

Introduction

Welcome to this special issue (SI) of the *International Journal of Emergency Services (IJES)*. We are delighted to be able to bring you an issue focussed specifically on the police, and on exploring the future challenges for police leaders with an emphasis on the people aspects. Our aim is to highlight, discuss, and further develop issues that are likely to be important in the future but are not currently being considered. This is done with the hope that it will enable police services across the world to prepare as much as they are able for our exciting and challenging future.

This SI brings together a series of thought pieces, research studies, and senior practitioner reflections from key academics and practitioner in America, UK, Africa, and Australia. These papers do not always agree, and there are different, sometimes contradictory, perspectives, and viewpoints shared. We believe this is healthy – policing, after all, is one of the most pluralist of endeavours – and we want to embrace difference. Whilst the SI is focussed on the future of police leadership, we are reflecting on the future, on leadership, and on the people aspects in organisations, and as a result, we argue that many of the issues are common across other emergency services and the public sector more widely. As a result, we hope there is something in this SI for everyone.

We would like to begin with forewords from two key figures who are significantly influencing this debate on the future of police leadership. The first is Chief Constable Sara Thornton, Chair of the National Chiefs' Police Council in the UK, and the second is Nathan Long, the President of Saybrook University in Oakland, California. These forewords illustrate the international nature of this SI, and the healthy mix of practitioner and academic perspectives contained within.

Chief Constable Sara Thornton

Policing is an essential public service which makes a difference to the quality of life of all citizens but, in particular, those who are vulnerable or marginalised. The capability and expertise of those who lead policing is the key to the effectiveness of the policing service. I therefore welcome this edition which can only serve to help leaders to improve their practice.

Many of the problems that we face are wicked problems – they are complex and there is no single transactional solution. We cannot look to the leader to know all the answers but need to ensure that leaders are equipped to get the best out of their teams. We need to ensure that leaders know how to create the right environment to learn rather than constantly find fault and blame. We need to ensure that leaders encourage all the team to contribute their expertise.

As policing develops as a profession, we need to look to the evidence and research that will help us to improve our practice. We need to look to other organisations to find what works and listen to those from outside the service. Intellectual curiosity and an enquiring mind have long been valuable traits in police officers investigating crime. They are now equally valued in the development of our professionalism.

Nathan Long

This SI of *IJSE* brings together an important collection of articles written by talented scholars from around the globe. Their articles are arranged around five major themes focussing on culture, diversity and inclusion, informed decision making, leadership styles and approaches, and the realities in the field related to policing leadership. Furthermore,



this panoply of articles affords us the occasion to glean key insights, all of which offer unique applications for improving and enhancing policing and policing leadership, from an international perspective.

Surveying this wealth of rich, informed research within these articles, I am also struck by how important it is for our policing agencies the world over to consider the power of consistent, continuous professional education in pursuit of excellence. Consider for a moment that professionals in a variety of fields (teaching, nursing, and medicine, to name just three) are required to maintain their credentials through ongoing continuing education. Our policing institutions are charged with the task of protecting the public, thus, at their core, ensuring the safety of the communities they serve. From the top leaders to line-level officers in agencies around the globe, the need for education – most critically related to the themes identified in this SI – have particular relevance today, given the incredible challenges facing these brave women and men.

What better way to improve the health and safety of communities than by equipping law enforcement officers to better understand the communities and the world in which they live and serve? I urge the readers of this SI to give due consideration to the vitality of education while reading these powerful scholarly discourses.

This SI is a substantial volume bringing together a total of ten papers that reflect the themes and international perspective of the journal and of this SI. There are five key themes explored. Culture within the public sector and emergency service organisations and particularly within the police is such an important, powerful, and underpinning factor for the future, and runs through many of the papers. As such, we are beginning with two papers that focus primarily on this police culture. In our first one, Metcalfe explores some of the challenges of making the police service in England and Wales a “self-reforming sector”. He does this by drawing on his research with chief constables in England and Wales, and analysis of investigations into police failures. Conveniently, for this first paper, he also shares his perspective on the changing operational context for policing and clearly makes the case for the need for institutional change. A step change is needed, argues Metcalfe, and his paper then goes on to detail how this might be brought about. Our second paper to look at culture comes from Grint, Holt and Neyroud. They highlight the importance of culture and emphasise that police leaders of the future will need to change this culture. They take a new perspective on how we understand culture and explore how it might be more easily changed. As such they challenge the convention that cultural change can only ever be achieved, if at all, through years of effort.

Flowing nicely from this culture theme is our second area of focus – that of diversity and inclusion – and our third paper explores this area in more detail. Here, we look to Australia and draw expertise from McLeod and Herrington who argue that police and other emergency service organisations need to draw on different skills, a different mindset, and different leaders to navigate this complex, rapidly changing world. Herrington and McLeod convincingly argue that organisations’ logic for seeking to diversify the demographic make-up of their workforce does not necessarily add up, and they argue that future police leaders will need to ensure their organisations are not only demographically diverse, but more importantly, are inclusive.

Our third theme relates to the information future leaders will need to draw upon in making decisions about the people aspects in the police, and links nicely with Thornton’s foreword shown earlier. We call here upon work from America by Mitchell and Lewis, who explore these themes and evidence-based policing comprehensively to assist us in this. Evidence-based policing is not new but Mitchell and Lewis take this further by arguing that there will be a growing ethical imperative for police leadership of the future to adopt evidence-based practices. They link this with what may well be one of the biggest challenges in the future, that of the fundamental legitimacy of policing, which Kudakwashi

in one of our later papers also highlights. Mitchell and Lewis argue that police leadership in the future will need to adopt more evidence-based practice and be transparent about the research that supports the programs they implement.

The fourth theme moves to leadership style and approach, and also links well with Thornton's argument. Our next three papers detail research studies on three aspects of this style. This is in order to explore the type of leadership style that may be most appropriate for the police service in the next decade, and what moves may be required to enable this. In the fifth paper, Yarlagadda, Bailey, Shantz, Brione and Zheltoukhova focusses on the findings of a research study on purposeful leadership. In the sixth, Martin, Rogers, Samuel and Rowling expand this consideration and links to ethics further, and explore the contribution of servant leadership. In our seventh one, Kudakwashi draws on the experiences in the use of an appreciative enquiry model in the Women's Police Network in Zimbabwe to examine another possible leadership style for the future.

Policing is essentially a practical occupation and so must be grounded in practice. Our final theme homes in on this and draws on practitioners from within policing to provide two short practitioner reflections to ensure that our deliberations on the police leadership of the future are grounded in this reality. In our eighth paper, Melling reflects on the importance of developing leaders and how this might be done most effectively in the future. In our ninth paper, Farrar reflects on the learning from his extensive and very successful career within the police.

Our final paper provides a closing editorial from ourselves, which seeks to draw all the papers together and highlight some key themes.

The well-written and engaging papers in this issue explore some vital areas in the future of police leadership that not only causes us to reflect now but also advances the literature in emergency services leadership internationally. Thank you to all the authors who have enabled this – to the few who we were able to publish in this SI, and to the many for whom, unfortunately, we did not have space to include. Also thanks to all those who conducted peer reviews for little reward, to all those involved in the production and circulation of this SI, and to all the readers supporting *IJES*. We really appreciate all your hard work, commitment, support, willingness to share your ideas, spirit, and all the brilliant and important areas of work you are engaged in. Thank you all for your commitment and desire to work towards a brighter future.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue, and that it inspires you, the future of police leadership, and more scholarly enquiry into this vital field of emergency services and management.

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