Speech presented by Adam Graycar, Director, Australian Institute of Criminology:

"Crime prevention & criminality prevention"

to the Australian Sociological Association, Hobart, December 5 1996

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Crime Prevention & Criminality Prevention

The Australian Sociological Association

Hobart

December 5 1996
Crime Prevention & Criminality Prevention

Abstract

While analysts debate whether crime rates are up or down, this paper examines some of the base data on crime in Australia, and focuses on public policy strategies to limit crime.

Examining strategies in both crime prevention and criminality prevention this paper examines three public policy approaches to crime and its prevention:

a) a criminal justice approach
b) a developmental approach
c) a policy research approach focussing on inter-sectoral and cross-disciplinary research
Intro...

1. General Crime/stats
   a) Perception of crime/violence among the public
   b) Reality of crime - violence is only a small part, homicide even smaller, (as seen in overhead)
   c) General discussion of crime, and some crime stats (see overhead)

2. Firearms/Violent deaths
   a) Discussion of firearms and firearms death....topical, but present the true story (see overheads)
   b) Discuss new monitoring program

3. What makes people violent? (see overheads)

4. What can/should we do about it? (see overheads)
   a) Crime prevention
      i) Types of crime prevention (see overheads)
         a) crim justice system,
         b) situational,
         c) developmental etc.

5. Conclusion...eg
   a) Community/government awareness & support
   b) Intersectoral problem requiring Multidisciplinary response
   c) Coordinated public policy formulation, implementation and evaluation
1. **General Crime/stats**
   a) Perceived crime/violence among the public
   b) Reality of crime - violence is only a small part, homicide even smaller, (as seen in overhead)
   c) General discussion of crime, and some crime stats (see overhead)

### General Crime Statistics - 1995

- Over 100,000 people were victims of assault in Australia, most (58%) were male, and more than 40% were aged between 20-34 years
- There were 12,809 victims of sexual assault in Australia, most (82%) were female, and 61% were under 20 years of age
- 16,466 victims of robbery were recorded, weapons were used in 40% of cases, firearms used in 13% of cases
- There were 384,897 victims of unlawful entry with intent (burglary/break and enter), 59% occurred in private dwellings, and in 79% of cases the intention was to steal property
- 126,919 motor vehicles were recorded stolen, 37% of the thefts occurred in the street
- There were 489,785 victims of other types of theft recorded, 25% occurring in retail premises
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   a) Discussion of firearms and firearms death....topical, but present the true story (see overheads)
   b) Discuss new monitoring program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violent Deaths and Firearms in Australia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• There have been 24 known mass firearms killings since 1987 - resulting in 128 deaths - an average of 13 per year.</td>
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<td>• There were 519 firearms deaths in 1994 (ABS Causes of Deaths)</td>
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<td>• 81% (420) of the firearms deaths in Australia in 1994 were suicides. 15% (79) were homicides, and 4% (20) were accidents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• There were 332 homicide victims in 1994 (ABS Causes of Deaths), and 2258 suicides.</td>
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<td>• A firearm was used in 1 in 4 homicides and 1 in 5 suicides. At least one suicide death by firearm occurs each day, and every fourth day one person is killed by another, with the use of a firearm.</td>
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<td>• The rate of suicide in towns and rural areas is almost 4 times greater than that in captial cities, and the highest rate of suicide by firearm is among men over 60.</td>
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<td>• The majority (55%) of homicides occur in the home. Not only is the home more dangerous than the street from a homicide risk perspective, the chances of a firearm being used in the home are higher than on the street.</td>
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<td>• One-third of all homicides take place within the family and another one-third take place among friends and acquaintances. Only 11% take place among strangers and of the stranger homicides less than 10% involve a firearm.</td>
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<td>• Males comprise 61% of homicide victims and females 39%; but males make up 89% of persons accused of a firearms homicide whilst females make up 11%.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Australia's rate of firearm-related homicide is 0.4 per 100,000 population compared to 0.7 in Canada and 6.3 in the United States of America. In the United Kingdom, however, the firearm homicide rate is 0.1 per 100,000.</td>
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</tbody>
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AIC will begin a Firearms Monitoring Program in 1997...

Background
At its 17 July 1996 meeting, APMC resolved that the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) ‘will monitor the effects of the new firearms controls’. The Commonwealth Law Enforcement Board (CLEB) has a central policy role in this area and the States and Territories are responsible for most of the implementation of the new controls.

