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# LIGHTNING STRIKES TWICE

## Preventing Repeat Home Burglary



# REPORT

CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION
TOWARDS A SAFER AUSTRALIA

# LIGHTNING STRIKES TWICE

## Preventing Repeat Home Burglary

REPORT

*Lightning Strikes Twice: Preventing Repeat Home Burglary*

Prepared for the Commonwealth Government's National Crime Prevention project by the Queensland Criminal Justice Commission.

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# Foreword

The Commonwealth Government shares the community's concern about crime, and particularly violence, and its impact on the lives of everyday Australians. Since taking office, the Government has played a strong leadership role, working in partnership with the community, States and Territories, to develop innovative methods of crime prevention.

Burglary is a crime that affects many Australians every year and burglary prevention is a priority area for the Government.

This report shares the lessons learnt from a pilot project in Queensland which trialed strategies to reduce the risk of people being burgled again. One of the results of the project was a reduction of 14.8 per cent in repeat burglaries.

I believe the report on the pilot aids those of us committed to the prevention of property crime and will prove to be a valuable base on which to build our knowledge about the phenomenon of repeat burglaries in Australia.

I am also pleased that the Queensland Police Service is building upon this pilot project by using it as a model for The At Risk Premises (TARP) project, which is being implemented across Queensland.

Senator the Hon Chris Ellison

MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND CUSTOMS

## Acknowledgments

Many people contributed to the *Beenleigh Break and Enter Reduction Project*. In particular we wish to acknowledge the efforts of the general duties staff of Beenleigh Police Division and the support given to the Project by staff from the South Eastern Police Region and the Queensland Police Service Crime Prevention Unit.

The Project was managed by Dennis Budz from the Research and Prevention Division of the Queensland Criminal Justice Commission with the assistance of Sergeant Neil Pegnall from Beenleigh Police Station and Michael Townsley and Maggie Blyth of the Criminal Justice Commission. Valuable research advice was also provided by Dr David Gow from the University of Queensland.

Dr Monika Henderson of M & P Henderson and Associates provided substantial assistance in the preparation of this revised report. Thanks are also due to Dr Gloria Laycock, Director, Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science, University College London, for her helpful comments on a draft of this report.

The ongoing support, enthusiasm, direction and dedication of Dr David Brereton, Director of Research and Prevention at the Criminal Justice Commission was crucial to the success of the Project as well as the production of this report.

## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ABS | Australian Bureau of Statistics |
| CJC | Queensland Criminal Justice Commission |
| CRISP | Crime Reporting Information System for Police |
| MO | Modus operandi |
| NCP | National Crime Prevention project |
| POP | Problem-Oriented Policing |
| PMC | Project Management Committee |
| PMG | Project Management Group |
| QPS | Queensland Police Service |
| VIP | Volunteers in Policing |

### NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

*For the purposes of this report the terms burglary and break and enter have been used interchangeably to refer to crimes that involve unlawful entry (either with or without the use of force) to a residence and theft from the residence.*

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## What was the Beenleigh Break and Enter Reduction Project?

The *Beenleigh Break and Enter Reduction Project* was a 12-month project mainly funded by the Commonwealth Government's National Crime Prevention project (NCP) and established by the Queensland Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) and the Queensland Police Service (QPS). The Project was designed to enhance the police response to the problem of residential break and enters with a particular focus on reducing the risk of repeat victimisation and the number of offences in identified 'hot spots'.

The Project was conducted in Beenleigh, a predominantly lower-income community lying half-way between Brisbane and the Gold Coast, with a residential break and enter rate well above the Queensland average. It ran from 1 November 1998 to 31 October 1999.

The CJC was responsible for the design and administration of the Beenleigh Project and formed a working partnership with the QPS to manage the operational aspects of the Project.

## How did the Project operate?

The Project offered a three-tiered response to residential break and enters: Stopbreak, Hot Dot and Hot Spot. The first two tiers focused on the victimised residence; the third targeted high-crime areas:

THE STOPBREAK RESPONSE was a standard project delivered to all victimised addresses by the police attending the scene. A security assessment of the residence was conducted, the victim was given a folder containing crime prevention material (including a property-marking kit), and immediate neighbours to the victim were encouraged to improve their own home security. During the 12 months that the Project was in operation 623 Stopbreak Responses were provided.

THE HOT DOT RESPONSE was initiated when a victimised residence was recognised as the site of a previous break and enter or related offence (such as stealing from a dwelling or wilful damage) within the preceding 12 months. In these cases, a specialist project officer visited the victim to see if there were any underlying conditions that may have contributed to the repeat incident. The victim was given specific advice on preventing further break and enters, as well as the loan of security devices such as portable security alarms, locks, property engravers and light timers. Extra police patrols of the area were arranged and near neighbours were given a package containing burglary prevention advice. Hot Dot Responses were provided to 67 repeat victims in Beenleigh Police Division.

THE HOT SPOT RESPONSE was implemented when a particular area was identified as having a very high rate of break and enters. Everyone in the area (victims and non-victims alike) was offered free home-security assessments and given help with property marking. Through door-knocks and letter-box drops (by police and volunteers), specialised burglary prevention training was offered and encouragement given to establish Neighbourhood Watch in the area. Two areas containing approximately 580 households received a Hot Spot Response.

## What did the Project evaluation reveal?

The Project was evaluated by asking victims about their experiences with the Project and comparing break and enter crime rates during the 12 months of the trial with the preceding 12 months in Beenleigh and two comparison areas (a contiguous area and a non-contiguous area).

### Impact on repeat victimisation

During the life of the Beenleigh Project, the number of repeat victimisations in the area dropped by 15 per cent (compared to the previous 12 months). In addition, the risk of a victimised household being revictimised fell in the trial area, whereas the risk increased in both comparison areas. This is evidence that the project was effective in reducing the risk of a *repeat* break and enter.

### Impact on break and enters in hot spots

It is difficult to isolate the effects of the hot spot strategy from the other Beenleigh strategies; however, the application of hot spot interventions was followed immediately by a short-term drop in residential break and enters in both of the targeted areas. There was no evidence that the interventions merely displaced the offences to surrounding areas.

### Impact on total break and enters

*Total* break and enters reported to police declined in the two comparison areas (by 13 per cent in the first and by 12 per cent in the second), but rose by 19 per cent in Beenleigh.

The figures for Beenleigh were skewed by the activities of a single prolific offender during two months of the trial period. If offences attributable to this individual are excluded, the Project may have reduced the overall number of break and enters in Beenleigh by 2 per cent. However, this is still less than the reductions that occurred in both comparison areas.

### Explaining the limited impact of the Project

The Beenleigh Project was principally targeted at *repeat* victimisation - that is, at reducing the vulnerability of an already victimised address. Only two components had the potential to affect the level of risk of first-time victimisation in other residences, and then only for those households near victimised addresses. First, near neighbours were meant to be notified of the incident and encouraged to be more vigilant as part of Stopbreak Response. However, this was the one project component that was not well implemented. Secondly, the hot spot intervention was aimed at both victims and non-victims residing in the hot spot. As indicated, the Project had a short-term impact on offending in the two hot spots, but these areas were too small for this to have much effect on the total number of offences in Beenleigh.

### Impact on the quality of policing service

During the trial, victims in the Beenleigh area were more likely than those in the comparison areas to receive, and to act on, police information or advice, indicating that the Project had a favourable impact on shaping decisions about home security.

Where victims expressed dissatisfaction with the service received, the reasons given generally related to matters outside the boundaries of the Project (for example, poor response time and lack of feedback from investigators about the status of an investigation).

### What did the Project achieve?

The Beenleigh Project:

- succeeded in getting operational police in Beenleigh to give greater priority to prevention and the needs of the victim
- showed that it is possible to improve the police response to residential break and enters without imposing significant additional burdens on operational police
- confirmed that, by changing the way in which police respond to break and enter offences it is possible to reduce the risk of repeat victimisation and decrease offending in hot spots
- identified ways in which "police volunteers" can contribute to crime prevention[1], and
- provided some valuable lessons for designing and implementing future projects of this type (see appendix D).

1. The Queensland Police Service has implemented the *Volunteers in Policing Scheme* under which members of the public are selected and trained to undertake voluntary work assisting the police in crime prevention and other related issues.

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter provides the background to, and context of, the Project and summarises the research literature on the role of police in preventing residential break and enters.

## Background to the Project

In the mid-1990s, the States and Territories agreed to work cooperatively through the then *National Anti-Crime Strategy*[2] to establish pilot projects aimed at preventing crime in priority areas. These pilot projects were to be run jointly by the Strategy and the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, under the auspices of the National Crime Prevention project.

In 1997, *National Anti-Crime Strategy* Lead Ministers from all States and Territories and the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department identified the prevention of residential break and enter offences as a priority area for the establishment of a pilot project. It was agreed that officers from crime prevention agencies in Queensland and South Australia would each develop a proposal for consideration that would focus on repeat victimisation.

In November 1998, the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) and the Queensland Police Service (QPS), supported by funding from the Commonwealth Government's National Crime Prevention project (NCP), established the pilot Break and Enter Reduction Project in the Beenleigh Police Division in South-East Queensland. The aim of this project was to develop, implement and evaluate an enhanced police response to the problem of residential break and enters, which would include a focus on repeat victimisation. Specific objectives for the Project included to:

- evaluate the effectiveness of strategies to reduce overall break and enter victimisation rates and levels of reported repeat victimisation in areas with high residential break and enter rates
- assess the impact of this approach on victims' perceptions of the quality of policing services provided in response to break and enter incidents
- identify the information requirements and the administrative and organisational conditions needed to enhance the ongoing police response to residential break and enter
- develop a project guide to support the implementation of effective break and enter reduction strategies in other locations, and
- increase understanding of the phenomenon of repeat victimisation.

This report presents the results of that 12-month trial project. A meta-evaluation report commissioned by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department will provide a further analysis of the outcomes of the Queensland project together with the results of a trial project conducted in South Australia over the same period.

2. Now the *Australian and New Zealand Crime Prevention Ministerial Forum*

## Why is residential break and enter a serious problem?

Residential break and enter is one of the most prevalent types of crime in Australia today and one of the crimes of greatest concern to the general public. Almost 50,000 such offences were reported to Queensland police in 1999 (ABS 2000). Approximately 25 per cent of break and enter incidents are not reported to police (SCRCSSP 2000), so the actual number is even higher. In the 1998 Crime and Safety Survey, 8 per cent of Queensland households stated they had experienced a break and enter incident or an attempted break and enter in the previous 12 months (ABS 1999) and 41 per cent of Queensland respondents considered break and enter was a problem in their neighbourhood (ABS 1999b).

The crime of residential break and enter has far-reaching consequences for both victims and the wider community. Victims may suffer financial losses arising from stolen and damaged property, psychological suffering as a result of having their home and personal possessions violated, and longer-term emotional and social damage. The wider community may also experience social and quality-of-life effects, such as an increased fear of crime restricting the activities of non-victims.

Indirect costs include increased insurance premiums, and the tax share of public sector costs to deal with the crime. For example, a QPS estimate in the mid-1990s costed the police response to residential break and enter at over $6.5 million annually (CJC 1996).

### The issue of repeat victimisation

Repeat victimisation - which refers to a situation where more than one crime is experienced by the same person or place over a specified period - has been identified in the research literature as a major contributor to the overall incidence of residential break and enter, and as an issue that requires addressing in its own right because of its disproportionate impact on victims (Bridgeman & Sampson 1994; Pease 1998).

British studies have documented repeat domestic burglary rates ranging from 7 to 17 per cent (Anderson, Chenery & Pease 1995; Bennett & Durie 1999; Johnson, Bowers & Hirschfield 1997; Ratcliffe & McCullagh 1998). In Sherman's analysis of calls to police in a United States jurisdiction, 1.2 per cent of addresses in the area experienced 29 per cent of burglaries (Robinson 1998).

A CJC study (1997) of calls for service to police for break and enters in the Beenleigh area calculated that nearly 19 per cent of all reported residential break and enters within an 18-month period were repeat incidents. Further analyses of the data reported in Townsley, Homel and Chaseling (2000) estimated that the chance of a residential address being victimised only once was 0.07 while the chance of a repeat victimisation, once victimised, was more than double at 0.163. The 1998 Australian Crime and Safety Survey (ABS 1999) identified that 30 per cent of those Queensland households experiencing a break and enter or attempted break and enter over the 12-month period were repeats, although not all were reported to police.

Morgan's (2000) analysis of repeat burglaries and attempted break and enters in a Perth suburb over a five-year period confirms that there was a heightened risk for victimised households, although Morgan also found quite different patterns of burglary and repeat burglary in areas only several hundred metres apart.

Repeat victimisation has been associated with higher levels of fear of crime (Borooah & Carcach 1997) and with lower reporting rates to police (Chee 1999; Pease 1998). Further, the research evidence suggests that the people who are most vulnerable in society are also the most likely to be repeatedly victimised (Bridgeman & Sampson 1994; Pease 1998). Repeat victims of property crimes are also likely to experience increased financial costs in the form of higher insurance premiums and, in some cases, the loss altogether of insurance coverage.

## Preventing residential break and enter: An overview of the research

### General approaches to crime prevention

The research and theoretical literature has produced different models and theories of crime prevention (Brantingham & Brantingham 1995; Clarke 1995; Jeffery & Zahm 1993; Taylor 1997). One of the more useful conceptual schemes is provided in a UK Home Office publication by Hough and Tilley (1998), who distinguish between crime prevention and criminality prevention. In their model, crime prevention consists of:

(i) enforcement activities designed to deter or incapacitate offenders (for example, routine police patrols and special task forces)

(ii) situational measures to reduce opportunities for crime (for example, household security advice and safety audits).

Criminality prevention consists of:

(i) community, social and developmental prevention, intended to block the development of criminal motivation (for example, working with at-risk young people and drug education)

(ii) rehabilitation (for example, prisoner work and education projects, community drug treatment and counselling for offenders on community orders).

Most initiatives directed at reducing the incidence of residential break and enters focus on crime prevention rather than criminality prevention.

## Policing responses to break and enter

### ENFORCEMENT STRATEGIES

A commonly proposed solution is to increase the number of police and police patrols in identified high-risk areas, on the assumption that increased police surveillance will both deter potential offenders and identify offences actually being committed. However, it is very difficult to maintain the level of coverage necessary to have a deterrent effect. Other possible enforcement-focused police responses include: targeting known offenders; disrupting the distribution of stolen goods by focusing, for example, on second-hand dealer markets; or employing new investigative techniques (such as DNA technology). These strategies have been adopted with varying degrees of success in different policing environments in Australia and internationally.

### SITUATIONAL MEASURES

Another role police can play is to assist in the implementation of situational crime prevention measures. This term is used to describe measures involving the management, design or manipulation of the immediate environment in a systematic way, so as to reduce the opportunities for crime (that is, increase the effort associated with its commission), or increase the risk associated with the crime, or reduce the rewards derived from the crime (Clarke 1995). Example of strategies for increasing the effort include 'target hardening' measures, such as securing windows and doors with deadlocks to prevent unlawful entry. Measures to increase risks include increased surveillance through Neighbourhood Watch projects, or improved street lighting. Strategies to reduce rewards include property marking, which acts to limit resale options for stolen goods. Police can facilitate the adoption of situational controls by such means as conducting detailed safety and security audits of individual households, and by encouraging the use of simple security procedures such as property marking of valuable objects.

Tilley and Webb's (1994) evaluation of 11 anti-burglary schemes in relatively high-crime areas in the UK concluded that target-hardening can reduce local burglary rates in the short-term and lower the risk of individual victimisation. They also concluded that police have an important role in victim-centred target-hardening initiatives.

Welsh and Farrington's (1999) cost-benefit analysis of 13 situational crime prevention measures produced cost-benefit ratios of 0.4 to 5 for the three projects targeting burglary offences, which indicated that situational crime prevention can be an economically efficient strategy for crime reduction. Ekblom (1995) estimated that the potential national impact of introducing *Safer Cities*-type burglary action targeting higher risk areas amounting to a tenth of the UK's households would give a 6 per cent reduction in national burglary rates and gross financial benefits about two-and-a-half times as great as monies spent on the projects.

