

Editorial

On 12 May 1987 the Acting Premier of Queensland, William Gunn, announced there would be an inquiry into allegations made in the media of police protection of gambling, prostitution and drug trafficking. The 'Fitzgerald Inquiry' report was handed down two years later. It provided a damning exposé of police corruption and mismanagement, but its critique went well beyond the police to condemn an entire 'corrupt' system of government. The recommendations for reform consequently included wholesale restructuring of how politics was done in Queensland. Power was to go back to the people, with a comprehensive set of safeguards to ensure openness and full accountability for all politicians and public servants. A significant innovation was the creation of the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC), which has become a major new feature on the political landscape in Queensland, destined it seems to be almost constantly embroiled in controversy.

In July 1997 the Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology held its annual conference at Griffith University in Brisbane. Given that it was ten years from the inauguration of Fitzgerald's inquiry, police reform in Queensland was a key focus of the conference. Because the CJC was one of the major elements of the reform package, its role in police and public sector accountability was also a central point of interest. Tony Fitzgerald provided the keynote address on the topic of 'Crime, Disadvantage, and the Dilemmas of Justice'. Unfortunately, Mr Fitzgerald's position in the Queensland Court of Appeal precluded his commenting on the implementation of his famous report.

Conference papers on police reform and the CJC form the basis of this special issue of *Queensland Review*. Have corruption and misconduct been eliminated from the Police Service? Is police management effective and accountable? Have the wider processes of democracy been rebuilt to ensure honesty and representativeness in government? Is the CJC effective in protecting Queenslanders from fraud and misconduct in the public sector? These questions are addressed from a variety of perspectives in this edition. The first paper by Colleen Lewis describes the internecine warfare between the CJC and government, and shows how public sector oversight organisations such as the CJC will always be under threat because of the challenge they pose to the power of politicians. Colleen's paper takes us to August 1997 when the Connolly-Ryan inquiry into the CJC was shut down after Connolly was deemed 'ostensibly biased' by the Supreme Court. This was followed by one of those particularly telling events in Queensland's history when the Attorney-General Denver Beanland, the Minister responsible for the Connolly-Ryan inquiry, defied a majority vote of no confidence by the parliament and, with the Premier's support, refused to step down.

Colleen's analysis of the politics of the CJC is followed by my paper, which provides a broader context with a kind of 'Cook's Tour' of significant events in 'post-Fitzgerald' Queensland. These events, I claim, show how reform has been

seriously undermined. Space prevents consideration of numerous other controversial events, such as the aborted trial on perjury charges of former Premier Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, the death of Daniel Yock in police custody, the treatment of police whistleblowers Reynolds and Harris, or the politicisation of public service appointments. A more positive view of change in policing is provided from within the Queensland Police Service by Owen Hertz, who examines innovations in police performance measurement.

The emphasis on a scientific approach to accountability is developed by Ross Homel, a part-time Commissioner with the CJC, who assesses the Commission's performance and suggests strategies for improving its preventive function. David Brereton and Andrew Ede from the CJC's Research and Co-ordination Division provide a summary of a major project concerned with evaluating the complaints handling system. The paper is a good example of the excellent public-interest research work being undertaken by the Division. The Queensland Police Union of Employees is always a significant player in the issues under discussion here, and Jenny Fleming provides a fascinating retrospect on police union activism in the Depression years.

Readers of *Queensland Review* who would like more information on the Fitzgerald Inquiry and its aftermath could do no better than to sit down with Phil Dickie's witty narrative account, *The Road to Fitzgerald and Beyond*, published in 1989 by University of Queensland Press. Three further volumes by UQP are *Working the System: Government in Queensland* (1989, by Peter Coaldrake), *Corruption and Reform: The Fitzgerald Vision* (1990, edited by Scott Prasser, Rae Wear and John Nethercote) and *Keeping Them Honest: Democratic Reform in Queensland* (1992, edited by Andrew Hede, Scott Prasser and Mark Neylan). Two other sources are *The Hillybilly Dictator: Australia's Police State* by Evan Whitton (1989, ABC Enterprises) and *The Goss Government*, edited by Bron Stevens and John Wanna (1993, Macmillan).

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