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## Policy Implications

While further research and data would be able to clarify many issues, this report presents findings that have direct practical policy implications. That crime concentrates around certain targets, be it individuals, households, or facilities, is also supported by official crime statistics and successful crime prevention strategies overseas.

Police services in a number of Australian jurisdictions have, in recent years, enhanced their technological capabilities to deal with crime. With the help of new technology, police can map precisely the location, intensity, and the incidence of specific types of crime. They can, therefore, reliably assess the concentration of crime. It is possible that high crime concentration would involve a substantial amount of repeat victimisations. A further careful analysis of "high concentration" can provide important clues for strategies to reduce crime. A good example of such efforts is the Kirkholt Housing Estate burglary reduction program in the United Kingdom. The main program strategy in this case was to prevent burglaries on previously victimised dwellings (Forrester et al. 1988, 1990; Pease 1992). The project used a number of activities, including target hardening, "cocoon" Neighbourhood Watch, and changed billing practice to replace coin-operated gas meters which had been highly vulnerable to theft. These efforts not only resulted in reduction of burglaries but also developed a sense of security among the residents and a positive and helpful relationship with neighbours. The project

also demonstrated how the ownership of the program can be transferred to the community and how victim support groups can be helpful in crime prevention. This is but one example of a successful crime prevention strategy.

This analysis and review of literature shows that the Australian crime scene is in many respects similar to that in the United Kingdom and the United States, and the political and government approaches to crime control, particularly since the mid-1980s, are also not so different. It is therefore suggested that Australia engage in a different type of experimentation of crime prevention. Rather than initiating, implementing and evaluating projects similar to those already tried in other countries, we should experiment in implementing the results of these projects. Thus, if target hardening appeared to produce desirable results in other countries, experiment with that type of target-hardening in areas of Australia that display high concentration of residential burglary. Hundreds of such projects exist and careful selection of those dealing with "crime hot spots" around the world could be the basis for trial in Australia. It should be noted, however, that a large majority of such projects aim at reducing property crimes, although some successful violence prevention strategies have emerged in recent years.

The crime and safety surveys in Australia and victim surveys overseas clearly demonstrate that a high proportion of households remain inadequately secured

and a large number of individual victims of personal crime lack knowledge of personal safety. Various survey results and official crime statistics indicate a need for systematic victim education programs designed to protect against crime and violence. Again, numerous modules exist to suit specific potential victim types. Nevertheless, households can be victims of crime even after adopting adequate security measures, and persons can still be the victims of violence despite taking all sorts of precautionary measures.

Crime victimisation results from complex social processes underlying the convergence in time and space of offenders and potential targets, as well as the presence/absence of barriers to crime. Appeal and proximity are known to be among the factors that determine an offender's decision as to whether to choose a particular target as his/her victim. In addition, some areas are known to create more opportunities for crime than others. "Target hardening" in the form of enhanced security measures at home, is only one of the many factors with a potential to reduce household victimisation.

Currently, crime prevention strategies tend to be based on information relating to victims and incidents. This is because systematic information on offenders engaging in a large majority of offences is not available, and in many instances cannot be available as the offenders are unknown. There is evidence that repeat offences are often committed by the same offenders. The reason for such activity is that offenders feel less apprehensive in situations and locations that are familiar to them. Information on offender characteristics, therefore, can also enhance the effectiveness of a crime prevention strategy.