

Chapter Five

Key Players in Crime Prevention

5.1 Introduction

The committee believes crime prevention is a “whole of government” responsibility. The Crime Prevention Division of the NSW Attorney General’s Department has stated:

effective crime prevention strategies involve partnerships: partnerships between government, the community and the private sector. To successfully reduce crime we need to involve every relevant stakeholder to ensure that a systematic and thorough approach to the prevention of crime is taken.¹

In New South Wales there are a vast number of key players, both government and non-government, in crime prevention. Criminal Justice agencies such as the Crime Prevention Division in the Attorney General’s Department, the Police Service, the Department of Corrective Services and the Department of Juvenile Justice play a direct role in developing and implementing strategies to reduce offending behaviour. Other agencies, such as the Department of Community Services, the Department of Health, the Department of Housing, the Ageing and Disability Department, the Department of Sport and Recreation, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Office of the Commissioner for Children, can play a crucial role in developing programs and delivering services that can support vulnerable families, children and communities and thus lessen the likelihood of criminal activity. However, because resources are finite, and often scarce, all of these departments and offices can frequently be limited in how effectively they can deliver preventative services. Many also do not identify the crime prevention component of their programs, particularly where crime prevention is not part of their core business.

In recent times there has been a move towards adopting a “whole of government” response to crime prevention, that is, ensuring that a range of government departments have responsibility for crime prevention. This has been borne out in the development of interdepartmental committees that deal with crime prevention. Further, greater evidence and knowledge of the strong links between neglect, abuse, poverty, inadequate housing, education and criminal activity has meant that government departments now have some of the information required to recognise that their programs contain a crime prevention component. Through this inquiry the committee hopes to

¹ *Resource Manual*, NSW Crime Prevention Division, Attorney General’s Department, 1997 p 2.

stimulate a greater interest and awareness of the crime prevention potential in most agencies.

The following chapter will briefly discuss the key players in crime prevention in New South Wales. During the course of this inquiry many of the programs will be discussed in detail in relation to particular aspects of crime prevention through social support.

5.2 The Cabinet Office

The Cabinet Office is responsible for the development and implementation of the Families First Program, the government's strategy to assist vulnerable families, discussed in detail in Chapter Six. As the central policymaking agency it also has a strong influence on the direction of other agencies.

5.3 The Premier's Council on Crime Prevention

The Premier's Council on Crime Prevention is at the centre of the Government's goal to achieve crime prevention partnerships among all sectors. The overall purpose of the Council is to help to effect a reduction in the incidence of crime through the development, promotion and implementation of relevant strategies.

The Council is chaired by the Premier and has a membership of eleven ministers and eight non-ministerial members. The non-ministerial members are drawn from academia, the private sector and the community sector. The Council has undertaken a series of strategies for the prevention and reduction of violence and has adopted a special focus on rural crime issues.

5.4 The Crime Prevention Division, NSW Attorney General's Department

The Crime Prevention Division is located in the NSW Attorney General's Department. It acts as the secretariat to the Premier's Council on Crime Prevention, by providing advice, developing policy and facilitating a "whole of government" response to crime prevention. The Crime Prevention Division has developed a Crime Prevention Strategic Plan for endorsement by the Premier's Council on Crime Prevention.

The main work of the Division is in assisting local communities, particularly through local government, to develop crime prevention in their areas. The Division's role is discussed in detail in Chapter Seven of this report.

Within the Crime Prevention Division is the Violence Against Women Specialist Unit. The major role of the Unit is to:

- develop strategic policy responses to issues of violence against women;
- support strategies and programs to prevent violence against women;
- manage the Regional Violence Prevention Specialists in collaboration with host managers; and
- provide executive support to the NSW Council on Violence Against Women and the State Management Group.

5.5 The Premier's Department

Through its Strategic Projects Division the Premier's Department has pursued several "whole of government" experiments in crime prevention. This has primarily been through the place management projects in Cabramatta, Kings Cross and Moree; these are discussed in Chapter Seven.

5.6 The Police Service

The NSW Police Service plays an important part in one aspect of crime prevention. The police's law enforcement role can provide a deterrent to would-be offenders as well as assist in removing the threat of some offenders from the community. The core function of the Police Service is to focus on dealing with current offending and to discourage and disrupt future offending. Police are often known as "the gatekeepers" to the criminal justice system.

