of questions for future research which may resolve some of the controversy. He also examines the historical effect of introduced feral and domestic livestock on forest ecosystems and river red gums. Cattle, sheep and rabbits had deleterious effects in southern NSW and northern Victoria, along with camels and rabbits in arid Australia. Colloff proceeds to survey the changing political, social and economic aspects of timber harvesting, and concludes Part II with an analysis of the effect of irrigation and flow regulation upon both the physical and political environments of the Murray-Darling Basin.

In Part III, Colloff explores the changing relationship between Australians and the gum, drawing on the watercolours of Hans Heysen, contemporary Kaytetye art and even the ABC series *Two Men in a Tinnie* (2006). He also uses his personal experiences of political debates over water management in the Riverina to supplement reflections on the links between cultural landscapes, conservationism and what he calls ‘river red gum consciousness’ — an intriguing concept that future environmental writers will find very useful. The book concludes with a summary of the sparse state of knowledge and research on river red gums, and calls for detailed local historical ecologies and adaptive management for a future where climate change will greatly affect this child of Australia’s cycles of wet and dry.

While Colloff considers that *Flooded Forest and Desert Creek* forms part of the historical ecology genre rather than environmental history, I’m not entirely convinced such a distinction is clear or productive. Given that Colloff has attempted to focus upon the effects of people on the river red gum, he cannot help but engage with attendant cultural and political debates. Indeed, it is testimony to the politically charged atmosphere surrounding some river red gum issues that Colloff feels the need to justify his claims at a deep level of detail, even if these explanations are generally handled with grace.

Given the sources, Colloff focuses largely on the Murray-Darling Basin, with substantial sections on *Eucalyptus arida* in Central Australia. Queensland readers will be best served by regarding this book as a launching point for further study on local conditions and patterns. *Flooded Forest and Desert Creek* is written for specialists and lay readers alike, and it generally succeeds in appealing to both audiences. Colloff convincingly argues for the river red gum as both a national and continental icon — one that connects desert to forest, land to water and people to place.

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Ray Whitrod, *Before I Sleep: My Life Fighting Crime and Corruption*, Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2015, 240 pp., ISBN 9 7807 0225 3409, A\$32.94.

This is an encompassing and evocative memoir by former Queensland Police Force (QPF) Commissioner Ray Whitrod, who wore many hats in his lifetime. However, heading Queensland’s police force between 1970 and 1976 had the most impact on

his future career, social life and health. The Fitzgerald Inquiry into police corruption following the term of his successor Terry Lewis had a watershed effect on the QPF and the organisation was overhauled. Given the scarcity of insights into the political dimensions of QPF management during this time, Whitrod's memoir will be invaluable for scholars of Australian policing and politics and its Queensland dimensions. *Before I Sleep* affords the reader a glimpse into the personal life of a person responsible for the formation of key national and state organisations: the Commonwealth Police, the Australian Institute of Criminology and Victims of Crime Service in his home state of South Australia, to name a few.

The first three chapters of the book provide a detailed account of Whitrod's early life and his family's colonial origins in Queensland. His mother would tell Whitrod stories of her life in Birdsville and of a kind rural sergeant who helped an illiterate girl work out home remedies for her younger siblings. Women occupied a prominent role in the author's life. The desire to be a suitable spouse for his future wife, Mavis, led Whitrod to join the South Australia Police Force cadet program in 1934. The subsequent four chapters recount the personal and professional landmarks that shaped his adulthood, illuminating the mechanisms of the government that would help Whitrod navigate the political system.

Whitrod's commissionership of the QPF between 1970 and 1976 will be of key interest to scholars of Queensland law-and-order politics. Whitrod recalls a sergeant meeting him at the airport and, on approach to Brisbane, alerting him to the local state of affairs. 'Commissioner, I don't know how much you know about the Queensland Police Force, but it's pretty corrupt' (2015: 137). In the pages that follow, Whitrod gives a painstaking account of his attempts to reform the organisation. The tone is sober and non-sensationalist and, with few exceptions, he avoids personal attacks. Chapter 9, 'A Losing Battle', signals Whitrod's recollection of his term. Overt power struggles between the commissioner, the premier and the new police minister marked for him the beginning of his demise.

