

**Building Site  
Crime Prevention  
Initiative**

**Final Report**

**August 2001 – June 2002**

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## **Executive Summary**

This report addresses the issues associated with Building Site Crime on residential developments within the City of Casey. Residential building site crime has been described as endemic to the housing industry. This initiative marked the first co-ordinated initiative in Australia to tackle this issue.

The Building Site Crime Prevention initiative was funded by Crime Prevention Victoria, and supported by the City of Casey and the Urban and Regional Land Corporation between July 2001 – June 2002.

A Project Reference Group representing the four key stakeholder groups - local builders and developers, local community groups, Police agencies and Council worked with the Project Worker to implement a range of strategies.

Two trial sites within the City of Casey were identified: Lynbrook Stage 8 and Kings Park Stage 5. The focus of the initiative centred around these two sites.

Twenty-five builders and developers were identified as having a direct interest in the trial sites and they were all afforded the opportunity to contribute to the initiative and attend the bi-monthly Project Reference Group meetings.

From the outset it was clear that, for a number of reasons, there was a great deal of under-reporting of crime on building sites. There was no reliable statistical information available, and most information supplied was anecdotal. Police data does not code building site crime as a separate category, making analysis of information difficult.

Insurance excesses and a reluctance to report 'minor crimes' to the Police were frequently cited by builders as the reason for not reporting incidents. Various attempts to collate statistical crime information were undertaken and a number of initiatives were introduced to elicit this information, all with disappointing results.

A further complication in analysing criminal data is the possibility of short deliveries, under estimating and accidental damage on building sites, being included in reporting procedures and insurance claims. These losses can then be 'written off' without the formality of follow up inquiries and action.

The absence of reliable crime statistics and information has restricted the opportunity to utilise crime pattern analysis and has also frustrated the evaluation of the initiative.

A range of crime prevention strategies were identified and following consultation with the Project Reference Group, a number of these were introduced during the initiative, and others were investigated but not actioned.

A key feature of the initiative centred on the need for a community awareness and education campaign for the local community. This was addressed by means of open letters sent to local residents of the two trial sites, supported by articles in local newsletters and local newspapers.

Another key feature of the initiative was to encourage the reporting of suspicious activities. The initiative identified the general belief that such incidents should only be reported to the local police. The initiative identified and promoted Police policy that if people are seen on site and they are believed to be stealing or vandalising property, the incident should be reported immediately on **000** in order to secure a priority response. Promoting this message to the builders, developers and general community was identified as one of the main strategies of the initiative.

Other notable achievements of the initiative include:

- The production and distribution of a Theft and Vandalism Survey form, Building Site Crime Prevention signage and an Information Pack;
- Launch of the Building Site Crime Prevention Signage, attended by 60 industry representatives on 8 May 2002;
- Co-ordinated media campaign including local, national and industry coverage; and
- Production and circulation of a 'Best Practice' document containing the findings of this project.

Ownership and responsibility for addressing building site crime within the industry has always been a problem. Coordination and a commitment to action is needed.

Many large organisations appoint Loss Prevention Officers to address issues of loss, damage and criminal activity, yet the building industry seems slow to recognise the potential benefits of such appointments.

The community seems to be largely unaware of the level of 'factored in' pricing to allow for wastage including loss, theft and vandalism. Perhaps such knowledge in the community would raise an expectation that the industry should take a more pro-active approach to reduce these costs. Pro-active industry strategies to crime prevention provide potential marketing opportunities.

This report on the Building Site Crime Prevention initiative provides a useful tool and best practice document for adaptation to address particular building site situations.

The formation of a co-ordinated industry body with both the funding and expertise to coordinate an education program and package of crime prevention measures is needed to address the endemic problem of building site crime.

## **Background Information**

**Context**

**Terms of Reference**

**Consultation**

**Project Timetable**

**Selection of Trial Sites**

**Crime Statistics**

## **Context**

Housing construction is the largest sector of the building industry in Victoria, accounting for up to 60% of all building activities. In recent years there has been on average a 2.6% growth per annum in the number of households constructed in Victoria.

Concurrently, the cost of building a new home has also increased. This has been due in part, to a rise in the number of thefts from residential construction sites.

Until now, much of our knowledge on the issue of building site crime has been based on anecdotal information rather than systematic investigation. Although building site crime has been most evident in municipalities with rapid growth of new housing estates, the problem extends state-wide to 'in fill' building in developed areas.

Fiscal pressures are also felt by insurance companies such as the Housing Industry Association (HIA) Insurance Services, that reports paying in excess of \$3million in claims during an 18 month period in 2001-2002, 85% of which are related to site theft.

Research suggests that much of the theft at building sites is small in nature, relatively new items and portable. The majority of theft occurs outside working hours and on weekends. It is likely that much of the construction crime is committed by people who work or have worked in the building industry.

A problem in providing an accurate picture of building site theft is the lack of a specific reporting code for Police investigations. Under-reporting may also occur due to insurance excess levels and potential premium increases.

These issues form the basis for the pilot Building Site Crime Prevention initiative in the City of Casey. Investigation of crime trends, reporting processes and crime prevention strategies were undertaken during the pilot phase and are reported in this document.

## **Terms of Reference**

### **Aims of the Building Site Crime Prevention Project**

The pilot project aims to:

- Identify and analyse crimes that occur on building sites;
- Enhance communication between key stakeholders;
- Develop and implement appropriate strategies to minimise and prevent such crime;
- Undertake evaluation of the project's processes and strategies; and
- Disseminate information about the project to interested parties.

### **Role of the Project Reference Group**

A Project Reference Group comprising key stakeholder representation met regularly to guide implementation of the pilot project. Key roles and responsibilities of the group include:

#### **Research**

- Assist in the identification and analysis of key building site crime issues.
- Initiate an ongoing process to assess and monitor building site crime.

#### **Plan of Action**

- Assist in the identification and implementation of appropriate strategies.
- Link the project strategies with other relevant municipal and industry initiatives.
- Initiate and coordinate the development and implementation of building site crime prevention projects.

#### **Partnerships**

- Promote co-ordinated action and build partnerships with agencies that can influence building site crime prevention.

#### **Evaluation**

- Design measures of success for specific projects and the overall strategy.

## Consultation

The following chart identifies the key stakeholders and means of consultation, liaison and communication that were employed during the project.

<i>Key Stakeholder Groups</i>	<i>Means of Consultation</i>					
	<i>1-1 Meetings</i>	<i>Group Meetings</i>	<i>Project Reference Group Meetings</i>	<i>Launch</i>	<i>Open Letters</i>	<i>Media Articles</i>
Builders and Developers	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Industry Groups: HIA & MBA	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Community Groups: Resident Action and Neighbourhood Watch		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Police Agencies	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Crime Prevention Victoria	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
City of Casey: Community Development, Traffic Engineering, Community Protection, Planning Departments	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

## **Project Timetable**

The original time frame for the project was determined by the funding allocation from Crime Prevention Victoria.

This initial funding allowed the City of Casey to employ a Project Worker in August 2001 in a part time position averaging 2/3 days a week for approximately 6 months.

During the project, additional funding was made available by the Urban and Regional Land Corporation and from the City of Casey.

This additional funding enabled the project to be extended to the end of June 2002.

### **Project Time Line for Implementation**

July 2001	Funding Allocation approved Project Reference Group established
August	Project Worker commenced
Sep – Nov	Liaison and data gathering
Dec – Feb	Trial site selection and engagement
Feb – May	Strategy development and implementation
May	Launch of Estate Signage
June	Preparation of final report
Aug 2002	Dissemination of information

## Selection of Trial Sites

Following discussions with the Project Reference Group, two trial sites in the City of Casey were selected, Kings Park at Narre Warren South and the Lynbrook Development at Lynbrook.

In making these selections, a number of factors were taken into account. Both sites presented different problems and issues with regards to site vulnerability and management and coordination of new strategies.

# AVJennings

Kings Park Stage 5, Narre Warren South

- one developer/builder;
- easier to monitor;
- easier co-ordination; and
- isolated and vulnerable location.



### Launch of Trial Site 1: Kings Park Estate

L > R: Ken Lee, Building Site Crime Prevention Project Worker, City of Casey; Shane Jenner, Construction Manager, AV Jennings, Sam Battaglin, Building Supervisor, AV Jennings, Melanie Sanders, Community Safety Officer, City of Casey.



Lynbrook Estate Stage 8, Lynbrook

- one developer;
- 24 different builders;
- active Neighbourhood Watch and Residents Action Group; and
- limited access and egress.



### Launch of Trial Site 2: Lynbrook Estate

L > R: Bernie Porter, URLC; Ken Lee, Building Site Crime Prevention Project Worker, City of Casey; Anne Lovatt, Neighbourhood Watch; Mayor Cr Mick Morland, City of Casey; Melanie Sanders, Community Safety Officer, City of Casey.

## Crime Statistics

The Project Reference Group (PRG) at its meeting in July 2001 identified that various sources of statistics could provide input for the Project Worker. An aim for the project is to document current crime levels and trends within the City of Casey.

Three key sources of information were identified:

### **1. *Builders and Developers Data Collation***

Two members of the PRG, Urban Regional Land Corporation (Developers of the Lynbrook Estate) and Metricon Homes, agreed to collate information about past and current theft and vandalism.

### **2. *Police Crime Reports***

The City of Casey is served by two police stations – Narre Warren and Cranbourne. Police crime report information from both stations was requested.

Narre Warren Police provided crime report information, which covered the period 1 January – 7 November 2001.

Unfortunately Cranbourne was unable to provide the information requested.

### **3. *Crime Survey Questionnaires***

The Crime Survey form was introduced to the industry in December 2001. A total of 25 builders on two trial sites were contacted in January 2002 and supplied with copies of the survey forms.

Builders were asked to record details of criminal incidents on their sites between the trial period 1 February – 30 April 2002 and return the survey forms for evaluation. In addition, these builders were encouraged to promote the use of the survey forms within their company and use them to record criminal activities on any of their other sites and forward them to the Project Worker for evaluation.

The statistical information about building site crime from these three sources is summarised as follows

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### ***Builders and Developers Data Collation***

- ***Urban and Regional Land Corporation - Lynbrook Estate***

In August 2001, the Urban and Regional Land Corporation (URLC) initiated their own survey form, which was sent to a total of 28 builders who were working on the Lynbrook or Lynbrook Heights Estates. The survey requested information on any incident of crime, (theft or vandalism) that occurred during August 2001 and asked that the forms be returned to the Estate Sales Office. A total of 15 replies (54% response rate) were received covering a period June - September 2001.

- 5 builders responded with no reported crimes.
- 10 builders responded with a total of 28 reports of criminal activity of which 6 builders experienced crime on the Lynbrook Estate only, with 3 builders experiencing crime on both the Lynbrook and nearby Lynbrook Heights Estate and 1 builder experienced crime on the Lynbrook Heights Estate only.

The results of this initial survey process is summarised:

#### **Building Stage**

- Crimes reported at all building stages, ie slab, frame, lock up and completed homes.
- One completed display home was targeted with a theft of a computer and plants from the garden area.

#### **Types of Crimes**

- Theft, vandalism and damage (to gain entry).
- Damage accompanied theft in most cases involving property at lock up stage.
- Theft of materials on site, in particular timber, was most common.
- A few minor incidents of vandalism were reported.

#### **Value**

- Was not shown, but about half appeared to be under \$500.

#### **Timing of Crime**

- On 4 occasions it appeared the same or surrounding lots were targeted more than once within a 14 day period.
- No details available to establish specific time frames for incidents.

#### **Reporting Crimes**

- A total of 8 (29%) of criminal initiatives were reported to the Police.

- ***Metricon Homes Pty Ltd – City of Casey Area***

Metricon Homes agreed to provide statistics on incident reports they had collated for the City of Casey area between the period 1 May – 31 July 2001.

A total of 22 incidents at 20 different lots were reported in the 3 month period.

The results of this data collation is summarised:

**Building Stage**

- No information was provided.

**Types of crimes**

- Total of 12 theft incidents reported.
- Total of 10 damage (vandalism) incidents reported of which 50% were broken windows.

**Value**

- Value of property stolen/damaged for each incident was under \$200 with one exception.

**Timing of Crime**

- No details available of the time of day these occurred.

**Reporting Crimes**

- One incident was reported to the Police. (Theft of Windows \$1,066)

***Police Crime Reports***

A summary of the building site crimes for the Narre Warren Police area during the period 1 January – 7 November 2001 is listed:

- 45 building site related crimes were recorded.
- 19 (42%) of the incidents included property damage in addition to theft.
- 7 Property damage reports were valued in excess of \$1,000.
- 3 cases of theft or damage to plant/equipment were recorded.
- Thursday to Sunday was the peak time for incidents of theft/vandalism.
- There was one incident of 3 adjoining lots targeted on the same night.

### ***Crime Survey Questionnaires***

The responses to the Crime Survey Questionnaire, as distributed for the Building Site Crime Prevention Pilot Project were divided into 3 categories:

- Lynbrook trial site;
- Kings Park trial site; and
- Other Locations - City of Casey and Melbourne region.

#### ***Findings: Lynbrook Trial Site***

- No crime survey forms were submitted by any of the 24 builders on Lynbrook Stage 8 during the trial period.
- One verbal report of apparent scaffolding theft was reported indirectly by one of the builders.
- Unable to establish any form of current crime trends or patterns due to lack of information.

