

NEW DRUG SOURCES CAUSE CONCERN

CONTINUED high levels of opiate and cannabis production are predicted for South-East and South-West Asia.

Delegates to a big anti-drug conference held recently in Kuala Lumpur were told that while some countries — notably Thailand — were successfully eradicating narcotics production the shortfall was being taken up quickly elsewhere in the region.

Burma, Laos and Afghanistan were all mentioned as problem areas where the intricacies of the socio-political climates made it unlikely that any effective control over narcotic production would be gained in the near future.

The conference was the inaugural annual regional meeting of the Foreign Anti-Narcotics Community (FANC).

The AFP was represented by its liaison officers from Islamabad, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, Detective Inspectors Steve Polden, Bernie Doyle, Tony Bott and Roger Hellier.

Detective Inspector Polden's situation report on the South-West Asian narcotics situation was particularly well received. He was honoured at the end of the meeting by being among those who received a Certificate of Appreciation from FANC for an outstanding contribution to foreign anti-narcotics liaison enhancement in the region.

The meeting was attended by 26 narcotic liaison officers from ten national police agencies, and Interpol. They came from nine posts in South-East and South-West Asia.

Observers included Commissioner Nils Ahmansson, of the Swedish National Police; Mr Christer Sjöberg, Head of Interpol, Swedish National Police Board; Superintendent Neil Pouliot, OIC National/International Drug Operations, Royal Canadian Mounted Police; and Deputy Commander Yip Kwok Keong, Narcotics Bureau, Royal Hong Kong Police.



N.S.W. Police Deputy Commissioner Angus Graham (L) seals the agreement with AFP Eastern Region Assistant Commissioner Ray McCabe.

AFP-NSW DRUG AGREEMENT

By Stephen Simpson

For the first time in Australia a formal agreement has been made between two police forces on information exchange and the investigation and prosecution of drug offenders.

An agreement between the Commander, AFP Eastern Region, Assistant Commissioner Ray McCabe, and the State Commissioner of the NSW Police, Deputy Commissioner Angus Graham, was signed in a short ceremony at NSW Police headquarters on 2 March this year.

In essence, the agreement is that both police forces will pass on to each other information or evidence concerning offences committed against drug laws enforced by the other. In our case of

course, we primarily enforce the Customs Act 1901, and the NSW Police enforce the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985. The AFP can and does prosecute under either Act. The agreement also provides for joint investigations in appropriate cases and in addition it formally establishes designated liaison officers in both police forces.

The agreement in effect formalises arrangements that have been in place for some time between the AFP Eastern Region and the NSW Police which have served to ensure that neither force treads on the toes of the other when chasing drug offenders who are often common targets.

The agreement came about through the personal efforts of drug squad members in both forces who felt that future changes to the internal organisation of either force could affect the informal arrangement.

Special guest speakers included Police Major General Chavalit Yodmani, Secretary-General of the Thai Narcotics Control Board and His Excellency Mr John Spreckley, the British High Commissioner to Malaysia.

The AFP delegates said the meeting presented a most valuable forum for multilateral information exchange by foreign police and narcotic liaison officers assigned to Asia.

The presentations by the speakers gave an in-depth analysis of the volume of

narcotic cultivation, production and trafficking from source countries within Asia.

The resounding success of the inaugural meeting was reflected in a statement by the Swedish National Police Commissioner, Mr Nils Ahmansson, that he would be strongly advising his fellow Scandinavian commissioners to attend the annual FANC meetings on a rotating basis so that they could get the most extensive briefing available on the narcotics perspective in South-East and South-West Asia.