

National Crime Prevention Framework

Prepared by the Australian Institute of Criminology
on behalf of the Australian and New Zealand Crime
Prevention Senior Officers' Group

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The Australian and New Zealand Crime Prevention Senior Officers' Group (ANZCP SOG) provides a national forum for senior crime prevention staff from each State and Territory as well as Commonwealth and New Zealand government to exchange and share information about crime prevention practices. The ANZCP SOG aims to:

- support strategic thinking and policy development on crime prevention issues;
- promote inter-jurisdictional collaboration;
- promote and encourage strategic research in crime prevention; and
- share information on matters to be discussed at relevant Ministerial and Senior Officer forums

Australian Institute of Criminology

The Australian Institute of Criminology is Australia's national research and knowledge centre on crime and justice. We seek to promote justice and reduce crime by undertaking and communicating evidence-based research to inform policy and practice.

1. INTRODUCTION

Crime prevention is an effective approach to reducing crime. It is internationally recognised as an important component of a national approach to building viable communities. Evidence from several countries¹ shows that implementing and sustaining effective and efficient crime prevention programs can contribute significantly to the achievement of safe and secure societies by reducing the level of crime. Well-planned interventions can prevent crime and victimisation, promote community safety and make a significant contribution to the sustainable development of vibrant communities.

Crime prevention can reduce the long term costs associated with the criminal justice system and the costs of crime, both economic and social, and can achieve a significant return on investment in terms of savings in justice, welfare, health care, and the protection of social and human capital. A safe and secure society is an important foundation for the delivery of other key services. Community safety and security is a prerequisite for sound economic growth through continuing business investment as well as community well-being and cohesion. International experience has shown that effective crime prevention can both maintain and reinforce the social cohesion of communities and assist them to act collectively to improve their quality of life.

The techniques and effectiveness of crime prevention continue to improve. The international trend is towards a comprehensive approach to crime prevention, and there is a growing recognition of the characteristics of effective programs that must be adapted to specific circumstances. The use of a knowledge-based approach to developing policies and programs, particularly in terms of using reliable evidence about both crime problems and effective responses, has markedly improved, but there is still room to do better.

The prevention of crime requires individuals, communities, businesses, non-government organisations and all levels of government to work together in a coordinated way to develop and implement effective strategies to address the short and longer-term causes of crime.

2. PURPOSE

The National Crime Prevention Framework has been developed by the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) on behalf of the Australia and New Zealand Crime Prevention Senior Officers' Group (ANZCP SOG) as a resource which outlines the most effective approaches to the prevention of crime. It also describes a range of possible roles and functions for state/territory and national governments for the effective delivery of crime prevention activity in Australia. The purpose of this Framework is to:

- support a coordinated approach to addressing crime and safety issues of national importance, including new and emerging crime problems;
- promote an improved level of collaboration between crime prevention agencies operating in each jurisdiction;
- improve the effectiveness of crime prevention across Australia by promoting principles of good practice and successful strategies;
- encourage increased commitment to crime prevention at all levels of government and across different sectors; and
- assist in guiding the allocation of crime prevention resources to achieve the greatest impact.

This Framework does not aim to prescribe specific actions that must be implemented by stakeholders involved in the delivery of crime prevention. Rather, it provides guidance by way of information on best practice to assist with the development of appropriate policies, strategies and programs to address crime problems.

¹ Including Australia, United Kingdom, Canada and United States (Homel P 2009. Lessons for Canadian crime prevention from recent international experience. IPC Review 3:13-39)

3. CRIME PREVENTION

Crime prevention includes ‘strategies and measures that seek to reduce the risk of crimes occurring, and their potential harmful effects on individuals and society, including fear of crime, by intervening to influence their multiple causes’². These measures can be implemented by individuals, communities, businesses, non-government organisations and all levels of government, to target the various individual, social and environmental factors that increase the risk of crime, disorder and victimisation. Strategies include those that modify the physical environment to reduce the opportunities for crime to occur (environmental approaches), and those that address the underlying social and economic causes of crime and limit the supply of motivated offenders (social and structural approaches).

Crime prevention may have a universal focus—strengthening institutions that support civil society or addressing aspects of the broader physical or social environment that may lead to crime (primary prevention). It can be targeted at high risk settings or be directed at the early identification and subsequent intervention in the lives of people or groups at risk of engaging in criminal activity or becoming victims of crime (secondary prevention). It can also be targeted at the prevention of recidivism among those people who have already engaged in offending behaviour (tertiary prevention). A comprehensive crime prevention strategy will incorporate all three approaches.

Other sectors – for example health, education, housing and human services—can deliver a range of actions which may not have the prevention of crime as their primary goal, but will have an impact on crime levels, especially in the long term. While this activity does not necessarily fall within a strict definition of crime prevention, it is important that the potential crime prevention benefits of the policies and programs delivered in these sectors are identified, acknowledged and, wherever possible, enhanced.

This Framework is focused on those strategies that have, as a primary goal, the elimination or reduction of crime and antisocial behaviour or improvements in community safety.

4. OUTCOMES

This Framework will assist in the achievement of the following outcomes:

- a reduction in crime and disorder problems that are of greatest harm and concern to the community;
- increased community safety, security and cohesion, including a reduction in the actual and perceived risk of victimisation;
- increased support for people to cope with the impact of victimisation; and
- a reduction in reoffending among those people who have already engaged in criminal or antisocial behaviour.

5. PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD PRACTICE

A number of important principles underpin good crime prevention policy and practice. The principles outlined in this Framework are consistent with international standards for crime prevention, including the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime (Box 1). These principles also reflect recognised best practice in crime prevention policy and practice from Australia and overseas.

Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments will adopt the following principles, recognising that adherence to these standards is important for crime prevention work to deliver optimum results. Effective crime prevention involves:

- strong and committed leadership at all levels;
- collaboration between multiple stakeholders to address the wide-ranging causes of crime and to draw upon the skills, expertise, resources and responsibilities necessary to address those causes;
- the practical application of research and evaluation findings in the development and implementation of measures to reduce crime, targeted to areas of the greatest need and adapted to suit local conditions;
- a focus on outcomes and a commitment to demonstrating measurable results through evaluation and performance measurement, with clear lines of accountability;

² United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) 2002. Guidelines for the prevention of crime. 11th Commission on the prevention of crime and criminal justice. Resolution 2002/13, Annex. New York: UN ECOSOC

- building and maintaining the capacity to implement effective crime prevention policies and interventions;
- promoting an active and engaged community, and being responsive to the diversity and changing nature of communities;
- long-term commitment to achieving sustainable reductions in crime and savings to the criminal justice system and the community; and
- coordination across sectors to embed crime prevention into relevant social and economic policies, including education, employment, health, and housing policies, particularly those directed towards at-risk communities, children, families and youth.

Box 1: United Nations (UN) Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime

The 2002 UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime outline eight principles on which prevention should be based:

1. Government leadership: at all levels to create and maintain an institutional framework for effective crime prevention.
2. Socio-economic development and inclusion: integration of crime prevention into relevant social and economic policies, focus on integration of at risk communities, children, families and youth.
3. Cooperation and partnerships: between government organisations, civil society, business sector.
4. Sustainability and accountability: adequate funding to establish and sustain programs and evaluation, and clear accountability for funding.
5. Use of a knowledge base: using evidence of proven practices as the basis for policies and programs.
6. Human rights/rule of law/culture of lawfulness: respect for human rights and promotion of a culture of lawfulness.
7. Interdependency: take account of links between local crime problems and international organised crime.
8. Differentiation: respecting different needs of men and women and vulnerable members of society.

6. REQUIREMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE CRIME PREVENTION

There is an accumulated body of knowledge regarding proven and promising practices to inform crime prevention policy and practice. Proven interventions are those initiatives which have been subjected to rigorous evaluation and have demonstrated results.

Promising programs are those that adhere to principles of good practice, are based on sound crime prevention theory, and are targeted at the causes of crime. They may have already shown some evidence of success but are not yet evaluated or, where they have been evaluated, the evidence regarding their effectiveness is not yet clear.

Effective crime prevention requires careful consideration of the evidence base with regard to identifying possible interventions, the circumstances in which these interventions will be delivered and how they will be adapted to suit local conditions. It also requires an understanding of what needs to be done and the factors that are integral to successful implementation. Initiatives should be supported on the basis that they are shown to target factors known to influence crime, are consistent with proven or promising practice, and adhere to best practice in implementation.

6.1. Approaches to preventing crime

There are a variety of different approaches to preventing crime, and programs frequently involve multiple interventions delivered at once. Strategies may be directed towards:

- addressing the environmental conditions that promote and sustain crime;
- eliminating risk factors and enhancing protective factors to reduce the likelihood that individuals will engage in offending behaviour;
- strengthening communities by addressing social exclusion and promoting community cohesiveness; and
- enhancing the capacity of criminal justice agencies to prevent crime and reoffending.

6.1.1. Addressing the environmental conditions that promote and sustain crime

Environmental approaches to crime prevention include both situational approaches and broader planning initiatives where the aim is to reduce crime by designing and/or modifying the physical environment to reduce the opportunities for crime to occur.

Situational crime prevention is based upon the premise that crime is frequently opportunistic, and aims to modify contextual factors to limit the opportunities for offenders to engage in criminal behaviour. It comprises a range of measures geared towards reducing the opportunities for crime to occur, and highlights the importance of targeting very specific forms of crime in certain circumstances (e.g. targeting hardening in service stations to prevent armed robbery). This involves identifying, manipulating and controlling the situational or environmental factors associated with certain types of crime.

Communities and individuals can assist situational approaches by implementing personal, household and vehicle security measures (such as ensuring their house and car is securely locked and their property appropriately marked), participating in the delivery of crime prevention strategies directed at the physical environment (e.g. strategies that encourage the reporting of suspicious activity), and providing input into identifying and understanding the nature of local crime problems and identifying local priorities. Similarly, by adopting business practices (e.g. responsible service of alcohol training for bar and security staff) and designing business premises and products that minimise the opportunities for crime to occur, businesses can help to reduce crime. Businesses can also ensure that their financial and commercial practices are not conducive to the promotion of crime by systematically identifying potential risk opportunities and acting to reduce those risks. These can range from the way stock is displayed and financial transactions are managed, to securing organisation-wide information systems.

Broader planning initiatives include Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and urban renewal projects, and seek to reduce the opportunities for crime through the design and management of the built and landscaped environment. Strategies include modifying the built environment to create safer places that are less crime prone or can make people feel safer (such as by designing public spaces that encourage large numbers of users and provide greater natural surveillance, or by designing pedestrian thoroughfares that are well lit and do not create places for potential offenders to hide). CPTED has a major influence on crime prevention policy and practice in Australia as in other parts of the world, and a number of state, territory and local governments now have specific planning policies that incorporate CPTED principles or guidelines.

There is considerable evidence of the effectiveness of situational crime prevention in reducing crime, both in Australia and overseas. There is also a growing body of evaluated strategies, which can help to inform the selection and design of situational crime prevention interventions, and a well-developed methodology for their application. The evidence in support of CPTED is growing. There is sufficient evidence to support the application of CPTED principles, as well as environmental safety assessments more broadly, as a key consideration in the development of the built environment, including new development proposals and urban regeneration initiatives. This should be supported by further research into the effectiveness of CPTED as a crime prevention measure.

The use of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) has become an increasingly popular approach to dealing with crime in public spaces. There has been tremendous growth in the use of CCTV to prevent crime in public space, particularly among local governments. Research indicates that CCTV may be effective in reducing some forms of property crime in certain circumstances (e.g. in car parks). However, it is most effective when used in conjunction with other initiatives as part of an integrated approach. There is also an increasing range of emerging crime and safety surveillance methods available (e.g. number plate recognition software) which may assist in deterring and apprehending offenders, as well as advancements in tools such as crime mapping technology which can help inform place-based interventions.

