An Overview of Crime Prevention in Victoria

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This overview can only present a broad-brush approach of the main features of the Victorian crime prevention ‘landscape’. When overviewing the crime prevention initiatives in Victoria, questions are continually faced about the roots and origins of crime which may shape what is thought will work to prevent and control crime. There is no escaping from such questions. Other questions relating to what is meant by crime prevention are also key factors in shaping an overview.

Crime prevention is a rubbery concept. It can be a means to a better quality life and it can be an end in itself. It can cover policy directions, programs, specific projects, techniques, certain types of activities, professional organisations and infrastructures. The boundaries of crime prevention are elastic and not easy to place. For example, at what point does crime prevention merge into crime control? Crime prevention is multiform and multifaceted and crime prevention policies are often much more than the ‘fight against crime’. If crime prevention policies are designed to tackle the ‘roots’ of crime and address causal factors, then there is no reason why they should not encompass social structures and social phenomena or, depending on one’s view of crime causation, the psycho-social development of individuals and the general management of risks in society.

One limitation of this overview is that the boundaries to what is and what is not included as crime prevention have been arbitrarily set on the basis of available information on recent initiatives. A second limitation is the overview’s descriptive rather than analytic nature. An overview such as this should not be a mere listing of what the crime prevention initiatives are. Such listings provide essential ‘stocktakes’ but tend to contribute little to an understanding of the policy framework and sociopolitical context in which they occur. Nor do these listings tend to facilitate learning from the past, enabling avoidance or modification of unsuccessful measures and the building on ‘past successes’.
While it is relatively easy to merely list what seems to be an ever-expanding range of crime prevention initiatives, there is a need to analyse them more critically. In practice, what happens in Victoria once the initiatives have been launched seems rarely to be examined. Demonstrating the efficiency and effectiveness of crime prevention efforts remains a relatively under-developed area. There also tends to be little evidence that the information, which is available on the impact of the initiatives, is used to judge and improve the quality of crime prevention efforts.

Thirdly, this overview is limited because of its relatively narrow focus on what is happening principally with the Ministry of Police and Emergency Services (MPES) and Victoria Police. Crime prevention activities or programs in other government or non-government agencies are only briefly touched upon.

It is an encouraging sign that in Victoria the approach to crime prevention—being developed by the MPES and Victoria Police, within the context of the development of the multifaceted, integrated anti-crime strategy—is attempting to be more critical and analytical. It is articulating both a conceptual framework and a set of guiding principles which are focusing on providing a balance of proactive and reactive approaches to crime prevention; on efforts for coordination and integration of crime prevention structures, activities and resources at the local, regional and state levels; on a targeted approach based on a realistic and informed perspective about the crime problem and on developing and building strategic partnerships at all levels of government and the community.

While much of what is happening in Victoria is initiated and confined to specific local areas, there are other more recent developments occurring at the state level which are of importance and are described in the overview. The many initiatives which are occurring in other government and non-government agencies and in the wider community are unfortunately beyond the scope of this paper.

**Ministry of Police and Emergency Services-Auspiced Approaches**

Through the policy development and analysis work of the recently established Crime Prevention Division in the Ministry, a number of specific initiatives have been developed in conjunction with Victoria Police. Some of these focus specifically on violence-minimising risks for victims and potential victims—others adopt diversion strategies and community/social development approaches to impact on offending and potentially offending behaviour.

**Safety, Security and Women Project**

A major initiative of the Ministry has been the Safety, Security and Women Project which builds on recent achievements of government and non-government agencies, such as the establishment of family violence outreach services and sexual assault centres. The project recognises that women are most likely to be the victims of violent crimes and the perpetrators are most likely to be men they know. The approach has three critical elements: significantly improving the safety and security of women; changing male
behaviour and attitudes; and working towards ensuring a safer physical environment.

A community awareness campaign targeted at the whole community is under way which aims to address and change male behaviour and attitudes towards women and make violence against women and the harassment of women totally unacceptable to the community. The campaign has several targets: men who are violent or potentially violent; women-by giving them the power to demand the right to be safe and secure; and the general community. The campaign will empower women by providing them with information on the criminal nature of violence and also the support available to them through government and non-government agencies.

The campaign will include printed information and program coverage through announcements on radio, television and in the print media. It will explore the images and perceptions of who is violent to women and why. It will address the myths of violence against women and highlight that women have the most to fear from someone they know. Related to this will be an expansion of training programs for police, particularly in relation to family violence and sexual assault. Safety and security information is being produced to provide practical advice aimed at reducing women’s fear of victimisation. This information will complement existing material. It should be noted that a pilot program being developed by the Office of Corrections to empower female offenders who were previously living in a violent relationship is linked to this approach.

