1. Question – *To what extent does Victoria Police see crime prevention as a key policing focus?*

- Peelian principles. Sir Robert Peel identified prevention of crime and disorder as primary activities for police. Peel also advocated that the effectiveness of police should not be measured by the number of arrest, but by the lack of crime.


- Victoria Police Priorities and Service document 2011 identified the prevention of crime against the person and property crime as current priorities. (Operational priorities – ‘the unacceptable levels of crime affecting people and their property’)

- Police are key leaders in crime prevention program development and implementation. There has been a 19.3% reduction in property crime over the last 10 years. Property crime makes up 75% of all reported crime. Crime against the person is more complex and challenging.

- The organisation's members seek to develop links within the local community, schools, ethnic communities, local business and other groups to reduce the incidence and impact of crime.

- Victoria Police understands the importance of community and other partnerships in reducing crime and in providing a safer place to live. Partnerships are achieved through community based crime prevention programs such as Neighbourhood Watch and Crime Stoppers and a network of full time Crime Prevention Officers. Community consultation and education are key parts of this process.

2. *What role should police play in crime prevention program development, implementation and participation?*

In relation to the Neighbourhood Watch Program (NHW) Victoria Police currently funds 26 full-time positions in the role of NHW Divisional Police Coordinator. These members are responsible for direct liaison with volunteers and provide them direction and support in relation to the conduct of the program and the development of crime prevention strategies to support a reduction of crime and enhanced community safety. Each Police Service Area across the state has its own Crime Prevention Officer (CPO). The CPO acts as a liaison officer to individuals, community groups, local government and corporations. They provide advice, source, develop, and implement
crime prevention strategies relevant to local community safety priorities in addressing problems/issues.

Current knowledge about effective crime prevention strategies comes from evaluation research and anecdotes about successful and unsuccessful programs and strategies used in the past. Some of these strategies have very little to do with the police, while others involve the police in important ways. Crime prevention efforts involving the police represent just one stream among many types of crime prevention efforts. Crime prevention methodology has three main themes – motivated offenders, suitable targets, and capable guardianship. Policing activities operate in all three key areas of crime prevention. Police, however, cannot do this work alone and it is important that there is an integrated whole of Victoria Government approach to crime prevention.

Police play a vital role, and on many occasions a leading role, but not the only one. The causes of crime and disorder lie primarily in societal issues commonly referred to as ‘The Four Pillars’ of 1. Health (including Mental Health & Substance Abuse), 2. Housing, 3. Education and 4. Employment. Responsibility for each of these lies in other (ie, non-policing) arenas.

Fundamentally, crime prevention starts with improving social efficacy and eliminating social disadvantage (for e.g. see Professor Tony Vinson’s work in that field). It is also worth making a distinction between efforts focused on communities as a whole, and those on individuals. Victoria Police provides some targeted programmes (e.g. High Challenge, discussed later) for individuals. It also leads with initiatives that engage with communities ‘as communities’, (e.g. PACMAC also discussed later). As to recidivism, Victoria Police is clearly the lead agency, and has a responsibility to actively target, investigate and prosecute those individuals who will not desist from criminal activity. That in itself has a crime prevention benefit. Thus, recidivist individuals will be the focus of targeted law enforcement effort. On the other hand, wholes of communities will benefit from proactive engagement as the means to crime prevention, in order to build relationships that lead to trust, confidence and a clear police mandate. That distinction in levels is important. There are of course other forms of deterrence that also act in preventive ways – potential victims that are less vulnerable, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) and sentencing among them.

3. How are crime prevention initiatives managed by Victoria Police centrally, regionally and at local level?

**Centrally** – The Crime Department’s Crime Strategy Group and the Safer Communities Unit identify and manage crime prevention initiatives. The State Tasking and Co-ordination Committee identify priorities and co-ordinate activities.

