Review of the Waverley Theft Reduction Strategy

Final Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Waverley Theft Reduction Strategy was a joint initiative of the NSW Department of Justice and Attorney General and the NSW Police Force that ran from December 2007 to April 2009. The aim of the Strategy was to reduce the incidence of retail theft and steal from person offences in the Bondi Junction Shopping Precinct. CPD undertook a review of the Strategy to examine the implementation of the Strategy and the outcomes it achieved.

Key features of the Strategy were the development of strong partnerships with local stakeholders to implement a range of crime prevention initiatives. Key stakeholders included the NSW Police Force, Waverley Council, the major shopping centres (Westfield, Eastgate), key retailers, Railcorp and the State Transit Authority of NSW. It was intended that the initiatives would be based on approaches that had shown promising results in other locations. The evidence base in the area, however, is limited at present and so we don’t have a good understanding of the key drivers of retail and personal theft or the types of solutions likely to be effective in reducing these offences. The initiatives were therefore based on the best available evidence and were primarily aimed at educating retailers and the public about suitable crime prevention techniques and encouraging them to adopt such techniques. The initiatives included —

- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) audits in identified hotspot stores to recommend potential store improvements.
- Seminars (Bizsafe seminars) to educate retailers about crime prevention techniques.
- A community education campaign (Gone in a Flash) to inform the public about how to better protect their personal belongings.
- A young offender program to educate young shoplifting offenders about the consequences of shoplifting and help reduce their future risk of offending.
- Installation of anti-theft accessories (such as hooks to secure handbags and other bags) in food-courts, change-rooms and shoe stores to better protect personal belongings.
- A crime prevention newsletter to provide information about the Strategy and crime prevention tips to stakeholders and retailers.

Implementation of the Strategy

Despite some initial reluctance, most stakeholders came on board and got involved with the Strategy. Relationships between the key stakeholders were strengthened, information exchange between stakeholders improved, and there was an increase in awareness of and proactivity toward the problem, at least among those stakeholders more closely involved. Unfortunately, the Strategy was hampered by limited involvement from some stakeholders and many retailers. High staff turnover in the retail and security industries made it difficult to establish relationships and get stakeholders involved on an ongoing basis. It was also difficult for many retailers to take time out of their day, away from their day-to-day business, to get involved in the initiatives. For many, crime prevention was just not a top priority.
With the support of those stakeholders closely involved in the Strategy, most of the key initiatives planned under the Strategy were implemented. However, many initiatives were not implemented as fully as had been intended. The CPTED audits were implemented as planned. Most of the identified hotspot stores were willing to participate in and were satisfied with the audit process. The audits appeared to increase retailers’ awareness and focus on retail theft and encouraged retailers to make some changes in their stores. Retailers were not always in a position to make the suggested changes as the changes were not in line with company strategy and image. Sales, modern marketing principles, and the look and feel of the store typically outweighed crime prevention concerns. Aside from persuading retailers to make changes to their stores, the major challenge for this initiative was achieving adequate coverage across the large number of retailers in the Bondi Junction Shopping Precinct (well over 500). Outside of the identified hotspot stores, few retailers opted to participate in this initiative.

The BIZSAFE seminars were also implemented as planned. Participants tended to provide positive feedback and indicated the seminar had increased their knowledge of crime prevention techniques to some extent. Some participants indicated that they intended to put some of the crime prevention techniques covered in the seminar in place in their store. The major challenge for this initiative was again the limited coverage it was able to achieve across the large number of retailers in the area, despite the concerted efforts of CPD and Police to promote this initiative to retailers.

Similarly, the community education campaign (Gone in a Flash) was implemented as intended. There were some initial concerns from stakeholders that alerting customers to crime may increase their fear levels and have a detrimental effect on sales and patronage levels, and there were some difficulties in displaying some of the educational material at times. However, the campaign tended to be viewed positively by those involved. Many stakeholders commented on the benefits of the positive interactions security staff were able to have with customers, rather than traditional enforcement actions. Given the huge volume of pedestrian traffic in the area and that the campaign was only run in three set months, it is unclear how much coverage this initiative was able to achieve.

A number of the other key initiatives planned under the Strategy did not get off the ground properly. The young offender program was beset by delays and was only able to reach a small number of young persons at the conclusion of the Strategy. The anti-theft accessories were not implemented by the time the Strategy concluded, due to Westfield’s concerns about trialling the anti-theft hooks. Delays in the opening of the newly created Designing Out Crime Research Centre also meant that it was not open in time to design and test any other accessories. Specific initiatives were also planned for the Transport Interchange, however these were limited to an extension of the initiatives in the Shopping Precinct.

Despite these challenges the Strategy does appear to have brought about an increased awareness of the problem and a degree of attitudinal change among some key stakeholders. Westfield in particular has had a change in mindset, and has become much more proactive across its centres about crime prevention in general. Other stakeholders and retailers have
also become more aware and focussed on the problem. Many stakeholders were positive about the Strategy and felt it represented a good start that could be built upon, to achieve longer term change.

**Outcomes achieved by the Strategy**

Unfortunately we do not have reliable data sources on the true levels of steal from retail store or steal from person offences due to low detection and reporting rates. The best available data does not provide any strong evidence that the Strategy has brought about a reduction in retail theft in the Bondi Junction Shopping Precinct, nor in the identified hotspot stores where the CPTED audits were undertaken. Retail theft levels in Bondi Junction appear to have stabilised prior to the commencement of the Strategy, with an average of 38 incidents reported to police per month. Retail theft levels appear to have remained relatively stable over the course of the Strategy, with an average of 40 incidents reported to police per month.

Similarly there was no strong evidence that the Strategy brought about a reduction in steal from person offences. Steal from person offences in Bondi Junction appear to have stabilised in the lead up to the Strategy, with an average of 14 incidents reported to police per month. Steal from person offences appeared to remain relatively stable over the course of the Strategy, with an average of 17 incidents reported to police per month. Small reductions in steal from person offences were evident during the months in which the Gone in a Flash campaign took place, although this effect was not sustained over time.

It is possible, however, that we did not observe any reduction in the target offences, as reporting of these offences may have increased under the Strategy. The Strategy encouraged stakeholders and shoppers to report retail and personal theft to Police. The Strategy also increased stakeholder awareness and focus on the problem, and improved stakeholder relations with Police. These factors may all have contributed to an increase in reporting rates. Some of the stakeholders also argued that the Strategy might have helped to keep a lid on things, but given that crime trends tended to be stable in other major shopping areas, this suggests other factors could be at play.

**Discussion**

The results of this review highlight the need to increase our understanding of the main drivers of retail and personal theft. In order to do this we need retailers to collect and provide accurate and complete information on their stock theft, through having effective stock inventory systems in place. This is crucial to increasing our understanding of the problem and monitoring the effectiveness of any measures put in place to address it. Future efforts will also need to focus on ways to better engage retailers in the process, perhaps through more extensive consultation within the industry, a greater focus on retailer’s bottom lines and a better understanding of how crime prevention goals can complement the commercial interests of many of the stakeholders.
Future efforts might also focus on increasing the risks (both perceived and actual) of shoplifters being caught. This could be achieved through increasing the presence of trained and aware staff, security or Police. There was reduction in retail theft after the major Police Operation took place in December 2008, which resulted in a large number of shoplifters being apprehended. Previous research with shoplifters also suggests that factors such as the presence of trained and aware staff or security, which increase the perceived risks of shoplifting, are more influential than other factors such as perceived effort.
1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of a review of the Waverley Theft Reduction Strategy, a joint crime prevention initiative of the Crime Prevention Division (CPD), of the NSW Department of Justice and Attorney General, and the NSW Police Force. The Strategy was set up in 2007 to address large increases in the number of ‘steal from retail store’ and ‘steal from person’ offences recorded by police in the Waverley Local Government Area (LGA). The purpose of this report is to inform stakeholders about the implementation and results of the Strategy and to inform decisions about the future direction of the Strategy. The report will also help inform other related work currently being undertaken by CPD. The review draws upon data from a range of sources, including police and retail data, and a series of key stakeholder interviews. It should be noted at the outset, however, that we do not have good measures of either retail theft or steal from person offences. These offences typically go undetected or unreported. Retailers do not always have good stock inventory systems in place to closely monitor stock loss, and are not always willing to provide such commercially sensitive data. The results of this review should therefore be treated as indicative rather than definitive.

The first section of this report focuses on the background and development of the Strategy. Section 2 provides details of the review and methodology. Section 3 examines the implementation of the Strategy in practice, and Section 4 examines the outcomes achieved by the Strategy, particularly whether it was successful in reducing retail and personal theft in Bondi Junction, based on the best evidence available to us.

