

Community Crime Prevention Program *Review*

Parliamentary Secretary for Justice



Preface

Evidence indicates government working in partnership with communities to support community crime prevention leads to better outcomes – more so than government simply imposing crime prevention responses or making decisions about the best way to address local issues. The Community Crime Prevention Program (CCPP) focuses on strengthening the important contribution that local communities make to preventing crime by funding a competitive grants program available to a wide variety of community organisations including local government organisations.

The purpose of my review of the CCPP is to consider the effectiveness of the CCPP in supporting communities to prevent crime. To do this I considered how well the administration of the CCPP aligns with best practice. This has involved a review of local, national and international evidence supporting best practice community crime prevention as well as a process for robust community engagement. Engaging local communities is an integral part of community crime prevention. Over a six month period, I also consulted with a broad range of community stakeholders and attended a number of site visits across Victoria. This approach builds on the findings from the Australian Institute of Criminology's independent evaluation of the CCPP in 2014, *Evaluation of the Community Crime Prevention Program: Final Report*, which established that the CCPP is an effective program.

Using the information collected during my review, I assessed whether the CCPP aligns with best practice. My findings indicate that the CCPP uses a strong partnership approach to engage community organisations and also supports communities to effectively respond to crime by delivering activities that build community capacity. I also found the CCPP facilitates the development of sustainable community crime prevention by targeting the causal factors of crime and encouraging local-level partnerships.

The CCPP has created momentum within the community to prevent crime and improve community safety. During the course of my review I found there is increasing emphasis on the importance of targeting social disadvantage as one of the causal factors of crime. Recent reports from the Jesuit Social Services (*Dropping off the Edge 2015: Persistent Communal Disadvantage in Australia*) and the Victorian Ombudsman (*Investigation into the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Prisoners in Victoria*) confirmed that hotspots of disadvantage within Victoria can be linked to offending behaviour. Effective measures to address this and other causal factors will require not just whole of government responses, but the active engagement of local communities. There is an opportunity to build on this momentum through supporting community capacity to identify existing and emerging needs and to develop and deliver effective local crime prevention responses.



Ben Carroll MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Justice



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Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Description
AIC	Australian Institute of Criminology
CCPP	Community Crime Prevention Program
CCPU	Community Crime Prevention Unit
CPTED	Crime Prevention through Environmental Design
DJR	Department of Justice & Regulation
PVAW	Prevention of Violence Against Women
RVAWC	Reducing Violence Against Women and their Children



Figure 1: Cranbourne Park revitalisation has encouraged community use of the park, reducing antisocial and offending behaviour

Introduction

A fundamental obligation of any government is keeping communities safe and the justice system fair.

Crime is driven by a range of factors relating to the broader social and environmental context and the characteristics of individuals. Addressing social and economic disadvantage and improving community connectedness can be protective against antisocial and offending behaviour as well as the fear of crime.

The government believes that early intervention and a comprehensive approach to reducing crime, implemented across the community, is the best defence against a cycle of crime and violence. Effective, evidence-based crime prevention strategies can deliver a range of benefits for the Victorian community, including:

- ◆ reducing the long term costs associated with the criminal justice system
- ◆ reducing the direct social and economic costs of crime
- ◆ reducing the indirect costs of crime, including in areas such as health and social services
- ◆ improving community cohesion and the quality of community life.

Effective crime prevention requires individuals, communities, businesses and all levels of government to work together in a coordinated way to develop and implement effective strategies to address the causes of crime.

The Community Crime Prevention Program

Crime prevention contributes to community safety as one part of the government's overarching approach to reducing crime. Crime prevention is defined as

“...any action or policy designed to influence the underlying or contributing factors that increase the risk of crime or victimisation occurring or improve actual or perceived safety.”¹

The CCPP implements the government's approach to collaborating with and supporting councils and community organisations to deliver local crime prevention programs through the delivery of a competitive grants program. The grants program engages the community in effective crime prevention action and builds the number and quality of local crime prevention responses across Victoria.

The CCPP ensures government and communities can build on, share and enhance the good work that has been done to date.

My review considers the role of the CCPP in supporting local community crime prevention and builds on the findings from the AIC's report *Evaluation of the Community Crime Prevention Program: Final Report* to identify how the CCPP aligns with best practice.

“...community level structures and processes are among the most resilient constraints on criminal behaviour.” Jesuit Services Dropping Off the Edge 2015: Persistent Communal Disadvantage in Australia

“The grants are a great opportunity for the community to put programs in place that will help prevent crime. The fact communities are responsible for the outcomes of these programs builds their understanding of effective crime prevention.” - Joanna Farrell, Red Cliffs Community Resource Centre Inc.

¹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2010) *Handbook on the Crime Prevention Guidelines: Making them Work* accessed online at http://assets.justice.vic.gov.au/ccp/resources/e69e1ebc-e139-4689-8abd-3d55bb64d80c/unod_chandbookonthecrimepreventionguidelines.pdf

Scope and Terms of Reference for the Review

I was asked by the Minister for Police, on behalf of the Justice Ministers, to lead the review by 30 September 2015, for subsequent Cabinet consideration.

The Terms of Reference for my review were to undertake the following:

- 1) Identify the key principles and features of good practice models of crime prevention, with regard to contemporary research and the evidence base in relation to effective crime prevention frameworks and strategies adopted in other jurisdictions, both within Australia and internationally.
- 2) Assess the effectiveness of existing Justice-led crime prevention strategies and programs.
- 3) Identify gaps and opportunities for Justice-led action to improve crime prevention outcomes, including evidence-based initiatives to address the causes of crime and intervene early to prevent people becoming involved in a cycle of crime and incarceration.

While my review is focused on the Justice portfolio (excluding correctional programs) the concept of crime prevention extends beyond traditional law and order responses to address social, developmental, situational and environmental approaches to addressing the factors that contribute to the risk of crime.

As a result, consulting with a broad range of key stakeholders and experts was critical to informing my review. These stakeholders involved academics, peak bodies, community organisations and government agencies, from a broad range of areas including policy advocacy, services to young people, Koori communities and other disadvantaged and vulnerable groups over-represented in the criminal justice system.

I acknowledge that my review occurred during a time when the government is putting considerable investment into the Royal Commission into Family Violence and the Ice Action Taskforce. Any input and options arising from my review are made in the context of these other existing processes and resulting recommendations.



Figure 2: Clayton Laneways regeneration included installation of a mural to reduce incidents of illegal graffiti

Victorian Government Policy and Key Commitments

This government is committed to meeting its obligations to provide a safe and fair society by investing in community crime prevention through additional funding to reduce disadvantage and promote a safer community.

In May 2015, the government allocated \$5.8 million in funding to continue operating the CCPP while I completed this review. This funding is supporting a number of established grant programs including the Community Safety Fund, the Public Safety Infrastructure Fund and the Graffiti Prevention Grants. Early on, I quickly identified that these existing programs are limited in terms of their focus on the social elements that contribute to the causes of crime. To address this gap, existing funding is also being used to pilot new place-based grants targeting communities with high rates of crime and disadvantage. The grants have a focus on more vulnerable members of our community, including young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The government has also made further investment in education for young people to ensure that they have the best start in life and reduce their risk of developing antisocial or offending behaviour. The best defence against crime is the power of education and the dignity of work. Therefore the government has invested in work readiness amongst Victorian youth, supporting training, education, employment services and other tools to give these young adults the best opportunities in life.

Other recent government initiatives that contribute to reducing disadvantage and promoting a safer community include a \$45 million investment in the Ice Action Taskforce to reduce the impact of ice (methamphetamine) in Victoria and a \$40 million investment to undertake a Royal Commission into family violence to improve Victoria's response.

Crime and the Criminal Justice System

The need for crime prevention is demonstrated by the level of demand currently experienced by Victoria's criminal justice system. While rates of crime have remained relatively stable, recent changes to sentencing laws and strengthening of the parole system have increased demand for a criminal justice response. Additionally, increased police targeting of family violence in 2013-14 and drug crimes in 2014, has resulted in an 8.2 per cent and 12.9 per cent increase in reported incidents, respectively.

The effect of increased identification of family violence and drug crimes has contributed to increased demand on the criminal justice system. The Magistrates' Court of Victoria experienced a 36 per cent increase in case initiations during 2013-14. Within that Court, theft, assault, contravention of family violence intervention orders and drugs possession were some of the most frequently heard offences. At the same time the prison system has experienced increased demand resulting in a 25 per cent increase in the total prisoner population between 2010 and 2014.

Economic Burden of Crime

In addition to increasing demand on the prison system, I understand there is a significant economic burden associated with offending behaviour and the criminal justice system. Based on 2010-11 cost estimates, during 2014-15 the predicted

“After our recent burglary, which caused so much damage to our hall, the installation of a comprehensive alarm system is helping to restore the young people’s confidence in the safety of the environment in which they gather and store their scouting equipment. The importance of young people having this safe environment cannot be underestimated.”
- Jarrod Ragg, 1st Vermont Scouts

“Victoria Police currently use hot spot mapping for high risk areas however it is necessary to drill down and find out exactly what is driving the crime to determine the appropriate intervention - crime stats are not enough to explain what is going on” - Acting Deputy Commissioner Jack Blayney, Victoria Police

economic cost of crime for Victoria is \$11.1 billion or \$1,906 per person.² These costs include elements relevant to particular crimes (for example, lost productivity or property loss) and system-wide costs (for example, administration of justice, victim assistance and insurance administration).

However, I am advised this economic cost does not take into account the impact of the actual crime or the broader social effects such as the impact of the fear of crime. The fear of crime can adversely affect social and economic wellbeing and disrupt people’s participation in community life. Research confirms that community perceptions of crime are often disproportionately higher than rates of crime and therefore the effects are felt more broadly. While the criminal justice system has been successful in addressing offending behaviour, it is unlikely that the need to address community perceptions of crime will decrease. Therefore, I am advised community led and owned crime prevention activity is critical in addressing crime issues and overcoming fear of crime at the local level.

Hotspots of Crime and Disadvantage

Areas of high crime intensity, typically called ‘hotspots’, are small geographic places where antisocial and offending behaviour consistently occurs over a period of time. Victoria Police advised me they use a technique called hot spot mapping to identify high risk community locations and repeat victimisation and to help them identify emerging issues and trends.

