

# Embracing the future of law enforcement

In November, a range of provocative thinkers gathered in Canberra over two-and-a-half days to predict what might be the key influences on crime and law enforcement as society heads towards 2020.



Rarely before in law enforcement circles has such a range of experts from disciplines including crime, sociology, geopolitics, science and technology come together to present to an audience representing the world's major law enforcement organisations, their individual visions of the not-so-distant future.

Commissioner Mick Keelty welcomed more than 300 delegates from around the globe on the first day at the *International Policing Toward 2020* conference. This significant international event enabled participants to discuss the shape of law enforcement in the future, and to think about how we might address challenges and embrace opportunities in the years to 2020 and beyond.

The following pages give a snap-shot of some of the strategic insights presented by leading experts in their respective fields. There is also information from some of the panel discussions held during this high-level event. *Platypus* readers are encouraged to visit the conference website at [www.conference.afp.gov.au](http://www.conference.afp.gov.au) to obtain more detailed information about the program and speakers.

**Setting the scene – examining characteristics of policing that might**

## begin to emerge or diminish as we progress toward 2020

The following is an edited extract from Commissioner Keelty's welcome address on 19 November:

"...The fact that we are all here at this conference trying to better understand some of the broader factors at work in shaping our world counters any argument against us (law enforcement and related organisations) engaging in future strategy.

"As we will discover during the conference, the world in which we all live is in a dramatic state of flux. Communities and governments have come to expect that law enforcement agencies will ensure safety and that security prevails – not tomorrow, but right now...

"So what can you expect from this conference?

"I think at the very least we are all going to be challenged by the enormity of the changes that we are still to experience as we move toward 2020, and beyond.

"Over the coming days we'll talk about some very important topics...the themes for this conference cover a diverse array of topics which all have one thing in

common. They are very likely to have a profound influence on crime and law enforcement for decades to come.

"...Arguably one of the most important and difficult questions we will address in this conference is this: What expectations will society place on law enforcement in 2020?

"To even begin to answer this question we need to speculate on what society might look like in 2020. It's a difficult task, given we can explore it from a number of different perspectives, but we can certainly address future organisational values of a police force, the structure of a police force, civil society's policing requirements, and even questions about what it means to be human.

"Arguably, the science and technology revolution has had a greater impact on humanity than any other. It has heralded unprecedented advances in almost every area in which humans are involved. It has impacted upon politics and the economy and in many ways it has redefined class structures.

"...By 2020 we might see the development of an intelligent robotic entity with the ability to interact in a meaningful way with society. This might



sound like science fiction, but more and more people and organisations are giving credence to such a concept... if such a concept were to eventuate it would place demands on the law enforcement community that we can barely conceive of today..."

The full speech can be accessed at: [www.afp.gov.au/media/national\\_media/national\\_speeches/2007/international\\_policing\\_toward\\_2020\\_conference](http://www.afp.gov.au/media/national_media/national_speeches/2007/international_policing_toward_2020_conference)

### Expanding the horizon by exploring key global issues through key themes

On day one, master of ceremonies and television journalist Anne Fulwood, set the agenda and welcomed guest speakers to present their visions of the future world and how law enforcement must evolve to meet those challenges. Ms Fulwood invited delegates to free their minds, be proactive and to draw

inspiration from the words of Professor Sohail Inayatullah who expanded on the conference themes:

"We live in profoundly revolutionary times where the pace of change in spheres such as science and technology, economics, politics and the environment is unparalleled in our history," Professor Inayatullah said.

During the conference, highly regarded and influential academics, business representatives and futurists spoke on issues including world-wide competition for basic resources, mass human migration, environmental degradation, the rise of crimes made possible or enhanced by the developments in digital technology and the likelihood of pandemic diseases.

Speaking after climate change expert

Professor Tim Flannery's presentation, Assistant Commissioner Paul Jevotivic of the AFP's International Deployment Group said: "while he shared with us the threat of climate change he does so in a way that not only frightens us into what could happen but also gives us a sense of how achievable the solutions are to slow down these challenges."

Internationally renowned futurist Watts Wacker also had the Gala Dinner audience thinking when he raised the concept of changing the game instead of the rules. As Gala Dinner MC Superintendent Matt Varley from ACT Policing said: "While his flamboyancy was a shock to us all, I will take away his statement that most things occur out on the fringes of society and move toward the central normality, as an essential tool for straight-forward planning." ■



"Australian police have had a large burden imposed on them by the consequences of existing climate change...it is of course at a much smaller level than what could occur in the future if we are not vigilant in terms of emission reductions."