The Police Service submission acknowledges that despite the best use of strategies and resources, police are not able to address the real causes of crime. To this end, the submission maintains:

the Service recognises the need to look beyond traditional policing responses towards greater collaborative and interagency work with other agencies to develop crime prevention strategies.²

Among the programs within the Police Service that have a wider preventative role beyond conventional policing are:

- Police and Community Youth Clubs;

² *Submission*, 11/11/99, NSW Police Service, p 4.

- Community Safety Officers;
- Youth Liaison Officers;
- Truancy programs;
- Joint Investigative Teams and Child Protection Investigative Teams;
- Disability Action Plan; and

- Memorandum of Understanding between the NSW Police Service and the Department of Health.

Further the Police Service is involved in a number of consultative arrangements with representatives of minority groups. These are:

- the Police and Ethnic Communities Advisory Council;
- the Police Aboriginal Strategic Advisory Council and supporting local consultative structures;
- Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer and Ethnic Community Liaison Officer Programs;
- Ethnic Affairs Priority Statement; and
- Police Aboriginal Police Statement and Strategic Plan.

5.7 The Department of Community Services

Among the major roles of the Department of Community Services is the detection of, and intervention in, cases of suspected childhood neglect and abuse. The Department relies on notifications of suspected abuse and neglect before it takes action regarding the protection of a child.

Chapter Six details the Department's role in relation to early childhood interventions. Chapter eight discusses its involvement in relation to people with an intellectual disability.

Groups who are vulnerable to entry into and over-represented in the juvenile and criminal justice systems, and who have an involvement with the Department of Community Services include:

- state wards;
- children in substitute care; and
- people with an intellectual disability.

The Department is also the major funding body for family support services and preschools. Its Office of Child Care regulates the various forms of childcare in New South Wales. The Department is a partner in many interdepartmental projects with a crime prevention component, most recently the Families First program.

5.8 The Ageing and Disability Department

The Ageing and Disability Department has primary responsibility for two of the groups most vulnerable to becoming victims of crime, people with disabilities and older people. Its work with regard to the intellectually disabled and the criminal justice system is discussed in depth in Chapter Eight.

5.9 NSW Health

The Department of Health plays an indirect yet significant role in crime prevention. Prenatal care, mental health and drug and alcohol services all come within the domain of the Department of Health and all are significant when examining the wider implications of crime prevention.

Health professionals in primary health care teams can often identify families and communities at risk, and are frequently an important source of parenting advice.³ Further, medical staff in emergency wards are able to identify cases of neglect and abuse of children and make appropriate notifications to the Department of Community Services for intervention.

NSW Health offers a range of health services which can be identified as early childhood and early intervention. These include:

Primary Services

- antenatal education programs provided through maternity wards in hospitals;
- early childhood health centres which provide individual consultation and group programs for parents of children 0-5 years of age; and
- child and family health teams located in community health centres which provide multidisciplinary assessment and management advice where children and families have a range of developmental, emotional, behavioural or relationship difficulties.

³ Bright J *Turning the Tide*, Demos, London 1997 p 98.

Secondary Services

- family care cottages/centres which provide multidisciplinary support, education and advice to families with more complex parenting problems; and
- child and adolescent mental health workers who offer treatment for children and adolescents with mental health problems and information and support to parents.

Tertiary Services

- residential family care services provided through Tresillian and Karitane for families requiring intensive specialist support and complex parenting problems;
- sexual assault services and specialist services for children who have been subject to abuse; and
- paediatric hospital-based services which provide education and information services for parents of chronically ill and hospitalised children.⁴

Under the Families First initiative, discussed in detail in Chapter Six, Area Health Services are responsible for supporting families during antenatal and postnatal periods as well as providing professional intervention for families which require additional assistance.

5.10 The Department of Education and Training

The role of the Department of Education and Training can be critical in relation to crime prevention. As Chapter Four discussed, school performance and achievement and truancy are some of the factors which can place a young person at risk of antisocial and criminal behaviour.

The Department of Education and Training is responsible for a number of programs that can assist children and families which may be vulnerable or disadvantaged. These include the Parents as Teachers program, school counsellors and the Schools as Community Centres program all of which are discussed in Chapter Six.⁵

⁴ Standing Committee on Social Issues, Report on Parent Education 1998, p 65.