Background to the Strategy

CPD had identified large increases in the number of steal from retail store and steal from person offences recorded by police in the Waverley LGA between 2004 and 2006, through regular quarterly crime analysis. Steal from retail store incidents had increased from 287 in 2004 to 606 in 2006 and steal from person incidents from 283 to 362. Waverley LGA ranked among the top LGAs in the state for these offences in 2006, both in terms of the rates of these offences per 100,000 population and the total number of incidents. The true levels of these offences are likely to be much greater than the numbers reported here (due to the low detection and reporting rates). While the true levels of these offences will represent only a tiny fraction of the total retail turnover and customer visits to the area (which total in excess of $1 billion and 21 million, in Westfield Bondi Junction alone), retail theft still has a significant impact on retailers’ bottom line.

Closer analysis of Waverley crime data indicated that the increases in retail and personal theft were concentrated in Bondi Junction, the major shopping area in Waverley LGA and

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1 Note that the terms ‘steal from retail store offences’, ‘retail theft’ and ‘shoplifting’ are used interchangeably throughout this report. The terms ‘steal from person offences’ and ‘personal theft’ are also used interchangeably.

2 Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

coincided with the re-development of Westfield Bondi Junction. Incidents were spread across the week, and tended to occur during daytime shopping hours (9am-6pm). Steal from person offences were particularly frequent over lunchtime hours (12noon-3pm). Clothing and cosmetics featured among the more commonly stolen items from retail stores, while mobile phones, cash and wallets featured more commonly in personal theft. Victims of personal theft tended to be female, and aged between 20 and 39 years or 60 years and over. As most offenders go undetected we have limited data on offenders. However, among those who were apprehended for shoplifting, both males and females and young persons under the age of 18 years, and to a lesser extent, those aged 20-29 years featured more frequently.

The Bondi Junction Shopping Precinct (shown in Figure 1) covers three main shopping areas – Westfield, Eastgate and the Oxford St Mall – as well as a major bus/rail transport interchange. A further shopping plaza – Tiffany Plaza - is located directly above the transport interchange.

Westfield Bondi Junction is one of the largest shopping centres in NSW, and caters for upmarket consumers. Westfield has described it as ‘a global flagship centre, which set a new international standard in shopping centre design’. The centre has harbour views and features over 500 retailers, including supermarkets, department stores, designer fashion stores, homeware stores, food outlets and bars, a cinema complex and a gym. The Bondi Junction Centre is the best performing centre among Westfield’s Australian portfolio, with annual turnover growing to over $1 billion in 2009, customer visits over 21 million per year, as described earlier, and retail space of over 127,000 square metres.

Eastgate Shopping Centre is a mid-sized shopping centre, which houses a mix of over 40 retailers including discount department stores, supermarkets and specialty retailers, and serves the day-to-day needs of residents.

The Oxford Street Mall is a pedestrian mall with over 60 stores, and is described as a place where residents and visitors can meet and mingle, enjoy a casual outdoor meal without the disruption of traffic, and shop for day to day or specialty needs. The mall also houses markets on four days of the week (an Organic Food and Farmer’s Markets and a Rotary Market).

Any attempts to reduce crime in this Precinct were going to present significant challenges, given the sheer number and diversity of retailers, stakeholders, shoppers and others in the area. The fact that crime prevention was not a top priority for many and that commercial interests often competed with crime prevention interests was also a major challenge. Clearly there was no one-size-fits-all approach that was going to suit the range of retailers, stakeholders and members of the public in the area.

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What initiatives were already in place prior to the Strategy?

Prior to the Strategy, Waverley Police and other stakeholders in the area had a number of initiatives already in place to deal with theft in the area. Waverley Police regularly conducted High Visibility Policing patrols in the Bondi Junction area, both on foot and in vehicles, and ran operations specifically targeted at shoplifting when a need arose. Waverley Police also
held monthly LINK meetings with local retailers and other stakeholders to share crime information. Waverley Police, supported by NRMA Insurance, held Bizsafe seminars to educate local retailers about crime prevention. The LINK meetings and Bizsafe seminars had been somewhat sporadic in the lead up to the Strategy as a key position at Waverley Police (the Crime Prevention Officer) had been vacant for some time. Waverley Council, with funding from CPD, had also run a Beach Theft campaign in the summer months on Bondi Beach to educate beach goers to better protect their valuables whilst on the beach.

The shopping complexes had their own security staff and measures, such as CCTV, in place. Retailers also had in place their own loss prevention practices to address retail theft. These varied across retailers, depending on company policy and resources, but included security staff (uniformed and covert), CCTV, electronic tagging systems with security barriers, and staff training to assist staff to identify and deal with theft.

**Key features of the Strategy**

The Strategy was set up to reduce the incidence of steal from retail store and steal from person offences in the Bondi Junction Shopping Precinct. It ran between December 2007 and April 2009 and aimed to build on the local initiatives that were already in place and develop strong partnerships with relevant stakeholders in the area.

Key features of the Strategy were to —

- Develop strong partnerships with key stakeholders in the area, including Waverley Police, Waverley Council, Westfield Bondi Junction, Jones Lang LaSalle (Eastgate owners), Meriton (Tiffany Plaza owners), key retailers including Woolworths, Railcorp and State Transit Authority of NSW, to implement suitable crime prevention initiatives.
- Further educate key stakeholders about crime prevention strategies and techniques to help reduce steal from retail store and steal from person offences and encourage stakeholders to introduce such measures in the local area.
- Educate the public who uses the Bondi Junction Shopping Precinct for shopping, commuting and entertainment about techniques to better protect their personal belongings and encourage the public to adopt such techniques.
- Educate young shoplifting offenders in the early stages of their offending career about the consequences of shoplifting and help reduce their future risk of offending.

**Development of the Strategy**

The Strategy represented the first time CPD had attempted to take an approach that targeted an identified problem, using an evidence-based approach. It was also the first time many of the key stakeholders had been involved in such a partnership approach. CPD had intended to develop an evidence-based Strategy, based on strategies that had shown promising results in other locations. The evidence base in this area, however, was very limited. There was little research literature to give us a good understanding of the key drivers
of either shoplifting or steal from person offences, or the types of interventions that are likely to be most effective in reducing these offences. Quality evaluations in the retail setting, employing before and after designs and suitable controls, are rare. Retailers have also traditionally been reluctant to publicise their efforts, due to their commercial sensitivity and concerns about potentially alerting criminals to their vulnerabilities (see for example Shapland 1995).

Nevertheless, the available evidence did point to some potentially effective interventions for retail theft, some of which retailers already employ. These included the use of CPTED principles (see for example Casteel et al, 2004) including store redesign and stock placement (see for example Farrington 1999, Sherman et al 1998). There is not a great deal of research however, to provide guidance on the types of store layouts and displays that are likely to be most effective in reducing shoplifting (Clarke 2002). Other interventions suggested by the available research included electronic tagging (see for example Farrington 1999, Nelson & Perrone 2000, Eck 1997), CCTV (see for example Beck & Willis 1999), staff presence (see for example Butler 1994), close monitoring of high risk items (see for example Ekblom 1986, Hayes 2003) and diversion programs for offenders (see for example Krasnovsky & Lane 1998, Royse & Buck 1991, National Association for Shoplifting Prevention, 2010, McCulloch 1996). Press et al (2001) and Shapland (1995) have also highlighted the importance of a cooperative approach with open information exchange between retailers, security, police and other local agencies in dealing with retail theft.

The evidence base for personal theft is even more limited than that for retail theft. However, the available evidence did suggest that measures to better secure items and targeted public awareness campaigns might be effective strategies. Designing layouts to reduce congestion, improve lighting and increase opportunities for surveillance may also be effective in reducing bag snatches (Tilley et al 2004, Smith et al 2006). **Key initiatives planned under the Strategy**

CPD established a stakeholder working party in September 2007 to discuss the potential Strategy and gain local insights and expertise into the problem. The working party consisted of representatives from Waverley Police, Waverley Council, Westfield Bondi Junction, Jones Lang LaSalle (owners of Eastgate), Meriton (owners of Tiffany Plaza), Railcorp, State Transit Authority of NSW and a key retailer (Woolworths).

The key initiatives planned as part of the Strategy included —

**CPTED audits**

Undertaking Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) audits in identified ‘hotspot’ stores, and recommending potential store improvements to store managers to reduce steal from retail store offences.
Retailer education seminars
Bizsafe Seminars to educate local retailers about crime prevention techniques to reduce crime against their business. Seminars covered a range of crimes affecting retail businesses, including fraud, but the main focus was on retail theft.

