
Southern Community Safety Project

Final Report

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Huon Stronger Community Partnership

Kingborough Stronger Community Partnership

Hobart Community Safety Strategy Working Group

Central Coast Community Safety Partnership

Chance on Main Steering Committee

Clarence Plains Services Network, *FUTI* management committee

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Executive Summary

In June 2003, the Tasmanian Government provided funding of \$150,000 to employ two project officers to work with the Crime Prevention and Community Safety Council and local communities in the northern and southern regions to develop community safety projects and to raise awareness about crime prevention. Both projects have now been completed.

Particular research was conducted in relation to early intervention, the key elements of Stronger Community Partnerships and the role of government in supporting early intervention strategies. The research produced the following papers:

- *Literature Review, Early Intervention in Crime Prevention;*
- *Stronger Community Partnerships - 'A way forward'; and*
- *Government's role in strengthening the capacity of communities to deliver early intervention strategies.*

The Project also provided direct support to nine communities (Brighton, Central Coast, Clarence Plains, Derwent Valley, Glenorchy, Hobart, Huon Valley, Kingborough, and Sorell) to develop and implement initiatives which, in some cases, may not have been developed without this support.

The learnings of the Project have been documented to provide guidance and support to Tasmanian and interstate communities seeking to develop a Stronger Communities Partnership. The report, *A Guide to developing a Stronger Community Partnership – based on the model developed in the Huon Valley*, to be released in early 2005, will contain the following information:

- Best practice approaches to early intervention in crime prevention;
- A case study of a successful Partnership;
- Templates that can be adapted by communities to assist in the development and evaluation of a Partnership; and
- An explanation of government's role in assisting with the establishment of a Partnership.

The Project has supported the development of a whole-of-government approach to service delivery in community-based projects.

Due to the success of the Project, funding was received from the Department of Premier and Cabinet *Kids in Mind* initiative to further develop Stronger Communities Partnerships and Inter-agency Support Panels. This funding will ensure that the Project Officer can continue to provide support to Tasmanian communities until September 2005.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide a final report on the Southern Community Safety Project. This report documents the actions undertaken by the Southern Community Safety Officer. In particular, the paper refers to the Primary Tasks of the position and identifies the actions taken to complete those tasks.

2. Background

In June 2003, the Tasmanian Government provided funding of \$150,000 to employ two project officers to work with the Crime Prevention & Community Safety Council members, local communities and other government stakeholders in the northern and southern regions to develop appropriate community safety projects and to raise awareness about crime prevention. Both projects have now been completed.

The Northern Community Safety Officer Project is the subject of another report, which is outside the scope of this report.

In August 2003, the Southern Community Safety Officer ('Project Officer'), Mrs Andrea Heath, was employed for thirteen months to undertake the following five primary tasks:

1. Use available qualitative and quantitative data and existing research to report on best practice approaches to early intervention that might be effectively utilised in the Tasmanian context;
2. Support existing partnerships and assist with the establishment of community-based partnerships (particularly in the southern region);
3. Assist communities in relation to identifying, developing and implementing appropriate early intervention strategies that address the capacity of communities to nurture young peoples' potential across a spectrum of problems;
4. Document the experiences when working with communities and to develop resources for both local communities and government agencies. The resources will act as a guide and provide the tools for communities and government agencies interested in establishing and maintaining community partnerships to assist with building community capacity; and
5. Work within the framework of Tasmania *Together* Community Safety Priority Cluster to promote change and foster whole-of-government service delivery in local projects.

3. Actions Against Primary Tasks

This section of the paper details the actions taken by the Project Officer against each of the five Primary Tasks.

Primary Task 1

Use available qualitative and quantitative data and existing research to report on best practice approaches to early intervention that might be effectively utilised in the Tasmanian context.

A literature review was undertaken in relation to early intervention in crime prevention. From this review, a paper was prepared, titled *Literature Review Early Intervention in Crime Prevention*. The paper defined the term 'early intervention' and reported on the outcomes of the review, categorising early intervention strategies into primary, secondary and tertiary approaches.

From the analysis of this review, the paper provides a summary of current research in relation to best practice early intervention strategies and makes recommendations on how to deliver those strategies in the Tasmanian context. The paper particularly focuses on strategies at the primary and secondary levels. A copy of the paper is attached, refer Attachment 'A', page 17.

The paper was distributed to members of the Community Safety Priority Cluster in June 2004 and will be made available to the community as an attachment to a document titled, *A Guide to developing a Stronger Community Partnership – based on the model developed in the Huon Valley*.

Primary Task 2

Support existing partnerships and assist with the establishment of community-based partnerships (particularly in the southern region).

In order to obtain an understanding of community-based partnerships, the Project Officer consulted extensively with key stakeholders in the southern region in relation to existing partnerships. From this consultation, a strong and successful community-based partnership was identified as being developed at Huonville. The Project Officer worked closely with the Huon Stronger Community Partnership in order to identify the successful elements and components of the model.

As a result of the Project Officer's work, the key elements of the model have been identified and documented in a paper titled, *Stronger Community Partnerships – 'A way forward', June 2004*. A copy of the paper is attached, refer Attachment 'B', page 30. The contents of this paper have been used to develop a document for communities interested in establishing a Stronger Community Partnership, titled, *A Guide to developing a Stronger Community Partnership – based on the model developed in the Huon Valley*.

Using the learnings from the Huon Stronger Community Partnership, the Project Officer provided support to communities that expressed interest in developing a similar partnership or components of the partnership. These communities included Brighton, Kingborough, Derwent Valley, Sorell and Hobart. These activities are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1

Community Partnership	Actions
Brighton Inter-agency Support Panel	Assistance was provided in relation to the development of an Inter-agency Support Panel.
Hobart Community Safety Strategy Working Group	<p>Assistance was provided to the Hobart City Council in relation to the development of the Hobart Community Safety Strategy through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. undertaking an audit of existing and planned community safety strategies and initiatives by state government agencies; and 2. developing a framework for the evaluation of the strategy.
Huon Stronger Communities Partnership	<p>Assistance was provided in relation to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the development of the Huon Stronger Communities Partnership (HSCP); 2. the development of links with early intervention strategies including, <i>Bounceback</i>, <i>Whitelion</i> and <i>Good Sports</i>; 3. liaison between the HSCP and the <i>Kids in Mind</i> Project; 4. the conduct of a survey with members of the HSCP and a working group in relation to the effectiveness of the partnership model; and 5. the conduct of a survey with community members in relation to perceptions of community safety, community issues and awareness of the HSCP. <p>The information obtained through the surveys conducted by the Project Officer will be used to assist the HSCP in identifying and developing appropriate activities in the community.</p>
Kingborough Stronger Communities Partnership	<p>Assistance was provided in relation to the development of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a Stronger Community Partnership; and 2. an Inter-agency Support Panel.
Derwent Valley Inter-agency Support Panel	<p>Assistance was provided in relation to the development of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. an Inter-agency Support Panel; and 2. links with early intervention strategies, including <i>Bounceback</i> and <i>Good Sports</i>.
Sorell	<p>Assistance was provided in relation to explaining the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stronger Community Partnership model (including Inter-agency Support Panels) with representatives from Tasmania Police and the Sorell Council; and the suitability of the model for the area; and 2. model to other service providers in the Sorell area (government and non-government).

Table 1 contd.,

Central Coast Community Safety Partnership (Ulverstone)	Assistance was provided to the Central Coast Community Partnership by: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. attending and participating in meetings of the Partnership;2. identifying prevention and early intervention strategies for young people; and3. providing information relating to Closed Circuit Television Cameras (CCTV), Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) and links to Project Currawong.
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At the time of preparing this report the initiatives developed for Brighton, Huon Valley, Kingborough, Derwent Valley and Central Coast were ongoing.

Primary Task 3

Assist communities in relation to identifying, developing and implementing appropriate early intervention strategies that address the capacity of communities to nurture young peoples' potential across a spectrum of problems.

In order to address this task, the Project Officer researched and prepared a paper titled, *Government's role in strengthening the capacity of communities to deliver early intervention strategies, October 2003*. A copy of the paper is attached, refer Attachment 'C', page 39.

In addition, the Project Officer provided support to the following early intervention strategies:

1. Inter-agency Support Panels, developed for the Huon Valley community;
2. *Chance on Main* Project, developed for the City of Glenorchy;
3. *Facing Up To It ('FUTI')* Project, developed for the Clarence Plains community; and
4. *Early Links* Project, developed for the Kingborough community.