Hotspots of Disadvantage

Crime hotspots are often hotspots for social and economic disadvantage. The recent report from Jesuit Social Services, *Dropping off the Edge 2015: Persistent Communal Disadvantage in Australia*, identified a number of hotspots of disadvantage across Victoria. The report confirmed 27 postcodes in Victoria (representing four per cent) presented with 28.2 per cent of the highest ranked indicators for disadvantage. The report also identified that hotspots of disadvantage are also hotspots for offending behaviour with these postcodes reporting the following:

- ◆ levels of exposure to child maltreatment three times higher than the national average
- ◆ rates of family violence almost three times higher than the national average
- ◆ numbers of people with a criminal conviction twice as high as the national average.

The link between disadvantage and offending behaviour was confirmed by the recent Ombudsman’s Report *Investigation into the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Prisoners in Victoria*, which identified that half of the Victorian prisoner population came from six per cent of Victorian postcodes. The Ombudsman has confirmed that five of those postcodes were also identified as being included in the six most severely disadvantaged in *Dropping off the Edge: Persistent Communal Disadvantage in Australia*.

While hotspot data and statistical reports provide important information about crime occurring in specific locations, I am aware they are limited in providing any detailed understanding of *why* crime occurs in a particular place. My stakeholder consultations highlighted the importance of local knowledge to drill down and find out exactly what

² Russell Smyth (2011). *Costs of Crime in Victoria*. Monash University, published online at www.buseco.monash.edu.au/eco/research/.../2511costsofcrimesmyth.pdf

is driving crime to determine appropriate interventions, noting that crime statistics are not enough to explain why crime is occurring.

Addressing Hotspots

Addressing disadvantage in areas with high crime rates requires a whole-of-government response and should include evidence-based crime prevention activities targeting specific, vulnerable locations, communities and priority issues. This is because community crime prevention approaches empower communities to respond to disadvantage by promoting social cohesion through targeted community crime prevention responses.

Example: Targeting Hotspots of Crime at Drouin Memorial Park

Earlier this year I visited Drouin Memorial Park. The park is an important part of the Drouin community; it is a natural thoroughfare linking Drouin township to public transport as well as the location of the town's war memorial, a bronze bust of a digger. The bronze bust is one of only two made, with the other at the National War Memorial in Canberra. Memorial Park is also a key meeting point for local Koori community members.

Prior to redevelopment, I heard that the Memorial Park had become a hotspot for antisocial behaviour. It had become popular as a gathering point, particularly at night, and a lack of natural surveillance contributed to increased property damage and graffiti, and poor perceptions of safety at the park and around nearby shops. To address these issues, Council received a \$250,000 Public Safety and Infrastructure Fund grant.



Figure 3: Memorial Park prior to redevelopment - poor accessibility was linked to antisocial and offending behaviour

Council confirmed that community engagement was undertaken to develop a shared community and council vision to help shape the redevelopment of Memorial Park. This included establishing a Steering Committee responsible for engaging and consulting with local groups and participated in the planning and decision making phases for the project. The Steering Committee was representative of the community, including an Aboriginal Elder, local police, the Drouin Business Group, RSL, clubs, community members and members from church groups.

Council used a situational crime prevention approach, adopting urban design principles to redevelop Memorial Park to improve natural surveillance and activate the space for legitimate community use. On my visit to the Park I saw firsthand the positive and lasting impact of the project through the installation of new lighting, redevelopment of footpaths and paving, improvement of the public toilets and realignment of the monument area. Additionally, Council also established a new community art display and incorporated interpretive signage highlighting the historic value of the park and War Memorial to encourage community use.

I am told that improving access to the park has been successful in increasing community perceptions of safety and building community pride and ownership of Memorial Park. I spoke with local community members including Aboriginal people, local residents and traders, Council staff, and the local chapter of the Vietnam Veterans Association. These groups confirmed the project has brought the community together to create a shared public space in the heart of the Drouin township.



Figure 4: Memorial Park after it was redeveloped – improved community access to the park has helped reduced antisocial behaviour and offending behaviour

Principles for Delivering Crime Prevention

The delivery of crime prevention approaches is supported by an international evidence base and best practice literature.

Introduction to Crime Prevention

Crime prevention attempts to identify and understand why crime occurs and then addresses these causes with appropriate preventative measures. Activities to prevent crime can include everything from whole-of-government strategies to simple everyday acts such as people locking their cars and homes.

Key classifications of crime prevention approaches include the following:

- ◆ **social crime prevention** addresses factors that influence the likelihood of people becoming involved in crime, approaches may include educational, employment, health and welfare programs
- ◆ **neighbourhood crime prevention** focuses on strengthening communities and building social capital to change social conditions in communities that influence offending
- ◆ **environmental and situational crime prevention** address factors in the physical environment or situation that create opportunities for crime to occur.

Community crime prevention activities are identified and driven by communities, rather than government. We know from evidence that criminal trajectories are established early in life and that communities have the greatest potential to lower crime rates by providing environments that deter crime and foster pro-social attitudes and healthy development.

The Principles and Features of Good Crime Prevention

The following documents provide the national and international framework for delivering effective crime prevention in Victoria.

The UN Handbook on the Crime Prevention Guidelines

These Guidelines were developed as a practical tool to support jurisdictions to implement a range of standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice. They emphasise the role of government in leading crime prevention strategies and promoting the capacity of communities to develop and respond to their own needs.

The Guidelines identify that community has an important role in identifying their own crime prevention priorities and implementing and evaluating crime prevention programs. Approaches for preventing crime include addressing the risk and protective factors associated with crime and victimisation and building community capacity to address crime.

The National Crime Prevention Framework

This Framework provides a guide for effectively delivering crime prevention programs across Australia. Generally, this Framework acknowledges the importance of promoting an active and engaged community. It is acknowledged that a long-term commitment is required to achieve sustainable reductions in crime and savings to the criminal justice system and community.

Eliminating risk factors, enhancing protective factors associated with offending behaviour and strengthening communities by addressing social exclusion and

promoting community cohesiveness are identified as key approaches to prevent community crime. Both approaches acknowledge that community organisations are well placed to address local problems and that community participation and involvement in crime prevention planning and delivery is important to address social exclusion that is associated with crime.

The Framework also identifies the importance of crime prevention being responsive to the diverse and evolving nature of communities and that the following national priority areas should be targeted: improving the safety of young people and reducing violence against women.

Parliamentary Inquiries

The Victorian Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee has completed several inquiries into the delivery of crime prevention programs, including the *Inquiry into the Supply and Use of Methamphetamine, Particularly 'Ice', in Victoria* (2015), which I sat on. Also of relevance are the findings from the Queensland Government's recent *Inquiry into Strategies to Prevent and Reduce Criminal Activity in Queensland* (2014).

The findings from those inquiries emphasised the important role of the community in developing and delivering appropriate crime prevention programs. Community organisations are best placed to deliver crime prevention programs because of their local knowledge and established relationships. Government's role is to coordinate community crime prevention and facilitate access to appropriate resources.

The *Inquiry into Locally Based Approaches to Community Safety and Crime Prevention* (2012) acknowledged that one of the key principles for effective crime prevention was a commitment from government to plan for the 'long-haul' and that community safety strategies and programs need to transcend the imperatives of short term expediency, for example, the electoral cycle.



Figure 5: Jewell of Brunswick redevelopment – painting the Bunjil nest

Best Practice Literature

The following key principles were drawn from national and international evidence-based best practice literature about delivering crime prevention programs.

Leadership

Good crime prevention is defined by clear goals, which are directly linked to strategies, vision and good governance. A strategic plan supports a cohesive approach to community crime prevention programs across jurisdictions by identifying priority areas and requires a partnership approach supporting local government and community agency engagement. All levels of government have a role in promoting crime prevention across the community and government's leadership role should be balanced with community-led processes. Good governance is achieved by establishing administrative approaches that work in partnership with local organisations to leverage local knowledge and facilitate strategic implementation.

Partnerships

Given that the influencers of crime are complex and multifaceted, a partnerships approach to identifying crime prevention problems and delivering crime prevention is required. As local communities are best placed to identify local issues, a partnership approach is required to identify and achieve shared outcomes through a reciprocal understanding. Effective partnerships are supported by creating channels of communication and platforms of exchange that involve all relevant stakeholders.

Engaging local government organisations is seen as particularly important given their responsibility for managing services that are integral to community crime prevention, such as public space and building design and providing recreational facilities and services for young people and their families.

Resourcing

Community crime prevention programs require appropriate and adequate funding. Resources should be structured in accordance with subsidiary principles, which require that resources and responsibilities be delivered and designated at the lowest possible level of government. A contractual approach to funding with clear parameters will help to ensure that the programs funded align with and can achieve central government's strategic plan. The benefits of the contractual arrangement include leveraging local knowledge by engaging local government and community organisations and empowering communities to respond to local problems.

Capacity

It is a common finding in the literature that limited knowledge relating to crime prevention programs can reduce the effectiveness of an otherwise well designed program. Capacity is required to facilitate implementation and evaluation activities and is described as "...one of the most important roles that central agencies can play".³ Evaluation is a key contributor to establishing an evidence base, by determining program effectiveness and informing implementation. In stakeholder consultations, the AIC identified central government has a key role in setting evaluation priorities in alignment with strategic directions.

'Community crime prevention not only educates the community but also facilitates social cohesion and enhances healthy dialogue and networking between people.' – **Chantal Kabamba, Community Leadership Network of Victoria Inc.**

³ A. Sutton, A. Cheney & R. White (2014). *Crime Prevention: Principles, Perspectives and Practices*. Cambridge University Press; New York, p.102

Engaging the Community in Crime Prevention

I have been told that a common assumption about crime prevention is that it is the responsibility of government alone. While the role of government is very important, crime prevention theory and international best practice emphasise that community engagement and empowerment is essential for effective crime prevention. In addition to targeting environmental and situational factors of crime, crime prevention approaches are increasingly seeking to influence the underlying social and economic causes of crime by improving health and housing, educational achievement and improving community cohesion through community development measures.

The risk of becoming involved in crime, and the perception of poor community safety, is greater in communities with high levels of social exclusion or a lack of social cohesion. Social exclusion may include neighbourhood disadvantage, unemployment, intergenerational disadvantage, limited education prospects, poor child health and well-being and homelessness. Victimization and fear of crime can lead to further social isolation and exclusion. There is growing support for addressing social exclusion and assisting disadvantaged groups to reduce their risk of involvement in antisocial behaviour or criminal activity.

Place-making for Safer Communities

Evidence supports community-level interventions that address social and economic disadvantage and reduce crime and the perception of crime. Often referred to as 'place-making', this approach is a process for reimagining and reinventing public spaces so they are transformed into safe and healthy places. Place-making considers how the physical, social, ecological, cultural, and even spiritual qualities of a place can discourage antisocial and offending behaviour and encourage business and economic growth and promote health, happiness and community vibrancy.

