


Safe City Strategy 2007–2012



city of villages



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
1.0 INTRODUCTION	4
2.0 BACKGROUND	5
2.1 The City of Sydney	5
2.2 The Role of Local Government in Responding to Crime	5
2.3 Legislative and Policy Context	5
3.0 CRIME PROFILE	8
3.1 Crime Trends	8
3.2 Key Crime Categories	8
3.3 Key Place of Crime	9
3.4 Key Time of Crime	11
3.5 Perceptions of Safety	11
3.6 Victim and Offender Profile	12
3.7 Key Crime and Safety Issues	12
4.0 SAFE CITY STRATEGY	13
Objective 1. Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour	14
Objective 2. Tackle complex crime and safety issues in areas of public housing	18
Objective 3. Improve the look and feel of our public spaces	19
Objective 4. Deliver primary prevention and early intervention initiatives	25
Objective 5. Target first time offenders released from prison	27
Objective 6. Strengthen communities and increase opportunities for people to engage in legitimate activities	28
Objective 7. Advocate to higher levels of government for more resources aimed at crime prevention	31
5.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION	32

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

All over the world the problems associated with crime and safety issues in our cities provide ongoing challenges for the public sector as well as key business groups, community organisations and local residents. Annual spending on law and order in Australia alone runs into several billion dollars and this does not take in to account the significant emotional costs affecting victims, their families and the broader community. While Sydney is by international standards a safe city the Safe City Strategy emphasises that we can always work better together in order to make our city an even safer place.

The Safe City Strategy 2007–2012 provides an overarching framework to guide the City and its partners in tackling the complex range of crime and safety issues affecting both the Central Business District and our urban villages. This is in recognition that the causes of crime are complex, many and varied and that only by working together effectively on a broad range of issues can we continue to create safer, vibrant and more prosperous communities.

The key objectives of the Strategy are to:

- 1. Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour** – including addressing domestic and non-domestic assaults, targeting steal from motor vehicle offences, reducing steal from person offences, reducing fraud, tackling victimisation of international students and visitors and providing crime prevention information to residents and business.
- 2. Tackle complex crime and safety issues in areas of public housing** – including delivering the Creating a Safer Community Project aimed at addressing fear of crime asocial exclusion, council representation at relevant forums and creating a Public Housing Liaison Officer position.
- 3. Improve the look and feel of our public spaces** – by delivering good urban design, ongoing CPTED Protocol Referral with NSW Police, extending the CCTV Street Safety Camera Network, initiating community safety audits, rapid graffiti removal, delivering high quality cleansing services, improved street lighting and the reactivation of laneways and public parks.
- 4. Deliver primary prevention and early intervention initiatives** – including increasing opportunities for recreation and learning and investing in programs which increase the chances of vulnerable children and young people and their families at key transition points in life.
- 5. Target first time offenders released from prison** – including supporting the StAMP Project which provides a mentoring support program to ex-offenders

6. Strengthen communities and increase opportunities for people to engage in legitimate activities – recognising the specific needs and developing appropriate responses to key community groups including Aboriginal people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD), older people, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) communities and women.

7. Advocate to higher levels of government for more resources aimed at crime prevention – recognising that the City has an important role to play in ensuring that federal and state government continue to support initiatives aimed at reducing and preventing crime at the local level.

The Safe City Strategy recognises that there are many contributing factors to crime and that simplistic solutions such as more police and tougher sentencing do not address the underlying causes of crime. The Strategy has an emphasis on crime prevention, recognising that by investing in building and strengthening our communities at the local level we can in turn create a safer city. Above all, the Strategy has a focus on shared responsibility – that ultimately all of us are responsible for our own and each other's sense of safety and security.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sydney is an attractive and vibrant city with a rich mix of people from diverse social, cultural, religious and economic backgrounds. Council values the unique precincts which surround the Central Business District and which make Sydney a city of villages like many of the great cities of the world. While the City of Sydney is proud of its safe reputation by international standards it recognises that we can always work on ways of making our communities safer places.

The City of Sydney recognises that crime is a genuine community concern and that it has an important role to play in delivering a safe city environment. The City contends that there are many reasons why people commit crime and that only a coordinated approach involving a broad range of different groups and individuals will lead to making our community an even safer place.

The City of Sydney acknowledges that policies and strategies that focus on the prevention of crime, rather than on addressing crime once it has occurred, provide a potentially more cohesive and in the long-term cost effective manner of dealing with community concerns around crime and safety issues. It also understands that the nature and causes of crime are varied and complex and that any program needs to be dynamic and flexible to evolving local conditions.

The City of Sydney's Safe City team have developed this document to provide a framework which aims to encompass the range of crime prevention initiatives it is currently implementing in partnership with the community, the Police, government and non-government agencies, business and community organisations. It is this central theme of shared responsibility that underpins the framework – that the best weapon we have to address crime in our communities is a planned and united community effort.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The City of Sydney

The City of Sydney is located in the heart of Sydney, Australia's premier city. The City of Sydney is the local government authority for the area and is a tolerant, diverse and prosperous "city of villages". The City of Sydney has evolved into a lively and cosmopolitan metropolis and provides a high quality of life and amenity for residents, businesses and visitors.

Council understands that Sydney's people feel a strong sense of belonging and we value our rich, natural, cultural and urban heritage. The City of Sydney is committed to ensuring that the city is a safe and vibrant place to live, work and visit.