The research concludes there are many benefits of a situational crime prevention approach as it often presents a direct, immediate, speedy and cost-effective solution to a crime problem. However, a strong message from the literature is that there are few universal remedies, and strategies need to be properly targeted for maximum effectiveness (Goldblatt 1998).

### PROBLEM-ORIENTED POLICING

Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) is a process through which police, in conjunction with other agencies, analyse the underlying features of crime and community problems in a systematic way, and then develop, implement and evaluate responses to address those underlying problems, rather than simply reacting to crimes after they have occurred. POP has been reported as a very successful approach to crime problems internationally (such as Goldstein 1990; Sherman, Gottfredson, MacKenzie, Eck, Reuter & Bushway 1997; Leigh, Read & Tilley 1998; Wexler, Samuels & Frazier 2000).

Problem-solving policing approaches have been adopted in many different locations, with varying degrees of success. Read and Tilley's (2000) review of problem-solving initiatives in the 43 English and Welsh police services identified a number of unsuccessful POP initiatives and concluded that high-quality problem-solving is still exceptional, although promising examples of small area crime and disorder problem-solving could be found in most of the forces. Other research has reported substantial benefits. For example, Eck and Spelman (1987) found an average reduction of 35 per cent in household burglaries using a POP approach.

### HOT SPOT POLICING

Hot spots refer to spatial concentrations of crime, or specific areas or locations experiencing a higher than normal level of crime over a sustained period of time (Townsley, 2000). Repeat victimisation has often been identified as an important factor in the disproportionately high crime rates that are characterised by these areas. While there is an increasing body of international research on the characteristics of hot spots across various types of crime, including break and enter (for example, Bennett 1996; Bennett & Durie 1999), relevant Australian research is limited.

Hot spots, because of their disproportionately high levels of crime and, particularly, their higher rates of repeat victimisation, are considered by a number of crime prevention experts to be appropriate target locations for crime prevention projects. For example, Felson and Clark (1998) suggest that concentrating resources on hot spots is one of five critical points for action in crime prevention.

Bennett and Durie (1999) have reported on a project in Cambridge, England, which implemented a range of initiatives including *Cocoon Neighbourhood Watch*, loan of burglar alarms, security advice, fitting additional locks, targeted police patrols, various community initiatives targeting greater surveillance by the local community, and youth development schemes targeting potential offenders. They found that total burglaries reduced in the targeted hot spots by 4 per cent, but fell in the wider city area by 19 per cent.

Townsley's (2000) review of the research concluded that most hot spot intervention studies failed to significantly reduce the incidence of the principal crime problem used to define the hot spot, although some had an impact on other related crimes. It is not clear whether this was because the actual approach was flawed or the outcomes were due to implementation failure, such as inadequate analysis and identification, or the application of inappropriate strategies.

## Dealing with repeat property crime

International research provides examples of crime prevention projects specifically targeting repeat victimisation that have been successful in reducing crime generally, as well as repeat victimisation in particular. The two most cited studies are the UK Home Office crime prevention projects. The first was conducted on the Kirkholt housing estate. The major interventions, which were based on providing victim support and improving home security following the occurrence of an offence, resulted in a 75 per cent reduction in residential burglaries (Pease 1992). Application of the Kirkholt methodology in other projects failed to show the same level of impact, although this has been attributed to differences in the characteristics of the interventions and target areas (Tilley 1993).

The second major study was the Huddersfield Project. During this project, called 'Biting Back', victims of a break and enter crime received an intervention that was calibrated to the number of previous victimisations. The responses were designated Bronze, Silver or Gold. For the lowest level of response (Bronze), all victims received crime prevention information from police and property-marking materials. At the next highest category of response (Silver), victims received a personal visit from a crime prevention officer, increased police patrolling, and some basic security devices (for example, portable alarms and security lights). Victims in the highest category of intervention (Gold) were provided with a police-monitored silent alarm and intensive police patrolling. An evaluation of the project reported a 30 per cent reduction in domestic burglary and reduced levels of repeat victimisation (Chenery, Holt & Pease 1997).

Other studies have examined the effect of general burglary reduction schemes on repeat victimisation. For example, one of the *Safer Cities* schemes evaluated by Tilley and Webb (1994), the *Meadows Household Security Project* in Nottingham, showed a reduction in repeat burglaries from 22.8 to 13.6 per cent over a two-year period, with the average time between revictimisations rising from 81 days to six months.

### KEY FINDINGS ON WHAT WORKS

While there is not as yet a comprehensive body of research providing consistent conclusions about the most effective crime prevention approaches to burglary specifically, there is a growing body of knowledge evaluating the comparative effectiveness of broad intervention strategies in reducing crime generally.

UK Home Office research (Goldblatt 1998; Nuttall, Goldblatt & Lewis 1998) suggests that an *integrated* strategy will be most effective, particularly one that includes elements such as hot spot targeting, reducing repeat victimisation, and greater emphasis on problem-solving policing. Hough and Tilley (1998) consider that the most effective crime prevention strategies adopt a broad problem-solving approach (see also Police Executive Research Forum 1996).

Jordan's (1998) review of the relative effectiveness of police strategies in crime reduction concludes that in certain circumstances police have had considerable impact, with success generally following the selection of appropriate tactics to the problem, effective management and good targeting of resources. Targeting repeat offenders, repeat victims and hot spots are identified as demonstrably effective strategies, and problem-solving policing recommended as one of the strategies warranting further review. On the other hand, random patrols, increasing fast response, Neighbourhood Watch and community policing initiatives without a clear focus were considered to have been demonstrated to be ineffective responses to crime.

Morris's (1996) analysis of examples of effective practices in policing problem-residential areas in the UK suggested that the most successful strategy is combined action on three fronts - police, civil, and community based measures. In this context, effective police strategies include targeting key offenders, targeted patrols, high-visibility policing and countering witness intimidation.

## Summary

The research literature indicates, firstly, that police have a potentially important role to play in reducing the incidence of residential break and enters; and secondly, that a mix of strategies tailored to local circumstances is likely to be more effective than a 'one size fits all' response.

Promising strategies identified by the research literature for enhancing the police response to residential break and enter include:

- using situational crime prevention approaches
- concentrating on reducing the risk of repeat victimisation, and
- focusing interventions and enforcement efforts on hot spots.

The project that is described and evaluated in the following chapters of this report was designed with a view to trialing a mix of these approaches in a 'real world' policing context.

# CHAPTER 2: PROJECT DESIGN AND EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines how the Beenleigh Project was designed and implemented, and describes the evaluation methodology employed. Details about project management arrangements can be found in appendix A.

## Project setting

The *Beenleigh Break and Enter Reduction Project* was set in Beenleigh, an outer suburban community with a population of about 41,000 people located approximately 40 kilometres south of the Brisbane central business district.

Policing services in the area are provided by the Beenleigh Police Division, which is part of the Logan Police District. Most people in the Beenleigh Police Division live in the suburbs of Beenleigh, Eagleby and Mount Warren Park, with the surrounding areas being largely rural and semi-rural in nature. The division covers an area of roughly 300 square kilometres, commencing in the north at the Logan River Bridge on the Pacific Highway, and extending south to the Pimpama Bridge, east to Cabbage Tree Point and west to Waterford.

FIGURE 1 – Map of Beenleigh Division

The police division staffing complement is reasonably large with approximately 60 sworn (police) and 25 unsworn ('civilian') staff.[3] During the operation of the Beenleigh Project the largest concentration of staff was assigned to general duties, the Beenleigh Watchhouse and the Police Communications Centre. A small number of police officers were also assigned to areas such as criminal investigation, intelligence and traffic.

Beenleigh was selected as the site for the Project for three main reasons. First, it has one of the higher residential break and enter rates in Queensland. In 1998-99 there were 1,718 residential break and enters per 100,000 population, compared to the state average of 1,290 break and enter offences. Second, as a result of a previous CJC-QPS initiative in Beenleigh – the *Beenleigh Calls for Service Project* (CJC 1998) – the CJC had already conducted some analysis of repeat victimisation and hot spot patterns in the areas, using calls-for-service data. A third consideration was that the Beenleigh area was located quite close to Brisbane and so was readily accessible by project research staff.

## Project design and logic

Prior to the Project being implemented, the standard police response to residential break and enter in Beenleigh – as in most parts of Queensland – was routine, highly standardised and predominantly reactive.

Typically, a police car with two officers was dispatched to the scene following a call from a member of the public (usually an occupier of the victimised premises) and a crime report taken. It was unusual for police to provide any prevention advice to the occupiers or to visit neighbouring properties to obtain additional information or to warn them that a break and enter had occurred nearby. If the break and enter was deemed to be sufficiently serious, the Criminal Investigation Branch would be called in and a more extensive investigation would be initiated, but it was relatively rare for burglars to be apprehended by police, as evidenced by the low clearance rate for this offence category (about 13 per cent for Queensland). From time to time, Beenleigh police increased patrols in areas where there had been a particularly high number of break and enters, but this strategy was not employed systematically.

The Project sought to change the way that local police dealt with break and enters by introducing a three-tiered, graded response. The first two levels - the Stopbreak and Hot Dot Responses - focused on the individual residence and the third was an area-level response targeting hot spots. The three response tiers did not operate independently. For instance, the Project was designed to provide all break and enter victims with a Stopbreak Response. Repeat victims usually received a Stopbreak Response and a Hot Dot Response. All residents (victims and non-victims) living in a hot spot received a Hot Spot Response. Most victims living in a hot spot would have also received one or both of the other responses, depending on how many times they had been victimised during the span of the Project.

3. As at 3 December 1999.

### Stopbreak Response

The initiating event ('the trigger') that activated the Stopbreak Response was a report to Beenleigh police that a residential break and enter offence had occurred in the project area.

The Stopbreak Response generally involved two general duties officers attending the scene of the break and enter. While at the crime scene, the first officer was expected to:

- complete a crime report (CRISP report)
- conduct a preliminary scene examination, and
- contact the Scenes of Crime Unit to request their attendance to photograph the scene and examine any physical evidence, such as fingerprints, left at the scene of the crime.

The second officer at the scene was requested to:

- provide the victim with a Stopbreak folder containing a burglary prevention booklet, crime prevention brochures and property-marking materials
- conduct a Home Security Quick Assessment to identify the steps victims needed to take to reduce the risk of further break and enters
- ascertain if the address had a history of previous break and enters, and
- make personal contact with near neighbours or leave a small advice card containing home-security information in the mailbox.

At the conclusion of their shift, the officers were required to attach the original copy of the Home Security Quick Assessment to the CRISP report and forward it to the project team for review.

During the 12 months that the Project was in operation, Beenleigh police provided 623 Stopbreak Responses.

### Hot Dot Response

The second-tier response - Hot Dot - was directed at preventing multiple repeat victimisation. The response was triggered when there was an indication on CRISP that the victimised address was the site of a previous break and enter or related offence (such as stealing from a dwelling or wilful damage) in the previous 12 months. Providing the Hot Dot Response was the responsibility of a police officer who had been assigned full-time to the Project (the project officer). The principal role of the project officer was to identify and respond to any factors (such as poor security) that may have contributed to revictimisation.

The 12-month window was selected for both theoretical and practical reasons. The most compelling theoretical reason was that 12 months is the most accepted period for defining repeat victimisation in international research. Adopting this standard allowed comparisons to be made with similar research in other jurisdictions. From a practical standpoint, the 12-month window coincided with the length of the Project.

In addition, the adoption of a 12-month period for searching for repeat victimisation reflected the current capability of the CRISP system. A longer time window would have required a substantially more powerful and accurate crime reporting system incorporating an extensive collection of historical records.

The tasks undertaken by the project officer included:

- reviewing the Home Security Quick Assessment completed following the provision of a Stopbreak Response
- interrogating CRISP for the crime history of the address to determine if the residence was the site of a previous break and enter or related offence - if so, the project officer scheduled an appointment with the resident of the victimised address
- attending the victimised address and conducting a repeat victimisation survey with the resident
- where appropriate, making suggestions on how to minimise the risk of re-victimisation
- where necessary, providing the resident with a portable security alarm, padlock, electric engraver, timer device or identifying the residence as a requiring extra police patrols
- distributing a package containing burglary prevention advice to near neighbours.

During the 12 months that the Project was in operation, the project officer provided 67 Hot Dot Responses. (This was greater than the number of addresses recorded as having been subject to a repeat break and enter victimisation, because some addresses received more than one Hot Dot Response.) Table 1 details the types of intervention delivered by the project officer.

TABLE 1 – Types of intervention delivered by the project officer as part of the Hot Dot Response: Beenleigh Division (1 November 1998-31 October 1999)

| Type of intervention | Number of addresses receiving the intervention |
|---|---|
| Home security advice | 52 |
| Review of Home Security Quick Assessment | 47 |
| Arranged for extra police patrols | 33 |
| Assistance with property marking | 15 |
| Referral to other agency for assistance (e.g. Home Assist Secure Project) | 4 |
| Theft pastes and powders deployed | 3 |
| Portable wall alarm deployed | 2 |
| Police-monitored alarm | 2 |
| Video alarm deployed | 1 |

*Note: Multiple actions could be recorded for the one address.*

In addition to the interventions delivered to repeat victims, the project officer also provided 206 burglary prevention information packages to residents ('near neighbours') living in the immediate vicinity of victimised residences.

The project officer relied to a great extent on the suite of interventions designed to prevent repeat victimisation, such as providing home-security advice, providing assistance with property marking and arranging for extra police patrols. Little emphasis was placed on interventions that were focused on apprehending offenders or targeting receivers of stolen property.

## Hot Spot Response

The Hot Spot Response was designed to prevent or reduce residential burglary by applying an area-wide approach involving both victims and non-victims (that is, neighbours). For the purposes of this project, a hot spot was defined as a small area of approximately 200 metres radius in which multiple break and enter offences had occurred (see appendix B for a detailed account of the methodology used to identify hot spots).

The identification of hot spots was the responsibility of the project's data analyst. The analyst conducted weekly and monthly checks of CRISP to pinpoint particular locations with a high number of break and enters, searching specifically for unusual patterns in the location, date and time of incidents, or changes in the modus operandi. If patterns were detected, a more intensive analysis was undertaken to identify possible 'area effects', such as the proximity to crime attractors or generators (for example, schools, shopping malls, train stations), proximity to offenders or environmental design issues. Once an area was identified as a break and enter hot spot, the Hot Spot Response was initiated involving the research team, Volunteers in Policing (VIPs) and staff of the QPS Crime Prevention Unit. Strategies used as part of the hot spot included:

- conducting door-to-door campaigns and letter drops to increase community awareness of the break and enter problem in the area
- increased police patrols, particularly in and around victimised addresses in the hot spot
- offering free home-security assessments and providing assistance with property marking
- encouraging the establishment of Neighbourhood Watch
- assisting residents to conduct a Safety Audit
- providing residents with specialised burglary prevention training.

During the 12 months that the Beenleigh Project was in operation, two hot spots were identified: the first being a small area in the suburb of Eagleby, the second in Beenleigh. Approximately 580 properties received a Hot Spot Response.

Table 2 shows the types of interventions applied in the hot spots and the date of commencement/completion.

TABLE 2 – Schedule of interventions applied in the hot spots (1 November 1998-31 October 1999)

| | Hot Spot 1 | Hot Spot 2 |
|---|---|---|
| Area scan conducted | 25-26 March | 8-9 September |
| Information package distributed | 30 March | 14 September |
| Door-knock | 6-7 April | 29-30 September |
| burglary prevention workshop | 13 April | 4 October |
| Safety Audit meeting | 21 June | N/A |
| Neighbourhood meet and greet | N/A | 24 October |
| Interventions completed | 21 June | 24 October |

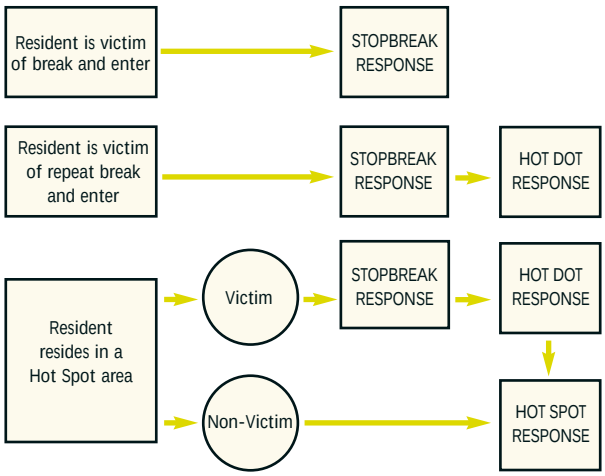
The project team was active for about two months in each of the hot spots with the interventions for the hot spots taking approximately 300 person hours to complete, although the schedule of interventions was not the same for each hot spot.