State and territory and local government play a key role in environmental design, through the development and management of safe public spaces. Governments can address factors that influence the opportunities for crime to occur through its various responsibilities in areas such as managing public space and building design, providing community recreational services and developing policies that affect local businesses and urban development processes. As both users and managers of public spaces, business operators have a role in contributing to the design of safe, attractive and inclusive environments.

6.1.2. Eliminating risk factors and enhancing protective factors to reduce the likelihood that individuals will engage in offending behaviour

Developmental crime prevention, which involves intervening early in critical transition points in a person's development to address those factors that may lead them on a pathway to future involvement in crime, is

an important crime prevention measure. There are positive outcomes for young people, their families and the broader community. Intervening early in a young person's development, particularly in disadvantaged communities, can produce significant long-term social and economic benefits. Eliminating risk factors and enhancing protective factors associated with offending can impact upon the likelihood that a young person will engage in future offending behaviour. These factors can be related to the individual or their family, school, peers, life events and community and cultural factors.

The approach is based on studies that have identified that the pathways to antisocial behaviour involve persistent conduct problems, oppositional behaviour and physical aggression in the preschool and early primary school years as among the strongest predictors of adolescent aggression, delinquent behaviour and a range of negative long-term outcomes. More broadly, impulsivity, low school achievement, poor parental child-rearing practices (including in extreme cases, child abuse and neglect), and poverty, have been identified as key predictors of involvement in juvenile crime.

Long-term reductions in offending can be achieved by providing basic services or resources to individuals, families, schools or communities to minimise the impact of these factors on the development of offending behaviours. These resources and services are best directed towards disadvantaged families with young children – where there is an identified need. There is growing evidence that developmental prevention programs can open up opportunities for children and young people and reduce their likelihood of involvement in crime, especially if they live in disadvantaged communities.

To generate sustainable reductions in crime, the management and delivery of crime prevention programs and initiatives needs to support the implementation of long-term early intervention programs, which requires moving from specific short-term projects to embedded, long-term programs. The effectiveness of developmental crime prevention strategies can be improved through long-term initiatives that are integrated into broader social policy, as opposed to discrete geographically focused and short-term demonstration projects.

Many of the risk and protective factors related to crime are the responsibility of state and territory and Commonwealth government agencies. Various sections of government that can make a significant contribution to a reduction in crime include (but are not limited to) education, employment, health, housing and human service agencies. These agencies develop and implement a range of social policies that need to take into consideration the potential implications for preventing or facilitating crime and the factors that may contribute to the development of offending behaviour.

For example, responsibility for the development of strategies to reduce school truancy rates rests largely with schools and the education sector. However, improving school attendance rates can reduce the number of young people who are left unsupervised during school hours and can also improve long term educational outcomes, which can in turn reduce the short and long term risk that individuals will engage in crime.

Community-based and non-government organisations also provide a range of important services that can address many of the individual and community level factors associated with crime and antisocial behaviour. Community-based and non-government organisations are frequently a focus for promoting community mobilisation around local problems and are well placed to quickly deliver appropriate preventive action when empowered to do so.

6.1.3. Strengthening communities by addressing social exclusion and promoting community cohesiveness

The risk of becoming involved in crime, or being victimised, is greater in those communities that experience high levels of social exclusion or a lack of social cohesion. Experience from both Australia and overseas has shown how quickly social disorganisation and crime can develop to serious levels within otherwise “normal” communities, to the point that it becomes necessary for governments to expend significant resources attempting to restore order and economic viability.

There is also growing recognition of the importance of addressing social exclusion (deprivation, disadvantage and limited access to services) and assisting disadvantaged groups to reduce their risk of involvement in crime. Aspects of social exclusion, including neighbourhood disadvantage, unemployment, intergenerational disadvantage, limited education prospects, poor child health and wellbeing and homelessness are important

risk factors for criminal behaviour. Victimization and fear of crime can lead to further social isolation and exclusion. The social exclusion of vulnerable individuals based on factors such as culture, religion, national origin and language is an area of concern, particularly given Australia's significant migrant population.

There is some evidence from overseas that neighbourhood-level interventions in deprived areas designed to address issues related to economic and social regeneration can result in reductions in crime and fear and increased satisfaction with the local area. Community development programs that focus on strengthening informal networks and enhancing community structures have the potential to build community capacity, which can in turn provide opportunities to mobilise communities to address local crime problems.

Further research into the effectiveness of these programs in achieving long-term reductions in crime is required. However, programs that aim to address social exclusion and cohesion are likely to be more successful when they:

- identify communities at need based on evidence and community consultation and analyse factors that may contribute to social disadvantage or exclusion;
- take into consideration a community's capacity to implement change and level of social disorganisation;
- increase opportunities to participate and promote community involvement and consultation in program design and decision-making, as well as in the management of activities that impact on, either directly or indirectly, those social conditions believed to sustain crime in residential settings;
- encourage representation from diverse groups, particularly those community members most at risk of being marginalised;
- coordinate efforts between agencies across government and non government sectors to target multiple areas of disadvantage, supported by neighbourhood regeneration;
- are provided with ongoing support (including human, financial and physical resources); and
- regularly review progress to ensure that initiatives remain on track.

A focus on strengthening communities recognises that crime is strongly associated with the coincidence of a series of structural determinants present within particular communities (e.g. differential rates of access to housing, employment, education, and health services, among other factors). It is therefore important that policies in these areas are considerate of, and responsive to, the implications for crime prevention, as part of a whole of government approach. This includes the need for crime prevention to be embedded into the national and state/territory strategic plans, and the framework and policy documents of other government bodies, where appropriate. For example, crime prevention initiatives need to be supported by broader social policy initiatives that are designed to reduce the supply of potential offenders by reducing economic stress and preventing geographic concentrations of disadvantage.

