

International update

FOR a number of years the Australian government has supported a project in Thailand by way of funding and manpower resources with the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB).

The Australian Federal Police has been associated with the project from the beginning.

The project, which was first approved in the early 80s by the then Commonwealth Minister for Administrative Services, Mr Kevin Newman, was for the installation of a computer at the ONCB for crime intelligence and a number of other associated drug-related issues aimed at stopping the export of illicit drugs from Thailand to the international market.

The original computer was installed at the ONCB Headquarters in Bangkok in 1983 and the mainframe computer was replaced by the Australian Government this year. The total cost so far expended by the Australian Government is approximately \$14 million.

The computer has a number of programs including immigration records, watch list, operational reports system, document control and message switching as well as a number of other law enforcement systems.

At present, the immigration records system does not include direct access to the immigration barrier. However, the barrier system at Bangkok International Airport will be implemented early in 1991.

When complete, the system will be one of the most sophisticated in South West and South East Asia. The initiative by the Australian Government to install this computer system for Thai law enforcement has benefited not only the Thais but also 14 foreign law enforcement agencies operating out of Thailand, including the Australian Federal Police.

Each year there is a conference held in respect of the project by the



Delegates of the JPCC Conference held in Phuket.

Joint Project Co-ordination Committee (JPCC). This conference has a number of objectives and functions to perform including the approval of further funding, the discussion of problems associated with the project and to discuss other matters of interest which affect the efficient running of the project.

At the present time the funding of the project is being sourced from the Australian Attorney-General's Department which has three staff members attached to the project. They include two computer experts and one crime intelligence analyst. As a result of an offer by the Australian Government, the project has just been extended for a further three years.

This year the JPCC conference was

held in November on the island of Phuket. The Attorney-General's Department was represented by the Secretary, Mr Alan Rose, and his Deputy, Mr Alan Watson. Mr Murray Cobban, the Deputy Head of Mission, represented the Australian Embassy Bangkok and Detective Superintendent Steve Polden, Liaison Co-ordinator Bangkok, represented the Australian Federal

Police. The Thais were represented by Police Lieutenant General Chavalit Yodmani, the Secretary General of the ONCB. The three Australian members of the project team were also present.

The conference received extensive television coverage and when completed was thought to be the most productive held so far.

During the conference there were a number of official functions where senior officials of the Thai government and law enforcement attended including Mr Nurak Marpraneet, Chief Judge of Phuket, Mr Rathakorn Nimwatana, Chief Prosecutor of the Prosecution Office on Phuket, and Police Colonel Amphon, Chief of the Phuket Police. •

Senior NSW Policeman visits Thailand

In November 1990, Deputy Commissioner Lauer, State commander of the NSW Police visited Bangkok.

The visit was co-ordinated by the Australian Federal Police attached to the Australian Embassy.

During the visit, Mr Lauer had meetings and attended social functions with senior members of Thai Law enforcement agencies and was accompanied by Detective Superintendent Steve Polden, the AFP Liaison Co-ordinator for Thailand.

Mr Lauer also visited the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) and received a briefing on the current situation in the Golden Triangle. He also had discussions on subjects of mutual interest with senior ONCB management and inspected the Australian-funded computer project at ONCB.

Mr Lauer indicated that the visit had been an educational experience and had provided him with the opportunity to obtain an understanding of the problems of policing in Thailand and the role of the AFP in the region.