



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Official Committee Hansard

**HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES**

STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL
AFFAIRS

Reference: Crime in the community

THURSDAY, 1 JULY 2004

GOSNELLS

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Thursday, 1 July 2004

Members: Mrs Bronwyn Bishop (*Chair*), Mr Murphy (*Deputy Chair*), Mr Cadman, Mr Kerr, Mr McClelland, Ms Panopoulos, Mr Sciacca, Mr Secker, Mr Somlyay and Dr Washer

Members in attendance: Mrs Bronwyn Bishop, Ms Panopoulos and Dr Washer

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

To inquire into and report on:

The extent and impact of crime and fear of crime within the Australian community and effective measures for the Commonwealth in countering and preventing crime. The Committee's inquiry shall consider but not be limited to:

- a) the types of crimes committed against Australians
- b) perpetrators of crime and motives
- c) fear of crime in the community
- d) the impact of being a victim of crime and fear of crime
- e) strategies to support victims and reduce crime
- f) apprehension rates
- g) effectiveness of sentencing
- h) community safety and policing

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Committee met at 10.21 a.m.

ABRAHAM, Mr Clive, Westan Aboriginal Corporation

NARKLE, Mr Cleave Lucas, Westan Aboriginal Corporation

JARDINE, Mr Stuart, Chief Executive Officer, City of Gosnells

MORRIS, Councillor Patricia, Mayor, City of Gosnells

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HARP, Mr Leon, Tenant Support Officer, Moorditch Koolaak Housing Service

AHNSTROM, Mrs Vibeke Elise, Private Capacity

CHAIR—I declare open this public meeting of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs' inquiry into crime in the community: victims, offenders and fear of crime. Since this inquiry was referred to the committee, we have taken evidence relating to many aspects of crime. Of particular interest has been the nature of crime experienced in local communities such as yours and the programs which have been put in place by community bodies to combat neighbourhood crime. We have found that, in responding to crime in the community, some councils and other groups have introduced some innovative strategies which are clearly making a difference. We are pleased to be here in Gosnells this morning to hear from you about your concerns and how you think the crime issues can be addressed.

Welcome. We will commence this morning's program by hearing from witnesses from various organisations within the community. We do indeed appreciate the invitation that came from the City of Gosnells, which was extended to the committee in its submission at the beginning of its inquiry, to discuss the initiatives by the City of Gosnells to combat crime. I am also delighted to welcome the local member for Canning, Mr Don Randall, who, when he heard of the submissions that had come our way, was very keen that we should come to Gosnells and hear about the things that happened in his electorate. Following the formal presentations that we are going to hear from Councillor Morris, the mayor, Mr Stewart Jardine, the CEO of the city, Mr Clive Abraham from the Western Aboriginal Corporation and from Superintendent Ross Napier from the Western Australian police, there will be an opportunity for the people who have come

along to make a statement that they think is important and that they would like the committee to hear. Although this morning we are not swearing the witnesses, I should advise you that hearings are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect as proceedings of the House of Representatives. The giving of false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of the parliament.

Mayor Morris, we will begin with you. Would you like to make some opening remarks? I was very impressed with the submission you sent in. There was some really good and innovative thinking there.

Mayor Morris—Thank you very much, indeed. As the first female mayor—and the longest-serving mayor—of the City of Gosnells, and as a civic leader of the city, I am here today to outline the innovative approaches to crime prevention and community safety in our area, which have received widespread recognition internationally, nationally and locally.

Our city has a population of 90,000 people. That is likely to grow by a further 26,000 in the next 10 to 15 years. The population is made up of individuals from over 72 different nations, all of whom call the City of Gosnells home. We have an awareness of the cultural sensitivities and the differences in our community, but across the whole of the community one issue that is paramount is community safety. I would like to point out that crime in this city is below the metropolitan average. I will table the latest comparative official crime statistics, which show a downward trend in most offences within this region. I will quote the local police:

This success can be attributed to a number of factors and innovative strategies that have been implemented over the past two years and are clearly bearing fruit.

In my view, one of these factors is the strong partnership between the city and the Gosnells police district. There is a memorandum of understanding which sets out clear roles for both parties, with the objective of mutually supporting each other to deal with community safety and crime issues.

By way of background, in 1997 the residents of the City of Gosnells were surveyed to ascertain what the greatest need in our community was. One of the two highest needs was identified as community security and safety. The SafeCity initiative was then created and is seen as a comprehensive community based crime prevention program. It was instigated by the City of Gosnells in 1999 to address those needs. The SafeCity initiative is unique within local government, as it addresses the issues of crime prevention with a community based, holistic approach and accepts that crime prevention is not the sole domain of one party. It utilises partnerships with government agencies, community groups and businesses to address the various issues around crime prevention. Crime prevention is approached from many different perspectives so as to address a variety of elements that can lead to crime and the fear of crime.

The program is unique in local government in that it does not have security patrols. We do not have these in our city as part of the initiative, and our community has clearly articulated to us that they do not want them. Each area of need is addressed separately, with the best options used to deal with the particular concerns of our area. The SafeCity initiative is focused on reducing the opportunities for crime, on addressing the fear of crime and on building on social capital to create a sense of community within the City of Gosnells. 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 program with many subelements. Each works toward a particular aspect of crime prevention but encompasses the overall ethos of the program of community responsibility and, clearly, the community's involvement. 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 programs. Part of the role of all staff involved is to foster and maintain these partnerships at every opportunity, as crime prevention cannot be tacked onto one agency or organisation, alone. Our SafeCity initiative brings together in partnership many organisations, government agencies and individuals to enhance the programs and their outcomes.

I would like to mention some of our programs. There is the Indigenous Community Liaison Officer Service. The gentleman on my left is a wonderful success story of this. He will speak to you shortly on his own group's behalf. The Indigenous Community Liaison Officer Service provides a unique liaison and mediation service and acts as a buffer between our Indigenous community, which is one of the largest in Western Australia, and government agencies. The philosophy of the service is based on the principles of self-determination. The service works closely with the local community to provide local solutions for families. The service's eight offices are located in an identified hot spot, with the role of identifying the nature of any antisocial or disorderly behaviour and responding in a culturally sensitive manner. The program is made up of a joint partnership and a performance based contract between the City of Gosnells, the Nyungar Employment and Enterprise Development Corporation Incorporated and the Perth Employment and Enterprise Development Aboriginal Corporation.

SafeCity Urban Design is based on the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design, which has a catchy acronym: CEPTED. It is about examining the relationship between environmental design factors and a reduction in the opportunity for crime. The council commissioned a comprehensive study of crime and urban layout in the city, and the findings show that design factors indeed have an impact on security and safety. The SafeCity Urban Design strategy examines ways to change the current built environment of the City of Gosnells. Not only has it helped to reduce crime but it has increased the sense of security and safety and changed our community's perception of crime. This work has been recognised as being of national importance. Dr Adam Graycar, the former Director of the Australian Institute of Criminology, described the study as innovative and a major contribution to safety enhancement.

Our 'Dob in a Hoon' campaign is a new joint venture between the City of Gosnells and the officer in command of the south-east metropolitan region of the Western Australia Police Service. Following a public forum at which concerns were raised about hoon behaviour, I approached the officer in command with the idea of running a joint operation known as 'Dob in a Hoon'. The campaign gives residents the opportunity to identify antisocial behaviour in our communities and provides residents with the opportunity to forward information through widely circulated leaflets and by emailing local police directly. That is another initiative that we have with the Gosnells police. It is called eWatch. In excess of 200 people are directly linked through email to give information. That is becoming very widely known and it is a wonderful innovation. The project has been well received to date. It is known within the community that action has been taken.

There are other projects, including the Safer Seniors project, where we conduct workshops and home safety audits. The home safety audits are done with a police officer and a FESA fire prevention officer. The needs of the people are recorded in a file and we advise them about what needs to happen. I have two folders with all the information on these programs, and I will leave them with you so that you can look at them.

We have a zero tolerance antigrffiti program. It has actually been in place since 1989 in this city and was groundbreaking for local government in Western Australia. The program has taken on partners, and we have a partner role with the Department of Justice in Western Australia, where people who have community service hours to do—fine defaulters or perhaps people with early work release orders—take on a role in this city and work under the supervision of our people and help with the greening out of our parks. We have got to almost a minimum of graffiti back on the fence lines of people's properties, because we are now painting them in a particular forest green, and we have found that by doing that we break down immediately the recurrence of graffiti. We also have a 24-hour clean-up of our community's fence lines, our own buildings and business and commercial premises. That is something we provide. We also have a hotline here.