The features of healthy and safe public spaces include the following:

- ◆ good physical and visual access
- ◆ comfortable, promoting perceptions of safety, cleanliness and choices for seating
- ◆ has uses or activities, providing something to do
- ◆ promote sociability, where people feel comfortable interacting with one another.

Community engagement is a cornerstone for developing healthy and safe public places. This is based on the understanding that communities are best placed to identify local issues and approaches that are appropriate for the local community. Place-making builds partnerships with local community and local government and community organisations. Partnership approaches strengthen community networks to leverage existing community investment, in addition to government investment, promoting sustainability.

"Because of the grants we receive from the Department of Justice [& Regulation] we have reduced our break and enters, physical attacks, theft and serious malicious damage to zero while making the centre a more usable and safer environment. This has enabled us to attract more users to the centre after hours and increased our income." - Heidi Butler, Glen Park Community Centre Inc.

Community Crime Prevention Program

The following section outlines the Department of Justice & Regulation's current approach to supporting community crime prevention, in the context of the previously identified principles for effective crime prevention.

Overview

The Community Crime Prevention Unit (CCPU) is a business unit within the Police & Corrections Division of the Department of Justice & Regulation. The CCPU is responsible for managing the government's Community Crime Prevention Program (CCPP), which provides grant funding to communities to address local crime issues. The CCPU's key strategic priorities include the following:

- ◆ building knowledge and a shared understanding across government and community about crime prevention and effective responses
- ◆ strengthening partnerships at a local, state and national level in relation to crime prevention
- ◆ supporting the implementation of effective crime prevention solutions at both a local and state level
- ◆ analysing and reviewing crime prevention initiatives, particularly those funded through the grant programs, to inform future practice.

The mainstay of the CCPP is the competitive grants program, which provides funding for local government and community organisations to develop and deliver community crime prevention programs. The following grants streams are currently funded by the CCPU.⁴

- ◆ **Community Safety Fund** – provides grants of up to \$10,000 for communities in Victoria to implement locally-based crime prevention projects that increase community capacity to identify and address local crime problems and encourage local partnerships.
- ◆ **Graffiti Prevention Grants** – provides councils with up to \$25,000 to partner with community organisations to deliver projects to deter, prevent and clean up illegal graffiti in local neighbourhoods. Forming partnerships between local councils and community stakeholders to address illegal graffiti is a critical part of the graffiti grants, given that communities are best placed to identify local graffiti problems and develop appropriate responses.
- ◆ **Public Safety Infrastructure Fund** – provides councils with grants of up to \$250,000 to develop public safety and security infrastructure to improve community safety and confidence in public places. The design of environments has an important role in reducing opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour. Environments designed with embedded safety features promote safer and more accessible public places that encourage legitimate community use.
- ◆ **Reducing Violence against Women and their Children** – funds 12 projects across Victoria to support primary prevention and early intervention focused partnership projects across community service organisations and local government to reduce violence against women and their children. Four of these projects are led by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. They

⁴ Further information is provided in the Appendix.

specifically focus on violence in Koori communities, targeting areas of high crime and disadvantage.

- ◆ **Place-Based Targeted Grants** – launched in September 2015, funds evidence-based or promising best practice approaches to addressing local community safety priorities, particularly those addressing youth or other particularly vulnerable groups.
- ◆ **Communities that Care** – funding is provided to engage the community to develop a framework for addressing the particular risk and protective factors amongst young people in each local community. Communities that Care is currently being piloting in five locations across Victoria.

The CCPP was due to lapse in June 2015, however this government has delivered a fresh injection of \$5.8 million so it can continue while my review takes place.

Regional Crime Prevention Reference Groups

The Regional Crime Prevention Reference Groups were established across Victoria to support the delivery of community crime prevention programs and help facilitate community engagement. The purpose of the groups is to build partnerships focused on crime prevention between government departments, local government, police and local organisations. These partnerships support local communities to take an active role in preventing crime in their own neighbourhoods and towns.



Figure 6: Clayton's Laneways regeneration – mural to reduce incidents of graffiti

Community Engagement during the Review

During the course of my review I met with a broad range of community organisations. I met with representatives from organisations including Local Governments, community leaders and non-government health and social support organisations as well as government agencies. These organisations included, but were not limited to, Cardinia Shire Council, Warrnambool City Council, the Municipal Association of Victoria, Mallee District Aboriginal Service, Carrington Health and local branches of Women's Health Victoria. These stakeholders provided me with feedback about the needs of their local communities. I also heard from academics and researchers, who provided advice about implementing best practice approaches within the Victorian context, this included representatives from Deakin University, the University of Melbourne and the AIC.

I also visited a number of sites across Victoria to view programs funded through the CCPP. These programs included, but were not limited to, Communities that Care (Bairnsdale, Rosebud and Geelong sites), Banksia Gardens (Broadmeadows), Autumn Place (Doveton), Peter Lalor Walk (Thomastown) and the Memorial Park (Drouin). Visiting these sites enabled me to see the positive effects of the CCPP on local communities.

I used information collected during the consultations and case studies from the sites visited to inform my review of the CCPP.

Effectiveness of the Community Crime Prevention Program

My review has considered how well the CCPU has administered the CCPP, as well as the effectiveness of the CCPP grants program.

Effectiveness of the Administration of the Community Crime Prevention Program

I have found that the CCPP is an effective program, delivered in accordance with best practice principles.

Leadership

Overall, I found support for the CCPU as an effective leader of the CCPP. This was confirmed by findings from the AIC's evaluation report identifying the CCPP as well operated and delivered, consistent with United Nations principles of good crime prevention, the National Crime Prevention Framework and good practice grants administration principles. Feedback from the community has consistently identified that the grants program operates efficiently, this has been acknowledged by the national publication *Grants Management Quarterly*, which noted it was refreshing to see how efficiently the CCPP was being administered.

I have found that the CCPU's current partnership approach to identifying crime prevention issues and supporting local resolution acknowledges the important roles of the CCPU, local government and community organisations in preventing crime. I received feedback from stakeholders confirming the CCPU has adopted a best practice approach to balancing government's leadership role with community empowerment. Findings from the AIC's evaluation report also confirmed that the CCPU's stakeholder engagement is very strong, helped by cooperative and consultative leadership.

I received feedback that the Department of Justice & Regulation's reputation as a credible agency has been an asset to the community. Community organisations advised me that they have been able to leverage that credibility to build partnerships with other organisations, including those not usually directly involved in crime prevention and secure further investment in crime prevention programs. One example

'The Community Crime Prevention Unit's strength in shepherding, particularly in the model used to deliver the Reducing Violence against Women and their Children grants, is the best I've ever seen. This involved leveraging expertise from third parties and gave the authority to collaborate and guide the funding allocation towards the best projects.' - **John Fitzgerald, Chair of Criminology University of Melbourne**

of this was the CCPU's administration of the Reducing Violence against Women and their Children (RVAWC) grants. Stakeholders advised me the CCPU has been very successful in leveraging third party knowledge about violence against women from other organisations to guide funding decisions. I was also advised stakeholders leveraged the CCPU's credibility to attract partnerships with organisations not usually engaged in crime prevention.

My findings indicate that the CCPU has the capability to oversee the identification and delivery of crime prevention programs in Victoria and the local expertise required so that priorities set by the CCPU are relevant to each local government organisation and to ensure that resources are invested effectively and efficiently. I received feedback during the consultation confirming the successful implementation of the RVAWC grants as evidence that the CCPU is working collaboratively with other organisations.

Capacity Building

I have found that the CCPP has been effective in building community knowledge about crime prevention by requiring evaluation of grants programs, establishing and maintaining a crime prevention website and communicating written and verbal crime prevention information to communities.

This was confirmed by evidence from the AIC evaluation report. The AIC evaluation reviewed programs funded through the CCPP and found there were high levels of compliance with evaluation requirements and that the CCPU's approach to evaluation and the efforts made to assist projects to undertake good evaluation work reflects good practice. The evaluation report also identified that the CCPU's website is engaging local communities about effective ways to reduce crime, with over 79 per cent of local government and 90 per cent of community organisations reporting that information of the website was useful in helping them to prepare their application and to help with program delivery. The CCPU has also been successful in sharing information and promoting their activities through a variety of forums including workshops, presentations and ministerial events. For this reason awareness and knowledge of the CCPP and its activities is widespread.

I have also found that there is evidence to support further investment in activities that build the community's capacity for evaluation. The AIC evaluation report confirmed that the quality of evaluations undertaken by grant recipients varies, with most evaluations relying on anecdotal evidence and a survey of stakeholders indicated that around only half of grant recipients reported having access to appropriate support for evaluation activities or capacity for evaluation within their organisation.

I note that constructive feedback has been received relating to the further development of the CCPU website to better inform processes beyond the application phase, including evaluation. While the CCPU provides some support, findings from the AIC evaluation noted that this work was not a core function of the CCPU and not specifically funded. However, stakeholder consultations indicate that there is a need for an expanded and ongoing program of professional education and practical skills training in crime prevention good practice. The CCPU's 'Communities of Practice' workshops have brought recipients together to build evaluation capacity and share best practice knowledge. I heard that stakeholders reflected positively on those workshops, which give them the opportunity to network with other organisations.

Partnerships

I have found that the CCPU has been effective in developing partnerships with communities, in accordance with good governance principles for good partnerships. This finding was confirmed by the AIC evaluation, which found that the CCPP and the CCPU are considered by grant recipients to be responsive and receptive to feedback and that the CCPP operates openly and with transparency and clear purpose.

"It was clear ... that the CCPU's effort to improve knowledge of crime prevention good practice was leading to improvements among those organisations involved in the delivery of local crime prevention."
- **Evaluation of the Community Crime Prevention Program: Final Report**

'The Community of Practice provides a forum for building and sharing knowledge and has made a significant difference in terms of expertise and professional development for workers.' - **Helen Makregiorgos, Women's Health West**

“As a result of these collaborations between Council, Harrington Square traders and Victoria Police, the Harrington Square traders established stronger relationships. These traders have now established various passive surveillance strategies to help support each other in improving safety within the precinct. This has improved morale and strengthened the traders as a group.”

**- Marg Scanlon,
Hobsons Bay City Council, Harrington Square, Altona Safety and Amenity Improvements**

“...those who have been grant recipients feel quite strongly that there has been a general increase in community participation in local crime prevention.”

- Evaluation of the Community Crime Prevention Program: Final Report

I heard that the CCPP has been effective in facilitating community partnerships to support the delivery of community crime prevention programs. The guidelines for each grant program encourage applicants to engage with other stakeholders and evidence from the AIC evaluation confirms that grant recipients are engaging with other stakeholders from a range of stakeholder groups, including local government, police and other community and non-government organisations. The credibility of DJR as an organisation has facilitated these partnerships by lending legitimacy and recognition to programs receiving grant funding, attracting participation from other organisations.

