

Education forges ties

A new dimension in education is forging ties and increasing international cooperation for the AFP.

Improving access to education and professional development opportunities for police officers in Australia and overseas has long been a key aim of the AFP. The long-term investment in a wide range of educational opportunities has taken some interesting turns, including the latest initiative with members of the Indian Police Service, who are coming to play an increasingly important role in maintaining regional security.

Developing strong relationships with international law enforcement agencies is an important element of the AFP's role. Traditionally, this has been done by the AFP's International Liaison Network through the work of liaison officers strengthening personal and professional ties. More recently, overseas deployments to peace-keeping missions under

the auspices of the International Deployment Group have offered another means of developing and maintaining international relationships.

Through participating in joint training initiatives, intelligence sharing and investigations, the organisation has been able to become part of a resilient international framework in which policing agencies can work together to combat transnational crime in all its forms.

But as multi-agency, multijurisdictional operations become an increasingly common aspect of all AFP business, the organisation is finding new ways to engage with its partner agencies across a broad spectrum of activities. One of the most important is through education.

While the AFP has had a close relationship with Charles Sturt University (CSU) for a number of years, Acting National Manager Human Resources Stephen Walker said a recent project has helped to bring a new dimension to the way in which the two organisations work together.

"The AFP was asked by CSU to participate in a program providing training to mid-level police officers in the Indian Police Service," he said.

"It was the first program of its kind to be run in India, and focuses on helping officers at superintendent level to develop their skills and international best practice."

CSU won a restricted tender offered by the Indian Police Service to deliver the program which provides

01: Course participants break out into discussion groups during presentations by speakers from the National Policing Improvement Agency.





01: Course participants. **02:** Indian Police Service members at an ANZAC dawn service for the Australian Faculty.

a mix of practical and theoretical coursework to participants, most of whom already have the equivalent of a masters degree and an average of 10 years policing experience.

The AFP provided five superintendents as course mentors who spent six weeks in India during the residential phase of the program and two weeks with the 150 course members in Australia as part of the practical component.

The agreement came at an opportune time for the AFP which recently opened a liaison post in the Indian capital Delhi.

"This has given us an opportunity to develop critical and high-level connections and networks between the AFP and the Indian Police Service," Mr Walker said.

"In particular, it has enabled members of the AFP to engage with officers working on the ground in key areas of southern India where we are looking to improve our levels of cooperation and collaboration in key areas such as people smuggling."

CSU's Associate Dean in Policing

Tracey Green said the Indian police officers taking part in the program certainly had significant issues to deal with on a day-to-day basis.

"They are facing numerous attacks from a variety of terrorist groups and multiple fatalities of officers in ambush attacks," she said.

"It's vastly different from the work police in Australia deal with every day. But we have all learned a lot from each other. There are huge cultural differences and the respective community's expectations are different. However there are also remarkable similarities regarding how the police hope to serve their community. Both the Australian and the Indian police are passionate about making a difference to law and order in their country."

During their visit to Australia, course participants with a particular interest in the area met members of the AFP's people smuggling team to discuss key issues of concern. They also engaged with members of the AFP's Counter Terrorism teams, Human Source Management and Surveillance staff, members of the

International Deployment Group, High Tech Crime Operations, ACT Policing and representatives from Forensics and the Australian Bomb Data Centre.

"It has been beneficial to be able to utilise an academic context in forging lasting police-to-police relationships," Mr Walker said.

"The benefit of being able to discuss some of the challenges in a theoretical context also helps to illustrate how international best practice can be used to address issues."

But Mr Walker said an enhanced relationship with Indian authorities was just one way the AFP was benefiting from the program.

"Over the three years we will be involved in the program we will be actively involved in strategic engagement with CSU to enhance the content of the course so that it provides the most benefits to participants," he said.

"We are also hoping to explore further opportunities with CSU."