The support provided by the Project Officer to these initiatives is outlined below.

1. Inter-agency Support Panels

Inter-agency Support Panels ('Panels') are partnerships that bring together state government agencies and councils to provide integrated support to 'at risk' children, young people and their families. Panels ensure that these groups receive appropriate support in a timely, coherent, coordinated and sustainable form.

In order to provide support, members of Panels identify children or young people who are considered by one or more agency workers to have or be 'at risk' of having multiple and complex needs. Information is then shared regarding the circumstances surrounding the child or young person, with the view to collectively developing the best strategy of 'early intervention' or support for that person through focusing on local resources.

This model of providing support was developed by an action group of the Huon Stronger Communities Partnership. The Project Officer, through participation on the group and conducting a survey of members to measure effectiveness, identified the key elements of the model.

In order to ascertain whether the model was portable to other communities, the Project Officer assisted with the establishment of a Panel in a community of similar demographics to the Huon Valley, namely the Derwent Valley. The model was successfully implemented in that community.

From these learnings the Project Officer identified a number of issues in relation to the operation of Panels that required attention prior to the expansion of the model to other communities. These issues included: confidentiality; privacy; consent; involvement from groups outside state government; and involvement from families. The Project Officer worked with members of both Panels to ensure all issues were identified. A workshop was held in May 2004 to discuss how to address these issues.

The Project Officer compiled the outcomes of the workshop to produce a document for Panels to adopt, titled *Guidelines for Inter-agency Support Panels*. This document addressed all of the issues that had been identified at the workshop. The Project Officer held a further workshop in November 2004 to seek feedback from participating agencies on the Guidelines. The Guidelines are currently being developed for endorsement from all state government agencies.

The success of this component of the Project resulted in the Department of Police and Public Safety receiving funding in June 2004 from the Department of Premier and Cabinet *Kids in Mind* initiative to complete and implement the Guidelines and expand the model to other Tasmanian communities.

More information in relation to this strategy can be obtained by contacting Andrea Heath, *Kids in Mind*, Project Officer, Department of Police and Public Safety on 6230 2185 or andrea.heath@police.tas.gov.au.

2. Chance on Main Project

Chance on Main Project is a community-based project developed to support young people living in the Glenorchy area.

The aim of the Project is to provide young people, in particular 'at risk' young people and young offenders, with the opportunity to participate in positive activities and recreation. It is intended that these activities will:

- assist participants to develop skills relating to vocational and educational outcomes;
- provide participants with an environment that will assist with identifying and addressing personal issues in a collaborative and respectful manner;
- provide participants with the opportunity to identify relevant services and assist with referral pathways to those services;
- assist participants to develop a sense of community participation and connectedness;
- create personal development opportunities for participants;
- provide participants with the opportunity to make restoration to the community; and
- provide opportunities for community members to participate as a volunteer or mentor.

The objective of the Project is to identify, develop and implement activities and strategies that assist with achieving the aim of the Project by providing participants with skills relating to:

- job readiness (career planning, awareness of options, connection with services);
- decision-making (making informed choices);
- life skills (communication, budgeting, relationships);
- personal development; and
- improved health and well-being (including anger management, mental health issues, alcohol and other drug issues, and sexual health).

In order to achieve the aims and objectives of the Project a number of stakeholders, representing the broader community of Glenorchy, are represented on a Steering Committee. This committee works in partnership to oversee the delivery of activities and recreational options for young people and includes representation from state government agencies, local government, non-government organisations and the business community.

The Steering Committee applied for Community Partnership Stream Funding through the National Crime Prevention Community Grants Program for project funds. This application was successful and in July 2004, the Project received \$267,410 funding over two years.

The role of the Project Officer in the development of this initiative was to:

- attend meetings of a working group formed to develop the initiative;
- facilitate a workshop to determine a common vision between all stakeholders, including the identification of additional stakeholders;
- provide initial secretarial assistance to the working group;
- assist with the development of a Steering Committee;
- attend meetings of the Steering Committee;
- provide initial secretariat support to the Steering Committee;
- develop and conduct a survey of young people in relation to the initiative;
- compile the results of the survey and prepare a comprehensive report for the Steering Committee on the results of the survey;
- develop with the Steering Committee the aims and objectives of the Program;
- develop and implement Operational Guidelines, including Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee; and
- assist with the preparation of the funding application to the National Crime Prevention Community Grants Program.

The role of the Project Officer was pivotal to the success of the development of the Project. This is highlighted by a letter dated 10 August 2004, from the *Chance on Main* Steering Committee to the Commissioner of Police, refer Attachment 'D', page 46.

Further information in relation to this strategy can be obtained from Ross Park, Acting Safer Communities Development Officer, Glenorchy City Council, 6216 6780 or rpark@gcc.tas.gov.au.

3. Facing Up To It ('FUTI') Project

FUTI is a community-based project developed by the Clarence Plains Services Network to create safe, happy and healthy relationships through providing a framework for the community to address shared concerns on abusive behaviours.

It has been established that 70 per cent of people experiencing abusive behaviour first told a friend, neighbour or family member¹. As a result, an action group of the Clarence

¹ *'Facing Up To It, FUTI, Challenging Abusive Relationships, A Community based project'*
Clarence Plains Services Network, July 2004

Plains Services Network developed *FUTI* to focus on giving these community members training in relation to how to respond.

The objectives of the Project are to:

- foster the development of health relationship skills across the community;
- facilitate the development of skills for effective response to disclosures of abuse;
- create a holistic community response to the issue of abusive relationships;
- increase community awareness, through training support and information of the possibilities of responding to this issue; and
- take the issue of abusive relationships from the private to the public sphere.

The program has been developed in three ways:

1. the establishment of a resource centre;
2. training for identified target groups in the community; and
3. ongoing support for first contact people.

The role of the Project Officer was to assist the *FUTI* management committee to document the project for the information of other communities interested in adopting the project. Assistance from the Project Officer ensured that a comprehensive summary of the project was produced. The *FUTI* management committee adopted the document in October 2004.

Further information in relation to this strategy can be obtained from Colleen Fletcher, Clarence Plains Community & Health Centre, 6214 6017 or colleen.fletcher@dhhs.tas.gov.au.

4. *Early Links* Project – Schools and Community Partnership

Early Links is a community-based project developed by the Kingborough Stronger Communities Partnership to support families with children in their pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten years.

The Project aims to:

- provide support to families;
- assist in the early identification of any social, emotional, psychological and health needs;
- provide cross-service liaison and support for families and children; and
- provide families with links to agencies.

The Project is delivered through a parent/child playgroup based at a local primary school. The playgroup session provides the opportunity for families to:

- develop networks with other local parents and families;
- participate in developmentally appropriate play and learning experiences with their children;
- learn about developmentally appropriate activities and strategies that will support on-going development at home;
- access information about local service providers and support agencies;

- access relevant parenting, relationship and health and well-being programs; and
- make initial links with local primary schools and child-care providers.

The role of the Project Officer in the development of this initiative was to:

- attend meetings of an action group of the Kingborough Stronger Communities Partnership, formed to develop the initiative; and
- assist with the development of a project plan, including the identification of appropriate performance indicators.

The Project Officer concluded involvement in the Project prior to a pilot being conducted in Term 3, 2004. At the time of writing this report the Kingborough Stronger Communities Partnership was undertaking an evaluation of the Project.

Further information in relation to this strategy can be obtained from Simon Matthews, Assistant Manager, Hartz District Support Service, simon.matthews@education.tas.gov.au.

Primary Task 4

Document the experiences when working with communities and to develop resources for both local communities and government agencies. The resources will act as a guide and provide the tools for communities and government agencies interested in establishing and maintaining community partnerships to assist with building community capacity.

The Project Officer has documented the Stronger Communities Partnership model developed in the Huon Valley in a comprehensive paper titled, *A Guide to developing a Stronger Community Partnership – based on the model developed in the Huon Valley*. The Guide provides information and assistance for communities that may wish to establish this type of community partnership.

In addition to providing information and assistance, the Guide also includes information for communities in the following areas:

- best practice approaches to early intervention in crime prevention;
- a case study of a successful Partnership;
- templates that can be adapted by communities to assist in the development and evaluation of a Partnership; and
- the government's role in assisting with the establishment of a Partnership.

The Guide will ensure that the research undertaken by the Project Officer is made widely available. As highlighted earlier in this report, a number of papers prepared by the Project Officer (Attachments A, B and C) will be included in the Guide.