Crime prevention reference groups
To facilitate coordination in crime prevention across relevant government departments, the Crime Prevention Division of the MPES convenes a number of issue-specific reference/working groups. Membership varies according to the matters being considered and has included representation from the Victoria Police, Attorney-General’s Department, Community Services Victoria, Department of Labour, Department of Sport and Recreation, Ministry of Ethnic, Municipal and Community Affairs (including the Office of Local Government, Office of Youth Affairs, Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Older Person’s Planning Office), Ministry of Education and Training, Ministry of Transport and Public Transport Commission, Office of Corrections and other government and non-government agencies and community groups.

The terms of reference for the groups vary. In general, it is intended that advice will be provided on such matters as the policy context; program directions and priorities; dissemination of information on crime prevention; projects being implemented; monitoring and evaluation of projects and programs; and their coordination and joint auspicing. It is intended that the outcomes of the work of the reference groups will be strategic and achievable. To date, four groups have been established.

- The Safety, Security and Women Reference Group was established in October 1990 with a core membership from the Ministry and the Victoria Police. It provides status reports on the critical issues affecting safety, security and women; identifies gaps which can be addressed to improve women’s safety and security; consults with
significant groups and others in the community on ways in which to address these issues; and provides proposals and recommendations for addressing issues of safety, security and women.

- **A Safety, Security and Transport Reference Group** has been convened with the Ministry of Transport, the Public Transport Corporation and Victoria Police. The major task of the reference group is to consider and develop appropriate strategies which will address crime prevention on and around public transport.

- **The Safety, Security and Older Person’s Reference Group** was recently established with representatives from key government and non-government agencies involved in the provision or coordination of services to older people. Tasks will include identifying critical issues affecting both the actual and perceived safety and security of older people; examining existing services and programs in relation to safety and security; consulting with relevant community groups so as to address identified issues; developing and evaluating proposals to improve the perceived and actual safety and security of older people.

- **The Crime Prevention and Youth Reference Group** was established in cooperation with the Office of Youth Affairs (in the Ministry of Municipal, Ethnic and Community Affairs) to examine key issues affecting young people and crime. The coordinated effort of the various government agencies which have responsibility for youth policy and programs, including the grants program, has resulted in the joint funding of a number of innovative projects to prevent youth crime. Some projects target ethnic and Aboriginal youth, while another addresses the interface between the criminal justice system and mental health services. The Ministry of Education and Training has sought membership of the group and interim discussions on matters of mutual concern have occurred.

**Safety audits**

Safety audits, addressing the issue of unsafe physical environments, are soon to be conducted in local areas. These audits aim to identify ways in which local areas can be made safer and more secure. Specific places will be examined, as will the features that contribute to safe and unsafe environments including street lighting, location and safe accessibility of public transport stops, security in car parks, the availability of street parking, adequate street signs, security in other public places such as parks, gardens and shopping malls, urban design and the location of public phones.

Working with members and officers of Local Councils, a Safety Audit Officer from the MPES will establish a Safety Audit Reference Committee, seeking representatives from the various key community and government organisations identified at the local level. These will include: police, local councils and instrumentalities; crime prevention groups such as Good Neighbourhood committees, Safety Houses, Neighbourhood Watch; community groups such as women’s groups, senior citizens, community
health centres, neighbourhood houses, local business groups, church groups, service clubs such as Lions International, and school councils. A kit is being prepared which will be used by local communities to assist them with the audits.

**Safe Cities Interdepartmental Committee**

The Safe Cities Interdepartmental Committee (IDC) was recently established to examine practical ways in which the community, with an obvious stake in preventing acts of violence and addressing longer-term causes of violence, could become directly involved in efforts to improve community safety. Such an approach would aim to operate at a community or municipal level to improve safety and security within physical and social environments through community involvement rather than through 'fortified' privacy.

The Safe Cities IDC comprises senior representatives from the Ministry of Planning and Housing, the Ministry of Ethnic, Municipal and Community Affairs, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services, Victoria Police and was convened by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Its aim is to develop an approach which will encourage local communities to identify the problems they perceive their community to be facing, to develop strategies or solutions to address these problems and to strengthen the capacity of committees to ensure the safety and security of their members on an ongoing basis. In so doing, communities will be encouraged to accept that responsibility for the safety, security and protection of their members is a broader community responsibility which does not rest only with police as a law enforcement or crime prevention issue. It is anticipated that the MPES will convene the Steering Committee arising out of the Safe Cities IDC Report.

