

Evaluation of Operation Never Again

Prepared for the Orange City Council

by

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Printed
July 2003



Charles Sturt Univ. Bathurst, NSW

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Acknowledgments

The WRI would like to acknowledge the following people:

- Mr David Bull, lecturer in sociology at Charles Sturt University for his insight into crime.
- Senior Constable Michael Kuter from Orange Police, for providing background information, distributing questionnaires and gathering statistics.
- Members of Orange Police who provided "on the ground" feedback
- The sponsors of Operation Never Again who provided valuable feedback
- Members of the Orange community who completed the questionnaires

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Executive Summary

Orange City Council commissioned the Western Research Institute to conduct an evaluation of Operation Never Again, which is a break and enter crime prevention program that was implemented in Orange in 2001.

The main findings of this evaluation are:

1. There has been a decline in "first time" and repeat break and enter offences in Orange since the start of Operation Never Again and tests show that this decline is statistically significant.
2. The rate of decline in residential break and enter crime in Orange is greater than that in NSW, which suggests local factors such as Operation Never Again may be the cause.
3. It appears that security is being upgraded in homes across Orange as part of Operation Never Again. The most common items purchased to upgrade security are new locks and deadlocks for windows and doors.
4. While some respondents believed that their homes were already secure, some households were unable to afford the cost of upgrading their homes which may make them a target for future break and enter crimes.
5. The home security audits conducted as part of Operation Never Again were effective in increasing resident's sense of security. Thus, Operation Never Again has a positive impact on the wellbeing of victims of break and enter crime, given the feelings of insecurity and fear that most people experience after their home is broken into.
6. The police believe that Operation Never Again has increased their paperwork, however many believe that this is worthwhile as the level of break and enter crime has declined.

The results of this evaluation suggest that the effectiveness of Operation Never Again could be enhanced by:

1. Increasing the number of homes that participate in security audits and more importantly, convert these audits into completed property registers.
2. Implementing a program with builders to improve security levels in new homes.
3. Implementing a program for people that are renting, as many tenants are unwilling to, or unable to, upgrade the security in their premises.
4. Investigating some funding for people that cannot afford upgrading security in their homes.
5. Investigate expanding the program into other types of crimes such as shoplifting and break and enter in non residential dwellings.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Operation Never Again is a joint project between the Orange Police, Orange Crime Prevention Committee, local businesses and service clubs and the broader community of Orange. Operation Never Again aims to reduce repeat victimisation of residential dwellings by encouraging residents to harden their premises.

Operation Never Again is based on "Biting Back", a program conducted in Huddersfield, England which resulted in an overall reduction in domestic burglary of approximately 30%, reduced levels of repeat burglaries and improved quality of service to victims (Home Office Police Research Group, 1997). In addition there was no evidence that the burglary was displaced to other locations or other types of crime.

Operation Never Again has been conducted in two phases, reactive and proactive. The reactive phase was introduced in February 2001 whilst the proactive phase was implemented in August 2001.

1.1.1 Reactive phase

The reactive phase of Operation Never Again aims to increase the security of the victim's home to improve the feeling of safety and to reduce repeat offences at the same property. To support this aim, a three-tiered response approach has been implemented.

1. At the first break and enter offence, the police respond to the break and enter crime and collect information at the scene. The police also conduct a brief security audit of the premises and provide feedback to the victim. This information is passed onto the Crime Prevention Officer who distributes an information pack, which provides strategies to improve home security. This pack also contains discount vouchers for security items at a number of local businesses.
2. In the event of a second break and enter occurring at the same premises, a monitored alarm is installed for a minimum period of 90 days. The Crime Prevention Officer conducts a security audit. Window locks, deadlocks and security doors are fitted if required and security is also upgraded at the point of entry. These increases in security are provided at no cost to the occupant. The home is also targeted by police car crews and is regularly monitored on patrols.
3. If there is a third offence at the same premises, the Crime Prevention Officer attends the home for a further assessment. Security is upgraded at point of entry at no cost to the occupant and video surveillance equipment may be installed. Daily targeting by TAG and car crews also begins.

1.1.2 Proactive phase

The proactive phase is aimed at hardening or securing homes in the community to reduce the likelihood of break and enter crime. This stage includes free security audits of homes by the Crime Prevention Officer and the distribution of information packs. Household occupants complete a register of property, which is returned to the police and stored for future reference. The dwellings that have a property register and meet the Operation Never Again security standards are provided with Operation Never Again stickers to display on their homes.

1.2 Evaluation objectives

Consistent with the broad aims of Operation Never Again, the aims of the evaluation were to:

1. Determine if Operation Never Again has contributed to a decrease in the number of break and enter crimes in Orange overall as well as its impact on repeat victimisation.
2. Assess the extent to which Operation Never Again has encouraged and enhanced the "hardening" of residential premises against break and enter crimes.
3. Examine the perceptions about Operation Never Again by victims, police and security service providers. The examination focuses on both the changes in behaviour induced by Operation Never Again and its impact on mental wellbeing such fear, insecurity etc.
4. To determine if any changes could be made to enhance the program in the future.

1.3 Methodology

The effectiveness of Operation Never Again was evaluated on the basis of an analysis of official crime data and survey results from members of the Orange community who had been involved in Operation Never Again, the Orange Police and sponsors of the Operation Never Again program.

1.3.1 Analysis of crime statistics

Official crime data regarding break and enter and other offences were collected from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Orange Police.

This data was statistically analysed to determine whether or not Operation Never Again contributed to a reduction in break and enter crimes in Orange, and whether the program also led to a reduction in repeat victimisation. The statistical methods used to analyse the official crime data included, where appropriate, chi-square tests of goodness of fit,

regression analysis with critical F-ratios used to test statistical significance and Friedman ANOVA by ranks tests.

1.3.2 Surveys

Four surveys were conducted as part of this evaluation.

1. Victims of break and enter – A sample of 120 victims of break and enter crime in Orange was randomly selected from a database maintained by Orange Police. The local Crime Prevention Officer then sent a postal survey to these people that addressed issues such as upgrading security in their home, feelings of safety and security and the response of the police.