Community education campaign (‘Gone in a Flash’)  
Educational material (‘Gone in a Flash’ bookmarks, cards and posters) displayed and distributed throughout the Bondi Junction Shopping Precinct to inform shoppers and the general public on ways to protect their personal belongings and reduce steal from person offences.

Reduce theft at transport Interchange
Several initiatives were specifically targeted at the transport interchange. These included the CPTED audits and the community education campaign (Gone in a Flash), similar to those used in the Shopping Precinct, to reduce both steal from person and steal from retail store offences in the interchange.

Young offender program
A voluntary program was run for young persons apprehended for shoplifting in the early stages of their offending career to assist them to consider the consequences of their actions and help reduce their future risk of committing shoplifting and other offences. The Youth Educational Shoplifting (YES) Program, developed by the National Association for Shoplifting Prevention (NASP) in the USA was purchased for this purpose.

Anti-theft accessories
Installation of anti-theft accessories in food-courts, change-rooms and shoe stores to protect shoppers’ and others' personal belongings and reduce steal from person offences.

Crime prevention newsletter
Distribution of a quarterly newsletter to local retailers and stakeholders to provide information about the Strategy, updates from local Police and key retailers, as well as crime prevention tips.

The Strategy was jointly implemented by CPD and Waverley Police with assistance from other key stakeholders. CPD employed a Project Officer for 16 months from December 2007 to April 2009 to coordinate and oversee the implementation of the Strategy. The Project Officer was based locally at the Waverley Police Station and worked closely with Waverley Police, particularly the Crime Prevention Officer, and also the Crime Manager and Youth Liaison Officer, as well as other key stakeholders and retailers in the area.
2. THE REVIEW

CPD undertook a review of the Strategy to inform stakeholders about the implementation and outcomes achieved by the Strategy, and to help inform decisions about the future development of the Strategy and its potential to be rolled to other areas.

The review examines —

- The implementation and operation of the Strategy in practice
- Whether the Strategy was successful in achieving its aims of reducing the incidence of steal from retail store and steal from person offences in the Bondi Junction Shopping Precinct.

Methodology

CPD employed a range of methods to carry out the review. These included —

- A review of relevant program documentation and data
- A series of key stakeholder interviews. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 19 persons (representing seven of the eight key stakeholders and four of the nine identified hotspot retailers) about their experiences and perceptions of the Strategy and its implementation.\(^7\)
- Police data sourced from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR). Trends in the number of steal from retail store and steal from person incidents recorded by police in Bondi Junction prior to, and over the course of the Strategy were analysed.\(^8\) Trends in the incidence of the target offences in other major shopping areas, and in other offences in Bondi Junction were examined for comparison purposes.
- Shopping centre management data. Trends in the number of steal from retail store and steal from person incidents recorded by centre management were analysed.
- CPTED audit data. Follow up audits were conducted and compared with the initial CPTED audits to examine whether or not hotspot stores had adopted the recommendations on potential store improvements.
- Retailer data. Stock loss (or shrinkage) data from hotspot stores obtained through stock takes were analysed (three of the eight stores provided shrinkage data).\(^9\)

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\(^7\) Face to face interviews were conducted wherever possible. However several interviews had to be conducted by phone. Not all retailers were willing or able to be interviewed during the review period.

\(^8\) We used the Kendall’s rank-order correlation test to test for significant upward or downward trends in the number of recorded criminal incidents pre- and post- strategy, throughout this report. We could have undertaken more sophisticated time series analysis to test for pre- and post- strategy differences in trends. However, after an initial inspection of the data it was clear that the crime trends were predominantly stable, and this level of analysis was not necessary.

\(^9\) Shrinkage is the amount of stock lost by retailers due to damage, loss, theft or administrative error, identified through regular stock takes. Shrinkage data does not necessarily provide a reliable indicator of shoplifting as the quality of the data can be highly variable and the data is not limited to theft.
Details of retail theft incidents detected by retailers in three set months, recorded on a standardised form were analysed (seven of the eight stores provided some pre-audit and post-audit data),

- Surveys of attendees at the Bizsafe seminars (completed surveys were received from approximately eight of the 35 attendees at the first seminar and 20 of the 35 attendees at the second seminar).
- Surveys of young persons completing the YES program (completed surveys were received from the group leader on all five program participants and from four of the five program participants).

Despite the use of a wide range of data sources, we do not have good measures of the levels of shoplifting and steal from person offences in the area, as we mentioned earlier. Any trends (or lack thereof) observed in offences may be due to changes in detection or reporting levels, changes in policing activity, or more general changes in crime trends. The findings in this report should therefore be treated as indicative rather than definitive.
3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

This section examines the implementation of the Strategy. We draw primarily on the review of program data and documentation, key stakeholder interviews, and surveys completed by Bizsafe seminar attendees and YES program participants. We examine the implementation of the key initiatives in practice, key stakeholders’ views and the major challenges faced in implementing the initiatives. The section concludes by considering whether the Strategy and its key features were implemented as intended. That is, whether the Strategy helped to strengthen partnerships and educate key stakeholders and encourage them to introduce their own crime prevention measures. Whether it educated shoppers and the public to better protect their belongings and educated young shoplifting offenders to help reduce their future risk of re-offending. In the final section we examine what impact the Strategy may have had on crime levels in Bondi Junction Shopping Precinct.

How were the initiatives implemented in practice?

Building stakeholder relationships
Stakeholder meetings were held over the course of the Strategy to inform key stakeholders about the progress of the Strategy. Meetings were held every few months (in November 2007, February 2008, April 2008, June 2008, August 2008 and December 2008). Westfield Bondi Junction provided the venue for most of the meetings. Attendance at these meetings was variable, however, and at times quite low. Not all stakeholders were represented at each meeting, and the stakeholder representatives who attended the meetings frequently changed.

Key stakeholder interviews indicated that most stakeholders had a good understanding of what the Strategy was about, particularly those more closely involved. Most stakeholders felt that they had been kept adequately informed about the Strategy, although a number of stakeholders noted the need for more regular feedback about the progress of the Strategy.

Many stakeholders felt that, despite some initial resistance from some key stakeholders, partnerships had been developed and built upon through the Strategy. A number of stakeholders commented on the improved relations they now had with police, and between key retailers. They felt that police were more enthusiastic about dealing with retail theft and more responsive to the problem. A number of stakeholders were very positive about the improved information exchange and networking that had resulted from the Strategy. Many stakeholders did, however, feel that there was further room to build the relationships. A number commented that relationships had only been built among the few players that had been more closely involved. They felt that there could have been much greater involvement from some of the stakeholders and retailers, in terms of attending stakeholder meetings and getting involved in the initiatives. Others felt that Westfield tended to dominate the relationships, and they had not seen much of an improvement in relations from their perspective. Some stakeholders did not feel particularly engaged with the Strategy and felt more consultation could have taken place at the outset. Others suggested that the Strategy could have been better planned and laid out for stakeholders from the outset, with clear
milestones and clear roles assigned to stakeholders. This way it could have been better packaged and sold to stakeholders and may have encouraged a greater level of involvement. A couple of stakeholders suggested that there could have been a greater push from CPD and Police to increase the level of interest and involvement in the Strategy. However, stakeholders also acknowledged that it was very difficult at times to get stakeholders involved and build strong partnerships due to the high staff turnover among retailers, security and police, and that it was highly dependent on the persons who were involved. A number of stakeholders felt the relationships would not have been as strong as they were, if it had not been for the interest and drive of those who were involved. They spoke very highly of the efforts of the CPD Waverley Project Officer and Waverley Police Crime Prevention Officer.

CPTED audits
CPD and Waverley Police jointly carried out CPTED audits in nine hotspot retail stores. The stores were selected through consultation with police and on the basis that they had an identified crime problem. Stores were also selected to cover the three main shopping areas (Westfield, Eastgate and Oxford St Mall). It is noteworthy that a number of these stores had relatively high reported theft rates, but some stores, particularly those in Oxford St Mall, had low reported theft rates (averaging fewer than one retail theft incident per month in the year prior to the Strategy).

CPTED audits were arranged through store managers and took place in February 2008. In the absence of a strong evidence base to guide them, the audits were based on standard CPTED principles. Recommendations for store improvements focussed on increasing the level of surveillance, and increasing the effort required to steal items. The recommendations were discussed with store managers within several months of the audit (between April 2008 and July 2008). Follow-up audits were then conducted approximately six months after the initial CPTED audit (ie. between November 2008 and February 2009) to determine whether or not the stores had adopted the recommendations. One store did not appear interested in participating in the initiative after the initial audit and did not respond to repeated attempts at contact. This store was therefore withdrawn from the initiative.