**Crime Prevention Grants Program**

The work of the Crime Prevention Division is enhanced by the existence of the Crime Prevention Grants Program. However, the existence of a grants program does introduce an unfortunate dichotomy which suggests in the minds of some agencies that they cannot place crime prevention on their agenda unless they are funded to do so. The Crime Prevention Division argues that crime prevention should be a consideration in the policy, planning and program development processes of all agencies. To ignore it is to potentially 'design-in crime'.

There is also concern as to which priorities should have precedence—the funding of projects or of infrastructure. The implications of the former can result in short-term changes occurring during the life of the project without durable changes taking place. The latter is more likely to impact on long-term trends but is less likely to produce visible short-term achievements. This dichotomy is currently being addressed within the Crime Prevention Division. However, the Crime Prevention Division is insistent upon projects being able to demonstrate the crime prevention objectives and outcomes, the long-term impacts and the potential for the projects to attract alternative funding and/or support when the Ministry funds cease. It should be noted that the Ministry funds are not available for recurrent programs. This stance has resulted in some criticism of bureaucratic intervention into what is
defined by some groups as a community development issue. However the funds are for crime prevention approaches (albeit through community/social development) and the government must be assured that there are crime prevention outcomes which will contribute to a safer and more secure community.

The Crime Prevention Grants Program supports two categories of crime prevention activities—the Good Neighbourhood Program and the Statewide/Special Program—within six priority areas:

- activities for young people at risk;
- education, training and employment;
- safety and security in the community;
- drug and alcohol abuse;
- minimising re-offending behaviour; and
- police/community relations.

The Good Neighbourhood Program, through its local committees and related projects, is the major component while the Statewide/Special Program represents a smaller component.

The Good Neighbourhood Projects are submitted by local Good Neighbourhood committees and relate to their Local Crime Analysis and Strategy Plans. A recent review of the Good Neighbourhood Program identified that there are some crime prevention activities which should develop a broader focus than the local community due to significant statewide implications. Whilst these projects can focus on the activities in one geographical area, they are generally applicable statewide.

In identifying projects for the Statewide/Special Program component, involvement is sought from government and non-government agencies, the community, the police, unions, and the private sector, as well as representatives from identified groups at risk and existing crime prevention agencies. The causes of crime are analysed and expert knowledge is used in the design, development and implementation of the projects. Some of the projects are jointly funded with other government agencies. The aim of the Ministry to foster and pilot new and innovative projects has enabled some significant crime prevention projects to be funded. (For example, the MPES and the Ministry of Education and Training have funded two crime prevention projects through the Aboriginal Community Justice Panels in Ballarat and Dandenong).

The Statewide/Special Project component of the Crime Prevention Grants Program is in its developmental phase but already has funded some twenty projects, most of which are jointly resourced with other government departments or non-government agencies. Some of these include:

- An advanced training package for the Police/Schools Involvement Program where fifty School Resource Officers (RSOs) of the Victoria
Police undertook specially designed training to enhance their skills and knowledge of crime prevention programs and strategies.

- A video on **Family Violence Procedures** has been funded which is designed to explain police procedures in line with requirements under the Crimes (Family Violence) Act 1987. It is intended that the video will be used to enhance training of family violence procedures for recruits and operational members.

- To address the issue of re-offending behaviour, the Ministry has taken a lead role in the development and funding of three projects focussing on the reintegration of offenders into society. One of these is the **Brosnan Centre Garden Project** which teaches relevant educational and work skills to young offenders within a supportive environment. The **Salvation Army Crossroads Project** (jointly funded by Community Services Victoria) focuses on supporting young offenders in the community following Youth Training sentences. This group is particularly vulnerable to homelessness and to re-offending. For adult offenders leaving prison, the Ministry has funded VACRO, through the Office of Corrections, to undertake the **Community Integration Program** for all prisoners.

- In response to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, the Ministry has established, in conjunction with local Aboriginal communities, **Community Justice Panels** across Victoria. Their aim is to maximise the delivery of services to Aborigines in the criminal justice system and minimise their formal contact with the system. Some of the Panels’ tasks include assisting police and prison authorities in ensuring the safety of Aborigines in custody; to provide assistance in court proceedings: and to advise and participate in the supervision of community based orders, pre-release programs and parole. They have a general role in making the Aboriginal community aware of the criminal justice system, as well as sensitising criminal justice agencies to Aboriginal culture.

