



Casey

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**Taking Care of Crime
Through Prevention**

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We reluctantly live with crime in our communities every day. It has become an unfortunate fact of life. Newspaper headlines proclaim:

" Drug Dealing RampantHalf of State Lives in Fear

Daytime Burglaries on the RiseElderly Attack Alarm

Traffic Strain in Growth CorridorPolice Station Crisis....."

Traditional approaches to crime have focussed on law enforcement - arrest and punishment; measures that can only be taken *after* a crime has been committed. This, however, is only part of the solution. Crime prevention is a pro-active approach to rid crime from our communities and, like enforcement, must be considered in the total package of strategies to address crime.

In this presentation, Taking Care of Crime through Prevention, I will outline what crime is evident in the City of Casey, who is working on crime prevention, evolving partnerships and how we are trying to prevent crime in Casey.

But before further exploring the principles of crime prevention and various strategies we are implementing, let me place Casey in context for you:

Snapshot of Casey

The City of Casey is Victoria's fastest-growing municipality and Australia's third fastest behind the Brisbane and Gold Coast city councils. It covers an area of about 400 square kilometres on the south-eastern edge of Melbourne.

The municipality takes in diverse geographic and demographic areas. It stretches from an area of rolling hills, with large house blocks and small farms; through a densely-populated urban area; to a stretch of open farm land and market gardens; right through to the coastal villages on the shores of a bay of internationally-significant environmental values - called Western Port.

In the last quarter of the 20th century, 120,000 people moved to the area. Our current population is nearly 180,000, but in the next 25 years, a further 140,000 people will make the area their home. Casey's projected population of more than 320,000 people will make it one of the largest municipalities in Australia, and similar in size to Canberra!

The vast majority of our residents are young families. About 70 per cent of the population are aged under 40 years and Casey has Australia's highest number of people aged under 24 years. Balancing this are significant pockets of older residents in some Casey townships.

Meeting the service and infrastructure needs of this rapidly expanding City is obviously a high priority and significant challenge for the Council. But also high on the Council's agenda, is creating an environment where people feel safe to live, work and undertake their daily activities. In fact, this imperative is clearly articulated in Casey's vision and mission statements, and the strategies we implement to achieve them.

Council's vision statement's first goal is:

" To create a place where people can enjoy **a secure** and quality lifestyle..."

Our commitment to achieving this goal is reflected in our *Corporate Plan* and adoption of *Safer Casey, A Plan for Community Safety*. These principal planning documents provide legitimacy and a framework for a focus on crime prevention at Casey.

Identifying Community Safety Priorities

In 1998, the City of Casey was one of 20 Victorian municipalities to receive funding from the Victorian Department of Justice, under their *Safer Cities and Shires* program, an initiative of VicSafe. This funding allowed us to identify local issues and to work with key stakeholders to develop a community safety plan. Extensive community consultation - public forums, questionnaires, research, and a service register - informed our plan.

The *Plan for Community Safety* works with the definition of:

"The right of all individuals living, working or visiting Casey to go about their daily pursuits without fear or risk of harm or injury; and the shared responsibility of Government agencies and all other people in the community to ensure this is possible."

There are two aspects to this community safety definition that I would like to explore further with respect to crime prevention:

Firstly, let me address the concept of 'fear or risk'. Crime prevention strategies aim to address two related phenomena:

- the public's perception of community safety, and
- the probability that a crime will actually occur.

Though perception does not always mirror fact, it does form part of a person's reality. Because of this, the simple fear of crime can have a detrimental effect on an individual's health and well-being and contribute to social isolation. Fear can also have a negative impact on groups in our community such as business, schools, sporting clubs and other organisations. When considering fear in any prevention model, it must be recognised that there is a complex interaction between psychological, social and physical factors that impact on our fear of crime.

The probability or risk of crime occurring - whether real or perceived - influences people's patterns of behaviour. This can result in people's social isolation, public spaces not being used to their full potential and a lack of activity in public spaces creating more opportunity for crime.

Both phenomena - the fear and risk of crime - are factors to consider in identifying appropriate strategies to prevent crime. Prevention strategies can impact along a continuum of crime: Perception > Fear > Risk > Incidence.

Crime prevention strategies aim to reduce both the perception that crime will occur and the actual incidence of crime in our community. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design - CPTED (pronounced sep-ted) for short, is one such strategy. I will return to discuss the principles and applications of CPTED in a moment.