In some cases these partnerships have created momentum for delivering crime prevention, empowering broader community collaboration and contributing to the overall sustainability of crime prevention programs in Victoria. I have been advised that grant recipients have been able to leverage expertise and skills from partner organisations as well as additional funding. Grant recipients have reported that receiving grant funding had provided their programs with legitimacy and recognition, encouraging engagement and investment from other organisations.

According to the AIC evaluation, the grants program is effective in establishing short-term partnerships, however longer-term investment will provide local government and community organisations the opportunity to further capitalise on their partnerships.



Figure 7: Community consultation was a key part of the Jewell of Brunswick redevelopment

Resourcing

I have found that the CCPU’s grants administration is fair and equitable. The provision of grants funding is based on demonstrated need and grant applicants are required to provide evidence to support their proposed approach. The AIC evaluation found that the majority (77 per cent) of grant recipients provided at least two forms of evidence to demonstrate need, with a positive correlation between the amount of evidence provided and the value of the grants.

The CCPP has positively influenced community capacity to develop and deliver crime prevention programs. I confirmed this finding with results from the AIC evaluation identifying that 70 per cent of local government respondents agreed the CCPP had

“The CCPP has come to represent an important resource for community crime prevention in Victoria and its termination would represent a significant loss to the ability of the local communities across Victoria to support their crime prevention activity.” - Evaluation of the Community Crime Prevention Program: Final Report

““The immediate benefit of the project, beyond the engagement of the community in its early stages, is that it has acted as a further catalyst for ongoing investment in Atkinson Park and the surrounding public realm. Council has now committed further funds to the next stages of community infrastructure development within the park, and has also been successful in forging a new relationship with local service groups that are keen to contribute to the ongoing redevelopment of the park.” - Jason Russell, CEO and Katrina Thorne, Gannawarra Shire Council Remote Control Redevelopment of the Kerang Skate Park

increased the awareness of crime prevention and safety. I was told that this has enhanced grant applications and contributed to creating momentum in the community for further interest and investment in crime prevention programs.

This confirmation came through stakeholder consultations where I repeatedly heard that their respective organisations have been able to leverage the Department of Justice & Regulation’s credibility to raise community awareness, develop partnerships across community sectors and secure additional investment.

This idea of *leveraging* was discussed in the AIC evaluation report and my consultations and site visits also described the term being used in a number of contexts. For example, leveraging was used to describe the:

- ◆ ways in which a CCPP funded project attracted financial co-investment by other organisations and sectors and facilitated the development of formal partnerships to work together to deliver crime prevention activities
- ◆ additional resources, both financial and organisational obtained within a CCPP grant funded organisation to extend the scope and reach of their original project
- ◆ further financial investment within the surrounding geographic area directly attributable to the implementation of a CCPP funded project
- ◆ buy-in, relationship development and partnerships formed between grant recipients and local organisations through leveraging the DJR brand
- ◆ buy-in within council across typically disparate departments leading to a greater focus on community safety and crime prevention.

The term was also used to describe the ways in which the CCPP intentionally and carefully leveraged off the expertise and work developed by others in its design of the RVAWC program.



Figure 8: Poster promoting gender equity – part of the ‘Paving the Way’ campaign

Effectiveness of the Community Crime Prevention Program's Grants Program

This section discusses each of the competitive grants streams in relation to best practice approaches to crime prevention, illustrated by examples from my site visits.

Community Safety Fund

Community Safety Fund grants provide up to \$10,000 of seed funding for communities in Victoria to implement locally-based crime prevention projects. The grants provide an additional resource for local communities to support practical and locally relevant crime prevention solutions that address crime prevention and community safety, increase local knowledge and support local partnerships.

◆ Building community capacity for crime prevention

The broad seeding approach of the Community Safety Fund invests in community capacity building in order to empower communities to identify and respond to crime at a local community level. This approach ensures that communities' own experience, expertise and local knowledge are recognised and supported. The role of government is balanced through setting appropriate parameters for investment.

Stakeholders confirmed with me that, as a result of this seeding approach, the Community Safety Fund grants have increased confidence and participation amongst community groups generally.

◆ Extending capacity for crime prevention to the broader community

I found support from the AIC evaluation report confirming that the Community Safety Fund had been effectively far-reaching, extending into remote and rural communities and targeting high needs communities such as young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. More than half of the programs funded were located in remote and rural communities, where resources to address crime can be scarce. This funding is particularly important to support areas with higher levels of social and economic disadvantage, which can impact on crime and community safety.

While the broad seeding approach of the Community Safety Fund attracts some overheads, largely associated with the administration of the grants, these overheads help to ensure that programs funded through the Community Safety Fund represent value for money, in that they are evidence-based and that organisations have the capacity to successfully undertake the programs.

Overall, I have found that there are significant financial and capacity building benefits associated with the Community Safety Fund.

Case study: Brimbank City Council

In August 2015, on behalf of the government, I announced allocation of the 2015-16 Community Safety Fund grant funding for seven crime prevention programs targeting hotspots within Brimbank City Council in the North West Metropolitan region. Collectively these programs received \$63,700 of grant funding.

'The Community Safety Fund grants have enabled community groups to own their issues and invest in security and safety improvement activities. Council has acted in an advisory capacity and welcomed the opportunity to be involved at a grass roots level.' - **Richard Maugueret, Local Government Professionals**



Figure 9: Visit to Sunshine for the announcement of the successful applicants from the Community Safety Fund 2015-16 grant funding round

The area within Brimbank City Council was identified as a hotspot for crime. Council have reported the third highest number of incidents of crime compared with all other Local Government Areas, with particularly high numbers of drug offences and assaults. High levels of crime are reflected in the low perceptions of safety reported by residents; 58 per cent lower amongst women and 23 per cent lower in men, compared with Victorian rates. I was advised that high levels of social and economic disadvantage across Brimbank City Council contribute to rates of crime with unemployment 34 per cent higher and average weekly income 17 per cent lower than the Greater Melbourne average.

The seven crime prevention programs funded by the Community Safety Fund for Brimbank City Council are summarised below.

- ◆ **City Soccer** delivers a Friday night soccer program in a parkland near the Sunshine Railway Station to address anti-social behaviour through football, leadership and the use of role models.
- ◆ The **Youth Place-Making Outreach Program** tackles anti-social behaviour in Sunshine by engaging at risk young people in high needs communities in activities that will improve public perceptions of safety, while regenerating community spaces.
- ◆ The **True Jamaican Dancehall Dance Festival** reduces the risk factors of high needs youth engaging in antisocial and offending behaviour and improves community perceptions of safety by promoting positive community engagement.
- ◆ The **Sunshine Lighting Program** and **Sunshine Lighting Program: Hampshire Road** programs improve lighting in the Sunshine Town Centre and facilitate activation of public spaces during the evening to improve the vibrancy of the centre and address perceptions of community safety.
- ◆ The **St Albans Lighting Project** and **St Albans Town Centre Lighting Improvement Programme** seek to address crime prevention issues within central St Albans by deterring antisocial behaviour and improving community safety.

These programs provide good examples of the flexibility of the Community Safety Fund in achieving a flexible range of positive crime prevention outcomes and tackling the underlying causes of crime. They also demonstrate that a relatively small amount of funding can have a considerable impact on achieving positive community outcomes.

◆ **Flexible crime prevention outcomes**

The different approaches used by the funded programs all work together as a multi-pronged approach to preventing crime and improving perceptions of safety. For example, City Soccer uses a place-making approach to address antisocial behaviour thereby improving community perceptions of safety. The program generates legitimate use of a parkland and area around Sunshine Railway Station. Use of the park by City Soccer will reduce the current drug and alcohol activity, encourage community use of the parkland and improve community perceptions of safety. In contrast, the lighting programs funded through the Community Safety Fund provide a situational approach to crime prevention by making it more difficult to commit crimes. These projects use good urban design principles to improve active and passive surveillance of the areas by installing lighting in areas known for antisocial and offending behaviour.

◆ **Tackling the root causes of crime**

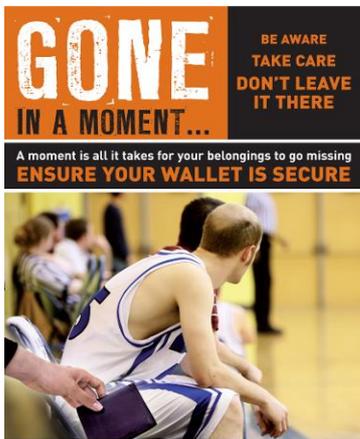
The Community Safety Fund allows communities to deliver crime prevention approaches that address the causes of crime specific to their community's needs. Culturally and linguistically diverse young people are often faced with social disadvantage stemming from social stigma. With little opportunity to engage with the community, culturally and linguistically diverse young people are at risk of antisocial and offending behaviour. The True Jamaican Dancehall Dance Festival targets young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (particularly African). The program addresses the risk factors for these young people by building their self-confidence and promoting social connectedness and pros-social behaviour by linking them with mentors who provide inspiration and social support. The media attached to this program encourages the community to adopt positive perceptions of these young people, improving community engagement and community perceptions of safety. Alternatively, the Youth Place-Making Outreach Program engages young Sudanese people who are at risk of engaging in antisocial behaviour, in community revitalisation activities. This approach encourages community connectedness by engaging a range of existing service providers and the local community in the design and development of the activities and encourages positive community perceptions of these young people.

◆ **Building effective community partnerships**

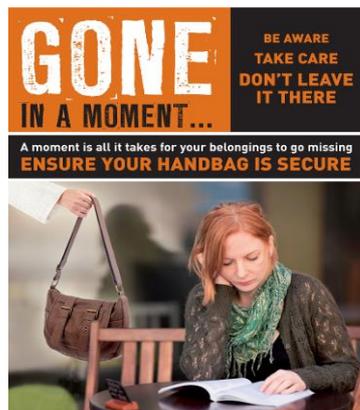
To be effective, the funded programs use a range of approaches to developing community partnerships. City Soccer and the Youth Place-Making Outreach Program partner with local community groups and police to ensure that their programs meet the needs of the young people that they target. Alternatively, the Sunshine Lighting Programs use a partnership approach to engage local businesses to leverage additional support to improve active and passive surveillance. Community engagement is an integral part of the Youth Place-Making Outreach Program. The loitering of large groups of youths from Sunshine's Sudanese community across central Sunshine was seen as a public nuisance by the broader community and the Sunshine Police regularly receive complaints of the group becoming intimidating and aggressive. This behaviour can potentially lead to the stigmatisation of these young people, creating barriers to participation in the broader community, resulting in limited employment opportunities and ultimately perpetuating anti-social behaviour. By working widely with the community, the project will help to address negative community perceptions about these young people and provide a platform for undertaking similar, future activities.

