

Trends & issues

in crime and criminal justice



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Foreword | *The Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards (ACVPA) is a national awards program administered by the Australian Institute of Criminology that recognises innovative crime prevention projects that embody good practice.*

This paper provides an assessment of six ACVPA national winners from 2009 and 2010, with a focus on determining reasons for their success and the factors that appear to play a role in sustaining effective crime prevention programs. Essential to the success of many of these projects was the time taken to tailor approaches that suited the individual needs of clients. Emphasis was also placed on the important role played by local businesses and the wider community.

Although it was difficult to identify the impact of winning an ACVPA on future project success for the small number of projects sampled for this paper, winning an ACVPA appeared to provide a foundation for pursuing other activities and 'legitimised' the project to the community and other agencies.

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Good practice lessons from Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards winners

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Implementing effective crime prevention strategies relies on practitioners having access to information that helps them know how best to implement interventions. Generating the required information for practitioners starts with documenting how existing crime prevention projects operate, not just documenting whether a project is effective (Bullock & Ekblom 2010). This information can enable practitioners to improve the way they implement projects (Homel 2010). However, relatively few research studies examine in detail the implementation process of crime prevention projects.

Existing crime prevention awards programs, such as the Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards (ACVPA), provide a potentially valuable source of material for identifying good implementation practice from which universal lessons can be drawn. This paper provides the results of an initial attempt to identify good practice lessons from such projects.

Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards

Since 1992, the annual ACVPA have been recognising good practice and innovation in crime prevention in primarily community-led initiatives, but also for law enforcement and other government-led projects. The awards are sponsored by the heads of Australian governments and members of the Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management–Police as a joint Australian Government and state and territory initiative. Each year, non-government projects that receive a national or state/territory award are also eligible for monetary awards from a funding pool of \$130,000 across a number of categories. Nominated projects can be any size and scope, and can be submitted by government or non-government agencies. Individuals can also be nominated for an award, including those working together in partnerships with others. The projects are assessed each year by the ACVPA Board, which comprises representatives from each Australian jurisdiction and is chaired by the Director of the Australian Institute of Criminology.

Winning projects are selected based on six key factors:

- Has the project prevented or reduced violence or other types of crime, or does the project strongly indicate the capacity to prevent or reduce violence or other types of crime?
- How well is the success of the project measured?
- How suitable is the project for replicating/adapting elsewhere?
- How lasting are the outcomes likely to be?
- How innovative or otherwise special is the project?
- How well does the project raise community awareness of the issue?

The most heavily weighted factor is the success of the project in reducing or preventing crime.

Between 1998 and 2011, there have been 43 national winners, 315 state winners (plus 2 joint state winners) and 208 other state meritorious projects. In addition to these, eight national police awards, eight national certificates, 18 state/territory police certificates, one special certificate and one state medal have been awarded. Prior to this (1992–97), there was greater variation in how the awards were classified. However, a total of 221 projects were recognised in this period.

These projects have contained a wealth of good practice knowledge. While the awards are crucial in highlighting the innovative and important contributions that these projects have made to crime prevention, the lessons on what makes these projects successful have not been adequately captured and shared with other practitioners. The purpose of this review was to determine what information could be learned from ACVPA projects that could be shared with other practitioners and to identify how the ACVPA contributed to improved outcomes for project winners.

ACVPA review

To determine if good practice crime prevention information can be extracted from ACVPA projects, a pilot exercise was

conducted on a small sample of ACVPA projects. This review relied solely on consultations with ACVPA project winners and on participant perception of their project's continued success. The findings from this review will help determine whether it is worthwhile to conduct a more thorough investigation into ACVPA projects.

Six national ACVPA winning projects were randomly selected from the 2009 and 2010 ACVPA winning project booklet, with three projects being identified for each year. The years 2009 and 2010 were chosen for two reasons. First, at least two years had passed since they had been awarded an ACVPA. This allowed time to gauge whether the award had made an impact on the project and to determine project sustainability. Second, due to the high turnover of staff in community crime prevention and the short-term nature of many crime prevention projects (Anderson & Tresidder 2008), it was considered likely to be more difficult to contact individuals who were involved in a project before 2009. Indeed, older projects were considered less likely to remain operational. Only six projects were selected due to resource constraints.

To select the case studies, national winners for 2009 and 2010 were randomly assigned a number via Stata (a statistical software package). The Australian Institute of Criminology then chose the first three projects with the highest number listed for each year. If one or more winners were unable or unwilling to participate, the next project listed for that year would be contacted and so on. Using these criteria, the following projects were selected as case studies.

2009 Funded Projects

Under the Limit Drink Driving Education and Rehabilitation Program (Queensland). An 11 week drink driving prevention and rehabilitation program offered in association with a probation order at the time of sentencing (Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety—Queensland).

Weld to Life (Western Australia). An intensive work-ready training program incorporating education, mentoring and hands-on activities for young people who

have committed an offence or are at risk of offending (Rockingham Police and Community Youth Centre).

Time for Kids (South Australia). A program that provides regular respite care for disadvantaged children in South Australia with volunteer carers on a part-time basis (Time for Kids Inc).

2010 Funded Projects

The Bridge Project (Victoria). A program that provides support, training and employment opportunities to young offenders in Victoria (YMCA Victoria).

B Safe (Victoria). A personal alarm system and risk management option for people escaping family violence and sexualised assault perpetrated by intimate partners (Women's Health Goulburn North East).

Dubbo Transformation Strategy (New South Wales). A project that involved the relocation of 320 public housing households in West Dubbo and the conversion of public housing to private properties in order to address the high level of crime and antisocial behaviour in the area.