The second aspect of our definition of community safety I would like to expand on is our 'shared responsibility'. Partnerships with residents, business, various council departments, and local and state community safety and emergency services organisations, have enabled us to address crime prevention, and more broadly, community safety, on a number of levels:

- immediate action : local solutions to local problems;
- education and awareness raising; and
- long term solutions : prevention by design and strong policy direction.

Partnerships not only allow for resources to be shared - giving clear economic benefits, but the responsibility for problems and ownership of solutions helps to generate sustainable solutions and a pride in our community.

Safer Casey, A Plan for Community Safety identified 6 key issue areas for action in our municipality:

1. Transport and Road Safety
2. Public Space
3. Private Space
4. Young People
5. Drugs and Alcohol
6. Age and Gender Related Injuries

Each of these six areas identifies objectives and strategies to improve community safety by reducing injuries and preventing crime.

Community consultation identified **Transport and Road Safety** as the number one community safety issue for most residents across Casey.

"City traffic on country roads" best describes our situation. Casey's massive population growth and subsequent development have placed considerable strain on our main road network over the past ten years.

And so, in 1998, alongside the development of our *Plan for Community Safety*, delegations of senior Council staff met with the Victorian Roads Minister, Department of Infrastructure and VicRoads representatives. This was the first step in a concerted effort to find the best way of solving the municipality's most critical road problems and importantly, reduce our significant road toll.

The model that evolved is SIPS - Strategic Infrastructure Planning Strategy - that identifies transportation infrastructure requirements for both public and private transport. The SIPS model is now being used in other councils.

Considerable progress has been made on all fronts, with State Government yearly expenditure in Casey increasing from an average of just \$1.65 million a year for the past 6 years to over \$10.35 million each year over the next 4. This money is being used to improve Blackspot locations and upgrade main arterial roads.

Complementing an engineering focus on road infrastructure, Council has been innovative in employing Victoria's first municipal based full-time Road Safety Officer. The role of the Road Safety Officer is to focus on human behaviour, a contributing factor in up to 70% of motor vehicle crashes. Some criminal behaviour, for example, speeding, not giving way, and driving under the influence, can impact in motor vehicle crashes and subsequently the road toll.

A dedicated Road Safety Vehicle, complete with road safety messages and branding, is supplied by David Nutter Ford of Berwick - another successful partnership in working towards community safety and shared responsibility. This vehicle is a moving advertisement - highly visible at local events, school functions and other promotional opportunities.

CPTED Origins & Outline of Principles

CPTED : Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, is a tool that addresses aspects of each of the 6 priority areas identified in Casey's *Plan for Community Safety*. It is one strategy amongst many that aims to reduce the fear, risk and incidence of crime in our community.

CPTED's origins lie in the 1960's when Jane Jacobs, a social commentator and New York resident, was openly critical of rigid zoning regulations. She argued these regulations resulted in a lack of vitality after working hours, which, in turn, had an impact on unsafe streets. In a nutshell, she suggested three factors contributed to community safety:

1. If a street is to be safe, there must be a clear demarcation between public and private space;
2. A constant watch must be kept, she described this as 'the natural proprietors of the street'; and
3. The streets and sidewalks must be in constant use, in this way, the street will gain and maintain a reputation for being interesting, lively and secure.

Many other authors and commentators followed the early work of Jacobs. The principles of environmental design that can influence the perception of safety and level of crime activity in a neighbourhood now forms the basis of CPTED.

CPTED is much more than dead bolts on doors and security screens. It is fundamentally about design that eliminates or reduces criminal behaviour and at the same time encourages people to 'keep an eye out' for each other. CPTED utilises design principles to influence human behaviour.

Criminals make a conscious choice about their targets. Generally the greater the risk of being seen or caught, the less likely they are to commit a crime. Using CPTED principles we can design and manage an environment to:

- increase the chance a criminal is seen, challenged or caught;
- increase the effort required to commit a crime;
- decrease the actual or perceived rewards; and
- minimise opportunities for criminal activity.

The use of CPTED principles in assessing a location is through a three step review process - Designation, Definition, Design. These concepts help to identify users of the space - both legitimate and illegal - and any potential conflicts that may occur.

- **Designation** - what is the intended use of an area? What behaviour is allowed?
- **Definition** - what are the physical limits of an area? What are the borders between public and private spaces? Is it clear which activities are allowed? What risks can be anticipated and planned for?
- **Design** - does the physical environment support the intended use safely and efficiently?

This assessment process forms the basis of applying CPTED principles. In Casey, we are working with four CPTED principles. These are an adaptation of commonly used CPTED terminology.