NOTE: Each of the three levels involves intelligence lead crime prevention principles through ‘Intelligence Assessments’. For specific crime problems ‘Intelligence Practitioners’ develop relevant initiatives which have a focus on crime prevention.
Regionally – Regional Tasking and Co-ordination process identifies priorities and co-ordinates activities.

Local Level – Divisional and Police Service Areas (PSA’s) based Tasking and Co-ordination Activities. Crime Prevention Officers are directly engaged and tasked. Fluctuation or spikes of crimes in certain Police Service Areas may call for local level management.

Example - ‘Operation Guardian’ looked at crime prevention initiatives to reduce crime & assaults upon the Indian population. Between 2009/10, international students predominately from India were becoming higher statistics in relation to assaults/robberies. This was a state wide issue with ramifications and poor publicity to the Victorian Government, Victorian Tourism, tertiary education/colleges and Victoria Police. Discovery indicated that Indian students were working in industries across Victoria which exposed them to higher levels of being victims of crime. (e.g. taxi industry, 24 hour convenience stores) This was a state wide problem but was managed centrally and focused on re-active patrols, risk management, crime prevention initiatives and community education. Simply because of the size and scope of the project, this warranted central management and involved many stakeholders.

Developing innovative efforts to reduce crime and social disorder is an integral part of modern police work. CPO’s that undertake such interventions should consider advertising their work and ideas. Victoria Police CPO’s can help remove crime opportunities by teaching and encouraging the public to adopt better self-protection measures, or they can warn offenders of increased police vigilance or improved police practices.

When designed properly, publicity campaigns can offer another problem-solving tool in the fight against crime. There are many different ways that the public can learn about a police crime-prevention initiative. There could be a news story detailing the initiative, people may hear about it through word of mouth, or newspaper editorials may mention it. All of these “sources” do in fact publicize the initiative, but there is little control over the content or its portrayal. To separate this kind of general information from a crime prevention publicity campaign, the term crime prevention publicity should refer to: A planned effort based on intelligent policing by Victoria Police to promote crime prevention practices by creating distinct campaigns designed to educate victims, or deter offenders. This definition focuses on clearly defined efforts that incorporate information with practical crime prevention measures.

Transient crime (such as multiple armed robberies) can either be handled by the affected region or a well managed central approach should the offender cross regional boundaries. This allows for continuity with the investigation, arrest and rehabilitation of the crime scene.

4. Does the Safer Communities Unit still exist in Victoria? If not what unit is responsible for Crime prevention within VicPol?

The Safer Communities Unit still exists within Victoria Police. There has been a restructure of the unit as a result of a departmental review. The Safer Communities
unit is now part of the Media and Corporate Communications Department and is managed by an Inspector and four Victoria Public Service (VPS) staff.

5. Across the state what role does VicPol play currently with regard to crime prevention programs and activities?

In consultation with many internal and external stakeholders, Victoria Police’s role is to provide resources & to assist with financial backing of crime prevention programs operating throughout the State of Victoria. Victoria Police owned crime prevention programmes are managed either locally by Crime Prevention Officers or centrally by Victoria Police management with a whole of government approach to reducing crime. Our business partners include Department of Justice, Attorney Generals Department, Office of Corrections, and Minister for Crime Prevention.

CPO’s and NHW Coordinators are in large reliant upon funding sourced through the Department of Justice. CPO’s, on occasions, have obtained corporate sponsorship or developed partnerships with other organisations to be able to obtain the material / equipment in order to carry out their duties/work. This resourcing is further eroded if the CPO’s managers under value their work and directs them other duties not core crime prevention related.

6. Does VicPol specifically trained and dedicated crime prevention officers that work solely on crime prevention initiatives? If not are there plans for such officers in the future?

There are up to 43 full time and some part time dedicated Crime Prevention officers positioned across the state of Victoria. These members are highly skilled at developing crime prevention initiatives and have qualified in the course of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). In recent years Victoria Police have moved to a Crime Desk model where specially trained staff examine crime scenes and support investigations. There ‘Crime Scene Officers’ also attend the CPTED course and are well positioned to offer advice to victims and other community members in relation to crime prevention. All of the above mentioned police officers are OSTT qualified and can be used on the front line depending upon operational needs.

