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The Policing Complex

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This chapter provides an overview of law enforcement and private security. It begins with a brief discussion of the historical foundation of police in Australia, from the convict era to the transplantation of the traditional British model. Themes to be discussed are the integration of policing in the Australian federal system, the professionalisation of Australian law enforcement, and the rise of private security and its interrelationship with sworn police.

Policing in Australia is complex, contradictory, and controversial. There is recurring debate about its value to taxpayers in terms of demonstrable performance outcomes. While the rapidly increasing crime trends apparent in the 1970s and 1980s appear to have reached something of a plateau, it is unclear whether crime has been capped by the agencies responsible for maintaining order or by forces outside their control. It would seem likely, nonetheless, that the proliferation of 'policing' agencies, including the significant growth of private security, did contribute to the containment of crime in the last decade.

These achievements have come at great cost to the public and private purse, of course, and have not been free of difficulty. For example, despite some innovations in research-driven preventive strategies, public sector policing appears to have remained locked in a narrow reactive style of crime control. Moreover, revelations of crime and misconduct by police have proved to be a major distraction from the business of crime prevention. Efforts to control corruption have resulted in an additional layer of bureaucracy – 'policing the police' – on top of the already complex policing structure.

Be that as it may, as policing progresses into the twenty-first century, its various functionaries must respond to two primary challenges entailed in the process of professionalisation. The first is how to establish the highest standards of ethical conduct. The second is how to balance obligations of reactive policing with pressures to find more effective proactive strategies to reduce crime.

Dimensions of policing

The 'police'

The verb 'to police' means to control. In that sense, all agents of social control – be they parents, teachers, priests, or innumerable other persons or groups – serve, in part at least, as 'police'. As a noun, however, the word is primarily used to refer to a relatively small group of public servants employed to enforce criminal and related laws. 'The police' are responsible for investigating, prosecuting, and preventing offences defined by the criminal law, for example offences 'against the person' such as murder, rape, assault, and robbery, and property offences such as embezzlement, vandalism, and theft. Police are also tasked with control of a vast array of 'regulatory offences', such as violations of traffic laws and breaches of licensing regulations. Finally, they are expected to maintain public order generally.

Conventional policing services can be organised in very different ways. At one extreme, for example, is the highly decentralised system in the United States, while at the other is the highly centralised French system. In England, police are organised at a regional level. Australia has a federal, or State-based, system; with a small federal force, the Australian Federal Police, which enforces federal criminal laws such as fraud against the Commonwealth and drug-smuggling, and provides conventional police services in the Australian Capital Territory on a contract basis. The AFP was established in 1979 as the latest permutation of an evolving Commonwealth police service that dated back to 1917. The current State-based police systems grew out of the desire of Australian colonial administrators to retain as much authority as possible when Federation occurred in 1901. This produced large, centralised police bureaucracies, mostly covering extensive geographical areas. It also made for long-term inefficiencies. One of the more striking legacies is that New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and the ACT rely on the common law for their criminal laws, while Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory operate from criminal statutory 'codes' (Rush and Yeo 2000: 2). This arrangement continues to toss up inconsistencies in police powers, criminal laws, and the defences available to accused persons.

Unlike the United States, Australia has only eight divisions or jurisdictions – the six States, the Northern Territory, and the Commonwealth (Table 3.1). Police take up the largest proportion

TABLE 3.1 Australian Police Services at 30 June 2001

Jurisdiction	Sworn	Unsworn	Total	Budget ²
NSW	13 614	3 887	17 501	1 130 504 000
VIC	10 291	1 841	12 132	771 032 000
QLD	8 082	2 981	11 063	595 855 000
WA	4 993	1 325	6 318	370 288 000
SA	3 808	837	4 645	270 144 000
TAS	1 131	406	1 537	77 835 000
NT	985	223	1 208	81 038 000
AFP ¹	597	127	724	48 288 000
Total	43 501	11 627	55 128	3 344 984 000

Notes: ¹ Includes ACT Policing only. Budget figures relate only to funds provided by the ACT Government.

² Refers to 1999/00 and comprises recurrent expenditure on salaries and payments in the nature of salaries.

Sources: Police personnel data adapted from unpublished police data and ACT Policing Annual Report 2000/01; budget data: SCRCSSP 2001.

of Australian expenditures on the criminal justice system and related safety and security services. States and Territories in Australia spent A\$6.4 billion in 1997/98 on 'public order and safety'. This was about 8% of their total expenditure and compares with A\$19 billion for education and A\$16 billion for health (ABS 2000j: 708).

From the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s, police in Australia assumed an enormous range of duties including being responsible for inspecting weights and measures and slaughterhouse practices, collecting statistics, registering births, serving as clerks of the courts, supervising lunatics (*sic*) on leave, and issuing driving licences (Bryett et al. 1997). Police served as criminal law enforcement officers and did 'everything else' that needed doing where and when other government agencies were absent. Although many of these ancillary tasks have now been shifted to different agencies, patrol officers are still mainly occupied with activities that do not lead to criminal prosecutions. Typically, only about a third of a patrol officer's time will involve responding to incidents that become treated as offences (CJC Qld 1996). The remainder is spent resolving disputes, restoring order, or assisting people with problems such as rowdy parties, prowlers, traffic accidents, or missing persons. A given police officer's attendance at murder scenes, sieges, or major accidents is fairly rare. Australian police have thus adopted a common division of labour between a large general duties uniformed arm providing a first response, and a smaller, plain-clothes detective arm responsible for investigations and prosecutions. The legal powers of police to perform these functions were historically drawn from the general powers of citizens to arrest offenders and use force to protect people and property (depending on factors such as the severity of the offence or threat). Over the years, however, parliaments have passed specific laws giving police certain powers above and beyond those of ordinary citizens. These include such things as 'move-on' powers, the right to demand a person's name and address, the authority to disperse crowds or to apply to install a listening device or conduct a search (Leaver 1997). There has also been a trend to consolidate and clarify police powers in specific legislation, where, in the past, these powers were dispersed across numerous Acts or found in legal precedents. Legislative provisions have also ensured that police benefit from a higher level of protection than ordinary citizens when faced with false imprisonment suits or assault charges.

Specialist agencies

The work of conventional police attracts constant attention from the media, and much police and policing scholarship has also been focused on this group. Such interest is understandable, given that police assume responsibility for the more dramatic crimes, and given the frequency of police interactions with ordinary citizens through traffic law enforcement and emergency responses. However, the idea of police as the sole, or even the primary, agency responsible for law enforcement and crime prevention can no longer be taken for granted. There have always been groups other than police involved in law enforcement, and in the last three decades there has been an enormous expansion and diversification of these 'non-"police"' police. These other agencies fall into two main groups: public sector specialist agencies, and private and public sector security services. Table 3.2 lists many of the specialist public sector policing agencies.

