

A C P C. AND THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY

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I have been invited by the Executive Director to offer a few thoughts on what the future roles of the Institute and the Council might be in our joint quest for better crime prevention and improved criminal justice systems. If the Institute has been silent so far in an official sense, it has not been because this relationship has been neglected in our thinking. The close association of senior members of the Institute with the Council is sufficient indication of our genuine concern to promote Council activities and to develop more effective liaison.

However, the situation is complicated by the fact that we, at the Institute, are in many ways a creation of the Council. Over the gestation period of 1960 - 1973, the Council had a great deal to say about the need for an Institute and was influential in ensuring that there was State and Federal support for the operation which is now under way. In many ways the Council has passed over some of its activities to the Institute, which is now better equipped to discharge such responsibilities. On the other hand I have strived since 1973 to make sure that this Institute established no monopoly and did not attempt to cover all the various activities for the prevention of crime and the improvement of criminal justice throughout Australia. There is too much at stake; there are too many separate issues involved and there is ample scope at all levels for the greatest support we can get from each other.

Criminology is still an infant science in Australia and one of the big problems of the Criminology Research Council is the need for researchers in this field to be better prepared and more capable of writing projects and carrying them out. There are lawyers, psychologists, sociologists, physical scientists and a range of others, including the geographers, with a legitimate interest in our field of study and I see the Institute as a catalyst to develop criminological studies throughout the country besides anything which it might do on its own. We are concerned with what the universities should be teaching in the future and with the kind of criminological education which will be of service to people in the field we want to encourage; therefore we seek more investment in university training at the State level, as well as at a Federal level

In research, the division of responsibilities between the Criminology Research Council and the Institute has already been established, so that the projects which we take on will normally be either inter-State or demonstrative in the sense that they can be used anywhere in Australia. The Council, however, will aid local projects, even if these are of purely local interest providing they add to criminological knowledge.

As regards the relationship of the Institute with voluntary or professional organisations (including the Council), I am conscious of the need for there to be a consultative council to be set up under the auspices of the Institute for non-governmental organisations. It was even more difficult to do this on a world basis, but I did eventually achieve in New York an alliance of non-governmental bodies which operated simply by allowing the members living nearest to the United

Nations Headquarters to attend meetings on behalf of their organisations. The parent bodies had some concern at the possibility that initiative might be taken over by such an alliance and were a little unwilling to give their members in New York full powers of attorney. However, great progress was made. Governing bodies still retained power and important matters had to be cleared with them, but the fact that there was such a regular interflow from the centre to organisations across the world providing information and consultations on policy, was of immense value, both to us in the United Nations and to the non-governmental bodies.

I see no reason why we could not work for a similar structure in Australia, with the Institute having a consultative group meeting monthly, attended by members of the Council who are living in Canberra and the members of other organisations equally able to provide Canberra representatives. This would be the cheapest way to operate. Alternatively, should executive bodies feel that they wish to be more formal, then a consultative group of the selected officers of a selected number of organisations could meet from time to time in Canberra. The difficulty of this is the selectivity and distance to be travelled. Such a scheme would have to be funded and with present restrictions, the Institute does not yet have the means.

A further possibility is one could begin with the cheaper arrangements and then move on to something more ambitious and more formal if funds became available in future years.

Another aspect of the liaison between the Institute and the Council is that I would hope to be able one day to ensure that we had closer relationships by the fact that our offices were in close proximity. As all members will know, the Institute is in temporary accommodation now, for which rent has to be paid. However, there have been plans for a permanent building in the future and included in those plans are proposals for a number of small offices which could be made available to voluntary bodies or non-governmental organisations connected with the Institute. It is too early to say how this could be arranged financially, but it establishes from the outset our desire to be in close co-operation with universities, police, corrections, courts and other services.

A final matter which perhaps has escaped the attention of members of the Council is that the Criminology Research Act which governs the Institute, provides for research and training and the dissemination of information, but for reasons which are not particularly clear, does not provide for the Institute to have a "servicing" role. Obviously the rationale for an Institute like this is for it to be of service to all field workers, to the various agencies involved in criminal justice and to be a resource from which technical assistance can be obtained when this is necessary in the various fields of work which are undertaken by anybody - voluntarily or officially. In various ways, and even non officially, i.e. in our personal capacities, we have been providing this kind of service, but for it to become part of our funded operations, the Act will have to be amended. This has handicapped our ability to be as useful to field organisations as we would have liked. At this time in particular, when economies are being made, especially at the Federal level, this kind of servicing role is not easy to realise. Nevertheless we are prepared to go as far as it is legally possible to go

I trust that these remarks will be of use to those who have been thinking of these matters for some time. I hope they will provide reassurance that the Institute is both respectful of and grateful to the Council for its past and present work. There may have to be a re-organisation of functions and a sharing of interests between us. We will always do our best to make this possible. Above all, the Institute can give vigour, new direction and greater strength to the Council if it is properly used and I would like to see this happen.
