

Top data is 'vital to the drugs fight'

Drug enforcement policy in Australia must be supported by a concentrated and continuing effort to assemble and maintain data on all aspects of the drug problem.

An Australian Institute of Criminology seminar in Canberra was told this by Australian Federal Police Detective Chief Superintendent Col Winchester recently.

Detective Chief Superintendent Winchester, who is in charge of the Criminal Investigation Division of the AFP, said that present hard data on the true extent of the drug problem was uneven and substandard.

He said it was essential that the enforcement effort against drug supply should be reinforced by the establishment of a first rate database and the correlation of information on a concerted basis.

In the paper, entitled Drug Enforcement Policy in Australia, he said:

"Traditionally, police have tended to approach crime on a case-by-case basis; an offence receives cognisance, a brief is compiled, a result obtained, and on to the next case.

Compounding this piecemeal approach, each police force keeps its own records and, to safeguard civil liberty as much as anything, there is little information exchange between the demand and supply sides of the problem.

It is evident that, to counter the degree of organisation exhibited by the drug traffic, a more structured information and intelligence approach is required.

As a first step, the development of an Australian Drug Database is proposed. It will allow essential information in this field to be assembled on a national basis and then be analysed and inter-related to determine the trafficking patterns that persist.

This Database also will draw upon the significant intelligence that can be developed from the scientific analysis of intercepted consignments.

While putting in place the mechanisms which will ensure a national collation of information in this field, one has to ensure that the quality of both the information input and intelligence output is high. All Police Forces in Australia are apprised of the need for quality and are developing their finite resources accordingly.

This is an edited version of a paper written jointly by **OLIVER HAYDOCK-WILSON**, Principal Research Officer (Drugs), Australian Federal Police, and **DETECTIVE CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT COL WINCHESTER**.

The framework of co-operation between Australian law-enforcement agencies on drugs stems largely from the recommendations made by the Australian Royal Commission of Inquiry into Drugs (ARCID).

There is a need for co-operation between the supply-reduction and demand-reduction sides, particularly where the development of reliable data is concerned.

ARCID, for example, stressed the need for reliable data on the extent of heroin addiction within the country.

Once such data is established, it should then be feasible to quantify seizures as a proportion of demand and thus place interdiction effort at least tentatively in the context of the whole drug problem.

On the initiative of the NSW Police and the AFP, a start has been made in this direction through a study of the distribution of heroin abuse in a segment of the illicit market in Sydney.

Realising that the drug problem is international, Australian law enforcement has determined to react in an outward looking fashion in this field and in the field of organised crime generally.

Police Liaison Officers already have been posted to Bangkok, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Wellington, London, Los Angeles and Washington and before long such offices will be established in Islamabad, Manila, Hong Kong, Rome and Singapore.

Such liaison not only creates con-

fidence between the enforcement agencies concerned but also greatly assists the flow of information and intelligence and encourages joint investigations and operations.

In addition, we have the more routine links of ICPO/Interpol and our own Overseas Liaison office which extend to most countries in the world.

The difference of language, law and legal system and of attitude to drug enforcement will always exist, but our outgoing approach, we believe, minimises their effect and enables us and the liaising countries to tackle drug trafficking at its source rather than purely local manifestations.

The Australian Government takes much more than just a passing interest in drug-crop substitution/eradication programs and is an active supporter of, for example, the Highlands Agricultural and Marketing Program in Thailand.

Uniform drug legislation was recommended by ARCID, and model



● Detective Chief Superintendent Col Winchester

legislation based upon these recommendations is currently being drafted through the Parliamentary Counsels Committee of the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General.

Any consolidation of the myriad legislation extant here will help to refine the national drug enforcement effort.

The achievement of commonality in definition alone would be a step forward, particularly if it followed United Nations definitions in this field.

It would be no small relief just to know, for example, that heroin, diamorphine and diacetylmorphine were effectively and legally one and the same thing, even if they continued to live laboratory lives of their own under, as it were, their maiden names.

In 1979 amendments were made to the Customs Act (Section 229(A) in particular) which prescribed the forfeiture of monies or other possessions acquired through dealings in illicit drugs.

One case, which is still before the courts, has to date invoked this legislation.

Proposals for reciprocal legislation between the Commonwealth and the States, are being developed by the Australian Police Ministers Council (APMC).

In addition, recommendations from the Costigan Royal Commission on the tightening of banking and financial regulations are being considered by the Federal Government.

Given the huge profits which accrue from the illicit drug traffic, sound legislation which allows the forfeiture of such profits following conviction makes a lot of sense.

Additionally, legislation or administrative provision which enables the investigator to follow what has been termed 'the paper trial' and assemble hard evidence from the 'laundering' aspects of the crime, should serve to strengthen the case against the major trafficker.

There is one major enforcement weapon which should serve both tactical and strategic ends. This is the intelligence arm, which is itself the direct result of post-ARCID drug enforcement policy in Australia.

A reliable, efficient and penetrative intelligence system which can obtain and collate good information and, from it, develop sound, timely and relevant intelligence is seen to be a prerequisite to active drug enforcement.

Even the considerable organisational and technical skills of major drug-trafficking syndicates can be countered by the use of an efficient intelligence capability.

At the same time, that capability should contribute to the basis of knowledge upon which future drug enforcement policy changes must rest.

Death of popular college chef

AFP members throughout Australia mourned the death recently of Estonian migrant Mr August Sild.

"August," one AFP colleague remarked, "had the classic way to endear himself to everyone. He personified the adage, 'The way to a man's heart is through his stomach'."

August Sild was the principal chef at the AFP College, Barton, from the AFP's inception.

He died, aged 58, of cancer on 3 September and was buried at Canberra's Gungahlin Cemetery after a funeral service at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Reid.

Many from the AFP attended the funeral. Among them were Acting Commissioner Mr John Johnson, Assistant Commissioner Mr Allan Watt, Chief Superintendent Peter Dawson, Chief Inspector Lionel Claydon, Inspector Mike Keating, Sergeant Bernie Smith, Senior Sergeant Barry Boyce (retired), Sergeant Mike Keelty and, representing Commonwealth Accommodation and Catering Services, Mr Bill Biorac and Mr Hans Thamer.

All members of the CACS catering staff at the college also attended.

Mr Biorac, CACS manager at the



● Mr Sild (centre), pictured with other college chefs John Ball (left), Graeme Harmer and Commonwealth Accommodation and Catering Services manager Mr Bill Biorac.

college, said he had known Mr Sild since 1951.

"Estonian born, August came to Australia in 1948 with the thousands of other migrants from the Baltic States," Mr Biorac said.

"He was never a formally trained chef. He was entirely self taught. He was a man who could turn his hand to any type of cooking. But most of

all he was reliable. He would never let you down."

Inspector Keating, related to Mr Sild by marriage, said that if he was asked to sum up Mr Sild's most endearing characteristic, he would say it was an unfailing humour.

"He had a great sense of humour," Inspector Keating said. "He liked a drink, too!"