

THE FUTURE AND CRIME: CHALLENGES FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

Dr Grant Wardlaw
Director, Office of Strategic Crime Assessments
ACT

*Paper presented at the 3rd National Outlook Symposium on Crime in Australia,
Mapping the Boundaries of Australia's Criminal Justice System
convened by the Australian Institute of Criminology
and held in Canberra 22-23 March 1999*

The imminent arrival of a new millennium has recently had many dusting off their crystal balls and trying to divine where their futures lie. This watershed event – at least in symbolic terms – comes at a time when many are already painfully aware that the pace and nature of change in the late twentieth century leaves us with models, attitudes, strategies and institutions that may not be best adapted to dealing with the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The world that we face is being described by new terms such as “blur” and “connexity”. In their recent book *Blur. The Speed of Change in the Connected Economy*,¹ Davis and Meyer describe blur as the new world in which we will all come to live and work. They see blur as a product of speed (every aspect of life operates and changes in real time), connectivity (everything is becoming electronically connected to everything else) and intangibles (every transaction has both tangible and intangible economic value, but the intangible is growing faster). In a similar vein, Geoff Mulgan, a policy adviser to British Prime Minister Tony Blair, has coined the term “connexity” to describe the changing and growing connections we all experience as individual, organisations and nations in a wired world.²

These forces affect the criminal environment every bit as much as the economic and political arena about which so much has been written recently. They are driving rapid and significant changes in the nature, extent and impact of crime – locally, nationally and globally. But the scale of the changes also seems to drive us to have a very pessimistic view of the future of crime. As a result, many of the prognostications about crime and the future see only overwhelming threats and inadequate law enforcement responses. In my address today I want to stand back a bit and examine some of the drivers of the emerging criminal environment, to take a balanced view of the nature of the emerging threats and to suggest that the same drivers also create opportunities for us to exploit to make the world a more secure place in which to live. I should emphasise here that most of the examples I will use come from studies of the Commonwealth’s criminal environment carried out by the Office of Strategic Crime Assessments (OSCA). But many of the issues and implications affect all levels of the community, not just the Commonwealth jurisdiction. I should also emphasise that I have chosen to examine just a few examples of the issues facing us rather than attempting a comprehensive survey.

Strategic Drivers

In looking at the key forces driving change and influencing the criminal environment, there is no escaping the ‘g’ word.

The globalisation of markets and commerce has opened up opportunities to sophisticated financial criminals and to transnational crime groups. Financial criminals are exploiting the increasing integration and complexity of the global economy, and the differences in national regulatory and enforcement regimes. Increased volumes of trade are increasing the opportunities for, and decreasing the risks involved in, organised illicit trading. Criminal organisations are exploiting the growing gap between their global reach and the predominantly state-based law enforcement efforts against them.

¹ Stan Davis and Christopher Meyer, *Blur. The Speed of Change in the Connected Economy*, Addison-Wesley, 1998.

² Geoff Mulgan, *Connexity: How to Love in a Connected World*, Harvard Business School Press, 1997.

Technological innovation, particularly in the convergence of computers and communications, is another important facilitator of the internationalisation of economic activity. It is also an important facilitator of criminal activity, providing crime groups with extra geographic reach, more flexibility and an increased capacity to avoid detection. It has been the basis of fundamental changes in the way international business operates. Some of these changes, for example, the emergence of electronic commerce, have opened up new avenues for criminal exploitation.

These developments, along with the new strategic environment created in the early 90's by the breakdown of the former Soviet Union, have nourished the development of transnational crime.

Transnational Crime

The globalisation of financial markets has facilitated the growth of transnational crime. Criminal organisations have been quick to adapt their structures and activities to new opportunities in the global economy. They have increasingly engaged in cross-border activity, both in response to illicit market opportunities and as a means of reducing their vulnerability to law enforcement counter measures. As a result, criminal organisations and networks have increased in size and power, and many have developed interests beyond their country of origin. Whilst there is no evidence of a disciplined or formal network of criminal organisations, there is ample evidence to suggest that various transnational criminal groups forge closer working relationships in areas of mutual interest. In some cases, transnational criminal organisations have become significant actors in global economic activity.