Budget and personnel figures indicate that most of these specialist agencies are fairly small, though when added together they present a significant policing profile. The list of functions and targets shows a three-way division of labour, broadly speaking, between the following:

- tasks derived from conventional policing, such as fighting organised crime

TABLE 3.2 Composition of specialist agencies

Agency	Targets/functions	Jurisdiction	Personnel	Year established	Allocation/ expenditure
Protective Security Coordination Centre	Coordinating security for holders of high office, visiting dignitaries and diplomats	National	72.0 ¹	1977	26 411 000
Australian Protective Service	Guarding Commonwealth property	National	731.0 ¹	1984	61 166 731
National Crime Authority	Organised criminal activity	National	410.0	1984	48 355 841
Australian Customs	Smuggling, illegal entry	National	4 043.0	1985	544 593 000
NSW Crime Commission	Organised crime, drug trafficking	NSW	93.0	1986	9 432 000
ASIC	White-collar crime	National	1 225.0	1991	145 533 000
Queensland Crime Commission ³	Organised and major crime	Queensland	35.0	1998	3 048 000
Australian Institute of Police Management	Executive education, policy input	National	26.0	1960	3 258 823
Australian Bureau of Criminal Intelligence	Clearinghouse for criminal intelligence	National	66.0	1981	6 422 937
Australasian Centre for Police Research	Research assistance to police	Australasia	15.0	1983	1 277 783
AUSTRAC	Monitoring financial transactions, money-laundering and fraud	National	49.0	1988	9 588 732
National Crime Statistics Unit	Crime statistics	National	5.0	1990	510 203
National Exchange of Police Information (CrimTrac) ²	Clearing house for forensic data	National	31.0	1990?	8 006
National Institute of Forensic Science	Facilitate the use of forensic evidence	National	4.0	1991	1 060 074
Law Enforcement Coordination Division	Coordination of policing primarily at a policy level	National	53.0 ¹	1997	8 072 000
WA Ombudsman	Public sector misconduct	WA	35.0	1972	2 294 000
VIC Ombudsman	Public sector misconduct	Victoria	23.0	1973	2 776 018
NSW Ombudsman	Public sector misconduct	NSW	91.51	1975	7 219 000
Commonwealth Ombudsman	Public sector misconduct	National	85.0	1976	8 667 925
TAS Ombudsman	Public sector misconduct	Tasmania	21.0	1978	483 300
NT Ombudsman	Public sector misconduct	NT	13.0	1978	1 158 000
Police Complaints Authority	Police misconduct	SA	12.6 ¹	1985	925 930
Independent Commission Against Corruption	Public sector misconduct	NSW	146.0	1989	15 268 000
Criminal Justice Commission ³	Public sector misconduct	Queensland	263.0	1990	23 731 000
Police Integrity Commission	Police misconduct	NSW	93.0	1996	14 837 000
Anti-Corruption Commission	Public sector misconduct	WA	58.0	1996	10 270 958
Totals			7 699.1		\$956 369 261

Notes: ¹ Full time equivalent.

² From July 2000.

³ In October 2001 the Queensland Crime Commission and the Criminal Justice Commission merged to form the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

Source: 1998/99 annual reports and personal correspondence. Allocation/expenditure figures are the total revenue from government or expenditure for 1998/99. Where both figures were available, the highest figure is displayed.

- facilitative functions, such as sharing research and information
- anti-corruption tasks.

The most recent area of innovation has been associated with detection and prevention of public sector misconduct. Increasingly, this is being handled by 'standing commissions' formed to oversee and guide the development of public sector ethics.

It could be argued that the specialist agencies identified here have been too narrowly defined. The list could be extended by tens of thousands of personnel involved in law enforcement if one were to include child welfare officers, health and safety inspectors, pool fencing inspectors, parking officers, animal welfare officers, school marshals, tax officers, and military police. There are also many boards and units that combine judicial functions with inquisitorial and investigative, or *quasi-policing*, functions. These include tribunals responsible for dealing with violations of sporting codes, and human rights and equal opportunity commissions responsible for the enforcement of, for example, anti-discrimination and racial vilification legislation. A case might be made for including the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) in the list. State environmental protection agencies have emerged as a new type of policing agency responsible for investigations and prosecutions as part of their mission to prevent environmental crime. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and its State consumer protection counterparts are also emerging as prominent agencies of social control, responsible for protecting consumers and policing anti-competitive behaviour. Within their jurisdictions, many of these agencies now have considerable powers to enter property, seize evidence, give directives, require appearances, and halt operations.

Protective security

Two Commonwealth agencies, the Australian Protective Service and the Protective Security Coordination Centre, were included in the specialist agencies listed in Table 3.2. These agencies could have been included in a separate category of 'protective security'. However, government security staff are generally exempt from licensing requirements and are not, therefore, usually counted in security personnel statistics. In Table 3.3, the numbers of licensed security personnel in Australia are listed. The total of approximately 72 000 understates the true figure because most jurisdictions do not license all security occupations (apart from exempting government employees).

TABLE 3.3 Licensed security personnel

Jurisdiction	Licensed personnel ¹	Revenue from licences
NSW	32 325	unavailable
VIC	21 409	1 623 813
QLD	3 797	1 549 730
WA	4 751	68 830
SA	5 902	unavailable
TAS	1 092	110 284
NT	1 167	unavailable
ACT	1 367	260 000
<i>Total</i>	<i>71 810</i>	<i>3 812 657</i>

Note: ¹ Includes licensees holding a company licence.

Source: 1998/99 annual reports and personal correspondence.

Were these unlicensed groups to be included, the figure would probably increase to between 90 000 and 100 000 (Prenzler and Sarre 1999).

Available data do not allow for a reliable breakdown of security personnel into public and private sector, nor into 'in-house' and 'contract' security. Very rough approximations suggest that about a quarter of licensed security personnel are in the public sector, and about a quarter are 'in-house' in the private sector. Security services are focused on crime prevention through various forms of guardianship, such as static guards, mobile patrols, and the installation and application of security hardware. Table 3.4 sets out the main divisions in labour, with wide differences apparent in the types of tasks performed and the levels of technical or interpersonal skills required. There are also numerous related occupations with input into security, such as architecture and town planning, insurance, financial auditing, fire services, and computer software design. ABS figures indicate that private security is a labour-intensive industry, with 58% of expenditure on labour costs and 72% of staff deployed in guarding and crowd control. In 1998/99 the private contract sector had an estimated income of A\$1.4 billion (ABS 2000i).