### Environment Change

Australian of the year 2007, scientist, explorer and conservationist Professor Tim Flannery contributed to the Environment Change session and spoke on the evocative and controversial subject of climate change and shared his environment vision for the future.

Professor Flannery's presentation outlined where we are today and where we might

be going. "What the future may hold for us in terms of climate change and - that of course is going to be dictated by how big the climate threat is and how fast it's moving," he said.

He focused on the three great atmospheric pollution crises of our age including acid rain, depletion of the ozone layer and greenhouse gases. He highlighted how big each threat was,

how fast they moved and the action that needed to be taken by scientists, nations acting collectively and government at that time to reduce their impact on the planet.

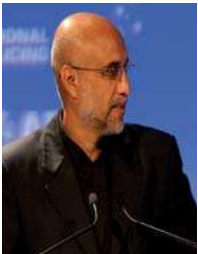
Professor Flannery reminded us of possible consequences if countries had been slow in ratifying the Montreal protocol on banning the production of CFC's in 1987. "The world as we know it would have experienced a full blown



crisis," he said. That crisis may have included the collapse of eco-systems and significant impacts on human health. Yet, Professor Tim Flannery reminded us that a willingness to act has stopped acid rain and that a similar concert of wills would enable us to bring about a sustainable future.

Professor Flannery was delighted to hear that delegates had planted trees during the conference as a concrete gesture toward a safer and more secure future. Carbon sinks, such as tropical rainforests, would be needed to sequester carbon dioxide. He encouraged delegates to

come back in 20 years to see their trees, saying "hopefully you'll be flying in a jet aircraft with butinoil - a biofuel, rather than the current fossil fuels and you won't need to pay for carbon offsets." ■



Professor Sohail Inayatullah asked the audience to participate in a think-tank session and to imagine a future for their organisation via pillars of foresight. These foresights included: used future, disowned future, what's the inner future – your metaphor, and alternative futures.

Professor Inayatullah is a political scientist at Tamkang University, Taipei. He was one of three academic futurists who spoke at the conference and his presentation focused on the methodologies law enforcement agencies could use to address strategic planning and future issues as we head toward 2020.

One of the key methods he advocated was to encourage participants to map the changes of the past 13 years as a clue to the rate and scope of possible future changes.

To illustrate, *Platypus* compared information from the 1994-1995 AFP Annual Report with the recent 2006-2007 Report to reveal radical change as well as similarities. One significant difference is the number of personnel serving overseas: more than 420 in 2006-07, more than six times greater than the 67 members posted internationally 13 years earlier.

In 1994, the AFP was positioned to combat fraud and the emerging computer crime. Today the ministerial direction focuses on terrorism, transnational crime, organised people smuggling, high-tech crime and asset seizure. However, strategic partnerships, capacity building, community policing in the ACT and organisational accountability have been common themes across the 13 years.

The tools of law enforcement have continued to evolve. In 1995, the AFP Network (AFPNET) was under development for a rollout in major offices across Australia and case management system PROMIS was several years away. Today, members can access AFPNET securely from anywhere on the globe and there are multiple IT projects looking to improve the AFP's operational capability.

Operational successes in the mid-nineties reflected the criminality type in Australia

at the time. Cannabis, cannabis resin and heroin comprised the main drug seizures. Now, amphetamines, precursor chemicals and cocaine head the list. Measuring the AFP's effectiveness has also radically changed, with a focus on harm prevention. Net weight of drugs, while still used, is supported by the Drug Harm Index which places a dollar value on the damage to society that has been prevented.

Developments in DNA, hormonal and steroid technology and expanded production may change the user profile. Looking ahead to 2020 it is likely that trafficking of illicit and prohibited material will continue, so investigative techniques and legislation will need to constantly evolve as criminals innovate.



## Gala dinner – Preparing for the 21st Century

On the second evening, delegates and guests attended the Gala Dinner at Parliament House. Superintendent Matt Varley from ACT Policing was master of ceremonies and Commissioner Keelty opened the evening's proceedings.

Futurist Watts Wacker set the scene with a quote from American author Helen Keller: "Is there anything worse than being blind? Yes, having no vision."

Mr Wacker explored the definition of a futurist and the considerations of future change. He described the changes we are experiencing now as autocatalytic – change is changing itself, with exponential effect. Whichever way we look at it, this change is no longer linear, nor is it confined to one particular geographic or social area at a time.

