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TRANSCRIPT OF PODCAST

WORK WITH PURPOSE

EPISODE 9

REECE KERSHAW APM – Commissioner, Australian Federal Police

MICHAEL OUTRAM APM – Commissioner, Australian Border Force

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DAVID PEMBROKE: Hello, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to Work with Purpose, a podcast about the Australian Public Service. My name's David Pembroke. Thanks for joining me. Before we begin today's podcast, I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today, the Ngunnawal people, and pay my respects to their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of our city and region.

We are on the road once more today with Studio 19 squeezing into Studio 4A at the headquarters of IPAA ACT, here in Barton, ACT. Drew Baker, the head of IPAA has gone full Steven Spielberg on me and created his own high definition television studio. And with the help of Work with Purpose's Technical Director, Ben Curry, they have put together a very tidy, little, narrowcasting operation here in Barton. I'm sure in the years to come, it is going to be the home of a lot of great content. And if you are listening and you need to build your own studio, which by the way, all of you in the future will need, just as organisations like the Australian Federal Police and the Australian Border Force have known for many years, I'm sure that Drew and Ben would be happy to share their experience with you.

So, to our guests today. Reece Kershaw is the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police. He began his career in the AFP in the late 80's, serving in a variety of positions in Canberra, Western Australia, and Victoria. During his career, Commissioner Kershaw has been seconded to numerous positions outside the AFP, including the National Crime Authority, the Australian Crime Commission, as well as postings to The Hague, East Timor, and the Solomon Islands. Prior to being appointed as the Commissioner of the AFP, he was the head of the Northern Territory Police Force for five years during a time that, it has to be said, must have been particularly challenging, being involved in a number of inquiries and trials into his own force. Known for his scrupulous integrity, he was sworn in as AFP Commissioner in October of last year. Reece Kershaw, welcome to Work with Purpose.

Also joining us today is Michael Outram, the Commissioner of the Australian Border Force, the law enforcement agency responsible for offshore and onshore border control, enforcement, investigations, compliance, and detentions. Commissioner Outram began his policing career on the streets of London, spending 20 years in the ranks of the Metropolitan Policing Service, rising to Detective Chief Inspector serving in Anti-Corruption, Anti-Terrorism, and major investigation teams. He was seconded to the New South Wales Police Force working on the Independent Commission Against Corruption. He liked the weather and he decided to stay. Since then, he has served in numerous high-profile crime-fighting roles with both the Australian Crime Commission, the AFP, before joining the ABF in 2015. He was sworn in as Commissioner in 2018. And, like Reece Kershaw, Michael Outram is also known for his integrity. Commissioner Outram, welcome to Work with Purpose.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Reece Kershaw, if I might start with you. Last week, we spoke with General Angus Campbell and Greg Moriarty, and I asked him how he felt when his phone rang, and it was Greg's name. And he came up with an answer, something on the lines that when you're in charge of a big organisation, you never quite have the control that you would like and things can and do go wrong. I noticed a few weeks ago that you had that sort of moment when I'm sure your phone rang to tell you that a number of your recruits had breached social distancing protocols at a party at the AFP College. And I'm sure with all the concerns and stresses and pressures that you're under at

the moment, that it was the last thing that you needed. And by the way, I loved your answer before the committee up at parliament, where you said that they'd been suitably caned for their stupidity. But, is that the hardest part of your job, getting everyone to understand the standards, understand their responsibilities, and being accountable to those?

REECE KERSHAW: Yeah, I think that's part of it. I mean, the challenge is to enforce the values. And for us, we are a representative of the community we serve and we also have the same values as the community. So, it was disappointing that we breached the social distancing guidelines and enforcement that was in place in the ACT. And the recruits, I think, have learned, not only did they have to be internally investigated, which can be quite a harrowing procedure, they actually had to answer to me separately, and I asked them two questions. And that is A, do you think you're above the law? And the second question was, what are you going to do to fix it?