#### ***Findings: Kings Park Trial Site***

- AV Jennings are the sole builder and developer for this site.
- 3 survey forms were received during the trial period.
- All 3 incidents were reported to the Police and related to the theft of materials.
  - *Incident 1:* Theft of doors and bath at lock up stage; appears to be a ‘theft to order’ as other materials were left on site. No sign of forced entry. Value \$1,148.
  - *Incident 2:* Theft of door and door furniture overnight; items were fitted in the afternoon and stolen that night. Isolated site at lock up stage; easy to access the building and remove door from inside without damage. Value \$320.
    - *Recommendation:* The door & door furniture should have been fitted at a later stage or the building made more secure (access from the garage was a known vulnerable area).
  - *Incident 3:* Theft of timber beams, stolen over a long weekend. Isolated site at frame stage. Value \$200.
    - *Recommendation:* Timber is particularly vulnerable especially at frame stage. Good coordination of deliveries and high profile stencil paint marking would reduce opportunities and act as a deterrent.

- *Incident 4:* (Verbal report only.) Theft of timber flooring. Frame stage. Value \$600. Delivered Friday and stolen over the weekend. Neighbour saw the property being removed and telephoned the local Police who could not respond to the call at that time due to other commitments.

- *Recommendations*

- (1) Where there are suspects on site who are believed to be stealing or vandalising property, then the number to ring is 000 to secure an emergency response.
- (2) That the co-ordination of deliveries should be improved to reduce unnecessary exposure of 'high risk' materials over the weekend. Materials should only be delivered on the day they can be installed.

***Findings: City of Casey Other Locations***

- A total of eight survey forms were received relating to incidents in other locations in the City of Casey. 7 from Metricon and one from AV Jennings.
- Three incidents related to the theft of timber. Timber is frequently stolen within 1-3 days of being delivered on site.
- Four incidents involving damage related to theft or criminal damage such as broken windows.
- One property was targeted twice; theft of timber \$250 and 2 weeks later criminal damage to windows \$2,500.
- Value of damage and theft claims varied between \$150 - \$2,500.
- Six of the 8 incidents were reported to the Police, whilst only three incidents were reported to the Insurance Companies.
- The nature of the property stolen and level of damage suggests that there is both an element of 'professional trades' involvement and local opportunistic crime.

***Findings: Metropolitan Melbourne Other Locations***

- A total of eight survey forms were received relating to incidents in the Melbourne Region - all from Metricon.
- Three incidents related to the theft of timber; timber is frequently stolen within 1-3 days of being delivered on site.
- Four incidents involved damage, either related to theft, or direct acts of criminal damage such as broken windows.
- Three incidents were linked to the same property and another two incidents were linked.
- One property was targeted three times (theft of timber) with all thefts occurring overnight on the day of delivery.

- One property was targeted twice; theft of all windows (\$5,225) and two weeks later criminal damage to 11 windows and sliding doors (\$895).
- Six of the eight incidents were reported to the Police.
- Again, the nature of the property stolen and level of damage suggests that there is both an element of ‘professional trades’ involvement and local opportunistic crime.
- A builder not associated with either project site provided information about Five Crimes. However, the information supplied lacked detailed information and was not useful in establishing trends or patterns of communal activity.

### **Conclusion**

The poor response to the Theft and Vandalism Survey and general lack of reporting by the builders of criminal acts restricted the opportunity to utilise this information for Crime Pattern Analysis.

## Strategies to prevent and reduce crime on residential building sites

Following consultation with members of the Project Reference Group, and key stakeholders, a range of **risk management** and **community education** strategies were identified that can be used to help reduce and prevent building site-related crime. These strategies are listed below. Some of these strategies were implemented as part of the Building Site Crime Prevention Pilot Project.

Each building site and housing development will present different opportunities for criminal activity. By conducting a risk assessment of each site and monitoring criminal activities, a **package of strategies** can be identified that are relevant likely to be cost effective.

<i>Crime Prevention Strategies</i>	<i>Implemented during Pilot Project</i>	<i>Research Undertaken / Not Implemented</i>
• <b>Access Control</b>		✓
• <b>Improved Coordination of Deliveries</b>		✓
• <b>Builders Liaison Group</b>	✓	
• <b>Community Awareness campaigns</b>	✓	
• <b>Cost Analysis</b>		✓
• <b>Council initiatives</b> Housing Crime Prevention Officer Street Lighting Community Protection Patrols Environmental Policy	✓	
• <b>Crime Prevention Signage and Builders' Rewards</b>	✓	
• <b>Insurers verification of claims</b>		✓
• <b>Media Campaign</b>	✓	
• <b>Police Support and Emergency Reporting number 000</b>	✓	
• <b>Property marking</b>		✓
• <b>Prosecution Policy</b>		✓
• <b>Surveillance Measures</b> Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Security Alarms Security Lighting Security Patrols		✓
• <b>Suspicious Activity Guidelines</b>	✓	
• <b>Theft and Vandalism Survey</b>	✓	

## Access Control

Access control is defined as the management, regulation and control of who is allowed access to specified areas, in this case, the building site.

Access control generally involves the principle of ‘layering in’ protection, starting at the external site boundaries and implementing a range of physical and electronic measures to monitor and /or control the site, and movement of people within that site.

The implementation of access control measures is a key feature of most security plans, and features prominently as a key strategy in this initiative.

Practical and effective access control measures for building sites has proved a most difficult issue to address and one that few, if any, companies have found an effective solution too.

In the case of building sites, there are usually two main areas where access control measures should feature prominently: perimeter security and building security.

### ***Perimeter Security***

New housing estates are invariably in isolated areas on new developments. In the majority of cases, there is no perimeter security fencing included in the package when the land is acquired from the developer.

Most builders do not include the cost of fencing in the building contract, and those that do, usually erect the fencing once the house has been completed. In many cases, builders prefer an ‘open site’ to enable better access for large vehicle movement, deliveries and an unrestricted working environment.

There is a need to address how perimeter security could be improved. There are two options generally available: temporary wire or permanent fencing. Each should be considered on their own merits and in terms of their practical application to that particular site.

- ***Temporary wire fencing***

Temporary wire fencing provides a visible, high profile deterrent and gives out a ‘message’ that the builder is security conscious and has taken a pro-active approach. The use of temporary wire fencing is increasing in popularity and use.

**Advantages:**

- Visible high profile deterrent.
- Clearly identifies site boundaries and persons who are within the site.
- Thieves and vandals are likely to feel less comfortable being within a confined area, especially when on site ‘out of hours’.



- Raises the potential for community awareness and observation of the site.
- Reduces opportunity for vandalism, and likelihood of opportunistic theft.

**Disadvantages:**

- Cost of installation, hire charges, and removal costs.
- Impedes access for deliveries and site work.
- Fencing usually able to be ‘dismantled’ by a determined thief.
- Gate access difficult to supervise.
- Widespread master key issue for the gates will result in lack of control over who has access.
- Gates likely to be left open by tradespeople with the resulting opportunity for unauthorised access.

- ***Permanent fencing***

Permanent fencing usually takes the form of a metal or wooden structure and in most instances is installed once the building has been completed.

From a security perspective, factors to consider when installing a permanent fence prior to commencing a building program include:

- The height of the fence;
- Which side the rails are positioned;
- The cut down length at the front; and
- Provision for securing the site at the front, i.e. a wing fence and gate.

**Advantages:**

- Visible high profile deterrent.
- Clearly identifies site boundaries and persons who are within the site.
- Thieves & vandals are likely to feel less comfortable being within a confined area, especially when on site ‘out of hours’.
- Raises the potential for community awareness and observation of the site and persons seen thereon.
- Reduces opportunity for vandalism, and likelihood of opportunistic theft.
- Costs and specifications can be built into the purchase price at the time of contract.

**Disadvantages:**

- Cost factor: if purchaser will not agree to pay the additional costs, or if adjacent owners do not agree to pay proportionally.
- Impedes access for deliveries and site work.
- Fencing likely to be damaged by delivery vehicles and storage of materials.
- Risk of graffiti damage to the fence.
- Front access difficult to effectively secure and monitor.

During the Building Site Crime Prevention Initiative, it was established that the majority of builders consulted choose not to implement any form of perimeter security measures for their sites.

There are however situations where builders and developers felt that temporary wire fencing is appropriate. Typical developments for this type of fencing may include medical centres, nursing homes, community developments, apartments, flats and display villages.

The benefits of perimeter security fencing, whether temporary or permanent, should be considered for each individual site. Factors to take into account should include but not be restricted to:

- History of the area including the number and nature of previous incidents.
- Isolation of the site (are there are occupied premises nearby?)
- If there are any security patrols on the development.
- If street lighting is available and will be commissioned during the construction period.
- The value of the development including fittings and plant.
- The expectations of the community to provide a safe and security conscious site.
- The number of developments that can be included within the confined area.
- Insurance, public liability, and health and safety requirements.

The practice of installing perimeter fencing to comply with issues such as those listed above is quite common in the United Kingdom.

With ongoing legislation and concern surrounding public liability, and health and safety issues, it appears likely that some form of enclosed site requirement will be forced upon the residential building industry.

Another example is provided by Hume City Council, where General Local Law No 1 (Amendment) now identifies a local law - 'Building and Works Code of Practice.' This introduces specific fencing and access requirements for building works within that municipality. This Local Law is primarily focused on environmental and pollution control measures. However, within this legislation is a requirement to contain the development within a fenced area to a minimum height of 1.5metres and provision of access control measures by restricting access to only one point. Whilst not intended to be a primary security feature of the legislation, this fencing requirement lends itself to some form of access control measure and is therefore likely to have an impact on crime prevention.

## **Building Security**

On most sites, there are no perimeter security measures in place. Therefore, the security of the site and opportunity for criminal activity will be dependent on what security measures are in place for the building itself. Building security measures should be introduced as soon as practical and certainly by the time the site reaches lock up stage.

Fundamental to building security is the control, regulation and management of who has legitimate access to the site. Some points to consider include:

- ***Key Access to the Building Site***

Larger building groups tend to employ a wide range of sub-contractors and it is common practice to issue them with a builder's master key, which effectively gives access to any site operated by that builder. These builders' master keys are in theory changed periodically every 6-12 months.

- ***Supervision of Access***

Due to the volume of work, many building supervisors have 12 or more houses to supervise, and as such they are not in a position to manage, regulate or control access to their sites on a daily basis. In addition, the supervisor is often unaware of who is on site at any given time, due to the nature of sub-contracting work and the irregular times that sub-contractors are present.

In this instance, the responsibility for building security should also fall to the sub-contractor. They should be responsible for the security of the site in terms of locking the doors and windows when they finish their work. Some sub-contractors showed a positive approach to building security, ensuring doors and windows were locked when they left, whilst others do not appear to consider basic security issues their responsibility.

- ***Responsibility for Building Site Security***

At present, implied responsibility for building security will in most cases rest with the building supervisor and ultimately the construction manager.

In the absence of a dedicated Loss Prevention Officer within larger building companies, there should be clear written instruction as to who is responsible for building site security issues.

Whoever is deputed with responsibility for site security, should make sure that all sub-contractors are instructed on their security responsibilities and include security checks when they visit sites, especially out of hours.

- ***Security of Scaffolding***

Scaffolding is now a health and safety requirement for double storey houses. Frequently the tie-in scaffolding bars are fixed through the upper side windows, then making it impossible to close the windows securely.

This situation provides two opportunities for unlawful access - fixed scaffolding to climb on and open windows to gain access through.

Where these circumstances are present the scaffolding tie-in bars should be removed as soon as safe to do so and the windows should be 'tied' in the closed position in order to prevent them being opened from the outside.

A building security issue worthy of note is the entrance door from the garage to the house. This door frequently seems not to be installed or properly secured at lock up stage and often provides easy and unobserved access to the building.

Other physical and electronic measures that impact upon building security are referred to elsewhere in this report.

## **Conclusion**

Access control is a key feature of any security conscious site. Most builders choose not to implement perimeter control measures resulting in increased risk of theft and vandalism, both to the materials on site and the building itself.

Larger building group supervisors appeared often too busy to concentrate on security issues, with the resulting responsibility for day-to-day site security falling to the sub-contractors. Whilst some subcontractors appeared aware of their responsibilities for the security of the site, others appeared to disregard this issue, leaving sites unsecured, with doors and windows open or unlocked. In these cases it would seem appropriate for the site building supervisor and construction manager to play a more active role in monitoring and managing these issues.

## Improved Co-ordination and Storage of Deliveries

Poor co-ordination of deliveries and storage of materials on site is one of the key areas where opportunities for theft and vandalism are highest. Repeated examples of poor management of these issues was encountered during the course of the initiative.

In particular, larger building groups tended to have poor management and co-ordination of deliveries, undoubtedly the result of being unable to personally oversee each delivery due to multiple site commitments.

Examples of poor coordination of deliveries included:

- Windows delivered on site before the slab had been laid;
- Framework including roof trusses being delivered on site before the slab had been laid;
- Bricks being delivered on site before the frame stage had been started; and
- Materials left on the nature strip or public highway.

The likely effects of poor co-ordination of deliveries include:

- An increased probability of theft or vandalism due to prolonged exposure of the materials.
- Materials left on site attract unwanted attention and encourage the opportunistic thief.
- Materials left on site and not fixed are easier to remove by the opportunistic thief.
- Affords unnecessary temptation to other trades people.
- Vulnerability for delivery drivers who do not usually have the delivery checked by a representative of the organisation. This leaves no protection for the driver from later claims of short or non-delivery of materials.
- Increased risk of accidental damage.

