



Policing the Revolution with Special Guest Mick Palmer

Part 1

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Welcome to the Future Sense podcast with Steve McDonald and Nyck Jeanes, broadcast weekly from our Future Sense pod in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales, Australia, and available on your favourite podcast platforms or directly through www.futuresense.it. You can follow us on Twitter @futuresenseshow, or on our Facebook page. Thanks for joining us today.

Nyck: Hello and welcome to this week's edition of *Future Sense*, our podcast that is broadcast throughout the world. Thanks for listening wherever you may be listening, at whatever time you may be listening in. Hello to my co-host, Steve McDonald here. Good morning, Steve. How are you doing?

Steve: Good morning, Nyck. Great to be here again.

Nyck: Great pleasure to be with you. We we've got a kind of special show today because we have a very special guest interviewing with respect to some of the issues that are worldwide at the moment in terms of the revolution, you could say, that is occurring on the planet in various ways, and the efforts of the powers that be to manage those forces that are erupting around the world—particularly some of those issues here in Australia, but not just—and with regard particularly to policing and the future of policing in this country and beyond.

With us this morning, we have Mick Palmer, Michael John Palmer, AO APM. He is a barrister as well as having a 33-year career as a police officer with extensive experience in police leadership and corporate governance reform and community, national and international policing and security, and with an active interest in human rights and illicit drug reform. He joined the Northern Territory Police Force in 1963 and he was appointed Commissioner of the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services in 1988. In 1994, he was appointed Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police (AFP), a position he held for seven years until his retirement in March of 2001. I won't give the whole amazing resumé that you've had, Mick, but some of the other features here which are relevant to today: you also, between 1997 and 2000, were a member of the Executive Committee of Interpol, having become the first Australian elected to that position. You were also the inaugural Deputy Chair of the National Council Against Drugs—a position you occupied until your retirement from policing in 2001—and since retiring from policing at that time, you have conducted a range of enquiries and reviews for the Australian Federal and State Governments, both within Australia and overseas. A couple of other points here: Between 2004 and 2012, you

were the Federal Government's Inspector of Transport Security, a position created after 9/11 and the Bali bombing terrorist incidents, to review air, sea and land transport, and more; you're a recipient of the Australian Police Medal and in 1998, admitted to the Order of Australia (AO) for your work in advancing the professionalisation of policing through the introduction of far-reaching anti-corruption processes and management practice reform. You're also, finally, a current member of the Board of Australia 21—and we will probably talk a little bit about that today—and a member of the Foundation Board of the Queensland Mind and Neuroscience Institute, the University of the Sunshine Coast. So welcome to our podcast, *Future Sense*, Mick Palmer. Thanks for joining us here and taking some time out.

Mick Palmer: Nice to be with you, Nyck. Thank you. Thank you, Steve.

Steve: Thanks, Mick. Just to give you a bit of background, as per the information we sent to you. Here on *Future Sense*, we're looking at often large-scale issues that apply to a shifting human consciousness on a global level, and we're using a research-based understanding of how humans are changing, which is based around the work of Dr Clare W. Graves. It was done last century and not published until almost the turn of the century. His theory quite accurately predicted a revolution similar to the revolution that took place between the Agricultural Era and the Scientific and Industrial Era. He didn't give the timing of that, or any great detail, but he certainly described the themes and the mechanisms that would drive that particular shift in humanity.

I've been studying his work since 2003, and what I'm seeing happening in the world now is exactly what his work predicted in terms of a rising wave of new values that's calling for changes to the structure of government, changes to the way that we live, changes to human rights and all those sorts of things. Back in the 1960s, we saw an earlier wave of this same shift. Many people are calling this time now 'the new 60s' because of the similarity there, and I'm sure you've noticed that, yourself, having lived through that time, that the protests that are happening around human rights—Black Lives Matter, calls for an end to warfare and tyranny, a return to a more communal way of living and those sorts of things—are very, very similar to what you must have seen in the 1960s. I think that the only significant difference is that there is a larger percentage of the general population now which is calling for that change.