2.2 The Role of Local Government in Responding to Crime

The City of Sydney recognises that the NSW Police and the criminal justice system are the most important components in relation to maintaining law and order in our city. The role of the City of Sydney as the Local Government Authority is to:

- Complement the work of the Police in reducing and preventing crime and fear of crime; and
- Work with community stakeholders to build and strengthen community, prevent the community harm and enhance quality of life.

2.3 Legislative and Policy Context

Local government has a legislative responsibility to respond to crime and community safety concerns. Additionally, national and state crime prevention policy frameworks provide a clear role for local government.

Federal

Whilst there is no National Crime Prevention Plan or any specific legislative/policy framework at the Commonwealth level, local government crime prevention programming is guided to some extent by the following:

- Crime prevention legislation is developed by the Criminal Justice Division of the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department and includes national law enforcement policy, legal and policy advice on criminal law and legal aspects of the federal criminal justice system;
- The Australian Government runs the National Crime Prevention Program which provides funding for projects at the local level designed to reduce and prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, improve community safety and security and reduce the fear of crime including primary prevention and early intervention and initiatives which address alcohol and illicit drug use and misuse; and
- Legislation and policy frameworks relating to the reduction and prevention of crime is largely drawn up by the states in their administration of the criminal justice system.

State

Whilst there is no NSW Crime Prevention Plan, local government responds to crime and safety via the following legislative and policy frameworks:

- *The Children (Protection and Parental Responsibility) Act (1997)* provides a statutory basis for the development of community safety or crime prevention plans with local governments taking the lead agency role. This Act recognises the importance of community safety activities that draw upon local knowledge and services in adopting a strategic partnership approach to addressing local community safety issues.
- *The City's Charter under the Local Government Act (1993)* requires council to take responsibility for managing public land. By implication, this can mean that councils have a duty of care in relation to people who use public land. The Local Government Act gives councils the power to issue and enforce orders which aim to prevent activities that place members of the public at risk.
- A range of other legislation such as the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979)* and the *Roads Act (1993)* also provides Council with a range of responsibilities and functions including public health and safety.

The New South Wales Government has also developed the State Plan: a ten-year direction statement aimed at improving services, setting priorities and planning to meet the challenges facing the state for the period 2006–2016.

One of the key themes of the State Plan under Respect and Responsibility is keeping people safe, tackling anti-social behaviour and building harmonious communities. More specifically for the City area the plan focuses on improving safety for people after dark and working well with people at the local level.

Local

The Safe City Strategy is one of many strategic planning documents and is designed to complement the following City documents:

- Social Plan 2006–2010;
- Local Action Plans;
- Road Safety Strategy;
- Youth Interagency Strategy and Action Plan; and
- Redfern-Waterloo Community Safety Plan.

The Strategy will also complement the following documents under development as at October 2006:

- Draft Oxford Street Safety Strategy;
- Draft Homelessness Strategy;
- Late Night Trading Premises Discussion Paper;
- Draft Open Space and Recreation Needs Study;
- Draft City Plan Development Control Plan; and
- Draft Drug & Alcohol Strategy.

3.0 CRIME PROFILE

By international standards Sydney is a very safe place. However when we take into account that the City's resident, business and visitor population exceeds some 900,000 people each day then, like every major city throughout the world, we will experience some level of personal and property crime.

Accurately measuring the incidence of crime is a difficult task. Crime statistics are based on information reported or detected by the Police and are usually calculated using an area's residential population. The City of Sydney Local Government Area has a residential population of 150,000 and crime rates are much higher than they would be if its daily workforce and visitors were taken into account.

How perceptions and realities work to influence each other may well determine people's reactions to crime. For example while there is no denying that high crime rates are cause for concern, research shows that people's fear of becoming a victim of violent crime in Sydney tends to be much greater than their chances of actually becoming a victim.

3.1 Crime Trends

Nationally, there has been a decline in actual crime and fear of crime between 2000 and 2004¹. In NSW recorded rates of crime across many categories are at their lowest levels in 15 years (i.e. since 1990). However recorded rates of sexual assault and assault have more than doubled over this period².

3.2 Key Crime Categories

From 2006 onwards, the City will commission bi-annual research for a comprehensive Crime Profile report of the local government area (LGA). The aim of the report is to provide a detailed explanation of crime trends and factors potentially contributing to crime and its prevention and to guide the City in its attempts at reducing and preventing crime. The following information in this section relates to the inaugural Crime Profile developed in 2006³.

1 Johnson, H. (2005) Crime Victimization in Australia: Key findings of the 2004 International Crime Victimization Survey, Australian Institute of Criminology.

2 Moffatt, S. & Poynton, S. (2006) Long Term Trends in Property and Violent Crime In New South Wales: 1990–2004. Crime and Justice Bulletin, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

3 Clancey G. Bolitho J. & Robertson D. (2006) City of Sydney 2006 Crime Profile Comprehensive Report, Australian Centre for Security Research, University of Western Sydney.

The top five crimes by volume over the ten-year period 1996–2006 were non-domestic-related assault, fraud, malicious damage to property, steal from motor vehicle and steal from person offences.

Based on data for the ten-year period (1 July 1996 to 30 June 2006), it is apparent that some crimes have increased, while others have decreased in the City of Sydney LGA. Specifically, increases have occurred for assault (domestic violence-related and non domestic violence-related), fraud, steal from dwelling, harassment, threatening behaviour and private nuisance.

