

Editorial

By Dr. John F. Walsh of Brannagh

When, nearly twelve months ago, I commenced research into the subject of drug offences and the law as part requirement for the completion of a law degree, I little realized that I would this day be writing an introductory editorial for a special edition of *A.C.P.C. Forum* on the subject of drugs, this issue of *Drugs and the Law—A National Perspective for Australia*.

It was while I was making my first preliminary steps into what was for me a completely new field of inquiry that the idea of a special edition of this journal given to the subject of drugs was created in the minds of Ken Weaver, the Managing Director of Magazine Art Pty. Ltd., the publishers of *A.C.P.C. Forum*, and John Purcell, the Executive Director of the Australian Crime Prevention Council. They realized the importance of the subject, and the necessity for clear and rational debate, for the Australian public as a whole, and not only for those involved in the law or the criminal justice system.

It was they who convinced me that this edition (now to be in two issues) should be written, and persuaded me that I should take on the responsibility of being the editor of this special feature edition charged with the task of gathering the material to be included. If I was to undertake research into drugs it was natural and logical that I should edit a journal on the topic.

The assignment interested and excited me, and I undertook my work with enthusiasm, though, I must admit, without any special qualifications of knowledge or experience. I knew little about drugs. The topic had not been included in my reading of law and criminology at university, and I had had no particular reason to study the subject. In my work as a magistrate over the last five years I had, of course, come across drug offenders, and had heard a number of drug cases, but these were, of necessity, of the nature and degree of offence as is found in the magistrates court.

My own research helped enlarge my understanding of what is referred to as the drug problem. But it was really my travels

and contacts in the search for suitable copy that brought home to me the realization of the size and complexity of what it was I had become involved in. My travels, by plane, by car, by foot, by letter, by telephone, by telegram, across this great land to speak to those whose contributions form this special edition, gave me a real appreciation of the legitimate concern felt by so many over the many aspects of the use and control of drugs in our society. What I heard you will find contained in these pages.

John Purcell, of the Australian Crime Prevention Council, suggested that what I had written myself should be included. Thus I find myself in these pages in the distinguished and worthy company of eminent judges and learned academics. The placement of my own paper is only an introduction to what follows from the scholars and authorities who follow.

The contributors, whose names are a Who's Who of knowledge and learning, have written on areas related to their own interests in the subject. Their views are not necessarily the same as one another. This was not sought. When selecting the material to be included I did not look for uniformity of opinion nor for agreement with my own beliefs. The criterion for selection was whether what was written was worthwhile and would be of benefit in the advancement of learning. Each paper met this standard. In addition every article contained in these pages is readable. What follows is not written in legal or scientific jargon, nor is it only for those involved in the law. It is written for the community. The contributors are to be commended: they have done a service to us all.

This special edition is published in two parts. The first issue contains approximately half the submitted papers; the second issue has the balance together with the footnotes for all the papers. This division has been made for technical reasons to do with the printing. It has the advantage that each issue will be of a size more convenient for the reader.

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FROM THE PUBLISHERS

It is with great pleasure that we at Magazine Art Pty. Ltd. present this edition and the edition to follow of the "ACPC FORUM".

We believe that such a work is long overdue and these issues open the door to sensible debate on a subject which to say the least has been used politically and socially to create hysteria or to win points in the political arena.

The answers, I believe, lie in sensible discussion, group effort, the hearing of all points of view and the making of laws to overcome the problem. We do not necessarily agree with all points of view expressed in these publications. However, the criteria has been to give everyone equal opportunity. To that end, I would like to cordially invite any reader who would like to advance any differing theory, to approach the council and it will be our pleasure to incorporate their thoughts in future editions.

I would like to congratulate John Walsh of Brannagh who, on a trivial budget, has been able to draw together these splendid articles. I might add, I would doubt that Dr. Walsh's budget would have paid for afternoon tea at any Royal Commission! My thanks are extended to John Purcell for his overseeing the project, to Judge Grubb for his work and scrutiny, to each of the contributors for their efforts (without reward), to the ACPC Council who have made their Magazine available to carry these works and of course to the advertisers who paid the bills.

I remain,
Yours sincerely,
K.I. Weaver

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