7. What are some of the crime prevention/community safety programs run, funded or auspiced by Victoria Police? Are any of these developed or implemented in conjunction with other partners?

As community safety is predicated on confidence in police and connectedness to wider society, some of the following examples are initiatives that seek to build that confidence and connectedness. A sample of both community safety and crime prevention programmes:

4
- **Residential/business security kits** provided to victims of crime on how to target harden their homes/business was developed and funded by Victoria Police. Additional reprinting costs covered by other stakeholders including CGU/RACV Insurance Co.

- **Crime Prevention through Environmental Design** courses – run by Victoria Police and are self funded.

- **Remove It/Lock It or Lose It Campaign** - The campaign was designed and implemented by Victoria Police Safer Communities Unit. It was designed to reduce the likelihood of Theft from motor vehicles which became rampant at railway stations and shopping centre car parks. Brochure funded by Victoria Police.

- **Safe Plate** – providing one way screws to motorists to reduce the likelihood of number plate theft and petrol theft. Campaign funded by Victoria Police with some input from key stakeholders including Neighbourhood Watch Victoria Vic Roads & Bunning’s Hardware. This campaign was extremely successful and picked up by other states/territories.

- **Handbag/Purse security campaign** – managed locally by Crime Prevention Officers throughout Victoria. Brochures/training packages funded by Victoria Police with some input from Department of Justice. Costs included shopping centre brochures/posters and visits to educate community.

- **Party Safe Programme** – On line version of ‘Party Safe’ currently being built and managed by Victoria Police Safer Communities Unit. Build expected to be completed late May 2012. Party Safe will allow general public to report parties *On Line* and will provide them with information on how to conduct a safe party. A poster is printed off informing patrons that the party is registered with Victoria Police. Cost - $86,000 funding received via Department of Justice.

- **High Challenge** – VicPol programme to re-engage with offending young people through challenging activities conducted with sworn officers, in order to build positive relationships and prevent further offending. As can be seen, many of these initiatives stem from diverse parts of Victoria Police.

At the strategic level, there are also many initiatives designed specifically to build confidence, trust and support with communities with strong police participation (and especially with those that are actually or potentially at a disadvantage or at risk of marginalisation:

- **PACMAC.** (Police and Community Multicultural Advisory Committee)

- **The Multi-Faith Council.**

- **The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, & Queer Reference Group.**
• Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer Programme.

• New Emerging Community Liaison Officer Programme.

All of these are designed to enhance community perceptions of safety through relationship building, leading to trust, confidence and a clear police mandate.

- *(Q7 part 2) Could you please provide a list of these programs specifying where relevant those that are being developed or implemented in conjunction with other departments, agencies or organizations?*

• ‘EyeWatch Project. – This program is being implemented in conjunction with Neighbourhood Watch Victoria bring Neighbourhood Watch into the 21st century. 5 Police Service Areas are currently being trialled including Geelong, Brimbank, Darebin, Yarra Ranges and Hobsons Bay. Localised Facebook pages with local solutions to Crime Prevention and methods on reporting crime. Interactive pages which allow Local Inspectors and crime prevention focussed staff to interact on line with greater community. Provides real time feedback and answers to the community and makes the community feel apart of the Police. Original NSW concept currently on trial here in Victoria with assistance from the NSW Police Force. If this trial is successful – may be rolled out across 54 Police Service Areas.

• Operation Dead Lock – Proactive programme initiated by Safer Communities predominately looking after the elderly, weak or financially handicapped people in our community. When Police attend the scene of a Burglary or Aggravated Burglary and notice that either poor door or window locks or non-existent door locks, Safer Communities Unit is notified who then make contact with Assa-Abloy (Lockwood Company). New door locks are provided and fitted free to this vulnerable group of people.