A number of offences linked to law enforcement and regulatory practices have also increased, including liquor offences, offensive conduct and offensive language, trespass, transport offences, prohibited weapon offences and possess and/or use cannabis and amphetamines.

Conversely, some significant falls have been recorded for motor vehicle theft, break and enter (dwelling and non-dwelling), robbery with a weapon not a firearm and steal from motor vehicle.

3.3 Key Place of Crime

Analysis of the premise type where crime occurs in the City revealed the most frequent perpetration of crime in outdoor/public places, licensed premises, residential dwellings and retail/wholesale outlets.

Trends across the entire City of Sydney LGA mask local differences. Crime trend data for each postcode within the City of Sydney LGA reveals growth in some crimes in particular locations. For example, 2000, 2010, 2011 and 2017 postcode areas have each experienced increases in a number of crimes. This suggests that preventative initiatives should recognise and respond to the localised conditions contributing to increases in crime in these areas.

Table 1 below outlines crimes that have increased by postcode over the five-year period July 2001–June 2006.

Table 1: Crimes that Increased by Postcode between 1 July 2001 and 30 June 2006

Suburb	Crimes Increasing
Sydney 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assault up by 6.3% ■ Prohibited and regulated weapons offences up by 6% ■ Offensive language up by 7% ■ Criminal intent up by 30.7% ■ Trespass up by 7% ■ Possess and/or use amphetamines up by 15.2%
Ultimo 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Steal from dwelling up by 20.5%
Darlinghurst Surry Hills 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Criminal intent up by 5.1% ■ Possess and/or use amphetamines up by 13.7% ■ Possess and/or use ecstasy up by 23.2%
Elizabeth Bay Rushcutters Bay Potts Point Woolloomooloo 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Prohibited and regulated weapons offences up by 4.3% ■ Possess and/or use narcotics up by 11.3% ■ Possess and/or use other drugs up by 27.6%
Alexandria Beaconsfield 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assault up by 5.9% ■ Steal from retail store up by 27.6%
Waterloo Zetland 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Robbery without weapon up by 17.5% ■ Break and enter dwelling up by 7.8% ■ Steal from dwelling up by 11.8% ■ Fraud up by 23.3%
Glebe Forest Lodge 2037	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Break and enter dwelling up by 21.1%
Erskineville 2043	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Malicious damage to property up by 12.5%
Pymont, Redfern, Rosebery, Paddington, Newtown, Enmore, Camperdown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Nil

It is apparent from the data presented in Table 1 that some postcode areas have not experienced increases in any crime categories in the five-year period. Conversely, 2000, 2010, 2011 and 2017 postcode areas have each experienced increases in a number of crimes. This highlights some local variations and confirms the need for location-specific responses to crime, rather than generic LGA-wide strategies.

3.4 Key Time of Crime

Crime data for the ten-year period (1 July 1996 to 30 June 2006) confirms that many offences peak between Friday and Sunday and tend to increase in the summer months in the City of Sydney LGA. This is consistent with general police intelligence and the research evidence.

3.5 Perceptions of Safety

People's perceptions of crime can often be disproportionate to recorded crime data. Research routinely shows how many people over-estimate the likelihood of becoming a victim of crime.

Data extracted from the 2006 City of Sydney Household Survey, while not specifically targeting views/perceptions on crime, provides some useful insights into general concern about crime and more specific concerns based on suburb of residence.

The survey has revealed that perceptions of crime and community safety are not spread equally across all suburbs within the City of Sydney. Rather, some suburbs disproportionately highlight crime and community safety problems. Respondents from Waterloo, Pyrmont and Redfern listed crime and community problems as the top three things that they like least about their suburb.

According to a random sample of 3,385 respondents to the 2006 Household Survey questions "What do you like least about your suburb?" the most common crime-related issues raised by respondents were:

- Drugs and Alcohol abuse (n=742, 4th most common issue mentioned);
- Crime (n=631, 6th most common);
- Community safety (n=531, 7th most common); and
- Vandalism and graffiti (n=220, 15th most common).

These data demonstrate the relatively high importance of crime and community safety issues for those City of Sydney residents who responded to the 2006 Household Survey.

3.6 Victim and Offender Profile

Persons aged between 20 and 39 years are more likely to be the victims and persons of interest of many crimes committed within the City of Sydney LGA. This is consistent with general empirical research, which suggests that key offending years are generally 15–24 years. Furthermore, given the attraction of the licensed premises and entertainment precincts in the City of Sydney LGA for young adults, it is perhaps inevitable that this age group would be disproportionately involved as victims and offenders in various offences.

3.7 Key Crime and Safety Issues

The Crime Profile, ongoing community consultation and a review of existing research and inter-related plans and strategies has demonstrated that the key priority crime and safety issues facing the City are:

- alcohol-related anti-social behaviour and public disorder;*
- crime and safety issues in areas of public housing;
- drug-related crime;*
- perceptions of safety;
- safety education and advice to residents, businesses and City visitors;
- coordination of efficient and effective responses with Police and other partners;
- early intervention and capacity building with key target groups;
- public space management, maintenance and design;
- recidivist offending; and
- advocating to higher levels of Government for more resources aimed at crime prevention.

