

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

School of Education

Police education and police practice.

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Kym Pennell

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kym Pennell", written over a dotted line.

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Abstract

A perception of escalating social disorder and allegations of police corruption and ineptitude have led to a social and political imperative to reform policing. Fundamental to this reform is the modification of the core mission of the police and the operational practices of the uniformed Constable. The core characteristics of policing and the operational practices of the uniformed Constable are determined by the core mission and the operational context of policing.

Despite an imperative to reform the quality and provision of police services to the community the core mission of the police has not fundamentally altered during the last half century and remains crime control (Zaho, 1996). The core mission of contemporary policing has been criticised for being in direct conflict with basic democratic principles and for being simply unachievable. This thesis will establish that the origins and occurrence of crime, its prevalence and persistence is determined by social, economic and cultural factors that are beyond the control of the police. It will be argued that long-term successful law-enforcement in a democratic society requires the acceptance, cooperation and approval of the community. Community oriented policing may provide the theoretical framework for internalising normative controls and for enhancing public participation in and sharing responsibility for crime control.

It will be demonstrated that the strategic shift in policing implicit within the theoretical framework of community policing has significant implications for the reform of police education and training. Several commentators and various Commissions of Inquiry have recommended upgrading police education and training, and the participation of police in tertiary education.

The reform of police practice is contingent upon the reform of the core mission and the operational context of policing. The core mission and the operational context of policing is substantially defined, controlled and manipulated by the perceptions, expectations and actions of stakeholders. Directly or indirectly these have been found to be antithetical to alternative

models of policing that are service orientated; thus blocking, diluting or redirecting efforts to implement community policing.

Unless the core mission of the police and the operational context of policing are substantially modified then police education will continue to have a limited impact upon the operational practices of the uniformed Constable.

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