

As the bureau serves all police organisations and several other government agencies, both federal and state, it has a strict code of confidentiality. This means that when information is obtained on behalf of a particular police service or agency, that information cannot be released to a third party without permission.

The NCB can only take action on requests which are of a criminal or humanitarian nature. As each bureau can only operate within the laws of its own country, it must establish the purpose for a request for information is in fact a criminal offence in the country that originates the request.

The bureau also assists in notifying people overseas of the death a relative in Australia where police have been unable to locate a relative in this country.

Another function of the NCB is to collect information from various sources, nationally and internationally, on topics being researched by police.

The bureau works in close co-operation with the federal Attorney General's Department in the matter of requests for extradition to and from Australia.

On request from police agencies, the NCB issues international notices colour coded in the following manner: red – wanted for extradition; blue – to locate the whereabouts of a suspect or offender; green – to advise that a known criminal is travelling overseas; yellow – missing person; and black – to identify a deceased person. Interpol also distributes notices of stolen art works, new modus operandi, weekly drug intelligence messages and other matters of police interest. These are forwarded to all state police services in Australia.

When a Australian police officer is required to carry out investigations in another country, the NCB can assist in obtaining the required permission and arrange for the help of police in the host country.

The NCB exists to assist all law enforcement officers with their overseas inquiries. If any doubt arises as to the correct procedure to follow or the type of information that can be obtained, it is recommended the officer contact the duty sergeant at the bureau on (06) 275-7641.

Liaison Officer witnesses Bali resort blaze

Superintendent Steve Polden, AFP Liaison Officer in Indonesia witnessed and photographed the destruction of the Bali Beach Hotel in January. He filed this report:

On the 20 January 1993, the Bali Beach Hotel, located on the beach at Sanur just outside Denpasar, Bali caught fire and was completely gutted.

The nine storey, 30-year-old building caught fire at approximately 12:30pm and by 5pm was a complete ruin. It is believed that the fire started in the Qantas office in the reception area of the hotel. The office was closed due to an Indonesian public holiday.

The Bali Beach Hotel was built from Japanese war reparation funds and is owned by the Indonesian Government.

The hotel had about 300 guests at the time of the fire including about 170 Australian tourists. It was fortunate that the fire occurred when most guests were out of the hotel. There was no loss of life, but it may have

been a different story had the fire occurred during the night. As it was, the fire caused a tremendous consular problem as most guests lost everything in the fire, including passports.

Pumps were brought in from the airport in an effort to use water from the swimming pool, but the spray was only able to reach the fourth floor.

Thousands of spectators came from near and far and at times the crowd had to retreat from the base of the hotel as glass exploded and rained down.

Australian hotel guests that I spoke to later said that no one had come to their doors to warn them of the danger. A man on the second floor had a traumatic time reaching safety from his second floor room. A wooden ladder raised to his balcony caught fire and collapsed, while knotted sheets lowered by the man also caught fire.

He finally escaped by jumping into a blanket held taught by other hotel guests.



In January 1993, the Bali Beach Hotel was consumed by fire. Water pumped from the hotel pool could only reach the fourth floor.