Whitrod was very much an outsider in Queensland and its so-called rural culture. In his view, Premier Bjelke-Petersen was someone who personified this world: 'Joh, the hillbilly dictator', who 'served both God and Mammon' (2015: 143). Bjelke-Petersen's machismo was perfectly exemplified in his attitudes to women's roles and their place in the '3Ks': kirk (church), kitchen and kinder (children) (2015: 158). According to Whitrod, the premier's leadership rested on the support of an under-educated country 'flock' and on so-called 'squires' who were only concerned with maintaining their status quo. Whitrod's attempts to introduce educational courses and to raise the education bar in the QPF failed unsurprisingly. Without any consultation with Whitrod or Police Minister Hodges, 'the premier made a public announcement that the Queensland people did not require their police to be Rhodes scholars' (2015: 160). Whitrod's personal view was quite different. He believed that scholarship and policing were complementary: 'little knowledge' was 'a dangerous commodity' that a good policeman could not afford.

Whitrod struggled against a local culture dominated by populism, conservatism, authoritarianism and anti-intellectualism, and months after the Cedar Bay fiasco, in which the police raided a North Queensland commune, Whitrod resigned as commissioner no longer willing to endure the interference of the Bjelke-Petersen government. Although the findings of the Fitzgerald Inquiry vindicated the author, the book offers little discussion of that investigation.

Before I Sleep is a history of policing and politics in Australia as much as Whitrod's personal history. Whitrod comes across as a perpetual outsider with a thirst for knowledge and a keen awareness of achievements and reforms in police forces around the world, especially the United States and United Kingdom. He would go on to reshape Australia's policing landscape through patience, observation and careful strategy. But he resented his time in Queensland, which he suggests was like 'walking blindfolded into the nest of ants' (2015: 142).

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John Blaxland and Rhys Crawley, *The Secret Cold War: The Official History of ASIO, 1975–1989, Volume III*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2016, 522 pp., ISBN 9 7817 6029 3215, A\$49.99.

What a difference a generation makes! In the mid-1970s, as this third volume in the official history of ASIO shows, there was a 'domestic violence' threat in Australia. But this was not the domestic violence of the private sphere that has become a major preoccupation of political debate and social policy in contemporary Australia. Rather, it was the violence arising within the borders of the nation directed at the institutions or personnel of the state. For Australia, this kind of domestic violence was never as bloody, or on the same scale, as that witnessed in the United States or Europe during those years. But it was a continuing preoccupation of ASIO during the tumultuous transition from Whitlam to Fraser.

Arguably, it was ASIO's political fate to be distracted by its engagement in the politics of the streets, a fate from which it took many years to be rescued by the slow process of reform that rendered the organisation both more professional and more accountable. Accountability was improved through political change that directed two Royal Commissions investigating Australian intelligence and security. The first of these inquiries (its establishment backgrounded in the second volume of the official history) resulted in the 1979 legislation that provided, for the first time, a comprehensive statutory framework within which ASIO would operate. The second Royal Commission established in the Hawke years coincided with a challenging period for ASIO, with Attorney-General Gareth Evans its political master. The somewhat bland demands of an official history limit the colour that this period might exhibit in a more political account. It is instructive, nevertheless, to observe the degree of oversight by a determined Attorney-General once ASIO had been put onto a proper administrative framework (Chapter 15).

This transition in the way ASIO was governed is evident in the 1980s in the increased scrutiny of the grounds for seeking a surveillance warrant, with conflict evident between ASIO and other agencies (2016: 388–9). This volume also demonstrates the challenges ASIO faced in a period when domestic political subversion was diminishing, while the activities of hostile intelligence services remained all too evident in the very late stages of the Cold War. For ASIO, and indeed for Australian