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DESIGNING OUT CRIME IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA: A CASE STUDY.

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Abstract

Purpose of this paper: To present developments in designing out crime policy in Western Australia (WA) as a case study example, discussing the innovative Designing Out Crime Strategy, a systematic attempt at embedding such ideas within government policy.

Design / methodologies / approach: Report on the systems approach adopted by the WA government, which draws together three key themes of designing out crime, namely; the design of the built environment, the ongoing management of the built environment and the use of product design to reduce opportunities for crime. The systems perspective is underpinned by an evidence-based approach across these three areas.

Findings: Many existing international approaches to designing out crime are arguably limited, piecemeal and largely uncoordinated. This Strategy represents a comprehensive and holistic policy commitment to designing out crime.

Research limitations / implications: The effectiveness of this Strategy is as yet unknown, but it arguably represents a comprehensive approach to embedding designing out crime within public policy frameworks. The future will ultimately judge the success or failure of this policy and key performance indicators are presented as part of the Strategy.

Practical implications: It will be challenging to monitor the progress of this vision and whether adequate resources are made available to appropriate agencies to deliver the desired outcomes from the various actions identified within the Strategy.

What is original / value of paper: No national or state jurisdiction has attempted to develop designing out crime policy in such a comprehensive manner and WA's Designing Out Crime Strategy arguably represents a truly proactive policy framework and a comprehensive vision and plan for action to reduce opportunities for crime in the design, planning, development and maintenance of the built form and in the design of products.

Keywords: Designing Out Crime, State government policy, Western Australia, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)

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Introduction

This paper discusses the theoretical background and practicalities of embedding Designing Out Crime, also known as crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED), into mainstream public policy in Western Australia (WA). Law and justice policy development is often reactionary and is characterised by a mixture of evidence, faith and political appeal (Ellsworth, 2002) and populist calls for more police and tougher sentencing can influence policy development, leaving little opportunity for thoughtful and planned responses to crime. Indeed, as Ellsworth (2002, p.2) comments, "while research and experience repeatedly demonstrate that crime prevention is the most effective and efficient means of reducing crime, crime prevention continues to lag behind reactionary approaches to crime reduction."

Designing Out Crime is a proactive crime prevention process which asserts that "the proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, and an improvement in the quality of life" (Crowe, 2000, p. 46). Designing Out Crime is a multi-disciplinary approach, located within the field of environmental criminology and draws on disciplines such as criminology, planning and environmental psychology (for a review see Cozens *et al*., 2005; Cozens, 2008). Research consistently supports the assertion that the design (Poyner, 1993; Clarke, 1997; Eck, 2002; Cozens *et al.*, 2005) and management (Wilson and Kelling, 1981; Ross and Mirowsky, 1999; Cozens *et al.*, 2005) of the built environment and the design of products (Ekblom, 1997; Pease, 2001; Ekblom, 2005) can reduce opportunities for crime. The WA State Government's Office of Crime Prevention (OCP) has drawn together these three themes in an innovative proactive, comprehensive approach to embed designing out crime within the State's public policy frameworks, and particularly the planning system (OCP, 2007).

According to Ellsworth (2002, p.3) "the embedding of crime prevention requires a systems perspective", which is different from the traditional reductionist method of focusing on the individual components of what is being analysed. Instead, systems thinking works by expanding its view to consider larger and larger numbers of interactions as the issue is being developed. It is particularly successful in projects involving complex issues and those that depend on the action of others (Aronson, 1996). Furthermore, although Chapman (2002, p.27) comments that the two approaches are complementary, he argues "a systems approach will provide a framework within which most or all of the participants can agree an agenda for improvement or a process for moving forward". In view of the complexity of the planning system and public policy frameworks, the systems perspective represented a useful framework to promote embedding designing out crime in WA.