Mr Wacker challenged the audience to consider that the only certainty is uncertainty when dealing with the future. He also suggested that the audience adopt the beginner's mindset: unlearning everything we have already learned may help us deal with future events. In his closing statement Mr Wacker spoke of the five pillars to innovation which are scope, curiosity, attention to detail, challenging convention, and play.

## Closing of the conference – beginning a new chapter and sharing outcomes

Professor Sohail Inayatullah delivered a final address, saying law enforcement agencies needed to get back to the basics and harness their capacity to adapt to

change in the future. He also urged delegates to appreciate the different perspectives in relation to world views, and suggested that anticipating the future may be a way of adapting to change.

A panel discussion on the theme, Shaping our Futures, was facilitated by social commentator Dr Keith Suter and included: Chief Executive Jim Gamble of the UK Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre; First Assistant Secretary at the Attorney-General's Department Joanne Blackburn; Professor Chris Stone from the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, USA; Anita Hazenberg, International Director of School of Police Leadership in the Netherlands; and Chris Abbott, Program Coordinator and Researcher at the Oxford Research Group from the United Kingdom.

The speech officially closing the conference had AFP Deputy Commissioner Tony Negus reflect on the consistent message from speakers across the broad range of expertise that it was crucial for us to imagine the future. He also noted that while the warnings of our survival have been a hotly debated topic by climate scientists, Professor Flannery provided us with a more optimistic outlook.

In his final statement Deputy Commissioner Negus reinforced the central message Watts Wacker had provided the evening before as the gala dinner speaker: "We must be creative, we must challenge ourselves and we must remember, the only thing that's off the table for our futures is the status quo."

## Feedback from delegates

The following quotes were provided by some of the delegates interviewed for a special video presentation on the closing day.

**Angus Smith from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)** - My task in the RCMP is to think about the future and that's often a very lonely place to be. Coming to the conference allows me to meet other people who are in the same position and thinking about the same things.

**Commissioner Lui Patu of the Vanuatu Police Force** - The world has become smaller. It's a global village.

**Anita Hazenberg, International Director of School of Police Leadership in the Netherlands** - What about China and India? How will they affect the world? What about child pornography? The fact that we are sitting in this room today discussing these issues which connect us and the many challenges we face.

**Orlando Paez, Brigadier General of the Columbian National Police** - The theme of terrorism and the many events that occurred after 9/11 and how that has now produced many countries to cooperate and to combat terrorism including my country. There isn't a country in the world that is free from this problem.

**Oscar Gutiérrez, Prefecto Inspector of Policia de Investigaciones de Chile** - in particular a concern for Chile as for everyone else is global warming issues and also how technology is changing, for example the Internet and paedophiles online. And how there is a requirement for law enforcement agencies to cooperate and that is going to be of great importance for our future.



**Longuinhos Monteiro, Attorney-General of the Republic of Timor-Leste**

- In the future we all know, that no one country can not work alone by them selves, especially combating organised crimes. We need to work together globally and enhance our corporations for the best outcomes in the future.

**A delegate's perspective post-conference**

Dr Keith Suter is a broadcaster, writer and strategic planner. He is the author of *Global Notebook: an Introduction to World Affairs* and makes regular appearances on Australian television. As a social commentator, Dr Suter contributed to the Mass migration and human security session, and has provided *Platypus* with his reflections on the 2020 conference.

This historic conference was the first of its type and, unlike most police conferences, focused on the future rather than immediate issues. The conference has set a fresh benchmark on how such police conferences could be organised in the future.

The conference was diverse in its attendance with more than 300 delegates from nearly 30 countries. Significant questions addressed included:

- What will international policing look like in 2020?
- What will international society look like in 2020?
- What major challenges will police forces face?
- How will technological change affect policing?

A particular strength in all the considerations was the way in which each

issue was examined from a specific police point of view. For example, conference delegates looked at the impact of the Internet on policing. While the Internet has not invented child sexual exploitation, it has provided additional opportunities for the offence to take place.

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre based in the United Kingdom (UK) has have had to think creatively about how to combat this form of exploitation and has benefited from having a panel of advisers aged 10-16 to assist with this task.

Many websites in the UK have an icon that a child can click on to activate a method for online tracking of criminals without the criminal being aware they are being monitored. This is a form of empowerment for children. The Virtual Global Taskforce takes advantage of new technologies to electronically connect police forces around the world to work together to detect and prevent online child abuse.

