

THE POLICE PERSPECTIVE

THE CHANGING FACE OF HOMICIDE

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TO EXAMINE CHANGING PATTERNS OF HOMICIDE, STATISTICAL DATA WHICH IS gathered by the investigators or through the judicial process is generally relied upon. Available statistics indicate little change in the number of reported homicides in Victoria in recent years. Likewise, it is generally recognised that 'domestic' murders account for a significant percentage of the annual homicide figures. No doubt these factors would be a consideration when analysing prevention and control measures.

But how accurate are these figures? Do they reflect the true situation? There are a number of ways in which distortions may occur.

- Annual figures more accurately record the number of bodies recovered in the twelve-month period where it has been determined that death resulted from a homicidal act. The solution rate refers to the number of homicides which are solved in each twelve-month period. A murder reported during this period and solved one day outside the relevant period is not included in the annual statistics, while a murder committed in 1988 and not discovered until 1992, is recorded in the 1992 statistics. Thus a distortion may occur in the overall figures.
- A murder is generally determined by the discovery of a body and the medical decision on the cause of death. Sometimes it is not scientifically possible to determine the cause of death although it is strongly suspected that murder has been committed. Likewise, there are a number of persons reported missing each year where the disappearance and the circumstances indicate murder, but this will not be reflected in the figures. There are a number of known occurrences where criminals have been murdered and the identity of the offender is known but the body cannot be located. Again these cases cannot be included in the statistics.

- It is very common to hear of the so called 'hot shot' which is the injection of adulterated heroin or an over-strength dose which is substituted into the victim's routine supply or forcibly administered. Again these deaths cannot be included in the statistics.

In total, the number of unidentified murders could be as much as 30 per cent above the official annual figure. Generally this type of murder would be restricted to the criminal elements within our society and would include very few, if any, domestic murders. If this is the case, the proportion of the total number of incidents represented by domestic murders committed each year would be substantially reduced.

Unreported incidents have been referred to as a preface to introducing the practical view of the changing pattern of homicide.

In Victoria and in some other states the following trends have emerged over the last two years:

- an increase in incidents involving multiple victims and/or multiple offenders;
- an increase in murders occurring in rural areas;
- an increase in random fatal attacks on the elderly;
- an increase in brutal murders by the young;
- fewer 'standard' domestic murders: a tendency for third parties to be employed to carry them out;
- an increase in the proportion of stabbings;
- more protracted investigations; and
- less public response.

While all trends may not be readily identifiable in the available statistical data, they are obvious to the investigator. No doubt community standards, self-discipline and the risk of detection have some bearing on the trends, but the reasons are many and varied. For example, gun control may be a significant factor in the reduction in the number of deaths by shooting and the increase in the number of stabbings, though this may only be a temporary phenomenon.

However, one of the aspects of greatest concern is public apathy. In the past murder was regarded as the ultimate crime and sent shock waves through all sections of the community, including much of the criminal element. When a murder was reported people wanted to assist, but now there is a reluctance to get involved. This may be due to concern for individual safety or alternatively a lack of faith in 'the system'.

In the past, very few murders occurred where the identity of the offender was unknown, even if there was insufficient evidence to launch a prosecution. This is not necessarily the case in 1992. Recently, two particularly nasty murders were the subject of appeals through the media for assistance from the public—not one response was received, although it has

since been established that a number of people had information but did not want to become involved.

The trends which have been mentioned, together with legislative and procedural changes, have placed greater demands on the homicide investigator. Investigations are protracted and generally more difficult. Greater reliance is placed on scientific evidence rather than admissions. Criminal profiling and advanced scientific techniques will be of assistance to the investigator in the future, but it is essential that the confidence and the cooperation of the public be regained if police are to properly respond to the changing face of homicide.

SPECIAL ISSUES IN SERIAL MURDER

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THE INVESTIGATION OF HOMICIDE IS THE MOST CHALLENGING AND EXACTING of all criminal investigation procedures. Homicide is a unique crime because of the seriousness with which it is regarded both by the law and the community. The community, it seems, has an almost insatiable appetite for, and weird fascination with, the details of individual murder cases. The manner in which the media report murder plays an essential part in moulding community attitudes to the crime and the perpetrators of it. The media tend to concentrate on publicising those cases which are rare, sensational or abnormal—in short, those that make a good story. Typically, it is unprovoked attacks by strangers and cases involving bizarre methods of killing that hit the headlines.