Local government can also deliver both crime prevention and community development strategies that focus on providing important infrastructure to meet the needs of communities, as well as hosting a range of community events to build a sense of community. The active participation of civil society in these strategies is an important factor in their success.

6.1.4. Enhancing the capacity of criminal justice agencies to prevent crime and reoffending

Criminal justice agencies make a valuable contribution to effective crime prevention strategies. There is strong evidence that effective criminal justice processes can contribute to reductions in offending behaviour.

The definition of crime prevention adopted by this Framework includes the range of proactive strategies delivered by law enforcement agencies that aim to prevent crime (e.g. intelligence-led policing of licensed premises). There is a considerable body of knowledge surrounding the impact of policing strategies in terms of their capacity to prevent crime, including strong support for problem-oriented policing and for some aspects of community policing.

Police provide a strong presence in most communities across Australia, comprise a large and highly skilled workforce and represent the juncture between primary prevention and the criminal justice system. They can perform a number of important functions relevant to crime prevention, such as:

- providing a visible presence in communities;
- deterrence through the threat of apprehension and prosecution;
- intelligence-led and proactive policing of crime hot spots;
- diversionary programs that change the course of individuals away from the criminal justice system and, in some cases, into treatment;
- providing assistance in the planning, implementation and review of community-driven crime prevention initiatives;
- problem-oriented policing strategies, often involving police led partnerships with other stakeholders; and
- disseminating crime prevention information and advice and conducting safety audits;
- community policing initiatives that engage the community in the development and implementation of crime prevention strategies.

This requires police to work in partnership with a range of stakeholders (including government and non-government agencies, businesses, community groups and the wider community) to identify local crime problems, possible solutions, and design and implement appropriate responses. The importance of these partnerships is highlighted in the national strategy *Directions in Australia New Zealand Policing 2008–2011*.

This Framework also acknowledges the ability of criminal justice processes (e.g. correctional rehabilitation programs, specialty court programs) to prevent future offending. Courts work in partnership with a range of stakeholders to implement a variety of court-based diversion programs and specialty court programs that target specific offender types and modify the criminal justice process to meet the needs of offenders and address those factors that increase the likelihood that they will reoffend. Correctional agencies deliver a range of rehabilitative programs to offenders in custody and in the community that can make a significant contribution to a reduction in reoffending. They can also provide support to offenders post-sentence that facilitates their successful reintegration into the community.

Effective criminal justice approaches to reoffending require:

- adoption of an holistic approach that incorporates evidence-based interventions at all stages of the criminal justice system and for both adult and juvenile offenders, including police diversionary programs, court-based diversion, programs for offenders serving custodial and non-custodial sentences, and re-entry programs and support post-release for prisoners;
- a focus on improving the delivery of evidence based programs that target individual and lifestyle risk factors for reoffending, particularly among young offenders, both in the custodial environment and community settings;
- programs delivered both pre and post-release targeted at the difficulties encountered by offenders following their release for custody and factors that inhibit successful reintegration to encourage their active and productive community participation;
- continued support of those programs that are demonstrated as being effective in reducing the rate of reoffending and successful in addressing those factors related to offending behaviour;
- support for expanding and maintaining the integrity of those programs that have been trialled successfully in discrete locations (i.e. pilot or demonstration projects) to ensure that the demonstrated impact of the program is sustained; and
- the provision of greater support to victims who come into contact with police and the courts, including information and assistance to prevent repeat victimisation.

Programs that have been shown to be effective in reducing recidivism depend upon the close cooperation between agencies within the criminal justice system and those agencies outside it, including a range of government agencies responsible for housing, health and education, non government service providers, local industry and the community. Improving interagency collaboration between criminal justice agencies and between criminal justice and other government agencies is an important feature of strategies that aim to reduce the likelihood that individuals will reoffend.

It is important that crime prevention programs are consistent with national and state and territory strategies to improve the criminal justice response to prevent reoffending.

6.2. Key features of effective strategies

Effective crime prevention not only requires an understanding of what needs to be done, but also the features that are integral to successful implementation. This includes features that are specific to crime prevention, as well as aspects of good governance more broadly.

6.2.1. Problem solving

Effective crime prevention is underpinned by a problem-solving approach. This involves a systematic analysis of current and emerging crime problems, their causes and risk factors. Once these problems are identified and understood, an appropriate response can then be identified and developed based on evidence regarding the effectiveness of different approaches and a consideration of the circumstances to which it will be adapted. The process then involves identifying the key parties that need to participate and mobilising them for action. The next step is implementing the response, which is subjected to ongoing monitoring and review, and the process is repeated throughout the life of the project or program.

Effective problem-solving is a systematic and continuous process. Several problem-solving models have been formulated, but all highlight the importance of ongoing analysis and review processes and access to the best available high quality, reliable information about the causes of crime and possible solutions. It also requires an understanding of crime prevention theory and the causal mechanisms that underpin the different approaches to preventing crime.

6.2.2. Community engagement

Community engagement is a key feature of effective crime prevention. A clear strategy for engaging the most vulnerable sections of the community (in terms of their risk of offending, becoming a victim of crime, or feeling unsafe) is important in the development and implementation of crime prevention programs and projects. This can include representatives of the community targeted by a particular strategy as well as those who may be otherwise considered marginal or potentially excluded (e.g. culturally or linguistically diverse (CALD) communities). It is also important for those involved in the development of crime prevention policies and programs to tailor crime prevention initiatives according to the context in which they are delivered and the community with whom they are attempting to engage.

6.2.3. Partnerships and good governance

Crime prevention is a shared responsibility involving government and civil society. There are a range of stakeholders who make a valuable contribution to the development, implementation and evaluation of crime prevention initiatives. In Australia, contemporary crime prevention has generally embraced the value of partnerships, collaborative policy development and program delivery, in recognition that the causes of crime are wide ranging, complex and frequently require a coordinated response.

