



Judge D.M. BREBNER

EDITORIAL

*No doubt we all have our good days and our bad days.
Your editor, obviously, provides no exception to this
general proposition.*

The good news is that the preparations for the Council's next conference to be held in Wollongong, New South Wales, between the 2nd and the 6th September, 1991, are proceeding apace. Details of the arrangements that have been made appear elsewhere in this issue. It is to be hoped that many readers will avail themselves of the opportunity to express interest in attending the conference later this year.

Our cover photograph of the courthouse at Wollongong is calculated to whet your appetite.

The Honourable Justice Michael Kirby presented the Eighth South Australian Justice Administration Foundation Oration in Adelaide late last year. A very well attended meeting heard His Honour address the topic of "AIDS Strategies and Australian Prisons." We are, indeed, grateful to His Honour and to the South Australian Justice Administration Foundation for permission to reprint the Oration in this issue.

The Western Australian Branch of the Council participated in a conference under the title, "Responses to Victims of Violence" in October, 1990. We are pleased to publish the contribution made to that conference by Mr. David Indermaur who is Vice-President of the Western Australian Branch.

Now for the confessions about the bad days. There was one associated with each of the last two issues of the Journal.

You may imagine my dismay on ascertaining that our

printer had managed to print the photograph of Wollongong on the cover of the last issue the wrong way around! Unfortunately, the entire issue had been printed and distributed before the mistake was discovered. It was naturally very disappointing to the people in Wollongong who are working so hard to make a success of the next conference. I hope that they may take some consolation in the fact that it was still a lovely photograph.

An editorial comment of mine in the previous issue was clearly capable of an interpretation that I did not intend. Without further comment, I reproduce hereunder a letter that I received from Dame Phyllis Frost, DBE, on behalf of the Victorian Women's Prisons Council and my reply.

"18 October 1990

Your Honour,

I write at the request of the Victorian Women's Prisons Council following receipt of the Australian Crime Prevention Council Journal June 1990, Vol. 11, No. 3 in regard to your editorial remarks. We are a little taken aback at the second sentence, viz:

'Whilst we still hear in some quarters a certain clamour for more and larger prisons, and the opening of Barwon Prison in Victoria was no doubt greeted enthusiastically by those in that persuasion, there is evidence to suggest a subtle change is taking place.'

"As an Honourary Life Member of ACPC and a member of the first council formed in 1960, I personally resent the implication in these remarks. As far as I am aware, in Victoria nobody is clamouring for more or larger prisons if they are not necessary.

EDITORIAL — CONTINUED

However, if owing to the increase of the population, better methods of crime detection, and in some cases longer sentences are given by the judiciary, the concerned people of this State realise that their old prisons are cramped, archaic and restrictive. I believe it is only humane to provide better designed, more spacious and adequate places for holding people who have been convicted and sentenced to terms of imprisonment. In my opinion it is much more humane and proper to hold sentenced offenders in well designed and programmed prisons than to have the over-crowding which exists at present in Victoria where in some instances men and women are being held for a matter of days in police lock-ups and watch-houses due purely to lack of space in gaols.

"Do not for one moment think that we are overlooking community service orders and other similar programs because these too are operating most satisfactorily in our State. I must conclude that you have not had an opportunity to visit the Barwon Prison at Lara for if you had you would have seen by its design and its administration that it is a most satisfactory prison in every respect — if one can ever call a prison 'satisfactory'.

"All members of the VWPC are striving to play their part in bringing about the subtle change to which you refer as is our Minister as well as the administrators and staff of the Office of Corrections. We believe — as no doubt you do — that a prison is not an ideal place to house anybody, but in the case of some people who are bent on violence and criminal intent in our community and those who in some instances are borderline cases for either institutional care in mental hospitals or some other area where they may be restrained, at present I cannot think of any satisfactory alternative.

"I feel you have not appreciated the reason why our new prisons have been constructed. Our new Remand Centre, built in Spencer Street, Melbourne; Tarrengower, the new Open Women's Prison in

Maldon; the new Loddon Prison at Castlemaine for medium security and group living; and Barwon Prison at Lara, are all part of an overall corrections master plan.

"We are deeply concerned at the implication in this part of your editorial as for those of us who have been toiling consistently for many years to improve the living conditions and rehabilitation facilities for offenders within Australia (I have been actively involved for 38 years in this), it seems rather a scathing remark.

I wish you success in your role as Journal Editor.

Dame Phyllis Frost, DBE,
Chairman, Victorian Women's Prisons Council."

"23rd October, 1990

Dear Dame Frost,

Thank you for your letter of the 18th October, 1990, written on behalf of the Victorian Women's Prisons Council.

"I am sorry that the words written in the editorial to the Australian Crime Prevention Council Journal caused you and your Council concern. I had not intended to suggest that the development of better prisons, for those who must be incarcerated, was anything but desirable. I was certainly not intending to reflect at all upon organisations such as that over which you preside. My observation was intended as a commentary upon the views of those, often reported in the mass media, who see the answer to all offending in more frequent and longer terms of imprisonment.

"Lest others should have drawn the same inference from my remarks as you have drawn, I shall be happy to print copies of both your letter and this reply in a future edition of the Journal. Thank you for drawing the matter to my attention.

D.M. BREBNER"

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Crime Prevention Council and the operation of Neighbourhood Watch

and would like to see the programme extended to cover
the whole of Thebarton as soon as possible

Wolfgang Waclawik
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Annette O'Rielly
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER