

Commissioners resolve to 'find the money'

By Brian Swift



Representing the police services of Australasia and the South West Pacific were (l to r) Commissioner Hunt (SA), Commissioner Macdonald (NZ), Acting Deputy Commissioner Gibson (NSW), Commissioner Tokam (PNG), Commissioner Arnfield (Fiji), Commissioner McAulay (AFP), Commissioner Bull (WA), Commissioner Comrie (Vic), Commissioner O'Sullivan (Qld), Commissioner Johnson (Tas), Commissioner Palmer (NT) - Photo by Branko Ivanovic

POLICE Commissioners of Australasia and the South West Pacific Regions were in Canberra in early March for a five-day conference which had the major theme of "Finding the Money". Hosted by Australian Federal Police Commissioner Peter McAulay, the Conference was attended by representatives from all Australian States and Territories as well as Fiji, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

Resolutions taken by the Commissioners included the need to adopt a common system under which an equitable proportion of proceeds of crime funds or assets (additional to budget allocations) are directly disbursed for law enforcement purposes, and strong recommendation for the enactment of consistent legislation restricting access to restrained funds suspected of being proceeds of crime, for legal and living expenses of accused persons.

The Conference further resolved to develop a national investigation

management strategy dealing with confiscation of proceeds of crime and covering, among other things, multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary task forces; and to develop a memorandum of understanding for co-operative arrangements between jurisdictions.

Commissioners agreed there was a need for a system that established confiscated assets trust funds; a formula for equitable sharing of assets between parties involved in an investigation, presumption in favour of forfeiture; and administrative enforcement provisions.

Further to the theme of "Finding the Money" Commissioners resolved to note the growing need to explore the full range of sources for external funding or resource assistance.

This included private sector sponsorship at local, national and possibly international level; partnerships with the community, private sector and other departments; user-pays

arrangements; overseas aid and specific program funds.

The Conference confirmed the importance of a professional business approach to sponsorship based on clearly articulated policies and practices that address accountability, integrity and conflict of interest issues. Commissioners noted and endorsed as guidelines the 10 principles for sponsorship outlined in the ICAC report on sponsorship, November 1993.

Police commissioners acknowledged the importance of meeting public expectations when implementing changes to police service delivery and endorsed the importance of effective media and marketing strategies by police departments.

Another item covered by the Conference was the extradition of offending parolees. Commissioners agreed to examine and report on their respective jurisdiction's position in order to develop a co-ordinated position on legislative reform

as an input into the review of the Commonwealth's Service and Execution of Process Act.

The Conference acknowledged and formally recognised the outstanding contribution made by Northern Territory Commander Barbara Etter as Chairperson of the Police Commissioners' Policy Advisory Group (PCPAG). South Australia Police Commissioner David Hunt was appointed the new facilitator for PCPAG which will now be chaired by the SA Police officer in charge of Strategic Development Branch.

In considering a report on the 1993 Australasian Crime Conference, Commissioners discussed issues to be dealt with out-of-session including mandatory reporting of child abuse; response to violence within the family; computer investigation techniques and strategies, Pawnbrokers Act and problems of enforcement; and national standardised computer legislation.

The Commissioners' Conference also noted progress on the Crime Conference's topic of environmental offences and the development of relationships between police jurisdictions and their relative environmental protection agencies.

With the increasing recognition of the globalisation of crime, the Conference was greatly enhanced by the attendance and contributions by



Conference delegates and accompanying persons met the Governor-General at a reception at Government House - Photo by Branko Ivanovic

Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and Fiji. Law enforcement in Australia is experiencing a growing benefit from co-operation with neighbouring nations as the South West Pacific Region is continuously targeted by organised crime groups for establishment of infrastructures or the staging of drug trafficking. The value of Australia's regional partners will be further recognised next year when the 1995 Commissioners' Conference is held in Fiji.

The Conference also touched briefly on the impact on policing of the 2000 Olympics and resolved to include the issue as a standing item on the conference agenda until the year 2000.

Police relationships with the private security industry were also a widely discussed agenda item at the Conference. Commissioners resolved to support the need for developing partnership arrangements with that industry, particularly in conjunction with major public and international events such as festivals and the Olympics.

The Conference also recognised the productivity of the recently-formed National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau. Commissioners endorsed, subject to funding, the Bureau's initiative of staging a Police-Ethnic Youth Relations Summit.

The Conference agreed to support in principle the proposal for a National Police Memorial to be erected in Canberra. The Australian Federal Police will chair a committee to develop a proposal for the memorial.

Finally, Commissioners agreed to support wide promulgation of information promoting the 1995 World Police and Fire Games to be hosted in Melbourne by Victoria Police. In a report to the Conference, Victoria Police forecast that the Games could attract more competitors and spectators than the Commonwealth Games and should inject millions of dollars into Victoria and other States through the tourism it will attract. □



Commissioner Macdonald, Commissioner McAulay and Federal Minister for Justice Duncan Kerr are shown aspects of communications equipment by Mr Chris Latchem of Motorola Communications - Photo by Branko Ivanovic