Of the 120 surveys sent out 20 responses were obtained, which is equal to a response rate of 16.7 percent.

2. Participants in security audit - A sample of 40 households that had participated in a safety audit of their homes was randomly selected from a database maintained by Orange Police. The local Crime Prevention Officer then sent a postal survey to these people that addressed the same issues contained in the victims of break and enter survey.

Of the 40 surveys sent out 29 responses were obtained, which is equal to a response rate of 72.5 percent.

3. Members of Orange Police – Mail back surveys were placed in the pigeonholes of 40 members of the Orange Police. This survey addressed issues such as, the upgrading of security in Orange homes, the impact of Operation Never Again, and any impacts on the day-to-day activities of the police.

Of the 40 surveys distributed to members of the Orange Police, 20 responses were obtained, which is equal to a response rate of 50 percent.

4. Ten interviews were conducted by telephone with sponsors of Operation Never Again.

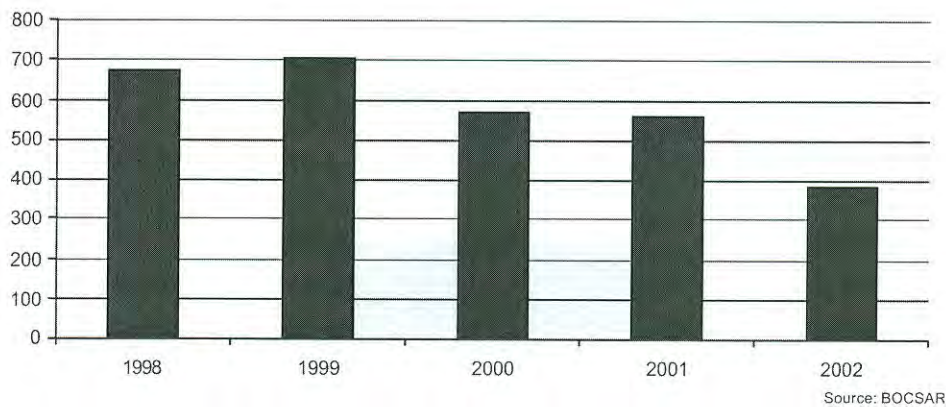
2. Analysis of break and enter statistics

The first objective of this evaluation was to determine if Operation Never Again has contributed to a decline in the number of break and enter crimes in Orange. Data was collected from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR), the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and from the Police statistics by the Crime Prevention Officer.

2.1 Did residential break and enter crime decline in Orange?

Break and enter on dwellings in Orange has declined from 676 incidents in 1998 to 386 in 2002, a decrease of 43% over a five year period (see Figure 1). Since the inception of Operation Never Again, break and enter has declined by almost a third (32%).

Figure 1: Recorded Criminal Incidences – Break and Enter of Dwelling
Orange LGA

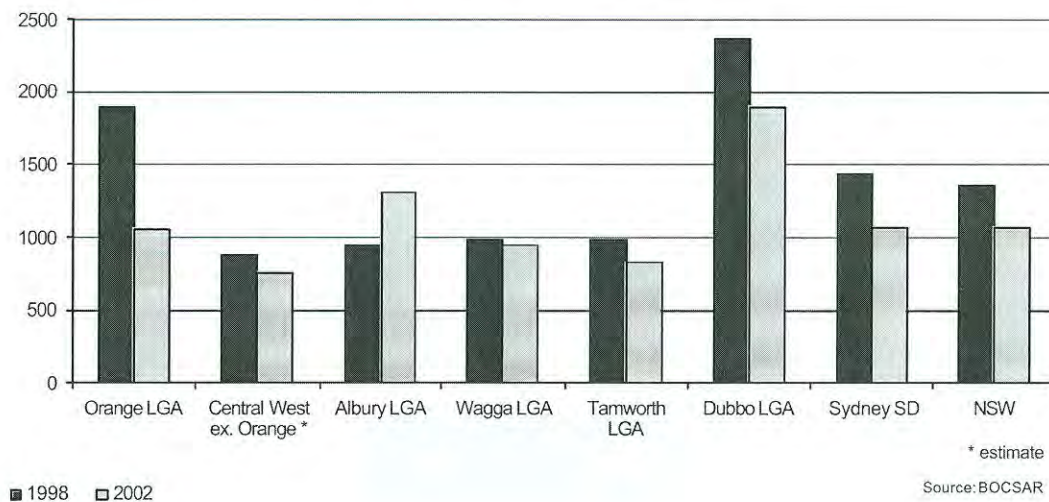


A chi square test of goodness of fit indicates that there was little change in the number of break and enter crime between 1998 and 1999, (Chi square value is 0.65). Regression analysis on the period 2000-2002, shows a highly statistically significant downward trend, (F value is 12286.984).

2.1.1 Level of break and enter crime in the community

The data indicates that Operation Never Again has impacted on the decline of break and enter crime on dwellings in Orange. However, despite the large decline in break and enter crime on dwellings, the level of break and enter crime within the local population in 2003 was about equal to the average for NSW. (See Figure 2) This suggests that Operation Never Again has been effective in reducing the level of break and enter crime to the state average. However, it is yet to be determined whether Operation Never Again can reduce crime to levels below the state average.

Figure 2: Recorded Criminal Incidences – Break and Enter of Dwelling
Rate per 100,000 population



2.2 What other external factors may have contributed to the decline?

The significant decline in break and enter crime in Orange, especially after the commencement of Operation Never Again, suggests that the program may have been effective. However, there may be other causes of the decline in break and enter on residential dwellings in Orange, that we will now examine.