• Security Audits – This program has been conducted in conjunction with private industry, local council and community members. Security audits are conducted on homes where members of the public have become repeat victims of crime. Security Audits conducted by Crime Prevention Officers throughout the state of Victoria. Security audits are also conducted whereby Police members feel that the premises maybe subject to repetitive crimes due to location, isolation or vulnerability.

• Property Marking – theft/burglary reduction campaigns. Funded by Victoria Police with some assistance from Neighbourhood Watch volunteers & private industry – e.g. Smart water system, Data Dot Security, RACV Insurance. ‘Mark it in March’ campaign where CPO’s are supported by NHW volunteers.

• With Indigenous Community & Aboriginal Community Justice Panels – the Blues & Brothers Murray River Marathon Team entered annually (Koori young people and police joint entries).
• **Schoolies Week** – DEECD (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development), local councils, transport, entertainment and accommodation providers, local businesses.

• **Safe Streets** – Dedicated project within CBD for reduction and disruption of anti social behaviour in partnership with Melbourne City Council via its CCTV system.

• **Research into perceptions of Safety in our Vietnamese Communities** – Jointly with community representatives, the Australian Research Council (ARC), and a university partner.

• **Hobson’s Bay Community Leadership Programme** – Local Government Area, other emergency services and community leaders. In short, there are many local examples of community engagement, most initiated by local police to meet local needs that they are best placed to identify.

• **Community Concerns about mussel and pipi harvesting along sections of the Gippsland coast** – jointly with Department of Primary Industry and local residents and conservationists.

• **Community Safety Month** – October is Community Safety Month. Community Safety Month provides Victorians with a chance to take part in activities and events and learn how to make local communities safer places to live and work. Held in October each year, the month aims to promote awareness about a broad range of safety matters, including crime prevention, personal safety, safe work practices and staying safe during an emergency. Community Safety Month was initiated in 1996 by the Victorian Safe Communities Network, which coordinates the project with **support from Victoria Police**. Local communities, groups, schools, regional services, businesses, state and local government departments and agencies, are encouraged to build community safety partnerships by organising safety activities with other groups. The website – [communitysafetymonth.com.au](http://communitysafetymonth.com.au)

• **Elder abuse campaign** was run in conjunction with the Office of Senior Victorians. Similarly ‘You are not alone’ campaign was also operated by both government agencies. Funding provided by both agencies.

8. **In what ways does the Victoria Police coordinate its crime prevention initiatives with other government departments?**

Victoria Police participates in the activities of local Community Safety Committees through local councils and other key stakeholders. The level of coordination is managed and progressed through Local Area Commanders and special units within Victoria Police including community focused departments. In general terms the subject matter will define the appropriate area of the force. In all cases a liaison officer will be appointed and responsible for reporting on the initiatives progress. Quite often the Department of Justice might run campaigns along side Victoria Police. They will manage theirs and Victoria Police managed our own. An example of this
was the Assault reduction strategy in 2009. The department of Justice ran a campaign of media advertising utilising an advertising company called “Convenience Advertising”.

This was about placing small ‘Bill Boards’ in toilets and rest rooms urging people (predominately males) to look after their mates. Don’t let them get too drunk and remove them from confrontations etc. Running simultaneously, Victoria Police ran an education campaign in secondary colleges and universities throughout Victoria. The aim was to reduce alcohol fuelled violence.

It also depends on which Government Department is funding the campaign. For example where the Department of Justice (DOJ) fund an initiative, we are simply an active business partner and the co-ordination is by DOJ. Like wise Victoria Police funded a project it would be steered and co-ordinated by Victoria Police.

On large projects e.g. – Assault reduction strategy – we held regular meetings with all our business partners and shared ideas. Action items were dived up to Departments possessing the appropriate skill sets and ability to achieve goals. A co-ordination team consisted that of all Government partners.