Overall, the workload in each of the hot spots was slightly less than anticipated. This was principally because the letter drop and door-knock campaign did not generate a great deal of follow-up activity, such as requests for home-security advice and for assistance with property marking. As well, public participation in various meetings and events in the two hot spots was light (see next chapter).

## Summary

Figure 2 summarises how the three-tiered approach was applied during the course of the Beenleigh Project.

FIGURE 2 – Overview of the operation of the three-tiered approach




## Evaluation framework

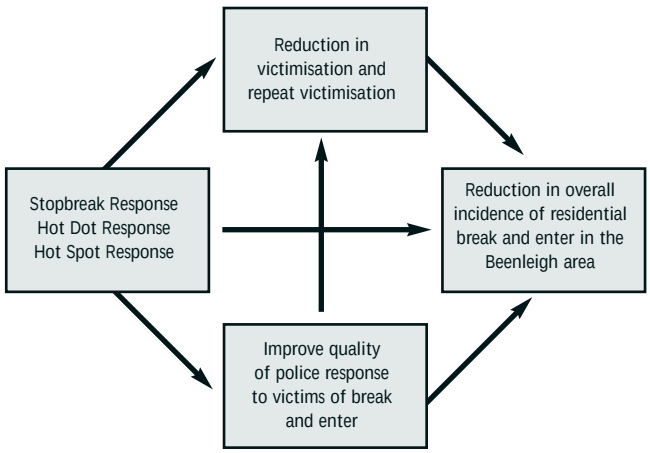
The impact of the Project on repeat victimisation and the overall number of break and enter offences was assessed by comparing the 12-month period immediately preceding the introduction of the project in the trial area and the 12 months during which the project operated against two comparison areas (a contiguous and a non-contiguous location) over the same time periods. Additionally, hot spots identified in the trial area were compared prior to, during and after the intervention period for the hot spot site and a comparably sized, immediately surrounding, geographic area over the same periods.

Outcome measures included crime reports and calls-for-service data from police record systems, relevant items from security assessment forms completed by police and the project officer, data compiled by project staff on the nature of interventions applied in the trial area, items from a specific repeat victimisation questionnaire, and questions from follow-up surveys with victims in both trial and comparison areas conducted two months after a reported incident. Additional information relevant to process evaluation issues was obtained from interviews with project staff and stakeholders and analysis of a wide range of documents and reports.

The primary focus of the outcome evaluation was on assessing: (a) whether the Project had been successful in reducing the risk of repeat victimisation; and (b) whether the hot spot interventions had been effective. It was assumed that successful implementation of these strategies would also reduce the overall incidence of break and enter offences. In addition, the evaluation addressed the question of whether there had been an improvement in the quality of policing services to victims of break and enter offences in the trial area.

A graphical representation of the underlying project logic is provided in figure 3.

FIGURE 3 – Project logic of the Beenleigh Project



## Selection and use of comparison areas

When pilot projects are implemented in the field, there are many external factors that can influence the performance of the project. An overall improvement in the national economy, for example, may contribute to a reduction in crime independently of the impact of an innovative crime reduction project. To monitor the impact of some of these external factors, two broadly similar comparison areas were selected.

One of the comparison areas (Control 1) was geographically contiguous to Beenleigh and was used to assess whether the strategies used to prevent burglary in Beenleigh had displaced criminal offences, particularly break and enters, to nearby locations. The other areal (Control 2) was non-contiguous, being around 40 kilometres from the project site, but had a similar socio-demographic profile and similar rate of reported residential break and enters.

Some key features of the project site and two comparison areas are reported in table 3. Apart from Beenleigh having more public housing properties, the project site and comparison areas were broadly similar in terms of the characteristics of the populations and the rate of break and enters.

TABLE 3 – Key characteristics of the project and comparison areas

| Key characteristic | Beenleigh | Control 1 | Control 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-project break and enter rate per 100,000 of population | 1,485.3 | 1,743.9 | 1,259.0 |
| Population | 40,675 | 52,946 | 57,895 |
| Number of dwellings | 15,548 | 17,745 | 22,566 |
| Public housing properties as a percentage of all dwellings | 20 | 6 | 6 |
| Percentage of households earning < $500 per week | 56 | 47 | 44 |
| Unemployment rate (%) | 13 | 11 | 10 |

*Source: QPS CRISP 1997/98, ABS, CDATA96.*

## Data sources

The main sources of data used for the evaluation are shown in figure 4 below.

FIGURE 4 – Sources of data used to evaluate the Beenleigh Project

- Crime reports. These data comprised electronic records extracted from the Crime Reporting Information System for Police (CRISP). The information contained in this database included the number and location of break and enters as well as associated address histories used for the identification of repeat victims. Relevant CRISP data were collected for the period 1 November 1997 to 31 December 1999. The database contained approximately 20,000 records.
- Calls-for-service data. The calls-for-service data used for the Beenleigh Project consisted of records of requests for police assistance made by telephone to the Beenleigh Police Communications Centre for the period 1 August 1998 to 31 January 1999. These data were collected using the Information Management System.
- Security practices data. Security practices data were derived from the Home Security Quick Assessment form. This is an assessment of the security features of a victim's residence made at the time of the initial visit by general duties police officers.
- Applied interventions data. Two types of applied interventions data were used for the evaluation. The first type identified the actions taken by the project officer in relation to a repeat victim or near neighbour. The second type recorded the actions taken by members of the VIP project as a result of a request by the public for assistance with property marking, and provision of security advice.
- Surveys. Two types of surveys were administered during the Project. The first survey, which was administered to repeat victims only, was designed to collect information on security features of the victim's residence, circumstances relevant to the current victimisation (e.g. occupancy, point of entry) and previous experience with victimisation. The second survey was a follow-up survey designed for use in the intervention and comparison areas. The primary purpose of this survey was to enable comparisons to be made of the different approaches to break and enter and to identify any actions taken by the victim to improve home security for the two-month period following victimisation. (See appendix C for further details.)
- Interviews. To gain more detailed information about the implementation and operation of the Project, semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of the research team and general duties police. The interviews, which ranged from 30 to 60 minutes, were conducted by a project evaluator.
- Documents. The evaluation examined a wide range of documents and reports, such as policy documents, correspondence and activity reports.

## Summary: Links between evaluation questions and measures

The links between the key evaluation questions, measures of performance and sources of data are summarised in table 4.

TABLE 4 – Overall evaluation strategy

| Key evaluation questions | Relevant measures | Data sources |
|---|---|---|
| Did the Project have an effect on reducing repeat victimisation from break and enters? | Reduction in the incidence and probability of repeat break and enter victimisation in the Beenleigh area; no or smaller reduction in comparison areas. | ☐ CRISP<br>☐ Repeat victim survey<br>☐ Victim follow-up survey |
| Did the Project have an effect on reducing residential break and enters in chronic hot spots? | Reduction in the number of break and enters in the relevant hot spot.<br>No corresponding displacement to the surrounding area. | ☐ CRISP |
| Did the Project succeed in reducing the overall number of residential break and enters in the Beenleigh Police Division? | Reduction in the number of residential break and enters reported to Beenleigh Police; no or smaller reduction in comparison areas. | ☐ CRISP |
| Did the Project improve the quality of policing services to victims of break and enter offences? | Greater willingness of police in trial area to provide information and/or advice to break and enter victims.<br>Greater willingness of victims in trial area to implement security measures.<br>Higher level of victim satisfaction with the police response to break and enter in trial area relative to comparison areas. | ☐ Repeat victim survey<br>☐ Victim follow-up survey |

# CHAPTER 3: PROJECT OUTCOMES

This chapter reports the results of the outcome (or impact) evaluation of the Beenleigh Project and primarily focuses on the extent to which the Project:

- reduced the incidence or risk of repeat victimisation
- reduced offending in identified hot spots
- reduced the overall incidence of residential break and enters in the Beenleigh Police Division
- improved the quality of policing services provided to break and enter victims.

## Constraints on assessing project impact

Several features of the Project made it difficult to properly assess the Project's impact and therefore to draw definite conclusions about the overall success of a project of this type.

### Low overall incidence of break and enter victimisation

As in many other police divisions, there was substantial month-to-month variation in Beenleigh in the number of break and enter offences reported in the trial area. Given that comparable data for some measures (such as repeat victimisation and victimisation in hot spot areas) were only available for relatively short periods, it was difficult to distinguish possible project effects from what may have been essentially random or seasonal fluctuations.

### Low incidence of repeat victimisation

The pre-project estimates of the proportion of break and enter offences which were repeat offences in Beenleigh (victimised addresses experiencing one or more break and enters in the previous 12-months) was around 18 per cent (CJC 1997). However, further analysis undertaken after the Project had commenced established that in the pre-project period the rate of repeat victimisation was in fact only around 8 per cent.

The difference between these two estimates is attributable mainly to the different information sources from which repeat victimisations were identified. The earlier CJC analysis was based on calls-for-service data, which proved to over-identify repeat addresses, especially in situations where the incident occurred in flats or units (often logged in the calls-for-service database under a single street number rather than as the specific unit or flat at that street address). The Beenleigh Project used the QPS CRISP system for logging incident report details. Once the CRISP data had been 'cleaned' (which took some months) it proved to be considerably more accurate in identifying the specific address locations, particularly where there were 'multiple' addresses.

The fact that repeat victimisation turned out to be considerably lower than initial analysis had indicated limited the ability of the Project to demonstrate an impact on the overall break and enter rate, as well as making it more difficult to demonstrate statistically that the initiatives aimed at reducing repeat victimisation had been effective. With the benefit of hindsight, the Project may have been more successful had it been relocated to an area with higher rates of repeat victimisation or, alternatively, if a different suite of strategies had been employed. However, this was not practical because of time and resource constraints.

## Limited time frame for project effects

The Project was established for a period of 12 months, commencing on 1 November 1998 and ending on 31 October 1999. This time frame restricted the operation of the Project to strategies and tactics that could be implemented within a relatively short time frame. It was simply not feasible to focus on initiatives requiring a longer lead-time to be established (such as community-building strategies or urban-design changes). The limited time frame also meant that it was not possible to gauge the full effects of some interventions, especially those that only took effect in the last months of the Project.

## Operational constraints

The Beenleigh Project was conducted in a busy operational environment. As a result, substantial compromises in the area of training had to be made to accommodate the operational policing needs of Beenleigh Division. In addition, there was considerable movement of personnel in and out of Beenleigh Station during the course of the Project. This made it difficult to ensure that operational officers had an adequate understanding of project procedures, which may have affected the quality of the intervention able to be provided.

## Field setting

Any operational research in a field setting is vulnerable to extraneous influences impacting on the performance indicators in both the trial project and comparison areas. For example, almost simultaneously with the commencement of the Project, a package of initiatives targeting repeat break and enter was introduced in South-Eastern Region in early 1999. These included special patrols to target known and suspected offenders, specific operations targeting break and enter suspects, and the use of VIPs to offer safety audits and crime prevention advice to victims and notify near neighbours. Effectively, police elsewhere in the Region were directed to employ elements of the Beenleigh Stopbreak Response, which had the effect of reducing the utility of the contiguous comparison area as a control.

# Key findings 1: Preventing repeat victimisation

## Changes in reported repeat victimisation

The trial project was associated with both a reduction in the number of repeat victims (that is, addresses experiencing more than one residential break and enter victimisation during the trial period) and in the absolute number of repeat incidents reported to police across all addresses. As shown in table 5, the number of victims experiencing a repeat residential break and enter declined by 16 per cent in the trial area while the specific number of repeats reported by those victims dropped by 15 per cent.

TABLE 5 - Comparison of number of reported repeat victimisations in the pre-project and the project period: Beenleigh

| | Victims | | Incidents | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Pre-project* | *Project period* | *Pre-project* | *Project period* |
| Total incidents | 563 | 686 | 617 | 732 |
| Total repeats | 45 | 38 | 54 | 46 |
| % change in repeats | -15.6% | | -14.8% | |

*Note: Pre-project period (1 November 97-31 October 98),*

*Project period (1 November 98-31 October 99).*

The number of repeat victims during the same time periods was also compared for the two comparison areas to determine whether the changes identified for the trial area were the result of factors other than the trial project effects. Control 1 was the contiguous site and Control 2 the non-contiguous location (see table 6).

TABLE 6 - Comparison of number of reported repeat victims in the pre-project and the project period: comparison areas

| | Control 1 | Control 2 |
|---|---|---|
| Pre-project period (1 Nov. 97 to 31 Oct. 1998) | 36 | 95 |
| Project period (1 Nov. 98 to 31 Oct. 1999) | 67 | 78 |
| % change in repeats | +86.1 | -17.9 |

In the contiguous comparison area (Control 1) the number of victims experiencing repeat incidents increased by 86 per cent. By contrast, there was an 18 per cent decline in the non-contiguous area (Control 2).

## Impact on probability of reported repeat victimisation

The probability of victimisation was calculated by dividing the total number of victims by the total 'at risk' population (that is, the number of dwellings). The probability of experiencing a further incident after an initial break and enter was calculated by dividing the number of repeat victims by the total number of victims. The ratio of increased risk is the ratio of repeat victimisation probability to initial victimisation probability for each period and area.

TABLE 7 – Probability of reported repeat victimisation in trial and comparison areas

| | Pre-project period 1 Nov. 97-31 Oct. 98 | Project period 1 Nov. 98-31 Oct. 99 |
|---|---|---|
| Beenleigh | | |
| Probability of being a victim | 0.034 | 0.041 |
| Probability of being a repeat victim | 0.087 | 0.059 |
| Ratio of increased risk | 2.560 | 1.440 |
| Control 1 | | |
| Probability of being a victim | 0.044 | 0.038 |
| Probability of being a repeat victim | 0.043 | 0.093 |
| Ratio of increased risk | 1.020 | 2.450 |
| Control 2 | | |
| Probability of being a victim | 0.043 | 0.035 |
| Probability of being a repeat victim | 0.085 | 0.087 |
| Ratio of increased risk | 1.980 | 2.490 |

Table 7 shows that the probability of being a repeat victim fell during the Project (from 0.87 to 0.54) at the same time as the probability of initial victimisation increased. This resulted in a marked drop in the ratio of increased risk from 2.56 to 1.44. By contrast, this ratio increased in both comparison areas to levels well above that of the trial area.

These findings support the conclusion that the project had a real effect on repeat victimisation in the trial area. The probability of repeat victimisation, while initially higher in the trial area than in the comparison areas, declined to a much lower level of risk during the operation of the Project, while risk increased in the two areas where the project was not operating. However, this finding needs to be considered in the light of changes in the overall incidence of residential break and enter (discussed further below), and the possibility that the project may have displaced offending from previously vulnerable repeat victims to other residences.

## Impact on multiple-repeat victimisation

Table 8 shows the number of repeat incidents reported in the 12-month trial period compared to the 12 months immediately before the project commenced and the number of addresses experiencing one or more repeat victimisations. Only a very small number of cases involved multiple repeat incidents during the relevant period, with less than 1 per cent of all victims experiencing more than one repeat incident either during the project or in the preceding 12 months.

TABLE 8 - Comparison of number of reported repeat incidents prior to and during the project period: Beenleigh

| | Victims | | Incidents | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Pre-project* | *Project period* | *Pre-project* | *Project period* |
| Times victimised | | | | |
| 1 | 518 | 648 | 518 | 648 |
| 2 | 40 | 32 | 80 | 64 |
| 3 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 12 |
| 4 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 8 |
| 5 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Total addresses/ incidents | 563 | 686 | 617 | 732 |
| Total repeats | 45 | 38 | 99 | 84 |

*Note: Pre-project period (1 November 1997-31 October 1998); project period (1 November 1998-31 October 1999).*

Regardless of whether victims or incidents are counted, the percentage of multiple repeats was similar in the pre-project and project periods. There is therefore no evidence that the project had an impact on the frequency of multiple repeats. This may be because there were very few such cases even before the Project commenced.