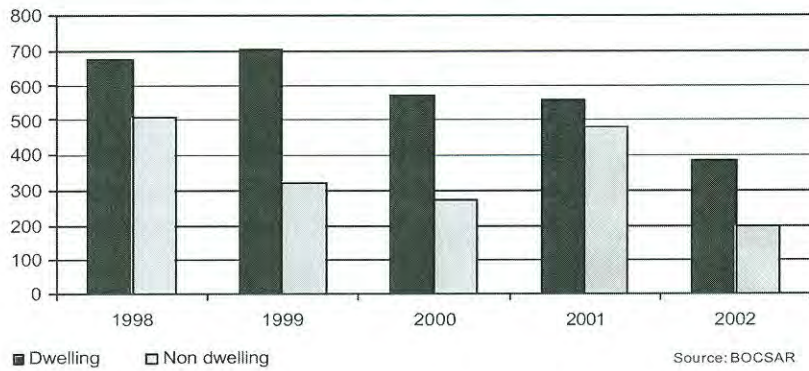
2.2.1 Overall break and enter crime in Orange

The first factor to consider is whether the decline in break and enter crime on residential dwellings is part of a general reduction in break and enter crime in Orange.

There is a significant difference between break and enter on dwellings and break and enters on non-dwelling over the period 1998-2002. (Chi square value is 77.323) The BOCSAR data shows that break and enter on non dwellings in Orange is holding at a statistically steady state. This means that the trend in break and enter on non dwellings is neither up or down over the past five years. This can be seen by the clear cyclical fall and rise in non-dwelling break and enter in Figure 3. This is in contrast with the significant

decline in break and enter crime on dwellings which can also be seen in Figure 3, where the 2002 data is out of the range of the cycle in the previous four years. (Note: the cycle in non-dwelling break and enter has a greater amplitude than the cycle for dwelling break and enter prior to 2002.)

Figure 3: Break and enter crime
Dwellings and non dwellings in Orange

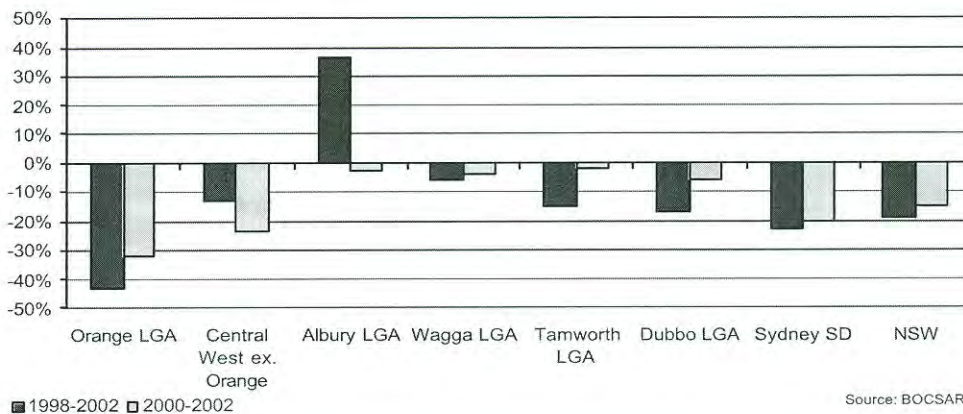


Thus, the evidence suggests that the decline in break and enter crimes on dwellings in Orange is not part of an overall trend in break and enter crime, as break and enter crime on non dwellings has remained relatively constant.

2.2.2 Break and enter crime in NSW

The second external factor to consider is whether there has been a general reduction in the incidence of break and enter crime in dwellings across NSW. Changes in crime rates at a state level will influence the rates of crime in Orange. The size of this impact needs to be determined. Figure 4 shows the rate of change for break and enter crimes in NSW, Sydney and other centres in NSW. Break and enter crimes have decreased throughout NSW in the last five years. However the decline in Orange is more than double that of NSW overall (19%).

Figure 4: Recorded Criminal Incidences – Break and Enter of Dwelling
Percent Change



The data shows a statistically significant difference in the decline of break and enter of dwellings in Orange compared to NSW overall. That is, the rate of decline in Orange is greater than the rate of decline for NSW and this difference is statistically significant. This indicates the decline in break and enter crime in Orange is due to local factors rather than statewide trends across NSW.

Statistics recently released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics support the fall in crime levels published by BOCSAR in March 2003. The fall in overall crime statistics was described by BOCSAR as the "most comprehensive fall in crime in Australia" since 1993. The Director of the BOCSAR indicated that the most plausible explanation for the fall in crime was the severe heroin shortage across Australia. The Bureau's research shows a strong link between heroin use and crime.

Break and enter crime has decreased at both state and national level. The extent of the decline in Orange indicates that local factors including programs such as Operation Never Again, have been successful in reducing break and enter crime beyond state averages.

In addition, Orange Police believe that the heroin shortage has had little influence on the level of crime in Orange, as the most commonly used drugs are cannabis and amphetamines. This may indicate that a greater proportion of the decline can be attributed to local factors.

2.2.3 Conclusion

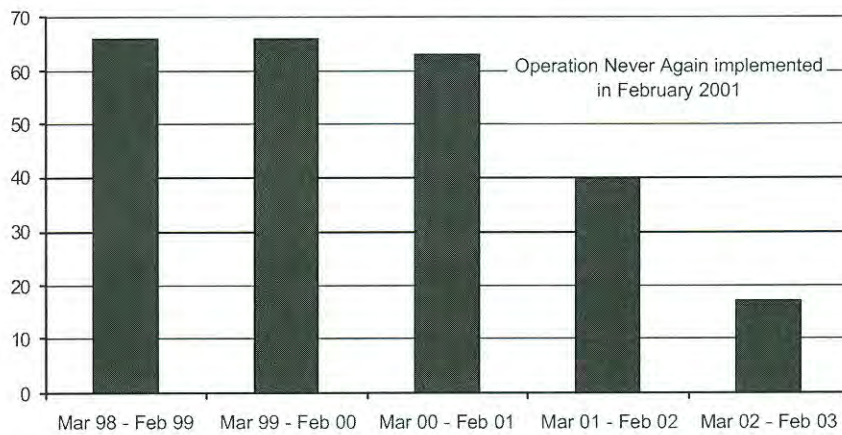
After the external factors have been examined, Operation Never Again is the best explanation for the decline in break and enter crime on dwellings in Orange.

