

## *“From the Director’s Desk”*

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Entering Volume 5 of *Current Issues in Criminal Justice* seems a useful time to reflect on the direction that this important Institute publication has taken. In these difficult economic times for academic institutions perhaps the first observation is that we are still publishing at all. In terms of our loyal readership amongst the members of the Institute, and those subscribers to the journal both nationally and internationally who join us with each new issue, we must be doing something right.

We have not erred from our contemporary issues format since the first issue of this journal. Each new number has presented challenging, provocative, and sometimes controversial positions on such diverse issues as pornography and censorship, environmental pollution control, confiscation of criminal assets, official corruption, battered woman syndrome, HIV infection in prisons, punishing war criminals, and truth in sentencing. These topics have been dealt with from State, Federal and overseas perspectives, from both local and international contributors.

The format of the journal has always been important. While scholarly articles form the backbone of any such publication, the journal is concerned with solicited and unsolicited material as well as selected papers from its public education series, and thereby provides a range of writing not available in journals which focus on any of these sources in particular. The Contemporary Comment section has provided opportunities for debate, as well as the presentation of issues with more immediate and popular impact. The book reviews are an important contribution to the entertainment value of the journal, and the current events notices are a means of communicating across the Australian criminal justice community. Another unique feature of the journal’s policy is to shift editorial responsibility with each issue. This number for instance, is the first to be managed by someone outside the staff of the Sydney University Law School. We hope to be able to involve other friends of the Institute from wider academic and professional circles in future issues.

A journal such as *Current Issues in Criminal Justice* should have an educative function for editors, contributors, and readers. We wish to give the opportunity to as broad a range of contributors as possible at different stages of their writing careers. For instance, this number contains work from distinguished international scholars, criminal justice activists, government bureaucrats, doctors and lawyers, and post graduate students. In this regard the journal provides not only an interesting mix of life experiences, but an unusual variety of writing styles and potential. Also, recently a survey of the journal’s readership was carried out by marketing students from the University of Technology, Sydney. The data from this survey should give us a better idea of whether our efforts with the journal are well received, and which features require further development. I will report on the survey in the next issue.

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