In the UK, Designing Out Crime initiatives are underpinned by a variety of planning policy guidance notes and Acts of Parliament including; Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998, p3) which states "without prejudice to any other obligations imposed upon it, it shall be the duty of each authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area." The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (1995) extends this duty beyond crime and disorder to include low-level anti-social behaviour and environmental crime (such as litter, graffiti, fly-posting, nuisance vehicles and fly-tipping). Further support is derived from elements within the Environmental Protection Act (1990); the Police Reform Act (2002) and the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003). Significantly, since the early 1990s, UK police forces have commonly appointed a designated architectural liaison officer (ALO) or crime prevention design advisor (CPDA) to consult on designing out crime issues at the development proposal stage. Specifically, they are also involved in the accreditation of Secured By Design (SBD) awards to developments that meet designing out crime principles. Research indicates that SBD developments can significantly reduce crime (Armitage, 2000; Brown, 1999; Pascoe, 1999; Cozens *et al.,* 2007a), with building security and target-hardening playing a crucial role. *Safer Places - The Planning System and Crime Prevention* (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004) replaced the Planning Out Crime Circular 5/94 (Department of the Environment, 1994) and represents a practical guide for planners, architects and developers to ensure streets, homes, and public parks are safer places. The guidance promotes a greater consideration for crime prevention and focuses on seven key attributes of safe, sustainable environments:

1. Access and Movement: places with well-defined routes, spaces and entrances that provide for convenient movement without compromising security
2. Structure: places that are structured so that different uses do not promote conflict
3. Surveillance: places where all publicly accessible spaces are overlooked
4. Ownership: places that promote a sense of ownership, respect, territorial responsibility and community
5. Physical Protection: places that incorporate necessary, well-designed security features
6. Activity: places where the level of human activity is appropriate to the location and creates a reduced risk of crime and a sense of safety at all times
7. Management and Maintenance: places that are designed with management and maintenance in mind, to discourage crime in the present and the future

Source: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2004, p13).

Indeed, the links between sustainable development and designing out crime have been repeatedly highlighted (eg. Du Plessis, 1999; Cozens, 2002; Dewberry, 2003; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004; Cozens, 2007a) along with its potential contribution to enhancing public health (Cozens, 2007b). Significantly, on a national level, a recent report by the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia (2005), entitled, *Sustainable Cities* recognises Designing Out Crime as a useful approach to building and promoting communities.

Furthermore, this guidance notes how "the police are one of a range of players who have an important contribution to make in the production of successful places" (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004, p8). The UK government's Design and Technology Alliance between government, prominent designers and supported by the police promotes the idea that designing out crime is about the sustainable and innovative design of products, spaces and places to reduce opportunities for crime and enhance community safety. It forms part of a renewed commitment to designing out crime set out in the UK government's new crime prevention strategy: *Cutting Crime*: *A New Partnership 2008-2011* (Home Office, 2007). The document refers to Secured by Design (SBD) as promoting good practice in using the planning system to ensure that designers, architects, planners and builders consider crime prevention measures during the design stage of any proposals.

However, despite such policy and legislative support, experience in the UK demonstrates that less than 3% of all new build housing (Schneider and Kitchen, 2002; Cozens *et al*., 2004; 2007) meet designing out crime standards (this refers specifically to the UK's SBD Scheme). The government in WA has adopted a more systematic approach to designing out crime and recently launched a proactive approach, and arguably a world-first in policy innovation, the Designing Out Crime Strategy.

Western Australia (WA)

WA's population of around two million people is spread over one million square miles with about one and half million people living in the capital, Perth. The Government's planning vision for the future, Network City, estimates that 375,000 new homes will be required by 2031 and 60% will be built in existing urban areas (WAPC, 2004a). This has obvious potential criminogenic implications for WA, and designing out crime can assist in meeting these objectives in a safer and more sustainable way.

Significantly in WA, the police are not routinely involved in the decision-making associated with the planning and development approval process and designing out crime and CPTED are relatively new concepts for many planners in WA. WAPC's Residential Design Codes (R-Codes) promotes surveillance of and from the public realm as do a range of Statements of Planning Policy. Liveable

Neighbourhoods (WAPC, 2004b) is an optional development control policy currently being used in WA, which promotes some elements of designing out crime such as the use of surveillance However, it is a tool for achieving sustainability and does not focus specifically on designing out crime. Indeed, within the WA planning system references to designing out crime concepts were predominantly implicit, rather than explicit, and crucially there are no minimum security standards for buildings (e.g. doors, windows or locks).

