

BOOK REVIEW
Policing Australia:
Old Issues, New Perspectives

edited by Peter Moir and Henk Eijkman

Macmillan, 1992, 391 pages, \$69.95 (hbk), \$34.95 (pbk).

In the last few years courses on policing have started to mushroom. This growth has, in part, resulted from a demand that police receive better training and, in part, from a recognition that the role of the police - as a powerful institution in society - needs to be scrutinised. A number of books on policing have been published recently, including M Finnane (ed), *Policing in Australia: Historical Perspectives* (1987) and D Chappell and P Wilson (eds), *Australian Policing: Contemporary Issues* (1989); and textbooks based on Griffith University's police studies courses are planned. The market is wide open.

In *Policing Australia: Old Issues, New Perspective's*, the editors have assembled 14 accomplished contributors (including Paul Wilson, who has written a chapter but is not mentioned in the introduction or in the list of contributors) - mainly academics (including some police educators) and one serving policeman, Mick Palmer, Commissioner of Police in the Northern Territory. Each chapter provides an up-to-date bibliography, but virtually every contributor calls for more empirical research on the Australian police.

In a brief introduction the editors say their aim is to provide police practitioners and students of policing with a "way of looking" at police work that "facilitates long-term change" or "strategic innovations" (that is, to "initiate the conditions under which the police may continue to be adaptive and innovative" at all levels). The book provides "an interpretive understanding of both the nature and quality of policing, its goals, experiences and decision-making processes". The editors also want police to adopt "a more critical assessment of the moral, ethical and political principles and criteria involved in all aspects of police practice".

This critical approach is taken up in Chapter 1 by Braithwaite, who considers good and bad police services. He outlines his "republican theory" of criminal justice, previously detailed in his impressive book *Not Just Deserts* (1990). This theory focuses on "dominion - a social, subjective and comparative conception of liberty - as the objective a good police service should maximise". This is a very thoughtful chapter, brimming with insight, and should be compulsory reading at least for Police Commissioners. Chapter 2 by

Moore assesses the major contributions to the literature on measuring police efficiency; looks at how the New South Wales and federal police measure productivity; and casts a critical eye over community policing within the context of the new managerialism sweeping malignly and dementedly through police services and elsewhere. The way police are educated is relevant here and, in Chapter 5, Bradley tackles this topic, starting with the reform of police education arising from Justice Edwin Lusher's Inquiry into the Administration of the New South Wales Police Force (1981) and ending by evaluating the Police Recruit Education Program introduced in July 1988.

It is doubtful that better education alone will modify the dominant masculine ethos that permeates policing or will remove the barriers to advancement that Sutton in Chapter 3 says policewomen face, but she is optimistic that change is possible once the contribution of female police is honestly examined. Change is also possible in dealing with corruption, says Palmer in Chapter 4, by developing "a professional ethos that promotes and embraces integrity and rejects corruption and all its manifestations". Training quality recruits, ensuring corrupt elements (they are always only "elements") are not promoted or transferred into key areas, decriminalising some activities, greater use of technology, and stronger internal disciplinary mechanisms are among the matters Palmer considers. Perhaps greater exposure of corruption in the media would work but this is unlikely for, as Wilson fascinatingly shows by well chosen quotations in Chapter 6 on police and the media, reporters depend on police for information on crime; if they offend police their sources of information will dry up. Chapter 6 ends Part I on organisational issues.

Part II covers issues in service delivery. In Chapter 8 the Moirs examine community policing and, in particular, community consultation. Any definition of community must embrace consultation with outgroups such as Aborigines and migrants. In Chapter 9 Hazlehurst, after nicely placing police-Aboriginal relations in historical context, gives the revelations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody a necessary airing. She suggests new directions in Aboriginal-police relations, including making Aborigines and police partners in crime prevention. In Chapter 13 Bird considers criminality in the immigrant community, immigrant fear and distrust of police, the police and racism, and, once stronger anti-racist laws are passed, how to improve policing of multi-cultural communities. In an appendix Bird lists selected recommendations from the National Conference on Police Services in a Multicultural Australia, which have been endorsed by all Australian police services.

Two difficult areas of policing are drugs and domestic violence. Drug taking, due to public demand, is on the increase

despite police efforts, and throwing more police resources at the problem is not the solution, according to Mugford in Chapter 7, whereas the progressive removal of prohibitions might be. Police are less enthusiastic about intervening in domestic violence disputes partly because "relations within the home are emotionally charged" and such intervention is "difficult and unpredictable". In Chapter 12 the Mugfords consider how to police domestic violence using Braithwaite's process of reintegrative shaming and Speck and Attneave's ideas on networks to provide "a humane and effective method of minimising problems".

Victims are not neglected in this collection. In Chapter 11 O'Malley notes how burglary is on the increase and is now second to theft as "the most frequently reported crime in most Australian States", while police clear-up rates are falling. Insurance companies and police are placing greater emphasis on situational crime prevention, on making crime harder to commit by improving domestic security, forcing individuals under risk to take greater responsibility for protecting themselves against crime. Insurance companies have, self-interestedly, promoted and funded Neighbourhood Watch in Australia as part of "a discipline of domestic security" and part of "a police public relations exercise". The victim is made responsible for the crime "to the extent that she or he allowed it to happen" and provides police with an excuse to take less interest in burglaries. In Chapter 10 Eijkman considers the future development of the Australian victim movement and advocates an "incrementalist application" of Braithwaite's republican perspective to police victim assistance as one way of ensuring "the development of equitable victim assistance policies within the criminal justice system".

This book lives up to the editors' modest claim that it will "contribute to an understanding of some of the principal issues which confront police organisations preparing for the twenty-first century". Most of the chapters deal with important issues but I would like to have seen a chapter on policing juveniles, taking into account recent developments, and more on the Fitzgerald inquiry. Another obvious deficiency from my viewpoint is the scant reference to the Tasmanian experience, even if only drawing on annual reports. The omission reflects the lack of research by Tasmanian criminologists on the activities of police despite the fact that the police have regularly made local newspaper headlines over the last two years. I am sure that reading this useful collection will stimulate much needed research and, perhaps, a course on policing - essential, given the frequent contact between police and most lawyers - will be established by the Faculty of Law in the not too distant future.

Stefan Petrow, Law Librarian, University of Tasmania