The diversification of policing

For most of the period since British settlement, conventional police forces in Australia have had a predominant role in crime prevention and law enforcement. While there has never been a public police monopoly, it is now apparent that there has been a considerable diversification of policing in the last few decades with the expansion of the various 'non-police' agencies mentioned above. This is consistent with developments in other countries and gives rise to concepts such as the 'pluralisation' of policing (Bayley and Shearing 1996), a police 'continuum of activity' (Jones and Newburn 1998), and the 'greying' of policing (Hoogenboom 1991; Johnston 1992). Perhaps the most significant development in this 'mixed economy' of policing (Loader 1997) has been the growth of contracted security services, especially private security. The data presented in the section above indicate that there are at least two private security officers for every sworn police officer, and there has been a great deal of media interest, mainly negative, in the idea of private security 'taking over' police roles and functions. However, in considering this apparent usurpation

TABLE 3.4 Main security positions and functions

Position	Function
Inquiry agent	Obtain evidence for litigation, search for missing persons, conduct anti-fraud surveillance
Guard/security officer	Provide protection through static guarding, patrol, call-out, entry/exit screening, and cash-in-transit
Crowd controller	Protect patrons in places of entertainment
Bodyguard	Protect individuals
Consultant	Conduct security audits, advise on security needs and security equipment
Security manager	Oversee all aspects of security within an organisation
Equipment Manufacturer and distributor	Research, production, marketing and distribution of security equipment
Equipment installer	Install and service security equipment including locks, alarms and CCTV
Control room operator	Monitor security cameras, access control and alarm systems
Trainer	Teach security competencies

Source: Prenzler and Sarre 1998.

of the public police role, it should be kept in mind that police are part of the larger criminal justice system. Their authority is substantially drawn from the authority of other justice systems, essentially courts and corrections. Specific legislation confirms and substantiates police powers to deprive civilians of their liberty and to force compliance with their directions in accordance with the law. Private security officers do not, for the most part, enjoy those privileges.

Be that as it may, there has been a significant privatisation of many aspects of policing. In using the term 'privatisation', however, one needs to differentiate it from the usual understanding of the term in management parlance: downsizing, outsourcing, and selling off. With the exception of temporary cuts to some Commonwealth policing agencies by the Commonwealth Government in 1996/97, police numbers have not been reduced and police infrastructure has not been sold into private hands. There is little evidence of key police functions being outsourced, though some local governments have taken to contracting with private security services in shopping malls and beach front precincts, for example. In fact, as Figure 3.1 shows, public police numbers have increased over the twentieth century and in terms of the ratio of police to population are currently at their highest level for 100 years. The process of privatisation of policing has, therefore, mainly entailed growth in the diversity of providers and tasks.

What has caused this diversity and expansion? A broadening market for security services throughout the last 20 years allowed private suppliers to eclipse government providers in, for example, surveillance services, some patrol work, alarm monitoring, custodial transfers, and crime prevention. Although official statistics do not allow for a reliable analysis of the historical process, it is likely that the number of security personnel overtook police in the 1970s or 1980s, as they did in many developed countries. While security work does not involve the same degree of use of force, arrest, and emergency response as conventional policing, it arguably makes a larger contribution to crime control through a more diffuse application of crime prevention technologies. Growth rates appeared to moderate in the 1990s, but may still be as high as 5% per annum in terms of the ratio of security providers to population (Prenzler and Sarre 1999). Some of the consequences of the mix of public and private policing will be reviewed towards the end of this chapter.

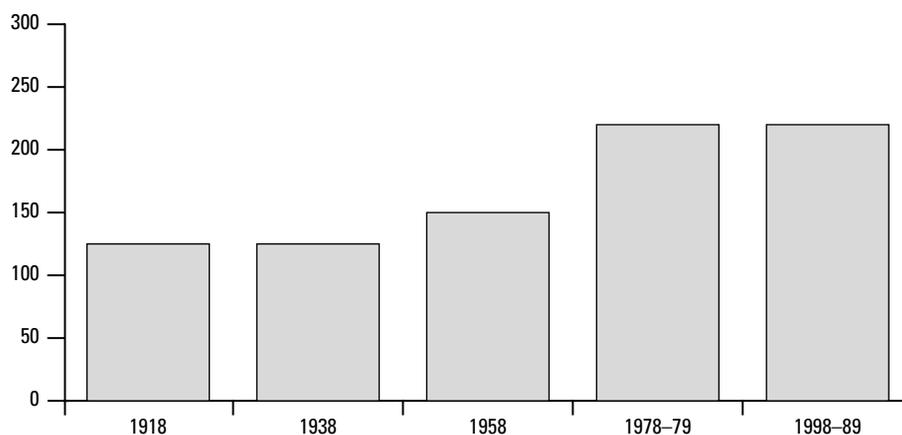


FIGURE 3.1 Australia (excluding NT and ACT/AFP): police officers per 100 000 population, Source: ABS Yearbooks.

Police conduct

A brief history

Perhaps the most glaring contradiction one finds in examining the policing complex is the existence of heroism and self-sacrifice alongside corruption and abuse of authority. Policing in Australia began in a discreditable fashion, and it could be argued that it was only in the last part of the twentieth century that police began to recover from a colonial and convict legacy, at least in the eastern mainland States. The marines who arrived with the first ships from England in January 1788 at Port Jackson loathed the police role imposed on them, evaded their responsibilities, stole food, and sexually exploited female convicts. The New South Wales Corps that replaced them in 1795 became known as the 'Rum Corps' because of its organisation of a corrupt trade in spirits. Architects of civil policing were obliged to try to make police officers out of reformed convicts. The combination of ex-convicts as constables, the inclusion of corporal punishment in their duties, and the policing of a convict population created a cauldron of hostility and conflict. The influx of free settlers opened the way for the brutal suppression of the Indigenous population as well. The frontier environment created a haven for escaped convicts and bushrangers (O'Malley 1979), with problems of disorder greatly exacerbated by the gold rushes in the mid-nineteenth century. All of these factors led to the adoption of a military style of police organisation, with a focus on the use of arms, the summary use of deadly force, regimental discipline, and separation from the community (Bryett et al. 1997).

The expansion of colonial self-government from the mid-nineteenth century put police on a more professional footing. However, relations between police and community were marred by a number of factors, including the forcible suppression of the great strikes of the 1880s and 1890s. A puritan minority imposed prohibitions on gambling, alcohol, and other 'vices', creating an environment ripe for corruption. Moreover, these laws exacerbated animosities between police and the working-class constituency from whence many police came. The period from colonial self-government through Federation (1901), statehood, and until the 1950s is marked by uncertainty about the level of police probity and the winning of public support. Something of a paradoxical situation obtains in that the limited research undertaken on the period shows many dismissals of police for misconduct while highlighting 'a continuity of allegations of corruption' (Finnane 1999: 28). Occasional judicial inquiries were severely constrained and tended merely to perpetuate suspicions about police behaviour and propriety.

