

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Of course, one other group of Wagga residents have helped with the program evaluation - and their help has been invaluable. The conference participants whose voices are heard in this report generously agreed to the recording and transcribing of their conferences. A number of these people subsequently gave of their time to offer observations - critical and otherwise - about the conferencing program. To protect the confidentiality of these contributors, their names have been changed. Their (anonymous) assistance is greatly appreciated.

Several hours drive up the road, in Canberra, great support for this evaluation has been provided by John Braithwaite at the Research School of Social Sciences. John has consistently made himself available to discuss practical and theoretical matters. More recently, ANU colleagues Nathan Harris and Ros Dalziell have proven to be interesting discussants, as has Heather Strang of the Australian Institute of Criminology. John Blackler, who now gravitates between Wagga and Canberra, has watched the development of the Wagga model from the beginning, and is a source of regular profundities. From the Australian Federal Police, Peter Dawson, Ken Uren, Kim Pearson, Cedric De Costa have encouraged the development of a standard training program. ACT Attorney-General Terry Connolly was the first prominent politician to examine the model in any depth, and has supported its implementation in the ACT. John and Judy Blackler, and Maryanne and Hank Gregory are thanked for cutting accommodation bills in Canberra.

If there would have been nothing to evaluate were it not for Terry O'Connell in Wagga, the same is true of John McDonald in Sydney. As adviser on juvenile justice to the New South Wales Police Commissioner, John has coordinated meetings, tours of Sydney and other parts of the State, and training sessions - all in support of an idea with which he returned from New Zealand in 1990. He has done all this with remarkably little support from senior members of the organisation to which he has given many years service. Notable exceptions include Christine Nixon, currently an Assistant Commissioner, David Bradley, Dean of Studies at the New South Wales Police Academy, and Pat Cioccarrelli, Director of Executive Development. Also in Sydney, Lubica Forsythe, the secondary author of this report, worked with skill and efficiency on the statistical analysis of the Wagga figures. She delivered the final draft of her chapter only weeks before she delivered her son Liam. Phillip Adams has entered into a mutually amusing correspondence on the Wagga model from his Ultimo studio. Genevieve Crouche and John McDonald, Liz Bernard, Sarah Huffam and Mark Summerbell all cut the Sydney accommodation bill.

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In Brisbane, Mark Finnane and his colleagues at Griffith University have supported a related research project, and Mark has been a consistent source of good ideas. Margaret Thorsborne and Mary Hyndman have provided a host of insights concerning the conference process, which they have implemented in schools in the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane MetWest districts. Maureen Finnane has initiated an interesting debate on conferencing among Brisbane-based child psychologists, and Kayleen Hazlehurst has encouraged debate in academe on other applications of conferencing.

In Melbourne, fruitful discussions have been had with the *Law Report's* Suzanna Lobez, with La Trobe University's Tom Fisher and Darren Palmer, and with writer, actor and old friend Humphrey Bower - whose insights on this issue have been as acute as his insights on everything else to which he turns his unusual mind.

In New Zealand, Michael Brown, Principal Youth Court Judge, maintains his interest in the export of a process that he was instrumental in having introduced into New Zealand's mainstream justice system. His eloquent support for responsible experimentation in the juvenile justice has encouraged reform in Australia. Gabrielle Maxwell, of the Office of the Commissioner for Children in Wellington, has offered interesting observations concerning differences between the various models which employ the conference process.

Thanks are also due to friends and colleagues overseas who have shown great interest in Australasian reforms, and who have offered insightful observations. In the United States, psychiatrists Donald Nathanson and Vick Kelly, both of the Philadelphia-based Tomkins Institute, have greatly enhanced our understanding of conference dynamics. Lawrence Sherman of the Crime Control Institute in Washington has helped to design the Canberra evaluation into which this evaluation will feed. John Kleinig and Maggie Smith of John Jay College's Center for Criminal Justice Ethics showed an early interest in the Wagga program, commissioned an apparently influential article on the subject for the journal *Criminal Justice Ethics*, and have offered useful observations. For hospitality and loquacity during a 1994 visit, thanks more generally to Roz and Don Nathanson, Bruce Shapiro of Tufts University, Ted and Susan Wachtel and their colleagues at the Community Services Foundation, Claire Renzetti at St Josephs University, Gates Rodes at the University of Pennsylvania, Lauren Abramson of Johns Hopkins University, and the Reverend Dave McShane.

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Finally, in the United Kingdom, former Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall, John Alderson, and science writer John McCrone, have both engaged in an ongoing and profitable exchange on obscure technicalities fascinating probably only to ourselves, but fascinating nevertheless.

This may seem a long list of acknowledgments for an evaluation of one policing program in one town in southern New South Wales. But the Wagga model has attracted national and international attention. It has prompted sophisticated debates. And it has shown that there is a great deal of goodwill and energy available for constructive reforms in an area that is fast becoming the favourite topic for politicians in search of a policy. So thanks, finally, to all those politicians who have resisted the temptation to make political capital through the direction of official aggression at young people. Thanks especially to those politicians who are looking for constructive, responsible alternatives in the justice system. May the voters be with you.

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