
“Defending Principles through Meaningful Partnerships ”

“Good citizens ALWAYS defend each other – always defend their mates, no matter how different they might seem.”

Community Service Announcement (CSA) aired nationally in Australia, ACRO, Brisbane, 1998

A Paper delivered to the *Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders*, the Austria Center, Vienna Austria, 10-17 April 2000

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Preamble / Discussion Points

There is a certain irony for an Australian presenting to an august International Conference on Crime Prevention and the Treatment of Offenders at a time when Australia has been roundly criticized by the United Nations for the mandatory sentencing approaches and treatment of indigenous Australians by two of Australia’s State (Provincial) jurisdictions; Western Australia and the Northern Territory. More deeply rooted in irony is the fact that Australia, in the past, has strenuously advocated for the development of Community-based Partnerships ostensibly geared towards a resolution of socially constructed prejudice, bigotry and inequality.

The good news is that, in my opinion, the vast majority of Australians find the mandatory legislation in place in Western Australia and the Northern Territory to be inappropriate. Undoubtedly, common sense will prevail and an Australian Federal Government will eventually exercise its prerogative as a signatory to United Nations conventions to override the foolishness of these State governments.

In addressing the Objectives for this Conference and placing my background in Partnership development in the context of this Conference, I am obliged to declare some preliminary observations and bias:

1. Community-based Partnerships need to be (yet currently do not appear to be) concerned with social justice in the broadest sense recognizing crime in significant measure as a *consequence* of failed social relations and economic inequity. These Partnerships, therefore, should have little to do with crime prevention *per se* and everything to do with the conditions that lead to social dysfunction that in turn leads to crime.

It seems to me that there has been an unreasonable emphasis placed upon Community-based Partnerships in crime prevention as some style of cure-all for flagging social structures. Furthermore, it is evident that opportunistic governments have been eager to embrace, for electoral purposes, and subvert, for political gain, the concept of Community-based Partnerships. Naturally, many communities have willingly embraced the logic of holistic approaches and collaborative brainstorming to help solve the problems associated with crime. Given the opportunity communities have rallied and demonstrated significant insight into the social causation of crime at a local level (ACRO, 1998). Academics and others (purporting to be

“experts”) remained cynical and governments have not been keen to hear community messages that run contrary to their policies or programs. As a person who directly influenced Federal and State governments to develop crime prevention strategies, it was easy to promote such an approach to political leaders who were being criticized daily in the media.

It is believed that crime prevention initiatives that embrace social justice concerns will produce positive outcomes. However crime prevention initiatives that are piece-meal and targeted on the basis of spuriously determined agendas by "experts" and politicians will do little more than create a political or professional advantage for those who propose their implementation. They say that empty vessels make the most sound and to me the sound of a soulless justice is deafening.

There is a world-wide trend for governments and would-be governments to outbid each other in terms of their response to crime. At a time when world economic dynamics are changing as a result of the electronic and information revolution and public confidence in government manifests in wide vacillation at the ballot box, it seems that criminal justice became the scapegoat of distraction and the tool for diverting attention from failed systemic policies. Elitist Committees of “experts” were convened, allegedly representative "partnerships" were constructed (and legitimized) and an industry was constructed based upon selective perceptions of the expressed needs of citizens. Globally, opportunistic leaders who exploit the good faith of their communities by creating the catchphrase of consultation divert our attention from the main game. It should be remembered that consultation has no action orientation. It requires strategic planning based upon upward and downward input and community-based action (or implementation) to move beyond itself. Otherwise it is just a word – consultation.

We have all heard the war cries: "three strikes/one strike and you're in"; movement towards mandatory sentencing (which clearly entraps more people from disadvantaged backgrounds); more punitive juvenile justice Acts; increased police powers beyond reasonableness; more and more people in prison by virtue of their economic and social circumstances rather than their threat to society – the list goes on and on. These have become the norm in political-speak and the mantra of a confused and frightened public. Ironically community organizations and individual advocates, keen to have social concerns legitimized through their engagement on government appointed Committees and Task Forces (ostensibly dealing with “crime prevention”), fall mute when the same governments that appointed them progress retrograde legislation that is the antithesis of that which they purport to represent.

It has become fashionable to believe that community-based partnerships dealing with crime prevention can work in isolation from the economic and social forces that contribute to the phenomenon of crime. It has also become fashionable to target disadvantaged groups within communities as being the "crime problem". In my country it has been non-European migrants, indigenous peoples and our youth that have been defamed and attacked by rhetoric and through legislation. This pattern in Australia is replicated across a dozen other "civilized" countries. Sometimes the work of Partnerships can inadvertently reinforce this view through a conspiracy of silence – the “don't rock the boat” approach.

Put simply, effective partnerships need to be unfashionable. Members of Committees and Partnerships should resist the temptation to be silent in the midst of political-speak and be prepared to criticize government policy that is not appropriately measured and which has an effect of net-widening disadvantaged citizens into an increasingly inflexible criminal justice system. Whilst Partnerships may be funded by government, they **must** be independent. That, of itself, is a paradox, yet should be the challenge for all Partnership members across the globe.

2. Strategic Alliances within Communities will prove to be the more potent Social Justice endeavor.

Having discussed the serious impediment that I believe political opportunism presents to effective and meaningful Partnership development, I would suggest that there may be Alliances that can be forged within communities that crystallize social justice principles in the context of personal and business environments. It is a matter of public record that a number of significant Corporations have recognized that it is in their interest to engage in the poverty debate as to do so provides entry to the marketplace of large numbers of consumers (the "bread and butter" of successful businesses).

Similarly there are a number of high-profiled sports and entertainment personalities who, I believe, have a moral and ethical obligation to link their popularity and conspicuousness to social justice endeavor. It would seem inappropriate that personalities elevated from the depths of injustice and poverty would not apply their visibility to programs that seek to allow entry by others to better access through education to opportunities that would be otherwise denied to them. Citizens have a greater regard for such personalities than they do for politicians. It is time that those who have expropriated the respect of their communities remember the communities they came from and return that respect in equal measure. Whilst it is the case that some have engaged in social justice endeavor through educational and other Foundations, their potential contribution to a large-scale intervention (or series of interventions) should not be discounted and should indeed be strategically mapped by Social Justice specialists. This is an approach that this writer is pursuing with some vigor.

