Community justice crime prevention
Theory and practice
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We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people, the traditional owners of the land that the City of Yarra and the Neighbourhood Justice Centre rests upon.

In this document the term ‘Aboriginal’ refers to both Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people either in Victoria or in other parts of Australia unless otherwise stated e.g. Clan name/s or generic name i.e. Koori (VIC, NSW), Murri (QLD), Palawa (TAS), Nunga (SA), Noongar (WA), Torres Strait Islander.

The term ‘Koori’ used in this document respectfully refers to the local Aboriginal community in Victoria. Within the Koori community, the NJC acknowledges there are also other Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons residing, working and gathering in the local area.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Written as a guide for local councils, courts, criminal justice agencies, government, and community organisations, this publication explores how the Neighbourhood Justice Centre’s Crime Prevention and Community Justice team improves community life through improving public safety.

Since the Neighbourhood Justice Centre (NJC) opened its doors in 2007, crime rates have fallen 31%1 in the City of Yarra.

While crime rates are generally down across Melbourne, Yarra’s rates have fallen significantly further than comparable inner urban areas. In areas with comparable levels of disadvantage crime increased upwards of 10%2.

No doubt gentrification plays its part, but the Australian Institute of Criminology draws a correlation between the introduction of the NJC and Yarra’s significantly better report card3.

The NJC is Australia’s only community justice centre. It delivers justice services at a series of points in the continuum of community life, from primary prevention programs to court-based intervention and into the post-court sphere. Its central tenet is the decentralisation of authority in ways that build the capacity of citizens to take action in relation to community-wide safety and individual rehabilitation.

The centre’s sole magistrate hears criminal, civil and Children’s Court matters. Working in partnership with the court is the Client Services team, comprising around 17 independent welfare agencies. The agencies operate as an embedded unit, rather than as independent operators who happen to be colocated.

Is the NJC advocating that courts have the capacity to improve community life through community-oriented crime prevention? Yes, and it also advocates that all organisations central to civic life can do so.

From 2007 to 2012, community crime prevention at the NJC was managed by the Crime and Violence Prevention Unit (CVPU) within the Department of Justice.

The CVPU focused on reducing offender rates in the 15-29 age bracket, reducing property crime, and building the capacity of local communities to implement local crime solutions. Its solutions were practical and targeted, and proved that the first step towards community safety is to bring together people who have the spirit for change.

In 2012, the NJC took carriage of community crime prevention and established its Crime Prevention team (today called the Crime Prevention and Community Justice team).

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1 Ross, S. Evaluating neighbourhood justice: Measuring and attribution outcomes for a community justice program. Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice No.499, pg3
2 Ibid pg3
3 Ibid pg3
Underpinned by the principles of the community justice model, the team addresses the underlying causes of harm and offending by drawing on the strengths of the established cornerstones of the community — local councils, local government agencies, local police, local business organisations, local welfare networks, local schools.

Two excellent illustrations of this approach are the Communities that Care project and the Collingwood All Stars Soccer Program. The former is an alliance of Yarra’s services that was forged to develop early prevention policies and frameworks to prevent young people from harm and wrongful behaviour. The latter is a football club for at-risk youth that NJC’s Registrar team runs with Victoria Police. These initiatives do not rely on any organisation having a dedicated crime prevention team to work; rather, they simply rely on cornerstone organisations working together to run practical intervention initiatives.

These are but two illustrations that prove we all have the agility and flexibility to exploit our organisational strengths, networks and expertise. Moreover, organisations often share similar processes and share many of the same goals—civic improvement, harm reduction, safer communities.

The principles discussed herein are universal: place matters, relationships matter, problems are solved, use strengths not weaknesses, work collaboratively and, as required, lead by example.

As the voices of the Crime Prevention and Community Justice team’s many collaborators explain, community crime prevention works best when professional bodies working at a local level apply their skills collaboratively.

And this, advocates the NJC, is how experts develop a better ear for, and give a helping hand towards, improving community life.
CRIME PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY JUSTICE

UNPACKING THE THEORY
CRIME PREVENTION

Both the theory and practice of crime prevention refer to initiatives undertaken by communities, non-government organisations, businesses and all tiers of government that target the social and environmental factors that lead to or exacerbate crime, disorder and victimisation.

Traditionally, crime prevention initiatives were seen as the province of the police and justice system. However, over the past 20 years a new understanding has emerged that crime prevention is a collective responsibility.

Research shows that taking a collective and proactive approach to preventing crime is more effective, cost-efficient and beneficial. Collective approaches involve all levels of government, community agencies and services, police and the justice system.

Collective approaches to crime prevention aim to be sustainable, accountable, long-term, and based on sound evidence-based practices.

Crime prevention can be approached in several ways, differing in terms of the:

• focus of the intervention
• types of activities delivered
• theories behind how activities are designed to bring about the desired results
• mechanisms applied.

The major fields of crime prevention approaches are:

• environmental crime prevention
• social crime prevention.

The type of approach taken depends on a range of environmental factors, the people involved and conditions at play.

ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME PREVENTION

Environmental crime prevention is the design and/or modification of the physical environment to reduce the opportunities for crime to occur. It includes situational approaches to crime prevention as well as broader planning initiatives.

Situational crime prevention is a primary prevention measure based on the idea that crime is often opportunistic. The situational approach is directed at

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What is crime prevention?

The United Nations defines crime prevention as “strategies and measures that seek to reduce the risk of crimes occurring, and their potential harmful effects on individuals and society, including fear of crime, by intervening to influence their multiple causes”.


5 Ibid. 2010.
stopping crime before it occurs by reducing the risk factors that provide the opportunity for criminality. Examples of situational crime prevention initiatives include:

- improving street lighting
- installing CCTV, car immobilisers
- Neighbourhood Watch campaigns
- reducing the concentration of pubs in an area.

**Built environment crime prevention** shapes the ‘man made’ environment (public spaces, buildings, streets, neighbourhoods, cities, parks) in ways that improve liveability and safety.

This strategy is based on research that shows that poorly designed and managed environments create opportunities for crime and make people feel unsafe. Broader planning initiatives such as urban renewal projects and new urban design projects incorporate design principles such as:

- encouraging many people to use public spaces
- designing natural/passive surveillance
- avoiding ‘hidden’ places.

Preventing crime through environmental development is an approach used across Australia, and local governments incorporate these principles and guidelines in their planning policies and processes.

### SOCIAL CRIME PREVENTION

**Social crime prevention** targets the underlying social and economic causes of crime, as well as offender motivation.

Initiatives include increasing school attendance, improving citizens’ wellbeing through improving housing, and improving citizen resilience to harm and conflict by improving community solidarity and connections.

**Developmental crime prevention** is based on the premise that early intervention in children’s development can produce significant long-term social and economic benefits. Interventions occur early at a child/young adult’s critical transition points:

- birth
- preschool years
- primary to high school
- high school to further education or the workforce.

Early intervention approaches address the risk factors and improve the protective factors that affect the likelihood of a person engaging in offending behaviour. For example, interventions include:

- maternal and child health services
- primary to secondary school transition programs
- leadership programs targeting at-risk young people.

**Community development approach** is founded on the belief that changing a community’s physical or social organisation structures influences the behaviour of individuals who live there. A person’s risk of becoming involved in, or a victim of, crime increases in communities that lack cohesion or have high levels of social exclusion.

Community development strategies build social cohesion by empowering communities to participate in community decision making, increasing resources and services and providing opportunities for those that are disadvantaged.

In all, the NJC uses the principles of crime prevention to identify local crime issues, develop strategies to reduce anti-social behaviours and reduce crime, and build a strong community.

Notably, the centre’s crime prevention measures are conducted in partnership with the Yarra community.

A strong community leads to less victimisation, better community safety and stability, opportunities for sustainable development, and good law and order.

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7 Ibid. 2010.

8 Ibid. 2010.


10 Morgan, A; Boxall, H. et al, Effective Crime prevention interventions for implementation by local government, AIC Reports 120, pg: 12

Additionally, there is the long-term benefit of a reduction in the associated costs of formal criminal sanctions and other social costs of crime. Until 2012 the NJC applied the Local Solutions Program which was framed by principles of community engagement and focused on reducing crime and improving perceptions of safety. For more detail, see Appendix 2.

“[Crime prevention] game plan is not just to ‘be there’. The game plan isn’t to be the street sweeper; to assume it’s necessary to come back tomorrow to sweep up the same problems because the street got dirty overnight. The game plan is to be creative and purposeful; to say ‘let’s drive crime down’.”

– Leading Senior Constable Anthony Brewin, Victoria Police

COMMUNITY JUSTICE

“Community justice is not achieved simply by a just response to particular criminal incidents. The shift from traditional to community justice requires a change in purpose from a narrowly conceived agenda of crime control to a broadly determined mission of enhancing the quality of community.”

Community justice is a both a strategy and a philosophy of the criminal justice system, and refers to all variants of crime prevention where citizen participation is expressly required and where the goal is to improve community life.

Community justice has three essential components:

• **Place** – it operates at a local level; justice activities take place in designated locations or neighbourhoods.

• **Adding value** – public safety and crime reduction are not just matters of sanctioning offenders, but of improving the area or place to ensure that people have better places to live.

• **Public safety** – it takes a broad view of public safety and order, rather than traditional concepts that equate public safety with rates of crime. Justice initiatives focus on enhancing community life.

In action, community justice strategies target neighbourhoods were crime is rife, the conditions that fuel crime are prevalent, and many people are on the downward spiral of repeat offending. In community justice parlance, these are called ‘high impact’ locations as they signify where the problems are and where there is most to gain.

In crime-prone and crime-torn areas traditional criminal justice (‘blame and sanction’) is “little more than a debilitating revolving door” as offenders circulate from the street to incarceration and back to the same streets. The cumulative effect: communities wracked by poverty, broken families, high unemployment, unsupervised youth, and educational disengagement, to name but a shortlist of ills.

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12 Hieng Lim, Community Justice Series, October 2014.


15 Ibid. 2010 pg.2

16 Ibid. 2010. pg.2
As such, community justice:

- **Targets high impact locations** – places it can make the most impact on the prevalence of criminality.
- **Strengthens informal systems of social control** – strengthens the foundation for public safety by, for example, helping individuals, families and community groups build community capacity.
- **Develops partnerships** – justice agencies work alongside residents, businesses, community groups and services to strengthen community capacity and apply crime and public safety activities\(^\text{17}\).

Community justice initiatives are further developed by foundational requirements:

- **System accessibility** – community justice agencies are accessible and service delivery is flexible and responsive to identified needs and conditions. The services and relationships should be respectful, sensitive and emphasise consensus and conflict resolution.
- **Community involvement** – include active (non-coercive) recruitment and meaningful participation of offenders, victims and community members. Recognise there are power differentials between the players, and that processes of participation and decision making need to be democratic and inclusive.
- **Reparative process** – grounded in the problem-solving model where the focus is on understanding the underlying causes of crime and the problems caused by crime, in a community justice approach the focus is on collectively rectifying specific community problems that cause crime.
- **Reintegration processes** – involve both the restoration of victim and the community, and the social integration of community members experiencing disadvantage. The standards of behaviour, social norms or community values must be identified, and consensus and agreement reached with all stakeholders that these standards are important to uphold. The focus is then on problem *behaviours*, not the types of people who are often targets of social control or social order mechanisms.

“Together, these processes should foster a set of important community justice outcomes—the operationalised meaning of community justice as a collective experience”\(^\text{18}\).

As the next section highlights, these priorities and principles are embedded in all aspects of the NJC’s work. But this has not been without its challenges. As Kerry Walker, Director NJC, argues:

“...community justice is capacious, fluid and egalitarian in its work, joining law with community. It is able to adopt, adapt and revel in agile problem-solving that invites partnership and leadership in the community. It is both the boundary rider and the stock hand inside the corral.”\(^\text{19}\)

Most cogently, community justice work at the NJC is a different way of preventing crime.

Crime reduction in and of itself is not the sole objective of community justice, unlike traditional crime prevention approaches. Rather community justice focuses on strengthening communities to prevent crime from occurring in the first place, and on improving community life overall for everyone.

\(^{17}\) Ibid, 2010.


Key Components of the Community Justice Model

- Community focused
- Emphasis on places not cases
- Targets ‘high impact’ locations
- Proactive not reactive
- Problem-solving not blaming
- Decentralisation not hierarchy
- Fluid organisational boundaries not fragmented organisational accountability
- Restoring order and strengthening community cohesion
- Efficacy of collective action to nurture a more beneficial community life
- Community-level outcomes

The NJC, Australia’s first ‘community court’, “brings together treatment and support services, a court, education, community engagement and crime prevention, which means it sits differently, and is in a different milieu”.20

As crime does not occur in isolation, community justice approaches need to be flexible and operate both inside and outside the courtroom.

In this respect, community justice for the NJC is a continually evolving process of action, reflection and learning.

*It seeks to develop a principled practice that is able to respond to lessons learned and to evolve into a better and more robust practice through that process.*21

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20 Walker, K., Discussion re Community Justice, 14 December 2015.
DOING JUSTICE LOCALLY

YARRA – A CITY OF MANY PEOPLES AND CULTURES
Prior to the colonisation of Melbourne, Yarra held significant cultural importance to the Wurundjeri people, and this connection still exists. The Wurundjeri originally inhabited the areas known today as Fitzroy, Richmond and Collingwood. The Wurundjeri still hold spiritual connections to places within Yarra’s municipal boundaries, like the Yarra River and its junction with Merri Creek. Since the early 1900s, Victoria’s Aboriginal community has flocked to Yarra, in particular to Gertrude Street in Fitzroy, to find that sense of community and connection.

“On one hand it is a court, on the other it is a community centre. I think it can be a challenge to explain the NJC because it is so unusual in the sense of having so many services located in the one place, and has a community engagement focus. This is unusual for a traditional court.”

