



Attorney General
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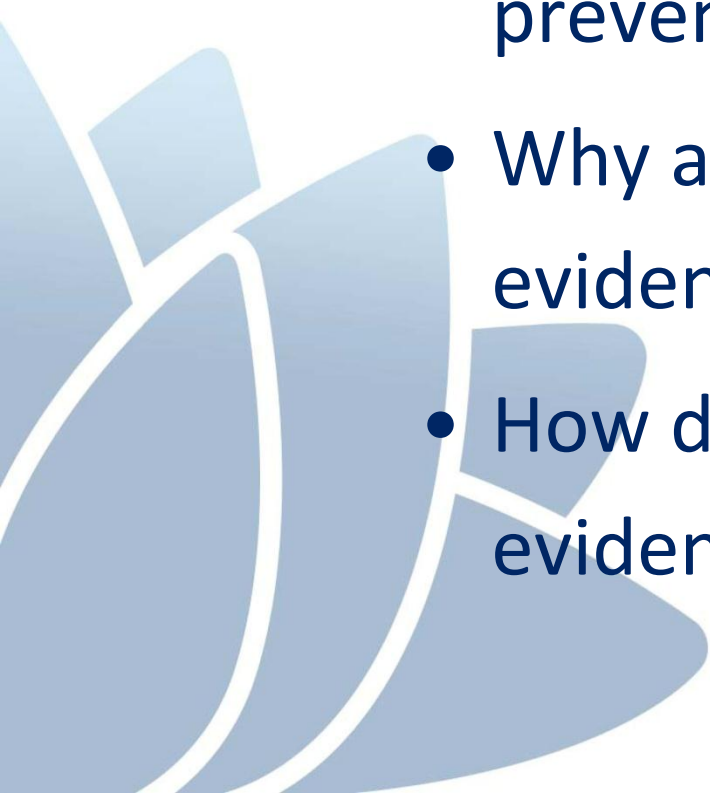
The challenges involved in evaluating crime prevention programs

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Crime Prevention and Communities Conference

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Outline of Presentation

- Why do we need to evaluate crime prevention programs?
 - Why are there so many gaps in the evidence base?
 - How do we start to improve the evidence base?
- 

Why do we need to evaluate crime prevention initiatives?

- Emphasis on evidence-based policy
- Good policy requires good analysis and evaluation
- How do we know that what we are doing is reducing crime?
- Need to understand what works, what doesn't, and why.
- Governments need to use limited resources in the most effective way



We need high quality evaluations

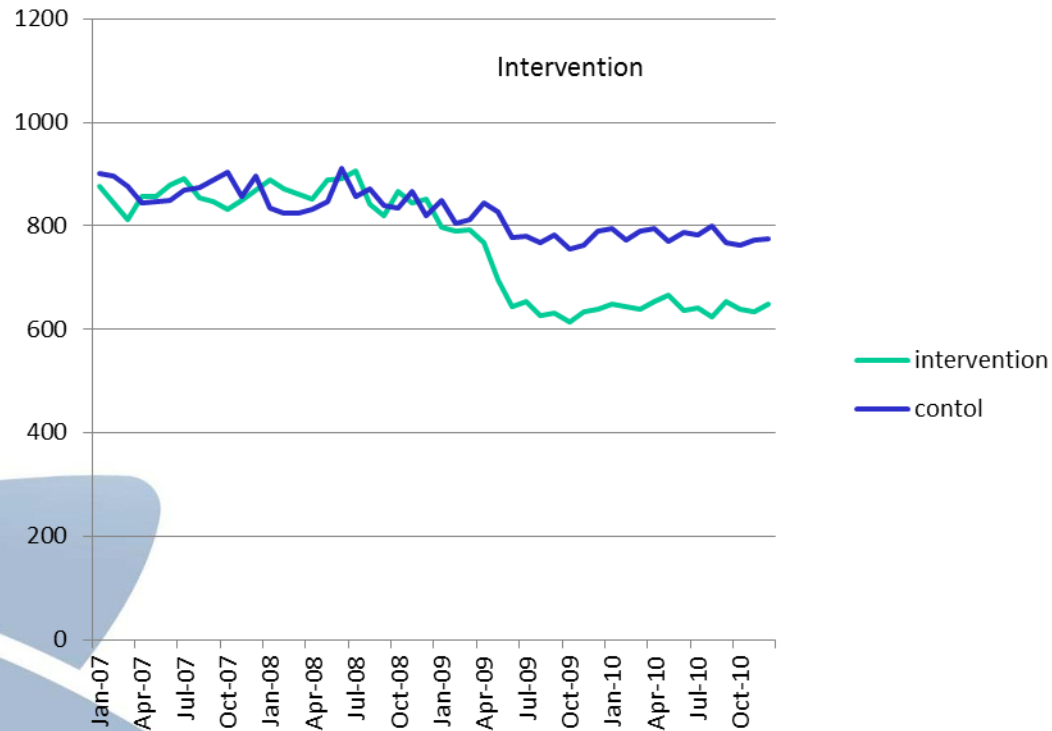
Scientific Methods Scale	
Level	Criteria
1	Correlation between a prevention program and measure of crime at one point in time
2	Measures of crime before and after the program, with no comparable control condition
3	Measures of crime before and after the program in experimental and comparable control condition
4	Measures of crime before and after the program in multiple units with and without the program, controlling for other variables that influence crime, or using comparison units that evidence only minor differences
5	Random assignment of program and control conditions to units