The phenomenon of serial murder has become one of increasing concern in homicide investigation in recent years because of the special problems it presents to criminal investigators. Serial murder is a phenomenon attracting increased attention from both the criminal justice system and the community. The serial murderer is especially frightening to the community, stalking and selecting victims at random, often travelling great distances to kill again, (Brooks et al. 1987, p. 37). In recent years there has been considerable discourse on the phenomenon and how the criminal justice system ought to respond to these killers. The kind of fear serial murder can generate was illustrated in Sydney in 1989/90 by the series of 'Granny Murders'. These murders of elderly women in Sydney's North Shore district generated great

anxiety in the community and resulted in many who perceived themselves as potential victims living in fear and isolation for many months.

Serial murder is the killing of three or more separate victims with emotional time breaks between killings. These breaks, or cooling-off periods, range from days to weeks or months between killings. Serial killers may be defined as psychopathic: they have a profound personality disorder but are aware of their criminality and certainly are not out of touch with reality. Serial killers have been described as intelligent, charismatic, street-wise and charming. They are usually mobile and capable of travelling any distance in search of a certain type of victim. Serial killers are extremely manipulative: frequently, they talk their victims into what may be described as a 'comfort zone'—a location where they feel comfortable or safe and can control their victims. In the mind of the serial killer, the experience of murder is one of great pleasure in exerting power and control over his victim, including the power of life and death. (Geberth 1990, pp. 72-4).

Serial murder nearly always involves some planning or stalking of the victims over a period of time. These killers are constantly in search of victims. The basic characteristics of serial murder are repetitive murder involving similar modus operandi and similar types of victims.

The Australian contemporary paradigm of a serial killer is that of John Wayne Glover who, during a period of twelve months between 1989 and 1990, murdered six elderly women, all but one over the age of eighty years. These murders occurred in a limited geographical area on weekdays between 3 pm and 6 pm, when frail, elderly female victims were walking to their homes carrying shopping bags and aided by walking sticks. All victims were attacked in the vicinity of their homes with a hammer and fists—four were strangled with their own pantyhose.

Serial murder had entered the northern suburbs of Sydney, setting in motion the most extensive police investigation of its type in Australian policing history. In November 1991, Glover was convicted of all the murders and sentenced to life imprisonment.

One of the problems experienced by homicide investigators in the 'Granny Murders' investigation was the interference with crime scenes. Due to the age of the victims and their association with other elderly people, persons acting in good faith, washed blood and forensic material away from crime scenes prior to the notification and arrival of police, so as to alleviate the anxiety that could be caused to other elderly people. Four of the crime scenes were interfered with in this manner. The preservation of the scene of a murder is essential to a thorough scientific and forensic examination. Training is given to police in crime scene preservation, but police are seldom the first people at the scene of a murder. Education and training need to be given to the community and relevant organisations in an endeavour to preserve murder scenes.

Mass murder is another form of homicide which is sometimes confused with serial murder. Mass murder characteristically involves the killing of several people, in the same general area, at roughly the same time, by a lone assailant. It is usually a one-time murderous act (Levin & Fox 1985). Mass murderers are not concerned with who the victims are—they kill anyone who

comes into contact with them. In contrast, a serial murderer premeditates his crimes and usually selects a type of victim.

Extensive media reporting given to serial murder may have the unintended consequence of encouraging others to commit similar crimes. Pinto and Wilson (1990, p. 5) cite research which suggests there could be a link between the degree of publicity attached to a murder and subsequent conduct of a similar nature. Wilson (1988, p. 273) comments that the influence of violent, sadistic pornographic material may be relevant to the incidence of serial murder. In the USA several serial killers were found to have had an obsessive interest in sexually-violent pornographic literature and videos.

During the 'Granny Murders' investigation, the media provided valuable assistance to the community and the investigation. Unfortunately, some sections of the media sensationalised the murders with the inference of the 'copycat' phenomenon which created a heightened atmosphere of alarm. Regular and controlled press conferences given by the Senior Investigating Officer is the most appropriate way to release information to the community.

