AIC CONFERENCE 2026

transnational serious and organised crime

Program

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Timetable

Day one

8:00 – 9:00

Registration

9:00 – 9:30

Welcome to Country

Aunty Violet Sheridan, Senior Ngunnawal Elder

Opening remarks

Heather Cook, Australian Institute of Criminology and Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission

9:30 – 10:30

Keynote presentation
Human trafficking and exploitation: Complexities, concentrations and challenges

Associate Professor Ella Cockbain, University College London

10:30 – 11:00

Morning tea

11:00 – 12:30

Australian Government
Illicit Tobacco and
E-cigarette Commissioner

Panel session 1

Session sponsored by the Illicit Tobacco and E-cigarette Commissioner
Understanding the rise of the illicit tobacco market

1. **Illicit tobacco and e-cigarette overview**
   Alex O'Rourke, Home Affairs

2. **Through the smoke: Exploring drivers and deterrents of illicit tobacco use to inform public policy**
   Dr Cheneal Puljević, University of Queensland

3. **Australia's illicit nicotine market: Trends and insights**
   Dr James Martin, Deakin University

12:30 – 13:30

Lunch

13:30 – 15:00

Panel session 2

Follow the money: Preventing money laundering to disrupt organised crime

4. **The conflicting objectives of anti-money laundering regulation**
   Dr Anton Moiseienko, Australian National University

5. **Financial crime and new technology: The complex case of NFTs**
   Professor Saskia Hufnagel, University of Sydney
   Professor Colin King, University of Sydney

6. **The billion dollar blind spot: Organised crime and trade-based money laundering**
   Dr Jamie Ferrill, Charles Sturt University

15:00 – 15:30

Afternoon tea

15:30 – 17:00

Panel session 3

Intersecting crimes: The case of scam centres in South-East Asia

7. **Understanding the development of scam centres in South-East Asia**
   Ryan Winch, Regional Support Office on the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime

8. **Women's experiences of forced criminality in South-East Asia's cyber-scam centres**
   Dr Siobhan Lawler, Australian Institute of Criminology

9. **Policing of forced criminality in the South-East Asian region: Challenges and responses**
   Dr Hai Luong, Griffith University

17:00

Conclude

Day two

8:00 – 9:30

Registration

9:30 – 10:30

Keynote presentation
Criminal careers of organised crime offenders

Professor Edward Kleemans, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

10:30 – 11:00

Morning tea

11:00 – 12:30

Panel session 4

Tackling the enablers of organised crime

10. **'If you get into the business, you have to arm up': The possession, display and discharge of firearms by members of organised criminal groups**

    Professor David Bright, Deakin University

11. **Simulating network disruption: Testing interventions on drug trafficking networks**

    Professor Chad Whelan, Deakin University

12. **When stability is not safety: The hidden impact of organised crime group cooperation in UK drug markets**

    Dr Andrea Giovannetti, Australian Catholic University

12:30 – 13:30

Lunch

13:30 – 15:00

Panel session 5

Measuring trafficking in illicit commodities

13. **The serious and organised nature of wildlife and environmental crime in Australia**
    Professor Phill Cassey, University of Adelaide

14. **International perspectives of crime script analysis applied to wildlife crime**
    Margo van Felius, Griffith University

15. **Wastewater analysis: Operational and policy applications**
    Amber Migus, Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission

15:00 – 15:30

Afternoon tea

15:30 – 17:00

Panel session 6

Understanding organised crime harms

16. **Money laundering and the harm from organised crime**
    Anthony Morgan, Australian Institute of Criminology

17. **The economic and social costs of illicit drugs to Australian communities**
    Dr Alexandra Voce, Australian Institute of Criminology

18. **Transnational serious and organised crime … *What now?***
    Chris Davey, Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission

17:00

Conclude

Presentation details

Opening remarks

Heather Cook, Australian Institute of Criminology and Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission

About the speaker

Heather Cook was appointed Director of the Australian Institute of Criminology and CEO of the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission in January 2024. She is a career intelligence professional with more than 36 years of experience. Prior to taking up her current roles, Heather was Deputy Director-General of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), where she spent seven years leading the delivery of its intelligence mission and supporting capabilities. She has worked across a broad range of operational, analytical and strategy areas, as well as working at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet as a senior policy adviser in the International Division.

Heather has enjoyed supporting the broader work of the national security community, including as a member of the Distinguished Advisors panel at the Australian National University's National Security College, where she was a guest presenter and mentored emerging leaders on the college's Executive Development programs. Heather has a strong interest in corporate governance and has served as a Company Director in the private sector.