Source: Sherman et al 1998

That are rigorous and credible

- Generally accepted that minimum standard is level 3 on SMS
- Need to establish that crime levels have decreased
- Any crime decrease is due to our program, not other factors (eg crime was already decreasing, differences between groups)


Crime decreased and more so than in control sites



Why are there so many gaps in the evidence base

- Few evaluations of local crime prevention programs
- Evaluation not valued highly enough
- Focus on delivering crime prevention rather than on identifying effective programs and approaches
- Lack of funding and resources for evaluation
- Lack of evaluation expertise and capability within the field
- Evaluation is seen as too risky
- Perception that we already know what works
- Sometimes evaluation is just not feasible

And then when we do an evaluation

- Lack of resources and time
 - Thought about too late in the project
 - All too hard
 - Difficult to measure the project
 - Difficult to measure multiple interventions
 - Priorities and projects change
 - Timing not right
 - Difficult to access good quality data
 - Difficult to identify suitable control sites or groups in local programs
 - How credible is the evaluation?
- 

So how do we start to improve the evidence base?

- Support and investment in evaluation at all levels
- Need to use best available evidence
- Do more high quality evaluations
- High quality doesn't have to mean overly costly and complex
- Plan for evaluation at the start of the program
- Recognise that good evaluations take time
- Make better use of the data that is available

Using the best available evidence

- Ideally systematic reviews and studies of level 3 and above on SMS.
- In the absence of systematic reviews and high quality studies, need to rely on what is available




How do we go about doing high quality evaluations?

- First we need to really understand our program and how we are trying to reduce crime
 - a good understanding of our problem
 - a clear sense upfront of what we are trying to achieve
 - a clear sense upfront of how we are going to achieve it