A copy of the Guide can be obtained from Sandra Lovell, Crime Prevention and Community Safety Council, Tasmania, Sandra.lovell@police.tas.gov.au or on the website www.police.tas.gov.au

Primary Task 5

Work within the framework of Tasmania Together Community Safety Priority Cluster to promote change and foster whole-of-government service delivery in local projects.

The Project Officer has provided support to the Tasmania *Together* Community Safety Priority Cluster in the following areas:

- the preparation of a Business Plan;
- minute-taking of working group meetings;
- the conduct of an audit of activities undertaken by the Department of Police and Public Safety towards achieving Tasmania *Together* Goal 2; and
- the facilitation and collation of an audit of activities across government agencies towards achieving Tasmania *Together* Goal 2.

The tasks undertaken by the Project Officer have provided the Community Safety Priority Cluster with essential information in relation to achieving the targets in Tasmania *Together* Goal 2.

In addition, the Project Officer has ensured that when undertaking the tasks detailed in this report, all relevant agencies have been included, ensuring that a whole-of-government approach is adopted for each response.

4. Conclusion

This report identifies a number of significant results achieved by the Southern Community Safety Project for the Tasmanian community. A total of nine communities have received direct support from the Project Officer to develop and implement community safety initiatives which, in some cases, may not have been developed without this support.

The learnings of the Project have been documented and will be made available in early 2005 to provide guidance and support to Tasmanian and interstate communities seeking to develop a Stronger Community Partnership. This document titled, *A Guide to developing a Stronger Community Partnership – based on the model developed in the Huon Valley*, will contain the following information:

- best practice approaches to early intervention in crime prevention;
- a case study of a successful Partnership;
- templates that can be adapted by communities to assist in the development and evaluation of a Partnership; and
- an explanation of government's role in assisting with the establishment of a Partnership.

The Project has supported the development of a whole-of-government approach to service delivery in community-based projects. This has been achieved through the Project Officer ensuring that all relevant agencies have been included in any initiative developed and through providing support to the Tasmania *Together* Community Safety Priority Cluster.

Finally, due to the success of the Project, funding was received from the Department of Premier and Cabinet *Kids in Mind* initiative to further develop Stronger Communities Partnerships and Inter-agency Support Panels. This funding will ensure that the Project Officer can continue to provide support to Tasmanian communities until September 2005.

5. Glossary

The following terms are referred to in this report and are defined as follows.

<i>Bounceback</i>	<p>The Bounceback Foundation was established to design, fund and deliver programs that assist youth who are seriously disadvantaged by poverty, suffering, substance abuse and/or destitution.</p> <p>Bounceback Foundation programs are designed to develop self-confidence, self-reliance and other abilities that address disadvantages so as to assist young people in adapting, joining and contributing to the community.</p>
<i>Good Sports</i>	<p>The <i>Good Sports Program</i> is a partnership between the Australian Drug Foundation, national, state, regional and local sports bodies and the government sector to develop a safer and healthier community. The <i>Good Sports Program</i> helps sporting clubs manage alcohol responsibly through a step-by-step accreditation process. Sporting clubs can achieve accreditation at three levels.</p>
Inter-agency Support Panels	<p>Inter-agency Support Panels ('Panels') are partnerships that bring together state government agencies and local government to provide integrated support to children, young people and their families that have, or are at risk of having, multiple and complex needs. Panels ensure that these groups receive appropriate coordinated support at the earliest possible opportunity.</p> <p>In order to provide support, members of Panels share information regarding the circumstances surrounding the child or young person with the view to collectively developing the best strategy for 'early intervention' or support. Local resources will be focused to provide this support.</p>
<i>Kids in Mind</i>	<p>The <i>Kids in Mind</i> initiative focuses on the needs of children and young people in families where a parent has a mental illness, with the overall goal of improving outcomes for these children through interventions which support the child and family.</p>
Stronger Community Partnership	<p>A Stronger Community Partnership is a multilateral response between community leaders, business, government, local government and non-government agencies designed to combine energy, ideas, financial strengths and resources to take ownership of a broad range of issues facing a community.</p>
<i>Whitelion</i>	<p><i>Whitelion</i> is a not-for-profit community organisation that is a network of positive role models from sport, music, business and the community working towards giving young people opportunities and memorable experiences.</p>

Attachment A

LITERATURE REVIEW EARLY INTERVENTION IN CRIME PREVENTION

Department of Police and Public Safety, Crime Prevention and Community
Safety Council, Tasmania, March 2004

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to review literature and research undertaken in relation to early intervention in crime prevention and to assess that information for its relevance in the Tasmanian context.

This paper will focus on:

- A. What is meant by the term 'early intervention in crime prevention';
- B. Best practice approaches to early intervention in crime prevention; and
- C. Relevance to the Tasmanian context.

METHODOLOGY

A lot is already known in relation to early intervention strategies and crime prevention. This paper does not intend to review literature in relation to those topics but to collate material already published in these areas and to assess this information and its relevance in the Tasmanian context.

A EARLY INTERVENTION IN CRIME PREVENTION

The purpose of this section is to gain an understanding of the term 'early intervention in crime prevention'.

(i) What is crime prevention?

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) defines crime prevention as –

“...any action that causes a reduction in the level of criminal activity and the resulting harm, or in the number of criminal offenders and their victims.”¹

The AIC goes on to describe crime prevention in terms of three stages or levels:

- “Primary crime prevention is directed at stopping the problem before it happens and focuses on social and situational factors;

¹ AICrime reduction matters 20 May 2003, no.1 – Approaches to understanding crime prevention

- Secondary crime prevention seeks to change people, typically those at high risk of embarking on a criminal career;
- Tertiary crime prevention focuses on the operation of the criminal justice system and deals with offenders after it has happened. The primary focus is on intervention in the lives of known offenders in an attempt to prevent them from re-offending.”²

(ii) Developmental and Early Intervention strategies

The AIC indicates that one of the sub-categories into which the three levels of crime prevention are sometimes divided, is developmental and early intervention strategies.

The AIC defines effective developmental prevention as: –

“...intervention early in developmental pathways that may lead to the emergence and recurrence of criminal behaviours and other social problems. It does not mean early in life, although inevitably many of the critical moments for effective intervention will occur during the early years.”³

The AIC continues: -

“Developmental prevention emphasises investment in strategies and programs for creating ‘child friendly’ institutions and communities. It also focuses on the manipulation of multiple risk and protective factors at crucial transition points across a lifetime.”⁴

The “*Pathways to Prevention: Early Intervention and Developmental Approaches to Crime in Australia Report*” (the Homel Report), draws on other works to describe developmental prevention:

“Developmental prevention, in Farrington’s (1996:18) definition, ‘refers to interventions designed to inhibit the development of criminal potential in individuals’. Tremblay and Craig (1995) expand on that definition:

Developmental prevention refers to interventions aiming to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors that are hypothesised to have a significant effect on an individual’s adjustment at later points of...development (1995: 156-157).”⁵

As highlighted in the definitions, it is important to understand that early intervention does not necessarily mean ‘early in life’. Whilst there should be a strong emphasis on early in life interventionalist strategies, the definitions focus on the provision of strategies and programs that address risk and protective factors at key transition points experienced by children, young people and adults, over a lifetime. This conclusion is supported by the Homel Report:

“Developmental approaches do not see life as marked by one steady march toward adulthood that is set early in life, or one steady line of change, either for better or

² AICrime reduction matters 20 May 2003, no.1 – Approaches to understanding crime prevention

³ AICrime reduction matters 1 July 2003, no. 4 – Developmental and early intervention approaches to crime prevention

⁴ ibid

⁵ The “*Pathways to Prevention: Early Intervention and Developmental Approaches to Crime in Australia Report*” (the Homel Report”), Section 1, page 8.

worse. Instead, what occurs is a series of phases, a series of points of change, a series of transitions. These phases and transition points are where interventions can occur most effectively.”⁶

(iii) Transition Points

The Homel Report states that:

“The nature and timing of interventions depends, from the developmental perspective, not just an individual’s age, but on the identified pathways to offending and the critical transition points that characterise those pathways.”⁷

The report identifies the key transition points as -

- Transition into Parenthood
- Transition into Preschool
- Transition to School
- Transition to High School
- Transition to Work and Adult Relationships

These transition points are times of change and people may be open to support at these points, thus creating opportunities for change.