Does that scenario sit well with you? Is that the sort of thing that you've been pondering yourself?

Mick Palmer: A little, I have to say. I hadn't stopped to think about it in those deeper terms, I guess, but the analogy is quite accurate, really. That is, as you say, a sign of the repetition of things that occurred in 1960 on a much larger scale and with much, I guess, deeper feelings. On the back of social media and the nature of media now, giving people more access to the reality of what's occurring, or exposure at least, to what is being broadcast as having occurred. So, yes, it's not inconsistent with what I believe.

Steve: That's great to hear, and I agree 100% with what you said about social media. In fact, if we look back through history, as our communications technology has got faster and faster, the pace of change has also got faster because after all, change is really just a matter of spreading new ideas and influence. So that's obviously playing a really big role. I'm interested to know whether your work, particularly on the think tank, Australia 21—is there any awareness that these changes that we're seeing going on at the moment could be as big as this? Something that equates to that time when the Agricultural Era came to a rather bloody end, I must say, and the Scientific-Industrial started to roll out?

Mick Palmer: Well, I can't talk for Australia 21 specifically. I'm now a Director Emeritus of Australia 21, so I'm not actively involved currently, but I know categorically that what you say is quite accurate. They have some very serious concerns about the nature of the way the world is continuing to evolve and develop, particularly in regard to the way we safeguard the planet, the way that we get smarter in the use of agriculture in terms of not destroying it, while we are at the same time supplying food and provenance for our population and so on. There's a lot of concern within Australia 21 board ranks, I know, about those bigger issues that you talk about, and they are constantly looking for financial support, if you like, to conduct in-depth reviews and assessments and to write reports on those sorts of issues.

Nyck: Just quickly, Mick, could you just give a brief summary of what Australia 21 actually is? The website www.Australia21.org.au for those who wish to check it out. Could just give us some parameters about the mission of Australia 21?

Mick Palmer: It's essentially a think tank organisation. It's based on a Canadian organisation of a different name—the name of which escapes me—that was created back in the 1990s, and is the brainchild of Paul Barratt and Professor Bob Douglas, who created it back in the very early 2000s. It's a not-for-profit organisation to generate discussion on what are frequently termed 'wicked problems' impacting on Australia and Australia's future, for which there doesn't appear to be either too much motion in terms of improving the status quo, or sufficient debate. So it's about creating opportunities and means of debate on issues which are seen, at least by the Board of Australia 21, as issues of crucial importance to Australia's future.

The process they use in achieving it, in dealing with that, is generally to conduct a roundtable conference involving participants from the broadest range of areas in regard to that subject they can get—in other words, representing all sides of the argument—having a full day's brainstorm discussion under Chatham House Rule on the subject, and taping and recording all aspects of that conversation. Then Australia 21, writing a report that reflects the reality of that discussion—not what Australia 21 thinks should be the outcomes or what they think ought to be done, but rather what the group of people around the table thought were the issues and thought should be done. That report then goes back in draft form to the participants and if and when they sign off on it, it is then published in that form. So it's a

report that's intended to reflect the views of informed and learned people—experienced people—on the subject to accurately reflect all aspects that were brought to the table in regard to that discussion, and hopefully, obviously, to offer some pathways forward in terms of what could be done, but is not now being done, that might improve the situation.

Nyck: Just for our listeners, you mentioned the term 'wicked problems', which is great, and we're familiar with this term. It's a term coined by design theorist, Professor Horst Rittel. Basically, 'wicked problems' refer to chronic ongoing issues that are both unsolvable and unavoidable, and where you apply customary problem-solving, you actually only make them worse, so you need a different kind of thinking to deal with these kind of complex problems that are emerging on the planet now.

