were convicted for a range of offences related to the attack, from organising the bombing to harbouring wanted persons.

Countering terrorism continues to be a key priority for the AFP and its partner agencies. In February, nine men were convicted and jailed after a joint investigation exposed their plan to use explosives to attack a major sporting event.

Other investigations have led to the convictions of Faheem Lodhi

for his role in planning an attack against Australia, and Belal Khazaal for making a document which encouraged others to engage in terrorist acts.

The AFP collaborates with other Australian police forces, with Joint Counter-Terrorism Teams in place in all AFP offices around Australia.

Manager Counter-Terrorism Domestic, Scott Lee, said the AFP remained vigilant.

"The AFP has made significant disruptions to planned terrorist attacks by arresting the perpetrators before they have been able to carry out their plans," Commander Lee said.

"In 2007, the AFP helped the Indonesian National Police (INP) to disrupt a planned terrorist attack in Indonesia. The INP arrested a

## Family liaison rewards

On the morning of Friday 17 July 2009, news arrived of a terrorist bombing in Jakarta which killed nine people, including three Australians. AFP Family Investigative Liaison Officer (FILO) Michael Nicholas was assigned to work with the family of one of the victims.

FILOs were introduced as part of assistance to Indonesia after the 12 October 2002 bombings in Bali. They work with victims and their families to gather evidence and information to assist the investigation and to provide

information about the investigation and the judicial process.

Federal Agent Nicholas has been a FILO for eight years and was part of the inaugural deployment following the Bali bombings.

One of those who died in the Jakarta bombing was Perth businessman, Nathan Verity.

"I had the honour of dealing with Nathan's family," Federal Agent Nicholas said.

"Nathan's father Peter, mother Patricia and wife Vanessa were strong in their resolve. Terrorism would not diminish the great achievements Nathan had made in Jakarta."

With assistance from colleagues and the AFP Perth Office, Federal Agent Nicholas organised a special day for Nathan's five-year-old son, Christopher.

The Fremantle Football Club and the Australian Football League (AFL) arranged for Christopher to be a 'Docker for the day'



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**01:** The J W Marriott Hotel in Jakarta after the bombing in July 2009 **02:** The Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation  
**03:** The aftermath of the 2002 Bali bombings

Jemaah Islamiya member and seized chemicals he intended to use to make explosives.

“The partnership between the INP and AFP resulted in another disruption to a terrorist cell in Palembang, where 22 explosive devices and the equipment to make more of them were seized, and 10 people were arrested.”

No policing or law enforcement agency can single-handedly defeat terrorism and the AFP works with its international partners to detect and prevent terrorism. This commitment includes participating in capacity development programs with police agencies throughout the South-East Asia region.

One example is the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC). Participants attend courses on investigations management, criminal intelligence, forensics, financial investigations

and communications. To date, 5000 participants have completed programs offered by JCLEC. Also, for the first time, participants outside the South-East Asia region are attending courses including Islamic law and politics, security risk management and disaster victim identification.

The AFP has also provided assistance to other countries affected by terrorist attacks. In 2005, the AFP assisted the INP when terrorists attacked again in Bali. A counter-terrorism team deployed to Thailand to assist after the New Year’s Eve 2006 bombings, and a team deployed to Mumbai, India after the terrorist attacks in November 2008.

Successful counter-terrorism operations are those which prevent any plans being realised, Operation Neath, a multijurisdiction, multiagency operation, is a recent

example of counter-terrorism at work.

A team of more than 400 officers from the AFP, Victoria Police, NSW Police, the NSW Crime Commission and ASIO contributed to the seven-month long investigation which foiled a potentially devastating terrorist attack on Australian soil. Following the execution of 19 search warrants across Victoria, four people were arrested.

“We will continue working to protect Australia’s interests, both at home and overseas,” Commander Lee said.

“We have built on our experience from events such as the Bali bombings, and work hard to ensure that AFP members are well prepared and equipped to deal with any future incidents.”

when the Dockers played Essendon at Subiaco Oval.

“The AFP’s FILO members have helped families in their times of grief on many occasions,” Federal Agent Nicholas said.

“I am honoured to have been given the privilege of meeting these families.”

AFP FILOs have been involved in many investigations and responses including the recent Samoan tsunami, Kokoda plane crash, the Britt Laphorne investigation and the Jakarta and Bali bombings.

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