

International service, post-haste

With around 100 members posted to more than 30 countries, managing the business of the AFP's International Network is not an easy task. But the process has now been streamlined as part of the AFP's realignment of operational priorities and business needs.

Singapore, Bogota, New Delhi. The AFP members stationed at these posts manage high workloads and the challenges of working across time zones. But their efforts are supported behind the scenes by teams within the AFP's new Serious and Organised Crime portfolio, which provides crucial assistance to members stationed across the AFP's International Network.

As part of a review of the AFP's Border and International and Economic and Special Operations portfolios, a new integrated business support area has been established

to support the entire Crime Program. Included in this area is a revamped team which supports AFP members posted overseas. International Network Coordination and Support (INCS) is divided into three operating areas. This replaces the previous model, which managed international posts by their regional location.

Acting Coordinator INCS Steve Holgate said the changes are the result of the reviews of recommendations, which advised the AFP to move away from a regionally focused international model to a more overarching strategy.

"The way we dealt with posts meant they were divided into the regional areas they represented," he said.

"From having desks dedicated to Asia; America, Europe and the Middle East; and Indonesia, the Philippines and the Pacific; we have developed the INCS team to deal with matters affecting posts in a holistic way."

Having worked on the former Asia desk for six years, Mr Holgate said it is a significant change.

"We've changed the way we communicate. Posts no



01: International Coordination and Support team members at headquarters in Canberra.

From left: Debbie Dixon, Michael Field, Jo Taylor, Jodie O'Brien, Rob Blount, Di Osborne, Steve Holgate and Phil Gaynor.



longer have to feed operational matters through the desks, which means our teams no longer have to do as much transactional work. This gives them the opportunity to focus on some higher level strategic work on behalf of the posts, to support what they're doing offshore."

Work is currently underway to consolidate this new structure and refine the way support is provided to the posts. There are three key areas within the INCS structure.

Monitoring and Reporting Teams One and Two provide operational support to the International Network and the Executive by monitoring and reporting on information and significant events and activities relevant to the International Network. These teams also facilitate the dissemination of relevant intelligence to and from posts and assist with ad-hoc requests for operational support.

The Education and Liaison Team is the most recent to be formed as part of INCS. It educates and liaises with internal AFP stakeholders, Australian and foreign law enforcement agencies, and other Australian Government departments. The team is also responsible for building and maintaining strong relationships

with posts by maintaining regular contact and providing briefings and debriefings.

The team also manages and provides support to specific International Network projects including facilitating high level events such as the Association of South East Asian Chiefs of Police conference, the overseas visits of National Manager Serious and Organised Crime, and other international visits to and from Australia. The team also deals with Law

Enforcement Cooperation Program submissions for posts and conferences for AFP Senior Liaison Officers.

The Interpol-Europol Engagement Team guides the relationship and exchange of information between Australian agencies and Interpol and Europol on behalf of Australia. It works to increase the use of international tools and services in Australia, provides support to AFP members seconded to these multi-jurisdictional



02: International flags represent some of the countries where AFP members are posted. **03:** Map showing London. **04:** Acting Coordinator Steve Holgate manages the International Network Coordination and Support services. **05:** Acting Coordinator Steve Holgate with Phil Gaynor.

agencies and ensures compliance with Europol intelligence and security obligations.

While the new structure has resulted in changes to the way the teams manage tasks from the international posts, Mr Holgate said the volume of work remains fairly constant.

“Recently we’ve established new liaison posts in New Delhi and Colombo,” he said.

“But we’ve also closed other posts as a result of operational priorities. It could be described as a moving feast, which is determined by the AFP’s needs at any given time.”

In addition to the core teams which make up INCS, three other teams from the Crime Program’s Serious and Organised Crime portfolio play a significant role in helping to manage the AFP’s international posts and activities.

Overseas Administration looks after the logistics of managing the deployment of around 100 AFP liaison officers. Medical clearances, security briefings, language training and the

facilitation of AFP finance matters are all dealt with by the team. It also provides wellbeing and accommodation support services to members of the International Network living overseas.

The International Travel and International Visits Teams also play a crucial role.

The Travel Team processes high volumes of international travel bookings and associated documentation to ensure that members travelling around the world on AFP business do so safely and efficiently.

The Visits Team coordinates strategically important visits and events, including coordinating official overseas travel programs for the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners and the official programs for international delegations meeting with senior AFP officials in Australia.

It also provides guidance to other functional areas on protocols to consider when hosting international guests.

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06: International flags at The Hague.