Steve: Thanks, Nyck, and that different kind of thinking feeds back into the research of Dr. Graves, which we're using as a compass, essentially, in this very interesting process that's unfolding globally. What Graves's work does is that it looks at the human values that are motivating the behaviours that we're seeing in polarised groups. Essentially, Graves's work says that at the moment we're seeing the end of the Scientific-Industrial era, which he identified as a layer of human consciousness—we call it Layer 5—and the emergence of Layer 6, which is essentially a post-modern set of values that is very humanistic and it judges and rates things on the basis of human experience. It's also very network-centric, so it's a communally-oriented value set, whereas the Scientific-Industrial Era, Layer 5, was an individually-oriented value set, and these value sets swing between an individual and a communal orientation. So the Agricultural Era was communal, Scientific-Industrial, individual, and now the Layer 6, Post-Modern or Relativistic as Graves called it, is communally-oriented.

I guess there's an inevitability in this trajectory, this momentum, that's carrying us through these eras and so the sticky issue is, 'okay, how do we gracefully transition from one era to the next, without having the kinds of civil wars and things that have gone on during previous transitions?'

Mick, we're really interested to talk to you about the police angle and the law enforcement angle on that, and the police interface with government, as well, because we're in an era where all of our structures—our government policies and processes—have been designed according to scientific-industrial thinking, which is individualistic and quite hierarchical, and the change that's being demanded by the new values is a collapsing of those hierarchies, a decentralisation of power, and a return to human experience as the key driver—human connection, to be more accurate—whereas success and profit-making was a key driver in the previous system. So I guess that the really, really big question, that we're probably not going to answer today, but that over-sits or over-looks our discussion here, is: 'How the hell do we navigate that as best we can?', and with the benefit of people like yourself who have a deep knowledge of how the established systems work, and also very, very clearly seeing that there's a change in place and things need to change.

I'm very grateful to have you here because there aren't many people around like you, to be quite honest. So, from a police point of view—I mean, obviously, the police often find

themselves at the frontline of this tension, trying to enforce the old paradigm and tied to the old laws and processes and those sorts of things, and are trying to deal with a completely different mindset that's opposing the new system. I'd be interested to hear your perspective on how this has unfolded since about the 80s.

As you probably saw in my bio, I spent 15 years in the Australian Army as an officer, and I saw in the late 1980s, a reorientation of our strategic outlook from what essentially was the same as the Vietnam War—we were continuing to train for the Vietnam War well into the 80s—and then all of a sudden we switched to what they called 'low level operations', which really was about the threat of domestic terrorism, domestic insurgency and civil unrest. So we went from calling in artillery fire, to putting on shields and masks and dealing with make-believe protesters and those sorts of things, and I'm sure that you would have seen that wherever you were at that time in terms of the massive increase in counterterrorist funding and the shift of outlook there. What did that look like from your perspective at that time?

Mick Palmer: Well, it was a change in policing, I have to say, from about the 80s—you're quite right, probably a bit a bit earlier—but I remember well, when John Avery was New South Wales Police Commissioner, he wrote a book which became quite a celebrated book on policing called, I think the title was *From Force to Service* [Editor's note: the title of the book is: *Police, Force or Service?*]. The focus, even back then among policing was, we need to change the way in which we are structured and the way in which we get our people to think about the business they do.

It is easy to have a police force—again to pick up your army analogy—a structured organisation where people are told what to do and get on and do it, but in the world in which we're now finding ourselves living, we have to have a much more flexible approach based on the way that we allow people to exercise power, the way in which we function as an organisation. So it must become, and has to become, if you like, much more decentralised, much more authority given to police officers on the beat to make their own decisions, to back their own judgment, to exercise their own discretion. Part of that deal is to create an environment in which they see themselves as part of a service where their priority function, if you like, is to deliver a service to the community rather than a force that enforces the law. I was personally quite involved in that basis. I believe that was exactly the way we ought to go.

I was with the Northern Territory when that first started to really create momentum, and through what was then the Australian Institute of Police Management at Manly [Editor's note: Manly is a harbourside suburb of Sydney, NSW]—it might have been the Australian Police Staff College in those days; it was a senior academic educational facility for Australian police and an international police in the south-west Pacific, for them to attend—the whole focus of that training and development—that development, really, and learning experience—changed to reflect this more service-orientated approach to the business we do.