## Summary

- Reported repeat victimisation in the trial project area fell within the context of an rise in the total incidence of residential break and enter offences, resulting in a marked decline in the ratio of increased risk after the initial incident.
- The two comparison areas showed different patterns of results, with one area experiencing a dramatic rise in repeats in the context of overall reduction in total incidents, and the other a decline in both repeats and total incidents.
- In both comparison areas, the ratio of increased risk rose from pre-project levels to figures well above those in the trial area during the period when the project was operating.
- The Project did not have any impact on the frequency of multiple repeats.

## Key findings 2: Hot spot intervention

Two hot spots were identified during the trial project and received the hot spot intervention. Methods for selecting the hot spots and the interventions that were implemented are described briefly in the methodology section and outlined in detail in appendix B. Because of the relatively short intervention periods, there was an opportunity to evaluate post-intervention period effects in both areas during the overall project period (see table 9). The average monthly number of incidents is used in this analysis to control for the different lengths of time in the pre-intervention, intervention and post-intervention periods.

TABLE 9 - Monthly average number of reported break and enter incidents in hot spots and surrounds: Beenleigh

| | Hot Spot 1 | | Hot Spot 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Hot Spot* | *Surrounds* | *Hot Spot* | *Surrounds* |
| Pre-intervention period | 2.80 | 1.80 | 1.67 | 0.83 |
| Intervention period | 0.67 | 1.67 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Post-intervention period | 2.75 | 1.25 | 0.50 | 0.00 |
| % change pre and during intervention period | -76.10 | -7.20 | 100.00 | 100.00 |

*Note:*
*Hot Spot 1:*
*pre intervention = November 1998-March 1999*
*intervention = April-June 1999*
*post-intervention = July-October 1999*
*Hot Spot 2:*
*pre intervention = April-September 1999*
*intervention = October 1999*
*post-intervention = November-December 1999*

Hot Spot 1 showed a marked decline in residential break and enters during the intervention period that was not reflected in the surrounding area. However, the incidence of offences in the hot spots returned to pre-intervention levels when the intervention concluded.

Hot Spot 2 had zero incidents during the intervention period. There was a slight rise after the hot spot project concluded, but only to one-third of the level in the pre-intervention phase. The surrounding area showed a similar decline, which was maintained in the post-intervention phase.

Overall, the data show that the hot spot interventions resulted in reduced offending, although apparently only temporarily. Furthermore, the interventions did not displace offences to the immediately surrounding areas and may have, in the case of Hot Spot 2, had a diffusion of benefit effect.

## Key findings 3: Impact on the overall break and enter rate

The approach taken in the trial project was to address residential break and enter offending using three project components - by focusing on repeat victimisation (as described above), by targeting hot spots, and by providing the Stopbreak Response as a consistent 'first-tier' intervention to all victimised households and nearby residents. As previously stated, the Project did not focus on households that were not burgled unless they were adjacent to a victimised address or located in a hot spot.

### Overall incidence of residential break and enter

Information on the total number of residential break and enter incidents reported to police was collected for the 12-month period immediately preceding the introduction of the trial project (pre-project period), the 12-months during which the project was operational (project period) and an eight-month period after the trial project was completed, covering the period 1 November 1999 to 30 June 2000 (follow-up period). Since the three phases involve different time periods, the figures below and the relevant analyses are based on monthly averages rather than total number of incidents.

In the trial area the total number of reported residential break and enter incidents rose from a monthly average of 53 in the pre-project period to 63 in the trial period, an increase of 19 per cent. This trend was clearly counter to the anticipated effects of the Project.

One possible explanation is that the increase may have reflected general trends in increases in such crimes in the wider Queensland region. However, comparison with trends in the two comparison areas - where total break and enter dropped by 12 and 13 per cent respectively - suggests that the increase that occurred in the trial area was specific to Beenleigh and not a manifestation of general increases in South-east Queensland.

The data further indicates that the increase in Beenleigh was restricted to the trial period (figure 5). There was a 35 per cent decline between the project period and the 8-month follow-up period after the project was completed. In fact, the monthly average number of incidents reported in the follow-up phase was 22 per cent below the average in the pre-project period. Control Area 1 also showed a decline in the follow-up phase to levels below those reported in the pre-project period, although there was only a marginal change reported in the second comparison area.

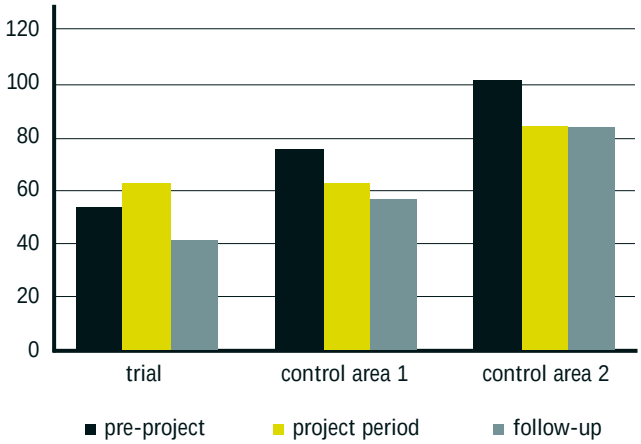



FIGURE 5 - Monthly average number of offences in Beenleigh and comparison areas: November 1997-June 2000

*Note: Pre-project (1 November 1997-31 October 1998), Project period (1 November 1998-31 October 1999), Follow-up (1 November 1999-30 June 2000)*

FIGURE 6 - Number of reported break and enters: Beenleigh: November 1997-June 2000

An analysis of monthly trends shows that the increase in incidents occurring during the project period was almost completely due to a dramatic rise in offences over a single two-month period (see figure 6). During the first seven months of the trial, the number of reported residential break and enter incidents show a reasonably stable trend, at a similar level to the pre-intervention period. However, in June and July 1999 there is a dramatic spike, reflecting a marked and sudden increase at double the numbers in previous months, followed by a return to the long-term trend.

It is almost certainly the case that this spike reflects the impact of a single prolific offender operating in the trial area (see the following case study). A rough estimate is that this person may have committed more than 130 break and enters over this two-month period.

## Explaining the Beenleigh 'spike'

During the first seven months of the Beenleigh Project, the number of break and enter offences followed a fairly stable pattern with a slight trending downwards. Then, in June 1999, there was a sudden and observable 'flare-up' with 86 offences reported, almost twice the number of offences reported in the previous month (47). The dramatic rise continued into the month of July when a further 117 residential break and enter offences were reported to Beenleigh Police.

With the help of members of the Beenleigh File Squad,[4] Beenleigh CIB and staff from the Beenleigh and District Intelligence Offices, a strategy was immediately formulated to deal with the problem.

The first step taken was to analyse the problem from a police-intelligence perspective. A small team consisting of the project officer, Beenleigh Intelligence Officer and members of the Beenleigh File Squad:

- compiled a list of suspects
- compared the modus operandi (MO) of the break and enters committed in Beenleigh to the MOs used by these suspects
- made inquiries as to the whereabouts of each of the suspects in relation to the break and enters
- alerted general duty police officers to observe these suspects and record details on an Activity Report Card
- interviewed police informants.

As a result of these efforts, a suspect was placed under surveillance and arrested. A considerable amount of stolen property was recovered by police with much of it eventually being returned to the victims.

The offender was suspected of having committed 130 break and enter offences, which was approximately 20 per cent of the total number of offences committed in the Beenleigh area during the course of the Project.

This episode demonstrates the vulnerability of carefully designed field experiments to unanticipated events and illustrates the importance of police using a variety of strategies, including traditional methods of investigating and arresting suspects, to combat problems of crime and disorder.

## Adjusted data analysis

The atypical circumstances described in the case study had the potential to cloud real project effects. Therefore, an adjusted data analysis was carried out to eliminate the impact of this event in the same manner as other statistical data may be corrected by reducing the influence of statistical outliers.

When the estimated 130 offences committed by this offender were removed from the analysis, the number of total residential break and enter offences reported to police during the project period fell to 602, a 2 per cent decrease from the number of incidents reported in the preceding 12 months (617).

An alternative approach, which involved removing June and July 1999 data from both the trial project and both comparison areas, gave the following results (see table 10):

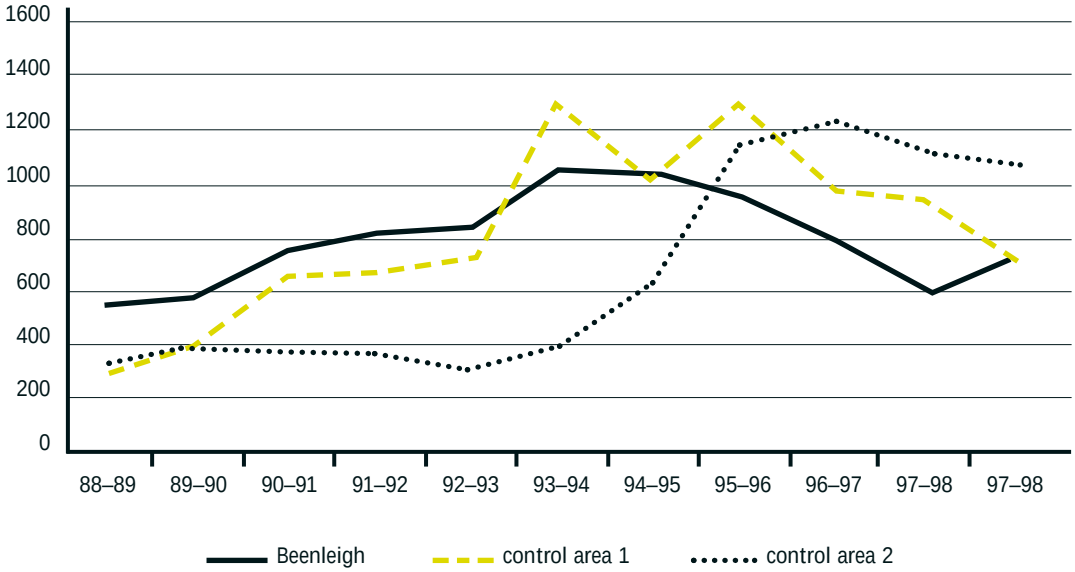
TABLE 10 - Adjusted monthly average number of residential break and enter incidents: Beenleigh and Comparison Areas: November 1997-June 2000

| | Beenleigh | Control 1 | Control 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Monthly average number | | | |
| Pre-project period (1 Nov. 97 to 31 Oct. 98) | 53.0 | 75.7 | 102.6 |
| Project period (1 Nov. 98 to 31 Oct. 99 - excluding June and July 1999) | 55.1 | 63.0 | 95.3 |
| Follow-up period (1 Nov. 99 to 31 June 00) | 41.1 | 58.4 | 89.9 |
| % change between periods | | | |
| Pre-project to project period | 4.0 | -16.7 | -7.1 |
| Project to follow-up period | -25.4 | -7.3 | -5.7 |
| Pre-project and follow-up period | -22.4 | -22.9 | -12.4 |

This adjusted data shows a very different pattern of results to the analysis based on the full 12 months. The level of increase between the pre-project and project periods in the trial area is much smaller (only 4 per cent compared to 19 per cent previously) while the two comparison areas show divergent trends. However, while these adjustments substantially reduce the size of the increase in reported break and enters in Beenleigh during the trial period, they do not change the conclusion that the Project had no apparent impact on the overall number of break and enters in Beenleigh.

4. The Beenleigh File Squad is a small unit formed to conduct follow-up investigations and to proide operational support to the Beenleigh Intelligence Officer.

FIGURE 7 – Ten-year trends in reported residential break and enter incidents: Beenleigh and comparison areas




## Longer term trends in residential break and enter offences

Figure 7, which presents 10-year trend data, shows that Beenleigh had experienced a steady decline over the preceding four years following a steady increase between 1988 and 1994. The contiguous comparison area (Control 1) showed slightly more variability, whereas the non-contiguous control (Control 2) experienced a rapid rise in break and enters between 1993 and 1997, which then tapered off to stabilise at much higher levels.

Of the three areas, the trial project area has shown the least volatility, while both comparison areas have exhibited more variability, including particularly sharp increases in some years. Given the tendency for sharp increases and decreases to revert to the mean over time (that is, to return to average levels), and the somewhat higher baseline levels in the two comparison areas, it may be that the changes between project and pre-project periods reflect, at least in part, the continuing effects of these longer-term trends.

## Explaining the lack of impact on the overall break and enter rate

The absence of any measurable impact of the Project on the overall break and enter rate in Beenleigh was, at least in part, a result of the design of the Project. As discussed, much of the focus of the Project was on reducing repeat victimisation. While the Project can be judged to have been successful in terms of this specific objective, the number of repeats was too few for this aspect of the Project to have had a significant impact on the aggregate break and enter rate. Arguably, some project adjustments might have helped to increase the number of repeats 'prevented', but even a 50 per cent reduction in repeat offences would only have translated into a fall of around 4 per cent in the reported break and enter rate during the project period (on the highly improbable assumption that none of the repeats prevented would have been displaced to other targets).

The hot spot component of the Project arguably had a greater potential to have an impact on the overall break and enter rate, but this did not occur in practice, for the following reasons:

- due to the time required to clean and analyse address data, the first hot spot was not identified until several months into the Project, with the second location being identified only towards the end of the Project
- the two hot spots which were identified accounted for only a small proportion of the total break and enter offences in the trial area (Hot Spot 1 constituted about 4.6 per cent of the total and Hot Spot 2 constituted about 1.6 per cent of the total)
- the effects of the interventions were relatively short-lived (particularly in Hot Spot 1, which was the 'hotter' of the two locations).

It is possible that a different 'suite' of strategies (for example, initiatives directed towards identifying high-volume offenders or disrupting the local market for stolen goods) may have had a greater impact on the overall rate in the trial area. However, implementation of such measures would have entailed a major departure from the original project design, necessitated the allocation of substantially more resources to the Project, and required a longer time frame than the 12 months available to the Project.

The finding that the Project reduced the risk of repeat victimisation within the context of a general increase in break and enter offences is consistent with international experience. For example, Tilley and Webb's (1994) evaluation of 11 *Safer Cities* anti-burglary schemes in relatively high crime areas in the United Kingdom concluded that victim-centred target-hardening reduces the risk of individual victimisation, but may not, on its own, affect overall area crime rates.

## Displacement and diffusion of benefits

A real concern in evaluating any crime prevention project is whether the intervention may simply have displaced the problem to an adjoining premises or area or channelled offender efforts into another type of offence. The different forms of displacement include geographic displacement (shifting the location of offending from one area to another), target (a shift from one type of victim to another group), crime type (for example, displacement of break and enters to vehicle thefts), temporal (deferring the offending behaviour to a later time), perpetrator (one group of offenders is displaced by another), and method (for example, prevention efforts replace one type of modus operandi with other, more successful, offending strategies to overcome the prevention efforts). Diffusion of benefits is the opposite effect, where the prevention efforts engender positive effects on crime in adjoining areas.

The findings from the Project do not present definite evidence of either displacement or diffusion of benefits between the trial area and comparison areas. It is possible that there was some geographic displacement at a small local area level, in which dwellings immediately adjacent to the trial area were affected by displacement, and that this effect was overshadowed by the larger area trends. However, any analysis of displacement effects in this situation would be a time consuming and laborious process as it would require detailed analysis of the crime histories of adjoining areas. Owing to the time constraints under which the Project operated, it was not possible to conduct this type of analysis. Similarly, it was not possible to analyse for temporal or method displacement or diffusion of benefits.

## Summary

- The unadjusted data analysis shows a 19 per cent increase in reported residential break and enter offences/incidents in Beenleigh compared to reductions in both comparison areas (13 per cent in the contiguous control and 12 per cent in the non-contiguous control).
- The increase in break and enters in Beenleigh was mainly due to an atypical two-month spike in the trial area, which was attributable largely to a single prolific offender. Removing the atypical two-month period from both trial and comparison areas showed a much lower increase of only 4 per cent. However, regardless of the adjustment used, there is no evidence to indicate that the Project had an impact on the overall number of residential break and enters in Beenleigh.
- The lack of impact on the overall break and enter rate in Beenleigh may have been partly a consequence of the relatively low incidence of repeat victimisation and the limited scope of the hot spot interventions.
- It was not possible to measure whether there were any displacement or diffusion of benefits effects arising from the Project.