Central to good governance in successful crime prevention partnerships are the development of:

- appropriate mechanisms for promoting and steering a whole of government approach to the prevention of crime, and ensuring that key stakeholders are involved in crime prevention planning at all levels;
- forums for bringing together government, non-government, communities and businesses that promote open communication and allow all partners to contribute;
- clearly defined roles and responsibilities for these stakeholders;
- a shared goal and common purpose, and an understanding of how each partner contributes to this goal;
- partnerships for the delivery of integrated solutions, comprising closely linked and coordinated interventions that can achieve shared outcomes;
- an understanding and acceptance of the different interests, philosophies and contexts in which each partner works;
- clear lines of accountability for the partnership, both to each other and their respective organisation;
- a joint framework for performance measuring and reporting, with an agreed understanding of what constitutes success; and
- clear benefits to the partnership that are evident to all those involved.

6.2.4. Monitoring and evaluation

Effective crime prevention involves ongoing monitoring and evaluation of strategies and programs, and the dissemination of findings to the broader sector. There are two basic approaches for measuring the effectiveness of crime prevention:

- *performance measurement*, which involves the development of systems to regularly monitor performance information, review program performance and to inform decisions as to how to improve the operation and effectiveness of a strategy; and
- *evaluation*, which helps to determine how well a program has been implemented or whether a chosen strategy has achieved its stated objectives in order to build an understanding of what works in crime prevention, identify good practice, and determine what can be done, and in what circumstances, to prevent crime.

Experience shows that both approaches need to be considered during the initial planning and development stages of a project. Measuring and improving the effectiveness of crime prevention involves a combination of performance measurement and evaluation. Selecting an appropriate evaluation model involves a consideration of the characteristics of a program, the purpose of the evaluation, the available options, and determining methods to gather the views of key stakeholders. Evaluation can be directed towards:

- the program as a whole, which will include the assessment of the overall impact of the program (i.e. the aggregate impact of the various initiatives delivered as part of the program) and the appropriateness, efficacy and efficiency of mechanisms used to support the delivery of crime prevention;
- individual projects or initiatives, providing evidence as to their effectiveness in achieving desired outcomes, including explanations as to the reasons for the observed effect, as well as identifying practical challenges and lessons for implementing similar projects; or
- clustered groups of projects (classified according to location, intervention type, target groups etc.) to draw conclusions regarding the effectiveness of specific interventions, and the relative contribution of certain contexts and project characteristics.

Decisions regarding which interventions should be subjected to more rigorous evaluation can be based on an assessment of the potential practical and policy significance of the findings, and of the ability of the intervention to be effectively evaluated. By focusing evaluation on clusters of projects that are identified as being important and/or of interest, individual projects can be freed to focus on performance managing their work and the knowledge base on effective crime prevention practice can be developed in a strategic and systematic way.

Determining the most effective approach to supporting evaluation work will be based on an assessment of the existing capacity and potential needs of those likely to be entrusted with the responsibility for evaluation. Experience has shown that the actual work of evaluation needs to be supported by appropriate mechanisms to ensure that regular and timely feedback on findings from evaluations can be passed back to program managers to support continued program improvement. Similarly, research and evaluation findings need to be disseminated in a format that is accessible to policy makers and to non-experts working in the sector.

7. PRIORITY AREAS

7.1. Concentrate efforts on addressing crime problems that present the greatest threat to the safety, security and cohesiveness of communities

While each jurisdiction experiences different types and levels of criminal offending and victimisation, a number of issues currently affect communities across Australia and warrant particular attention. The following issues have been identified as requiring a concerted and coordinated response:

- reducing alcohol-related violence;
- improving the safety of young people;
- improving the safety of Indigenous people;
- preventing child abuse and neglect; and
- reducing violence against women.

7.1.1. Reducing alcohol-related violence

Criminal justice, health and survey data shows that there is a significant level of alcohol-related violence. While the majority of people who consume alcohol do not engage in violent behaviour, there is evidence of a relationship between the excessive consumption of alcohol and an increased risk of being a victim or perpetrator of assault. Comprehensive strategies to reduce alcohol-related violence are more likely to be effective if they:

- include interventions that aim to reduce the short term harmful consumption of alcohol (binge drinking);
- target the problems associated with alcohol in a range of settings, including entertainment precincts and residential areas;
- promote responsible attitudes to alcohol and drinking behaviour in a range of settings (e.g. universities, work places and sporting clubs) and address cultural attitudes towards alcohol to influence behavioural change through well-designed social marketing and education campaigns;
- create a positive physical and social environment in and around licensed premises to attract and encourage patrons to be well behaved by setting and maintaining high standards for venue operators and clientele;
- maintain effective regulatory controls over the supply and availability of alcohol, supported by the proactive enforcement of relevant legislation;
- are informed by the growing body of evidence from both Australia and overseas outlining effective interventions to reduce alcohol related problems; and
- are consistent with the responses outlined in relevant national strategies, including the *National Alcohol Strategy 2006–2011*, *National Binge Drinking Strategy* and priorities outlined by the *National Health Preventative Taskforce* to reduce alcohol-related social harms, as well as relevant state and territory strategies.

7.1.2. Improving the safety of young people

There is significant evidence to show that young people are disproportionately affected by crime. While the majority of young people are not involved in crime, people under the age of 25 are overrepresented as both offenders and victims. Young people who have experienced or witnessed violence are at increased risk of becoming violent offenders themselves. Males comprise the majority of young people involved in crime, although rates of female delinquency appear to be increasing.

While the rate of overall offending by young people has declined in recent years, there is evidence of a growth in violent offending. *The National Strategy for Young Australians* has highlighted the importance of ensuring young people feel safe in their communities.

There is already a considerable amount of crime prevention activity directed at young people. Further research is required into the effectiveness of current strategies, such as education and awareness raising programs delivered in schools and the range of diversionary activities that attempt to move young people away from engaging in criminal or antisocial behaviour by providing alternative activities.

