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Conference  
13 – 15 November 2016  
Auckland, New Zealand**

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## ICPRA Chairman's Welcome

Tom Stamatakis

Welcome to the October 2016 edition of ICPRA's e-Newsletter. It's always challenging for busy Association officials to find the time to share experiences from different jurisdictions so we are grateful to those of you that have provided an article and encourage those that could not make the deadline for this edition to think about providing some information for the next edition of the ICPRA e-Newsletter! We do have a variety of articles and topics covered this month so I hope you enjoy catching up with colleagues and their activities around the world.

I am also pleased that we were able to include the article describing New Zealand Police Association President Greg O'Connor's incredible 21-year career. Remaining in any elected office for 21 years is an incredible accomplishment and it is clear Greg is leaving his position the same way he came into the police association; on his own terms. No doubt much of his success can be attributed to a key principle underlying his association activities "everything the association did was good for both the members and for Police". From all of us at ICPRA; good luck Greg! We know you will be successful wherever your future endeavours take you.

Over the last few months I have been struck by two themes across most jurisdictions; the lack of resources and capacity to deal with the demands being placed on police in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and mental health of police. There is no doubt in my mind that the two are related and as the expectations on front line personnel increase, the impact on their mental health becomes more severe.

I am somewhat encouraged that there is more attention being paid to mental health in the first responder community but I think we have a long way to go. In Canada we are encouraged that Members of Parliament have made the study of mental health in First Responders one of the first topics that they've chosen to study in the new Parliament that was convened after our most recent federal election. We need to encourage this kind of focus and response from politicians, funding authorities, and administrators across all ICPRA jurisdictions. It can sometimes be overused as a cliché, but protecting those who protect others is a truly non-partisan issue.

Part of the difficulty in discussion of this nature is that there is no single cause for OSI or PTSD in first responders. For some it's a question of a single traumatic event, which is often followed by intense analysis by supervisors, media and the general public (all with the benefit of hindsight), while for others, it's built up over years of exposure to some of the worst circumstances. It's almost impossible to predict and extremely difficult to prevent.

However, there is absolutely no question with respect to the urgent need for action. Whether it's because of the 77 first responders have taken their own lives in Canada since April 2014, or the over 200,000 sick days that were taken by police personnel in Scotland, status quo is not acceptable. Obviously, not all suicides or sick days taken are a direct result of PTSD, but apart from the elevated

risk of suicide, almost every officer I know has direct experience and knows a friend, a colleague, a partner, who is or has suffered from what we now recognize is PTSD.

To illustrate, a recent survey of a large 1400 member urban police service in Canada established that over 30% of police officers met the criteria to be clinically diagnosed with PTSD. Surveys conducted in other police services have shown similar results, which offers a glimpse into the scope of this serious problem.

While suicide is obviously the most severe of the consequences that can be suffered, it is far from the only one. There are many testimonials from police personnel regarding their own personal experiences dealing with workplace insurance boards when filing claims for benefits for those suffering from a disease whose symptoms aren't always easily visible, which is why many organizations have been actively advocating for presumptive legislation to reverse the burden of proof for those who have been diagnosed as suffering from PTSD or operational stress injuries. I'm pleased to say that there a number of jurisdictions that have taken very positive steps in this regard, yet there are many others that remain stuck in the past, like our colleagues in the state of Western Australia that still have no worker's compensation coverage at all.

Of course, not all of the solutions will come directly from government, and I will certainly acknowledge that we have work to do ourselves, as police leaders, both on the front-lines, and particularly at the executive level. "End the stigma" is a familiar refrain which recognizes that we all need to work harder to understand the difficulties faced by those who are suffering. It will come as no surprise that in a world like policing that there has been, for a long time, a culture that encourages our members to "tough it out" and work through problems while still pulling your weight as part of your policing team, whether on patrol or as part of a specialized unit within the service. Everyone from partners to supervisors must work harder within the policing structure to understand the signs, and to reach out with a helping hand and the necessary assistance when one of our colleagues needs it the most.

I should also note that police associations across the world have made tremendous progress in recent years to address this issue. Employee Assistance Programs, Peer Counselling and Psychological Health and Safety Standards are all innovations that have been pushed by front-line representatives, and have taken a much more prominent focus during collective bargaining negotiations with our employers.

Despite all of that, there is still a tremendous lack of research into the issue itself, particularly with respect to first responders, and I believe that is one major area where governments can play a significant role. While a number of organizations have taken steps to begin to better understand PTSD, there is a lack of focus in this area that could be addressed with federal leadership. As President of the CPA, and now Chairman of ICPRA I'm approached regularly by researchers and groups that want to be more involved, however without proper coordination, there is a serious concern that any new resources might not be used in the most effective or efficient way possible.

Underlying all of this is one very important point: while any action plan needs to engage professionals across a number of disciplines, from academic researchers to psychiatrists, this must be a process for first responders and by first responders. I firmly believe that for us to realize any progress any new initiative or program has to have the necessary credibility among those who need it most, it must be driven by those with a serious understanding of the particular culture and environment that is unique to the first responder community. This is a serious issue that we need to focus on locally but also nationally and internationally. The challenge for ICpra will be to identify how we can most effectively support our member organizations.

