



RE: CMC INQUIRY INTO POLICING IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) has a longstanding interest in policing and in criminal justice matters relating to Indigenous people. Following is an outline of relevant AIC publications relating to policing and research that focuses on specific issues related to policing for the Indigenous community in Australia.

The policing implications of cannabis, amphetamine and other illicit drug use in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

The National Drug Law Enforcement Fund (NDLERF) commissioned a 14-month study by the AIC in conjunction with AIATSIS to examine issues associated with the policing of cannabis, amphetamine and other illicit drug use in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in rural and remote areas.

As well as seeking to enhance the law enforcement sector's understanding of the extent and nature of illicit drug use, the project sought to identify good policing practice to help prevent and to minimise the harms resulting from illicit drug use and produce guidelines on the implementation of good practice. As part of this research a web-based survey of police was conducted. There were 792 responses, including 493 from police in non-urban areas (regional and rural towns, and remote settlements). A minority of the non-urban police (58) worked in remote Indigenous communities.

The research team visited a number of locations in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands (APY) (SA), in the Goldfields and Ngaanyatjarra Lands (WA), the Tiwi Islands (NT), Rockhampton and Woorabinda (Qld) and Queanbeyan (New South Wales). The field research provided a detailed picture of the issues and underlined some important commonalities and differences in both drug use and police/community responses. It also helped to identify and assess police and community ideas on how police could help reduce drug use and minimise drug related harms. This formed the basis for good practice guidelines for police.

The study found that conventional drug policing strategies were rarely suited to rural and remote areas, especially in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities where police officers were highly visible. Effective strategies and initiatives were those that had the close cooperation and support of community leaders, high quality intelligence and logistical support from police organisations.

Promising initiatives include police using a combination of community policing and enforcement strategies to identify, target and remove local drug dealers and undermine their support base. Strategies include building support for policing initiatives through working with local Indigenous leaders to convene community forums, the sharing of intelligence across regions and borders, and the adoption of special legislative

provisions and operational strategies sensitive to the sociocultural milieu and the probable impact of disruption.

The full report can be found at: http://www.ndlrf.gov.au/pub/Monograph_15.pdf and a summary of the report, 'Illicit drug use in rural and remote Indigenous communities' number 322 in the *Trends and Issues in crime and criminal justice* series at <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi2/tandi322t.html>

Good practice framework: policing illicit drugs in rural and remote local communities

In conjunction with this study the AIC and AIATSIS prepared a good practice guide for policing in remote and rural areas. The advice in the guide is intended for police and police organisations looking to review their approaches to policing illicit drug use and reducing drug-related harms among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in rural and remote areas. It emphasised the importance of adapting the advice to each situation because of the variation in communities and situations within those communities.

The guide focuses on opportunities to improve policing through the use of:

- strategic policies and programs requiring different sectors and jurisdictions to commit to coordinated approaches to drug control
- local, district and regional area planning to prevent crime and promote community safety, including the reduction of illicit drug supply and use
- individual police practices.

See: http://www.ndlrf.gov.au/pub/Monograph_15a.pdf for the full report.

Deaths in custody in Australia: National Deaths in Custody Program annual report 2005

Following the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) the AIC monitors, through the National Deaths in Custody Program, the circumstances of all deaths in prison and police custody (and custody related police operations) and deaths in juvenile detention in Australia. Through this program it identifies the long-term trends and changes in deaths in custody in Australia.

In 2005 there were 54 deaths in custody, comprising 34 deaths in prison custody and 20 in police custody and custody-related operations. Fifteen deaths were of Indigenous persons, eight of which occurred in police custody.

Police custody deaths by Indigenous status and jurisdiction, 2005

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Persons Total
	n	%	n	%	
New South Wales	1	33.3	2	66.7	3
Victoria	0	0.0	5	100.0	5
Queensland	1	20.0	4	80.0	5
Western Australia	6	100.0	0	0.0	6
South Australia	0	0.0	1	100.0	1

Australia	8	40.0	12	60.0	(20)
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Police custody deaths by Indigenous status and jurisdiction, 1990–2005

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Persons
	n	%	n	%	Total n
New South Wales	21	13.4	136	86.6	157
Victoria	4	3.8	102	96.2	106
Queensland	15	19.5	62	80.5	77
Western Australia	31	56.4	24	43.6	55
South Australia	6	18.8	26	81.3	32
Tasmania	2	16.7	10	83.3	12
Northern Territory	16	55.2	13	44.8	29
Aust Capital Territory	0	0.0	6	100.0	6
Commonwealth	0	0.0	2	100.0	2
Australia	95	20.0	381	80.0	(476)

The report can be found at: <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tbp/tbp021/>

2002 National Police Custody Survey

Also arising from the RCIADIC report, the AIC undertakes a national survey monitoring police custody. Survey findings include: how many people go into and out of police cells over the course of one month; why people are placed in police custody; the types of offences associated with police custody; the length of time that people are in police custody; the proportions of incidents in which Indigenous people are involved; rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous custody per population; and whether these patterns change over time.

Over-representation of Indigenous persons in police custody

Data from the 2002 National police custody survey have been used to compare the involvement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians with police. The following table gives the numbers of Indigenous and non-Indigenous custody incidents per respective 100,000 population, aged 10 and over. The final column shows the degree to which Indigenous persons were over-represented in police custody incidents compared with non-Indigenous persons.

	Indigenous	Other	Over-representation
New South Wales	1,693.2	158.2	10.7
Queensland	1,483.1	141.4	10.5
Western Australia	3,468.0	128.4	27.0
South Australia	3,605.3	142.4	25.3
Victoria	861.1	49.9	17.2
Northern Territory	2,841.9	234.9	12.1
ACT	1,187.7	54.7	21.7

Tasmania	144.2	36.6	3.9
Australia	2,028.7	119.6	17.0

The most recent survey was undertaken in 2002 and will be undertaken again this year. The report can be found at: <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tbp/tbp013/>

Community Policing: a descriptive overview

This publication gives an outline of community policing that has relevant information on policing practices which could be useful for policing in Indigenous communities.

The report can be found at <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/other/2004-03-policing.html>