Crime prevention strategies targeting children, youths and young adults are more effective when they are:

- inclusive and engage young people in the development and implementation of interventions wherever possible;
- supported by effective interagency collaboration between stakeholders such as police, youth workers, service providers, community groups and young people;
- age, gender, culturally and developmentally appropriate, as well as being tailored to the needs of different groups and the context in which they are being delivered (e.g. rural communities);
- considerate of the peer, family, school and community factors which may exert some level of influence over the young person's behaviour;
- targeted at areas of the greatest need and focused on those communities that exhibit indicators of risk, including evidence of high rates of offending or involvement in antisocial behaviour among young people, early school leaving, unemployment and substance abuse and a lack of structured or supervised youth activities;
- part of a broader strategy that incorporates multiple interventions to address both social and environmental factors associated with young people's involvement in crime, including a balance between proactive crime prevention strategies and ensuring timely responses to offending behaviour when it occurs;

- consistent with developmental approaches to crime prevention and intervene early and at key transition points to target both risk and protective factors to generate long term, sustainable reductions in offending behaviour;
- based on an understanding of the reasons or factors that drive young people to engage in certain offending or antisocial behaviours;
- supported by strong and consistent messages regarding appropriate behaviour and the consequences associated with involvement in criminal behaviour;
- delivered in a range of settings, including (but not limited to) schools and in the community; and
- are supported by intensive case management to high risk or prolific young offenders who have frequent contact with the criminal justice system, to reduce reoffending.

The evidence relating to young people's involvement in crime highlights the need for crime prevention to target a number of key areas. These include:

- intervening early to help young people to deal with drug and alcohol issues, preventing those at risk from developing alcohol or substance use problems, and ensuring that treatment and support is available to those people who need it;
- providing support to parents with young children, particularly in high risk communities;
- building trust and encouraging positive interactions between young people and police, particularly within those communities where there may be mistrust, suspicion or a lack of respect for police;
- improving young peoples' access to important support services, particularly for those young people who find themselves in unstable living arrangements;
- addressing low levels of school retention and attendance in those areas that experience difficulties engaging young people in school;
- providing vocational training and increasing employment opportunities for those young people looking for work;
- school-based programs that aim to address attitudes that may support violence by enhancing the social and emotional wellbeing of young people, providing them with conflict management skills and helping to build empathy;
- creating youth-friendly public spaces that are safe and engaging, and which minimise conflict between different activities and users; and
- promoting safe internet use to increase online safety.

7.1.3. Improving the safety of Indigenous people

Indigenous people (i.e. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) come into contact with police, the courts and corrections at a higher rate than the rest of the community. They are overrepresented as both offenders and victims of crime. Serious social and economic disadvantage within Indigenous communities is a significant contributor to high rates of offending.

Effective crime prevention strategies can address the underlying reasons for Indigenous offending, which can in-turn reduce the risk that Indigenous people will come into contact with the criminal justice system. To prevent crime in Indigenous communities it is important to develop strategies that aim to:

- reduce the rates of drug and alcohol abuse;
- improve school performance and retention;
- strengthen social support and increase participation in social activities;
- increase the level of employment and employment skills;
- increase access to adequate housing and reduce financial stress;
- improve the quality of family life, in particular provide support to parents with young children; and
- increase the level of support for victims of crime and those people exposed to violence in the home.

Interventions should comprise a number of different strategies to address multiple risk factors, be community driven, involve Indigenous communities in program design, decision making and delivery, and be culturally appropriate. It is important that initiatives directed at Indigenous people encourage a sense of community

ownership and responsibility, supported by professional mentoring, training and development and ongoing assistance. More specifically, crime prevention programs are more likely to be effective where they:

- meet the specific needs of Indigenous offenders, include Indigenous specific content and, where practical, are Indigenous specific;
- involve Indigenous personnel in the delivery of the program and, where this isn't possible, ensure staff are provided with appropriate and adequate cultural awareness and sensitivity training;
- implement an holistic approach to Indigenous health and well being that takes into consideration the range of societal, cultural, community, family and individual factors which may impact upon a person's behaviour;
- involve local Indigenous persons (including Elders and respected persons) in the development and delivery of programs;
- attempt to engage the participant's family and community in programs and services;
- incorporate an understanding of Indigenous society and emphasise Indigenous heritage, culture and law;
- develop strategies to overcome language and literacy barriers;
- consider eligibility criteria where programs are open to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants to ensure Indigenous people can access the program; and
- assist in establishing and strengthening relationships with Indigenous persons who are able to mentor others.

There is a need for further evaluation into the effectiveness of crime prevention programs targeting Indigenous communities to build a better understanding of effective interventions. Crime prevention policies and programs need to continue to support the implementation of national and state and territory initiatives to improve safety in Indigenous communities, including the actions outlined in the *National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework 2009–2015* to increase safety and reduce offending in Indigenous communities.

7.1.4. Preventing child abuse and neglect

The number of children substantiated by child protection services as having suffered child abuse or neglect has increased in Australia over the past 20 years, leading to significant social and economic costs due to an increased need for child protection and out-of-home care services, as well as the short and long term costs to the child in terms of psychological and physical trauma and damage to family cohesion. Poor parenting practices, and child abuse and neglect, are among the strongest predictors of juvenile involvement of crime.

Priority areas for reducing child abuse and neglect are outline in the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020*. A whole of government approach to child abuse and neglect will incorporate interventions to address known risk factors for child abuse and neglect as well as universal approaches to prevent child maltreatment. Effective crime prevention involves developing and implementing evidence-based strategies to support families and promote positive parenting practices among those people are at risk of child abuse and neglect (including parents with drug or alcohol problems, adolescent parents, families with parents or children with special needs, mental illness, and intimate partner violence), and among those individuals who come into contact with the criminal justice system.

