

International Women in Law Enforcement Conference (IWLEC) Cairns 2017.



I am currently a Detective Senior Constable in the New South Wales Police Force. I commenced my Policing Career almost ten years ago. I have been a member of the International Police Association (NSW, Australia) for the last five years, holding the role NSW Region Secretary for two years.

I was privileged to represent the International Professional Commission (IPC) of the International Police Association (IPA) in attending the 2017 International Women in Law Enforcement Conference (IWLEC) held in Cairns, Australia 2017, hosted by the Australasian Council of Women in Policing (ACWAP), attended by 1000 delegates representing 62

Countries.

On arrival in Cairns we all made our way to the Cairns Convention Centre, a short walk for most of us from our accommodation and to be greeted with a traditional "Welcome to Country" performed by the senior members of the local Indigenous community. We were informed that the site of the convention centre had in fact, been the traditional "Meeting Place" of the local indigenous women and the site for what is known as "women's business". A spiritual place for the meetings of tribal women and the sharing of knowledge. Making it a very fitting location to host this event.

This was followed by welcome drinks giving the delegates a chance to get to know one another, all 1000 of us. This was also attended by "Reptilian Guests" from the local reptile park; allowing our International guests to get 'up close and personal' with some Native Australia Reptiles, a baby Salt Water Crocodile, Olive Python and a Blue Tongue Lizard. There were mixed reactions at first which soon transformed to a line up for "selfies", no doubt to post on Facebook. We were entertained by the sounds of the Queensland Police Band; amongst the chatter of all the ladies.



Our first day began with the “Parade of Nations”, consisting of delegates marching together in uniform through the main streets of Cairns to the Convention Centre. Cheered on by locals and tourists.



NSW Police Force Contingency.

The beginning of the Conference was marked with a Flag Bearing Ceremony and a traditional “Welcome to Country” and a performance of “My Island Home” by Indigenous Artist and Cairns local, Ms Christina Anu. This incredible performance bought a new and special meaning to all the Australian Delegates present.



The daily format consisted of keynote presentations held in Main Hall followed by lunch. Giving delegates an opportunity to socialise and get to know each other.

The afternoon sessions were conducted over several smaller meeting rooms; enabling the delegates to attend lectures of their choice. Lectures consisted of a variety of topics including Domestic Violence related topics, which remains to be the most common issue confronting Law Enforcement Officers worldwide.



The evening consisted of a formal dinner on behalf of ACWAP, to present the Excellence in Policing and Awards. This evening provided formal recognition of the incredible achievements of the remarkable women in the room. We took advantage of the chance to get “Glammed Up” and get to know each other.

It was a rare opportunity to have all the Police Commissioners from all over Australian, in addition to many other Domestic and International Senior Officers in such a relaxed environment. It was a little overwhelming to look around the room and recognise the “Who’s who” of Australian Law Enforcement mingling together with our international delegates. It was a great opportunity to swap stories with the other ladies and get to know each other.



Australian Commissioners Panel

The following day, the Commissioners of every State and Territory of Australia, had the opportunity to relay personal stories of women that have inspired them, their thoughts on a personal level and to see their commitment to succession planning across all areas of Law Enforcement. It was a great opportunity to listen to the “Nations Top Cops” in a relaxed environment away from the daily pressures of their roles.



The week consisted of presentations covering topics such as Practitioner Selfcare, Struggles and limitations confronted by Women in Law Enforcement, Career Guidance and Navigation through the Promotional System. Two of the standout presentations that struck a chord with me

Unmasking the secret of the abuser: Exploring the secrets of Toxic Relationships

Dr Dina McMillian.

Sadly, so much of our core business globally involves physical or emotional violence towards women and the cycle of abuse. Understanding the cycle of the violence and the characteristics of the offender and potential offenders. Can education on generations assist in breaking the cycle to give them the tools to identify potential offenders

Emotional Survival Workshop.

Dr Kevin Gilmartin.

Dr Gilmartin is a retired Police Officer with twenty years' experience who has dedicated his post retirement life, becoming a behavioural scientist, assisting police officer and their families to equip themselves to survive the emotional trauma of a career in law enforcement and educate on the effects that service has on the individual, family, relationships ect.

Canadian Host Night

In preparation for IWLEC conference to be held in host city Calgary, Canada in 2018. The Canadian IWLEC hosted an evening themed "Calgary Stampede" consisting of cowboy hats, hay bales, Boot Scooting and dancing on table which is apparently

completely acceptable in Cairns and Calgary



The presentations revolved around Violence against woman in the community, work place resilience, issues confronting women in Law Enforcement around the world, Gender Bias and sexual harassment within the work place. Issues that affect all organisations world wide

Crime type

the tone of their conference was a focus on issues confronting Law Enforcement Agencies across the board ranging from as a core business and the reality of stereotypical crime type committed against Women on an International Platform – Education, evidence based policing ect

Family bond same issues – Self and Professional Resilience and Preservation

I came away from this conference with a far greater understand of the law enforcement community across the world. We all go to work, leaving our families, believing in what we do and try to do the best for our community.

Mentoring and promotion

A number of presentations were on the - inclusion - bring others up not bringing them down – stronger together Overall tone of the conference was support of each other and lifting each other up.