- The **Good Neighbourhood Program** (GNP) is modelled on the French approach and recognises that local communities are best able to identify local problems and local solutions. A critical component for the program’s success is the integration of the local committees’ work with the work of the government and non-government agencies at a local level. There are a number of local councils and communities seeking to join the program. The Good Neighbourhood component of the program has now been in existence for two years. At this time there are Good Neighbourhood committees operating in twenty-four local and regional areas involving ninety Councils.

- The Ministry field officers work with committees in developing and monitoring local projects and activities. One innovative project is the **Bulldogs (Footscray-Australian Football League Club) ’Care for Kids’** where well known footballers act as positive role models for
primary school children. The project addresses both girls and boys and involves the police in activities. This approach is being extended to other clubs and sports.

- Another project is the **Berwick Rock Cafe**. It provides a social focus for youth by way of a 'drop-in' centre/cafe which is self-managed and provides a meeting place. It is seen as minimising illegal and inappropriate behaviour by young people. It also teaches organisational and recreational skills.

Other GNP projects have included parent effectiveness training, sporting and recreational activities and skills development. Many of the GNP projects are targeted at 'youth at risk of offending' in areas with high levels of vandalism and petty crime.

*There is a 'Good Neighbour' in your community*
Several initiatives have been developed based on the fact that some groups in the community are able to be observant because they are out in the streets as part of their daily routine. They can observe and report suspicious circumstances and activity thereby assisting the police and the community. By agreement with the Victorian Taxi Association, the government introduced **Taxi Watch** in 1989 enabling Melbourne’s one thousand plus taxis to report any suspicious activities to police. This direct contact-via their radio base-also provides increased protection for taxi drivers.

There are many government employees who work outdoors. Accordingly, the GNP is to be progressively introduced to enable government personnel to report incidents requiring police or one of the emergency services. As a first step, the program will be introduced to employees with government vehicles having radio facilities. Also, the Gas and Fuel Corporation has introduced its **Gas and Fuel, Good Neighbours campaign** as a first step in this policy.

*Victoria Police*
Many crime prevention initiatives are part of Victoria Police general operations, although a large number are developed by specialist sections, such as the Crime Prevention Bureau and the Public Relations Section. There are a number of different local approaches which reflect the nature of crime problems in particular districts.

*Blue Light Discos and Camps*
To meet some youth needs, the police have successfully established **Blue Light Discos** across Victoria. These are designed to improve relations between young people and police and to provide 'safe' (alcohol-free) activities for young people. Blue Light Discos provide young people with models of entertainment in environments free of alcohol, drugs and violence. They have also raised considerable funds for local charities.

The government has also funded the establishment of a permanent **Blue Light Youth Camp** in Maldon in rural Victoria which is managed by police.
This extends the range of activities and opportunities for young people to participate in outdoor and recreational activities. The interaction between police and young people at the camp aims to increase mutual understanding. It is intended to link the Blue Light Youth Camp more closely to the work of the Good Neighbourhood committees.

The Police Schools Involvement Program

The Police Schools Involvement Program began in February 1989 in primary schools (Years 5 and 6) and is now being extended into post-primary schools. The aims of the program are:

- to reduce the incidence of crime in society;
- to improve relationships between police and youth in the community;
- to give young people an understanding of the role of police in society; and
- to extend the concept of crime prevention into the Victorian school system.

It is hoped that after participating in the program, children will be able to:

- demonstrate the values, responsibilities and obligations current society deems to be valuable;
- state the consequences of a person’s actions regarding unlawful behaviour;
- demonstrate sufficient self-esteem and skill to say ‘no’ to drug and substance abuse and other antisocial behaviour;
- engage in positive interactions and consultations with police; and
- state the basic role of police and the criminal justice system in Victoria.

Fifty School Resource Officers (SROs) have been gazetted—four country and forty-six Metropolitan. SROs undertake a two-week intensive initial training course which covers presentation, planning, communication skills and the use of teaching aids. The course addresses school protocols and Ministry of Education and Training structures and relationships. The SROs are also given four additional training days per year where they receive current police and educational data and have the opportunity to workshop ideas and issues together.

The SROs operate from the police districts. However, the state coordinator’s office provides them with support and training. The office coordinates, monitors and evaluates the program and its development. Each SRO is allocated approximately ten schools, depending on whether the schools are primary or post-primary. SROs respond to the specific needs
of the various schools, using a basic kit of information and lesson plans that are able to be adapted to varying situations.

SROs work with the whole school community—students, teachers, parents and school councils. Their roles vary from school to school and encompass teaching sessions, non-structured meetings with the school community, and activities such as excursions and camps. The program in each school is planned by, and a commitment is given to, the school.

