

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY

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In the fourth decade of the Institute's existence, and the last decade of this century, Gordon Hawkins, in his essay 'Present at the Creation', looks at the history and development of the Institute and invites us to view the past as prologue, and look to the future. In so doing, the Institute has a unique vantage point from which to cast a critical eye over the operations of criminal justice. Whether it was the foresight of earlier supporters, or the result of somewhat "ideosyncratic and eclectic" development, the Institute has colonised a common ground which has, over the years, given a large number and variety of disparate interests the opportunity to debate matters of urgent concern before those who have the responsibility to implement change. We are building on this popular foundation.

The Institute of Criminology is a body within the Faculty of Law at the University of Sydney. While operating comfortably in a law school environment, the Institute has neither been bound to a single discipline, nor discharged its duties for any one master. Its teaching, research, and public education functions have always been directed towards broad community needs. This will continue.

The principal areas of activity for the Institute have involved:

- the presentation of courses of study in Criminology, at Degree, Diploma and Masters levels;
- the organisation of a programme of public seminars on topics of contemporary concern in the field of criminal justice;
- the publication of the proceedings of these seminars and other related information;
- the provision of specialist in-house seminars which bring together the critical views of those actively involved in particular issues of criminal justice; and
- assisting a wide range of applied and theoretical research initiatives concerned with crime and criminal justice in New South Wales.

These are the foundations for our present programme for development. The Institute aims to achieve:

- the continued diversification of its public education function;
- the upgrading and expansion of innovative publishing ventures;
- the development of a specialised training potential;
- the further review of its teaching commitment; and
- the creation of a research infrastructure which will complement the public and private sector needs of this State, as well as a wide range of community interests.

Let me expand on two of these areas of development.

Publishing

Following on from its 78 issues of the *Proceedings of the Institute of Criminology*, the Institute launched *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*. The first numbers of this journal were still closely aligned to the public seminar programme, and it is envisaged that the more significant seminar papers will continue to form the backbone of its content.

However, the journal is intended to provide a wider vehicle for debate about contemporary crime issues. To facilitate this we will solicit articles on chosen topics, analyse the issues discussed at in-house seminars, comment on research in progress, and provide regular notes on topics of public interest. Readers are encouraged to submit items to the Editorial Committee, including letters to the editor, for possible publication. The journal is presently being published three times during the membership year, in July, November and March. This issue marks the first number of Volume 2.

Staff of the Institute are developing legal information management systems, on a micro-computer format. One prototype contains relevant Commonwealth and State legislation, over 40 leading cases, 20 or so major commentaries, and instructive examples of corporate compliance systems. This material is extensively cross referenced and can be quickly accessed in several different ways. Such models will have a variety of different and exciting applications in teaching and research programmes.

Public Education

In addition to the ongoing tradition of our public seminar programme (which have recently focussed on topics such as money laundering and the confiscation of assets, court delay, committal hearings, specialised investigation agencies, sex, violence and censorship), the Institute is now running a host of occasional seminars for specialised audiences. Issues such as fraud and corporate culture, the use of hypnosis in criminal investigation, and computerised information management, reveal the variety of subject areas covered by these seminars. The Institute will also be contributing more particularly to continuing legal education.

The provision of postgraduate courses of study in criminology will be enhanced in 1991 with the commencement of the Masters in Criminology, which will be open to non-law graduates.

I will not cavil over Professor Hawkins' observation, in this issue, that "it would be foolish to pretend that the Institute has, by its efforts, produced any substantial diminution in the squalor, inefficiency and inequity which continue to characterise the administration of justice in New South Wales. The most that can be said is that it has drawn attention to those ills, made specific suggestions for amelioration, and contributed to the knowledge of the facts which is an essential precondition of effective reformative action". Our commitment is to advance these claims against the never-ending and immediate challenges of criminal justice.