A more detailed overview of the projects is available at *Appendix 1*.

Once the projects were selected, project managers and relevant personnel were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews lasting no more than one hour. The key questions for the interviews focused on:

- the impact of winning an ACVPA on the long-term operation and effectiveness of the project;
- the effectiveness of winning ACVPA projects in meeting their objectives, particularly in relation to reducing crime and violence, and addressing factors that contribute to crime and violence; and
- the key characteristics of ACVPA winning projects and the factors that contribute to their sustainability as long-term responses to local crime and violence problems.

Individual researcher notes were compiled and compared for common themes and cross-checked for accuracy. The findings were then sent to participants to ensure accuracy of reporting.

The findings focus on four themes that examine the key characteristics of projects:

- stakeholder engagement;
- focused implementation;
- adaptation; and
- sustainability considerations.

It is important to note that sustainability should not be confused with project longevity. Some projects are, by nature, not long term for a variety of reasons. For example, the problem they were set up to address may no longer exist and therefore the project is no longer needed. Sustainability should be viewed as the project being able to exist within its means and to continue to produce results for as long as it is needed or is intended to last.

Due to the small sample size, the experiences of these case studies should not be considered representative of all crime prevention projects. Moreover, the experiences of these case studies are heavily influenced by contextual factors such as resourcing, demographics, location and local policies. As such, lessons need to be considered with each project's unique context in mind.

Other limitations to the findings include potential errors in collecting this information retrospectively, which may be influenced by limited memory recall. There is also the risk of bias, where project officers have a vested interest in reporting positive findings that may not necessarily reflect the experience of other stakeholders or participants on what did or did not work well. Due to resource and time constraints, it was not feasible to interview more broadly. However, project personnel are often best placed to describe project sustainability and implementation issues. In addition, project success had to be demonstrated in order for a project to receive a national ACVPA (refer to 6 key factors above), therefore, they have already been recognised as demonstrating good practice.

Contrary to initial expectations, the Australian Institute of Criminology was able to contact all key project officers. Even though some had moved on, they were still associated with the funded agency or had

contact with those in the project. In addition, all projects were still operational, which was unexpected as often, projects struggle to continue to operate as a result of a lack of long-term funding (ICPC 2003). Typically, programs re-prioritise or modify their approach to accommodate this limitation (Brown 2006), which in turn, affects project continuity and the retention and dissemination of good practice prevention knowledge (Homel 2010). Therefore, the findings presented here may be skewed by the small sample size and because only relatively recent award winners were sampled.

Findings may also be skewed by the focus on national award winning projects, which may be more sustainable due to their high profile compared with the majority of local crime prevention projects. Despite the limited generalisability of these findings to crime prevention projects more broadly, it is encouraging that crime prevention initiatives have the capacity to be sustained over multiple years in the face of the aforementioned limitations.

Findings

Overall, all projects reported to have continued to deliver success rates similar to those achieved at the time of winning the ACVPA. Five of the six projects had been formally evaluated by academics or private consultant agencies prior to winning an ACVPA, with one project (The Bridge Project) also conducting a separate cost-benefit publication (links to publically available evaluation reports are at *Appendix 1*). The sixth agency provided internal evaluation documents that included, among other data, documented assessment of participant recidivist behaviour during and after the program, participation rates, and employment and education outcomes of participants since program completion. These evaluations have informed their indicators of success.

However, the projects continuously evolved to adapt to emerging needs and some projects shifted their focus to what project officers considered reflected more relevant and/or meaningful outcomes. This was

not to change the overall crime prevention goals of the projects (eg reduced property crime), but to recognise how the influence of the projects on different aspects of recipients' lives (eg improved education or health outcomes) has an influence on these goals. For example, although Weld to Life was developed to help reduce burglary in the local area, its success meant that it had moved beyond solely considering crime rates as the project outcome, to improving other related outcomes (such as employment) for each individual involved in the program.

In the Time for Kids project, even though there was difficulty in measuring long-term outcomes of matches between volunteer respite families and young people, they saw the continued contact of participants with host families beyond the program and youth not feeling 'placed' (ie young people not made to feel like they were a problem that had to be 'fixed', but were worthwhile people whose needs were taken seriously) as indicators of success. These actions were considered by project coordinators as more meaningful indicators of success than crime rates alone, which do not reflect each client's individual circumstance and progress.

The projects examined were largely established from grassroots community action rather than directed by state or Australian Government initiatives. Four of the six projects started from motivated community members who identified a local problem and wanted to address the issue. Appropriate strategies were developed and then measures were taken to obtain resourcing and support. The exceptions were Under the Limit and Dubbo Transformation Strategy. These initiatives were developed as part of a targeted government priority to address existing issues in the two communities. Under the Limit was developed to address transport-related alcohol issues, while the Dubbo Transformation Strategy was developed to address the high level of crime and antisocial behaviour in the West Dubbo public housing area. However, both projects were still developed through consultations with key industry stakeholders

and consultations with the target audience/community throughout program implementation. With the exception of the Dubbo Transformation Strategy, all projects were developed through a pilot study prior to being adopted or funded more broadly.

Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholders refers to interested parties affected by a project. They can include project staff, funders, partner agencies essential for service delivery, project recipients and the wider community who may benefit from the project. Sustaining stakeholder engagement can be fraught with difficulties and has been identified as one of the more complex aspects of project implementation (Anderson & Tresidder 2008; Homel 2005). However, working with the community is essential to ensure the project being adopted is appropriate for the problem being addressed (Jamieson 2008). This review identified the importance of effective stakeholder engagement as an essential ingredient of success in the case studies examined.

