



More Police Trained to Shut Down Illegal Drug Labs

Friday 30th October 2009

Minister for Police Michael Daley today congratulated 29 NSW Police Drug Squad officers, Tactical Response Specialists and Forensic Scientists on completing expert training on how to dismantle highly dangerous illegal drug labs.

Mr Daley was on site to learn more about the six-day **Clandestine Laboratory and Safety Certification Course**, led by the NSW Police Drug Squad - the only course of its kind in Australia.

Eleven officers from interstate and New Zealand also completed the course.

“The NSW Police Force is leading the way when it comes to fighting drug crime and the fact that our Police squads are the ones training other jurisdictions is evidence of this,” he said.

“NSW Police Drug Squad is also doing an excellent job in the field, having shut down 62 illegal backyard drug labs already this year, including five this week. This represents seven labs more than for the whole of 2008.

“This year, Police have seized 45.8 kg of amphetamines with a street value of around \$23 million.

“Just this week, Police seized more than four kilograms of the deadly drug “ice” following fire at a house in Prestons that was suspected of housing a clan lab.

“Not only are these illicit drugs deadly in the hands of party goers and drug addicts – they’re also a very serious danger for the Police who have to clean these illegal labs up.

“The Drug Squad can’t simply walk into these houses and pack up them up – it’s a complex operation and one that can take days.

“The fact that our Police have to do a six-day course to learn how to properly dispose of these labs shows just how toxic these illicit street drugs are,” said Mr Daley.

Detective Superintendent Nick Bingham, commander of the NSW Police Drug Squad, said the course is a compulsory requirement for all Drug Squad personnel.

“This is a practical clan lab course in which police and chemists learn how to keep themselves safe when attending toxic crime scenes,” Det Supt Bingham said.

“These labs are deadly. And the crooks themselves can be very dangerous. Due to what they do, they could be suffering psychosis from exposure to these drugs and the lethal environments they “work” in.

“There’s a saying we have in the Drug Squad – that if the crook doesn’t hurt you the lab crime scenes will.”

“Yesterday’s raid in Prestons is a clear indication of why this course is vital to the safety of our police,” Det Supt Bingham said.

“While our chemical operations detectives are well versed in the dangers of drug labs, police attending something like a fire may not know what they are walking into and can be seriously injured.”

Topics delivered during the course included chemical diversion, methods of manufacture, safety and investigative procedures, legislation and the use of personal protective equipment.

“The dangers created by these toxic and poisonous lab sites are present long after the criminals have left,” said Det Supt Bingham.

“In this course we also offer guidelines on site remediation and the interaction with local councils,” he said.