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Community night patrols in the Northern Territory: Toward an improved performance and reporting framework

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Background Paper **47**

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Foreword

This Technical and Background Paper summarises the results of a project funded by the Australian Government Attorney-General's Department's (AGD). The project aimed to clarify the contribution of the community night patrol program in the Northern Territory (NT) to improving the community safety of Indigenous communities, and in this context recommend an improved framework for monitoring performance and reporting. Community night patrols or similar services operate in many other areas of Australia and internationally, thus this paper is of wide interest. The paper concludes that the core business of community night patrols is (non-crisis) crime prevention not defacto policing, that an unrecognised outcome of patrols is capturing and sharing local knowledge about community safety issues and solutions and that a focus should be on working with other services to reduce the need over time for repeat assistance by patrols to persons at risk and for risky incidents.

While patrols are small operations, where fully effective they can contribute in unique ways to achieving improved community safety. Their work can contribute to achieving progress in community safety outcomes under the Overcoming Disadvantage

Strategic Framework and the related National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework, Frameworks supported by all governments in Australia. The recently released report on the evaluation of the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER Evaluation Report 2011) confirmed that communities and service providers surveyed largely support night patrols, but better data is required to more comprehensively assess their performance.

The recommended performance and reporting framework in this paper will assist community night patrols to both improve and demonstrate their effectiveness. The framework is consistent with good practice in performance measurement, and responds to the various challenges of measuring performance for the community night patrol program, such as patrols' diverse operating environments, limited administrative resources, and the need to ensure that local and accumulative successes, most visible to the local community, are not missed in high-level program and whole-of-government monitoring.

Dr Adam Tomison
Director

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Acronyms

AGD	Attorney-General's Department, Australian Government
AIC	Australian Institute of Criminology
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
MOU	memorandum of understanding
RCIADIC	Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

Executive summary

This paper summarises the results of a project funded by the Australian Government Attorney-General's Department's (AGD). The project aimed to clarify the contribution of the community night patrol program in the Northern Territory (NT) to improving the community safety of Indigenous communities, and in this context, recommend an improved framework for monitoring performance and reporting.

Community night patrols (also known as street patrols, night patrols, foot or barefoot patrols, mobile assistance programs and street beats) have a long history in the NT. Emerging in Tennant Creek in the late 1980s as a community initiative in the face of 'under-policing' and later in Yuendumu to stem the adverse contact Indigenous people were having with the criminal justice system, there are 80 patrols today funded by the AGD in the NT. With a budget of \$69million over three years (2009-2010 to 2011-2012), the AGD's community night patrol program is the largest community night patrol program in Australia.

Patrols are not defacto police, rather they are non-coercive, intervention strategies to prevent anti-social and destructive behaviours through the promotion of culturally appropriate processes... in conjunction with contemporary law enforcement measures (AGD 2010:5)

They have a long and continuing history of being regarded by the communities they serve as essential, and the support of key local persons and groups in the community, such as elders, women and cultural leaders, is critical to their success. However, there is limited up-to-date literature, information, data and evaluations about the operation and impact of community night patrols.

This project involved four steps:

- a review of the literature on community night patrols
- consultation with key stakeholders and visits to patrols to conduct observations
- the development of Program Logic Models, and
- the development of a revised performance framework and reporting guide.

The project highlighted four issues in the operating environments of patrols that needed to be considered in order to develop the performance and reporting framework:

- separating the roles of community night patrols and roles of police;
- responding to challenging service environments where not all essential complementary services in all communities are present and/or effective;
- recruiting appropriate local staff, and retaining and training them; and
- working in diverse situations in regard to governance and community cohesion.

In this context, Program Logics were developed, which are analytical tools that describe the ideal inter-relations between inputs, processes and outputs necessary for a program to produce the ideal outcome(s). Program Logics capture the theory of how change will be achieved, in this case the delivery of a safer community. The Program Logics for the program as a whole (see Figure 1) and the individual community night patrols (see Figure 2) are intuitively straightforward - patrols engage in crime prevention work and through this they drive change, achieve the 'immediate outcomes' and contribute to longer term outcomes for community safety. However their operating environments present

challenges which require Program Logics that actively respond to such challenges, for example patrols need to work strategically as well as with individual clients so that gaps in local essential services are constructively identified and met.

The higher level Program Logic (see Figure 1) considers the community night patrol program as a whole. At the centre of the Program Logic for the whole program is the community-level logic (see Figure 2). This higher level Program Logic shows that a community night patrol is ideally positioned to focus on outcomes in primary crime prevention (before offending occurs) and secondary crime prevention (targeting persons at risk of being victimised or of offending, or targeting risky incidents), and also to support but not conduct the tertiary crime prevention work undertaken by police. In addition, patrols undertake crime prevention actions such as leading or actively participating in community safety planning and follow-up.

At the community-level (Figure 2), a patrol delivering these core crime prevention services well can be expected to achieve a range of 'immediate outcomes' and over time contribute to a range of 'intermediate outcomes, for example a 'reduction in repeat assistance to at risk persons and risky incidents' through genuine decreased demand for such repeat services. In turn, these 'immediate' and 'intermediate outcomes' contribute to the long-term outcome of the community feeling and being safer.

Importantly, the Program Logics clarify that the core business of patrols is (non-crisis) crime prevention not defacto policing, that an unrecognised immediate outcome of patrols is capturing and sharing local knowledge about community safety issues and solutions and that a focus should be on working with other services to reduce the need over time for repeat assistance by patrols to persons at risk and risky incidents.

Finally, the project considered good practice in performance measurement and reporting, in the interests of improving the patrols where necessary and sound accountability for the funds they receive from the Australian Government. The unique challenges and considerations of measuring the performance of Indigenous justice outcomes need to be taken into account when developing a performance framework for Indigenous-specific,

community-focused programs such as the community night patrol program. This includes ensuring that the value of a relatively small program, where successes are accumulative (rather than dramatic) and most visible at a local level, is not overlooked in high-level performance monitoring. Furthermore, performance measurement should focus on factors that the program can directly influence i.e. 'immediate outcomes' and should be practical for a small program where each patrol has limited administrative resources.