Stakeholder involvement in project delivery

All of the case studies were successful in engaging a disparate mix of stakeholders across agencies and skill levels. This was achieved by project administrators recognising and playing to each stakeholder's strengths. For example, since commencing in 2005, the Bridge Project has maintained the same members (20 representatives) in its reference group. Maintaining this level of engagement was attributed to the flexibility in approaching the role and the purpose of the reference group. Day to day implementation was undertaken by a project team, while the reference group was called on to provide high-level support. Reference group contributions included providing access to a network of contacts known to reference group members (considered to be 'bridging social capital'), commenting on a strategic plan, or being actively involved in individual project groups.

Time for Kids adopted a similar approach. Project staff were able to call on a number of 'ambassadors', ranging from celebrities,

to high-profile businesses. They provided assistance with publicity, provided access to networks, conducted further research and provided referrals to businesses and services.

Engagement with the project recipients

Four of the six case studies (the exceptions being Under the Limit and Dubbo Transformation Strategy) engaged with potential project recipients (those receiving services from the project) prior to developing an initiative. Although the Dubbo Transformation Strategy was first announced by the government, the implementation team reported that they immediately developed a plan to engage with residents prior to the relocation to negotiate the least disruptive means to implement the strategy.

All projects were also characterised by continuous engagement with project recipients after the pilot period, with all projects evolving based on recipients' feedback and experiences. For the Weld to Life project, the engagement was noted to be beneficial in showing the project recipients that they were valued and worthwhile. For the Dubbo Transformation Strategy, continuous engagement with recipients was critical to the project's successful execution because of the high level of disruption and change that it would create (ie relocating 320 households to new residences, in some cases with tenants who had lived in their homes for more than 30 years).

Weld to Life was developed based on the interests expressed by young offenders to the police contact officer at a local YMCA. The project evolved from a local police officer providing an informal welding class to young offenders, to a more formal project involving a partnership with TAFE to provide accreditation.

Engagement with business

While projects identified the importance of traditional crime prevention partnerships (eg with police and other community groups), business groups were singled out as essential partners in all projects. All case

studies had proactive engagement from the local business community who were usually involved from the inception of each project. A representative from the Bridge Project noted that the business community was seen as the 'missing link' in crime prevention, often providing the infrastructure (such as access to workshop facilities) and required skills (eg expertise to teach the youth in a trade, project management experience, fundraising capacity etc) to make the project successful.

Both Under the Limit and Weld to Life engaged TAFE as a key facilitator for their initiatives, while the Bridge Project relied on the local business community to provide placements for program participants. To date, approximately 75 businesses have provided job placements.

The Dubbo Transformation Strategy formed a working relationship with local real estate businesses to ensure redeveloped properties were sold only to owner-occupiers (rather than property investors) to promote ownership of the area and to reduce the likelihood of the former problems returning (eg high crime, lack of safety in the housing estate, dilapidated and unkempt houses). This was achieved by developing a legally binding 'ownership' covenant that guaranteed the properties were owner-occupied for at least seven years and by including maintenance and upkeep clauses to ensure the new owners kept their properties in good condition.

All six projects engaged businesses by highlighting the potential benefits of investing in the project. This included benefits to both the community and the business concerned, as well as the benefits for the project recipients. This is in line with research that found that agencies should provide convincing arguments when approaching businesses for support (Murray & Powell 2007).

Benefits for businesses involved in the Bridge Project included being subsidised at the rate of \$12,000 per person employed, training for the mentors and access to a pool of potential employees. Business support for Weld to Life was secured by highlighting the community benefits of the

project (eg repairing a decommissioned wheelchair ramp at half the normal cost, welding bicycles, constructing skip bins).

B Safe engaged the support of VitalCall and Telstra as project partners by highlighting the clear benefits of the initiative to project recipients and the role these companies could play in reducing domestic violence through the use of communication services to keep victims safe, thereby bringing the essential skills and infrastructure required for the project. This resulted in VitalCall tailoring their services to support B Safe clients (ie introduction of passwords, changing the VitalCall system to accommodate B Safe client needs and not just elderly clients such as calling the police instead of the ambulance when the system was activated) and Telstra providing two phones in the pilot stage.

Benefits for businesses could also extend beyond subsidies and apprenticeships. Weld to Life provided one of its principal funders—BHP Billiton Nickel West Kwinana Refinery—an opportunity to be globally showcased as supporting an innovative project via the BHP Health, Safety, Environment and Community awards, with the project being ranked eighth worldwide. This led to continued financial support being provided to the program by BHP Billiton.

Focused implementation

The projects benefited from careful planning that helped to ensure clarity of purpose in delivering straightforward interventions. There were a number of aspects to this planning. These included the following:

Clear, realistic objectives

Projects examined in this review had clear, realistic objectives based on the nature of the problem and availability of resources. For example, B Safe's objective was to improve the safety of clients at risk of domestic violence. Time for Kids' objective was to minimise at-risk children's exposure to risk factors linked to offending. Under the Limit's objective was to decrease drink-driving recidivism. Weld to Life's objective was to decrease offending and antisocial behaviour among youth. The

Bridge Project's objective was to minimise reoffending among youth and the Dubbo Transformation Strategy's objective was to address the high level of crime and antisocial behaviour in West Dubbo.