Serial murder raises enormous challenges for police in regard to their resources and investigatory professionalism. Serial murderers are difficult to detect and apprehend, especially where there is no readily identifiable motive and no initial recognition that a serial killer is operating. It is incumbent upon police to be alert to the identifiable characteristics of a serial murderer and collect, collate, analyse and disseminate data to appropriate groups. Australia needs a National Centre for the Analysis of Violent Crime similar to the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program which is based at the FBI in Virginia, USA. This program provides a computerised clearinghouse for information on solved and unsolved murders, missing persons and unidentified bodies where homicide is suspected. The establishment of a data clearinghouse to analyse murders can provide an indication that one killer is responsible for a series of murders. Sharing investigative information can supply more pieces of the puzzle necessary to strengthen the investigative process and expedite the identification and apprehension of the subject (Brooks et al. 1987, p. 40).

Criminal profiling is a technique for identifying the major personality and behaviour characteristics of an offender. Profiling does not provide the specific identity of the offender, but is an investigative aid that should be considered with all other evidence gathered from the crime scene and witnesses.

The forming of a task force for serial murder investigation is the most appropriate way to effectively and efficiently approach this phenomenon. Task forces provide coordinated resources and the professional utilisation of homicide investigators. The North Shore Murder Task Force formed to investigate the 'Granny Murders' had seventy multi-skilled investigators to analyse all information in a coordinated manner.

Although serial murder currently represents only a small proportion of all murders, the question of whether this situation may change in the future should be considered. It is a real possibility that serial murder will increase in Australia based on the historical evidence of the increase of serial murder in the USA. The investigation of serial murder is the most demanding and challenging of all criminal investigations due to its complex and protracted

characteristics. Police investigators must be flexible in their attitude and approach to murder investigations in the early stages in an endeavour to identify the fact that a serial murderer is operating.

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HOMICIDE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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THE INVESTIGATION OF HOMICIDES IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA IS HANDLED BY both suburban Criminal Investigation Branch (CIB) units and a specialist unit—the Major Crime Task Force. When a homicide occurs, it is the decision of the relevant Regional Commander as to whether he has the necessary resources to handle the particular incident. It is also a consideration as to whether the crime is part of a pattern or is likely to be a long, complicated and protracted inquiry.

If the homicide is relatively simple and straightforward, then in all probability the investigation will be undertaken by the local CIB. However, members of the Major Crime Task Force are able to provide an advisory service to these officers.

If the homicide is beyond the resources of the local CIB or forms part of a pattern of crime, then it will be formally declared a *major crime*. This will then invoke the provisions of the Task Force Policing Plan, which means that the entire investigation will be thoroughly documented. In practical terms what occurs is that an administrative officer is appointed to undertake control and guide the direction of the investigation, collate the information gathered and, on the basis of this information, issue inquiries. The administrative officer is supported by a primary team whose role is to interview any offender who is located and formulate the brief. These people are in turn supported by secondary teams, whose roles are to carry out all other inquiries concerning the investigation.

The complete inquiry is recorded on a computer-based case management system, which automatically indexes and sorts all significant people and events involved in the investigation. Each separate inquiry is recorded and each result gained is linked to that inquiry. In effect, this case management system provides an accurate and complete record of the whole investigation. The simple principle applied to this method is that *all* information gained is recorded, assessed by the administrative officer, and either investigated or recorded for information.

The advantages of the case management system are many and at all times there is an available and up-to-date manuscript of the status of the investigation. The system ensures that there is a logical and structured approach to the inquiry, and that all information gained becomes part of the inquiry. Furthermore, in circumstances where the inquiry takes several years, it ensures that, as original investigators transfer, or for one reason or another leave the inquiry, new investigators are able to thoroughly brief themselves with the documented information. In fact, this has occurred several times in South Australia, where old murder inquiries have been successfully concluded some years after the incident. A further advantage of the system is that, during subsequent court procedures, the file provides an accurate record.

