

Dr Jacqui Dewar  
Committee Secretary  
Parliamentary Joint Committee  
(Australian Crime Commission)  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Dr Dewar,

**The Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Australian Crime Commission's inquiry into the future impact of serious and organised crime on Australian society.**

I write in response to your letter dated 14 December, 2006 where you invite Victoria Police to provide a submission to your committee's inquiry on 'The future impact of serious and organised crime on Australian society'.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the PJC's inquiry.

I am aware that the Australian Crime Commission is providing a submission to your inquiry which will address the inquiry's references (a), (b) & (c). In the circumstances, I do not intend to add to any material already provided by the Commission.

In respect to reference (d) – *the adequacy of legislative and administrative arrangements, including the adequacy of cross-jurisdictional databases, to meet future needs*, I make the following comments.

Funding the future of Crimtrac

The prevention of serious and organised crime is dependent on the provision of timely and accurate information relating to all crime. Within the States and Territories of Australia strategies and tactics to prevent and disrupt crime have historically been informed by local systems providing data on matters relating only to the relevant jurisdiction. However, serious and organised crime does not acknowledge state and territory borders, it is a national and international problem that cannot be managed on a jurisdictional basis in isolation.

Issues such as illicit drugs, identity theft and computer crime can only be effectively managed by strategies and tactics that are supported by national systems. Crimtrac has created a limited capacity to provide such support with operational information such as criminal records, DNA profiles and fingerprints but much remains to be developed. The current Australian Law Enforcement Intelligence Net relies heavily on jurisdictions uploading information for sharing.

Developing new systems with a capacity for automatic inter-jurisdictional operability is a costly challenge. The significant issue I believe that needs to be examined is the Commonwealth's future funding of Crimtrac. The funding is required for both development and ongoing maintenance and it is beyond the capacity of the State and Territory agencies.

#### Access to data from 3<sup>rd</sup> parties

Serious and organised crime is well entrenched in regulated industries such as prostitution and gaming. Regulators in these industries often have access to information that is not known to law enforcement agencies. Centralising such information as well as adding more traditional data such as drivers' licences, car registration and firearms licences has enormous potential for strengthening national law enforcement generally.

Again, collecting such information and adding to holdings in a national system would be costly.

#### Security and Privacy

Broadening the scope of national data collection and use will require careful management of the security and privacy issues. Modern systems can have the capacity to protect both incorporated during the design and build phases if the legislative and administrative arrangements are made at the outset.

#### Conclusion

Serious and organised crime can be challenged at local community, state, national and international level through the provision of intelligence based on timely information. Crimtrac has a significant role in the provision of this information to police and other law enforcement agencies. More effective prevention and disruption of criminal activity on a national level will in turn make Australia a safer place to live.

Yours sincerely,

Christine Nixon APM  
Chief Commissioner