There is evidence for the effectiveness of crime prevention programs that involve:

- early intervention to address risk and protective factors for child abuse and neglect, particularly in at-risk communities that experience high levels of social and economic disadvantage;
- parental education focused on building existing skills and promoting positive interactions and behaviour toward children, combined with other programs to address factors which may be impacting on their parenting;
- providing support to parents and families and ensuring that important support services are available, such as through tailored home visitation programs delivered by skilled staff;
- personal safety programs that address a range of issues delivered in school settings and incorporate role play to encourage reporting and dealing with high risk situations; and
- improving coordination between criminal justice agencies, domestic violence and child protection services to assist in the prevention of children's early exposure to domestic violence, deal with physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect, and prevent the intergenerational transmission of violent attitudes and behaviours and/or subsequent victimisation.

A balance must be achieved between investment in health, education and welfare universal support services available to all children and families, those specifically targeted towards at-risk or vulnerable children and families, and strategies to prevent repeat victimisation where abuse or neglect occurs.

7.1.5. Reducing violence against women

Research has shown the majority of family and domestic violence events in Australia are committed by men against women. There is considerable evidence surrounding the negative impact of domestic violence on victims and their families. *The National Council's Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2009–2021* highlights a number of areas that can be addressed through future domestic violence initiatives, including:

- overcoming barriers to effective implementation of collaborative strategies and monitoring the effectiveness of partnerships in reducing domestic violence;
- supporting primary prevention strategies, including social marketing strategies that aim to promote cultural and behavioural change;
- ensuring that domestic violence services are accessible to victims and their children, and that service systems are sufficiently integrated to address the complex needs of victims;
- ensuring programs are targeted towards and tailored to the needs of those women at an increased risk of domestic violence or who may be less likely to access support services, including Indigenous women, women from CALD backgrounds, younger women and women living in rural and remote communities;
- increasing the involvement of men and boys in the development of programs designed to prevent violence against women by changing male attitudes and behaviours; and
- improving the evidence base with respect to effective interventions to reduce domestic violence, particularly in relation to primary prevention, victim support services, perpetrator programs, criminal justice interventions and risk assessment and management.

Increasing coordination and collaboration across sectors and across all levels of government and non-government is an important principle underpinning any approach to the prevention of domestic violence. Programs should also be supported by ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

In addition to being consistent with other national strategies, including the *National Council's Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2009–2021*, effective responses to violence against women should be comprehensive and focus on a number of key areas. These areas include:

- continuing efforts to improve community attitudes towards violence against women and address prevailing misconceptions regarding the prevalence, nature and acceptability of violence against women, through social marketing and communication and community development initiatives;
- implementing early intervention and education programs targeted at young people, including school-based programs that aim to shape appropriate attitudes towards women and violence;
- addressing alcohol and other substance use problems among both perpetrators and victims of domestic violence, including through the development of partnerships between treatment services and domestic violence programs;
- assisting agencies such as police to implement effective processes and risk assessment tools to identify early signs or risk factors for violence and implement secondary prevention programs that target families that have been identified as being at risk of domestic violence;
- continuing to build upon the considerable work undertaken to improve the criminal justice response to domestic violence and an integrated response from criminal justice agencies, such as better linkages between criminal justice processes, support services and prevention programs, introduction of pro-arrest police policies, specialist courts and support services for victims; and
- increasing the availability and awareness of services for victims (such as advocacy, support, accommodation, skill development and counselling) and perpetrators, enhancing referral mechanisms and improving collaboration between service providers.

7.2. Continuing to monitor local crime problems, identify local priorities and develop strategies to reduce their impact on the community

Each Australian jurisdiction faces a range of local crime problems that will be identified through systematic analysis of local data on key indicators, as well as in response to political or community interest or concern. Furthermore, these problems vary across communities and locations within each jurisdiction. An important feature of this Framework is that it supports the development of different priorities and targeted responses in individual jurisdictions and communities.

This requires the development of appropriate mechanisms to:

- identify and prioritise local issues of concern based on evidence of need, develop practical responses to these issues and evaluate and measure the effectiveness of each response;
- consult and engage with the local community to help understand crime priorities, exchange information and to identify opportunities to engage the community in local problem solving;
- improve the quality and availability of information for local stakeholders required to appropriately target interventions to address local crime problems; and
- integrate crime prevention within other services and preventative strategies delivered at the state/territory and local government level.

At the local level, police and local government can perform an important role in providing leadership and coordinating local crime prevention activity through the development of a local crime prevention plan that clearly defines agreed actions for all relevant stakeholders to address local crime problems.

7.3. Addressing new and emerging crime problems

Crime prevention operates in a complex and ever changing global environment. While many factors influence the level and nature of crime in a community, new crime problems continue to emerge as changes in the global economy and advances in technology create new opportunities for offenders.

Further, new threats to security are likely to continue to emerge with the ongoing development of technologies and the changing nature of business operation. The development of new technologies has been identified as a key factor in the expansion of consumer fraud and can also be exploited to commit identity related crimes, scams targeting vulnerable people, cyber stalking and bullying, computer vandalism, theft of information and the dissemination of objectionable material online. New technologies also have the potential to increase the risk of organised crime and terrorism.

There is evidence of increasing levels of concern in the community regarding identity theft and credit card fraud via the internet. The growing use of personal computers and mobile devices by young people is increasing the risk of online scams, and harassment and bullying targeting young people. The increased use of high speed internet, and growth in social networking sites and online chat rooms, presents potential opportunities for both criminal activity and crime prevention. At the same time, individuals can take a range of actions designed to make electronic crime more difficult through securing domestic Internet facilities and protecting the security of personal information as far as possible.

Inadequate security measures and limited awareness of risk increase the probability of victimisation. Some of the areas to focus on include:

- establishing mechanisms to continually reassess the risk from new and emerging technologies;
- increasing awareness among both individuals and businesses through education and the development of appropriate resources of the risks posed by technology enabled crime;
- embracing those developments in technology that provide a new medium through which crime prevention strategies can be implemented, and opportunities for the development and utilisation of new crime prevention technologies; and
- addressing the lack of skills, knowledge and capacity to prevent information and communication technology enabled crime, and to develop cost effective solutions;

There is growing recognition of the potential harm from organised crime to individuals, businesses and the community more broadly through impacts such as:

- economic instability, community fear and risks to personal wellbeing and safety;
- loss to businesses and individuals through organised fraud; and
- social and economic cost of drug related harms associated with organised criminal activity.