In general, the projects were not overly complicated, often comprising one key activity. B Safe's core activity was simply to provide clients with a personal safety device. Time for Kids matched volunteer host families to provide children with respite care. Under the Limit offered an 11 week training course to separate drinking and driving. Weld to Life worked principally on providing professional qualifications for young offenders or those at risk of offending. The Bridge Project linked young offenders with employment or training and the Dubbo Transformation Strategy focused on relocating public housing residents to remove the concentration of at-risk individuals from one area. Any additional activities conducted by the projects (eg providing meals in Weld to Life and adding a healthy lifestyle content in the Under the Limit program) were developed specifically to support the successful implementation of the initiative and to ensure the primary objective was met.

Clear project target group

When resources were limited, adherence to eligibility criteria helped focus attention on the clear identification and focus on the project client target group (eg Weld to Life, B Safe, Bridge Project), which in turn, helped to ensure project success in meeting objectives. The B Safe project, for example, was underpinned by clear eligibility criteria, where assistance was provided to clients who had an Intervention Order in place and the offender was not living in the same house. This enabled the police to respond effectively when/if called to the client's aid, by acting on specific breaches of an Intervention Order.

Tailoring interventions to the needs of individuals

Representatives of the projects often recognised that for an intervention to be successful, it needed to be carefully tailored to the needs of project recipients. This often

involved flexible, open-ended responses. For example, Time for Kids did not impose time restrictions on the overall length of the engagement between the child and host family. Similarly, B Safe personal security devices were returned only when the client felt safe rather than having a predetermined deadline. This was considered important, as the length of time that the device was needed could be longer than initially anticipated. In particular, consideration was given to the protracted legal proceedings (which could take years to resolve), where the client may have felt threatened throughout that period.

In Weld to Life, project staff identified that the support required by project participants extended beyond the original objectives. There was a need to provide wholesome meals because many of the project participants had poor diets. In addition, providing meals was used as an additional incentive to encourage participants to complete the program. As a result, the project engaged the services of two local YMCA staff to cook meals one night a week.

The Dubbo Transformation Strategy project staff recognised that a tailored approach would be necessary to maximise the likelihood that all 320 households would be relocated successfully. Project staff held one-to-one consultations with each household to determine the most suitable relocation options for them. In addition, project staff held follow-up consultations after relocation to ensure those residents were acclimatising and had access to relevant social services.

In the Under the Limit project, literacy problems were recognised as a particular challenge for some project participants. The course curriculum was therefore developed with this in mind. This included introducing measures such as group activities with at least one literate participant in each group. In addition, the program was strategically placed within a TAFE college and it was hoped that being exposed to other education opportunities on the premises would provide a catalyst for attendees to further their education. In rural/remote areas, the project focused on mutual sharing which gave participants an opportunity to share

the challenges they faced and the strategies they developed to avoid drink driving. This approach fostered skill development and by refraining from discussions about their personal lives, helped preserve participants' privacy. Privacy was a key issue in rural/remote areas due to the high likelihood that participants from small communities would know each other.

The Bridge Project recognised that matching a mentee with an appropriate mentor could mark the difference between success and failure for a particular placement. This was viewed as more important than the choice of job placement itself in achieving a successful outcome to the placement. To assist the process, mentors were trained to deal with the young people with whom they were matched.

Time for Kids similarly recognised the importance of matching children with compatible foster carers. Extensive consultations with the host families were therefore undertaken before a placement was made. Discussions with biological children in the fostering families were considered essential to ensure they were also comfortable with having a foster child visit them. It was also observed that children aged between 14 and 17 years were less likely to stay with their foster carers over the weekend, but were still interested in spending time with them. As a result, Time for Kids introduced a mentoring program to allow the children and foster carers to spend time together doing different activities without the need to stay overnight. The importance of tailoring the service to the needs of the individual was exemplified by one interviewee who noted that 'the Time for Kids service should fit the people, not the other way around' (Interviewee personal communication August 2012).

Each project dealing with young people (Time for Kids, Weld to Life, Bridge Project) indicated that success was underpinned by tailoring the intervention to suit the individual needs of each participant. This included considering not just the interests of participants, but also their cultural backgrounds. For instance, Time for Kids liaised with the African Women's Federation for assistance with

placing children from Sierra Leone and Sudan. They also collaborated with an Indigenous organisation, Mari Yurta, to provide guidance to Time for Kids staff on Indigenous issues and childrearing practices. In the absence of an available Indigenous host family, this advice was then used to assist with placing Indigenous children with non-Indigenous families.

Tailoring interventions to suit different contexts

In addition to tailoring responses to individual needs, different approaches may be required to make effective changes with specific client groups, even if the underlying problem targeted remains the same (eg drink driving). That is, programs developed for young adults do not necessarily translate well to younger or older target groups, or even to other groups within the same age bracket (males *cf* females). The ability to adapt projects to suit different contexts (eg target population, funding, project settings etc), is considered essential to implementing good practice crime prevention projects and identifying the factors can aid in these lessons being shared to other practitioners (Anderson & McAtamney 2011; Bullock & Ekblom 2010; Carmody et al. 2009; Ekblom 2010).

For example, in both the Bridge Project and Weld to Life projects, it was discovered that some participants were not ready for work for numerous reasons that included age, maturity and literacy levels. Placing young people in positions where they were not ready could negatively impact on the young person and potentially damage relationships with business and other community partners assisting with the projects. Thus, when faced with such issues, these projects were modified (and continue to be adapted) to suit the needs of participants and to further the program goals. In these cases, further training and education was offered to those not ready to enter the workforce, rather than offering placements when the young people were not ready and were likely to fail.