Recommendations on potential store improvements varied across stores, due to differences in their size, layout, merchandise and loss prevention focus. Common recommendations related to placing high risk stock away from store exits and more within view of staff, better positioning and maintenance of CCTV, better use and maintenance of security tags and barriers, reducing the amount of stock on display and lowering the heights of shelves or displays. Other recommendations related to increasing staff levels, positioning staff in high risk areas, placing cash registers in locations that would better facilitate surveillance, improving the use of bag checking, introducing staff reward systems for identifying offenders, using signage to deter shoplifters, and improving fitting room security.

The follow-up audits indicated that the retailers had adopted many of the recommendations, in full or in part, or had addressed the issues through other means. Retailers, however, did not always concur with this finding, when it was raised in the key stakeholder interviews. Some retailers felt that they had not adopted many of the recommendations at all. The audits
indicated that retailers were most likely to adopt recommendations relating to improving staff awareness of, and monitoring of high risk areas, better use and maintenance of security tags and barriers, improved use of bag checking, placing high risk stock away from high risk locations and better positioning and maintenance of CCTV. These changes tended to be relatively easy and/or low cost. Retailers that underwent a refurbishment following the audit period were sometimes in a better position to make some of the changes.

Retailers were least likely to adopt recommendations that involved significant expenditure, or interfered with store image or sales. Retailers were unlikely to alter their store layout, install mirrors, locks or signage, or reduce the amount of stock on display. Retailers indicated through the key stakeholder interviews that they were not able to implement some of the recommendations because the changes were out of their hands. Higher-level approval was required (through Head Office, for example), but was often not forthcoming, as the suggested changes were not in line with company strategy and image. Sales, modern marketing principles, and the look and feel of the store typically outweighed crime prevention concerns.

Despite the difficulties in identifying store improvements that have proven to be effective and in persuading retailers to make those changes, key stakeholders generally held positive views about the CPTED audits. Those who were directly involved in the audits were satisfied with the manner in which the audits were conducted and they were kept informed of the process. Most felt that the audits had increased their knowledge of crime prevention to some extent, or at least their awareness and focus on the problem. Some retailers indicated they already had a pretty good grasp on the problem as they dealt with the issues everyday. Some retailers indicated that they found the recommendations useful for their store. Others indicated that while they felt the recommendations were useful in principle, they were not useful for their particular store. They suggested the recommendations might have been more beneficial for smaller stores, who may have less access to loss prevention resources, and more scope to implement change.

A number of the retailers involved in the audits felt the recommendations had been effective in reducing crime, to some extent. The literature suggests that there may be limits to the effectiveness such measures can have. Such measures are more likely to deter amateur rather than professional shoplifters (see for example Nelson & Perrone 2000, Farrington 1999, Butler 1994). Shoplifters can be very skilful and can get around security devices and barriers (Salmelainen 1992, Press et al 2001, Shapland 1995). Many of the measures also rely heavily on retail staff being trained and motivated to detect shoplifting to be effective (Clarke 2002), and this may not have always been the case, given the number of staff employed by stores and the level of staff turnover. It has also been recognised that the effectiveness of such measures may only be short-lived and risk needs to be constantly reappraised (Shapland 1995, Press et al 2001). Retailers, and other stakeholders, based on their interview responses also seemed to accept that there would always be some level of theft in any store and that while such measures might be helpful, they are unlikely to have a huge impact.
Another significant challenge for this initiative was encouraging retailer involvement in this initiative. The initiative was designed to target nine retail stores initially. CPTED audits were then offered to all other stores in the area upon request over the course of the Strategy, through the Crime Prevention Newsletter and Bizsafe seminars. Only a further three stores, however, came forward to request an audit by the time the Strategy concluded. CPTED audits were therefore only conducted in a total of 12 stores. This initiative thus achieved very limited coverage across the large number of retailers in the Bondi Junction Shopping Precinct, which number well over 500. Some of the stakeholders felt there could have been a greater push behind efforts to get retailers involved in this initiative, through more intensive follow up of retailers, a greater level of police presence in some areas or engaging stakeholder expertise and networks to get more retailers on board. Stakeholders also suggested that providing feedback to stakeholders about the outcomes of the audits might also have encouraged greater involvement.

A couple of stakeholders suggested that CPTED principles might be better addressed at a higher level, rather than at store level. Retail layouts may be better regulated or controlled, for example, through legislation, or shopping centre management, via rental contracts with retailers. In addition CPTED principles could be incorporated into the design of new shopping centres or when refits are undertaken. Designers, who may have limited access to crime prevention information (Press et al 2001), could work in partnership with those with crime prevention expertise. A higher level approach might also address some of the Head Office issues to some extent. Working more closely with some of the retailers' Head or regional offices, rather than at store level, may have also been a more effective approach in some cases.

**Retailer education seminars**

CPD and Waverley Police, supported by NRMA Insurance, held two Bizsafe Seminars over the course of the Strategy. Greater Union Cinemas (as they were then known) provided the venue for the seminar and Westfield provided catering. The seminars aimed to educate business owners and store employees about crime prevention techniques to reduce crimes against their business, with a major focus on retail theft, as well as fraud. They were held in June 2008 and in March 2009, at times outside of retail opening hours to facilitate attendance. Speakers included the CPD Waverley Project Officer, as well as representatives from the NSW Police Force and NRMA.

CPD and Waverley Police widely promoted the seminars to retailers in the area, through their centre management, local media releases, the Crime Prevention newsletter, Council flyers, and personal visits to retailers. Approximately 35 people attended each of the seminars, representing around 26 retail stores in the area (some of whom had also participated in the CPTED audits). Several key stakeholders and representatives from several security companies also attended the seminars.

Key stakeholders were generally positive about this initiative. Survey feedback received from eight participants in the first seminar, and 20 participants in the second seminar was mostly positive. Some participants indicated that they were interested in obtaining more information on crime prevention. More targeted questions were asked at the second seminar and
suggested that the seminar had increased participants' knowledge of crime prevention
techniques to some extent. Some participants indicated that they intended to put some of the
crime prevention techniques from the seminar into place in their store, particularly improving
staff training and increasing the attention staff paid to checking credit card details.

As with the CPTED audits a major challenge for this initiative was encouraging retailer
involvement. Only about 26 retail stores were present at the seminars, representing a very
small proportion of the total number of retailers in the Bondi Junction area (well over 500). A
couple of stakeholders noted that it is difficult for retailers to take time out of their day, to
attend these sorts of seminars. Another stakeholder also indicated that they were not able to
attend the June seminar as it coincided with their stock take period. A couple of the
stakeholders felt that retailer involvement could have been further increased through better
engaging stakeholder’s expertise and networks to get retailers on board. However, CPD and
Police widely promoted the seminars, but attendance levels still remained relatively low.

**Community education campaign (‘Gone in a Flash’)**
The Gone in a Flash campaign was run over three set months to educate shoppers and the
general public on ways to better protect their personal belongings and reduce steal from
person offences. CPD and Waverley Police, along with a number of stakeholders and
retailers, were involved in displaying and distributing educational material including posters,
cards and bookmarks throughout the Bondi Junction Shopping Precinct. Security staff from
Westfield and Eastgate and staff from some of the retailers and Waverley Council were all
involved in displaying and handing out material to shoppers and the general public. They
also personally approached and provided advice to people who were not protecting their
belongings as well as they could have been. A smaller, more targeted operation took place
in Eastgate Shopping Centre, in September 2008 due to a need identified by the police.

The first wave of the campaign was held in January 2008 and was limited due to its timing,
as some stakeholders required advanced notice to display promotional material in prime
locations. Some key staff were also on leave at this time. Limited numbers of bookmarks
were handed out and posters displayed. The two subsequent waves held in July 2008 and
January 2009 were more intensive, with more stakeholders and retailers involved, and a
greater number of bookmarks handed out and posters displayed in more prominent
locations. Waverley Council also displayed the material on the plasma screen in their
Customer Service Centre.

Stakeholder interviews indicated that stakeholders were very positive about this aspect of
the Strategy and commented on the benefits of the positive interactions security staff were
able to have with customers, rather than traditional enforcement actions.