3. Crime prevention must **not** be used as a means to a political end.

It has been the experience of the writer that governments as a matter of political expediency, not for the merits of the approach, embrace the adoption of holistic strategies for crime prevention. In other words, if you are able to demonstrate that short-term outcomes will electorally benefit the government or personally benefit the person proposing the initiative, your approach will be adopted. In some other circumstances it may be that pandering to the ego of a political leader / Mentor will find acceptance for your ideas. This is a particularly unhelpful position for the advancement of social change but it is nonetheless rooted in reality. Whilst such commentary may seem cynical in the extreme, its publication should serve as a warning both to those who wish to advance a proposition but also to the political process that appears to demand a quid pro quo.

4. Discussion on crime prevention in certain jurisdictions is superfluous in the midst of social and economic disparity resultant from long-term exploitation.

5. Unless you totally engage affected citizens in the Partnership process as primary Stakeholders (and owners of the process) we are all wasting our time.

Background

In 1987, the then Queensland Government in Australia was approached to pilot a Crime Prevention initiative designed by the Australian Community Safety & Research Organization Incorporated (ACRO). The resultant Program, known as Community Policing Partnerships - later to become known as the Crime Prevention Program (CPP) was adopted by the then Queensland Government with ACRO appointed to oversight its implementation. A Summary of CPP appears as Appendix 1.

ACRO had previously, and successfully, argued for the implementation of "Safer Australia", a National Strategy on Crime Prevention announced by the then Australian Federal Minister for Justice at the 9th United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in Cairo in 1995. Regardless of this announcement, Safer Australia required the support of the Australian States and Territories in order that it may succeed - a proposition that

was fraught with inherent danger in the midst of divergent political approaches to criminal justice across the various jurisdictions in Australia. It is no surprise that a revamped version of Safer Australia (since renamed twice [“National Campaign Against Violence and Crime” / “National Crime Prevention”]) has become a bureaucratic approach, in the opinion of many, an irrelevancy.

Under the Australian Constitution, principle responsibility for law and order, law enforcement and the protection of citizenry is vested with its States (Provinces) and Territories. The Federal Australian Government has a general power to execute and maintain Commonwealth laws, which include those powers that create criminal offences, and to provide for related enforcement action. The Australian Federal system, reflected in its Constitution however, is bound by State (Provincial) control over its own affairs. Such was the competitiveness of the early colonies in Australia that any National unity (to provide contingency for defense for example) was conditional upon the retention of powers by the constituent colonies (which were to become States).

It wasn't until particular decisions of the High Court of Australia (the highest Court of Appeal in the country) based upon external powers provisions within the Australian Constitution, that State laws could be challenged by the Federal Government and over-ride provisions enacted. In its simplest terms, when a State law is in contravention of an International Covenant to which Australia is a signatory, the Federal Government can act to circumvent that State Law.¹

In the context of National strategies, the Federal Government is significantly constrained by State peculiarities.

Whilst others may argue otherwise, the idea of a National Strategy (particularly one created federally over which State jurisdictions have ultimate control anyway) was always destined for failure.

Introduction

There is no trick in mobilising local communities to embrace reasoned crime prevention and social justice initiatives. For the vast majority of citizens the opportunity to engage in processes – with an honourable intent – towards safer, sustainable communities is compelling and desirable. Whether citizen's perceptions are based upon real or imagined fears; whether the community is affluent or impoverished; the simple desire by citizens to live a peaceful existence provides a powerful incentive for participation.

The trick is recognizing and neutralizing the sleight of hand that seeks to transform and subvert the genuine and legitimate goodwill of ordinary citizens – those insidious political and/or personal agendas that cripple honourable intentions.

The purpose of this paper is threefold; firstly to discuss some of the structural barriers to whole-of-government approaches to crime prevention, secondly to provide evidence of the communities support for crime prevention in the face of traditional 'law and order' responses by government, and thirdly to discuss some of the issues that need to be acknowledged if meaningful and sustained community participation in crime prevention is to be achieved. This paper was not written to provide answers, but rather to ask questions, and challenge the reasons why crime prevention has been seemingly elevated to a level of significance above social justice. It could be argued that a concentration upon crime per se and the endorsement of police-centred crime

¹ This matter will be the subject of discussion both within Australia and the United Nations as it relates to mandatory sentencing arrangements in Western Australia and the Northern Territory as they affect indigenous Australians and juvenile offenders. Suffice it to say that, in the opinion of the author, the vast majority of Australians are appalled by the apparently politically motivated actions by both jurisdictions.

prevention validates a form of social control in the context of inequitable social and economic relations. The presentation of this proposition should serve as a warning – that crime prevention is a *consequence* of strategic processes that enshrine the principles of equity and fairness for all citizens in terms of access to affordable housing, health, education and so forth.

Through the growth of Partnerships as a prime focus of Crime Prevention at a community level we (as a sector) have opened the door and invited the community inside our little house. Explanations will be demanded from the community if they find that while we have invited them in, they are not allowed to sit on the best furniture or use the good silver. It is not adequate to enable the community to express crime prevention and community safety needs and then ask their support for initiatives they did not ask for or express a need for. To do so on the basis that 'the community doesn't always know what is good for them' is patronising and dangerous. Patronising because it implies that the community is not open to information about alternative actions and dangerous because to invite someone to your house and then insult them (their lack of knowledge) will surely invoke a stronger reaction against you than never having invited them at all. The expression of need at someone else's request generally brings an expectation that action (to address that need) will result. The community is now increasingly being asked to participate in the crime prevention debate via the expression of needs and the onus is now clearly on government and the 'experts' to provide action.

Community Participation in Crime Prevention: Structural Barriers to Whole-of-Government Response

As suggested, the first section of this Paper will seek to articulate those matters that are believed to be impediments to partnership development. This list is by no means complete, but it does nonetheless point to those matters which evolving partnerships should be aware of in order that they can differentiate between that which is relevant and that which is not as they open the door to their houses and invite the community in. These issues are based upon experiences in the developed world. It is my view, however, that there will be points of convergence for the developing world given the inherent nature of human behavior. Many people suggest that partnerships are difficult to manage. Whilst not disagreeing with this view, I would strenuously argue that these difficulties can be effectively managed by recognising, acknowledging and responding to them.