The Government's decision to establish the OCP in 2001 was an important first step in securing the introduction of designing out crime to WA. In October 2001 the Government assembled a group of crime prevention units to form the OCP, and it was assigned the task of coordinating existing crime prevention and playing a leading role in reducing crime in WA. In 2004, the OCP released the State Community Safety and Crime Prevention Strategy, *Preventing Crime* (OCP, 2004) describing how the WA Government will make its communities safer. It outlines five clear goals to achieve this vision:

- Supporting families, children and young people;
- Strengthening communities and revitalising neighbourhoods;
- Targeting priority offences;
- Reducing repeat offending; and
- Designing out crime and using technology.

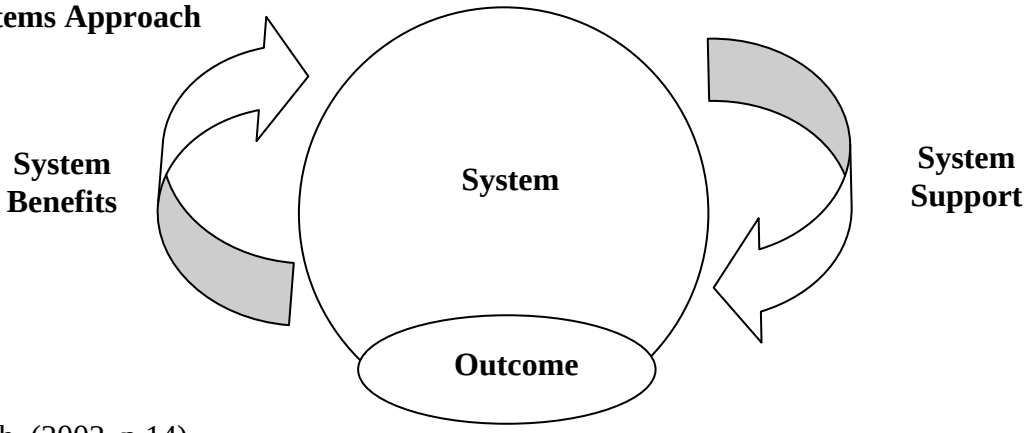
Clearly, goals two and five have direct designing out crime implications. To achieve these goals, key staff members were recruited to develop the State's Designing Out Crime Strategy. The OCP adopted a systems perspective and an evidence-based approach, which conducted a major review of the published findings from recent place-based crime prevention research (Cozens *et al.*, 2005). This review evaluates the available evidence on the contribution of designing out crime as a crime prevention strategy and represents a significant piece of work for all designing out crime policymakers and practitioners. The review highlights one of the most significant reviews of crime prevention project evaluations the US Congress report *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising* (Sherman *et al*., 2002). Research by Eck (2002) revealed that 90% of place-based crime prevention evaluations showed evidence of crime reduction effects. Other reviews (eg. Poyner, 1993; Taylor and Harrell, 1996; Feins *et al.*, 1997; Clarke, 1997; Sorensen, 2003) all show that research consistently yields results suggesting designing out crime can lead to crime reductions. A more detailed discussion of some of the methodological issues relating to evaluating crime prevention studies is provided elsewhere (Cozens, 2005).

Designing Out Crime Policy Development

Nationally, efforts in WA were significantly strengthened in November 2003, by the decision of the Australian and New Zealand Ministerial Crime Prevention Forum to adopt Designing Out Crime as one of six key priority areas. The policy approach in WA is a strategy and a plan for action with the objective of making designing out crime practice part of the routine operations and thinking of crime prevention policymakers, urban planners, developers, product designers and a host of others, who in various ways influence the urban form and the design of products.