The main challenges in implementing this initiative were adequately reaching the huge target
audience in the Bondi Junction Shopping Precinct. Westfield, alone, has over 21 million
customer visits per year. This initiative may have had limited coverage also given that it only
ran in three set months over the course of the Strategy. Some difficulties were also
encountered in being able to display posters in prime locations due to the advanced notice
required and Westfield having other marketing priorities at the time. Overcoming the
concerns of Westfield and other retailers that alerting customers to crime may increase their fear levels and decrease their willingness to ‘get their purse out’, and therefore potentially impact negatively on sales and patronage was also a challenge. Some stakeholders suggested that better consultation with stakeholders at the outset could have better targeted the message to the local audience, so that it was less confronting and ‘less in your face’.

A number of stakeholders believed this initiative had led shoppers to better protect their belongings, although other stakeholders were not so sure. Several stakeholders commented on the need for a more ongoing campaign, with more regular waves targeted to coincide with peak times, to be effective on a longer term basis. It was also suggested the message may needed to be refreshed over time to retain its impact, and not merely become ‘part of the furniture’. Some stakeholders also suggested that it could have been more effective if it had been coordinated with a greater police presence in particular areas.

**Reduce theft at the transport interchange**

A couple of initiatives were specifically targeted at the transport interchange – the CPTED audits and the community education campaign (‘Gone In a Flash’).

CPTED audits were carried out in the interchange and Tiffany Plaza, the adjoining shopping centre, in August 2008. Recommendations were provided to Railcorp, the State Transit Authority and Tiffany Plaza in September 2008. The recommendations focussed on similar principles as those for the retailers, such as increasing surveillance and security measures. Recommendations mainly related to increasing the amount of security staff at peak times, improving monitoring of toilets for antisocial behaviour, enhancing support provided to crime victims, installing alarm systems and ensuring fire exits met with standard requirements. Few of these recommendations were adopted, however, due to budgetary constraints.

The community education campaign took place over two set months (July 2008 and January 2009), in conjunction with the campaign in the Shopping Precinct. Gone in a Flash posters were displayed in the transport interchange. Railcorp Transit officers handed out material to commuters and the public and personally approached people who were not protecting their belongings as well as they could have been.

The main challenge for the community education campaign was again adequately reaching the large number of commuters who use the transport interchange, with the campaign running only in two set months. Stakeholders also indicated that the timing of the first wave of the campaign (in July 2008) coincided with World Youth Day, which made it difficult to implement. There was limited opportunity to display the Gone in a Flash educational material, as World Youth Day material took priority. The second operation in January 2009 was easier to implement, as the material was able to be displayed.

Stakeholders again commented on the benefits of positive interactions between security guards in the transport interchange and the public. Stakeholders were generally unclear as to whether the initiatives in the interchange had encouraged the public to better protect their belongings, as they had not been involved in this aspect of the Strategy. Those more closely involved felt that the campaign may have encouraged the public to better protect their
belongings, on a short term basis, namely over the course of the campaigns and for a short time afterwards. Again it was suggested that a more coordinated approach, with greater police presence in the interchange during the campaign, might have been more effective.

Young offender program
CPD, in conjunction with Waverley Police, ran a voluntary program for young persons apprehended for shoplifting offences and who were in their early stages of offending. The aim of the program was to assist the young persons to consider the consequences of their actions and help reduce their future risk of committing shoplifting and other offences. CPD purchased the Youth Educational Shoplifting (YES) Program for this purpose from the National Association for Shoplifting Prevention, a not for profit organisation in the USA. Low recidivism rates for both shoplifting and other offences have been associated with the program (see for example, Krasnovsky and Lane 1998, National Association for Shoplifting Prevention 2010).

Young persons (under 18 years) cautioned by police at Waverley Police Station for shoplifting or related offences were eligible to be referred to the program. Following a caution, the CPD Waverley Project Officer and Police Youth Liaison Officer would explain the program to the young person and their parent or guardian. Young persons who agreed to participate in the program were required to complete a take home module, using a CD and workbook, and then participate in a full day group session. Waverley Action for Youth Services (WAYS) in Tiffany Plaza was available to provide young persons with computer access and other assistance, if required. CPD hired a consultant, identified through the then Department of Juvenile Justice, to run the group session. Waverley Council provided the venue for the group session.

Unfortunately there were a number of challenges in getting the young offender program up and running. There were a number of delays experienced in identifying a suitable program and determining its appropriateness, and in obtaining the program from the USA. The Police Youth Liaison Officer position at Waverley Police Station was also vacant for some time. Referrals to this program therefore did not commence until late in the Strategy (January 2009). Only six referrals were made to the program before the Strategy concluded and five of these young persons the program completed all program requirements.10

Like a number of our initiatives, this initiative was only able to achieve limited coverage, with only six young persons referred to the program in total. This program is therefore unlikely to have had any major impact on the incidence of shoplifting in Bondi Junction area for the

10 The Police Youth Liaison Officer cautioned a total of eight young persons for shoplifting or related offences between 27/1/2009 and 12/3/2009. Six of these young persons were referred to the program. The Police Youth Liaison Officer and the CPD Waverley Project Officer considered the other two young persons unsuitable for the program, one due to their lack of cooperation in the cautioning process, and the other as they presented with an intellectual disability. Of the six young persons referred to the program, four were female, two were males, five had been cautioned for theft from retail store and one for credit card fraud offences. They were aged between 13 and 16 years. Only one of the six young persons had previously received a caution from the NSW Police Force.
duration of the Strategy. Figures from both BOCSAR and Waverley Police indicate that
police cautioned around 80 young persons for shoplifting offences in Bondi Junction
between January 2008 and March 2009. Had the program been able to be implemented
earlier it could have reached more of these young persons and had the potential to have a
greater impact on shoplifting in the area.

Whilst limited conclusions can be drawn from such a small number of participants, the
perceptions and experiences of those involved may be useful in determining whether it
would be worth pursuing a larger scale trial of the program. Feedback from the stakeholders
involved in this initiative was positive. The five young persons, who participated in the
program, did so in a positive manner and demonstrated a positive attitude to reducing their
shoplifting. The young persons tended to view the program in a positive light and indicated
that they had found the program helpful. They felt that the program had helped them to
understand the reasons for their shoplifting and the consequences of their shoplifting and
that it would help them to stop shoplifting in the future.

BOCSAR data indicate that none of the five young persons who completed the YES program
have had a finalised court appearance in NSW for any offence by September 2009. Whether
these young persons stay out of crime in the longer term is unclear and further follow up is
required.

Most of the young persons believed that they could have stopped shoplifting without the
program, but only one young person was definite about this. This suggests that there may be
some value in reinforcing the value of the caution through such a program. The available
evidence suggests that a significant proportion of young persons caught shoplifting do
continue to reoffend (see for example Krasnovsky and Lane 1998). BOCSAR data also
indicates that among the young persons cautioned by police for shoplifting in NSW between
October 2006 and September 2007, only 7% had been reconvicted for a shoplifting offence
by September 2009, but 27% had been reconvicted for any offence.

There may also be some value in investigating the feasibility of extending the program to
young adult offenders, given that 20 to 29 years olds also appear to be responsible for a
sizeable proportion of retail theft in Bondi Junction, based on the number of police
apprehensions.

**Anti-theft accessories**

It was intended that anti-theft accessories would be installed in the Westfield food-court, in
retail fitting rooms and in shoe stores to help protect shoppers’ personal belongings and
reduce steal from person offences. This initiative did not go ahead by the time the Strategy
concluded, and was beset by a number of challenges. A trial of anti-theft hooks to secure
handbags and other bags was being considered in Westfield’s food court. The trial did not go
ahead as Westfield had a number of concerns about the likely effectiveness of the hooks,
the potential damage the hooks could cause to customers’ clothing, and the risk that
customers would leave their handbags behind on the hooks. Furthermore, the initial supplier
of the hooks appeared to have closed down. It was also intended that the newly created
Designing Out Crime Research Centre, University of Technology, Sydney would design and
test some other accessories as part of the Strategy. However delays in the opening of the Research Centre meant it was not open to design and test any accessories by the time the Strategy concluded. A Westfield representative suggested, as part of the key stakeholder interviews, that a trial of any such accessories, many be better undertaken in one of their less high profile centres.

**Crime prevention newsletter**
CPD distributed several newsletters to retailers and stakeholders throughout the Bondi Junction Shopping Precinct in June 2008, October 2008 and February 2009. The newsletters provided information about the Strategy, updates from local Police and other key stakeholders, as well as crime prevention tips on retail theft and fraud. The newsletters were also used to promote some of the Strategy’s initiatives such as the CPTED audits, BIZSAFE seminars and Gone in A Flash campaigns. Retailers were also encouraged to report retail theft to Police through the newsletter.