Keynote presentation

Human trafficking and exploitation: Complexities, concentrations and challenges

Associate Professor Ella Cockbain, University College London

In this presentation, I will focus on some of trafficking's key complexities, concentrations in harms, and challenges for analysis and intervention. Human trafficking and 'modern slavery' are umbrella constructs that encompass a wide and disparate set of harms. Trying to address them in the aggregate risks obscuring important differences in victimisation, offending, enabling factors, and barriers to intervention. Drawing on examples from an extensive program of empirical research, I argue for the importance of a more disaggregated approach and close attention to contextual specificities. I also stress the need to interrogate stereotypes and assumptions, improve data, and address possible backfire effects in interventions. Despite major investment in anti-trafficking activities globally, robust evaluations are astonishingly rare and a growing body of evidence points to the collateral damages various countermeasures can cause. With that in mind, I also highlight opportunities and imperatives for building a stronger, more nuanced evidence base that better incorporates the needs and voices of affected populations.

About the speaker

Ella Cockbain is Professor of Human Trafficking and Exploitation at University College London (UCL) and a Visiting Research Fellow at Leiden University, the Netherlands. She leads UCL's Research Group on Human Trafficking, Smuggling and Exploitation and is committed to encouraging more nuanced, evidence-informed and ethical responses to these complex social issues. She has worked with a wide range of stakeholders across civil society, public sector and private sector organisations. Recent publications include her latest book *Evaluating anti-trafficking interventions: Critical reflections and lessons from the field* (UCL Press, with co-editors Aiden Sidebottom and Sheldon X Zhang) and a special issue on the new geographies of organised crime for *Criminology & Criminal Justice* (with co-editors Felia Allum and Patricio Estévez-Soto). She is the co-lead (with Chris Pósch) of a major new mixed-methods study into the scale and nature of labour market exploitation in the United Kingdom, with a particular focus on experiences of people in precarious work. Commissioned by the Director of Labour Market Enforcement, it was funded by the UK's Department for Business and Trade and the Economic and Social Research Council to the value of roughly £860,000 (A$1.8 million) and is due to publish in 2026.

Panel session 1
Understanding the rise of the illicit tobacco market

Illicit tobacco and e-cigarette overview

Alex O'Rourke, Home Affairs

Illicit tobacco and e-cigarettes represent a threat to Australia's public health, community safety, and economy. These illegal markets undermine hard-won gains in reducing smoking rates, expose consumers to unregulated products, and fuel organised crime. Drawing on insights from the ITEC Commissioner's Report 2024-25, this presentation provides an overview of the current illicit market landscape and its impacts. It highlights that there is no single solution to addressing the illicit market; instead, a cross-portfolio and cross-jurisdictional approach is being taken across the ecosystem, from supply (growth through to retail) to demand.

About the speaker

Alex O'Rourke is Assistant Secretary, Governance, Strategy and Reporting within the Home Affairs Portfolio. A senior executive with over 20 years' experience across the Australian Public Service and the private sector, Alex supports the Illicit Tobacco and E-cigarette Commissioner's efforts to drive a national approach to combat the threat of illicit tobacco and e-cigarettes. She has held senior leadership roles in Home Affairs across cyber policy, national security, border management and strategic coordination, and was a secondee to the Attorney-General's Department and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Through the smoke: Exploring drivers and deterrents of illicit tobacco use to inform public policy

Dr Cheneal Puljević, University of Queensland

The illicit tobacco market is a growing policing and crime issue in Australia, yet there is limited research exploring which factors drive consumers' decisions to purchase illicitly traded tobacco products. This presentation will outline findings from interviews with 50 illicit tobacco consumers from across Australia. Interviews explored what factors drive their demand for illicitly traded tobacco products (eg price, product preferences, social acceptability), and what factors may deter them from purchasing these products in the future. The presentation will conclude with policy recommendations to address this growing crime issue of national importance.

About the speaker

Dr Cheneal Puljević is an ARC DECRA Senior Research Fellow at the NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence on Achieving the Tobacco Endgame at the School of Public Health at the University of Queensland. Her current research focuses on the drivers and deterrents of illicit tobacco use. She is also a core research team member for the Global Drug Survey, an Associate Editor for the *International Journal of Drug Policy*, a Deputy Editor for *Drug and Alcohol Review*, and a volunteer (and former Queensland Research Lead) for The Loop Australia.