**Other Victoria Police initiatives**

The Crime Prevention Bureau provides a technical and practical advisory service on any matter relating to the prevention of crime. The advice is provided to both police and the community. The Crime Prevention Bureau has a number of initiatives, including training police in crime prevention; distribution of crime prevention information on such issues as armed robbery and cash handling advice; retail security; payroll handling; service station security; bomb threats and warning; guidelines to follow if taken hostage and general personal safety.

The Defensive Living Program, Crime Prevention Bureau, Victoria Police, is a crime prevention strategy designed to provide women with accurate and realistic information about sexual assault and to dispel many of the current myths. The program aims to empower women with correct information and includes a self-defence video, information on alternatives for both passive and active defence, and a range of safety strategies for the home, street, car and public transport. The production of additional resource support materials to expand the operation of this program is being prepared and funded by the Crime Prevention Grants Program.

Currently police from the Crime Prevention Bureau are providing the program to all major hospitals, a range of different community groups via local government councils, other community groups—such as women’s bowling clubs, intellectually disabled women through Technical and Further Education (TAFE) Colleges, women in Neighbourhood Houses and local Adult Learning Centres.

The twenty-nine Community Policing Squads in the districts provide a specialist response to community and welfare problems that frequently come to the attention of the police. Using a network of government and voluntary agencies, the squads totalling 180 officers across the state, exercise both pro-active and reactive policing to help support families in crisis. Strong links are maintained with health, community services and education agencies as well as emergency accommodation, self-help and other community groups.

Community Policing Squads provide a style of law enforcement which emphasises close cooperation between the police and the community. The major aim of the squads is to offer a professional and effective response to child abuse. Responsibilities include telephone and personal counselling for victims and others brought to police attention with personal or family problems; investigating and monitoring inquiries regarding missing children and investigating cases of children at risk.

The Protective Behaviours Program is supported by the Community Policing Coordinating Office which provides training and advice for squads in police districts, government and non-government agencies, schools and community groups. The program incorporates positive messages about any
threatening situation a person might face at any time. The Protective Behaviours Program seeks to empower through do’s rather than don’ts. It provides practical steps to create safety and personal support for people of all ages, particularly women and children.

The Crisis Support Unit is a joint initiative between Victoria Police, the MPES, the Health Department of Victoria and Community Services Victoria. The Crisis Support Unit establishes crisis care teams comprising police members and social workers to deliver after-hours personal contact and outreach services to help people in crisis, particularly in situations of family violence. These teams address a community need and also offer a valuable combination of police and welfare skills which provide worthwhile help to those who most need it, particularly women and children.

The Family Violence Project Office, Victoria Police, provides training to police officers to help them deal more effectively with family violence issues, and give advice to service providers who have responsibility for women’s issues.

A Family Violence Database, Victoria Police, has been established to gather and maintain records of victims and complainants by gender, age and relationship to the perpetrator. Approximately 1,000 reports are received per month. The database is used for planning programs and services to assist victims of family violence.

The Law Enforcement Assistance Program (LEAP) of the Victoria Police is a new and major integrated crime prevention initiative designed to give Victoria a more effective police force. It provides a computer-based systematic analysis of localised crime information which will significantly contribute to the identification of crime patterns. This analysis will better enable the police to implement pro-active and reactive responses to crimes.

Police Community Consultative Committees are community-based forums having the active participation and support of police. One such committee is in Geelong and one, more recently established, in Knox. These are each chaired by the Police Chief Superintendent of the district and have members representing local councils, Neighbourhood Watch and other community groups. Regular meetings allow for an exchange of information, the voicing of complaints and concerns about police/crime activities, and feedback on action taken. These committees aim to improve the relationship between the police and the community through improved awareness of each other; and the effectiveness of local policing. The functions of the committee are to advise, consult and provide advocacy as appropriate, and to assist local police.

The Geelong committee has initiated an ‘outreach: youth project’ in the central business district Mall of Geelong to address the problem of vandalism and violence. This project has been funded by the Crime Prevention Grants Program. There are other models in other districts relating to the needs of those local communities and the crime problems being faced. Several police initiatives attempt to assist particularly vulnerable groups when they become victims or offenders.

The Victims of Crime Liaison Officer seeks to improve rather than duplicate existing services and has two principal objectives. Firstly, to provide training to police on victims of crime issues; and secondly, to assist in the
development of policy and program initiatives specifically designed to complement the police role in dealing with and supporting victims.

