

LECTURE 1 – Introduction to the Unit & and ‘Police Officers Function and Role’

Police Officers Function and Role

Police are the key formal mechanism in which society seeks:

- They control its members,
- They encouragement conformity – social norms,
- Bring those who stray from the line of conformity back “into line”.

Who are the Police?

According to Bowling and Phillips (2004), the Police are:

- Police sanctioned by the state with power to enforce the law and keep order
- They are a social institution
- They are a social group

What is Policing?

- It is the type of activity the Police, this social group, social institution do,
- It is a set of processes that serves particular functions – not necessarily done by police
For example, border patrol, rangers, security, RMS and Centrelink.
- As we know, the Police are sanctioned by the state to conduct policing, but this activity is not solely fulfilled by the Police,
- Policing can be undertaken by both formal and informal mechanisms.

Changes in Policing – Why and How?

- The Police came under criminology scrutiny – studies in police discretion, the importance of the policing process as well as their culture and socialisation.

Specific Features of a Modern Police Service/Force

- Crime Prevention (*i.e. physical uniform, statistics*),
- Detection (*i.e. radar, walking the streets*),
- Peace Keeping (*i.e. to maintain the peace, stopping things to escalate, preventing issues/crime*),
- Public Order Maintenance (*i.e. moving people along*),
- Preservation of State/National Security (*i.e. investigating terrorism, working with government agencies, National Security Hotline, Parliament House (State security)*).

(Reiner, 1994)

LECTURE 2 – Historical and Comparative Developments of Australian Policing

Police are to:

- To enforce the law
- Maintain order
- Prevent crime

Introduction

- Australia has a colonial history – British brought their criminals into Australia.
- This colonial history centres around the British who took over the Government of Australia.
- This historical development of Australia has had a profound impact of policing.
- This is further complicated as policing practice varied and still does according to the State you live in.

For example:

Victoria is known as a 'Free Settlement'

New South Wales is known as a 'Convict Settlement'

How it All Began

- Henry Kable was the first Constable appointed in Sydney around 1788.
- Governor Phillips guarded the night watch known as the Sydney Foot Police.
- The key role centred around:
 - *Order Maintenance – Policing their behaviour, address and maintain any public disorder.*
 - *Keep Social Control – Keeping the peace – Preventing any issues.*
- During this time, the term 'police' (an organisation) and 'policing' (RTA, Centrelink, home surveillance) had many varied definitions.
- Scholars such as Jeremy Bentham and Edwin Chadwick provided social commentary on the police officers role.
- Police work centred around:
 - Control Public Disorder
 - Law Enforcement
 - Crime Prevention
 - Broader Social Administrative Roles

Start of the 'Modern Day' Police Force

- In 1829 Sir Robert Peel established the 'London Metropolitan Police'.
- Police work made more formalised – NSW Police established in 1862.
- This is important for Australia – governed by the British law.
- What led to these developments? Social Change.

Social Change

- 'Social Change' – A Shift in the underlying structure of the situation over a period of time.
- 3 main features of Social Change are:
 - Physical Environment
 - Political Organization

- Cultural Factors

Characteristics of the Modern Society

- Industrialisation and Urbanisation.
- During this period an emergence in machine production and power, agriculture was on the demise.
- At this point in history approximately 90% of people lived in the towns and cities in order to secure employment.
- The growth in the political system.
- The rise of the Nation State.
- The Nation State can be defined as:
 - “Political Communities divided from each other by clear boundaries. National Government takes power over aspects of citizen’s lives.” (Taylor et. al., 1997)
- The key issues here – the rise in inequalities.
- Divisions in society.
- An increased role of Government in the lives of its citizens.
- This period in history led to:
 - Civil unrest (people think they are being taxed too much),
 - Alienation amongst communities and social groups (people experiencing racism and discrimination, which causes criminal issues, such as terrorism),
 - Class divide (domestics, alcohol).

Policing in Australia Across History

- Police officers (Constables) were appointed by State Governors.
- Policing was ‘centralised’.
- Police was imposed on people and communities.
- This created tensions between the police and communities.
- The centralised approach to policing was solidified into the Australian context in the 19th Century.
- The role of the Chief Commissioner was established.

Community Tension and Policing

- As part of the colonial history of Australia – land disposition was a key feature of this time.
- The police were to play a major role in reclaiming this land.
- Created tensions between the Indigenous Community and the Police.
- Further enhanced by the fact that the Indigenous Community were not allowed to be police officers.
- In stark contrast – New Zealand.
- States established the ‘Native Police Force’ in 1848 (focusing aboriginals off their land, controlling their income).
- The Indigenous Community were increasingly exposed to legislation that developed police duties.
- This included – surveillance of communities.
- Cunneen (2001) – ‘this form of policing of the Indigenous Community was a result of such communities resisting land acquisition’.

The Recruitment of Police Officers in Australia

- Recruitment was not of a high standard
- It was common for police officers to have a criminal background
- 1850's and introduction to 'minimum standards':
 - Must be under age 45 to join the Police Force
 - Have good character, including Fidelity
 - At least 5ft 9"
 - Other physical qualities
- By the end of the 1800's, police officers were coming from a policing background.
- By 1926, 90% of all NSW Police Officers had been born in Australia.
- By 1923, women were also allowed to be recruited in the Police Force.
- Indigenous Recruitment -
<http://www.alrc.gov.au/publications/32.%20Aborigines%20and%20the%20Police/aborigines-police-force>

The Work of the Police (*Building on Last Week's Learning*)

- We have come to learn that police work is diverse and contains a range of roles centred around:
 - Social order
 - Maintenance of Order
 - Peace Keeping
 - Detection
- The police were and are still seen to play a role in broader welfare roles – 1838 the Sydney Police Act.
- 1882 the Chief Commissioner of Victoria stated:
“[The police] do not confine themselves strictly to police duty, wherever there is a duty to perform, and there is no one else to perform it, the police do it. They make themselves generally useful.”
(Wilson, 2006: xi)
- Society was a watchable environment.
- 20th and 21st Century – technology and social change has altered the way police conducts its business.

The Introduction of the Federation

- The establishment of Federation in 1901.
- 6 states, at the time, formed as one nation.
- It led to the development of the Australian Federal Police.

Conclusion

Over the course of this lecture we have identified that:

- Australian Policing has been shaped by its colonial history.
- It was a centralised agency.
- The police has and still does conduct a broad range of roles.
- The police have had a problematic relationship with the Indigenous Community due to Land Acquisitions (this was created by others outside of these two social groups).
- The police were poorly paid and seen as a less desirable occupation.
- Contemporaneously it is associated with 'Social Mobility'.