Australia's illicit nicotine market: Trends and insights

Dr James Martin, Deakin University

In recent years the illicit nicotine market has emerged as one of the most significant organised crime problems in Australia. This market encompasses manufactured cigarettes, roll-your-own tobacco (or 'chop-chop'), vapes, and newer products such as nicotine pouches. Over the past decade the illicit nicotine market has expanded substantially and, according to a recent assessment by the Australian Institute of Criminology, now represents the second largest illicit drug market in the country. Supply has been driven largely by organised crime and accompanied by widespread systemic violence, including multiple homicides and more than 250 arson attacks nationwide since the beginning of 2023.

This presentation reports findings from a national survey of nicotine users, providing the most detailed account to date of the size, value, distribution and consumer profile of the illicit nicotine market in Australia. It also examines the structural drivers underpinning demand, considers the limits and unintended consequences of supply-reduction strategies, and reflects on the likely trajectories of the market under current regulatory and enforcement settings.

About the speaker

Dr James Martin is a criminologist and Director of the Bachelor of Criminology at Deakin University. He is recognised internationally for his research on illicit markets and cybercrime, and his recent work has centred on the Australian nicotine market. He currently leads a major project for the Illicit Tobacco and E-Cigarette Commissioner that investigates consumer behaviours, demographic patterns, and the broader dynamics of illicit nicotine use in Australia.

Panel session 2
Follow the money: Preventing money laundering to disrupt organised crime

The conflicting objectives of anti-money laundering regulation

Dr Anton Moiseienko, Australian National University

There are multiple well-known problems engendered by anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing (AML/CTF) rules, including the propensity of regulated businesses to 'derisk' higher-risk customers and over-report suspicious activities. The existence of the AML/CTF regime is often presented as a consequence of well-meaning but ill-conceived attempts to 'do something' about financial crime, or 'deputise' regulated businesses with law enforcement functions.

My recent research, published in *Doing business with criminals* (Cambridge University Press, 2025) demonstrates that these critiques fail to capture the real essence of the challenges presented by the AML/CTF regime. The image of hasty governmental reaction to quell a 'moral panic' about money launderers or terrorist financiers is far from the truth.

The real problem of AML/CTF regulation is its pursuit of multiple conflicting objectives, including the tension between excluding suspected criminals from the legitimate economy while surveilling their financial entanglements with it. Balancing these considerations requires regulated businesses to make judgement calls that should be dictated by law enforcement objectives rather than private sector compliance calculus. This research presents several solutions to the challenge of better aligning private sector compliance efforts with law enforcement objectives, from reform at the international level to improved domestic practices.

About the speaker

Anton Moiseienko is a Senior Lecturer and Research Director at the Australian National University Law School. His work focuses on financial crime, including money laundering, terrorist financing and proliferation financing, and the legal and policy aspects of economic sanctions.

He is the author of *Doing business with criminals*, a wide-ranging account of the objectives and history of financial crime rules published by Cambridge University Press in 2025, and Corruption and targeted sanctions, a monograph on the legal and policy implications of Magnitsky sanctions published by Brill in 2019. He has also co-edited four books on transnational crime.

Anton's articles or essays have appeared in leading journals, including the *Modern Law Review*, *American Journal of International Law*, *Criminal Law Review*, *European Journal of International Law*, *German Law Journal*, *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* and *Leiden Journal of International Law*.

His experience includes advising the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative, a joint program of the World Bank and UN Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as consulting for government-funded and private sector financial crime projects worldwide.

Financial crime and new technology: The complex case of NFTs

Professor Saskia Hufnagel, University of Sydney

Professor Colin King, University of Sydney

Since the record-breaking sale of Beeple's *Everydays: The first 5000 days*, most people in the art market know about NFTs (non-fungible tokens). Everydays achieved a record sales price of US$69m in March 2021 and was the first 'purely' digital artwork sold by Christie's Auction House. This was the third highest price ever paid for a single work of a living artist after Jeff Koons and David Hockney. The NFT 'boom' happened in 2021. While the traditional art market also skyrocketed, specifically since the 1980s, the NFT rise in prices was much faster. What took the art market decades took NFTs merely months. While the total sales value was an estimated US$12m in December 2020, it reached $340m by February 2021. While the market in NFTs is by now much lower in value, it is still an attractive target for financial crimes. For example in the United Kingdom, HM Treasury has stressed: 'There are a number of risks associated with the NFT market including fraud, market manipulation and money laundering.' Similar concerns have been echoed by the Financial Action Task Force and others. This presentation considers the applicability of criminal law to NFT-related financial crime, specifically looking at theft and fraud, market offences and money laundering.

