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16 August 2002

Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives Stand Committee on  
Legal and Constitutional Affairs  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Our Reference:  
Your Reference: Email: laca.repsGaph.gov.au  
Enquiries: 9391 3359

Dear Sir

**CURRENT INQUIRY: INQUIRY INTO CRIME IN THE COMMUNITY: VICTIMS,  
OFFENDERS AND FEAR OF CRIME**

It is with pleasure that I enclose a submission from the City of Gosnells in relation to the above.

In 1997 the City of Gosnells conducted an extensive survey of our community and found that security and safety, coupled with the fear of crime, was one of the two highest issues of concern which is why the City of Gosnells SafeCity Initiative was established as part of our strategic direction in establishing and maintaining sustainable and liveable communities.

The SafeCity Initiative has received many state and national awards and has been recognised as a benchmark for other local councils to use in the development of crime prevention programmes.

Should the Standing Committee be in Perth to hear submissions I would also like to extend an invitation for the members to visit and meet with representatives on the City of Gosnells to discuss further the points raised in our submission and provide an overview of the SafeCity Initiative.

If you have any further enquires regarding this submission please do not hesitate to contact the Manager SafeCity Mr Michael Coe direct on (08) 9391 3359.

Yours faithfully

STUART JARDINE

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**Submission from the City of Gosnells, Western Australia**

**to the**

**House of Representatives Standing Committee on  
Legal and Constitutional Affairs**

**Current Inquiry : Inquiry into Crime in the Community :  
Victims, Offenders and Fear of Crime**

**16<sup>th</sup> August 2002**

## **Background on the City of Gosnells**

The City of Gosnells is located in Western Australia, some 17 kilometres South-East of the central business district of Perth and has a population of approximately 86,000 people. The City is known for its great climate, pleasant residential living, markets, bush walks, wildlife parks and winery.

The City of Gosnells has an area of almost 127 square kilometres and continues to grow rapidly, with about 45% of the City area remaining to be developed.

In terms of Council itself, we are building a reputation for achievement and innovation. The City of Gosnells is the fourth largest local government in Western Australia, with the responsibility of ensuring delivery of a wide range of services to a diverse community. There have been significant changes in the Council to better meet the challenges of the 21st Century and the changing needs of our community, including a strong focus on customer service, an emphasis of more from less in terms of value for money and an even greater degree of consultation with the public.

## **Crime Prevention – Theory and Practice**

Crime prevention involves the creation and implementation of proactive programmes and strategies that are designed to prevent crime and address the fear of crime. Crime prevention can be placed into three levels. These being:-

- Primary – measures that are designed to take effect before crime occurs;
- Secondary – measures that intervene at the point where they actual or potential perpetrators are identified;
- Tertiary – measures that are practiced by the courts.

When approaching crime prevention there are two identified ways. These being :-

- Situational – the main focus of this approach is removing the opportunity, with individual, community and physical environment levels:
- Social – looks at measures which attempt to deal with those conditions and risk factors that increase the likelihood of particular individuals engaging in crime. It also includes measures designed to alter the social conditions which influence offending and perceptions of offending in a community setting.

Many academics and studies over years have shown that the building of social capital plays a major focus in the prevention of crime. Just as important are strategies and programmes that reduce the opportunity for crime to occur in the first place. The City of Gosnells *SafeCity Initiative* is very focused in addressing these particular areas.

## **Local Government and Crime Prevention**

Local government has been involved in crime prevention for many years. Initially this involvement was through some form of in-kind and financial contribution to not for profit organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch and Safety House. However in 1997 Western Australia became more involved in this area with its primary focus on the provision of community security patrols. Since the inception of security patrols from one particular local council other major metropolitan local council's have also engaged security patrols as their major contribution to crime prevention. Now though the industry has evolved where it is widely recognized that security patrols are only part of the "big picture" and that the outcomes from these patrols are questionable when related to the "perception" and "reality" of crime and the value for the funding of such services.