Understanding our problem

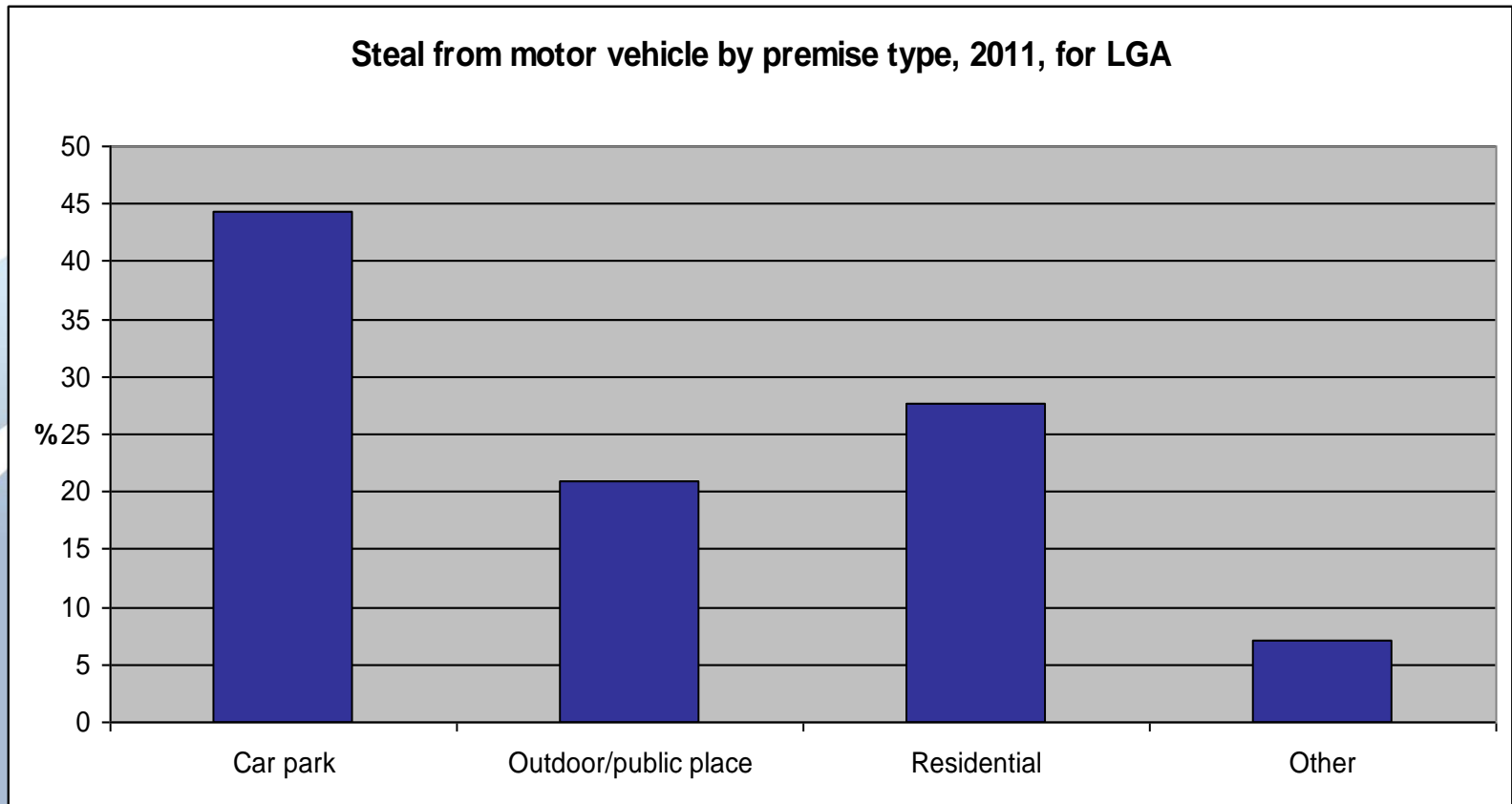
- Do we have a significant crime problem? What are the current trends?
 - Where are the hotspots?
 - What types of locations?
 - What are peak days and times?
 - What are key risk factors?
- 
- A decorative graphic in the bottom-left corner consisting of several overlapping, semi-transparent blue shapes. These shapes include curved lines and solid areas, creating a modern, abstract design.