9. What factors may act as either facilitators or impediments in Victoria Police developing comprehensive and successful crime prevention policies and programs?

Evidence shows that the most effective programs are those that are incorporated into a suite of mutually re-enforcing strategies, rather than stand alone policies and/or programs.

**Impediments** – Funding/Budget constraints, lack of sponsorship, low level of interest in some communities, lack of skilled volunteer base (NHW/Lions/Victims Support etc), resourcing balance and competing priorities ie/ need to provide reactive service to the community as a priority.

**Facilitators** – Finance availability, support from Government/other departments and government agencies, industry (e.g./ National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council), comprehensive communications and marketing strategies, reach to target audience, sponsorship by private industry, keen dedicated staff, and interest from volunteer support agencies (NHW/Lions Etc) Other facilitators include demonstrated benefits such as insurance discounts provided for residential properties with deadlocks and alarms systems. Program development and the work of the Australian Institute of Criminology are of great assistance.

10. What have been the ‘success stories’ in Victoria with regard to crime prevention programs initiated and/or operated by Victoria Police?

‘Remove it, lock it or lose it campaign’. With the introduction of modern technology (mobile phones/Satellite Navigation) saw a sudden increase in theft from motor vehicles. This was addressed by a state wide campaign of ‘Remove it, lock it or lose
The campaign targeted shopping centres, railway station car parks, hospital car parks commercial car parks. The campaign involved brochures, posters & DVD’s which were shown at regional shopping centres. Active patrols were conducted by Police leaving pamphlets on windscreens of drivers who had left items exposed. This resulted in a significant reduction in the statistics.

**One way screws** – One way screws for number plates have played a major role in reducing thefts (Theft of petrol/theft from building sites etc). The failure of offenders being able to steal number plates and commit further offences has been significant.

**Residential/Business Security Kits** – These kits have played an important role in target hardening businesses and residential homes against theft and burglary. A valuable tool also handed out to victims of crime.

11. **What training do recruits get in crime prevention theory and practice?**

Recruit Training moving towards development of education package as result of sworn member from Safer Communities Unit being assigned to education.

Detective Training School incorporates two work shop sessions relating to high volume crime and disruption crime initiatives. Ie. Box Hill Train Station with intelligence led response, community involvement, private industry and environmental design – CCTV.

Protective Security Officer Training incorporates one session delivered by Crime Prevention Officer.

12. **What ongoing in servicing opportunities do police officers receive in crime prevention theory and practice after they graduate?**

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design course is offered to all sworn and VPS staff. These courses run bi-annually and offer a comprehensive curriculum over 2 weeks with theory and practice in reducing crime, risk shifting & target hardening of your premises.

Supt Ehrenberg delivers community engagement presentations to every Senior Sergeant Qualification Program and Inspector Qualification Program, with following case studies from Local Area Commanders (LAC’s) and divisional managers (half-day). CPOs/NHWs and other dedicated liaison officers (as listed above) all participate in courses dedicated to their particular line of work. For example, the most recent 3 week Youth Resource Officer course finished earlier in April 2012. Partnering with non government organisations (NGOs), Victoria Police ran an intensive Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officer (GLLO) course last year for portfolio GLLOs from across the State (This is relevant to better engagement with these communities, who suffer from a far higher rate of unreported domestic violence, and a greater rate of physical injury arising during those incidents.)

Decreasing the vulnerability of victims is also an important aspect of crime prevention. Increasing cohesion, connectedness and social efficacy through police
engaging with various communities also improves crime prevention, as discussed above.

**Neighbourhood Watch**

**13. What challenges and organizational problems are faced by Victoria Police in participating in Neighbourhood Watch?**

We have seen a slow decline in Neighbourhood Watch since the late 90’s. NHW commenced in Kananook in 1983. It originally started with approximately 3,500 volunteers. This grew over the years to more than 1500 individual & registered NHW areas with more than 25,000 registered volunteers. NHW attracted retired or semi retired personnel and as they left the organisation they were not replaced.

