



An Australian Government Initiative



## NATIONAL COMMUNITY CRIME PREVENTION PROGRAMME

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# Establishing and implementing CCTV in your local area

This tip sheet sets out information that will help communities to conduct a needs analysis and create a plan for the appropriate use of CCTV in their local area.

It also outlines the basic implementation issues that need to be thought through in deciding where to place CCTV, what kinds of systems might be the most useful and what the cost implications are. Evaluation is also addressed in this tip sheet.

*Prepared in partnership with the Australian Institute of Criminology*

### Initial steps establishing CCTV as a crime prevention strategy

Before establishing CCTV as a crime prevention strategy in a local area, the following steps are recommended:

- an analysis of local crime should be undertaken
- establish whether CCTV is one of a number of measures that are required to address criminal activity and/or fear of crime
- establish clear objectives about why a CCTV system is needed to:
  - effectively prevent or reduce crime in the area under surveillance (a deterrent for potential offenders)
  - improve sense of safety for general public in the area
  - providing evidence that identifies offenders and events
- involve a local crime prevention or safety committee
- undertake community consultation before, during and after planning and installation.
- identify the potential police role and interest and capacity for involvement. It is important to engage the people who will use the system in the beginning of the planning phase. Police particularly need to be involved as they will be asked to respond to incidents, to supply intelligence for installation and to make use of the images collected for evidence for prosecution later.

If possible, an initial trial of a CCTV system should be conducted. The trial may indicate if you need to modify or correct any problems.

### Key implementation issues

#### Costs

- The costs of CCTV can be significant, there is the initial set up cost and then recurrent operating costs. Systems that are actively monitored 24 hours will be the most expensive to implement and maintain.
- Technology is also changing and there will be further costs associated with updating the system, as new technology becomes available.
- Recent research investigated how local councils funded their open air or shopping mall systems. Twenty-two percent of local councils that had CCTV reported they shared the ongoing costs of CCTV systems with other organisations, with a business levy or rate being the most common source of this funding (IRIS 2005).

#### Legislation

- It is important to be aware of and understand the implications of state or territory legislation that may affect the usage of CCTV and any images collected. The relevant areas to consider include but may not be limited to privacy laws, human rights, data storage and access, and freedom of information provisions.

- Particular attention may need to be paid to any monitoring of private residences that may occur. The NSW guidelines suggest that in NSW no private residences should be monitored in the surveillance area without the residents' explicit permission (see [www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/cpd/ll\\_cpd.nsf/vwFiles/cctv.pdf/\\$file/cctv.pdf](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/cpd/ll_cpd.nsf/vwFiles/cctv.pdf/$file/cctv.pdf))

### Technology

- Skilled people who have knowledge of video production technology and the capacity to implement a CCTV scheme need to be involved in decisions about the purchase of equipment and in its installation and operation.
- There are two types of camera, static or PTZ (pan, tilt and zoom) depending on whether operator controlled or not. In general, operators prefer PTZ but it is more expensive as it requires many cameras with overlapping vision.
- Australian standards for CCTV are currently under development by Standards Australia and may be available publicly by the second half of 2006. There are British codes of practice that contain much of the technical information that needs to be considered and understood when considering whether a CCTV system will work in local situations ([www.bsi-global.com/Security/Electronic/BS7958:1999.xalter](http://www.bsi-global.com/Security/Electronic/BS7958:1999.xalter)).

### Type of coverage and level of monitoring

- In Australia most local government operated schemes involve less than 25 cameras, and have colour digital cameras. Six out of ten CCTV systems in local areas have less than ten cameras (IRIS 2005).
- The same survey of local councils revealed that a third of systems are monitored 24 hours and nearly a third of systems are not monitored at all.
- Decisions regarding density of cameras and camera coverage and positioning are crucial to an effective CCTV system. Technical expertise and police intelligence information should inform decisions about how the CCTV system is set up in terms of placement and coverage.
- Lighting is important. Some areas do not have adequate lighting at night for CCTV systems to be effective.

### Managing and operating a system

- It may be necessary to employ an experienced project manager with relevant broad knowledge and skills to bring together a diverse set of personnel to work together to plan and implement what can be a complex project.
- Where local government cameras are actively monitored, different type of personnel may be involved in monitoring, such as council staff, private security personnel, police and volunteers.
- Procedures need to be in place to cover the day to day operation of the system and data storage and access. Operating procedures are widely used to provide instructions to control room staff, to regulate program operation and the release of visual material.
- Police involvement in the monitoring process makes for stronger linkages between surveillance and responses to incidents. If the police are not directly involved in monitoring, there needs to be procedures and resources in place to ensure there is an appropriate response to incidents. No response will effect community perceptions of the effectiveness of CCTV and its deterrence value.

### Monitoring and evaluation

- Accountability and external review can include a complaints procedure, signage that alerts the public to the presence of cameras, and audit committees.
- The impact of the CCTV should be monitored over time, in terms of community safety and fear of crime.
- NSW guidelines recommend evaluation in the first six months of operation.
- An evaluation can include the following:
  - benchmark crime statistics for the area and adjacent areas for the 12 months leading up to installation time
  - crime statistics for the area and adjacent areas for at least 12 months after installation, to see if there have been any changes
  - data on incidents where a response was initiated and no official intervention was required (to capture other incidents other than those that would generate official crime statistics).

### Further reading

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