Steal From Motor Vehicle - Hotspots, Campbelltown LGA

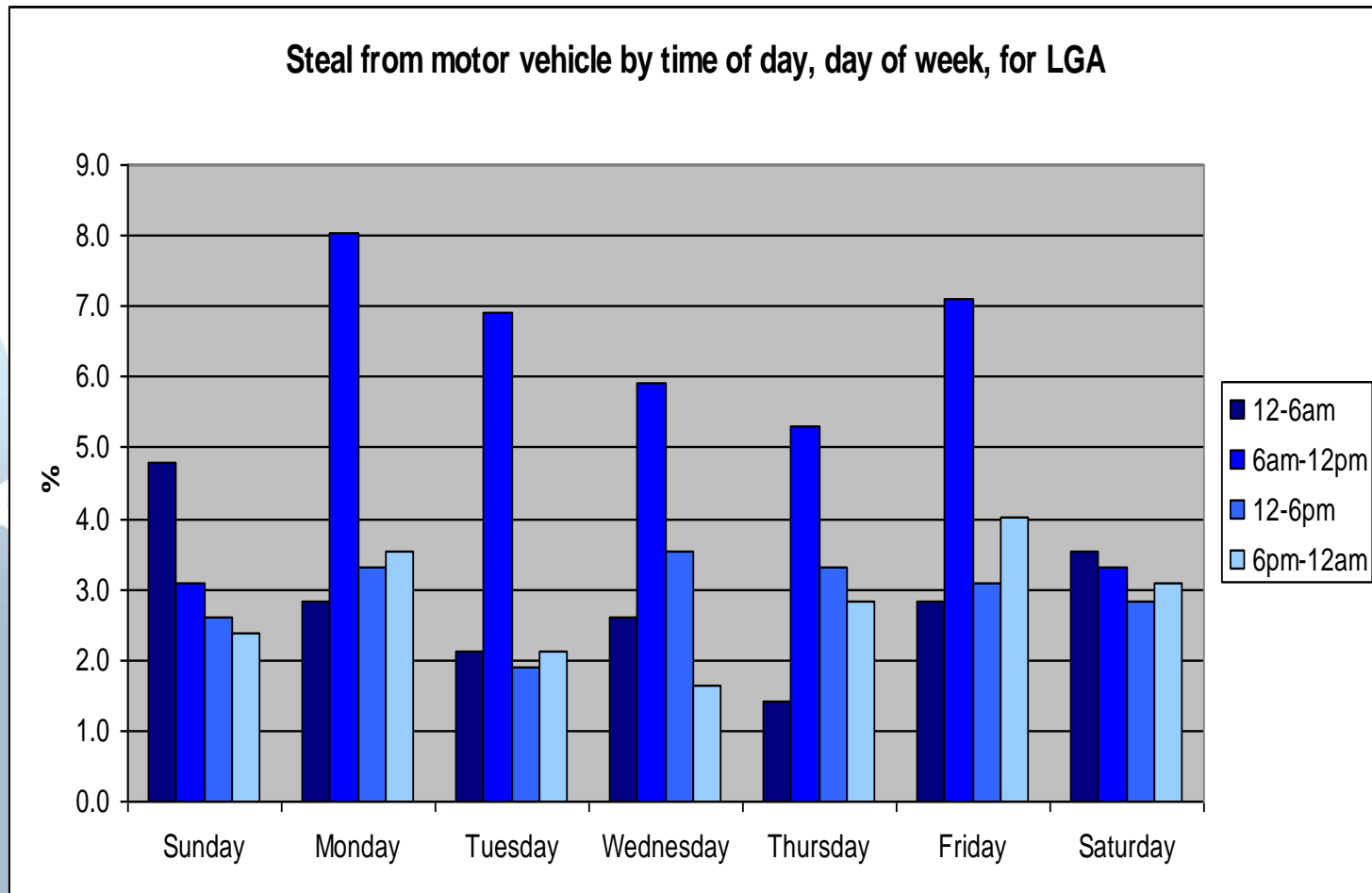


Source: BOCSAR 2010

What are the key locations?



What are the peak times?