The development of new technologies, changes to law enforcement practices and the changing economy have all been identified as potential risk factors for organised crime. The UK experience with organised crime suggests that harms associated with organised crime are concentrated in the most deprived communities.

Further research is needed into the potential impact of community-based prevention strategies as opposed to national agency-based strategies in addressing organised crime. However, there is evidence that collaboration between law enforcement, government, industry and the community is vital to Australia's response to organised crime.

Such responses need to be flexible, innovative and forward-looking; at the community level, they should include strategies to increase public awareness of the indicators or signs of organised criminal activity. Partnerships with business can be used to increase awareness of the risks from organised crime, to share information on emerging threats and to develop strategies to reduce the risk posed by new technologies. Finally, it is important to develop strategies to protect socially marginalised and vulnerable groups at risk of being targeted by organised criminal groups.

7.4. Improving the evidence base for crime prevention

There is a considerable body of knowledge about successful approaches to crime prevention, and understanding of the conditions that must be in place to implement effective interventions. Nevertheless, it is important that this evidence base continues to be developed and refined, and that the ongoing effectiveness of interventions is assessed on a regular basis.

Researchers, including universities and agencies such as the AIC, make a significant contribution to evidence-based crime prevention by undertaking policy-relevant research into new and emerging crime problems, and by evaluating the effectiveness of crime prevention strategies. They can also help inform crime prevention strategies by facilitating access to relevant data and research on crime problems, trends and effective solutions. Collaborative arrangements which encourage the involvement of researchers in crime prevention evaluation, and which support the integration of research into practice, are therefore important.

Despite advances in understanding crime, its precursors and in determining effective interventions to prevent or reduce crime, a concentrated effort is required to address gaps in the existing evidence base, particularly as it relates to new and innovative crime prevention strategies and in understanding emerging crime problems. This Framework will assist in the development of research and evaluation priorities and the development of a program of research and evaluation work directed towards improving the evidence base for effective crime prevention interventions.

Further research into the effectiveness of the following crime prevention strategies is required, particularly as they operate within the Australian context. This includes areas such as:

- the use of CCTV in public spaces;
- integration of principles relating to restorative justice (e.g. young offender programs) and therapeutic jurisprudence (e.g. the blending of justice and health objectives) into the legal process, in particular the growing number of specialty courts (e.g. drug courts) that now operate in a range of formats in each jurisdiction;
- the efficacy of changes to legislation in terms of their preventive or deterrent effect (e.g. liquor licensing legislation), and legislation that aims to improve the criminal justice response and prevent reoffending;
- community-based crime prevention initiatives in which police are the principal or lead agency; and
- education and awareness campaigns to promote attitudinal and behavioural change.

In addition to these specific areas, there is also the need to undertake cost benefit analyses as part of evaluations of program outcomes in order to determine the cost effectiveness of crime prevention policies,

programs and projects. The development of a national model to enable reliable forecasts of crime trends would help overcome some of the challenges associated with determining and demonstrating the extent to which any observed reduction in crime at an aggregate level (i.e. at a state or national level) resulted from specific crime prevention policies and programs.

7.5. An ongoing program of capacity building and technical assistance to ensure new knowledge and good practice are actively disseminated and adopted in practice

A key feature of effective crime prevention programs is the support provided to crime prevention practitioners to assist them to design, deliver and evaluate initiatives through regular communication, technical advice and assistance. This involves a commitment to developing the knowledge, skills and practices of individuals and organisations engaged in crime prevention action, and to actively disseminate good practice knowledge to enhance effective program implementation.

Recent experience has highlighted the need to direct more focused attention and resources to the task of improving the skills base and access to appropriate resources for those engaged in crime prevention action. This should include:

- the active dissemination of crime prevention knowledge, including research findings, evaluation and effective interventions;
- the development of physical and online resources, toolkits and other materials to assist in improving the skills and capacity of those engaged in crime prevention work;
- identifying and working with key training providers to assist in the development of appropriate content for training and workforce development relevant to the wide variety of crime prevention practitioners; and
- the development of a model performance measurement and evaluation framework to be used as a tool for assessing progress and emerging priorities for the provision of technical support to the crime prevention field.

The objective of crime prevention can best be achieved in close cooperation with other areas of prevention. Crime prevention strategies and programs therefore need to create professional interfaces, promote reciprocal understanding and acceptance of different prevention objectives, methods, technical expertise and standards, including in the areas of health, education and environmental protection.

The AIC is currently in the process of designing and implementing a technical assistance program that would provide education, training and support to stakeholders working in crime prevention. The objective will be to develop an ongoing program of work to improve knowledge and skills in crime prevention and to help overcome many of the practical barriers to the effective implementation of crime prevention strategies.

8. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Each jurisdiction already has a number of actions in place that are consistent with the priorities and principles outlined in this Framework. Implementation of this Framework will involve jurisdictions referring to the approaches, principles and priorities supported by the Framework when developing or reviewing crime prevention strategies, and modifying existing strategies (where necessary) to reflect this Framework.

Responsibility for overseeing the implementation of this Framework will rest with the ANZCP SOG and its member agencies. Reporting on progress in implementing the Framework will be consistent with the current jurisdictional biannual reporting by ANZCP SOG member agencies. Reporting will focus on the delivery of crime prevention activity that is consistent with the principles and addresses the priorities highlighted in this Framework. Issues of high importance will be communicated to the Standing Council on Police and Emergency Management (SCPEM).

This Framework is a working document. The priority areas (in section 7) will be subject to annual review so new and emerging issues can be highlighted and incorporated over time.

Individual jurisdictions will be responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of strategies implemented as part of this Framework. A longer term review will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the Framework in achieving the purpose (section 2) and to determine its contribution to crime prevention and achieving the outcomes outlined in section 4.