Inquiries into police corruption

The first inquiry to break through this pattern was the Fitzgerald Commission in Queensland, convened from 1987 to 1989. Dogged investigative journalists, courageous police whistle-blowers, and a renegade police minister forced the inquiry on the government. The Fitzgerald Commission was distinctive for two reasons. In the first instance, it cracked open the hard kernel of corruption – the Licensing Branch – to reveal a lucrative racket that protected vice operations (essentially prostitution and gaming). It revealed 'top to bottom' corruption, and culminated with the jailing of former police Commissioner (then Sir) Terence Lewis for accepting bribes. The second distinctive feature was that the Commission also developed a critique of police mismanagement that was extended to include the whole system of deficient democracy in the State. The Queensland Police Force, Fitzgerald (1989: 200) declared,

is debilitated by misconduct, inefficiency, incompetence, and deficient leadership. The situation is compounded by poor organisation and administration, inadequate resources, and insufficiently developed techniques and skills for the task of law enforcement in a modern complex society. Lack of discipline, cynicism, disinterest, frustration, anger and low self-esteem are the result. The culture which shares responsibility for and is supported by this grossly unsatisfactory situation includes contempt for the criminal justice system, disdain for the law and rejection of its application to police, disregard for the truth, and abuse of authority.

The report stimulated a major restructuring of policing in Queensland and brought the public sector in line with the more progressive States through electoral reform, greater transparency, and the establishment of an independent anti-corruption body, the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC).

Likewise, New South Wales went through the long and painful process of a royal commission into police corruption from 1994 to 1997. The findings of Justice Wood confirmed the suspicions of many that New South Wales had always had significant levels of police malfeasance. Corruption possibly reached its apogee, and became deeply politically enmeshed, under the Liberal Premiership of Sir Robert Askin from 1965 to 1975 (Hickie 1985). By the 1990s, direct political connections were apparently severed and the pervasiveness of the rackets may have been mitigated by the liberalisation of laws regarding vice and liquor licensing. Nonetheless, organised protection and graft were central to the Wood revelations, along with other classical forms of police misconduct such as fabrication of evidence ('process corruption') and assaults on suspects. The Commission's findings indicate the diversity, intensity, and extensiveness of police malpractice that had prevailed (Wood 1997). The following comments were made by Commissioner Wood:

A state of systematic and entrenched corruption existed within the Service. (p. 84)

In almost every segment of the evidence called, the issue of process corruption reared its head, comprising variously: perjury, planting of evidence, verbals in the forms of unsigned records of interview and note book confessions ... assaults and pressure to induce confessions ... [and] tampering with the product of electronic interception. (p. 84)

There was abundant evidence of the ready availability of various forms of gratuities ranging from small amounts of money to free liquor, meals and sexual services. (p. 95)

It became apparent that there have been serious problems with drinking on duty ... particularly among detectives. (p. 97)

Systematic abuse [was uncovered] within the Physical Surveillance Branch involving the falsification of duty books and surveillance logs, and of travel, overtime and meals claims, and the adoption of work practices that saw members of the Branch engaging in recreational pursuits [mainly golf] at times when they were posted on duty. (p. 102)

Evidence was called of various ways in which police interfered with prosecutions, or provided favourable treatment to persons brought within the criminal justice system. This variously occurred ... in return for bribes ... [and] as an act of friendship extended to criminals. (p. 109)

In a disturbingly large number of cases, the Royal Commission received complaints of money and property having been stolen by police in the course of routine police work. (p. 114)

Theft and extortion from criminals had become regular features of policing in some sections. (p. 114)

There was an overwhelming body of evidence suggesting the existence of close relationships between police and those involved in the supply of drugs ... A controlled environment was created. (pp. 119–20)

The protection of clubs and vice operators was at Kings Cross conducted on much the same basis as that for the drug suppliers. Key members of the group involved in 'the laugh' and various Kings Cross identities admitted to the regular payment of corrupt monies for these purposes. (p. 123)

Perhaps most disturbing of all was the extent to which police admitted to being directly involved in the supply of cocaine, heroin and cannabis. (p. 133)

The Commissioner's report also revealed extensive fraud in employment benefits, 'cover-ups' of drunk-driving accidents involving police, and an extremely serious neglect by police of the activities of paedophiles.

The other police services in Australia have varied considerably in their experience of allegations of misconduct. WA Police have been plagued by claim and counter-claim regarding corruption, with no resolution despite the establishment of an Anti-Corruption Commission in 1996 (McDonnell 2000). Victoria Police too faced frequent allegations of scandal. Some of the more prominent controversies and claims across the last three decades have concerned, among other things:

- inappropriate covert activities of the Special Branch responsible for political surveillance
- 'pay-back' shootings of known criminals
- the use of deadly force against people, including mentally ill people, at rates far in excess of those recorded in other jurisdictions
- sexual harassment and discrimination against women police
- harassment of police whistleblowers
- systematic abuse of strip searching
- rape of women
- suspicious murders involving police (FCLCV 1999; Hoser 1999).

The most organised form of corruption officially exposed in the Victoria Police was a scheme spanning several decades involving preferential notifications to emergency security hardware installers. Investigations resulted in disciplinary charges against approximately 550 police officers (Ombudsman of Victoria 1998). Pressure for a royal commission into the Victoria Police has been reduced by the establishment of an Ethical Standards Department, continuing external review by the Ombudsman's Office, and the Task Force Victor (1994) report on revised firearms procedures. Nonetheless, where the Ombudsman's office has claimed success in exposing misconduct, this has been, arguably, piecemeal and highly dependent on whistleblowers. The absence of a large-scale and thorough commission of inquiry like those of Fitzgerald or Wood inevitably leaves many issues unresolved and allows doubts about current levels of integrity to surface regularly.

The corruption problem has extended well beyond State police, with officers from the Australian Federal Police and the National Crime Authority also implicated in the Wood Royal Commission. The Commonwealth Government refused to release the 1997 report of the Harrison Inquiry into corruption in the AFP, falling back on the shibboleth of 'trust us' to fix the problem. Accountability of federal police agencies remains contentious, with the Commonwealth Government rejecting a key Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) Report recommendation

for a powerful watchdog agency to oversee the AFP and NCA (ALRC 1996). In general, the other specialist agencies considered here have not attracted the same amount of concern. This is possibly due to a mix of factors, including less opportunity for corruption and more professional cultures. Indeed, agencies that attract a more diverse and educated personnel profile, including accountants and lawyers, are perhaps less inclined towards impropriety.

Consistent with trends in other Western countries, the period from the 1960s in Australia has seen the development of a more general critique of unethical and inappropriate police practices, often couched in terms of 'over-policing' and 'under-policing', especially of minority groups (e.g. Cunneen 1992, 2001; Maher et al. 1997). There was growing disquiet over police neglect of victims, mostly female, of 'hidden' crimes such as domestic violence and sexual assault (Hatty 1989). The 1991 report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC 1991b, vol. 3) was highly critical of reactive arrest practices carried out by police when dealing with problems of disorder and crime among Aboriginal Australians. Police have also been criticised for persecuting minor drug users while neglecting crimes by corporations and white-collar criminals. There have been repeated criticisms of police behaviour in relation to high-speed pursuits, excessive force against public demonstrators, and the use of arrest rather than notices to appear (e.g. Fitzgerald 1989; RCIADIC 1991b, vol. 3; Homel 1994; Brown, James and Sutton 1997; Chan 1997; CJC Qld 1999b).