- **Public Space** - includes definition and ownership; a positive and active interest in the space (other CPTED references refer to this as 'territoriality')
- **Natural Surveillance** - this aims to keep intruders under observation
- **Access Control** - safe movement into, within and out of an area for intended users of the space
- **Management and Maintenance** - includes community consultation, upkeep of public space, policy and practice.

Each of the CPTED principles I have outlined has a set of parameters to guide action. It is worth noting that CPTED principles, while written in a general style, should always be adapted to local problems, and the best compromise for all interested parties. CPTED can be useful in many settings - housing estate development, retail and industrial locations, recreation and sporting grounds, and educational and other community institutions.

Training in CPTED

CPTED, while not a new concept to developers, urban designers and architects, is a new set of terminology and framework for others both within council and our community.

As a means of developing a greater understanding of these principles, Red Road Consulting was employed in mid 2000 to run a series of workshops for council staff, local developers and the community. This training aimed to:

- improve the literacy of council planners and designers as well as local developers in design for safety principles;
- inspire planners and designers to consider CPTED principles in their work;
- enhance organisational planning, develop a formal CPTED policy, and gain senior commitment to CPTED in planning and practice; and
- involve and educate the community on the practical implementation of these principles;

The first two workshops had a broad representation of Council staff participants - from strategic development, aged services, recreation and leisure, community access, youth, community services, building maintenance, planning, administration, works and operations, transport, local laws and our local Victoria Police Crime Prevention Officer. Representation included staff at all levels such as council officers, team leaders and managers.

Workshop one introduced CPTED principles of design and spent considerable time identifying 'hot spots' across Casey.

Workshop two explored a local example, Hampton Park as an intensive problem solving exercise. To provide some insight into this process, the 3D framework - Designation, Definition, Design - is useful in assessing Hampton Park's features:

Designation

What is the intended use of an area?

- Hampton Park has a current population of approximately 23,858 people, a considerable increase from its population of 5040 in 1981.
- There is a considerable percentage in the under 9 years age group and fewer over 50 years compared to Casey.
- Socio-economically, this area has tended to attract lower income families and this is reflected in census data.

Definition

What are the physical limits of an area? Borders between public & private space?

- Disjointed development has occurred in Hampton Park - initially around the central core and to the immediate north, then to the east across, yet divided by a major road which still effectively divides the town.
- Growth to the east and south east abuts the Narre Warren South area, with a significant cultural and physical separation due to the style and design of housing estates and poor physical links.
- Industrial areas are situated west of Hampton Park, again separated by major roads and a train line.

What facilities support legitimate use?

- The area has a large Secondary College (1400 +), 5 Primary Schools, 9 Churches, 3 Maternal & Child Health Centres and 4 Preschools. Council operates a Youth Information Centre in the township.
- There are some traditional recreation facilities: football, soccer, tennis, netball, basketball, lawn bowls and cricket clubs, yet no gyms, adult swimming centres or golf facilities.

Design

Does the physical design support legitimate use safely and efficiently?

- Public transport links are poor and focus on the neighbouring area of Dandenong than Casey.
- Planning decisions made in the 1980s and 1990s have left marked legacies in this area. For example:
 - The shopping centre precinct, despite having two major supermarkets within 50m of each other, is haphazard and disjointed. As different developers built various sections, the road network remained unclear including two adjacent car parks with no traffic flow between them.
 - The community facilities in the central area include a hall, community centre and preschool, all on the same site. Space is also available for a proposed library. However the community facilities effectively back onto the shopping area and vandalism rates are high, deterring their use.
 - Interesting design "experiments" occurred in residential areas overtime with collector roads with no house frontages, creating blank corridors as entries, small scattered open space which is difficult to develop and small lots sizes clustered around specific areas.

Using this 3D framework, several conflicts between user groups were identified in the training workshop and possible design solutions were brainstormed. These have been kept on file for later this year, when a significant re-design of the area will be planned.

The **third workshop** outlined CPTED principles and application advantages to local developers, builders and professional designers.

The **fourth workshop** covered CPTED design tips for local community groups and local businesses. These two groups were chosen to facilitate acceptance and ownership of CPTED as a valid tool for preventing crime in our community. Working with community groups at a developmental stage encourages sustainable solutions for crime prevention.

The City of Casey is now moving to localise and formalise CPTED principles into our everyday practice. A working group is looking at departmental practices and the necessary policy to implement CPTED principles in future building, planning, development and maintenance. The working group, at this stage is an internal council group. We believe it is necessary for us to understand how our own practices can be improved through the use of CPTED prior to re-establishing our links with developers, business and community groups who took part in the training last year. We expect further consultation will help shape CPTED principles into a workable document that is easy to use and has clear benefits both to developers and our Casey community.