Goal
The goal is to provide to APMC (and other stakeholders) accurate, timely information on the effects of the new firearms initiatives, and to highlight any policy issues needing review that are identified through the monitoring process so as to contribute to a continual assessment of policy. Reports will be provided annually.

Key questions to be answered by the monitoring and evaluation process
With regard to the new national firearms initiatives:
1. In what ways and to what degree has the agreed-upon policy been implemented?
2. What have been the short-term outcomes and longer term impacts of the implementation of the new initiatives.

Information to be collected and analysed
The AIC will collect, analyse and present information in four broad areas:
1. The numbers and types of firearms in Australia.
2. The number and characteristics of people licensed to possess and use firearms.
3. Deaths and injuries (homicidal, suicidal and accidental; single and multiple) caused by firearms.
4. Firearm related offences generally.

The research will cover important ancillary aspects such as the possible displacement of causes of death and injury from firearms to other means.

Wherever possible, details on firearm types and the characteristics of licensees, offenders and victims will be analysed.

Discussions will be held with the Commonwealth Law Enforcement Board to obtain national overviews of the implementation of the new controls throughout Australia, including the operation of the firearm surrender program and legislative changes.
3. What makes people violent? (see overheads)

4. What can/should we do about it? (see overheads)
   a) Crime prevention
      i) Types of crime prevention (see overheads)
         a) crim justice system,
         b) situational,
         c) developmental etc.

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**Crime / Criminality Prevention**

To prevent and reduce crime there are at least three approaches we can follow - they are not mutually exclusive - they need to be taken together.

A **criminal justice** approach focuses on

* retribution
* incapacitation
* rehabilitation
* deterrence (both in respect of the individual and society)

Debates on what the criminal justice system should do revolve around

* prevention/reduction of crime
* reduction of fear
* punishment of offenders
* rehabilitation /re-integration of offenders
* compensation for, and assistance and support to victims
* humane treatment of suspects/offenders
* generating perceptions of fairness
* containment of costs

A **developmental approach** works from the basis that law enforcement comes into play more to deal with offending, and less to prevent offending. The aim is to work cross-sectorally to turn potential future offenders into good citizens. If they grow up to be offenders behind bars they cost the community in the order of $50,000 p.a., not to mention the emotional and financial costs to the community in the course of getting them into prison; nor the likely social security payments after their release. Investing in appropriate developmental activities - primary health care, early childhood supports, education and training, is more likely to turn them into productive taxpayers.

A third approach is to focus on **policy research** and to learn from inter-sectoral and cross-disciplinary research and demonstration projects. The task is to determine the **causes and consequences** of rule making, rule breaking, and rule
enforcing. The task of policy analysis is then to integrate scientific evidence and difficult value judgments to recommend the best course of action, no matter how limited the available evidence. Appropriate research and evaluation however can ensure that adequate evidence is available for informed decision making.

The challenge facing us is to harness our activities to ensure, at the end of the day, good policy for the promotion of justice and the prevention of crime, and a safer Australia.

We know that the prevention of crime and violence cannot to be achieved by law enforcement alone, but rather through inter-sectoral collaboration, and in particular through a range of health promotion, education, and community service activities.

Responses

Crime Prevention

There are two ways to prevent crime. The first is to make crime more difficult to commit, more risky and less rewarding by putting in place measures such as better security, increased surveillance and property marking. This is the most commonly understood type of crime prevention and can be applied to most situations in which crime is likely to occur. This approach targets the crime-prone situation rather than the offender. It is sometimes called situational crime prevention.

The second approach aims to prevent criminal behaviour. It addresses the underlying social causes of offending and seeks to influence the attitudes and behaviour of those most likely to offend so they are less inclined to do so. This is done by reducing the risk factors long known to be associated with offending (such as poor parenting and school failure) and enhancing protective factors (such as good parenting and school success). This approach targets the potential offender rather than the crime. It is sometimes called social crime prevention or criminality prevention.

- **Developmental prevention** or **criminality prevention** refers to interventions designed to inhibit the development of criminal potential in individuals. It targets the various risk and protective factors discovered in studies of human development, particularly in children. Early identification and intervention programs at home and at school are the primary methods of the developmental approach.
• **Community prevention** refers to interventions designed to change the social conditions and institutions - such as families, peers, social norms, organisations and environment - that influence offending in communities.

• **Situational prevention** refers to interventions designed to reduce the opportunities for crime and to increase the risk and difficulty of offending.

