

Negotiators at a glance

AFP Police Negotiation Team

The AFP Police Negotiation Team has six full time members and 29 part time members. 31 are located within the ACT geographical area and are drawn from both ACT Policing and National. The team has four negotiators situated in the Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Darwin regions.

Roles and tasks

Suicide intervention
Persons with mental health issues
Kidnapping/extortion
Sieges
Barricaded offender situations
Escapees
Warrants – search, Drug of Dependence Act 1989 warrants, firearms, high-risk warrant execution
Family law matters
Public order management
National counter-terrorism incidents
International operations as required

International training conducted

Thailand	India
Philippines	Nauru
Papua New Guinea	Singapore
Japan	Vietnam

Training

Basic Negotiators Course – 2 weeks
Advanced Negotiators Course – 1 week
Australia New Zealand Counter Terrorism Negotiators Skills Enhancement Course – 1 week (hosting jurisdiction rotated and conducted once yearly)
Annual validation training – 8 days annually to maintain qualifications
Participation in training exercises – ACT and interstate

Forums

Australia New Zealand CTC Negotiator Capability Forum
Australia New Zealand CTC Negotiator Working Group
International Negotiator Working Group
Australia New Zealand Police Advisory Agency

those vital 'key issues' or 'hooks' that are crucial to getting to the bottom of the situation.

"So the faster the primary negotiator can attend to a key issue in a subject, whatever that may be, the better likelihood we have of identifying what the core issues is. The faster we do that the quicker we can start to de-escalate by addressing those issues."

"The science is to not just represent as a sort of symbolic punitive 'state'. The less we present as the state and trying to tell people what to do as opposed to working out what their problem is and trying to find a solution the better result we get."

As the hours draw on in a negotiation the situation transforms. Hostage and hostage taker all need food, water and rest. Often after hours of intense negotiations the hostage taker is emotionally exhausted. The initial emotional charge that led to the circumstances seems trivial.

While the hostage taker tires, the PNT can rest and be refreshed. The hostage taker – particularly if it

is a lone individual – needs to be on constant guard.

Some operations have ended when the hostage taker has fallen asleep and police have quietly removed the hostages and taken the perpetrator into custody.

Even in desperate situations such as the Mumbai attacks, negotiators can work toward the best possible situation. At those times, a calm mind amid that most unusual chaos can guide and protect as best they can those people in an extraordinarily vulnerable situation.

Ultimately, a hostage taker has limited options. Fortunately, most resolutions end with surrender to the police. If the situation does worsen then a tactical resolution may be employed. The success of the AFP's PNT is, however, encouraging. There have only been two deaths, negotiators were not at fault, in the 30 years of the team's existence where negotiators have been called to assist. That's a good sign for someone having the worst day of their life.