It was impacted adversely, if you like, but not unexpectedly, by 9/11 and then Bali 2002, which, because of the creation of terrorism as a real threat, and the reality of what had occurred in those two events created a move back towards a much more enforcement-focused discipline. The AFP, for example, became a much more uniformed organisation on

the back of that. We were essentially a plain-clothed organisation until 2001, but shortly after that, because of the nature of the responsibilities placed upon the AFP by the federal government, for reasons you could understand—including off-shore policing and the need as part of that process to recruit police from police forces around the country to be part of the Australian Federal Police force, terrorism component, if you like, an overseas deployment process—it became a much more uniformed organisation and police force became re-emblazed, if you like. I don't think we've recovered from that.

I understand why it occurred. Most organisations, I think, around the country now would refer to themselves as police forces or police services, and there's a much heavier uniformed presence and an old-fashioned, if you like, police patrol and enforcement focus in law enforcement than what was likely to have been the case in the 1990s, where we were really softening the way in which we did business, employing much more discretion and flexibility. So we made some forward progress. The nature of events, the reality of events on the ground, which was very severe, caused a rethink—you know, community expectations that really were then based about keeping us safe—and we created, in law enforcement terms, an environment not unlike COVID-19, where caution was optimal and the enforcement and the rigidity of the application of the law became more important than what it had been before that time.

So I think we've gone through a couple of iterations. We're now back to being a bit more—and I think now it's becoming very counterproductive to what we really need to achieve—a much more traditional old-fashioned enforcement organisation, or series of organisations, than we really need to be or that we should be.

Nyck: It's very interesting, the title John Avery's book itself. *From Force to Service* really says it all. That's a wonderful title that articulates the values shift that we're talking about, and what you've articulated is a really good example of how those new values emerge into culture. Often there's two steps forward, one step back or sometimes even two steps back occasionally, and that regressive search to go back to the way we were. The way we controlled and maintained things are forced upon us by these events, as you articulated, so it's a rather interesting example of exactly what this show, in fact, is all about.

Steve: Absolutely, and also, the change dynamic that Dr. Graves described in his research, included what we call a 'slingshot effect'. That term, 'slingshot effect', comes from stock market terminology, where often the market will take a downturn just before a massive increase in value, and vice versa. In Graves's work, what he described was that when a set of values which drives motivation in a way that we live our lives—the way that we structure our governments and those sorts of things—when those values no longer work so well, it thrusts us into what he called a 'values regression', where we start to think about the old times, we think about when things used to be good, and we often go on a journey backwards through older value sets.

So in this case, with this shift between the Scientific-Industrial and the Relativistic or Post-Modern, what that means is going back to essentially Agricultural era values, and sometimes

even further back than that, which results in rigidity of thinking, ethnocentric thinking—in other words, racist thinking—and often the use of force to try and solve problems. These events that you've been describing represent exactly that, a regressive values search where people have resorted to violence and terrorism to try and get what they want because they felt that the social systems weren't allowing them to get what they want in a peaceful way.

Graves's work pointed out that in terms of the long-term evolutionary progression, that actually speeds up the change because it's the tension on the rubber band of the slingshot, which actually determines how fast and how far the projectile goes. So when you have an event like 9/11, it increases the evolutionary tension significantly and often—or usually—after an event like that, there are great leaps forward made in terms of social change. We're actually just seeing that right now with COVID-19, where we've gone backwards into individual isolation and we've come out of that wanting to join together in community much more than we did before. So it's actually accelerating the shift that's underway, if that makes sense, Mick.

Mick Palmer: Yes, I think that's right. I think it has.

Steve: So the trick is, unfortunately, most people don't have the benefit of this kind of understanding or the large-scale perspective to realise that, 'okay, this feels really bad in the moment, but it actually is going to speed things up in a good way', and I guess part of our work here on *Future Sense* is to try and point out these large-scale patterns and help people understand that the dynamics that are driving social behaviour at the moment.