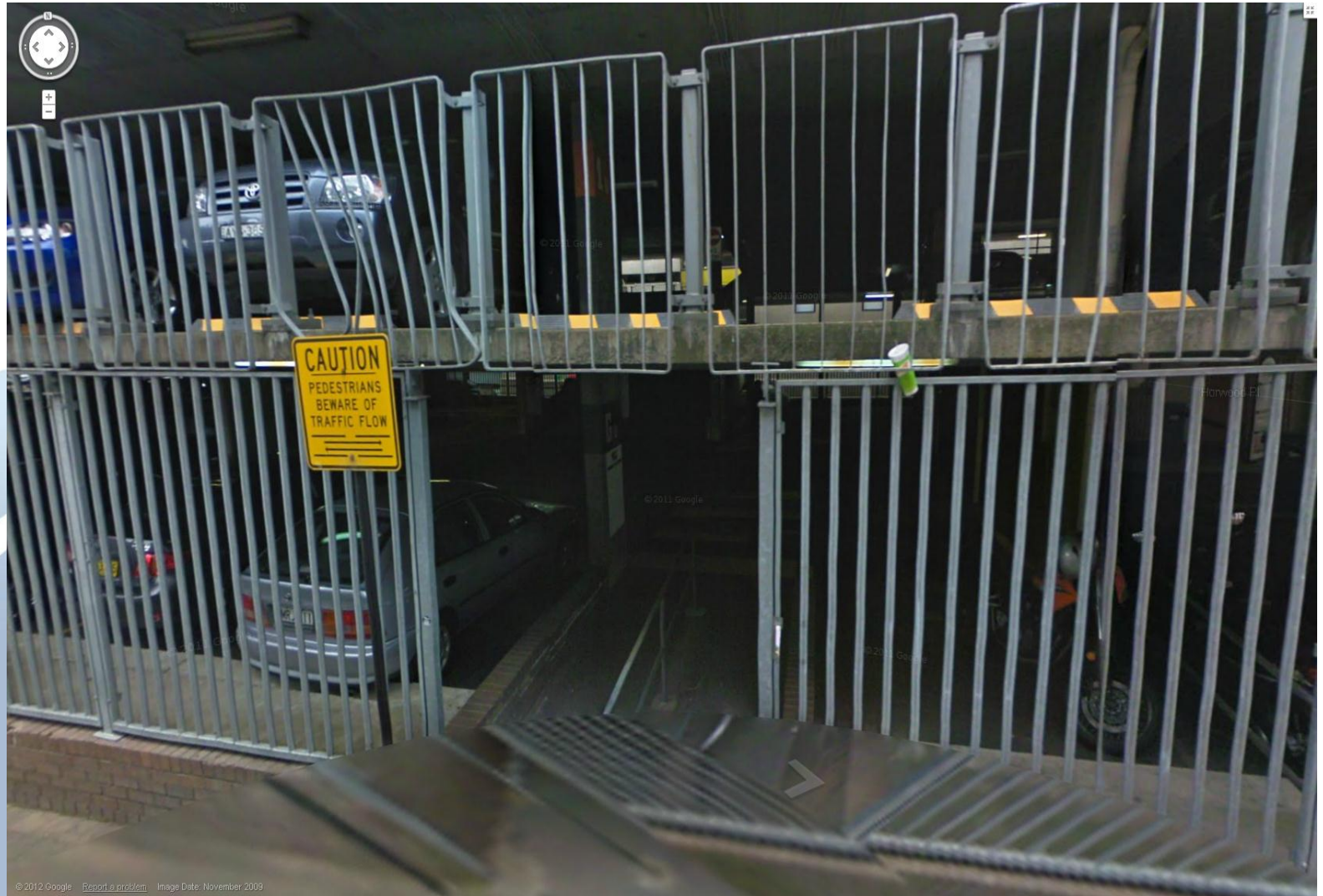


What are the key risk factors?




Source: Google Maps, May 2012

Poor visibility?



Source: Google Maps, May 2012

What are we trying to achieve?

- Reduce a particular crime (SFMV)
 - Reduce level of concern or increase feelings of safety among the community
 - Where (in specified locations such as particular streets/car parks or LGA-wide)
 - When (for the duration of the program or longer term)
- 

How are we trying to achieve it?

- Mechanisms for reducing SFMV
 - Educating vehicle users about reducing risks (eg signage, flyers about not leaving valuables in vehicles)
 - Restricting access to car parks to legitimate users (eg installing secure fencing)
 - Increase visibility in car parks to increase likelihood of being offenders being seen in the act (eg improve lighting)
 - Introducing formal surveillance (eg parking rangers, security patrols)

So how do we go about evaluating it?

- Two key questions
 - Did we do what we intended to do?
 - If the program didn't happen as planned, then what are we evaluating?
 - Would the results (+ or -) be due to the program or something else?
 - What impact did we have?
 - Did we reduce crime
 - Did we reduce community concern and increase feelings of safety

We need to understand what success will look like?

- **Implementation**

- Planned measures adequately put in place in target areas
 - fencing was installed, lighting upgraded, flyers were distributed, security patrols etc
- Key risk factors adequately addressed
 - eg restricted access, enhanced visibility, fewer valuables left in vehicles, enhanced surveillance etc
- Stakeholders satisfied with implementation

- **Impact**

- Crime decreases in target areas
 - more so than in other areas
- Community concern about the problem decreases
- Stakeholders are satisfied with outcomes

How will we measure success?