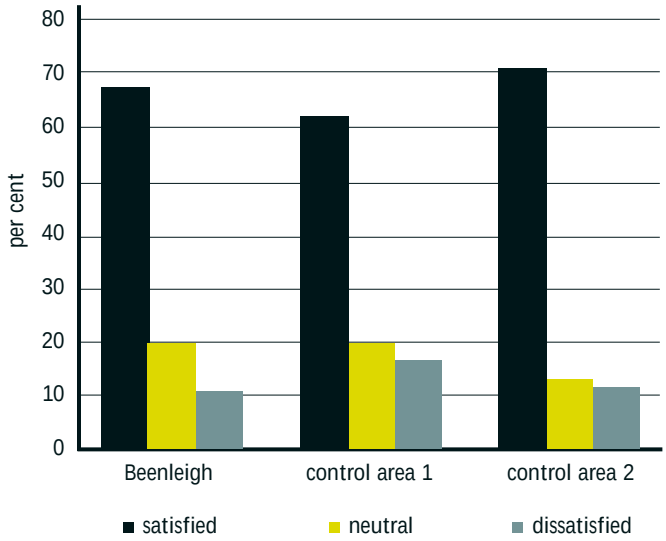
# Key findings 4: Improving the quality of policing services

Quality of police service was assessed by both direct measures (such as victims' stated satisfaction with the service received) and indirect measures (such as the extent to which the advice provided by police was acted upon). The data were obtained from follow-up telephone surveys of victims in Beenleigh and the two comparison areas. There were 373 surveys completed in Beenleigh, 453 in the contiguous control and 226 in the non-contiguous area (see appendix C).

## Expressed satisfaction with police services

Figure 8 indicates that 68 per cent of victims surveyed in the trial project area stated they were satisfied with the way that police had handled the matter, compared to 63 per cent of victims in the contiguous comparison area (Control 1) and 71 per cent in the non-contiguous control (Control 2). The percentage expressing dissatisfaction in the trial area (13 per cent) was equal to or lower than in the two comparison areas (16 per cent and 13 per cent respectively).

FIGURE 8 – Victim satisfaction with police response: Beenleigh and comparison areas



As shown by table 11, 32 per cent of dissatisfied respondents in Beenleigh cited poor response times as their main reason for being dissatisfied with the police response, compared to only 8 per cent of respondents in the non-contiguous comparison area. The project design did not address the issue of response times. Another common complaint in each of the three areas was that police investigators did not provide feedback on the outcome of the investigation. Again, the project design did not deal with this aspect of service delivery.

TABLE 11— Reasons given for dissatisfaction with police response: Beenleigh and comparison areas

| | Beenleigh n=90 (%) | Control 1 n=152 (%) | Control 2 n=62 (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| No feedback | 50 | 57 | 66 |
| Took too long for police to arrive | 32 | 21 | 8 |
| No follow-up investigation | 7 | 7 | 9 |
| Police seemed limited in what they could do | 6 | 5 | 11 |
| Officers seemed uncaring | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Police are understaffed in the area | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Police treated the incident as if it was routine | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Officers didn't spend much time at the scene | 0 | 5 | 2 |
| No extra patrolling in area | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Had to report the incident at the police station | 0 | 2 | 0 |

## Action taken on police advice/information

Victims in the trial area were more likely than those in the comparison areas to take at least one action to improve their home security within the two months following the incident and were also much more likely to take multiple actions (see table 12).

The largest differences between the trial and comparison areas were in relation to applying warning stickers, marking property, compiling lists and fitting new locks. Where significant financial outlays were involved (such as installing burglar alarms, or fitting new doors or screens) there seemed to be a general reluctance in areas to implement the measures.

TABLE 12 – Percentage of victims improving home security: Beenleigh and comparison areas

| | Beenleigh n=373 | Control 1 n=453 | Control 2 n=227 |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Took any action to improve home security* | *77%* | *65%* | *66%* |
| Applied warning stickers | 45% | 11% | 3% |
| Marked property with ID code | 42% | 12% | 4% |
| Fitted new lock | 39% | 27% | 27% |
| Compiled inventory list | 34% | 13% | 10% |
| Fitted window screens, grilles | 15% | 14% | 19% |
| Photographed property | 15% | 10% | 7% |
| Fitted security screen door | 13% | 7% | 6% |
| Secured garage or shed | 12% | 6% | 2% |
| Installed burglar alarm | 10% | 16% | 11% |
| Improved lighting | 8% | 3% | <1% |
| Fitted solid core door | 5% | 4% | 3% |
| *Average number of actions taken per victim* | *3.7* | *1.9* | *1.4* |

*Note: Multiple responses permitted*

These figures are generally lower than international experience. For example, Laycock's (1989) evaluation of UK security survey projects showed take-up rates of 35 to 97 per cent across security measures and groups, with the highest compliance levels being for recommendations about doors (84 to 90 per cent across three groups) and the lowest for alarms (35 to 65 per cent). According to Laycock, those most likely to act on security advice were those who had been recent victims of burglary. Householders who knew that police would be making follow-up visits were also more likely than others to take up at least some of the advice given. In a separate evaluation, Laycock (1995) found a take-up rate of 72 per cent for property marking.

The lower levels of take-up rates in the current project could, in part, reflect differences in the characteristics of the populations being targeted, different dwelling features and different standards of home security already in place. For example, the 1998 ABS Crime and Safety Survey noted that 27 per cent of Queenslanders had deadlocks on all doors and a further 38 per cent on some doors. This obviously limits the relevance of security advice about doors and affects estimates of the take-up rate for security advice about door locks. In fact, 13 per cent of victims in the trial area surveyed in the current project stated they did not add any additional security because they already had most or all of the relevant measures in place.

Almost two-thirds of victims surveyed in the trial project area stated that the most important influence on their decision to improve their home security was the advice/information provided by police (table 13). In the comparison areas, the majority of victims stated that they took action on their own account, rather than on the basis of police information or advice.

TABLE 13 - Reason given for improving home security: Beenleigh and comparison areas

| | Beenleigh n=352 | Control 1 n=445 | Control 2 n=226 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Attributed action to police advice/information | 50% | 20% | 12 |
| Took action on own account | 27% | 45% | 53% |

## Rated helpfulness of project material and advice/assistance given

The follow-up survey conducted with victims in the trial area two months after the reported incident included specific questions about how helpful residents had found the project material and the security advice provided in the Stopbreak intervention phase, and, where relevant, the advice and/or assistance given by the project officer in the hot dot intervention phase. The majority of residents responding agreed that the material, advice, or assistance had been helpful (see table 14).

TABLE 14 - Rated helpfulness of project material and security advice: Beenleigh

| | Stopbreak folder % | Stopbreak security advice % | Hot Dot security advice/assistance % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Very unhelpful | 0.3 | 0.7 | - |
| Unhelpful | 2.0 | 2.3 | 6.5 |
| Neutral | 15.4 | 11.9 | 6.5 |
| Helpful | 55.5 | 49.7 | 25.8 |
| Very helpful | 26.8 | 35.4 | 61.3 |

*Note: n=373 (percentages based on numbers responding to this question)*

## Summary

- Victims in the trial project area were more likely to act on police information and/or advice, indicating the Project had an impact on shaping decisions to take action to improve home security - in this respect, police provided a better quality of service in relation to crime prevention in Beenleigh.
- There was no difference between the trial and comparison areas in expressed satisfaction with policing services received.
- Where victims expressed dissatisfaction with police service received, the reasons given generally related to matters outside the parameters of the project service delivery (for example, slow response times and lack of feedback about the status of the investigation).
- Most respondents described the project material and security advice provided by Beenleigh police as 'helpful'.

# Summary: Key findings of the outcome evaluation

The results of the outcome evaluation show:

- a modest decline in Beenleigh in the absolute number of repeat victimisations and a substantial reduction in the probability of becoming a repeat victim
- a reduction of offending in the targeted hot spots during the intervention period without any apparent displacement to neighbouring areas
- no evidence that the Project had an impact on the total number of residential break and enters in Beenleigh
- an increase in the likelihood of victims acting on police information and/or advice about ways to improve home security
- no major differences between the trial area and comparison areas in the level of expressed satisfaction with the way that police responded to the break and enter.

# CHAPTER 4: PROCESS ISSUES

This chapter looks at the implementation of the Beenleigh Project and identifies a number of issues critical to the success of future projects of this type.

## Project implementation

### Consistency of implementation and project design

It was initially intended to build into the Project a focus on police applying the principles of POP to deal with the problem of residential break and enter. However, the strategies applied in the trial project were limited in various ways. Given these constraints, the trial project may be more appropriately considered as a test of a differentiated policing response model rather than a test of the POP approach. Subject to this qualification, each major project component was implemented on schedule and broadly operated as intended.

The evaluation objectives identified in the original proposal to the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department were revised in the light of early experience with the Project. Specifically, the original project objectives included:

i. a comparison of the effectiveness of specific intervention strategies (singly or in combination) in preventing repeat residential break and enter offences; and

ii. an assessment of the interaction of the specific intervention strategies applied and vulnerable features of the location identified during follow-up.

However, the focus of the trial was on using a creative mix of conventional policing strategies to deal with a policing issue or problem. In most cases, the appropriate solution required a combination of multiple intervention strategies to address the identified issues effectively (such as advice about target-hardening strategies and increased surveillance encouraged by neighbours). In those cases where only a single intervention was applied, the numbers were too small to allow a meaningful statistical comparison. As it was not possible to reliably assess the effectiveness of specific interventions, the two original project objectives dealing with the assessment of specific interventions were dropped.

Early in the life of the Project it was also decided to include a specific objective in relation to victim satisfaction with police services, as it was considered that the interaction between police and victims was an important component of a credible and effective police-delivered crime prevention project.

## Intervention delivered as intended

Project staff conducted regular audits to determine whether households falling within the scope of the Project were visited and whether the required level of intervention was provided to each household. In the first case, the measures used were the proportion of all addresses reporting a residential break and enter during the project period that participated in the Stage 1 intervention (Stopbreak Response) and the proportion of all addresses experiencing a repeat break and enter that participated in the Stage 2 intervention (Hot Dot Response). The second aspect related to whether specific broad project components were delivered where appropriate. In the case of the Stopbreak Response these were considered to be crime prevention advice to victims, and near-neighbour contact. For the hot dot intervention the components were:

i. crime prevention advice and assistance to repeat victims;

ii. near-neighbour contact; and

iii. additional police patrols.

The extent to which these various elements of the project were implemented is summarised in table 15.

TABLE 15 – Process measures for intervention delivery: Beenleigh

| | % |
|---|---|
| Reach of project | targets reached |
| Households within Stopbreak intervention parameters which received intervention targets reached | 85 |
| Households within Hot Dot intervention parameters which received intervention | 84 |
| Relevant intervention components delivered | |
| Stopbreak advice provided to victims by operational police at visit | 93 |
| Contact made/card left with near neighbours by operational police at visit | est. 33 |
| Prevention advice/assistance provided to victim by project officer at visit | 100 |
| Burglary prevention package to near neighbours by project officer | 100 |
| Additional police patrols operating in target area | 55 |

Fifteen per cent of the 734 victimised addresses eligible to receive a Stopbreak Response did not receive that intervention, for the following reasons:

- 33 break and enters were reported without police attending the scene
- 19 break and enters were attended by police units not participating in the Project (such as the Criminal Investigation Branch or neighbouring police stations)
- in 17 cases a satisfactory explanation was offered by the attending officer for not completing a Stopbreak Response (for example, language barrier, victim refused, house was vacant)
- one officer attended 42 break and enters and did not provide the victims with a Stopbreak Response (this issue was identified early in the Project and addressed by the introduction of a 'risk management' process under the responsibility of the Officer in Charge of the station).

Overall, there was a high degree of compliance with project procedures by the attending police officers. No incidents of officer non-compliance were identified in the second six months of the project.

Sixteen per cent of the 79 victimised addresses eligible to receive a Hot Dot Response did not receive that level of intervention, for the following reasons:

- eight victimised addresses were found to be vacant or the residents were in the process of moving when the project officer attempted to make arrangements to deliver the Hot Dot Response
- one repeat victim refused the offer of further assistance by the project officer
- one elderly repeat victim with special needs was referred to a local senior citizens organisation for advice and assistance
- all efforts to locate two of the repeat victims were unsuccessful.

For the 85 per cent of eligible addresses which received the stage 1 Stopbreak intervention, the crime prevention victim-advisory project component was completed in full in 93 per cent of cases. In the remaining 7 per cent there appeared to have been only partial project delivery. In these instances, the victim stated during the follow-up interview that the crime prevention folder had not been provided, or the security assessment was not completed.

The second Stopbreak component (contact with near neighbours) appears to have been under-utilised. It was planned that police would distribute the cards while they conducted neighbourhood inquiries or would leave them in resident mailboxes. However, only 1000 of the 3000 advice cards expected to be distributed over the course of the Project were used, providing an estimated compliance of 33 per cent for this component.

Several reasons were given by general duties police for not distributing the cards. A small number of police said that they failed to see the benefit of the card while others said that they did not have the time to distribute them. The fact that few police regularly distributed the card may have diminished the impact of the Project for non-victims. However, this is difficult to judge as the distribution of the advice card was not regularly monitored during the Project.

In the second intervention stage, the project officer delivering the Hot Dot Response provided specific crime prevention advice and assistance to all households participating in the project, and distributed the burglary prevention advice package to 100 per cent of identified near neighbours of all repeat addresses. Records of police patrol activity show that 55 per cent of repeat addresses received extra police patrol activity for up to several days after the incident.

### Cost effectiveness

The trial project was resourced through funding provided under the Commonwealth Government's National Crime Prevention project. Most of this was allocated to the evaluation rather than the operation of the project. As with any trial project, dedicated resources were required to establish the project and to develop appropriate processes and procedures for wider implementation and this was funded by the CJC.

The funds expended on the project's operations (separate from the evaluation component) were on motor vehicle and running costs ($12,000), and other equipment and operating expenses of $19,000 (portable alarms, security equipment, brochures and property marking kits). These additional costs of $31,000 calculate to $42 per reported residential break and enter in the trial area during the project of which approximately $10 was expended on the information kit component of the Stopbreak Response.

This unit cost would almost certainly have been lower if the project had been operating more widely or in areas with higher rates of victimisation, given that the overhead costs would have been distributed across a larger number of incidents. Also, many of these costs could be subsumed within existing resource allocations if the project were integrated into routine operations (for example, the Hot Dot Response could be provided by local officers, possibly in conjunction with volunteers) or through external funding (for example, sponsorship funding for printed crime prevention resources or sponsor donation of some security equipment items).

An important issue to consider early in the Project was whether the Project was placing greater demands on operational police officers' time. Analysis showed that the average time between police acknowledging the call to attend a residential break and enter until the time they advised that they were available to attend another call was 59 minutes in the three months immediately preceding the Project, compared to 58 minutes during the first three months of the trial project. This showed that the delivery of the Stopbreak project components was no more time consuming than the traditional response, but simply made more effective use of the second officer's time.

Viewed as a whole, the trial project showed that it was possible to improve the base-level police response to residential break and enter without major resource implications for operational policing and without substantial additional funding being needed to develop and administer such projects.

## Conditions of successful implementation

On the basis of interviews with project participants, discussions with stakeholders and input from the Steering Committee, the following factors have been identified as critical to the success of project of this type.

### Designing and delivering the right response

One of the most valuable lessons from earlier crime prevention work is that the adoption of a series of measures is likely to have a much greater impact than simply taking one or two steps (Forrester, Chatterton, Pease & Brown 1988). Staged levels of intervention have been particularly effective in UK crime prevention, such as the graded responses applied in Huddersfield outlined in Chenery et al. (1997). As described in Farrell, Edmunds, Hobbs and Laycock (2000), these approaches are now commonly used by most British police forces.

The three-tiered response applied in the trial project area, and, in particular, the options available as part of the Hot Dot Response, provided police with access to a wider and more diverse range of policing strategies than traditionally deployed when responding to a break and enter. For example, depending on the circumstances, a victimised household might be offered a range of security measures such as a portable security alarm, locks, property engravers, timer devices, or similar security equipment, and extra patrols scheduled. In addition to being able to use a diverse range of options, the project officer had also received extensive training in problem-solving and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies.