* NB Council's response to alcohol and drug-related issues is contained in the Draft Drug and Alcohol Strategy.

4.0 SAFE CITY STRATEGY

The Safe City Strategy:

- provides a framework to direct the work of the City of Sydney in addressing priority crime and safety issues;
- responds to a series of identified key issues based on evidence from research and information from the Police and community stakeholders;
- acknowledges the work of other units of council as integral components of a coordinated approach to addressing the identified issues; and
- recognises that the crime and safety issues facing the City are changeable and that evolving practice and unique local conditions will always give rise to new ways of preventing crime and achieving a safer city.

Aim

To improve actual and perceived safety across the City of Sydney.

Objectives

1. Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
2. Tackle complex crime and safety issues in areas of public housing
3. Improve the look and feel of our public spaces
4. Deliver primary prevention and early intervention initiatives
5. Target first time offenders released from prison
6. Strengthen communities and increase opportunities for people to engage in legitimate activities
7. Advocate to higher levels of Government for more resources aimed at crime prevention

Guiding Principles

The City of Sydney is committed to a crime prevention approach that:

- delivers a measurable reduction in crime;
- improves quality of life for all members of the City community;
- delivers best practice, evidence-based and economically viable solutions that provide the greatest benefit to all members of the City community;
- works in partnership and in meaningful consultation with other levels of government, business and residential communities;
- includes an active advocacy role that promotes comprehensive and coordinated public policy responses to crime;
- recognises that crime and the causes of crime are complex and require multi-faceted strategies which address the needs of specific locations and target groups;
- recognises the need for primary prevention and early intervention; and
- respects the right of all community members to use public spaces.

Objective 1. Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour*

The most common crimes that occur in the City of Sydney are assaults, steal from person, steal from motor vehicle, malicious damage to property and fraud. The City acknowledges that the NSW Police are the lead agency in tackling crime, and as such coordinates initiatives which seek to reduce crime in conjunction with police operations.

The key focus of the City's work in reducing crime is through educating all members of our community to ensure that people are both informed and involved in ways to make their community an even safer place. The City achieves this by coordinating efficient and effective responses with NSW Police and other government partners and by improving the ability of all community members to respond to crime and safety issues.

* Defined as swearing, loud noise, verbal assault, defecation/urination, speeding cars in public places or offences which may adversely affect neighbourhood amenity or the social well-being of others.

The City will reduce crime and anti-social behaviour by:

- addressing assaults (domestic and non-domestic);
- targeting steal from motor vehicle offences;
- reducing steal from person offences;
- tackling victimisation of international students and visitors;
- providing crime prevention information to residents;
- providing crime prevention information to business; and
- delivering localised crime prevention/community safety plans.

Addressing Assaults (domestic and non-domestic)

A significant portion of all non-domestic assaults in the City of Sydney are related to alcohol and occur in the street or in licensed premises.

To reduce assaults, the City will:

- continue to work with and support liquor licensing accords to improve the participation of licensed premises in lowering assaults;
- provide CCTV in public spaces where high levels of public domain assaults occur;
- undertake joint operations with NSW Police and Office of Liquor Gaming and Racing, targeting licensing premises with high levels of assaults and other issues; and
- piloting Police-Ranger patrols in key hotspot locations at key times.

The City is committed to tackling domestic assaults and domestic violence.

The City will:

- continue to disseminate the joint City of Sydney/NSW Police booklet for victims of domestic violence;
- translate the DV booklet into key community languages; and
- provide assistance to frontline services addressing domestic violence via council's community and accommodation grants programs.

Targeting Steal From Motor Vehicle Offences

The theft of personal belongings from parked vehicles is one of the most common crimes in the City. Opportunistic crimes like this are best targeted through educating potential victims on how to reduce their risk of crime. The “Stop Theft” campaign was introduced in 2004 and has been successfully reducing this type of crime.

The City will:

- continue to implement the “Stop Theft” campaign which reminds motorists not to leave their valuables in their car;
- continue to install aluminium “Stop Theft ” signage in hotspots across the City; and
- continue to promote the campaign message on all parking meters and parking tickets.

Reducing Steal From Person Offences

The theft of hand bags, mobile phones and brief cases is another common crime in the City. This can occur in numerous settings, such as cinemas, internet cafes, libraries and hotels.

The City will:

- continue to promote the “Gone in a Flash” campaign which asks the public to be mindful of their personal belongings; and
- continue to disseminate posters, drink coasters, and screen savers with this message to key hotspot locations.

Tackling Victimisation of International Students and Visitors

To reduce the victimisation of newly arrived international students who study in and/or visit the City, council and the NSW Police have developed the “Student Safe” campaign. “Student Safe” aims to provide students with personal safety tips to reduce their risk of victimisation. “Student Safe” resources are circulated to tertiary institutions in the area and are available in Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Korean and Vietnamese.

The City will:

- continue to disseminate “Student Safe” resources to international colleges and student services and international language schools; and
- participate in annual on-campus orientation week events, holding safety tip seminars and staffing crime prevention information stalls.

Providing Crime Prevention Information to Residents

Community safety education and information campaigns are a fundamental part of the Safe City Strategy. The provision of high quality, targeted education initiatives improves the ability of all members of the City community to respond to or prevent crime. Being aware of how to respond to crime can also significantly improve a sense of personal capability and improve perceptions of safety.