This is a very brief overview of the system under which the South Australian Police Department operates. Steps are continually being taken to upgrade and improve this system and, in 1992, a new program is being devised which will enable suburban CIBs to operate under the same computer program, thereby enabling an electronic transfer of information when and if a matter is declared a major crime.

Types of Homicide

Homicides can be divided into several types and each has particular problems.

Domestic/intimate homicides

Domestic/intimate homicides are usually the simplest to investigate. The victim is usually known by the offender and there is, in most cases, a clear

motive. Most importantly, the offender is usually remorseful and truly regrets the action. However, experience has shown that this feeling of remorse lasts about forty-eight to seventy-two hours. If questioned within this time span, offenders will be cooperative but are less likely to be so outside that time frame.

Confrontational homicides

Confrontational homicides can be somewhat more difficult than the domestic murder. The classic example of this type of incident is the murder which arises as a result of a brawl in a hotel. The incident usually stems from an argument, alcohol is often a contributing factor and, in most cases, the action is usually stimulated by the need for the parties involved not to 'lose face'. Similar incidents have also occurred as a result of people becoming involved in arguments over minor traffic accidents. These homicides may be more difficult to solve than the domestic murder because sometimes the victim and the offender are unknown to each other. From an investigator's point of view, there is often the redeeming feature that these types of incidents are quite often witnessed by independent parties, thereby providing police with valuable evidence. Often these matters will revert to the offence of manslaughter.

Assassin type murder

The assassin type murder is perhaps one of the most difficult investigations which confront homicide investigators. These types of crimes are often premeditated well in advance, and deliberate steps are taken to thwart the efforts of investigators in the gaining of evidence. Certainly, investigators may become aware of a motive and, generally speaking, will have some idea of a suspect. However, there does exist a code of silence among criminals and it is difficult to break this code of silence. A classic example of this type of offence is the murder which occurs in a prison. For example, a prisoner was stabbed in a yard where another ninety prisoners were assembled. Two years later, only two people who are prepared to say anything about the offender have come forward from that group. Police information is that this particular offence was planned well in advance and was, in essence, an assassination.

Abduction/stranger type murder

The abduction/stranger type murder is perhaps the most difficult of all murders to investigate as there is usually no rhyme or reason to the incident. In most cases there is no relationship between the offender and the victim, there is usually no obvious motive, and in practical terms, investigators are usually left without a crime scene. Invariably in these cases, police rely very heavily on information from the public. If there is no information forthcoming, then the task of solving the crime becomes very difficult indeed.

Serial or pattern type murder

There is a further category: the serial or pattern type murder. Fortunately, these are not commonplace, though there has been a few such incidents in

South Australia. Serial murders are extremely difficult to investigate as there is no relationship between the victims and the offender/s. There are no tangible links which can guide an investigator to a particular person. In these matters, more than most others, police rely very heavily on information from the public. Usually the offender is mentally disturbed and extremely cunning in the way he commits crimes. Invariably these people will continue to offend until they are apprehended.

Problems for the Homicide Investigator

There is little doubt that the homicide investigator of today has a more difficult task than that of the homicide investigator of the past. The problems lie in two areas:

- the investigation and arrest of person/s for the offence; and
- the subsequent trial and court procedures.

In general terms the following are problems that are encountered in the investigation and arrest of homicide offenders:

- Modern day homicide investigators are required to be well-aware of the legal requirements in respect of the rights of an accused. Furthermore, they must be completely familiar and adept in the practical application of powers that they are able to invoke. Investigators are sometimes required to make decisions very quickly, with the knowledge that the decision will almost certainly become the topic of a lengthy legal argument in the ensuing court proceedings. They are required to keep abreast of decisions handed down in the Appeal Court, as the thrust of those decisions will very much influence the manner in which they handle an investigation.
- The media, while being a valuable tool to an investigation, can also place undue pressure on investigators. Investigators are well-advised to be particularly careful in their comments to the press, as it has happened in previous matters that certain statements made in the press have become the subject of debate during the course of a criminal trial. In particular, offences must not be described too graphically as it may be argued that jury members who read that article will be prejudiced against the accused. In fairness, it should be pointed out that the media provide a very valuable service to investigators in that they can convey police requests for information to the public. There is no doubt that on some occasions this has assisted inquiries. However, investigators would do well to remember that the media are very much a double-edged sword, and it is necessary during the course of investigations to keep very strict control over press releases.