We have a safety and security initiative for people with disabilities. It is called Safety Links. It would be the first, I would suggest, in Western Australia. It is something that is very appreciated by our people. We have a very strong branch of Neighbourhood Watch in our city here. The city pays half the cost of a coordinator for that program, and in the 2 to 2½ years that that lady has been advocating for Neighbourhood Watch she has increased the number of people joining by about 2,000. She is a very strong advocate. There are street representatives and managers, and they are very strong and committed in this community. Another initiative we have is called Beat the Burglar.

CHAIR—Literally?

Mayor Morris—We hope so. There are some in our community who would probably like that opportunity, but that is out of our hands. It is an innovation we have had just recently, and here is one of the brochures about it. You can see that it has the badging of the Western Australia Police Service on it. The initiative called Dob in the Hoon also has the badging of the Western Australia Police Service on it, so that makes it very official—from the police point of view and from our point of view. I think that shows a clear commitment—on our part and on the part of the police service in our area—to a meaningful partnership that calms our community down.

We have a people in the park program where we are encouraging our neighbourhood parks to be reclaimed by the families that live around them. We are also looking again at a lot of the landscaping in those parks, as part of our crime prevention and what we have done in local government. We have crime prevention workshops that are delivered to primary school children in their schools by an officer of this council. That is now also taking on local crime prevention. The police crime prevention officer is an outstanding young woman who is working collaboratively with us, and she goes into schools to speak to the children. We also provide around about \$14,000 a year to a program called Constable Care, which is a puppet show that goes into primary schools. We make that available to every primary school in this city, so that they have the opportunity to do that.

We have a mobile youth service to provide intervention in areas of risk, so that wherever those hot spots appear and are identified we can move support in there straight away to have a look at it. We also work very collaboratively with the YMCA and other external youth organisations like Mission Australia and the Smith Family. We have strong partnerships with both of those. The Smith Family is actually domiciled in one of our high schools here—Yule Brook High School—because when there is an advantage for our community that is exactly what we want to go out and get, to bring the best service into our community.

Sometimes you need to be very brave. Local government authorities are seen across Australia as somewhat conservative—not putting their toes into the water too often, but we do not take that view. We want a healthy and happy community that is proud of itself and proud of its own initiatives, so we are brave in a lot of the things that we do. I think you will agree from listening to what I have said this morning that many of our initiatives are ones that have commenced here. We are very pleased and proud to share our knowledge and our initiatives with other local governments and other agencies. I think an acknowledgement has built up in Western Australia that we are on the leading edge of a lot of the things that we do, and that is because we are brave enough to take that first step. It would sometimes be far easier to do nothing, but that is not the view that we have here. We feel that we have got a commitment to our community, and I think we are delivering as best we can at the moment. Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide this evidence. I will leave you with the detailed information kit that we have for you. It is with some considerable pride that I give this evidence to you this morning from the City of Gosnells. We are proud to be here and we are proud to provide this service to our community. Thank you.

CHAIR—Thank you very much, Councillor Morris, we appreciate that very much.

Ms PANOPOULOS—Thank you very much for your evidence. For those of us who have growing urban areas in our electorates, there are some initiatives here that councils right across Australia can look at. I was particularly interested in a couple of initiatives of the council. One was the urban design strategy. Is there information regarding that in the kit?

Mayor Morris—Yes, there is, but Mr Jardine is going to speak more about that in just a few moments. He is much more capable of explaining the intricacies of that than I am.

Ms PANOPOULOS—All right, I will wait to hear him. Is the memorandum of understanding between the council and the police unique? Do you know of any other areas that have engaged in such a thing?

Mayor Morris—To the best of my knowledge it is the only one, but that does not mean to say that all local governments or all local police services could not do that.

Ms PANOPOULOS—Do you have a copy of that memorandum of understanding in the kit that you are providing to the committee?

Mayor Morris—No, I do not think we do, but we could certainly get a copy of it for you.

Ms PANOPOULOS—That would be appreciated, thank you.

Dr WASHER—I think you have done yourself proud, Mayor Morris. I have bumped into you a few times in the past and have been impressed by you, as you know. You are very forthright and very capable. One of the programs that I will mention to you—my friend Don Randall advocated this strongly in the party room and we got it up—is the \$20 million National Community Crime Prevention Program. Have efforts been made so far to alert the people in the community that it would be appropriate to apply for some of this money down here?

Mayor Morris—Have we applied for that?

Mr Jardine—We have.

Mayor Morris—We have actually put in a very strong submission for that already on behalf of the community.

Dr WASHER—Don is going to be pleased. He fought hard for that, and so did I. That is great.

CHAIR—I think it is a good program because it is not one that goes through state governments; it is one that comes straight from the federal government to local community organisations, and we think that is a very good way to proceed.

Mayor Morris—From a local authority point of view, I would agree with that. We give an undertaking that we will come in on time, on target and within the bounds of the finance.

CHAIR—Do you have a figure for what it costs you annually to operate your zero tolerance antigraffiti program?

Ms Cochran—I can answer that. It is \$85,000, plus the vehicle costs of about \$35,000.

CHAIR—That is a pretty good expenditure of money, though, for your outcome, isn't it?

Ms Cochran—It is a very well run program, and a very committed officer runs it.

Mr RANDALL—I just wish to explain that the antigraffiti program the local government authorities, including the city of Gosnells, have taken on is as a result of the fact that the state-wide program was discontinued. I find it very disappointing that local government authorities have had to pick up the tab for graffiti programs, when there used to be a very effective state-wide program. It is an impost and a cost to local government, which I think is disappointing.

CHAIR—They did not compensate you with additional funding from the state government to make it up?

Mayor Morris—In my opening address I did say that we have had that program in this city since 1989. The state government program was introduced some time after that. That was extremely helpful across the state and the metropolitan area. It added value to what we were doing here already. The officers who were involved in it had direct contact with local government, including us. We did a video out here with some children, with the state agency at the time, but a decision was made to end that program. The local government authorities that

have the program within their own communities have continued it. It did make a lot of difference to a lot of local government areas. To have a partnership with the government in your state on issues like this makes it a lot easier for local government and the community at large.

Supt Napier—One of the programs that I look after within the police service is the Western Australia Police Ethnic Advisory Council. We have recently been considering issues to do with racial harmony and offences concerning racial hatred and things of that nature. Due to the effectiveness of the antigraffiti program that is currently running in the city of Gosnells, I have invited Councillor Morris to address that group to try to benchmark some standards across the whole of local government as to how we all respond to not only graffiti generally in its nuisance sense but also graffiti when it has another motivation. That meeting will be occurring within the next month, so we can establish some benchmarks, best practices and so on.

CHAIR—Just on that point, do you find a sort of continuum, if you like, in that people in the community who commit the small crimes also usually commit the big ones and that people who are sometimes involved in really offensive graffiti are probably doing a bit of break and enter too?

Supt Napier—From the evidence we have found over time, that holds true. Graffiti vandals, as they are known in this state, tend to operate in fairly large gangs—and I use that term advisedly. We have had people roaming the streets. Until recently I was the regional commander of the Peel district, which is part of Mr Randall's electorate, and we had people coming from as far away as the northern suburbs of Perth down to the city of Mandurah, which is some 70 kilometres south of Perth, to perpetrate offences. It is noted through the arrests of these people over time that they escalate from scratching tags on windows to intergroup rivalry and assaults and then later on to things such as burglary and other matters.

CHAIR—So if you could intervene with them early and take the pleasure out of the act of graffiti vandalism and maybe get them into some programs you could prevent the escalation of crime.

Supt Napier—Absolutely.

CHAIR—That was certainly Mayor Giuliani's experience in New York.

Supt Napier—The tags that a lot of the graffiti vandals use are very highly stylised. Part of the graffiti task force work within the police service was to take digital photographs and images of those things and use them for our intelligence base. Hence, we were able to track people from the northern suburbs who came down in the middle of the night and tagged a whole city. We were able to track them back to places in the northern suburbs. So that kind of very good intelligence-led policing and other initiatives which support the removal of graffiti, and therefore the tacit approval that can be inferred from leaving those things around the place, are very effective strategies in reducing those sorts of offences.

Dr WASHER—I get a gut feeling—and gut feelings sometimes work, although they do not always prove true—that if you have a city where you see lots of graffiti then the fear of crime, the reality of crime and the lack of social responsibility and engagement of that society that

Councillor Morris has spoken so strongly about here breaks apart. Would you comment on that? What is your gut feeling? Or do you have any facts to back that up?

Supt Napier—Mrs Bishop spoke to me earlier about the Giuliani experience. We can look at both New York and Boston and at things that Councillor Morris alluded to about crime prevention through environmental design, which is a more scientific way to the broken windows process that they had in places such as New York. If the community does devalue its own environs, it attracts a certain type of person and a certain type of behaviour. If the people within a community value who they are and what they are and where they live, that creates a different environment. When people value who they are, what they are and where they live, then they either take action to correct a problem or do not tolerate what is going on about them and take action against the person or group that is doing these things. Engagement of the community in crime prevention and crime reduction is of pivotal importance. Councillor Morris also alluded to the fact that this is not the role of a single agency, whether it be local government, the police service or elsewhere. I notice in your correspondence you talk about holistic approaches to crime prevention. That is probably easier said than done, because what happens is that the bureaucracy gets in the way.