– Magistrate David Fanning, NJC

The City of Yarra is located in the inner north-east of Melbourne. It is home to around 86,500 residents, a number expected to grow to around 110,500 by 2031. Its 19.5 square kilometres include the suburbs of:

• Abbotsford
• Burnley
• Clifton Hill
• Collingwood
• Cremorne
• Fitzroy
• North Carlton
• North Fitzroy
• Princes Hill
• Richmond
• parts of Alphington and Fairfield22.

The 2011 Census reported there around 300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Yarra. However, many more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people come to Yarra to visit family, attend cultural activities and events and receive services.

Yarra has areas of affluence, but it also has significant pockets of disadvantage. The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) ranks areas according to relative socio-economic advantage or disadvantage. Yarra scored 1019.5 on the 2006 SEIFA index, a level of advantage higher than the 1005.2 national average. However the suburbs of Collingwood, North Richmond and Fitzroy, home to some of the largest public housing estates in Victoria, scored between 894 and 955, with high levels of social disadvantage.

Yarra has one of the highest crime rates of any Victorian Local Government Area other than the City of Melbourne. In 2007-08, when the NJC was established, the aggregate crime rate in Yarra was around 2.5 times higher than the state as a whole. In this period property crime was around 2.7 times higher and drug related crime 3.5 times higher than the state as a whole.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD JUSTICE CENTRE

In 2007, the Neighbourhood Justice Centre opened as an innovative three-year pilot project of the Victorian Department of Justice under the Fairer Victoria policy. As a departure from a traditional court, it was designed on a ‘community justice’ or ‘neighbourhood justice’ model to provide new and innovative ways of dealing with “crime and other forms of social disorder, disadvantage and conflict in Yarra.”

Almost ten years on, it remains the first and only community court in Australia. It was established in Yarra, a high-crime location, to find new ways to tackle and reduce crime in the community with a particular focus on burglary and motor theft.

Since it opened its doors, total crime has fallen in Yarra by 31%, largely as a result of a decline in property crime. Although crime rates have generally fallen in Victoria over this time, “the decline in Yarra is greater than observed in comparable inner urban areas (Melbourne, Darebin, Port Phillip, Maribyrnong and Stonnington) or areas with higher levels of social disadvantage (Dandenong and Frankston).

To maintain this decline in crime, the NJC realises there needs to be long-term commitment to engaging the community to address underlying causes of crime.

Some of Yarra’s communities experience deep-seated and complex social, cultural and economic issues. There is a collective recognition that these communities require consistent, long-term care and support. The increasing polarisation in Yarra of its rich and poor also has the potential to compound these vulnerabilities.

At the heart of the NJC is the endeavour to work alongside agencies and communities to reduce the impact of social disadvantage, and to influence positive social change.

The NJC incorporates a multi-jurisdictional court, which implements therapeutic and restorative approaches to the administration of justice, and houses around 17 independent treatment and referral agencies, as well as defence and police prosecution teams.

At its core, community involvement, engagement and partnerships are fundamental to its work.

MISSION AND PRINCIPLES

Developed in 2010, the NJC’s missions to “do justice locally”, and strengthen the communities of the City of Yarra continue to guide its work.

The NJC’s three strategic goals are to:

• prevent and reduce criminal and other harmful behaviour in the Yarra community
• increase confidence in and access to the justice system in the City of Yarra
• strengthen the community justice model and facilitate the transfer of its practices to other courts and communities.

The critical elements of how the NJC works and its practices and principles are summarised into four broad approaches:

• Integration – central to its practices, integration is incorporated into all aspects of the Centre, including the building’s design, the location of staff, practices around court phases, and case management and support.
• Local focus – focus is on the City of Yarra. This enables the Centre to identify and understand the needs of the local community, and is important to its identity and value in and for the community.

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25 Ibid. 2015. pg.3.
**Deliberation** – characterises its ability to move from an adversarial model of justice to a community justice model framed by collaborative problem solving.

**Adaptation** – the ability to adapt and change to different ways of working, and to learn from such experiences.

The relationships upon which the Centre relies to work are multifaceted and distinct. For this reason, the Centre’s relationships cannot be replicated but the four underpinning principles can:

- **Two-way learning** – respect and learn from the knowledge people hold, and capture lessons to inform practice.
- **Respect** – value ongoing and mutual respect in all relationships.
- **Empowering** – enable people to change their behaviour and consolidate changes to improve community life.
- **Deepening internal relationships** – create a more robust court and organisation through strengthening internal relationships.

Community justice says that its practitioners must forge relationships tailored to the needs and wishes of specific people and places.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Community engagement underpins everything the NJC does and is embedded in its operations, from the friendly security team at the front entrance, to community-focused court proceedings, the delivery of integrated client-centred services, and the hosting of community events.

Community participation and citizens’ ownership of the Centre is encouraged, and staff work with, and in, the community in some capacity.

This depth of engagement ensures that staff understand local issues and build links between justice and the community. It also provides “the basis for improved service delivery to NJC clients, more targeted and effective local crime prevention, and community development programs that contribute to justice system goals and outcomes”.

Central to community engagement is the development of partnerships with stakeholders across Yarra. This includes, but is not limited to:

- local council
- state government departments.
- community agencies
- schools
- residents
- local Aboriginal community members
- local traders.

The NJC’s culture, model and organisational structure are designed to foster flexibility, innovation and responsiveness.

Combined, they enable effective community engagement across a range of domains – individual, family, community and municipality wide.

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27 Neighbourhood Justice Centre, Strategic Framework 2010-2013. pg.1.
What the NJC Hopes to Achieve

• Prevention – prevent crime and work with the community to improve social, economic, physical and civic conditions.
• Restorative justice – includes notions of stewardship, restitution, transformation and accountability.
• Simplification – for offenders, victims and the wider community.
• Justice served – people feel offences are appropriately dealt with, victims of crime are supported, and the wider community has confidence in the system.
“My work is about forging the relationships that create healthy, strong, holistic communities. My work is more than, and a little different to, traditional crime prevention.

Relationships are central to my work. We know that when people have strong relationships it does not matter what problems they face; they will find solutions together.

We know that brilliant solutions to problems require the right relationships to work.

I work on the basis that if we can get each relationship right—if I trust you and you trust me—we can resolve any problem. Each solution is based on the sum of us, our whole community, our journey together.”

– Hieng Lim, Senior Project Manager, CPCJ Team. 2014

The NJC, as a community justice program practitioner, has always conducted community crime prevention work. What has changed over the years is who conducts that work and how they do it.

From 2007 to 2012, community crime prevention was undertaken by a team from the Crime and Violence Prevention Unit (CVP) of the Department of Justice and staff of Victoria Police.

In this period, community crime prevention initiatives fell under the auspice of the Local Solutions Program (LSP), a pilot crime prevention initiative developed in Yarra and Ballarat in January 2007 (see Appendix 2).

The LSP was a coordinated, strategic and integrated approach to crime prevention and community safety that built on the existing capacity and infrastructure of two targeted communities: one in regional Victoria (City of Ballarat) and one in inner city Melbourne (City of Yarra)28.

In 2012, the NJC took on the responsibility for community crime prevention when Hieng Lim and Maree Foelz formed the Crime Prevention team.

Hieng’s and Maree’s skills encompass:

• policing
• law
• mediation
• crime prevention
• restorative justice
• project management
• conflict coaching
• community justice practice.

The next three years marked a new period for the team as community justice work piloted across Yarra. The team conducted a ‘stocktake’ and review of all crime prevention and community engagement activities, identified the then current crime and safety issues and mapped all their stakeholders across the municipality and those as internal to the NJC.

The stocktake enabled the team to finalise some projects, continue others as ‘business as usual’, and plan new projects with a community justice focus.

Additionally, the team identified key champions and potential partners, and there was a concerted effort to build relationships essential to community justice.

Maree explains that their role is now about crime prevention but not in the traditional sense, rather in a broader sense of working with people, facilitating connections, and identifying how people can support each other.

“We engage with the community and work in partnerships across the housing estates. We use resources that are often at hand or experiences that we have that others do not, to work together to develop solutions.”

THE CRIME PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY JUSTICE TEAM MODEL

In 2015, the team changed its name from Crime Prevention to the Crime Prevention and Community Justice (CPCJ) team.

The name change reflects the duality of community justice – it prevents crime, but it also improves upon community life.

The team’s work is guided by traditional crime prevention and community justice principles. A simple way of understanding the team’s work is as follows:

• **Traditional justice** – in the ‘traditional’ or ‘mainstream’ justice system, the court ascertains if an offence was committed, and if so, what punishment is appropriate. A traditional court does not operate to prevent crime from happening in the first place.

• **NJC model** – the CPCJ team works in tandem with the NJC’s court; that is, it works alongside procedural justice and with the community, to ensure that the community continues to become healthier and safer, has the resilience to withstand or restore itself from harm, and is the right place for people who have gone through the justice system to return to.

Note, both pathways return the individual back to his or her community.

The team does not work directly with clients of the court (that is, offenders); rather, it works with the communities that offenders come from and return to.

Some communities in Yarra are significantly disadvantaged, with people experiencing unemployment, educational disengagement and impoverished households. As such, these locations are home to drug markets and other criminal enterprises, and less desirable for people to live and work in. Disadvantage becomes even more ingrained and people find it harder to build successful lives. It is therefore much more likely for individuals to reoffend and re-enter the justice system when they return to such a community environment.

The team understands this and works to:

• respond to criminal events and problems of public safety within these communities

• employ strategies that are directed to deal with criminal events and to address the informal social control deficits that make crime possible

• improve the quality of life

• build social capital in locations where community justice is needed.

A community justice strategy broadens the responsibility of traditional criminal justice agencies to include partnerships with citizen groups and other service providers with which to create a sustainable and comprehensive level of activity in high impact areas.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CRIME PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY JUSTICE TEAM

Hieng Lim explains that the goal of the Crime Prevention and Community Justice team is to:

• support and build the capacity of community members and organisations to prevent, reduce and tackle the underlying causes and impact of crime
• strengthen community cohesion to ensure a safe, healthy and vibrant Yarra community.

Sitting beneath these goals, the team’s objectives fall into seven areas of focus:

• Access - increase confidence in and access to the justice system in the City of Yarra.

• Partnership - proactively build partnerships and collaborate with stakeholders across Yarra to plan, develop and implement targeted responses to identified issues.

• Practice - put into practice community justice principles through building the relationships, capacity and social capital required to:
  a. strengthen community cohesion
  b. repair the damage from crime
  c. proactively prevent conflict, harm and crime
  d. support communities to defend their own interests and act as key agents in a stronger, safer community.

• Innovation - drive and support innovative approaches to community justice work in Yarra.

• Education - facilitate professional development and community education opportunities.

• Evaluation - evaluate crime prevention and community justice initiatives to inform the planning and implementation of future projects and activities.

• Advocacy – advocate for community justice practices to be applied across the Magistrates’ Court of Victoria as well as local, national and international justice communities.

PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE

Everything the CPCJ team does is underpinned by eight core principles:

• place matters
• relationships matter
• problems are solved
• work is proactive, not only reactive
• draw on, work with and support the strength of a community, not its weaknesses
• build partnerships, work collaboratively
• lead by example
• foster communitarianism.

The next section explores these principles in more detail with case studies that illustrate the principles in action.

Places Matter

Community justice emphasises the importance of place.

“The place where a person lives greatly affects the school that a person’s children attend, the leisure-time activities used to occupy time…The neighbourhood is the place that provides work opportunities and is home to the friends that a person will have. [Place] sets the stage for how a person lives much of daily life and is especially important for those who lack the resources to leave their surroundings easily.”

As stated earlier, community justice selects high impact locations; that is, places where there is a concentration of crime and criminal justice activity\(^1\).

Yarra is economically, socially and culturally diverse. This is why, as a high crime location, the City of Yarra was the chosen location for the NJC, and why the CPJC focuses on the areas within Yarra that are ‘high impact’ locations – specific suburbs, areas within its suburbs, and communities living in these areas.

Yarra’s high impact crime areas are where some of the most disadvantaged communities live. Hit hardest by crime and disadvantage, these communities lack the resources and social capital to respond to safety and crime issues.

Eleven per cent of the population of Yarra live in public housing. Leading Senior Constable Anthony (Tony) Brewin, Victoria Police, stresses that they do not live there without stories.

“Every single flat has a story associated with it and those stories are sad. The stories are of people who are struggling, stories of people who are living in the margins where they are involved in, or exposed to, crime,” Tony Brewin says.

These communities are the primary targets for the CPCJ team’s community justice initiatives.

Tony Brewin points out it’s important for agencies in Yarra to realise that reducing crime is a really important part of the business of people who work in Yarra.

The CPCJ team does not focus on individual issues or cases, rather Hieng and Maree focus on the particular problems facing a local area or community.

The team is aware of individual cases through its involvement with reference groups, partners and case workers at the NJC. But individual cases are often symptomatic of larger systemic problems and deeper community-linked issues.

The team works with stakeholders to strengthen communities’ capacities to respond to issues. It has membership on Yarra’s area-based safety forums and working groups, and is part of local area networks, giving the team a comprehensive understanding of the issues and challenges facing particular communities.

Also critical to community justice work is local information gathered from listening to workers and communities on the ground.

Taking a place-based approach (rather than the traditional case-based one) is a significant shift in strategic direction, and one that defines how the team works.

The following Reporting of Crime Project is an example of place-based community justice.

Developed in 2012 by the NJC in partnership with Victoria Police, Office of Housing and residents of the public housing estates, it demonstrates the complexities of working at a local level, and the effectiveness of responding to community needs.

\(^1\) Ibid, 2010. pg. 2.
CASE STUDY

Reporting of Crime Project: A Place-Based Approach

In 2012, the Crime Prevention team addressed the issue of the under-reporting of crime by focusing on the Richmond, Collingwood and Atherton Gardens public housing estates, and major business strips in Yarra.