These considerations, in combination with the two Program Logics discussed above were used to develop a suite of Key Performance Areas (see Appendix A) and a Generic Reporting Guide (see Appendix B) for the program and individual patrols. The Key Performance Areas and Generic Reporting Guide relate to all dimensions of the Program Logics, from inputs to outcomes, consistent with good practice in performance measurement. The indicators for the 'immediate outcome'-those outcomes that the program and patrols can most directly influence- include 'community knowledge of community safety progress, issues and solutions captured and appropriately shared by patrols' and 'referral processes to and from other local services in place and working well'. The Reporting Guide incorporates a combination of quantitative and qualitative information and data consistent with good practice, for example qualitative reporting information includes descriptions of responses by patrols to issues, in order to promote and track approaches to managing their challenging operational environments.

The Paper recommends that data be based on counting rules and data definitions that are comparable between patrols and that are consistent with core standards and definitions such as those maintained by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Also the Paper recommends that the information and data collected be analysed in a timely manner, and shared with all community night patrols, as well as within government. This approach has two benefits -first, whole-of-government analysis and policy development regarding community safety will be continuously informed by community experiences, and secondly, community night patrols will receive information that will assist them to improve their performance and provision of services.

The Paper emphasises that achieving the ‘intermediate outcome’ of ‘reduced repeat assistance to persons at risk and risky incidents’ due to a genuine decrease in demand for such repeat services is an important aspect of driving change. It promotes practices that support this outcome, for example well-supported referrals, long-term follow up for repeat clients and pro-active

work to prevent risky incidents reoccurring. Reducing the need for repeat assistance to even one client and/or in respect of one type of risky incident can free up significant resources for the patrol and other community services. If the root causes of behaviour linked to violent offending and victimisation are dealt with, this can make a significant lasting contribution to community safety.

Introduction

Community night patrols (also known as street patrols, night patrols, foot or barefoot patrols, mobile assistance programs and street beats; AIC 2004; Blagg & Valuri 2004a, 2004b) are

non-coercive intervention strategies to prevent anti-social and destructive behaviours through the promotion of culturally appropriate processes around conflict resolution in conjunction with contemporary law enforcement measures (AGD 2010: 5).

Community night patrols assist people at risk of either causing or becoming victims of harm, in order to break the cycle of violence and crime in Indigenous communities (FaHCSIA 2010). Examples of actions undertaken by community night patrols include:

- relocating a person to a 'safe' environment (eg a sobering-up shelter, hospital or women's refuge);
- defusing potentially violent situations;
- intervening in situations of family violence;
- diverting intoxicated people away from the criminal justice system;
- providing information about and referral to support services (eg police, youth services, alcohol and other drug services);
- assisting people at risk;
- promoting community night patrols and increasing public awareness of them; and

- supporting community safety planning and its implementation.

Community night patrols emerged in the late 1980s in the NT community of Tennant Creek (Blagg 2003; Langton 1992). In Tennant Creek, community night patrols were established by the Indigenous community 'because there was nothing else' (Blagg 2003: 15). Although the problem of over-policing in Indigenous communities has been widely documented, the converse problem—under-policing—can also have negative impacts on Indigenous communities (Blagg & Valuri 2004b; NTERRB 2008; Tangentyere Council Executive 2008). Similarly, in Yuendumu in the 1980s and 1990s, community night patrols were developed by Indigenous women to 'help protect the community in the absence of effective intervention from mainstream justice systems' (Lui & Blanchard 2001: 18). In other communities, patrols emerged to address over-policing—'to divert Indigenous people from unnecessary contact with the criminal justice system' (Blagg 2003: 7).

The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) (1991) also provided an impetus for community night patrols (Blagg & Valuri 2004b), as it recommended that Indigenous people be kept out of the criminal justice system to the extent possible, particularly for minor matters.

The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department (AGD) funds community Night Patrol Services across 80 communities in the Northern Territory, including in 72 of the 73 communities that have been targeted for a range of initiatives under the Northern Territory Emergency Response. This is the largest community night patrols program in Australia.

As Indigenous communities often have poor views of and/or relations with the police (Blagg 2003; Tangentyere Community Patrollers & Elek 2007), community night patrols can play an important role in maintaining order in Indigenous communities, particularly where they draw on cultural authority, knowledge and identity by, for example, using local Indigenous languages (Langton 1992; Tangentyere Community Patrollers & Elek 2007; Walker & Forrester 2002). The support of Elders and other respected persons, especially women, in Indigenous communities is an important historical feature of community night patrols—'it has been recognised that endorsement by community leaders is important to "authorise" the work of patrols' (Tangentyere Community Patrollers & Elek 2007: 25).

What is known about the operation and impacts of community night patrols?

Assessment of the literature confirms that community patrols have historically been highly valued by Indigenous communities, although there is limited up-to-date information and data about the operation and impact of community night patrols. The absence of such information can lead to misconceptions by external stakeholders, such as funding bodies, policymakers and researchers about the program's core business, its value to achieving community safety objectives and its level of accountability. That is, the true value of such programs may not be fully realised if measures are not put in place to enable a true assessment of their effectiveness and impact. This project was designed to clarify the program's core role and value, and in this context, enhance the framework of accountability for this unique, community-focused program. Given this aim, the method for this project largely involved analysis of

literature, data and best practices relevant to patrols and the whole-of-government environment it operates within, together with a limited number of highly targeted stakeholder consultations.

The most up-to-date information on activities of community night patrols is reported by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA 2011). At December 2010, there were community night patrols in 80 NT communities. Between July and December 2010, a large number of persons (n=49,984) were transported and/or referred to a service by these community night patrols. Of these, approximately 359 persons were transported to a recognised 'safe house' by a community night patrol service.

In 2006, the Tangentyere Council Patrollers and Elek (2007) reported on their services in the Alice Springs area as follows:

- there were 9,396 encounters, resulting in 5,474 people being assisted;
- violence or a disturbance was the main reason in nine percent of cases;
- only one percent of people were taken to police;
- seven percent of call-outs occurred because the police needed community night patrols to assist them; and
- about one-third of cases resulted from local residents calling on community night patrols.