From my perspective, after I leave this place today I will be chairing a meeting of what I have called the Community Safety Consortium, where I am pulling together heads of some fairly major departments, acting under Premier and Cabinet in this state and also the health department, to try and extract from them an agreement to work together on one causal factor of crime which is largely disregarded in this community. If we look at all the work of Professor Tim Stockwell to do with drug strategies that shows that one of the largest issues to do with crime and its causation is alcohol and the adverse effect it has on the community. Yet when we look at where we target money and resources we see that it tends to be more at high-end drugs: heroin, cocaine, ecstasy, cannabis—all of those things. But if we actually look at the adverse effect of a drug on the community, then alcohol has to be ‘it’. It is readily available, it is abused and it is available to young people as well as to those who are more socially and economically able to have access to it. I have coined a phrase for an initiative we have—I am calling it ‘drink is the link’. If we look at domestic violence, family violence, child abuse, road trauma and the commission of various types of offences, whether they be fairly trivial or otherwise, in a large percentage of those offences alcohol is the underpinning, actual cause. It is available to young people and people throughout the community. That is a difficulty.

CHAIR—This concentration on alcohol has been put before, but what we are certainly seeing in evidence that we are taking is that methamphetamine is really a growing drug problem. It is going to be very problematic for us because it can be created in backyard operations and it can have catastrophic effects in terms of making people far more violent. We have taken evidence that, where a person would commit the crime of going into a shop, holding up the owner and stealing some goods, you are more likely to find someone under the influence of methamphetamine is going to go in there and shoot the bloke just because they can and because they are high, or you might find that an arm will get hacked off. It is the sort of violence that you do not see without the influence of drugs. We must not downgrade the importance of the Tough on Drugs campaign we have.

Supt Napier—But it is about whether we should be less strident in our attempts to reduce that. You will not be able to see it from there, but indicatively this is a chart that was put together

by Tim Stockwell about the impact of various types of drugs. The bottom line here is the things to do with hard drugs and their effect on the people. It is an escalating role up here. This is hard drugs, tobacco and so on and then up here is alcohol. Unfortunately alcohol is far more readily available. Methamphetamine—and, yes, it has devastating effects—still costs a lot of money to get hold of and it is still, in a clandestine sense, illegal and therefore not readily available. We can go down to supermarkets and steal or buy alcohol. We can get alcohol in our parents' cupboards and so on. Consequently, with school age children particularly, if we look at the issues and the propensity for crime, again we are talking about fact and fiction. The people who are most offended against and the people who commit the most offences—

CHAIR—Are young men aged 17 to 25.

Supt Napier—are young males, absolutely. That is where we are at. These people have access to alcohol and are the people who offend against women, offend against the seniors in our community and so on, yet if we look at where we have intervention alcohol does not rate very highly.

CHAIR—I think it was quite important that we saw a High Court decision come down the other way, saying that you have to take responsibility for your own consumption of alcohol and you cannot say, 'I was drunk; therefore, you can't hold me liable.' It was a very important decision we got the other day. It might send a strong message. Perhaps we might move on. One thing that you did say to me earlier, Councillor Morris, is that you had been utilising people who did not pay their fines, people who were given community service orders and the like in your graffiti program. Could you quickly say something about that and then we will go to Mr Jardine.

Mayor Morris—Just before I take that offer up, I would like to say that in part our zero tolerance on graffiti is about being really innovative. A lot of these people start off quite young. Anybody who has children growing up knows that you cannot say, 'You can't do that,' unless you give them an alternative. We have given these young people an alternative through our urban art program, which we run at a dedicated youth area under supervision, and we allow these young people to use their creativity. We have had competitions in the past with our bus shelters. We have said, 'No drugs and no violence, but the rest is open,' and we have actually turned that right around. We were getting messages from young people. They had to nominate and we turned that right around by the young people themselves saying, 'Don't drink and drive; you're a fool if you do,' and these sorts of things. It is just about having the opportunity and, as I said before, being a bit brave to try some of these alternative things as well.

With our program that we have had in this city for at least 15 years with our local Department of Justice they have what we call a sessional worker that goes with the group. It could be 15 or 20, or fewer. We have had what we call the river enhancement scheme, where they have come into this city and cleared the edges of the banks of the rivers of introduced species like pampas grass, blackberry and those sorts of things. That has allowed our own people to get down there and mow, so that our families can get close by and enjoy the river. Also, they have done what we have called the greening out program, where they have come in and painted all around the fence lines. Quite by accident, we found out that with this particular colour we have very little recidivism in that area whereby the illegal graffiti comes back. We value that service very much. It has enhanced our community measurably. Whilst we are the fourth-largest council in this state, we are the 13th in terms of finance, so we do not have the extra money to provide programs. I

guess this is seen as being quite creative. This has been a magnificent partnership. We have our own staff supervisor that works with the sessional worker. The director of infrastructure and I meet with them every three months, with the department, to see that things are travelling along. I must say it has been hugely successful in this city, and we are grateful for the opportunity.

Mr Jardine—Community safety and the community's perception of public safety are primary factors in the liveability of an area. Communities throughout the world have indicated that they want liveability in their areas, which, put simply, means simply asking the question in any community: is it clean, green and safe? Recent Australian research consistently identifies safety as a high priority for all sectors of the community. In fact, the Australian Institute of Criminology in February this year stated that local government was one of the key players in the development and implementation of community level crime prevention and social resilience programs. We agree with that. We think that local government can have a key role in community safety.

On this point, I urge the federal government to continue providing funding to targeted community safety and crime prevention research. In our view, reactive responses are not the solution. By way of example, a large number of local governments in Western Australia are spending millions of dollars on security patrols, although to date there is no evidence to suggest that this significant funding leads to an actual reduction in crime. In 2003 an independent resident survey was carried out in the City of Gosnells. It had a 95 per cent accuracy rating—that is, confidence level. The community was specifically asked whether or not they would be prepared to fund, through rates, security patrols, given that they had little influence on overall crimes rates but may improve the perception of safety, and 68 per cent of our residents indicated that they were not prepared to pay any additional rates towards security patrols, and hence we do not have them.

As you heard earlier, the city has taken a more innovative approach to dealing with community safety, and I will flag as an example of that, in response to a question you raised, our safe city urban design strategy, which we see as providing a long-term benefit. We have over \$1 billion worth of development taking place over the next 15 years in our Canning Vale and Southern River areas of the city. In simple terms, the smart planning of these areas has included leading practices in urban designed community safety. We carried out the largest urban design study in the Southern Hemisphere. This involved Murdoch University carrying out observations over a 24-hour period. We overlaid that observation study with the crime statistics for two years. That observation study looked at an individual property and whether it had a wall around it, whether it backed onto fencing, whether it was in a cul-de-sac. The findings of that study proved, through empirical evidence, that there is a direct correlation between certain types of urban form and crime. That meant, in simple terms, that for cul-de-sacs backing onto parks and for houses with large walls around them you could have an incidence of burglaries that could mean a difference of over 30 per cent, which is regarded as significant. That research was independently assessed by the Institute of Criminology, which supports the findings. We find it very useful for long-term planning of developing areas. It is something that we would urge other local authorities to look at, especially those with growing populations.

Walled estates, which lead to greater crime opportunities—one of the major findings of that research—have been discouraged, decreasing the fear of crime and promoting walkability, which have significant ramifications for community health such as childhood obesity—a current focus

of the federal government. What we mean by that is, if passive surveillance allows a community to enjoy walking along the street, that helps community health and wellbeing and also strengthens communities. That is why we have urged developers to drop those walled estates and we have been fairly successful in that.

CHAIR—You are saying that the walled estates create more crime?

Mr Jardine—Yes, we are, and we have evidence to support that. The other interesting aspect is spin-off from this. There was a reluctance in the development industry, but they have had a greater return on the investment. One of the first estates which decided, after negotiation with the council, not to go ahead with walls has proved to be one of the most popular. That is the proverbial win-win situation: a win for the developers and a win for the community. Where there are walls—and in some instances you do need them—under our strategy they would be allowed as long as they are permeable and you can see through the wall. You might have an insert or some sort of treatment to allow that to happen. Large walls around estates that are not permeable we actively discourage because we think walls are a factor in crime.