DAVID PEMBROKE: And what were the answers?

REECE KERSHAW: It was quite good because what I was looking for was, separate to the disciplinary process, was just to see what the thinking was from each recruit, independent of the process. And so, I was able to sort of gain an understanding of where they're at. They all agreed they're not above the law and that they collectively could have done... Some of them said yes, whilst I wasn't involved, I should have probably taken some action, and so on. So, it was about just reinforcing the values of the organisation, and also what the community expects from us.

DAVID PEMBROKE: And, Michael Outram, what about you? How do you try to build that consistency and holding up to the very high standards of the ABF?

MICHAEL OUTRAM: Yeah, it's an interesting area for us. We're not as mature as the AFP, we're only five years young as an organisation. And, of course, we're brought together a number of people from former customs organisation, immigration, former police officers like myself, former Defence and public servants. So, it was interesting to galvanise everybody into a culture that's coherent, where our values are well understood and well-practised. I'd have to say, through COVID-19, a lot of that came to the fore. You actually don't know as the head of an organisation quite how prepared you are in crisis, and how the organisation is going to react. So, everyone reacted really well there.

But, in terms of integrity, I still think we've got some way to go as an organisation to get people to understand that as a law enforcement official, and some, of course, some of my officers were previously public servants, when you wear this uniform, you automatically create an expectation on the part of the community that you will adhere to a standard of behaviour and conduct, not just when you're at work, but also in your life because you have access to coercive powers that you use. And people want to be sure and confident that you're going to use them fairly and proportionately and be accountable for them. So, I'd say we were doing well as an organisation, but we still have some way to go to galvanise that. And that comes through our standard operating procedures, our training, and the way that we actually reward and recognise good performance and the way we deal with underperformance.

DAVID PEMBROKE: And what about you though, as a leader, what do you see as your responsibility in building out that culture?

MICHAEL OUTRAM: Well, it's about leading by example. Every organisation I've worked in, David, has, in a way, resembled the persona and the behaviour of its CEO, whether it was in the Metropolitan Police and organisation of 40,000 people, or a smaller organisation, like the Australian Crime Commission. The behaviours and actions and the conduct of the person leading the organisation sets very much the scene for the conduct within the organisation.

And so, the way I behave, I actually have to be very careful about the way I behave, like any leader, I've got attributes in my personality that I try and keep behind the scenes, and I'm aware of those, and you have to deal with that as a leader, particularly when you're under stress. And you have to be always conscious that people are reading your every movement, your body language, the way you speak, the way you behave, the way you deal with things behind the scenes. And so, my office, for example, they pore over all of my emails, all of my expenses, all of those things to make sure everything is absolutely above board. And then, I set a really good example.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Okay. So, this series to date has focused on how our government agencies have responded to the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both of you are at the very sharp end of it. Your people are very close to the people. And, Reece Kershaw, if I might ask you first, how have Australians responded, in your view, to the challenge of the pandemic?

REECE KERSHAW: I'm really proud of how Australians have responded. I think that we've shown global leadership, like no other country. I think that it was great to see that we united. All the politics was left aside and we united as a country. And that's the great thing about living in this country that we probably underestimate that we're closer than what we realise when it comes to dealing with crisis. Australia's pretty well experienced. And, for me, it was really good to see. Yes, you have some members of the society that break the rules, and so on. That's probably the larrikin coming out in the Australian sort of persona, but overall, very happy with how Aussies have responded. And speaking to the other police commissioners, they probably say similar.

DAVID PEMBROKE: And Michael, your views on how the Australians have responded? What you've seen?

