

## **Inquiry into Locally Based Approaches to Community Safety and Crime Prevention: Victorian Government Response**

On 10 February 2011, the Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee received terms of reference from the Legislative Council that requested it inquire into, consider and report on locally based approaches to community safety and crime prevention.

In particular, the Committee was asked to consider:

- the breadth of locally based groups and organisations addressing community safety and crime prevention issues within Victoria, particularly with regard to local government and Neighbourhood Watch;
- the approaches adopted by these groups to promulgating community safety and crime prevention practices, programs or initiatives;
- the extent to which these organisations are effective in engaging with local and state agencies in the development of policy;
- whether institutional or other arrangements support or impede such local groups in engaging in the development of community safety initiatives;
- whether there is a cost benefit to the community for current crime prevention strategies;
- whether alternate models for such organisations may improve outcomes; and
- local community safety and crime prevention arrangements in other jurisdictions, particularly within Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

The Victorian Government response to each recommendation is as follows:

- **Support:** The Government supports the recommendation and is currently enacting or will soon enact initiatives or activities that are in line with the recommendation
- **Support in principle:** The Government supports the theme of the recommendation but will achieve the outcomes in a different manner to that suggested by the Committee. Alternatively, there may also be funding implications that the government has yet to consider, or support may be contingent on the outcome of another process
- **Support in part:** The Government supports one or more aspects of the recommendation, but does not support another aspect
- **Not supported:** The Government does not support the recommendation
- **Recommendation noted:** The recommendation is not directed to the Victorian Government.

## Recommendations

On 5 June 2012, the Final Report was tabled in Parliament with a number of recommendations made:

Committee Recommendations	Response	Comment
<p><b>1. The Committee recommends</b> that the Community Crime Prevention Unit should develop a Crime Prevention and Community Safety Framework as the means for coordinating Government action in the area. In developing the framework, the Government should ensure it consults with relevant partners in community crime prevention such as local government, police and representatives of non-government organisations.</p>	Support	The Government supports the development of a Victorian crime prevention framework and is currently undertaking this work.
<p><b>2. The Committee recommends</b> that the Crime Prevention and Community Safety Framework include clear definitions as to what is meant by crime prevention and community safety.</p>	Support	The Government supports the inclusion of definitions of important terms in the framework.
<p><b>3. The Committee recommends</b> that the best way of implementing the Crime Prevention and Community Safety Framework and indeed crime prevention strategies generally is through the Community Crime Prevention Unit.</p>	Support in part	The Government supports the Department of Justice's Community Crime Prevention Unit leading the development of a Victorian crime prevention framework. The Government notes that the implementation of crime prevention initiatives is a shared responsibility across federal, state and local government and the community. The Government recognises that local communities are best placed to identify and respond to local crime prevention priorities, and provides support for local initiatives through the Community Crime Prevention Program. The Government considers that it is appropriate for different parts of government and for other agencies to also lead strategies that assist in the prevention of crime.
<p><b>4. The Committee recommends</b> that the role of the Community Crime Prevention Unit should include but not be restricted to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the development and publication of the Crime</li> </ul>	Support in principle	The Department of Justice's Community Crime Prevention Unit undertakes a wide range of functions to support the Government's Community Crime Prevention Program. This includes some, but not all of the functions identified by the Committee. Additional functions will be considered having regard to the priorities of the department.

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<p>Prevention and Community Safety Framework including a community engagement strategy to indicate how the public, community organisations and the private sector can have ongoing input into crime prevention policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• liaising with federal and state agencies, professionals in the field, community agencies and media</li> <li>• disseminating information with regard to crime prevention and community safety</li> <li>• implementing a mapping exercise and audit to establish the current levels of services available</li> <li>• developing and coordinating training programs on crime prevention and community safety</li> <li>• developing and coordinating a research agenda and the commissioning of crime prevention research</li> <li>• assessing and providing funding for programs, research and evaluation relating to crime prevention and community safety</li> <li>• ongoing responsibility for evaluating programs that are funded</li> <li>• developing a protocol in liaison with media representatives on the reporting of community safety and crime prevention issues</li> <li>• liaising with and supporting local government and community agencies to develop Local Community Crime Prevention Strategies</li> <li>• identifying available resources and gaps in service delivery in order to plan a response to community safety and crime prevention at both</li> </ul>		<p>Any decision affecting funding and program delivery would be subject to Government consideration through the normal state budget process.</p>