On another aspect, the city has entered into a partnership with state government to improve the liveability of the Kenwick and Maddington suburbs, known as the Maddington Kenwick Sustainable Communities Partnership. This multifaceted initiative includes a proposed community safety study. Partners include the WA police, the Department of Community Development, the Smith Family and Mission Australia. The project aims to understand and address the perception and incidence of violent crime and victimisation within the Maddington and Kenwick regions of the city. As a preventative rather than a reactive measure, this community development safety initiative, through capacity building and strengthening families, aims to address community safety concerns in those areas. It will target particular vulnerable sectors of the community, including the aged and youth. Again, our research has demonstrated that significant numbers of the community avoid evening activities due to perceived community concerns. That is something that a lot of areas in Australia face. What I mean by that is in the evening seniors tend not to go out because they perceive there are safety issues. We have also found that various age groups among the youth, maybe the younger ones, go out to a certain time but after that they will not because there is a perception that older youths may be involved in some sort of assault. We are going to carry out a study to get evidence to support what we have been told by residents and then we are going to look at solutions to improve that situation.

CHAIR—That is quite an interesting point you raise. It is the chicken and the egg: older people feel more at risk than any other group in the community, yet statistics say they are in fact less vulnerable. I always ask the question: is that simply because they stay home because they are fearful and therefore they are not subject to the muggings?

Mr Jardine—That is an interesting debate, but what we want to do through research and hopefully with support from the federal government is find out exactly what are the issues, based on empirical evidence, and how we might treat them. We all have a view and a lot of it appears to be commonsense but in actually tackling the issues and using scarce resources to deal with them, I think we need evidence in support. We are pleased that the federal government have a number of programs and have allocated funding. We urge you to continue those programs.

CHAIR—Have you had a measurable outcome from your program of home safety audits?

Ms Cochran—That is not a figure that can be collected, because it is a preventative role. We are in there preventing the perception. You cannot measure it, and to claim a measurement would be a very difficult thing. What it is doing is actually accessing seniors' homes and advising them of the things they need to do. Having a policeman, a fireman and someone from the health department and local council come into your home is reassuring. We are getting a lot of feedback from that.

CHAIR—That is good.

Mayor Morris—They put a smoke detector in the house immediately if there is not one there. They are donated by a local Rotary club.

CHAIR—Are they battery ones or permanent fixtures that are wired in?

Mayor Morris—I think they are battery ones.

CHAIR—Make sure that you follow that up so that the batteries do not run down.

Ms Cochran—I would add that we have a program where the volunteers go back and replace them.

Dr WASHER—Most smoke detectors, if they are of any value, use nuclear energy. They have a radioactive isotope which activates them.

CHAIR—They are the ones that are wired into the electricity, aren't they?

Dr WASHER—The ones you see flashing are the same as exit signs—they are run by nuclear power.

Supt Napier—If I may, Chair, can I comment on a couple of things that Mr Jardine raised. The issue to do with fear of crime is certainly a huge one for the police service. You have touched on a number of issues. The security appraisals matter is a very sound initiative, but recently there have been reported cases where, because of the fear of crime, people are barricading themselves into their homes. As a consequence of that, people have been dying in fires because they cannot get out. It is also symptomatic of the same siege mentality that members of the community have that the walled suburbs have been in growth over the last 10 or 15 years.

I made a presentation last year to the seniors expo down in the city of Mandurah. It was all about healthy lifestyles. Indeed, Mr Jardine was talking about appropriate issues of exercise for both the young and the seniors. Certainly it is an issue that we as a responsible community need to be looking at. Seniors need to be made aware, firstly, that the opportunity for them to be offended against is fairly small. In fact, the crime that they are most likely to have perpetrated against them is fraud and not violence or burglary and so on. I was speaking to some of our media colleagues here today and saying that some of the reporting that goes into offences against the elderly is to some large extent irresponsible. The amount of angst that that causes for our seniors within our community is enormous. The long-term effect of poor reporting on our seniors

is on their state of mind and their state of health. Again, it drives them in behind locked doors, as you have alluded to.

CHAIR—We cannot get into censorship, although there is one thing I would like to see. When the media like to talk about an elderly person being beaten up or in an accident or whatever it is, I would like them to start using that term when the person is at least 85. That is about the time you can start describing people as elderly. They can be older Australians up to there, if you like, but I think the term is used as a pejorative and we ought to stop doing it.

Supt Napier—Indeed.

Mr Jardine—Just following up on the issue of walkability and passive surveillance and getting people out on the streets and improving safety and perceptions of safety from that point of view, when the federal government Roads to Recovery round 1 was announced, this city took the decision that it would have a 20-year footpath program for an area which was about the same size as greater Paris. We simply could not afford to put those footpaths in in a shorter period of time. But, using federal funding, we have reduced that program from 20 years to four years. It has been very successful. So we targeted that. We could have spent it on other issues but we spent it on the footpath network. It has just over a year to go and the feedback from the community has been very encouraging. If you go around the city today compared to four years ago, people can actually walk with their prams along shared paths and it has been an excellent use of federal funding. So I would thank the government for that one.

CHAIR—That is a good point. So it is a foot road?

Mr Jardine—Yes. It is a community road.

Dr WASHER—Do cyclists use the same path or is it just for pedestrians?

Mr Jardine—It is dual use. Nowadays they are called shared paths. We have golfers. If you go into the town centre just around the corner here, on the footpaths you have seniors using golfers. There is even a golfer shop down there to get people around and about. With the wider footpaths, with a bit of consideration everyone can use them.

In terms of the study we flagged that we aim to carry out on victimisation and violent crime within our Maddington and Kenwick areas, another aspect of that, again, from results that we found from the community is that the industrial and commercial areas of the city are perceived to be areas that you do not go to in the evenings. It sounds like commonsense, and probably is, but as part of the study we are going to have a look at why there are such negative impacts and whether there is something we can do about that. It might be as simple as a tidy up or it could be lighting. We do not know at this stage but we certainly intend to look at that. This week, the city has made an application for funding from the Commonwealth National Community Crime Prevention program. This funding will be critical to the success of the study and we would like to think that we would get support for that.

Another initiative that we are looking at, which will have an impact on community safety, is a comprehensive multimillion dollar submission that we are currently developing for the Commonwealth government's Stronger Families and Communities Strategy Local Answers

program. We see that this will improve the quality of life of many of our residents. In a moment I will ask Adelle if she will briefly take you through how we see that Local Answers program working for our city.

Finally, from my point of view, I would like to stress that whilst the City of Gosnells has an unacceptable level of crime it is not in the top 10 crime hot spots of the metropolitan area of Perth. However, the city is serious about working with the police, the community and other key partners to address community safety problems with local solutions in a cost-effective and sustainable manner.

Ms Cochran—With regard to the Local Answers program, it is great to see a funding round that does not make one size fit all. The City of Gosnells community has a long demonstrated history of connecting together to make things happen and that is how the City of Gosnells does business. Both the mayor and the CEO have talked about that, and there are tangible examples of partnerships that they have spoken about. The Local Answers funding criteria are tailor-made for communities such as the City of Gosnells which has already done the social research about the community and its services. In doing that research we have identified the gaps in service delivery, but we have also identified the opportunities for us all to link up with other service providers and communities. That way we will be able to maximise the output of the funding and minimise the duplication because we are not repeating each other's work.

The City of Gosnells already have the communication systems but we have also got the service delivery culture. As the mayor was saying before, we have gone outside the normal way of doing business. A lot of that can sometimes be put down to budgets but it is also about knowledge and resources. Why should the city have a fire prevention officer when FESA has already got one? If we link together we could actually do twice as many home safety audits. If we are successful in getting this funding, we will be undertaking the doing bit. We will actually be out there with the community linking up. Initiatives such as Local Answers funding enable, and in some cases make, local communities and local service providers share and link to increase their outputs for their community.

A cost-benefit analysis is really difficult and, Chair, this is like the question you asked before about the preventative stuff. A cost-benefit analysis on social programming is impossible; it cannot be done. Just from economies of scale, one has to think that, if you are not employing an admin officer in every single organisation, it has got to be better for the community and better for the outputs. That is where the linked-up services are coming from and that is the way the City of Gosnells does its business. There are a lot of examples of things that the city is providing that would not have happened and we could not have given to the community unless we took this approach. It is not just the dollars; it is the knowledge, the capacity and the resources. So Local Answers funding is exactly what communities like Gosnells can maximise, and the community will get the maximum benefit from those dollars should they come from the federal government.

Mr Abraham—We have been around for eight months now. We try to keep the druggies and sniffers off the street. If anyone is arguing, we walk with them, talk to them and try to calm them down. We support the community or anyone—we are there to help with anything. If a car breaks down on the road we are there to help push it off. If anything comes up we are there to help. We

set a good example. We know all the shopkeepers now and have good friendships with them. We are even working with the police.

CHAIR—You mentioned sniffing. Is there a problem with sniffing?

Mr Abraham—A few of them come down here sniffing but they are from other suburbs.

CHAIR—Other areas?