A typical example was encountered with the delivery of thousands of dollars of materials to a site well in advance of when the items were needed for installation. The materials remained in full view for several days and available to be taken by anyone passing by.

Windows are particularly vulnerable to theft, especially when left in the open on an unsecured site for days or weeks prior to installation. This scenario was all too common and repeated examples of poor co-ordination of window deliveries and installation were encountered during the project.



Whilst it is likely that small builders will have the opportunity for better co-ordination and management of deliveries to their sites, the above problems appear to be inherent to the larger building companies, which in turn makes them particularly vulnerable to this type of crime.

There is scope in most instances, to arrange for the delivery to take place on the day the materials are due to be installed or at worst, the day before installation.

Further information and guidelines on co-ordination and deliveries appears in the Building Site Crime Prevention Information Pack - 'Building Site Security' brochure (refer to Appendix).

## **Builders Liaison Group**

Annual losses to the building industry as a result of criminal activities runs into millions of dollars and, according to most industry stakeholders, losses are escalating each year.

Given this considerable financial loss, this pilot project has aimed to encourage a co-ordinated approach to implementing strategies to address the problem of building site crime. However, there appears very little real commitment within the industry to address these issues in a co-ordinated and planned response.

In most companies there appears no provision for the appointment of a Loss Prevention Officer or similar position to coordinate action. Responsibility for losses generally falls to the construction manager or building supervisor who has responsibility for security as an addition to their primary role.

Crime prevention principles identify that everyone has a responsibility to take reasonable precautions to prevent crime and look after their property.

A peak body within the building industry to implement crime prevention strategies to minimise the risk and incidence of building site theft and vandalism could make considerable progress in providing co-ordinated action.

A possible model for co-ordinated action could be drawn from the Builders Alliance Group - comprising six of the key industry stakeholders. This group meets at regular intervals to address various building issues including security, and would appear ideally placed to take on this responsibility and establish a specific building industry crime prevention liaison group or subgroup.

Such a subgroup could operate under the umbrella of the Builders Alliance Group and be specifically tasked to investigate, report, coordinate, implement and evaluate a whole range of crime prevention strategies for the building industry.

Membership of this “Crime Prevention Liaison” Group could be drawn from industry experts, consultants, and other key industry stakeholders, specifically to include the insurance industry and Police agencies.

Consideration should be given to the appointment of a co-ordinator to the position with appropriate funding secured from within the industry.

## **Conclusion**

The building industry is the stakeholder with primary responsibility and commitment to reduce building crime. Other key stakeholders such as the insurance companies, Police agencies and the public can work with the building industry to implement crime prevention initiatives. Losses from building site crime are likely to continue to increase unless the industry implements a range of co-ordinated crime prevention strategies.

The industry should consider the establishment of a dedicated group responsible for addressing issues of building site crime. Key industry stakeholders should support this group, and where appropriate contribute to its financing.

## **Community Awareness Campaigns**

The following initiatives were identified and implemented as part of the community education and awareness strategy:

### ***Launch at Lynbrook Estate***

The Building Site Crime Prevention Project was launched at the Lynbrook Estate on 12 December 2001. Invitations were sent out to 24 builders and 85 local residents and people who had purchased land on that stage. Two meetings were held: builders for 5pm, followed by a residents meeting at 7pm.

Attendance at the launch was disappointing, with only two builders attending and about six residents. However this included chairpersons of the Residents Association and Neighbourhood Watch Group. Feedback from builders indicated they were too busy, especially just before Christmas to take time away from the job.

In hindsight, delaying the launch until after Christmas would probably have been beneficial. However, the aim was to raise awareness of the program before the Christmas break and increased risk of theft and vandalism during these periods.

A second launch at Kings Park was not considered worthwhile, instead opting for distribution of open letters to local residents.

### **Open letters to residents**

Open letters were distributed to residents on the Lynbrook estate, 450 in January and the Kings Park estate 270 in February 2002 .

These open letters contained details of the initiative, encouraged people to look out for and report suspicious activities on site and included guidelines to assist them. An example can be found in the Information Pack (Appendix)

Following the launch of the Poster signage on 8 May 2002, a further open letter was sent to both the Lynbrook and King's Park resident's (710). This second letter advised them of the new signage and again requested them to look out for and report any suspicious activities seen on site.

### **Liaison with Community Groups**

Communication was made with both the Residents Action and Neighbourhood Watch Groups at Lynbrook Estate.

A presentation on the Building Site Crime Prevention Initiative was given to the Neighbourhood Watch Committee in November 2001. Ongoing contact has been maintained, with the co-ordinator attending the PRG meetings.

Both groups were invited to attend the launch of the Poster Signage on 8 May 2002. A further presentation was made to the Neighbourhood Watch Committee on 17 June 2002.

Community groups are not yet established in the Kings Park estate.

### **Media Campaign**

A media campaign was introduced as part of the initiative and details appear on page 35.

### **Central Contact and Liaison**

The City of Casey Housing Crime Prevention Officer provided a central contact person for the project. Contact details were provided on all correspondence and written and verbal communication was encouraged with the Project Worker.

### **Encourage builder liaison with the community**

The project encouraged liaison between builders and the local community, and indeed there were several examples where this had taken place with positive results.

The importance of good face-to-face communication and availability of a contact number cannot be overstated. Good communication between builders and the local community will benefit both groups and help address any issues or misunderstandings at an early stage. The Information Pack (Appendix) contains a sample 'Open' Letter that Builders can use. It is intended that the letter be followed up with a personal face to face meeting.

### **Conclusion**

Community education is a key strategy in this project. Time and effort in working with the community is likely to be a very cost effective and well-received initiative. Face-to-face contact supported by newsletters, and involvement with and the support of community groups such as the Resident's Association and Neighbourhood Watch Groups should be a basis for developing this strategy.

## Cost Analysis

Any investment in a crime prevention strategy to address building site crime should weigh the cost of implementing strategies against the significance of the costs of theft.

It appears that the industry has not analysed the costs, both direct and indirect, associated with building site crime. Builders and developers who are aware of the true cost of crime on their sites are more likely to have taken pro-active preventative approaches.

A risk assessment for the site would in all probability identify high profile and cost effective strategies that are a means to reduce crime.

Some costs to consider for the various stakeholders include:

### Costs to **builders**:

- Insurance excesses and premiums;
- Security guards/systems/appliances;
- Replacing tools sooner than anticipated;
- 'Down time' due to delays in replacing materials;
- Replacing materials not covered by insurance; and
- Penalties for late completion.

### Costs to **residents/home owners**:

- Personal cost as a victim of crime;
- Insurance excess, premiums;
- Delay in moving in - rental and storage expenses;
- Perception of crime rate in local area; and
- Reluctant to be the first to move into an estate.

### Costs to **insurance companies**:

- Insurance payouts.

### Costs to **community**:

- First impression of community is of crime;
- Fear, distrust, relationships affected;
- Isolation; and
- Added cost of crime to economy including home construction cost and insurance.

Each of these costs is considerable. The investment in a range of crime prevention strategies could significantly minimise the expenses incurred from building site theft.

## Council Initiatives

The following four council initiatives were implemented as part of this project:

- Housing Crime Prevention Officer;
- Street Lighting;
- Community Protection Officer Patrols; and
- Environmental Policy.

### *Housing Crime Prevention Officer*

The City of Casey appointed a Project Worker for the duration of the initiative.

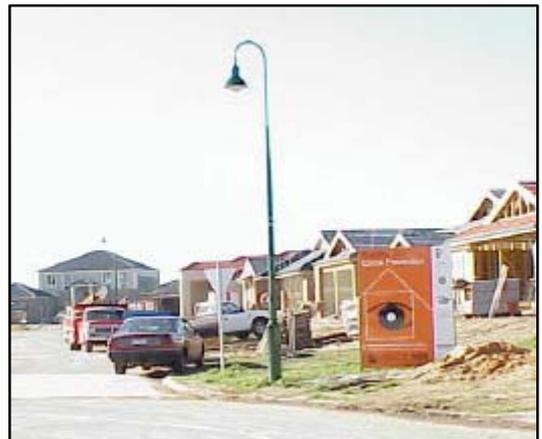
In kind support for this position from the City of Casey included staff resources, meeting venues, administration support and transport.

Additional funding was also provided by the City of Casey to enable the final report stages of the project to be completed.

### *Street Lighting*

It was recognised from the outset that thieves and vandals often target isolated and unlit sites where there is less chance of them being observed. This message was repeated in most builder and developer interviews.

Prior to the commencement of the initiative the general policy was to wait for the first occupants to move in, before connecting the streetlights and then, only those lights in the areas that were occupied.



This meant that whilst the estate was being developed and at its most vulnerable, there was no street lighting available.

The City of Casey immediately responded to this issue and has now adopted the following lighting policy.

*“That requests for street lighting to be energised be made to the electricity company upon notification from the Subdivisions department to the Traffic Engineering Section when the estate or development stages of the subdivision Statement of Compliance has been issued”.*

This change of lighting policy will now allow for the activation of streetlights at the time of release of each sub-division.

All key stakeholders have universally welcomed this new policy.

### ***Community Protection Patrols***

Council Community Protection Officers were represented on the Project Reference Group by the attendance of the Superintendent.

The Community Protection Officers are primarily engaged on enforcing Local By-Laws pertaining to animal control, parking enforcement and pollution and environmental controls. These officers are a trained uniformed group, and have at their disposal communication facilities, vehicles, cameras and the provision of lighting from their vehicles.

Whilst not primarily a night time or weekend resource, they do as and when the need arises, deploy on these occasions.

These Community Protection Officers afforded the project additional resources in the form of patrols alerted to the possibility of crime on building sites and acting as a high profile deterrent. This building site security program complemented their duties relating to enforcing environmental controls on building sites.

### ***Environmental Policy***

The City of Casey's Local Law No. 2 Part 3 Community Protection includes regulations pertaining to Building Works particularly sanitation and litter control.

To support this legislation, the City of Casey has produced a pamphlet entitled "Clean Building Sites, a guide to managing waste, litter and sedimentation on building and construction sites."

Like other municipalities, there are currently many building sites within the City of Casey that do not comply with existing environmental legislation.

Recognising the importance of environmental controls, the City of Casey is currently undertaking an education and enforcement campaign in order to minimise the abuse of the laws intended to protect the community and environment.



As part of Council's initiative, Community Protection Officers identify building sites that are in breach of the regulations and encourage compliance via an education, and where necessary, an enforcement campaign.

An untidy building site will attract unwelcome attention from a number of groups. It increases the perception of lack of ownership and supervision whilst lending itself to the attention of opportunist thieves and vandals.

**Benefits of a clean site include:**

- Lower clean up costs for builders and the community;
- Reduced public complaints;
- Better image within the Community;
- Improve health and safety conditions on site;
- Less visual pollution; and
- Increased community pride.

In order to protect the community and environment, Council remains committed to ensuring that building sites within the municipality are properly managed and comply with relevant legislation and controls.

**Conclusion**

The City of Casey initiatives were well-received and demonstrated Council's commitment to support the initiative. The City of Casey along with other municipalities, including the City of Hume, recognise their responsibility in promoting and enforcing environmental controls on building sites.

Builders and developers who fail or refuse to comply with environmental legislation are likely to be identified and penalised. The benefits of a tidy site are many, and will almost certainly reduce the potential for criminal activity on site.

## **Crime Prevention Signage and Builders' Rewards**

Crime prevention signage and the provision of offering builders rewards is an area that offers great potential as a visible high profile and cost effective deterrent.

### ***Crime Prevention Signage***

In most cases however, where security notices were displayed, they were generally perceived as ineffective due to the following reasons:

- The security notices were not professionally produced and appeared very bland and basic.
- They were usually printed in black and white.
- They were often only produced in A4 size and too small to be easily seen by passers by.
- The same signs had been used for a long time and had become 'stale and routine' on site.
- The positioning on site of the signs was not changed, thereby reducing their deterrent value.

Professionally designed and produced signage, which is prominently and strategically displayed, and well maintained, includes the following benefits:

- It is a high profile deterrent.
- It indicates the company's commitment to prevent and reduce building site crime.
- It is cost effective because the same signage can be used on different sites.
- It can be easily adapted to change the appearance i.e. change the colour print or border but still contain the same message, thereby giving the appearance of new signage and 'refreshing' the interest and deterrent value of the sign at minimum expense.
- Likely to arouse interest, awareness and response from the local community.
- Increases the company's profile as pro-active in community crime prevention.

Builder's interviewed in the project, particularly the larger building groups, recognised the potential benefits of good signage and builders rewards, and adopted the idea.

### ***Builders Rewards***

Some of the builders interviewed currently operated or had previously operated a scheme which offered rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of persons found committing crime on their sites.

A few reward schemes had been available for many years but had not been pro-actively promoted and managed, and any resulting benefits could not be evaluated.

During the Project Reference Group meetings and ensuing meetings with individual builders, there was general agreement and support for introducing a builders reward scheme.

Potential benefits of a reward scheme:

- Increased deterrent to thieves within the industry as other tradespeople may report them in order to claim the reward money.
- Increased deterrent to thieves and vandals due to the belief that they are more likely to be reported by people who want to claim the reward money.
- Increase in public awareness of the site and opportunity to claim a reward if they report suspicious activities.