MICHAEL OUTRAM: Remarkable. I'd say that we deal with not only the travelling public, so people at airports. They want seamless, fast, get straight through and, of course, in a pandemic that's not possible. The patience that's been demonstrated towards my officers has been exemplary, really, I've got to say. So, people have accepted the restrictions on their ordinary lives, but not only the public but also industry. You can imagine, again, behind the scenes in COVID-19 the amount of cargo vessels coming into our ports, the issues that creates around our seaports and for workers, so industry's been remarkable too, and very patient with us, and very open to discussions about how those restrictions will play out in their environment. So, I got to say, like Reece, very proud of Australia.

When you look at where we stand geographically, in proximity to where the outbreak started, compared to some of our similar countries in the world and where we are now, I think that the actions of Australians in those first few weeks are what really has got us where we are today.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Now, interestingly, in one of the earlier answers, you spoke about the pride that you had in your organisation, a young organisation, and it responded. What happened? What did it do that made you feel that we're getting somewhere here with the ABF?

MICHAEL OUTRAM: So, an example would be when the Cabinet first said, "We want to put a restriction in relation to anybody what's been in or travelled through Mainland China." That's a lot of people. We need to prevent them coming to Australia. That was at two o'clock in the afternoon. By nine o'clock that night, my officers implemented that travel ban. They'd never done that before. There was no playbook, no rule book, no experience. They had to literally sit down at the airports-

DAVID PEMBROKE: So, what did they do?

MICHAEL OUTRAM: Well, they sat down at the airports and said, "How we going to do this?" And we got on the phone to airlines and, literally, through several hours, just made the job work. We didn't ask people to come back with detailed designs or plans. They had to get on with it at the airports. And that showed to me straight away that, in fact, the work we'd done around agility, around command and control, those things in the background that we've been doing, it actually paid dividends. But, the main thing was they just rolled their sleeves up and stepped in. And in some areas, doing things they were unfamiliar with doing. It wasn't all about just doing our immigration and customs role, because we had to work with agriculture, we had to work the airports and the airlines to make this thing work.

DAVID PEMBROKE: And, Reece, your organisation? How has it responded, and what have you noticed, and what's made you proud of being-

REECE KERSHAW: So, we, being police, we went into a very disciplined structure straight away, early on in the piece. And one was to support Michael's and the ABF, his response in Christmas Island, and repatriating the Australians. So, we knew we had to play a support role, but also in the Northern Territory, we'd deployed over a hundred police to those remote communities to protect those communities. So, we started Operation Protect very early in the piece, and it's a force protection posture, meaning our first commander's intent was to protect our people because you can't deliver a service if your people are sick or crook. And then the second thing was around safeguarding the nation's interests. So, that's whatever government were going to task us with or how we could support other agencies. And then, the other one was assisting with public safety, which was airports and other areas.

So, we clearly defined those three things early on. Put a commander in charge and said, "Deliver that," so that we were able to be flexible, respond to whatever we needed to, but we also protected our force, which we did probably earlier than most. And, the NYPD actually have come to us recently to say, "We want to see how you did it," because, sadly, they've lost so many officers, and they've went into their, not being critical of them, but they went into their probably posture a bit late and got caught. We sort of learned from the rest of the world and we all leveraged off each other.

DAVID PEMBROKE: So, you did have some sort of playbook there ready to go sort of step one, step two, step three. So, there was something organised and ready to go.

REECE KERSHAW: Yeah, and look, we have a very good Chief Medical Officer. So, we actually went beyond, probably, the government's initial advice. We actually went stronger, earlier because I realised, and the leadership team, that if we don't protect our own, we can't actually be of any benefit to the community. So, we were very strict early on in how we deployed and how we looked after our staff, whether it be PPE, or hand sanitizer, and all those sorts of things, and very disciplined in our approach.

DAVID PEMBROKE: And you had enough equipment, and you had enough resources, and you had enough process to be able to-

REECE KERSHAW: We did. We scrambled early and we got ourselves a flight out of China early, I think, and that helped. And we also worked with Michael, with the ABF, who helped us out.