“Business and residents have received the awareness campaign with great enthusiasm and stimulated conversation which has strengthened relationships between council, business and community groups.”

- Caroline Bell, City of Casey, Gone in a moment - Public Information Awareness Campaign



This project has been funded under the Community Safety Fund grant program, part of the Victorian Government's Community Crime Prevention Program - local solutions for local crime prevention issues. CITY OF CASEY VICTORIA POLICE



This project has been funded under the Community Safety Fund grant program, part of the Victorian Government's Community Crime Prevention Program - local solutions for local crime prevention issues. CITY OF CASEY VICTORIA POLICE

Figure 10: Posters from the 'Gone in a Moment' campaign reducing personal property theft

Case study: Gone in a Moment: Reducing opportunities for personal property theft

With personal property theft on the rise in Casey, the local council saw a need to implement a public awareness campaign to remind people to always keep mobiles, handbags and wallets secure. The City of Casey's Gone in a Moment education campaign is one example of the importance of working in partnerships with the community to identify and respond to crime. The project received \$10,000 in grant funding in addition to \$4,790 co-contribution from Council.

◆ Local community involvement in identifying issues

Council initiated the education campaign in response to feedback from commuters, local traders and community groups identifying concerns about personal property theft. During the development of the education campaign, community members were involved in providing feedback to help ensure that the education campaign's messaging was relevant. The campaign had strong support from the business community, who worked in partnership with the City of Casey, to develop and deliver the education materials. Local police confirmed that the education campaign was effective in targeting personal property theft.

◆ Council's approach to develop and implement the campaign

The slogan 'Gone in a Moment – A moment is all it takes for your belongings to go missing' formed the foundation of the campaign. The catchy phrase aimed to remind Casey citizens that it only takes a second for a thief to steal small items. Council took a strategic approach to raising community awareness. The campaign was based on a best-practice model developed by the City of Sydney to address opportunistic thefts from people. To try to reach large segments of Casey, Council engaged a graphic designer to develop a series of posters that would be displayed in public places. The community and local police provided feedback on the posters before they were distributed. Council then targeted places and groups with high visibility and foot traffic to send the posters. The posters have been in high demand and public feedback has been very positive. More than 2,500 posters have been distributed to a range of entertainment precincts, shopping centres and local businesses.

◆ Effect of the campaign on personal property theft

In addition to effectively targeting personal property theft, engaging the community has had a number of positive flow-on effects. According to Council, local engagement has improved their relationships with the community and facilitated conversations about other community issues. It also gave Council a chance to educate people about what Council does generally. Council staff reported that feedback about the education campaign was very rewarding and gave them a strong sense of pride.

Given the effectiveness of the project, Council has agreed to continue funding the education campaign as part of an ongoing awareness program for the community.

Graffiti Prevention Grants

The Graffiti Prevention Grants program provides local councils with grants of up to \$25,000 to partner with community organisations to deliver projects that deter, prevent and clean up illegal graffiti in local neighbourhoods.

◆ Community perceptions of fear regarding illegal graffiti

Illegal graffiti has negative social and economic impacts for communities. The presence of illegal graffiti has been found to influence individual community

“The students had so much fun painting the traffic signal boxes. They liked the honour of being chosen to paint something that normally an adult would be chosen to do. The students are especially excited about being able to see their artwork for many years to come, that it will be so visible and longstanding within the community.” - Pine Lisette, Knox City Council, Community Art on Traffic Signal Boxes in Knox project

“Prior to the mural graffiti was removed from the site at least weekly. Since then the mural has been left largely untouched by graffiti. Personally this project has been one of the most rewarding I have worked on and thank the Department of Justice & Regulation for this grant and giving the students that opportunity to portray their skills in a positive environment. It was a sense of achievement for the students with their artistic skills increasing through the project and their increased personal confidence individually.” – Carly Bell, Wyndham City Council

members’ fear of crime occurring. Fear of crime and poor perceptions of safety can negatively affect a person’s quality of life by adversely affecting social and economic wellbeing. Given an individual’s fear of crime is influenced by a range of social and demographic factors, removing illegal graffiti is likely to result in improved social cohesion and reduced crime.

The AIC evaluation identified that the Graffiti Prevention Grants program has been effective in improving public perceptions of safety. Up to 60 per cent of evaluated projects identified community levels of fear were reduced post-implementation. Additionally, 68 per cent of projects identified increased use of public space, which is an indicator of improved perceptions of safety.

To promote social cohesion, the Graffiti Prevention Grants program facilitates partnerships between local councils and community stakeholders to address illegal graffiti. The Graffiti Prevention Grants acknowledge that communities are in the best position to determine which prevention measures are most suitable to their particular problem and councils are required to engage with communities, as a condition of grant funding. An important feature of community engagement in this program is the opportunity it provides to work with young people in graffiti issues. Through the Graffiti Prevention Grants program young people (in particular) learn about the negative and costly impact of illegal graffiti for local communities and provides them with legal, pro social opportunities to meaningfully engage in community life.

◆ **The economic impact of illegal graffiti**

Graffiti vandalism not only affects the visual appearance of neighbourhoods and influences perceptions of safety, it is also costly for communities and property owners to prevent and remove graffiti. The AIC evaluation of the Graffiti Prevention Grants program found it represented significant value for money, saving the government approximately \$5 million during 2012-13, compared with standard commercial rates for removing graffiti. Based on historical trends, the savings to government is progressively increasing, potentially leading to further savings in the future.

There was conclusive evidence from the AIC evaluation confirming the significant financial and social benefits of the Graffiti Prevention Grants.

Case study: Argyle Adopt a Space Mural

Earlier this year I launched a new mural in Fitzroy, made possible with a Graffiti Prevention Grant, to clean up an important public space and prevent graffiti in the area.

◆ **Argyle St was a hotspot for illegal graffiti**

The apartment block at 117 Argyle Street Fitzroy, was an identified graffiti hotspot due to continuous unsightly 'tagging' by graffiti vandals over a number of years. Illegal and offensive graffiti had a significant impact on the Argyle Street site, with vandals regularly targeting the area despite Yarra City Councils’ ongoing attempts to keep it clean. For too long, local residents in Argyle Street and surrounding areas have been forced to put up with the negative impacts of ugly graffiti.

In 2014, Yarra City Council secured a \$15,000 Graffiti Prevention Grant for the Argyle Adopt a Space Mural project. The project objectives were to rid the apartment block of unsightly graffiti and address the community's concern of living in an unsafe environment by making the area more appealing, encouraging

members of the community to take pride in and ownership of the art. Council contributed a further \$5,000 as well as in kind support for the site supervision, traffic management, scissor lift hire, anti-graffiti coating and maintenance of the mural for a period of 12 months.

◆ **Community engagement**

I understand Council undertook robust community consultations before, during and after the installation of the mural. Council worked closely with the residents throughout delivery of the project and ongoing communication by way of face to face meetings and email has kept the community involved, encouraging ownership of both the site and the mural.

Council used an expressions of interest process from interested artists and short-listed applicants and local residents were engaged in the selection of the final design of the mural.

Through the process, 15 applications were received which were shortlisted down to three by speaking with residents. The shortlisted applicants were then provided \$500 each to further develop their designs. Upon receipt of the three designs, Council convened a further meeting with residents and Victoria Police representatives to make a final selection and appoint an artist. Initially there was some disagreement between the residents regarding selection of the final design however, with some facilitation by council this was resolved and a consensus reached for the “Life on Planet Daisyworld” design. The mural has an underwater, space and earth theme using earthy colours.



Figure 11: Completed 'Life on Planet Daisyworld' mural, has helped prevent illegal graffiti at this site

◆ **Effect of the mural**

At the official unveiling of the mural I saw how effectively the mural brightens up the whole area giving the community a new artwork to admire, rather than unsightly graffiti. The sense of ownership and pride the local residents have in this mural is fantastic, with the expected decrease in illegal graffiti and antisocial behaviour a great result for the community.

Residents advised me that as installation of the mural progressed there was a dramatic improvement to the area. According to stakeholders, even those who were originally less supportive of the final design have since provided overwhelmingly positive feedback. In addition, some of those residents have now indicated to council they intend to privately engage the artist to extend the mural at their own expense.

Case study: B-Creative urban art aerosol project

Brimbank City Council was awarded \$19,750 through the Graffiti Prevention Grants in 2013-14 for their B-Creative Urban Art Aerosol project. This funding built on the \$24,700 Graffiti Prevention Grant for the first phase of this project in 2012-13, where murals created in Brimbank reduced graffiti vandalism. Brimbank is one of the largest municipalities in Melbourne and has a wide range of issues surrounding graffiti and associated vandalism. The majority of this tagging has been within the Sunshine Town Centre.

◆ Building community connections

The purpose of B-Creative was to help protect young people from offending and antisocial behaviour by engaging them in the arts and ultimately reduce illegal graffiti. For this project, 20 young people from newly arrived communities were engaged with support from community leaders with the aim of building a sense of ownership and community connection among the young people through collaborative engagement to deter engagement in illegal graffiti on private property.

B-Creative used a place-making approach to addressing illegal graffiti hotspots and promoting social cohesion. Employing professional artists as mentors for the program contributed to successfully engaging young people in the program. Participants worked in partnership with the community to design and develop murals that align with local expectations.

Community engagement, improved self-confidence and allowing young people to develop their artistic skills has contributed to reducing social and economic risk factors generally associated with offending and antisocial behaviour. Once finished, B-Creative helped link participants with opportunities to develop their skills as professional artists.

◆ Effect of B-Creative on illegal graffiti

The Council has reported that B-Creative has decreased illegal tagging in the Brimbank municipality, potentially reducing the financial cost of illegal graffiti.



Figure 12: A mural created by the B-Creative program, to decrease incidents of graffiti

“We worked across Council departments promoting community safety to other Council staff, who used their initiative and resources to add further works and value to the project. For example, implementing additional lighting and partnering with the Community Corrections Service to clean up graffiti.” - Rozlyn Will, Banyule City Council, Watsonia Station Lighting Project

‘The PSIF grants have increased support and partnerships and created leverage around the importance of place, perceptions of safety and community ownership of places and spaces.’ - Jan Black, Municipal Association of Victoria

Public Safety Infrastructure Fund

The Public Safety Infrastructure Fund (PSIF) grants fund developments to public and security infrastructure that improve community safety and confidence in public places. Local councils can access grants of up to \$250,000 to support projects using good urban design and technology, such as CCTV and improved lighting.

