UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SYDNEY

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

PERCEPTION OF CHANGE IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE NSW POLICE SERVICE, POST THE WOOD ROYAL COMMISSION

BY

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Candidate

_____

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the perception held by members of the NSW Police Service as to the effectiveness of changes made to education, training and development, post the recommendations made by the Wood Royal Commission in 1997. The Commission report highlighted a number of important education, training and development issues.

The literature on policing indicated that police jurisdictions have a need to both anticipate and respond to changes and events occurring in the communities they serve. This study thus examined both the general and police literature covering change, culture, management and leadership, professionalisation and the main education, training and development topics that were included in the Commission report. An historical scan of developments within the NSW Police Service was also made.

The study basically adopted an empirical, quantitative research methodology, supplemented by qualitative statements made by participants during discussion sessions. Two separate questionnaires were developed: one for respondents in the broader NSW Police Service (one city and one rural region), and the other for sworn officers and academic staff at the NSW Police Academy. The Service questionnaire addressed participant perception of the effectiveness or otherwise, of changes made in relevant aspects of individual, team and organisational learning. Opportunity was also taken to analyse responses to the Service questionnaire, based on a range of selected demographic characteristics. The Academy questionnaire addressed the perceptions held about the effectiveness or otherwise, of changes made in general learning issues, curriculum development, course delivery and the evaluation of training. An analysis of combined

responses to like questions in both the Service and Academy questionnaires was also made. Both Pre and Post Royal Commission perceptions, as recorded on a five point Likert scale were collected. From the resulting mean difference scores potential change in the respondent's perception of the effectiveness of the changes made were determined.

The findings indicated that respondents perceived some improvement in the effectiveness of education, training and development Post the Wood Royal Commission. There were some important findings related to: (a) perceived differences between the formal Academy recruit training and probationer practicum or field training; (b) the need for 'Professionalisation' Vs 'Craft' training; (c) leadership role models of learning and the creation of a learning culture and climate; (d) the role of knowledge management in intelligence-led and evidence-based policing; (e) the use of information technology and distance learning strategies; (f) the development of reflective practice and the gaining of lessons learnt from experience; (g) the provision of leadership development; (h) support for continuing professional development, as a part of fostering self-managed lifelong learning and, (i) the consistent Quality Assurance review of both the course curriculum and evaluation of training effectiveness at the Academy.

The findings have possible implications for practice and further research in the NSW Police.