Although comprehensive quality data and published evaluations are scant, the literature has identified that local evaluations of community night patrols have been positive (eg Blagg & Valuri 2004b). The Gordon Inquiry (into the response by government agencies into complaints of family violence and child abuse in Aboriginal communities in Western Australia) found that Aboriginal people viewed community night patrols as 'essential to the operation of their communities' (cited in Blagg & Valuri 2004b: 2). The recent evaluation of the NT emergency response confirmed that communities and service providers support night patrols (NTER Evaluation Report 2011)

Improvements to data collection and reporting on community night patrols are important means of assessing the effectiveness of community night patrols as they continue to operate in the Northern Territory.

Developing a performance and reporting framework for community night patrols in the Northern Territory

This report provides an overview of research undertaken by the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) for the AGD. The purpose of the research was to develop a performance and reporting framework for community night patrols in the Northern Territory. The findings of this research may also be useful for community night patrols in other jurisdictions.

The project involved four steps:

- a review of the literature on community night patrols;
- consultation with key stakeholders, including a discussion forum and visits to patrols to conduct observations;
- the development of Program Logic models; and
- the development of a revised performance framework and reporting guide.

The findings from this research are outlined below.

Key issues from the literature review

The literature on community night patrols is limited and to some extent dated, yet it highlighted a number of key issues for consideration, together with issues that emerged from a discussion forum held with key stakeholders, conducted as part of this research.

Roles of community night patrols and roles of police

Increased understanding about the respective roles of community night patrols and the roles of the police has been identified as an important area (Allen Consulting Group 2010). Participants at the forum held as part of this research project suggested that in some instances, government agencies or community may view 'Indigenous problems' as the role of community night patrols and problems among non-Indigenous residents as the role of

police. Incidents in communities may therefore be divided up along cultural, indeed racial, lines rather than more appropriately by incident type (ie whether an incident requires the involvement of the police).

It is emphasised in the literature that the primary purpose of community night patrols is to prevent crimes; that is, to intervene early in situations to minimise the need for police involvement (Blagg 2003; Higgins & Associates 1997). Although it is difficult to define boundaries around community night patrol activities and police activities, and there is some overlap and cross-referrals between the two groups (Tangentyere Council Patrollers & Elek 2007), the role of community night patrols is principally focused on 'pre-crime' scenarios. This theme in the literature confirms that the main purpose of patrols is primary and secondary crime prevention rather than crisis intervention or de facto policing.

Lack of essential complementary services in communities to support patrols

The success of community night patrols is dependent on obtaining appropriate support from governments (Higgins cited in Blagg 2003; Ryan cited in Blagg 2003) to ensure that these patrols are resourced adequately to do their job and importantly, that community night patrols and other support services/agencies work well together (Ryan cited in Blagg 2003).

When community night patrols first emerged, Indigenous communities relied heavily (sometimes exclusively) on their own resources. Langton (1992) describes community night patrols in which patrollers were not paid for their work, uniforms were bought out of patrollers' pension incomes and 'one bloke was using his car to run around, using his own money for petrol' (Langton et al. cited in Langton 1992: 7). For some years, community night patrol staff in the Northern Territory have been paid employees and not volunteers, providing a more solid foundation for patrols.

However, a serious challenge remains—participants at the forum noted that in some communities, a lack of adequate complementary services limits the capacity of community night patrols. Community night patrols rely heavily on networks of services,

such as crisis alcohol and drug services, to perform their duties effectively and their absence may even prevent a patrol being established.

Where Indigenous communities are not in a position to support the successful implementation of a NPS [night patrol service] in their community, this may be due, in part, to a lack of infrastructure or capacity to support the night patrol (AGD 2008: 21).

Staff recruitment, retention and training support

Recruiting, training, supporting and retaining appropriate staff for community night patrols has been raised as an important issue for ongoing and effective operation (FaHCSIA 2010a, 2010b). Working as a night patroller may result in unique pressures being faced by staff; for example, issues with kin may arise for patrollers. Patrollers' success in part relies on their standing within a community to deal with people who may be intoxicated and/or operating outside of socially sanctioned behaviours, and who may be related or known to them. Safety issues can also arise for the patrollers. The role is a difficult one and as a consequence, retaining staff can be challenging. The Allen Consulting Group (2010: 66) confirmed that staffing of patrols was a problem in their review of policing in remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory.

[N]ight patrols suffer from the limitation of available and suitable personnel and longer term commitment to that role....Recruitment of night patrol staff appears to be an issue for many communities. Some also request more and better training to undertake their role.

Stability of governance and community cohesion

One of the key indicators from the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage report (SCRGSP 2009) is effective governance; good governance by communities and governments is a vital foundation for achieving many outcomes in Indigenous communities. Conversely, poor community governance, low social cohesion and multiple uncoordinated government accountability arrangements can increase demand and undermine efficiency in services such as patrols.

According to the report, 'governance' is defined as the 'members of a group or community organis[ing] themselves to make decisions that affect them as a group' (SCRGSP 2009: 11.1) and good governance involves sound governing institutions, leadership, self-determination, capacity building, cultural appropriateness and resources. Locally-based services like patrols can contribute to building the governance capacity of the community, service providers and governments by, for example, training and employing local staff, having input into community safety planning and assisting other services to overcome barriers that restrict Indigenous people's access to them. In this way, they can facilitate better governance while also assisting individuals. The role of community night patrols in improving governance of communities and governments (including government-funded service delivery) should be better reflected in performance reporting and is often overlooked or undervalued. The revised performance and reporting framework presented later in this report addresses this by including opportunities to report such activity.

Program Logic for community night patrols in the Northern Territory

As Tilley (2004) argues, criminal justice programs are only as good as the theories on which they are based. These theories are, however, often unstated and not well-evidenced. The importance of clarifying program theories became clear in the 1970s, as program evaluators began to find that 'programs could have vague or unspecified goals, which made measurement of outcomes well-nigh impossible' (Hurworth 2008: 42).

A number of approaches to clarifying the underlying theories of social programs have emerged since this time, including 'evaluability assessment' (eg Basile et al. 2005) and 'program theory' (Hurworth 2008). The term 'Program Logic' has been used synonymously with, or replaced, the term 'program theory' since the 1990s (Hurworth 2008).

