

Success in Delhi means more than medals

The Australian team scooped the medals pool during the Commonwealth Games in Delhi this year, but our athletes weren't the only winners. Behind the scenes, the success of the law enforcement effort not only ensured a safe and secure Games, it also created new ways for international agencies to work together and tested the mechanisms in place for dealing with major events and incidents.

Against the background of a well-publicised high threat environment and blanket media coverage of sub-standard preparations, the lead-up to the XIX Commonwealth Games presented some challenges for the AFP and other agencies working to negotiate a safe environment for Australians attending events.

On the day the first members of the AFP contingent arrived in New Delhi, two Taiwanese nationals were shot outside the historic Jama Masjid mosque. The subsequent media attention did little to quell doubt in the public's mind about security concerns. Travel advice from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) also urged those going to India to exercise extreme caution.

The collapse of a bridge leading to one of the major Games venues and concerns about the preparedness of the athlete's village also meant that many countries were making difficult decisions about whether to participate in the Games in the days immediately prior to the Opening Ceremony.

For security agencies, the combination of events realised many concerns. However, months of preparation and planning helped to ensure that issues were dealt with effectively at both the domestic and international level.

There were two key centres of operation for the AFP, at the Australian High Commission in

Delhi and at the AFP National Headquarters Incident Coordination Centre (ICC) in Canberra.

"Both centres worked closely together in the weeks leading up to the Games and during the event itself," said Manager Close Protection Greg Harrigan, who was in charge of the Delhi operation.





01: From left, AFP Police Forward Commander New Delhi Greg Harrigan, Canadian Sports Minister Gary Lunn and Federal Minister for Sport Mark Arbib visit the Quad. 02: Superintendent Warren Kowalick outside the hockey stadium. 03: Inside the Incident Control Centre.

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"Of particular significance during the Commonwealth Games was the decision by the governments of Canada, New Zealand, Britain and Australia to get the law enforcement agencies of each country to work together in a way that had never been done before."

This arrangement, known as the Quad, was based at the interim Chancery of the Australian High Commission in New Delhi. Approximately 70 staff from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, New Zealand Police, Metropolitan Police Specialist Operations and the AFP worked from the same office, sharing information, intelligence and resources.

"The Quad was able to coordinate and control communications and real-time tracking of VIPs, athletes, officials and Quad staff," Commander Harrigan said.

"The success of the operation was noted by the governments of all countries involved, and there are now discussions underway about how we can adopt the concept for use at special and large-scale events in the future."

Over the course of the Games the Quad received some high profile visitors, including Prince Edward

the Earl of Wessex, the Canadian Sports Minister and Australia's Minister for Sport Mark Arbib.

It was also able to use its combined resources to effectively manage a range of situations, including potential misreporting by the media.

"Having combined resources on the ground meant we could respond quickly to issues that had the potential to have a negative impact on the athletes or be misreported by the press," Commander Harrigan said.

As an example, members of the Quad countries were able to quickly quell rumours and provide timely and accurate information back to Canberra. This helped to prevent inaccurate media reporting and provided precise and relevant accounts to those responsible for informing senior members of government about any potential situations.

It also helped to solidify and build relationships between the Quad countries and the Indian authorities. For the AFP this reinforced the growing rapport between Australian and Indian law enforcement.



Clockwise - **04**: The Quad Centre ran on five time zones: New Delhi, Canberra, Wellington, Ottawa and London. **05**: Inside the Incident Control Centre. **06**: Commander Greg Harrigan with Chair of International Security Liaison Group R.N. Ravi. **07**: Prince Edward Earl of Wessex meets with AFP members at the Quad.

“One of the key outcomes from the Games has been the AFP’s ability to reinforce valuable relationships with our Commonwealth partners, including Indian law enforcement agencies,” Commander Harrigan said.

“The Games have also shown the importance of relationships at a domestic level, especially in coordinating the AFP’s response through the ICC to our federal colleagues in a range of different departments.”

Manager Counter Terrorism International Justine Saunders agrees. She was responsible for running the ICC during the Commonwealth Games and managed the AFP’s liaison activities with its domestic partner agencies before and during the event.

“The Incident Coordination Centre provided a conduit to other Australian agencies, like DFAT, with a strong involvement in the Games,” she said.

“It was also the first time the ICC had been used to coordinate a whole of AFP response to a major event.”

One of the key roles for Canberra-based staff during the Commonwealth Games was to ensure that contingency planning in the event of a major incident was put into practice and carried out effectively.

This involved a significant amount of pre-planning with the involvement of most business areas across the AFP, including Aviation, Forensics, Counter Terrorism,

Intelligence, the International Network, the AFP Operations Coordination Centre and Protection.

Members from all these functions and others such as Communications and Media manned the ICC for the duration of the Games.

“One of the most satisfying results was to see how well the ICC functioned during the Games,” Commander Saunders said.

“Having all the relevant portfolio areas represented in a single facility ensured that coordination and communication ran smoothly and efficiently across the entire organisation. While we were fortunate that a major incident did not happen, I am confident that had





08: Mr Adam Kelly explains to Canadian Sports Minister Gary Lunn and Federal Minister for Sport Mark Arbib the communications capabilities of the Quad Coordination Centre in Canberra. **09:** SLO New Delhi Richard C Moses and Prince Edward Earl of Wessex at the Quad. **10-11:** Inside the Incident Control Centre.

we needed to, the ICC would have operated effectively in providing an appropriate and proportionate response to any situation which arose."

The centre also linked into the work being done by other agencies during the Games. In addition, members of the AFP were out-posted to other departments, further strengthening the organisation's communications capability had an incident occurred.

"The Games has provided us with an opportunity to build and cement our domestic relationships with partner agencies on a number of levels," Commander Saunders said.

"In addition to intelligence and information sharing, we were

able to liaise with our Federal and State partners to provide real-time updates about what was happening, as well as provide feedback to our members in Delhi about issues in Australia that may affect their operations."

Commander Saunders said that since the Games ended the AFP has been examining the lessons learnt both in Australia and Delhi, looking at ways to improve and enhance how the organisation responds to major events and incidents.

"The Commonwealth Games has really emphasised the importance of having good relationships both with our domestic partners and our international colleagues," she said.

"Working in collaboration means we are able to more effectively and efficiently respond to incidents as they arise, which means that if something critical does happen the Australian response will be swift, appropriate and effective."