Using a systems perspective to embed designing out crime has resulted in the analysis of the whole planning system in WA in terms of interrelationships, policies and processes that have interest and relevance for designing out crime. As the process develops, it is noticeable that the approach further contributes to the sustainability of outcomes by highlighting the support/benefit ratio (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. A Systems Approach



Source: Ellsworth, (2002, p.14).

Indeed, Ellsworth, (2002, p14) notes “within a systems approach, sustainable outcomes are those that both contribute to and derive support from the system”. Accordingly, a thorough review of the planning system of WA was undertaken (a detailed discussion is beyond the scope of this paper) and key policy areas were identified.

Research also indicates that new knowledge and practices are adopted in a stepwise approach, which starts with the pioneers who introduce the innovation. Innovators and early adopters then follow the pioneers. The adoption reaches tipping point when the late adopters come on board and lastly, “there are the laggards who refuse to adopt the new knowledge / practices until they have no choice” (Ellsworth, 2002, p.8). When the adoption of new ideas reaches the tipping point, the innovation becomes a prime candidate for embedding in policy. One key objective of the Designing Out Crime policy development in WA is to ensure that common sense ideas for reducing opportunities for crime within the built environment and products become common practice.

The Designing Out Crime Strategy was endorsed by government in October 2007 and has five key goals:

1. To embed Designing Out Crime principles within all relevant State and local planning policies.
2. To manage the built and landscaped environment to reduce crime.
3. To increase understanding of Designing Out Crime.
4. To apply Designing Out Crime principles in a multi-agency approach.
5. To use product design and appropriate technologies to reduce crime.

Actions to achieve Goal 1, to embed Designing Out Crime principles within all relevant State and local planning policies, include;

- Ensure Designing Out Crime principles are included in the review of relevant State planning policies, strategies and instruments.
- Make reference to Designing Out Crime when reviewing relevant national and state legislative frameworks.
- Review and refine the Designing Out Crime planning guidelines.
- Provide assistance to local government in developing local Designing Out Crime policies for town planning schemes.
- Provide Designing Out Crime advice, training and consultancy to local government and other agencies and organisations.
- Collaborate to ensure government infrastructure projects and redevelopment authorities utilise Designing Out Crime principles.
- Ensure private sector projects use Designing Out Crime principles by engaging with major developers.
- Provide funding and advice to local government to develop and implement Designing Out Crime policies.
- Ensure entertainment precincts are designed, planned and managed in a manner that is consistent with Designing Out Crime principles.
- Provide funds for strategic Designing Out Crime projects.
- Ensure Designing Out Crime principles are used when purchasing goods and services for the Western Australian Government and promote the use of the Designing Out Crime Planning Guidelines as a condition in tendering for development.

- Collaborate with universities to ensure Designing Out Crime content is present in all relevant courses including planning, architecture, landscape architecture, urban studies, geography, criminology, engineering, building and surveying, and art and design courses.

Actions to achieve Goal 2, to manage the built and landscaped environment to reduce crime include;

- Ensure that public spaces consider design issues that contribute to crime and are adequately illuminated and well-managed.
- Provide a detailed structured approach to improving the management of public access ways and implement the recommendations of the Premiers' Interagency Working Group on Public Access Ways.
- Implement the Graffiti Vandalism Reduction Strategy to reduce the incidents of graffiti, make offenders more accountable to the community and to ensure both the rapid removal of graffiti and the prompt repair of damage to state property.
- Maintain statewide graffiti removal standards (within 48 hours and immediately for obscene or racist graffiti) and improve and streamline reporting procedures.
- Provide information on good practice management strategies that reduce graffiti vandalism and encourage reporting by promoting the Goodbye Graffiti website.
- Encourage property owners to refurbish run-down properties with heritage and cultural significance by developing incentives and to explore options to ensure property owners effectively manage and maintain their properties and reduce the number of vacant and derelict buildings.
- Provide advice and training to local government and other agencies on measures to improve safety through the management and maintenance of the built and landscaped environment.