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) (1996: 22) defines Program Logic as

a diagrammatic representation of the links between inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes. It provides a linear hierarchy with the top level in the 'map' being the intended outcomes of the program.

Davidson (cited in ARTD Consultants 2009) explains Program Logic as a description of the processes necessary for a program to produce the ideal outcome(s) (see Table 1 for definitions of key Program Logic terms). By presenting Program Logic in a visual format on one page (eg as a flow chart), a clear, succinct picture should emerge as to how a program is expected to work (ARTD Consultants 2009).

Program Logics are analytical tools rather than an end in and of themselves (ARTD Consultants 2009). Devising a Program Logic can help determine:

- how programs are supposed to work;
- what assumptions underpin them;
- whether the elements of the program (ie inputs, activities, strategies and models) are logical and appropriate;
- whether the program is able to be evaluated;
- what the key questions for evaluation are; and
- what information and data regarding performance and activity should be collected (ARTD Consultants 2009).

Two Program Logics have been developed from this research project. The first (see Figure 1) reflects the program as a whole (ie for all 80 communities in the AGD program). The second (see Figure 2) reflects an individual community night patrol in any NT community.

Community night patrols program

The Program Logic for the program as a whole (see Figure 1) shows that the program involves:

- delivering core services (ie non-crisis crime prevention services) to targeted communities;
- targeting communities with needs in regard to improving community safety and with sufficient capacity to make a patrol feasible;
- adopting an appropriate model for the targeted communities, given their local contexts; and
- providing program resources and infrastructure to succeed.

If these 'inputs' and 'activities' are in place, the logic is that a community night patrol can be established and can function effectively, and so contribute to making the community feel and be safer (the program's main outcome).

The mechanism for the program achieving its outcomes is the community night patrols operating as change agents in the 80 communities. Therefore, the Program Logic for the community night patrol program (see Figure 1) contains at its centre the community-level program logic (see Figure 2)—the community night patrols that operate in the 80 communities are embedded in Figure 1 and the logic for any one of these is expanded in detail in Figure 2.

Community night patrols at the community level

The Program Logic at the community level (see Figure 2) represents how a community night patrol is intended to work. The Program Logic shows that ideally, community night patrols at the community level are positioned to focus on outcomes in primary

Table 1 Program Logic terminology

Key term	Definition
Input	Resources (eg staff, materials or premises) utilised to provide the service (Audit Commission 2000)
Process	What is done to produce outputs (ANAO 1996)
Output	Goods and/or services that are produced to meet outcomes (Homel, Willis & Gray 2006)
Outcome	Outcomes are the long-term impacts that outputs have on communities (Homel, Willis & Gray 2006)
Performance information	Evidence about a program's performance that is collected and used systematically (ANAO 1996)
Program logic	A diagrammatic representation of the links between a program's inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes (ANAO 1996)

Figure 1 Program Logic for the Aboriginal community night patrols in the Northern Territory program funded by Attorney-General's Department