The Gay Community Liaison Officer meets once a month with the Gay Electoral Lobby and is available to mediate between the gay community and the police in order to prevent antagonism and improve communication between the two groups. This initiative has tended to reduce the number of complaints from gay people against police and has improved communication.

The Prostitution Liaison Officer is a member of the monitoring committee established after the introduction, of the Prostitution Regulation Act 1989. Convened by the Attorney-General’s Department, the committee includes government departments such as Health, Local Government and Victoria Police who meet together with representatives from the Prostitutes’ Collective and other interested groups to discuss any problems arising from the administration of the Act.

The Police Ethnic Affairs Advisor’s primary area of responsibility is to provide expert advice to the police on ethnic matters and to design and implement new initiatives establishing durable and harmonious relations between the police and various ethnic communities in Victoria. The position helps to break down the barriers which exist between some ethnic groups and police.

The Police Aboriginal Liaison Officer consults with Aboriginal communities and endeavours to ensure that existing services are culturally relevant, and also that Aboriginal members of the community have access to these services.

Business Watch has been organised in Footscray with the aim of reporting offenders and criminal activities in commercial areas. The program is based upon cooperation between the police and the local business community through the Chamber of Commerce. The program has demonstrated a potential for further development in other areas.

A related program is Bush Alert which requires forest users to report vandalism, suspicious or criminal activity to the police. It is also designed to prevent environmental offences such as stealing ferns, illegal trapping or shooting, removal of soil and damage to riverbanks.

To address the growing problem of drugs and related offences, the police established Operation Noah (narcotics, opiates, amphetamines and hashish) in 1983, which three years later became a national campaign operating over five days to gather information from anonymous callers. In addition to the enforcement aspect, police promote the use of the Health Department’s drug counselling which is a confidential, anonymous service available to victims of drug abuse and independent of the Operation Noah police investigations.

Operation Ethos is designed to improve relations between police and ethnic communities in Victoria. As a logical extension and practical application of a community development approach and pro-active policing, this initiative attempts to promote a greater awareness and understanding of the police role and laws and a greater appreciation of immigrants and their cultures. The program is run by the Police Ethnic Affairs Advisory Unit who liaise with ethnic organisations and the ethnic communities media.

Promoting socially acceptable values is behind Operation Olympus whereby trophies (donated by an insurance company) and monthly
certificates are awarded by local police for the most disciplined player of junior football clubs. Other sports such as netball are also included.

Operation Paradox is similar to Operation Noah except that it focuses on the sexual abuse of children. Operation Paradox requests the community to report any situation they may wish in relation to themselves, or if they suspect that someone else is being abused. Police and counsellors skilled in dealing with sexual abuse are available to answer the calls. During the three operations that have been run, approximately forty paedophiles have been charged, together with a greater number of investigations and charges of sexual abuse (for example, incest) under way. A campaign such as this provides a focus for the community to address their concerns and have a greater awareness of the extent of the problem.

A one-off, local targeted approach to local problems is often initiated by police in conjunction with the local community. One such example is Operation Burn-out which consisted of a committee of police, the local council and community groups attempting to resolve the problem of dangerous driving of cars in Carlton. The use of increased patrols, and the intensive use of the offence of Public Nuisance-supported by an integrated operational team of police-led to the problem's disappearance.

Many police initiatives are designed to educate the community, mainly through media campaigns, about reducing or eliminating opportunities for crime to occur. One such example is the Look, Lock and Leave anti-car theft program. Specially-fitted vehicles are taken out by police into shopping centres where the public can observe and learn how to better protect their cars from theft and vandalism.

The Police Cautioning Program is a diversionary approach to crime prevention for juvenile offenders and for adult offenders for the offence of shop stealing according to specific criteria being satisfied. Police are able to caution first offenders without proceeding to court, thus reducing their entry into the criminal justice system.

In conjunction with the police, Life Education Centre Committees have been formed in the inner eastern and southern suburbs of Melbourne. These provide a mobile caravan display to visit primary schools to teach children about drug abuse and are assisted by a teacher. The related Drug Education Program focuses on developing a training package, including resource material, for local police.

Established in 1987, Crime Stoppers provides effective encouragement through the media to the general public to come forward anonymously with information to assist the police with unsolved crimes. Rewards of up to $1,000 are available for information leading to the arrest of offenders for serious crime.