Although these various measures were available and differentially applied across households, a concurrent focus on offenders would have broadened the strategies available to deal with the problem of burglary victimisation.

## Training

Training is a critical issue identified in various international research reports and project guides on crime prevention (for example, Anderson et al. 1995; Bridgeman & Sampson 1994; Chenery et al. 1997; Hough & Tilley 1998; Stockdale & Gresham 1995; Taylor & Hirst 1985).

It was originally intended to provide a full-day training course to all Beenleigh police officers on the aims of the trial project, its origins in POP, and general approaches to break and enter prevention. Due to operational requirements, it was not possible to set a full eight hour shift aside solely for training purposes. The only alternative available to the project team was to radically reduce the length of the training session so that it could be delivered to small groups of police during the two-hour period when shifts overlapped. There was no formal training project for new staff arriving after the Project commenced, although supervisors were asked to brief new members about the Project and its requirements. As a result of the limited training given, several problems involving proper completion of basic procedures affected the Project for the first two months of its implementation. A properly structured training course of adequate length at project commencement, supported by ongoing training during the life of the project, would have facilitated implementation of some key elements of the project.

## Resources and structure

An important issue for many crime prevention projects is ensuring that there is sufficient funding to resource the project properly. The Beenleigh Project was well supported by commonwealth funding through NCP, allowing a more extensive evaluation than could otherwise be undertaken by many in-house project reviews. Operational and administrative support was also provided by both the CJC and the QPS to support the trial project.

An appropriate level of dedicated resources is important for conducting effective pilot projects, but there may not be a corresponding need for additional resources where a project is integrated into ordinary operations. As discussed above, in the case of the Beenleigh Project minimum additional operational requirements included a dedicated project officer (for coordination and specialist service delivery) and funding for necessary resource material (such as crime prevention advice and property-marking kits and specialised equipment such as portable alarms).

Flexibility in identifying and employing non-traditional sources of support is a useful strategy. Initially it was intended that the VIPs would assist the project officer in delivering the Hot Dot Response. However, this proved difficult to manage given that volunteers do not work to set hours, and were not always able to commit to the times and dates on which visits to victimised residents were arranged. An alternative strategy was devised, which involved the VIPs in delivery of the Hot Spot Response. Given that the service delivery to individual residents associated with the hot spot component were not time-critical, visits in response to requests for assistance by local residents could then be arranged at a mutually agreeable time between VIP and resident. This strategy proved to be highly successful and a more effective use of the volunteer resources. The enthusiasm and efforts of the five volunteers assisting in the hot spot made a major contribution to the Project.

## Managerial support

The successful implementation of any police-based crime prevention project requires ongoing support from police management. In this instance, the QPS considered the Beenleigh Project to be an example of potential 'best practice' and the level of support and cooperation was very high at all levels. Senior management support ensured that general duties police actively participated in the Project, and that implementation issues could be resolved quickly and effectively.

## Operational police officer commitment and skills

The underlying philosophy of the Project was not well understood by Beenleigh police at the outset. The general sense at the time was that the differentiated approach represented nothing new in policing. Fortunately, the commencement of the trial project coincided with introduction of a Service-wide initiative to introduce POP, which underpins the differentiated policing approach, statewide. However, more was needed to integrate these techniques within current work practices.

## Community support

The Project enjoyed a relatively high profile and was well supported in the Beenleigh area. This was largely due to several articles in local newspapers, a successful display in the Beenleigh Marketplace Shopping Mall, and numerous presentations to local schools and community groups, as well as project-specific initiatives such as a poster contest sponsored by the Project for local schoolchildren. There were, however, some difficulties in mobilising residents in hot spots. For example, there was anecdotal evidence from the project team when conducting the door-to-door campaigns that many residents seemed reluctant to participate in the Project. A small number of residents said that their own home was adequately protected and they were not interested in doing anything else. A few stated that they were disillusioned about similar efforts in the past and preferred to watch from the sidelines. As a result, the project team had considerable difficulty in getting large numbers of residents to participate in the Project. During the first of three door-to-door campaigns, each resident was invited to attend a two-hour Burglary Prevention Workshop designed to provide them with burglary prevention information. Only 16 residents attended the first workshop with an even smaller number (8) attending the second workshop. There was a somewhat better turnout at a neighbourhood meet-and-greet event in the second hot spot when about 30 residents turned up to hear a presentation on burglary prevention.

In future projects of this nature, considerable thought needs to be given to finding ways of encouraging the participation of residents in burglary-reduction initiatives. Additionally, consideration should be given to developing strategies other than community mobilisation, such as increasing the involvement of government agencies, businesses and community organisations in helping to address problems in hot spots.

## Information systems

The main source of data used by the project team to identify a hot spot were electronic records extracted from the QPS crime reporting system, CRISP. Routine analysis of CRISP was hindered by two main factors. First, the CRISP system had no built-in analytical capacity and it did not interface well with other software applications. As a result, considerable time was spent extracting data from CRISP and 'massaging' it into suitable formats for use by other software projects, such as SPSS or Vertical Mapper. Second, the data were not quality assured and contained numerous minor errors and inconsistencies (for example, misspelling of street names, wrong codes assigned to incidents). Having to rectify these problems manually consumed substantial resources, which could have been used for other tasks. These problems caused considerable delay, as all of the data had to be read line-by-line to ensure that it was suitable for analysis and mapping.

These problems underscore the importance of reliable and readily accessible information systems to provide an accurate and easily accessible method of identifying the crime history of residential addresses and hot spots. In addition, the system needs to interface well with other applications and should have a simple information-retrieval function. Ideally, the system should also be capable of automatically generating frequency tables based on set parameters, such as the top 10 addresses or victims for any given category, and of producing a map showing the location of offences for a given area.

The difficulties of identifying repeat addresses from police records have commonly been identified in international crime prevention research (for example, Anderson et al. 1995; Farrell 1995; Hough & Tilley 1998) and can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of projects targeting repeat victimisation. The research literature has noted the propensity for police information systems to under-report repeat victimisation (for example, Bridgeman & Sampson 1994). However, the differences between repeat rates found in this project (derived from the CRISP incident reporting system) and the earlier CJC research using calls-for-service data (CJC 1996) demonstrates that there may also be a potential for over-identification of repeat incidents.

## Key findings of process evaluation

- After some relatively minor modifications to the Project's original design, most aspects of the project were implemented effectively in the trial area.
- The intended target population was reached, and responded to the intervention.
- There was a high rate of compliance by operational police with project procedures, due in part to the fact that the delivery of the project was mandatory and was integrated into the standard police response.
- One aspect of the Stopbreak Response (the distribution of 'advice cards') was under-used by police and may have diminished the preventive impact of the response for non-victims.
- The Project did not impose significant additional resource or time requirements on police participating in the Project.
- The project team had considerable difficulty in getting large numbers of residents living in hot spots to participate in the Project.

Based on the experience in Beenleigh, the following factors are likely to be critical to the successful implementation of projects of this type:

- appropriate resourcing
- adequate and ongoing training of officers involved in project service delivery including the opportunity to apply those principles and techniques learned in the field
- high-level ongoing managerial support
- effective strategies to engender officer and community commitment, and
- appropriate information management systems.

# CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter looks at the implications of the evaluation findings and discusses some of the lessons learned. The last part of the chapter highlights some of the main positive outcomes of the Project.

## Implications for future interventions

Some important lessons from the trial project that should be taken into account in designing future residential burglary-reduction projects are:

- repeat victimisation is preventable through targeted action by police
- the approach used in the trial project could be integrated into routine police operations
- focusing on repeat victimisation purely as a strategy for reducing *overall* break and enter rates may have limited utility, although addressing repeat victimisation is important for other reasons
- focusing on hot spots is both resource-intensive and difficult to implement, and may also be of limited utility as a strategy for reducing *overall* break and enter rates, and
- situational crime prevention measures focusing on the victim should be integrated with offender-focused strategies for maximum effect.

### Repeat victimisation is preventable

The outcome evaluation for the Project demonstrated that police can reduce the incidence and risk of repeat victimisation by enhancing how they respond to first-time victims and by providing a more extensive follow-up to repeat victims. The implementation issues and the critical success factors associated with this approach have been outlined in earlier sections of this report.

### Integration into routine police operations

The trial project was developed, established, implemented and evaluated as a discrete project with separate funding, and managed outside the immediate control of local police. However, the approach and the intervention strategies applied can be readily incorporated into routine police activity, under the direct control of local police management, in order to enhance general police service delivery. A project guide for introducing a repeat victim focus to the standard police response to break and enter has been developed as one of the project outputs and is provided in appendix B.

## Utility of focusing on repeat victimisation to reduce overall break and enter

There is a wide body of research, particularly from overseas, pointing to repeat victimisation as a major factor contributing to high break and enter rates. Until recently, this phenomena has largely been unexplored in the Australian context. Although the Project was successful in reducing the number of repeats and lowering the probability of revictimisation, it also highlighted several issues regarding the practicality of approaches aimed at reducing the overall level of offending by focusing on repeat victimisation.

After the Project commenced it became clear that the incidence of repeat offences was lower than pre-project estimates, which had been based on calls-for-service data rather than criminal offence data. This meant that there was considerably less scope than anticipated for the Project to 'make a difference' to the aggregate level of repeats.

Given that, in practice, it will never be possible to prevent all repeats or to ensure that there is no displacement, it is likely that repeat offences would need to constitute about 25 per cent or more of the total number of offences for a repeat victimisation focus to have a substantial impact on the overall level of offences. Initiatives aimed at reducing overall break and enter rates by reducing the incidence of repeat victimisation should therefore be deployed in areas where there is a high concentration of repeats. However, there are other legitimate reasons for focusing on the problem of repeat victimisation, such as to ensure that risk is more equally distributed in the community and to protect victims from the added trauma of repeat victimisation.

## Practical difficulty in using area-wide approaches for crime reduction

The trial project sought to identify, analyse and respond to hot spots using a flexible set of area-wide strategies targeted at reducing break and enter victimisation. The Project was associated with marked short-term reductions in the number of break and enters in hot spots. However, there were some practical difficulties encountered in using area-wide approaches to reduce residential break and enters, which need to be considered when deciding on whether to target hot spots in any future crime reduction project. For example, it was some months into the Project before a suitable location in which to apply hot spot interventions could be identified. In part this was because considerable resources had to be devoted to improving the quality of the address data, but the inherent volatility of the data also meant that it was difficult to isolate a stable hot spot. Moreover, the two hot spots that were ultimately identified accounted for only a small proportion of total break and enters in Beenleigh, which meant that even successful interventions in these areas would have had only a minimal impact on the overall break and enter rate for the Beenleigh Division.

The second issue was the difficulty experienced in mobilising residents in hot spots. hot spot analysis seeks to identify areas with disproportionately high levels of crime. These areas are often characterised by socioeconomic disadvantage and high degrees of mobility. For some residents, this limits their attachment to the community. In addition, hot spots are often likely to have a history of police attention and a high degree of cynicism among residents about any efforts by police directed at improving the situation. During the Beenleigh Project, several attempts were made to involve hot spot residents in the Project, but with limited success. Future area-based crime prevention initiatives would need to find more effective strategies to mobilise residents in hot spots, or consider employing alternative strategies that do not rely on community involvement; for example, invoking the assistance of other agencies, such as housing authorities, to have locks and security screens fitted.

The third issue was the resource-intensive nature of the intervention strategies. The Stopbreak Response made minimal demands on available police resources as it could readily be adopted as part of the standard first response. In contrast, the suite of area-based interventions required numerous home visits, letter drops, and community evening meetings. These responses were resource intensive and were only feasible in the Beenleigh setting because of the availability of community volunteers (VIPs).

The Beenleigh experience indicates that police are unlikely to embrace strategies that require a radical departure from their established routines for dealing with break and enter offences or that require intensive on-the-ground strategies. Therefore, the successful application of area-based intervention strategies is likely to need resources above and beyond those that are routinely available to police. In the case of Beenleigh, the inclusion of community volunteers not only reduced the demand on police resources, but also was a way of getting members of the community actively involved in the delivery of area-based crime prevention projects.

In summary, while the concept of 'hot spot' has considerable analytical utility, more work needs to be done on exploring the strengths and limitations of this concept as an operational tool.

## Restricted focus of the Project

The trial project relied, to a great extent, on delivering a range of situationally relevant crime prevention-based strategies, such as target-hardening (new locks etc), increasing the risk of detection (extra patrols, greater community surveillance etc) and reducing the rewards available to offenders (property marking). The Project did not have an offender focus nor did it address the market for stolen property. While this restricted focus could be justified for a trial project, particularly having regard to the limited time frame and resources available to the Project, general police service delivery needs to include these wider options.

Applying a differentiated approach in the fullest sense involves considering the range of policing options and strategies relevant to reducing crime. For example, it may be appropriate to focus effort and resources on offenders rather than locations in some circumstances (as shown in Stockdale & Gresham 1995, for example), or on disrupting the distribution of stolen goods as well as theft prevention in other instances, as has been demonstrated to be effective in other cases (for example, Sutton 1995).

A differential policing approach to the problem of break and enter also requires participation and commitment to the crime prevention approach from all police functional areas, which was not able to be achieved in this project. Involving investigators as well as operational police in developing and implementing solutions to issues identified through the scanning and analysis stages of the problem-solving process might have brought greater depth and wider options for intervention to the trial project, and, in particular, may have facilitated greater integration of detection and prevention efforts.

## Positive outcomes

While the Beenleigh Project may not have achieved all of its objectives, there nonetheless were several important positive outcomes. In particular, the Project:

- confirmed that, by changing the way in which police respond to break and enter offences, it was possible to reduce the risk of repeat victimisation
- provided useful information about the value and limitations of the concept of 'hot spots' as the basis for targeting policing efforts
- added to the research knowledge of the phenomenon of repeat victimisation, particularly in the Australian suburban context
- demonstrated that it was possible to improve the quality of police response to break and enter offences without imposing any significant additional resource or time requirements on operational police
- showed that victims were willing to act on police advice about simple steps that they could take to reduce the risk of repeat victimisation
- succeeded in getting police in the trial area to focus on prevention and the victim, rather than seeing their role as simply one of taking a criminal offence report, and
- identified ways in which volunteers in policing can work in conjunction with police to make a meaningful contribution to the prevention of crime in the community.

The lessons derived from the Project will also be valuable for designing and implementing future initiatives aimed at enhancing the police response to residential break and enter offences.

# APPENDIX A

## Project management arrangements

### Project management

The Project Management Group (PMG), which comprised representatives from the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, South Australian Attorney-General's Department, New South Wales Attorney-General's Department and the CJC had overall responsibility for the Beenleigh Project.

In addition to the PMG, a state-level Project Management Committee (PMC), comprising representatives from the CJC, QPS and Griffith University was established to set the strategic direction and to provide management oversight of the Project. The principal responsibilities of the PMC were to provide advice and guidance to the research team and oversee the drafting of various reports arising out of the Project.

### Project research team

The management of the Beenleigh Project at the local level was the responsibility of a small research team consisting of a manager, a project officer, a data analyst and a research officer.

- The project manager oversaw the design and implementation of the Project.
- The project officer, an experienced police officer, was primarily responsible for the operational aspects of the Project and spent much of his time dealing with victims or near neighbours of victims.
- The data analyst collected and analysed crime reports and other statistical data in support of the Project.
- The research officer administered the three follow-up surveys designed to gauge the impact of the Project.

The team was also assisted by five Beenleigh residents who were members of the Volunteers in Policing (VIP) project.

# APPENDIX B

## Hot spot analysis

### Selection and use of hot spots

Some geographical areas have aggregate levels of victimisation greater than the average of the surrounding area. The rationale of the Hot Spot Response is that if a small area has an increased victimisation rate then some characteristics of that area may be facilitating the commission of offences. These factors could include a local offender, a unique property feature common to many of the households, poor lighting, or the demographic profile of the area. The purpose of the Hot Spot Response was to determine whether there were any hot spots in Beenleigh, and if so, to deliver customised burglary-reduction initiatives to that area.

### Data sources for defining hot spots

Crime reports were the main source of data used to identify hot spots. These reports consist of electronic records extracted from the Crime Reporting Information System for Police (CRISP). The information contained in this database included the number and location of break and enters and related offences in the intervention and comparison areas, as well as associated address histories used to identify repeat victims.