In the first instance, it is important to acknowledge that the personality of partnership members or workers can interfere with the creation and sustainability of partnerships. The more problematic impediments as they relate to personality may manifest in issues such as 'empire building' (creating the 'industry' and ensuring its growth), fear of failure (opting for non-human based services simply because they appear to work – or at the least provide conspicuousness), reliance upon the 'comfort zone' (dependence upon the parameters of specific academic qualifications or life experiences rather than exploring beyond that which is immediately understood), moral bias (which can create prohibitions in such areas as sexuality, human relationship and so forth) and career orientation (using the work within the partnership for a purpose beyond its scope – be it political, social or work oriented).

I would suggest that there have been several other significant macroscopic impediments to the development of a coordinated approach by governments (and players of significance within the Corporate, Community and Media sectors) in the past that takes into account the nexus between criminal and social justice. The principle of these are:

The compartmentalisation of responsibilities both within levels of governments and across levels of government.

The historical development of State government (interchange Provincial for State) structures has created discrete departments (e.g. Police, Health, Education) each of which have developed

strategic approaches to what they perceive to be their area of responsibility. The sharing of a common view across these departments on a range of social issues is virtually non-existent and interdepartmental committee structures have failed, in the author's view, to deal with the co-ordination of resources both human and financial to deal with issues that are clearly of common concern.

Furthermore there is a suspicion of each level of government, each against the other - which has tended to mitigate against cooperative venturing in the area of social justice. This is an extremely difficult impediment particularly given the interdependence of these levels (specifically between State and Local governments). In more recent times the public perception of Local Government as a change agent rather than as a government of water, rates and sewerage, has been noted (ACRO, 1994; 1997). The effect of this changing perception is a public expectation that Local Government can deal with crime, health and education issues (to name a few). The debate about "responsibility" about such matters in the context of this perception has exacerbated friction between levels of government. Local Governments increasingly are moving towards the creation of Community Services Departments, replicating in part structures at other levels.

Any reasonable partnership structure should provide the necessary interface to significantly interfere with, and ultimately eliminate, cross-department and cross-government differences by:

- C assigning crime prevention and community safety as the core business of all levels of governments (including across departments) and the community, thereby extending "tunnel vision" to "lateral vision" which recognises the correlation between the work of each;
- C Educating the general public to the view that crime prevention and community safety are the "responsibility" of all citizens and that by dealing with issues such as participation in education, racial intolerance, family dysfunction and other such matters influence criminogenic behaviour and that governments of themselves (or specific Departments such as Police) cannot reduce criminal behaviour.
- C Insisting upon performance by all levels of government in problem solving locally identified issues and resourcing options across relevant levels of governments and departments.

A lack of cross-discipline / cross-government management protocols to recognise and respond to shared issues of concern.

Because each government department interprets government policy in the context of its particular strategic area of "responsibility" and each department operates differing management strategies to meet the objectives of their departments, the proposition of cross-discipline / cross-government cooperative approaches is problematic. The "tunnel vision" of departmental approaches (and therefore, the rationale for not responding to issues that could arguably be included in their portfolio of responsibility) is often justified on the basis of differing management protocols (linked to departmental outcomes as opposed to government outcomes [which are, more often than not, not defined]).

A sensible approach to partnership development should see the development of standardised management protocols between and across, government departments and levels. This set of protocols should be negotiated and based upon a mutually agreed-shared vision.

Divergent information collection and sharing methodologies.

As a result of the development of differing methods of information collection and sharing between different government departments (if and when it occurs) and across levels of government (and

within the community in general) it is difficult to integrate information, and stimulate holistic debate on community safety and crime prevention issues.

An effective partnership model should allow a more realistic flow of information across and between government agencies in the resolution of crime prevention and community safety issues. It has been the author's experience that high-leveled and structured Partnerships allow the informal flow of information (ACRO, 1994, 1997). However, this process needs to be formalised.

Lack of Process to identify and promote "successes"

There are numerous successes at a local level of crime prevention and community safety initiatives that go unnoticed - and which are rarely replicated as a consequence. Many of these undertakings have value-added to the communities in which they have been auspiced.

A key ingredient to partnership strategies should be the promotion of successes consequent from the work of the Partnerships. This publication should be facilitated to affected groups and not just to the 'converted'. At the end of the day it will be the good will of citizens that will ensure the continuity of effective partnerships, not the good intentions of crime prevention 'specialists'. Furthermore, the development of a strategy to share information about successes should utilise WorldWideWeb technology as well as the traditional mediums of Reports, Newsletters and other such devices to ensure replication.

Media campaigns, which promote fear about crime and disproportionate negative reporting

The Media tends to adopt an ethos of exaggeration about crime matters that tends to feed to a hysterical reaction by the public. The usually uniformed debate generated within the media, which at times inappropriately appears to target specific interest groups (particularly young people), inadvertently or otherwise, influences public perceptions about crime and those interest groups (ACRO, 1994, 1995).

It is recognized that the media operate as a business that markets products in much the same manner as any other corporation. Crime is a marketable product for a range of psychological and sociological reasons and ACRO has created a successful strategic approach in its dealings with the media that creates marketability for stories that others would have difficulty promoting. The adoption of this method (i.e. Marketing crime prevention in a positive manner), as a matter of routine, should be of the highest priority to partnerships.

Lack of Practitioner Organisations with a specific and holistic Crime Prevention and Community Safety mandate.

As crime prevention and community safety become the core business of government, business and the community, the coordination of the work of existing and emergent practitioner organisations becomes critical. Firstly it is essential that the niche market that currently epitomises the work in the field be replaced by a holistic set of strategies the implementation of which will greatly assist in the long-term implementation of Programs that have social justice outputs. Secondly, it is equally important that a consensual approach be adopted that is inclusive of the largest number of citizens possible in order to diffuse the effect of personal, 'professional' (those who don't trust the public view and consider theirs as the most appropriate approach) and/or esoteric agendas as well as ensure ownership of any processes from within the community. Finally, this coordination must recognise the constituency in a way that completely dismembers the concept of our work contributing to an 'industry'. What we collectively do is meant to be in the interest of our communities - not to aggrandize the process, but rather to celebrate the outcomes that benefit us all.

