



• From the Australian Institute of Criminology •

Closed-circuit television effectiveness and cost

The Australian Institute of Criminology has released a paper that examines the issues surrounding CCTV. In this case, CCTV refers to visual surveillance systems designed to monitor public spaces such as malls and major thoroughfares. Results of research on the impacts of CCTV in open-street settings have to date been ambiguous. Whether crime is prevented by CCTV or merely displaced to other locations remains contested. There is no hard evidence to show that CCTV systems are the panacea for crime problems in public space. Furthermore, critics suggest there are significant downsides to CCTV, namely that it may target already vulnerable sections of the population and result in social exclusion. There is also the possibility that CCTV surveillance will be used to undermine individual freedoms and facilitate oppressive forms of social control. CCTV is also expensive. Ongoing funding is most commonly generated through the general revenue of local government authorities. Another common funding method is the use of levies paid by local business to the council. Cost is primarily dependent upon the level of monitoring and maintenance costs, however monitoring is clearly the most significant expense.

Annual operational costs of selected CCTV systems

<u>Location</u>	<u>Annual cost</u>
Ipswich	\$444,000
Sydney	\$900,000
Fairfield	\$340,000
Melbourne	\$400,000
Adelaide	\$310,000
Toowoomba	\$85,000
Brisbane	\$270,000

SOURCE: Wilson D & Sutton A 2003. Open-street CCTV in Australia. *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice* no. 271 Australian Institute of Criminology Canberra

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Full report available on AIC web site: <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi2/tandi271.html>

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