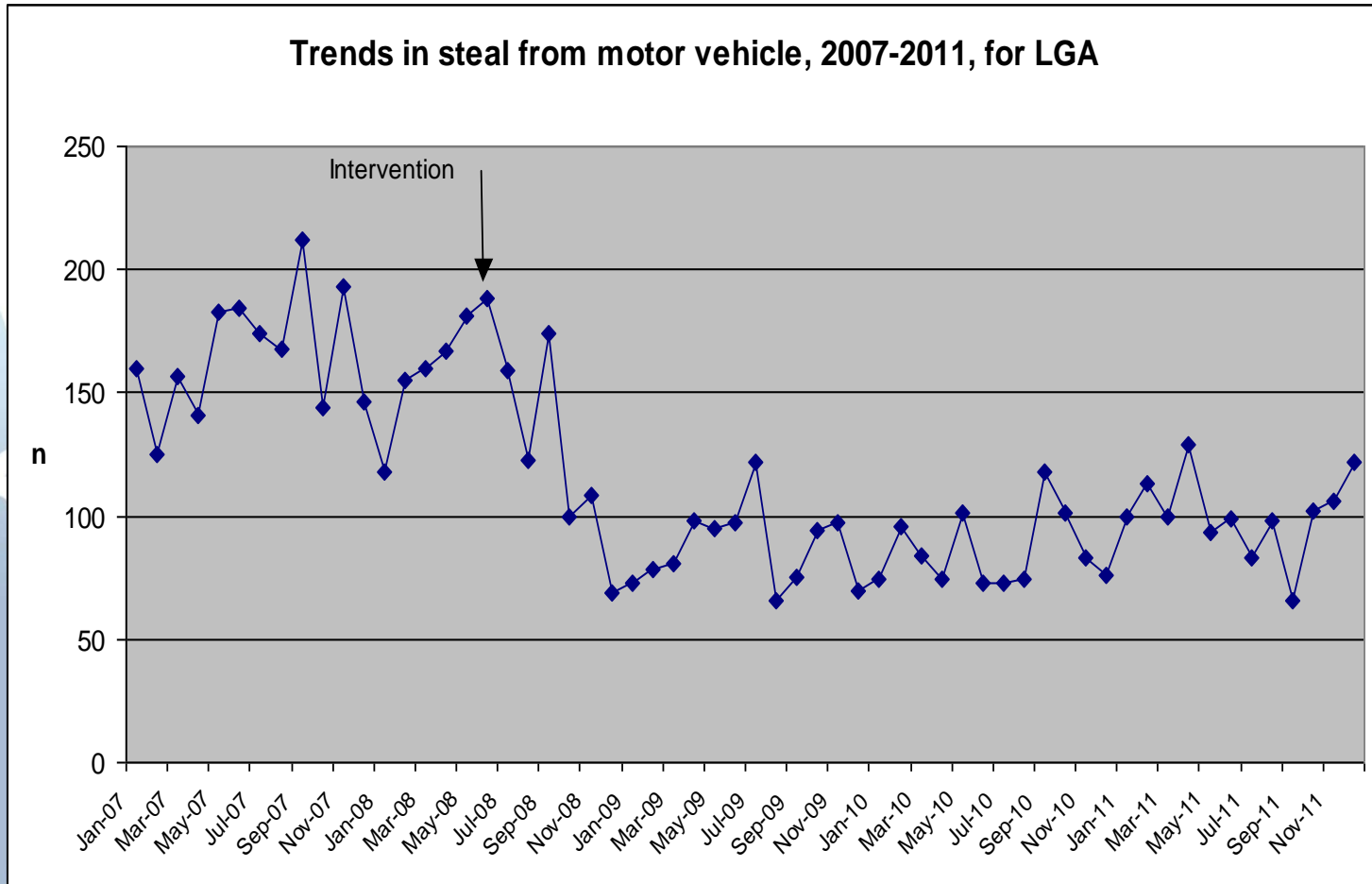
- Need multiple measures, both qualitative and quantitative
- Need to allow time for program to have an impact
- **Implementation**
 - Planned measures were adequately put in place
 - Program records documenting what we did, when, how, how many, and any issues that arose
 - Key risk factors were adequately addressed
 - Audits/observations of lighting levels, accessibility, usage, vehicles etc before and after the intervention
 - Stakeholder satisfaction
 - Stakeholder interviews

What impact did we have?

- Crime levels
 - Crime statistics (BOCSAR or local police)
 - Car park security records
 - Survey of car park users
 - Other measures?
- Community concern about the problem decreases
 - Community survey
- Stakeholders are satisfied with outcomes
 - Stakeholder interviews



Did we reduce crime?



Trends before our intervention

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Table 1. Recorded incidents of selected offences in the Parramatta Local Government Area
Annual totals and 24 month trend from July 2006 to June 2008

Offence	Jul 2006 to Jun 2007	Jul 2007 to Jun 2008	24 month trend	Annual percentage change	
Steal from motor vehicle	1869	2006	Stable	*	View Graph

* No annual percentage change is given if the trend is stable or if a trend has not been calculated.