I contend that whole-of-government, whole-of-Council, whole-of-community responses will achieve desired outputs in crime prevention and community safety. However it should also be recognized that perhaps the current orientation for partnership development is disproportionately loaded against the citizenry – upon whom is vested the longer-term responsibility for social justice responsiveness. It is noted that a leading Australian academic berated the approach by ACRO in placing a premium on the opinions of citizens through its Survey work stating that the opinions of citizens are not to be "trusted". This elitist (in my opinion) approach greatly understates the capacity of ordinary citizens not only to understand the issues in their communities but also to respond proactively in the construction of workable solutions.

Community Participation in Crime Prevention: The Voice of the Community

It seems that at a global level, policymakers have recognised that crime prevention initiatives need to look beyond the criminal justice system. In Australia, the results of an examination of the association between socio-economic disadvantage and crime led ACRO to conclude that crime prevention should be the concern of social and economic policy development just as it is the concern of the police (Devery, 1991). The 1990's witnessed a growing movement toward the development of crime prevention strategies based on community initiatives that have in turn been based on community identified local needs (The John Howard Society of Alberta, 1995).

In late 1997, over 8000 Queenslanders (residents of the State of Queensland in Australia) living in regions across the state took advantage of an opportunity to voice their opinions about crime and crime prevention (Whelan & Begg, 1998). A Summary of findings for these Surveys together with URL addresses for Report publication can be found at Appendix 2. The aims of the research were clear; to provide a forum for the expression of community needs regarding community based crime prevention (Whelan & Begg, 1998). The results of the research must be seen as encouraging to all practitioners and (hopefully) policy development officers who have long realised the need for widespread community involvement if crime prevention is to be an effective tool in creating safer communities.

The research was conducted via a mail survey and asked over forty (40) questions regarding respondents attitudes, experiences and needs regarding specific crime and crime prevention issues. Importantly, the survey did not ask questions regarding the criminal justice system but as stated earlier was clearly focused on community participation in crime prevention. Selected findings will be discussed within the paper based on their relevance to the papers subject of concentration. Parties with further interest in the research findings should contact the researchers, ACRO, the Australian Community Safety & Research Organisation Incorporated, or view the material at <http://www.acro.com.au> under "Partnerships", "Publications" or " Research".

Respondents were asked if *The Community (with Police/Government support) can be an effective force in preventing crime*. Respondents answered resoundingly in the affirmative, 84.1% (7077) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the community could be an effective crime prevention participant. In contrast to this strong acceptance of the role the community could play in crime prevention, was the community perception of the ability of the Police to be effective as the sole agent of crime prevention. When asked if the *Police are doing a good job tackling crime in the Community*, 41.5% (3503) agreed or strongly agreed that they were. It would seem that there is a strong recognition within the community that crime prevention (to be successful) cannot be the sole responsibility of the police and further that the community can be an effective partner in crime prevention.

In anticipation of strong community interest in the issue (community participation in crime prevention) and in an effort to provide individuals with a clear invitation to become actively involved, the researchers made an important addition to the research. Each package mailed out

by the researchers contained a 'Participation Form'. The form enabled respondents to not only voice their opinions (through survey answers) but to become active participants in crime prevention in their community. The Participation Form enabled respondents to either indicate a desire for 'being informed about crime prevention in their community' or 'getting involved in crime prevention in their community' thus creating a mandate for community participation beyond determining need. The determination of community need is well practiced across a wide range of issues (hence complaints that the community is 'surveyed out') but the follow-on response to that identified need is often seen to be lacking by community members. By including options for ongoing involvement (through information or activity) the researchers hoped to achieve two aims. Firstly, to provide those bodies mandated to implement community based crime prevention with a base of community support that can be consolidated and built upon, but also to ensure that some responsibility was invoked among those mandated bodies to recognise community participation as something more than simply determining need.

Respondents were further asked if *Effective community programs that tackle crime issues would benefit my (their) suburb*. 76.6% (6446) of respondents felt that programs that tackled crime issues would be a positive addition to their suburb. Respondents were also asked if *Crime prevention programs should target the underlying causes of crime (unemployment, poverty, isolation, etc)*. 83.6% (7249) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that crime prevention programs should target the underlying social causes of crime, thus demonstrating support for the knowledge held within the crime prevention field that crime prevention will be most successful when it is concerned not only with short term solutions and strategies but when concentrated effort is focused on long term strategies that tackle the many risk factors associated with crime.

Respondents were provided with eleven (11) program concepts (10 explicitly stated and 1 other) for 'desired introduction' in their suburb. As stated earlier, the criminal justice system (and its role in crime prevention) was not the focus of the research and as such only one policing option was provided. The program options were heavily loaded with 'crime prevention through social development' concepts as it is accepted by the researchers that these options are likely to be most successful in preventing crime on a long term basis. Respondents were able to choose as many concepts as they felt would be of benefit to their suburb. Table 1 shows the percentage of respondents who selected each option according to their age. Options are listed in the table as they are listed in the survey form. While there were obvious differences between age categories in their selection of 'crime prevention programs for (desired) introduction in their suburb, the most popularly selected program concepts tended to be (in no particular order) safety checks for older neighbours, after school activities for youth, school based crime prevention programs, facilities such as lighting, paths, etc, and foot/bike patrols by police.

Table 1 Programs selected for 'desired introduction' in respondents' own suburb by age.

Program Option	Age Category Indicated by Respondents in Years					
	12-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 +
After school activities for youth (12-18 years)	48.2%	52.1%	54.6%	49.6%	47.8%	38.3%
Safety checks for older neighbours	49.7%	47.1%	53.5%	57.0%	57.0%	49.7%
Support services for families	26.8%	25.6%	30.6%	24.9%	21.6%	18.3%
Support networks for those living alone	30%	34.3%	40.6%	45.5%	48.7%	44.3%
Programs for increased communication between neighbours	37.4%	34.8%	33.2%	36.1%	34.7%	24.7%

Neighbourhood graffiti clean-ups	23.2%	25.5%	27.4%	30.2%	28.3%	21.5%
Foot/bike patrols by Police	44.4%	49.6%	53.6%	52.0%	53.7%	47.1%
Facility for Community development programs	16.2%	21.9%	23.1%	21.8%	19.6%	13.6%
School based crime prevention programs	42.9%	56.1%	60.4%	53.9%	50.5%	36.5%
Facilities such as lighting, paths, etc.	74.7%	63.3%	56.2%	53.2%	46.2%	35.2%
Other (specify)	9.4%	9.4%	8.4%	7.6%	6.9%	4.9%