Table 3.1 from the Homel Report details these transition points together with developmental tasks, risk factors and preventative strategies, refer Annexure ‘A’. As an example, the Table states that for the developmental phase - *Transition to School* - the developmental tasks are: adaptation to school; peer relationships and experiences of success and failure. From these, the Table identifies particular risk factors as being: school failure; lack of parental monitoring; inconsistent discipline and peer rejection. The Table suggests one preventative strategy at this developmental phase is peer group training.

B BEST PRACTICE APPROACHES TO EARLY INTERVENTION IN CRIME PREVENTION

The purpose of this section is to review international and national best practice approaches to early intervention.

(i) Review of best practice approaches to early intervention in crime prevention

A paper titled, *Early Intervention – Crime Prevention*, states “A review of overseas research found considerable evidence that early intervention with families and the social development of children had positive effects in terms of reducing the likelihood of offending later in life (Tremblay and Craig 1995).”⁸

⁶ The “*Pathways to Prevention: Early Intervention and Developmental Approaches to Crime in Australia Report*” (the Homel Report”), Section 1, page 8.

⁷ *ibid*, page 9

⁸ Early Intervention – Crime Prevention paper presented by M. Brown and J. Putt at the Children and Crime: Victims and Offenders conference 1999, page 2.

The paper further states, “The crucial implication of this research for policy and practice is that social development of children has a profound role over the long term in preventing crime. As a result many of the programs that fall within the classification of a developmental approach to crime prevention are those designed to enhance the well-being of families and children...Based on the results of mostly Canadian and American research Farrington (1996) lists the following as the most promising approaches to preventing youth crime -

- Frequent home visiting to provide advice about prenatal and postnatal care of children
- pre-school ‘intellectual enrichment’ programs
- cognitive and social skills training for children
- peer influence strategies
- classroom management and other training for teachers
- anti-bullying programs in schools”⁹

Consistent with Farrington, the Home Office Research and Statistics Directorate, when establishing ‘What Works’ in preventing criminality classifies initiatives “...into those which are family based, those which are school based and those which are peer group based”¹⁰.

From this research the author of this paper concludes that when developing early intervention strategies in crime prevention it is more appropriate to focus on ‘best practice’ principles rather than individual best practice models. It is proposed that the reason for this is that each individual community has a different series of issues that it will be required to respond to (social, economic, demographic or cultural) and therefore it is not possible to conclude that one approach ‘fits all’.

In support of this proposition, the Home Office Research and Statistics Directorate, when establishing ‘What Works’ in preventing criminality in the UK context, comments “... most of the evidence cited in this report is based on studies from North America. We cannot be sure that what works in one country will work equally well in another. The widespread ownership of firearms, the absence of a universal public health service, the ethnic minority composition of many inner city areas and a long history of widespread use of hard drugs are just some of the features of American society which are different from ours.”¹¹

The individuality of communities must therefore be borne in mind when determining ‘What Works’ in both the Australian and the Tasmanian contexts.

(ii) Review of ‘What Works’

This report has defined ‘early intervention in crime prevention’ as meaning early in the pathway to crime which may or may not be early in life. This approach can include interventions before any offending has taken place and interventions ‘early after’ the committing of an offence.

⁹ *ibid*, page 3

¹⁰ The Home Office Research Study 187, *Reducing offending; an assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour* Section 2, page 8.

¹¹ *ibid*, page 18.

As a result when determining 'What Works' it is important to gain an understanding of appropriate early intervention strategies for key transition points. For example, strategies to deal with preventing teenage pregnancies will greatly differ to strategies for a 15-year-old in the criminal justice system. For the purposes of this report it is intended to examine early intervention strategies using the primary, secondary and tertiary levels identified by the AIC, refer page 18.

(a) Primary early intervention strategies

"Primary crime prevention is directed at stopping the problem before it happens and focuses on social and situational factors."¹²

Research suggests "that the goal of primary prevention is to target at-risk populations and assist with their transition through normal life stages"¹³.

Primary prevention focuses on the predictors of behaviour which are open to intervention, rather than on entrenched behaviours in a traditionally reactive way. Primary prevention is a proactive approach and differs from traditional approaches in respect to timing and targeting.

For instance, Weisberg, Caplan and Harwood discuss:

"The value of working proactively with families, the education system and communities to enhance the psychological, social and physical health of children."¹⁴

and go on to suggest that:

"...a dual focus on promoting competent young people and creating competence-enhancing environments is essential both to prevent behaviour problems in children and to improve the functioning of those who already suffer from such difficulties."¹⁵

Weisberg et al further state "Primary prevention strategies differ from traditional treatment approaches with respect to the targeting and timing of their prevention practices. In particular, they are (a) systems and group-oriented rather than targeted to individuals; (b) directed primarily toward essentially healthy people who are not currently suffering any disability to the condition being prevented,...; (c) concerned with promoting health, building competencies, and establishing supportive systems and settings as a protection against dysfunction."¹⁶

Primary prevention relies on an understanding of the issues confronting a community and further an understanding of the services needed in order to address those issues. It is contended by the author of this paper that a demographic audit of the community and an audit of services available to that community is essential for ensuring that an effective primary intervention strategy can be implemented.

¹² AICrime reduction matters 20 May 2003, no.1 – Approaches to understanding crime prevention

¹³ *Adolescents At Risk: Prevalence and Prevention*: New York Oxford University Press, Dryfoos, J. G (1990)

¹⁴ *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology*, 1991, Vol.39 No. 6 830 -841, *Promoting Competent Young People In Competence – Enhancing Environment – A Systems Based Perspective on Primary Prevention*, Roge P Weisberg, Marlene Caplan, Roslin L Harwood, page 830.

¹⁵ *ibid*, page 830.

¹⁶ *ibid*, page 831

(b) Secondary early intervention strategies

“Secondary crime prevention, seeks to change people, typically those at high risk of embarking on a criminal career.”¹⁷

Secondary early intervention strategies are discussed in the Home Office Research study 187, *Reducing Offending: An assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour*. The study discusses reducing criminality by reducing the number of children and young people who are ‘at risk’ or with a disposition to behave persistently in a criminal manner.

The report recommends the targeting of known risk factors and makes the following observation:

“Although we cannot predict accurately which individual will become an offender on the basis of the level of risk to which they are exposed, we know that children exposed to multiple risks are disproportionately likely to end up as serious or persistent offenders (Graham and Bowling, 1995). Also those who engage in anti-social or criminal behaviour at an early age are more likely to become serious and persistent offenders (Home Office, 1987)....

Thus, programmes to prevent criminality can be part of wider programmes to address a range of problematic outcomes for young people, such as substance abuse, school failure and teenage pregnancy”.¹⁸

As previously mentioned, the study classifies initiatives into those which are:

- Family based;
- School based; and
- Peer group based,

and summarises these classifications and appropriate strategies as follows:

“Family-based initiatives

Family-based interventions can be divided into three main types: early home visits and pre-school education programmes; family therapy and parent training; and family preservation.

(i) Early home visits and pre-school education programmes

Sherman (1997) indicates that the most promising results in preventing crime are to be found in home visitation programs. These involve trained and committed individuals, usually nurses, health visitors or social workers, supporting, helping and sometimes training parents of young children. Such programs consistently showed positive effects on crime or crime risk factors.

¹⁷ AICrime reduction matters 20 May 2003, no.1 – Approaches to understanding crime prevention

¹⁸ The Home Office Research study 187, *Reducing Offending: An assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour Section 2 – What works in preventing criminology* page 7.

(ii) Family therapy and parent training

Sherman (1997) reviewed 17 family therapy and parent training programmes...With one qualified exception (Dishion et al., 1992), all the evaluations showed reductions in anti-social behaviour, conduct disorders and/or improvements in parenting...

Overall, parenting courses do seem to be able to help parents to respond more constructively, use discipline less harshly and more consistently and avoid situations which precipitate conflict. The most promising approaches combine parent training with other strategies, such as social and problem-solving skills for the parent's children (Kazdin et al., 1992) and proactive classroom management and peer-related strategies for older children (O'Donnell et al., 1995)...

(iii) Family preservation

Family preservation comprises intensive interventions with families where parent:child relationships are under severe stress or breaking down and the child is at risk of being taken into care...

The available evidence on effectiveness is limited, although family preservation projects in the states of Washington (Tacoma Homebuilders) and Michigan (Families First) have shown success in terms of keeping children out of care (Utting et al, 1993). According to Utting et al (1993), projects which report success in working with such families tend to be those which emphasise the need to raise parental self-esteem and build on the existing strengths of the parents concerned.

