

Speech by His Excellency the Governor of South Australia, Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce AC CSC RANR on the Opening of the Asia Pacific Crime Prevention Forum Australian Crime Prevention Council

Sunday, 23rd January 2011

- Admiral Chris Barrie, President of the Australian Crime Prevention Council
- Professor Felix Patrikeeff, Master of Kathleen Lumley College
- Master Peter Norman, Chairman of the Australian Crime Prevention Council
- Distinguished participants from throughout the Asia Pacific region
- Ladies and Gentlemen:

I chose to join you this afternoon because - like you - I believe that the issue of crime prevention is of enormous significance to our communities.

We are concerned not only about the immediate impact of criminal actions; but also about the debilitating effect that the fear of crime can have on communities.

These impacts can take the form of local ripples or global tsunamis, as we have seen in the wake of the September 11 terrorist acts.

The people in this room are well placed to help our governments and our people to understand, manage and influence the incidence and impact of crime.

Most people have a very limited understanding of crime prevention strategies, apart from the obvious ones of catching and constraining the offenders and having a wall-to-wall police presence.

Crime prevention strategies emerge from a wide range of disciplines. Whilst law enforcement agencies are in the front line, and lawyers, criminologists and the judiciary are invariably engaged in the equation, other disciplines such as medicine, sociology, public health and town planning also have much to offer practitioners in the criminal justice system.

Criminal behaviour is increasingly oblivious of international boundaries. Collaboration across jurisdictions is an important key to successful detection and prevention, and the collegiate approach which you are demonstrating by coming together is a good indicator that constructive and cooperative approaches will be found.

I understand that the objectives of this Forum are to identify the most effective crime prevention strategies in contemporary society, and to communicate these.

This is a field where factual information often fails to compete with the apparent lust for sensationalism. Managing the perceptions of politicians and their constituencies is a major challenge, but it is one with which I believe you need to grapple. After all, who is better placed to do this? Your findings and recommendations will be based on the methodical analysis of hard data and trends, and on reference to strategies which have been rigorously evaluated. If your messages are well-founded and consistent, they will be powerful.

Unless you are able effectively to communicate your findings and recommendations to the decision makers and the voters who influence them, nothing will change. You may need to draw upon expertise from outside your ranks to help develop imaginative and effective methods of communication that really will influence opinion, rather than preach to the converted.

And so I leave you with the hope that through collaboration and communication you are able to make an impact on this field with which you are all passionately engaged. I appreciate that this is not an easy task.

I hope that this kernel of a regional network will grow and flourish in the years ahead. I wish you well in your deliberations, and I commend the organisers for their efforts in bringing you together for such a useful and important agenda.

I have pleasure in declaring the Forum: Crime Prevention 2011 and Beyond, officially 'open'.