⁵ The Schools as Community Centres Program reflects a “whole of government” approach to addressing issues within the community as it involves cooperation with the Department of Community Services, the Department of Health and the Department of Housing, and the

Other initiatives with a preventative role, offered by the Department of Education and Training include:

- Community Liaison officers;
- Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers;
- Home School Liaison Officers;
- The Early Learning Program; and
- Anti-bullying and anti-violence programs.

5.11 The Department of Sport and Recreation

The Department of Sport and Recreation runs specific programs that have a crime prevention focus and principally target young people aged 10 to 18 years. Among those programs are:

- Coaching clinics and team development leading into mainstream competitions;
- Use of sport and recreation in education-based programs;
- Bringing police and targeted youth groups together in an informal setting; and
- Sport Restart program.⁶

5.12 The Department of Juvenile Justice

The Department of Juvenile Justice has a significant role in the prevention of recidivism. The submission from the Department states that its approach to preventing recidivism among young offenders in its care focuses on three primary areas. These are:

- Conducting research on juvenile offending, recidivism and the effectiveness of departmental programs;
- The provision of support and rehabilitative programs for juvenile offenders; and

Police Service. Other non-government agencies, particularly local government services, and at times, voluntary services are also involved with the program (Rice *evidence*, 26 /7/ 99).

⁶ *Submission*, 13/10/99, NSW Department of Sport and Recreation, p 1.

- Achieving improved collaboration between the many human service agencies that play a role in supporting young offenders and young people at risk of offending.

The Department provides a range of services to young offenders whilst in the juvenile justice system and upon release. Many of these services are designed to support and assist the young offender to re-integrate into the community and to desist from offending behaviour. These programs and services are guided by a five level programming model which focuses on:

- self-awareness;
- addressing offending behaviour;
- coping skills;
- the social environment; and
- community re-integration.

Among the specific services and programs offered or funded by the Department are:

- Youth Justice Conferencing;
- Juvenile Justice Community Services;
- Mentoring;
- Bail Accommodation Services, Transitional Accommodation;
- Community Care Schools (within juvenile justice centres);
- Drug and alcohol services;
- Local Community Reintegration Programs;
- Psychological and specialist services;
- Sex offender and violent offender programs;
- Young women in custody program; and
- The Robertson program (for young offenders who present with challenging behaviours while in custody).

The Department's Research Unit is working with Charles Sturt University to develop a risk assessment instrument for young offenders who need intensive intervention. The Department of Juvenile Justice is also undertaking a Wards Project with the Department of Community Services. The aim of the project is to reduce the number of state wards entering the juvenile justice system through cooperative and coordinated case management strategies.

5.13 The Department of Corrective Services

The Department of Corrective Service's mission is to protect the community and reduce offending behaviour by providing a safe, secure, fair

and humane correctional system which encourages personal development.⁷ Like the Juvenile Justice Department, the Department of Corrective Services plays a major role in preventing recidivist behaviour.

A principal strategy of the Department's in trying to reduce recidivism among offenders is to provide opportunities for offenders to participate in programs which address the deficits or addictions which contributed to the reason for their imprisonment. Among the relevant programs and services offered by the Department of Corrective Services are:

- drug and alcohol programs and services;
- psychological programs for the management and treatment of specific groups of high risk inmates;
- education and vocational training;
- Aboriginal pre and post-release program;
- funding to non-government agencies to provide support services to inmates, ex-inmates and their families;
- the establishment of the mothers and babies unit at Emu Plains Correctional Centre;
- the establishment of the women's transitional centre; and
- the development of post release planning and support for offenders with an intellectual disability.

5.14 The Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People

The Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People was established this year with a mandate to consider a wide range of issues that affect children and young people. Fundamental to the Commission's role is community support and employment screening following the abuses uncovered during the Wood Royal Commission.

The main functions of the Commission are:

- to promote the participation of children in the making of decisions that affect their lives and to encourage government and non-government agencies to seek participation of children appropriate to their age and maturity;
- to promote and monitor the overall safety, welfare and well-being of children in the community. To monitor the trends in complaints made by, or on behalf, of children;

⁷ *Submission*, NSW Department of Corrective Services, p 1.

- to conduct special inquiries into issues affecting children;
- to promote information, training and advice on issues affecting children;
and
- to participate in and monitor screening for child related employment.

5.15 The Department of Housing

The Department of Housing is responsible for the provision and management of public housing in New South Wales. Through provision of housing to disadvantaged groups the Department is able to reduce the stress which contributes to neglect and abuse of children. In recent years it has given increasing attention to designing public housing estates in such a way as to minimise opportunities for criminal activity.