About the speakers

Saskia Hufnagel is a Professor at the University of Sydney Law School and Co-Director of the Sydney Institute of Criminology. Her research concerns global law enforcement cooperation, transnational and comparative criminal justice and art crime. Her particular interests are international and regional legal patterns of cross-border policing as well as the detection, investigation and prosecution of art crimes in the United Kingdom, Germany and Australia. Saskia is a qualified German legal professional and accredited specialist in criminal law.

Colin King is a Professor at the University of Sydney Law School, where he teaches and researches in evidence and financial crime, and is a Senior Associate Research Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, University of London. Prior to arriving in Australia, he worked at universities in Leeds, Manchester, Sussex and London (IALS). Colin is Editor-in-Chief of *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*.

The billion dollar blind spot: Organised crime and trade-based money laundering

Dr Jamie Ferrill, Charles Sturt University

Trade-based money laundering represents one of the most under-detected and under-researched methods used by transnational serious organised crime (TSOC) groups to launder criminal proceeds. Conservative estimates suggest billions of dollars flow through these schemes globally each year. This presentation exposes how organised crime syndicates are weaponising legitimate international trade to disguise drug and human trafficking profits, proceeds of corruption, and other illicit funds while systematically undermining Australia's economic security. Drawing on recent cases, the presentation will reveal the evolving tactics employed by TSOC groups and demonstrate how criminals abuse invoice fraud, shell company networks, and correspondent banking relationships to transform dirty money into seemingly legitimate business transactions. Critical findings expose dangerous gaps in Australia's regulatory architecture: fragmented intelligence sharing between customs and financial crime agencies, inadequate scrutiny of beneficial ownership in trade finance, and limited capacity to detect sophisticated value manipulation schemes. These vulnerabilities not only facilitate financial crimes but also provide pathways for organised crime syndicates to infiltrate our economy. The presentation will provide policy recommendations to strengthen Australia's defences against this growing threat while protecting our position as a trusted trading partner in the global economy.

About the speaker

Dr Jamie Ferrill is a Senior Lecturer in Financial Crime Studies at the Australian Graduate School of Policing and Security, Charles Sturt University. She has nearly a decade of law enforcement experience, having worked for the Canadian federal government prior to commencing an academic career. Jamie researches threats to national and economic security; her current focus is on the nexus of money laundering with border governance, transnational cooperation and collaboration, and organisational processes. Jamie has been a visiting fellow at the Academy of International Affairs North-Rhine Westphalia (Germany) and the Border Policy Research Institute (Western Washington University, USA), and she is a fellow of the Financial Integrity Hub (Macquarie University, Australia), Borders in Globalization (University of Victoria, Canada) and the Institute of Intergovernmental Relations (Queen's University, Canada).

Panel session 3
Intersecting crimes: The case of scam centres in South-East Asia

Understanding the development of scam centres in South-East Asia

Ryan Winch, Regional Support Office of the Bali Process

Cyber-scam centres have emerged as one of the most complex and rapidly expanding forms of transnational organised crime in the Asia-Pacific, blending large-scale fraud, trafficking in persons for forced criminality, and a growing range of other crime types. Drawing on research from the Regional Support Office of the Bali Process (RSO), this presentation will provide a situational overview of these operations, look into evolving trafficking recruitment trends and discuss the illicit financial flows that sustain them. It will explore how cyber-scam centres proliferated during COVID-19 and continue to adapt through online platforms and social media, expanding transnational organised crime networks, and the use of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and satellite internet. It will also outline practical recommendations to strengthen financial oversight, enhance cross-border information sharing, and building regional resilience to emerging forms of technology-facilitated trafficking in persons and people smuggling.

About the speaker

Ryan Winch is Programme Manager for Transnational Crime and Technology at the Regional Support Office of the Bali Process, where he leads the RSO's work countering cyber-scam centres and technology-facilitated trafficking and people smuggling. He has previously worked with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime in Myanmar and Thailand, working to address transnational crime and strengthen criminal justice capacity. He has also worked with the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Central African Republic and as a Programme Coordinator with CIVICUS's Data for Action Program.

Women's experiences of forced criminality in South-East Asia's cyber-scam centres

Dr Siobhan Lawler, Australian Institute of Criminology

Cyber-scam centres have become major sites of trafficking in persons and exploitation across South-East Asia, with forced criminality in this context now a significant human rights crisis. Globally, women and girls are disproportionately affected by trafficking, with evidence highlighting they often occupy dual roles as victim-survivors and perpetrators. However, the role of gender in shaping pathways into, and experiences of, exploitation in cyber-scam centres has not been examined. This study examined women and girls' experiences of trafficking for forced criminality in cyber-scam centres through qualitative consultations with 86 regional stakeholders and in-depth interviews with three victim-survivors.