Actions to achieve Goal 3, to increase understanding of Designing Out Crime include;

- Provide Designing Out Crime training for local government, other agencies and organisations.
- Develop risk assessment tools to assess the crime risks associated with the planning, design and use of space for use by local governments and others.
- Collaborate with developers and non-government agencies to ensure Designing Out Crime principles are considered within their policies, practices, staff development and training.
- Explore methods to improve the utility and accessibility of recorded crime data for use at the local level for spatial and geographical analysis.

- Formulate resident and or victim surveys for use in local government community safety and crime prevention plans.
- Establish Designing Out Crime demonstration projects to highlight and promote Designing Out Crime.
- Develop recognition awards for buildings and products incorporating Designing Out Crime principles.
- Monitor and refine the Designing Out Crime Planning Guidelines on an ongoing basis.

Actions to achieve Goal 4, to apply Designing Out Crime principles in a multi-agency approach, include;

- Ensure that the community is consulted and actively involved with Government agencies and industry on crime prevention and community safety initiatives.
- Continue the 'Eyes on the Street' program to train and encourage local government and targeted commercial agencies, outdoor workers, parks and gardens officers, rangers and security officers to record and report suspicious persons or events.
- Broaden the police 'cocooning' program focusing on victims of burglary in order to minimise repeat victimisation and burglaries to nearby properties.
- Establish inter-departmental partnerships with key stakeholders and develop Designing Out Crime initiatives for emerging problems.
- Integrate Designing Out Crime strategies within Local Government Community Safety and Crime Prevention Plans., particularly for crime 'hot spots'.
- Improve the application of Designing Out Crime in Aboriginal communities by commissioning research on Aboriginal perceptions of crime, notions of property, ownership and territoriality.
- Collaborate with the Aboriginal Land Trust, the Department of Indigenous Affairs and the Western Australia Planning Commission (WAPC) and to develop culturally-specific Designing Out Crime audits, plans and actions.
- Provide financial support and advise on the development of local government Designing Out Crime policies and local guidelines.
- Encourage the community to 'think crime' to reduce opportunities for crime and refine programs such as 'Look, Lock and Leave' (a WA Police initiative encouraging citizens to 'look' to ensure no valuables are left in vehicles and to 'lock' them before they 'leave').

- Provide support to the Housing Institute of Australia's 'Name and Shame' program in the reduction of thefts from building sites.
- Encourage increased use of facilities, parks and pedestrian and cycle routes in support of the Premier's Physical Activity Task Force.

Actions to achieve Goal 5, to use product design and technology to reduce crime include;

- Develop policy to minimise opportunities for crime in the design of products.
- Collaborate with the Design Institute of Australia and others to ensure the crime potential is considered in the design of products.
- Incorporate in Standards Australia crime prevention principles that reduce opportunities for crime in the design of products and processes.
- Develop an accreditation framework for 'approved' products which reduce opportunities for crime.
- Collaborate with the retail industry to reduce theft and the crime potential of products using technology and Designing Out Crime.
- Develop CCTV standards and guidelines and advise on WA 'best practice' for the installation, implementation and operation of CCTV.

Specifically, the move towards the development of the Strategy precipitated two other important policy guidance documents. In 2004, the Minister for Community Safety requested that the Western Australian Planning Commission prepared Designing Out Crime Planning Guidelines, incorporating the principles of CPTED (WAPC, 2006a). These guidelines are supported by the second guidance document, Planning Bulletin No.79 (WAPC, 2006b). The guidelines "provide users with an understanding of the principles of designing out crime and a toolbox of possible design approaches to address crime prevention in Western Australia" (WAPC, 2006b, p1). The guidelines are underpinned by comprehensive research into international evidence-based best-practice. Community consultation involved a series of workshops with key stakeholder groups, a ninety-day public comment period and information forums in seven locations throughout WA. The guidelines represent leading interstate practice and it is hoped that they will act "as a catalyst for public and private sectors in house planning and design procedures that take into account designing out crime principles and performance requirements" (WAPC, 2006b, p2). The Designing Out Crime Planning Guidelines (WAPC, 2006a) establish a ten-step process for developing designing out crime initiatives:

1. identifying principles

2. incorporating risk assessment
3. integrating planning and design considerations
4. applying the toolbox of design guidelines and criteria
5. preparing a design strategy
6. carrying out design assessment
7. management and maintenance
8. monitoring
9. preparing a security risk strategy
10. reviewing policy

Figure 2 illustrates this process. Step 1 ensures that designing out crime principles are identified and are reflected in planning policies and assessment practices. However, before applying the principles a crime risk assessment is required (step 2) to assist in determining the priority given to designing out crime principles with respect to all other planning and design considerations. Step 3 describes methods to ensure local conditions and community or stakeholder input are utilised in accommodating conflicting considerations. This process can be applied at any scale of proposed development from the macro (strategic/structure plan) to meso (subdivision) or micro (individual building design). It can also be applied to a range of developments including greenfield, brownfield, metropolitan and regional sites.

Step 4 involves the practical application of the Designing Out Crime Planning Guidelines to specific proposals and policies. It demonstrates how generic and site specific tools can be used in a variety of situations. These ‘tools’ are described in section 5 of the guidelines and set out the objectives, rationale, factors to consider and performance criteria for a range of designing out crime concepts including; natural surveillance, urban structure, land use mix, activity generators, building design, including boundary definition, lighting, landscape management and maintenance, sightlines and way finding, signage predictable routes and spaces safe from entrapment. The toolbox provides designing out crime advice for specific urban spaces such as civic and town centres, shopping, commercial, health and education centres, parks and public open space, car parks, transit stations, (rail, bus and taxi ranks), public toilets, pedestrian routes, laneways, alleyways and access ways, pedestrian overpasses and underpasses.

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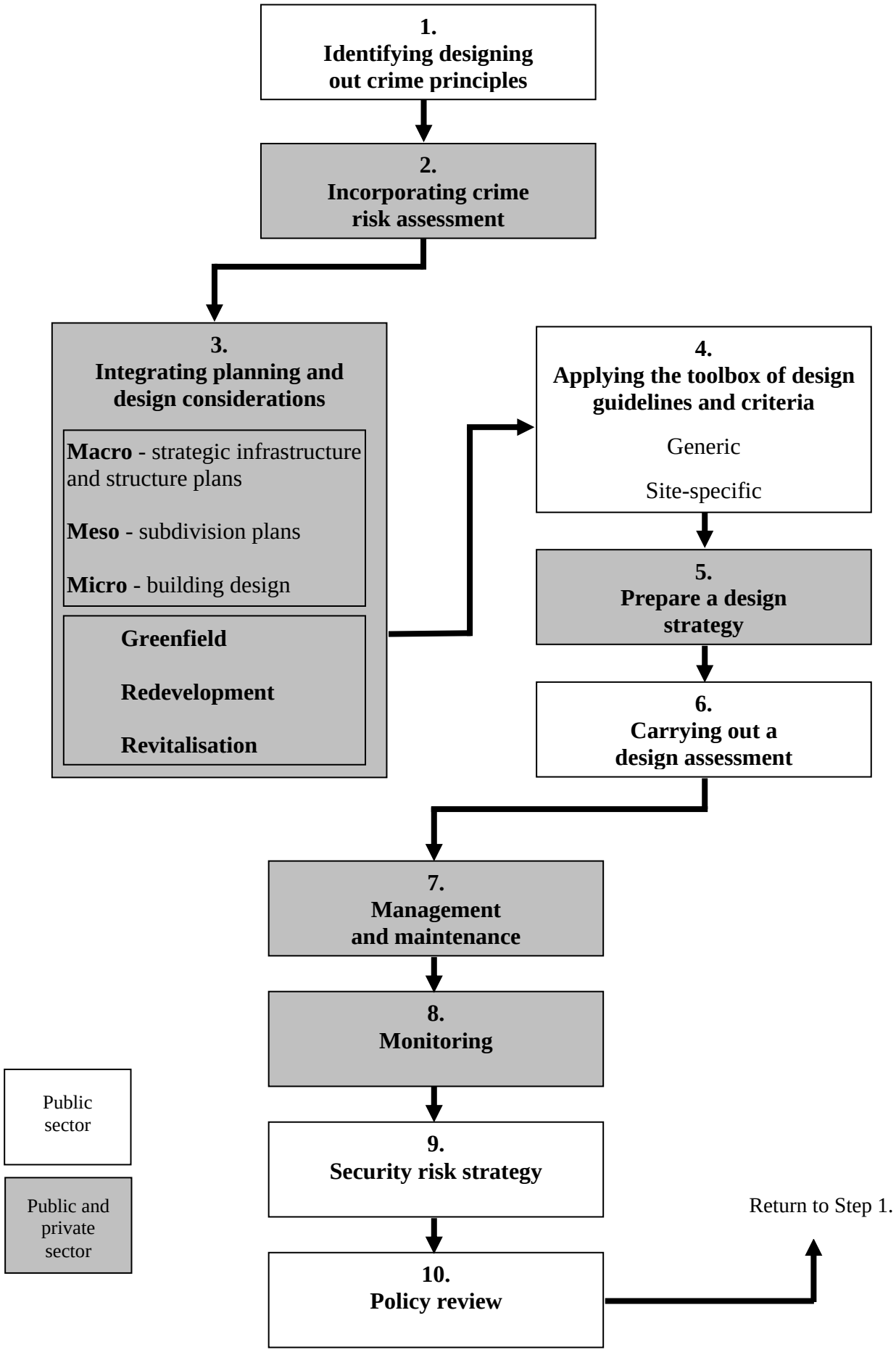
Figure 2. Key Steps for Designing out Crime