A number of positive comments were made in stakeholder interviews about the newsletter. One stakeholder mentioned it was well received by the retailers who appreciated the crime prevention tips. Another stakeholder thought it was a good idea, but felt it could have benefited more through inclusion in the Council newsletter that was already in place for the retailers in the mall.

**LINK meetings**
Although not explicitly part of the Strategy, the Strategy did appear to renew stakeholder interest in the LINK meetings, coordinated by Waverley Police to improve the exchange of crime information between local police, retailers and other stakeholders. LINK meetings had not been held for some time prior to the Strategy, due to the Crime Prevention Officer position at Waverley Police being vacant. The LINK meetings were re-established after the Strategy commenced and a new Crime Prevention Officer was recruited. The Crime Prevention Officer has continued to drive this initiative and build up attendance.

A number of stakeholders were very positive about the improved information exchange and networking that appeared to have resulted from the Strategy and through the LINK meetings. Although some stakeholders did comment that this was limited to those that were more closely involved in the Strategy.

**Police operations**
The NSW Police Force ran a number of operations over the course of the Strategy, targeting shoplifting and offending in the area, generally. These operations were also not explicitly part of the Strategy, but one of the key stakeholders noted that there was a greater level of reinforcement and support for these activities as a result of the Strategy. A particularly large-scale shoplifting operation targeting shoplifting took place in December 2008, in which a large number of shoplifting offenders were apprehended.
Was the Strategy implemented as intended?

It can be seen then that while most of the key initiatives planned under the Strategy were implemented, many initiatives were not implemented as fully as they were intended over the 16-month period. A number of the key initiatives, including the CPTED audits and the Bizsafe seminars were implemented as they were intended, and positive feedback was received from those involved. They also appeared to have encouraged retailers to make some store improvements to reduce retail theft. However, unfortunately these initiatives were only able to achieve limited coverage, among the huge number of retailers in the Bondi Junction area, despite the efforts of CPD and Police to encourage retailer involvement. Likewise, the community education campaign (Gone in a Flash) was also implemented as intended, aside from some of the difficulties experienced in displaying the educational material at times. Positive feedback was received from those involved. However, given the huge target audience in the Bondi Junction area, it is unclear how extensive the coverage was. It is also unclear whether it led to shoppers being more protective of their belongings, particularly on a long-term basis.

A number of the key initiatives didn’t get off the ground properly. The anti-theft accessories were not implemented by the time the Strategy concluded. Delays in getting the young offender program up and running meant that the program was only able to reach a very small number of young persons at the conclusion of the Strategy. Specific crime prevention initiatives were also planned for the transport interchange, however the initiatives implemented were limited to an extension of those in the Shopping Precinct. While the CPTED audits appeared to have limited impact in the interchange, the Gone in a Flash education campaign appeared to have more success in raising public awareness about protecting their belongings.

Key stakeholders were quite positive about some aspects of the Strategy and the Strategy does appear to have brought about some degree of change in stakeholder attitudes toward retail and personal theft.

Did the Strategy strengthen partnerships?

The Strategy appears to have strengthened partnerships to some extent, at least among those closely involved. Some critical relationships have been developed and there has been an improvement in information exchange and networking among some of the stakeholders. Some stakeholders acknowledged that relationships with police had improved and they felt that police were more enthusiastic about dealing with retail theft and were more responsive to the problem. Relationships between security staff and retailers and customers have also improved.

Others were not so positive about the partnerships that had been developed. They felt that the larger players dominated the partnerships. Many stakeholders also acknowledged that efforts were hampered by high staff turnover. The fact that crime prevention was not a top priority for many stakeholders also did not help. There was also a strong view among stakeholders that there had been limited involvement from some stakeholders and particularly retailers. A couple felt that there could have been a greater push from CPD and
the Police to encourage stakeholder and retailer involvement in the Strategy. They felt that more consultation could have taken place at the outset and the expertise of stakeholders could have been better engaged. Some felt that the Strategy could have been better planned, better targeted, better coordinated at times and better packaged and sold to stakeholders and retailers to encourage involvement. Whether this would have been successful is unclear as retailer involvement in initiatives remained low even where CPD and Police had put concerted efforts into promoting the initiatives.

Did the Strategy educate stakeholders and encourage them to introduce their own crime prevention measures?
The Strategy appears to have educated stakeholders to some extent, at least among those more closely involved. Most stakeholders felt their knowledge of crime prevention techniques had increased to some extent as a result of the Strategy. Most of the retailers who participated in the CPTED audits and were able to be interviewed indicated that the audits had increased their knowledge of crime prevention to some extent, or at least their awareness and focus on the problem. Survey feedback from participants in the second Bizsafe seminar also suggested that the seminar had increased their knowledge of crime prevention techniques to some extent. Stakeholders appeared to welcome the advice and appreciated that the government wanted to deal with the issue.

The Strategy appears to have brought about a degree of attitudinal change among Westfield and others. Historically Westfield has been very conscious of any ‘negative’ connotations associated with its centres. A Westfield representative acknowledged that Westfield had a change of mindset and is now much more open to such ideas. Westfield representatives indicated that Westfield had introduced a number of its own crime prevention measures across its centres as a direct result of the Strategy. There has been much greater emphasis on sharing information among its centres. Westfield has developed its own education campaign, with bookmarks, to encourage customers and retailers across their centres to better protect their belongings. Westfield is also working with Police on ways to reduce organised retail theft. Consideration was being given to the development of a campaign aimed at encouraging appropriate behaviour among young persons. Security staff were becoming more proactive in approaching retailers, and building relations. Westfield also became more proactive in relation to dealing with other crimes it was affected by, including steal from motor vehicle in their car parks and graffiti.

Waverley Council indicated they are planning to repeat elements of the Strategy over the next couple of years through their 2008-2011 Community Safety Plan, most notably the Bizsafe seminars, and promoting community awareness of retail and personal theft.

There also appears to be an increased awareness and focus on the problem among some of the stakeholders, retailers and security and an increased level of proactivity toward the problem. A number of stakeholders did feel they already had a strong loss prevention focus and were on top of the issue anyway, so the Strategy had not made a great deal of difference.
Did the Strategy educate the public to better protect their belongings?
It is unclear whether the Strategy was successful in educating the public to better protect their belongings. Some stakeholders believed it had, that people were more aware, while others weren’t so sure. Stakeholders questioned whether the Strategy had achieved this on a long-term basis, given there was only three waves of the campaign. They suggested the message needed to be refreshed and repeated more regularly to coincide with peak times, to achieve longer term change.

Did the Strategy educate young shoplifting offenders about the consequences of their actions and help reduce their future risk of reoffending?
The Strategy appears to have educated those young shoplifting offenders who participated in the program about the consequences of their actions and helped to reduce their future risk of reoffending. Feedback from the group facilitator and program participants was positive and suggested that the program had helped them understand the reasons for their shoplifting and would help them to stop shoplifting in the future. BOCSAR data indicated that none of the YES program participants had appeared in a finalised court appearance in the six months following completion of the program. Whether these young persons stay out of crime in the longer term, however, remains unclear. Given that so few young offenders participated in the program, the Strategy, however, was clearly not able to reach the vast majority of young offenders in the area.

We now turn to examine what impact the Strategy may have had on crime levels. Given that the Strategy was not fully implemented, and that it had limited coverage across the large number of stakeholders in the area, we probably would only expect the Strategy to have a modest impact on the target offences at best.
4. OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY THE STRATEGY

This section draws primarily on Police, centre management and retail data, and to a lesser extent key stakeholder interviews, to examine whether the Strategy achieved its aims of reducing steal from retail store and steal from person offences in the Bondi Junction Shopping Precinct.

Have steal from retail store and steal from person offences decreased in Bondi Junction, since the Strategy was implemented?

Unfortunately we don’t have good measures of levels of steal from retail store and steal from person offences, as we discussed earlier. These offences are notoriously underreported to Police. Typically retail theft is only reported to police when retailers detect offenders, when retailers have the resources to do so, and when retailers feel the Police will be able to do something (see for example Clare and Ferrante 2007, Farrington 1999). The Strategy has improved information exchange and relationships with Police and has encouraged retailers and shoppers to report these offences to the Police. This may have increased reporting levels. Stakeholders, however, had mixed views on whether reporting had increased under the Strategy. Some stakeholders felt that reporting had definitely increased, due to the improved relations with Police, increased awareness of the problem and the fact that the Strategy encouraged it. Others did not think reporting had increased due to the time and effort involved for retailers to make a report to Police, for what were often minor incidents, or because they had not seen a greater police presence in the area. Others were unsure. The Strategy has also increased awareness of, and focus on the retail theft problem. It is possible that retailers have consequently detected more shoplifting. Increased levels of policing activity may have also resulted in more shoplifting being detected.