Building closer community networks and providing crime prevention information are key challenges for the City. In meeting this challenge, the City is delivering “Good Neighbour” BBQs in conjunction with the NSW Police and NRMA Insurance. The BBQs have been successfully piloted in the City South area and provide a relaxed environment where neighbours can meet each other, and receive information to reduce their risk of personal and property crime.

The City will:

- deliver a series of safety fact sheets in partnership with the NSW Police and the NSW Attorney General’s department Crime Prevention Division;
- deliver translated versions of the safety factsheet series;
- deliver safety resources targeting senior citizens;
- continue to disseminate the safety contacts fridge magnet; and
- deliver a series of “Good Neighbour” BBQs across the LGA.

Providing Crime Prevention Information to Business

The City of Sydney understands the importance of providing a safe and secure environment in which to do business. Safe City regularly hosts business safety – “Biz Safe” forums for retailers and other relevant stakeholders to create greater awareness of crime prevention and safety for local businesses. The forums are conducted in partnership with the Police, NRMA Insurance and local businesses.

They provide an opportunity for business operators and employees to explore ways of working together and raising awareness on common issues such as sharing information on crime prevention, reducing fraud, safe work place designs, safe cash handling procedures, crime scene management, business security audits and how to deal with aggressive customers.

The City will:

- deliver three “Biz Safe” forums annually; and
- deliver “Biz Safe” forums which target the City’s culturally and linguistically diverse business community.

Delivering localised crime prevention/community safety plans

The City recognises the need to develop localised responses to crime and safety issues which are unique to specific areas.

The City will:

- deliver localised crime prevention/community safety plans in Redfern, Waterloo, Oxford Street, Darlinghurst, Darlinghurst Road, Kings Cross and Woolloomooloo.

Objective 2. Tackle complex crime and safety issues in areas of public housing

The City of Sydney contains several suburbs which comprise large areas of public housing including Redfern, Surry Hills, Waterloo, Woolloomooloo, Glebe, Erskineville and Millers Point. The City recognises that people who reside in public housing areas have their own specific community safety needs. The City aims to work with the NSW Department of Housing, residents and other agencies to address these needs in relation to addressing fear of crime and social exclusion.

The City will:

- deliver the Creating a Safer Community Project;
- represent Council at relevant forums; and
- establish a Public Housing Liaison Officer position.

Creating a Safer Community Project

The Creating a Safer Community Project has been successfully piloted in the Redfern and Waterloo areas during 2005 and 2006. The Project has undertaken a range of action-based initiatives in response to the community safety needs of local public housing tenants. The project includes a newsletter providing safety and security advice, a personal alarm trial, a walking group, community safety forums, morning teas, BBQs and seminars raising awareness in relation to understanding mental illness and falls prevention.

The City will:

- extend the project to the Northcott Estate in Surry Hills in 2007; and
- extend the project to Woolloomooloo public housing tenants in 2008.

Council representation at relevant forums

Council recognises that it has an important role to play in working with public housing tenants in the provision of services, participating in a range of community development initiatives and in advocating for the needs of such groups to higher levels of government.

The City will:

- attend Neighbourhood Advisory Boards, precinct meetings and other relevant forums where appropriate.

Establish a Public Housing Liaison Officer position

The City recognises that it has an important role to play in supporting the needs of people residing in public housing.

The City will:

- establish a Public Housing Liaison Officer position to coordinate a range of initiatives aimed at addressing the needs of public housing tenants; and
- pilot the Public Housing Liaison Officer position for a period of 24 months.

Objective 3. Improve the look and feel of our public spaces

The City acknowledges that through careful assessment of the physical and social environment and a thorough understanding of place and context, safer places can be created which may help to improve the quality of people's lives. The City aims to design and maintain the public domain to produce attractive and well managed environments that help to discourage criminal or anti-social behaviour.

This is achieved by:

- delivering good urban design;
- ongoing Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Protocol Referral with NSW Police;
- delivering a CCTV Street Safety Camera Network;
- initiating community safety audits;
- rapid graffiti removal;
- delivering high quality cleansing services;
- improved street lighting; and
- reactivation of laneways and public parks.

Urban Design

The City is aware that a clean, well maintained and appropriately designed environment can be instrumental in producing attractive, accessible and well-managed public spaces that help to discourage criminal or anti-social behaviour. The design of a city (including the choice of land use and activities, the site planning of buildings and activities, and the design of detailed building elements) can all contribute to its level of safety and security.

One of the objectives of Council's City of Sydney Development Control Plan 2007 which is one half of the overall City-wide City Plan is to contribute to an overall crime prevention strategy which achieves development that encourages neighbourhood interaction. In terms of safety and security, the plan contains a Design for Safety element which aims to minimise opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour and maximise casual surveillance so that people feel safer at all times of the day and night.

The City will:

- continue to ensure that its urban design policy and development control plans consider safety and security issues.

CPTED Referral Protocol with NSW Police

The City's approach to urban design is based on the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) which provide guidelines for council both when planning its own developments and when considering private development applications. A key component of the guidelines is the notification of relevant development applications to the seven NSW Police Local Area Commands in the council area. In this way police can provide comment on the development from a crime prevention perspective prior to the application being considered by council.

The City will:

- continue to commit to this important referral process;
- work with the NSW Police to deliver "Safer By Design" training (based on CPTED principles) to City planners and other staff; and
- continue to disseminate CPTED checklists for specific settings such as parks and convenience stores.