Identifying Local Issues

The team had anecdotal evidence from public housing residents that there was a high level of crime on or around the estates and on the business strips.

The Office of Housing also reported hearing from residents that incidents were occurring but not being reported.

The team met individually with the Housing Managers from the three estates to better understand why residents were not reporting crime, and the impact of this on local communities.

The team also attended safety working groups and forums on each estate, thereby hearing from residents directly. Residents, especially those from non-Australian cultures, confirmed the issues already identified by Housing Managers, which were:

- growing apathy about reporting crime when they heard nothing back
- lack of understanding, apathy and fear of reprisals
- lack of consistent processes in relation to a crime feedback protocol
- lack of clarity of the roles of the Office of Housing, Brotherhood of St Laurence (concierge services), Wilson Security (security service) as well as how Victoria Police would respond.

“It is not easy for us to get our message across. There is a reluctance and mistrust from people who come from countries where the police are viewed a little differently. That’s why we needed to bridge this gap, to gain understanding, and gain their trust.”

– Inspector Bernie Edwards, Victoria Police
The Challenges

A lack of coordination and agreement between and by different agencies involved rested on the following factors:

- Historical resistance to police attending reported crime, whether by habit or through lack of resources.
- The will to implement any crime reporting project changed when personnel changed.
- The need to maintain a culture of practice about reporting crime among the many stakeholders.
- Diverse communities that also change over time.

Developing Local Solutions

The CPCJ team worked with relevant agencies to understand how reported information was used, and identify gaps in the reporting process. Options were developed for improving the timeliness and feedback mechanisms to community.

In partnership with the Housing Managers, Brotherhood of St Laurence and Wilson Security (the firm that manages security on the estates), the CPCJ team developed a process map outlining each of the steps required for effective reporting of crime, outlining roles and responsibilities as well as procedures for giving feedback to residents regarding a complaint.

Practical information was developed and provided to the residents about:

- how to report crime anonymously
- why reporting crime and antisocial behaviour was valuable to building a strong community
- how relevant agencies use and act on the information provided
- dispelling myths and fears concerning the reporting of crime.

The police also attended estate-based activities to improve communication and build trust with residents on the estates.

Bronwyn Boyd, Collingwood Housing Manager, says the project was about developing a process by which residents feel supported and encouraged to report crime.

“And it’s also about reporting it to the right authority. So people ring up security and say this is an issue. There is a form they fill out…and then they get a phone call saying ‘You have made an allegation. I know the police have come – how are things going?’” says Boyd.

Information about how to report crime was also provided to residents during the annual October Safety Week and at other safety events on the estates, and included in the New Tenancy Sign-Up Kit that new residents receive. Biannual crime reporting forums were also held on each estate where key agencies presented information to residents on:

- crime statistics in their local area (Victoria Police)
- how to report crime (Crime Stoppers)
- what to do if you are a victim of crime (Victims of Crime).

These forums ensured that residents understood what was happening in their local area in relation to crime, understood the new reporting process, and felt empowered to report crime.

The Upshot

Stakeholders said residents felt more comfortable reporting crime, were developing better relationships with police, and perceptions of safety on the estates had increased.

However, it was identified by those interviewed for this guide that staffing resources make ongoing monitoring of the project difficult. The monitoring and evaluation of this project has not been undertaken, and this has been identified as an area requiring critical attention.

Anecdotal evidence from the team and the Office of Housing indicated that this project was successful with an initial increase in the reporting of crime.
BUILDING DEEP RELATIONSHIPS

Building relationships of trust, integrity and respect is a core strength of the Crime Prevention and Community Justice team and integral to its work.

These relationships require understanding of the social, cultural, political, economic, and organisational contexts they are working in.

With the ability to initiate and develop deep, responsive dialogue in context, the team and community members can reach a shared understanding of issues and people.

Relationship building is time-consuming, challenging, sometimes confrontational, and requires a level of reflective and reflexive effort. But it also enables a solid platform to work on complex issues, negotiate areas of conflict, and develop collective action.

Hieng says part of the journey is openness, which in turn requires the ability to maintain the relationships to get the best outcomes.

“Building relationships requires depth in a commitment to the person you are working with and subtlety in the way you handle what may sometimes be sensitive egos. You have to value the person you are building the relationship with, and more importantly, you must build a solid foundation. My practice is to look towards the long-term outcomes, and the greater good,” Hieng says.

The focus on experimentation and innovation at NJC enables the team to be flexible and unconventional in how it builds relationships. For example, the team fostered relationships with the local Aboriginal community by meeting members on the streets upon which they socialise.

As Hieng explains, building relationships in such ways generates genuine, long-term relationships that are grounded in reciprocity, respect and trust.

The team identifies key skills for effective relationship building, including the ability to:

• listen and hear people
• remain patient
• commit to the idea of a ‘good society’
• ‘tune in’ to people and what is going on quickly
• trust your intuition
• be adaptive and flexible
• understand and respect cultural and social protocols
• mediate conflict, complexity and chaos
• let go of ego
• build strengths
• act with integrity
• have no vested position
• have a willingness to be hopeful when all around you are hopeless
• use a curiosity that allows us to ask ‘How could we make this work? What good can come from this? What good can we see in each other? What can we learn together?’

Arguably these are not standard skills for traditional criminal justice workers, and they would rarely be outlined in a position description. However this skill-set is crucial for building the depth of relationship required to do effective community justice work and for dealing with complex problems.
The next case study examines the complexities and challenges of undertaking community justice in a high impact location, and shows how community justice works in a place where “public safety is a significant problem and crime is a fact of life”\(^3^2\).

Now in its fourth year, the Smith Street Working Group comprises representatives from Aboriginal community, police, Yarra traders, service providers and the NJC. Together they develop solutions to overcome public safety concerns and crime and forge a strong and peaceful community.

As a study, the working group project illustrates a number of important community justice factors.

First, it illustrates the necessity of building relationships based on deep trust and integrity. This means engagement that each party finds meaningful and sustainable, which promotes long-term collective benefits.

It illustrates the importance of processes that recognise and respect Indigenous concepts of governance, communication and wellbeing. Such processes were key to the group’s successful establishment and are now vital to its longevity.

It also illustrates the importance of understanding historical, social and cultural complexities, which are unavoidable in case the issues that beset Smith Street and the multiple stakeholder agendas at play.

The CPCJ’s methods for opening dialogue with disparate groups in the first instance neatly illustrate strategies that “strengthen community cohesion, repair damage from crime, and build partnerships that nurture a more beneficial community life.”\(^3^3\)

Finally, the case study shows that building social capital is the key to cultivating trust and cooperation, as well as developing the collective strength necessary to achieve community justice outcomes.\(^3^4\)

Building social capital marks the difference between traditional criminal justice and community justice approaches. Traditional criminal justice uses the ability of the state to enforce the rule of law and ensure social safety measures. Community justice, on the other hand, harnesses collective willpower to address crime and safety issues.

\(^3^2\) Clear T., Hamilton J., & Cadora E., Community Justice, Routledge, London 2010, pg. 1

\(^3^3\) Ibid, 2010, pg. 4

\(^3^4\) Ibid, 2010.
CASE STUDY

Strong, Robust Community, One Relationship at a Time

Smith Street is an iconic Melbourne strip. No more than 1.7 kilometres long, it has long history of crime, public drunkenness, drug use and tension between the police, local Aboriginal community, and traders.

Over the past ten years tensions have increased as gentrification changes the street’s cultural and social demographics, and ‘new affluence’ rubs shoulders with ‘old Collingwood’.

Of vital importance to the fabric of Smith Street are the ‘Parkies’, a self-named group of local Aboriginal people who meet in Collingwood to connect with family and community. Many Parkies are from the Stolen Generation who came to Fitzroy in the 1960s and ’70s to find family, and Smith Street became an important meeting place. Is this group the Parkies? Smith Street is now recognised as significantly important for this group of people to maintain their identity and traditions.

Over the years numerous attempts have been made to address widespread anti-social behaviour on Smith Street. However, most strategies focused solely on the behaviour of the Aboriginal community.

In 2004, the Street People’s Committee was formed to develop solutions to issues. The committee comprised representatives for council, police, the Department of Health (DoH), Department of Human Services (DHS) and a number of local service providers. Residents and business were not represented.

In 2006, the committee drafted the paper Strengthening the Aboriginal Community in Smith Street, Collingwood: A Service Model, which proposed ways to address the impact that harmful levels of drinking had on the Aboriginal community. However, no funding eventuated and the proposals were not implemented.

Over 2008-09, issues on the street were perceived by some as being at a crisis point, and Victoria Police and the state government made a number of requests to Yarra City Council to introduce a local law that banned the consumption of alcohol in public places. This was to become Local Law 8.

Yarra councillor Amanda Stone says that the council resisted Local Law 8 for a long time because it understood the law had the potential to discriminate against people who were already disadvantaged and had little control of many aspects of their lives.

However, in 2009, and against a backdrop of rapid gentrification, the council implemented the law. That year, the Department of Justice and DHS funded a comprehensive investigation into the nature and extent of the problem in Smith Street that culminated in the development of the Smith Street Plan. Throughout the investigation, the NJC provided advice and facilitated the involvement of all stakeholders to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to be heard.

With this funding, in 2009, Yarra City Council coordinated a Search Conference attended by the Aboriginal community members, traders, residents, Victoria Police, DHS and Office of Housing. They discussed issues in Smith Street and provided input into community planning and action.

The conference was followed up with a comprehensive community consultation process—that included visitors to the street—which informed the development of the Smith Street Plan 2009-2013. The plan envisioned Smith Street in 2030 to be a mix of local, eclectic, welcoming and inclusive ‘street life, and to be a good place to live, visit and do business, that’s safe and feels safe and is attractive.

As a key member of the reference group, the Crime Prevention team brokered communication between agencies and provided material support to the Yarra Aboriginal Support Service Network and the Billabong BBQ Program (Yarra’s local Koori community regular get-together).

In 2011, Capire Consulting evaluated the impact of Local Law 8 and found no evidence it led to a notable decline in the levels of drinking in public places; in fact, around 20 per cent of Collingwood residents surveyed indicated they felt unsafe or very unsafe in shopping areas during the day. Consultations with traders revealed that stealing from shops was a significant issue.

From 2009 to the 2011 evaluation, conflict between police and the Aboriginal community remained high with street drinking, begging, assaults, verbal abuse, unpredictable behaviour, public urination, breaking
bottles and littering on the streets of Collingwood and neighbouring Fitzroy remaining major issues.  

**Unpacking the Issues**

In 2012, NJC’s Hieng Lim was tasked with building relationships with traders in the major streets of Yarra. He quickly identified Smith Street, noting that the Aboriginal community’s relationships with the police and and traders were poor.

After meeting with Yarra Council staff, Hieng met with traders through the Smith Street Traders Association. Traders told him that, for many, business was poor, shoplifting was a regular occurrence, levels of assault were high, and people were avoiding areas in the street seen as ‘hot spots’ of crime. Police were being called out to the street up to ten times per day, and traders saw that arrests made little difference.

Di Harris, a Smith Street retailer who would later join the Smith Street Working Group, says that the issues on Smith Street were so bad she could not do business.

“I was being threatened every day. Threats like ‘I am going home to get my gun to shoot you’. I’d have ten men in my shop on drugs and alcohol calling me all sorts of things. When I look back through my notepad of the incidents that occurred it still blows my mind,” Di says.

A pivotal moment in the establishment of the working group came after Hieng witnessed an interaction between police and Aboriginal community members on the street in 2012. For Hieng this incident highlighted the increasing tension and lack of trust between the Aboriginal community, police and traders. He was also concerned about a lack of respectful and appropriate treatment of the Parkies by police responding to issues.

Hieng raised this incident with Kerry Walker, Director NJC; Inspector Bernie Edwards, Victoria Police; members of NJC’s Koori Justice Unit; and the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service. However, the blunt response from police was, says Hieng, that ‘the attending members must have been from outside of the City of Yarra’.

Looking for a solution, Hieng says that the reason the police, the Aboriginal communities, and the traders had such dire relationships was because they did not respect one another.

“They only saw the worst in each other. The police were seen as ‘brutal’ law enforcers, the Aboriginal community as law breakers and troublemakers, and the traders saw themselves as people who just wanted to trade. In reality there were good policemen and women, good Aboriginal people and leaders, and good traders.”

Hieng points out that over many years these groups, all with disparate interests, had lived in an environment of conflict that had bred distrust and a state of ‘us versus them’.

He says that many of the strategies trialled by various tiers of government had only limited success in effecting change; indeed, some strategies inappropriately imposed short-term solutions that failed to take into account the needs of everyone in the community.

“It was clear that over time the conflicts remained and the interactions between the many different players had not changed.”

Hieng says that he knew if they could see the good in each other many long-standing issues would resolve.

“I knew that if they could talk to each other face-to-face and know each other by name, they were less likely to disrespect, insult or assault each other. I realised we had to do something to show the good in each other.”

After extensive, carefully crafted and facilitated conflict management and relationship building, everyone agreed that they required a strategy to repair and build relationships between traders, the police and the Aboriginal community.

**Building Relationships One Step at a Time**

Relationships needed to mend before people could meet. As such, Hieng and his colleague Maree Foelz met each key stakeholder individually. They met Parkies and Aboriginal community members, traders, community agencies, street buskers, police and Yarra City Council. They attended key networks such as the Smith Street Traders Association and the Yarra Aboriginal Support Network. They:

- walked the street to introduce themselves
- dropped off Business Security Kits to traders to initiate dialogue
• met with the Parkies on street corners
• attended Yarra’s Billabong BBQ so people could get to know them and learn about the work of NJC.

By hearing all perspectives without judgement or favour, people slowly came willingly to the table to identify and discuss issues.