The conference also looked at how climate change is already a problem for Australian police. For instance, hot weather can contribute to the causes of violence and unruly behaviour and the rural drought can mean increased suicides and domestic violence.

In the long-term, any increased worry about the environment may lead to declining public confidence in a government's ability to protect its citizens which can impact on the ability of police to protect law and order.

Importantly, the conference has reduced the risk to the AFP – and the wider

Australian society - of being taken by surprise by rapid change. The 'Law of Accelerating Change' means that the pace of change is itself increasing. We may see the equivalent of 20,000 years of change during the 100 years of the 21st century.

DNA technology has been a significant boom to crime-solving, but future developments in this area could impact on that. The conference heard that it will eventually be possible to synthesize the DNA of a person and leave it at a crime scene, implicating someone else and weakening the power of DNA evidence.

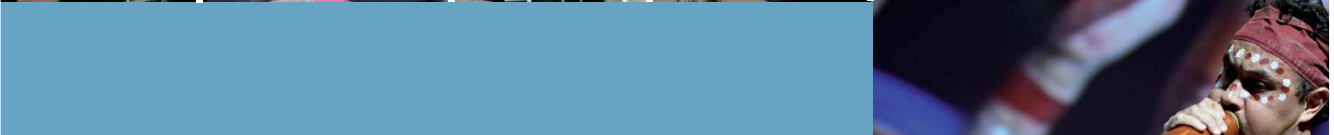
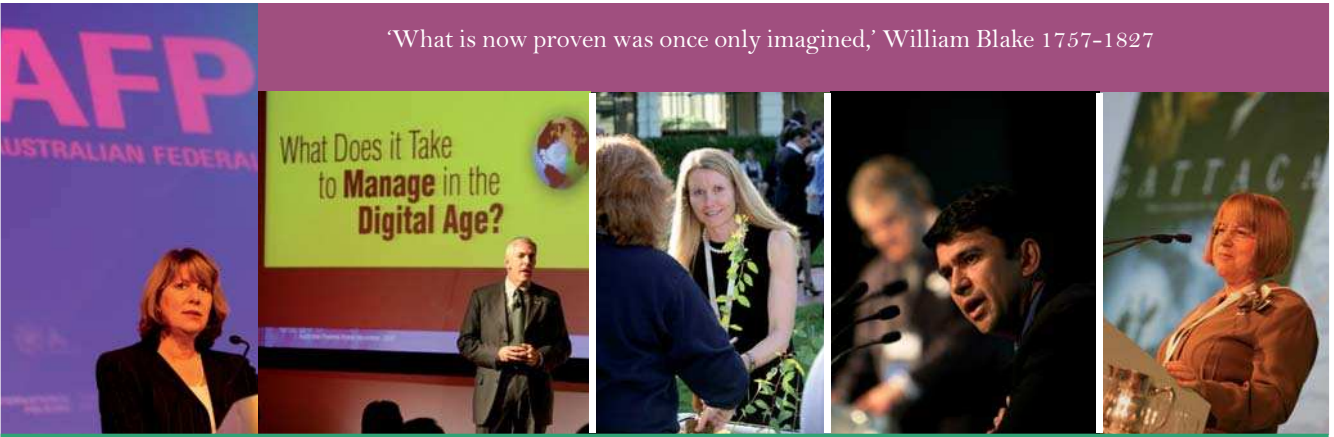
While terrorism received much attention at the conference and many speakers viewed it as a problem which would still be around in 2020, it was discussed in the context of the major conference themes rather than in a specific session.

The increasing role for policing in helping restore order and stability internationally was a significant feature of discussion as Australia is considered a pioneer in the field.

The AFP's increasing international role and its domestic duties are expected to continue to pose recruitment challenges. The younger generation views work and life differently to today's decision-makers. Younger workers do not necessarily stay in the same organisation for long and while they make a great contribution to an organisation, they are difficult to recruit and retain.

The conference provided a great for colleagues across national boundaries to share ideas and experiences and, perhaps, work together to meet the challenges that the next 13 years will bring.

'What is now proven was once only imagined,' William Blake 1757-1827



"This is not just an environmental problem. It is a defence problem. It is a problem for those who deal with economics and development, conflict prevention, agriculture, finance, housing, transport...trade and health," former UK Foreign Secretary, Margaret Beckett, 26 October 2006.



“Science has not yet mastered prophecy. We predict too much for next year and yet far too little for the next ten,” United States American astronaut Neil Armstrong



All photos from the 2020 conference. Brian Hartigan