While all countries are affected by these criminal developments, their impacts are not felt equally. A number of contextual factors affect a country's *relative exposure* to transnational crime. In Australia's case, the principal factors are our business and trading relationships with countries known to be source or transit countries for illicit goods, our high level of technological development, our geographic proximity and our cultural ties to source and transit countries. All these factors expose us to transnational crime.

On the plus side, while there are commercial incentives for cross-border trafficking of illicit goods and services from developing countries to Australian markets, our potential market for illicit goods is relatively small compared to other markets, including those in our region. Nor do we have features which facilitate transnational crime activities in other countries, such as poorly developed democratic institutions, political instability, systemic corruption, a restricted press, and shortages of essential commodities. Their absence provides Australia with some measure of protection from transnational crime, and reduces the threat compared with some other countries.

It is noteworthy that the facilitators which I mentioned as applying to Australia are either fixed, such as those related to our geographic position, or are the by-products of policy choices judged by successive governments to be essential to national development and prosperity, such as trade and technological development. As such, they are not candidates for fundamental change. This suggests that Australia's underlying vulnerability to transnational crime will remain consistent and relatively low for the foreseeable future.

Moving now to the *nature* of the transnational crime that does affect Australia, we should be careful about characterising this automatically as organised crime. OSCA sees the defining characteristics of transnational organised crime as the presence of an organisation which:

- exercises control;
- is vertically integrated across national borders (that is, that successive stages in the production/distribution of goods and services are undertaken by a single firm); and
- moves profits offshore within the organisational structure.

In Australia, there is little evidence of offshore control, or of vertical integration, or of profits (as distinct from payments for goods) moving offshore under the control of an offshore organisation. Rather, the parties to the cross-border transactions through which illicit goods are imported to Australia seem to be autonomous buyers and sellers who may be linked in various ways on an opportunistic basis but who are not members of a single organisation. Our analysis leads us to believe that this situation is unlikely to change substantially for Australia in the next five years. We need to be careful in public discussion of transnational crime not to inflate the threat to assume that what is happening in some other parts of the world will necessarily play out the same way here.

This does not mean that we can be complacent in Australia though. If organised crime of the type typified in some of the more hysterical popular treatments of the subject will not be a major issue for Australia, transnational crime certainly will be. As time goes on, an increasing proportion of major crimes in Australia will have an international dimension, through the links necessary for importation of illicit products and services, through Australia's place in crime in cyberspace, through money laundering and through the activities of Australian criminals in the international sphere.

Illicit Drugs

A major influence on the future crime scene in Australia is the development of mass markets for illicit drugs in Asia and their potential effect on our drug markets. Developments in heroin production, consumption and trafficking in China are of particular relevance. This analysis of heroin consumption, opium cultivation, and heroin production in China and heroin trafficking through China and its impact on Australia has identified a number of issues relevant to Australian law enforcement agencies.

Heroin use in China is widespread and is unlikely to be affected by current Chinese policy settings and can be expected to continue to grow, potentially to alarming levels. Heroin use in China is currently well supplied by Burma, with a number of other sources emerging such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and North Korea. China will probably be adequately supplied by these sources if heroin use continues to grow at current rates.

Illicit opium cultivation and heroin production presently occur at a low level in China. While China could again become an important opium cultivation and heroin production region, it is unlikely to emerge as a significant source of heroin internationally unless its existing and emerging heroin sources are removed. An increase in opium cultivation and heroin production in China could be related to a combination of increased ethnic unrest in China, decreased central control over the provinces in China and the displacement of cultivation and refining activity from Burma. The frontier regions of Yunnan, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia would be

the areas most likely to resemble the political, military, social and economic conditions necessary for large-scale opium cultivation and heroin production if there was substantial breakdown of the existing well-developed political control infrastructure. It is, however, unlikely that such a major shift of opium cultivation and heroin production away from Burma will occur in the next five years.