In a recent survey of proactive policing measures across police districts, local crime prevention activities were identified which had been designed to meet the specific local needs of communities. For example, in B-District, regular meetings occur between police, the local council and the traders. In C-District, Operation After-Care-which follows up complaints made to the police-and Operation Metsafe-which focuses on the safety of the public around trains and buses-have been operating for some time. In H-District, a range of measures have been adopted and include the use of foot patrols, Operation Bag-a-Thief, and a local crime mapping and information service.
Bicycle and foot patrols are also in I-District, while in L-District, Shop Watch has been introduced. Some promising local crime prevention approaches have not survived for a variety of reasons. One example of this is the Police-Community Involvement Program which existed in Frankston (1982-86) and in Broadmeadows (1983-88). This program enabled schools, business and police to work together in a variety of ways to reduce criminal behaviour, especially among young people. Reduction in shopstealing was reported to have occurred.

**Neighbourhood Watch and Rural Watch**

Neighbourhood Watch is one of the best known community-based programs designed to minimise property crime. There are now 930 Neighbourhood Watch areas in Victoria with 45.2 per cent of the state covered and close to two million people involved.

Once Neighbourhood Watch has been introduced in an area, residents participate in four strategies. Operation Identification involves the marking of items of value—such as televisions and video cassette recorders—with the resident’s drivers licence number prefixed by the letter ‘V’. The identification number acts as a deterrent for potential thieves and also assists with easier identification and return of property that comes into police possession. Residents are informed by police of the incidence of crime in their area on a monthly basis and are advised on how to identify and report criminal activity and suspicious behaviour. Residents also gain an increased knowledge and an understanding of personal and household security. The Neighbourhood Watch area is signposted as a deterrent to criminal activity.

Whilst Neighbourhood Watch is community-based, in Victoria it is police driven and has continuing police involvement. Local operational police attend all Neighbourhood Watch meetings and provide local crime statistics and information. There are district coordinators who are full-time police who are appointed to manage, maintain and control the programs in the districts. They are in close liaison with the community committees and they receive support from the state coordinator’s office. The state coordinator’s office has full-time police launching new areas, facilitating the work of the district coordinators, training police and community representatives and providing general coordination of data and operations.

Rural Watch was launched at Dergholm in April 1989 and is linked with a UHF CB radio network. There are now thirty-four areas operating in rural Victoria.

**Transport and Crime Prevention**

It is important to note that it is the perception of crime on public transport which is being addressed here, because the probability of becoming a victim of crime on the public transport system is low. As a response to community perceptions, the government has established the Safe Travelling Forum to advise the Minister for Transport on ways to improve safety and perceptions of safety on and around the public transport system. Membership of the
Forum includes public transport customers; women, older people and young people; unions; people from non-English speaking backgrounds; local government; the media; relevant government agencies and the Public Transport Corporation. The Forum has a role to inform the general public of these initiatives and their implications for safe public transport and travel; monitor the introduction of safe travelling initiatives; and provide regular reports to the Minister on the development and implementation of initiatives.

To respond specifically to the graffiti problem on and around public transport, the Ministry of Transport has developed a Graffiti Strategy. This strategy has been developed in consultation with young people and has included the recent appointment of a graffiti artist as project officer.

The Good Neighbourhood Program has funded two pilot Safe Train projects in Croydon and Frankston, aimed at providing safer public transport for young people between an outer metropolitan suburb and the central business district on Saturday nights. The project provides safe travel to and from Melbourne, with entertainment (juke box and rock bands), a shuttle-bus service to meet the train and take the young people to their homes; supervision on the train by parents, youth workers, and police involved in the project. To date the pilot has been incident-free. The Ministry has recently evaluated the Croydon model and made a number of recommendations for a limited and planned extension of Safe Trains under certain conditions, reflecting local needs and resources.

The Ministry of Transport is currently addressing the issues of safety through the implementation of safety audits on and around public transport. The community is encouraged to become involved and have a sense of ownership of transport facilities, such as railway stations.

Other Government Agency Approaches
A number of programs aim to encourage socially responsible behaviour in young people and to keep them from becoming involved with the criminal justice system. These include recreational programs such as The Push and Next Wave Festival (jointly funded by MPES, Ministry of the Arts, Ministry of Education and Training and the Office of Youth Affairs).

The Employment Access Program (managed by the Department of Labour) has been expanded across the state to specifically assist young offenders, children and young people in need of care and protection. Other employment and training programs which can have a significant impact on keeping young people from crime include the Youth Guarantee Program and the Targeted Apprenticeship Access Program.