2.3 Has there been a reduction in the number of repeat offences?

As part of the aim to reduce the level of break and enter crime in Orange, Operation Never Again seeks to lessen the number of repeat offences. Statistics collected from the Orange Crime Prevention Officer show that the number of repeat offences has fallen from 66 to only 17 (see Figure 5).

Regression analysis on the number of repeat victims shows a significant statistical downward trend (F value is 0.034).

Figure 5: Number of Repeat Break and Enter offences - Orange



Source: Crime Prevention Officer

Note: This data is calculated manually by the Crime Prevention Officer and is currently not available for other parts of the state in an easily accessible format.

Given the decline in repeat offences since the commencement of Operation Never Again it is plausible to argue that the decline in repeat break and enter offences is due to the Operation Never Again program.

2.4 Has there been a displacement of crime to other locations or types of crime?

The displacement of crime is an issue to consider when implementing a crime prevention strategy. This displacement may be to other locations or other types of crime. A recent paper from the Australian Institute of Criminology (2002, p1) indicated that some studies have measured a modest degree of displacement in some types of crime, however this displacement did not outweigh the benefits gained from a successful crime reduction program.

In the same paper the Institute examined the displacement of burglary offences into other locations within Canberra. Operation Anchorage, a burglary reduction program undertaken by the Australian Federal Police showed a successful reduction in the rate of burglary and no significant displacement to other areas.

2.4.1 Another location

In the local area, there is no evidence to suggest a significant displacement in break and enter crime from Orange to surrounding Local Government Areas. Bathurst, Blayney and Evans councils (see Figure 6), all recorded declines in break and enter crime, however these declines were less than Orange.

Cabonne Shire which immediately surrounds Orange LGA recorded a larger reduction in break and enter crime than Orange, 54% since 1998 and 43% since 2000. (see Figure 7) This large decline may be due to the small numbers involved which can distort percent change. Nevertheless, this does raise the possibility of factors outside of Operation Never Again, contributing to a local decline in break and enter crime.

Figure 6: Orange and Surrounding LGAs



Figure 7: Recorded Criminal Incidences – Break and Enter of Dwelling
Percent Change



2.4.2 Different type of crime

The second type of displacement may be a move to another type of crime. Figures from BOCSAR for Orange indicate that “steal from a retail store” and “steal from a person” crimes, have increased during the same period that recorded a decline in break and enter crime. (see Figure 8)

The data indicates that a trend increase in stealing from a person or a store may have begun in 2000-2002, which is an issue that should be monitored. As most other areas of crime have reduced in Orange overall, this may indicate some displacement to these two types of crime.

Figure 8: Recorded Criminal Incidences – Orange LGA

Percent Change



2.5 What is the value of the reduction in break and enter crime?

Part of the evaluation of Operation Never Again was to determine the value in dollars, of Operation Never Again to the community. NRMA assesses the average cost of a break and enter crime to be \$3,500. On this assessment, a reduction of 184 break and enter crimes since 2000 has, therefore, saved the Orange community \$644,000.

2.6 What are the conclusions from the break and enter statistics?

Operation Never Again began in 2001. Since the program started:

- Break and enter has fallen by 32%
- Repeat break and enter has fallen by 73%

The decline in "first time" and repeat break and enter in Orange, since the commencement of Operation Never Again was found to be statistically significant. Moreover, the decline does not appear to be attributable to a general decline in break and enter in Orange or across NSW. Therefore it is plausible to argue that Operation Never Again has been effective in reducing the incidence of residential break and enter crime in Orange to the average for NSW. Further monitoring is needed to determine if the program can continue to reduce crime levels even further.

3. Assessment of the hardening of residential premises

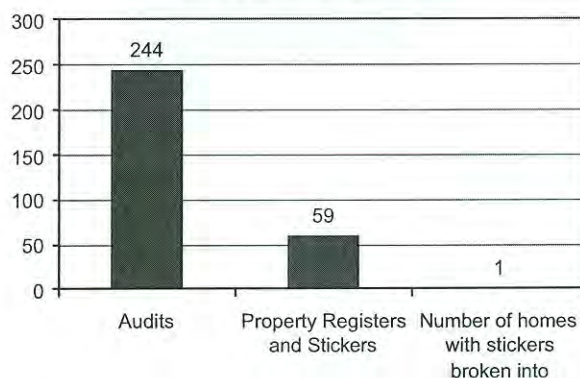
Operation Never Again aims to harden people's homes against the likelihood of break and enter. Increasing the level of security at a person's home may increase the difficulty and risk associated with break and enter crime. (BOCSAR, 1995, p5) Security or obstacles that increase the time it takes or the noise of the break and enter, increase the risk to the offender. (BOCSAR, 1995, p5)

Operation Never Again seeks to increase the security of homes in Orange by undertaking security audits preferably before the break and enter occurs or immediately after the crime, in order to decrease the likelihood of a repeat offence.

3.1 How many people have participated in the home security audits?

As part of the proactive phase of Operation Never Again, home security audits are conducted by the Police to determine the level of security at the person's home and suggest improvements. Currently in Orange, 244 home security assessments have been conducted. (See Figure 9) From this, 59 people have returned property registers following the assessment (24%) and these people have been issued with a set of stickers informing potential thieves that the house is secure. Only one residential premise with a sticker has been broken into since 20 August 2001.