Street Safety Camera Program

Closed circuit television (CCTV) may deter criminal activity as any potential offender may be fearful of being identified and prosecuted. The use of CCTV videotapes may provide useful evidence to the court in terms of detecting and convicting individuals involved in criminal activity. It also provides police with the ability to rapidly assess a situation and to allocate resources accordingly in response.

The City's Street Safety Cameras have been installed in over 65 crime locations to assist NSW Police to detect, prevent and prosecute those involved in assaults and robberies as well as other serious offences such as property damage.

The Street Safety Cameras are monitored 24 hours a day by specially trained security personnel in a control centre at Sydney Town Hall. From the control centre, live TV images can be transferred to police should a person's safety be at risk, allowing the police to respond quickly.

The output of the cameras is also taped and held for 21 days, to assist police with their investigations and with legal proceedings if necessary. Areas monitored by the Street Safety Cameras are clearly signposted to deter crime, increase the perception of public safety and alert the public for privacy reasons.

The City of Sydney's Street Safety Camera system is subject to the tightest privacy protection controls. To achieve a balance between crime prevention interests and the rights and privacy of individuals the scope of the Street Safety Camera Program focuses on crimes against the person, other serious crimes and crowd management. As a further safeguard, the City of Sydney has drawn up a rigorous Code of Practice, which governs the use of the Street Safety Cameras.

The City will:

- continue to deliver the Street Safety Camera program in areas which have been identified as having specific safety and security risks.

Community Safety Audits

Where crime statistics from the Police and the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics reveal areas within the City which are experiencing higher rates of crime, Council may undertake a community safety audit. A community safety audit is a process that may involve a group of local people and experts documenting issues in the physical environment which may impact negatively on people's safety in a designated area.

Once a series of issues have been identified and recorded a list of recommendations is compiled and circulated to the relevant agency charged with addressing the identified issue. Ranking or prioritising issues may also be carried out so that more costly recommendations can be factored into budgets in the medium to longer term.

The City will:

- continue to undertake safety audits in key "hotspot" locations in partnership with the police and other stakeholders.

Graffiti Removal, Cleansing and Maintenance

The City of Sydney recognises that public spaces and streets that are clean and in good condition increase the public's confidence in the safety of the city. The City of Sydney has set high standards for the cleanliness and maintenance of its streets and public spaces, including graffiti removal, street cleaning, litter control, waste collection and repair of vandalism to City assets.

The City of Sydney recognises that quickly removing graffiti is an important step in improving the amenity of a neighbourhood. The visual impact of a clean wall is immediate and a tangible sign to residents that they live in a clean and safe neighbourhood.

Graffiti 'hotspots' are inspected every 24 hours and graffiti removed within 24 hours of identification, or when consent from the building owner or resident is obtained. The remainder of the Local Government Area is inspected every five days and graffiti removed within 24 hours of identification, or when consent from the building owner or resident is obtained.

The City will:

- continue to remove graffiti within 24 hours of identification.

Cleansing Services

The City of Sydney recognises that a poorly maintained environment can impact negatively on people's perceptions of safety and security. The City's Street Cleaning Service ensures the flushing and cleaning of footpaths, malls and plazas and the emptying and steam cleaning of street furniture, litter and recycling bins and cigarette ash cylinders on a regular basis.

In addition the City's Environmental Health Officers regularly undertake inspections and serve notices dealing with such issues as accumulated rubbish, overgrown vegetation and unsightly articles to name a few. Environmental Health Officers protect the environment through clean up, prevention and infringement notices, which are applied to the management of environmental issues and pollution events.

The City will:

- continue to maintain its high standards in terms of street and public domain cleansing.

Street Lighting

The City recognises that good street lighting is often cited as a measure which has the effect of enhancing feelings of safety not only for its visual effect of improving overall surveillance but also as a means of attracting people to a site. Council's street lighting strategy at a broader level aims to promote safer environments by optimising opportunities for surveillance and reducing feelings of fear and vulnerability.

The City's Public Domain Manual contains the City Lights Strategy which establishes target minimum levels for public domain lighting throughout the City and standardises lighting infrastructure.

The City will:

- continue to work with its provider in ensuring the upgrading of street lighting in identified "hot spot" locations.

Activation of Laneways and Public Spaces

Laneways across the City can be the location of criminal and anti-social behaviour. The City is preparing a Laneways Revitalisation Strategy to reclaim a series of Sydney's laneways as a way of breathing new life into the CBD and surrounding neighbourhoods and providing new intimate places for people to socialise within the hustle and bustle of the CBD. The strategy aims to revitalise Sydney's laneway system to allow for:

- alternative types of public space to be available to City workers, residents and tourists;
- alternative walking routes through the city;
- opportunities for small businesses; and
- laneways to be treated as a place of historical and cultural meaning.

Public parks and spaces across the City have been increasingly activated through buskers, outdoor events, markets and organised sporting competitions. These activities increase the legitimate use of our open spaces and reduce opportunities for criminal activity. Key locations still require work, and the City's Open Space and Recreation Strategy and Local Action Plans provide directions for the future in this regard.

The City coordinates an extensive program of events and festivals in our public spaces all of which incorporate comprehensive risk management and security assessments and plans.