So, it was a team effort amongst Home Affairs, plus with the state police. We actually distributed our own PPE across to the States, which they thought was really generous because they were quite concerned at one stage. And then, we actually were able to get a shipment in, in the middle of it all, which was a great effort from everyone.

DAVID PEMBROKE: So, in terms of the roles that you play, how quickly are you on the phone to Michael, in terms of when this happened? Is it first phone call? Second phone call?

REECE KERSHAW: Yeah, we were talking a fair bit early on. And my role was to support ABF. The AFP's role was to help ABF out because he had a monumental task, and we knew that this is going to be a real challenge for ABF, and they did it remarkably well. And we just said, "Well, whatever we can do to help." And that's how we operate.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Monumental. Big word. Was it like that?

MICHAEL OUTRAM: Yeah, I'd say in the first six weeks, David, it was six to 12 weeks, it was pretty full-on. I mean, you can imagine week one, close the border with China. Week two, establish a quarantine facility on Christmas Island for the, obviously, the repatriation of Australians from Hubei Province and we'd never built a quarantine facility. We don't have the expertise. So, we relied on creating a team with the AFP, with Defence, with Health, AUSMAT teams. We brought all those people together really quickly.

We pushed teams forward onto Christmas Island, dealt with our contractor, Serco, there. We had to sort that out really quickly to set that facility up and we did it remarkable speed. Same again, a week later in Howard Springs in Northern Territory. These were things we hadn't done before. And, whilst we're not the experts in building and running quarantine facilities, of course, we don't have any medical expertise, it was the coordination and the planning and effort behind the scenes that we were leading. And, without the help of Reece, and without the help of Defence, Angus and others, we wouldn't have been able to do it. It was very much a Team Australia effort.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Now, there are so many great examples of things that went well and have worked well, but there was, obviously, the Ruby Princess where that coordination, at some level, obviously, didn't work, decisions weren't made and, obviously, major impact and, happily, we had a very few number of those sort of occasions. How hard is it to try to make sure that all of the pieces are working together because there are so many pieces that you've got to draw together. And how in fact do you do that?

MICHAEL OUTRAM: It's a challenge, of course. And I won't go into Ruby Princess in too much details because there's obviously a lot of legal and other proceedings on foot. But, what I will say is this, that the border is a really complicated mechanism. And, you can imagine you've got 30 or 40 organisations in governments that work across the border, 200 plus pieces of regulation and law. You have port authorities, and cruise ship operators, and cargo ship operators, and industry representative, like Ports Australia and Shipping Australia. Then you have other stakeholders like the Export Council of Australia and the Business Council of Australia, stevedores, pilots, people that work at the ports.

And then you have, of course, the medical fraternity, of course, you have the human biosecurity arrangements that work between the Department of Health, Agriculture, and State and Territory Health. We have customs and immigrations functions. Then you have the state and federal constructs in Australia, as well. So, that gives you a sense of, let alone what other countries are doing-

... And we connect to other countries and we have responsibilities at sea for safety of life at sea. So, this is a very complex system at the border. And so, you're absolutely right. The coordination, the collaboration, the cooperation, everybody understanding their own roles and responsibilities and how they dovetail with those of others is critical to the effective functioning of the border.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Reece, we now look to have done a pretty good job around the health crisis, flattened the curve, but we know that this is a long way away from finished. There's so much to come. The tap will be turned off in terms of Job Keeper and into the future. We're seeing increasing in funding for mental health and, obviously, funding for domestic violence, the pressures of growing unemployment. How are you preparing now for what is going to come? How are you getting ready to make sure that the AFP is ready for those pressures that are coming?

REECE KERSHAW: Yeah, I think part of that has been to understand our environment and what's happening. So, we've taken a wide lens to this across, not just the whole country, but the globe.