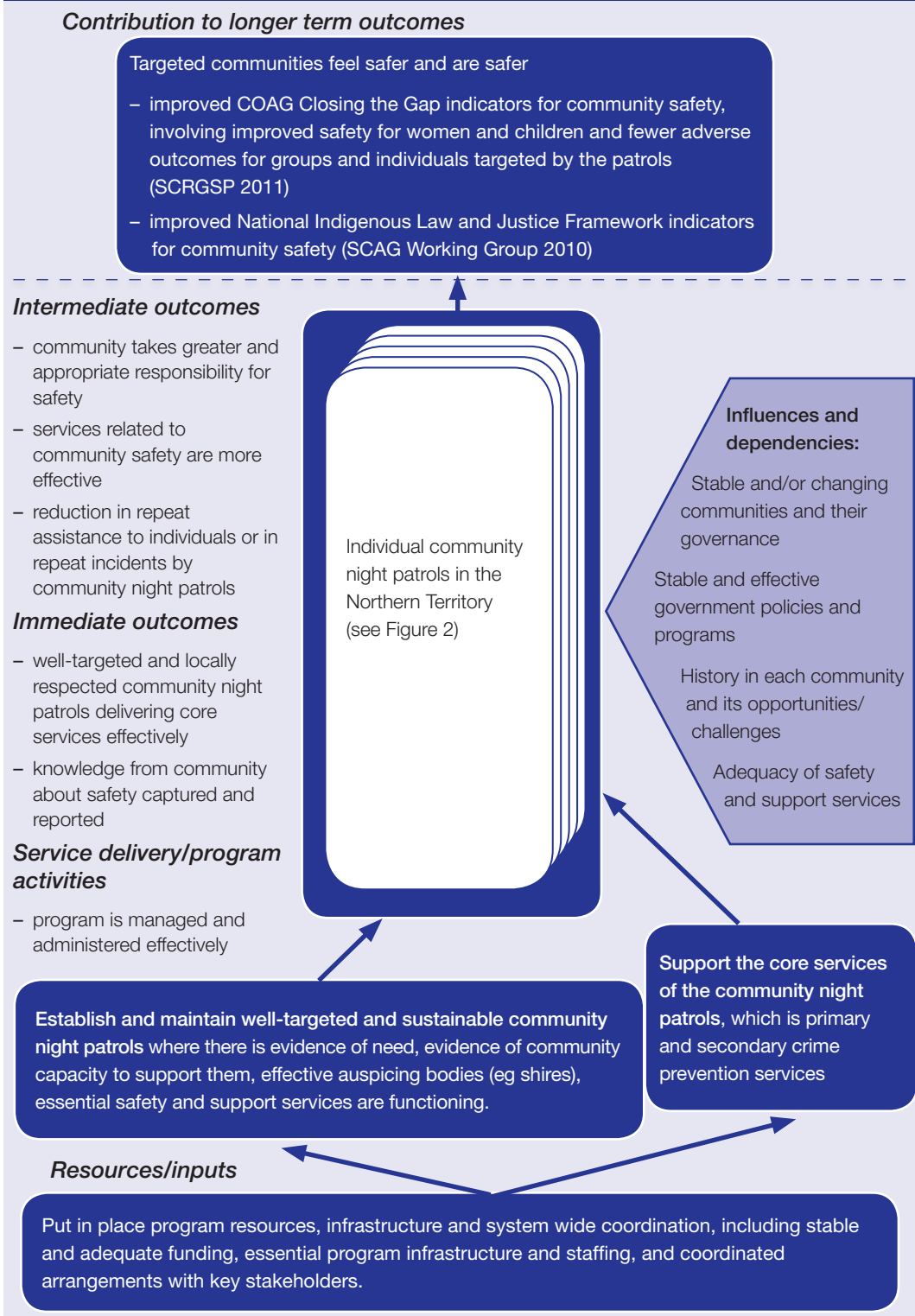
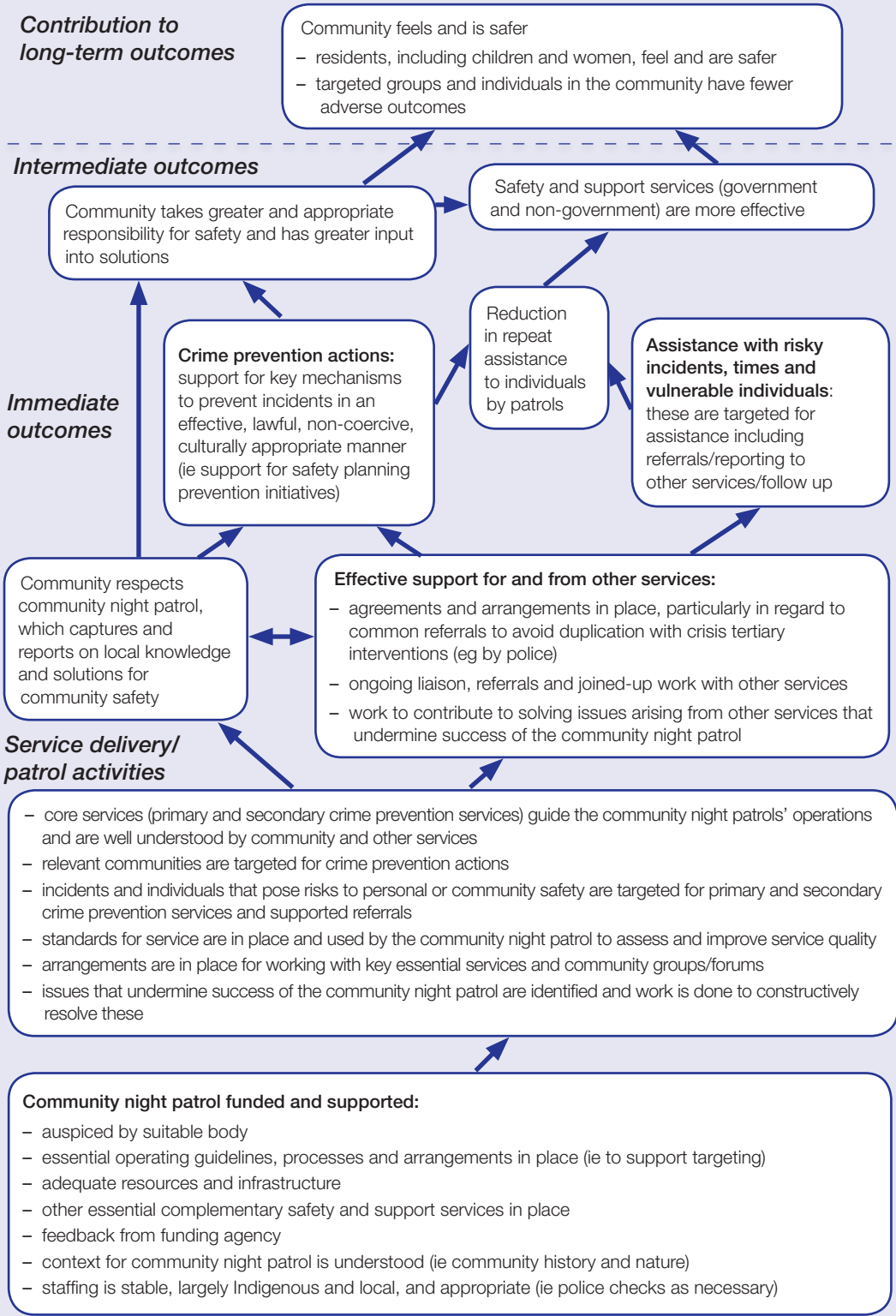


Figure 2 Program Logic for an individual community night patrol in the Northern Territory



crime prevention (before offending occurs) and secondary crime prevention (targeting persons at risk of being victimised or offending); such non-crisis crime prevention is ideally the core service of a community night patrol. At the community level, they would support but not conduct police services' tertiary crime intervention work (targeting persons offending or being victimised), since police have unique powers and systems to perform such duties.

Program Logic begins with having the resources, support and governance (inputs) in place for a community night patrol service to deliver its core services—non-crisis crime prevention actions and assistance. Given the right inputs, the following 'immediate outcomes' can be expected:

- community respect for the community night patrol;
- the community night patrol captures and reports on local knowledge and solutions for community safety. The unique nature of community night patrols allows them to contribute to improved and timelier 'local intelligence' about community safety issues—both current and emerging—and ideas for solutions; and
- effective working relations between the community night patrol and essential complementary safety and support services, especially police, child protection services and crisis services including safe houses and sobering-up shelters.

Additional 'immediate outcomes' across the range of the patrols' core services can be expected to be achieved as follows:

- outcomes from crime prevention actions (eg inputting into community planning); and
- assistance with risky incidents, times, locations

or vulnerable individuals to prevent crime or harm, particularly involving repeat clients. Repeat clients or risky incidents are actively and effectively managed, mostly through supported actions with other services, to deal with root causes. The resources that are freed up by effectively assisting and following up repeat clients or repetitive risky incidents will allow more and earlier prevention work in the community.

The 'immediate outcomes' mentioned above in turn can be expected to deliver two 'intermediate outcomes' over time:

- the community takes greater responsibility for safety and has greater input into solutions; and
- the key safety and support services in the community improve.