Many of the problems of police conduct relate directly to the 'macho' culture of policing. Until recently, police adopted a military model of recruitment and training in preparation for a 'war' against criminals (McCulloch 2000). They recruited from a narrow band of young Anglo-Saxon working-class males who fitted a strict physical ideal. Women police were first appointed during World War I but were retained in very small numbers until well into the 1970s. It was not until 2001 that a woman was appointed to a top police job – the appointment of Christine Nixon as Chief Commissioner of Police in Victoria. With a few exceptions, police managers, rank-and-file police, and police unions have been united in their resistance to women as police officers. Fair employment practices were imposed on police, however, through anti-discrimination legislation, yet police have used various subterfuges, such as obstacle course tests in recruitment, to by-pass the laws. There remains significant variance between the eight main police agencies in meeting equity and access targets – a difference largely attributable to varying commitments on the part of senior managers (Prenzler and Hayes 2000). Figure 3.2 shows that policing remains an overwhelmingly male occupation, with women making up 15% of sworn officers in 1998 (clustered in the lower ranks). The number of sworn females is increasing, but the rate is extremely slow at approximately 0.4% per annum. Greater attention needs to be given to flexible employment practices to discourage the attrition of female officers.

This 'macho' culture appears to be slowly breaking down in Australia as a result of a number of factors. Apart from the expansion of women police, there are now policies aimed at recruiting more Indigenous Australians and recruits from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Representation of these groups in the ranks of sworn officers around Australia, however, remains very low. For example, in New South Wales, possibly the most progressive State in human resource management, only 0.6% of sworn police officers identify as Indigenous, and only 2.1% are from non-English-speaking backgrounds. In comparison, 1.8% of the New South Wales population is Indigenous and 10.5% of the population was born overseas in a non-English-speaking country (ABS 1999g; NSWPS 1999). Anti-discrimination legislation has meant that more mature and better-educated recruits are contributing to the changing profile of policing

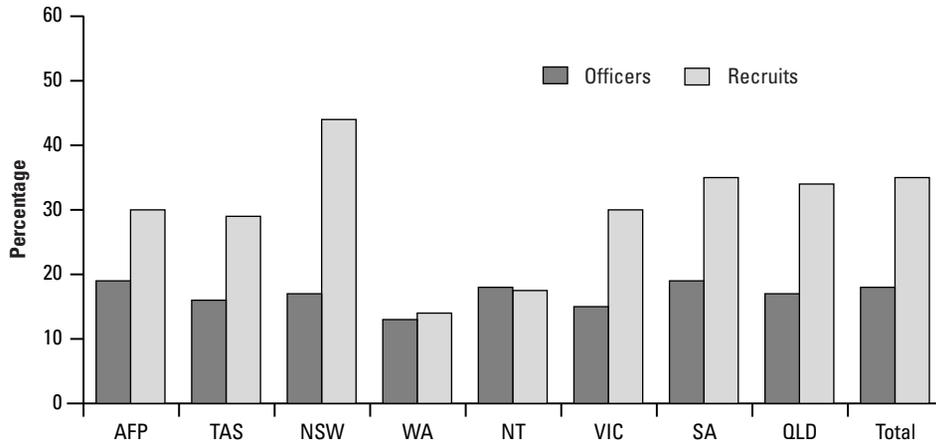


FIGURE 3.2 Female police officers and recruits
 Source: 1997/98 police annual reports.

following the removal of restrictions on age, height, and weight which were, with the value of hindsight, absurd. 'Civilianisation' is also a significant feature of the new policing profile. The impact of these changes on styles of policing is not yet clear, but there is a growing body of research that suggests that women are better able to manage conflict with citizens and are less likely to attract complaints (Braithwaite and Brewer 1998; Waugh et al. 1998). The issue of police culture is, and will remain, an important focus of academic attention (Chan 2000).

Policing the police

The misconduct problem in policing has necessitated the creation of an additional dimension of complexity through institutional measures designed to detect and prevent corruption. The most prominent development has been the creation of expensive independent watchdog bodies for police (Table 3.5). The approximate cost of this oversight (combining the percentage figures in Table 3.5 with the budget figures in Table 3.2) is A\$46 million per annum. For most of their

TABLE 3.5 Police oversight agencies

Jurisdiction	Oversight body	% police complaints
NSW	Ombudsman	26
NSW	Police Integrity Commission	100
VIC	Ombudsman	49
QLD	Criminal Justice Commission	63
WA	Ombudsman	50
WA	Anti-Corruption Commission	51
SA	Police Complaints Authority	100
TAS	Ombudsman	12
NT	Ombudsman	35
ACT/AFP	Commonwealth Ombudsman	3
<i>Average</i>		<i>53</i>

Source: 1989/99 police annual reports and personal communications.

existence, Australian police agencies have operated under a simple minimalist model of accountability. In this system, primary responsibility for misconduct lies with police disciplinary command, with relatively detached operational oversight by the police minister and Parliament, and scrutiny of police conduct by the courts (Sarre 1989). Ironically, the principle of the separation of powers, and of constabulary independence that lies behind this 'detached' approach, is intended to prevent corruption and politicisation of policing. In some instances the occurrence of scandal prompted the creation of specialist internal affairs departments. Renewed evidence of corruption in the NSW Police Service as recently as 2001 shows this simple model of corruption prevention to have been less than successful.

There is a strong correlation between the experience of a major inquiry and the imposition of external control over police conduct. Hence Queensland and New South Wales have the most powerful oversight bodies in the wake of Fitzgerald and Wood. In New South Wales, oversight is divided between the Ombudsman's Office, which deals with medium-level misconduct, and the Police Integrity Commission, which is responsible primarily for investigating allegations of serious corruption. A disconcerting aspect coming out of New South Wales was that the Wood Royal Commission revealed extensive corruption *despite* a major internal reform program under Commissioner Avery in the 1980s and the establishment of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in 1989. These circumstances appear to underscore the difficulties of penetrating the organisational 'code of silence'. Nevertheless, there is good reason to acknowledge the necessity of a well-resourced standing commission against corruption and misconduct, making maximum use of high-technology strategies to control improprieties such as covert surveillance, integrity testing, and drug and alcohol testing.

Most of the jurisdictions that escaped the purging fire of a full inquiry continue to operate under a relatively weak ombudsman-style model of complaints against police (Lewis 1999). A prominent feature of current debate in Australian policing concerns the division of labour between police and external bodies in responsibility for anti-misconduct initiatives and the investigation and adjudication of complaints (e.g. Goldsmith 1991). This is a debate that will continue to dominate policing policy-making, especially in the context of police violence (Goldsmith 2000).