Women and girls trafficked into scam centres come from diverse nationalities and are commonly recruited through personal networks, including friends, family, acquaintances and romantic partners. Their exploitation is dynamic and evolving: while most are forced into online scamming, many also face sexual exploitation, either concurrently or at another stage of their exploitation.

Addressing trafficking in persons in cyber-scam centres requires gender-responsive approaches that recognise the compounded harms women face. Key implications include targeted prevention, improved victim identification, stronger legislative definitions, and enhanced collaboration between non-government organisations, governments and police.

About the speaker

Dr Siobhan Lawler is a Principal Research Analyst at the Australian Institute of Criminology, where she leads a program of research on elder abuse perpetration. Siobhan holds a PhD in Medicine from the University of Sydney and a Bachelor of Psychological Science and Criminology (Honours) from the University of New South Wales. Siobhan has previously held research positions at the Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use (University of Sydney) and the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (UNSW). Her research areas of interest include violence prevention, program design and evaluation, sentencing and restorative justice.

Policing of forced criminality in the South-East Asian region: Challenges and responses

Dr Hai Luong, Griffith University

The rapid growth of online casinos and digital gaming in South-East Asia has raised serious concerns among law enforcement, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. This expansion has increased human exploitation, gambling options, and payment methods, especially cryptocurrencies, enabling transnational organised crime. Criminal groups use these platforms for illegal activities such as human trafficking, cyber fraud and money laundering. A mixed-methods study, including case studies, interviews with Vietnamese officials, and open-source intelligence analysis, highlights complex networks where victims are forced to engage in cybercrimes like cryptocurrency fraud, romance fraud, and illegal gambling—operations that demand advanced investigative and forensic skills. Additionally, the laundering of illegal profits through international financial systems, legitimate businesses and digital assets underscores the need for better cross-border cooperation, technological upgrades and stricter regulatory controls. As criminal groups reinvest profits into emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, law enforcement must adapt swiftly to identify, prevent and dismantle these growing threats. This analysis stresses the vital role of policing in protecting vulnerable communities, maintaining digital financial integrity, and safeguarding regional security amid the complex interaction of crime, technology and economic exploitation.

About the speaker

Dr Hai Thanh Luong is a criminology lecturer at Griffith University's School of Criminology and Criminal Justice. He also serves as a senior researcher and chairs the Asian Drug Crime Research Committee at the Institute for Asian Crime and Security in the United States. Dr Luong holds a Bachelor of Law (Criminal Investigation) and has spent 20 years researching and teaching at police institutions across mainland South-East Asia, especially Vietnam. His areas of interest include cybercrime, policing related to cybercrime and cybersecurity, drug trafficking, migrant smuggling, human trafficking, and police training. As a member of the Asian Regional Law Enforcement Management Program, funded by the Australian Federal Police and hosted by the Ministry of Public Security of Vietnam and RMIT Hanoi, he has contributed to establishing a strong link among law enforcement agencies, policymakers and academia across Asian nations to prevent and tackle serious and transnational crimes since 2005. Recently, he presented and collaborated closely with many international and regional organisations, including the Australia-Mekong Partnership and the US–Mekong Dialogue against Transnational Crimes, the UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, Thailand), ASEANPOL and the AFP. In 2020, he was honoured with the Young Asian Criminologists Award from the Asian Criminological Society.

Keynote presentation

Criminal careers of organised crime offenders

Professor Edward Kleemans, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Despite the fact that the media and law enforcement often depict organised crime as Mafia-type groups involved in Mafia-type activities (in particular, extortion and racketeering), empirical research clearly shows a different picture. Organised crime is embedded in social relationships and offenders collaborate in criminal networks. Based on extensive empirical research, this keynote lecture will elaborate upon the social embeddedness of organised crime, criminal networks and criminal careers. What do we know about how offenders collaborate and how criminal careers in organised crime develop? And what does this mean for law enforcement and crime prevention?

About the speaker

Edward R Kleemans is Full Professor at the Department of Criminology, Faculty of Law, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands (Serious and Organized Crime and Criminal Justice). His research focuses on organised crime, including cybercrime, drug trafficking, human smuggling, human trafficking, fraud and money laundering, social organisation, embeddedness, and the interaction between offenders and the criminal justice system (including policing issues). He started and coordinated the Dutch Organised Crime Monitor, a systematic, continuing research program of WODC, Erasmus University Rotterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam into the nature of organised crime in the Netherlands, based upon intensive analysis of large-scale police investigations. The Dutch Organised Crime Monitor is considered a landmark study in the field of serious and organised crime. He was previously Vice-Dean and Director of Research (2017–2023) and Dean (ad interim) of the Faculty of Law, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam; and Head of the Crime, Law Enforcement and Sanctions Research Department of the Research and Documentation Centre (WODC), Ministry of Security and Justice, The Netherlands (2009–2013).