The PSIF is based on established evidence identifying that situational and environmental crime prevention interventions can be successful in preventing crime and improving safety in a range of circumstances. To facilitate partnerships, community engagement is a requirement of PSIF grant funding. This partnership approach encourages community ownership of issues and empowers communities to identify and implement appropriate responses. The co-contribution requirements of the PSIF also encourages Council ownership.

I received feedback from my consultations identifying that the PSIF increases the application of best practice approaches, including the Safer Design principles and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles. When I met with key stakeholders I heard that the PSIF grants help Councils to build community partnerships and increase community engagement and ownership of public spaces. This has encouraged community ownership of local crime problems and investment in appropriate responses.

The achievement of nominations and awards reflects the alignment of programs funded through the PSIF with best practice approaches. These awards include Planning Institute of Australia’s Planning Excellence 2014 Victorian awards, amongst others (the case studies provide examples).

The PSIF is supported by strong evidence and long-term community benefits directly linked to the partnership approach facilitated by this grants program. From my consultations I have identified that this partnership approach has broader benefits for the community and also has the capacity to build a long-term sustainable approach to community crime prevention.

Case study: Jewell of Brunswick

In May 2013, Moreland City Council was awarded \$210,000 under the Public Safety Infrastructure Fund (PSIF) Grants Program for the ‘Jewell of Brunswick’ project to build a new public space and urban bouldering wall (climbing wall) on the corner of Wilson Avenue and Sydney Road Brunswick, to address local crime and safety issues. The original total budget for this project was \$325,000, including Council’s co-contribution of \$114,350 and the \$210,000 PSIF grant. Earlier this year I visited the Jewell of Brunswick to witness improvements that Council have made.

◆ Strategic importance of the corner of Wilson Avenue and Sydney Road

Wilson Avenue, Brunswick is a short street of 160 metres which leads from Jewell Railway Station to Sydney Road. Wilson Avenue is a key pedestrian connector to Jewell Station, however I was advised that the intersection of Wilson Avenue and Sydney Road near the entrance to Barkly Shopping Centre has a history of public safety issues such as assault, robbery, intimidation, property damage and graffiti. Council advised by that Victoria Police identified the intersection as the ‘number one hotspot for crime’ within the City of Moreland.

To address these issues, Council initially proposed using good urban design principles to transform the corner of Wilson Avenue and Sydney Road into an actively used public space by expanding the existing pedestrian kerb with new

seating, lighting, planting and a bouldering wall. A shared pedestrian and vehicle road space was also included within the original proposal.

◆ **Community engagement**

Council advised me of their robust approach to community engagement. Using a place-making approach, Council advised me they conducted extensive community consultation from planning through to implementation. This achieved significant community support, including strong support from Victoria Police, the Brunswick Residents Network, Sydney Road Brunswick Traders Association, Barkly Square Shopping Centre Management, Victorian Climbing Club, Jane Garrett MP, State Member for Brunswick and Kelvin Thomson MP, Federal Member for Wills.

Consultation included a series of initiatives including a two day 'Parking Day' event held where community members had an opportunity to speak with student volunteers from RMIT about the plans for the area. This was followed by a one day event for community members to celebrate place and community. Volunteers painted the street and there was live music and dance. Participants from the community included youth groups, the local secondary school, local artists, student groups, local traders and local politicians.

Based on community feedback supporting a full road closure of Wilson Avenue, Council temporarily closed the road and created a temporary public space using a 'Pop-Up Park' concept. The Pop-Up Park was used for a program of community events over a 56 day period in early 2014. An open invitation was extended to community groups to participate in the 56-day trial period during which a number of performers, community groups and members of the public came forward and offered assistance to engage members of the public. Community Correctional Services within the Department of Justice and Regulation supported the Pop-Up Park by providing a team of nine low-risk offenders who helped make temporary seating furniture from recycled palettes. Other features included planter boxes, trees, shade umbrellas and fake turf to help 'green' the road space.

During the trial period, Council's project team conducted face to face consultations with local stakeholders. Ward Councilors listened to community members concerns and suggestions for a permanent public space. Over 10,000 community members were engaged and local police reported a clear reduction in local crime. Council sought written submissions and of the 356 submissions received, an overwhelming 94 per cent voted to permanently close part of the street and establish a brand new public space. Given that road closure proposals are notoriously contentious, particularly those which reduce parking in a major retail precinct, this is a remarkable result and illustrates the effectiveness of the approach Council undertook.

In July 2014, Moreland City Council formally voted to permanently close part of Wilson Avenue and establish a larger public space than originally proposed within the Public Safety Infrastructure Fund application. The project was successful in leveraging additional funding, Council invested a further \$450,650 to support the expanded project and secured an additional \$50,000 from Melbourne Water. This almost tripled the total value of the project to \$865,000.

There is great potential for positive change in this part of Brunswick. As well as Council having a grant from Department of Justice [& Regulation] for a new public space and urban bouldering wall, Barkly Square has just finished a major upgrade and a Jewell Station upgrade is still under consideration. Success won't be possible without strong local support, so we are always seeking further ideas, suggestions and offers of assistance and partnerships. It's a marathon, not a sprint and bringing people on the journey is the best way to improve our chances of success.'
**- William Coogan,
Moreland City Council
Jewell of Brunswick**



Figure 13: Pop-Up Park trialling the closure of Wilson Avenue

◆ **Recognition for the Jewell of Brunswick**

Council's successful development of the Jewell of Brunswick has been recognised with three significant awards. The Place Leaders Inaugural Asia-Pacific 'Place Practice' Award, the Planning Institute of Australia 'Best Planning Ideas, Small Project' award for Victoria and a subsequent National Commendation as runner up in the Australian awards. The awards acknowledge Council's success in improving community use of the junction.



Figure 14: Completed Jewell of Brunswick bouldering wall and mural, reactivation of this public space is helping to reduce antisocial and offending behaviour

Photo by Arlene Sachon (Arlene Sachon Photography) and supplied by Moreland City Council

Case study: Regeneration of Autumn Place, Doveton

In addition to funding from Council, the City of Casey received PSIF grant funding for a community development project regenerating Autumn Place, a small park located opposite a shopping precinct in Doveton. Autumn Place had been identified by police as a High Risk Community Location. I visited Autumn Place, to view Council's success in deterring antisocial and offending behavior and encouraging legitimate use of the park.

"Autumn Place Park Regeneration is a good example of how cross-functional work teams within Council have come together with the local community to achieve a common goal of improving perceptions of safety and crime in a public open space in Doveton."
- Richard Maugueret,
Casey City Council,
Infrastructure
improvements to
improve safety in
Autumn Place, Doveton

◆ Community engagement in design

Council advised that the regeneration of Autumn Place used a partnership approach, involving community engagement. To engage the community in the design stage, Council delivered a range of innovative strategies, including community barbeques, to raise community awareness and ultimately drive the final design. This partnership approach was very successful, with community members offering to provide in-kind support. The regeneration used approaches based on principles of environmental design to reduce and deter antisocial and offending behaviour, such as improving lighting and visibility to improve surveillance to increase risk of detection.

The benefits of the partnership approach used by Council for the regeneration extended beyond the redevelopment of Autumn Place, with Council reporting strengthened partnerships between local businesses, emergency services, police and Council after Autumn Place was completed. These partnerships have improved local capacity to work collaboratively to respond to other local crime issues.



Figure 15: Community feedback lounge at Autumn Place

◆ Effect of the regeneration of Autumn Place

I have been advised by Council that the regeneration of Autumn Place has been successful in increasing use of the park by 30 per cent and decreasing offending behaviour, with Autumn Place no longer considered a High Risk Community Location. I am told that incidents of illegal graffiti have decreased and there has been a considerable overall reduction in reported crime, which was reduced the need for a police presence. As a testament to the success of the redevelopment, Autumn Place received a commendation in the Planning Institute of Australia's Planning Excellence 2014 Victorian awards (Best Planning Ideas – Small Project

Category) and in February 2015, the project was also recognised at the Victorian 2015 LGPro (Local Government) Awards for Excellence.

While visiting the park I noted that there has been a positive, yet unexpected, added benefit of the regeneration with the building redevelopment taking place adjacent to Autumn Place. Prior to the regeneration, the shop buildings had been neglected for many years, with very high vacancy rates. Since the regeneration of Autumn Place, there have been indications of economic benefits, the shops are now tenanted and one building is now undergoing major development. Council advised me that the Autumn Place upgrade has been highly influential in encouraging private investment as it signaled a commitment to improving and revitalising the precinct.



Figure 16: Autumn Place, after regeneration – increased community use has decreased antisocial and offending behaviour

Reducing Violence against Women and their Children Grants

The Reducing Violence against Women and their Children (RVAWC) grants program funds primary prevention and early intervention approaches to prevent violence before it occurs and address the key contributing factors of violence against women and their children. The focus is on changing behaviours and attitudes that allow violence against women and children to continue.

◆ Leadership

I met with a range of stakeholders who confirmed that a number of factors influence family violence and therefore multiple organisations are engaged in responding to this serious issue. I was advised that to be effective, primary prevention and early intervention approaches such as those funded through the RVAWC grants, need strong leadership. Findings from the AIC evaluation report confirmed that DJR's leadership of the RVAWC grants program has been effective. This was demonstrated by grant recipients using DJR's credibility to leverage support from stakeholders not usually engaged in the prevention of violence against women and to secure additional community investment. By providing funding through DJR, the grants program was not considered to be taking away from crisis responses and was reported to be effective in engaging organisations not usually involved in preventing violence against women.

'DJR's partnership with VicHealth in developing evidence-based practice and the subsequent involvement of local Councils and engagement of community leaders has created credibility for those in the primary prevention space.'
- Renee Imbesi,
VicHealth

◆ **Importance of a partnerships approach**

The initial design and development of these grants highlights the importance of sector engagement and collaboration in achieving quality outcomes. Stakeholder consultations highlighted the significant contributions these grants have made in establishing a focus on the prevention of violence against women. Stakeholders also highlighted that the CCPU were successful in establishing solid partnerships that had not worked as effectively with other organisations.

The partnerships approach was supported by Regional Reference Groups that have been central to the successful operation of the RVAWC grants, because the grants are designed to operate as a regional or sub-regional program and so the infrastructure provided by the Department of Justice & Regulation's Regional Directors is critical to their effectiveness.