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<p>state and local levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifying key personnel and agencies in the community who have expertise in dealing with community safety and crime prevention in order to establish a comprehensive referral and resource network</li> <li>identifying best practice initiatives and assessing their applicability to local communities.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>5. The Committee recommends</b> that the Community Crime Prevention Unit provide technical support and assistance to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of local crime prevention action.</p>	Support	The Government supports the Department of Justice's Community Crime Prevention Unit undertaking functions to support building the capability of local communities to implement effective local crime prevention action.
<p><b>6. The Committee recommends</b> that the Community Crime Prevention Unit should establish and support a Crime Prevention and Community Safety Advisory Group to provide ongoing formal advice to the Community Crime Prevention Unit from experts in the field.</p>	Support in principle	The Government actively engages with a broad range of agencies, organisations and individuals to receive advice in relation to its community safety and crime prevention agenda. Given that specific community safety and crime prevention issues and initiatives will require specialised input and advice from diverse areas of practice and expertise, the Government will continue to actively seek advice from the appropriate experts in relation to specific areas of practice as required.
<p><b>7. The Committee recommends</b> that the Community Crime Prevention Unit should establish an interdepartmental Crime Prevention Working Party to coordinate crime prevention and community safety programs and interventions across state government departments.</p>	Support in principle	The Government has a range of mechanisms under its current cabinet and committee structure to facilitate coordination of government action and will continue to utilise these structures to coordinate intra-government crime prevention and community safety initiatives.
<p><b>8. The Committee recommends</b> that the Victorian Government Framework on crime prevention and community safety provides local government with clear direction on its crime prevention responsibilities.</p>	Support	The Government supports the need for the framework to clearly outline the strong role local government plays in community safety and crime prevention in local communities.

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<p><b>9. The Committee recommends</b> that the Community Crime Prevention Unit work with local government authorities to develop and implement a Crime Prevention and Community Safety Plan where one does not currently exist or where it does not conform to the principles and guidelines of the new Crime Prevention and Community Safety Framework. Such a Plan should draw from the new Crime Prevention and Community Safety Framework and be based on/informed by best practice evidence.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Government supports and encourages local councils to develop plans to address local community safety and crime prevention priorities. The Government notes that local councils currently address community safety in a range of ways and supports local councils continuing to have this flexibility. Government agrees that local government action in relation to crime prevention should be informed by evidence and form part of a strategic response.</p>
<p><b>10. The Committee recommends</b> that local governments in developing their crime prevention and community safety strategy plans seek the views of members of the local community through a properly constituted consultation process.</p>	<p>Recommendation noted</p>	<p>The Government notes that local councils utilise a range of community consultation processes to inform their strategies, plans and initiatives. It supports local councils using these processes to actively engage local communities in identifying and developing responses to local community safety and crime prevention issues.</p>
<p><b>11. The Committee recommends</b> that each council and shire conduct a crime prevention audit and/or needs analysis of community safety requirements in their municipality.</p>	<p>Recommendation noted</p>	<p>The Government notes the recommendation. The Government supports councils actively working with their local communities and Victoria Police to identify and respond to local community safety and crime prevention issues and priorities. The manner in which councils obtain information about their local community safety requirements is a matter for individual local councils.</p>
<p><b>12. The Committee recommends</b> that each local government authority should ensure that its crime prevention and community safety strategy plan be based on evidence of current crime prevention and community safety issues and problems facing the local community.</p>	<p>Recommendation Noted</p>	<p>The Government notes the recommendation. The Government agrees that effective community safety and crime prevention plans should be based on evidence of local needs and priorities.</p>
<p><b>13. The Committee recommends</b> that the Community Crime Prevention Unit should undertake a review of the feasibility and likely effects of requiring local councils to develop crime prevention and community safety strategy plans as part of a legislative mandate.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Government supports and encourages local councils to develop plans to address local community safety and crime prevention priorities.</p> <p>The Government is undertaking ongoing work to reduce the overall reporting burden on local government, including mandatory</p>