Panel session 4
Tackling the enablers of organised crime

'If you get into the business, you have to arm up': The possession, display and discharge of firearms by members of organised criminal groups

Professor David Bright, Deakin University

In this presentation, I examine the use of illicit firearms as a component of organised criminal activities and by members of organised criminal groups. In these contexts, 'use of firearms' includes carrying, displaying and discharging guns for instrumental reasons during a crime or as a symbolic gesture such as to prove one's mettle to peers.

The presentation draws from 75 in-depth interviews with prisoners convicted of firearm-related crime in Australia and focuses specifically on illicit firearms markets and organised criminal groups. I explore the use of guns by members of organised criminal groups and in the commission of organised crime type offences such as dealing and trafficking in illicit drugs.

Drawing on interviews, a range of themes are explored, including preferences for specific types of firearms, the use of firearms to enhance status and power, the use of firearms for protection in illicit drug markets, firearms as a tool to steal drugs and money from drug dealers, and the use of firearms in conflicts between organised criminal groups. I discuss the implications of our results for policy and practice.

About the speaker

Professor David Bright is a criminologist and forensic psychologist. His research interests include criminal networks, organised crime and illicit markets (eg drugs, tobacco, firearms). He is Director of the Deakin Covert Networks Lab, which conducts groundbreaking research using social network analysis and related approaches to study organised criminal groups and terrorist groups. He is an internationally recognised expert in the use of social network analysis and related approaches to study crime and offenders. He has developed key partnerships with law enforcement agencies across Australia and internationally and provides training to police and intelligence analysts on the use of social network analysis in operational contexts. Professor Bright has been Chief Investigator on seven consecutive Australian Research Council funded projects in addition to projects funded by industry and government. His most recent book, published by Oxford University Press in 2025, is titled *Illicit firearms markets and organised crime: Global, regional and local perspectives*. The book explores international intersections between illicit firearms markets and the activities of organised criminal groups.

Simulating network disruption: Testing interventions on drug trafficking networks

Professor Chad Whelan, Deakin University

Organised criminal groups are best conceptualised as networks. Social network analysis has been used extensively by researchers to scrutinise the structure of organised criminal groups and identify key actors based on network structure. An extension of these analytical methods is the use of social network analysis to inform effective strategies to disrupt these networks. This study examines the effectiveness of different network disruption strategies applied to drug trafficking organisations through simulated interventions on empirically grounded social networks. Using eight real-world drug trafficking networks, exponential random graph models were fitted to capture each network's structural properties and generate 1,000 simulated networks per case. Several disruption strategies were tested on simulated networks, including those targeting degree, betweenness and eigenvector (PageRank) centralities, as well as identifying and removing members of cut sets and network backbones. The study extends existing research by moving beyond single case studies and by testing both novel disruption strategies and metrics of efficacy.

About the speaker

Chad Whelan is Professor of Criminology in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and Deputy Director, Deakin Cyber Research and Innovation Centre, Deakin University. He conducts research on organised crime, cybercrime and cybersecurity, and multi-agency responses to such problems across organisational boundaries and professional disciplines. Much of his research adopts a network perspective. He has received over $5 million in funding from various sources, nationally and internationally, including the Australian Research Council, Criminology Research Advisory Council, Cyber Security Cooperative Research Centre, Data to Decisions Cooperative Research Centre, National Intelligence and Discovery Research Grants, Office of the eSafety Commissioner, and direct consultancies. His research has appeared in more than 50 publications in leading outlets addressing these and related topics. Recent publications have appeared in *Deviant Behavior, Global Crime, Journal of Criminology, Police Practice and Research,* and *Social Networks*.

When stability is not safety: The hidden impact of organised crime group cooperation in UK drug markets

Dr Andrea Giovannetti, Australian Catholic University

In many cities around the world, drug markets and violence often coexist. Yet the link between the amount of drug dealing and the level of violence is inconsistent: in some places they rise together, in others they do not. We suggest that the dynamics between organised crime groups (OCGs) help explain this puzzle. When multiple groups potentially compete for the same market, conflict can escalate quickly. To mitigate risks and protect business, OCGs may resort to cooperation. Our theory predicts that when cooperation breaks down, drug business will collapse and violence will increase.