A comprehensive strategy of early intervention would consist of providing an integrated package of pre-school education for the child and support and training for the child's parents, including intensive therapy in extreme cases. But whilst early interventions show much promise and are necessary for effective prevention in the early years, they need to be supplemented with other strategies. As the child begins to explore the outside world, the influence of family life and parenting recede as school and peer group influences increase...

School-based initiatives

School based interventions aim to reduce the propensity to engage in delinquent and anti-social behaviour. They can be divided into projects which aim to influence the organisation and ethos of schools; anti-bullying initiatives and family:school partnerships.

(i) Organisational change programs

...research on school effectiveness shows that schools which are characterised by high quality classroom management, good leadership and organisation and where children feel emotionally as well as educationally supported, are those which are best placed to protect their pupils from engaging in criminal behaviour.

(ii) Anti-bullying initiatives

...In Bergen, Norway, a “whole school” approach to combat bullying has been implemented in 42 schools. The initiative introduced specific rules about bullying, the insertion of discussions about bullying into the school curriculum, encouragement to victims to report incidents of bullying and better systems of playground supervision. In addition to marked reductions in bullying, the initiative resulted in reductions in anti-social behaviour and victimisation outside school...

(iii) Family/school partnerships

To be effective, early intervention needs to improve both the parenting and the education of children at risk, preferably sustained throughout childhood. The best way to accomplish this is to forge partnerships between the two principal sources of socialisation and informed social control – families and schools (Graham and Utting, 1996)...

Peer group-based initiatives

Associating with criminal peer groups is an important factor in subsequent criminality. However influencing this is very difficult and there are very few examples of successful interventions.”¹⁹

The Home Office Research study 187, also discusses ‘what doesn’t work’ and states,

“There are many more examples of programmes which are being shown not to work than those which do. Dryfoos (1990) and Gottfredson (1997) list a number of preventive interventions which have been evaluated and found not to work. These include individual casework, individual and peer group counselling/therapy, ...pharmacological interventions (except for specific forms of violent offending), corporal punishment, suspension from school, information campaigns (especially in relation to substance abuse), diversion to leisure and recreation facilities, fear arousal...and moral appeals. Many of these were based on single measure interventions and it is now accepted that, to be effective, prevention programs need to comprise a range of complementary measures which target multiple risk factors within the primary domains of a child’s life (the family, the school, the peer group and local neighbourhood), preferably at different developmental stages (early childhood, primary school, adolescence) – Hawkins *et al.* (1992).

It is also recognised that to be effective, programs should target behavioural change and not just changes in attitude, values or knowledge.”²⁰

(c) Tertiary early intervention strategies

“Tertiary crime prevention focuses on the operation of the criminal justice system and deals with offenders after it has happened. The primary focus is on intervention in the lives of known offenders in an attempt to prevent them from re-offending”²¹.

¹⁹ *ibid*, pages 8 – 16.

²⁰ *ibid*, page 16

²¹ AICrime reduction matters 20 May 2003, no.1 – Approaches to understanding crime prevention

The AIC undertook a review of current literature on youth crime prevention titled: *What works in reducing young peoples' involvement in crime* (2002). The report aimed to provide an overview of the current knowledge of what works in reducing offending in young people aged 12 to 25 years. The main section of the report focused on what can be done to reduce youth offending and identifies interventions and programs that can address this problem.

The report examined a cross-section of the literature relating to the subject in order to establish which types of interventions are most effective. The report found that if targeted correctly the following types of treatment worked best: -

- **Social Competence Training Programs** - These help young people change the way they think and act and this has been shown to impact positively on criminal activity.
- **Programs that Divert from Custody** – Mediation in the form of conferencing appears to be effective in preventing young people continuing in an offending lifestyle.
- **Education-type Programs** - Keeping young people in education has been shown to be effective in reducing delinquency and crime.
- **Mentoring Programs** - These are shown to have positive short-term results, however there is insufficient research to evaluate how successful they are long-term.
- **Comprehensive Programs** - Comprehensive programs provide an holistic approach by using different interventions targeted at a number of different risk behaviours. This approach appears to be effective in reducing offending, however it is important to remember that removing a young person from their familiar environment and providing no aftercare when they return to the community has little effect.
- **Recreational Programs** - These programs can have a small effect in the short term.
- **Programs Target Specific Groups** - Targeting certain groups has been successful in the past when the program has been tailored to the setting and needs of that group.

The report finds that generally, programs targeted at the needs of individuals appear to be more effective. One program does not necessarily “fit all” and a case management approach to dealing with young people may be more appropriate. Finding the right program for young offenders is important so that the risk factors and problem behaviours can be addressed. In general, the following principles are important:

- Programs addressing many risk factors have a greater effect;
- Programs that work across social settings can impact on the whole of someone's life, therefore these can have more success than programs concentrating on just one area;
- Programs that alter the way a young person thinks and acts are particularly effective;
- Programs containing skill-based components can help offenders reintegrate into the community;

- School-based programs which emphasise behavioural skills are effective. Young people not in school are at much higher risk of delinquency; and
- Programs should be culturally specific.

The report details important components of programs:

1. Clear aims and objectives;
2. Well-trained, committed and enthusiastic workers with ownership of the program; and
3. Program integrity.

C TASMANIAN CONTEXT

The purpose of this section is to examine how early intervention strategies can be effectively implemented in Tasmania. There appears to be consensus that strategies are best delivered through coordination of state government agencies, local government, non-government organisations and community members at the local level.

The Homel Report states at page 100,

“The key emphasis of our proposal is on the targeting of multiple risk and protective factors at multiple levels (the individual, the family, the immediate social group, and the larger community) and at multiple life phases and transition points in an individuals development. This necessarily entails a whole-of-community intervention model that incorporates a range of programs and services, rather than an intervention built around a single program”.

Tasmanian communities are demonstrating this approach through State and Local Government Partnership Agreements and the formation of Stronger Community Partnerships.

A comprehensive analysis of Stronger Community Partnerships in the Tasmanian context was undertaken by Andrea Heath in the paper *Stronger Community Partnerships – ‘A way forward’, June 2004*. The paper provides a detailed overview of a community based partnership at Huonville and documents the key actions to be undertaken by a community wishing to establish a Stronger Community Partnership. The author concludes (at page 10) that “key elements of the Partnership may be suitable for adoption by other Tasmanian communities”.

The author notes that a number of other Tasmanian communities have established or expressed interest in establishing Stronger Community Partnerships. This fact in itself appears to be evidence of the success of Stronger Community Partnerships in the Tasmanian context. A Guide is being developed for communities who wish to establish Stronger Community Partnership.

In light of the observations made above, and with particular reference to the Homel Report, it is contended that the most appropriate and effective way for Tasmanian communities to develop and implement early intervention strategies is through community-based partnerships.

D CONCLUSION

In summary the key points from this review are:

- The term 'early intervention in crime prevention' refers to the provision of strategies and programs that address risk and protective factors at key transition points experienced by children, young people and adults over a lifetime;
- The research suggests that when developing early intervention strategies in crime prevention it is more appropriate to focus on 'best practice' principles rather than individual best practice models. One model does not fit all in terms of a response to community issues;
- In determining 'What Works', it is important to gain an understanding of appropriate early intervention strategies for key transition points;
- Early intervention strategies tend to fall into three main areas -
 1. Family based
 2. School based
 3. Peer-group based
- The focus for the strategies can be primary, secondary and tertiary in nature;
- The most effective responses involve a whole-of-community intervention model that incorporates a range of programs and services, rather than an intervention built around a single program; and
- The most appropriate and effective way forward for Tasmanian communities when addressing issues of concern, including crime prevention appears to be through broad community-based partnerships.

Annexure 'A'

TABLE 3.1 DEVELOPMENTAL PHASES AND TRANSITIONS: THE TASKS, RISK FACTORS AND PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES AT EACH PHASE			
DEVELOPMENTAL PHASE	DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS	RISK FACTORS	PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES*
Prenatal/perinatal	Physical and neurological development	Parental substance abuse Adolescent pregnancy Inadequate prenatal care Birth injury Prematurity	Family support
TRANSITION TO PARENTHOOD			
Infancy	Affect regulation Attachment Developing autonomy Sense of self	Disturbances of attachment Inappropriate behaviour development Social isolation Inappropriate parenting	Parent training Early education
TRANSITION TO PRESCHOOL			
Preschool	Separation from mother Preparation for school Socialisation for transition Peer relationships	Inappropriate parenting Problem behaviours Peer difficulties Impulsivity and inattention	Child training Teacher training
TRANSITION TO SCHOOL			
School	Adaptation to school Peer relationships Experiences of success and failure	School failure Lack of parental monitoring Inconsistent discipline Peer rejection	Peer group training
TRANSITION TO HIGH SCHOOL			
Adolescence	Defining identity Growth of autonomy in a context of peer conformity Developing value system Intimate relationships	Teenage pregnancy Risk-taking behaviour Unemployment Antisocial peers Lack of parental support	Anti bullying programs Community support for youth in schools
TRANSITION TO WORK AND ADULT RELATIONSHIPS			
Adulthood	Adult roles and responsibilities	Unemployment Poverty Homelessness Social isolation	Social and economic development Building social networks

* The preventative strategies are only examples of possible interventions. Other strategies at each phase are available, and many strategies (such as family support) are applicable at more than one phase.