The City understands that public spaces need to be appropriately designed for all different kinds of user groups. Where possible the City seeks to facilitate community participation which balances a range of views in developing community negotiated solutions to the design of "contested space". The City acknowledges that designing "out" solutions may also be required particularly where anti-social behaviour is evident at a particular site. Ultimately the City will aim to continue to address the underlying problems with a range of stakeholders at any location with a view to avoiding displacement to other areas.

The City will:

- implement the Laneways Revitalisation Strategy;
- continue to provide a range of events and activities which activate parks and public spaces; and
- continue to consult with a range of stakeholders in developing community negotiated solutions to the design of "contested spaces".

Objective 4. Deliver primary prevention and early intervention initiatives

The City of Sydney is aware that there is an increasing body of evidence that suggests that interventions early in life can have long term impacts on crime and other social problems. Investment in health, education, employment and recreation programs can all be beneficial in ensuring that children, young people and their families are given the best possible start in life. Similarly the provision of recreation and learning programs for such groups can facilitate personal and social development through which behaviour may be positively affected.

The City will:

- increase opportunities for recreation and learning; and
- invest in programs which increase the chances of the vulnerable children and young people at key transition points in life.

Recreation and Learning Centres

The Safe City Strategy recognises that as well as aiming to reduce crime and the fear of crime a safer city must also aim to become an active and healthier city. The active participation of pedestrians along clean and visually attractive streets and route in the public domain in itself creates the impression that there are people around and hence feelings of safety and security are likely to be enhanced.

Similarly there is a wealth of literature which supports the view that recreation programs provide a means of social interaction, may reduce risk-taking behaviour and provide a means for people to actively participate in community life. The Safe City Strategy acknowledges that these are all essential components in creating safer communities. The City recognises the value of these programs providing a basis for children and young people to engage in legitimate activities, develop new skills and provide a diversion from risk-taking behaviour.

The City will:

- continue to provide an extensive network of Recreation and Learning Centres that host activities ranging from sports, arts, music, fitness, self defence and street safety advice, employment programs, sexual health education, nutrition courses, adult education, youth programs and children's services; and
- provide targeted recreation and diversionary programs for children and young people which are outlined below.

Children and Families

The Safe City Strategy supports early intervention and emphasises its importance in terms of developing responses that are not just aimed at children and parents, but responses that support the community to develop and become a better environment in which to raise children. Strong and consistent support during a child's formative years reduce the risk of that child engaging in crime later in life. The City provides several direct services which provide this level of support.

The City will:

- continue to provide child care, after school and school holiday care; and
- continue to provide community development initiatives such as the Inner City Playbus, parenting programs and Playgroups in the Park.

Young People

The City is aware that young people aged between 12 and 18 years are more likely to be victims of crime than any other group. The Safe City Strategy recognises that adolescence is a time often characterised by risk taking and experimental behaviour and as such develops responses and projects aimed specifically at this group. The Safe City Strategy is closely aligned with the Youth Strategy which identifies priority issues and includes an action plan for implementing a range of programs meeting the needs of young people across the City. The Strategy also recognises that there needs to be a focus on integrating older boys and young men in to society in a meaningful way.

Projects and initiatives undertaken by Safe City are designed to link in with council's Youth Centres that provide innovative services and diversionary programs in Erskineville, Millers Point, Pyrmont, Redfern and Woolloomooloo.

The City will:

- continue to oversee projects such as Short Black Films which links in with the City's Lights Camera Action program, providing work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander actors and extras in film, television, theatre and advertising;
- support diversionary recreation programs for at-risk young people, including Midnight Basketball, a structured basketball tournament incorporating life skills workshops on Saturday nights at times when many services are not operating; and
- continue to support other organisations which provide services to young people outside of standard business hours, such as the After Dark program run at Glebe.

Objective 5. Target first time offenders released from prison

The City of Sydney is aware that recent research* has revealed that ex-offenders are currently provided with very little support to successfully reintegrate back in to the community. As such, almost half the state's ex-prisoners return to jail or community supervision within two years. The City recognises that it has a role to play in working with community-based organisations that provide post-release support services to stabilise the housing, work and social needs of ex-offenders to help make them well-adjusted and productive members of society.

The City will:

- support the StAMP Project which provides a mentoring support program to ex-offenders.

StAMP Mentoring Project

The StAMP Mentoring Program was established by the Community Restorative Centre (CRC) to link volunteer mentors to address the severe shortage of post release support to people being released from custody in NSW. The period post-release from custody has been acknowledged as the most critical time for people who have been to prison and the highest risk period for many in terms of reoffending.

The project aims to break the barriers to social inclusion for ex-offenders by building on the strengths of the existing community whilst educating and increasing the capacity of the community to assist this client group with their reintegration into the community and workforce. As at November 2006, the project has recruited 26 mentors who have undertaken an accredited TAFE course and who have been linked to 30 mentees. The early findings of this innovative project have supported a wealth of literature which shows that the more support an ex-offender is given upon release from custody the less the likelihood of reoffending.

The City will:

- consider the continued support of the StAMP Mentoring Project via the City's grants and sponsorship programs.

*NSW Auditor General Report (2006)

Objective 6: Strengthen communities and increasing opportunities for people to engage in legitimate activities

The Safe City strategy recognises that there are priority groups in the community that have been identified as having their own specific needs. In this regard the Strategy focuses on addressing the underlying causes of crime by building and strengthening community networks and supporting the most vulnerable groups and individuals in the City community.