Trafficking through China of Burmese heroin is likely to continue, at least at present levels. Law enforcement action in China will not seriously affect it. China is likely to become the primary embarkation point for South East Asian heroin trafficked to Australia over the next five years. China may emerge as a transit route for Central Asian and North Korean heroin. Organised crime involvement in heroin trafficking through China may change from being dominated by Chinese organised crime groups based in Taiwan and Hong Kong to the increased prominence of existing or new mainland organised crime groups. New mainland groups may be the result of the amalgamation of previously offshore and mainland organised crime groups.

The analysis of the impact of trends in the Chinese heroin market on Australia indicates that the future of the heroin market in Australia may be influenced by changes in the Chinese heroin market. There is potential for the supply of heroin to Australia to be temporarily affected by significant increases in demand elsewhere, particularly in potentially large markets such as China. Such a temporary shortage could alter the dynamics of the local market by increasing the price of heroin, lowering its purity, leading to users substituting heroin with other types of drugs and increasing drug related crime. The likelihood of this occurring is limited by the surplus of heroin internationally and the fact that heroin use in China is not likely to exceed 6.5 million people in the next five years. If the number of regular heroin users in China does exceed 6.5 million, it could be a catalyst for a heroin shortage internationally and in Australia.

As has been the case with heroin, for synthetic drugs such as amphetamines, Ice, and Ecstasy, there has been an increasing demand in Asian markets. Partly to service this demand, production of synthetic drugs has increased in the Golden Triangle. Given that this region also supplies Australia with most of its heroin, the infrastructure and networks to supply synthetic drugs to the Australian market from this source are already in place.

Relevant to this is the displacement of synthetic drug production from countries with stronger precursor controls to those with weak controls. In Europe, for example, production is shifting from the more developed Western European countries to less developed Eastern European countries. In Asian countries, precursor controls are generally weak. There is also a large regional black market emerging in Chinese ephedrine, a precursor for many forms of synthetic drugs. The purity levels of Asian produced synthetic drugs are likely to be higher than for those produced in Australia, where the introduction of strong precursor legislation has increased the difficulty of obtaining precursors, resulting in reduced product quality.

On the basis of these observations, we are looking for indications that domestic illicit production of synthetic drugs in Australia, which currently services the bulk of local demand for amphetamines is being challenged by accessible and higher-quality synthetic drugs imported from Asia. Such challenges are likely to lead to increased availability of amphetamine-like substances and the possibility of increased violence in the marketplace as rival domestic and overseas suppliers vie for dominance. Such competition is likely to be accompanied by increased violence and aggressive marketing as suppliers try to hold on to or expand into markets.

Transnational Law Enforcement Mechanisms

Returning to the impact of globalisation, there are interesting trends emerging from the difficulties faced by State-based law enforcement agencies in operating effectively in the transnational sphere. There is a lot of activity to develop cooperative international arrangements, ranging from EUROPOL (the European Police Organisation) and ASEANAPOL (the ASEAN Police Organisation) to FATF (the Financial Action Task Force) and the various UN conventions. But these efforts tend to be slow and relatively cumbersome.

In the meantime, business is already out there operating in a dynamic international environment. At one end of the scale, business appreciates the variance of regulatory regimes and government policies that enable it to forum shop for the most attractive business environment in which to operate. But business also wants to be confident about the safety and security of its transnational operations. In the absence of effective government-based transnational law enforcement mechanisms, multinational business has begun to initiate its own solutions or turn to private sector organisations offering quasi law enforcement and security services.

Perhaps the most interesting development in this area is the rise of international investigative and competitive intelligence firms providing a number of services to the international business and legal community. Services provided include the provision of pre-transaction intelligence, due diligence investigations, and character checks on and investigations of potential business partners, competitors and customers.