Table 2. Recorded criminal incidents of selected offences in the Parramatta Local Government Area by month

Month/Year	Steal from motor vehicle
Jul 2006	181
Aug 2006	154

Trends after our intervention



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**Table 1. Recorded incidents of selected offences in the Parramatta Local Government Area
Annual totals and 24 month trend from July 2008 to June 2010**

Offence	Jul 2008 to Jun 2009	Jul 2009 to Jun 2010	24 month trend	Annual percentage change	
Steal from motor vehicle	1255	1026	Down	-18.2%	View Graph

Table 2. Recorded criminal incidents of selected offences in the Parramatta Local Government Area by month

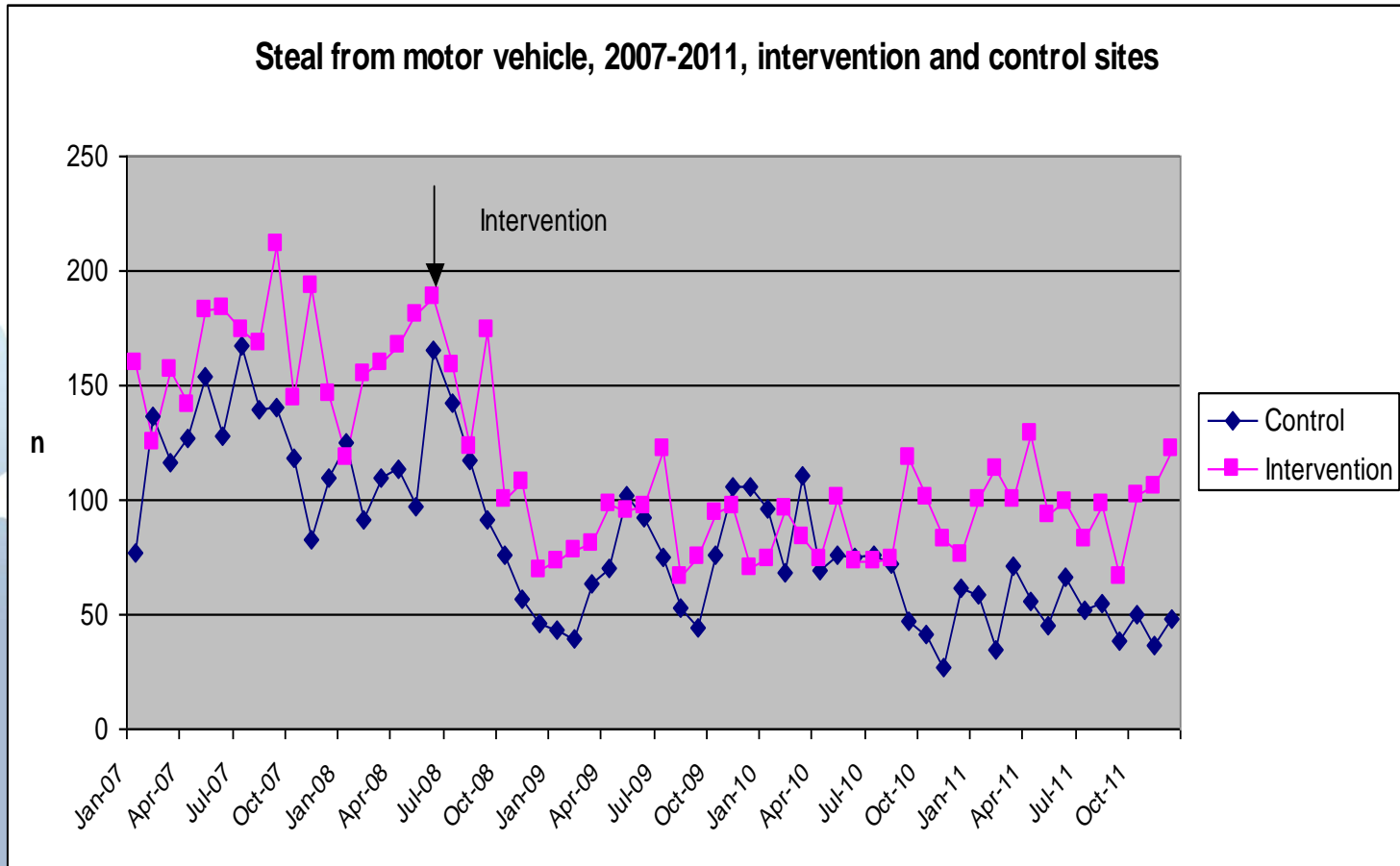
Month/Year	Steal from motor vehicle
Jul 2008	159
Aug 2008	123