### ***New Building Site Crime Prevention Signage***

The Project Reference Group identified the need and opportunity to design and develop new signage as part of the project, which would ultimately be made available to all builders and developers.

Several graphic design companies were invited to tender. Three companies submitted tenders and following evaluation, one was selected as the chosen provider. A sub-committee of the Project Reference Group was formed and several meetings were subsequently held to finalise the new signage design. The proposed design was endorsed by the Project Reference Group, with the new signage being launched on 8 May 2002.



Three key stakeholders - City of Casey, Victoria Police and Crime Prevention Victoria are featured on the signage together with their logos. One of the features of the new signage was the provision for builders and developers to be able to personalise the sign by including details of their company.

In order to meet the strict guidelines on the use of the above stakeholder's logos, it became necessary to produce a set of Style Guidelines for use of the signage.

In order to ensure the integrity and control of the signage, including the logos, the City of Casey and Crime Prevention Victoria have been identified as copyright owners. Use of the signage is conditional upon acceptance and compliance with the published style guidelines, as included in the Information Pack (refer Appendix)

The signage has been produced in the following sizes:

- Estate Entry Signs  
Approximately 2400 x 1800mm (8ft x 6ft) or 1800 x 1200mm (6ft x 4ft); and
- Individual House Lots  
A4 and A3 sizes for use on site entry points and on individual access points i.e. doors and windows.

## **Conclusion**

There appears to be some merit in introducing builders reward schemes. However, builders reward schemes are likely to be more effective if adopted collectively and this again lends itself to be discussed by a meeting of key industry stakeholders. Whilst the Police supported the Building Site Crime Prevention signage design, they do not allow any reference to rewards being mentioned or included.

Appropriate signage is likely to play a key role in reducing the incidences of building site crime by increasing awareness of the issue, and encouraging people to report suspicious activity.

The initiative has resulted in the design and availability at no cost to the industry of new and innovative crime prevention signage. However, since the introduction of the signage at the launch on 8 May 2002, there appears to have been little interest from within the industry to utilise this resource.

## **Insurers Verification of Claims**

Insurance companies have borne the brunt of the building site crime wave and have recorded massive increases in claims over recent years. One leading insurance group has described the problem of building site crime as endemic and out of control.

Whilst not the subject of investigation during this project, it seems that many companies do not have a means of accurately recording their losses and as such, do not know the extent of the problem they face.

For most companies it appears that the normal insurance excess for any building site claim is between \$500 and \$1,000. It appears that within the industry there is a reluctance to submit insurance claims unless they exceed the \$1,000 threshold, regardless of the fact that the individual builder may themselves only have a \$500 excess.

In spite of these insurance excesses and general reluctance to submit claims for 'small' amounts, the level of building site claims continues to increase in monetary value.

If the insurance industry are not to be seen as a 'soft touch' for claims they will need to ensure that they impose conditions and restrictions on when and how they will settle claims. At present it seems that in many cases there is a high percentage of claims being settled in full, without any form of verification or investigation.

The insurance industry has the potential to influence the way the building industry implements and manages building site security.

It needs to adopt a pro-active stance by working with the building industry in identifying and implementing appropriate security precautions and adopting a policy that claims will only be paid if they have met a set of basic criteria.

### **Conclusion**

Verification and investigation methods should feature prominently in the insurance strategy to reduce building site theft claims.

The insurance industry should use its influence to promote the use of crime prevention strategies within the building industry.

Insurance industry stakeholders should be represented on any working group set up to address building site crime.

## Media Campaign

The benefits to the project of including a media strategy was identified and implemented at an early stage.

In June, 2001 a Project Reference Group was formed with industry key stakeholders. Meetings were held to agree on the Terms of Reference for the project and the appointment of a project worker to coordinate the initiative.

Following these initial meetings, the City of Casey Communications Department were consulted and a co-ordinated media campaign was implemented.

Central to the media strategy were three objectives:

- To promote the initiative and therefore act as a deterrent to would be thieves and vandals;
- To raise community and industry awareness to the issues of building site crime; and
- To promote the project objectives, namely, risk management and community education.

Further use of the media as a means of relating security messages is an option open to the building industry either through their trade representative bodies or on an individual basis. Whilst any media campaign needs to be carefully thought out and managed, the potential benefits, especially to large organisations, should not be discounted.

A list of publications which reported upon the initiative appears below. A collage of some of the feature media articles appears in the Appendix.

<b>Date of Publication</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Source</b>
6 July 2001	Casey Pilots Crime Prevention	Victorian State Government Media Release
12 July 2001	Watch the New Neighbourhood Casey Pilots Crime Prevention Program	Berwick News
12 July 2001	Watch the New Neighbourhood Casey Pilots Crime Prevention Program	Cranbourne News
18 July 2001	Building Site Crime Spirals	Cranbourne Leader
18 July 2001	Thieve Cash In On Building Boom	Dandenong Examiner
19 July 2001	Casey Cracks Down on Housing Theft	Berwick News
28 July 2001	The Big Steal	Herald Sun Home Magazine
13 August 2001	Casey Pilots Crime Prevention	Victorian State Government Media Release
November 2001	Casey Puts The Finger on Building Site Crime	City of Casey Business Bulletin
19 January 2002	Building Better Site Security To Stop Theft	The Age
7 February 2002	Lynbrook Cracks Down on Crime	South Eastern Real Estate News

9 February 2002	News – With Andrew Brasier	Herald Sun Home Magazine
9 March 2002	Builders Join Forces	Herald Sun Home Magazine
March 2002	Building Site Theft	Crime Prevention Victoria Newsletter
May 2002	'copy not supplied'	Real Estate Institute of Victoria Magazine
May 2002	Keeping an eye on building site theft	Crime Prevention Victoria Newsletter
8 June 2002	Sign of The Times	Herald Sun Home Magazine

## **Police Support and Emergency Reporting Number 000**

Victoria Police have supported this initiative and feature prominently as one of the key stakeholders. They have been well represented on the Project Reference Group with attendance at all meetings and in particular from the local Crime Prevention Officer and Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator.

The two trial sites selected for the initiative fall into different Police Districts. Kings Park, Narre Warren South falls under the Narre Warren Police District, whilst the Lynbrook Estate falls under the Cranbourne Police District. During the project, liaison was maintained with both Districts, including interviews with officers from the Criminal Investigation Branch.

Builders are encouraged to report building site crimes by attending the local police station where the report is recorded and a copy issued for insurance or other purposes.

It seems that in the majority of cases the Police are unable to progress the investigation due to workload pressures and the fact that there are usually no witnesses or suspects.

The Victoria Police supported the initiative with offers of increased patrols and a willingness to prosecute offenders where there was sufficient evidence and a complaint from the aggrieved builder or developer. They also agreed, subject to availability, to work with the builders and developers where there was a specific or high-risk threat to property.

The Victoria Police logo appears on the Building Site Crime Prevention Signage and Information Pack cover and this high profile support has added credibility to the project and published material.

The Police were well represented at all ranks at the Building Site Crime Prevention Poster Launch in May 2002 where Commander Leigh Gassner representing Chief Commissioner Christine Nixon gave a keynote speech in support of the initiative.

### ***Crime Stoppers***

The Crime Stoppers initiative is primarily a reactive measure for encouraging people to report information, anonymously if they wish, on crimes that have taken place. The possible benefits and use of this scheme, although not included in this project, should not be overlooked.

### ***Emergency Reporting Number - 000***

One issue that was highlighted during the initiative was the ability of the local Police to dispatch units in response to phone calls made to the local police stations. Availability of officers and the need to prioritise the demands upon them often meant that calls to local Police stations would not secure an emergency response.

This report provides the opportunity to re-iterate Police guidelines with regard to reporting crimes on building sites.

- Where a crime is discovered on a building site **and there are no suspects present**, the general guide is to attend the local police station to report the incident, in line with company policy.
- Where people **are on site or otherwise acting suspiciously**, and it is believed that they are stealing or vandalising property, record details, such as description of the suspects and vehicle registration numbers and **report it immediately to the Police on 000**.

The Police advise that they must be advised of an incident where there are suspects still at the scene by use of the emergency number **000**. This will give them the best opportunity to send a response unit to the scene as quickly as priorities allow and identify the suspects while they are still at the scene.

The Police recognise that people are generally reluctant to ring the emergency number **000** to report such incidents but stress that they must ring this number in cases where there are still suspects at the scene.

Another point to highlight is the facility to have your call treated in confidence, thereby not being identified when the police attend.

It is important that people realise that even by ringing the emergency **000** number, the calls are prioritised. The priorities at any given time will determine the response time. However, all emergency calls are answered and in the event of a delay in response, this would usually indicate a higher priority call is being dealt with first.

## **Conclusion**

Victoria Police have been key stakeholders in this project, providing a range of support services.

The use of the emergency number **000** to report incidents such as suspects on building sites is still not fully understood by the general public. This project has set out to address the above issue by means of a community education program, including the circulation of open letters to local residents to the two trial sites and being clearly promoted on the new signage.

## **Property Marking**

One of the greatest deterrents to thieves is if they believe that the property they are stealing, or have stolen, can be identified and the owner traced. Property marking is an area that offers great potential, both as a pro-active deterrent and a means to assist in identifying stolen property.

There are a number of ways that property marking can be introduced into any environment, but a key feature of an effective strategy is the cost effectiveness and practicability of the system that is selected.

The scope of the project did not include an in depth analysis or evaluation of the methods of property marking. It did however, identify it as a potential deterrent and one which could be used in conjunction with supporting warning notices, to create an air of uncertainty with the potential thief as to whether or not the property and owner could be identified at some later stage.

One of the main advantages that a thief has when stealing unmarked property is that once they are clear of the site, it becomes difficult to establish if the materials they have in their possession are stolen because the owner cannot be traced due to there being no identification on the property.

Property marking equipment can range from cheap high profile paint stencils to more sophisticated concealed microchip technology for selected high risk or high value items.

Microchip property marking is becoming increasingly popular, especially in the United Kingdom, where advances in this technology are enabling it to be used in an increasing number of applications including building site plant, heavy machinery, tools and equipment.

Whilst microchip property marking technology may seem too sophisticated and the expense unwarranted for many sites, it should not be automatically discounted.

Recording manufacturers serial numbers for appliances was an initiative that some builders were investigating. The concept being that if the appliance was subsequently stolen, the audit trail would enable the serial number to be recorded on a stolen register kept by the manufacturer. The theory was that when in due course the appliance needed servicing, the service engineer would check the number and if it was on the stolen list, it would show up as such.

Following on from this concept, the theory is that any appliance could be checked with the manufacturer to identify who it was supplied too.

This idea has merit, and although it was not established if the system actually worked when put to the test, it is another example of making use of property marking (in this case serial numbers) to establish identification and ownership.

Another property marking concept widely used in the United Kingdom is the colour-coded paint marking of scaffolding and plant.

Many of the large building companies have adopted a colour and painted their scaffolding, ladders and other equipment with this colour. It is a very cheap, high profile and cost effective deterrent. In addition, some have stamped in the company details into tools and other equipment.

Whilst recognising the difficulties with the marking of some items of building equipment, there is usually opportunity and scope to implement some form of high profile marking system.

Examples of some property marking ideas:

- Metricon Homes Pty Ltd have, in conjunction with their window supplier, introduced a system of marking all their windows at the point of manufacture with a red paint stencil on the outer window frame.
- Select and adopt a unique colour and spray the polythene wrapped pallets of bricks and roof tiles and timber frames, either with a stencil with the builder's name or just spray the coloured 'flashes.' This is a very quick, cheap and high profile deterrent to any would be thief. (especially the builder opposite who is looking for some extra timber).
- Use security signage to indicate that items on site have been property marked (leaving out specific details).



## Conclusions

- Property marking should be considered as a valid deterrent.
- A site featuring property marked equipment will hold more uncertainty for would be thieves.
- Liaison with crime prevention officers, insurers, manufacturers and other key industry stakeholders will assist in identifying practical and cost effective methods of property marking.
- Use security signage to indicate that items on site have been property marked (leaving out specific details).

## Prosecution Policy

Deterrence through a company prosecution policy can be introduced and focused in a number of different ways. For example, deterrents for people within the industry who are convicted of building site crime or gross misconduct, could include:

- Being dismissed from the company.
- Loss of remuneration / bonuses.
- Embarrassment at having to later confront colleagues.
- Colleagues may feel 'uneasy' working with you.
- Being 'black listed' by the building groups.
- Aggrieved building company may terminate business with your employer.
- Possible expulsion from trade organisations for gross misconduct.
- Upon apprehension, homes being searched by the Police and family embarrassment.
- Police prosecution and upon conviction, punishment, imprisonment, fines and legal costs.
- Media reporting and identification in the local papers.

## Conclusion

Deterrents are a key feature of any crime prevention program.

Companies should have a written policy on dealing with incidents of theft and vandalism on their building sites. The policy should clearly state that they will in all cases actively support and encourage prosecution for incidents of theft and vandalism on any of their sites. A prosecution policy should highlight the long term after effects of dismissal for gross misconduct or criminal conviction. The policy should be promoted to all employees and sub-contractors and be included in their contract.

Failure to inform employees and subcontractors in writing of your company policy on these matters can potentially compromise the ability to impose disciplinary or dismissal procedures.

Companies should consider taking legal advice in order to establish guidelines on exchanging information on people who have been dismissed for gross misconduct or who have been convicted of building site related crimes.