Allegations of misconduct often overshadow the countless acts of self-sacrifice and heroism performed daily by Australian police. These acts occur at all levels of law enforcement but are mainly found in front-line public policing. Misconduct allegations also overshadow the victimisation of police that occurs regularly in the form of injuries and abuse. Research indicates that general duties police can expect to be punched and scratched at least three times each year. Police also face the prospect of being bitten, stabbed, spat on, and infected by bodily fluids during the course of their duties (CJC Qld 1998). Police deaths on duty are always tragic and receive appropriate media coverage. Although policing may not be Australia's most dangerous occupation, the unpredictability of attacks on police adds greatly to the stress of policing from tasks such as attending road accidents and dealing with victims of violent crime (Savery et al. 1993). In reviewing police conduct, then, Commissioner Fitzgerald's qualifications to his 1989 condemnations of the Queensland Police Force should be kept in mind: 'Not all police officers are responsible for the nature of the police culture. Many officers retain their integrity and provide meritorious and usually unrecognised service' (Fitzgerald 1989: 200).

Operational accountability and strategic initiatives to reduce crime

The 1980s and 1990s in Australia have witnessed an increasing emphasis on government accountability through quantitative measures of efficiency and effectiveness. The trend has flowed through to police, where managers and policy-makers have had to come to terms with a new paradigm of accountability based around performance indicators (Grabosky 1989). While public police commonly obtain high scores in surveys of citizen satisfaction (CJC Qld 2000c), rigorous evaluation of effectiveness is problematic because of the number of confounding variables influencing crime. Nonetheless, three critical policy dimensions can be identified as emerging from this emphasis on accountability. The first concerns the principle that police must involve the community in 'partnership' approaches to solving problems of crime, disorder, and victimisation. The second dimension relates to the unprecedented attention given to the issue of demonstrable outcomes in crime prevention. The third policy issue concerns how police should relate to private providers.

Crime prevention and community policing

The establishment of the National Crime Authority in 1984 represented a turning point for policing in Australia. This initiative followed a series of inquiries into organised crime which recognised a need for a new type of agency, 'essential to counteract organised crime because the traditional law enforcement bodies, police services, were perceived as largely ineffective for that purpose' (Leaver 1997: 342). Since then, the evolution of Australian policing has been one of continuing fragmentation, as shown in the first section of this chapter, with attempts to generate cooperation through the creation of even more agencies. There are other manifestations of dissatisfaction with the traditional structure and methods of policing. The growth of private security and public sector security is an obvious one. Less obvious, perhaps, has been the growing interest of local government in crime and safety issues (Sarre and Prenzler 2000). In another major departure from tradition, the initiative in crime prevention is shifting to other government departments with programs designed to integrate the work of a range of service providers. South Australia's Together Against Crime Strategy was launched in 1989 and located in the State Attorney-General's Department. Other jurisdictions, including Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland, have followed suit, as has the Commonwealth with the National Campaign Against Violence and Crime launched in 1997 (now National Crime Prevention) and located in the federal Attorney-General's Department in Canberra.

Police are secondary players in this refocusing of policy and action against crime. Some critics have seen 'non-police' initiatives as an unwelcome usurpation, arguing that it 'absolves police from responsibility for improving their effectiveness and ensures that the proposition that "nothing works" in policing will become self-fulfilling' (Brereton 2000: 125). However, police have also experienced renewal in their mission through initiatives in 'community policing' – although this has tended to be imposed on police from the outside. Defining precisely what is meant by 'community policing' is difficult (Sarre 1996), but essentially this style of policing insists that police engage and inspire the community towards greater participation in maintaining order and reducing crime through a process of local consultation. One early Australian study of the Frankston (Victoria) Police Community Involvement Program was cautiously optimistic of success, but only if changes were made to the management, supervision, promotion, and training

structures within the Victoria Police (Beyer 1993). Since then, there has been a well-documented failure of consultation, although the reasons for failure are complex. Not only is there a fundamental problem in asking untrained, unpaid volunteers to assist the policing process, such as in the sometimes feted, though more often maligned, Neighbourhood Watch program (Mukherjee and Wilson 1987; Corns 1988), but there are major difficulties in formalising and implementing accountability structures. Moreover, community consultation often entails irreconcilable priorities (Sutton 2000). For example, police may be pressured by some members of the community to implement a night curfew for teenagers, which acts counter to the aims of other stakeholders who may be appealing to young people to become involved with their community and its civic leaders. Policing strategies, therefore, that attempt to be all things to all people are likely to fail. It is also rare for such projects to divert sufficient resources and interest away from the dominant law-and-order paradigm (Sutton 2000).

For police to remain effective players in the strategic future of crime prevention, they may need to embrace broader social justice and social policy issues in keeping with the broader prevention initiatives of the last ten to 15 years. Unfortunately, research on police management styles in Australia suggests that lack of strategic thinking and resistance to experimentation means it is unlikely that many innovations will come from within police organisations in the foreseeable future (Densten 1999).

Despite this pessimistic picture, there is optimism among some scholars over the potential role for police in crime prevention (Brereton 2000). This follows three decades of international research on the topic. In the most comprehensive review to date, Sherman and associates (1997: n.p.) concluded that:

Hiring more police to provide rapid 911 [000] responses, unfocused random patrol, and reactive arrests does not prevent serious crime. Community policing without a clear focus on crime risk factors generally shows no effect on crime. But directed patrols, proactive arrests and problem-solving at high-crime 'hot spots' has shown substantial evidence of crime prevention. Police can prevent robbery, disorder, gun violence, drunk driving and domestic violence, but only using certain methods and under certain conditions.

One of the most systematic Australian studies to address this issue used three case studies to demonstrate both the limits and the potential for police in crime reduction (Homel 1994). The first case study examined the impact of the Victoria police strike of 1923. It is clear from this event (and similar occurrences in other countries) that the withdrawal of police services may lead to an outbreak of opportunistic crime and disorder. Having said that, there was no automatic descent into anarchy at the time. Most citizens continued to obey the law. Alternative 'police' were quickly marshalled into forming *ad hoc* protection groups; temporary constables were sworn in. This scenario shows that police services play an important role in the maintenance of public order but that they need not be the sole providers of order maintenance.

The second example concerned *counter-productive* police strategies. In a Perth-based study, Homel analysed the impact of police high-speed pursuits of vehicles stolen mainly for joyrides. He found that police were firmly committed to the necessity of pursuits to catch offenders in order to incapacitate them, deter 'copy cats,' and maintain respect for police authority. However, contrary to police assumptions, the risks to public safety considerably outweighed the crime prevention effects. Very few offenders were caught, those caught were not deterred by fear of incarceration, numerous accidents and some deaths occurred as a result of pursuits, and many offenders were attracted to the crime by the prospect of a police chase.

In the third case, that of random breath testing, and based on a New South Wales study, Homel showed that strategically directed law enforcement could greatly increase compliance with drink-driving laws and produce dramatic reductions in road accidents, deaths, and injuries. But these outcomes depended on a strict application of randomisation and testing of all drivers in combination with widespread advertising to ensure the maximum deterrent effect. It was essential that police refrained from traditional practices of non-systematic, discretionary testing.