Tom Stamatakis  
Chairman



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### **When Twitter Accidentally Opened Wider Debate on Budget** Mark Lindsay, Chairman, Police Federation of Northern Ireland

Twitter restricts you to 140 characters which means, you have to be succinct and to the point with no room to equivocate or qualify.

We all know the social media 'platform' is a double-edged sword. It's a huge asset to have and to use, but it can also deliver a self-inflicted punch.

A Twitter saga had the unintended consequence of opening up a debate on resources and financing and for that, the popular and dangerous social media outlet did us all a big favour.

[Click here](#) to view the article

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### **A Long Association** Ellen Brook, Editor Police News, New Zealand Police Association

As Police Association President Greg O'Connor prepares to step down from the role after 21 years, he reflects on a job that has defined him, challenged him, given him incredible opportunities and insights and allowed him to put policing at the heart of the organisation.

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### **Terror on the Radar** Heather McDonald, Police News, New Zealand Police Association

Does terrorism exist in New Zealand? Senior Sergeant John Battersby is looking into it, he tells Heather McDonald.

Senior Sergeant John Battersby, a practice leader at the Police College, is the first recipient of a new Police Research Fellowship at the Victoria University Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS) and will spend a year researching the impact of terrorism in New Zealand.

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## **The National Police Memorial Day Service**

Steve White, Chair, Police Federation of England and Wales

HRH The Prince of Wales was among those who paid tribute to the thousands of police officers in Britain who have died or been killed in the line of duty.

He was joined at the National Police Memorial Day service at St Paul's Cathedral, London, by Home Secretary Amber Rudd, more than 40 chief constables and around 2,000 former colleagues and family members of serving police officers who lost their lives while carrying out their duties.

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## **National Police Remembrance Day (Australia)**

Mark Burgess, CEO, Police Federation of Australia

National Police Remembrance Day is observed in Australia on 29 September each year.

While services are held all over Australia, the day also saw the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the dedication of the National Police Memorial in Kings Park Canberra on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin. The event was marked with a march of interstate police across Kings Avenue Bridge from AFP Headquarters to the Memorial in Kings Park.

A large turnout witnessed a moving event where the audience was addressed by the Prime Minister of Australia Malcolm Turnbull and Australian Federal Police Commissioner Andrew Colvin.

Seven new touchstones were added to the Wall this year.

Earlier that morning the Queanbeyan Police Station, about 15 kms east of Kings Park over the New South Wales border, hosted its traditional dawn service where the touchstones of the seven members were blessed and subsequently escorted in vintage police vehicles to the National Police Memorial where they were affixed to the Wall in readiness for the evening service.

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Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull laying a wreath at National Police Memorial Canberra

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## Sentencing Reform

Nathan R. Catura, National President, Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA)

Today, America is experiencing yet another drug epidemic. Heroin abuse and the ancillary crimes that accompany it are plaguing our cities, with the abuse of Fentanyl and other synthetic drugs exponentially increasing.

In 2014, more than 47,000 people – about 120 per day – died from overdoses. This is more deaths than those occurring due to traffic accidents and gun violence. All the while, though it defies logic, this administration and its Departments have rolled back sentences and released prisoners at an unprecedented rate, and the number of people federally prosecuted has declined by almost 30% since 2011.

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## Wall to Wall Ride for Remembrance

Mark Burgess, CEO, Police Federation of Australia

2,080 riders, a record number, registered to ride in the 2016 Wall to Wall Ride for Remembrance on Saturday 17 September.

[Click here](#) to view an article about the ride



The batons laying on the Memorial during the Wall to Wall service

## NT Assistant Commissioner Kerr Receives 2016 Excellence Award for Research

Paul McCue, President, Northern Territory Police Association

Northern Territory Police Officer Assistant Commissioner Jeanette Kerr was recently recognised at the Australian Council of Women and Police Annual Awards for Excellence in Policing. Assistant Commissioner Kerr, the highest ranked female in the Territory's Police Force on her appointment last year, received the 2016 Excellence in Research on Improving Law Enforcement for Women award.

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## **Concerns with Police Oversight in Canada**

Tom Stamatakis, President, Canadian Police Association

For police oversight to be considered effective, it must have the confidence of the public as well as the confidence of those who are being overseen. Both the public and the police must have the confidence that investigations are conducted impartially, and professionally. Unfortunately, as has become increasingly apparent, Canada's current oversight regime enjoys neither, and as a result, public and internal confidence has suffered, not just in oversight agencies, but in policing in general, which is having a significant negative effect on our front-line policing members.

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## **A Global Perspective and More**

Tom Stamatakis, President, Canadian Police Association

The Canadian Police Association Biennial General Meeting, held in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island focused on a wide range of topics and presenters with the first business sessions squarely focused on the challenges being faced by police labour organizations around the globe.

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The End