## **The City of Gosnells SafeCity Initiative**

### ***Introduction – What is the SafeCity Initiative?***

In 1997 the residents of the City of Gosnells were surveyed to ascertain the greatest needs of the community. One of the two highest needs identified was community security and safety. The *SafeCity Initiative* was created and is seen as a comprehensive community based crime prevention programme instigated by the City of Gosnells in 1999 to address this need.

The *SafeCity Initiative* is unique within Local Government as it addresses the issue of crime prevention from a community based holistic approach and accepts that crime prevention is not the sole domain of any one party. It utilises partnerships with government agencies, community groups, and business to address the various issues around crime prevention.

Crime prevention is approached from many different avenues, addressing the variety of elements that can lead to crime and the fear of crime. It is unique in Local Government in that the programme does not have security patrols as part of the initiative. Each area of need is addressed separately with the best options used to deal with the particular concerns of that area. The *SafeCity Initiative* is very focussed on reducing the opportunities for crime to occur, addressing the fear of crime and building on social capital to create a sense of community within the City of Gosnells.

The aspects of the initiative aim to raise community awareness of safety and security through publicity campaigns, workshops, specific events, community involvement and social capital building to attain a sustainable community. The *SafeCity Initiative* is a comprehensive programme with many sub elements. Each of these work towards a particular aspect of crime prevention but encompasses the overall ethos of the programme of community responsibility and involvement.

***Some of the programmes of the SafeCity Initiative are:-***

**Youth/Children Component** – The *SafeCity Initiative* funds activities at a local Youth Centre that include workshops, skills programmes and specific indigenous projects including a sports mentoring programme. The *SafeCity Initiative* also provides funding to the City of Gosnells Leisure to transform the centre into a youth only area on particular night events. The *SafeCity Initiative* also supports community groups to provide activities youth and also provides the primary schools with crime prevention educational programmes such as the Constable Care Puppet Shows and the *SafeCity* Education and Visitation Project.

**Safer Seniors Programme** –The *SafeCity Initiative* provides a series of workshops for Seniors that give them skills to improve their own safety and security. From these workshops Seniors are able to access Home Safety Audits free of charge to enable them to make informed choices about their safety and security needs at home.

Special events are also conducted that meet specific criteria regarding access, transport, security etc during the year in particular a special Carols by Candlelight for Seniors.

The City of Gosnells also produces a special monthly newsletter for its Seniors informing them of events, activities, safety tips and health information. Many seniors have been involved in various events, workshops, seminars and home audits which have developed and conducted in partnership with other government agencies, community service providers and community members. For example the WA Police Service, Dept. of Justice, Dept. for Community Development, Fire and Emergency Services, Rotary, Drug and Alcohol Council and many more.

**Partnerships** - The *SafeCity Initiative* works closely with many partners. The City of Gosnells recognises that crime prevention cannot be the responsibility of one organisation and actively encourages partnerships in all its projects and programmes. Part of the role of all staff involved is to foster and maintain these partnerships at every opportunity.

As crime prevention cannot be tackled by one agency/organisation alone, the *SafeCity Initiative* brings together in partnership many organisations, government agencies and individuals to enhance it's programmes and outcomes.

The issue of crime prevention can only be tackled in a collaborative fashion and this is being achieved through extensive networking and liaison with many individuals and organisations.

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**People In Parks** - Events are held at various parks throughout mainly the summer months. A variety of free entertainment is provided that helps bring the local people together to form a sense of community ownership and reclaim the parks and neighbourhoods for all. Over 6,000 people have attended People in Parks events since their inception in 1999.

**Anti-Graffiti Campaign** – A service provided to residents to keep the effects of this visual pollution to a minimum. The City of Gosnells has a zero tolerance policy by removing graffiti within 24 to 48 hours of it being reported. This has resulted in a more heartening look to the general appearance of the City.

**Safety and Security for people with disabilities** - A new programme developing information, workshops and seminars that specifically address safety and security needs as identified by people with disabilities who utilise City of Gosnells facilities and services similar to Safer Seniors. The programme is driven by the needs of the community and will develop further from feedback and input from people with disabilities.

