

**McKechnie, Nicole**

**From:** Sharpe, David [David.Sharpe@afp.gov.au]  
**Sent:** Saturday, 8 August 2009 11:37 AM  
**To:** McKechnie, Nicole  
**Subject:** Media Watch Statement [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Attachments:** Media Watch Statement.doc

Nicole

Here is the media watch statement we intend to release.

Please advise if you have any issues. Based on your reply to them identifying 5am I think this will complement.

As discussed last night Peter Drennan contacted the Aus to advise the AFP were concerned re Stewart continually making public statements and misrepresenting the AFP. They agreed to acknowledge the paper was on the street prior to search warrants and based on that I spoke to them. Paul Maley contacted us advising he was tasked with writing the Page 1 story to set the record straight but initially had no idea. He wanted Tony Negus but I refused this request. I sent him an email (to follow) in an attempt to ensure balance. As you will see today he has chosen, not surprisingly, to ignore most. I informed him that if the record was not set straight the AFP would be forced to publicly respond. There is no acknowledgement the paper was on the street. As such I intend to release the above media watch statement as a result of their request to us.

I may be wrong but the way the Aus story was written today is a deliberate attempt to drive a wedge between AFP and Vicpol to ensure we dont stick tight on this. As least the West Aus/Age etc have reported the fact the paper was on the streets and acknowledges the fact that despite the rubbish from the Aus, the operation was a huge success and great joint operation.

Anyway I will send you the email I sent to Maley so I had a record in writing. I am also appearing before ACLEI on Wed and will have great pleasure dropping Mr Stewarts email sent to me to be forwarded to Peter Drennan. It notes the editors guarantee that the story will not even be printed prior to 3pm. Also cant wait to deliver the news that AFP have records of Stewart and the editor refusing to print the following day from the warrants and insisting they would go to print early. Bring on the fight.

All the best



**DAVID SHARPE**  
NATIONAL MEDIA COORDINATOR  
CHIEF OF STAFF PORTFOLIO  
Tel +61(0) 2 62757100 Mob +61(0) 429929552  
[www.afp.gov.au](http://www.afp.gov.au)

9/08/2009

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Nicole" with a flourish at the end.

## Media Watch Statement

On Thursday the 30th of July 2009 the AFP were contacted by a journalist from The Australian newspaper stating that he had sensitive information relating to a joint counter terrorism investigation in Victoria.

After consultation with the agencies involved in the investigation, the AFP requested The Australian newspaper delay the publication of the story until the investigation was ready to be resolved.

The AFP immediately referred the breach of operational security to its Professional Standards area and an investigation was commenced on Friday the 31st of July 2009.

Since that time the AFP has communicated with the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI), the Victoria Police Ethical Standards Unit, ASIO and the NSW Police to ensure a coordinated investigation of the security breach takes place.

The AFP places the highest importance on its operational security and the safety of its members and acted immediately to investigate the breach. As the matter is currently under investigation, it would not be appropriate to make any further comment at this time.

The key issues in this matter are as follows:

1. Operation Neath was a joint operation between VicPol, AFP, NSWPol, NSWCC and ASIO.
2. A serious security breach occurred in this investigation and is now subject of investigation from numerous bodies in an attempt to identify the source of the breach.
3. The Australian Newspaper agreed to implement a range of procedures to prevent this information becoming known publicly prior to the resolution of the operation.
4. An agreement was entered into with the Australian Newspaper following consultation with all partner agencies, to ensure the story was not published prior to the investigation becoming overt.
5. The AFP and partner agencies involved were satisfied these procedures would protect the ongoing security of the investigation.
6. The timing of the operational resolution was not determined by the Australian Newspaper. This was an operational decision.
7. Copies of the Australian Newspaper were available in Melbourne prior to the execution of the search warrants.
8. AFP Acting Commissioner Tony Negus shares the concerns of Victorian Police Chief Commissioner Simon Overland in that officers were potentially placed at risk by the article being publicly available prior to the resolution of the operation.
9. The AFP has been advised by the Australian Newspaper that they are investigating reasons why the paper was publicly available prior to the agreed time frame.





**McKechnie, Nicole**

**From:** Sharpe, David [David.Sharpe@afp.gov.au]  
**Sent:** Saturday, 8 August 2009 12:04 PM  
**To:** McKechnie, Nicole  
**Subject:** FW: Comments re story [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Importance:** Low



Nicole

As discussed in previous email Maley was to write a story acknowledging the paper was on the streets at 1.30am. When I spoke to him he was completely off focus to what Whittacker told Peter Drennan he would have Maley write. I think his first thought was protect Aus and attack Simon for his public comments. I sent him the email below to at least have our views recorded. I reminded him that if the record wasn't set straight the AFP would be forced to do so publicly. The Aust have chosen to still deny the 1.30am event.