The designing out crime toolbox can be used to prepare a design strategy (step 5) or a design assessment process (step 6). However, ongoing management and maintenance (step 7) is required after development is complete in order to maintain safety. Ongoing monitoring (step 8) to evaluate the effect of design modifications and to indicate emerging problems is also necessary to ensure long-term sustainability. A security risk management is incorporated in step 9, to ensure that existing and emerging issues are identified and addressed. Finally, step 10 reviews designing out crime policy in the light of practical experience in order to update tools, guidelines and practices. This process will potentially ensure the ongoing relevance of designing out crime in planning, assessment and development processes.

To date, the State's Designing Out Crime Strategy (OCP, 2007) has produced Designing Out Crime Planning Guidelines (WAPC, 2006a) and the supporting Designing out Crime Planning Bulletin No. 79 (WAPC, 2006b) in partnership with the WAPC. The Strategy also commits to strengthening the designing out crime dimensions to existing policies including the State Planning Strategy and the State Sustainability Strategy. Furthermore, all relevant Statements of Planning Policy (SPPs) prepared and adopted by the WAPC "will provide more explicit explanation and reference to Designing Out Crime principles" (OCP, 2007, p32) and "WAPC policy on Regional Strategies, Regional and Sub-regional Structure Plans, Strategic Policies and Operational Policies will also reflect the Government's commitment to Designing Out Crime" (OCP, 2007, p32). Furthermore, it states that all operational policies (predominately subdivision and development control policies) will support the commitment to Designing Out Crime.

The success of the Designing Out Crime Strategy requires an effective strategic framework and there are a range of actions to achieve this, including;

- Developing key performance indicators for agencies to demonstrate their contribution to the Designing Out Crime Strategy.
- Collecting and analysing relevant data and information to monitor the performance of the Designing out Crime Strategy.
- Providing information, advice and planning guidelines to assist Designing Out Crime planning and project management.
- Establishing private sector partnerships and sponsorship arrangements to develop high profile campaigns.
- Incorporating rigorous evaluation into the planning of initiatives under the Strategy.
- Amending relevant public health legislation (in WA, the Public Health Act 1911) to provide legislative support.
- Enshrining the Designing Out Crime framework for WA by enacting appropriate legislation.