**Awards** - The *SafeCity Initiative* has three annual awards which recognise people/organisations in the community who have made contributions to make the City of Gosnells a safer place through addressing crime prevention as an issue for their group, school or organisation.

**Neighbourhood Watch** - The *SafeCity Initiative* sponsors and promotes Neighbourhood Watch and encourages all residents to participate in this important crime prevention programme. The Community Police work in partnership with Gosnells District Neighbourhood Watch and the *SafeCity Initiative* .

**Indigenous Community Liaison Officers Services** - The Indigenous Community Liaison Officers provide a unique liaison and mediation service that acts as a buffer between the indigenous community and government agencies. Their philosophy is based on the principles of self-determination and work closely with the local community to provide local solutions. The eight officers are located in an identified “hot spot” with a role to identify the nature of any anti-social or disorderly behaviour and respond in a culturally sensitive manner. The programme is made up of a joint partnership and performance based contract between the City of Gosnells, Noongar Enterprise Aboriginal Corporation Inc. and Perth Employment and Enterprise Development Corporation Pty Ltd.

**Bright City** - A Christmas Lights competition giving the winner a prize of \$250; a plaque and a commemorative street sign encourages community spirit and the community really enjoys going out to view the lights around the City.

**SafeCity Urban Design Strategy** - The strategy is based on the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and is about examining the relationship between environmental and design factors and reducing the opportunities for crime. The Council commissioned a comprehensive study of crime and urban layout in the City and the findings show that design factors have an impact on security and safety. The SafeCity Urban Design Strategy examines ways to change the current and future built environment of the City of Gosnells to not only help reduce crime but to increase the sense of security and safety and change the community's perception of crime.

The SafeCity Initiative was developed to address an identified community need. It addresses the issue of crime prevention from a community level. It is a diverse and multi-faceted crime prevention programme that increases the sense of community, provides skills and empowers various sectors of our community but overall helps to reduce fear of crime within the City of Gosnells as a whole.

Our methods address crime prevention with longevity as a primary goal. To achieve a high level of sustainability, all aspects of the initiative are developed in collaboration with community groups and members of the community to reinforce the sense of community ownership and decrease the risk of any projects being unable to continue from lack of human resources. It also recognises and publicly acknowledges community groups, individuals and schools that encourage, maintain or initiate crime prevention strategies or projects.

The SafeCity Initiative takes a holistic approach to crime prevention and actively encourages other agencies, community groups and state government departments to participate. To enable the City of Gosnells to be successful in reducing the fear of crime, it is acknowledged that the need for collaboration is high.

### **Partnerships and Funding**

Many local government authorities today are providing both short and long term strategies to combat crime and to provide sustainability for their communities into the future. Unfortunately funding opportunities from both a state and federal level are limited and this in turn places enormous pressure on local council ratepayers.

The government, both State and Federal, need to examine closely the work and services local governments are providing to contribute solutions to the problems associated with crime and the pressure that is being placed on elected members to deal with this problem at a local level. Collectively it is estimated that between \$12 and \$20 million is being directly spent by the major metropolitan local government authorities in Perth on community security and safety and crime prevention. These figures do not include infrastructure costs such as wheeled sports facilities and other community facilities and events that communities are demanding.

### **Conclusion**

For many years it has been widely recognised by all three levels of government in Australia that local government is the closest level of government to the community.

If governments are committed about forming strategic partnerships with local government they must demonstrate this by providing sufficient support and funding sources to local council for community safety and crime prevention strategies, that is funding for the long term and outcome based strategies that stimulate social capital and sustainability. In addition from this, funds should be provided directly to the local council to administer funding/sponsorship to other community agencies and organisations that provide services for the prevention of crime and community services. In terms of accountability and local knowledge of these agencies and the funding that they believe to be of value to the community, local government authorities are better placed to administer these funds than any other organisation, even above a state and federal level.

***At the City of Gosnells we're taking a closer look at crime!***