We test this idea using a unique dataset covering all OCG-related offences in a large UK region. We show that, net of urban and socio-demographic factors, a one percent increase in inter-OCG cooperation is simultaneously associated with higher future levels of drug dealing and lower future violence at the monthly level. Our results highlight how OCG cooperation stabilises illicit markets while reducing violence, providing new insights into the governance of criminal economies and measurable conditions under which violence can emerge.

About the speaker

Dr Andrea Giovannetti is Assistant Professor of Economics at the Australian Catholic University and a member of the Violence Research Centre at the Institute of Criminology of the University of Cambridge, where he previously held a Marie Curie Fellowship. His research on urban organised crime and contemporary extremism combines econometrics and machine-driven methods to support policymakers and security agencies with actionable insights on complex social threats.

As Co-Director of the Tackling Hate Lab at Deakin University and as principal investigator on projects sponsored by counter-terrorism divisions and police forces in both the United Kingdom and Australia, Dr Giovannetti applies an evidence-based approach to identify the drivers of community risks emerging from complex multi-agent dynamics. In particular, his current work focuses on the design and deployment of large-scale experiments and computational simulations to examine mechanisms of propagation and containment of violence, extremism and online hate.

Panel session 5
Measuring trafficking in illicit commodities

The serious and organised nature of wildlife and environmental crime in Australia

Professor Phill Cassey, University of Adelaide

Wildlife and environment crime (WEC) is a global issue threatening biodiversity, environmental security and human wellbeing. Its occurrence is growing at a rate two to three times faster than the global economy, positioning it as the fourth largest transnational organised crime sector in the world. In Australia, types of wildlife and environmental crime include but are not limited to: trafficking and trade of native species, unlawful removal of habitat and species, lethal control, and illegal harvest. The potential impacts of WEC in Australia are as diverse as the illegal acts themselves, and the extent of these crimes in Australia, as well as their drivers and impacts, is poorly understood. While large crime syndicates are often implicated in WEC, the range of perpetrators also spans small-scale, individual and opportunistic contributors, as well as corporations and smaller criminal networks. Understanding what drives offenders to commit such acts can assist in minimising the impacts of WEC through targeted compliance and law enforcement. Here, I will discuss the scale and extent of WEC, including the allocation of resources for combatting and preventing these crimes.

About the speaker

Professor Phill Cassey is the Director of the Wildlife Crime Research Hub at the University of Adelaide. He is an inaugural Australian Research Council Industry Laureate Fellow, working to combat wildlife crime and prevent environmental harm. As a global change biologist, he has worked internationally in wildlife conservation for 20+ years and is globally recognised as an expert in environmental biosecurity and researching the illegal wildlife trade. In 2019 he was named an Australian research leader in life and environmental sciences. Phill is highly experienced at leading multiple research teams and driving a systemic culture of excellence, creativity, innovation and inclusiveness. Under his leadership the Wildlife Crime Research Hub is co-delivering the tools, stewardship and training required to secure Australia's environmental assets and natural capital from current and future threats.

International perspectives of crime script analysis applied to wildlife crime

Margo van Felius, Griffith University

This presentation explores the application of crime script analysis to wildlife crime, with a focus on offences involving fauna such as poaching, illegal trade, and trafficking of animals. Drawing on a growing body of interdisciplinary research, this presentation aims to systematically review and evaluate how crime script analysis has been applied to wildlife crime, identify methodological limitations and synthesise prevention and control recommendations to strengthen the use of situational crime prevention to disrupt this form of transnational organised crime. The review identifies how crime script analysis has been used so far to unpack the procedural and situational aspects of wildlife crime across different stages—preparation, execution and post-offence. While crime script analysis proves valuable in advancing prevention strategies and enforcement practices, the review notes limitations, including data scarcity and a bias towards high-profile animal species. The review concludes by recommending a more systematic and context-sensitive approach to crime script analysis to better support policy development and coordinated, multi-agency responses to wildlife crime.

About the speaker

Dr Margo van Felius is a Lecturer in Criminology in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University. Her PhD thesis, on improving the uptake of multi-agency and third-party policing partnerships, received the Academic Award of Excellence. She previously worked as a detective in the Queensland Police Service, specialising in child protection, organised crime and economic crime.

Wastewater analysis: Operational and policy applications

Amber Migus, Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission

The presentation will deliver examples of ways in which wastewater analysis, in addition to being a regular and reliable source of data, is informing operational and resource-allocation decisions, monitoring the effectiveness of existing responses to drug markets and contributing to the achievement of broader Australian Government policy objectives.