5.16 The Department of Urban Affairs and Planning

This Department of Urban Affairs and Planning comprises a range of agencies that deal with planning, policy and regulation of the natural and built environment, rural and urban management (including urban growth, renewal and consolidation) and the development of housing policies. Its main contribution to crime prevention is through the promotion of situational crime prevention strategies (see Chapter Two and Chapter Seven). Such measures use urban design, development controls, land management and traffic management to reduce the opportunity for crimes to be committed.

The Department also provides community development funding through Area Assistance Schemes which can involve funding of crime prevention projects.

5.17 The Department of Aboriginal Affairs

This Department of Aboriginal Affairs acts as a policy and co-ordinating body to assist other agencies in programs which work with Indigenous communities. It also liaises with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, which funds many programs aimed at reducing the economic stress of their communities and the over representation of Indigenous offenders.

There are also regulatory bodies such as the Community Services Commission (see Chapter Eight) which do not have a direct service provision role but have a major interest in crime prevention.

5.18 Federal Departments

At a Federal level, there is a National Anti-Crime Strategy in which New South Wales is a participant. This is led and co-ordinated by National Crime Prevention, an agency within the Federal Attorney General's Department. The Federal government has committed \$13 million over a three year period from 1997 to this agency. National Crime Prevention is currently pursuing twelve projects, with priority areas being:

- fear of crime;
- domestic violence;
- residential burglary;
- young people and crime;
- violence in Indigenous communities;
- migrant and refugee communities; and
- training.⁸

*Pathways to Prevention*⁹ which is referred to frequently in this current report is one of the products of this program.

Some of the other major players in crime prevention federally are:

- the Department of Family and Community Services, which provides welfare support through Centrelink and specific programs, as well as funding childcare services;
- The Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business, which includes among its programs those targeted at Indigenous persons and prisoners;
- the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, which funds a number of crime prevention initiatives including those diverting young offenders and preventing family violence;
- the Australian Institute of Criminology which commissions and collects research into crime and crime prevention nationally; and

⁸ Submission 15/9/99, Law Enforcement Coordination Division, Federal Attorney General's Department.

⁹ 1999 National Crime Prevention.

- the Australian Institute of Family Studies which commissions research and acts as a clearing house for material on children and families.

The main link between federal and state crime prevention appears to be through the Crime Prevention Division of the NSW Attorney General's Department.

5.19 Local government

Chapter Seven of this report covers the role of local government in crime prevention in considerable detail. It is one of the areas of crime prevention of most growth in New South Wales. Again, the Crime Prevention Division is the key link between state government agencies and local councils.

5.20 Non-government

By far the most diverse crime prevention activity is undertaken by the non-government sector. Many state government agencies either fund or work with non-government agencies on crime prevention programs. The Cabinet Office's Families First program, for instance, will use non-government agencies to manage volunteer home visiting schemes during its first pilots.

Among the larger non-government agencies involved in crime prevention through social support are:

- Barnardo's;
- Burnside;
- The Benevolent Society;
- Wesley Dalmar;
- Anglicare;
- Centrecare; and
- The Salvation Army.

There are several major networks of social support services which have a major crime prevention role. These include family support services and community childcare, both of which are discussed in Chapter Six. There are also many smaller groups which play a role which belies their size:

- community legal centres;
- community agencies that work with specific target groups such as migrant resource centres;
- disability services;

- prisoner support groups; and
- children and adolescent support services.

5.21 Private sector

The only private sector participant in the inquiry to date has been the private childcare sector. Its role is described in Chapter Six. The committee has also visited an Aboriginal employment program at Moree run by the cotton industry.

The committee is aware that in recent years insurance companies, shopping centre management companies and even clothing companies have funded crime prevention programs.

The exercise above is of necessity incomplete. In an attempt to audit early intervention crime prevention programs the authors of *Pathways to Prevention* estimate that there could be over 10,000 such projects in Australia.¹⁰ It should be noted that early intervention is only one of the forms of crime prevention covered by the terms of reference for this inquiry.

Through this survey of some of the main players in crime prevention through social support it is apparent that there is great potential for partnerships to be formed, both between government agencies and between sectors. By recognising that crime prevention is a “whole of government”, and non-government responsibility there is much more potential for multi-faceted approaches to be taken to confront the types of complex risk factors which cause crime.

¹⁰ Ibid p 176.