Figure 9: Security audits

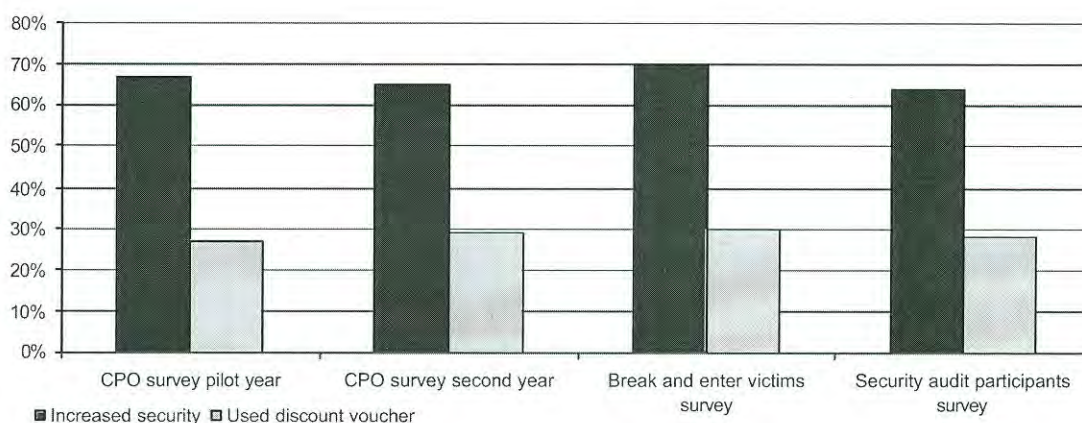


Source: Crime Prevention Officer

3.2 How many people have upgraded home security?

The Crime Prevention Officer conducts a survey of participants in Operation Never Again. This survey was extended as part of this evaluation, so that it includes both victims of break and crime and participants in the home safety audit program. As part of both surveys, respondents were asked whether they had upgraded their home security and if they used the discount offers provided by Operation Never Again. Their responses are shown in Figure 10.

Figure10: Increased home security



The results from all surveys were similar. Approximately two thirds of respondents had increased their home security after contact with Operation Never Again. This ranged from 70% of respondents of the break and enters survey, to 64% of security audit respondents. Use of the discount vouchers was less common with approximately 30% of respondents reporting use of the vouchers.

A number of security providers sponsor Operation Never Again. The security sponsor's response to the discount vouchers was mixed. Two of the four sponsors believed that the discount vouchers were quite popular while the others were disappointed with the response.

The sponsors of Operation Never Again indicated that sales in security items have only increased slightly over the last two years and most were unsure if this was a result of Operation Never Again. Some sponsors commented that there was an increased awareness of general security issues, possibly due to the advertising of Operation Never Again in the media.

Seventy percent of the Orange Police that responded to the survey indicated that Operation Never Again had a big or very big effect on the upgrading of security in homes in Orange. In addition, 65% of the Police respondents said that they had noticed an increase in security at homes in Orange.

3.3 What types of security have been upgraded?

Respondents identified doors as the item most commonly upgraded in homes. (See Table 1) This included deadlocks, chains and other locks, as well as security screens. Windows were the second most common item upgraded in people's homes.

Table 1: Types of security upgraded

	Door	Window	Lighting	Alarms	Gates	Garage Doors	Blinds
Break and enter with discount	3	3	1	0	0	0	0
Break and enter without discount	7	4	2	1	1	1	1
Security audit with discount	3	1	2	3	1	0	0
Security audit without discount	5	5	3	2	0	0	0
Total	18	13	8	6	2	1	1

The sponsors that are providing discounts for security items confirmed that doors and windows were the most frequently upgraded parts of the home. Locks and dead locks for windows and doors were the most common security items purchased from their stores with or without the discount vouchers. These ranged in price from \$20 to \$300.

The survey of the police asked if the police had noticed an increase in security in homes throughout Orange. The respondents identified alarms (50% of responses) as being the largest increase followed by protection to doors (25%) and windows (16%).

3.4 What were the main reasons for not increasing security?

Almost half of the respondents (49%) that did not upgrade their security felt that their homes were already secure. Seven percent of respondents indicated that the cost of upgrading was a problem and that they could not afford the necessary upgrades.

One respondent said, "Upgrading security is usually an issue of costs versus risk. Cost of upgrading is too expensive and we will look to do it over a few years." Three sponsors also indicated that cost was a consideration in purchasing security items and that some people could not afford the items recommended to them.

Respondents in rental accommodation and Department of Housing properties felt that their capacity to upgrade was limited, as they did not own the properties. However one respondent reported that the Department of Housing installed a security door "free of charge".

3.5 What are the conclusions?

It appears that security is being upgraded in homes across Orange as part of Operation Never Again. About two-thirds of the people who had received a home security audit as part of Operation Never Again later upgraded their security, mostly by purchasing new locks and deadlocks for windows and doors.

While some respondents indicated their home was already secure, some households were not able to upgrade their security because they could not afford the necessary upgrades and these homes may be a target for repeat break and enter offences.

The security sponsors of the program believed that there was an increase in awareness of security issues in Orange and that some people were using the discount vouchers. The police also indicated that there had been an increase in security in homes across Orange

4. Community perceptions of Operation Never Again

This chapter examines the community perceptions of, and attitudes towards, Operation Never Again. Feedback was received from the Orange community, the victims of break and enter crime, participants in the safety audit program, the sponsors of Operation Never Again and from the Orange Police.

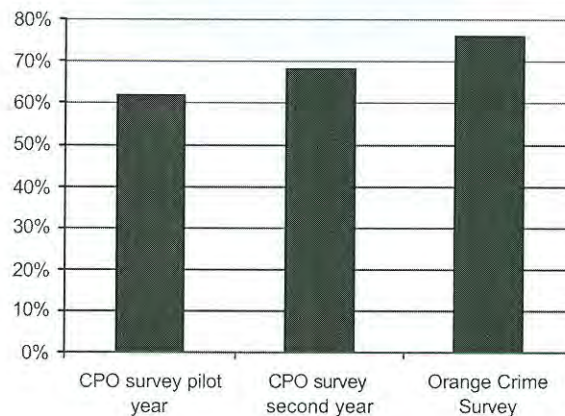
4.1 Do people feel safe at home?

Burglary brings stress and fear to prospective victims and anger and annoyance to direct victims (Australian Institute of Criminology, 1995). Operation Never Again therefore aims to increase the feeling of safety in the home and the general wellbeing of the community.