This is achieved by recognising the specific needs of, and developing appropriate responses to, the following key groups:

Aboriginal People

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (CALD)

Older People

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Communities

Women

Street-based Sex Workers

Aboriginal People

Aboriginal people as the country's first people have their own unique community issues. Safe City acknowledges the need to focus on the challenges facing its Aboriginal people, including addressing overrepresentation of this group in the criminal justice system and providing culturally specific programs and services.

The City will:

- continue to invest in a range of programs which support Aboriginal people including Lights Camera Action, Short Black Films, NAIDOC Week celebrations and the annual Yabun festival.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities

People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds make up a significant proportion of the City's community with over one in five residents having been born overseas in a non-English speaking country. The Safe City Strategy seeks to play a role in coordinating initiatives which promote equal rights and responsibilities for CALD communities including ensuring that community information is available in a variety of languages and formats and supporting local community organisations to develop culturally and linguistically appropriate strategies and services.

The City will:

- continue to translate and distribute crime prevention and community safety information into other community languages to CALD communities; and
- continue to support programs and initiatives which celebrate the City's cultural diversity such as Harmony Day.

Older People

Older people, defined as people over the age of 55, comprise a diverse group within the City ranging from the healthy and active to the frail aged and those who need full time support. Safe City recognises that personal safety is a key issue for older people and as such develops programs and initiatives designed to address fear of crime and social exclusion for the City's seniors including working in public housing areas and developing and distributing resources aimed at improving personal safety for older people. These programs run in conjunction with Council's food, bus and podiatry services and the range of programs operating through its network of Activity Centres.

The City will:

- continue to develop and disseminate information to older people in relation to crime prevention and community safety issues;
- continue to implement the Creating a Safer Community Project for older people residing in public housing; and
- continue to provide and promote a range of services aimed at older people including community transport, podiatry, social work, Meals on Wheels and the range of pursuits available at Council's network of Activity Centres.

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Communities

The City of Sydney is home to a significant proportion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people (GLBT) and the Safe City Strategy works closely with the City's GLBT Project Coordinator and other agencies in developing responses to crime and safety issues affecting this section of the community. This includes developing and implementing strategies for addressing crime against GLBT people in places like Oxford Street, implementing community education campaigns to tackle violence and homophobia and to increase reporting to police and ensuring the provision of access and equity to information, services and facilities.

The City will:

- implement the Oxford Street Safety Strategy; and
- continue to develop and disseminate information and resources to tackle violence and homophobia and increase reporting of crimes against GLBT communities.

Women

Easy access to locally-based family support and other neighbourhood-based services are critical for supporting women in the City of Sydney, especially those who are isolated, have dependent children and are experiencing other personal or economic difficulties. Community consultations have revealed that women (especially older women) generally experience higher levels of fear of crime than men in the community.

The Safe City Strategy encompasses initiatives designed to improve the safety and security of women in the city through improving access to health services and education programs which promote healthy lifestyles and which encourage women to come together around common issues. The Safe City Strategy works with the police and local service providers on projects designed to educate and support victims of domestic violence, and supports events and activities which celebrate International Women's Day.

The City will:

- continue to support initiatives aimed at reducing domestic violence against women including International Domestic Violence Day; and
- continue to support events which highlight and celebrate women's contribution to the community including International Women's Day.

Street-based Sex Workers

Street-based sex workers represent a diverse group of people located in the inner city of Sydney. Council recognises that they share unique challenges posed in negotiating and providing sexual services in a public space. The City of Sydney seeks to reduce the impacts and harms for both sex workers and the community arising from street-based sex work activity by ensuring that the activity takes place in legal, low impact and safe locations. The City also acknowledges that many street-based sex workers work in crisis arising from homelessness, drug dependence and mental illness, and can be overrepresented as victims of crime.

The City will:

- support programs aimed at addressing the safety needs of street-based sex workers;
- support activities which address issues of social exclusion relating to street-based sex workers; and
- reduce the impacts of the activities on residents.

Objective 7. Advocate to higher levels of government for more resources aimed at crime prevention

The City of Sydney has an important role to play in ensuring that federal and state government continue to support initiatives aimed at reducing and preventing crime at the local level.

The City will:

- continue to advocate to the state government for improved after hours transport from the City – particularly Nightrider bus services, and safe taxi ranks;
- advocate to other levels of government for extended operating hours on the train and ferry networks;
- advocate to other levels of government for more resources for Police in crime prevention;
- advocate to other levels of government to reduce the number of people on public housing waiting lists;
- advocate to other levels of government for more resources directed toward primary prevention and early intervention;
- advocate to other levels of government for more resources aimed at supporting the needs of ex-offenders to reintegrate back in to the community; and
- advocate to other levels of government for more resources to local government aimed at crime prevention.

5.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Safe City Strategy will be implemented over a several year period. To ensure that the Strategy is meeting key objectives and delivering outcomes, the City will:

- establish a Safe City Strategy Review Committee which will meet annually. The Committee will review the outcomes of Strategy actions for each year. It will be comprised of NSW Police and other key stakeholders;
- commission Crime Profile research for the City bi-annually. The profile will document key crime trends and categories, local variations and perceptions of crime; and
- report to Council regularly on the activities and outcomes of the Strategy.