◆ **An evidence-based approach**

The RVAWC is supported by and contributes to an evidence-base. This grants program aligns with State and Federal policies, including Victoria's Action Plan to address Violence against Women and Children and the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. Additionally, the CCPU requires that the efficiency of all programs funded through the RVAWC be independently evaluated. The AIC identified high levels of compliance with this requirement.

I know that funding for the RVAWC grants has been deferred pending the outcome of the Royal Commission into Family Violence. Given this government has already committed to implementing the recommendations arising from the inquiry, should a recommendation for a general grants program be made, I suggest that DJR is well placed to administer that program.

Case study: Gippsland's Regional Preventing Violence against Women Strategy

As part of the Gippsland Regional PVAW Strategy, Baw Baw Shire Council and Wellington Shire Council have partnered with Gippsland Women's Health Service to implement the 'Paving the Way' project in their respective organisations. I met with representatives from these organisations to hear about their program.

I was introduced to 'Paving the Way', which is a cultural change program focusing on increasing an organisation's capacity to achieve gender equitable access to workplace resources and opportunities. Paving the Way responds to and supports employees experiencing family violence and to create a workplace that does not tolerate attitudinal support for violence against women.

As a result of this project, the organisations developed a series of posters as part of a broader social marketing campaign encouraging people to 'Make the Link' between gender inequality and violence against women. I understand that now both councils have now embedded PVAW-oriented policies into their Health and Wellbeing plans 2014-2017. Family violence leave entitlements are endorsed at Baw Baw Shire and Wellington Shire and PVAW is a standing item on the Equal Opportunity Committee agenda. Internal communication plans for both councils with key consistent PVAW messages, are being implemented.



Figure 17: Resources developed by the 'Paving the Pathway' campaign

Activities the two councils have implemented include:

- ◆ promotion of key PVAW messages through their websites
- ◆ development of a series of posters through the Make the Link and Gippsland Prevention social media campaigns
- ◆ fact sheets provided to new staff at induction
- ◆ toolkit on the Health and Wellbeing intranet page
- ◆ regular updates to council staff about the Paving the Way project
- ◆ celebration of the International Women's Day event through a series of events bringing together community members to listen to guest speakers' PVAW messages through Community Conversations
- ◆ training opportunities for council staff including the Common Risk Assessment Framework (CRAF) for Local Laws, PVAW training for senior leadership and middle management teams, and regular support and guidance from GWHS.

I was also advised that Baw Baw Shire Council is building on the work achieved by Paving the Way. They advised they are also exploring ways to deliver Men's Violence Prevention Training (bystander training) to all council staff and community members.

Other Emerging Crime Prevention Approaches

◆ Communities that Care Pilot

Communities that Care is a partnership between the Royal Children's Hospital (Centre for Adolescent Health), Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Rotary Club of Melbourne, Deakin University and the University of Washington. It is a whole-of-community approach to promoting the healthy development of children and young people by coordinating a single local planning forum to address causal factors of crime in young people and promote positive youth development. As previously noted, studies have found that intervening early in a young person's life and promoting healthy development has the greatest potential to lower crime rates and foster pro-social attitudes. Communities that Care provides a framework that builds community capacity to identify local needs and empowers communities to identify appropriate evidence-based responses.

Communities that Care targets the risk and protective factors of young people at risk of engaging in antisocial or offending behaviour. There is no single factor or combination of factors that causes a person to get involved in crime, however there are risk factors that can increase the likelihood. Similarly, protective factors are positive influences that can keep people from becoming involved in crime. These risk and protective factors relate to personal characteristics and other family, peer, community and broader society influences such as family conflict and violence, low school achievement low levels of informal social control and social cohesion, strong commitment to school, good parental supervision and high levels of community engagement. The more risk factors present in a person's life, and the greater the absence of protective factors, the greater the risk of involvement in crime.

Communities that Care is supported by strong international evidence, including a randomised controlled trial in the United States, which found that over five years, young people involved in the trial experienced reductions in social developmental risk factors and elevations in protective factors. Communities that Care has since been adopted internationally, in the United States, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Cyprus, amongst other countries.

In terms of investment, the trial identified an estimated \$5.30 dollar return for every dollar invested in the program.⁵ These findings have been validated by a further effectiveness trial in other US jurisdictions, which also identified Communities that Care had effectively strengthened community partnerships over time leading to improved planning and implementation of crime prevention activities. Available Australian community resurvey results are in line with the findings from the overseas evaluations in revealing population-wide improvements in youth reports of community social environments and reductions in problems such as alcohol and drug use and precocious sexual activity. An Australian cost-benefit analysis is currently underway and, as alcohol use harms are higher than in the United States, Communities that Care advised me that the anticipated benefits are likely to be greater than the return of \$5.30 per dollar investment.

"In Australia the anticipated financial benefit of Communities that Care is likely to be greater than the US return of \$5.30 per dollar"

Since 2002, Communities that Care has been effectively adapted in three Australian communities, including the Mornington Peninsula Shire. Compared with State averages, findings from the Mornington Peninsula Shire included a reduction in alcohol and other drug use amongst young people and decreased serious antisocial behaviour (including assault, carrying a weapon, theft of a motor vehicle).

Given the strong evidence base and the findings from the Mornington Peninsula Shire, in 2014, the CCPP began funding Communities that Care in Victoria in five pilot sites, including the sites I visited in East Gippsland and Geelong, as well as Bendigo, Cardinia and Warrnambool. The pilot sites were chosen based on high rates of social and economic disadvantage. While implementation is currently underway, community profiling has identified a range of risk and protective factors. Compared with the national average, results from the first three pilot sites (Geelong, Cardinia and Warrnambool) identify high rates of substance abuse and antisocial behaviour in one site, very high rates of depressive symptoms in another site and high rates of lifetime alcohol use in the third site. These results

⁵ Kuklinski, M.R., Briney, J.S., Hawkins, J.D., & Catalano, R.F. (2012) 'Cost-Benefit Analysis of Communities That Care: Outcomes at Eighth Grade'. *Prevention Science*. 13, 150–161.

confirmed there is need for Communities that Care across the three pilot sites and for targeted community-specific responses. A randomised controlled trial is currently underway in Australia across 14 Communities that Care sites (including the five Victorian pilot sites) that have been matched with similar control sites.

Communities that Care is supported by a strong evidence base and provides a unique opportunity to engage the community in addressing the causal factors related to offending and antisocial behaviours in young people.

◆ **Introduction of the Place-Based Targeted Grants program**

The Place-Based Targeted Grants program was launched in September 2015, in response to an early finding from this review, which identified that crime is often localised within communities with high disadvantage. Advice from stakeholders confirm that a place-based approach to addressing crime hotspots is appropriate.

The government is providing grants of up to \$200,000 (incl. GST) over a maximum of two years for projects that build local community capacity and capability and empower them to work collaboratively and promote the use of integrated crime prevention approaches to improve community safety.

The causes of crime are multifaceted and complex. A wide range of factors influence the likelihood of crime appearing and make some communities more vulnerable to crime and victimisation. These factors can relate to individuals and to the broader social and environmental context. Communities are usually aware of existing local crime problems and generally have some strategies to address them.

However, a lack of resources or processes for sharing crime prevention knowledge can undermine local crime prevention efforts and addressing the causes of crime is often beyond the scope of any one group. Everyone brings different expertise and resources to help address the underlying causes of crime. Local government and community organisations provide specific services and programs for at risk and vulnerable groups to reduce their risk of crime or victimisation as well as opportunities for social participation, creating an environment for social networks and connectedness.

Using a place-based approach acknowledges that the risk and protective factors for crime extends beyond the justice system and encourages local organisations to find areas of overlap and opportunities for collaboration, leading to the development of a set of strategies and activities to influence the factors placing communities and individuals at risk and preventing or reducing the incidence of crime within local communities. It also creates an opportunity to use a mix of crime prevention approaches most likely to be effective in targeting the particular local issues.

I believe the Place-Based Targeted Grants represent an effective and efficient approach to preventing crime and victimisation by leveraging existing community knowledge and resources.

Conclusion

I found that the CCPU's approach to crime prevention is consistent with best practice. My findings confirmed the findings in the AIC evaluation report, which stated that the CCPP is delivering an effective and efficient approach to sustainable crime prevention and is considered to be one of the most effective programs in Australia and internationally.

I have also found that the CCPU is an effective leader with broad community support and has been successful in supporting community engagement in crime prevention. Community feedback identified that the CCPU's leadership was demonstrated through its management of the RVAWC grants. During the consultations I also received feedback identifying that community organisations have successfully leveraged CCPU leadership to engage organisations not usually associated with crime prevention and to secure further investment in programs. This was demonstrated by Moreland City Council's success in confirming additional funding for the Jewell of Brunswick project.

By leveraging community partnerships, I found the CCPU has been effective in facilitating a partnerships approach to crime prevention. There is strong emphasis on the use of partnership approaches across the grants programs, emphasising the important role of local communities in identifying and addressing local crime issues. This is reflected in the data collected by the AIC evaluation that identified that grant recipients were consulting with a range of stakeholders, including stakeholders from other sectors. I found that developing a partnerships approach to crime prevention has been effective in building momentum for further community investment and leveraging existing community investment, reflected in the Regeneration of Autumn Place. In addition to capacity-building activities providing by the CCPU, the seeding approach of the CSF has supported the development of community capacity to respond to crime, as demonstrated by the government's recent investment in targeting hotspots within Brimbank City Council. This has contributed to the creation of a sustainable knowledge base within the community to develop future crime prevention activities.

While it is widely acknowledged that addressing the broader influencers of crime requires a whole-of-government approach, the CCPU has been effective in moving beyond preventing crime by contributing to addressing the causal factors of crime through the introduction of the Communities that Care and the Place-Based Targeted Grants program. Communities that Care is particularly effective because it provides the community with a framework for identifying their role in the broader risk and protective factors associated with offending and antisocial behaviour and not just those requiring a justice response.



Figure 18: Doveton College students created a ping pong table as part of the redevelopment of Autumn Park

Opportunities for Improvement

During my review I identified the following opportunities to further improve the effectiveness of the existing CCPP.

Communities that Care

There is strong support for the continued funding of Communities that Care in Victoria and its expansion to additional sites. The strong correlation between disadvantaged communities and offending behaviour identified by the Jesuit Social Services' report *Dropping off the Edge: Persistent Communal Disadvantage in Australia* and the Ombudsman's report *Investigation into the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners in Victoria* indicates there is a need to continue investing in crime prevention approaches that tackle the causal factors of crime. Communities that Care is already achieving this by providing an evidence-based framework for identifying and addressing the risk and protective factors specific to local communities.