The 2002 Survey of Crime and Safety in Orange (Western Research Institute, 2002) found that 80% of respondents felt safe at home. This is an increase compared to 1998, where only 63% felt safe (Western Research Institute, 2002)

The 2002 survey also found, 76% of respondents believed that their homes were secure. The survey conducted by the Crime Prevention Officer (CPO) on victims of break and enter, showed 62% of respondents felt they were secure in their homes during the first year of Operation Never Again, and this figure rose to 68% in the second year of the program. (see Figure 12)

Figure 12: Feel home is secure

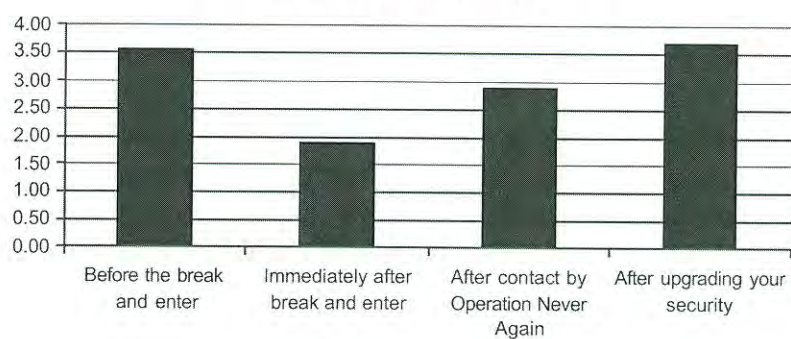


The feeling of security is lower in the Operation Never Again survey (68% compared to 76%) probably because they are actual victims of break and enter whilst the community questionnaire was amongst the whole community. In other words, the relatively higher sense of security among the general population could be due to an underestimation of the role of being a victim of break and enter.

The surveys of participants in Operation Never Again asked the respondents to rate their level of security at 4 different times. The responses were rated on a scale from 5 (very secure) to 1 (very insecure). These figures were then averaged to provide a security indicator, with higher scores indicating a greater sense of security.

The victims of break and enter indicated that they were reasonably secure in their homes before the break and enter crime (see Figure 13). However, the feeling of security dropped significantly after the break and enter. After contact with Operation Never Again, the feeling of security increased, and after upgrading security levels, respondents on average felt more secure than they did before the break and enter.

**Figure 13: Feeling of Security in home
Victims of break and enter**



The results from the survey of people who requested a home security audit show that feelings of security increased after the audit and again after a security upgrade (Figure 14).

**Figure 14: Feeling of Security in home
Security audit participants**

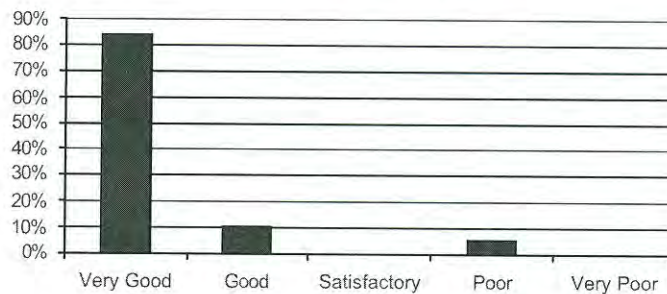


Sixty-five percent of police that responded to the survey believed that Operation Never Again had a big or very big effect on the emotional wellbeing of victims of break and enter. In addition, 95% of the police respondents believed that the installation of an alarm in people's homes increased the occupant's peace of mind.

4.2 Were participants happy with the response of the police?

The break and enter respondents were asked to rate the response of the police. Ninety-five percent of respondents indicated that the response of the police was good or very good (see Figure 15). This supports the data collected by the Crime Prevention Officer, which showed 95% of respondents were satisfied with the police response in the pilot year and 98% were satisfied in the second year.

Figure 15: Response of Police
Victims of break and enter



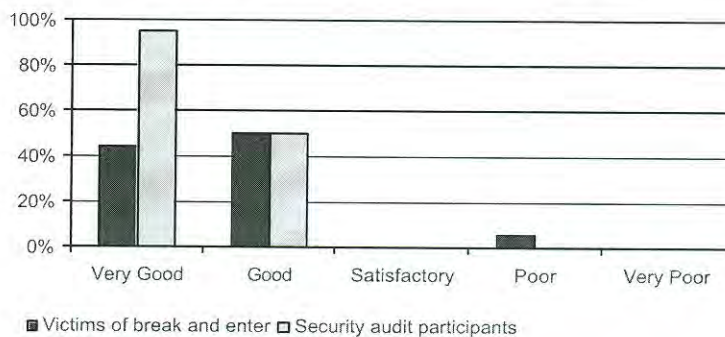
Most respondents indicated that the police were prompt in their response. Others indicated that the officers that attended were “professional” and “friendly”. Several respondents commented that the follow-up by the Crime Prevention Officer was also good.

Seventy percent of police that responded to the survey believed that Operation Never Again had a big or very big effect on the relationship between the Police and the community. Only 5% felt that it had no effect.

4.3 Were respondents happy with the information provided by the police?

Respondents were asked to rate the usefulness of the advice provided to them by the police. All of the participants in the security audits rated the advice as good or very good compared with 94% of break and enter victims. (see Figure 16)

Figure 16: Usefulness of advice provided of Police



Respondents indicated that the information provided them with knowledge on how to protect their homes and to realise some of the shortcomings in their security. One respondent said that the Police “pointed out or reinforced without causing apprehension”.

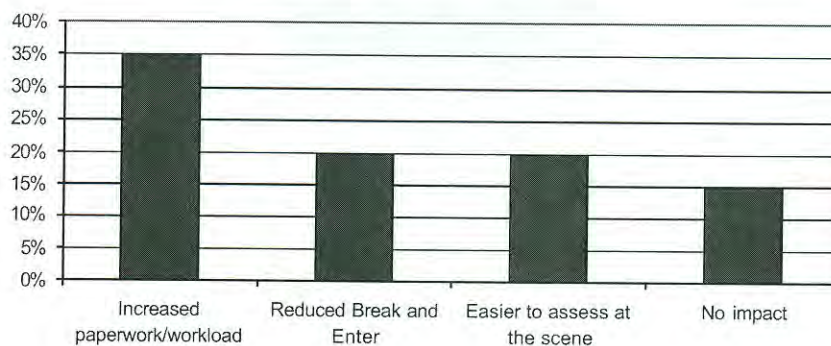
4.4 Did the respondents receive their packages within an appropriate timeframe?