## Surveillance Measures

### ***Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)***

A comprehensive crime prevention program will invariably involve both **pro-active** and **re-active** security strategies.

A correctly installed and maintained Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system can undoubtedly act as a main pro-active and re-active tool in crime prevention.

Traditional use of CCTV places them in locations where they are easy to see, and their presence is generally advertised in order to act as a pro-active deterrent to criminal behaviour.

Very few estates or developments in the City of Casey have installed CCTV as part of their crime prevention measures. Those that have are usually installed as part of the package of security measures at display villages and complemented by the installation of perimeter fencing and an intruder alarm system.

#### ***Example of CCTV installation and accompanying signage.***



To be most effective, the CCTV system needs to be designed and installed by a qualified person in order that the specification, positioning and lighting requirements are correctly addressed. The system should include provision for recording and be so positioned to reduce the opportunities for the equipment to be vandalised or compromised.

The location where the signals are received and stored needs to be carefully considered and a tape management system introduced in order to ensure the integrity of the system and retrieval of images at a later date. Most tape management systems operate on a 31-day turn a round period for tape storage.

To be most effective as a pro-active strategy, use of the CCTV system should be advertised by appropriate signage.

Two important factors in deciding if the installation of CCTV is likely to be a practical option are **cost** and **effectiveness**.

During the course of the initiative, it was frequently mentioned by building supervisors that they felt the presence of CCTV would act as a major deterrent to theft and vandalism on their sites. However, it seemed that the cost of the systems was in most cases deemed to be prohibitive.

Whilst this initiative did not pursue the use of CCTV on the trial sites, it does recognise the benefits that this technology offers if it can be introduced as part of a cost-effective package of security measures.

There is some scope for the developers to make it a requirement for the installation of CCTV on the estate during the development stage, and an appropriate cost sharing facility built into the builders/land contracts. This facility and ongoing running costs could at a later stage be offered to the Residents Association.

Whilst the costs of installing a CCTV system can be significant, there are new advances in this type of technology. One such system involves the use of a small camera, which monitors the site. When an intrusion is detected, a signal is activated which triggers an off site monitoring device to raise the alarm, and also downloads images of the intruder to computer for later use.



As part of the pilot project, a presentation on this new technology was hosted by the City of Casey in May, 2002 and members of the Project Reference Group and other industry stakeholders were invited.

Whilst the City of Casey does not endorse any particular product, it does seem that this type of technology is much cheaper than traditional CCTV systems. Although it does not replace the concept of traditional CCTV and the benefits it offers, these new systems are worthy of consideration in certain instances.

One feature of CCTV that frequently arises is the use of 'dummy' cameras. They are usually installed in high profile locations and are frequently sited at key entry points on the estate in order to be visible by vehicular and pedestrian traffic entering the estate. Whilst these 'dummy' cameras can initially have an excellent crime deterrent value, they are, due to a number of factors, usually 'discredited' within a month or two of installation.

CCTV specialists are able to offer a number of options, including the provision for alternating the 'live' and 'dummy' cameras thereby maximising the deterrent effect with a minimum of expenditure.

The benefits of CCTV as part of the **re-active** strategy should not be overlooked. For this option be most effective.

**Covert CCTV Cameras** are sometimes used in situations where repeat crimes are taking place.

It is important to realise that in most instances the use of the covert Camera is a last resort. This equipment will not stop the offence: at best it will identify who has committed it.

Before considering the use of covert cameras, there should be careful evaluation of the problem to identify whether a **pro-active** strategy would be more appropriate.

### **Conclusion**

CCTV and the latest advances in this type of technology should be specifically considered in the following circumstances:

- Display villages.
- Flats and apartment blocks.
- Where there are recurring theft and vandalism problems.
- In areas where there are restricted access and egress points to the estate.
- Where there are particularly valuable or unusual properties being constructed.
- Locations which afford quick and easy access to freeways.
- Locations which are particularly vulnerable and cannot be easily observed.

### **Security Alarms**

Information from builders suggests that much of the high value crime and vandalism occurs between lock up stage and when the property is handed over to the resident upon settlement.

Most builders nowadays offer the facility of including an alarm system in the house contract specification.

Whilst the installation of a reputable alarm system should be encouraged, it also raises the issue as to when the alarm should be 'operational,' in order to achieve maximum protection, impact and deterrent value.

In many instances, the alarm fit-off is not completed until just before settlement, and the system not utilised until the property is handed over to the owner.

Where the building contract includes the provision of an alarm, it would appear, therefore, to more appropriate to initiate the alarm as soon as possible.

One idea that was mentioned by several builders was for the installation of the alarm to be 'subsidised' by the builder. In return for a discounted alarm package, the client would allow the builder to connect and use the alarm during the construction process. This idea has considerable merit and potential as both a pro-active and re-active cost effective deterrent.

Points to consider:

- An alarm system will act as high profile deterrent to many thieves, especially those who do not have key access, and a code number to disarm the alarm.
- There are a number of different alarms available, including the provision of 'wire free' systems.

- Alarms can be adapted to suit the environment, with restricted siren times to minimise annoyance to neighbours.
- Alarms should be monitored to ensure a timely response.
- Security notices should be displayed on site reinforcing the deterrent effect.
- Alarm systems generally have an in-built battery back up in the event of power disruption or interference.
- It is possible to loan out alarm systems where they are not included in the house contract.
- Some companies advertise that their wire free alarms can be installed at any stage of construction, without the need for pre-wiring or electrical work.
- A method of setting the alarm when the contractors are off site will need to be determined. The monitoring station may be able to remotely set the alarm. Likewise they may be able to disarm it upon receipt of a telephoned code word.
- Where alarms are installed, liaise with any neighbours to re-assure them and advise them what to do if the alarm activates.

### **Conclusion**

- Alarm systems can be a cost effective deterrent in high-risk areas and sites.
- Consider offering client discounts to use the alarm during construction stage.
- Obtain specialist advice to find out the latest technology and its application to specific sites.
- Alarms should always be accompanied by high profile security warning notices.
- Alarms should always be monitored in order to ensure a response.

## **Security Lighting**

Security lighting is frequently used in display villages, and is usually accompanied by other security features, in particular, perimeter fencing and an intruder alarm system.

It is worthy of note that few of the builders had experienced theft or vandalism problems from display houses that included these security features.

Security lighting as an effective and **pro-active** crime prevention measure is often overlooked when considering crime prevention strategies for residential building sites.

The benefits of security lighting include:

- Indicates the presence of security measures on site.
- Allows increased observation of the site by passers by.
- Allows people to observe incidents on site without taking any personal risks.
- Helps to identify movement on site – especially ‘out of hours’.
- Helps to identify suspects and their vehicles.
- Removes the criminals comfort factor.

Considerations when installing security lighting:

- Correct siting of the equipment is important to maximise its capabilities and deterrent value.
- It should be installed in locations which minimise opportunities for vandalism to the equipment.
- Protecting the power supply from interference.
- Security lighting should be accompanied by security notices i.e. ‘this site is monitored by security surveillance.’
- The equipment needs to be checked at regular intervals to ensure it is functioning correctly.

## **Conclusion**

During the initiative several builders mentioned the potential benefits of security lighting but none had actually implemented it.

One electrical company that was consulted during the initiative said that they used to supply, install and rent out security lighting several years ago. They believed it to be a very effective and cost effective deterrent. They also indicated that they would be prepared to look at the costing to produce a modern system which could then be either rented out or purchased.

Security Lighting has a role to play in many pro-active crime prevention strategies, and it should certainly be considered on its merits for the building industry. Modern technology may offer advances in portability and self powered units and make it a practical and cost effective option.

This initiative presents an opportunity for a supplier to develop and market a security lighting package for the building industry.

## ***Security Patrols***

The use of security patrols was frequently perceived by builders and developers as an effective method of reducing and preventing crime on building sites. Those interviewed who had used security patrols were mainly developers, although some larger building groups had experience of their use on other sites.

The general view was that security patrols, including static security, was a good deterrent, but that it was costly and the performance of the security companies was frequently not in keeping with their requirements or expectations. Examples quoted included security guards being found asleep on the job and incidences of theft occurring right under the guard's nose and not being detected. Another comment made was the lack of communication and feedback from the security companies during their assignments.

These may of course be isolated incidents and it is not suggested that all security companies suffer the same issues. In another case, a local developer had engaged a security company to patrol their estate and they were very satisfied with the performance of the security company.

The majority of builders interviewed were aware of security patrols on that particular development and spoke highly of the initiative by the developer. Their view generally was that they could not individually afford to contribute to the costs of the security patrols, but that they supported them as an effective and excellent deterrent.

Due to the constraints of the project and reluctance of builders to report incidents, it was not possible to analyse and compare the reported crime figures for that 'patrolled' estate with surrounding areas.

Whilst not in a position to confirm that this estate has a reduced crime rate, the fact that security patrols operate on that estate is certainly well known in the community and provides comfort and reassurance to the local residents. Not surprisingly, the developer's commitment to the security patrols also received acknowledgment from the estates' resident's association.

There is a strong case for suspecting that persons either within the industry or bogus builders commit some of the building site crime. The fact that the security measures in place on that development are widely known within the trade is an excellent pro-active deterrent, which benefits the developer, builders and local community.

A view held by several key stakeholders was that developers should have some responsibility and play a more active role in providing ongoing security measures for their estates until such time that the estate is completed.

During the project it became apparent that many builders would consider the use of security patrols if they could be properly established and managed, with pro rata contributions from all builders on the estate.

One option to develop this initiative would be for the developers to charge a security levy on each land purchase and also make a contribution themselves. The developer would then arrange for the implementation and management of the security patrols.

At the present time it appears that many builders would consider contributing to such a scheme if it was properly managed, produced results, and was seen as cost effective. The biggest problem for most small builders was getting someone to organise and manage the scheme.

This scenario presents the opportunity for developers to play a pro-active and high profile role supporting the concept of community safety by accepting the challenge and taking responsibility for the implementation of crime prevention measure on their estates. This could also be used as a useful strategy in their marketing campaign.

Benefits of security patrols:

- Visible high profile pro-active deterrent.
- Generally regarded by the industry as the most effective deterrent.
- Reduces likelihood of theft and vandalism.
- Increases chances of detection and apprehension of thieves and vandals.
- Increases the perception of community safety of the area.

In some cases builders and developers who have engaged security companies to carry out site patrols have been disappointed with the results. It should be pointed out, that in most cases, this was possibly due to a lack of communication between both parties.

When engaging a security company to carry out static or random patrols, it is essential to prepare a written list of requirements and agree how they will be carried out and reported upon, including:

- Clearly define the scope of the security task.
- Provide a thorough brief to the security company.
- Have agreed guidelines for action on suspicious or criminal activity.
- Agree what supervision arrangements are in place.
- Establish an effective communication and reporting chain – ask for activity reports at agreed intervals.
- Ensure that the presence of security patrols are advertised by placing appropriate signage in key locations.
- Agree to review the deployment of the patrols in the light of criminal activity and other factors as appropriate.

The night before handover is considered a high risk period as many appliances and fittings will have been installed that day. Consider the use of static or mobile security patrols for this night.

Information to the local Police if there are concerns about a particular property or several houses in the same area in the same day are due to be handed over will also minimise the risk of crime.

## **Conclusion**

- The industry regards the use of security patrols as potentially one of the most effective means of reducing and preventing building site crime.
- Good communication and the issue of clear guidelines and reporting procedures are essential to maximise the benefits of security patrols.
- Security patrols should be evaluated at regular intervals to ensure they are being used at appropriate times and in a cost-effective manner.
- Cost sharing is an option on some estates and worthy of consideration.

## **Suspicious Activity Guidelines**

One of the main crime prevention strategies of the project focused on community education. It was recognised that there were a number of community groups and individuals who could be the ‘eyes and ears’ for the reporting of suspicious activities to the Police.

A strategy of community education was implemented at an early stage and involved the following initiatives on the two trial sites at Kings Park and Lynbrook.

### **Kings Park**

Kings Park was a developing estate, which had not yet formed either a Resident’s Association or Neighbourhood Watch Group.

Communication to the local residents was undertaken via open letters posted to them, advising of the initiative and how they could play an important role by looking out for and reporting suspicious activities to the Police.

### **Lynbrook**

Lynbrook was also a developing estate, but one that had the benefit of an established and active Resident’s Association and Neighbourhood Watch Group. A presentation on the building site initiative was made to the Neighbourhood Watch Group Committee and the support of both community organisations secured. Initial communication was established with the Residents Association and subsequently the Neighbourhood Watch Group.

It was agreed that communication of the initiative to the local community would be primarily by means of an open letter (similar to Kings Park), but would be supported with articles in the Resident’s Association and Neighbourhood Watch newsletters.

A mailing list was drawn up and included approximately 270 Kings Park and 450 Lynbrook residents.

The communication and education process involved informing the local community of the initiative, and as previously mentioned, to ask them to look out for and report suspicious activities to the Police.

A set of guidelines for what actions might be regarded as suspicious was produced and included in the open letters.

This Suspicious Activity Guideline appeared to be well received within both the local community and by the key stakeholders.

A particular feature of the guideline was to dispel the commonly held view that building site crime only occurred at night time.

Following the Crime Prevention Signage launch in May 2002 a second open letter was sent to the residents of Kings Park and Lynbrook. It again included copies of the Suspicious Activity Guidelines and encouraged people to use them.