Other municipalities funded through the *Safer Cities and Shires* program are also looking to implement CPTED on a local level. This multi-council group plans to develop generic CPTED practice and training guidelines. Casey, along with these other councils, recognises the need for State level support and legislation for CPTED principles. We will incorporate elements of CPTED into the next review of our Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) and will work with the Departments of Justice and Infrastructure as part of the multi-councils working group to influence state level policy.

Local Solutions for Crime Prevention

Having outlined the principles and benefits of CPTED, I would like to detail a few examples of Crime Prevention strategies in each of the 6 key issue areas in Casey's *Plan for Community Safety*.

1. Road and Transport Safety

Public Transport

Railway stations and bus shelters were identified as unsafe public places by 56.5% and 36.3% respectively of survey respondents in our perceptions of community safety consultation in 1999.

In conjunction with the Department of Infrastructure's Rural Modal Interchange Program, and the private train company M-Trains, Council has assisted in the identification of high risk railway stations. In the last financial year, Narre Warren and Hallam railway stations were upgraded with improved lighting, closed circuit television security, footpaths and parking. Berwick and Cranbourne stations will be upgraded in this financial year. The bus interchange in Cranbourne was also upgraded through this program.

A lighting audit of all Council owned bus shelters has been completed and a work schedule for improvements is being implemented. Council's graffiti maintenance program utilises CORE (Office of Corrections) participants to remove graffiti from bus shelters to help improve the perception of safety.

Community Education

A primary task of the Road Safety Officer is community education. This is achieved through regular media releases, the mobile messages on the Road Safety Vehicle, seminars such as 'Keys Please', displays and activities at community events such as the Safer Casey Carnival and education sessions in schools.

2. Public Spaces

Recreation Reserves and Open Space Strategy

Public safety with respect to injury prevention and safety from violence is a consideration in planning and developing recreation reserves and other open public spaces. A recent review of the Open Space Strategy includes elements of CPTED design principles. Other safety initiatives in recreation reserves include:

- engaging a consultant to routinely assess playground equipment against Australian Standards; and
- measuring water features in new estate developments against Melbourne Water's safety guidelines.

Retail: Loss Prevention

In conjunction with the local Crime Prevention Officer, a series of seminars discussing retail loss prevention have been presented at our 3 major shopping centres. Future seminars will involve local area Chambers of Commerce. These seminars outline both design strategies and the interaction between criminal behaviour and the shop environment in an effort to minimise retail theft.

3. Private Spaces

People in Parks Events

People in Parks are local events for new estate communities - Casey currently has over 95 development fronts! Each event specifically targets the current, future and neighbouring residents of a particular new housing area. The events offer residents the opportunity to meet neighbours, become familiar with local community groups and organisations and further develop their sense of community belonging. Displays at these events have included Neighbourhood Watch, Victoria Police, Safety House initiative, Road and Community Safety with activities such as bike and mobile phone marking.

Community Group Development

Neighbourhood Watch, the Safety House Zone initiative and Resident Action Groups are all opportunities to nurture ownership and pride of place in local neighbourhoods. Council has supported these groups by providing seeding grants, connections with regional contacts for these organisations and training around group facilitation, seeking sponsorship and public relations in an effort to foster responsibility for community safety.

4. Young People

The Vibe, Mobile Youth Centre

Casey's mobile youth centre "The Vibe" travels to new estates and isolated communities taking services to young people and their families both after school and on weekends. The Vibe also provides a youth presence at community events such as the Berwick Show, Australia Day celebrations, as well as local fairs and festivals. It also links into local secondary colleges for special expos and lunchtime activities to provide students with access to information, services and youth workers.

Skate Parks

Skate parks that support "boarding and blading" are popular recreation activities across Casey. The City of Casey has implemented a Skate Park Strategy, the first of its kind in Victoria. The Strategy identified the number of skaters and used these statistics to justify the location and establishment of skate parks throughout the entire municipality.

One of our permanent skate parks is located at Endeavour Hills, situated in between the shopping centre and the leisure centre and library. It is an important recreational facility, given Endeavour Hills' poor public transport links to other recreation opportunities for young people. The skate park provides a legitimate space for young people to 'hang out'.

The shopping centre management has reported a significant decrease in vandalism, graffiti and 'run ins' with security staff.

Consultations and Future Planning

Casey is currently developing a 10-year blueprint that will enable it to meet the projected needs of its community in 2011. The youth services 10-year plan will build on ongoing consultation with the community to ensure Casey's planning for youth services is flexible enough to accommodate the changing needs and preferences of Casey's young people.