Adaptation

Projects seldom remain static. Indeed, they typically go through a process of ongoing

re-planning and occasionally through more significant re-definition (Brown 2006). As the context in which the projects operated changed, it was found that the case studies had also adapted. Characteristic of the case studies was constant reflection and assessment of their projects via formal (eg commissioned evaluations) or informal means (eg talking to stakeholders, participants). For example, Under the Limit was originally conceived in the early 1990s, when the dangers of drink driving and alcoholism were not as well known in the general community as they are today. Consequently, the initial project design focused on the dangers of drink driving rather than on the underlying problem of alcohol misuse. With increasing awareness of these issues, the program content evolved to acknowledge these problems and incorporated more holistic content that included healthy lifestyle components.

Adaptation can also be necessary when projects change the location or context within which they operate. When the Under the Limit program was extended into rural/remote areas, some of the videos and programs initially implemented were abandoned and other strategies adopted because they were not applicable to a rural/remote audience. More relevant material was adopted for the target population, including the development of an Indigenous-focused resource that utilised the involvement of local elders.

The funding of programs may also frequently change over time, especially with changes in government. This can result in projects losing access to funds that were previously available. BSafe was one such project that was left vulnerable to changes in funding schemes. They identified that the government's updated funding model was targeted more towards crime prevention than family violence, so the project managers adapted their funding application to reflect BSafe's crime prevention value. This strategy led to additional transitional funding in 2011 from funding available through the *Proceeds of Crime Act 2002*. In addition, they also engaged in the strategic use of available resources to rally the media and community

to support their cause. By investing \$2,000 to employ a media consultant to develop a media strategy, they ran a very successful media campaign on their project that attracted many supporters. This included radio hosts, who regularly championed their cause on their programs. This strategy also led to 'Get Up' (an Australian online activist group) supporting their cause and the ABC's 7.30 Report running a story on the project. Consequently, more than \$40,000 was received in donations from members of the public.

Project expansion and transferability to other contexts

In some cases, the projects applied the key mechanisms behind their initiatives to develop further projects, or to implement the project in different locations. As well as expanding directly into rural/remote areas in Queensland, Under the Limit's approach also influenced the development of the Sober Driver Programs in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. With regard to BSafe, there were plans to expand the initiative beyond the Hume Region into the Gippsland region of Victoria and the program was being considered by other jurisdictions (eg New South Wales, Queensland). The selection of their service provider (VitalCall) was partly chosen for its national coverage, therefore allowing the program to be standardised across the country.

Weld to Life expanded its program to offer Certificate II in Welding. It also developed new programs for specific types of offenders. This included the 'Right to Write' program for graffiti offenders and the 'Creative Chefs' program for female offenders. The Weld to Life project also expanded geographically and was trialled in Armadale, Western Australia. Similarly, the Bridge Project expanded the programs it offered to include a Certificate I in Vocational Preparations, sports programs and life skills programs for 18–30 year olds.

Adjusting to unsuccessful project elements

Most of the case studies identified some elements that did not work well over the life of the project, highlighting that

even successful projects are unlikely to experience flawless implementation. However, these successful projects learned from these experiences and adapted their approach to overcome the issues, thereby improving project delivery. In the Bridge Project, coordinators observed some placements were more successful than others and realised that this was often the result of poorly matched workplace mentors. This issue was addressed by placing greater emphasis on matching participants with appropriate mentors.

In the Under the Limit project, a distance education format was trialled with Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety-Queensland, working with Distance Education Queensland, to provide the project where a traditional in-person format was difficult to deliver. Although this format was liked by participants and was cheaper to deliver, the format 'started to get loose around the edges' (Interviewee personal communication July 2012) in how it was applied. It was found that it had little effect compared with the traditional program format. Therefore, the program ceased to operate in this way, although web-based learning is currently being considered.

Weld to Life initially engaged volunteers to deliver its programs. However, there was a high turnover of volunteers due to the problems experienced in working with the difficult behaviour exhibited by some project participants, while other volunteers found it difficult to deal with the life histories of participants (which often included abuse, neglect and trauma). Weld to Life therefore moved to a model of employing professionals, experienced at working in a teaching environment. When adapting Weld to Life for graffiti offenders in the 'Right to Write' program (a program where young offenders participate in a creative art program), a similar approach to structuring the program was taken to that shown to work in Weld to Life. However, participants were not engaging as well as anticipated and were becoming bored with the program. This was attributed to differences in the core demographic. Weld to Life dealt with more violent offenders from disadvantaged backgrounds, whereas Right

to Write had people from more affluent, less violent backgrounds. The structured approach to the classes was not conducive to artistic stimulation, where the strict emphasis on a disciplined, 'production line' approach to producing art was not well received by participants. After listening to their concerns, simple modifications were made to the Right to Write program, such as playing music during class, adding visual stimulation and adopting a less structured format. This resulted in a significant turnaround in participation and motivation. As was noted by program respondents, when developing these strategies 'you need to go where the kids take you' (Interviewee personal communication June 2012), rather than assuming that adults or the main facilitator knows best. Hence, although the underlying concept behind the program was still relevant, there were many elements that required adaptation to suit the different target group. Once this was achieved, there was an immediate improvement in outcomes.

Sustainability

Maintaining project sustainability was a persistent concern for projects. This required consideration of how to support long-term positive changes for the target group, in addition to obtaining financial and in-kind support to keep the projects operational.