So, in particular, I've spoken to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, I've spoken to the German Federal Police, I've spoken to Interpol, others, about what are they seeing? What are they thinking the post-COVID's environment's going to be like from a crime perspective from us from movement? How do we adapt to the new environment? So, for us, we've prepared our staff by being clear in our messaging, saying that things have changed. From day one we said, "This is the rest of the year." So, we prepared the whole workforce to say, "Get ready. This is going to be the rest of the year, probably going to go beyond that," because it's the rest of the world needs to heal. I think Australia will heal before anyone else, and we are already seeing that. So, it's about your messaging, making sure we're communicating, which we have been very on point on that.

And, whether that's the Chief Medical Officer or a deputy commissioner or myself, we all play a role in which message and what do we really want to say to our staff. So, it's having that high level of communication, not too much, and also reassuring, to say, "We're going to get through this and we'll be okay. And remember what we're here, what our mission is, and our commander's intent." So, we've kept our, what we'd say, our shape very strong and also our posture. And we'll maintain that all the way through to the end of this year, and then reassess at the end of the year

where we're at. So, we'll hold, probably, the longer than some of the restrictions might start to ease. We'll probably still stay in our posture until we're happy that we've got through this.

DAVID PEMBROKE: It's interesting in your answer there, you raise something that I hadn't even thought about, which is crime. How does crime change?

REECE KERSHAW: Well, it does, it'll adapt. So, you'll have things like, we know that in unemployment, lower levels of crime go up, whether that be house break-ins, other property-type crime, or fraud. We've already seen that. We've seen an increase in the dark web because, of course, people are on their computers at home. So, you'll see an increase in online fraud, same techniques that they use, banking fraud, those sorts of things. We're seeing Commonwealth fraud of those schemes occurring. And then, sadly, we've seen a huge increase in child abuse images being shared across the dark web. Drug purchasing, a lot of it will move to the dark web, firearms, the whole lot. So, Michael's area will be flat out, like me, with the post, and things coming through the border. And, also looking at how do you actually keep up to date with technology, including cryptocurrency. People are going to switch to that instead of cash. There'll be a whole range of different things that will start to change. So, we're gearing up for that.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Okay. And Michael, one of the things you won't have to do is worry about people sort of come and going out of the border so much. But, how do you retool your organisation to, perhaps, support these other areas where there is going to be a need for you to put resources?

MICHAEL OUTRAM: It's a really good question. Unfortunately, we still do have quite a lot of... Unfortunately or fortunately, whichever you look at it, people coming through the border at the airports. I was at Canberra Airport last Friday, a flight of 200 people that came in and there were about 40 officials to deal with that flight. Medical practitioners from ACT Health, Australian Border Force, Department of Agriculture, people from the airport. That's what the border looks like today. 40 people dealing with 200 passengers.

So, people will still want to leave Australia and come back to Australia during this pandemic, and, of course, we're providing exemptions for that. That's a new role for us, authorising people to leave and come to Australia, individually, based on certain grounds. So, there's new roles. And looking for PPE, being exploitation, if you like, of our community by people trying to price-hike PPE. So, we're now searching export cargo for PPE and detaining it. As well though, as Reece rightly said, unfortunately, we're still finding a lot of narcotics, tobacco, and other illicit products, childlike sex dolls, all these heinous things in the mail, in air cargo, in particular. There's been a massive hike in air cargo because people are sitting at home buying online. And so, we've really had to shift our resources from airports into our cargo operations mainly, but also we're now reporting data on a lot of things we weren't reporting data on before, about the PPE that's being exported and imported and detained, about the exemptions regime that we've put in place.

So, we've got an army of people now having to do new sorts of reporting for our organisation that we weren't doing before. So, it's been a signal shift, whilst Reece has maintained the same sort of shape as an organisation, we've actually had to move our shape frequently through the last few months, and we will continue to have to do that. So, agility, and flexibility, and readiness is our mantra for the next

six months going forward because we don't fully know what a new bio-secure border is going to look like. And we don't fully know quite how the arrangements with, say, New Zealand and the idea of a Tasman bubble is going to play out. We're readying ourselves for a lot of variables in the next few months.