- With the advance of technology, there is now more forensic evidence becoming available to police. However, it follows that investigators, in order to make use of these services, must have a rudimentary knowledge of the practical application of the information.

Allied to these services is the problem of collating all the information and evidence which is gathered. Difficulties may arise in obtaining statements/declarations from other government bodies (such as the forensic science personnel), tests and procedures may take considerable time, and quite often the evidence/statement is not available in time for the committal proceedings.

A further problem is the growing trend among some members of the community 'not to get involved'. People who have been witnesses are often heard to say that they will never become involved again. When one considers the length of time that witnesses spend sitting outside a court, one cannot blame them for their reluctance to come forward with information in the future. It is an unfortunate fact of life that no-one can accurately predict when a witness will be required. The investigator quite often has to bear the brunt of the complaints concerning time delays from these witnesses. Professional people can be particularly difficult, as their time is money and more often than not, they have well-defined schedules that have to be met.

The following are some of the problems faced by investigators in respect to criminal trials:

- Except on very rare occasions, persons charged with murder plead not guilty. There is nothing wrong with this, but all homicide investigators know at the time of an arrest that at sometime in the future they will be involved in a strongly contested murder trial. These trials, in the main, are now becoming longer in duration. Some years ago murder trials would average about four weeks in duration but now it is common for trials to take between six and ten weeks. In most cases, the murder trial is preceded by a 'voir dire' hearing, which is in effect a trial within a trial.
- Recently in South Australia, procedures were adopted to invoke pre-trial conferences in an effort to speed up the court processes. The thrust behind this procedure was to eliminate any unnecessary argument from the actual trial but, to date, these procedures do not seem to have had any effect. Naturally, a side-effect of longer trials is a reduction in available investigational resources. It is not uncommon to have three or four investigators tied up on a criminal trial for six to ten weeks. This time period is for the actual trial and does not include the time spent by investigators in conveying, locating and briefing witnesses. All in all, a strongly contested criminal trial can be a very busy and stressful time for an investigator.

Conclusion

There are no easy answers to these problems. Modern day investigators are required to have a wide knowledge of both law and investigative techniques, and the responsibility for this knowledge rests with individual departments and their training techniques. The South Australian Police Department has addressed this need and accordingly has revamped its detective training course to keep pace with changing trends and requirements. Furthermore, experienced homicide investigators pass on their knowledge to junior members through lectures, and junior members are seconded to the Major Crime Task Force for six-month periods. The aim of the secondments is to give junior investigators on-the-job training, under the guidance of experienced homicide investigators.

In respect of the problem of lengthy criminal trials, each accused person has the right to a complete and thorough defence. However, some trials do take an inordinate length of time and contain days of argument over relatively minor points which may well have been resolved at a pre-trial conference.

ISSUES IN THE POLICING OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

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FAMILY VIOLENCE AFFECTS A LARGE PROPORTION OF OUR SOCIETY: FOR example, an estimated 50,000 calls were made to the Victoria Police in 1983 relating to domestic disputes (Barnes cited in Comley 1986, p. 534), and 25 per cent of offences against the person reported to New South Wales Police in 1986–87 were committed in the home (New South Wales Police Department 1987). In 1986–87 the cost of accommodating victims of domestic violence in Australia was \$27.6 million (Australia 1990, p. 15), and in Victoria alone, over 28,000 women and children seek refuge accommodation each year (Victoria 1991b).

Evidence of this large community problem is also contained in statistics compiled by the Family Violence Project Office of the Victorian Police. For example, the Victoria Police Family Violence Project Office found that in a twelve

month period during 1990/91, police attended a minimum of 919 domestic disputes per month, totalling 11,087 for that year (Victoria Police. Family Violence Project Office 1991).

The potential for a lethal situation developing within the context of domestic/family violence is demonstrated by surveying available homicide data. For example, a survey of Victorian homicides occurring between 1989 and 1991 indicated that each year domestic homicides represented the largest category where motive was known (Victoria Police. Homicide Squad 1991). Wallace (1986) and Bonney (1987) found that a higher proportion of homicides (43 per cent) were committed by family members than any other category of relationship (Australia 1990, p. 21).