Ultimately, the longer term outcome that community night patrols contribute to (but are not directly able to deliver alone) is a safer community. Further, targeted incidents and individuals—particularly those that are repeatedly dealt with by the community night patrols (eg intoxicated individuals, recurring events and times that involve abuse of alcohol)—have fewer adverse outcomes or need for assistance from community night patrols.

Program Logic shows community night patrols taking action to identify and try to solve service gaps (ie in policing, alcohol and drug crisis services, violence protection including child protection services and mental health crisis services). It also shows patrols clarifying roles between police and safe houses if relevant; for example, through memoranda of understanding and patrols having mechanisms in place to avoid being drawn into providing unnecessary transportation.

Towards an improved performance and reporting framework for community night patrols

Performance measurement has emerged in recent years as a key strategy to assist governments and other service providers assess the impact of their operations, improve service provision and effectively target resources (Cunneen & Luke 2007; Mears & Butts 2008; Rollings & Taylor 2008; Winokur, Tollett & Jackson 2002).

What is performance measurement?

A range of definitions of performance measurement have been proposed. The United States of America Center for Accountability and Performance Measurement (cited in Bazemore 2006: v) defines performance measurement as

a method of gauging progress of a public program or activity in achieving the results or outcomes that clients, customers, or stakeholders expect...[it] tells people how well public programs are doing (see also Juvenile Justice Evaluation Center 2004; Thomas 2006).

Good performance information has therefore emerged as an essential component of quality management and accountability (ANAO 1996).

What is the purpose of performance measurement?

Performance measurement has a range of purposes. Measuring performance:

- assists agencies to identify problems as they arise and allows for action to be taken to address problems;
- assists agencies to identify whether policies are likely to be effective;
- informs evaluation strategies;
- enables progress in achieving goals to be tracked;
- enables the prioritisation of new stakeholders;
- enables resources to be targeted towards achieving objectives;
- strengthens practice; and
- promotes the accountability of service providers (Audit Commission 2000; Harp et al. 2006; Mears & Butts 2008).

Reporting on performance measures also has a range of purposes, including:

- demonstrating that an agency is operating effectively, and that changes have been properly implemented;

- increasing public confidence in the system;
- promoting effective service delivery and accountability; and
- assisting policymaking and related processes (Harp et al. 2006; Mears & Butts 2008).

What are the particular challenges of measuring Indigenous justice outcomes?

It is widely acknowledged that there are unique challenges and considerations relevant to measuring performance of Indigenous justice outcomes, including:

- while sound performance standards need to apply, statistical indicators can be at the expense of specificity, context and history, which may undermine meaningful measurement of success;
- meaningful indicators need to be developed with input from communities, capturing human dimensions, incremental changes and local outcomes, otherwise it may appear that nothing has been achieved due to the high-level nature of the performance framework;
- performance information can be improved if communities have input into it and it should be shared with them and service providers in the community to support improvement;
- performance indicators for achieving justice outcomes (ie reducing offending) should not be the only focus for community safety. For example, contributions to school retention rates and reductions in youth suicide may also be relevant;
- prevention work may have a range of impacts, including reducing witnessing of violence, the de-escalation of alcohol and drug problems, and improving the reintegration of juveniles and adults after custody incidents or sentences. Reductions in offending and victimisation are not necessarily the only indicators of success;
- remoteness and mobility of Indigenous populations introduces challenges for service delivery and urban approaches to measuring performance may not be appropriate (ie

transportation of persons back to their home community and cultural authority may be an important crime prevention strategy in a remote community);

- performance indicators ideally measure progress in regard to outcomes, as well as essential processes (eg for implementing and for managing risks) and structural elements (eg adequacy of essential complementary services); and
- the existence of a strategy that authentically involves the community to improve community safety is in itself an outcome that is valuable (Willis 2010).

If the above considerations are not taken into account when developing a performance framework for Indigenous-specific, community-focused programs such as the NT community night patrols, the value and strengths of such programs can be missed in performance assessments.

Why is measuring the performance of community night patrols in the Northern Territory important?

A number of key documents relating to NT community night patrols highlight the need to measure the performance of community Night Patrol Services. One principle of the National Partnership Agreement On Remote Service Delivery (COAG nd b: C-1), for example, is that 'programs and services should have regular and transparent performance monitoring, review and evaluation'. Similarly, Allen Consulting Group's (2010: ix) review of policing in remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory recommended that:

service standards should be developed for night patrols to complement remote policing activities by NT Police....[and]....quantitative and qualitative performance measures should be established in order to monitor adherence to and accountability for service standards for policing in remote communities.

In addition, the Night Patrol Services in the Northern Territory Operational Framework (AGD 2010), the

Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement (COAG nd a) and the Indigenous Justice Program Guidelines 2010–11 (AGD nd) all stress the importance of collecting performance information on community night patrols.

Measuring the performance of community night patrols in the Northern Territory is important for a number of reasons. In order to secure ongoing and adequate funding for the program, it is vital to have an understanding of what community night patrols are doing, how much of an impact they are having on communities and how community Night Patrol Services could be improved. Measuring performance contributes to:

- identifying and addressing issues in relation to the operation of community night patrols;
- informing any future evaluations of community night patrols. Future evaluations will be able to build on data collection strategies already in place to evaluate community night patrols;
- enabling resources to be effectively targeted and therefore enabling community night patrols to assist as many people in communities as possible; and
- providing community night patrols with an insight into how their service is operating and ways to improve it.

This project contributes to meeting the accountability requirements for the NT community night patrols program; it clarifies their unique contribution to community safety and building on sound accountability practices already in place, it presents a practical and enhanced performance and reporting framework.

Performance indicators and reporting

As noted above, data collection on community night patrols are currently limited (Pilkington 2009). To address this, the current research project has developed a suite of Key Performance Areas and Indicators (see *Appendix A*) and a Generic Reporting Guide (see *Appendix B*) for community night patrols in the Northern Territory. These were developed based on the Program Logics described above.