Mr Abraham—Yes. A couple of times a week they might come this way. We try to talk to them and try to get them away from here. There might be nothing we can do—we just try to talk them out of it.

CHAIR—So in this area itself you do not have any local community people who are into sniffing? They are people who have come in?

Mr Abraham—We had a little group here but they have given it away now. It is excellent that they did that.

CHAIR—How did you convince them to do that?

Mr Abraham—We explained how it affected their brain. They do not do it anymore.

CHAIR—Did you get some help to do that?

Mr Abraham—No.

CHAIR—You just got in and did it. You said, ‘Hey, these are the rules.’

Mr Abraham—Yes.

CHAIR—Well done.

Mr Jardine—I think you are being modest, Clive. It is fair to say that before this service came into operation the town centre of Gosnells was experiencing quite a lot of antisocial behaviour at the lower end of the scale where you got people hooning around, going into shops and just making general mischief. These things are multifaceted. We had a 49 per cent vacancy rate in our shops. It was not a particularly attractive place to go. One of the issues we found was that people were disturbed by that antisocial behaviour. But since the Indigenous Community Liaison Officer Service has come into place, that has virtually dropped to zero. It has made a huge difference. It is one aspect of it, but it has played a major part in getting business confidence back into that town centre. The vacancy rate, from 49 per cent four years ago, is now at 10.4 per cent. It has made a significant difference.

CHAIR—That is terrific.

Mr Jardine—We have to commend the service that is run by Clive and his colleagues.

CHAIR—That is very well done, Clive.

Mr RANDALL—I would like to ask a question of Clive, if it is proper to do that, Chair. What sort of relationship do you have with the local police, Clive, and what point of contact does this organisation have with the local police to make this effective?

Mr Abraham—When we get a bit of trouble we just go around and have a yarn with the Aboriginal Police Liaison Officer.

Mr RANDALL—I asked the question because, in some of the other local government authorities in my electorate, they do not have exactly the same close relationship you seem to have. That is some of the feedback I have had from local businesses further up in Armadale, for example. They are suffering a good deal of harassment and are very frustrated by it. This is a good example of how it can work.

Mr Abraham—We go around just about every second day and have a yarn with the police there. They are there to help.

Ms PANOPOULOS—I note that you have quite a few of your members in the audience. I recognise them by their very stylish bomber jackets. Quite a few of them are young. How do you involve young members in your organisation? Are you successfully involving younger members in your organisation to help you?

Mr Abraham—When we are walking around, we give them a lot of experience. We show them how to communicate and talk. They just pick it up. We do not push them ahead; we keep them behind as we are doing our rounds.

Ms PANOPOULOS—When you do your rounds do you have a lot of younger members of the corporation helping you out?

Mr Abraham—Yes. Sometimes we work in twos and sometimes we go around in threes. It all depends on the day. If it is a busy day, we work with three.

Ms PANOPOULOS—Do you find it more successful, if you are dealing with young offenders—for want of a better term—to have younger members of the corporation with you?

Mr Abraham—Yes. There are a few young fellas in heaps of trouble. That is why we like to have a few young ones there who think like them and can talk to them.

Mayor Morris—Chair, I would like to correct something I said earlier. When we originally started the program it was with the enterprise people. Clive and his group are now with the Westan group. They represent a nucleus of the very first people we had here. It was groundbreaking stuff. We all learnt a lot from that. They are very patient. It was not universally accepted within our town centre. At one time there was a pause in the program, and we now have a direct contract between the council and the group. While there was some caution originally, we were very quickly contacted by people in the town centre to ask what we had done to upset them so that they were not there anymore. We were able to say that we were now making the contract directly.

One of the things that we have noticed with the reports that we have as part of our memorandum of understanding with our local police station relates to the number of call-outs—they have greatly diminished in lots of cases—and just the absolute confidence across the town centre. Clive and his group often do a tour around here. They are very distinctive; everybody knows them. From our point of view, they have been a marvellous success. Clive and the group—everybody in that group—are held in the highest esteem by us all.

CHAIR—That is very good. So it is not a night patrol as other people have thought of; it is just the fact that you are there as a presence to assist, and the community backs you up in that.

Mr Abraham—That is right.

Dr WASHER—Just to remark on your comment, Mr Jardine: you are saying that safer communities also become more affluent communities?

Mr Jardine—Yes.

Dr WASHER—Absolutely. Mr Abraham, what sort of age group are the young folk that you get out there? Are they truants from school or people who are unemployed? Can you tell me a bit more about the profile of the people you meet.

Mr Abraham—Most of those who give us a bit of trouble now and then are in school. Sometimes they miss school, and they come around this way sniffing. They are mostly aged under 15.

Dr WASHER—So do you have any luck in getting the kids back to school? I know that is not part of your role, but do you have a gut feeling about whether it is the same group and whether we can get the kids back there? What can we do to help in this?

Mr Abraham—That is something we are trying to work on—how we can get them into a program or something for the sniffing, to try and get them to stop before it gets too bad. That is something we think about.

Mr Narkle—I am a local community officer. Years ago when we first started, we had transport to take young kids back to their parents. A lot of these young high school kids are supposed to be at school but they are wagging school and meeting in certain areas. We used to take them straight home to their parents. A lot of parents do not see what is going on on the streets, but we see it every day. At the moment, we have not got any transport to get the kids off the streets before trouble occurs because we have not got the money to get something like that.

We try our best out there, and a lot of parents that we talk to do not realise what is going on. We are out there every day seeing all these things happen. We would like to get them home or get control over the situation before it gets out of hand. We could warn the kids and have a good talk with them and they will go and jump on a train or something—but we have no transport. We have got a lot of young kids out of glue-sniffing and everything, but we have to be able to do something for them before the trouble gets too far out of hand, which it is now: it is getting too far out of hand. Sometimes when we go to the local police station they say they cannot do anything about it. Then it comes back to us. If we had transport, we could deal with it.

CHAIR—Are you talking about something like a minibus or something of that nature?

Mr Narkle—Yes. We need something to help us out because we have only just started out. We are not on high wages or anything like that; we are on trial now, from what I have heard. Sometimes we wonder why we are out there, when people are not trying to give us a bit more support than we are getting now. At the moment we are really not getting that much support. We need more working hours because we are working for the dole, more or less, and we are not getting enough hours to be on the streets when all these things are happening.

CHAIR—Thanks very much. That is helpful.

Ms Cochran—This is exactly what I was talking about with the Local Answers funding. We are very aware that this group needs a vehicle and we have put in funding grants, but the city cannot supply that vehicle. Local Answers funding is exactly what is required for communities such as Gosnells. Where the need is realised we can link into these communities that need a vehicle and we can work out where to house it, where to put petrol in it, how to insure it and how to get drivers. That is your Local Answers funding option; this is what we can do if we get the funding. This is the information. We are very aware of these issues, so that can be done.

Dr WASHER—So, Adelle, basically at the moment the problem is displaced rather than engaged and fixed. In other words, we are pushing people across borders or boundaries to some degree.

Ms Cochran—That may occur. I have not got any evidence of that. We were talking earlier about school programs and truants. We do run a school program, and it is the linking up of those programs. It is an intervention program for children who have a long-term truancy history with a goal of either putting them in paid employment or back into school. We link up with TAFE and the education department. But it is about having those extra resources to link up what Mr Abraham said earlier and to have that person independent and linking throughout all these different organisations. We are acutely aware of these requirements. It is getting the extra resources that is important. We have the foundations; we just need to build on those. As I said before, because the foundations are already in Gosnells, the federal dollars that come will go straight into service delivery; they will not go into administration and research or setting up systems and programs. We did a city life community wellness study, and that brought out and highlighted a lot of these issues.

Mr RANDALL—What Adelle Cochran said in relation to support through Local Answers is correct. I know this is a mission from the city, and we are very optimistic about the future of it, but it is also my experience that there are other sources of funding for transport, such as equipment grants, and I encourage those as an avenue. I would like to add to the argument that both Mr Abraham and the other gentleman have made by pointing out that the group that Mr Abraham heads deals not only with Indigenous people locally but with other groups of people in the community. So it does not have just a single issue or a single focus.

CHAIR—Are you referring to the small equipment grants program?

Mr RANDALL—Believe it or not, while small equipment grants can be for anything from an overhead projector to a microwave oven, I have also been in a position to announce grants for

small eight-seater buses in other parts of the electorate for age care et cetera. So I am sure this program would be appropriate.

CHAIR—It is another good program.

Supt Napier—There are some other matters that the panel may not be aware of. In my recent job as the district commander of the Peel district I was concerned about truancy and behaviour management in schools and, as a consequence of that, approached the regional director of education in relation to those matters. To cut a long story short, it was discovered through that process that there was no standardised practice within either primary or secondary schools for truancy management and its processes and systems or for behaviour management.

