

National Crime Prevention Framework—Overview

Prepared by the Australian Institute of Criminology on behalf of the Australian and New Zealand Crime Prevention Senior Officers' Group

1. INTRODUCTION

Crime prevention is an effective approach to reducing crime. It is internationally recognised as an important component of a national approach to building safe and secure communities.

The prevention of crime requires individuals, communities, businesses, non-government organisations and all levels of government to work together in a coordinated way to develop and implement effective strategies to address the short and longer-term causes of crime.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Framework is to:

- support a coordinated approach to addressing crime and safety issues of national importance, including new and emerging crime problems;
- promote an improved level of collaboration between crime prevention agencies operating in each jurisdiction;
- improve the effectiveness of crime prevention across Australia by promoting principles of good practice and successful strategies;
- encourage increased commitment to crime prevention at all levels of government and across different sectors; and
- assist in guiding the allocation of crime prevention resources to achieve the greatest impact.

This Framework does not aim to prescribe specific actions that must be implemented by stakeholders involved in the delivery of crime prevention. Rather, it provides guidance by way of information on best practice to assist with the development of appropriate policies, strategies and programs to address crime problems.

3. CRIME PREVENTION

Crime prevention includes 'strategies and measures that seek to reduce the risk of crimes occurring, and their potential harmful effects on individuals and society, including fear of crime, by intervening to influence their multiple causes'¹. This includes strategies that modify the physical environment to reduce the opportunities for crime to occur (environmental approaches), and strategies that focus on addressing the underlying social and economic causes of crime and limiting the supply of motivated offenders (social and structural approaches).

4. OUTCOMES

This Framework will assist in the achievement of the following outcomes:

- a reduction in crime and disorder problems that are of greatest harm and concern to the community;
- increased community safety, security and cohesion, including a reduction in the actual and perceived risk of victimisation;
- increased support for people to cope with the impact of victimisation; and
- a reduction in reoffending among those people who have already engaged in criminal or antisocial behaviour.

¹ United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) 2002. Guidelines for the prevention of crime. 11th Commission on the prevention of crime and criminal justice. Resolution 2002/13, Annex. New York: UN ECOSOC

5. PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD PRACTICE

A number of important principles underpin good crime prevention policy and practice. The principles outlined in this Framework are consistent with international standards for crime prevention, including the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime².

Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments will adopt the following principles, recognising that adherence to these standards is necessary for crime prevention work to deliver optimum results. Effective crime prevention involves:

- strong and committed leadership at all levels;
- collaboration between multiple stakeholders to address the wide-ranging causes of crime and to draw upon the skills, expertise, resources and responsibilities necessary to address those causes;
- the practical application of research and evaluation findings in the development and implementation of measures to reduce crime, targeted to areas of the greatest need and adapted to suit local conditions;
- a focus on outcomes and a commitment to demonstrating measurable results through evaluation and performance measurement, with clear lines of accountability;
- building and maintaining the capacity to implement effective crime prevention policies and interventions;
- promoting an active and engaged community and being responsive to the diversity and changing nature of communities;
- long-term commitment to achieving sustainable reductions in crime and savings to the criminal justice system and the community; and
- coordination across sectors to embed crime prevention into relevant social and economic policies, including education, employment, health, and housing policies, particularly those directed towards at-risk communities, children, families and youth.

6. REQUIREMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE CRIME PREVENTION

Effective crime prevention requires careful consideration of the evidence base with regard to identifying possible interventions, the circumstances in which these interventions will be delivered and how they will be adapted to suit local conditions. Initiatives should be supported on the basis that they are shown to target factors known to influence crime, are consistent with proven or promising practice, and adhere to best practice in implementation.

6.1. *Approaches to preventing crime*

There are a variety of different approaches to preventing crime, including strategies that:

- address the environmental conditions that promote and sustain crime;
- eliminate risk factors and enhance protective factors to reduce the likelihood that individuals will engage in offending behaviour;
- strengthen communities by addressing social exclusion and promoting community cohesiveness; and
- enhance the capacity of criminal justice agencies to prevent crime and reoffending.