Following the circulation of the open letter and Suspicious Activity Guidelines it was reported that a local resident who had previously been introduced to the building supervisor, saw what he now recognised as suspicious activity and called the Police, resulting in a pending prosecution.

There have also been other accounts of people reporting suspicious activities as a result of the open letter and information contained therein.

A copy of the Suspicious Activity Guidelines is included in the Information Pack (refer Appendix).

### **Conclusion**

- The use of the open letters and guidelines on what might be regarded as suspicious activities appeared well received by the community and industry groups.
- In addition to the community education benefit from this initiative, it also helped put would be thieves and vandals on notice that there was likely to be a greater public awareness and interest in their activities on site.
- The Suspicious Activity Guidelines and open letter initiative served as both a community education strategy and a pro-active deterrent to would be thieves and vandals.
- Good communication and liaison with both the Residents Association and Neighbourhood Watch Group are essential in order to maximise the local public acceptance and support of the initiatives.

## Theft and Vandalism Survey

The Project Reference Group at its meeting in July 2001, identified that the Project Worker would require as much information as possible in order to establish current crime levels and trends within the City of Casey, both prior to appointment and during the term of the project.

Upon appointment, it was immediately apparent that most companies were unable to provide details of their losses. The general reluctance of the industry to report these incidents, especially those under a \$500 threshold, to either the Police or insurance company meant that there was limited written information available to evaluate.

This lack of statistical data restricted the opportunity to identify existing crime trends by means of the traditional system of Crime Pattern Analysis.

In order to address the first objective of the project to identify and analyse building site crimes, it became necessary to implement three initiatives as soon as possible:

1. To design a user friendly Theft and Vandalism Survey form for reporting criminal activity;
2. To promote the benefits and use of this survey form to the industry; and
3. To provide a central collation point for the return of the survey forms.

- **Survey Design**

Following extensive liaison with the Project Reference Group, industry representatives and Crime Prevention Victoria, a one page user-friendly Theft and Vandalism Survey form was designed and introduced to the industry towards the end of 2001.

The survey form contained questions specific to the building industry and, when completed and returned, would provide the necessary information to enable the use of Crime Pattern Analysis, and subsequent identification of appropriate crime prevention strategies.

- **Promote Benefits of the Survey**

The survey form was introduced and promoted to members of the Project Reference Group, and industry stakeholders including the HIA, MBA, & Builder's Alliance Group.

In total, 25 builders involved in the development of the two trial sites were identified. Meetings with 17 of these builders were subsequently held in January 2002 to promote the use of the survey form for a trial 3-month period between February – April 2002.

The remaining 8 builders from Lynbrook who were repeatedly 'unavailable' were sent details of the initiative and copies of the new survey form. In addition the form was promoted and circulated to all 50 + members of the industry who were on the mailing list to receive the minutes of the Project Reference Group meetings.

Whilst the form was introduced primarily as part of the initiative for the two trail sites, it was stressed to all parties that the form should be used on all of their sites. They were also encouraged to keep a copy of the form for their own records.

During the 3-month trial period, several initiatives, such as sending out further copies of the survey form and reminders were sent to all industry stakeholders and persons who appeared on the Project Reference Group mailing list.

The survey form was not intended to replace the requirement to report incidents in line with existing company policy.

- **Central collation point**

The survey form contained guidance on how to return it once completed, namely to be sent or faxed to the Housing Crime Prevention Officer. In addition, the Lynbrook Land Sales Office also agreed to receive the completed forms and forward them on.

The probability that some builders would be unable or unlikely to take time out from their busy schedules to complete the form was acknowledged. As an alternative, builders were invited to ring the Project Worker with the details, so that the survey form could be completed from the information supplied over the phone.

## **Conclusion**

The results of this initiative were very disappointing. There were very few survey forms returned and those that were came from either AV Jennings or Metricon Homes.

The results of the Theft and Vandalism Survey appear in the Crime Statistics section of this report.

A copy of the Theft and Vandalism Survey form appears in the Information Pack (refer Appendix).

## Evaluation

Crime Prevention Victoria undertook an independent evaluation of the Building Site Crime Prevention project to identify:

- Awareness of the project within the community and building industry;
- Implementation of crime prevention initiatives; and
- A decrease in building site crime.

The findings of this evaluation are provided as a separate document.

## Recommendations

### Legend

- ✓ Primary responsibility
- Support role

	Recommendations	<i>Builders/ Developers</i>	<i>Council</i>	<i>Insurers</i>	<i>Police Agencies</i>	<i>Community Groups</i>
1	Police crime reporting classifications should be reviewed to specifically identify and include information relating to building site crime.				✓	
2	The building industry should establish a Working Group representing all key stakeholders, and with specific responsibilities for identifying, co-ordinating and promoting crime prevention strategies for the industry.	✓		●	●	
3	The Working Group should include provision for researching, trialing and evaluating new crime prevention technology, including, but not restricted too, closed circuit television, security lighting, alarms and property marking.	✓				
4	The insurance industry should feature prominently as a key industry stakeholder. They should use their influence to promote the adoption of crime prevention strategies within the industry, sit on the proposed Working Group, and employ strict verification and investigation methods in their claims processing.	●		✓		
5	The profile of building site crime prevention should be promoted through the key stakeholders by means of a co-ordinated media campaign including articles in trade magazines.	✓	●	●	✓	●
6	Builders and developers should include and promote building site security as a key objective.	✓		●		
7	The use of the emergency <b>000</b> number to report incidents of suspicious behaviour on building sites be widely promoted to industry stakeholders, the general public and community groups.	✓	●	●	✓	●
8	Builders and developers should have and promote a clear policy of prosecution of offenders caught stealing or vandalising their property. This policy should be made known to their subcontractors and reinforced with security notices on sites as appropriate.	✓		✓	✓	

**Legend**

- ✓ Primary responsibility
- Support role

	<b>Recommendations</b>	<i>Builders/ Developers</i>	<i>Council</i>	<i>Insurers</i>	<i>Police Agencies</i>	<i>Community Groups</i>
9	Builders and developers should introduce measures to accurately record details of their losses and use this information as a basis to determine their crime prevention strategy.	✓				
10	Guidelines on what types of activity could be regarded as suspicious should be promoted to both the industry and general public.	✓	●	●	✓	●
11	Each building group or developer should appoint a person with specific responsibilities and accountability for building site crime prevention.	✓				
12	The involvement of local community groups, police agencies, building industry groups and council departments should all be considered when implementing a building site crime program.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Community involvement in building site crime prevention should be encouraged by means of liaison with Neighbourhood Watch and Residents Action Groups, personal visits to local residents supported by open letters.	✓	✓		●	✓
14	A co-ordinated crime prevention campaign should include a risk assessment of the site and the identification of appropriate and cost effective strategies. The strategies should be reviewed in the light of incidents and other factors that impact upon the site.	✓		●		
15	Security patrols can be a high profile and effective deterrent if they are used properly. Establish the time frame and building stages that are high risk periods for the development and define the scope of security tasks accordingly. Consideration should be given to liaison with other builders and developers to share costs.	✓				
16	Improved co-ordination of deliveries is essential to reduce the opportunity for theft and vandalism. Delivery arrangements should be carefully supervised to ensure that materials are not delivered until they are ready to be used, and that they are, wherever possible, stored out of sight in secured areas.	✓				
17	Crime prevention signage, supported by builders rewards notices (where appropriate) should be strategically sited together with the builder's details clearly displayed on the site.	✓	✓		●	

**Legend**

- ✓ Primary responsibility
- Support role

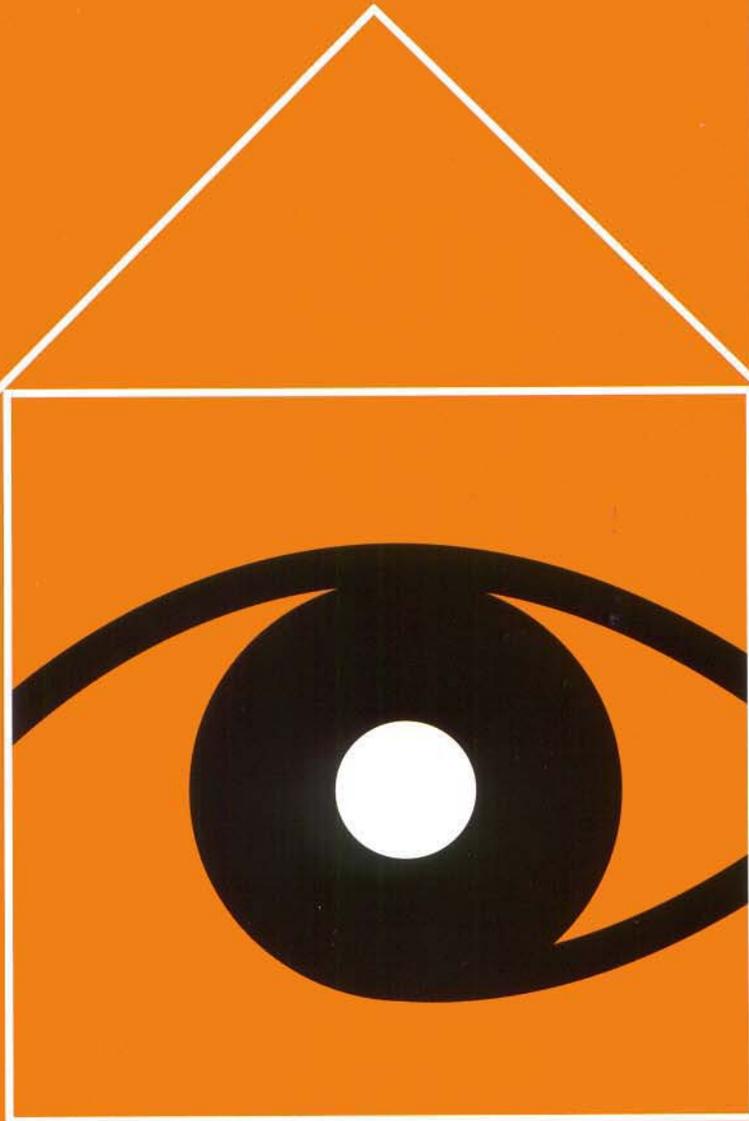
	<b>Recommendations</b>	<i>Builders/ Developers</i>	<i>Council</i>	<i>Insurers</i>	<i>Police Agencies</i>	<i>Community Groups</i>
18	Connecting the street lighting at the time of title release was identified a major pro-active deterrent, and Councils should consider this Policy.	✓	✓			
19	Councils should consider implementing an education program for Community Protection Officers, in order to raise their awareness to the issues of building site crime and strategies to help reduce and prevent it.	●	✓		●	
20	Building sites should be kept clean and tidy in order to comply with local building codes of practice and to help establish 'ownership' of the site.	✓	●			

## **Appendix – Information Pack**

This information pack was distributed at the launch of the Poster Signage on the 8 May 2002. It continues to be distributed to interested parties.

# Building Site Crime Prevention

## INFORMATION PACK



© City of Casey and Crime Prevention Victoria 2002

➔ **Theft and vandalism** at building sites are offences.  
If you witness any suspicious activity, please call



➔ **POLICE 000**

CALLS CAN BE TREATED IN CONFIDENCE



City of  
Casey

Ph: (03) 9705 5200



VICTORIA POLICE

CRIME  
PREVENTION  
VICTORIA



*Working with the  
community  
to prevent crime*

# Building Site Crime Prevention



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# Building Site Crime Prevention



## Introduction

The City of Casey is fighting crime at building sites and housing estates throughout the municipality through the development and the implementation of the Building Site Crime Prevention Initiative. This pilot crime prevention initiative is aimed at tackling the growing problem of building site crime in new estates, particularly theft and vandalism.

As Mayor of the City of Casey I am proud to present this information kit to the building industry and local residents as part of the Council's aim to improve safety in the community. I would also like to acknowledge the support of the State Government who funded the project through its Safer Communities fund.



The kit includes information on the background of this project, the use of signage at building sites, and an education brochure about how to improve security and reduce the risk of theft and vandalism.

Research has shown that new estates are particularly vulnerable to theft and vandalism in the early building stages, prior to occupation and in isolated areas. Financial costs to the industry and insurance companies are considerable. This topical issue also impacts on the quality of life and sense of well-being to local communities.

The City of Casey Building Site Crime Prevention project has involved the establishment of a Project Reference Group with representation from local builders and developers, HIA and MBA, Neighbourhood Watch, local community groups and Victoria Police. It is this strong and active partnership that will ensure the ongoing success of this project.

For more information about the Building Site Crime Prevention Project please phone the City of Casey on 9705 5200.

**Cr Graham Smith**

Mayor

# Building Site Crime Prevention



## Project Rationale

### *The City of Casey*

The City of Casey is Victoria's fastest-growing municipality and third fastest in Australia, behind Brisbane and Gold Coast City Councils. In 2002, Casey is experiencing unprecedented growth with more than 80 families moving in every week – that's two homes completed for every hour of the working week! In the last quarter of the 20th Century, 120,000 moved in to Casey and in the first quarter of this new millennium, a further 120,000 will make Casey their home.