Despite these limitations, an analysis of Police data is still a necessary part of the picture to ensure the review is as comprehensive as possible. All Police data presented in this section was provided by BOCSAR.

Steal from retail store

Figure 2 shows the trend in the number of incidents of steal from retail store recorded by police in the suburb of Bondi Junction between January 2004 and September 2009.

Steal from retail store incidents increased between January 2004 and April 2006, peaking at 60 incidents in April 2006. The number of incidents then fluctuated, but essentially remained stable, averaging around 38 per month, until the first retail theft initiative (the CPTED audits) was implemented around May 2008. Between May 2008 and April 2009 retail theft levels continued to fluctuate but essentially remained stable, averaging around 40 per month. The spike in December 2008 (92 incidents) was a direct result of the major police operation targeting shoplifting in the area, which resulted in a large number of shoplifters being targeted.

11 This average was calculated excluding the December 2008 figure, given that this figure was abnormal, as it was a direct consequence of the major police operation that took place.
apprehended. Retail theft levels appear to have dropped since the police operation and since the Strategy concluded, averaging around 29 per month. This may reflect the success of the police operation or it could reflect a reduced focus on shoplifting among stakeholders since the Strategy concluded.

Shopping centre management also provided data on the number of steal from retail store incidents recorded by their security staff. The data was not as comprehensive as police data, as it was not available for the full period of interest. However, it did indicate that while the incidence was lower than that reported to police, the trend mirrored that for police data. Trends in retail theft tended to be stable in the period immediately prior to the Strategy and while the Strategy was in place.

Steal from person
Figure 3 shows the trend in the number of incidents of steal from person recorded by police in the suburb of Bondi Junction between January 2004 and September 2009. Steal from person offences increased between April 2004 and April 2006, peaking at 26 in October 2005. Steal from person offences then remained relatively stable, averaging around 14 per month, until the first steal from person initiative (Gone in a Flash campaign) was implemented in January 2008. Over the remainder of the Strategy, steal from person offences continued to remain stable, averaging around 17 per month. It is noteworthy that the number of steal from person incidents was somewhat lower in the three campaign months (14 in January 2008, 13 in July 2008 and 9 in January 2009), particularly the latter two months where the campaign was more fully implemented, than in the non-campaign months (which averaged 17). The number of incidents in the three campaign months, however, was only slightly lower than in the months prior to the Strategy (which averaged 14).
Shopping centre management data, although not as comprehensive as police data, also showed a similar picture, with the number of reported steal from person incidents stable both in the lead up to the Strategy and while the Strategy was in place.

Based on both the police and shopping centre management data, the Strategy does not appear to have been particularly successful in reducing either the level of retail theft or the level of steal from person offences in the Bondi Junction Shopping Precinct. Both retail theft and steal from person levels had already stabilised in 2006, prior to the Strategy, although they remained at high levels. Waverley remained among the top LGAs for the state in terms of the rates for these offences. This suggests that other factors may have contributed to the stabilisation of the offence levels, prior to the commencement of the Strategy.

The lack of a reduction in these offences, as mentioned earlier, is perhaps not unexpected given the limited coverage achieved by some of the retail theft and steal from person initiatives under the Strategy. It is also possible that the level of awareness of theft may have increased among some retailers, or shoppers, which potentially could have resulted in an increased level of detection of offenders and/or an increased level of reporting to police. Some stakeholders concurred with this view, commenting that it would be difficult to tell whether the Strategy was effective based on the police statistics, as reporting may have increased.

Several stakeholders actually considered the Strategy somewhat of a success as retail theft levels had been maintained and had not increased any further. In effect the Strategy had helped ‘keep a lid on things’. Police indicated that the Strategy had helped keep shoplifting at a level which was below the target set out for this offence in their local business plan.
Have steal from retail store and steal from person offences decreased in other major shopping areas?

Trends in the number of steal from retail store and steal from person incidents recorded by police in other areas with major shopping complexes and high rates of these offences (ie. Burwood, Chatswood, Parramatta and Sydney) were examined to see if Bondi Junction had bucked any more general trends. CPD had not put in place any crime prevention strategies in these shopping centres. As can be seen in Figures 4 and 5 the picture in other areas tended to be similar to that in Bondi Junction, with trends in both steal from retail store and steal from person tending to remain stable both in the lead up to, and over the course of, the Strategy. Trends were stable across the state, and in Burwood and Sydney. The only exceptions were in Chatswood where retail theft did increase over the period the Strategy was in place, and Parramatta where steal from person offences increased in the lead up to the Strategy.

Figure 4: Trends in the monthly number of police recorded incidents of steal from retail store, Bondi Junction, Burwood, Chatswood, Parramatta and Sydney, January 2004 - September 2009

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
Figure 5: Trends in the monthly number of police recorded incidents of steal from person, Bondi Junction, Burwood, Chatswood, Parramatta and Sydney, January 2004 - September 2009

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

**Have Police clear up rates for steal from retail store increased, since the Strategy was implemented?**

Trends in the clear up rate for steal from retail store were also examined to see if the improved information exchange among stakeholders had contributed to any increase in police clear up rates. Figure 6 shows the clear up rate for steal from retail store in Bondi Junction between January 2004 and September 2009. Steal from person offences were not examined as there were too few incidents cleared up to detect any trends. Typically no steal from person incidents were cleared up within 90 days.

The 30-day clear up rate for steal from retail store in Bondi Junction remained stable both in the lead up to and during the course of the Strategy, averaging around 53% per month. The clear up rate peaked at 79% in December 2008, corresponding with the intensive police operation, which targeted shoplifting and resulted in a large number of apprehensions.
Have other offences decreased in Bondi Junction, since the Strategy was implemented?

Trends in the incidence of other offences recorded by Police in Bondi Junction were examined to see whether the Strategy may have impacted on other offences. As mentioned earlier in this report, a number of initiatives were directed at fraud, as well as the target offences. Stakeholders had been provided with tips on how to reduce fraud through the Bizsafe seminars, as well as through the crime prevention newsletter, which was distributed to all retailers. We also indicated that Westfield had become more proactive about dealing with some other offences, such as steal from motor vehicle in their car parks, as a direct result of the Strategy.

Figure 7 shows the trends in the number of steal from motor vehicle and fraud incidents recorded by police in Bondi Junction between January 2004 and September 2009. The incidence of steal from motor vehicle and fraud were stable in the lead up to the Strategy, but their incidence increased over the period the Strategy was in place. This increase may again reflect a real increase in the incidence of these offences or an increased level of awareness, detection and reporting of these offences.
Have steal from retail store offences decreased in the identified hotspot stores where CPTED audits were undertaken?

Trends in the number of steal from retail store incidents recorded by police in the identified hotspot stores were compared with trends in the remaining stores in Bondi Junction to see whether the CPTED audits had been effective in reducing retail theft in the hotspot stores. Figure 8 shows the trends in the number of police recorded incidents of steal from retail store in the eight CPTED intervention stores, the remaining non-CPTED stores, and all stores in Bondi Junction.\footnote{The CPTED stores include the eight stores identified as hotspot store and who actively participated in the CPTED audits. Non-CPTED stores include the remaining stores in Bondi Junction, the identified hotspot store who did not want to participate in the audit, and the three stores who approached CPD for an audit, as these audits did not take place until later on in the Strategy.}

It can be seen that the trends in the both the CPTED stores and the non-CPTED stores mirrored the overall trends in Bondi Junction, increasing in the period from January 2004 to around April 2006, remaining stable up until the first retail theft initiative was implemented in May 2008, and then continuing to remain stable over the course of the Strategy. This stable pattern was also evident in each of the eight individual hotspot stores.

CPTED stores averaged around 14 per month prior to the Strategy and 15 per month over the course of the Strategy, while non-CPTED stores averaged 25 per month prior to and 24
per month over the course of the Strategy.\textsuperscript{13} It is noteworthy that there were very low levels of retail theft recorded by police in some of the identified hotspot stores. Many of the stores had fewer than 10 incidents reported to police in the 12 months prior to the commencement of the Strategy. Thus it may have been difficult to detect any trends in retail theft levels in these stores. The lack of any comparison with suitable control stores also makes it difficult to assess the impact of the CPTED strategies on retail theft.

