

THE PRESENCE OF THE AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE IN THE PACIFIC REGION.

The AFP has had a presence in one form or another, in the Pacific for close to two decades. The initial entry into the Pacific Region was by way of the Defence Cooperation Program funding which enabled the AFP to place an officer in Vanuatu in an Advisory/Training capacity. That role today is a liaison role in keeping with other AFP officers posted overseas.

From an Operational perspective, the AFP has serviced the Pacific Island region from Canberra since the early eighties, by way of a South Pacific Island Liaison Officer, who travelled on a regular basis throughout the region. That role is now that of a Regional Coordinator Pacific Islands based in AFP HQ Canberra.

In 1994, the AFP, as a result of increasing transnational crime indicators such as drugs and guns, opened a liaison office in Port Moresby, PNG.

In August 2001, a successful cabinet submission to address the increasingly apparent transnational crime issues in the region saw the placement over a 6 month period, of two additional officers in Honiara in the Solomon Islands, an additional officer in Port Moresby, PNG and Port Vila, Vanuatu and the opening of a new post with two officers in Suva, Fiji Islands.

An additional AFP officer was also posted to the office of the Regional Coordinator Pacific Islands (formerly the South Pacific Liaison Officer) in Canberra.

All AFP Pacific Island posts have various responsibilities when it comes to other countries in the region. For example, Fiji is responsible for all PIC's east of Fiji and the AFP Regional Coordinator Pacific Islands retains responsibility for Micronesia and the French Territories, whilst PNG, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu have enough responsibilities with their countries alone.

The boost in AFP personnel in the Pacific Region was also supported by approximately 2.4 million dollars in Law Enforcement Cooperation Program (LECP) funding support over 2.5 years. Many LECP interventions are under way or have been completed in the field of Intelligence, Investigations, Forensic, Border Control, officer exchange and attendance at various conferences, seminars and workshops.

The AFP enjoys a high profile in the Pacific region and is intent on raising that profile in the future. Considerable work is being generated through the placement of additional officers in the region, and this together with the LECP initiatives has enabled considerable inroads to be made into Pacific policing and other law enforcement agencies.

The AFP today, involves itself in close consultations with DFAT, Defence and AusAID on issues relating to policing in the Pacific Region. The AFP now provide advice to the Australian Government, the Australian Intelligence community and Australian overseas missions on a regular basis on policing and politics in PIC's and

more recently on AusAID Police Institutional Strengthening Projects in PNG, Solomon Islands and future projects in Vanuatu and Fiji.

The AFP has hosted a number of workshops in an effort to improve the outlook of Pacific policing and also works in close consultation with the Pacific Island Forum (Law Enforcement Liaison Officer - LELO) on matters of mutual interest. The most recent initiative to be placed before AFP management is the placement of a Training Enforcement Liaison Officer in Suva, Fiji Islands to coordinate all Pacific Law Enforcement Training, a well overdue and much anticipated initiative for the region.

The AFP is a regular attendee and contributor at the following:

- The South Pacific Chiefs of Police Conference (SPCPC)
- The Australasian and South West Pacific Commissioners Conference (ASWPCC)
- The (Pacific) Forum Regional Security Committee (FRSC)
- The Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO)
- The Pacific Immigration Directors Conference (PIDC)
- The New Zealand Combined Law Agency Group Conference (CLAG)

The following are examples of the conferences attended.

South Pacific Chiefs of Police Conference (SPCPC)

SPCPC is the South Pacific Chiefs of Police Conference and consists of Police Commissioners from all Pacific Island countries from Saipan and Guam to French Polynesia and Australia and New Zealand. The SPCPC meets once a year in various member countries around the Pacific and is supported by a mid term SPCPC working group which addresses all resolutions arising from the conference. This conference is the voice of policing in the Pacific. The AFP is very active within the SPCPC, both financially (providing travel funds) and representative wise, and together with two invited state police force representatives, attend each year. Representatives of the SPCPC attend other Pacific Island forums such as the Forum Regional Security Committee (FRSC) and the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO).

Australasian and South West Pacific Region Police Commissioners Conference (ASWPRCC)

The ASWPRCC is the Australasian and South West Pacific Region Commissioners Conference. This is a more Australian dominated conference with the AFP and all States and Territories represented. PNG and Fiji are the only other semi regular representatives at this Conference. The conference addresses issues of both a domestic and international nature.

THE AFP OVERSEAS NETWORK

The principal role and functions of the Australian Federal Police Overseas Network is to:

- Establish a relationship of confidence with the police and law enforcement agencies in the host country and other countries within the region of responsibility, facilitating a flow of information to Australian police forces
- Initiate inquiries with relevant local law enforcement agencies on behalf of the AFP, State Police, ABCI, etc, and pass on requests from local agencies to the AFP for inquiries within Australia
- Coordinate and provide advice to host countries on joint investigations
- Assist the host country in the development and execution of controlled operations
- Assist with the extradition of persons wanted in Australia or the host country
- Identify new developments in police training, equipment and practices, especially in relation to drugs and organised crime
- Provide training and technical advice where appropriate to local law enforcement agencies
- Cooperate, with the knowledge and agreement of the host country, with Third Country law enforcement authorities
- Represent the AFP at international law enforcement conferences, including those held under the auspices of the United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP) and Interpol
- Facilitate visits by law enforcement officials to and from the host country
- Liaise with Department of Foreign Affairs-designated special purpose liaison officers at Australian Missions where the AFP is not represented
- Strengthen the capability of foreign law enforcement agencies through the provision of training programs through the Law Enforcement Cooperation Program (LECP)