Some estimates have private investigative revenues in the United States reaching \$US4.6 billion by the year 2000, a five fold increase on 1980 levels. Kroll Associates, a major US private investigative and competitive intelligence company, is the market leader. A number of the major accounting firms have also established their own in-house investigative divisions. OSCA first highlighted this trend in its 1996 Assessment and we have been monitoring its progress since. We were not surprised that in May last year the South African Government announced that it has hired Kroll Associates to conduct a year-long program of training for police and intelligence agencies in techniques for countering organised crime and corruption. This is reportedly against a background of investor concern about the crime situation in South Africa.

Another facet of the privatisation of transnational law enforcement is the increasing involvement of interest groups in monitoring compliance with international arrangements and gathering intelligence on illegal behaviour in their field of interest. For example *Transparency International*, the global anti-corruption watchdog, has been involved in developing the OECD's foreign corrupt practices convention, and now organises the regular International Anti-Corruption Conferences. The *Traffic Network*, a subsidiary of the *Worldwide Fund for Nature*, investigates and publicises the illegal use of animal and plant resources.

Both these trends show that the demand for compliance and enforcement services in the international arena is not yet being met by traditional law enforcement approaches, and non-government groups are stepping into the gap. These groups do not face the same type of constraints in operating in the international environment as do state-based government agencies. And both the private investigation and intelligence agencies and the single-issue interest groups are able to apply more resources to a particular issue than government agencies with broader mandates and competing demands.

There are a number of issues for law enforcement agencies and government raised by these trends. While competitive intelligence agencies like Kroll are at pains to argue that they operate within the law, they also use covert methods to collect information. As well as the privacy implications for the targets of intelligence collection activities, the generally unregulated nature of the industry creates the risk of sharp business practices or outright illegal methods being used to obtain information on behalf of clients. At the most sinister end of the spectrum, it is possible that criminal groups themselves could become involved in the provision of transnational investigative services. It is likely that the work of law enforcement agencies will increasingly intersect with the activities of these non-government agencies, requiring decisions about whether, and under what terms, they will work together.

Technology and Financial Crime

The other major driver I mentioned earlier is technological innovation. This of course has been a facilitator of globalisation and therefore impacts strongly on transnational crime. But it also impacts on crime at the local level. And of course the impact is both in terms of creating new opportunities for crime and of decreasing the likelihood of detection and prosecution.

The changes represented by electronic commerce and the Internet affect all areas of economic activity and have therefore been the subject of a number of government studies. The changes have significant financial crime implications, particularly for money laundering, fraud and tax evasion.

To take money laundering as an example, there are now many more players operating in financial markets than previously, including offshore suppliers of financial services via the Internet. The Internet is an attractive channel for the distribution of financial services and consumer goods because of its global reach and lower start-up and transaction costs. Direct relationships between suppliers and users of financial services are increasingly possible and, as a result, the role of financial intermediaries is declining. However, financial intermediaries are the principal focus of the existing framework of enforcement and compliance mechanisms in the financial sector.

The broadening of the financial services sector may also provide cover for criminal groups engaging in money laundering and other financial crimes. And the number of types of commercial transactions occurring over the Internet, from on-line gambling to the direct raising of capital from investors without going through the intermediary of a stock exchange, are providing many new avenues for money launderers.

Australia's existing anti-money laundering regime is predicated upon currency and international funds transfer as the launderer's financial instruments of choice, transacted through the traditional banking system. But new electronic payment systems involving electronic cash or stored value cards could undermine this regime. They allow anonymity whilst enabling very large denominations to be held in bearer fashion and large transactions to be conducted between remote parties. It is a secure method of transfer, not technically limited to any maximum value, and delivery costs are low.

Basically, globalisation and technological innovation are expanding the range of choices for professional money launderers while enhancing their anonymity, lowering their transaction costs and facilitating evasion of scrutiny by regulators and law enforcement agencies.

