

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



You may be relieved to hear that you will not be called upon to endure my words in the A.C.P.C. Forum for much longer. We draw closer in time to our biennial conference in Tasmania when the declaration as to the national executive you elect, pursuant to the new postal voting procedure, will be made. I have decided quite firmly that I will not seek re-election as National President, not because my interest in the Council has waned, but because I believe it is appropriate that after four years the Council should have a new person at the helm. Time and geography make it difficult for me to see as much as I would like to of local branch activities and members and my opportunities to do this will not improve.

My years as President have been full of interest. They have coincided with the establishment of the Secretariat and I have watched it come of age. Like many of you I have missed the friendly informality of regular and more frequent meetings of the National Executive conducted as they were under the firm but warm and wise guidance of the late Mr. Justice McClemens who introduced great humanity into our deliberations. Circumstances have required that our funds should be largely concentrated upon maintenance of the secretariat and we have just not had sufficient money to meet as often as we wished. The constant search for funds remains with us and at the present time we seek a special grant from the Commonwealth (in addition to our annual grant) to maintain our existence for the coming months. As I have said previously your incoming executive will have important and interesting decisions to make as to the future shape, form and location of the Secretariat.

But much has been accomplished. Our records are comprehensive and complete, including our National Register of Members. Our financial situation is known from day to day,

our levels of expenditure are projectible and we work under close budgeting control. Many links have been established. For all these things we owe much to our small staff of two. But beyond all this we now have this journal which ensures we are at least a Council well and regularly informed. We have a true national identity and I hope that in the future the A.C.P.C. Forum will be maintained. It contains much of interest and amidst our members we have great resources and a great capacity for worthwhile contributions and achievement.

Thanks to the enthusiasm of people like Judge Kingsley Newman and Ray Kidney our South Australian Branch appears to be in full swing again with almost dramatic suddenness. You will hear more of this but as an old South Australian member it is to me a matter of satisfaction. Those of you who know Frank Hayes, our Senior Vice President, will be delighted to learn of his appointment as part-time Commissioner to the New South Wales Corrective Services Commission. It was a wise choice. Frank's essential humanity, realism and experience will prove of great value to the Commission and its new Director Tony Vinson. John Mackay, our last elected Honorary Secretary, has tendered his resignation due to new work obligations. Happily he has delegated his responsibilities to Patricia Harris, Senior Child Welfare Officer at 'Omaru' in Launceston. Pat is the Tasmanian representative on the National Executive. We welcome her and I thank the Tasmanian Government for lending her and to this Council its support. She has taken over at a very busy time but I have no doubt that John Purcell and John Mackay will give her any assistance she may require. I have been requested as President of this Council to deliver a paper at the Sixth National Symposium on the Forensic Sciences to be held in Adelaide during the week

commencing Monday, 26th March. I trust this will give me the opportunity to meet the South Australian Committee and I am anxious to meet the Victorian Committee during that week.

By reason of various circumstances I have spent much of the last four months in the Criminal Court in Darwin. Administration of the Criminal Law for week after week is not a very happy experience. In this Territory there have, of course, been heartening changes, not the least of which is the growth of a sound probation and parole service, the construction of a new prison to replace the historical, almost notorious, Fanny Bay and new philosophies in the field of welfare. Self government in the Territory appears to have given great impetus for much needed change. Techniques, sentencing alternatives and correctional establishments are being improved. But these are not a panacea for social injustice. Comparatively few of the people who pass through the criminal court can truly be labelled as evil or bad or dangerous. Many, perhaps most, convicted of offences are not in fact motivated by greed or malice. There are so many lonely socially disadvantages and insecure people. Such people hit back at times and they often seek props in the form of alcohol and other drugs. I sense a tendency

in this country to shrug our shoulders to forget the business of young people who are out of work, to pretend the problem does not exist. I believe we try to reassure ourselves that the problem is temporary. Those of you who work with the young know how deep and real the problem is. You also understand how apathy and disillusionment are the bed-fellows of unemployment. Both see destruction of personal happiness and dignity. Over the last years governments have rightly enough shown increased interest in the techniques of the police, corrections and rehabilitation. These remarks of mine may be included in the journal concentrating upon the excellent report on 'Conditional Liberty' prepared some years ago now but still relevant. We accept much of its contents and recommendations today as almost routine. Times have changed and reports such as this were a catalyst for that change.

Perhaps in the near future our activities should be concentrated upon the alleviation of causes and the problems of the young.

MR. JUSTICE J.H. MUIRHEAD  
National President

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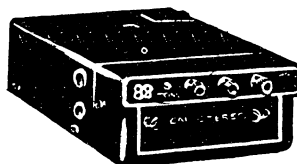
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