6.2. *Key features of effective strategies*

Effective crime prevention not only requires an understanding of what needs to be done, but also the factors that are integral to successful implementation, including:

- commitment to a problem solving approach;
- community engagement;
- partnership arrangements that are consistent with good governance; and
- ongoing and targeted performance monitoring and evaluation.

² Ibid

7. PRIORITY AREAS

7.1 Concentrate efforts on addressing crime problems that present the greatest threat to the safety, security and cohesiveness of communities

While each jurisdiction experiences different types and levels of criminal offending and victimisation, a number of issues affect communities across Australia and warrant particular attention. The following issues have been identified as requiring a concerted and coordinated response:

- reducing alcohol-related violence;
- improving the safety of young people;
- improving the safety of Indigenous people;
- preventing child abuse and neglect; and
- reducing violence against women.

7.2. Continuing to monitor local crime problems, identify local priorities and develop strategies to reduce their impact on the community

Each jurisdiction faces a range of local crime problems that emerge in response to local data on key indicators, as well as political or community interest or concern. Furthermore, these problems vary across communities and locations within each jurisdiction. An important feature of this Framework is that it supports the development of different priorities and targeted responses in individual jurisdictions and communities.

7.3. Addressing new and emerging crime problems

Crime prevention operates in a complex and ever changing global environment. New crime problems continue to emerge as changes in the global economy and increasing advances in technology create new opportunities for offenders. Areas to focus on include organised crime and technology-enabled crime.

7.4. Improving the evidence base for crime prevention

There is a considerable body of knowledge about successful approaches to crime prevention, and understanding of the conditions that must be in place to implement effective interventions. Nevertheless, it is important that this evidence base continues to be developed and refined, and that the ongoing effectiveness of interventions should be assessed on a regular basis.

A concentrated effort is required to address gaps in the existing evidence base, particularly as it relates to new and innovative crime prevention strategies and understanding emerging crime problems. It is also necessary to implement strategies to improve the quality of evaluation and performance measurement in crime prevention.

7.5. An ongoing program of capacity building and technical assistance to ensure new knowledge and good practice are actively disseminated and adopted in practice

Recent experience has highlighted the need to direct more focused attention and resources to the task of improving the skills base and access to appropriate resources for individuals and organisations engaged in crime prevention action. This requires an ongoing program of technical assistance to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of knowledge transfer, skills development, project and program management ability, and performance measurement and evaluation capacity.

8. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Each jurisdiction already has a number of actions in place that are consistent with the priorities and principles outlined in this Framework. Implementation of this Framework will involve jurisdictions referring to the approaches, principles and priorities supported by the Framework when developing or reviewing crime prevention strategies, and modifying existing strategies (where necessary) to reflect this Framework.

Responsibility for overseeing the implementation of this Framework will rest with the Australia and New Zealand Crime Prevention Senior Officers' Group (ANZCP SOG) and its member agencies. Reporting on progress in implementing the Framework will be consistent with the current jurisdictional biannual reporting by ANZCP SOG member agencies. Reporting will focus on the delivery of crime prevention activity that is consistent with the principles and addresses the priorities highlighted in this Framework. Issues of high importance will be communicated to the Standing Council on Police and Emergency Management (SCPEM).

This Framework is a working document. The priority areas (in section 7) will be subject to annual review so new and emerging issues can be highlighted and incorporated over time.

Individual jurisdictions will be responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of strategies implemented as part of this Framework. A longer term review will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the Framework in achieving the purpose (section 2) and to determine its contribution to crime prevention and achieving the outcomes outlined in section 4.

Australian and New Zealand Crime Prevention Senior Officers' Group

The Australian and New Zealand Crime Prevention Senior Officers' Group (ANZCP SOG) provides a national forum for senior crime prevention staff from each State and Territory as well as Commonwealth and New Zealand government to exchange and share information about crime prevention practices. The ANZCP SOG aims to:

- support strategic thinking and policy development on crime prevention issues;
- promote inter-jurisdictional collaboration;
- promote and encourage strategic research in crime prevention; and
- share information on matters to be discussed at relevant Ministerial and Senior Officer forums

Australian Institute of Criminology

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