The Communities that Care model is a longitudinal model. The measurable effects of Communities that Care on risk and protective factors are available between two to five years after initial funding, with measurable outcomes of problem behaviours and positive youth development between four and ten years post investment. During the consultations I heard that there is a gap in community crime prevention programs targeting young people.

Place-Based Crime Prevention

During the early stages of this review I identified the need for a crime prevention approach targeting crime hotspots. In addition to the findings from the Jesuit Social Services' and Ombudsman Victoria's reports identifying links between disadvantage and crime, community feedback during my consultations emphasised the need to target hotspots of crime. Victoria Police also confirmed that crime can be localised within communities. Initial feedback from the community regarding the Place-Based Targeted Grants indicates there is strong support for place-based crime prevention.

Place-based crime prevention uses existing community knowledge about crime problems to identify and development appropriate crime prevention approaches. These approaches target the causal factors of crime such as social disadvantage by investing in social capital. By empowering the community to build social cohesiveness, place-based crime prevention also contributes to overall community health and wellbeing.

Expanding Community Capacity for Crime Prevention

There is broad community support for building community capacity to identify and respond to crime. While there was strong support for the CCPU's existing capacity building activities, feedback during my consultations consistently advised that community organisations would benefit from further education and training about developing and delivering effective crime prevention programs.

Best practice approaches to delivering crime prevention emphasise that to be effective, communities need to have the capacity to deliver crime prevention programs. Appropriate training and professional development activities can support the translation of crime prevention theory into practice, building community capacity for effective crime prevention. There has been strong support for the Communities of Practice workshops that provided support for agencies receiving RVAWC grants and also provided opportunities for networking and collaboration amongst participants. Evidence indicates

"Council is often very good at identifying the problems in their communities but may not know how best to respond, or how best to implement a solution. This is an area where the government, through CCPU, could provide additional guidance and expertise." - Dr Rick Brown and Professor Peter Homel, Australian Institute of Criminology

that these activities should be coordinated at government level. As a credible source, the CCPU is well placed to develop and deliver information about crime prevention programs and the CCPU website provides an existing platform for effectively disseminating this information.

Improving Community Capacity for Evaluation

“The CCPP has come to represent an important resource for community crime prevention in Victoria and its termination would represent a significant loss to the ability of the local communities across Victoria to support their crime prevention activity.” - Evaluation of the Community Crime Prevention Program: Final Report

The AIC evaluation report supported building the community’s capacity to evaluate crime prevention programs. The report identified that in Australia generally, the quality of crime prevention program evaluation is poor. In Victoria, where evaluation is a requirement of program, there is a high reliance on anecdotal evidence to highlight key findings.

Best practice approaches identify the importance of delivering cost-effective crime prevention programs that are supported by an evidence-base. To be financially attractive, crime prevention initiatives must be able to demonstrate that they are producing results, however evaluation is considered a difficult task, requiring specific skills and knowledge. Improving community capacity for evaluation will meet the need for ongoing and independent evaluation, strengthen current evaluation practices, ensure greater integrity and increase the evidence base. As previously noted, the CCPU is well placed to develop and deliver information about evaluation and the CCPU website provides a platform for information sharing.



Figure 19: Clayton Laneways regeneration included a new zebra crossing

Conclusion

Overall, the AIC evaluation confirmed that the CCPP is delivering an effective and efficient approach to sustainable crime prevention and is considered by the AIC to be one of the most effective programs in Australia and internationally. Stakeholder feedback was supportive of the current configuration of the CCPP's competitive grants program because it covers a broad and complementary range of crime prevention approaches. I have outlined in detail the benefits of each of the main grants programs:

- ◆ Community Safety Fund
- ◆ Graffiti Prevention Grants
- ◆ Public Safety Infrastructure Fund.

The leadership role of the CCPU in administering the CCPP aligns with the best practice framework, which supports a centralised approach to crime prevention. Stakeholders have describe the CCPU as a strong leader, with good credibility, which has been leveraged by stakeholders to engage other organisations and secure additional investment. By leveraging community partnerships, the CCPU has been effective in mobilising the community and facilitating a partnerships approach to crime prevention, in accordance with best practice principles. As a result of the CCPU's strong leadership and community engagement, momentum has been established within the community to address crime.

I have identified strong support for the Communities that Care program that addresses not just the symptoms of crime, but also the underlying causal factors of crime. Communities that Care is the only rigorous, evidence-based community crime prevention approach in Victoria that empowers the community to engage a social developmental approach to crime prevention. National and international findings indicate that Communities that Care has proven to be effective in contributing to reducing young people's risk of offending and serious antisocial behaviour. It is also a cost effective approach with a significant return on investment (\$5.30 for every \$1 spent) and creates a single local planning forum for leveraging existing community services.⁶ By investing in community capacity and leveraging existing investment, over time Communities that Care aims to be a self-sustaining model.

Recent reports from the Victorian Ombudsman and Jesuit Social Services confirmed feedback I received during my consultations that there is a need to target support to areas of high crime and disadvantage. These reports highlighted the link between offending behaviour and disadvantage. Place-based crime prevention is an established approach that empowers communities to address crime hotspots by identifying and developing interventions that address the causes of crime. Place-based crime prevention aligns with best practice approaches to crime prevention by acknowledging that communities are best placed to identify and respond to crime and uses established crime prevention approaches to develop pro-social engagement.

During my consultations I heard the importance of empowering local government and community organisations to respond to local crime issues. Improved community capacity for crime prevention is linked to better program development and implementation and ultimately more effective and efficient outcomes.

⁶ M.R. Kuklinski, J.S. Briney, J.D. Hawkins and R.F. Catalano (2012). 'Cost-Benefit Analysis of Communities that Care Outcomes at Eighth Grade', *Prevention Science*. April 13(2).

Feedback indicates that the CCPU is well placed to support community capacity building, it is a credible source of information and has the capacity to leverage information from other agencies. Existing community capacity building activities delivered by the CCPU such as the Communities of Practice have been effective in facilitating partnerships and collaboration between stakeholders and building momentum of further crime prevention programs. The CCPU's website provides an existing platform for effectively supporting the development, implementation and evaluation of crime prevention programs.

Undertaking evaluation improves the evidence-base about 'what works' in terms of identifying and delivering effective and efficient crime prevention programs in Victoria. Activities that build community capacity for evaluation will strengthen the findings of the funded projects, improving the usefulness of those findings. According to the AIC, the government has a key role in setting evaluation priorities in alignment with strategic directions. As previously noted, the CCPU is well placed to develop and deliver information about evaluation and the CCPU website provides a platform for information sharing.

I recommend that the government considers options to continue to empower and support communities to engage in community crime prevention activities, having regard to my findings in relation to the Community Crime Prevention Program.

Appendix: Community Crime Prevention Program

Competitive Grants Program

The Community Crime Prevention Program includes a number of grant programs that help increase community safety and improve community confidence in the safety of local areas by funding community crime prevention initiatives. Each grant stream is described below.

Community Safety Fund

The Community Safety Fund Grants provide funding of up to \$10,000 for communities in Victoria to implement locally-based crime prevention projects, recognising that communities are best placed to identify local crime problems and develop appropriate responses. These grants provide additional resources for local communities to support practical and locally relevant crime prevention solutions.

The objectives of the Community Safety Fund Grants are to:

- ◆ help prevent crime and assist people to feel safer in their communities
- ◆ increase community capacity to identify and best address local crime problems
- ◆ encourage the development of local partnerships to address local crime prevention issues.

Since the Community Safety Fund Grants were established in 2011, communities across Victoria have benefited from a broad range of initiatives including improvements in infrastructure (i.e. locks, security screens and doors and fencing to prevent break-ins and vandalism) and community awareness (i.e. education campaigns and community engagement initiatives).

Graffiti Prevention Grants

The Graffiti Prevention Grants provide local councils with grants of up to \$25,000 to partner with community organisations to deliver projects to deter, prevent and clean up illegal graffiti in local neighbourhoods. Forming partnerships between local councils and community stakeholders to address illegal graffiti is a critical part of the graffiti grants, given that communities are best-placed to identify local graffiti problems and develop appropriate responses.

The objectives of the graffiti grants are to:

- ◆ encourage and support councils and communities to identify and develop options for graffiti prevention and removal in local areas to improve the visual amenity of neighbourhoods
- ◆ support the development of sustainable graffiti prevention and removal solutions in Victorian communities
- ◆ increase the sense of community confidence in the safety and security of public places.

Examples of Graffiti Prevention Grants projects include education programs, installing murals at graffiti hotspots to deter offenders, investing in graffiti removal trailers for community use.

Public Safety Infrastructure Fund

The Public Safety Infrastructure Fund grants provide councils with funding of up to \$250,000 to develop public safety and security infrastructure to improve community safety and confidence in public places. The design of environments has an important role in reducing opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour. Environments designed with embedded safety features promote safer and more accessible public places that encourage legitimate community use.

The objectives of the Public Safety Infrastructure Fund grants are to:

- ◆ support councils to improve local public safety and security infrastructure in local communities and apply innovative crime and community safety solutions
- ◆ increase community safety and confidence in public places
- ◆ build the knowledge base about good practice public safety infrastructure solutions, and capture and share lessons learned
- ◆ promote the development and delivery of integrated crime prevention initiatives as part of a strategic approach to local community safety

The types of projects that have benefited from this funding are infrastructure investments including lighting systems and other physical security or safety measures; streetscape and amenity improvements in public areas and physical elements of public place (i.e. Closed Circuit Television systems).

Communities that Care

Communities that Care is currently being piloting in five locations across Victoria. Funding is provided to engage the community to develop a framework for addressing the particular risk and protective factors amongst young people in each local community.

Reducing Violence against Women and their Children

These grants support primary prevention and early intervention focused partnership projects across community service organisations and local government to reduce violence against women and their children. These grants support primary prevention and early intervention partnership projects across community service organisations and local government to reduce violence against women and their children.

Twelve projects across Victoria have been funded to help reduce violence against women and their children. These Reducing Violence against Women and their Children (RVAWC) grants support primary prevention and partnership projects focused on early intervention. Four of these projects specifically target violence in Koori communities (Koori Community Safety grants).

These projects seek to prevent violence before it occurs or address the key contributing factors of violence against women and their children.

These grants are an important activity supporting Victoria's Action Plan to address violence against women and children and align with the *National Plan To Reduce Violence Against Women And Their Children*.

Place-Based Targeted Grants

The Place-Based Targeted Grants program was launched during 2015 to support evidence-based or promising practice approaches to addressing local community safety priorities, particularly those addressing youth or other particularly vulnerable groups.