Re-invigorating NHW has been a challenge for a number of years, and it has been difficult to attract younger members of the community to participate. Members of NHW watching understanding Victoria Police’s role and function within the auspices of the program.

Members of the community are busy with their lives, careers, and families and won’t commit to attending meetings.

Antiquated methods of typing or writing out newsletters, meeting notes and election results which are then delivered by hand is seen as time consuming by the younger generation. Some members of the younger generation also don’t see it as being ‘Cool’ or ‘Hip’ to be part of an organisation that assists Police.

We are also challenged by the demands on members of the public by other volunteer groups. Retaining volunteers is a problem not just faced by NHW but is shared by CFA/SES(Meals on Wheels/ Animal Shelters etc. Volunteers more often than not tend to remain with emergency response type volunteer services as they feel empowered when assisting people, are regularly trained and see results of their hard work. This is not always the case with NHW.

**14. The committee is aware that Victoria Police is considering the introduction of NSW programme Eyes on the Street in Victoria. What is VicPol’s rationale for this development?**

The EyeWatch project was introduced to NSW in 2011 and has now been implemented across the state in 80 ‘local area commands’. Victoria Police are currently trialling 5 Police Service Area pages and a Public Transport page as part of an Eyewatch Project being managed by the Safer Communities Unit. The idea of using social media (facebook) as a platform to connect with the community has great potential given that there are 11 million facebook users in Australia. It achieves several goals:
• Actively engages with the community via an easy to use, free, and accessible 24/7 available platform
• Gives accurate and timely feedback to members of the public
• Allows the general public to actively participate in dialogue with police about local issues and their solution (‘Local solutions for local problems’ theme)
• Brings NHW into the 21st century
• More attractive to the younger generation, although facebook statistics show good penetration into all age groups and almost 50/50 gender balance
• Demonstrated success of the Eyewatch Program in N.S.W. where they have already had in excess of 29 million page hits.

How does VicPol envisage the project will be managed and what the benefits maybe?

The project will be managed by a project team based at the Safer Communities Unit. Eyewatch police pages will be managed locally by each Police Service Area Inspector. Benefits include;

• Timely interaction with members of the community.
• Accurate exchange of information between members of the public and police
• Accurate reporting of events or natural disasters
• Reduction in crime
• Proactive policing achievements
• Community engagement
• Crime prevention/advice
• Ability to have online NHW meetings via facebook closed group pages
• Ability to establish specific facebook pages such as shopkeepers and security staff within a shopping centre.

15. The committee is aware that VicPol has undertaken a review of the role of Victoria Police working in the role of Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators.
- What have been the findings and outcome of this review?
- Will officers continue to be assigned to this role?

A review has been undertaken in some areas. It has been decided that in some areas, the role of Neighbourhood Police Coordinator could be shared with other tasks or functions. The Police coordinator for example might also take on the role of Crime Prevention. In some areas, these members have changed their title to ‘Community Engagement’ Officers rather than specific roles. This has been well received by members of the public and they are very supportive of these new roles. These officers will still perform the role of Neighbourhood Watch coordinator and crime prevention functions with a significant focus on engaging the community.

16. From a policing perspective what further new directions could Neighbourhood Watch take to improve outcomes?
The funding provided by government in the current financial year will be of great benefit. This will facilitate the employment of a fulltime CEO who will be able to drive the strategy and future success of NHW.

The introduction of the ‘EyeWatch’ project and the IT overall bringing NHW into the 21st century will stimulate greater interest especially from the younger generation. There is already some very good work that has been completed on the NHW website in providing crime prevention information to the community.

The use of social media such as twitter & facebook might be enough to stimulate interest into NHW. The community as a whole still have an interest with NHW and consensus is they don’t want to see it fail. The idea behind NHW makes people feel comfortable and safe within their community.