### Methodology used for identifying hot spots

Two types of hot spots were generated based on different time windows: *annual* and *monthly*. The annual hot spots were used to identify areas with long-term levels of high burglary rates, whereas the monthly hot spots provided a short-term focus. By using both types, areas with persistent high crime rates were identified. In addition, monthly hot spots could be used to control for seasonal trends within the data by analysing the patterns of monthly hot spots towards the end of the annual time period.

Two pieces of software were used primarily to generate the hot spots: MapInfo and STAC (Spatial and Temporal Analysis of Crime) applications. MapInfo is a well-known, relatively powerful, user-friendly computer-mapping package. STAC is special-purpose software that takes the geographic coordinates of incidents, generated in MapInfo, and calculates the boundary around the densest concentration of incidents.

STAC has two parameters, which are determined by the user: the *search radius* and the *minimum number of incidents*. The search radius influences the size of the hot spot and the minimum number of incidents controls the number of hot spots that are identified. In previous research (CJC 1997) the most suitable search radius was found to be 150 metres. The minimum number of incidents used to identify a hot spot was determined by a series of STAC analyses.

The analysis showed there to be a natural break in the distribution of monthly hot spots, using four incidents as the minimum cut-off value. We found that by using three incidents per month an excessive number of hot spots were identified. Conversely, by using the value of five, only a very few hot spots were identified in any given month. Therefore, it was decided that a minimum of five incidents per month would identify the hot spots of primary interest and highest concentrations of crime. For the corresponding annual hot spot, a threshold of 60 incidents was used (five incidents x 12 months).

The analysis consisted of four steps:

Step 1 - analysing a defined data set (CRISP reports) to identify areas with a high annual rate of break and enter offences.

Step 2 - analysing the identical data set to identify areas with a high monthly rate of break and enter offences.

Step 3 - combining the results of steps 1 and 2 and mapping them to produce a graphical representation identifying a particular area showing a persistent pattern of high burglary risk.

Step 4 - completing an area profile report containing socio-demographic indicators, crime history and an environmental audit (i.e. parks and public spaces).

## Characteristics of Hot Spot 1

### PHYSICAL LOCATION OF HOT SPOT 1

This hot spot was located to the north-east of the Pacific Highway, in the suburb of Eagleby. It was identified in February 1999 and the interventions applied in April, May and June. The interventions included two letter-drops, door-knock visitation, assistance with property marking and a two-hour burglary prevention workshop run by the police.

The hot spot contained 295 property parcels, one park, several vacant lots and a number of pedestrian alleyways.

All of the properties were residential and virtually all were detached dwellings. There were no units or townhouses in the hot spot, although a townhouse estate lies just outside the area.

Figure 9 shows a map of the area.

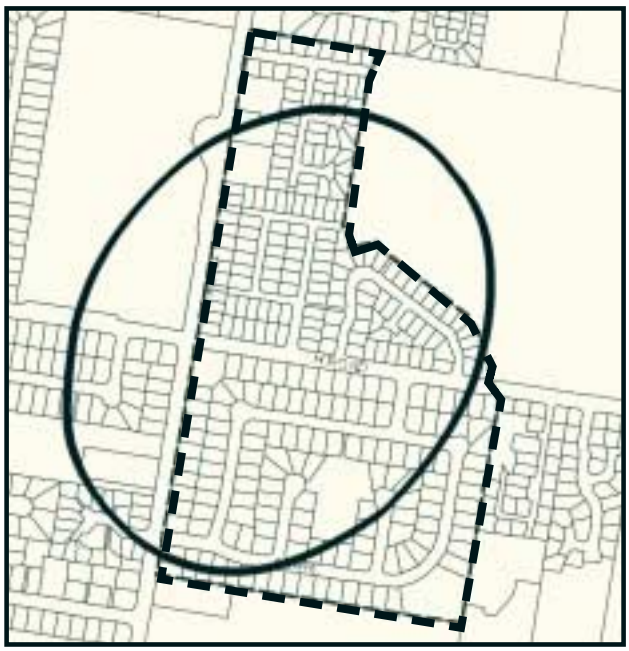


FIGURE 9 – Map of Hot Spot 1

The intervention area was 0.22 square kilometres. The solid dark line (oval shape) is the hot spot boundary determined by STAC. The dashed line is the intervention area that was the focus of the Hot Spot Response.

### VICTIMISATION PROFILE FOR HOT SPOT 1

For the period March 1998 to February 1999 a total of 72 incidents (burglary and related offences) occurred in the intervention area (see table 16 below).

TABLE 16 - Repeat burglary and related offences for Hot Spot 1 using the street address, 1 March 1998-28 February 1999

| Times victimised | Number of properties | Percentage of properties | Percentage of victimised properties | Number of crimes | Percentage of crimes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 244 | 82.7 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1 | 40 | 13.6 | 78.4 | 40 | 55.6 |
| 2 | 8 | 2.7 | 15.7 | 16 | 22.2 |
| 3 | 2 | 0.7 | 3.9 | 6 | 8.3 |
| 10 | 1 | 0.4 | 2.0 | 10 | 13.9 |
| Total | 295 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 72 | 100.0 |

*Note: Related offences were defined as other property offences occurring at a residential address (e.g. steal from a dwelling, wilful damage and theft of a motor car).*

*Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100 per cent.*

There were approximately 295 properties in the intervention area. The results from table 16 can be used to calculate the incidence, prevalence and concentration of crime in Hot Spot 1. The crime incidence of Hot Spot 1 was 24.4 crimes per 100 properties (72 crimes/295 properties) x 100. The prevalence of victimisation was 17.3 victimised addresses per 100 properties (51 victimised addresses/295 total addresses) x 100, and the concentration was 1.4 crimes per victimised property (72 crimes/51 victimised addresses). Comparable figures for the Beenleigh Police Division for the same period were an incidence of 8.4 crimes per 100 properties, prevalence of 6.1 victimised addresses for every 100 properties and a concentration of 1.4 crimes per victimised property (using similar formulae as above). In effect, this means that the reason the hot spot had more crime than other areas of the division was due to increased prevalence and not concentration.

Of the 72 burglary and related offences that occurred in the hot spot, only 10 (14 per cent) were cleared (or solved) by police. Those incidents identified only six offenders, three of whom lived in the hot spot at the time of the offence, one who lived nearby, and another who lived in the same suburb at the time. It is likely that the offenders who operated inside the intervention area lived inside the hot spot as well, but the proportion reported here is too small to draw definite conclusions.

An analysis of burglary times was conducted within the hot spot and it was found that a substantial proportion of incidents occurred between 4.00 p.m. and 10.00 p.m. Within this group, a number of incidents had a very short interval between start and finish times of the burglary provided by the resident at the time of reporting. Start and finish times with short intervals are indicative of offenders that either observed the occupant leave their premises or were sufficiently familiar with their habits and routines to be able to act in a short time. These observations all imply offenders who lived close to their victims and therefore in the hot spot.

## SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS OF HOT SPOT 1

To develop a profile of the hot spot, ABS Census data were used to compare the area with the surrounding communities. Four levels of aggregation were used: *the hot spot area, the suburb of Eagleby, the Beenleigh Police Division* and *the State of Queensland*. With the exception of the hot spot, all levels of aggregation conformed to census boundaries so the 1996 census can be used accurately for purpose developing a demographic profile of the area (see table 17).

Table 17 indicates that the hot spot and the suburb of Eagleby had relatively more unemployment, unoccupied dwellings, households earning less than $500 a week, greater levels of one parent families, less home ownership and lower levels of registered marriages than recorded in the Census at the divisional and state levels.

TABLE 17 - Socio-demographic variables from 1996 Census for Hot Spot 1, Suburb, Division and State

| Measure | Hot Spot 1(1) | Eagleby | Beenleigh Police Division | Queensland |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Population | 1,081 | 7,895 | 40,675 | 3,368,850 |
| Number of dwellings | 460 | 3,074 | 15,548 | 1,325,554 |
| % unemployment | 24.6 | 21.6 | 13.0 | 9.6 |
| % Housing Commission properties | 12.3 | 32.1 | 19.5 | 13.0 |
| % dwellings unoccupied | 15.0 | 11.2 | 8.7 | 9.2 |
| % one-parent families | 22.7 | 24.1 | 15.6 | 14.0 |
| % households earning <$500/wk | 65.0 | 65.0 | 55.6 | 46.5 |
| % own/buying dwelling | 47.3 | 47.6 | 61.8 | 62.9 |
| % couple families with children | 44.0 | 49.3 | 51.2 | 48.3 |
| % married | 20.0 | 22.0 | 27.0 | 26.0 |

*Source: ABS, CDATA96*

*Note: (1) All data are approximate.*

The measures listed in table 17 were selected for their theoretical links to crime and/or burglary levels. For example, the proportion of renters in an area may influence factors such as level of guardianship, neighbourhood cohesion and external security. With surprising consistency, the hot spot had values that were identified as increasing the risk of victimisation. For those measures that are linked to crime, such as unemployment, public housing, unoccupied dwellings, single-parent families and low income, the hot spot tended to have the highest value in comparison to the other areas.

## HOT SPOT 1 COMPARISON AREA

A method similar to that employed by Weisburd and Green (1995) was used to search for evidence of displacement. To determine whether or not the decrease in burglaries in the hot spot was accompanied by an increase in break and enters outside of the hot spot boundaries, a catchment area of 0.7 square kilometres surrounding the hot spot was defined.

## Characteristics of Hot Spot 2

### PHYSICAL LOCATION OF HOT SPOT 2

Hot Spot 2 was located to the west of the Pacific Highway, in the northern part of Beenleigh. There were few non-residential properties within the hot spot, which had a mix of townhouses, units and detached dwellings. The hot spot was identified in September 1999 and the interventions applied in September and October 1999.

Hot Spot 2 contained 150 property parcels, but due to the unusually high number of townhouses, there were more than 280 dwellings. There was a mix of townhouses, units and detached dwellings with few non-residential properties. There was also a church within the area. Within walking distance were several possible attractors of crime, namely a BMX track, a large park with a lagoon, a collection of shops and a football ground. Figure 10 shows a map of the area.

The solid dark line is the hot spot boundary determined by STAC and the dashed line is the intervention area that was the focus of the Hot Spot Response.

FIGURE 10 – Map of Hot Spot 2

### VICTIMISATION PROFILE FOR HOT SPOT 2

Hot Spot 2 differed from Hot Spot 1 as it contained a much higher proportion of multi-dwelling properties. To analyse victimisation composition in Hot Spot 2, two separate analyses were conducted, one using the most precise address available and another using the street address.

TABLE 18 - Repeat burglary and related offences for Hot Spot 2 using the most precise address: 1 August 1998-31 July 1999

| Times victimised | Number of properties | Percentage of properties | Percentage of victimised properties | Number of crimes | Percentage of crimes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 243 | 85.6 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1 | 32 | 11.3 | 78.0 | 32 | 61.5 |
| 2 | 8 | 2.8 | 19.5 | 16 | 30.8 |
| 3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 4 | 1 | 0.4 | 2.4 | 4 | 7.7 |
| Total | 284 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 52 | 100.0 |

*Note: See table 15 for a definition of 'related offence'. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100 per cent.*

Table 18 shows the results of the first repeat-victimisation analysis, where unit and flat numbers were included for multi-dwelling addresses. Table 19 shows the results of a second repeat-victimisation analysis where the street address was used. This condition is less restrictive than using the unit numbers because any incidents in the same structure are considered repeats, irrespective of the victim.

TABLE 19 - Repeat burglary and related offences for Hot Spot 2 using the street address: 1 August 1998-31 July 1999

| Times victimised | Number of properties | Percentage of properties | Percentage of victimised properties | Number of crimes | Percentage of crimes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 129 | 84.8 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1 | 14 | 9.2 | 60.9 | 14 | 26.9 |
| 2 | 2 | 1.3 | 8.7 | 4 | 7.7 |
| 3 | 2 | 1.3 | 8.7 | 6 | 11.5 |
| 4 | 4 | 2.6 | 17.4 | 16 | 30.8 |
| 12 | 1 | 0.7 | 4.3 | 12 | 23.1 |
| Total | 151 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 52 | 100.0 |

*Note: See table 15 for a definition of 'related offence'. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100 per cent.*

Using tables 18 and 19, the incidence, prevalence and concentration can be calculated for Hot Spot 2 using both methods of measuring repeats. These were compared with the divisional incidence, prevalence and concentration for the corresponding time period (see table 20).

TABLE 20 - Victimisation composition Hot Spot 2 and Division

| | Prevalence (victimised addresses per 100 addresses) | Concentration (crimes per victimised address) | Incidence (crimes per 100 addresses) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hot Spot 2 using precise address | 14.40 | 1.27 | 18.31 |
| Hot Spot 2 using street address | 15.20 | 2.23 | 34.44 |
| Division | 8.38 | 1.15 | 9.62 |

Table 20 indicates that both prevalence and concentration were higher within Hot Spot 2 compared to Beenleigh Division, regardless of how repeats are measured. The impact of changing the unit of analysis from individual dwellings (the most precise) to street address increased the concentration but did not appear to effect the prevalence greatly.

## SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS HOT SPOT 2

Table 21 shows that the hot spot and the suburb of Beenleigh had relatively more unemployment, unoccupied dwellings, households earning less than $500 a week, more people renting, greater levels of one-parent families, less home ownership and lower levels of registered marriages than recorded in the Census at the divisional and state levels.

TABLE 21 - Socio-demographic variables from the 1996 Census Hot Spot 2, Suburb, Division and State

| Measure | Hot Spot 2(1) | Beenleigh | Beenleigh Police Division | Queensland |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Population | 657 | 7,428 | 40,675 | 3,368,850 |
| Number of dwellings | 361 | 3,204 | 15,548 | 1,325,554 |
| Unemployment | 15.0 | 17.1 | 13.0 | 9.6 |
| % Housing Commission properties | 1.0 | 10.9 | 19.5 | 13.0 |
| % dwellings unoccupied | 15.2 | 9.4 | 8.7 | 9.2 |
| % 1 parent families | 24.9 | 20.5 | 15.6 | 14 |
| % Households earning <$500/wk | 60.6 | 73.4 | 55.6 | 46.5 |
| %own/buying dwelling | 34.4 | 45.2 | 61.8 | 62.9 |
| % couple families with children | 36.1 | 43.5 | 51.2 | 48.3 |
| % married | 19.8 | 23.1 | 27.0 | 26.0 |

*Source: ABS, CDATA96*

*Note: (1) All data are approximate.*

As was the case with Hot Spot 1, Hot Spot 2 had values that have been identified as increasing the risk of victimisation (e.g. high unemployment, unoccupied dwellings, single-parent families and low income).

## HOT SPOT 2 COMPARISON AREA

Evidence for displacement was examined in a similar manner to the first hot spot using a catchment area that surrounded the hot spot and had an area of 0.3 square kilometres.

# APPENDIX C

## Surveys

Two surveys were administered during the Project: the repeat-victim survey and the victim follow-up survey.

### The repeat-victim survey

This survey was designed to collect information about the environmental, structural and security features of a repeat victim's residence, circumstances relevant to the current victimisation (e.g. occupancy, point of entry) and any previous experience with victimisation. The survey was computer-based and administered by the project officer during a scheduled interview. Over the course of the Project, 68 repeat victim interviews were conducted.

### The victim follow-up survey

This survey was designed for use in the intervention and comparison areas. The primary aim of the survey was to enable comparisons to be made of the different approaches to break and enter and any actions taken following victimisation.

Surveying in the project site and the contiguous comparison area (Control 1) covered a 10-month period commencing in 1 January 1999 and ending on 31 October 1999. Due to resource constraints, surveying in the non-contiguous comparison area (Control 2) only covered a four-month period between 1 May 1999 to 31 October 1999.

The victim follow-up surveys were timed to be administered two months after victimisation. For example, a survey interview conducted in January 1999 referred to a break and enter that occurred (or was reported) in November 1998.

Table 22 shows the number of follow-up surveys completed at the end of the project for Beenleigh and the comparison areas.