Table 1 shows that 'crime prevention' needs differ across age categories. Respondents aged between 12-24 years most strongly supported lighting, paths etc, followed by safety checks for older neighbours (altruistic concern?), after school activities for youth, and foot/bike patrols by police. Respondents aged between 25-34 years most strongly supported lighting, paths etc, school based crime prevention programs, after school activities for youth, and foot/bike patrols by police. Respondents aged between 35-44 years most strongly supported school based crime prevention programs, lighting, paths etc, after school activities for youth, foot/bike patrols by police and safety checks for older neighbours. Respondents aged between 45-54 years most strongly supported safety checks for older neighbours, school based crime prevention programs, lighting, paths etc, and foot/bike patrols by police. Respondents aged between 55-64 years most strongly supported safety checks for older neighbours, foot/bike patrols by police, school based crime prevention programs, support networks for those living alone, and after school activities for youth. Respondents aged over 65 years most strongly supported safety checks for older neighbours, foot/bike patrols by police, and support networks for those living alone.

In the conclusion of the discussion of this recent research conducted by ACRO, several points bear reinforcement. The community has clearly indicated that they perceive a real and necessary role for the community in crime prevention. Approximately one in five survey respondents actively indicated (through the completion of participation forms) a desire for greater involvement in community based crime prevention. The community does have (and can articulate) crime prevention needs that go beyond the traditional criminal justice responses of more policing and more severe sentencing. Determining community need is important, however, perhaps more important is the recognition of the community as the major partner in crime prevention.

Community Participation in Crime Prevention: Translating the Community Voice into Action

To provide the community with a voice should be a primary function of any body that seeks to facilitate change in any community. Where that voice is weak and tenuous, then provide support for the strengthening of that voice. Where that voice is stuttering and unsure, then provide the information that will enable that voice to become fluent and forceful. Where that voice is strident but lacking the power of information to be most effective, then provide the knowledge that will assist that voice to ask for what will work. It is the author's belief that the transformation of Crime Prevention into 'core business of government' cannot occur until such time as agencies and individuals within the Crime Prevention sector accept that their 'core business' is providing support, information and knowledge to the community, so that their voice can demand such a transformation. The 'experts' within crime prevention have quality knowledge about what is effective in preventing crime. Certainly that knowledge is constantly evolving and there are key areas of weakness that need to be addressed, but enough has been done (crime prevention practice) at an international level to have a strong basis for decisive action to take place.

There is little question that Crime Prevention has grown as a sector of activity for both government and non-government bodies in recent decades to the degree that this area of activity is now an 'industry' feeding many mouths - not many of which appear concerned for resolution of the social problems that spawned their careers. The consideration of Crime Prevention as an industry may be problematic, given that most industry seeks to perpetuate activity indefinitely. After all this is the nature of business, to strengthen and expand. If a definition of Crime Prevention is accepted as 'any act that prevents crime' then it is an anathema to consider a body that seeks to prevent crime as a component of a 'Crime Prevention Industry', a schema that suggests perpetuation and growth. A more effective crime prevention sector might consider that its primary role is to further the expert knowledge available regarding crime prevention and to consistently and effectively pass that information on to the wider community, enabling the community to enter the debate on an equal footing. A well-educated community (in terms of effective crime prevention) is likely to be the most potent method of ensuring that crime prevention goes beyond traditional punitive responses to crime and effects worthwhile positive change in the community.

It is the authors' assertion that a primary function of crime prevention needs to become community education. When I discuss community education in this paper, I refer not only to community education regarding the issues but community education about what is effective in combating these issues. The media continue to be the major source of information about crime for the wider community. For too long we have asked the media to do our job for us and at times bewailed its failure to take completely on board our (crime prevention sector) arguments regarding the reporting of crime and the alternatives to traditional punitive responses to crime. There are some wonderful examples, both locally and internationally, of the media's willing involvement in positive crime prevention and community safety, but it is also true that a continuing difficulty is the culture of 'if it bleeds it leads'. Research has certainly supported this notion. Serious violent crime (while a small percentage within crime statistics) consistently dominates 'crime reporting' in a variety of media sources and has contributed to distorted images of crime. (Federal Justice Office, 1992; John Howard Society of Alberta, 1995). It is not the intention here to take up the argument of the media's role in perceptions of crime and fear levels but merely to suggest that the 'experts' in the crime prevention sector could be more proactive in ensuring that community education regarding crime and crime prevention is effectively achieved. It is true that the media has an important role in information provision in contemporary society. It is also recognised that the media has contributed positively at times to the crime and crime prevention debate, but it is further suggested that the crime prevention sector has not been as active as it could have been in ensuring an effective level of 'good' information is provided to the community.

Conclusion

As stated in the Introduction, this paper was not written to provide answers but rather to acknowledge some key issues (in my opinion) that need to be addressed if effective community participation in crime prevention is to be achieved. These are only some of the issues. They are issues, however, which I believe if not adequately addressed will delay the development of an effective response to crime, currently and in future decades. The focus of crime prevention on an international level is clearly centred on community partnerships and it is the authors' assertion that it is now a key responsibility of the crime prevention sector to ensure that the community does not become the subordinate partner (to governments and experts in the field) but becomes the dominant partner it deserves and needs to be, for crime prevention to be effectively achieved. The very real barriers to whole-of-government approaches to social issues as described in the paper also need to be planned for and strategies developed to address their occurrence. Partnership Model development needs to take into account and dynamically address the barriers to whole-of-government approaches and the crime prevention sector needs to listen to the community and effectively educate the community (without relying solely on media cooperation) to enable a whole-of-community approach to be truly evident and effective.

I would like to lend from Nelson Mandela who wrote some 36 years ago: "I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities". Should crime prevention as a concept be the tool by which we as a society (either within the developed world or in the developing world) crystallize the social dilemma that social and economic disparity reaps upon us all, then so be it. But should we use a moment in history to exploit an already deeply repressed citizenry without direct and substantial net benefits to that citizenry, then we deserve to be damned in history. The disenchantment by constituencies with governments that don't take their concerns seriously (which from this writer's experience and ACRO studies are rooted in realistic approaches – social justice approaches – will be measured at polling boxes. Citizens are not generally stupid; they are just treated as if they are. As suggested, there is no trick to mobilisation. But do not give undertakings unless you are serious about delivery and honourable in your intent.

