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Speech presented by Adam Graycar, Director,
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"Urban crime"

to the City of Gosnells, Western Australia, at the
launch of their publication 'Safe City Urban Design
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FOREWORD

Crime follows opportunity. Making crime harder to commit by designing out opportunities can limit crime significantly, as can considering the needs of vulnerable people and ensuring strategies for greater connectedness to community.

These are the principles underpinning the City of Gosnells Safe City Urban Design Strategy.

When we look at the big picture we know that most places have no crime, and most crime is highly concentrated in a relatively small number of places. Some shops have no robberies, while a few have lots. A few entertainment venues have many (a lot) of problems, most have none. Even in high burglary neighbourhoods most residences have no burglaries, while a few suffer from repeat burglaries. Understanding crime 'hot spots' is very important in developing preventive measures. Blocking criminal opportunities takes place by understanding place – its design and layout – and the different strategies that are appropriate for houses, flats, shops, warehouses, factories, public transport, parks, pubs etc.

Public space contains risks, but (and) the risks can be lessened by channelling movement patterns and dividing human activities into smaller and more manageable chunks. Public spaces like parks and streets should not be too large, and public shopping or transport facilities or housing developments shouldn't have vast unassigned spaces. Manageable chunks can help provide social control and thus crime control

In the City of Gosnells most housing is detached and there is low pedestrian movement. As a result the planning lessons that can be learned from overseas experiences are not always applicable in Australian cities. Furthermore we know that Local Governments do not have control over all of the factors that make for an environment which fosters safety and security. But they can be a positive force for change.

We know that those who feel excluded from participation in community life are more likely to offend against that community. Councils' willingness to address this sense of exclusion can reduce the risk of offending, as can the complementary strategy of reducing opportunities for crimes to be committed through the design, planning and structure of our neighbourhoods. Recognising that the physical environment influences the where and what of crime problems, designing natural surveillance, using building design to put more 'eyes on the street', focusing on natural access control and surveillance all contribute(s) to creating a setting in which access control and surveillance are brought about by the normal and routine use of the environment.

The City of Gosnells has taken an enormous leap forward by building on its many years of dedicated experience and publishing this important guide which incorporates important design principles with a realistic understanding of the features which make people live comfortable and safely in a thriving Australian city. This is a most useful and innovative publication, and a major contribution to better design, safety enhancement, and the creation of a community in which we all feel comfortable in being able to go about our daily activities in a relaxed (routine duplicates paragraph above)and uneventful manner.

I congratulate the City of Gosnells on this publication, but more importantly, on the values and commitment that underpin it, and look forward to the action that will flow from it.

Dr Adam Graycar
Director
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