

The President's Column



The notions that crime is socially and economically patterned and that crime prevention is a collective community responsibility were the recurring themes of the 1991 Biennial Conference of the Australian Crime Prevention Council held in Wollongong in September of this year. Recommendations from this Conference that will require the attention of the National Executive include amongst others, support for the development of Youth Crime Prevention Councils in schools, the creation and maintenance of community safety Committees, support the concept of community policing and support for the

crime victim. Education was viewed as a linchpin to effective crime prevention and the Council's historical role in this regard was affirmed. It was also agreed that there is significant merit for the Council to sponsor crime prevention initiatives that actively enlist the involvement of the community.

The incoming Executive Committee has been charged with the responsibility for promulgating a suitable action strategy in response to these recommendations. Such an undertaking is an important, albeit onerous, task as any Strategic Plan that may be proposed, if it is to be successful, must

have relevance in its implementation across a number of jurisdictions which have disparate views on a range of criminal justice matters.

There was also a clear direction from Conference delegates that the Council should adopt a more proactive stance in relation to the facilitation of reform of the criminal justice system. The Council should, as a consequence, develop a higher public profile on issues, particularly those that relate to matters of public safety. The intensity of feeling that surfaced at the conference on the controversial gun control issue illustrates the need for such an approach.

In grasping the nettle of public exposure the Council should be prepared not only to debate issues but to advocate vigorously when required for reforms which have as potential outcomes the reduction of crime and protection of the community.

This process cannot occur in a vacuum. It demands the commitment and participation of all Council members to be vigilant to perceived deficiencies in the Criminal Justice System (within each jurisdiction) and to lobby for more reasoned approaches at a State and National level.

The Council is indebted to its colleagues in New South Wales (and particularly in Wollongong) for their energy and vision in proposing and conducting this most important Conference. It may prove to be a watershed in the

development of the Council. I would also like to thank the outgoing National Executive for their capable handling of the Council's affairs this past two years.

This edition of the Journal is the first produced under the editorship of John Van Groningen (and Don Robertson as Associate Editor). On behalf of the Council I wish them well. To our former editor Don Brebner I express the profound gratitude and respect on behalf of the membership past and present. In his role as Editor over many years Judge Brebner has raised the standard of the Journal and inspired much discussion and debate.

The strength of the Council is to be found in the dedication and insight of its membership. It is a confederation of ordinary citizens from diverse disciplines and with differing experiences who share the commendable vision of a safe, equitable, fair and peaceful society.

I urge all members to send this message forward into the community and encourage others to join with us in the translation of this vision into reality.

Mr. Clive Begg
National President.

The more weakened the groups to which (the individual) belongs, the less he depends on them, the more he consequently depends only on himself and recognizes no other rules of conduct than what are founded on his private interests.

Emile Durkheim
Suicide