Many of the developments facilitating money laundering apply equally to fraud. Cyberspace is an ideal environment for fraudsters, providing instantaneous global reach, a growing pool of potential victims as Internet commerce gains pace, an unclear regulatory and law enforcement jurisdiction, and the ability to operate remotely. The detached Internet environment also assists deception in the form of misleading or false advertising, misrepresentation of products and services and deceptive pricing information.

Cyberspace, already host to a large number of (generally low grade) criminal acts, is likely to foster more serious crimes, especially as larger volumes of business are transacted over the Internet. No genuinely new frauds are expected. However, electronic variations of traditional frauds will be carried out with greater efficiency and effectiveness, will have potentially greater impact and will be more difficult to investigate. We can expect to see growth in the areas of consumer fraud, identity fraud, currency fraud, plastic card fraud, superannuation fraud, fraud in the public sector, telecommunication fraud, cyber-fraud and other computer-related fraud.

Managing the complexity of emerging fraud will require fundamental changes in fraud management, including regenerating core strategies, acquisitions of new competencies and the development of new partnerships between government and the private sector.

Information Technology and General Crime

In terms of the implications of new technology at the local level, the organisational assistance that sophisticated information technology provides to legitimate business applies equally to illegitimate business. So we can expect, for example, that drug suppliers at *all* levels of the drug supply chain will use information technology to manage their illegal business activities more effectively, securely and remotely. One cannabis producer in New York has already used the Internet to remotely monitor a number of hydroponic growing sites around the city. Both buyers and suppliers of many illegal goods and services will increasingly avail themselves of the security and ease of access that is provided by the smart use of information technology.

The emphasis on security in new information technology will, in many cases, reduce detection opportunities for law enforcement agencies, reduce the amount of physical contact between parties to an illicit transaction and encourage remote access to systems, increasing the flexibility and evasiveness of suppliers. The availability of strong encryption will enable coded messaging which will be all but impenetrable. The release last year of Windows and Linux versions of the Internet browser Netscape, with 128-bit encryption, by an international consortium based in Brisbane, means that an encryption capability above that of the US crypto-export laws is now readily available. And technology-based counter-intelligence strategies aimed at disrupting law enforcement operations, which were previously the preserve of sophisticated criminal organisations, are likely to become more accessible to a wider range of criminals.

But increasing use of technology will also make many criminals vulnerable to sophisticated use of monitoring and disruption capabilities by law enforcement, so the balance will not be tipped all in the criminals' favour. How far law enforcement is able to go in using these techniques, however, will be affected significantly by the debate that is likely to be sparked off about the balance between privacy and the public good of intrusive electronic law enforcement. Expect some heated argument in this area over the next five years.

Changing Priorities for Law Enforcement

The forces driving social, economic and political life generally will also open up more or different criminal opportunities in a number of areas that will impact heavily on law enforcement. Some leading contenders here are environmental crimes, crimes arising from advances in biotechnology and intellectual property offences.

Environmental crimes are already assuming a higher profile and will continue to increase in importance. Recent international environmental treaties have created new black markets that rival those for more familiar illicit substances. For example, the 1987 Montreal Protocol that effectively banned the use of carbonfluorocarbons (CFCs) in much of the world has spawned a multi-billion dollar smuggling opportunity that has been eagerly exploited by criminals. The United Nations now estimates that the illicit trade in CFCs rivals the value of the cocaine trade. Attempts either locally or internationally to control the disposal of hazardous waste generate similar criminal opportunities as criminals engage in a number of fraudulent practices in moving and disposing of toxic materials. And recent moves by the Australian, New Zealand and French governments to prevent illegal fishing in the Southern Ocean, including by the deployment of expensive military assets to detect and arrest illegal fishing vessels, illustrate the importance that will be attached to enforcement of laws against the illegal trade in endangered species or economically valuable stocks.