Getting back to the police perspective, assuming that our scenario is correct, that we're witnessing the birth of a new set of values that's actually driving the emergence of a new era which is going to bring changes to the way that we govern ourselves—it's going to bring decentralisation, a more humanistic approach, a more service-oriented approach, as you were saying—what are the change-related risks and opportunities from a police perspective, given that police are often the interface between government and the community when tensions are high? I guess the risks are obvious at the moment and we're seeing that play out, unfortunately, in the United States—and maybe we'll just take a small detour and talk about that US situation at the moment—what are some key problems emerging from a policing point of view that you're seeing in the media report from the US?

Mick Palmer: Well, the nature of violence obviously worries people who are looking at the 'what'—and I was going to get onto this and the broader issue of policing, but I'll talk about it now, and we can talk about it a bit more later. Now, policing is much better at dealing with the 'what' than the 'why'. So whatever the behaviour is that is being conducted for which people are responsible, if it happens to be unlawful, well, police can respond to the lawfulness of the behaviour without having to spend too much time thinking about why it is they're doing what it is they're doing. That's the nature of policing.

We've always been much better at dealing with the 'what' than the 'why'. I think the real challenge in the current environment is that we must get a much better understanding of the 'why'. What are the reasons why some of this behaviour is occurring or what the hell do we do about those reasons in terms of minimising the chances of the behaviour continuing? I think that's classic in the United States' sense. The police are between a rock and a hard place, actually—and I'm not trying to be in any way an apologist for the United States policing. There's lots of examples of bad policing, but obviously, as everywhere, there are also lots of examples of good policing. But they're now in a situation where the laws are pretty clear in terms of what's lawful and unlawful behaviour, so whatever their personal views are about the reasons why people are, for example, looting shops, or protesting and committing violence on the streets, they have to deal with the looting and the violence on the streets. And that, of course, immediately puts them in conflict with the broader citizenry, the broader community. So that's a huge problem for policing.

As you know here, even with peaceful protests, most of which do end up at the end of the day having a bit of violence attached to them—at least small segments of the protesting group will generally commit some sort of crime—police have to respond to the crime. Next thing, there's a brawl, and next thing, the allegations made against police for excessive power and so on. But the whole environment, which is one of conflict, is absolutely negative to policing. Some of the challenges in my view are—and certainly it's very difficult to deal with these things on the run while the violence continues, as it was until very recently in the United States, and probably still is—but until we stop, until we take time to think more carefully about what the laws are and what the punishments ought to be for different breaches of law and deal with that in a proactive way, in a more constructive way, we're always going to be putting police between a rock and a hard place.

The worst case scenario for a police force—and this is the case in Australia—is that most of the hard work of policing in the street—street-face work, on-street work of policing—is committed by the youngest officers. So they're the people with the obligation of performing police duties, street duties for policing, now generally of the same age, male and female, as the young people who are being involved in most of the protests or committing most of the offenses under the current law. So the law and the nature of conduct at the moment is clashing to the extent where police spend their life in conflict with the very people from whom they need most support and with whom they should be developing the best possible relationships. That's a real dilemma for policing and one which doesn't serve anybody well and makes life almost impossible for a young police officer and sometimes very violent for them, too, in fairness to them.

Nyck: Yes, very good point. Wonderful.