• **Criminal justice prevention** refers to traditional deterrence, incapacitation and rehabilitation strategies operated by law enforcement and criminal justice system agencies.

(each of these is a major topic in its own right)

I want to spend a couple of minutes on situational prevention because it deals with the here and now. There are three objectives:

• increasing the effort
• increasing the risks
• reducing the awards

Some examples: locks; screens; vandal proofing; photo ID; a few very simple examples.

* Clothing shop had every second hanger facing the other direction
* Retail stores removed display advertising from the window so that would-be robbers were visible from the street - also moved the cash registers close to the window, but out of the line of vision
* In Germany the enactment of legislation requiring motor bike riders to wear helmets cut the rate of motor cycle theft - very likely to get picked up if not wearing a helmet.
* In Sweden Local Government authorities designed public walls with rough, uneven surfaces very hard for graffiti -- to make things worse, painted them in dark colours - In NY graffiti on the subway has decreased because of a program of cleaning the trains regularly - there's no pride in watching your train come around.

These are among the thousands of here and now examples.

Our urban environments provide opportunities for criminal behaviour. Criminologists have worked with urban planners and architects to develop a series of initiatives that go under the heading of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).
* improving lighting in streets and car parks
* reducing opportunities for offenders to conceal themselves
* locating outdoor activities in sight of windows
* increasing designated walkways
* increasing pedestrian activities.

**Criminality prevention involves**

* family-based prevention: strengthening families and improving parenting skills, through programs such as “Triple P” (the Positive Parenting Program), developed by Dr. Matt Sanders at the University of Queensland which helps parents and children to deal with problems in a positive and constructive manner, including non-violent conflict resolution methods.

* school-based prevention: enhancing the education of those most at risk of school failure, truancy and delinquency. Pre-school enrichment programs focussing on literacy problems and general intellectual difficulties show promising results, with the participants experiencing lower rates of unemployment, arrest and imprisonment in adolescence and adulthood than non-participants. (Perry Pre-school program, Michigan)

* community-based prevention: providing recreational, social, employment and housing opportunities, especially for young people. Research has suggested that there are links between socio-economic inequality/deprivation and crime, therefore it is important that adequate education and employment opportunities are equally accessible throughout the community.

* preventing reoffending: diverting known offenders from a criminal career, through life-skills and employment training programs, in prison and post-release.

Techniques for reducing the risks of young people's involvement in drug misuse, crime and other antisocial behaviour include:

* frequent home visiting by health professionals during pregnancy and infancy
* education in parenting
* high quality nursery education
* training children to 'stop and think' (cognitive and social skills training)
* anti-bullying initiatives in schools
* classroom management training for teachers
5. Conclusion

a) Community/government awareness & support
b) Intersectoral problem requiring Multidisciplinary response
c) Coordinated public policy formulation, implementation and evaluation

**Good Public Policy**

It is obvious that no one sector alone can prevent crime - a partnership is needed, and the Commonwealth needs to be in there developing a national crime prevention framework, the component parts of which can be tested in different parts of Australia, and the lessons learned built into best practice models for use elsewhere.

In understanding the causes and manifestations of violence, we need to develop early childhood initiatives, and regard violence, as has the WHO, as a public health issue.

We need to maintain and improve education, knowledge and awareness of the harmful effects of aggression, violence, drug and alcohol usage etc.

We need to make sure our police are among the best educated people in our community.

We need to:

⇒ tackle the underlying causes of crime
⇒ reduce opportunities for crime to be committed
⇒ tackle specific crime problems
⇒ help victims of crime, and reduce the fear of crime

Good public policy balances initiative and response.

We need to know what the problems are, and what they're perceived to be.

We need to know what works, and what doesn't.

We need to have a partnership approach, blending different levels of government with community organisations and business organisations.

We need to focus firmly on the inter-sectoral approach to violence and crime.

* * * * * * * *
We know that the good old days when there was no crime are a figment of fiction. For centuries writers have lamented the prevalence of and danger from villains. We do know that patterns of work, housing, technology, family structure, domestic arrangements, financial dependency and sexual activity have made the way people live and do things very different to the way they lived and did things 100 years ago, or even 40 years ago. We can't just bring back the 'good old days' when young people supposedly behaved better and showed more respect for their elders. This would involve swimming against the tide. Ideally we swim with the tide, or if we are interested in good public policy, ahead of the tide, and this brings to the fore tensions in the balance between leadership and democracy.