One of the most rapidly developing areas in science is the field of biotechnology. Advances in this field will have significant law enforcement implications. The emerging crime of biopiracy looks set to become a major investigative priority for some agencies as nations struggle to retain their sovereign rights over biological and genetic resources found within their boundaries. Developments in gene technology that promise the cloning of human organs have implications for the control of the illicit market that already exists and is growing. And the public reaction to many biotechnology developments, especially where they involve manipulation of genetic material, will increasingly lead to protest about the nature and extent of the work. This is likely to evolve into one of the major public order issues of the early 21st century.

The growing role of knowledge in our economy will involve police increasingly in the investigation of knowledge-based offences (such as intellectual property offences) which may require the acquisition of new investigation skills. In addition, law enforcement's own competitive edge will increasingly depend on the way it acquires, creates, manages and transfers its own knowledge. This will have significant implications for the development of intelligence capabilities and for information-sharing and decision-support systems in general.

Implications for Australian Law Enforcement Agencies

The drivers and trends that I've spoken about so far raise some important issues for police managers. Investigative methods, police technology, relationships between law enforcement agencies, recruitment and training and many other issues will all have to change – and keep changing rapidly – if law enforcement is going to keep up with the changing criminal and general environment. Some of the issues we need to give particular attention to are:

The international role of Australian law enforcement. The global nature of criminal activities means that criminal investigations in Australia will increasingly have an international dimension. Such investigations will be both more extensive and often more complex than at

present. While international aspects will impact most heavily on the Australian Federal Police (AFP), the Australian Customs Service (ACS) and the National Crime Authority (NCA), they will increasingly be felt at the State and Territory level as well. Investigations other than those of traditional law enforcement agencies, such as the corporate regulatory investigations of the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC), will also continue a trend to international cooperation.

These changes will have implications for the nature of our dealings with overseas agencies, the type of person selected for international operations (especially those who will serve overseas), the nature of overseas duties, the location of posts, and the intersection between Australia's international law enforcement and other foreign policy goals and strategies. The growing importance of Asia for Australian law enforcement will have particular implications for such matters as language and cultural skills, the nature of partnership arrangements with regional law enforcement agencies, and the relationship between the AFP and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

Gaining and maintaining the technological edge over sophisticated criminals. The use of technology by criminals, either to commit sophisticated crimes or to evade law enforcement action, is a common theme. Computers and telecommunications enable many of the emerging crimes of economic significance. To combat these crimes, law enforcement will need to gain and maintain technological capabilities appropriate to selected areas of investigation. A solid base already exists in the technical, forensic and computer crime areas of some police services. But such capabilities will need to be expanded considerably and the level of technical skills will need to be enhanced throughout the organisations as investigations come to routinely require the ability to understand and exploit advanced technologies. Similar arguments apply to areas such as understanding the world of international banking and finance. These trends will have implications for a range of recruitment and training issues, equipment acquisitions and operational policies. They also imply an enhanced focus on counter-intelligence within law enforcement if it is to maintain any technological advantages gained and to assure the integrity of its own systems in the face of more sophisticated attempts to penetrate them.

Seeing the opportunities that the trends in the criminal environment provide for law enforcement. Almost all the trends I've discussed that lead to threats from criminals also provide opportunities for law enforcement to exploit. Technology can enable law enforcement to work smarter and more cost-effectively. Improved intelligence systems can underpin innovative strategies that lead to greater impact on criminal activity. The challenge is to engender an organisational mindset that stimulates the search for these opportunities and does not only see the threats.

Conclusion

The issues I've spoken about today are only a selection of the emerging changes in the criminal environment. What I hope the examples I've selected illustrate is that, at least at the national and international level, the strategic drivers affecting criminal activity are those that are critical to national economic competitiveness and prosperity and are therefore pervasive across a range of government policy interests, including the economy, taxation, communications, national security and foreign affairs.

A narrow and compartmentalised approach to emerging crime problems does not represent good public policy making in this complex and dynamic environment. Whole-of-government approaches, on the other hand, set out to be beneficial across a range of public policy interests, and to eliminate the ‘collateral damage’ often caused when one policy interest is advanced without a proper understanding of the impact on other policy interests.