It should be noted, however, that the role of Program Logic in developing a performance framework is to clarify the 'ideal' performance information. In developing the Key Performance Areas and Indicators and Generic Reporting Guide, the following practical issues were considered:

- building on the performance information and reporting schedules already used by community night patrols to minimise the administrative burden of improvements;
- addressing problems with the extent and quality of the current data, including inconsistent and/or lack of agreed definitions of key terms and the counting of different units;
- ensuring that information and data from community night patrols addresses in a meaningful way *How much have they done? How well have they done it? and Did they achieve what was expected?*;
- responding to barriers for data collection and reporting, such as small operations with limited administrative funding and support, limited literacy and limited information technology;
- building understanding of performance measurement and reporting among community night patrols and how it may be useful to them;
- using revisions to the reporting system already underway, including the development of a database and training and support to staff responsible for uploading recorded data; and
- improving the sharing of data and reports with community night patrols to allow them to test the reliability of the reports and to use them for continuous improvement of the community night patrols.

Importantly, the information and data collected need to be analysed in a timely manner and shared within government and with the community night patrols. It allows community input into whole-of-government reporting about progress on community safety and will provide community night patrols with vital information to improve and build on their successes.

Conclusion



While community patrols are highly valued by Indigenous communities as recently outlined by the evaluation of the NTER (NTER Evaluation Report 2011), there is limited up-to-date performance information and data about the community night patrols. The absence of such information can lead funders and other external stakeholders to form misconceptions about the program's core business, its value to achieving community safety objectives and its level of accountability. This project aimed to clarify the program's core role and value, and in this context enhance the framework of accountability for this unique, community-focused program. This was achieved by a desk-top assessment supplemented by a limited number of targeted stakeholder consultations.

Community night patrols can deliver positive impacts and contribute to closing the gap between non-Indigenous and Indigenous life outcomes, particularly those that relate to community safety. As the ANAO's (2011) audit of NT community night patrols found, this contribution could be better measured if more suitable procedures for collecting and analysing performance information were in place. Following a stakeholder consultation process and a literature review, the AIC developed a suite of Key Performance Areas and Indicators (see *Appendix A*) for the program and a supporting Generic Reporting Guide (see *Appendix B*), based on Program Logics

developed as part of this research project (see Figures 1 & 2). These are designed to assist with the management of the many pressures on community night patrols by clarifying the outcomes that the program and each community night patrol is most accountable for. In this way, Program Logic clarifies what each community night patrol is not expected to do and clarifies outcomes it is contributing to but not solely responsible for.

Thus, the program as a whole contributes to the outcome of 'targeted communities feel safer and are safer', if inputs and activities are in place. However, it is most directly accountable for 'well targeted and locally respected community night patrols delivering core services effectively' and 'knowledge from community about safety is captured and reported' (see *Figure 1*). The latter immediate outcomes for the program recognise the unique place of community night patrols in an Indigenous community and the value of harnessing this to provide community-level information through reporting to inform government agencies more generally about progress in community safety.

Community night patrols themselves are accountable under Program Logic for the delivery of core services and reducing over time repeat assistance by such patrols for the same risky incidents and the same vulnerable individuals. The latter outcome is important

as it encourages and rewards community night patrols for achieving this, through well-supported referrals and long-term follow up for repeat clients and proactive work to prevent repeat risky incidents. Reducing the need for repeat services to even one client and/or in regard to one type of risky incident can free up significant resources of a community patrol, which can then be used for other crime prevention actions. If the root causes of behaviour are dealt with through better supported referrals and

more follow-up by community night patrols, this can make a significant contribution to community safety overall. Inclusion of this outcome in the Program Logic for a community night patrol is not intended to encourage such patrols to avoid assisting clients repeatedly if they require it and it is within their core services. Rather, it aims to encourage effectiveness and innovation by these patrols in how such clients can be better assisted and referred to reduce their needs for repeat community Night Patrol Services.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Key performance areas and indicators for community night patrols

Performance area	Key performance indicators
Resources/inputs	<p>Appropriate numbers, type, trained and retained community night patrol staff</p> <p>Essential complementary safety and support services in place</p> <p>Sound compliance history for auspicing body for community night patrol (if relevant)</p>
Activities	<p>Clear and appropriate targeting of community Night Patrol Services</p> <p>Core services delivered, being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • crime prevention actions by these patrols—numbers and types • incidents where assistance provided by these patrols—numbers and types of incidents • vulnerable individuals assisted by these patrols—numbers, demographics, type of assistance and proportion receiving repeat assistance by patrols
Immediate outcomes	<p>Community engagement and feedback processes with community night patrols in place</p> <p>Community knowledge of community safety progress, issues and solutions captured and appropriately reported by such patrols</p> <p>MOU between local police and community night patrols (and also safety house if relevant) in place and working well</p> <p>Referral processes to and from other local services in place and working well</p>
Intermediate outcomes	<p>Examples of target community taking greater responsibility and inputting into solutions for improved community safety as a result of community night patrol activities</p> <p>Examples of safety and support services in target areas improving as a result of the activities of patrols</p> <p>Reduction in demand for repeat assistance to individuals by community night patrols, through appropriate supported referrals and other support for these individuals and proactive strategies to prevent or minimise harm from recurring risky incidents</p>
Contribution to long-term outcomes	<p>Community night patrol monitors assessments of progress in achieving improved community safety and describes resulting actions taken by these patrols for their target community</p> <p>Community night patrol monitors assessments of outcomes for individuals/groups and risky incidents that are repeatedly serviced by patrols in target communities and describes resulting actions by the patrol</p>

Appendix B:

Generic program reporting guide for community night patrols

Indicator	Example of information/data reported
Resources/inputs	
1. Appropriate numbers, type and trained staff 2. Good retention of staff	Total numbers of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff/volunteers Of these numbers, proportion who are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous/non-Indigenous • men/women • full-time/part-time Proportion of staff who have been with the community night patrol for one year or more (or other retention measure) Proportion of staff who are police checked/checked for working with children (or other relevant mandatory checks) Proportion of staff who have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first aid certificate • completed personal safety training • police check • other relevant certification
3. Essential complementary safety and support services in target communities — available	Tick option/s from a menu of available safety and support services, and include an option of 'other—please name' eg tick permanent police presence (if there is one); sobering up shelter (if there is one); and under 'other' a patrol might include a conflict resolution service (if there is one and the community night patrol uses it).
— not available	Tick option/s from a pull down menu of available safety and support services that are required but not available, and include an option of 'other—please name' eg permanent police presence (if not available)