"Two lonely cross-roads that themselves cross each other I have walked several times this winter without meeting or overtaking so much as a single person on foot or on runners. The practically unbroken condition of both for several days after a snow or a blow proves that neither is much traveled."

Robert Frost in a letter written to Susan Hayes Ward on February 10, 1912. [Cramer, Jeffery: Robert Frost Among His Poems]

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Appendix 1

The ACRO Model, A Summary CPP “Crime Prevention Partnerships”

CPP is an ACRO construct, which seeks to implement a whole-of-government, whole-of-Council, whole-of-community response to locally, identified criminal and social justice issues. It is premised upon the notion that effective crime prevention requires a coordinated approach and that causative social justice issues require attention (such as unemployment, racial intolerance, poverty, homelessness, sexual harassment and so forth) in order to reduce crime victimization and fear of crime.

It differs from other models in that it incorporates a top down and bottom up approach. Most world models utilize a panel of “experts” as a partnership that makes decisions for the entire community based upon their personal and collective experiences. Whilst the ACRO Model incorporates a Partnership structure that comprises the “experts” from each community (business, community, media, youth, aboriginal/ethnic etc), it is (more importantly) driven by the expressed needs of the general community as defined by a Survey process (which also combines other research and police material) in a strategic process that is unique and inclusive.

ACRO devised CPP to recognize the following:

That criminal justice and social justice is inexorably linked, that is, that social factors (such as family dysfunction and violence, unemployment, sexual exploitation and harassment, racism, cultural intolerance and so forth) are causative to conflict and crime;

That only through the creation and maintenance of meaningful partnerships within communities (working in tandem with government services and not excluded [nor directed] from them) can any effective community reconnection occur which will reduce social inequity and thereby reduce intolerance, friction and crime;

That only acting upon the expressed legitimate concerns of ordinary citizens within specific communities can governments utilize its resources, and those of the broader community, to minimize harm caused by social dislocation; and

That an imperative exists for government departments to collaboratively problem-solve and resource in those social areas nominated by local citizens and not to create Programs that are generalized across the State, which may have partial relevance but not necessarily be responsive to actual "needs".

This logic is developed from an appreciation gleaned from national and international survey work that suggests that:

Affected disadvantaged groups within communities are the "experts" whose input can make a defining difference in addressing problematic behavior, that is, that such people should be viewed not as the problem but rather part of the solution;

Ordinary citizens are not only capable of understanding the problems within their own community, but often provide meaningful ideas that reduce these problems;

Ordinary citizens want to be engaged in the process of problem definition and solving and are prepared to participate in Projects at a local level (always in the 90th percentile)

Governments (specifically police personnel) cannot, of themselves, provide the panacea to solve social problems that exist within communities

All members of the community whereby a mutually agreed set of objectives are strategically mapped and achieved can only achieve social cohesion through a joint-venture commitment.

The process by which ACRO's model proceeds is that:

Surveys of citizen's attitudes and opinions of crime and social issues are undertaken in regions nominated by the State Government. The participating Local Authorities should meet the cost of these Surveys in order to engender ownership of the process at the local level;

The results of this Survey will provide the information upon which locally appointed Boards (comprising no more than seven members including the Mayor as Chairperson, the most senior police person in the area and representatives from across the major community sectors - business, media, aboriginal/ethnic, aged, youth and so forth) will act. Those issues that can be resolved locally will be dealt with locally whilst those that cannot, and/or which have a cross- departmental, social justice component will be referred to a Central Board for resolution. As well as the local Boards having clearly defined goals and objectives, individual members of each local Board would be similarly performance driven. Amongst other tasks for these members will be the convening of meetings of stakeholders from within their particular interest group on a regular basis (for example, the police person would bring together all the players from Neighbourhood Watch, Commercial Watch, Adopt a cop, and other such policing initiatives). This process would reduce a great deal of time for those who are involved in several of these individual programs as well as bring together like-minded citizens to brainstorm and act as volunteers in the implementation of local Projects prioritized by the Local Boards. The involvement of citizens directly in the problem-solving and implementation process will also provide a much-needed focus for groups that are floundering. The work of the local Board will be guided by a co-ordinator funded by the State Government.

A Central Board for the Project will be established by the State Government which will be chaired by the Police or Justice Minister and will comprise representatives such as Local Government, the Police Commissioner, a Managing Director of a major Media outlet, a notable academic in criminal and social justice, a senior ranking Public Servant attached to the Office of the Cabinet (whose responsibility it would be to negotiate across government departments) a high-profile representative of the aboriginal or ethnic community and the facilitator of the Program on a day-to-day basis. The role of the Central Board will be to ensure that cross-departmental consultations occur to problem-solve locally identified problems, provide options for implementation and to find the necessary resourcing for implementation to occur. Strict adherence to timelines and goals will be required.

Appendix 2

"Creating Perspective: A Blueprint for Crime Prevention and Community Safety by the Community for the Community"

An ACRO Report of Experiences and Attitudes Towards Crime and Crime Prevention in Thuringowa, Mackay, the Sunshine Coast, Logan City and the Gold Coast

Stephanie Whelan and Clive Begg, ACRO, Brisbane, Australia, 1998

A copy of the full text of these Reports can be found at the following website addresses:

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In 1997, 40,000 Queenslanders living in the Gold Coast, Logan City, Mackay, Sunshine Coast, and Thuringowa Regions received a Survey regarding Crime. The Survey, designed by ACRO, generated responses regarding attitudes toward crime, experiences with crime and community participation and needs in terms of crime prevention.

The resultant publication **Creating Perspective: A Blueprint for Crime Prevention and Community Safety by the Community for the Community** addresses the local crime prevention needs identified by members of specific regions, within the survey. A Particular emphasis has been placed on information Survey Respondents have provided in terms of past and current involvement in Community programs, and 'willingness' to become involved in local crime prevention initiatives. It is widespread community involvement that is the cornerstone of successful crime prevention at a community level.

The Survey results provide a blueprint for action for Crime Prevention Partnerships being piloted in these five (5) regions. Community Policing Partnerships are an initiative of the Queensland State Government, and are operated in cooperation with the relevant Local Government Authorities.

