



## CRUCIAL TRAINING A REALITY

An emergency simulation for paramedic students allowed Ballarat Police a chance to run through the force's new active offender response recently, a very real reminder of what was put into play in the Bourke Street attack earlier in the month.

This is the second year Victoria Police have been involved in the major disaster exercise at Australian Catholic University's Ballarat Campus. Ballarat's Superintendent Jenny Wilson said it was important police get as much practical, training experience as possible and, with other emergency services on scene, this helped make the exercise as real as possible. "I think it's all on our mind, what happened in (Melbourne's) CBD. What it means for us in a regional area is our members today had elements of a real scenario," Superintendent Wilson said.



Victorian Chief Commissioner Graham Ashton told media last week, in the wake of Bourke Street, all police had undergone "active shooter" training so first response police were able to confront terrorists rather than wait for special teams or "cordon and contain".

In the ACU exercise, an active gunman had hit students with a car and fled, shooting, into a nearby building. Explosive devices were also detonated in the campus quadrangle. Police were assessed and given immediate feedback in the training scenario.

State Emergency Services, Ambulance Victoria, Country Fire Authority and The Alfred and Ballarat Health Services staff were also involved as final year nursing-paramedicine students worked through the mass casualty scene.



ACU Associate Professor Helen Webb, also an Army Reserves Captain, said in reality emergency services worked together and having professionals now using Ex Code Black for training, reinforced the importance of this training. "Our students have an opportunity to work alongside emergency services for real," Associate Professor Webb said. "We know with previous incidents in the world, the best outcomes in emergencies are when service personnel know each other."

Preparations for this scenario have been six months in the making. More than two hundred people, including volunteer alumni, were involved in bringing the

situation to life. ACU Campus Dean Bridget Aitchison said the scene was so graphic because mass casualty events were increasingly a reality. "One of the issues in a crisis is you don't know how you're going to respond in the moment," Professor Aitchison said. "...They can make mistakes here without lives at stake."