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		<p>legislated requirements and will have regard to this work in its consideration of any new requirements. It also notes the principles of the current Victorian State Local Government Agreement and the work to renegotiate this framework.</p> <p>Mandating reporting requirements in legislation may not always support the uptake by local governments of best practice in planning crime prevention and community safety strategies. Further it may not accommodate the wide range of circumstances and contexts faced by Victoria's 79 local governments, resulting in a focus upon compliance, at the cost of innovation and the uptake of best practice.</p> <p>As noted in response to recommendations 9 and 14 the Government will continue to work with councils to build the evidence base about effective crime prevention strategies and initiatives.</p>
<p><b>14. The Committee recommends</b> that the Community Crime Prevention Unit commission research to compare the crime prevention outcomes of those local government areas that currently have crime prevention and community safety strategy plans or their equivalents with those that do not.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Government will continue to work with local councils to build the knowledge base about the effectiveness of crime prevention strategies and initiatives. Funding for specific research initiatives would be subject to Government consideration through the normal state budget process.</p>
<p><b>15. The Committee recommends</b> that those councils and shires that do not presently have a community safety and crime prevention committee should establish one.</p>	<p>Recommendation noted</p>	<p>The Government notes the recommendation. This is a matter for individual local councils.</p>
<p><b>16. The Committee recommends</b> that in developing partnerships with community groups, councils and shires incorporate the guidelines from the Institute on Governance's <i>Good Governance Principles for Partnerships</i> as outlined in Recommendation 17.</p>	<p>Recommendation noted</p>	<p>The Government notes the recommendation.</p>
<p><b>17. The Committee recommends</b> that any partnerships entered into between government agencies such as the Community Crime Prevention Unit, local government</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Government notes that there are various existing partnership arrangements and frameworks within Victoria, which are consistent with these principles, however, tailored to local context and needs.</p>

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<p>and non-government agencies and the private sector incorporate the Institute on Governance <i>Good Governance Principles for Partnerships</i> discussed later in this Report.</p>		
<p><b>18. The Committee recommends</b> that the Victorian government undertake a review of the involvement of small business and corporate enterprises in crime prevention partnership initiatives.</p> <p>Such a review could include but not be restricted to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an audit of the current involvement of small business and the corporate sector in crime prevention and community safety initiatives in Victoria</li> <li>• the role of corporate social responsibility in the area of crime prevention and community safety</li> <li>• how the United Nations Guidelines on the use of corporate crime prevention partnerships can be incorporated into the proposed Crime Prevention and Community Safety Framework</li> <li>• the effectiveness and positive outcomes of current public/private sector projects in the areas of crime prevention and community safety</li> <li>• the use of private sector volunteers to work on projects associated with crime prevention and community safety</li> <li>• the barriers faced by the corporate and small business sector in becoming involved in crime prevention and community safety initiatives</li> <li>• incentives that the Victorian and/or Commonwealth governments may be able to provide to the private sector to invest in crime prevention and community safety projects</li> </ul>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Government acknowledges the important role business plays in crime prevention, both in undertaking industry-based initiatives, and as partners in broader community crime prevention initiatives. The Government will continue to encourage community partnerships involving the business sector through its Community Crime Prevention Program. Specific initiatives would be subject to Government consideration through the normal state budget process.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ways of promoting to the private sector the positive aspects of becoming involved with crime prevention and community safety initiatives</li> <li>ways of providing practical advice to the private sector on entering crime prevention partnerships, particularly through implementing the guidelines outlined in the <i>ICPC Public-Private Partnerships and Community Safety: A Guide to Action</i> (2011).</li> </ul>		
<p><b>19. The Committee acknowledges</b> on the basis of the available evidence that crime prevention and community safety initiatives are rarely subject to rigorous evaluation. The Committee therefore recommends that there is a need for the Community Crime Prevention Unit to ensure state-wide evidence based research, access to evaluation of programs and best practice modelling is provided or made available to councils in order to deliver effective crime prevention and community safety programs.</p>	Support	The Government supports continuing to develop the evidence base to help build community capability to deliver effective crime prevention initiatives. The Government will support councils and local communities by providing information to build greater knowledge and understanding about effective crime prevention initiatives, within current available resources.
<p><b>20. The Committee recommends</b> that the Victorian Government should establish a set of evaluation priority areas in consultation with key crime prevention stakeholders such as government agencies, academia, local government and community agencies.</p>	Support in principle	The Government has implemented evaluation requirements for all initiatives seeking further funding through the budget process.
<p><b>21. The Committee recommends</b> that the Community Crime Prevention Unit requires recipients of small grants such as Community Safety Fund Grants to report to the Unit on performance measurements and outcomes against the initial aims of the program</p>	Support	The Government notes that recipients of all grants under the Community Crime Prevention Program, including the Community Safety Fund, are currently required to report on process and outcomes. Evaluation requirements are commensurate with the level of the grant funding.
<p><b>22. The Committee recommends</b> that the Community Crime Prevention Unit reserve specific funding within their total crime prevention program to fund external evaluation of 'clusters' of projects that are identified as</p>	Support	The Government notes that each grant program under its Community Crime Prevention Program has evaluation mechanisms built in, commensurate with the level of the grant funding. In some grant programs, this includes an independent evaluation



