Editorial

This new volume of the Journal opens with a consideration of important international issues in the construction and response to crime. In 2009 Australia suffered sustained condemnation from the rising global power of India. Of primary concern were racially motivated attacks on Indian students in Melbourne, which some stakeholders argued were the result of participation in the night-time economy rather than matters pertaining to race or prejudice. It also focused policy makers on the plight of international students in a poorly regulated education market. Gail Mason in the lead article of this issue argues that Australian responses were shaped by denial in the face of claims for justice from India and from Indian nationals in Australia. Victoria Collins completes the issue by considering the application of moral panic literature in her examination of piracy off the coast of Somalia which has seen a heavily militarised response by the international community. Importantly it highlights the ways the panic remains disengaged from the realities and complexities of a nation that has endured endemic political, social and legal instability that drives cycles of violence and forced migration with consequences throughout the region.

In more domestically contained matters the qualitative study by Michael Rowe and Fiona Hutton of graffiti in New Zealand has important implications for policy makers and theorists by documenting the diversity in meaning ascribed to the act of graffiti. The study by Geraldine Mackenzie, Caroline Sprianovic, Kate Warner, Nigel Stobbs, Karen Gelb, David Indermaur, Lynne Roberts, Rod Broadhurst and Thierry Bouhours evidences that public opinion polling is a blunt tool for considering public perceptions of crime and punishment. While their findings confirm a broad public appetite for punitiveness and dissatisfaction with sentencing outcomes, they were surprisingly strongly supportive of non-custodial sentences for a range of offences. And Ivan Sun, Rong Hu and Yuning Wu consider Chinese citizens’ trust in police with an important contribution to English-language research on crime and justice in China.