Megan Dale, a Salvation Army officer based at the NJC who was part of the process, says that while the early days were hard going, the CPCJ team had to create an environment where all parties felt safe to speak without fear of reprisal or censure.

“As we got to know each other, and work together and understand a bit more about where each person was coming from, respect took hold. It was done through graciousness and kindness.”

NJC's sustained engagement was targeted and deliberate. The NJC initially focused on building relationships of trust and strength through hearing people’s stories, role modelling positive behaviour and acknowledging different points of view. Importantly, this process did not focus on the shortcomings of individual stakeholders; it focused on their strengths and the ways these could be harnessed to develop collective outcomes.

Slowly, over time, people from different groups were introduced to each other, stories were told, and they began to bond over the common cause of ending the crisis in Smith Street.

Maree says this type of deep engagement work is not quick or easy, and requires a lot of personal resources. As she says, “we are not relying on email but on face-to-face engagement. And that’s important for our work.”

For Hieng building successful relationships takes time and he built a relationship with each stakeholder in parallel before bringing them together at the working group.

“I visited with each stakeholder and worked on other projects important to them. I led the building of each of relationship through role modelling, and at all times emphasised a ‘no vested interest’ outcome for stakeholders. In this way we developed trust in each other, and were able to develop an agenda that suited everyone...It was about making sure people were heard, felt safe, respected and that we all dealt in good will and in good faith. And you had to live that philosophy.”

In October 2012, the Smith Street Working Group was established and had its first meeting at the NJC, facilitated by Hieng.

Membership at the time consisted of six representatives:
• Hieng Lim, Senior Project Manager
• Michael Honeysett, Aboriginal Outreach Worker, Turning Point
• Troy Austin, Executive Officer Regional Aboriginal Advisory Council, Department of Justice
• John Brown, Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer, Victoria Police
• James Fraser, Senior Koori Justice Worker, NJC
• Krystal Cutajar, Koori Justice Worker, NJC.

The working group’s vision was for “peaceable coexistence; an ongoing relationship with each other; to understand each other’s perspectives; and see the employment of young Aboriginal people in Smith Street businesses.” The group established two guiding principles in the 2012-13 period:
• build a positive image of Smith Street
• build good relationships between those that reside, trade on, and use Smith Street.

These principles were based on a positive, proactive approach that hinged on the group answering three questions:
• How can we make Smith Street positive for Aboriginal communities, the traders, and the general community?
• How can we get everyone to better understand each other and have a peaceable coexistence with each other in Smith Street?
• How can we make Smith Street a more positive place for everyone?

At the same time as the working group was forming, a number of entities were also looking into the issues on the street. Yarra City Council was looking at ways to include Aboriginal cultural and music in a festival held in Yarra; Di Harris was supporting individual traders to manage the problems they were experiencing on the street; and Senior Sergeant Peter Beckers, based at the Collingwood Police Station, was meeting with the Smith
Street Traders Association about issues between traders and police.

Peter Beckers says there was an immediate rapport when he met Hieng and Di.

“We three players aligned, and from then the issue was not so much the traders and making their business worthwhile, it was about the culture and the people in the area who make it vibrant, unique, who make it something special, and we extended that not only to the traders but to the Indigenous people, to the beggars on the road,” he says.

Di Harris and Peter Beckers joined the working group, followed shortly by other stakeholders.

The group worked collaboratively; everyone had a say and everyone was involved in decision making.

Of note, in recognising that there were power inequities between and within groups, the group consciously ensured that power was shared through plans, agreements and transparent decision-making processes.

As importantly, the group established processes to resolve conflict.

Peter Beckers says that the group captured the culture of Collingwood, and it was this culture that spread like a wave through the group.

“No one owned that group, but we had ownership of it. It became a brilliant thing,” says Beckers.

For Di Harris the group brought down barriers as relationships were built on respect and equality.

“Everyone at the table wanted to do something about the issues, the problems. We wanted to work together to make Smith Street a harmonious place to be. And I became a very big part of the solution, such as strategic planning, problem solving, community liaison, promotion, and designing the Smith Street Dreaming logo.”

In 2014, the working group identified that “real community involvement” was required to overcome the deeply entrenched issues. As such, Hieng met with Parkies and other members of the Aboriginal community outside the supermarket on Smith Street, inviting them to join the working group. This on-the-ground approach resulted in a number of Parkies attending the working group’s meetings. It also typifies Hieng’s approach to taking justice to the streets, rather than compelling people to come to the NJC. Hieng continued to meet Aboriginal community members on the street to build relationships and connections.

Since its inception membership of the working group has waxed and waned, which is to be expected given competing roles and responsibilities of many of the members. Despite this, a core membership has remained, and many members continue to attend meetings today.

Bringing together such diverse groups enables information, ideas and innovations to be shared. This partnership has led to the removal of cultural and social barriers, and built consensus across groups representing diverse interests. In addition, bringing justice agencies such as the police, NJC and the Department of Justice together has embedded social capital and reinforced the group’s solidarity.
Achievements

In 2013, the working group hosted the first of three annual Indigenous music festival.

The group was involved in designing every facet of the festival down to the last detail. Senior Sergeant Beckers, and Di Harris even worked with Aboriginal Ngarra Murray to design the logo and poster.

Smith Street Dreaming celebrates Aboriginal culture on Smith Street. Pertinently, the festival takes place on the corner of Smith and Stanley Streets, a significant meeting place for Aboriginal people.

Over the years, the festival crowds have grown as Aboriginal people come from across the state to join the Parkies, Yarra residents, police, Yarra City Council staff, and traders.

Celebrated by the wider community and organisers alike, each festival contributes to the relationships that bring peace to people who were in protracted conflict, and promotes the significance of Smith Street to Aboriginal people.

Hieng says the working group took the lived relationship it forged around the table to the streets.

“Smith Street Dreaming celebrates all that is good about our local community. It’s about looking for the good in, and building strong relationships with, each other. It’s about a united community that sees the best in one another, and leaving no one behind.”

The motto of the festival — One Street, Many Mobs, One Community — is drawn from the overarching principles of the working group says Hieng.

Bernie Edwards, Inspector, Victoria Police says that the very act of having police involved in supporting and organising the festival has been instrumental in breeding tolerance.

“A lot of work was done, especially by Maree and Hieng, to make the festival happen, and everyone was behind it.”

The inspector says that prior to the festival, the behaviour of some members of the Aboriginal community intimidated people working or visiting Smith Street. The festival, he says, created much wider community understanding for the Aboriginal community’s cultural heritage and history.

Bernie Edwards also cites the festival as instrumental in minimising what were regular police call-outs to the street.

Local councillor Amanda Stone says that being part of the festival has been a highlight of her career.

“You could feel the experience. [Aboriginal artist] Archie Roach played to the community he belongs to, it was profound. And at a local level, people were paying their respects to him, to all that he represents — his community, where he comes from. That is a really beautiful thing.”

For Maree Foelz the festival cemented relationships.

“It was a fantastic event which helped build better relationships between the various communities that visit, live, work and gather on and around Smith Street. I also embrace the opportunity to learn from being part of the working group.”

The Smith Street Working Group cites the following successes of their work:

• Since 2013 crime in the street is down 33%.
• Police call-outs are down from 6-10 times a day to 3-6 a month.
• Shop vacancy rate is four per cent.
• New businesses have moved into the street.
• Strong, trusting relationships between the Parkies, traders, residents and the police continue today.
• Stakeholders have shown ongoing commitment to the working group for over three years.
• Peace and prosperity for the street.
• A greater perception of safety on the street.
• A stronger community that continues and persists.
• A reduction in the number of assaults.
• Relationships have been maintained by implementing the Walk in our Shoes Project.

Smith Street Dreaming has been awarded the:

• 2014 City of Yarra’s Community Event of The Year
• 2015 Community HART Award (local government category)
• 2015 Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Award (Australian Institute of Criminology National Awards).
Learnings

The Smith Street Working Group learnt multiple lessons that continue to inform the way it works.

Members of the working group interviewed for this case study say the last three years have had a profound impact on their lives, both professionally and personally.

To begin, while regular meetings enable the group to negotiate and deal with issues and conflicts as they arise, they recognise that work must continue to ensure these relationships continue out to the streets.

There is also concern that gentrification will have a detrimental impact on many people, particularly the Parkies and other disadvantaged groups who may be pushed out.

Hieng notes that there is much work to do, and warns that success can lead to failure if vigilance is dropped.

“People need to continue to invest in and champion the working group because you can’t do it alone. It would be a big mistake to think you can do it alone.”

In August 2015, Troy Crellin from Indigenous restaurant Charcoal Lane, and Lorina Lovett, spokesperson for Parkies Inc., took responsibility for facilitating the working group. This is a significant step in the group’s evolution as it is now run by and for the community. As Di Harris says, this alone demonstrates how empowering the working group has become.

The group is now working on projects that are improving understanding and respect between its representatives. For example, they convene once a month to develop the Walk in Our Shoes Project (comprising the CPCJ team, police, Parkies and traders), and to produce an Aboriginal cultural awareness leaflet, referral card and induction training for police working with the Aboriginal community in Yarra.

Also back on the agenda is a proposed Indigenous mural on Smith Street depicting the history and cultural significance of the street.

This mural, says Troy Austin, original member of the Working Group, will recognise the footsteps taken by the community’s Aboriginal ancestors, and will speak to the obligations and commitments that today’s custodians have to the area.

As he says, “it would be a reminder to behave yourself on that site and respect Country.”

Undertaking community justice work in high impact areas is neither easy nor quick. Rather, it requires its proponents make the long-term commitment to foster understanding and trust with a wide range of people from across its targeted high impact areas.

Additionally, creating long-term change requires rethinking traditional approaches to tackling crime, conflict and public safety.

The CPCJ team continues to work with stakeholders in Smith Street in support of existing partnerships and to deliver the initiatives and support that will empower and enhance the community.

And the team still attends and supports the Working Group to help ensure its success long into the future.
Problem Solving

"Traditional criminal law is defined as a contest between the accused and the state. Under community justice, crime is not a contest to be won but a series of problems to be solved. The emphasis is placed on both the public safety problems that need to be solved in order to improve community life and the potential consequences of the means taken to solve those problems."

The Crime Prevention and Community Justice team takes a broad view of crime and safety, and an active approach to problem-solving.

First, the team gains a comprehensive understanding of the concerns, issues and context of its community. Only then will Hieng and Maree work with relevant stakeholders to develop solutions. Of note, the team’s focus is not to ‘blame’ individuals or groups; rather, it is to understand how the community is harmed and then resolve issues together.

As a problem-solving methodology the team’s approach is not new, but it is a core component of crime prevention practice. However, community justice deviates from the traditional approach by placing community at the centre of the problem-solving process — that is, while sound theory, empirical data and contextual knowledge are important, the focus is on understanding the cause and the impact of the problem from the community’s perspective and working with it to develop solutions.

Maree Foelz says there are minimal protocols and minimal bureaucracy at the NJC. Instead the culture of the centre lies in solving problems in the best way possible and always in concert with the community.

Active Approach

The CPCJ team works with the community to support and deliver responses to crime and safety issues in Yarra.

As Yarra is a high impact area, the team must react quickly to a criminal event or incident that affects the community, and this means the team must be accessible, flexible and agile.

Equally important is the team’s ability to re-prioritise actions at a moment’s notice so they are on hand to support the community, police and other local service providers at any time.

Hieng points out that this can be challenging, especially in a team of two already stretched to capacity. But the ability to juggle competing priorities is a necessary skill, and this ability is why the team has a reputation for never refusing any call for help.

Hieng Lim says that they respond as problems arise and do so without sifting through what to respond to or not.

“We respond to problems as soon as they arise, and we can’t pick and choose what we would prefer to respond to. This is why it’s essential we have the strong relationships that allow us to mobilise with our stakeholders and communities to deal with any crisis. It’s almost pointless to say we are proactive or reactive — we balance a range of responses from proactive to reactive to something in the middle.”

Sue Kent, Manager Collingwood and Richmond Neighbourhood Houses, says the CPCJ team’s high profile in the community is important, and the team enjoys a reputation for being ready to assist at any time.

“When issues or drama emerge at the grassroots level it’s great to have a trusting relationship where you can say ‘Maree or Hieng, this has happened. Help me manage the maze of supporting people through this drama or whatever has gone on’.”


Working proactively with the community to deal with and tackle the underlying causes of crime, and build the community’s resilience, is a major priority for the NJC.

Many public housing residents in Yarra live under the burdens of poverty and unemployment, and face cultural and language barriers to full participation in mainstream life. Residents are exposed to crime, and circumventing drug deals and drug-affected people are daily chores.

Many parents bringing up children on the estates do not allow their children to play on the grounds as they do not feel the public spaces are safe. As such, children often lack the opportunity to socialise with peers and participate in life-enhancing activities. Moreover, it means many young people are exposed to high levels of crime and conflict.

As the next case study illustrates, the Collingwood All Stars Soccer Program (CASP) is a proactive approach to working with vulnerable communities.

Established in 2006 by two police officers, CASP is one of the longest running community justice programs in Yarra. NJC’s Registry team has been involved since its inception.

Through love of the game, newly-arrived and refugee young people and the police form strong relationships, and the risks of young people entering the criminal justice system are curtailed. And of course, the children get to run around a field which is great for health and happiness.
CASE STUDY

Collingwood All Stars Soccer Program — Proactive, Early Intervention

A guitar and a soccer ball

The Collingwood All Stars Soccer Program (CASP) is one of the NJC’s longest running police—community partnerships, and is loved by staff and local kids alike.

In 2006, Leading Senior Constables Anthony Brewin and Chris McGeachan identified that something needed to be done to deflect young newly-arrived teenagers from harm and criminality.