Beyond intervention—supporting long-term change

All of the winning projects were developed to support long-term changes rather than one-off interventions to address limited short-term goals. The success of the Weld to Life program was primarily attributed to its 'business model' approach—participants were encouraged to be valuable and productive members of the community by obtaining a practical qualification in a field relevant to their local area. For example, Weld to Life's program incorporated TAFE qualifications (Certificate 1 Metals and Engineering, Certificate 1 WOW (Wider Opportunities for Work)) and the Senior First Aid Certificate. These reflected local needs in Western Australia; namely, skills sought

by the mining sector and its flow on to other community businesses. Consequently, the program provided a realistic, achievable skill in an area with a good chance of achieving employment, in addition to appealing to the interests of the participants. This was also reflected in the qualifications gained with the Bridge Project, where skills were developed to reflect local need, in this case the need for trades-based workers.

The long-term success of the Dubbo Transformation Strategy was largely attributed to the support provided to relocated residents by the project staff and tailoring support needs for each household. Project representatives commented that although the focus of the project was relocation, it was necessary to address underlying risk factors such as school attrition and drug/alcohol abuse to sustain long-term change. Project staff identified the need for additional social services after relocation and made appropriate referrals to support long-term success of the relocation.

Challenges to project sustainability

All projects had continuing and emerging challenges with which they had to contend. Short and unstable sources of funding continued to be an issue for all projects, reflecting an issue common to the majority of community-based crime prevention projects across the nation. Even the Under the Limit drink driving program—a project funded by the participants themselves—was threatened by external factors, as there had been calls for the cost of the project to increase to be more comparable to the fine that would have otherwise been paid if the offender had not attended the program. This was viewed by program staff as counterproductive, because they had observed that often offenders preferred to pay the fine, rather than pay a similar fee and have to attend a course. Increased fees were also seen as likely to skew the program towards serious offenders who were facing a very high fine or ‘serious jail time’. Such offenders were considered less likely to change their behaviour than less serious offenders (Sheehan et al. 2012).

The program was also affected by State Penalties Enforcement Registry practices

that allowed offenders to negotiate to pay a fine over time in instalments. By the time the offender had reached a stage that allowed them to enter the program, the drink driving event was so far in the past that the program staff felt the program would not be an effective strategy. Indeed, it was felt that the program would be most effective when offenders entered into the program soon after the drink driving event.

Long-term funding was seen to offer certainty to projects that would allow them to develop long-term solutions that short-term, non-renewable funding could not provide. Overall, the funding challenges faced by projects meant that they had to ‘get creative’ when trying to maintain the financial viability of the projects.

Sustainability of projects was also dependent on the overall commitment of the local community and businesses to provide in-kind services and support that funding alone could not provide. It was pointed out by the Bridge Project representative that, although money was important, without community buy-in a project would still not work. For example, the support from businesses was critical to the success of the Weld to Life and Bridge Project as they provided training and employment opportunities for participants. Similarly, Time for Kids relied on volunteer carers from the community to provide participants with respite care and mentoring.

Staffing attrition can affect a project’s viability in the long term and many projects had engaged paid trainers and facilitators (eg Weld to Life, Bridge Project, Under the Limit) rather than continuing to rely on volunteers who were not trained to handle participant behaviour or had not been provided with training to cope with any negative experiences that participants might have shared. Despite having an associated cost, this cost was balanced with what appeared to be more effective outcomes. However, it was noted that there is a lack of training available for project staff on how to deal with offenders (Weld to Life), which could help support them to do their jobs. For the Bridge Project, there was a concern that recent education cuts in Victoria

(including to the TAFE system) would negatively affect program placements, as the greater competition for limited places might mean that the offenders would be harder to place compared with those who had not had previous contact with the criminal justice system.

Impact of winning an Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Award

Winning an ACVPA had affected projects differently. For some (Weld to Life; BSafe), there were noticeable benefits. For example, winning was described as an ‘amazing experience’ and came at a good time for the BSafe Project, characterised by an uncertain funding environment. For projects such as Under the Limit, not much had changed from prior to the award, although it was noted that the award had helped to raise awareness that drink driving was a crime-related issue as much as a health issue. Similarly, Time for Kids noted that although the ACVPA did not necessarily result in increased publicity, it contributed to their program not being compartmentalised solely as a mental health concern (75% of participants have a mental illness diagnosis and 90% live in a home with a family member having a mental illness diagnosis) but also as a program with real crime prevention significance (eg reduced offending). Overall, winning an award was unanimously considered a positive experience.

Project representatives universally asserted that the most important outcome from winning the award was that it was seen to legitimise their projects. However, winning an ACVPA was reported to also provide project staff with a foundation to pursue other fundraising and awareness activities. Other specific and indirect benefits of winning an ACVPA were reported to be:

- acknowledgement and recognition of their work;
- inspiring staff to continue because their work was recognised as being valued;
- being able to tell project participants that they were part of a valued crime prevention initiative;

- increasing publicity and awareness of the programs in the community and within government;
- more people championing the project's cause;
- showing businesses and government that they were worthwhile projects in which to invest;
- adding extra weight to further funding proposals and project development opportunities; and
- providing support for additional projects that were developed on the same format.

Conclusion

While it was difficult to isolate the specific effects of winning an ACVPA, project representatives noted the benefits winning an ACVPA had on attracting increased public investment, recognition for program staff and participants, and increasing awareness of the issues.

Respondents from each of the six programs assessed for this paper also identified many other factors that contributed to the sustainability and effectiveness of their project, however, certain characteristics stood out as essential components.

Key workers—individuals who acted as drivers of these initiatives and in some cases continuing to work on the project more than a decade after it was implemented. Without these dedicated individuals maintaining momentum, many of the other success factors mentioned would not be able to be achieved.

Tailoring interventions to individual need—it was clear that flexibility was required when designing an intervention in order to achieve better outcomes for participants.