DAVID PEMBROKE: How are you people holding up?

MICHAEL OUTRAM: Pretty good. Look, I do these drop-in meetings with my people, with the small teams on Skype, and those sorts of things to sort of catch up over the last few months and see how they're going. There's a great sense of pride. There's a sense that they've made a big difference in delaying the onset of COVID-19 in our country and the work that we did in those first few months, and bear in mind a lot of them were at the front line, wearing their PPE, engaging with hundreds of thousands of passengers. There's a bit of personal risk in that, and trusting in the advice they were getting around social distancing, and how to wear the PPE, and how to do their job. So, they're immensely proud, I think, of the role they've been at play for our country, but working as a whole of Australia team effort with the AFP, and others, I think it's galvanised some of those relationships as well, I'd have to say. So, they're in a pretty good place, I think, proud of what they've done

DAVID PEMBROKE: Now, a feature of this programme are the questions that we get from IPAA's Future Leaders and, Reece, we can start with one of your people. Karen Gruber asks, "How has COVID-19 affected the AFP and the ABF's ability to liaise with international partners to combat transnational crime?"

REECE KERSHAW: I think there's no doubt it's posed a challenge for us. For example, we were due to hold high-level meetings on certain things, organised crime syndicates, and the like, offshore. We haven't been able to do that. It's probably highlighted for us that we haven't got the secure systems, perhaps, that we... Besides the Five Eyes, outside of the Five Eyes, [crosstalk 00:25:38] it gets quite complicated with the level of security because the last thing you want is those conversations to be compromised. So, that's been a challenge for us. How do we do it differently? I think there's had to be a bit of a delay on some of those things. But, on a good note, organised crime have the same issue. So, we're actually, probably, facing the same, that's our opponent, and they have the same issue.

They can't move. They've got to be careful with their comms, and so on. So, for us, it's about an opportunity for us to refocus our efforts and have a good look now that the environment sort of slowed down. They haven't stopped with their intent, which is to make profits out of this country, and import drugs, and all sorts of things, whatever commodity they can make money out of.

So, for us, it's been an opportunity to really go to those international partners and say, "Look, we're going to have to delay the face to face and other meetings, but how could we actually do... What are you seeing, how can we share more?" So, I've probably been on the phone a bit more to those international partners and we've got our officers... One thing people don't know is that all of my officers stayed in situ in-country, voluntarily. I've got 128 out there, including in China. And we're one of the only countries who've sort of done that. And that's been well received from all of those, our vulnerable countries that we deal with in our region, as well, is that all the troops made that stance to stay put and help fight the crime at the local level. So, we've been able to do that, as well. It was quite amazing because we brought a

lot of the family's home and a lot of the officers stayed behind. So, they've gone months now without their families. And they've done really well.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Michael, a question from one of your team from Mikaela Giri and she asks, "The COVID-19 pandemic has arguably increased the demand from both the public and the public service workforce on leaders to be more visible, to be more coordinated, and to be more consistent. Has this impacted your traditional leadership, and what tools are you using to meet this demand?"

MICHAEL OUTRAM: Yeah, there's no doubt there's been a shift because, of course, if you imagine what Reece just said in the international context, my organization's an international organisation. I can't visit my people at the workplaces the way I'd like to do. So, one of the things I'm doing is what I call drop-in sessions. These are Skype meetings with groups of 20 or 30 people at a time in certain work areas. So, I've simply one-hour conversation about my reflections on the last few months and just talking about what they're doing, what they're experiencing.