Many of the children and young adults came from war-torn countries and are deeply traumatised. Now living in Melbourne’s inner city, they were disengaged from school and faced social and cultural barriers to mainstream life. Moreover, having experienced negative, often violent encounters with police and officials in their homeland, they did not trust police. Adding to this, there was a lack of recreation and engagement programs for them on the estates.

As police Youth Resource Officers (YROs), McGeachan and Brewin focused on youth from the Collingwood, Richmond and Atherton Gardens Housing Estates. In collaboration with Jesuit Social Services and Yarra Youth Services, they invited young Sudanese refugees who were engaging in anti-social behaviour to join a basketball program.

Riding on the success of the basketball program, Brewin, armed with a guitar, and McGeachan, armed with a soccer ball, ventured to the Collingwood estate’s oval to join a group of kids having an ad hoc game.

From that initial foray, numbers swelled as children and young adults gravitated to the YROs, and an official program soon followed.

The aim of the game is to:

• break down barriers and engage positive relations with police
• enjoy regular physical activity in a supportive environment

• provide an avenue for service providers to establish relationships with young people
• give the youth positive adult male role models
• open pathways to mainstream sporting clubs
• open pathways to education and employment.

“CASP grew incredibly quickly. From five the first week, 25 the next. Soccer wasn’t played much around here but it was the game they wanted to play; that it was in their backyard, that was the biggest drawcard. And it was inclusive, not exclusive of anyone.”

— Leading Senior Constable Chris McGeachan
Initially the YROs opened the program to all ages, but with growing popularity and limited resources they chose kids in Year 8 to Year 12. However, it was open to any kid in these age groups living in Yarra.

Playing soccer is the ‘hook’, but the real aim is to give participants a safe, supportive way to meet peers, police, NJC staff, and community agency workers, and learn about local support services, and education and employment pathways.

In 2008, the program linked with the Clifton Hill Junior Soccer Club. Ten CASP players joined this club’s under-12 team, thereby enjoying the opportunity to play at a local club level. Through this, the Collingwood All Stars team was established and young people trained twice a week and played games on the weekends. The link to the local soccer club created a pathway to local club participation and potential pathways to elite sport. Importantly, it exposed CASP kids to mainstream structures that included informal mentors and volunteer coaches. It also helped them to experience behavioural boundaries and rules that applied to everyday members of the community.

The program also harnesses the game’s attendant rules to develop social relationships, and improve communication, teamwork and leadership skills — life skills that protect vulnerable youth from engaging in risky behaviour. As participant Wilson Poni says, CASP kept him busy and out of trouble.

“We were looked after by the cops. They used to come along to see what was going on. I felt safe ’cause Chris and Tony were there.”

Wilson Poni reported that the longer he participated the better his leadership skills grew, and in time he helped others develop their skills.

Another long-term participant, Ruyad Aden, said CASP deflected him from harm.

“I came here when I was nine years old, and I really enjoyed playing soccer. My older brother still plays soccer and I play basketball now. But soccer was a really good passion of mine when I was younger. I got involved with Chris McGeachan, the guy who runs it. He gave opportunities to a lot of us to go watch games at Ames Park, and Melbourne City. So I kept coming every Monday and got opportunities for leadership. It was really good.”

For the police, the program gives them the means to understand and respond to issues the youth faced before things escalated into more serious offending.

Additionally, the YROs built relationships of trust and respect, thereby breaking down the barriers between police and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) language backgrounds.

Chris McGeachan reports that the program brings him into the lives of young people beyond the boundaries of a sports oval.

“We are asked to be involved at different levels as they grow. Many of [the young participants] are missing extended members of family and other adults who’d ordinarily go through the different stages of life with them — people I take for granted in my life. So they call upon the connections they make with the community.”

He said that the young adults who grow out of CASP remain in contact with the YROs.

“They know that if they come down to Collingwood on a Monday that we’ll be there and they can continue that relationship.”

As McGeachan reported, the statistics show that many of the CASP participants are growing up in an environment that puts them at high risk of criminality, and many will live in Collingwood for quite some time.

“We’re in their backyard delivering a multi-service program, seeing kids getting together with their parents and guardians or whoever they are living with. [Through CASP] we can strike up the relationship and carry it through. Being that conduit, being that familiar person, can assist them right throughout the community. All from that Monday relationship. We’re seeking a big slice of the community each week.”

**NJC’s Involvement**

In 2010, NJC’s Senior Registrar Damian James accepted Chris McGeachan’s request for the NJC to support the program by providing operational and administrative help. It was a logical fit as CASP’s aims align with the NJC’s community justice objectives to:

- build partnerships with community in response to safety and justice issues
- extend engagement with community beyond the traditional four walls of the court.
Damian says CASP gives his team the means to have an ongoing, active community engagement role. As registrars rarely get the opportunity to be involved in community engagement activities, it was too good an opportunity to pass up.

Through his involvement, Damian knows the names, faces and stories of the participants, and understands the issues and challenges they face. Such close ties help him to forge the trust required to ensure that the NJC can support any young player who finds themselves in court.

Stakeholder Partnerships

Today, the NJC’s registrars participate in the Monday program and they see it as a valuable way of connecting with the one of NJC’s high impact areas.

Local school Collingwood College supports the program by providing access to the oval and facilities, and Yarra Youth Services provides youth worker support. Second Bite, a fresh food community program, and Fair Share provide food and drinks. Over the last ten years, Yarra City Council and the NJC have periodically funded CASP, and both are committed to maintaining support.

Yarra Council’s Youth Participation Officer, Toyin Abbas, said that without CASP a number of young people would find themselves on the other side of the law.

“I keep saying, ‘What if this program is not here?’ I don’t know what some of them would do. What would be happening in Fitzroy, Richmond? They come here and enjoy themselves after school instead of going out to the city to commit crime. [CASP] is great for their health and wellbeing as well.”

In 2012, Hieng instigated the now popular twice yearly awards ceremony. With a slew of medals up for grabs, the event celebrates the efforts of everyone involved in CASP, and gives parents a chance to be part of something that means a lot to their kids.

Every CASP player receives a medal. This promotes and recognises their contributions and personal attributes. Being recognised in front of peers, family, the Magistrate, police, NJC staff and other agency representatives reinforces the message that each young person is a valuable community member.

The NJC records the best and fairest players on an honours board that sits with pride of place in its foyer.

The ceremony has a serious, though subtle, side. Held at the NJC and attended by NJC staff, the police, and community agencies, the event shows the CASP kids that the justice system is here to help, support and protect them. The event sends the message that justice is accessible. The NJC also uses the event to strengthen the bond between it, the young people and their families, and the wider community, and in so doing reinforces the NJC’s founding principle that the community is the centre of the NJC.

And because it takes a village to raise a child, the awards ceremony encourages parents to support not only their children, but all the children. As such, whether cheering from the sidelines, coaching or distributing medals, the NJC encourages the guardians and stewards of these children to be active in children’s lives.

Finally, as Chris McGeachan points out, many people living on the estates, particularly those who are newly arrived to Australia as refugees, do not understand the system. CASP is, therefore an important bridge.

“To have that connection through a community program and a familiar face makes [integration] a bit more seamless, you are further down the track.”

He describes CASP as a valuable way to show some of the most disenfranchised people in our community that they do, in fact, have a say.

Achievements

While recognised across Yarra for positively engaging newly-arrived and refugee young people with opportunities to participate in mainstream sport, the program is much more than that. It is a testament to how early intervention programs enhance the protective factors young people need to reduce the potential risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system.

Since 2006, 60 young people a year go through CASP, many of whom would be considered at risk of offending.

Many of the older teenagers and young adults go on to volunteer with CASP, and a number are paid coaches. All of these roles develop their leadership skills and give the junior players positive role models.
Although there is a lack of evaluation data for the program, anecdotal evidence suggests that CASP has had a very positive impact on the lives of young people on the Collingwood Estate and the community as a whole.

For NJC, CASP is a valuable way of connecting with communities that are perceived as difficult to engage and hard to reach. It provides staff with a means to nurture relationships of trust that may be leveraged to support disadvantaged young people and their families should they come to court.

Importantly, should a CASP player offend, their connection to NJC enhances their accountability and improves their chances of turning their lives around.

Damian James notes that some of the kids he sees before the NJC’s Children’s Court are CASP players.

“When they get here they can put a face to a name. They arrive at registry and say ‘hang on, you’re Damian from soccer’. This eases a bit of tension, and adds weight to the seriousness of the offending and makes their behaviour a bit more accountable. I can have a discreet chat, and ascertain what supports they have in place and ensure they have a lawyer. I’ll even see if they’ve had breakfast. All of these small supports ease a bit of tension on court days.”
Strengths-Based Approach

The CASP case study highlights how community justice builds on the strengths and attributes of individuals, groups and communities. This is a divergent approach to mainstream correction and court models that tend to focus on the needs and weaknesses of individuals, a ‘label and blame’ paradigm that labels high-risk young people as ‘troublemakers’, ‘low achievers’ and ‘anti-social’, potential criminals. By comparison, the strengths-based approach values the capacity, skills, knowledge, connections and potential inherent in individuals and communities.

Community justice delivers initiatives that identify and build up the strengths and capacities of disadvantaged individuals, groups and communities. In doing so, it arms citizens with the tools and skills to deliver their own solutions to crime, conflict and public safety.

The Crime Prevention and Community Justice team holds as sacred that all individuals, groups and communities have strengths and resources. As such, the team works with the community to enhance these strengths. This means:

- understanding and respecting the needs and interests of individuals, groups and communities
- valuing the community as a rich source of resources
- viewing collaboration as a central practice
- believing that all communities have the capacity to learn, grow and change.

The team views strengths-based practice as a collaborative process between an individual, group or community and those supporting them. Principally the team concerns itself with the quality of the relationship, and fostering the most effective environment for collective initiatives to be delivered. In this way, the team ensures that each individual or group is involved in each process from planning and formal decision making to delivery.

Building Partnerships and Collaboration

Collaboration, underpinned by high levels of participation and trust, is core to the CPCJ team’s modus operandi, which means understanding that there many levels of participation, as Sherry Arnstein’s Ladder of Participation highlights:

- **Very low** – called ‘manipulation’ and ‘therapy’. The aim is to educate or cure.
- **Medium levels** – stakeholders play a more active role in planning, implementation and decision making, for example as ‘partnerships’.
- **Citizen control** – highest level of participation. Stakeholders hold all power and control.

Ultimately, community justice initiatives would aspire for citizen control, but given the nature of most criminal justice bureaucracies, this is often unlikely.

Our case studies highlight the high level of partnership and collective participation in a number of initiatives being delivered in Yarra and, as the reader sees, each project operates on a different level of participation depending on the:

- nature of the issue
- available resources
- environmental context
- capacity, interest and will of stakeholders involved.

This means that the CPCJ team’s role as a partner differs. For instance, the team’s role may be as:

- **Lead** – drive all stages of a project, with input and involvement from key partners and stakeholders.
- **Support** – provide advice, materials and/or funding, or attend events as a show of support.
- **Broker** – bring groups together.
- **Community capacity builder** – provide forums, workshops or training to encourage information exchange, professional development and local collaboration.
- **Participant** – take part in local or issue-based networks, forums, workshops and committees to foster understanding, build relationships, and provide information about the work of the NJC.
- **Host** – showcase and celebrate the identity and achievements of local communities by holding events and activities.


Advocate – champion the aims and outcomes of Yarra community justice work to government and community agencies.

Marjorie Casey, Community Participation team, Department of Health and Human Services, explains that the CPCJ team not only gathers intelligence, it shares information and finds appropriate solutions.

"[Hieng and Maree] spend a lot of time in meetings where it is not always clear what we are going to do. Theirs is a commitment to relationship building and working through curly issues that don’t always have an immediately apparent way to respond."

Building effective partnerships requires all stakeholders to explore and recognise diverse views and expectations, and understand myriad interdependencies and complexities, especially where there are power differentials. And all participants must acknowledge these conditions before work proceeds.

The next case study highlights a new initiative that seeks to take partnership building to the next level.

A new initiative for Yarra is the Communities that Care (CTC) Program, devised and run by CTC LTD.

A long-term program, CTC applies prevention science as the foundation upon which to craft prevention and early intervention programs to protect children and teenagers from harmful behaviour such as early school leaving, drinking, sexual risk taking and violence.

The CTC process is used by local service agencies — police, courts, schools, council, government and so forth — to identify, understand, develop and implement policies and programs for healthy child development.

The program is premised on the belief that no one organisation can tackle entrenched problems or issues; rather, community development requires “multiple organisations…from different sectors to abandon their own agenda in favour of a common agenda, shared measurement and alignment of effort”38.

Yarra CTC has already generated local data via surveying more than 600 Year 6 and Year 8 students. This data was supplemented with local demographic data, crime data, and information on the health and wellbeing of young people to provide a comprehensive picture of their issues and needs.

Based on this information, evidence-based programs are being implemented to address specific issues. Further surveys to be conducted in years to come will measure the effectiveness of interventions.

Addressing the root cause of issues, rather than managing behavioural outcomes, Yarra CTC is led by Yarra Council and involves police, government departments, many of Yarra’s primary and secondary schools, community agencies and the NJC.

Since 2014, NJC has been a leader in the program, contributing funding, staff and expertise.

38 Ibid.
CASE STUDY

Yarra Communities that Care (CTC) – a Collective Impact Approach

In 2013, the Yarra City Council held consultations to help develop the Yarra Middle Years Strategy 2014-2017. It found a lack of consistent data about the health and wellbeing of children and young people with which to inform program planning and delivery.

Yarra City Council Officers and the Victoria Police Youth Resource Officer (YRO) started to scope the potential to implement a CTC Program in Yarra. They met with Mornington Peninsula Council, which had piloted the first CTC program in Victoria in 2002, to get their advice regarding the benefits and value of establishing such a program. Mornington Peninsula had implemented targeted interventions for the past six years and was starting to see a reduction in young people’s alcohol and drug use and early sexual activity.