5. Drug & Alcohol

Casey Drug Action Committee

Over 30 participants including representatives from community groups, alcohol and drug services, Council and local residents came together in early 1999 in response to a growing concern about alcohol and drug related problems in the municipality, resulting in the formation of a Drug Action Committee.

A comprehensive Drug Action Plan was developed in the early phase of the Casey Drug Action Committee. The Committee is currently reviewing and adapting the Plan in line with the new State Government funding guidelines.

Syringe Collection

During 2000 a comprehensive syringe awareness program was developed and promoted through various channels including: radio, local paper, leisure newsletter, community group information sessions, Casey Environmental Health Unit and community organisations such as Berwickwide Community Health Service. The program promoted the 24 hour syringe collection service offered by Council's Environmental Health Unit and also showed the correct way to handle syringes if the service is not available immediately or there is a threat of injury to a person.

Safer Casey Party Guide

In an effort to avoid the incidence of problems at local parties, the City of Casey has developed the *Safer Casey Party Guide* which offers practical hints and tips for holding safe and enjoyable parties for parents, hosts and guests. Issues associated with parties include gatecrashers, excessive noise and damage to property. The Guide encourages hosts to be pro-active when planning a party.

Council has also introduced compulsory registration of parties at all of its Public Halls. Registration by advising local Police using the *Safer Casey Party Guide* form enables prompt police responses if needed. The Guide provides party hosts useful information, and a greater awareness of public responsibility.

Liquor Licensing

Several strategies are in place to promote the responsible serving and consumption of alcohol in the City of Casey:

- "Responsible Serving of Alcohol" forms part of our regular training calendar for committees of management of halls and sporting clubs.
- The Chief Inspector of Police, responsible for Liquor Licensing, is routinely informed of applications to Council's planning department for liquor licenses. This encourages open discussion and planning prior to new venues opening.
- The Cities of Casey and Greater Dandenong and Cardinia Shire are working with VicRoads to implement the Australian Drug Foundation's GoodSports program. This program builds on our existing relationships with Sporting Clubs in Casey to develop and implement responsible serving of alcohol policies and practices.

6. Age & Gender

Health & Safety Booklet for Older Residents

Casey's population is characterised by young families - 19.2% of our population is under 10 years of age, yet we have significant pockets of older residents. Some 17.6% of our population are currently over 50 years of age, residing in areas such as Doveton and the old town areas of Berwick and Cranbourne. Their safety concerns often differ slightly from those of other population groups.

A manual was developed to provide Casey's older residents with information on health and safety related services available within the municipality. The booklet also provides suggestions to reduce the risk of accidental injury and personal and property crime.

The booklet was distributed to Senior Citizens' Centres, Retirement Villages and via Council's Home and Community Care team.

Falls Prevention

The significant impact that an older person's fall can have on their health and well-being is of concern. In an effort to address this issue, Council is presenting a series of performances by the *Performing Older Women's Circus* that combines messages about positive ageing and that falls amongst older people are preventable. "The Art of Falling is Never Landing" is a 40 minute performance that has successfully been presented to older residents of Maribyrnong City Council as part of their falls prevention program. The performance will be accompanied by service displays. There is significant value in utilising the arts to promote falls prevention and related health promotion messages such as personal safety and confident living.

Benefits of Crime Prevention Strategies

There are many examples where CPTED has achieved a reduction in the level of criminal activity or an increase in the public's perception of safety. While CPTED focuses on the physical design of public space, it is framed around human interaction and behaviour within that space. CPTED aims to develop supportive environments for social interaction and activity, and is thus an effective tool in community development.

Benefits of crime prevention activities, particularly CPTED, include:

- partnerships: collective action on commonly-held concerns
- protection against liability
- adaptability for local solutions and changing needs of the community
- municipal leadership
- benefits for local law enforcement
- a secure and quality lifestyle

Casey has made significant in-roads to incorporating CPTED principles in everyday practice. We are nurturing knowledge of Crime Prevention strategies within various council departments and encouraging the sharing of information, experience and responsibility across council.

Our partnership approach extends beyond council departments to the community - police, neighbourhood watch, residents action groups, business and retail, property developers in new estates, schools and youth groups.

To borrow a quote,

"Crime expands according to our willingness to put up with it."

The residents of Casey will not put up with crime. We are committed, along with law enforcement, to effective policy, planning and development in all areas of Council responsibility in accordance with the values of our community, " a secure and quality lifestyle".