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Attachment 'B'

Stronger Community Partnerships 'A way forward'

Department of Police and Public Safety, Crime Prevention and Community
Safety Council, June 2004

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to:

1. Provide an overview of the Huon Stronger Community Partnership; and
2. Discuss the process for the development of similar Stronger Community Partnerships in other Tasmanian communities.

Background

In June 2003, the Tasmanian Government provided funding to the Crime Prevention and Community Safety Council to fund a 12 month project in relation to community safety. This funding enabled a community safety project officer to be employed in the north and south of the state. Both officers commenced duties in August 2003.

One of the Primary Tasks pertaining to the Southern Community Safety Officer was to –

Identify and assist communities in Southern Tasmania that are willing and have the potential to develop a Stronger Community Partnership.

In developing Stronger Community Partnerships assist communities to identify opportunities and gaps in relation to policies and services.

In order to address this task and to obtain an understanding of community-based partnerships, the Southern Community Safety Officer consulted extensively with key stakeholders in the southern region in relation to existing partnerships. From this consultation, a strong and successful community based partnership was identified as being developed at Huonville.

Upon identifying the Huon Stronger Community Partnership, the Southern Community Safety Officer engaged with that community to:

1. Document the model; and
2. Provide assistance in evaluating the effectiveness of the model.

Huon Stronger Community Partnership Model

Background

The Huon Stronger Community Partnership Inc. ('the Partnership') was formed in December 2002. The Partnership was established as a whole-of-community response to a number of social issues such as damage to property, alcohol and other drug abuse, youth at risk and domestic violence. The aim of the Partnership is to be an action-orientated group that has the strategic interests of the Huon community as its primary value.

The Partnership's Mission statement declares:

The Huon Stronger Community Partnership Inc. will collaboratively facilitate, develop and implement projects, programs and strategies that promote social wealth, community capacity and positively influence the determinants of social control in the Huon Valley.

Features of the Partnership

The Partnership has four key features:

1. Representation by community leaders on a central committee;
2. Strong governance principles and commitment to action;
3. Accountable action groups; and
4. Performance measurement.

1. Membership

Membership of the Partnership includes representation from:

- Satellite communities such as Cygnet, Franklin and Geeveston;
- Huonville Chamber of Commerce;
- Department of Education;
- Department of Police and Public Safety;
- Huon Valley Council;
- Department of Health and Human Services;
- Forestry Tasmania; and
- Huon Rotary.

As can be seen membership of the Partnership includes representatives from government, local government and the community.

In determining the role of government agencies participating in partnerships it is important to bear in mind the comments of Dr Jim Cavaye in his report *'The Role of Government in Community Capacity Building'* (2000) where he states:

Government cannot build community capacity – only local people can build the capacity of their community. However, public agencies can support and facilitate community capacity building.

The role of government in community capacity building is discussed in more detail in the paper titled, *'Government's role in strengthening the capacity of communities to deliver*

early intervention strategies' prepared by the Southern Community Safety Officer, October 2003.

2. Governance

The Partnership is an incorporated body that is bound by and operates within the *Associations Incorporation Act 1964*, and has a central steering committee with developed Terms of Reference. The committee meets on a monthly basis. A community representative provides secretariat support to the Partnership and a business representative chairs the meetings.

The funds required to establish the Partnership were minimal, and related only to the costs associated with incorporation which were paid by the Huon Valley Council. All other resourcing is through community members and agencies representatives providing time to attend meetings and shifting resources (within existing budget allocations) to address issues and capitalise on opportunities.

3. Action Groups

The Partnership identifies community issues, develops responses and evaluates progress.

Once issues are identified, action groups are formed to facilitate the advancement or implementation of strategies, programs and projects identified by the Partnership. Membership of these groups involves relevant representation from the broader community. As at May 2004, action groups developed from the Partnership included:

Truancy

This action group involved Police, Huon Valley Council Youth Workers and local schools working collaboratively to support young people found to be not attending school.

- Outcomes
- (i) Fewer school-aged children being in the Huonville shopping centre on school days without permission;
 - (ii) Improvements in attendance rates at school; and
 - (iii) Increased community confidence in the school because problems by truants like stealing, causing damage and intimidation were significantly reduced.

Inter-Agency Support Panels

This action group was developed to support youth 'at risk' and young offenders. The group is a multi-agency community-based group that works together to provide integrated support to 'at risk' children, young people and their families.

- Outcome
- (i) As at June 2004 the group has provided support to 25 children and young people; and
 - (ii) The Panel addressed the issue of 24-hour supported emergency accommodation for high risk and needy young people through the development of a crisis support house at Huonville in December 2003. Since its establishment five young people have been supported through this facility.

Community House

This action group was tasked to look at strategies to support young people who have been excluded from mainstream education to develop literacy and numeracy skills.

Outcomes (i) An off-campus location for the delivery of education sessions was secured in January 2004.

Farm Project

This action group was formed to investigate the feasibility of establishing an employment program involving the development of an organic farm. This project is ongoing.

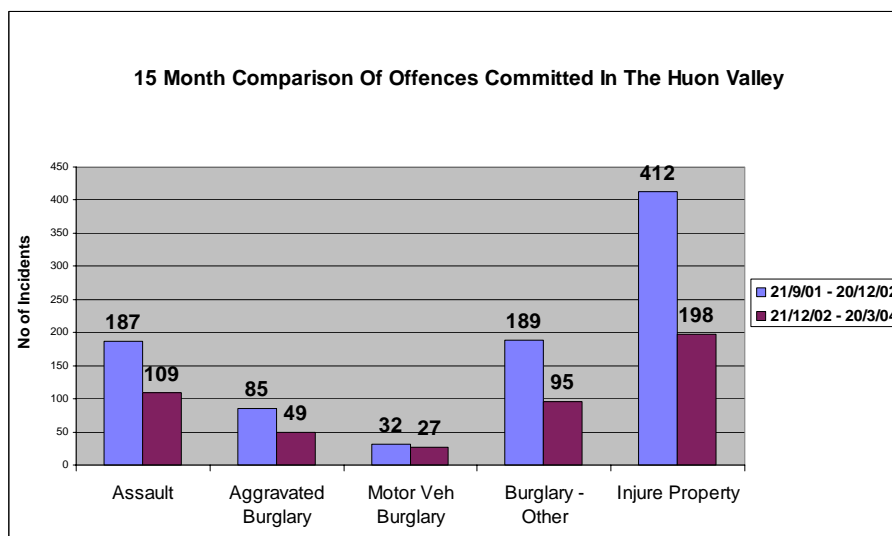
4. Measurement of Performance

The Partnership has been able to achieve the following successes:

- Reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour;
- Improved relationships between young people and police;
- Improved relationships between young people and business; and
- Better working relationships between state government, local government and non-government agencies.

The successful outcomes have been verified by qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data was obtained through surveys conducted by the Southern Community Safety Officer with Partnership participants, action group participants and community members.

Quantitative data provided by Tasmania Police shows the reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour. The chart below provides a 15-month comparison of offences committed in the Huon Valley: -



The total number of offences since the introduction of the Partnership has reduced from 1213 to 762, a reduction of 37%.

- Assault - reduced by 41%
- Aggravated Burglary - reduced by 42%
- Motor Vehicle Burglary - reduced by 16%
- Burglary (other) - reduced by 50%
- Injury to Property - reduced from by 52%

Process for the establishment of a Stronger Community Partnership

From the Southern Community Safety Officer's involvement with the Huon Stronger Community Partnership, the following processes have been identified as being key actions for the successful establishment of a Partnership in other communities:

1. Identification of, and participation from, community leaders who are action-oriented and influential, including representatives from satellite communities;
2. Participation from government, local government and non-government agencies;
3. Participation from representatives of the business community;
4. The establishment of a central committee;
5. The development of Terms of Reference for the central committee;
6. Identification of community issues;
7. Identification of appropriate strategies to address community issues;
8. Formation of relevant action groups;
9. Accountability mechanisms; and
10. The development of indicators of success.