I have a daily coordination meeting with my senior executives so that we're coordinated at that level. But even through the early parts of COVID-19, I recall one day we're trying to work from home and I had WhatsApp threads running red hot. I had secure video conferences going, I had Skype video conferences going, I had mobile phone calls coming in. At one point I was seven communications behind myself. I had to make notes as I was going. And so, there's a new way of working for me, as well. So, we've all had to change and adapt, but I think that the way that we've represented ourselves in the media has been important because our employees in the Border Force watch what we say and do in the media, as well. Internal communications has been really important, particularly around what Reece said, keeping our people safe.

So, they've got confidence in the advice they're getting that were connected to the Department of Health and expert advice. So, the advice we've been giving on the intranet through video blogs, our Surgeon General has been out there doing video blogs to our staff about how they should wear masks and those sorts of things. So, I think that using the online sort of communications has obviously taken over from the face to face.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Okay. Another question for you, this time from Rachel Martin at KPMG, and she asks, "What lessons have been learned through the COVID-19 period around collaboration with state-based agencies? How can we ensure we take these into the post-COVID-19 era to continue to enable a joined-up approach to both Australia's border, specifically, and national security, more broadly?"

MICHAEL OUTRAM: Yeah, I think that's a really good question. We touched on this a little bit earlier on about the border being a pretty complex system. And, I think that I'd say that one of the first important things that we all understand each other's roles, firstly. And there's been, obviously, through this last few months, I'd say there's been examples of where that hasn't been clear to everybody about who plays what part and what role and where decision-making potentially hasn't been connected closely enough. So, I think it's the collaboration, and cooperation, and the coordination sort of area that we need to really focusing in on. And, at a time of a pandemic, potentially, more holistic, desktop-type exercising, rather than people just running in their functional sort of lines. The final part I'll make on this is engage with industry. Industry are really important at the border and we can't conduct these sorts of exercises and run

these coordination mechanisms without industry being completely connected in, as well.

DAVID PEMBROKE: A final question then to you, Reece, from Kylie Highley from the Australian Public Service Commission. Great name. What are some of the challenges your leaders and teams have experienced in supporting your frontline workers in finding the balance between doing their job and meeting social distancing requirements?

REECE KERSHAW: Yeah, I think we obviously touched on the recruits and the issues we had there, which was very disappointing for us. Overall, the staff have armed themselves with lots of information and we have trust with our Chief Medical Officer, and going back to what Michael was saying with his Surgeon General, we trust our Chief Medical Officer. So, we've listened to her. She's been out there spruiking to everyone and, basically, reassuring us and saying, "You need to follow these guidelines." And she's been very strong in her messaging. So, that's helped us out a lot to unite the whole organisation, both nationally and internationally. She actually designed some action cards which some of the other police forces have taken on board. Very simple action cards, COVID-19, as to what to do in all the different scenarios, and that probably provided clarity for people, and reassured, took away a bit of fear to say, "Okay, I know what to do if I hit this issue," or, "Right, a member of my family is sick," and so on.

So, we've only been able to... Well, not only, but three people in our workforce had COVID-19, but that was from overseas, and none came into the workplace. So, very disciplined from those three individuals, as well, not to come into the workplace at all. So, we're pretty proud of that effort, and that was early on in the piece, and since then zero. So, I think everyone's worked really well together.

DAVID PEMBROKE: Well, gentlemen, thank you so much for your time today and thank you for your service, and the best of luck for the rest of what is, not only going to be a very busy run into the year, but who knows what you are going to be faced with into the future? So, thank you very much for joining us on Work with Purpose.

MICHAEL OUTRAM: Thank you.

REECE KERSHAW: Thank you, David.

DAVID PEMBROKE: And to the audience, thank you for coming back once again, and for your ongoing support. It has certainly been truly inspiring, the response to this podcast from across the APS at all levels, and I think the conversations and the quality of the conversations that we can have with our leadership just gives us great confidence and great pride, I've got to say, when you hear the stories that have been told today by both Reece and by Michael. So, thanks also to our friends and colleagues at IPAA and the Australian Public Service Commission for their support in putting the programme together.

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SPEAKER 4 :

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