At the moment in the Peel and the Fremantle education districts what is being trialled is a standardising of practices in relation to bullying in schools and behaviour management generally. It is linked to the truancy issue, with a view to getting better intervention and understanding about who is truanting and why. It also links outwardly to the community with the Stronger Families coordinators appointed recently and the child protection family violence officers within the police service appointed as a result of the Gordon review in Western Australia. We are trying to get a holistic approach to providing a better system to understand why bad behaviour, bullying and truancy happen in schools and to be able to intervene either within the school or, if they occur outside the school, to wrap around existing systems and resources to provide a better answer. Looking at the holistic approaches that you are considering, that program should be launched later this year within those two education districts. It is headed by the director of student services for the education department in Western Australia. That may be of some interest to you and others here today.

Mrs Thomas—Good morning. I work with the organisation DRUG-ARM. The DRUG-ARM office is based in Armadale, but it provides a service in the south-east corridor. When you were talking about the truancy program, I thought it was important for the panel—and some of the panel is aware of it already—to know that DRUG-ARM has been running a truancy program since 1998 for this corridor. Mayor Pat Morris is aware of the program. What is lacking is more funding to provide that service for the wider community.

Our program is workshop based. We are providing workshops in woodwork, metalwork and mechanical work. We are providing all of those tools to improve the behaviour of the young people. We can take only six to eight people at a time. We are seeing something like a 68 per cent success rate in that program. Earlier on a gentleman asked what percentage of kids were going back to school. How we work is that we take students who are truanting, or the school identifies the kids to us, and we work with them for 10 weeks. Within that program there is a literacy and numeracy component and a counselling component. When the student has been in our program for five to six weeks we link them back to the school so that they spend perhaps a half day at school and 4½ days in our program. That then improves into one or two days at school and three or four days in the program and eventually by the 10th week a half day in our program and 4½ days at school. We are seeing that program run very successfully.

Unfortunately, the program cannot continue to receive funding because the kids come to us from a cross-section of people. They can be kids from the education department, from the ministry of justice or from the Department of Community Development. I keep knocking on

doors and I keep hearing from the departments, 'This is a fantastic program; it would suit the education department,' or, 'It's a fantastic program; it would suit the crime prevention part.' This is one problem we are seeing. Mayor Morris is very much aware of it. She worked with me on this program and is seeing how things are happening. Senator Chris Ellison came to tour our program. He saw the success of the program, and he provided one-off funding of \$70,000 two years ago. This is one excellent program. Because of the lack of funding, we are finding it difficult to provide the program for a wider group of people. This program is not just for Aboriginal kids. It is for non-Aboriginal kids or any other kids who are in need. By the way, two years ago we received the crime prevention award in this corridor for this program. It is so sad to see that we do not have the funding to continue. Thank you.

Dr WASHER—I get a bit excited when I hear there are some solutions and when I hear about people doing proactive things. You got one lot of \$70,000 from the federal government, but obviously you must have some form of recurrent funding for this.

Mrs Thomas—That is one problem. The recurrent funding is not happening. I sent a submission to every minister in the federal government. We recently got some funding from the Prime Minister's department and from the Mentor Marketplace to appoint some mentors to work with these kids. However, we have the money for mentors but we do not have money for the program. I really do not know which door to knock on because I have knocked on every door. Mayor Morris is aware of that! We keep talking about this program, and we are looking for suggestions as to which door I can knock on. Every person behind every door I knock on says, 'It's a brilliant program.' Nobody says that the program is not good. A number of state and federal ministers came to see that program working and worked with the kids and saw how the program operates. It is a unique program.

CHAIR—Just to get it straight: you have money for the mentors—

Mrs Thomas—We have money for part-time mentors to work after hours with these kids.

CHAIR—but you do not have the money to run the program, which is providing the wherewithal for your woodworking, your metalworking and so on.

Mrs Thomas—Thank you. We received gap funding in January to run up to yesterday. As of today I do not have any money. I have six kids in the program, by the way. I do not have money to run the program. This is the problem I am facing.

Ms PANOPOULOS—When did you start the program?

Mrs Thomas—In 1997 we did a pilot program.

Ms PANOPOULOS—You got funding for that pilot from?

Mrs Thomas—We received the funding from the Gordon Reid Foundation and from Safer WA. That is where Mayor Morris got involved.

Ms PANOPOULOS—So with the pilot program you got money from a private organisation—

Mrs Thomas—That is correct.

Ms PANOPOULOS—and from the state government.

Mrs Thomas—From the state government we had the Safer WA program in Western Australia. That continued up until two years ago.

Ms PANOPOULOS—The funding from the state government that started with the pilot in 1997 lasted up until two years ago?

Mrs Thomas—They did not decide on recurrent funding. We continued to pester the department but we just got one-year funding every year until the end of December last year.

Ms PANOPOULOS—So it was not recurrent funding—it was year by year?

Mrs Thomas—That is correct. It was under the Safer WA program. We also received some one-off funding from the Department of Justice and some funding from the federal department of justice.

Ms PANOPOULOS—So federal government funding was a supplement to fill in the gaps where you were not getting enough state funding?

Mrs Thomas—That is correct.

Ms PANOPOULOS—Were you given any reasons in December last year why you would not receive another year's funding?

Mrs Thomas—Because that was one-off funding from the Department of Justice. They had some money left over from the previous financial year. They decided to give it to us at that particular time.

Ms PANOPOULOS—So the state government said to you that from 1997 it was just a pilot program and that they were finding extra bits of money to give you?

Mrs Thomas—The 1997 pilot program was funded by the Gordon Reid Foundation—that is funding from the Lotteries Commission of Western Australia—supplemented by the Safer WA program in the south-east corridor. That was for the pilot program. We went back to Safer WA with the results of the pilot program and we received two years funding. At the end of the two-year period there was no more funding—that was last year. At that time the Department of Justice gave us one-off funding. The Attorney-General's Department in Canberra gave us \$70,000 to supplement that program. That funding finished in December last year.

Ms PANOPOULOS—You have received an award for this program?

Mrs Thomas—That is correct.

Ms PANOPOULOS—Presumably the objective of having pilot programs is to see which ones work so that they can become permanent programs?

Mrs Thomas—That is right.

Ms PANOPOULOS—Was that your understanding when you started?

Mrs Thomas—Absolutely.

Ms PANOPOULOS—So basically what has happened is that you have had a pilot program, it has been successful and has delivered results to local community, it has won awards and the state government has stopped funding it.

Mrs Thomas—The state government never agreed to give recurrent funding. It was always giving one-off funding.

Ms PANOPOULOS—But they supported the pilot program?

Mrs Thomas—Absolutely, yes. We have been asked whether we could accredit the program. We cannot accredit the program. We are providing tools to improve behaviour rather than providing skills to make a table. That is not what it is. They are using the skills to improve their behaviour. So it is really difficult to accredit how well the behaviour has changed. If it were a program in table making or in a mechanical area we could accredit that program.

Ms PANOPOULOS—What was the award that you received?

Mrs Thomas—It was a crime prevention award from the federal government.

Ms PANOPOULOS—Thank you.

Mrs Thomas—That is the truancy program. There is also the problem of alcohol and drugs. The core program of DRUG-ARM WA is in the drugs and alcohol area. Even though our office is located in Armadale, the services are delivered to the south-east corridor. We have a residential program for sniffing. We work with young people who have a problem with sniffing volatile substances. We accommodate the kids overnight in a sobering-up centre. From there we work with them. We have counsellors and other people working with them. We work and support this corridor in Gosnells, even though we are physically located in another area.

Ms PANOPOULOS—Excuse my lack of knowledge about what is happening over here in the west.

Mrs Thomas—I have tried to explain what our experience is.

Ms PANOPOULOS—You have done extremely well, thank you. Does the Safer WA program still exist?

Mrs Thomas—No, it does not.

Ms PANOPOULOS—So that does not exist and the graffiti funding does not exist?

Mrs Thomas—That is right.

CHAIR—When did the Safer WA program lapse?

Mayor Morris—At the end of March.

Mrs Thomas—This year.

CHAIR—When did it start? Was it under the previous government?

Mayor Morris—Yes, it was.

CHAIR—So those two programs were started under a previous government and they have been stopped under this one.

Mayor Morris—That is correct.

Ms PANOPOULOS—You must be extremely safe, then, if the program stopped.

Mr Jardine—Not necessarily.

Dr WASHER—I would have thought that between state and federal governments, who are responsible for education, truancy would be a critical issue to address not only for educational reasons but also for the antisocial reasons that are going to be created by that. Sadly, the kids of today who are on the streets and not being looked after become the problems of tomorrow when they become adults. It is our responsibility at all levels of government to do something about it. This city obviously has been very good. But when I hear of programs like yours, which I did not know about, that do not get funding to address a vital issue such as this I feel very sad.

