

FOCUS ON NEGOTIATING A PEACEFUL OUTCOME

With an increasing focus on terrorism and law enforcement agencies' level of preparedness to counter the global issue, Queensland's negotiators are in high demand.

Not only has that demand come in the form of crisis resolution but also in the need for training, up-skilling and taking part in counter terrorism exercises.

In the past financial year, negotiators from the Queensland Police Service (QPS) have travelled to the Northern Territory, Victoria and South Australia for counter terrorism exercises.

Brisbane's recent counter terrorism exercise, Exercise Orchid Alert, provided an Australian first when Queensland negotiators had the opportunity to test the role of the internet in negotiation.

Lessons learnt from this ground-breaking development, in which negotiators used non-conventional communication techniques through the internet, will be presented to a National Counter Terrorism negotiator forum in Tasmania in December.

More than 90 Queensland police officers are trained and accredited negotiators.

They are specialist communicators who are used to diffuse a crisis and to achieve a peaceful resolution without loss of life, injury to any person, or damage to property.

A full-time negotiating team, consisting of a state coordinator and two full-time negotiators, is responsible for the training of negotiators statewide.

In April 2005 a negotiator from the QPS travelled to south-east Asia to assist the Australian Federal Police with liaison, training and exercises with their negotiator counterparts. The training program was a success and highlighted international cooperation and information sharing.

The past five years has seen an evolution in the traditional role of the negotiator with an increasing need for them to assist police with the execution of high-risk warrants and support policing operations when organised protests happen.

QPS negotiators are also regularly called on for their expertise in circumstances such as suicide interventions, abductions, and barricade and hostage situations. ■



Police conduct negotiation training in the purpose-built vehicle. The van is designed to allow negotiation by trained negotiators on one side of the viewing window and, on the other side, ensures the command and overall management of the negotiation is overviewed.