### *Background*

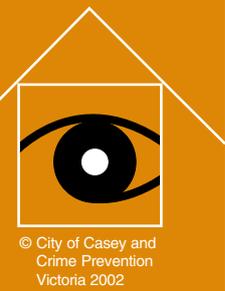
A meeting of key stakeholders in mid 2001, confirmed building site crime as an issue for the City of Casey. Crime occurring in new estate developments was seen as a greater problem than 'in fill' building in established areas. In addition, respondents to the Local Safety Survey, conducted annually by Crime Prevention Victoria, most often identified household burglary and property damage as perceived crime problems.

The **impact** of building site crime is considerable, both economically and to the health and well-being of residents. HIA Insurance Services advises it has paid out around \$3 million in site theft claims in the past 18 months, with 85 per cent of builders' claims relating to site theft.

A summary of the costs to the various stakeholders identified include:

<p>Costs to <b>builders</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• insurance excesses and premiums;</li> <li>• security guards/systems/appliances;</li> <li>• replacing tools sooner than anticipated;</li> <li>• replacing materials not covered by insurance; and</li> <li>• penalties for late completion.</li> </ul>	<p>Costs to <b>insurance companies</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• insurance payouts.</li> </ul>
<p>Costs to <b>residents/home owners</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal cost as a victim of crime;</li> <li>• insurance excess, premiums;</li> <li>• delay in moving in – rental and storage expenses;</li> <li>• perception of crime rate in local area; and</li> <li>• reluctant to be the first to move into an estate.</li> </ul>	<p>Costs to <b>community</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• first impression of community is of crime;</li> <li>• fear, distrust, relationships affected;</li> <li>• isolation; and</li> <li>• added cost of crime to economy including home construction cost and insurance.</li> </ul>

Several **types of crime** are addressed in the Building Site Crime Prevention Pilot Project including theft from builders, theft from building construction areas, and vandalism of the building site. The project identifies a range of appropriate strategies to address each of these crimes and focuses on **risk management** strategies



# Building Site Crime Prevention



## Project Partners

### *Project Reference Group*

Various stakeholders have expressed an interest in the issue of building site crime. A Project Reference Group has provided a valuable resource for the project worker, enabling ideas to be explored and expanded and project direction to be refined. An open membership has included regular representation from:

- AV Jennings
- City of Casey – Community Development, Planning, and Building Maintenance Departments
- Housing Industry Association (HIA)
- HIA Insurance Services
- Master Builders Association
- Metricon Homes
- Urban and Regional Land Corporation
- Victoria Police

### *Support*



The *Safer Communities Program* provided initial funding of \$26,186 for the pilot project to implement various strategies in partnership with the building industry, and assistance with resource production and information dissemination.



In kind support from the *City of Casey* included staff resources, meeting venues, administration support, and transport.



In kind support from Victoria Police including data analysis and increased patrols on new housing estates.



Project sponsorship of \$5,500 from *Urban and Regional Land Corporation* enabled a contract extension for the Project Worker.

### *Contact Details*

For more information on the Building Site Crime Prevention Project, please contact:

Ken Lee

Housing Crime Prevention Officer  
(03) 9705 5595 or email: [klee@casey.vic.gov.au](mailto:klee@casey.vic.gov.au)

Melanie Sanders

Community Safety Officer  
(03) 9705 5279 or email: [msanders@casey.vic.gov.au](mailto:msanders@casey.vic.gov.au)

City of Casey  
PO Box 1000, Narre Warren 3805

Caroline Gordon

Assistant Director, Knowledge Management  
Crime Prevention Victoria, GPO Box 4356 QQ, Melbourne 3001  
(03) 9651 6215

## A Co-ordinated Approach

Theft and vandalism at building sites affects the whole community. The costs are hidden, but they are passed on to consumers.

Central to addressing this issue is a **co-ordinated response** involving key stakeholders and the implementation of a range of strategies.

The involvement of local community groups, police agencies, building industry groups and Council departments should all be considered in addressing theft and vandalism at building sites.

Each building site will present different opportunities for criminal activity. By conducting a risk assessment of each site and monitoring criminal activities, a **package of strategies** can be identified that are relevant and cost effective.

A range of strategies that can be used to reduce and prevent building site-related crime are listed.

- Better co-ordinate deliveries;
- Complete and return the Theft and Vandalism Survey (enclosed in information pack);
- Covert measures eg security cameras;
- Engage Police support and assistance;
- Erect signage and posters that promote builders' rewards;
- Establish a builder's liaison group to address security issues;
- Implement Council initiatives
  - Street lighting energised early
  - Housing Crime Prevention Officer
  - Local Laws patrols;
- Insurers verification of claims – investigate and ask questions following a theft on site;
- Mark property – a visible deterrent;
- Promote reporting suspicious activity to Police – phone **000**;
- Prosecute offenders;
- Publicise security measures to the community and industry;
- Undertake surveillance measures eg. security lighting, cameras and patrols;
- Use community groups such as Neighbourhood Watch Groups and Residents' Associations to keep watch and report suspicious activities.



## Working with the Community

A strength of the Building Site Crime Prevention Project is a partnership approach to identifying problems and exploring strategies for action. Community members – residents associations, Neighbourhood Watch and local residents – have provided input at each stage of the project.

People in the community are our 'eyes and ears' on the street – they are familiar with their local neighbourhood, at home after working hours and typically know when something is suspicious or out of place. They have a valuable role to play in reporting suspicious activity to the Police.

### *Communicating with Local Residents*

It is important to establish **personal contact** with neighbouring occupied homes. Make the time to introduce yourself to the people who live around your building site. Experience has shown that residents are grateful to know who will be working on site and what hours of operation to expect, and in return, they are more likely to notice, and report, suspicious activity on site.

Leave a **letter or flyer** with neighbours and include the following information:

- Typical hours of work on site;
- Contact the Police on **000** to report criminal activity taking place on site;
- A contact name and phone number for the builder;
- Any special security concerns regarding the site; and
- If applicable, provision for rewards for information leading to an arrest and conviction.

Suspicious activity guidelines are included in this information pack.

### *Communicating with Local Groups*

Engaging the support of local groups can be helpful. Groups often distribute regular newsletters that can be a useful tool for reaching a large number of people. However, groups do not operate in all new estates. The following contacts may be useful:

- Victoria Police Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, City of Casey on 9767 7522.
- Local Residents' Action Groups – contact the City of Casey on 9705 5200, or at Council's website [www.casey.vic.gov.au/communitydirectory](http://www.casey.vic.gov.au/communitydirectory).

### *Social Events and Celebrations*

Social events, such as community picnics, barbeques or festive celebrations, are a great opportunity to develop 'goodwill' between local builders, developers and residents. You can also update them on progress of your development, and provide information about who to contact if they see suspicious activity on site. People are only too willing to help make their community a safer place to be.



## MEDIA COVERAGE EXAMPLES

The Building Site Crime Prevention initiative has attracted significant interest both locally and across Victoria as these sample media articles show.

### Casey pilots crime prevention program

**Thieves cash in on building boom**  
\$3m stolen from Casey homesites  
(18 July 2001)



Inspecting a local building site are City of Casey safety officer Melanie Sanders, AV Jennings representative Sam Battagin, crime prevention worker Senior Constable Anthony Marks and Housing Association of Australia representative Michael Fagan.

(12 July 2001)

### Building better site security to stop theft

A new strategy is to combat the growing incidence of theft from building sites. **Carolyn Rance** reports.

## The big steal

Home buyers are increasingly falling victim to the high cost of on-site theft

Words **Andrew Brasier** Illustration **Ching-Li Chew**

(28 July 2001)

**R**ising theft levels from residential construction sites are contributing up to 1 per cent of the cost of a new home, say industry chiefs.

Builders are taking out insurance to cover the loss of timber, tiles, tapware, kitchens, toilets, spa baths and even hot water services.

And inevitably it is factored into the price of a new home.

Builders are reporting an increase in such thefts in the last two years and some are considering banding together to fund dawn-to-dusk security services on estates where they are building houses in close proximity to each other and sharing display villages.

And in recognition that building site theft is a serious problem and something needs to be done about it, the City of Casey is developing a pilot project to combat this crime.



Getting the building industry involved is critical. "There seems to be a widespread acknowledgment that a lot of the problem is within the industry itself. Often appliances and materials are stolen within 24 hours of going on site."

"In a lot of cases the property has a home waiting for it — the items stolen are very specific — in one recent case it was 12 left-hand opening doors. It can be windows, sies, occasionally bricks and, as the building progresses, fittings — doors, locks, switches and hot water tanks."

Mr Miller describes the Casey project as an excellent idea. "Building site theft has reached a frightening level. It is not so much epidemic as endemic. Around 85 per cent of all claims paid to our clients relate to thefts from sites. It runs into millions of dollars," he says.

(19 January 2002)

## Builders join forces

Open building sites could be a thing of the past as a new construction alliance aims to cut industry theft and vandalism, which has reached alarming proportions

(9 March 2002)

## Suspicious Activity Guidelines

*Residents are encouraged to be proactive in helping to prevent crime in the local community. The Building Site Crime Prevention Initiative needs your support in observing and reporting suspicious activities. The following guidelines may assist you in identifying suspicious activities.*

- People on site:
  - in the dark
  - outside of normal building hours
- People seen:
  - loitering in the area and later seen on the site
  - removing materials from the rear or side doors
  - damaging property
  - removing doors, windows, spas, hot water and air conditioning units
  - removing materials that have recently been delivered or installed
  - vehicles that have their registration numbers obscured or missing
  - loading materials into private vehicles
- People making repeat visits to the site and removing materials each time.
- People removing property when there is no-one else on site.
- People seen removing property in the daytime in unusual circumstances for example:
  - removing full pallets of tiles, bricks or large quantities of materials; or
  - anything that appears out of the ordinary like the hot water unit taken off site and loaded onto the carpenter's vehicle. (Why is the carpenter moving plumbing equipment?)

As a general guide, ask yourself, does the description of the goods removed, match the person seen removing them? If at night, why would a person be removing materials when the site is in darkness?

### *Reporting Suspicious Activity*

If you see people on site, and believe that they are stealing or vandalising property, please record their details. Description of suspects and vehicle registration numbers, should be reported to Police on **000**.

### *Please Remember*

You should not take any personal risk by confronting people acting suspiciously.



## Sample Open Letter to Local Residents

*This letter is provided as guide to assist when communicating with local residents. Experience has shown the benefits of establishing **personal contact** with the local residents and this letter should be used to support rather than replace that personal contact.*

### Company Name and Logo

*Date as typed*

### Housing Crime Prevention Initiative

#### An open letter to residents of .....

Thefts from building sites affect the whole community. The costs are hidden but they are enormous – and are passed on to consumers. The Housing Industry Association Insurance Services has paid out around \$3 million in site theft claims in the past 18 months, with 85 per cent of builders' claims relating to site theft.

The City of Casey has identified this issue and is working on a Building Site Crime Prevention Pilot Project which is supported by a wide range of key stakeholders, including building industry groups, Police agencies and local community groups.

I am pleased to inform you that our company supports this initiative and will be implementing a range of strategies in this estate, aimed at preventing and reducing the number of building site related crimes, including theft and vandalism.

The fact that we are introducing these security measures, in no way implies that this estate has a higher incidence of crime than normal. Like many other builders and developers, we will be introducing these new security measures on all of our developments. Research has shown that new estates are particularly vulnerable to theft and vandalism in the early building stages, prior to occupation and in isolated areas.

During the coming months, a number of security initiatives will be introduced to the estate. One of these initiatives focuses on the reporting of 'suspicious activities' and it is here that we ask for your support.

Whilst many people regard building site crime as something that happens 'outside of normal building hours', there is in fact a substantial amount of crime that is committed during the daytime. There is also a strong case for suspecting that some of this crime is committed by persons either within the industry or bogus builders.

I encourage you to support this initiative by reporting incidents of 'suspicious activity'. In cases where there are suspect/s on the site and there are indications of criminal activity, the Police encourage you to report this immediately by ringing **000**. You will find overleaf some guidelines on what might be regarded as 'suspicious activities'.

For situations where you discover theft or vandalism on building sites and there are no suspects present, you are asked to contact us on the number displayed on site.

Yours faithfully

Name:

Position:

Company details:





## HOUSING ESTATE SIGNAGE - APPLICATION PROCESS

Building site crime is a major issue and affects the whole community. Recent statistics indicate that the Housing Industry of Australia (HIA) has paid out approximately \$3 million in household burglary and theft claims in the past 18 months (2000 to 2001), of which 85% were related to site theft. These costs are often passed on to the home buyer, which have been estimated to increase the cost of buying a new home by up to one per cent.

The City of Casey is fighting crime at building sites and housing estates within the municipality through the development and the implementation of the Building Site Crime Prevention Initiative, funded by Crime Prevention Victoria.

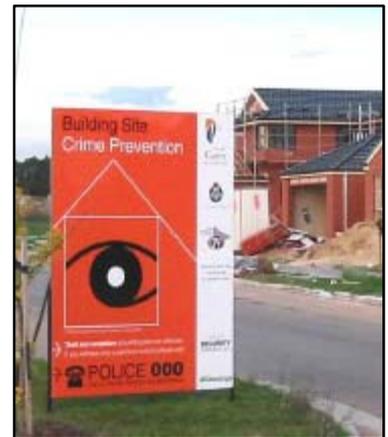
The housing estate poster and signage form a key component of the City of Casey Building Site Crime Prevention Initiative. This key strategy aims to:

- raise community and industry awareness of the issues of building site crime;
- encourage all key parties to have a stake in tackling the problem; and
- encourage the reporting of suspicious activity.