Mrs Thomas—Thank you. I have got a list of kids waiting to come into the truancy program. Can you believe that? There are kids on a waiting list to come into a truancy program. That is the saddest part of it. A difficulty is that the kids who are coming to us do not have a straightforward truancy problem only. They might have drug and alcohol issues, and they might have criminal issues in their lives. They might be homeless. There are all sorts of things. These people have a combination of different departments helping, so it is easy to pass the buck from one place to another.

CHAIR—Presumably, some of these kids have been suspended from school.

Mrs Thomas—Absolutely. Some of the kids are suspended. The school, a psychologist or somebody may have identified a kid and then they contact us. This is the sad part of it: we have the resources and we have a program, but we do not have the staff members to provide the service needed in the south-east corridor.

Mr Jardine—Susy Thomas has articulated very well the case of a successful program that is struggling and does not have certainty. It goes back to the issue of the synergies that we think local answers can provide if we are successful with a project through federal funding. That would enable good projects like the one we heard Susy talk about to have certainty for a four-

year period. We are not asking the federal government to look after that, but we would see that as part of the overall partnership. It would make a significant difference to this community.

Mayor Morris—I have known Mrs Thomas for years and have worked very closely with her on a lot of the initiatives in our city. I commend to you Mrs Thomas and her organisation. They provide a magnificent service in areas that are probably the most unpopular within a community. One of the great difficulties when money does become available—and this is certainly the case under the Safer WA program as well; that did provide communities like ours with an opportunity to test a lot of these initiatives—is that there is never any evaluation built into it at the end. These organisations need the money to run the programs. They are so busy running the programs that they should not be the ones to do the evaluations. When money is being made available to community groups, I think there is a responsibility for the state or the federal government to have a component of evaluation in that. If that were done, in a very short amount of time at the federal and the state level you could pick up immediately the programs of excellence, which could then be put into other communities. But, if organisations are struggling to run the programs and they are struggling to find the money to run them again the next year, they are already being diverted from the very programs that are giving excellence in a community. If there is one thing that the committee look at in the end, can I ask that you seriously look at this situation.

Supt Napier—I would like to add my support for that. Having been, as I said, a regional commander and now being responsible for crime prevention programs right across the state of Western Australia, I can say that the single biggest issue for all the well-meaning organisations and individuals out there is the fact that they live day by day, month by month, year by year. They can do absolutely fabulous work and they can make severe inroads into crime and fear in the community, but, at the end of the day, they will fold up because there is nothing further. We have no mechanism at the moment to, exactly as Councillor Morris was saying, go from a program to recurrent funding on something that works. There must be so many great initiatives that are dead on the ground out there somewhere.

CHAIR—I understand the problem when a pilot program is running and then you turn it into a recurrent program. But, from what I have heard, it seems to me that if the Safer Western Australia program were a fully fledged program and not a pilot—

Supt Napier—I could explain that. The Safer WA program was an initiative of the state government. It came in under the Court government some years ago. It was a community based executive which worked out of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and there was a structure that worked through community based district committees, which also had interagency committees—I was one of the managers that used to sit on those—and localised committees, which used to sit at the local government level. Through that mechanism were isolated issues of common interest and significant interest, and through that process funding was made available, via the state government, to fund programs. Again, the issue there was that it was year by year, day by day.

I think Mr Randall would support me in this. There is a program in Mandurah known as Streetnet. It is a multiagency response which looks at a number of police officers working with council people, youth officers, the health department and others. It has been working since about 1997. Last year they looked at some 2,500 young people who were homeless, disaffected,

unemployed, unemployable, the sick, the injured—you name it. That is still funded on a program level. Year by year, they have to run around trying to find funding, and yet the proof is there to say that this is an effective intervention.

CHAIR—The only point I was making is that they were fully fledged programs, they were not pilots, and the efficacy was that the method of funding was annual budget funding.

Supt Napier—That is correct.

CHAIR—What you are looking for is a rollover of funding over a three-year period, or whatever it is, in these programs.

Supt Napier—The mechanism that Councillor Morris articulated was: here is a pilot, here is an evaluation—a decision point about whether it should go on and a mechanism of saying, ‘This works.’ There are so many localised programs that work which other people in other areas do not know about. The sharing of the knowledge, the learning and then making it work in other areas are critically important. That supports the issue that local government should be the hub. They are closely linked with their community, they know what happens and they can make things happen at the local level. In my role, I can then develop programs to assist local police officers, local communities and local community groups to deliver what they need to deliver.

Mr Harp—I work at the Moorditch Koolaak Housing Service, which is basically across the road. My role is being the tenant support officer with the local agency. We deal with homeless families, couples with children, single parents, and a range of people who have problems with drugs, alcohol, and so forth. We also work with the local security people, including Clive Abraham. We try to access our APLOs. It is very hard for me to access them at the present time, obviously because they might be snowed under with work. I could only suggest—and I do not want this to be a whingeing session—that some of the APLOs walk the streets with the security patrols, because that would give an outlook to these young truants to say, ‘These people are working together.’ With truancy and the problems with our people, and by that I mean the Nyungar Aboriginal people, we need to get these young ones back to the basics—that is, having them respect themselves and their own people.

We have got facilities within the City of Gosnells like the farm up on the hill. Councillor Morris knows my mum, who teaches language to the young kids. We want to try to get these kids to respect themselves so that they can move on and run these programs in the future. We need something like a resource centre like Halls Creek has got. We can then teach our own kids in our way and also the mainstream way as well. But it is really hard—it gets down to the money side of it. If we were to look after our own kids then the ones that are on drugs and sniffing things would have an area where they could have access to other programs, whether it be what DRUG-ARM does with the mechanics or tied in to some kind of communication or self-determination skills.

CHAIR—It seems that Mrs Thomas’s program is one of those programs that gives hope through learning skills that are valued in the community, and it seems to me to be a very important program. Thank you for that.

Mr Jardine—On this issue of the evaluation of projects, we know that there is always more need than can be met, but I think that, when you are looking to allocate funding, the agreement between the parties on targets for outputs and outcomes is very important. So it does not become a handout to an area, it is structured in such a way that it is clear that outcomes are expected. If that performance does not arise, I think it is worth while saying that, unless there is a very good reason, that public funding should be pulled and put into another area where it can get a better return. We know in our area that the vision is there. The objectives of these organisations are very clear and I think you can have a performance contract to make sure that the money is well spent.

Mr RANDALL—Can I throw something in from left field, almost: a proposal has been put to the government by some backbenchers in the federal government that with the demise of ATSIC we should be looking at the mainstream funding being provided to what is called bottom-up funding, whereby the local communities get that money, probably invest it in the local government authority, and use it at a local level to provide it directly into communities rather than through the huge bureaucracy that ATSIC used to offer of some 400 public servants in a huge building in Canberra. Under that old system, apparently 8c in the dollar eventually filtered down to the end users in the communities. I would like to put it on the record that this is a proposal for the future which I know has been raised by my colleagues. I put it out there not necessarily for debate today but as something that I would like to see in terms of Aboriginal funding being redirected through the mainstream but at the local level rather than through a top-down bureaucracy.

CHAIR—What do you think about that, Mr Abraham?

Mr Abraham—If it happened, it would be pretty good.

Ms Cochran—Adding to what my CEO said about the evaluation, the City of Gosnells has a funding and sponsorship program. People from the community apply to access a very small pool of money that the city has to be able to make available. They have to apply, as we have to apply externally. We have a culture within that program whereby the community has to do evaluation reports and has to acquit that money. So a lot of the people that are here today and who have accessed that money are already used to that acquittal process and providing that information. We have used it in service internally and we have the systems already in place to do it.

CHAIR—Would members of the general public who have come along like to say something?

Mrs Ahnstrom—My name is Vibeke, and I am from Jacks Tools in Gosnells. We buy and sell new and second-hand tools. We are a curtain shop, and for the last two years we have been a pawnbroker. For screening, I feel that the police should give us a list of criminals, mainly drug addicts, who maybe have been in court and are now on parole or have to go and give a urine test. Those people should not be allowed to go near a pawnbroker's shop. They should be banned. They steal and then they go and sell to or borrow from a pawnbroker's shop.

I have talked to politicians and they tell me that you cannot do that, that people like this are allowed to have privacy. As I look at it, you have people like paedophiles who have their names made public. I definitely think that no drug addict should be allowed to go near a pawnbroker's shop. The police should give us a list of these people and if any pawnbroker has just bought

something from these people or lent money to these people they should get a big fine or they should lose their licence. I cannot believe what I have seen over the last two years. Just last night we had a man crawling along the wall down Lissiman Street like a ghost and he had stuff that he wanted to sell. He had no idea, none, but he wanted to sell things that he had hidden. He was really a heavy drug addict. Not only that, in Lissiman Street over the last two years we have had a van in the streets giving out needles to drug addicts, and that has created a little bit of a problem in our street.