Continuous improvement—the case studies illustrated the importance of assessing and acknowledging things that were not

working and having the flexibility to change approaches, which often resulted in more targeted and improved responses. This was often done formally through commissioned evaluations and/or informally via processes similar to participatory action-research principles (ie problems were identified throughout the life of the projects and responses altered accordingly). These findings emphasise the need to review project implementation processes and success regularly.

A firm evidence base—importantly, all the projects embodied characteristics of effective crime prevention as outlined in the National Crime Prevention framework (ie adopting a problem-solving approach, effective community engagement, promoting partnerships and implementing good governance structures, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the strategy (AIC 2012)).

Key stakeholders—community and business support for projects was crucial to implementing a successful project. Whereas community engagement is regularly highlighted in the development and operation of community-based crime prevention projects, the particular value of business partnerships should not be discounted. In this study, businesses provided a range of financial and in-kind support (eg training and work placements, project advertising) that were valuable elements of project success. This has been supported in other recent research, where business partnerships have re-emerged as a key consideration when developing community crime prevention initiatives (ICPC 2011).

Considering the diverse selection of projects included in this review and the commonalities of their success factors, these findings reinforce that although crime prevention projects may require different

initiatives and approaches depending on the crime type, target population and local context, the underlying principles of a successful project are similar. Accordingly, these good practice lessons have the capacity to be transferred broadly within crime prevention.

In light of these findings, the following actions are recommended. First, endorsing the importance of business engagement in crime prevention initiatives needs to be emphasised, alongside broader community engagement processes. Practical guides (such as the ICPC's (2011) *Public-private Partnerships and Community Safety: Guide to Action Resource*) can assist practitioners and project managers to foster partnerships with private businesses. Specific attention should also be given to assisting practitioners so they effectively utilise the skills and resources offered by local businesses to ensure engagement is meaningful rather than tokenistic.

Second, good practice dissemination should be promoted via both traditional methods (ie formal and informal evaluation or continuous improvement processes), as well as through new assessment and dissemination approaches, such as communities of practice. These are 'groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly' (Wenger 2006: 1).

As is often contended in the literature (eg Ekblom 2010), it is important that ways are found to highlight the lessons learned, program successes and innovation, as well as the problems or failures of successes, and how these were managed. A key part of that process can be to assess successful, potentially sustainable programs, such as the ACVPA national award winners, and to attempt to apply those lessons to the development of new projects.

Appendix 1 Summary of ACVPA national award winning case study projects

Project name	Description	Key lessons and success factors
Weld to life (WA)	<p>The program is targeted at boys who have committed an offence or are at risk of committing an offence</p> <p>Welding is used as a practical tool to teach discipline and instil a positive work ethic</p> <p>Welding qualifications are run through TAFE</p> <p>A 'business model' is followed; the focus of the 'business model' approach is to provide youth with practical skills that make them employable and productive to the community</p> <p>Providing youth with employment opportunities is also viewed as a means of turning them away from offending behaviour and steering them to become valuable members of the community</p> <p>It provides practical welding skills which have been in demand in Western Australia due to the mining boom.</p> <p>Welding was chosen as youth showed an interest and enthusiasm for the trade</p>	<p>Having staff who are able to engage and guide participants positively</p> <p>Providing participants with a positive male role model</p> <p>Providing practical welding skills and qualifications that are in demand in Western Australia</p> <p>Providing participants with wholesome, home cooked meals to improve their health and also encourage them to complete the program</p> <p>Allowing participants to guide the direction of the project</p> <p><i>For more information:</i></p> <p>Weld to Life website: http://www.wapcyc.com.au/content/page/weld-to-life-.html</p>
Bsafe (Victoria)	<p>The project services clients (predominantly females) who have Intervention Orders against their former partners and are at risk of domestic violence</p> <p>Clients in the project are provided with a VitalCall alarm system that can be used to discreetly alert VitalCall operators to call police</p> <p>The project utilises an emergency system that is known to work effectively for the elderly and disabled and applies that system to clients who are at risk of domestic violence.</p> <p>The project has raised community awareness of domestic violence</p>	<p>Incorporating eligibility criteria that requires clients to have an Intervention Order excluding their former partner from their premises</p> <p>Investing in a media strategy to obtain publicity and attract more funding</p> <p>Having media personalities who champion the BSafe program and highlight the issue of family violence</p> <p>Adapting the program to fit into government priorities to increase likelihood of receiving funding</p> <p>Password-protecting VitalCall devices to prevent offenders from calling VitalCall operators and cancelling active alarms</p> <p>Allowing clients to choose when they are ready to return the BSafe alarm</p> <p><i>For more information:</i></p> <p>BSafe website: http://www.whealth.com.au/work_bsafe.html</p> <p>BSafe pilot project report: http://www.whealth.com.au/documents/work/Bsafe_final_report_2011.pdf</p> <p>BSafe interim project report: http://www.whealth.com.au/documents/projects/Bsafe_interim%20evaluation_report.pdf</p> <p>BSafe summary of findings: http://www.whealth.com.au/documents/work/Bsafe_summary_2011.pdf</p>
The Bridge Project (Victoria)	<p>The project was developed to assist youth who have been in detention or those serving community based orders to develop skills and knowledge to enter the workforce</p> <p>The idea was developed by the head of the YMCA and other participants at a leadership forum in 2005</p> <p>The YMCA, with the assistance of the Department of Corrections, runs a virtual YMCA for youth in detention which is funded by Human Services</p> <p>Youth who may benefit from the Bridge Project are identified through the Virtual YMCA</p> <p>The project views employment as part of the solution and recognises that young offenders need support when they gain employment</p>	<p>Tailoring their approach to each young offender</p> <p>Training workplace mentors to support the youth when they start working</p> <p>Ensuring workplace mentors are not in a management or supervisory role</p> <p>Working in partnership with government, non-government agencies and the business community</p> <p>Encouraging input and contribution from project members</p> <p>Having flexible partnerships with project members and businesses</p> <p><i>For more information:</i></p> <p>Bridge Project website: http://www.bridgeproject.ymca.org.au/index.html</p> <p>The Bridge Project cost-benefit analysis http://www.nijn.org/uploads/digital-library/Evaluation-of-the-Bridge-Project_YMCA-Victoria-Australia_2008.pdf</p>

