

Destroying the weapons of destruction

As many as 400 lethal weapons, confiscated at airports and other arrival points in Australia, are currently being destroyed each year under Australian Federal Police supervision.

The weaponry ranges from pocket pistols to flick-knives, tear gas cylinders, cross bows, miniature (but deadly) dart guns, swords and a bizarre assortment of other weapons capable of causing death or serious injury.

In most cases, the task of examining, testing and ultimately destroying these deadly imports is co-ordinated through the Firearms Safety Testing Section, units of which today operate in Sydney, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne and Adelaide.

Although the primary function of the Section relates to testing and maintenance of a variety of weapons, particularly the testing of firearms intended for lawful import into Australia, the unique knowledge and equipment possessed by "armoury" staff make the Section an obvious choice for assessment of confiscated weaponry. In some instances it is necessary to firstly establish that an object is indeed a "weapon" within the true legal definition.

The Officer-in-charge of the Eastern Region FSTS, Senior Constable Ken Pryor, said the processing and destruction of confiscated items involved fairly close liaison with Customs authorities, particu-

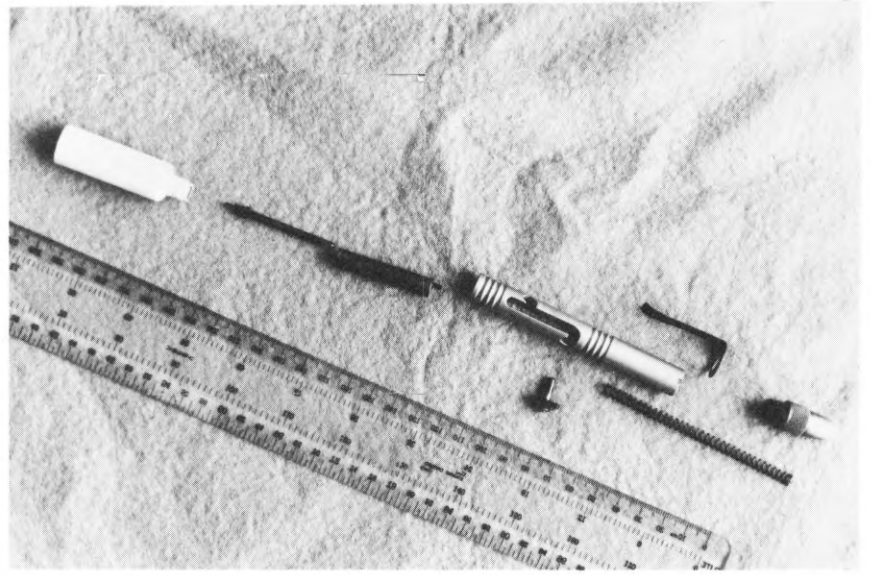
larly those involved in general seizure work at Sydney Airport.

Once detected and confiscated—perhaps on suspicion of being a lethal weapon—the items are sent to the FSTS for examination and report. When the mechanical aspects are confirmed, the weapons are temporarily stored before being shipped, en masse, to Canberra for destruction, usually by melting down.

In addition to duties such as weaponry training and repair, the Section's personnel are regularly engaged in testing various calibre weapons intended for lawful import into Australia.

Nationally, between 1,500 and 2,000 are tested, assessed and reported on in detail each year—particularly in relation to aspects of safety.

The use of regional FST Sections for this purpose has led to adoption of a uniform standard of safety testing for weapons.



At first glance, a seemingly harmless pen . . . in reality a tear gas weapon capable of causing severe discomfort, if not injury. This disguised weapon, detected by X-ray machine at Sydney's Kingsford-Smith Airport, is one of the slightly less-deadly imports regularly uncovered in passengers' baggage.

Annual ACT bowls day raises \$1322

Community work by officers of the Australian Federal Police has become well-known in the ACT. It takes many forms, from the daily police work to special events.

One of the many successful efforts is the Annual Police and Friends Bowls Day, held in aid of local charities.

