

From the Director's Desk ...

This issue of *Current Issues in Criminal Justice* is remarkable for several reasons. Firstly it is a record of the successful collaboration between the New South Wales Judicial Commission, and the Institute of Criminology, in a seminar which examined the ramifications of the *Sentencing Act*. The majority of papers contained herein form the focus of this expert seminar, convened as it was to canvass both scientific and policy concerns for the operation of the new legislation in New South Wales.

The Institute warmly welcomes the sponsorship of the Judicial Commission in the publication of this issue and gratefully acknowledges its generosity. It was logical that we should seek the participation of the Judicial Commission in our seminar, recognising its responsibility for the advancement of understanding in a variety of sentencing areas in this State. In turn, the Executive Officer and the members of the Commission accepted the challenge provided by the Institute's seminar to involve judicial interests at all levels in a critical consideration of their functions. As the Chief Justice points out in his introduction, "We trust that the matters contained in the following papers will stimulate further work to be done" with a view to encouraging public debate, so "that the operation of the *Sentencing Act* 1989 will be kept under regular review."

Around the time you will be reading this issue of our journal, the first offerings in the Institute's new monograph series will also be released. Last year it was decided that the Institute should expand its publication function, so as to provide the opportunity for works of particular and specialised research interest to receive high quality reproduction and the widest possible circulation. Criminologists and criminal justice researchers in Australia have long recognised that studies on crime, criminal liability, and the criminal process may not necessarily attract the interest of the larger commercial publishers. This is no criticism of the merits of these works, but rather a recognition of the limitations of their potential readership. We consider that through this monograph series the Institute may provide a valuable service both to authors and their criminal justice readership, who might otherwise be deprived of this convenient avenue of debate and discussion.

We are particularly fortunate that the first two titles in this series represent topical and innovative research endeavours. The collection of papers, photographic essays, and literary expression entitled "Aboriginal Perspectives on Criminal Justice" has been sympathetically edited by Chris Cunneen, with the intention of presenting topical issues of crime and justice from the perspective of the Aboriginal community. The text is accessible to a readership which ranges from secondary school students interested in Aboriginal studies through to those in the community concerned with contemporary Australian politics in transition. Janet Chan's investigation of executive release from prison, entitled "Doing Less Time: Penal Reform in Crisis", is a unique empirical and theoretical study of decarceration through one of New South Wales' most controversial periods of prison management. Yet the book should not be constrained to the concerns of this State, but

raises vital questions of relevance for the regulation of prison populations throughout the developed world. I commend both of these books to you.

In the first week of January I had the distinct pleasure of visiting the Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI) in Tokyo. This is a United Nations regional research institute with a 30 year history in the provision of criminal justice training. Obviously UNAFEI and our own Institute of Criminology share common functions, ones which may benefit through future collaboration. During my visit I contributed to UNAFEI's 90th International Seminar course entitled "The Quest for Solutions to Pressing Problems of Criminal Justice Administration". The sessions dealing with prosecutorial discretion were of particular interest, and provoked some volatile exchanges between participants from a variety of prosecutorial and policing traditions. It is hoped that, in the future, our Institute and UNAFEI might explore the development of mutual research and training potentials.

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