Alcohol and drugs are involved in many crimes. The Rage Without Alcohol Campaign is one of many initiatives, involving agencies such as Education and Health, which educate and encourage young people not to abuse these substances. Recent Community Services programs for young offenders have included the Youth Attendance Order Program where young people on court orders do unpaid community work instead of going to Youth Training Centres, while Neighbourhood Mediation Centres, auspiced by the Legal Aid Commission, assist in reaching settlement of disputes which would otherwise involve police and the courts.
Within the context of minimising recidivism, the Office of Corrections has developed treatment programs for violent offenders and sex offenders. Both groups of offenders have high rates of re-offending. A pilot psycho-sexual treatment program will soon commence in Pentridge Prison for sex offenders.

The Day in Prison has been operating for eighteen months and targets young people (17-25 years) who are recidivist offenders. The program provides an alternative to a prison sentence. The program was proposed by three life-term prisoners from A-Division in Pentridge who were concerned at the number of young people coming into prison. The program has been developed in conjunction with Magistrates, and the Chief Magistrate chairs the multi-agency Steering Committee. The young people experience a structured day in prison (Pentridge, Geelong and shortly in Fairlea Women’s Prison) where they are taken through the daily routines of a prison. Part of the day is spent with the three prisoners who discuss their own experiences and the advantages of staying out of prison. The Day in Prison is followed by an appropriate Community-based Order with the support necessary for the particular young person.

Community Council Against Violence
The Community Council Against Violence (CCAV) was established by the Victorian Government in July 1989 in response to community concerns about violence. It has fourteen members with a substantial knowledge of issues relating to community violence and a diverse range of opinions and experience. The main function of the CCAV is to provide an active link between the community and the government on a range of issues concerning violence and to examine the causes of violence and make recommendations to government on strategies for its reduction. Whilst investigating and responding to specific terms of reference that are referred to it by the government, the CCAV has a responsibility to consult and represent the views of the community.

The CCAV has the broad and long-term strategic objective of contributing towards the reduction and prevention of violence in the community. As part of this objective a number of shorter-term specific goals include the:

- development of education or publicity strategies to change cultural values which encourage violence;
- development of strategies for improving community support facilities to reduce the stress on individuals in order to prevent violence, particularly domestic violence;
- development of strategies to improve intervention procedures in relation to both victims and perpetrators of violence;
- assessment of the impact of the media on the levels of violence and recommendation of appropriate strategies for dealing with the issue.

The CCAV’s first report Inquiry into Violence In and Around Licensed Premises was published in March 1990, and was followed by the Source book of Victorian Sexual Assault Statistics 1987-1990 which was published in April 1991 as part of the work of the Violence in Public Places Inquiry. Further reports will also be produced relating to this reference.

Conclusion
In Victoria, crime prevention currently presents an array of diverse measures, programs and activities often developed in a pragmatic way, sometimes linked, sometimes in conflict and of
varying duration. While the integrated anti-crime strategy, which is being developed by the MPES and the Victoria Police, will attempt coordination across and within the various sectors, many questions will remain about what difference the crime prevention efforts make to the crime problem. Much greater understanding is needed about the crime prevention initiatives in Victoria as to what the crime prevention outcomes are (not only on reported crime rates but also on fear of crime, the degree to which community needs are met, and so on), both in the long and short-term; what limited, achievable aims they can have; and what unintended consequences might result from the initiatives.

There is a suggestion that the types of approaches to crime prevention which are favoured or adopted are susceptible to 'fashion' trends and maybe accepted as a 'good thing' without critical analysis. Again an improved understanding of what influences such trends in crime prevention would be valuable in improving what we do about crime.

Several practical ideas could contribute more to improving our knowledge base. These are the:

- preparation of an inventory/listing of crime prevention initiatives not only at the state level but also nationally, using a simple but standard format so that information is more efficiently shared; and
- development and support of comparative analyses of selected localities similar in terms of socio-demographic characteristics, but with different crime problems and reported crime rates, using perhaps less conventional methodologies (for example, social anthropological approaches) so as to tease out the significant factors determining crime and its prevention in communities.

The concept of crime prevention as an 'add on' to be funded and addressed, is a matter for all levels of government and for the community to address. Government policy development occurs within a matrix of considerations. No agency can totally ignore the impact of their programs on the clients or the programs of another. An informed analysis of crime prevention must become part of the matrix of decision making. Whilst this may require resources in the first instance, the planned outcome of reduced reliance on the criminal justice system will provide long-term savings for the community. To achieve these planned outcomes, there must be more commitment to critical analysis.

Ultimately, the value of crime prevention must be judged in terms of the actual and potential contribution to a safer, more secure, but also more just community, where quality of life is preserved and improved.
Bibliography