The first case study underscores the important role police play in containing crime and diffusing potentially explosive situations such as sieges and demonstrations. The challenge, however, lies in moving beyond this 'fire brigade' model of policing to obtain greater crime reduction per dollar spent. The limited penetration of crime by traditional methods of arrest and prosecution is best illustrated by reviewing data on the disposition of cases coming to police attention. Police annual reports continue to rely on the questionable concept of 'clearance', which primarily means that a suspect was prosecuted for an offence. At least 10% of these prosecutions fail (ABS 2000j: 318). Police obtain high clearance rates for murder, but this drops significantly for crimes such as robbery, where there are greater difficulties in obtaining evidence, and then drops to 20% for car theft and 10% for burglary (Table 3.6). Overall, research indicates that at least 70% of crime reported to police remains unsolved (Mukherjee 1996).

Problem-oriented policing

Problem-oriented policing (POP) is a strategy where police analyse crime-related problems and, in consultation with community members and other agencies, develop targeted intervention strategies, evaluate the impact, and make modifications where necessary. It has now largely superseded community policing as the most likely source of crime reductions by police. At present, some of the most promising research in this area, internationally and in Australia, concerns intervening in repeat victimisation. This stems from the finding that police often attend to the same victims or visit the same localities on numerous occasions. Trialling different responses to repeat calls means that systemic causes of problems might be addressed and the problem substantially reduced or even 'solved' (Sutton and Fisher 1989). Random breath testing provides a good example of 'problem-oriented policing'. Attempts to obtain the best from both community policing and problem-oriented policing have led to the concept of 'problem-oriented and partnership policing' (POPP rather than POP) (QPS 1998). Australian police services appear to have been broadly responsive to the notion of becoming problem-solvers, at least at the policy level. But in order for such approaches to become more widespread and accepted at the operational level there needs to be a greater commitment to information-gathering, the development of theoretical expertise, and a restructuring of work processes to free up personnel to engage in problem-solving analyses (Brereton 2000).

Perhaps one of the most significant ironies of the broader pluralisation of public sector policing is that it has done little to reduce the basic criticisms regarding inefficiency and ineffectiveness. In particular, critics argue that the new 'super' agencies targeting organised crime and

TABLE 3.6 Clearance of crimes reported to police, Australia, 1994–95

Crime	Murder	Assault	Robbery	Burglary	Motor vehicle theft
% cleared	87.5	68.9	34.7	10.5	20.3

Source: Mukherjee and Graycar 1997: 70.

drug-smuggling have failed to stop the 'Mr Bigs' of the underworld. Despite catching some key players and despite perennial media coverage of major drug interceptions, these interdictions appear to have had little impact on the ready supply of illicit drugs on the black market. Moreover, there appears to be a serious resource imbalance between the supply-side law enforcement approach and the demand-side 'harm minimisation' approaches such as addiction treatment, managed prescription supply, or safe injecting rooms. From that perspective, many of the hundreds of deaths from overdoses each year may in part be attributed to the prejudice and ignorance of the law-and-order lobby. Australia's high robbery and property crime rates are also inflated by the effects of prohibition on the price of drugs and the social alienation of addicts (Makkai 2000). Analyses of many of the regulatory agencies concerned with consumer protection, anti-discrimination, and environmental crime added to this negative critique in terms of the concept of 'regulatory failure'. Pioneering Australian research identified a major problem with under-enforcement by these agencies, due occasionally to inadequate powers and resources but in large part attributable to a culture of deference to the powerful private and public sector bodies whose behaviour was the target of regulation (Grabosky and Braithwaite 1986). Consistent with the contemporary emphasis on performance outcomes, many of these agencies are now showing a greater sophistication concerning regulation through a combination of well-publicised prosecutions (with heavy sanctions) and various modes of consultation, advice, and assistance to industry regarding compliance – strategies encapsulated in the new terminology of 'responsive regulation' (Ayres and Braithwaite 1995) and 'smart regulation' (Gunningham and Grabosky 1998). There have also been advances allowing for the confiscation of criminal assets, and the opportunity – albeit limited (Freiberg and Fox 1999) – for recovery of monies provides a new rationale for some specialist agencies.

The mix of public and private policing

Despite the many substantive criticisms made of policing strategies, rigorous research on the impact of policing in Australia has been rare. A respectable hypothesis is that the expansion and diversification of policing in the last three decades contributed to the stabilisation of crime rates in the 1990s. It appears that the growing assumption of the self-provision of security is a key element of this greatly expanded attention to, and investment in, crime prevention. Furthermore, a notable aspect of this process is that private security providers have overtaken public police in terms of numbers – a type of 'privatisation by default', as some critics have argued. The growth of security services continued in the 1990s for a number of reasons including the increasing recognition that conventional policing cannot provide the level of guardianship necessary to prevent crime. This situation has been greatly exacerbated by the enormous proliferation of opportunities for crime in the post-World War II period that derived from a combination of changing lifestyles and increased material prosperity (Felson 1998; and see Chapter 1 of this volume). There has been a much greater physical separation between commercial, industrial, and residential areas and a consequent reduction in 'natural surveillance'. Increased rates of workforce participation and expanded leisure opportunities have meant there are fewer guardians in people's residences to protect remaining occupants and property, and decreased guardianship coincided with large increases in the number, portability and value of targets. All of this adds up to a greater demand for the services that private policing can provide (Reynolds and Wilson 1996). Even greatly expanded police services would not be able to provide the type of 24-hour, tailor-made security that is now common.

The true picture of the private sector is not, of course, an entirely sanguine one. Inquiries into private security operations have been conducted by the ACCC, the NSW Police Service and WA Police, the NSW ICAC, and the Victorian Community Council Against Violence (Prenzler 2000). Specific problems identified in the 1980s and 1990s included fraud in alarm and patrols services, illegal trade in confidential information, a major problem with violence by crowd controllers, under-award payment of employees, threats to public safety through discharge of firearms, and inadequate training. There have been recurring questions about crimes such as theft and robbery by security providers against their clients or employers, and there are recurring criticisms by civil libertarians of security staff exceeding their powers. Some of the documented forms of misconduct have involved collusion with police.

This gives rise to the question if the accountability of private operatives is adequate, especially in light of advances in oversight of police. Often sweeping statements are made asserting that accountability for private security operations is either non-existent or, at the very least, inferior to that attaching to public policing. At the opposite end of the spectrum, and in some security industry circles, it is sometimes asserted that the sector is adequately accountable and thus needs little further regulation. The confused picture that results may be seen in part as a consequence of the lack of an integrated approach to the accountability issue, a lack of appropriate definition of terms, or an inability of participants to appreciate the power of private security to influence people's lives (Sarre 2000). Private operators have no more power than ordinary citizens to effect an arrest, engage in search and seizure, and so forth. While that may be true legally, the powers attaching to private security personnel are the very considerable powers that attach to private ownership and control over private property, and that allow employers to control, to a large extent, the master-servant relationship (Sarre 1994). Public police are not, for the most part, able to conduct random searches and seizures, nor to exclude people in an arbitrary fashion from access to places and services to which others may be entitled. Yet those tasks are carried out quite legally every day by private security operators in so far as they are acting within the scope of the authority delegated to them as agents of their employers. Public police cannot run security checks on people seeking public housing, employment, or bank loans, yet private security regularly effect such inquiries, legally and sometimes illegally as well.