The ACRO Crime Survey is an important addition to the knowledge base of community attitudes and experiences regarding crime and crime prevention, at a State and National level. The ACRO Crime Survey is the most comprehensive of its kind ever conducted in Australia, with an emphasis within in the Survey on Community Participation in Crime Prevention.

The participating Councils contracted with ACRO, the Australian Community Safety & Research Organization, to undertake a Survey of residents to determine citizen's attitudes towards crime, experiences with crime and community participation and needs in terms of crime prevention. The material gained from citizens was required to provide information for a newly constituted Crime Prevention Partnerships (CPP) in each of the participating Local Authorities, which are chaired by the Mayors and comprise eminent local citizens representing a diverse range of community and business interests. These local CPPs were charged with the responsibility for prioritizing the issues raised from the Survey and seeking solutions utilizing the combined resources of all levels of government, Council and the community. During December 1997, 8000 randomly selected households throughout each of the participating Local Authorities received a questionnaire for self-administration and return by reply-paid envelope. This process received 8571 completed Survey documents (or a 21.43% participation rate). The questionnaire required responses across four sections; attitudes, ("concerns about crime") experiences, crime prevention and demographic information. The Survey results have been analyzed in terms of the local crime prevention needs

identified by members of specific regions, within the Survey. A particular emphasis was placed on information provided in terms of past and current involvement in community programs, and willingness to become involved in local crime prevention initiatives. An important component in the research conducted throughout the regions was the inclusion of 'participation forms' in all survey packages. Respondents who wished to be informed regarding the results of the survey and future activities of the crime prevention partnership in their region were able to provide their contact details which would then be held by the partnerships for use in newsletter mail outs. Additionally, respondents were given the opportunity to express a desire for greater involvement in crime prevention within their community, through selecting that option on the participation form. This atypical addition (compared to most community social surveys) to the research is a strong indicator of the commitment this project has to whole of community involvement and mobilization, in action rather than through rhetoric. A total of 1620 completed participation forms were completed by respondents and forwarded to ACRO (Sunshine Coast, 292; Gold Coast, 432; Thuringowa, 333; Mackay, 221 and Logan, 342). This represents almost 20% of respondents, which is a strong result. Each Partnership now has at its disposal the energy of these respondents who should provide a significant resource.

SUMMARY OF CROSS-REGIONAL CONSISTENCIES

The responses to *Concern about Crime* issues, *Attitudes towards Crime* issues, *Crime Prevention* issues and *Crime Experiences* issues were extremely similar across the regions. Those differences that do exist can be explained by demographic anomalies, more specifically age and gender.

The summary position of the researchers is that there are substantially more similarities of opinions, attitudes and beliefs about crime, crime victimization and crime preventative activities that should be introduced across regions than there are dissimilarities.

As the crime prevention issues are most pertinent to the work of CPP, and given that the inclusion of questions on this aspect of community views is a "first", it is appropriate to draw attention to these, particularly in the context of approaches to crime prevention by government.

Attitude towards the underlying causes of crime

The majority of respondents in all regions agreed that crime prevention programs should target the underlying causes of crime and that effective crime prevention programs would benefit their suburbs.

Role of community in Crime Prevention

The majority of respondents across all regions reported that the community could be an effective force in crime prevention.

Police and Crime Prevention

Respondents across all regions were more unsure about whether the police are doing a good job tackling crime in their communities but nearly all respondents agreed that the police alone cannot prevent crime.

Crime Prevention Programs selected by Respondents for Introduction

Other than foot/bike patrols by police which appeared in the top six of preferred options (discussed elsewhere and related to the conspicuousness of police), respondents consistently chose programs which implementation would deal with the underlying causes of crime:

- Schools based crime prevention programs (citizenship); ranked number 2 for priority in Thuringowa, the Sunshine Coast and Mackay, and number 3 in Logan and on the Gold Coast. The researchers would view with extreme caution this consistency in reporting in relation to the objectives for police on campus programs currently being piloted in Queensland. It is not the view of the researchers that respondent's opinions are necessarily an endorsement of this pilot project.
- After schools activities for youth (12-18): ranked number 3 in Thuringowa and Mackay and number 4 in Logan.
- Safety Checks for people living alone (including older people): ranked number 1 on the Gold Coast (by a large margin); number 2 in Logan; and number 3 in Mackay and on the Sunshine Coast.
- Facilities such as lighting paths (situational crime prevention) ranked number 1 in Thuringowa, Mackay and on the Sunshine Coast, and number 4 on the Gold Coast.

Active Community Involvements

- Respondents across all regions were more likely to report past (rather than current) involvement in community groups/programs. Community Groups/Programs most commonly associated with targeted children or welfare oriented services; religious based groups and crime prevention. The issue of concern to the researchers relates to the reasons for disaffiliation with these involvements – a subject for future possible investigation.
- Respondents across all regions reported regular discussions with neighbors or with those in their neighborhoods.

What can be said with extreme certainty about respondents views (as consistently reported across the participating regions) is that citizens are seeking out more creative solutions to criminal and social justice issues.

The obvious conclusion to be drawn is that the general public, in those Local Authorities that participated in the Survey process, does not accept that traditional approaches to crime prevention (apprehension and detention) are working. Furthermore it can be asserted with a degree of confidence, on the basis of the Survey outcomes, that citizens are (and would be) extremely receptive to, and supportive of, alternative social justice strategies that seek to interfere with factors that contribute to crime.

• Visibility of Police within Communities

Previous research in the area of victimization and attitudes to crime has suggested that increased police numbers be considered a preferred option as a crime reduction measure by respondents. ACRO research in 1995 (Begg & Whelan) noted that it was the "presence" of police that was more desirable rather than increased police numbers. It was determined to test the relevance of this previous outcome in the context of the current research. Accordingly 'foot/bike patrols by police' was included as an option for programs/services/facilities that respondents would like to see introduced in their suburb. It was assumed that a significant response to this suggestion of foot/bike patrols by police would provide some clarification about respondent's view in relation to policing within their regions.

It is highly significant that the majority of regions rated this category in the top four (4) of eleven available categories (Logan rated it as number 1; Gold Coast rated it as number 2; Thuringowa and the Sunshine Coast rated it as number 4; and Mackay rated it as number 6).