A lot of we're talking about here, therefore, is the way that training actually occurs for police coming into the force and the psychological nature of those officers. I have a fairly recent document from December 2019. It's an American document from the National Center for Biotechnology Information, the National Library of Medicine, and the National Institute of Health (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6950698/>). I'll just quote one of those things here, because you alluded, when we began this morning, to social media, about

the media itself and about cyber issues. So this is quote here, just to pull that into line here: "Today's police officers carry more tools on their equipment belts (e.g., Tasers) and bodies (e.g., body-worn cameras), utilize more equipment in their patrol cars (e.g., computers), and face more public scrutiny of their actions due to smart phones and social media than officers from prior generations. It can be argued that the job has never been more demanding or, for that matter, more stressful. In the least, there is little dispute that contemporary policing is extremely complex and challenging. For this reason, law enforcement agencies are obligated to hire, train, and retain a cadre of the most psychologically fit police officers." And I guess it's hard to disagree with, but how would you see that? Do you agree with that, essentially? Is that coming into police training in this country, or in other countries, for example, that you're aware of?

Mick Palmer: Yes, I'd largely agree with that, and I think that has really been in force for quite some time in Australia. I mean, not always achieving the ends we might have set for ourselves, but the nature and quality of the police recruitment, even in my time leading up to 2001, had changed quite remarkably, and the quality of young men and women who were applying for policing, even in those days, was very high in terms of academic qualification, nature of their characters and so on. But the nature and extent of the recruitment process was far more sophisticated and far more in-depth than what it had been in my younger days, and a lot of it was psychological profiling. It's never going to be a perfect beast—more people, among other things, do learn how to play the game, obviously—and it won't always pick up all of the character flaws that may apply to a particular individual, but the nature and quality of the recruitment process in modern policing in Australia, particularly, where the forces are all large—the United States in a sense, suffers from having some 25,000 police forces, many of which are very small.

Nyck: They're quite privatised in some cases, too, aren't they?

Mick Palmer: They are indeed. This other level of training, of course, is sometimes very rudimentary, and the quality of recruitment is nothing like it would likely be in Australia. Bigger forces are quite different over there. So you've got a much more complicated environment in the United States. Here, we've only got eight police forces, essentially, eight police services. You have a much higher level of scientific and sophisticated recruitment, much more careful assessment process. The numbers applying far outweigh the numbers that are being taken, in almost all the cases on my last look at that. So we're not short of recruits. We're not having difficulty in getting people to show an interest in joining policing so they can be careful.

The nature of recruit training, first of all, is much more in-depth and scientific than it used to be, and gets better all the time, and in-service training is much more likely to be focused on some of those psychological sort of aspects of the skills you need to possess as an operational police officer than what used to be the case. In my day almost all the training is based on the tactical needs, the 'what' needs of the job. What are the laws? What are the

points of proof you need to prove an offence? What's a lawful arrest? How do you go about it? So it was all on the mechanics, if you like, of policing, not much on the engineering. Now, there is much more focus on the engineering. So the quality of police officers, I think, these days is probably as good, if not better than ever.

But you're right, the commentary was right in saying it is a very complicated environment now, constantly, because of social media and mobile phone cameras and the like on constant public view, as well as our own body cams and so on. So huge accountability is placed on young police officers in very difficult circumstance, and some of those situations where you only have a second or two to make a decision as to what's the appropriate reaction to a problem are not always going to be dealt with as well as you would if you had more time to think about it. But it's likely then to be dissected by the media and by observers over hours and criticisms made.

So I think it really is an important aspect of the problem, too, for people to realise the environment in which police are called upon to take action these days, and the enormous weight, if you like, that is placed on the youngest officers. The hardest job is given to our least experienced people. That's the reality, really.

Nyck: Yes. From the same article, which is entitled *New Directions in Police Academy Training: A Call to Action*, from December last year, as I said, I'm interested in your comment on some of their talk about emotional skills, which you're sort of alluding to there, and your comment on this little quote here: "the emotional exhaustion officers experience from constantly showing the public emotions other than what they are actually feeling, e.g., remaining calmly stoic when disgusted, or smiling when actually angry." I think this is very interesting, and probably at this time, as you are saying, with police being perhaps the same cohort in some of the protests that are occurring around the planet, really bring this up, that they're actually having to deny the feelings that they're feeling. Can you make a comment on that, please?