Appendix 1 (continued)

Project name	Description	Key lessons and success factors
Under the Limit	<p>The program targets serious and recidivist drink driving offenders and aims to educate participants to develop strategies to separate drinking and driving</p> <p>The program is self-funded as participants pay for the course in lieu of their drink driving fine</p> <p>The course is run in a classroom setting through TAFE</p> <p>Topics explored in the program include : measuring standard drinks, how to monitor alcohol intake and stay below the legal alcohol limit, potential dangers and consequences of drink-driving, and available community services</p>	<p>Running the course through an institution that the offenders can visit without feeling stigmatised (TAFE)</p> <p>Running the course through an institution that can encourage further learning and employment opportunities (TAFE)</p> <p>Police discussing with participants the impact of dealing with consequences of drink driving (such as informing family members of a fatality, and the impact on police of seeing accidents)</p> <p>Mixing young and older participants in classes (older participants may be able to talk to young participants about the dangers of drink driving)</p> <p>Mixing participants with different literacy levels in classes (participants with higher literacy may help those with lower literacy and numeracy)</p> <p>Giving participants diaries where they can record the number of drinks they have to monitor their consumption levels</p> <p>For more information:</p> <p>Under the limit process and outcome evaluation: http://www.fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Evaluation-of-the-UTL-Program-PDF.pdf</p> <p><i>For more information:</i></p> <p>Under The Limit website: http://www.carrsq.qut.edu.au/utl/</p> <p>Process and outcome evaluation of the project: http://www.fare.org.au/research-projects/a-process-and-outcome-evaluation-of-the-under-the-limit-utl-therapeutic-drink-driving-program-for-recidivist-and-high-range-offenders/</p>
Time for Kids (South Australia)	<p>Time for Kids is a child placement program that provides respite care for children from disadvantaged families for short term stays (eg weekends or holidays)</p> <p>It acts as an intermediary and matches children from disadvantaged families with volunteer carers and mentors</p> <p>The program aims to minimise the children's exposure to risk factors that may contribute to offending via giving children a break from stressors and home life</p> <p>A mentoring component for 14–17 year olds has also been developed that does not involve overnight stays</p>	<p>Introducing a mentoring program as an option for volunteer carers who were unable/uncomfortable providing overnight respite care</p> <p>Introducing group mentoring to increase the number of male mentors in the program</p> <p>Matching children to compatible foster carers through a rigorous interview process to maximise placement success</p> <p>Ensuring services operate in the background once children have been matched and placed with their volunteer foster carers or mentors</p> <p>Engaging program ambassadors and utilising their strengths to promote and publicise the program</p> <p>Forming partnerships with Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse agencies/representatives to inform the matching and placement of children from these backgrounds</p> <p>Generating funding through business connections, social media and publicity campaigns</p> <p><i>For more information:</i></p> <p>Time for Kids website: http://www.timeforkids.com.au/</p>
Dubbo Transformation Strategy (New South Wales)	<p>The Dubbo Transformation Strategy was announced by the Minister for Housing in response to the high level of crime and anti-social behaviour in the West Dubbo public housing area</p> <p>The transformation strategy was implemented because all previous crime prevention strategies had failed to effectively address the sustained crime and anti-social behaviour in the area</p> <p>The transformation strategy involved relocating public housing residents to other areas in Dubbo and redeveloping the area through private home ownership</p> <p>Vacated public housing properties were re-developed and sold to private owners while the properties that were unrecoverable were destroyed and the land sold to private home builders</p> <p>Since the inception of the project, 140 new units have been built at a cost of approximately \$20m</p>	<p>Harnessing existing relationships between Housing NSW staff and public housing residents through the consultation process</p> <p>Engaging local staff that understood the area and problems, rather than engaging staff from outside Dubbo</p> <p>Providing a consistent message on the purpose of the relocations and proactively addressing any myths being perpetuated</p> <p>Conducting detailed one-to-one consultations with each household to determine the most suitable relocation options</p> <p>Highlighting the social benefits of relocation through the consultation process.</p> <p>Conducting follow-up consultations with residents after relocation to provide assistance with acclimatisation</p> <p>Making referrals to other social services to address the overall welfare of public housing residents</p> <p>Approaching the project as a crime prevention strategy and not turning it into an Indigenous matter due to the high proportion of Aboriginal residents</p> <p>Placing a seven year ownership covenant on redeveloped properties to ensure all properties were sold to private home owners who would be more likely to maintain these homes</p> <p><i>For more information:</i></p> <p>Dubbo Transformation Strategy website: http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/Changes+to+Social+Housing/Redevelopment/Dubbo+Transformation+Strategy.htm</p> <p>Dubbo Transformation Strategy research report: http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/95E0ACAE-42C0-49AC-9D0A-2B2DE8715234/0/DubboResearchReport.pdf</p>

Project summaries for each project and other winning projects can also be downloaded by year from the ACVPA website: http://www.aic.gov.au/en/crime_community/acvpa.aspx

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