It is equally important to note that this measure fell behind programs such as school based crime prevention programs, after school activities for young people and other such social programs as well as 'lights, paths etc.'

On the basis of the results from this Survey, it is a reasonable conclusion that the public's call for "more police" actually equates to more conspicuousness by existing police. It would seem that respondents are more interested in putting a face to the police service, which would be achieved, by reorienting current patrol practices by existing police personnel.

GENERAL BACKGROUND

Traditional approaches to crime are reactive having their focus entrenched in a belief that apprehension and detention of offenders will reduce future crime occurrences. This methodology has failed to meet a key objective of effective crime prevention in that in spite of harsher sentences for offending behavior, more police and escalating criminal justice costs, crime continues to be a social and economic problem for communities worldwide. The cost of Corrective Services in Australia for the period between 1984/85 and 1993/94 increased by 105% whilst the prison population during this same period increased by only 31.1%.

With the anticipated influx of offenders from net-widening and 'truth in sentencing' legislation throughout Australia, and having regard to the rising costs associated with incarceration, the financial and social burden of maintaining reactive approaches will eventually become prohibitive. It must be remembered that every dollar spent on the criminal justice system is another dollar that won't be available for health, education and other more significant social services – this is the financial cost. The social cost will be measured in less than adequate education for our children, expensive health care for an aging population and a range of other unintended consequences, all of which will exacerbate the social problems that nurture and promote crime.

A more intelligent approach has seen an acceptance of the nexus between criminal justice and social justice and a recognition that two new proactive partners in crime prevention weaponry have joined the reactive criminal justice stable: reduction of opportunity approaches (commonly referred to as 'target hardening' and which seek to restrict the opportunity for crime to occur by eliminating [or reducing] targets for crime) and reduction of desire approaches (which refer to strategies that seek to reduce the likelihood of crime occurring by reducing the likelihood that any one person in the community will become an offender preventing crime through social development.

The authors have adopted a simple definition for crime prevention that is not driven by philosophy or politics: "any act that prevents crime from occurring is an act of crime prevention" and further "that crime prevention is not defined by its intentions but by its consequences".

Specific groups within the community are historically identified as experiencing and reporting greater fear or concern about crime. It is inappropriate to dismiss these concerns as exaggerated or irrational as they may well be based upon realities other than those explained by official police statistics. Women, older members of the community and victims of crime are groups commonly identified as exhibiting heightened levels of concern about crime. This Report does not support an explanation of heightened levels of concern experienced by these groups as irrational nor exaggerated, but supports the argument that proposes that heightened concern is based upon the specific vulnerabilities to crime that are evident for individuals within these sectors of the community. Women should exhibit heightened concern when compared to men for several reasons; women have a unique vulnerability to sexual assault that may only be shared by children (regardless of gender). Almost any victimization that is experienced by women is accompanied by a fear of sexual assault, a fear not generally experienced by men. Older members of the community should exhibit heightened concern about crime when compared to

younger community members given the apparent physical and financial vulnerability that is evident for these members of the community. Previous victims of crime are not laboring under the impression that they will not be victimized, they already have been and so are more aware of their individual vulnerability to crime than would be expected for individuals who have not experienced victimization.

Young people are often labeled as 'the problem' and rarely as part of the solution. Their marginalisation is profound given that they are as likely to be the victims of crime as the perpetrators of crime. This is not to suggest that young people do not offend, as they most certainly do, but that the generalization of offending behavior to **all** young people is, in the opinion of the authors, severely impacting on this group within the community and requires urgent and sustained remedial attention.

This Research is about creating perspective in relation to crime prevention fact and rhetoric, about placing the legitimate concerns of citizens clearly on the table, and about direct action by citizens in partnership with government and business to deal with locally identified problems and social issues.

Philosophical Underpinnings of the Research

- Effective crime prevention requires the activation of community-based partnerships to deal with the causes of crime from a social justice perspective i.e. crime is influenced by such issues as family dysfunction, unemployment, economic disadvantage, intolerance(to name a few) and crime and fear of crime can only be dealt with in tandem with efforts to minimize risk factors occasioned by these other issues;
- A whole-of-Council, whole-of-government and whole-of-community response is necessary to deal with the complexities of social constructs that contribute to the commissioning of crime and the escalation of concern of crime within the community; and
- Effective community and government based partnerships dealing with crime and social issues require information about the community in which the partnership is to operate and that the participating community should actively contribute by defining their concerns and by participating in the work of partnerships developed on their behalf. This will ensure ownership of the process and acceptance of the outcomes from any work undertaken.

Statistical information on Victimization to place against Respondent Attitudes about Crime

Age

- Young people aged less than 24 years are most likely to be victims of personal violent crime. Victimization of personal violent crime tends to decrease with age and persons aged over 65 years are least likely to be victims of personal crime, ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics. 1994).
- In 1996/1997 people aged between 15 and 34 years were more likely to be victims of homicide, than persons younger or older than this age bracket QPS Review (Queensland Police Service. 1997)
- The highest victimization of assault occurred with people aged between 15 and 29 years, with the victimization rate for persons aged over 55 years lower than the reported rate for children aged between 5 and 9 years. QPS Review (Queensland Police Service. 1997)
- The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) in the United States reports that although persons aged 65 years or over make up 14% of the population they reported less than 2% of all victimization (U.S. Department of Justice. 1994).
- The BJS reports that persons aged between 12 and 24 have the highest victimization rates for all crimes, while those aged 65 years and over have the lowest (U.S. Department of Justice. 1994).

Gender

- Males were more likely than females to be the victim of homicide and assault. QPS Review (Queensland Police Service. 1997).
- Female victims of homicide were more likely to have been killed by a husband, ex-husband, or boyfriend (28%) than males were to have been killed by a wife, ex-wife, or girlfriend (3%).BJS (Social Statistic Briefing Room. 1997).
- Males were more likely to be the victim of personal crime, with young men aged between 15 and 24 years most likely to be victimized ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics. 1994).
- Females were more likely to be the victim of all sexual offences, with women aged between 10 and 19 years most likely to be victimized QPS Review (Queensland Police Service. 1997).
- Women are more likely to be victimized by someone known to them than are men. BJS (Social Statistic Briefing Room. 1997).
- Females victimized by someone known to them were more likely to not report an offence to the police. BJS (Social Statistic Briefing Room. 1997).