In terms of evaluating the effectiveness of the Designing Out Crime Strategy, key performance indicators (KPIs) include;

- the number of local governments which amend their policies to include Designing out Crime principles and which undertake Designing Out Crime training for relevant staff.
- the number of State planning policies that are realigned to include Designing Out Crime principles.
- the percentage of major infrastructure projects employing crime risk assessments and risk minimisation strategies.
- the percentage of residential properties meeting minimum security standards according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Community Safety Survey.
- the scale of realignment of relevant university degree courses to include Designing Out Crime principles represents an example of a 'secondary' indicator.

The scale and scope of the strategy is certainly optimistic, and in relation to individual actions, it will be interesting to monitor who will carry them out as well as how and when they will be achieved. It will be necessary to monitor the effectiveness of the Designing Out Crime Strategy and of specific developments that have adopted the designing out crime principles. Although it is in its infancy, the strategy is already beginning to have an impact and is gaining momentum. Recently, several local governments in WA have produced their own designing out crime guidelines with the support of the OCP. Increasingly, developers and planning consultants are introducing designing out crime, and local governments and the community are requesting support and assistance. Moreover, innovative local governments are competing to establish themselves as leaders in the field of designing out crime and such participation is undoubtedly supporting the process of embedding designing out crime in planning policy.

A significant project emerging from the Designing Out Crime Strategy involves the development and permeation of designing out crime into the training and professional development of local government employees, built environment professionals such as architects, planners, urban designers, developers, builders, landscape architects and those who maintain the built and landscaped environment. To date, over three hundred participants from more than thirty local government organizations have attended the two-day designing out crime training sessions. Partnerships with local universities have been established, and the key industry stakeholders are enthusiastic and supportive. Furthermore, designing out crime is a central element to the local government Community Safety and Crime Prevention (CSCP) Plans, which are being developed in partnership with the State and identify priority areas for local government in terms of crime reduction and crime prevention initiatives. Designing out crime initiatives are commonly part of

these CSCP plans which most local governments are now producing in partnership with the OCP's Community Engagement Team.

In a very short time, designing out crime has captured both public policy makers and the public's imagination and an extraordinary appetite for advice and assistance has emerged. This response is attributable in part, to the recognition of design failures of the past and to the real and perceived necessity to remedy these. The Designing Out Crime Strategy is a proactive plan for action, which is arguably more systematic and all encompassing than any current state or international policy frameworks. Renowned criminologist and former advisor to the UK's Home Office, Paul Ekblom has commented that the Strategy is "very professional and impressive with clear rational principles…[and] we [the UK] are far behind on the ideas of embedding set out in these publications (Ekblom, 2008)". Although the future will ultimately judge the effectiveness of this Strategy, for policymakers and practitioners there are valuable lessons to be learnt from the experience of embedding designing out crime in Western Australia.

Conclusions and Recommendations

By taking a systems approach, those responsible for progressing designing out crime in WA have targeted the key points in the system at which to embed such ideas in the State's planning system and public policy frameworks. This increases the likelihood of the policy and practice of designing out crime surviving the ebb and flow of political priorities and withstanding the challenges and idiosyncrasies of the modern democratic system. Crucially, designing out crime approaches are amenable to politicians across the ideological spectrum (Smith, 1987) and represent visible, tangible and positive action being taken in and on behalf of the community.

Designing out crime strategies are proactive and practical and they merit vigorous promotion to assist governments, land developers and criminal justice agencies to combat crime.

Lessons from Western Australia suggest policy makers and practitioners seeking to adopt of designing out crime need to:

- Demonstrate and continue to develop an evidential basis for designing out crime theory, policy and practice.
- Ensure there is political and policy leadership and fully engage with designing out crime experts;
- Identify and galvanise inter-agency stakeholder support for designing out crime;
- Harness and reinforce ministerial support for designing out crime and strive for its adoption across multiple areas of government policy;

- Identify the critical levers in the planning system and refine specific planning policies at all levels of government; and,
- Use easily understood language to promote the benefits of designing out crime and to make links with issues such as sustainability, healthy environments, community viability and improved quality of life.

ENDS 4,867 words

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