Eighty percent of respondents to the survey indicated that their packages had arrived within a week of the break and enter occurring at their homes. The other 20% said the package arrived between 1 and 3 weeks later.

4.5 How has Operation Never Again impacted on the police?

The police were asked in the survey to outline the impact Operation Never Again has had on their day to day job. Thirty-five percent of respondents indicated that Operation Never Again had increased their paperwork or workload (See Figure 17). However, 20% of respondents said that the forms they had to fill in at the scene made it easier to assess and report the crime in a consistent manner. In addition, 20% of respondents said that overall Operation Never Again had reduced the number of break and enter crimes they had to attend. Fifteen percent of police respondents said that Operation Never Again had no impact on their day to day job.

Figure 17: Impact on Police



4.6 Has Operation Never Again received any national recognition?

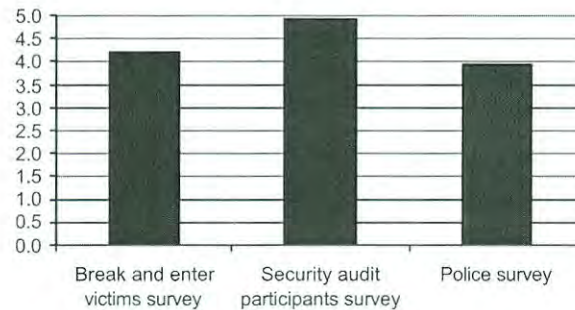
Operation Never Again has received national recognition in the following areas:

- Premiers Award for Excellence in Emergency Services.
- Crime Prevention Officer has been asked to speak at the Australian and New Zealand Crime Practitioners Conference in Perth in July
- Operation Never Again is listed as a Best Practice Program in dealing with Victims of Crime from the Victims Services section of the NSW Attorney General's Department.

4.7 What is the overall rating of Operation Never Again?

The community and police surveys asked respondents to rate the effectiveness of Operation Never Again overall. On average, Operation Never Again was given a high rating by all groups (see Figure 18). Participants in the security audits on average gave the program the highest rating.

Figure 18: Overall Rating



4.8 What is the general feedback?

Many participants commented on the professionalism and enthusiasm of the Crime Prevention Officer and other members of the Orange Police that attended their homes.

Some of the comments included:

- "I would like to thank the officer that came to see us"
- "The officer that attended us was very good in his personal approach and his expertise and professionalism"
- "The assistance and obvious dedication of the Crime Prevention Officer to this program is exceptional. Well done."
- "Very polite and helpful"

There were three respondents that were not completely happy with the response of the police. The comment from one respondent was "the response was good but the followup was poor". The other two respondents that were not completely happy did not provide a detailed comment.

Many respondents indicated that they believed the program should continue:

- "Operation Never Again is both satisfactory and successful"
- "A good idea and should continue"
- "To be commended"
- "Continue the program and help reduce crime"

All of the sponsors believed that the program was worthwhile and should continue. Four of the sponsors said that Operation Never Again provided excellent feedback to the sponsors and that the majority of their suggestions were acknowledged and implemented where appropriate.

The sponsors meetings were considered to be important and promoted a "good sponsorship relationship". One sponsor would like more frequent statistical reports to keep up to date with the progress of the Operation Never Again program.

Two sponsors believed that more recognition could be made of the sponsors. One of the security providers believed that some organisations in town were promoting the project without actually sponsoring and this devalued his sponsorship.

Overall, the police who responded to the survey were generally happy with the project. There was a feeling of increased paperwork however one respondent indicated "the time is well spent because it has decreased break and enters and repeat offences".

Some Police respondents believed that there were other factors in the reduced break and enter rate:

- "The overall effectiveness of this program is hard to gauge when you put it alongside the hard work done by officers in the command"
- "Never Again has been very successful but I am more inclined to believe that the success is having an officer dedicated to the concept of targeting offenders. Never Again is not a stand alone strategy and other initiatives must be used."
- "The public should do more for themselves and not expect others to hold their hands"

4.9 What are the conclusions?

It appears that Operation Never Again has had some impact on the feeling of security within the Orange community. Operation Never Again has high recognition in the general Orange community. Further, the overwhelming majority of people who have been involved with the Operation Never Again program have rated the program highly.

There is a general feeling of security in homes in Orange, although this feeling of security declines significantly after a break and enter occurs. The feeling of security returns after contact with the Operation Never Again program. Home security audits also appear to be successful in increasing security levels for households who request an audit.

The response of the police after a break and enter is rated highly, as is the information provided by the police. The police commented that Operation Never Again has increased their paperwork but believe that this is worthwhile as it decreased break and enter crime.

5. Options for enhancing Operation Never Again

This section examines possible options for improving or enhancing the Operation Never Again program, based on the results of the surveys.

5.1 Providing alternative access to the Crime Prevention Officer

A number of the sponsors commented that people may be reluctant to contact the Police directly for inspection of their homes. There may need to be a transitional contact point such as the Credit Unions or NRMA, who provide information about the program and collect the names and addresses of people who wish to participate in the security audit and then pass the details onto the Crime Prevention Officer. This would reduce the responsibility of the home owner in actually contacting the police which some people appear reluctant to do.

5.2 Increase the participation in security audits

There was some disappointment expressed about the relatively small number of homes that have been involved with the safety audits. In addition, the conversion of security audits to lodging of property registers is still low. Thus, there may be a need for more follow-up in this area to encourage people to lodge property registers.

There was also a suggestion to involve community organisations such as Rotary and Lions to encourage people to participate in the home security audits. These organisations may also be able to help overcome the initial hurdle of contacting the police.