The following comments are made in relation to these key actions:

Key actions

1. *Identification of, and participation from, community leaders, including representatives from satellite communities;*
2. *Participation from government, local government and non-government agencies; and*
3. *Participation from representatives of the business community.*

Comment

The involvement of state government agencies, local government and the community in an integrated and structured way combines energy, ideas, financial strengths and resources in order to take ownership of a broad range of issues. Agency, council and community representatives need to be capable of behaving strategically and be in a position to shift resources, effect change and exercise leadership.

State and local government involvement can be facilitated through Partnership Agreements.

4. *The establishment of central committee.*

Comment

The central committee brings together community leaders to collectively take responsibility and ownership of issues facing their community. They then work together to address the issues identified.

5. *The development of Terms of Reference for the central committee.*

Comment

Terms of Reference provide clear guidelines on the aims and objectives of the committee and ensure the committee remains focused.

6. *Identification of community issues; and*
7. *Identification of appropriate strategies to address community issues.*

Comment

These processes ensure that the committee responds to issues of concern in the community.

8. *Formation of relevant action groups; and*
9. *Accountability mechanisms.*

Comment

The formation of action groups ensure that a focus is brought to a particular community issue and addresses accountability by making the action group responsible to the central committee. This process also assists with community capacity-building by making the members of the action group responsible for devising and implementing strategies.

10. *The development of indicators of success.*

Comment

Indicators assist with monitoring and evaluation of the success of the Partnership.

Development of a Tool Kit

Whilst the key processes for the introduction of the model have been identified, it is essential that when seeking to establish the model the individual needs of a community are recognised in order to develop and implement appropriate strategies to respond to those needs. It is anticipated that the Partnership structures and priorities will be different from community to community.

The Southern Community Safety Officer is developing a tool kit for communities to employ in order to develop similar partnerships. The tool kit will contain information in relation to:

- Detailed information in relation to processes that have been identified as being critical to the successful establishment of a Partnership;
- Importance of statistical information;
- Model Terms of Reference;
- Information on Action Groups;
- Guidelines for Inter-Agency Support Panels;
- A Guide to developing a Community Safety Plan, prepared by the Northern Community Safety Officer;
- A Literature Review in relation to early intervention in crime prevention, prepared by the Southern Community Safety Officer;

- A copy of the paper, '*Government's role in strengthening the capacity of communities to deliver early intervention strategies*' prepared by the Southern Community Safety Officer;
- Information on early intervention strategies and projects undertaken in southern Tasmania;
- Template survey forms for partnership and action group participants; and
- Template community safety survey.

Application of the Partnership to other communities

One of the Primary Tasks of the Southern Community Safety Officer is to identify and assist communities in Tasmania that are willing to, and have the potential to develop a Stronger Community Partnership. Whilst the principle focus of the Southern Community Safety Officer remains the Huon Stronger Community Partnership, approaches have been made by other communities interested or in the process of developing similar partnerships.

These communities are:

- Brighton
- Burnie
- Clarendon Vale
- Hobart
- Kingston
- New Norfolk
- Sorell
- Ulverstone

The role of the Southern Community Safety Officer has been to assist those communities in developing their partnerships in line with the best practice principles identified and implemented in Huonville.

Whilst a tool kit is still being developed, components of the tool kit have been made available to these communities. For instance, the New Norfolk community has been mentored on the key elements of the Huon Stronger Community Partnership, including the Terms of Reference, community representation and governance issues.

These communities are at different stages of development and are responding to individual issues within their communities. With this in mind, it is important to appreciate that not one model or approach fits all. The model must be tailored to respond to the needs and capacity of a community and be flexible enough to adapt if the need changes and as community capacity develops. For instance in the Kingston community the establishment of two action groups – one to respond to domestic violence and the other a Inter-Agency Support Panel to support children, young persons and their families - led to the creation of a Stronger Community Partnership. The Partnership arose out of the action groups identifying the need to have access to a more diverse group that could identify the broader community issues and provide strategic guidance.

Not only do communities need to be flexible in relation to governance, they also need to be flexible in relation to the formation of action groups. As discussed earlier, action

groups are formed in response to particular issues identified by the Partnership. In many instances, action groups will have a limited tenure due to the fact that some issues may be satisfactorily addressed and not require ongoing support. However, it has become evident from the work undertaken by the Southern Community Safety Officer with various communities that an effective action group is an ongoing Inter-Agency Support Panel. Those communities who have developed these Panels have found them to be an effective method of providing integrated support to at risk children, young persons and their families.

Inter-Agency Support Panels

Inter-Agency Support Panels are partnerships that bring together state government agencies and local councils to provide integrated support to at risk children, young people and their families. The Panels ensure that these groups receive appropriate support in a timely, coherent, coordinated and sustainable form. (For an analysis of early intervention in crime prevention refer to the paper *Literature Review - Early Intervention In Crime Prevention*, prepared by the Southern Community Safety Officer, March 2004.)

In order to provide support, members of Community Support Panels identify children or young persons who are considered by one or more agency workers as being 'at risk'. Information is then shared regarding the circumstances surrounding the child or young person, with the view to collectively developing the best strategy of 'early intervention' or support for that person through focusing on local resources.

Strategies are developed to suit the individual and may include the utilisation of persons outside the working group. However, these persons will not be present at the consultation process, and need only to be provided with enough information to ensure the success of the strategy. Successful Inter-Agency Support Panels are operating at Huonville, Kingston and New Norfolk.

A successful Inter-Agency Support Panel relies on the sharing of personal and sensitive information relating to the people identified as requiring integrated support. Whilst these groups currently have Terms of Reference, it is agreed across the three communities that a set of guidelines need to be developed to ensure that the information shared is not breaching any State or Commonwealth legislation and protects the privacy of those persons being supported. A workshop was held in May 2004 to address this issue. The outcome of the workshop was that the Southern Community Safety Officer will work with government agencies to develop those guidelines.

In order for the Inter-Agency Support Panels to continue to operate effectively into the future, it is essential that the guidelines are endorsed by participating agencies and included in the Tool Kit for communities to adopt.

It is important, however, to remember that Inter-Agency Support Panels are but one approach to supporting young people. Whilst the Panels have been successful in some communities, they may not be the most effective in others. One approach does not fit all, and strategies must be responsive to issues confronting a particular community. In some communities or for some young people, strategies such as mentoring, case management or street workers may be more effective. The Southern Community Safety Officer will examine these strategies for supporting young people and prepare a paper for possible inclusion in the tool kit.

Conclusion

The Huon Stronger Community Partnership has proven to be a successful response to the issues confronting that community. The Partnership enjoys broad based community support as well as active involvement from state government agencies and the Huon Valley Council.

Key elements of the Partnership may be suitable for adoption by other Tasmanian communities. Whilst some work has been undertaken by the Southern Community Safety Officer with other communities, it is important to understand that each community must develop its own model that is capable and flexible enough to respond to its own particular needs. One response that appears to be consistently successful in communities is Inter-Agency Support Panels.

A tool kit is being developed to assist communities with the development and implementation of Stronger Community Partnerships.

Attachment C

GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF COMMUNITIES TO DELIVER EARLY INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Department of Police and Public Safety, Crime Prevention and Community Safety Council, Tasmania, October 2003

1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to identify issues relevant to early intervention strategies and the government's role in strengthening the capacity of communities to deliver those strategies.

2 BACKGROUND

Community Safety Interdepartmental Committee

The Tasmania *Together* Community Safety priority cluster comprising the Departments of Police and Public Safety, Health and Human Services, Education, Justice and Industrial Relations, Infrastructure, Energy and Resources and Premier and Cabinet ('the cluster agencies') have identified that intervening to support 'at risk' young people is a key priority. All participating agencies are focusing on ways to build resilience in young people in an attempt to improve life skills and opportunities and to prevent them from being victims of crime or offenders themselves.

The cluster agencies have targeted 'early intervention' strategies as an appropriate approach to support 'at risk' young people. As a result, a number of 'early intervention' projects have been funded to be undertaken by the cluster agencies, both at the state, regional and local community level.