Yarra councillor Amanda Stone reports on the value of CTC, given the middle years is a neglected area in terms of children and youth services.

“Other than the early years, it is the most important time to catch kids who may be at risk and invest in their wellbeing as a preventative measure. It is a proven model. It’s well based with research. Yarra has a really good environment in terms of the number of services, and willing and interested groups to implement it.”

At the same time, the CPCJ team was increasingly aware that a number of local young people were disengaging from school and were at risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system. While the team had data drawn from Yarra Council’s consultation, local demographics and discussions with the police, not much was known about the risk factors for young people and their families.

NJC saw the value and need for a CTC program in the local area, and as such in late 2013, Director NJC, Kerry Walker, invited CTC’s CEO, Professor John Toumbourou, to present to Yarra Council’s CEO, the Mayor and local inspector Bernie Edwards. The NJC pledged to commit funds for a program leader for the next financial year, a crucial pledge for securing financial commitment from Yarra Council, which pledged funds in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 New Initiative Budgets to establish and implement the Yarra CTC Program.

CTC Program Leader Bella Laidlaw explains that young people face complex, entrenched problems that no one organisation or individual can address.

As she puts it, “in working collaboratively we’re aligning our efforts so that we make the maximum impact for the resources we put in.”

In 2014, Yarra Council held a number of engagement workshops and forums to identify program champions and generate stakeholder interest.

By the end of 2014, more than 22 key agencies from across Yarra were directly involved in CTC, including:

• City of Yarra
• Victoria Police
• Neighbourhood Justice Centre
• Cohealth, community health service
• Department of Health and Human Services
• YMCA
• Youth Support and Advocacy Service
• Mission Australia
• Drummond Street Services, family support agency
• Inner Northern Local Learning and Employment Network
• Brotherhood of St Laurence
• The Smith Family
• Kildonan Uniting Care
• Sacred Heart Primary School
• Fitzroy Primary School
• Austin Health, child and adolescent mental health service
• Headspace Collingwood, youth support service
• Berry Street, family and youth services
• Save the Children, Australia
• Polyglot Theatre, participatory theatre

By the end of 2014, a Key Leaders Group, Community Board and several working groups had formed, with collaboration agreements in development.
The CTC process comprises five phases from recruiting stakeholders and key decision makers, to implementation of the Community Action Plan. Critical to each phase is that stakeholders agree to a common agenda and purpose, and are in the program for the long haul.

Marjorie Casey, Community Participation, Department of Health and Human Services, says that consensus can make the process challenging.

“Things are slow...this is the nature of doing community-led work. ...It takes time. Everyone has to have a shared understanding, everyone needs to agree on what we are working towards.”

However, she says that the need for collective buy-in equates to strength in numbers, and she points out that Yarra is home to many professionals who already apply the community building approach to their work and so possess the program’s key traits of responsiveness and flexibility.

Developing a Collective Impact Approach

In February 2015, Sacred Heart Primary School in Fitzroy hosted the program’s launch. Over 60 representatives from community agencies, schools, Yarra Council, the NJC and the police signed a banner pledging their commitment to:

• Provide comprehensive data on the health and wellbeing of children that can be used to inform program and service planning and delivery and the implementation of prevention strategies.
• Provide a framework for organisations and young people to work together to identify and address the specific needs of children, young people and their families.
• Build community capacity to deliver effective child and adolescent harm prevention and health promotion initiatives.

To date 26 organisations are represented on the Leadership Group and the Community Board, the two governing bodies that drive the program.

This requires stakeholders from different sectors to:

• commit to a common agenda for change
• agree to solving identified issues by implementing agreed interventions
• share data and measurements
• align their efforts.

For many organisations, the program’s reliance on open and continuous communication, collective agreement and common motivations will be foreign, and some will need to adapt.

For the past two years, the NJC has funded the Program Leader role. In addition, the Centre’s Client Services Manager sits on the Key Leaders Group to give high-level strategic advice, Maree sits on the Facilitation Group that drives the program’s development, and both she and Hieng sit on the Community Board to give support and advice.

Being at the forefront of this initiative sits well with the NJC’s philosophical and practical commitment to creative problem-solving and community justice. As Laidlaw says, the NJC was an early adopter of the partnership, and it provides far more than financial support.

“[The NJC is] showing that the program is innovative, a new way of doing things and something the community should be supporting to make a difference in the lives of young people.

Leading Senior Constable Tony Brewin says the NJC’s financial support is an important symbolic gesture.

“I am really happy the NJC is supporting it. As a police officer I’m interested in crime prevention as a strong role of CTC. And health and wellbeing is a pathway to get there...Having NJC funding shows that it’s got that crime prevention focus.”

Yarra CTC – Building the Evidence

In the four months to September 2015, 632 students (357 Year 6, 275 Year 8) from 16 schools completed an extensive survey.

Based on the CTC Youth Survey, this survey gathered information on rates of health and social problems that young people experience. With questions ranging from substance use to diet and nutrition, the survey painted a picture of the risks and protective factors found in community life, schooling, family life and peer groups.
Ultimately, the survey results underpin the program’s work and in time, the young people will participate in finding solutions for many of the problems they spoke about in the survey.

At the time of writing this case study, CTC Ltd had presented a draft report outlining the survey findings to the governing groups for review. Local data will supplement the survey data to provide a comprehensive picture of the health and wellbeing of Yarra’s youth.

In the next stage of the program the governing groups will review all data and prioritise the risk and protective factors that target health and behavioural problems. This will be a complex and challenging process for everyone, and will test the robustness of their agreement to a collective process and outcomes.

Once priorities are identified, the Yarra Community Plan will be developed by CTC partners outlining an agreed plan for prevention work in the community. It is anticipated that the plan will be developed by mid-2016.

**The Challenges**

The program faces a number of challenges.

For a start, it requires long-term funding to ensure prevention strategies are implemented as planned in 2016.

Equally challenging will be securing ongoing commitment and collaboration from all stakeholders, particularly as political, service and funding landscapes will undoubtedly change.

However, the program’s stakeholder diversity is one of its main strengths, as a testament to the fact that collectively they have already:

- developed a common agenda and vision
- shared data and measurement systems
- agreed on priority areas for attention
- implemented evidence-based prevention strategies.

This evidence-based process is one the NJC is keen to see implemented across a range of initiatives in Yarra to further strengthen community justice work.
Leading by Example

Hieng Lim and Maree Foelz say the key to the success of their work is trusting people. As the manager of one of the Neighbourhood Houses said “they will do what they say they will do” and with integrity.

As Hieng says, “The most critical part for me is holding that relationship in place…and when I say I am going to deliver it, I will.”

They cite the following qualities as crucial to their success:

• establish a trustworthy reputation
• have integrity
• be approachable
• be responsive
• be productive.

An integral part of their work involves ‘walking the walk’, that is, to role model positive values and behaviours. This is especially important in times of conflict, for instance when dealing with challenging interactions and when things are not going to plan. Their roles require the capacity to reflect and critically evaluate interactions and behaviours, and respond to lessons learnt.

Critical reflection and learning are embedded in the culture and practices of NJC, and this allows the team to continually learn from and build on experiences working with community.

Both Hieng and Maree debrief and discuss issues and challenges with each other and with other NJC staff. This candour means they:

• work through issues as they arise
• challenge practice assumptions
• identify solutions to problems.

Given the demanding nature of the NJC’s work, debriefing in a supportive environment that encourages frank and fearless dialogue is critical for continuous learning. Debriefing also strengthens practice by identifying key areas of learning and development.

Fostering Communitarianism

Reducing crime and increasing public safety are not the only goals of the CPGJ team; it also seeks to foster the collective spirit as a way to enhance community life.

The team is involved in a number of programs that directly and indirectly change values, norms and standards of behaviour, as agreed to by community, for the common good. In emphasising the interest of groups and communities above those of the individual, the team challenges the thinking that frames the ‘traditional’ justice system.

This communitarian, or ‘collective spirit’, approach focuses on empowering communities to assert moral standards and values for themselves and for individuals to be accountable for their own conduct.

“Communitarians realise that in many communities less emphasis has been placed on developing moral values, and individualism has taken over as the guiding principle. They also realise that if members of a community begin to dialogue more with each other they would tend to find many items of acceptable behaviour on which they agree. Encouraging members of the community to abide by these agreed-upon principles would diminish the need for formal control mechanisms to control unacceptable behaviour.”

Instead of standards being imposed on them by the state or justice system, communitarianism focuses on communities developing the standards. However, a ‘collective spirit’ approach often requires commitment from agencies, local and state government and other institutions and stakeholders. A good example is Maree’s role as Chair of the Yarra Family Violence Network, a family violence prevention network of government and community organisations. Through the network, member organisations share information, and develop and implement strategies that reduce family violence within Yarra.

In the next case study, we turn our attention to the Living in Harmony project.

The first place-based primary prevention project in Australia, its goal was to reduce the prevalence of family violence by promoting healthy, respectful and equal attitudes and behaviours between men and women, boys and girls from culturally diverse backgrounds.

The project highlights the benefits of working with citizens to change attitudes and behaviour, rather than relying on formal mechanisms of control to impose change from above.

The NJC was a member of the steering committee and provided funding to the project.
CASE STUDY

Living in Harmony Project – Building Respectful Relationships in Local Communities

Identifying Local Issues

In 2009, community leaders from African, Chinese and Vietnamese communities living on the Collingwood Housing Estate spoke out about the issues around, and prevalence of, family violence in their communities.

What they had to say to the manager of the Collingwood Renewal Plan (a whole-of-government development program for residents of public housing) accorded with concerns raised by the police, estate security and healthcare providers: there was limited understanding of what family violence constituted, limited knowledge about the rights of victims and the consequences for perpetrators, and cultural and language barriers that prevented residents getting services and information.

Agencies also identified that for a variety of reasons, including cultural norms and values, many victims of family violence were reluctant to seek help from members of their community, including community leaders. As troubling, the number of family violence matters reported to the police by the CALD community was significantly lower than the state average. This anomaly was not indicative of lower offending rates, rather that they were unwilling to report incidents.

In 2010, Living in Harmony was implemented by the Yarra Family Violence Network (YFVN).

The YFVN set up a steering committee to work with the community to develop solutions. The steering committee comprised:

- NJC
- Victoria Police
- City of Yarra
- Office of Housing
- In Touch, multicultural centre against family violence
- Jesuit Social Services
- Collingwood Neighbourhood House
- Domestic Violence Resource Centre
- Office of Women’s Policy
- VicHealth.

NJC contributed an initial $40,000 to the project, which opened the door for additional funding from a range of agencies including:

- Department of Human Services
- City of Yarra
- Ian Potter Foundation
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria
- Inner North West Primary Care Partnership
- Melbourne Family Relationship Centre
- Rotary Club of Collingwood
- Victorian Multicultural Commission
- Women’s Health in the North.

Maree Foelz and Morgan Schultz (Manager, Local Solutions NJC, the forerunner to NJC Crime Prevention) supported the project from beginning to end. They chaired and supported the steering committee, led Yarra Family Violence Network discussions, and supported stakeholder consultations on the estate to identify and understand the issues the communities faced.

“There was a need for a place-based project… ultimately it became a very successful program that ran for over three years.”

– Maree Foelz, Crime Prevention Officer, CPCJ Team
Collingwood Living in Harmony Project

As stated earlier, the Collingwood Living in Harmony project (LIH) was Australia’s first place-based primary prevention project. Its goal: reduce the prevalence of family violence by promoting healthy, equal, respectful attitudes and behaviours between men and women, boys and girls.

Through LIH, community representatives from the six largest cultural communities — Vietnamese, Somali, South Sudanese, Ethiopian, Eritrean and Chinese — received intensive training then employment, to:

• understand the problems of family violence and its causes
• develop culturally and linguistically appropriate ways of tackling the underlying causes of family violence
• promote non-violent norms and value equal and respectful relationships between the men and women, boys and girls in their communities.

Initially 16 facilitators were recruited (four men, 12 women). When a number left to pursue other interests, take up other work, meet other volunteering commitments or for family reasons new facilitators were recruited and trained. In the end, LIH comprised eight ‘active’ facilitators (six women and two men) and four temporarily ‘inactive’ facilitators who had expressed interest in continuing with the project in the future.

Over 12 months, facilitators were trained and funded to work with their community to build healthy, respectful and equal relationships. To achieve these ends, they conducted activities tailored to meet the needs and interests of their respective communities. Activities included:

• father and child reading sessions
• women’s only bicycle and car maintenance courses
• circus and theatre workshops
• speakers at schools, local cultural networks and public events
• specific violence-prevention initiatives such as Week Without Violence and White Ribbon Day.

Feedback from facilitators proved the program increased understanding of family violence, changed attitudes towards gender equality, and enabled the community to feel empowered. As they reported:

“You have to prevent it [violence] before it happens.”

“Through this project we were able to further strengthen social connections.”

“I have a better understanding of gender equality and the help that is available for family violence victims… I have learned more about planning, organising and running a community event [and] gained more confidence in public speaking. There are many ways to promote primary prevention of family violence against women.”

“I learn good things, for wife and husband to be equal – I will teach my family, my children and my community.”

Key Learnings

An evaluation of the project found that the project had:

• demonstrated clear benefits to the facilitators in terms of their personal development
• highlighted an understanding of family violence, social justice, crime prevention, gender equality and community development processes
• empowered the facilitators to speak about family violence and the concept of respectful relationships
• inspired the facilitators to take on a leadership role in their communities
• opened ways for community members to meet each other by participating in the facilitator-led activities
• generally increased understanding about what respectful relationships were.

In addition, a member of the steering committee reported that the project was “brave and ambitious” and, above and beyond its stated goals, it provided the facilitators with pathways to future employment.