A program run in conjunction with local builders and tradespeople may encourage people to install their security as part of the building process. Information could be provided to people when they discuss ideas with builders or when they apply for building approvals. An approach similar to this was tried by way of an address to the Housing Industry Association meeting in Orange in September 2002.

Two respondents were in rental accommodation and felt that their options in upgrading security were limited. The owners were not prepared to install additional security items in the premises and as tenants they were unwilling to spend money given they were unsure how long they would remain in the premises. There may need to be an additional sub program developed for rental properties or else these may become targets for future break and enters.

5.3 Lower the cost of upgrading security

Three respondents lived in homes owned by the Department of Housing and could not afford the upgrades recommended by the police. The Department of Housing was willing to install security equipment free of charge however could not contribute to the cost of purchasing the equipment.

Almost two thirds (65%) of the police that responded to the survey indicated that the cost of upgrading was a burden to many people. The respondents indicated that many of the people that were broken into were in lower socio-economic groups and did not have money to buy the security equipment. Indeed, upgrading their security was a low priority, given some were struggling to provide the basic necessities of life. Three of the sponsors also commented on the cost of upgrading security.

There may need to be some kind of loan or subsidy arrangement for people that cannot afford to upgrade security. As part of the security audit, the Police could prioritise the items to be upgraded which may help participants plan the purchase of the security items.

5.4 Expand the program

One sponsor suggested that the program should be expanded to cover other areas such as shoplifting and break and enter in non residential properties. It was discussed that Operation Never Again should be an evolving program that should not be limited in the future.

In addition, it was suggested that if the program was run with increased community support it would lessen the burden on the police. Operation Never Again would then be seen as a community driven program, which may enhance its effectiveness.

A police respondent argued that there needs to be more ownership from the community including real estate agents and political leaders. Other respondents commented that more police volunteers should be used to conduct the audits or a backup should be provided to the Crime Prevention Officer. A further comment was that perhaps a separate unit could be established to handle preventative programs.

5.5 Improve the administrative processes

Operation Never Again information packs tend to be sent out in a timely manner and the response of the police is good. However, if the program is to be continually monitored and evaluated, then the administrative processes should be improved.

The names and addresses of participants need to be recorded electronically to enable easier followup for surveys and completion of property registers. The results of the followup survey should be stored electronically to allow easier data analysis, especially over a longer time period.

In addition, access to statistics is an important part of applying for funding and grants and to provide feedback to sponsors and the community. Therefore the data needs to be accessible in a timely manner. These improvements to the administrative processes would require additional resources in the short term, but would result in considerable time saving in the longer term.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, Operation Never Again has successfully reduced the level of break and enter crime in Orange. Indeed, there has been a highly significant decline in the number of "first time" and repeat break and enter crimes in Orange since the program was introduced in 2001. While current levels of break and enter crime in Orange are now equal to the state average, the rate of decline in break and enter crimes in Orange was twice the average for NSW.

The community response to the Operation Never Again program has been extremely positive with participants in the program, the sponsors and the police all rating the program highly. A strong relationship between the community and the Orange Police is also developing, in part due to the proactive role the police are taking in this program.

To ensure that the program continues to be a success, some changes could be made:

1. Increase the number of homes that participate in security audits and more importantly, convert these audits into completed property registers and stickers. Increased community involvement and alternative access to the Crime Prevention Officer could increase the security audits. Improved administrative processes and additional support for followup could increase the conversion into property registers and stickers.
2. Implement a program with builders to improve security levels in new homes
3. Implement a program for people that are renting as tenants are often unwilling or unable to upgrade security in their premises.
4. Investigate some funding for people that cannot afford upgrading security in their homes.
5. Investigate expanding the program into other types of crime such as shoplifting or break and enter in non residential dwellings.

Operation Never Again appears to have been effective in reducing the incidence of residential break and enter crime in Orange to the average for NSW. Further monitoring is needed to determine if the program can continue to reduce crime levels even further.

7. Research Team

TOM MURPHY – Chief Executive Officer (Project Manager)

BEC (Hons I) MSc (Econ) Lancaster

Tom has been the CEO of WRI since its inception and brought with him a strong reputation built on private and public sector experience. Previously Tom held senior academic positions in the Faculty of Commerce, Charles Sturt University, as a senior lecturer and as Director of the Regional Economics Research Unit. He was an Economic Analyst with the Office of National Assessments in Canberra, with responsibility for the ASEAN economies and Senior Consultant with KPMG Peat Marwick Management Consultants. Tom has frequently been invited to participate in National and State regional economic development conferences and provide input to government policy. Tom was pivotal in establishing the WRI and his vast experience provides strong leadership to the WRI team.

KATHY SLOAN – Research Officer

BAppSc (AppGeog) Canberra, GDip InfoSys Charles Sturt

Kathy provides statistical analysis in WRI projects and is an experienced researcher in both the private and public sectors. Her strengths in information communication technology ensure WRI work is enhanced through the usage of current computer applications. Her recent experience in private consultancy and the Planning and Audit Division of CSU provides a strong background in project management and quality assurance.

MATTHEW BROOKS – Senior Economist

B Bus (Econ/Psych), M Econ (SocSc) (Hons) Sydney

As senior economist at the WRI Matthew is responsible for the integrity of the economic research. Matthew possesses strong economic modelling skills, especially input output table construction and economic impact analysis. His excellent written communication skills are demonstrated by the clear and simple language, which characterises WRI research reports.

LUCIANA MAZZOTTI - Research Assistant

B Bus (Marketing) Charles Sturt

Luciana, with a background in marketing adds a new dimension to the WRI team. With her strong understanding of data analysis and ability to apply context to figures, she provides research support to other team members. Luciana has experience in the retail, hospitality and advertising industries and brings a diverse range of skills to the WRI.

MICHAEL O'NEILL – Consultant

BA, Dip Ed (NSW), Cert of Equivalent Honours (2/2) UNE, MA (Lancaster)

Michael has 24 years experience as a lecturer in Mathematics and Statistics at the tertiary level. He has engaged in consulting in the areas of Social Science (Psychology), Biostatistics, Mathematical Economics and Business Statistics.

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