Maley confirmed he sent this email of concerns to Whittacker and Mitchell before writing the story to express my concerns. I think the comments Negus comments are a blatant attempt to place a wedge between AFP/Vicpol even though are concerns were addressed prior to the story being written. Tony is filthy at the story today and the way they have tried to play this even though it was only page 17 in the end.

Although we don't want this played out further in the media, the media watch response should set the record straight. Between the statement, our appearances at ACLEI this week and I suspect some debate in parliament, I think the records may get set straight. I hope.

Look forward to the opportunity to debriefing this with yourself and Kevin and perhaps developing some sort of protocol to protect us all in a similar event in future.

Did I mention I hate journalists.

DAVID SHARPE  
NATIONAL MEDIA COORDINATOR  
CHIEF OF STAFF PORTFOLIO  
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Tel +61(0) 2 62757100 Mob +61(0) 429929552  
www.afp.gov.au

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Sharpe, David  
**Sent:** Friday, 7 August 2009 2:06 PM  
**To:** 'maleyp@theaustralian.com.au'  
**Subject:** Comments re story [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Paul

As per our conversation

Paul

Im concerned about the story your intending to write tomorrow stemming from Op Neath this week. I know there have been a number of issues played out in the media over the past few days however a story singling out people for acknowledgement would not sit well accross the board. In fact it would likely create tension between agencies that would not be in the interests of future National Security operations similar to Neath. The AFP would like to see a fair and balanced report acknowledging all partners.

The simple facts are that it was a successful joint operation involving Vicpol, NSWpol, NSWCC, ASIO and AFP. The fact that all these agencies can work so well together to target issues of national security should be recognised publicly

The key issues for the AFP are:

1. The initial leak of information relating to a matter of national security
2. The agreement with the Aus to ensure the

9/08/2009



story was not printed which would have jeopardised the operation 3. The fact the paper hit the streets at 1.30am prior to the agreed time time which did cause concern for police about to execute warrants. Mr Overland and Mr Negus both share concerns in this regard. I understand your editor has suggested this was a mistake in procedures. We acknowledge the agreement and the extent the paper went to in the lead to the warrant executions however the fact the paper was on the streets remains of concern.

In general, the media have tried over the past few days to link the AFP and Aus as being in bed together and that the AFP use the Aus to leak. As you know this couldnt be further from the truth and you know the way I work in keeping everything tight (much to your frustration I know). However a couple of issues I would like to advise for consideration are listed below:

1. The relationship with Vicpol is very good and critical to the work we do particularly in the field of drugs and ntional Security.
2. The success of the Pendennis matter in Melbourne is evidence of the strength and commitment of our joint relationship 3. The successful result in Op Neath has been lost in all the post operational hype... at the end of the day it was a highly successful joint operation which should be acknowledged for the success. The joint partnership between AFP, Vicpol, NSWpol, ASIO and the NSW CC should be acknowledged. Without all partners working so closely we would not achieve results such as Pendennis Melb, Pendennis/Eden/Hammerly in Sydney and Neath in Melb.
4. Any story singling Tony Negus out for recognition or otherwise would draw away from the fact it was a joint operation and joint contribution by all partners. Mr Negus is far from the person who would want to be singled out for recognition with a story about him. Mr negus is the first to constantly acknowledges the partnerships and joint efforts. In fact if it wasnt for Mr Overland, his Executive and Vicpol members, NSWPol Commissioner, Excutive and police members, NSWCC and ASIO, we would not succeed in any operation of this nature.

Acknowledgement of all agencies, the success of the operation whilst noting the serious nature of the leak, and our joint efforts to id the source of the leak, works a good balance and may set all the records straight accross the board once and for all..

Happy to discuss further

<<http://awms2b.afp.le/outlook/afpcorporatesignature.gif>> DAVID SHARPE  
NATIONAL MEDIA COORDINATOR  
CHIEF OF STAFF PORTFOLIO

Tel +61(0) 2 62757100 Mob +61(0) 429929552 www.afp.gov.au <<http://www.afp.gov.au/>>

\*\*\*\*\*

WARNING

This email message and any attached files may contain information that is confidential and subject of legal privilege intended only for use by the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you are not the intended recipient or the person responsible for delivering the message to the intended recipient be advised that you have received this message in error and that any use, copying, circulation, forwarding, printing or publication of this message or attached files is strictly forbidden, as is the disclosure of the information contained therein. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete it from your inbox.

AFP Web site: <http://www.afp.gov.au>

\*\*\*\*\*