

Commissioner's message

Widening horizons



*Mick Keelty APM
AFP Commissioner*

In the early months of 2005 the AFP finds its members working literally in the four corners of the globe – a clear demonstration that our horizons are getting wider and that the variety of skills we possess are being called on more frequently in the fight against transnational, national and community crime.

The value of our presence overseas was demonstrated to me during a two-day visit to the People's Republic of China in February where I was hosted by the Ministry of Public Security. This organisation of more than 1.3 million police officers is breathtaking in its size, but I was humbled that senior Chinese officials expressed high regard for the AFP's experience and reputation. It is clear that the AFP is recognised as a contributor to the law enforcement affairs in our region.

As part of our international network of liaison officers we have had an office in Beijing and Hong Kong for some time and have developed an excellent working relationship with authorities in the region. Ultimately, it is these good relations that enhance our ability to provide effective law enforcement to the people of Australia. This is achieved by reducing the opportunity for transnational crime to reach our shores.

This is also true of the work undertaken by the International Deployment Group through which our staff in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, to name two missions, are assisting local authorities to stabilise their communities.

This work does not come easy for the organisation or for the individuals who carry out the tasks allocated to them. Sadly, the risk involved in our work was painfully highlighted by Protective Service Officer Adam Dunning's murder in the Solomon Islands on 22 December.

The presence of the Prime Minister, the Governor-General and all Defence Service Chiefs at Adam's funeral service at Duntroon is an indication of the high regard for the work our officers do on behalf of the people of Australia.

I believe we serve Adam's memory best by maintaining the commitment to our work of which he was so obviously proud.