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being of particular importance.		requirement. An independent evaluation of the Community Crime Prevention Program as a whole will also be undertaken.
<p><b>23. The Committee recommends</b> that the Community Crime Prevention Unit select for evaluation individual projects or initiatives that appear innovative but for which there is no evidence base currently to support their worth. Such an evaluation would assess their effectiveness in achieving desired outcomes and identify the practical challenges and lessons for implementing similar projects.</p>	Support in principle	The Government notes each of the grant programs under its Community Crime Prevention Program has evaluation mechanisms built in, commensurate with the level of the grant funding. In some grant programs, this includes an independent evaluation requirement. Any additional evaluation activity would be subject to Government consideration through the normal state budget process.
<p><b>24. The Committee recommends</b> that the Victorian Government establish an independent crime research, statistics and data collection/analysis agency to assist local government, police and community agencies with the provision of data and evidence to inform the development and implementation of crime prevention programs and initiatives. The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) in New South Wales may serve as a useful example.</p>	Support in principle	<p>The Government notes that the Committee's recommendation aligns with a recommendation made by the Ombudsman in his 2011 report <i>Investigation into an allegation about Victoria Police crime statistics</i>, which also recommended the establishment of an independent crime statistics body.</p> <p>The Government has committed to introducing an independent crime statistics agency in line with the Ombudsman's recommendation. Options for implementation are currently being analysed and considered by the Government. The Committee's recommendation will be considered as part of this piece of work.</p>
<p><b>25. The limitations on Council activity in the community safety area can often be attributed to the lack of adequate and specifically tailored/dedicated funding. The Committee therefore recommends</b> that appropriate funding opportunities be offered to local government to drive more targeted, evidence-based community safety activity.</p>	Support	The Government currently provides a number of funding opportunities to councils that target evidenced based community safety activity via the Community Crime Prevention Program.
<p><b>26. The Committee recommends</b> that the Victorian Government provide further and ongoing grants for community crime prevention and safety initiatives, particularly those involving partnerships. These grants should be awarded to initiatives that fulfil the objectives</p>	Support	As noted above, the Government currently provides a number of grants to councils that target evidenced based community safety activity via the Community Crime Prevention Program. Funding has been provided to 2014/15.

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of the Crime Prevention and Community Safety Framework.		
<p><b>27. The Committee recommends</b> that as a requirement of receiving Victorian Government funding for crime prevention, local governments either by themselves or in conjunction with other local councils in their regions are required to establish local safety committees that foster crime prevention and community safety partnerships.</p>	Support in principle	The Government supports and encourages local and regional collaboration and the formation of meaningful partnerships to foster effective crime prevention approaches. However, as noted in recommendation 15 and 16, councils' governance, committee structure and partnership arrangements are a matter for individual local councils, having regard to their local needs and resources.
<p><b>28. The Committee recommends</b> that as a requirement for obtaining a crime prevention grant, councils, shires and local community organisations be required to demonstrate to the Community Crime Prevention Unit that the initiative for which they are seeking funding addresses an identified problem in the community and falls within a priority of the local crime prevention and community safety strategy. Such evidence could be provided through the local crime prevention audit/needs analysis and/or by accessing police statistics, research and other intelligence data.</p>	Support in principle	The Government notes that the current guidelines for grants under the Community Crime Prevention Program require applicants to document the problem to be addressed (including evidence of the problem) and how the proposed solution will address the identified issue. As noted in recommendation 9, the Government agrees that local government action in relation to crime prevention should be informed by evidence and form part of a strategic response.
<p>29. The Committee recommends that the Community Crime Prevention Unit should develop a series of training packages on crime prevention and community safety. These modules should support the attainment of skills and knowledge required for job roles that involve the identification, planning, development or delivery of crime prevention strategies or activities.</p> <p>Course content could include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understanding crime prevention theory and practice</li> <li>• the various approaches to crime prevention including social-developmental approaches and</li> </ul>	Support in principle	<p>The primary function of the Department of Justice's Community Crime Prevention Unit is the administration of grants under the Community Crime Prevention Program. The Unit also develops tools and resources to help build local community crime prevention capability, including Information forums in relation to its grants programs.</p> <p>The Government notes that the National Vocational Education and Training System currently offers a number of nationally endorsed crime prevention training units available for delivery by any registered training organisation. The Unit is not, however, a registered training organisation.</p>