Mick Palmer: I think that's exactly on the money, and the other one I'd add to that is to appear courageous when you're feeling fearful. I mean, it's quite right to say that police and other first responders run towards danger while the rest of us are running away. We've seen a lot of examples of that in the last few years, including on the London Bridge. I remember reading the figures, in one of my reviews in the early 2000s after 9/11, of the number of firefighters, with one part of the fire service in a New York fire brigade losing almost all of its people, running from a place of safety into the towers to attempt to save people and most of them perishing on about the 30th floor, having continued to climb to help people while the fires raged and the building collapsed. I mean, it's a huge cost we're expecting of young operational first responder people, and I don't think we understand that well enough.

I'm quite deeply involved, actually, in some work on post-traumatic stress, which is becoming a really serious problem in policing. We've had too many suicides in policing, generally by service revolver, in the last couple of years across Australia. Not all of it is solely related to work related pressures, but in almost every case, there's a connection. There might also be

some domestic situation problems but they are clearly interrelated. The nature of the work, in many ways, defines the nature of your domestic relationship.

So there's a huge pressure on young police men and women. I think the comment you mentioned a little while ago about the importance of the obligation on policing to not only train but retain, is something I think every police commissioner in the country would love to do, but the length of time that members are spending in policing these days—I think probably all around Australia, but I know in many cases it is getting less—you used to be able to expect eight to ten years of service from most members. I think it's down now around the five or six in many cases. So people aren't staying in the job as long as they used to be in many cases.

A lot of the reasons for that are the pressure that people find themselves under, the unpopularity that can come in the public space, that can come from the job that you're expected to do, and when young men and women decide to marry and will form partnerships and have children, they find this is too hot a fire to stay part of. So they step away from the work, which at a time and generally—as it is when they suffer post-traumatic stress—it generally happens to people almost at the apex of their career when they are clearly very good at what they do, but they've gone to one too many fatalities, they've gone to one too many homicides, they've seen one too many child deaths, et cetera, and all of a sudden, what became a work challenge in terms of that false face that you talk about—being courageous when you feel fearful, or being calm when you feel anxious—becomes too much. As a result of that, of course, they find they can no longer continue.

We are losing in policing, I think it's fair to say, far too many people to a medical pension environment, who are pensioned out, superannuated out, because of their considered medical unfitness to continue. We're not anywhere near as good as we should be at preventing—identifying—the early warning signs of stress-related trauma and dealing with it so that we can manage it early, prevent it getting worse, and have people recover and come back to full work. So we're losing people at the prime of their capacity through the stress that the work itself puts upon them.

Steve: Mick, you may have seen in my bio, I'm a war veteran and I've been through my own battle with PTSD, and I'm also a founder of Psychedelic Research in Science and Medicine (PRISM), which is Australia's non-profit research organisation. We'd love to talk to you about this in-depth in another episode on another day, if we could. That would be amazing. And I've got some good news on that front in that we at PRISM have just got ethics approval to go ahead with a small MDMA-assisted psychotherapy clinical trial in Perth to treat post-traumatic stress disorder and we hope to be starting that within about 12 months or so. So, if you're up for it, we'd love to talk to you another day and just focus on perhaps that issue, together with drug law reform and psychedelic research. That would be great.

Mick Palmer: Yes. Happy to do that.

Steve: We are going to split this interview into two parts and so we'll wrap up Part 1 here and then we'll come back for Part 2 and I'll talk to you during the break about that, but what I'm interested in covering in Part 2, if you have time, is just looking at what might be possible in terms of what can change, what we can change, and how do we change it in order to make space for a revolution to happen—a revolution of human values and a change in society—while also maintaining the role of police in what they do within society, and make that a healthy exercise.

So we'll take a break now and we will come back with Part 2. Thanks so much for being with us.

You've been listening to the Future Sense podcast with Nyck Jeanes and Futurist, Steve McDonald, broadcast weekly. We're also happy to be liked—or loved—on the platform that you're listening to right now. And we welcome feedback, comments and input. Thanks for joining us, and remember that the future is here now. It's just not evenly distributed.