Then we need to delve a little deeper

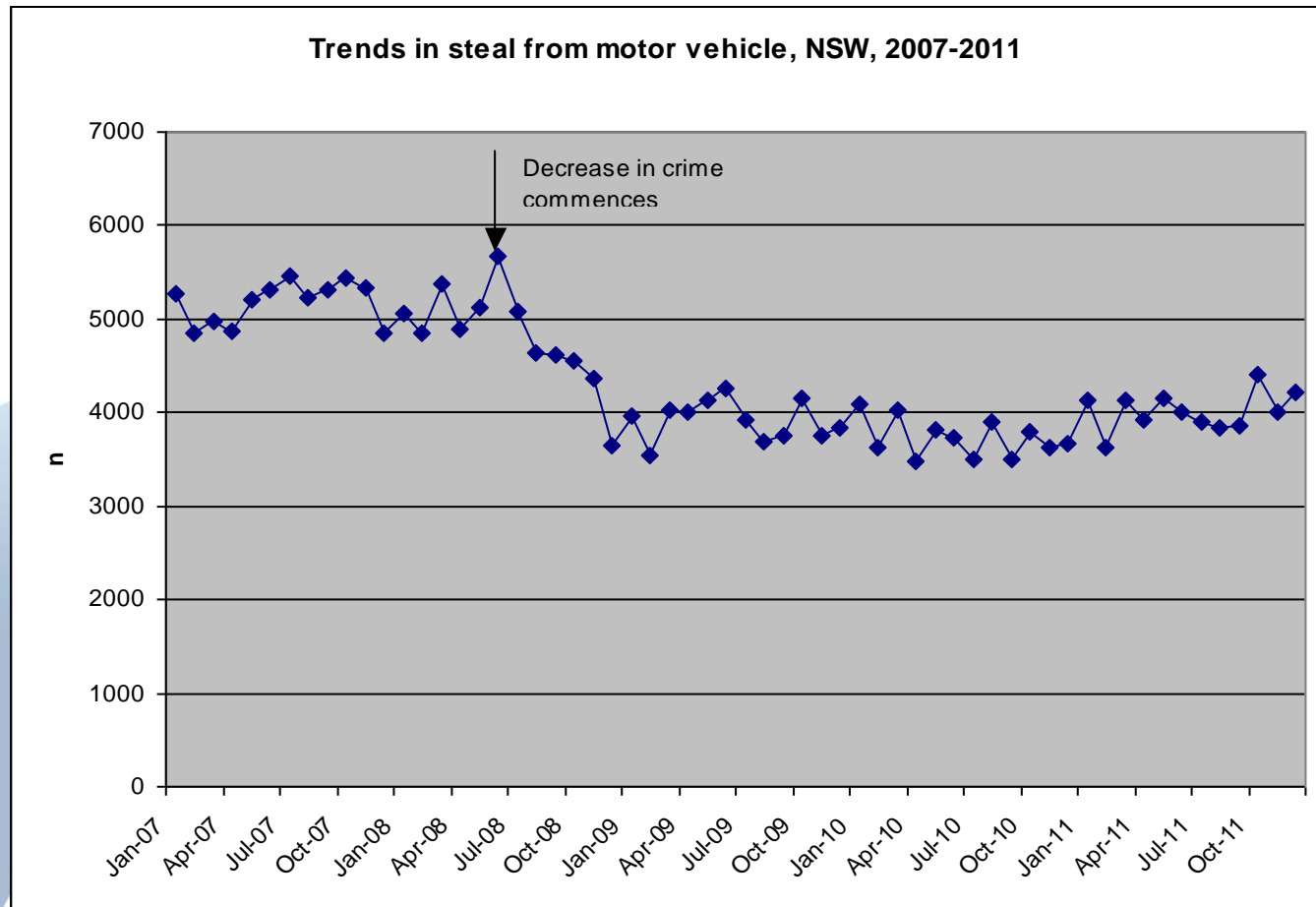
- Did measures (eg crime) go down more so in our target areas than in other areas?
- Need to look at and compare with trends
 - in other comparable areas
 - in other neighbouring areas
 - With the LGA or state



Trends in a comparison site



Statewide trends




Source: BOCSAR 2012

And rule out alternative explanations

- Were there any other factors that may have led to the observed crime trends (eg people stopped using the car park because a new one was built, or something happened on a statewide level such as fuel prices dropped etc)

So go forth and evaluate

- Understand your program, mechanisms by which it is intended to work
 - Use multiple measures to evaluate and set them up early
 - Document what you did and when
 - Look at your measures before and after your intervention and in other locations
 - Be as rigorous and systematic as you can in analysis
 - We can start to learn valuable lessons from relatively low cost and unsophisticated analyses
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Thank you