During the period 1989 to 1991 inclusive, there were sixty-seven domestic homicides in Victoria. The average cost per homicide in Australia is approximately \$1 million. This cost includes victims' loss of income, prison costs for offender and so on, but does not include prosecution and trial costs (Law Reform Commission of Victoria 1992, p. 15).

Firearms are not the major cause of death in Australian homicides, but a firearm is the most lethal of weapons. It requires less physical strength and time than other weapons in its lethal capacity and may be considered as an impersonal weapon, capable of causing death without having to physically touch the victim. Therefore the gravity of firearms is clearly defined within the context of homicide in general. Now let us take a closer look at firearms and examine them within the confines of domestic violence and the current legislation.

The current state legislation pertaining to domestic/family violence in Victoria is the *Crimes (Family Violence) Act 1987*. Of the legal options available, this is the most accessible legislation regarding domestic/family violence with approximately 2,000 intervention orders being current at any one time.

This legislation could be viewed as an attempt to provide some form of 'people control' as well as 'gun control', having regard to magistrates granting orders which can be used to control people's behaviour and the use of firearms through section 18A of the legislation. Despite this process, the Act does have its limitations and problems. For example, during the twelve months from 1 July 1990, out of a total of 5,374 applications for Intervention Orders, 3,232 (60 per cent) were granted (Victoria 1991a). During this same period, from a total of 976 Family Incident Reports, there were nineteen cases where firearms were used at the incident and a total of forty-nine cases where firearms were threatened (Victoria Police 1991).

There was no procedure available to ensure distinct case tracking, which would have provided details of what happened to the firearms and/or licences in these cases, for example, whether the licences were cancelled or firearms seized. The *Crimes (Family Violence) Monitoring Report* (Victoria 1991a, p. 26), which was undertaken during the same period, indicates however that twenty-nine firearms licences were revoked during this period.

According to the Firearms Registrar, the current legislation is not clear concerning firearms licences in cases where firearms are seized. For example, how effective in the long term is the seizure of firearms if the licences are not also cancelled? The Registrar believes the legislation should be structured so that if a person commits an act of violence or an offence against the *Firearms Act 1971*

(Vic.) there should be an automatic cancellation of the licence by a magistrate. Such are the proposed amendments to New South Wales' firearms legislation specifically relating to domestic violence. These amendments will provide for automatic suspension of licences where Apprehended Violence Orders are granted. Persons will be unable to renew their licence for ten years.

A new procedure has now been adopted in Victoria which will rectify some of these problems. Any Family Incident Report received by the Family Violence Project Office involving a firearm is passed to the Firearms Registrar. Inquiries are made concerning licences, permits and firearms, and forwarded with the details of the incident to the District Firearms Officer for appropriate action. Such action can include the cancellation of firearms licences, processing for an offence and or forfeiture of firearms. The Family Violence Project Office is then advised of the action taken.

The current situation in Victoria highlights the vulnerable position that victims of domestic violence are often placed in. The victim's powerlessness is heightened where the violent partner has easy access to firearms. As the law stands, a person who has access to firearms and is violent can abuse their partner or family, make threats and/or use a firearm but there is no provision following such an incident for the automatic cancellation of firearms licences or seizure of firearms. It would appear that a victim in this situation is not adequately protected. Where violent behaviour exists, the risk of a serious injury or a more tragic event occurring is increased dramatically with the presence of, or easy access to, firearms. The following incident, in the words of the investigating police officer, illustrates the dangers which exist while there are limited gun controls operating within the precincts of violence:

We had been called to this house on more than several occasions. It was an ongoing domestic dispute between a married couple with two children. When we attended, no legal action was taken because on our arrival the disputes had ceased. Things had settled down. Although we knew there was a firearm in the house, the owner was licensed and no firearm offence had occurred. On one occasion we assisted the woman and children to find other accommodation. I don't know what happened in between her leaving and our return visit, but the next time we were called, we arrived to see him stalking around, still with the shotgun in his hand. He had shot his wife dead and their two little children were present (Sergeant of Police, Victoria Police Force 1992).