About the speaker

Amber Migus is a Principal Specialist Drugs at the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC). Amber has tertiary qualifications in psychology, management, policing and forensics and worked in law enforcement and intelligence for nearly three decades. Her work at the ACIC includes a focus on drug data, particularly the National Wastewater Drug Monitoring Program and Illicit Drug Data Report.

Panel session 6
Understanding organised crime harms

Money laundering and the harm from organised crime

Anthony Morgan, Australian Institute of Criminology

Money laundering is clearly an important enabler of organised crime, but it has proven difficult to quantify the relationship between the two. This presentation will outline the findings from research into the effect of money laundering on the harm associated with organised crime. We used linked data from the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission on organised crime groups known to Australian law enforcement, the recorded criminal histories of group members, and suspicious matter reports made to AUSTRAC. We showed that an increase in the amount of money laundered increased the probability of organised crime and the amount of crime-related harm to the community. The increase in money laundering preceded the increase in crime-related harm, meaning the harm was likely due to the reinvestment of illicit funds in future criminal enterprises. We concluded that reducing the amount of money laundered by organised crime groups could limit their ability to engage in serious criminal offending—and we used these findings to demonstrate the potential benefit of tighter regulatory controls on illicit drug trafficking. This presentation will offer new insights into the laundering of illicit funds by serious and organised crime groups, the importance of financial intelligence, and the potential benefits of access to large, linked intelligence datasets for applied organised crime research.

About the speaker

Anthony Morgan is the Research Manager of the Australian Institute of Criminology's Serious and Organised Crime, Cybercrime and Radicalisation Research Program. Committed to promoting evidence-based policy, Anthony has spent nearly two decades working closely with law enforcement and policymakers to conduct rigorous, applied and policy-relevant empirical criminological research. He developed the Serious and Organised Crime Research Laboratory as a leading centre in Australian applied organised crime research with partnerships with law enforcement and world-leading academics, a national and international footprint, and several Australian-first studies. His recent research has spanned the areas of criminal careers of organised crime offenders, crime by outlaw motorcycle gangs, money laundering and organised crime, the human factor in cybercrime and vulnerability to radicalisation.

The economic and social costs of illicit drugs to Australian communities

Dr Alexandra Voce, Australian Institute of Criminology

According to the AIC's research into the costs of serious and organised crime to the Australian economy, illicit drug trafficking is consistently the most costly crime type. In 2023–24, illicit drugs accounted for over 40 percent of the billions in direct costs of serious and organised crime to Australia. This includes the billions of dollars that Australians spend on illicit drugs, health care and treatment costs and the lost productivity of people who use drugs. Further, a significant proportion of conventional crime occurs as a direct or indirect consequence of the illicit drug trade. In this presentation, I review findings on the cost of the illicit drug market, including changes over time and jurisdictional differences. I explore insights into the dynamics of illicit drug markets and resulting social and economic costs. In doing so, this presentation highlights the importance of supply reduction strategies by law enforcement and government, alongside demand and harm reduction initiatives.

About the speaker

Dr Alexandra Voce is an Acting Principal Research Analyst in the AIC's Serious and Organised crime, Cybercrime and Radicalisation Research Program. Alexandra leads the program of work on transnational serious and organised crime, including the annual series of reports estimating the cost of serious and organised crime to Australia. Alexandra has expertise in illicit drug trafficking and other markets for illicit commodities, such as illicit tobacco, firearms and child sexual abuse material. Alexandra also has expertise in money laundering, corruption, homicide, violent crime, conspiratorial thinking and national security threats such as espionage and sabotage. Alexandra has a PhD in Psychology, with her doctorate research focusing on the link between illicit drug use and mental health.

Transnational serious and organised crime … *What now?*

Chris Davey, Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission

In this presentation, I will draw on a range of contemporary examples to illustrate and explore some of the leading trends and drivers that are shaping transnational serious and organised crime with a view to highlighting the likely future shape and scale of this priority national threat.

About the speaker

Chris Davey has 31 years of experience across the Australian National Intelligence Community working on criminal, defence and national security targets. His roles have included criminal profiling, counter terrorism and counter espionage. He is an alumnus of the Australian and New Zealand School of Government and holds an Executive Masters of Public Administration (with Merit) from the Australian National University. He is also the Head of Profession for intelligence analysis in Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission. He is frequently invited to speak to a range of conferences with national and international audiences on national security, law enforcement and serious organised crime trends and developments. His passion is to help shape and develop Australia's next generation of national security leaders in an increasingly contested and complex world.