TABLE 22 - Follow-up survey completion rate by month of victimisation: Beenleigh and comparison areas (1 November 1998-31 August 1999)

| Month | Number of victims | | | Number of surveys Completed | | | % of surveys completed | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Beenleigh | Control 1 | Control 2 | Beenleigh | Control 1 | Control 2 | Beenleigh | Control 1 | Control 2 |
| Nov | 56 | 71 | | 43 | 52 | | 77 | 73 | |
| Dec | 51 | 43 | | 38 | 35 | | 75 | 81 | |
| Jan | 48 | 50 | | 38 | 35 | | 79 | 70 | |
| Feb | 61 | 35 | | 43 | 24 | | 70 | 69 | |
| Mar | 36 | 51 | | 24 | 38 | | 67 | 75 | |
| Apr | 25 | 63 | | 18 | 51 | | 72 | 81 | |
| May | 33 | 70 | 97 | 29 | 54 | 66 | 88 | 77 | 68 |
| June | 53 | 64 | 48 | 38 | 47 | 39 | 72 | 73 | 81 |
| July | 98 | 96 | 77 | 73 | 69 | 56 | 74 | 72 | 73 |
| Aug | 38 | 74 | 91 | 29 | 48 | 65 | 76 | 65 | 71 |
| Total | 499 | 617 | 313 | 373 | 453 | 226 | 75 | 75 | 73 |

*Source: Follow-up survey database. Sample taken 1 January 1999-31 October 1999.*

## Copies of survey instruments can be found at the following Internet sites:

Website: www.cjc.qld.gov.au

Website: www.crimeprevention.gov.au

The survey instruments are also contained separately in a volume entitled *Lightning Strikes Twice: Preventing Repeat Home Burglary: Survey Instruments* which is available upon request from:

Crime Prevention Branch, Attorney-General's Department

Telephone: (02) 6250 6711

Fax: (02) 6273 0913

Queensland Criminal Justice Commission

Telephone: (07) 3360 6060

Fax: (07) 3360 6333

# APPENDIX D

## Implementing a Repeat Burglary Reduction Strategy: A Project Guide

A strong focus of the Beenleigh Project was on reducing the incidence of repeat victimisation. This Project Guide provides advice on how the issue of repeat victimisation can be addressed within the context of a general police response to break and enter. For reasons discussed in this report, enhancing the police response to repeat victimisation may not have a large impact on the overall break and enter rate (depending in large part on the level of repeats in the area) but it will provide a better quality of police service, particularly to those members of the community who have experienced the trauma of repeat victimisation.

This guide been developed as a resource for police and is intended to provide some good practice suggestions based on experience with the Beenleigh Project. The emphasis is on identifying strategies that address repeat victimisation within routine police operations, rather than on establishing separately resourced and specialised projects to address the issue.

The guide acknowledges the practicalities of operational policing. While it details particular approaches for good practice, it also recognises that available resources may limit the extent to which the 'ideal' solution can be applied.

## Overall approach

There are five key steps in introducing a repeat victimisation focus. These are:

- establishing processes for identifying repeat victims
- determining the approach to be used and the intervention parameters
- developing a suite of effective strategies for preventing revictimisation
- implementing a differentiated policing response, which provides for the application of a range of situationally-relevant strategies, and
- reviewing and evaluating progress to enhance the approach.

# Identifying repeat victimisation

## Defining repeat victimisation

Repeat victimisation is generally defined as occurring when the same victim or address experiences more than one incident over a specified period of time. A repeat break and enter is therefore one where that victim or location has suffered one or more break and enter incidents within a designated time period prior to the one that has initiated the intervention response.

The Beenleigh Project initially used a broader definition of repeat victimisation that took into account related property offences such as stealing and motor-vehicle theft where these offences occurred at the same premises as the break and enter victimisation. This was done for both theoretical reasons (given the interrelationship of residential break and enter and related property offences) and practical reasons (because of concerns about the accuracy of offence classifications used by police officers reporting the incident). However, project experience showed that a simple definition of repeats limited to break and enter offences would be adequate for operational purposes.

The other issue to consider in defining repeat victimisation is the time frame that should apply. The Beenleigh Project classified an offence as a 'repeat' if the same type of offence occurred within the preceding 12 months. This has been the period used in most studies, although it may be possible to justify shorter or longer periods to suit particular circumstances.

## Establishing appropriate information systems

Many police crime-recording systems do not readily identify repeat victims. The degree of consistency and accuracy in recording addresses affects the capacity to electronically match locations experiencing repeat incidents from computerised records (for example, officers lodging the crime report may record the same location by number and street name, or as 'the corner of X and Y street', or other description, or may spell the street name differently, or differ in their use of lower and upper case).

Suggested action:

- review existing computerised police record systems to determine whether prior victimisation per location is already an identified field (this will generally not be the case in most systems)
- assess the capacity of the existing system to accurately match addresses experiencing multiple incidents; in particular, the system's accuracy in matching the same address where details have been recorded differently (this is important in order to minimise the under recording of repeat victimisation: see Bridgeman & Hobbs 1997)
- where existing systems are inadequate, consideration will need to be given to adding a manual filtering/vetting process, or possibly establishing a separate system specifically to identify repeat victim addresses
- error rates can be reduced by training officers in accurate address recording practices and/or introducing procedures in the electronic databases capturing the information that supports accurate and consistent address recording (such as 'look-up' tables).

Ideally, information systems should:

- have the capacity to readily and accurately identify current and historical address-level data
- contain at least details on: address, prior incident history by offence type, and date of occurrence of previous incidents
- be capable of interfacing with other applications, such as mapping projects to identify and monitor hot spots
- include a simple information retrieval function so that key information can be extracted without requiring expert specialist or technical knowledge
- be able to generate management information and performance indicators that allow monitoring and evaluation of performance in preventing repeat victimisation.

## A pragmatic alternative

Inadequate information systems reduce the accuracy of data about repeat victimisation, but this should not be seen as a barrier to adopting a repeat-victimisation focus. If resources are not available to enhance these systems, then an alternative approach is for police officers attending break and enter calls simply to ask victims whether they have experienced a previous break and enter within a specified prior time period.

If self-report is the method used to identify repeats, it is important to:

- establish clear guidelines from the start as to what constitutes a repeat for intervention purposes, so that accurate and consistent decisions can be made as to whether the incident described triggers a differentiated response
- establish and promulgate the specific procedures for acting on the information provided by the victim so that identification of a repeat incident triggers an appropriate intervention response in every case
- have a clear policy on whether these 'new offences' need to be recorded.

## Determining the overall approach

### Selecting an appropriate target area

An important threshold issue to consider is where to target any repeat victimisation strategy that might be developed. There should be no bar to implementing something like a Stopbreak Response on an organisation-wide basis, but many organisations are likely to opt, at least initially, for a more focused approach.

Broadly speaking, there are two justifications for giving priority to preventing repeat victimisation. The first is to protect individual victims from the heightened trauma and economic loss that often results from being revictimised; the second is to bring about a reduction in the overall level of break and enter offences in the targeted area. If the primary aim is to reduce the risk to individual victims, it matters less what the volume of repeats is in a particular area. On the other hand, if a repeat victimisation focus is intended to reduce overall offending levels, the rate of repeats will need to be quite high for the project to have any discernible aggregate impact. For example, to clearly demonstrate an impact on overall crime of even 10 per cent with a repeat rate of 20 per cent requires that at least half of all repeats be prevented by the project without any displacement to other residents.

### Selecting an appropriate service-delivery approach

Key decisions that need to be made about the broad approach to be taken include determining:

- who is most effectively placed to deliver the various intervention components (first-response police officers, police officers on a follow-up visit, other police staff, volunteers etc.)
- whether to grade the level of response according to the extent of revictimisation; recognising that the risk of revictimisation escalates with each subsequent incident
- whether the intervention is to be limited to the actual victim or to near neighbours as well
- the relative emphasis to be given to short-term measures (e.g. installation of temporary alarms) and longer term preventive initiatives such as target-hardening
- the extent to which other non-police stakeholders are to be involved in both the development and the delivery of intervention components.

### Principles for service delivery

A UK project guide addressing repeat victimisation (Bridgeman & Hobbs 1997) has identified several key principles for a policing response which are equally appropriate in the Australian context. They are:

- the aim is to prevent repeats, so intervention should start after the first crime, not the first repeat (early intervention has been shown to be important)
- the prevention and detection components of policing need to work together in addressing repeat victimisation
- keep measures as simple as possible; they are more likely to work
- any action has to occur quickly because of the high risk period immediately after the incident (Australian and international research shows the majority of repeat break and enter incidents occur within two months of the initial offence, and many of these within the first week; crime prevention measures should be in place within 24 hours for maximum effect)
- preventing repeat victimisation is about more than target-hardening; the focus needs to be on analysing the likely causes of the problem and designing appropriate interventions targeting those causes
- tackling repeat victimisation involves changing the way police work is organised and should be built into existing structures and systems for maximum effectiveness.

### Setting up structures and coordination mechanisms

Coordination mechanisms are critical to both establishing and operating effective strategies for responding to repeat break and enter, especially in integrating detection and prevention efforts. Key internal groups to coordinate in providing a differentiated police response to break and enter include general duties officers, investigating officers, intelligence analysts, and project staff.

A comprehensive approach to break and enter crime prevention may warrant solutions that are outside the scope of policing services, and therefore involve other agencies, such as:

- the relevant public housing authority (for example, to address target hardening responses in public rental housing)
- local government (for example, in addressing vulnerable crime spots by adding street lighting, removing barriers to visibility such as bushes and trees where appropriate)
- insurance companies (for example, to provide incentives to residents for taking target-hardening action in repeatedly victimised dwellings).

Bridgeman and Hobbs (1997) have stressed that multi-agency initiatives should:

- build on existing partnerships
- involve relevant organisations early in the planning process
- recognise the different agency roles and priorities but acknowledge the common goal
- develop partnerships at both the strategic and day-to-day operational level
- establish clear, smooth communications for rapid and accurate exchange of victim information
- demonstrate potential benefits as an incentive for other agencies to participate (for example, financial savings can be a powerful incentive for an agency to take action).

Where volunteers are involved in the delivery of elements of the repeat victimisation focus, appropriate training and support structures are critical when considering service delivery strategies that rely on volunteer input. The Beenleigh Project demonstrated the importance of:

- the duties of volunteers allowing maximum flexibility in the time demands placed on them
- having clear guidelines at the outset as to what volunteers should and should not do, supported by ongoing monitoring and feedback to ensure a consistent and appropriate quality of response
- standardising intervention elements to be delivered by volunteers so that there can be quality assurance of the advice given to victims by volunteers
- developing a comprehensive package and script for volunteers to follow so that there is a standardised response provided which can be replicated
- ensuring appropriate training in the deployment of the interventions for which volunteers are responsible
- providing appropriate orientation to the intervention strategy as a whole and what it is trying to achieve, so that volunteers have a context to work within
- giving volunteers confidence and providing appropriate feedback.

# Developing a suite of effective strategies

## Identifying appropriate responses to break and enter

It is useful to have a suite of responses identified and developed before introducing a repeat victimisation focus. Potential strategies should include not only the more traditional prevention responses such as 'target-hardening', Neighbourhood Watch schemes, or additional police patrol activity, but also other responses that may suit the circumstances of the area and its crime patterns. The theoretical literature on crime prevention provides a useful conceptual framework for classifying types of prevention approaches. An appropriate suite of measures would include strategies in each of these categories:

- *strategies to increase the effort required by offenders to commit the crime*, for example: encouraging householders to enhance locks and bolts at the point of entry to prevent revictimisation using the same modus operandi; encouraging householders to also improve security at other commonly identified vulnerable access points such as sliding patio doors or bathroom windows
- *strategies to increase the risk of offenders being detected when committing a crime*, for example: loan of a portable burglar alarm where there is a heightened risk of immediate revictimisation; advising immediate neighbours to be more vigilant of their own and their neighbour's properties because of the risk of offenders returning; encouraging councils to improve street lighting in relevant locations to allow better visibility for 'natural surveillance'; random police patrols during periods of heightened risk
- *strategies that reduce the rewards to the offender in committing a crime*, for example: facilitating property marking so that offenders are less able to sell the stolen goods legally; encouraging householders to secure expensive items off the property when they will be away for some period of time; making it more difficult for offenders to dispose of goods through legal but suspect distribution channels (such as some second hand goods markets) through heightened police scrutiny of the activities of such dealers to ensure they comply with legal requirements
- *enforcement strategies focusing on offenders*, such as targeting known high-volume offenders, enhancing investigative responses.

### Preparing crime prevention material

The same principles apply to developing repeat victimisation material as for any crime prevention or community development project. The material needs to be simple to understand, clearly written, and, given that highly levels of repeat victimisation have been identified among disadvantaged groups, should also be culturally appropriate and sensitive and ideally be available in different languages.

## Monitoring and evaluation

Ongoing monitoring (to determine whether implementation is proceeding as planned and to resolve problem issues or fine-tune aspects to improve implementation) and evaluation (to assess the extent to which the intervention strategy has achieved its objectives and how it might be improved in the future) need to be incorporated into any project. This requires:

- establishing effective monitoring processes for early identification of any implementation difficulties
- speedy and appropriate action to resolve identified issues (for example, officer non-compliance in the Beenleigh Project)
- designing appropriate performance indicators at the development stage rather than relying on post-hoc evaluations.

## Other implementation issues

### Resource issues

Effective repeat victimisation measures do not necessarily involve high levels of additional resources, or even impose significant demands on existing resources. In the Beenleigh Project, for example, patrol officers were able to provide the first stage of the crime prevention project without any additional time above the standard police response. Minimum additional resource requirements for introducing a repeat victimisation focus include:

- crime prevention resource material to distribute to victims (and where appropriate, the wider local community, as in hot spot prevention strategies)
- relevant material such as security surveys or similar forms needed for security audits
- training for those officers delivering the project components.

If necessary, some of these resources could be obtained from external sources such as through sponsorship (e.g. of printed resource material) or through use of volunteers (e.g. the Volunteers in Policing Scheme operating in Queensland).

### Overcoming organisational resistance

Suggested action

- Establish and market a 'business case' to key stakeholders on why it is important to address repeat victimisation (key issues include its prevalence, its contribution to high crime rates, its disproportionate impact on a small number of victims, and its preventability through targeted and relatively low cost initiatives).
- Make efforts to ensure operational police officers involved in service delivery of the prevention project are as well briefed about the impacts of repeat victimisation and the benefits of addressing it as are senior management.
- Address concerns about potential resource impacts and effects on other operational policing priorities, preferably with locally relevant information, as early as possible during the project. For example, a quick analysis of management information on the average time taken for police to attend calls may show negligible differences between the project's operation and the period immediately before its introduction, as was found in the Beenleigh Project.
- Seek ongoing senior management commitment and support. In the Beenleigh Project police senior management clearly articulated their expectations about the project and emphasised that the project components must be delivered in full to the standard expected, even if this meant impacts in other areas.
- Establish local management support and commitment by setting up processes for monitoring and addressing non-compliance by operational officers.

### Engendering community commitment

Engendering community interest in participating in crime prevention strategies is critical for promoting an effective partnership approach to crime prevention, particularly for area-based initiatives such as hot spot interventions. Methods for encouraging community commitment include:

- public awareness raising strategies using a variety of avenues targeted at reaching the local community (for example, shopping-centre displays, presentations to schools and community groups, as well as local media articles)
- involving the community directly in the development and design of elements of the intervention strategy (for example, a poster contest or logo competition for local schoolchildren on the theme of crime prevention sponsored by a local business group, with winning entries incorporated in the crime prevention materials distributed to the community)
- selecting a range of different avenues for mobilising community involvement.

## Training service deliverers

Adequate and appropriate training of officers is critical. Consideration should be given to:

- structuring training time up-front to ensure adequate blocks of time are available to fully train officers in the requirements of the intervention strategy and its delivery (in the Beenleigh experience, operational demands meant that the initially designed full one-day training project had to be reduced to two hours only)
- involving operational officers in design of the package to take advantage of their insights for both content and delivery of training
- conducting periodic refresher courses, given the rapid staff turnover in many police locations
- providing continuing feedback and quality assurance of service delivery, including accompanying officers at regular intervals to victim addresses
- ongoing monitoring of submitted forms and other materials completed by officers to ensure quality control, with remedial action where necessary.

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