The evaluation showed that while there was some evidence to suggest that individual’s attitudes to equality and prevention of violence had changed, there was not enough evidence to demonstrate wholesale attitudinal change in the community. This was because of the lack of baseline data available on community attitudes to gender equality and family violence.
Stakeholders reported that they learned the following lessons from LIH:

- Knowledge of the locality was important.
- Place-based community strengthening projects can build community capacity to change attitudes and behaviours.
- Stakeholder and community involvement was crucial to the success of a project.
- Facilitators’ initiatives and ideas ensured that the project was innovative and successful.
- Greater flexibility was needed to ensure different levels of community participation.
- Baseline data and a project evaluation framework were needed at the start of the project to ensure a robust evaluation process.
- Messages of primary prevention of violence against women need to be consistent, repetitive, and ongoing.
- Action needs to be multi-pronged to ensure inclusivity, and to achieve long-term outcomes.

Sue Kent, Coordinator of the Collingwood and Richmond Neighbourhood Houses, said LIH was one of the most effective projects she had seen.

“Some of those leaders have gone on to community development employment, so it had some great outcomes. Those sorts of projects have wonderful tentacles. Some [facilitators] have wanted to continue the groups they have set up. It’s a good sustainable model—the tentacles go off. So in that sense it’s a really good outcome.”

Bich-Hoa Ha, Manager Community Partnerships & Programs North & Inner North, Cohealth, reported that the NJC, which was involved in all activities organised by the facilitators, took the lead in organising safety days on the estates.

“There was a strong mutual relationship. I commend the Centre for not only working with victims but getting involved in primary prevention. The NJC has been very supportive of our projects, mixing their approach and doing both the court work and primary prevention work.”

For the CPCJ team, the project opened up opportunities to work directly with, and learn from, CALD community residents living on the estate. Through participating in events, the team became known to residents, and thus built relationships of trust and confidence.

Since 2011 Maree Foelz has continued to work with the program facilitators and CALD residents on the estate via activities such as White Ribbon Day and a Week Without Violence. Her ongoing participation in community-led events helps to strengthen relationships between the CPCJ team and the community and increases the community’s confidence that it has access to the NJC when required.

Maree states that LIH enabled her team to strengthen its connection to communities it has previously never worked with.

“People know us and feel comfortable coming and saying ‘Hi’. It also enabled us to continue to build relationships with stakeholders through the steering group, and enabled strong partnerships to be formed that has led to other projects on the estate in relation to family violence being supported.”

The CPCJ team continues to support activities that prevent family violence on the housing estates and across Yarra, and to help increase CALD women’s access to family violence services.

Additionally, the team leads, facilitates and supports a range of family violence initiatives both internally across NJC, and externally with Yarra stakeholders, including:

- online Family Violence Intervention Order application form
- coordinated intervention order (IVO) service response, and IVO support for public housing residents
- participating in White Ribbon Day and Week Without Violence events
- chairing of the Yarra Family Violence Network
- membership of the CALD Men’s Behaviour Change Reference Group
- training Office of Housing, security and concierge staff on all three public housing estates across Yarra about family violence.
Leading Innovation

As all case studies have shown, the CPCJ team trials and tests new ways of thinking about and responding to crime, safety and conflict in communities.

The team is open to new ideas and ways of working. And it is led by the community’s and support services’ concerns, interests and ideas — a principle that requires having the flexibility, agility and openness to embrace new ideas and possibilities. It also calls for a willingness to test the boundaries of one’s own practices, and adapt to concerns or challenges.

Councillor Amanda Stone reports that she loves that the work the team performs is a huge safety net for Yarra.

“They never turn people away. They try and assist and engage. They take risks. Not risky risks, but they will get into new areas. They take risks with new projects to benefit the community, and venture into new areas of work. It’s just wonderful to have that presence in the city.”

Bella Laidlaw, Program Leader Yarra CTC, states that the team’s spirit of innovation and thinking of how to do things better or differently makes them valued leaders in the community.

An effective and fair criminal justice system requires constant innovating, and that means resourcing and supporting programs that may potentially fail41.

NJC understands this, and therefore provides the optimal environment for staff, partners and communities to reinvent responses to the challenges of crime and safety, and create sustainable and liveable communities collectively. And it does so by encouraging its staff to test the boundaries. Some programs or projects may be successful and others may not. This is absolutely fine—the centre is underpinned by the principle that reflecting on failures is “as a great teacher” as reflecting on successes42.

The next section highlights the CPCJ team’s reputation for leading innovation in crime prevention and community justice.

Feedback from external partners and stakeholders from a recent survey (see Appendix 3) indicates the team’s work is both highly valued and that the team members are considered leaders and significant agents for change in their field.

The feedback informs and shapes this guide. Moreover, it will inform future strategic planning for the team and the NJC.


42 Neighbourhood Justice Centre, Reflections on Practice: The First Six Years, 2012. pg.13
REFLECTIONS FROM KEY PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS
In November 2015, an online survey\(^43\) was distributed to over 60 key external stakeholders and partners who had worked with the CPCJ team over the previous four years. The survey was not to formally evaluate projects, but rather to gather feedback from stakeholders about their experiences of working with the team. The NJC wanted to understand the successes, challenges and outcomes of community justice work in Yarra from its stakeholders’ perspectives.

The 2015 survey findings were consistent with a survey undertaken in 2012\(^44\) with NJC’s key stakeholders. That survey sought feedback on NJC’s key areas of action that underpinned the community engagement approach at the time – crime prevention, community strengthening and justice education. It found the NJC had “achieved a high level of social legitimacy, is supported by its stakeholders and has found ways to work cooperatively with them to achieve common goals. It is well positioned to continue to use these principles and practices to expand its network and strengthen its community.”\(^45\)

NJC received 42 responses to the 2015 survey:

- 25 from government departments including Victoria Police
- 13 from non-government agencies
- four identified as ‘other’ or not affiliated with an organization.

The response rate of around 70% was considered excellent given the two-week timeframe for completing the survey.

**UNDERSTANDING THE PRACTICE**

Of those who completed the survey, 93% provided a description of the work the NJC team undertakes, a sample of which follows.

“Works closely with the community across a number of different initiatives, programs, and stakeholder groups, establishing close connections, pathways to support and improving social cohesion for all.”

“To engage and work with community members to build capacity/strengthen the community’s response to crime (prevention) in innovative ways, and create a safer more inclusive community.”

“The CPCJ team takes a holistic approach to community safety and wellbeing by bringing together traditionally disparate parts of the community and helping them work towards shared goals.”

\(^43\) See Attachment 3.

\(^44\) 2012 ORDA Survey Report, Socom, June 2012.

\(^45\) Overview of NJC 2012 ORDA Survey, June 2012.
These descriptions closely align with the principles of the CPCJ team’s practice. This indicates stakeholders are experiencing the work as it is intended.

“I would describe the CPCJ team as having a strong and effective working model...they get their hands dirty. Their model allows them to be responsive to community needs quickly and...take a more innovative look at responses to emerging issues. It is a very consultative model which always works in partnerships.”

“Collaborative – they have good awareness of the general local landscape. They are equally willing to lead as well as to partner. They are constantly present and seen as a reliable presence and partner whose commitment to the Yarra community is well established and has a demonstrable history and record of outcomes.”

“Community led/driven approach that enables a holistic approach to community safety. The individual team members are responsive and flexible, and able to respond to community concerns, the work is relationship dependent and driven.”

The survey asked respondents to rate the team’s:

- responsiveness
- open and honest communication
- facilitation for problem-solving and decision making
- ability to deliver positive outcomes
- ability to build robust partnerships
- innovative thinking about justice.

Eighty-one per cent responded to the questions with positive results:

- 85% agreed or strongly agreed the team proactively responds to the needs of the community; and that it builds robust partnerships with stakeholders.
- 88% agreed or strongly agreed the team’s communication style was open and honest, and that it facilitates opportunities for shared problem-solving and decision making.
- 92% indicated they agreed or strongly agreed the team delivers positive outcomes for individuals and the community.
- 79% agree or strongly agree the team leads new ways of thinking about justice.

### KEY OUTCOMES FOR YARRA

Stakeholders and partners were asked to identify the outcomes for individuals or communities in Yarra. Respondents highlighted a number of specific projects, including:

- Smith Street Working Group
- Smith Street Dreaming
- Yarra Communities That Care
- estate-based community safety forums
- family violence training on the estates
- Circus Oz hand 2 hand program
- White Ribbon Day events
- men’s behavioural change program
- Yarra Family Violence Network.

A number of respondents highlighted that short-term outcomes could be identified, but long-term outcomes were more difficult to quantify and measure. They also said it was difficult to fully assess the long-term effectiveness of programs because there were a number of factors at play. This will be discussed in more depth in the next section.

Key outcomes that were identified included:

- more enriched, inclusive and safer community
- better relationships with the Indigenous community
- creation of self-confidence and understanding of rights and responsibilities for community members
- building and fostering of community and agency partnerships and participation
- community capacity building
- Yarra safest and best during their history – assaults in and around licensed premises low
- improved social cohesion.

The team was seen as a valuable source of local information and a valuable partner and leader of projects across Yarra. The team’s knowledge, skill-set and experience was highly valued, and a number of respondents commented on its willingness to take risks and lead innovative responses to issues as they arose.
“It really complements everything Victoria Police is striving to achieve. The CPCJ doesn’t just provide lip service but their team members have been supportive of community initiatives by attending with friends and family during their own time. They are valued and well respected within the local Yarra community for their work.”

“The CPCJ provides further insights into the local community and the difficulties some of the local groups may face. I think the real importance of the CPCJ team is in providing information to Council about what might be the flashpoints and how to approach the sensitive issues concerning community justice.”

“An extraordinary value that is so large it is hard to measure. The CPCJ team brings a new way of working and the best relationship community champions from outside in to contribute to NJC’s overall success in crime prevention. The value is broader than NJC, it reaches far out into the community and its message penetrates changing people’s lives for the better. Where there were fractured relations resulting in terror and crime reaching far back. Now there is unity, prosperity, harmony, goodwill and peace moving forward.”

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES

Stakeholders were asked to identify some of the challenges they had experienced in working with the team. The response rate to this question was 72%, however just under half (43%) indicated they had not experienced any challenges in working with the team. Only 17% (five respondents) indicated they had experienced challenges working with the team and these related to:

- information not always being shared or communicated
- being very outcome driven and needing to commit to the process of working with communities
- limited resources and time poor
- lack of availability
- workload.

The remaining respondents (40%) outlined challenges relating to crime prevention and community justice work more generally. These included:

- challenges of working in broad partnership models in terms of timing and making sure everyone participates and is involved in the process
- process of relationship building not well understood by some stakeholders
- multiple organisational and political agendas involved in planning and delivering projects
- breaking down barriers
- restrictions of role and lack of mobility to work with the team
- size of organisation and leadership structure makes it difficult to have an agreed approach
- misunderstandings between stakeholders around territory and ownership of a project and acknowledgement of work.

As this feedback highlights, crime prevention and community justice work is time consuming, resource intensive, and it challenges traditional organisational structures and operations which tend to be hierarchical and authoritarian. This is not only a challenge for those working in criminal justice organisations, but also for those working in councils, community agencies and other government departments that operate within hierarchical structures.

Community-oriented approaches challenge these traditional ways of working. It requires an understanding of the multiple and often conflicting organisational and political agendas at play so that cross-organisational strategies can be developed.

KEY LESSONS

A number of recommendations were identified to improve the way the Crime Prevention and Community Justice team works with stakeholders and partners in the future. These predominately were in relation to:

- additional staff, mobility, resources and funding to expand the work they do and ensure they are more available to support the work of stakeholders
• more open and inclusive communication about the formal planning behind their work
• a more strategic approach to the delivery of projects
• more brokerage funding.

Overall the feedback from stakeholders and partners about the work of the team was overwhelmingly positive. It showed a good understanding of the principles and challenges of crime prevention and community justice work in Yarra. The team is viewed as a significant ‘change leader’, along with the NJC. Stakeholders clearly have an understanding of the complexity of its work, and the NJC is seen as a significant partner by both government and non-government agencies in Yarra.

“We think the team is very proactive, trustworthy, reliable and skilful in what they do. People know their abilities, and trust in these skills and experiences. Continue the great work.”

“They are fantastic at diplomatically dealing with a number of agencies with self-interested agendas. CPCJ brings a neutral connectivity to the table. They identify gaps and help connect all the major players to ensure the best outcome.”

“Only that I hope their practice continues to be an innovative industry ‘change leader’, along with the NJC more broadly. It would be a great shame for the team and the organisation to become drab in their practice and default to how things are ‘normally’ done. A great strength of the NJC and its various teams is their capacity to deliver new approaches to persistent or ‘wicked’ problems in crime prevention and community development.”
FUTURE DIRECTIONS
Community justice work in Yarra is still relatively new and has not been without its trials and tribulations. Working with diverse and disadvantaged communities is complex and challenging. Effective work requires time to build relationships of trust and respect. Many of the communities in Yarra do not trust bureaucracies (whether police, government agencies, or city council) as they have often had very negative and exclusionary experiences, either in Australia or their home countries.

The amount of time required to mend fractured and conflicted relationships cannot be underestimated. For collective dialogue and effective action, there must be an understanding of:

- the power dynamics
- multiple organisational and political agendas
- social, cultural and economic contexts.

All these underpin meaningful and effective collective action.

The past three years has been a time of consolidation for the CPCJ team. It is now at a stage where it can start to think more strategically about how to plan and deliver its work. It is also looking at how it communicates its practice both internally and externally.

Three key areas require further attention in the future.

- **Data and research** – as a number of the case studies have highlighted, there is currently a lack of available and consolidated data and statistics relating to things like:
  - health and wellbeing
  - crime and community safety
  - risk and protective factors for particular age cohorts
  - community groups in Yarra.