Criminal justice systems in western countries have generally responded to legal and social issues separately, whilst mainly using a reactive approach. This means that offenders can be dealt with only after an offence has occurred. Support for victims is delivered in an ad hoc fashion, therefore any opportunity for empowerment is fragmented.

However, in the last decade some change has occurred towards an increase in the use of a proactive approach. Examples of this are: the Drink-Drive Campaign, Crime Stoppers, the Violence is Ugly Campaign, Break the Silence and Operation Noah. Police training in family violence also incorporates proactive/preventative strategies covering a multitude of issues.

The theme maintained is that criminal assault in the home is an offence and that violent behaviour is not acceptable.

The introduction of community policing strategies in the 1980s incorporated this proactive approach (Morgan 1984). Nevertheless, a large proportion of community policing squad duties are still reactive responses. This occurs because these squads are only one small sector of a large system which operates mainly with reactive responses. The successful nature of the proactive approach can be appreciated if attention is turned to some overseas models which have been operating at a more comprehensive level. Although the following examples relate specifically to domestic violence, some solutions may be become apparent from them and could assist in identifying patterns, prevention and control relating to homicide within the context of domestic/family violence.

In some parts of Canada, the USA and the United Kingdom, multi-faceted teams intervene in family violence situations. The strategies implemented give serious consideration to the victim's socio-legal needs using an integrated approach. The London Police in Ontario, Canada were the first police force in Canada to use this method. They are serviced by the Coordinating Committee to End Abuse on Women, which is made up of representatives from mental health organisations, advocacy centres, police, emergency service workers and refuge/shelter workers. The Committee members act as consultants and review policy and procedures. An evaluation study of this policy has found that there has been a large increase in the laying of charges relating to domestic violence by police and fewer charges have been withdrawn or dismissed (Canada. Ontario Police 1985).

A similar procedure is in use by the Duluth Police Force, Minnesota, USA. Immediately after the perpetrator is arrested, she/he is taken to the police station for arraignment to court and a Women's Shelter Advocate is notified. The advocate contacts the victim and provides information relating to protection orders and safety procedures. The perpetrator convicted for the first time is given a stayed sentence, ordered to receive counselling, and/or take part in a rehabilitation and educational program. Upon a second offence, the offender is gaoled but also receives treatment. A follow-up procedure is undertaken whereby the victim is contacted to see if further support and/or assistance is required.

The Metropolitan Police Force in London, England, also uses multi-agency domestic violence units. For example, the Tottenham unit is staffed by police women, and the referral agencies involved include social service, community and psychiatric services, a housing group and other action groups. There are thirty-two of these units throughout Metropolitan London.

These models reflect changes in criminal justice policy which lean toward a preventative treatment direction. The community based approach is anticipated to act as a social influence to others, reinforcing the message that certain behaviours are not acceptable. These types of treatment models have been recommended for use also in drug and alcohol rehabilitative programs (*Criminal Justice* 1987, pp. 285–88).

In Australia, preventative approach strategies are delivered in an ad hoc fashion. Little has been done to establish the team approaches described above. Some issues are given more attention than others, while some sectors of the

community are left in vulnerable positions. Generally speaking, Australia's criminal justice system is still fragmented, preferring the 'legal only' approach in preference to a system which administers the socio-legal method. Consolidation of the available facilities, knowledge/resources and appropriate staff is necessary. The cost of drawing them together would be much less than the expense incurred for each domestic homicide which has occurred.

To bring about a reduction in the incidence of domestic/family violence and homicides, appropriate intervention at the time of a crisis—followed by comprehensive support networks in both the social and legal environments—are crucial. Australia desperately needs a practical based network using an integrated, multi-faceted approach. It is time to work together and the following recommendations are made to bring this about:

- implementation of specialist, multi-agency (integrated) teams and programs to service domestic/family violence incidents;
- the *Crimes (Family Violence) Act 1987* (Vic.) to be amended to permit the automatic cancellation of firearms licences by a magistrate where a domestic/family violence incident has occurred and been reported to police—not renewable for set period; and
- the development of a variety of integrated, preventative community education programs concerning gun control and family violence.

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