It was also noteworthy that CPTED stores had a particularly high number of incidents during December 2008 when the police operation took place, much higher than the non-CPTED stores. This may reflect an increased level of cooperation with the police operation from these stores that resulted from the Strategy, as we mentioned earlier.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure8.png}
\caption{Trends in the monthly number of police recorded incidents of steal from retail store, Bondi Junction, CPTED stores vs non-CPTED stores, January 2004 - September 2009}
\end{figure}

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

Additional data was requested from the eight retailers participating in the CPTED audits to help examine the impact of the CPTED audits on retail theft. Retailers were asked to provide their shrinkage data for periods prior to, and over the course of the Strategy. Only three of the eight stores were forthcoming with shrinkage data. The eight retailers were also asked to record details of all retail theft incidents in their store in which an offender was detected, for three separate time periods. These were February 2008 prior to CPTED recommendations being made, July 2008, immediately after the CPTED recommendations had been provided

\textsuperscript{13} This average was calculated excluding the December 2008 figure, as this abnormally high figure was a direct consequence of the major police operation that took place.
to store managers and in February 2009, several months after the recommendations had been provided. A standardised data collection form was developed by CPD for this purpose. Seven of the eight stores provided details of recorded incidents for both the pre-recommendation period (ie. February 2008) and at least one post recommendation period (ie. July 2008 or February 2009), but only four stores provided complete details for all three time periods.

While we do not have a comprehensive picture based on either shrinkage data or the incident data recorded by the stores across all CPTED stores, there was no clear indication of any decrease in the incidence of retail theft over the course of the Strategy based on the available retail data. It is noteworthy however that the number of incidents identified and recorded by the retailers tended to be higher than the number of incidents recorded by police for those retailers, as the retailers did not always refer incidents to police, because they dealt with the offenders themselves or they were not successful in apprehending the offenders. It is also noteworthy that a number of incidents were detected through CCTV.

While the data suggest otherwise, the retailers involved in the CPTED audits, who indicated that they had adopted some of the recommendations were more positive about the impact of the audits. They perceived that the audits had been effective in reducing retail theft in their store, at least to some extent.
5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Waverley Theft Reduction Strategy was set up to reduce the incidence of steal from retail store and steal from person offences in the Bondi Junction Shopping Precinct.

Key features of the Strategy were to —

- Develop strong partnerships with relevant stakeholders in the area, including the NSW Police Force, Waverley Council, Westfield, Jones Lang LaSalle (Eastgate owners), Meriton (Tiffany Plaza owners), key retailers (including Woolworths), Railcorp and State Transit Authority of NSW, to implement suitable crime prevention initiatives.
- Further educate key stakeholders about crime prevention strategies and techniques to help reduce steal from retail store and steal from person offences and encourage stakeholders to introduce such measures in the local area.
- Educate the public who uses the Bondi Junction Shopping Precinct for shopping, commuting and entertainment about techniques to better protect their personal belongings and encourage the public to adopt such techniques.
- Educate young shoplifting offenders in the early stages of their offending career about the consequences of shoplifting and help reduce their future risk of offending.

Key initiatives planned under the Strategy included the CPTED audits, retailer education seminars (Bizsafe seminars), community education campaign (Gone in a Flash), transport interchange initiatives, young offender program, anti-theft accessories and the crime prevention newsletter.

There were a number of significant challenges involved with the attempt to reduce crime in the Bondi Junction Shopping Precinct. These included the sheer number and diversity of retailers and other stakeholders in the area, many of whom did not view crime prevention as a top priority and the sheer volume of shoppers and members of the public who use the area. Clearly there was no one-size-fits-all approach to crime prevention that would suit all retailers and stakeholders. The boutique image of Westfield Bondi Junction was another challenge, as Westfield was at times reluctant to trial new approaches in that particular centre with its particular clientele.

The limited evidence base in the area of retail and personal theft was also a significant challenge for the Strategy. Crime data on these offences is limited as these offences frequently go undetected or unreported. Retail data is also limited due to its commercial sensitivity and the lack of good stock inventory systems among many retailers. Few rigorous research or evaluation studies have been undertaken in on either retail or personal theft. This meant we had a limited understanding of the key drivers of problem and of potentially effective solutions.

Most of the key initiatives planned under the Strategy were implemented, however many were not implemented as fully as they could have been. The CPTED audits and the Bizsafe
seminars were implemented as they were intended, however they only able to achieve limited coverage among the huge number of retailers in the Bondi Junction Precinct, despite concerted efforts to promote retailer involvement, particularly the Bizsafe seminars. Similarly, the community education campaign (Gone in a Flash) was implemented as intended, aside from some difficulties in displaying some of the educational material. Given the huge volume of pedestrian traffic in the area and that it was only run in three set months, it is unclear how extensive the coverage was.

A number of the other key initiatives didn’t get off the ground properly. The anti-theft accessories were not implemented by the time the Strategy concluded, due to Westfield’s concerns about the effectiveness of and the risks posed by anti-theft hooks, and delays in the opening of the Designing Out Crime Research Centre. The young offender program was beset by delays and only able to reach a very small number of young persons at the conclusion of the Strategy. Specific initiatives were also planned for the Transport Interchange, however they were limited to an extension of the initiatives in the Shopping Precinct.

The Strategy was also hampered by the limited involvement of many stakeholders and retailers. Some of the difficulties could have perhaps been better addressed through more extensive consultation, better engagement of stakeholders’ expertise, and better planning, packaging and selling of the Strategy at the outset. In the absence of a solid evidence base in the area, however, this was difficult. Others such as the UK Home Office have also noted the difficulty of persuading small businesses to cooperate with other local businesses in crime prevention programs and to act on security recommendations (see for example Home Office 2004).

Another challenge was the difficulty of achieving crime prevention goals, when they often competed with the commercial interests of many of the stakeholders. Working with Westfield’s ‘boutique’ store image meant it was reluctant at times to trial new approaches in that centre, with their particular clientele. Westfield and some retailers had concerns about the potential consequences of alerting customers to crime, particularly through the Gone in a Flash Campaign. They felt it could increase customers’ fear levels and have detrimental effects on customers’ willingness to get their purses out and spend money, and on patronage levels. Sales, store image and marketing principles often outweighed crime prevention considerations, particularly where the CPTED audits were concerned. A higher-level approach to some of the stores, or regulating store layout more through shopping centre management may have been a more effective approach in some cases than targeting individual stores. A greater focus on the potential impact this initiative could have on retailers’ bottom lines may have also helped.

Despite these challenges the Strategy does appear to have brought about some degree of attitudinal change, Westfield in particular has had a change in mindset, and has become much more proactive across its centres about crime prevention in general. There appears to be have been some strengthening of relationships, an improvement in information exchange, and an increase in knowledge, awareness and focus on the problem, at least among those
stakeholders more closely involved. Many stakeholders were positive about the Strategy and felt it represented a good start that could be built upon, to achieve longer term change.

While we do not have reliable data sources on the true levels of steal from retail store or steal from person offences, the best available data does not suggest that the Strategy has brought about a reduction in retail theft in the Bondi Junction Shopping Precinct, nor in the identified hotspot stores where the CPTED audits were undertaken. The Strategy appears to have brought about a small reduction in steal from person offences during the months in which the Gone in a Flash campaign took place, although this effect was not sustained over time. The incidence of the target offences in the area appeared to have stabilised before the Strategy was implemented and remained stable over the course of the Strategy. Some of the stakeholders argued that the Strategy might have helped to keep a lid on things, but crime trends tended to be stable elsewhere as well, suggesting that other factors could be at play.

The incidence of steal from retail store decreased after the major police Operation that took place in December 2008 and resulted in a large number of shoplifters being apprehended. This suggests that the apprehension of offenders may be an effective way of reducing retail theft. It is also possible that shoplifters turned away from Bondi Junction after the operation, as they perceived the risk of apprehension as much greater. Future efforts to reduce retail theft perhaps need to focus on mechanisms that significantly increase both the actual and perceived risks of apprehension. Research by Cardone (2006) based on interviews with known shoplifters, suggests that perceptions of risk influence an offender's decision to shoplift more than other factors such as perceived effort. Butler’s (1994) research with shoplifters also suggests that the presence of trained and aware staff or security also influences shoplifter’s behaviour through increasing the perceived risk of being caught.

Clearly future efforts to reduce retail theft also need to focus on developing the evidence base in the area. Key to this will be getting retailers to collect accurate and complete information on their stock theft. Having effective stock inventory systems in place will help create a better understanding of the nature and key drivers of stock loss as well as help monitor the effectiveness of measures put in place to address it. Future efforts will also need to focus on ways to better engage retailers in the process, perhaps through more extensive consultation within the industry and a greater focus on the bottom line.
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