The signs have initially been placed in key locations around two trial sites in the City of Casey: Stage Five in the King's Park estate, Narre Warren South and Stage Eight in the Lynbrook estate.

Crime Prevention Victoria, with the support of the City of Casey, is co-ordinating the use of the signs and their potential to deter criminal activity around building sites. The signage has already proven to be a well-recognised feature in Casey with both builders and the surrounding residents.

The signs are available for use as large-scale estate signage (1.8m x 2.4m) or smaller signs (A4 and A3) for individual house lots.



### ***Using this Signage***

**As the building site crime prevention signage is governed by copyright, you must first obtain written permission from Crime Prevention Victoria to use it on a building site.** There are conditions and style issues associated with its usage to ensure that the integrity of the image is maintained. These are explained in the attached Style Guidelines including copyright compliance requirements. The Style Guide also provides advice on appropriate signage locations.

## ***Applications for use of the signage***

- Please complete the **Expression of Interest Form** (attached) to record your interest in using the signage.
- Send the expression of interest to:

Kate Wilkinson  
Project Officer  
Community Information & Education  
Crime Prevention Victoria  
GPO Box 4356QQ, Melbourne. 3001  
☎ 9651 0377  
[kate.wilkinson@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:kate.wilkinson@justice.vic.gov.au).

- Your applications will be considered and a response provided within a fortnight.

Note: The current signage format includes a City of Casey logo. If the poster is to be installed in a municipality other than Casey:

- ✧ the Crime Prevention Victoria logo must not be removed;
- ✧ the City of Casey logo must be removed and be replaced (subject to the approval of the City of Casey) with the relevant municipal logo; and
- ✧ the logos should be arranged evenly along the white panel.

***Please Note: Use of the signage is conditional upon compliance with the Style Guide.***



## STYLE GUIDELINES FOR USE OF ESTATE SIGNAGE

### *Size of Signs*

The suggested sizes and siting of Building Site Crime Prevention signs are:

- A4 corflute/foam poster signs for use on specific house locations  
e.g. on or next to doors or 'at risk' windows;
- A3 corflute/foam poster signs for use on specific house lots  
e.g. nailed to a pole near the front of the property; and
- **1.2m x 1.8m or 1.8m x 2.4m** Estate Signs for placement on the nature strip at entrance points to estate developments.

### *Restrictions on Use*

The sign (pictured right) is copyrighted to the City of Casey and Crime Prevention Victoria.

- The left orange section must remain unchanged and the logos must remain the same size.
- The right white panel provides a space on the bottom right to include the builder or developer logo, name and phone number only. The order of the white panel must not be altered as this will breach copyright.

(Exception: The City of Casey logo must be removed and be replaced (subject to the approval of the City of Casey) with the relevant municipal logo if the sign is to be used in other Victorian municipalities.)

- The sign is intended to be used as a stand-alone sign. For use in other formats, please contact:

Kate Wilkinson

Project Officer, Community Information & Education

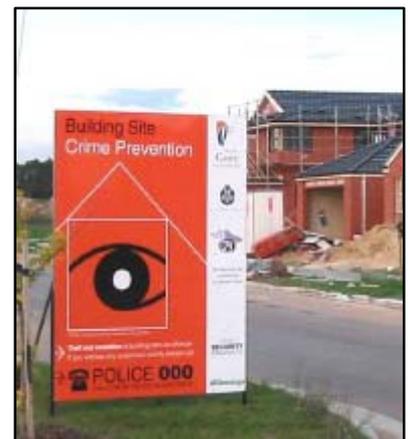
Crime Prevention Victoria

GPO Box 4356QQ, Melbourne. 3001

☎ 9651 0377; (e-mail) [kate.wilkinson@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:kate.wilkinson@justice.vic.gov.au)

- Signs that become defaced or damaged must be removed or replaced within 48 hours to maintain the integrity of the Building Site Crime Prevention Initiative.

All applications to use the Signage must be accompanied by a completed and signed **Expression of Interest Form**.





## PERMISSION FOR ERECTING SIGNS

Depending on the location of the large estate signs, a permit from Council or VicRoads may be needed before erecting the signs.

- For use on **individual housing sites**, no consent is required, as the property is privately owned.
- For use on **council-owned land** (e.g. nature strips and road and recreation reserves), consent must be obtained from the relevant council via the planning department. You will need to identify location, size and orientation of the sign and expected duration of use.
- For use on **VicRoads owned land**, including major roads and their reserves, consent must be obtained from VicRoads (Private Bag 4, Mount Waverley, Victoria 3149; ☎ 13 11 71; Fax: 9887 7590).

### **Contact for Queries**

1. For more information on the Housing Estate Signage, please contact:

Kate Wilkinson  
Project Officer, Community Information & Education  
Crime Prevention Victoria  
GPO Box 4356QQ, Melbourne. 3001  
☎ (03) 9651 0377  
kate.wilkinson@justice.vic.gov.au.

2. For more general information on the implementation of the Building Site Crime Prevention Initiative, please contact:

The Community Safety Team, City of Casey  
PO Box 1000, Narre Warren 3805  
☎ (03) 9705 5200  
e-mail: caseycc@casey.vic.gov.au

3. For more information on the evaluation of the Building Site Crime Prevention Project, please contact:

Caroline Gordon  
Assistant Director, Knowledge Management  
Crime Prevention Victoria  
GPO Box 4356QQ, Melbourne 3001  
☎ (03) 9651 6215  
e-mail: [caroline.gordon@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:caroline.gordon@justice.vic.gov.au)



# Expression of Interest - Use of Signage

Please complete this form to express your interest in using the Building Site Crime Prevention Estate Signage.

Permission to use the Estate Signage rests with owners of the copyright, the City of Casey, as administered by Crime Prevention Victoria, and is conditional upon compliance with the Style Guidelines.

You will be advised in writing of the outcome of your request.

## Use of Estate Signage

Where will the signage be used?

- Within the City of Casey.
- Within another municipality

Location: .....

- Both.

On what type of development will the signs be erected?

- Commercial developments
- New residential developments

- Existing residential developments ('in fill')

What size signage do you intend using?

- Small - A4 on windows and doors
- Medium - A3 on entrances to lots
- Large - Estate entrance points

How many signs do you intend using?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Small
- \_\_\_\_\_ Medium
- \_\_\_\_\_ Large

And, on how many different developments?

- One
- 2-5
- 6-10
- 10-20
- More than 20

Housing estate location where the signs will be displayed \_\_\_\_\_

## Organisation Details

Name of Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_

Position within Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Details Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

**I understand that use of the signage is conditional upon my/our compliance with the Style Guidelines.**

Name: Please print \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Theft and Vandalism Survey

*This survey is supported by the Housing Industry Association and Master Builders Association. Your assistance in completing this survey will help compile information about building site crimes in Victoria. This will lead to further development of appropriate strategies to reduce associated building costs and insurance premiums. **Please report all incidents, even minor crimes.** Please send your completed survey to: Kate Gill, Project Officer, Community Information & Education, Crime Prevention Victoria, GPO Box 4356QQ, Melbourne. 3001 ☎(03) 9651 0377 Fax (03) 9651 6955) [kate.gill@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:kate.gill@justice.vic.gov.au)*

## Incident type and location

Details (please tick)       Theft                       Vandalism                       Other .....

Incident occurred between ..... (time & date) and ..... (time & date)

## Location of theft or damage

Address:.....

Exact location on site (eg. garage):.....

Name of owner of building (and contact number, if known):.....

## Details of incident

What was stolen or damaged?.....

Was it:                                       Already fitted (eg. doors, taps)       Secured (eg. locked)       Stored on site (eg. not secured)

Were there signs of forced entry:       Yes       No

What are the costs?                      Stolen Item/s \$.....      Vandalism Damage \$.....      Total \$.....

## Building Site Details

What is the development stage of the building?       Slab       Frame       Lock Up       Completed

How long was the material on site?       1 day       2-3 days       1 week       Longer       Don't know

Is the building site fenced?                                       Yes                                       No

Are there any occupied houses nearby?                       Yes                                       No                                       Don't know

If the incident occurred in the evening or at night, were the streetlights on or off?       On                                       Off                                       Don't know

Were any warning or security notices displayed?               Yes                                       No                                       Don't know

Do security patrols operate in the area?                       Yes                                       No                                       Don't know

## Incident Reporting

Was this incident reported to your insurance company               Yes                                       No                                       Don't know

Was this incident reported to the Police?                       Yes                                       No                                       Don't know

If not, please tick reason:

the incident was not important enough to report

the value of the property was under \$500

it was too inconvenient to report

other reason .....

Can the stolen property be positively identified?               Yes                                       No                                       Don't know

Have there been any other incidents at this site?               Yes                                       No                                       Don't know

If yes, please detail .....

Your name and contact number (optional): .....

**The information you provide will remain confidential, subject to legal requirements.**

# Building Site Security



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→ **Theft and vandalism** at building sites are offences.  
If you witness any suspicious activity please call

→  **POLICE 000**  
CALLS CAN BE TREATED IN CONFIDENCE

Strategies to minimise building site theft and vandalism  
focus on reducing opportunities for criminal behaviour

These strategies form part of the Building Site Crime Prevention Initiative,  
a partnership between the City of Casey, Crime Prevention Victoria,  
local police, builders, developers and the community

# The Environment

## Arrange for street lighting to be installed

Thieves and vandals often target isolated and unlit sites where there is less chance of them being observed. Contact the Council and request that the street lighting be installed - advance notice will help to have the lighting ready for when you start work on site.

## Establish ownership of the site

Display clear signage.



- Showing lot number, name of builder and a daytime and an after hours contact number; and
- Locate these details in a prominent location such as the site entrance, doors and windows.

## Establish personal contact with neighbouring occupied homes

Leave a letter or flier with the neighbours and include the following information:

- Typical hours of work on site;
- Who to contact and what to do if they see suspicious activity;
- A contact name and phone number for the builder;
- Any special security concerns regarding the site; and
- If applicable, provision for rewards for information leading to an arrest and conviction.

## Keep sites tidy

Unkempt sites give the impression of a lack of interest, poor security and an easy target.

- Remove bricks and other site debris from the front of the site - vandals frequently use these to break the doors and windows.
- Remove empty boxes for high demand items from the site do not leave them on display in the wire cage where potential thieves can see them.



# Co-ordination and Deliveries

## Co-ordinate deliveries

Many materials are stolen on the night they are delivered. Liaise closely with the tradespeople to determine when the materials are needed.

- Minimise the time frame for exposure of goods 'at risk';
- Aim to deliver and install on the same day;
- Do not leave unused materials on site for long periods;
- Where practical, arrange for materials to be stored out of general view. Storing materials on the first floor of double storey houses reduces the opportunities for theft; and
- Check deliveries as soon as possible and report any damages or shortages immediately.



## Installation of materials on site

Expensive doors, locks, fittings and spas are frequently stolen, and should only be fitted at the last practical stage.

- Install expensive high risk items as close to handover as possible;
- Where practical, main entrance doors should be key locked to try and prevent them being opened and removed from the inside by people breaking in through another access point;
- Consider using additional security fixings for high risk items such as spas, baths etc. Special bonding adhesives and fixings are available; and
- Consider removing key components from high risk items and displaying a notice to this effect on the premises.

## Property marking

Identify and mark items of high risk:



- Stencils, spray paint and other forms of high profile marking are available.
- Use security signage to indicate that items on site has been property marked (leave out specific details).

## Liaison with other builders

One of the most effective methods of reducing crime on building sites is to share information. Include the subject of building site crime at your internal company meetings and consider establishing a builders liaison group to address security issues.

# Security and Reporting

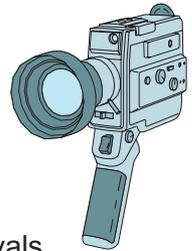
## Security patrols, cameras and equipment

Security patrols - mobile or static - can be used as a high profile and effective deterrent if they are used properly.

- Establish the time frame and building stages that are high risk periods for your development and define the scope of security tasks accordingly;
- Consider liaising with other builders and developers to share costs.

When appointing a security company, ensure that they understand your requirements.

- Provide a thorough brief to the security company;
- Have clear guidelines for action on suspicious or criminal activity;
- Know what supervision arrangements are in place;
- Have an effective communication chain - ask for activity reports at agreed intervals.



The night before handover is a high risk period as many appliances and fittings will have been installed that day. Consider the use of mobile or static security for this night. Security Cameras and other equipment, including on site security lighting should also be considered. They provide a deterrent and can be cost effective, especially when used on high risk sites.

Inform the local Police if you have particular concerns about a property or are handing over several houses in the same area on the same day and there is an increased risk of theft.

## Reporting suspicious activity

If you see people who are on site, and believe that they are stealing or vandalising property, record details, such as description of suspects and vehicle registration numbers and report it immediately to the Police on **000**.

## Following up reports of criminal activity

Always follow up reports of criminal activity - ask questions and make enquiries with staff, contractors and suppliers. You will give the impression that you care and may minimise the chance of repeat crimes at your site.

Comply with company procedures, that is completing Police and Insurance reports as required. Also, complete and submit the theft and vandalism form to the City of Casey to assist in identifying local crime patterns. (Copies are available by contacting the Housing Crime Prevention Officer).

## Personal safety issues

Personal safety is always a priority. You *should not take any personal risk* by confronting persons acting suspiciously.

For further information and advice please contact the  
City of Casey Housing Crime Prevention Officer on 9705 5200