There are a number of accountability mechanisms that can have some force in the regulation of private security. Licensing and other statutory regimes, industry self-regulation, market forces, civil suits, criminal laws, and administrative requirements provide an overall picture of accountability that suggests that private security activities are more visible and answerable than a first glance might reveal (Sarre and Prenzler 1999). Furthermore, all States and the Territories have in place a licensing system based on criminal history checks, character references, and prescribed training (Table 3.7). All jurisdictions have adopted this legislative approach, targeting crowd controllers, contract security guards, and security firms in particular. Yet only New South Wales, South Australia, and Western Australia have systems that license most security functions. Thus there exists, overall, a significant lack of uniformity in licensing criteria. Mandated training standards for guards and crowd controllers – aimed at underwriting basic competency – remains minimal, with a prescribed average of approximately one week. Recent regulatory initiatives appear to be producing improvements in integrity and competency, though further monitoring is required. Licensing of personnel cannot, on its own, provide a universal panacea against misconduct.

The great bulk of police and security work occurs without direct interaction between public and private personnel. Formal relationships are still largely infrequent but current trends may see

TABLE 3.7 Regulatory agencies and legislation for the licensing of private security agents

State	Agency	Legislation
ACT	Consumer Affairs	<i>Fair Trading Act 1992</i>
NSW	Police Ministry	<i>Security Industry Act 1997</i>
NT	Consumer Affairs	<i>Private Security Act 1995</i>
QLD	Fair Trading	<i>Security Providers Act 1993</i>
SA	Consumer Affairs	<i>Security and Investigation Agents Act 1995</i>
TAS	Police	<i>Commercial and Inquiry Agents Act 1974</i>
VIC	Police	<i>Private Agents (Amendment) Act 1990</i>
WA	Police	<i>Security and Related Activities (Control) Act 1996</i>

Source: Prenzler and Sarre 1998, updated.

some changes in the future. It is likely that the two sectors will more and more cross each other's paths because of the blurring of distinctions between areas that are private and areas that are public, and because of the movement of offenders and targets across these often intangible 'borders' (RCIADIC 1999a). At the same time, *ad hoc* and established partnerships are occurring and have become unavoidable because of overlapping responsibilities, outsourcing, and joint enterprises. The successful cooperative security arrangements for the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney is the most recent and large-scale example, but others occur regularly in areas such as maintaining order in sporting events. In another permutation of the privatisation theme, the WA Ministry of Justice contracted out in 1999, under licence, court security, police lock-up, and prisoner custody functions to Corrections Corporation of Australia (CCA). Once police cells have been 'prescribed' by regulation, they fall under the aegis of CCA, giving rise to the situation in which different policing and security functions will be controlled by public and private entities operating in the same precinct. The thinking behind this plan is that, under an integrated public-private regime, sworn police officers will be released to do other tasks and the quality of essential services will improve. With written standards firmly benchmarked, the standard of policing – public and private – is expected to improve, through the so-called 'cross-fertilisation' effect (Harding 1997: 19).

Cooperation between public and private police means that procedures are required to standardise these partnerships. Regular meetings between key executives should occur at both the operational level and executive level through the creation of standing committees involving police and senior private figures. Regulating cooperation means that police licensing of the security industry (as currently occurs in NSW, Vic., WA, and Tas.) may have to be moved to another department to enhance a sense of equality and partnership. Additionally, while there are reasons to encourage an evolutionary merging of public and private policing, there are also good reasons for caution about closer cooperation. Apart from the potential for corrupt relations, there is an inherent conflict between the principles on which each group operates. Police have a democratic duty to provide protection and law enforcement universally, or at least on the basis of the greatest need, whereas private security is usually focused simply on supplying risk-protection selectively on a user-pays basis. While there are cases where private security takes on a 'universalistic' aspect, such as security services at major sporting events and in public malls at the behest of local government, the basis of supply remains commercial and partial. Police independence and impartiality may therefore be compromised in favouring some security services and their customers over others when engaging in joint ventures. Other 'sticking points' include training

disparities, conflicts over ownership of crime control successes and failures, police frustrations with having to attend private alarms (often false alarms), poor information-sharing, and the reluctance of police to delegate authority to 'non'-police (Sarre 1997). The road ahead may be paved with good intentions but it contains many challenging obstacles.

Conclusion

Policy-makers seeking preferred policing strategies in contemporary Australia face a number of recurring issues and difficult conundrums. One critical challenge is to find the best balance between reactive and proactive policing methods, especially if public expectations regarding the ready availability of police do not match the realities. The application of quantifiable performance indicators to police, though highly problematic, suggests that the enormous budget expenditure invested each year by governments in this country is not resulting in significant reduction in crime. Nor can police demonstrate that the reductions that are occurring are something for which they can claim most credit. Not that this means that there will be major shifts in political direction. The potential political damage resulting from reductions to police numbers or resources has meant that police have been largely insulated from the government downsizing and outsourcing of the 1980s and 1990s. Dissatisfaction with mainstream policing has instead expressed itself in the multiplication of agencies continuously invested with hopes for large reductions in crime and effectiveness in meeting victims' concerns.

Unfortunately, there appears to be a law of diminishing returns operating as far as policing is concerned, and the new agencies have not been as successful as many may have hoped. Many of these entities cross State and federal jurisdictional boundaries. It is little wonder, therefore, that the task of planning a coordinated approach to reducing crime and maintaining order in Australia is bound to face numerous hurdles, some of them almost insurmountable.

While the risks and stresses placed on police makes criticism of them often appear churlish, the clear implication of the many inquiries into the conduct of police (and other agencies of order maintenance) in the last two decades is that they must be closely and constantly monitored. The delegation of authority to police is no longer something that can be applied largely on trust. At the same time, the new accountability structures, including those for the private sector, add considerable complexity and expense to policing and they generate an additional challenge in terms of accountability and performance measures for the oversight agencies themselves.

Whatever the nature of the current debates about crime control strategies, it appears that the future of policing in this country will involve a process of continued pluralisation. That is, there will be a mix of public and private agencies, a blend of specialists and generalists, and a milieu of professionals and lay persons alike. Indeed there may be some policing functions that police will avoid altogether. In many instances the preferred option might be for police to ensure simply that other agencies and groups (such as health care agencies, schools, town planners, and families) take ultimate responsibility. That is, there will be a role for police as 'facilitators', not 'commanders'. One suggestion is that governments take a lead role in this change in emphasis, appointing a Minister of *Policing* rather than a Minister of *Police*. The ability of all 'order-maintenance' functionaries to share their responsibilities and to see the wisdom in determining their limitations will be a key factor in meeting the challenges tossed up by the forces of disorder in the years to come.

Note

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