

# Book Review

## *Police Leadership and Management*

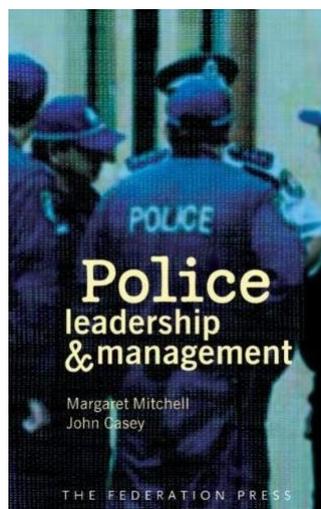
by Margaret Mitchell and John Casey (editors)

Federation Press, Sydney

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Reviewed by Alan Beckley



The Mitchell and Casey text contains eighteen chapters written by leading police researchers and commentators; and is regarded by many academic tutors as indispensable learning for post-graduate students. The editors have chosen the chapter authors well as they are well-researched and leading authorities in the policing and law enforcement field in Australia. There are three parts to the book, which are all related to aspects of police leadership and management: the changing contexts of operational police work; developing the profession of policing; and managing relationships in policing.

The first section of the book examines changing law, partnership policing, private sector policing, managing intelligence, evidence-based policy and practice and investigative interviewing. These somewhat disparate subjects are linked and cross-referenced on occasions by the authors, but they seem to the strategic reader to be uncoordinated, and by no means comprehensive.

It is true that they all contain changing contexts, but some of the subject matter, such as managing intelligence, was in every-day use in military circles even before police forces were invented, although admittedly, there have been recent developments. Though the authors do not claim exhaustive coverage of the subject of operational police work, the reader might expect to see other contemporary subjects such as internet crime or transnational crime, which do appear briefly in section three. Having criticised the first section for its coverage, it should be noted that the contributors have covered their specialist

subject areas well, particularly identifying the relevant issues for the attention and benefit of police managers and leaders.

The middle part of the book gathers subjects around police professionalism and here the authors seem to have achieved greater coverage of the subject. The long-term on-going, but painstakingly slow, progress towards professionalisation of the police service is assiduously tracked in chapter eight. In this chapter there is a good section to remind readers of the onerous requirements of a professional body; the police service in Australia (as in most other countries in the world) is some way off being able to lay claim to those requirements, not least a nationally-recognised body of knowledge (see chapter thirteen) and clearly defined professional standards, let alone continuous professional development requirements.

Leadership development and accredited training is correctly identified as a way forward along with police ethics, integrity and effective accountability. Performance management systems are described but are under-developed in the police service in Australia following various government requirements of “managing by objectives” and “public service management,” most of which was found not to be effective in this context.

Police organisations will need a serious examination of themselves to identify areas for improvement in their approaches towards organisational justice in human resource management systems to promote fairness, staff well-being and equity within their agencies to optimise staff engagement and quality of service standards. Three chapters in this section discuss these matters and it would have been useful to police managers to identify the overall effect of neglect in these areas to the detriment of professionalising the police. Chapter eleven specifically examines the independent oversight of the police, which is very relevant to the profession of policing, but content overlaps and duplicates some of the information in chapter ten which focuses on police integrity. Both chapters accurately portray the situation of police accountability in Australia but they fail to move the subject on and into developments for the future.

Part three of the book moves into managing relationships in policing. The reviewer was surprised to find this section was all about *external* relationships rather than *internal* relationships in policing; however there are some useful chapters here on how to manage the news media, consultation with the public, policing indigenous communities and the issues relating to international policing.

These factors may or may not personally affect the individual police manager or leader, but it is important to be aware of them as potential issues; however, these three final chapters are relatively rather short and although setting out the facts, they are light on solutions.

The latter sentence could, in fact, summarise the content of the whole book but that is what makes it so useful to police academics and tutors: assignments can be set for the unsuspecting student to assimilate information from the text and then compile their own findings, conclusions and recommendations in the form of an essay. Therefore, the book leaves the thinking and reflection where it should lie; with the student of policing. However, the book is also useful to the non-practitioner researcher as a reference source. Although a few years have passed since its publication, it still holds relevance and is recommended.

#### ABOUT THE REVIEWER

**Alan Beckley** is Evaluation Manager and Adjunct Fellow at University of Western Sydney. He is a graduate of FBI National Academy where he trained while serving as a police officer in the United Kingdom. He is currently completing the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the area of human rights and ethical standards in policing at the University of Western Sydney.

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