But I really want to talk about the crime that I have experienced. We have been dealing in tools for 15 years. It is very easy to pick a criminal when they come in to sell tools. But when they come in as a drug addict and they want to sell tools or something else you cannot pick them. I have learned that if the girls—mainly the girls—have sores all over their faces you do not touch them. Or if the men come in and they have sores, you do not touch them. I am learning all these things now. But we need help from the police and a list of the baddies. That is what we need.

CHAIR—Perhaps, rather than having a list of who the people are, if you had a list of stolen property that might be useful. With regard to the new proposal for a list of people who are paedophiles, that list is not to be publicly available. It is only to be available to police and people in authority.

Mrs Ahnstrom—But I had to say something.

CHAIR—Would a list of stolen property help?

Mrs Ahnstrom—If you go to a police station and you report something stolen, by the time it gets to the burglary team up at Armadale it takes a long time, so I would love to have a list. The police are so busy—I am a JP and I see the other side and I see how hard the police work—that by the time they get there, it is too late. I would love to have a list but they do not have time to give us a list.

Mr Clark—Providing a list of all of the thousands of pieces of property would just be impractical. We have a tag system. It operates for second-hand dealers and pawnbrokers in this state. It is a searchable database based on information that comes through. All of the second-hand dealers in this state are required by law under the legislation to supply all of the items traded, and our incident management system then does a matching process with things that have been traded so that we can see where stolen property is being traded through in that way.

CHAIR—That is after the event, and I can see what the lady is saying when she says that she wants to have some warning so that she does not lend money against stolen property. Presumably, if it operates the way that you operate, when you find out property has been stolen then she has lost her money.

Supt Napier—If there is a suspicion that the matter is stolen, then by delaying the person at the counter and making a phone call to the local police station that matter can be searched on the database and an answer given back, which would not take that long.

Mrs Ahnstrom—I want to tell you about that. For 15 years we have worked 100 per cent with the police. We got an award for helping the police to catch lots of criminals in our shop, but there is still more to be done. When we call the police, we have a code. Unfortunately, you can wait a long time for the police to come and it is very hard to keep the person there. Often, you send them away, take the car number and pass it on to the police. We would like to see more done, and I am sure it would stop a lot more crime if drug addicts were not allowed to go near pawnbrokers and second-hand dealers.

Ms PANOPOULOS—Do you have any video surveillance in your store?

Mrs Ahnstrom—Yes. We have video surveillance and it has been used many times in court. One other thing I would like to say is that our shop is in the main street, Lissiman Street, and I must say that all these boys and girls, as I call them, are very special; we only have naughty white kids hanging around in the street at the moment. That is how good they are. They are very special.

Dr WASHER—Superintendent Napier, isn't there a process whereby before you go to a pawnbroker you have to identify yourself with reasonable levels of identification, as you would have to in a bank? Can you flesh that out for the committee? Do you know all the details? My wife's jewellery was stolen and wound up at an Armadale pawnshop, so it does move around—we have got some of it back. I would have thought you would have to have reasonable levels of identification.

Supt Napier—That is my understanding of the legislative requirement: the bank details 100 points of identification and so on. Hence, when it is logged through the system and transferred against our tag system, we can trace it and hopefully come back to them. But then you have the issue of identity fraud, which is rife around the place at the moment and growing unfortunately, but those checks and balances are certainly in place. I also say for the committee's information that the police service is chronically aware that its client services in relation to answering phone calls is not where it should be. As of November this year, there will be a police assistance line put into place on a 131444 number and then a cascading of information on seriousness down to the local level. So many of the pieces of information that are currently clogging the telephone lines into local police stations will cease.

I did a study on telephone traffic into police stations last year and found that about 90 per cent of phone calls to police stations last less than 60 seconds. They are mainly calls where people ask things like, 'Where is the bus stop for No. 67?' The next seven per cent relates to calls of less than 120 seconds, which are usually something like: 'I had a burglary last week. What is the status of the investigation?' The last three per cent are the issues such as this lady has raised, but they are in a big queue. Hopefully, with the advent of new systems, we will be able to get rid of that 97 per cent that the other operators at the call centre can deal with and matters as serious as this will go down to what we call our incident management units, which can deal with static investigations of serious matters. We are conscious of our own service delivery and are working toward making that better.

CHAIR—I have to say with regard to the person who rings up and says, 'I had a burglary a week ago. What's happening?' that that is a legit call.

Supt Napier—Absolutely, but it can be dealt with in a systems way. It does not require an investigator to provide that information, so some of our non-sworn people will be doing those things under the supervision of police officers.

CHAIR—I explore the idea of it being an offence for someone who is addicted to drugs to go into a pawnshop. Suppose that was an offence. It would be something if you captured them subsequently and it was found that they had gone to a pawnshop that that would be an additional offence they would have to face. In your view, would that have any deterrence factor or not?

Supt Napier—That is a very complex question of whether somebody's need to satisfy a drug habit will be driven by a piece of paper that says they should not go somewhere. I would have to take that on advice and do some work on that one. I could not give you an answer, to be truthful.

Mr Clark—I work with the WA Police Service. With the current government, we have been reviewing the Pawnbrokers and Second-Hand Dealers Act. There is a submission going up to the minister now as part of a burglary reduction strategy which was looking at how the pawnbroking industry operates. Without wanting to cast aspersions on the industry, I think that some people are not as honest as the lady who got up and spoke. Whilst there is now a requirement for pawnbrokers to report suspicious behaviour under the act, the police have found that that is often not happening. Part of the work we are doing is to tighten that up in terms of what constitutes suspicious behaviour. Similarly there are moves to make it a circumstance of aggravation, along the lines of what you are already talking about, for people who bring in property where the unique identifier has been altered in some way. Again, they find that that they do that so that the system cannot track the goods.

CHAIR—The multidot system is very good, isn't it?

Mr Clark—Yes. So it is recognised as a problem. The police service has said to the government that it is a lot wider than just the pawnbrokers and second-hand dealers; it is weekend markets, classified newspaper ads and all those things. So it is an issue that is recognised and it is being looked at the moment.

Mr Dunn—I work with DRUG-ARM. I have a couple of comments. A moment ago you asked about whether this would be a deterrent against certain things happening. With respect, I wonder whether, when we go down the path of deterrence, we are going the wrong way. We have the Safer Communities program and all these other issues dealing with education, counselling and healthier lifestyles. In continuing down the deterrence path, which the white community has followed for centuries, we have not really succeeded.

CHAIR—I do not know. I think we are a lot better than Hogarth's England.

Mr Dunn—Deterrence has not succeeded. The rate of crime in our communities is not significantly less than it has been in the past. We need to work harder in other areas. We need to make prison and things like that the last resort, while we are dealing with the issues of education and counselling and providing programming. One of the concerns of an organisation like DRUG-ARM is recurrent funding. If we were to close the program and we wanted to establish a new program, there are many initiatives around. When we look at the web sites and search for money, we are often put off by the statement, 'This is not available for recurrent funding.' Most

funding is given for a set period of time with the comment that it is not to be recurrent. You then need to find your own funding, and there are not many organisations that are going to give you alternative funding for work in the area of drugs and alcohol.

CHAIR—Thank you. Councillor Morris, do you have the MOU and your package of material? I think we will accept those as exhibits.

Mayor Morris—Chair, I have two MOUs for you. One is the memorandum of understanding between the City of Gosnells and the Western Australia Police Service—the Gosnells police station. The second is between the City of Gosnells and the Department of Justice—community justice services. This MOU is for the services they do for us here. I also have an additional package for you.

CHAIR—Thank you very much. I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone for taking part today. It has really been most interesting. There have been many innovative ideas and thoughts that will certainly be part of our deliberations and reporting mechanism.

Resolved (on motion by **Ms Panopoulos**):

That this committee authorises publication, including publication on the parliamentary database, of the proof transcript of the evidence given before it at public hearing this day.

Mr RANDALL—I would like to add one thing. I would like to formally thank the committee for holding a hearing in Perth, particularly in the south-east corridor of Perth, where I share this local government area with the electorate of Hasluck. There are some challenges here, as you know, but I think it is pretty evident from the evidence this morning that the City of Gosnells is very innovative in many areas, particularly in community crime. As a model it might well be something that your committee takes on board for the rest of Australia's local communities. Councillor Morris, I would also like to put on the record that we appreciate your hospitality this morning. Thank you for hosting the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs.

CHAIR—Thank you very much, Mr Randall. The committee thanks you for your representations on behalf of your council in support of their submission and their invitation to us. Again, I thank everybody for their participation. We will certainly be utilising material gained today.

Committee adjourned at 12.21 p.m.