The world is a more diverse and less predictable place. The effects of any particular policy, decision or event either actually touch more people or seem to (through the amplification effects of media coverage, for example). Globalisation and interconnectivity mean that any particular law enforcement agency or even individual investigative unit face more and different adversaries than they are used to and may be prepared for. Law enforcement agencies themselves are undergoing rapid transformations as they change their missions, face competition from newly created agencies or the private sector and move to confront emerging forms of criminality.

Law enforcement agencies operate also in a changing landscape that increasingly sees major criminality as a threat to a redefined notion of national security. To some, this provides law enforcement with an opportunity to latch on to what they see as the budget generosity shown to the defence forces – a generosity often characterised as being out of synch with the reality of the level of military threat facing Australia. They call for a switch of resources from the military to law enforcement. But redefining law enforcement problems as national security ones may just as easily result in the further erosion of police jurisdiction as in the enhancement of police budgets.

There will almost certainly be a debate in Australia over the changing conception of national security, as there has been overseas – especially in the United States. There is no certainty, however, that the police will be the winners from the debate. Those in law enforcement need to be careful in opening up such debates that they attempt to frame them carefully and not just put forward simple notions of competition for resources as the sole reason for advancing their case. However, regardless of the nature and outcome of the national security debate, we can expect law enforcement issues to become more prominent on the national agenda because some criminal activities simply do have the potential now to affect the economic well-being of the nation.

Finally, a few comments on what all this means for the skills and knowledge that will be required by the police to operate effectively in the world of the 21st century. I have referred frequently to the fact that we live in an increasingly interconnected world. But this is a reality that public administration generally is still struggling to come to grips with. Effective action against any social problem will require collective action.

Crime control is not the exclusive preserve of the police. We play lip service to this notion now. But although there are isolated examples of a true community approach to crime control, institutionally we have a long way to go. One of the biggest lessons to emerge from the changing nature of our environment is the realisation that often police need to relinquish control rather than try to assert it. The best solution to many problems may be to act as catalysts for a group of self-organising efforts. There will seldom be simple answers. Problems cross inter-agency boundaries, efforts in one area impact on others and sometimes it is very difficult just to define the problems. When you throw in moral and political considerations the mess just seems to get worse.

Recent research³ suggests that effective public leadership in such situations involves four tasks that have a catalytic effect:

- getting some focus on the issue by elevating it on public and policy agendas – this requires credible analyses of the issues that can be used in the debate;
- engaging a diverse group of people, agencies and interests in addressing the issue;
- stimulating multiple strategies and options for action – no quick fixes, tolerance of failed experiments and partial success, and an ability to live with ambiguity; and
- sustaining action and maintaining momentum by managing interconnections through appropriate institutionalisation and rapid information sharing and feedback.

All this suggests that in addition to traditional policing skills and enhanced technical ones, police will need to give more emphasis to a range of other attributes. Both police operations and strategic management will require increasing emphasis on such skills as thinking and acting strategically and the ability to facilitate and mediate in working groups and networks

I'm not saying that these skills are not already evident in law enforcement or that good solid investigations practice and good operational police work generally will be any less important. But to be effective in their dealings with the community as problem-solvers, the police of the future will need an extended set of skills that allow them to function as equal partners in networks and strategic alliances rather than as directors and commanders. Problems are boundary crossing and the successful police of the future will be boundary crossers also. They will acknowledge the reality of fragmented authority and work within a new set of alliances and accommodations, rather than try to assert authority over the criminal realm.

Above all, the successful police of the future will realise that law enforcement agencies are part of a web that inextricably ties together historically separate economic, social and environmental problems. This will require law enforcement to be much more outward-looking and flexible than has often been the case to this point. The challenge is with law enforcement and the criminal justice system more widely to use new skills and mindsets to transform agencies into the agile and smart organisations that will enable them to survive and be effective in the new millennium.

³ Jeffrey S. Luke, *Catalytic Leadership. Strategies for an Interconnected World*, Jossey-Bass, 1998.