3 'EARLY INTERVENTION'

In undertaking and developing the above strategies, it has become apparent the term 'early intervention' may be being interpreted differently across the agencies. The purpose of this section is to gain an understanding and agreement of the term 'early intervention' across the cluster agencies.

What is meant by the term ‘early intervention’?

Gill Westthorp from the South Australian Crime Prevention Unit, in a report titled, *Early Intervention: Buzz word or starting point?* examines the different ways the term ‘early intervention’ is used and the common elements of the term.

The report discusses the origins of the term ‘early intervention’ and its different meanings across various government agencies such as disabilities, health, education, supported housing and crime prevention. The report proceeds to question the usefulness of the term given the diversity of meanings and possible misunderstandings as a result of agencies using the same term but applying it in different circumstances.

In questioning the usefulness of the term, the report identifies that there are common elements within many early intervention approaches regardless of their purpose or outcome focus. The common elements identified are:

1. Life is seen as a series of transitions, experienced by children, young people and adults, over a lifetime, either biological or social. These transition points are times of change and people may be open to support at these points, thus creating opportunities for change; and
2. There is a focus on risk and protective factors.

It can be concluded from Westthorp’s paper that early intervention does not necessarily mean ‘early in life’. Whilst there should be a strong emphasis on early in life interventionalist strategies, the common elements focus on appropriate risk and protective strategies at key transition points in the pathway of life. Westthorp states, “The risk and protective factors for physical health, mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, poor educational outcomes, and unemployment are very similar to those for offending. So intervening effectively can have benefits in a wide range of areas and can result in significant savings.”¹

4 GOVERNMENT’S ROLE IN STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF COMMUNITIES TO DELIVER EARLY INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

In addition to undertaking early intervention strategies, cluster agencies are being required to work with communities to strengthen their capacity to deliver those strategies. Again, it is apparent that government’s role in relation to community capacity building may be being interpreted differently across the agencies.

The purpose of this section is to gain an understanding and agreement of government’s role in relation to strengthening community’s capacity to deliver ‘early intervention’ strategies across the cluster agencies.

¹ Early Intervention: Buzz word or starting point? Gill Westthorp, Crime Prevention Unit, Attorney Generals Department, Government of South Australia, page 3

Dr Jim Cavaye in his report *'The Role of Government in Community Capacity Building'* (2000) describes community capacity as:

*"Community capacity consists of the networks, organisation, attitudes, leadership and skills that allow communities to manage change and sustain community-led development."*²

Cavaye's report refers to the need for communities to not only focus on their ability to maintain infrastructure, employment and income but also on the ability of local people to:

- anticipate change;
- 'reframe' problems;
- mobilise their community;
- communicate widely;
- think strategically; and
- make informed decisions.

In relation to government's role in community capacity building, Cavaye states:

*"...government cannot build community capacity – only local people can build the capacity of their community. However, public agencies can support and facilitate community capacity building."*³

Cavaye goes on to identify key principles that are important to government assisting communities build their capacity. The principles involve:

- "Creating a 'vehicle' for local people to express and act on existing concerns;
- Judging appropriate interaction with communities from 'consultation' to genuine partnership facilitation;
- Personal relationships between local public servants and community members is crucial to the invitation government can receive from local people, and the role of government can have in community capacity;
- Melding formal structures that mediate community involvement with grassroots culture of local participation; and
- Community members 'unlearning' the role of government solely as a 'provider' and government 'unlearning' the historical/technical assistance approach to communities."⁴

In order to achieve these principles, Cavaye states that the following new approaches are required by government agencies:

² The Role of Government in Community Capacity Building, Jim Cavaye, Department of Primary Industries, Queensland, 2000, page iii

³ *ibid*, page 2

⁴ *ibid*, page iii

“Redefining the ‘real work’ of public servants to be not only the deliverer of delegated services, but also a dual ‘delegation and community’ role where delegated work is achieved in a way that supports community networks, partnership and capacity;

Fostering relationships between community members and government workers by increasing the ‘networking’ role of public servants in communities and initiating contact with a greater diversity of clients;

Introducing accountability for the process with which government interacts with communities and accountability for community capacity outcomes; and

Coordination between agencies based on valuing existing cooperation, common goals and values and joint projects.”⁵

5 WHAT SHOULD GOVERNMENT AGENCIES DO TO STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITY OF COMMUNITIES?

Cavaye has outlined the principles of government’s role in community capacity building. This purpose of this section is to discuss how Government agencies can work with communities to translate the principles identified by Cavaye into actions.

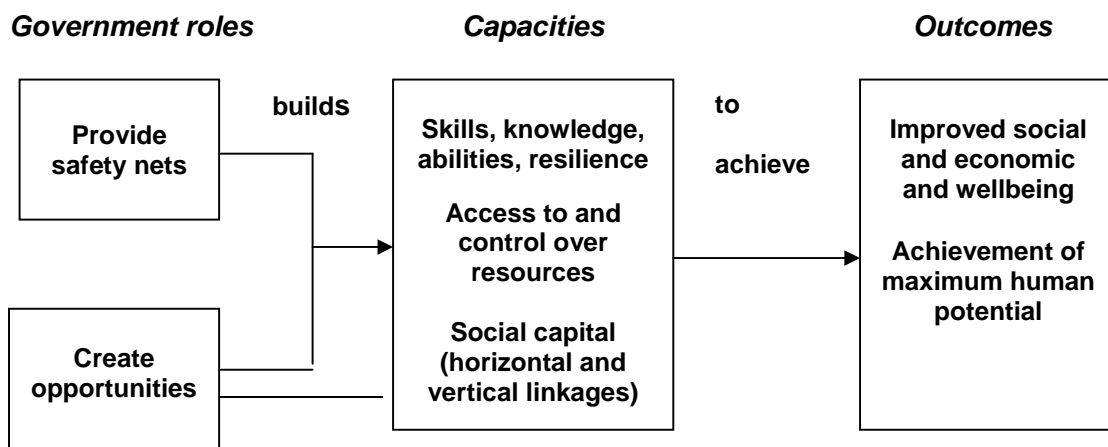
Lori Rubenstein in her draft paper, *Building Strong Communities: An overview* highlights the many paths to community building. Rubenstein suggests that the fundamental role of government in relation to capacity building is to:

1. provide safety nets; and
2. create opportunities.

Examples of safety nets provided by government are the provision of affordable housing and access to medical services.

Examples of the government’s ability to create opportunities include access to government funding grants and the provision of support services to communities.

Rubenstein demonstrates this role in Figure 1 below -



Rubenstein states that in order “To operationalise these roles in ways that will build stronger communities, Government agencies need to shift their approach in thinking, planning and practice from:

- Individual to population and collective outcomes;
- Single-issue focus to a more holistic, comprehensive approach;
- Lifestyle change to environmental change (in policies, services, economic and physical conditions);
- A ‘top-down to bottom-up’ approach;
- Service providers as experts to service providers as facilitators and enablers; and
- Emphasis on community needs and deficits to an emphasis on community assets and potential.”⁶

In addition to agencies shifting their approach, Rubenstein goes onto identify seven essential dimensions to building strong communities, namely:

1. Collaborative initiatives implemented in a way that reinforces values and builds social and human capital;
2. Community-driven action;
3. Comprehensive, strategic and entrepreneurial approaches;
4. Asset-based approaches;
5. Tailoring activities to neighbourhood scale and conditions;
6. Ensuring links to the broader community; and
7. Changing institutional barriers.

A number of the principles and approaches identified by Cavaye and Rubenstein are already being displayed in Tasmanian communities through Tasmania *Together*, State and Local Government Partnership Agreements and community-based Stronger Community/Safety Partnerships.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

From discussions in this paper the following recommendations are made:

1. Cluster agencies agree that in respect to early intervention:
 - There are different understandings and applications of the term ‘early intervention’ across agencies;
 - Despite these differences there are common elements to the term, namely:
 - (i) there are key transition points in the pathway of life which should be targeted as opportunities for change; and

⁶ Building Strong Communities: An overview, Lori Rubenstein, Department of Health and Human Services, Tasmania, 2003, page 8

- (ii) there is a focus on reducing risk and enhancing protective factors at these key points.
 - Effective 'early intervention' strategies will deliver positive benefits to the whole community across a number of social issues and allow the government to achieve common goals.
2. Cluster agencies agree that in respect to government's role in community capacity-building:
- Their role in community capacity-building is one of providing safety nets and creating opportunities to support local communities to identify issues, resolve problems and to capitalise on opportunities; and
 - This role may best be achieved through supporting and facilitating existing and potential community-based partnerships.

References

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