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<p>crime prevention through environmental design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understanding, developing and maintaining good partnerships</li> <li>• what works in crime prevention</li> <li>• evaluation theory and techniques</li> <li>• how to apply for grants and funding</li> </ul>		
<p>30. The Committee recommends that comprehensive units on crime prevention and community safety should be incorporated into Victoria Police probationary training as soon as possible.</p>	Support	Victoria Police provides training in crime prevention and community safety during the probationary training phase through lectures and Project OPTIC which is based upon Operational Police Training in the Community.
<p><b>31. The Committee recommends</b> that relevant TAFE Colleges develop crime prevention modules as part of community development courses so that those responsible for developing or implementing crime prevention initiatives can receive appropriate accreditation and acknowledgement for their professional development.</p>	Recommendation noted	The Government notes that the National Vocational Education and Training System currently offers a number of nationally endorsed crime prevention training units as part of the LGA04 Local Government Training Package. These are available for delivery by any registered training organisation.
<p><b>32. The Committee recommends</b> that Victoria Police should provide a clear statement of what the public should do when it observes any suspected criminal activity.</p>	Support	Victoria Police is undertaking consultation with Crime Stoppers Victoria and Neighbourhood Watch Victoria to inform an effective communications statement which will clearly define what the public should do when it observes suspected criminal activity and requires a police response.
<p><b>33. The Committee recommends</b> that the Community Crime Prevention Unit investigate the promotion of Facebook and other forms of social media in developing and implementing crime prevention initiatives.</p>	Support	The Government recognises the role that social media can play in supporting the development and implementation of crime prevention initiatives. Victoria Police is currently trialling EyeWatch, a facebook-based online forum that aims to empower local communities to participate in crime prevention activities. Any additional activities impacting funding or programs would be subject to Government consideration through the normal state budget process.

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<p><b>34. The Committee recommends</b> that the Community Crime Prevention Unit liaise with, encourage and assist university architecture and planning faculties to offer or expand courses on Crime Prevention through Environmental Design.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Government recognises that Victoria's autonomous universities play a leading role in creating and imparting knowledge that supports society to address a wide range of challenges. Universities continually evolve their course offerings to ensure that they produce work-ready graduates that are prepared to meet the needs of the community, industry and government. The Government supports cooperative working relationships with university architecture faculties so that their courses are better informed by contemporary crime prevention principles.</p> <p>The Government notes that Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles are embedded in the Safer Design Guidelines for Victoria. Safer design is embedded in good urban design principles. The Department of Planning and Community Development has established relationships with Victorian tertiary institutions with architecture and planning faculties, and it currently provides a range of additional training for urban design and planning professionals across industry and local government.</p>
<p><b>35. The Committee recommends</b> the Victorian Government consider establishing a Designing Out Crime Research Centre in Victoria similar to that operating at the University of Technology, Sydney NSW.</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The Government will consider the feasibility of establishing a centre to similar to the NSW Designing Out Crime Research Centre. Any decision will be subject to Government consideration through the normal state budget process.</p>
<p><b>36. The Committee recommends</b> that Neighbourhood Watch as part of its current funding requirements be reviewed by the Victorian Government in 2013. The Review would assess the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch as a government funded crime prevention initiative. It should also indicate on the evidence received whether on balance further government funding should be allocated to support Neighbourhood Watch beyond 2014.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>The Government has committed \$550,000 in funding over the four years to 2014/15 to help reinvigorate Neighbourhood Watch and enable it to achieve a sustainable and independent operating model. The normal state budget process requires all proposals seeking funding to have a cost-benefit analysis and, where funding has previously been provided, an evaluation of outcomes.</p>