Indicator	Example of information/data reported
Patrol services/activities	
<p>4. Clear and appropriate targeting of community Night Patrol Services</p> <p>5. Appropriate targeting of risky incidents and times</p> <p>6. Appropriate targeting of vulnerable groups/ individuals</p>	<p>Tick option/s from a menu of every targeted community, and include an option of 'other—please name' eg community night patrol supported a football match outside the targeted communities in Darwin since a team from this community attended'</p> <p>Tick option/s from a menu of main incident types, and include an option of 'other—please detail' eg family violence, intoxication, cultural dispute</p> <p>Tick option/s from a menu of main risk groups/individuals, and include an option of 'other—please detail' eg children not attending school, young people already involved with justice system, victims of family or other violence</p>
<p>7. Operating hours are appropriate</p>	<p>Number of days per week the community night patrol operated</p> <p>Number of hours that the community night patrol operated each day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday • Tuesday • Wednesday • Thursday • Friday • Saturday • Sunday <p>Average total operating hours per week for the period (eg five nights of 10 hours, each week, so 50 hours/week).</p> <p>Usual operational times: Day or night or both</p>
<p>8. Responsiveness to need for unusual operating hours</p>	<p>Describe (eg during the period a football competition was held outside the usual operating hours of the community night patrol so the patrol changed its usual operating hours to target this event)</p>
<p>9. Staffing levels are appropriate and staff are safe</p>	<p>Number of night patrollers on duty for each day of the week (a minimum of 2 are on duty at same time):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday eg two • Tuesday • Wednesday • Thursday • Friday • Saturday eg six • Sunday <p>Describe how staff are kept safe. Number of staff safety incidents eg staff injuries, accidents or other relevant staff safety measures.</p>

Indicator	Example of information/data reported
Immediate outcomes	
10. Crime prevention actions are undertaken	From a menu of options for main types of prevention action; insert numbers of crime prevention actions (eg community safety planning—3; 'movie nights—5; other—meeting about new diversion program—1')
11. Assistance with incidents	Types of incidents From a menu of options for main types of assistance of incidents; insert numbers of assistances provided for incidents (eg family violence—23; 'other—argument at police station—1')
12. Assistance to individual persons	Number of individual persons assisted For persons assisted, what was the proportion who were assisted due to: being harmed/causing harm/both/other (if the data system is limited, provide an estimate for the period)
13. Demographics of persons assisted is consistent with targeting	Number and age of females/males/intersex (ie transgender) eg 0 to 12 years, 13 to 17 years, 18 to 25 years, 26 to 44 years, 45 years and over
14. Referrals of persons/incidents to other services by Patrols are effective and appropriate	Types of services/facilities from night patrols refer clients to referrals by Patrols From a menu of options for main types of referrals by the Patrol, insert numbers of persons referred to services/facilities (eg police—10; medical facility—2; private home—8, 'other—another community—6)
15. Transportation of persons is necessary and relevant to core services to Patrols is effective and appropriate	Describe main problems for effective referrals to these services and possible solutions Describe how the community night patrol ensures that transportation is only available when necessary (eg this patrol has a policy and staff use it, and it says that unless there is a community safety risk, transportation is not provided to persons by this patrol)
16. Receiving referrals of persons/incidents from other services	Types of services referring to night patrols From a menu of options for main types of referrals to Patrols, insert numbers of persons/incidents referred from these services (eg police—10; medical facility—2) Describe main problems for Patrols to effectively receive referrals from these services and possible solutions (eg large numbers, inappropriate referrals)
17. Community engagement and feedback processes in place	Describe (eg the community night patrol is on the local community safety planning committee, with community and shire members, it meets every 3 months and recently led to better street lighting)
18. MOU or similar between community night patrol and local police in place	Describe (eg the MOU has been in place since 2011, between police, safe house and community night patrol, and parties meets every week to coordinate services and recently jointly agreed to have a special focus on young people while the holidays are on) Is the community night patrol doing work that police should be doing, eg crisis interventions—yes/no How can this be resolved? Describe (eg permanent police presence is not adequate for peak times and should be improved, core services of this patrol is difficult to implement due to community expectations that the patrol are community police, so community education is being done)

Indicator	Example of information/data reported
<p>19. Community knowledge on community safety is harnessed and used</p>	<p>Do the target communities overall appear to regard community safety as:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Better</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Same</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Worse</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unable to say</p> <p>Describe what is the main reason for the view (eg alcohol supply has increased due to local event)</p>
<p>Intermediate outcomes</p>	
<p>20. Reduce repeat assistance to individuals by community night patrols</p>	<p>Percentage of people assisted by the community night patrol in the period who have been provided with the assistance of this patrol at least once before (eg 50 percent (estimate may be required))</p> <p>Main factor/s leading to repeat services for individuals. Tick an option from a menu of main factors, include 'other—detail' (eg alcohol abuse, accommodation, 'other—cultural dispute')</p> <p>Describe how the community night patrol is assisting to overcome the factor(s) most relevant to individuals repeatedly being assisted by this patrol (eg in this period 10 individuals repeatedly being assisted by the community night patrol have been referred to the xy service, with follow up by this patrol to support their ongoing participation in this program)</p>
<p>Contribution to long-term outcomes</p>	
<p>21. Patrol monitors assessments of progress in achieving improved community safety and describes resulting actions by the community night patrol</p>	<p>Describe outcomes of assessments and any actions the community night patrol has or intends to take (eg a recent survey of community safety was conducted and this patrol outlines how it will respond to findings relevant to its role)</p>
<p>22. Community night patrol monitors assessments of outcomes for vulnerable groups and individuals in target communities and describes resulting actions by the respective patrol</p>	<p>Similar to above, describe outcomes of assessments and any actions the community night patrol has or intends to take (eg a recent coronial enquiry on youth suicide made a recommendation that certain locations be more closely monitored by the patrol in question and the patrol outlines how it will respond)</p>