  Data is usually available on a state or national level, but often not collected or analysed at a municipal level. This makes it difficult to comprehensively understand local areas, neighbourhoods and communities.

  For example, local public health data is important because it gives health indicators for a local community. It also provides baseline data that can be used to assess the effectiveness of particular interventions.

  For some community groups in Yarra, defined as ‘hard to reach’, very little is known about their health and wellbeing status, or the social determinants of their health. Thus it is difficult to respond effectively to their needs. This information is required to understand the underlying reasons people may have for poor health and wellbeing. It can also shed light on the factors that may lead them to come into contact with the criminal justice system.

Prior to the Yarra Communities that Care (CTC) Program there was little information available about the risk and protective factors for children and young people aged 8-12 years. Implemented programs had not been evidence-based, and there were no rigorous evaluations in place to assess their effectiveness. The Yarra CTC Program provided stakeholders across Yarra with comprehensive data on the health and wellbeing of children. This can be used to inform future program and service planning and delivery. It will support the implementation of prevention strategies.

This approach is one that the CPCJ team is keen to replicate across other age cohorts and community groups in Yarra. It has identified a need to map current data in Yarra to provide a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the community. The information will inform the strategic planning, development and delivery of future crime prevention and community justice initiatives. It will also provide useful baseline data to monitor and assess the progress and effectiveness of particular program interventions, both during implementation and after the initiative is completed.
Strategic planning and development – the CPCJ team must define its strategic direction for the next three years. This will guide program planning, development and implementation. The strategic plan will continue to be supported by, and align with, the strategic vision and goals of the NJC. It will be developed in consultation with key stakeholders and partners across Yarra. The strategic plan will be informed by data collected across Yarra. It will provide the roadmap to navigate future challenges and opportunities to ensure effective community justice work in Yarra.

Evaluation – the CPCJ team and its stakeholders agree to the need to develop frameworks and methods to evaluate community justice initiatives. Methods for evaluating community justice programs are not well developed, which makes evaluating small-scale or specialist programs difficult. For example, standard program evaluation models traditionally require:

- well-defined and measurable interventions
- quantifiable measures
- known sample participants
- control groups
- well-defined and accurately measured outcomes

This is often difficult to achieve when evaluating a behaviour-change program. Factors can include:

- baseline data is not available
- there are multiple participant groups
- a range of variables may be present at community or individual level
- outcomes are not clearly defined.

PLACE-BASED JUSTICE IN NUMBERS

In the period since the NJC was established, crime rates in Yarra have fallen 31\%.\(^48\).

This figure comes from a comprehensive peer-review investigation by the Australian Institute of Criminology on the effectiveness of NJC’s community justice approach. The findings surprised even the NJC.

The AIC found that comparable inner urban local government areas saw declines of around 15\%, and LGAs with comparably disadvantaged populations saw crime increase upwards of 10\%.\(^49\).

The AIC found:

- 76.9\% of NJC’s clients on community corrections orders successfully completed their orders, compared to the state average rate of 40.1\%.\(^50\)
- 22\% of offenders on NJC-imposed CCOs classified as high risk, compared to the state average of 12\%.\(^51\)

According to the AIC, the only conclusion to draw was that “observed changes in crime rates are what would be desired from an effective community court in Yarra”.\(^52\)

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\(^{47}\) Ibid, 2015.

\(^{48}\) Ross, S, Evaluation neighbourhood justice: Measuring and attribution outcomes for a community justice program, Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice No.499, pg3

\(^{49}\) Ibid pg 3

\(^{50}\) Ibid pg 4

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APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANTS

The following people participated in the various aspects of the writing of this Guide, including those that gave their time to be interviewed:

- Bella Laidlaw, Yarra CTC Program Leader, City of Yarra.
- Bich-Hoa Ha, Manager Community Partnerships & Programs North & Inner North, Cohealth.
- Bronwyn Boyd, Housing Manager – Collingwood Residential Client Services, Department of Health and Human Services.
- Anonymous council officer, City of Yarra.
- Councillor Amanda Stone, City of Yarra.
- Damian James, Senior Registrar, Registry Team, Neighbourhood Justice Centre.
- Di Harris, Oonkas Boonkas and ex-President Smith Street Traders Association.
- Foti Margiolakis, Housing Manager – Fitzroy Renewal Project – Atherton Gardens, Department of Health and Human Services.
- Hieng Lim, Senior Project Manager, Crime Prevention and Community Justice Team, Neighbourhood Justice Centre.
- Kerry Walker, Director, Neighbourhood Justice Centre.
- Leading Senior Constable Anthony Brewin, Youth Resource Officer, Victoria Police.
- Leading Senior Constable Chris McGeachan, Youth Resource Officer, Victoria Police.
- Marjorie Casey, Community Participation, Local Connections North East Melbourne Area, Department of Health and Human Services.
- Sue Kent, Manager Belgium Avenue Neighbourhood House and Collingwood Neighbourhood House.
- Senior Sergeant Peter Beckers, Collingwood Police Station, Victoria Police.
- Ruyad Aden, Collingwood All Stars Soccer Coach and ex-participant.
- Troy Austin, Executive Officer, Northern Metropolitan Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee, Department of Justice.
- Wilson Poni, ex-Collingwood All Stars Soccer Program participant, and Yarra Young Citizen of the Year.
APPENDIX 2:
LOCAL SOLUTIONS PROGRAM

Local Solutions Program Model

Background

The Local Solutions Program (LSP) was a pilot crime prevention initiative developed in Yarra and Ballarat in January 2007. The main objective of the LSP was to “develop a coordinated, strategic and integrated approach to crime prevention and community safety that built on the existing capacity and infrastructure of two targeted communities: one in regional Victoria (City of Ballarat) and one in inner city metro Melbourne (City of Yarra)” 53.

From January 2007 to October 2007, the LSP was an initiative of the Crime and Violence Prevention Unit (CVPU) within the Department of Justice. The CVPU was funded to implement three connected initiatives from 2006-07 and from 2008-09. It aimed to:

- Reduce the proportion of 15-29 year olds that offend, through a range of programs and initiatives focusing on early school leavers, anti-social behaviour by groups of youth and diversionary programs.
- Reduce the rate of high volume property crime targeting:
  - theft of and from motor vehicles
  - residential, commercial and building site burglary.
- Build the capacity of local communities to develop and implement locally relevant crime and violence prevention activities 54.

Two Project Managers were employed in 2007 to work in Yarra and Ballarat as part of the Victoria Police Operations Coordination Department. The Local Solutions Program initially focused on crime prevention activities across four key areas in the ‘high crime locations’ of Ballarat and Yarra.

The aim of the LSP across Yarra and Ballarat was to:

- assist communities to develop local solutions to local property crime concerns in two high crime locations
- reduce the rates of victimisation and repeat victimisation from burglary and motor vehicle crime with a specific focus in two high crime locations 55.

The government considered a number of factors when choosing the pilot sites for the LSP, which included:

- levels of total crime
- burglary and motor vehicle theft rates
- ABS SEIFA Index of Disadvantage
- measured perceptions of crime and feelings of safety
- presence of supporting infrastructure for the positions
- presence of other government initiatives such as Neighbourhood Renewal
- representation of both a rural and metropolitan area.

At the time the cities of Yarra and Ballarat were experiencing disproportionate levels of crime.

“City of Yarra’s total crime ranking was 2 (1 =worst, and 79=best) equating to a total crime rate 150% above the state average” 57. Ballarat was ranked as 11, with an overall crime rate of 19% above the state average.

Both areas were also experiencing very high crime rates in regard to burglary and motor vehicle theft, high levels of

54 Ibid. 2008. pg.3
56 Victoria Police, Local Solutions Program Project Plan 2007.
57 Ibid. 2007. pg. 10.
disadvantage and perceptions of crime. Approximately 50% of the crime committed within Yarra was committed by non-residents.

Key areas of concern within Yarra at the time included thefts from motor cars, property damage, illicit drugs and public order. Yarra was also seen as advantageous as a location for the program in that it offered an opportunity to locate the LSP Manager within the Neighbourhood Justice Centre, which enabled resources to be shared, and enhanced referral options and earlier intervention. In addition, it also had two Neighbourhood Renewal sites at the time - Atherton Gardens Housing Estate and Collingwood Housing Estate58.

Key stakeholders of the LSP included:

- Victoria Police
- Yarra City Council
- Community agencies
- Department of Justice
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Planning and Community Development
- Department of Infrastructure
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

LSP Projects and Activities

Examples of the key crime prevention initiatives implemented by the LSP from 2007 to 2011-12 include:

- The Business Crime Prevention Kit - developed in partnership with Victoria Police and Yarra City Council, the kit aimed to increase safety for traders and their customers. The kit provided plain English information about how to deal with problems like theft, aggression, electronic fraud and suspicious activity. The kits were also translated into Vietnamese for the many Vietnamese retailers in Yarra. Originally distributed to business owners in Richmond, this was extended to other major retail strips in Collingwood and Fitzroy.

- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) Audits - the Office of Housing, Victoria Police, community members and the safety committee members from each of the three public housing estates worked together to address spatial safety issues identified by the community through a consultative environmental design process.

For example, the Collingwood Youth Space Project involved young people, the local Aboriginal community, local agencies, the Collingwood Office of Housing and estate residents. The project addresses key elements included lighting, litter, graffiti and improved relationships between local groups that historically had experienced minor tensions. The project used a participatory program response to engage at-risk young people and the local Aboriginal community living on or around the estate to create art murals that enhanced a sense of local community and pride of place, while also improving the perceptions of safety through environmental design changes.

- Community Safety Days and Estate-Based Safety Forums - run in partnership with Victoria Police and Office of Housing, these community forums were held with local community members to identify issues of crime, safety and conflict, and to work together to develop collective solutions to identified issues.

For example, in 2008 safety priorities were identified by the Collingwood and Fitzroy Neighbourhood Renewal Crime and Safety Plans, and safety projects were developed with local estate-based residents. Safety days held on each of the public housing estates have been held annually and information on crime and safety was distributed by key safety, service and justice agencies (Victoria Police, Melbourne Fire Brigade, Community Legal Centres, NJC and community agencies) at these events.

- **Taking Action Together: Responding to Illicit Drug Activity in North Richmond Project** - brought key stakeholders together in 2010 to identify and understand the contributory factors and impacts of drug use in North Richmond and to learn about innovative public health and disease prevention approaches. Further, the workshops explored and committed to practical strategies to reduce the incidence and impacts of illicit drug activity in the North Richmond community. Five action learning projects emerged to tackle consequences of drug use in North Richmond.
APPENDIX 3:
CRIME PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY JUSTICE – EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK SURVEY

The Neighbourhood Justice Centre (NJC) is a community court based in Yarra. The Crime Prevention and Community Justice (CPCJ) Team, formerly known as the Crime Prevention Team, consists of two staff: Hieng Lim, Senior Project Manager, and Maree Foelz, Project Officer. Both work with stakeholders and partners like you to deliver crime prevention and community justice activities across Yarra.

The NJC are interested in capturing the ‘lived experience’ of the CPCJ Team from their own experience, and from your perspective as a key stakeholder or partner in Yarra. This information will be used to improve the way the CPCJ Team works with you, and also to inform the development of a Practice Guide. The Practice Guide will be an innovative tool that can be used by community groups, agencies, service providers, council and courts to gain insight and guidance about what it means to do crime prevention and community justice in Yarra.

As a key stakeholder or partner that works with Hieng Lim and/or Maree Foelz, we want to hear from you about your experience of working with them, the types of activities you have worked on together, and gain your feedback on the challenges, successes and outcomes of undertaking this type of work.

This survey will take around 10-15 minutes to complete, and is confidential and anonymous. Anonymous responses from the survey may be quoted directly in the Guide.

Please can you complete this survey by Wednesday 18 November 2015? If you have any questions, or require more information about this survey please contact Cherry Grimwade on 9948 - 8736.

- Where are you from?
  Government (State or Local)
  Non-Government
  Other (please specify)

- Have you worked with the Crime Prevention and Community Justice (CPCJ) Team?
  - Yes
  - No

- Can you please describe the type of work the CPCJ does at the NJC?

- What type of activities have you undertaken with the CPCJ Team? (Please list all activities such as projects, events, networks, reference groups etc.)

- What was your role in these activities? (If you have worked on multiple activities, please respond for each one)

- What was the role of the CPCJ Team in these activities? (If you have worked on multiple activities, please respond for each one)

- What was the outcome of these activities for individuals and/or communities in Yarra?

- How would you describe the way the CPCJ Team works?

- What value does the CPCJ Team bring to your work?
• Please can you rate the following statements using the scale 1-5 (1=strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) to best represent your experience of working with the CPCJ Team.

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Unsure
Agree
Strongly Agree

• I have a good understanding of what the CPCJ Team does
• The CPCJ Team proactively responds to the needs of the Yarra community
• The CPCJ Team communicates openly and honestly
• The CPCJ Team treats me with respect
• The CPCJ Team facilitates opportunities for shared problem-solving and decision making
• The CPCJ Team delivers positive outcomes for individuals and the communities they work with
• The CPCJ Team treats all stakeholders equally
• The CPCJ Team supports the work that I do
• The CPCJ Team builds robust partnerships with its stakeholders
• The CPCJ Team leads new ways of thinking about justice

• What have been some of the challenges of working with the CPCJ Team?

What have been some of the successes of working with the CPCJ Team?

Overall, how could the CPCJ Team improve the way they work with stakeholders and partners?

• How likely are you to work with the CPCJ Team again?

Extremely unlikely
Somewhat unlikely
Don't know
Somewhat likely
Extremely likely

• Lastly, do you have any other comments and/or recommendations for the CPCJ Team to improve the way they work with you in the future?

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY

WE VALUE YOUR FEEDBACK AND IDEAS.

www.neighbourhoodjustice.vic.gov.au