



Commissioner's message

It is with much pleasure that I introduce the new edition of AFP Platypus Magazine – my first as the newly appointed AFP Commissioner. Firstly, I would like to congratulate previous Commissioner, Tony Negus, on a distinguished 32-year career and on the success of his five-year leadership of our organisation. I also wish him the very best in his future endeavours.

This edition again highlights the key role that AFP members perform in fighting crime at home and overseas. The lead-feature series focuses on the AFP's Police Negotiators Team and demonstrates the professionalism and expertise that makes the AFP renowned for its excellence.

The comprehensive look at this specialist trade covers off on their role, training, operations and an overview of the science behind the art of successful negotiation operations. It highlights the fine line of establishing communications in situations of extreme duress and the empathy required to understand the emotional currents that impact on hostage situations.

The first-person operational account of an AFP negotiator involved in the 2008 Mumbai attacks illustrates the importance of this specialist trade. Working from the Department of Foreign Affairs, the negotiators contacted, consoled and advised Australian citizens who were caught up in the terrorist attacks. This extended spread provides a small insight into this little known world.

Similarly, this edition of Platypus highlights the growing impact of the South American drug trade on Australia. The incredible markup on cocaine creates incentive for drug syndicates to target Australia. The feature article illustrates the importance of the partnerships established by the International Network in the Americas to tackle the drug syndicates at their source.

The article also documents the growing importance of the American Police Community (AMERIPOL) organisation. The 30 member and 21 observer countries and agencies are mounting a collaborative offensive that will tackle drug syndicates in South America as a whole.

Finally, National Manager High Tech Crime Operations, Tim Morris explains how crucial retaining telecommunications metadata is for law enforcement agencies in the fight against crime.

Much misinformation about metadata has clouded the public discourse on this issue. Assistant Commissioner Morris provides a comprehensive overview on why the retention of telecommunications data records is pivotal in establishing investigations against criminals. The case study on Operation Damara provides a perfect example of how gaining access to metadata helps law enforcement bring criminals to justice.

Commissioner Andrew Colvin