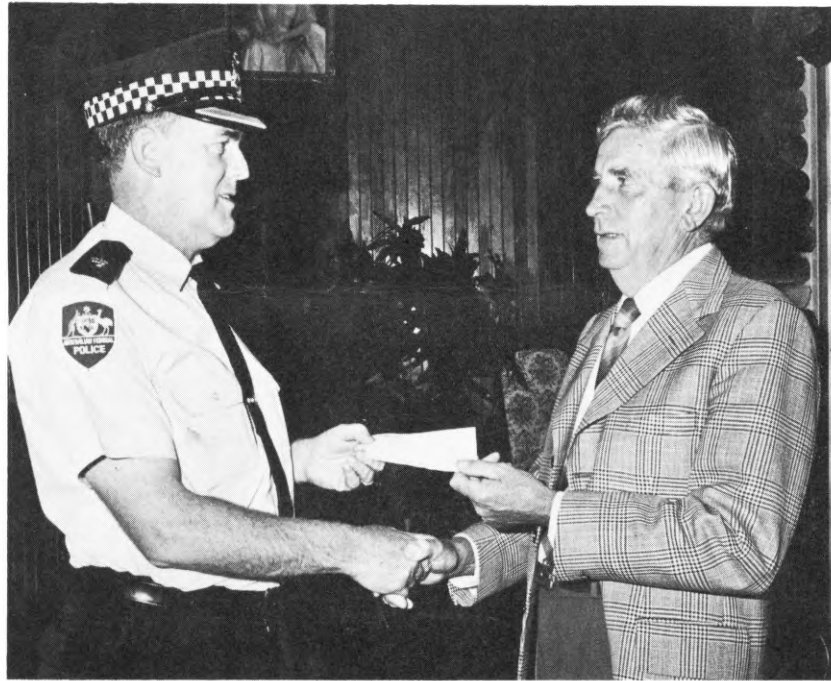
The event has been held for the past seven years and in that time has raised a total of \$5,115 for worthy causes.

The 1983 event was held on 24 October at Canberra South Bowling Club and was the most successful day so far.

At a special ceremony, an amount of \$1,322.60 was presented to the ACT representative of the Muscular Dystrophy Association, Mr Charles Crossley.

Organisers of the day expressed sincere appreciation to the numerous business firms which donated trophies. Many have supported the Bowls Day since its inception in 1977.

Left: A cheque for \$1,322.60, is presented by Inspector Max Bradley to the ACT representative of the Muscular Dystrophy Association, Mr Charles Crossley. (Picture by courtesy The Canberra Standard.)



NZ liaison officer sees need for close links

New Zealand's newly-appointed Police Liaison Officer in Australia, Detective Inspector Gerry Cunneen, is naturally a strong advocate of inter-Force communication.

In fact, as the title suggests, communication and exchange of information are the primary objectives of his four-year appointment.

"Recent events involving international drug trafficking can provide conclusive evidence of what can be achieved by facilitating the communication process between police organisations," Detective Inspector Cunneen explained.

"While relatively few cases receive such international news coverage, improved day-to-day liaison between police forces in countries like Australia and New Zealand has substantially assisted law enforcement activity in a wide range of matters—some routine, but nevertheless, equally important."

Detective Inspector Cunneen is one of three NZ liaison officers posted abroad, the others operating from Singapore and Bangkok.

The first liaison posting was made to Bangkok in 1978 specifically in response to the drug situation. With increasing international police concern over the movement of drugs throughout the South Pacific region, the additional appointments followed soon after.

"My role here involves purely liaison work," Detective Inspector Cunneen said.

Responsible for all liaison activity throughout both Australia and Papua New

Guinea, he anticipates interstate travel and contact with not just Australian Federal and State Police, but a wide variety of departments such as Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and Customs.

"It's a big job, but one I'm looking forward to," he said.

As part of the reciprocal arrangement, the AFP has a similar officer operating from Wellington, New Zealand. In both cases, the terms of reference are similar—to liaise, pass on information and to speed up the process of communication between all operational levels of the respective Police forces.

Detective Inspector Cunneen's credentials for the posting are particularly impressive. Currently reporting to the Director of Drug Enforcement and Intelligence, he served between 1977-80 as Co-ordinator of the New Zealand National Crime Unit. In 1979, he was sent to England to assist the Lancashire Police with their investigations into the Martin Johnstone murder.

Following this duty he was appointed Deputy Director of Drug Enforcement and Intelligence until May 1981, when he became Deputy Director of the Criminal Investigation Unit.

Right: Detective Inspector Gerry Cunneen, liaison officer with the AFP for New Zealand Police, right, with Eastern Region Drug Unit officer, Detective Inspector Ken Curnow.

