SAFER SNOWY VALLEYS

CRIME PREVENTION PLAN
2020 - 2025

Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of this land and elders past and present. We recognise Aboriginal people as the original custodians of the lands that comprise the Snowy Valleys Council area and pay our respects to the leaders of the traditional custodians of this land.

Together we acknowledge the contributions of Aboriginal Australians to this country we all live in and share together.

Snowy Valleys Council is committed to enhancing the knowledge and understanding of our communities about the history, heritage and cultures of Aboriginal Australians.

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Safer Snowy Valleys

The SVC recognises and celebrates the unique character of our region's towns and villages and we are committed to fostering vibrant, accessible and welcoming communities.

An important part of our vision is a sense of safety. People's perceptions of safety are strongly influenced by the communities they live in.

This Crime Prevention plan recognises Council's role in promoting safety and security within our communities.

This is a community-wide plan and reflects a commitment from Council to work together with a range of organisations and local groups to provide a coordinated approach to crime prevention in the Snowy Valleys over the next five years (from 2020-2025).

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Council Plans and Policies

This Crime Prevention plan supports Council's strategic vision set out in *Our Vision for the Future: Snowy Valleys 2028 Community Strategic Plan (SCP)*.

The Snowy Valleys Operational Plan for 2019-2020, aligns with that vision and lists the development of this Crime Prevention Plan as one element of Council's intention to celebrate and nurture the unique character of our towns and villages.

We aim to achieve this by supporting and partnering with other agencies to ensure community safety.

In developing this plan Council have a number of aspirations:

Our Aspirations:

- Reduce opportunities for criminal offending in the Snowy Valleys.

- Increase community confidence and heighten perceptions of safety in the region.

- Enhance partnerships and encourage collaboration amongst community groups involved in crime prevention initiatives.

- Engage and inform the community about local crime prevention activities.

To find out more about Council's plans for the future of our region, go to www.svc.nsw.gov.au/plansandpolicies

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A Connected Community

Everyone has a role to play in Crime Prevention. Improving community safety relies on a combined effort - including the Police, government agencies, other community groups and the community itself.

Council's Role

Council's knowledge and connections with the local community mean that we can play an important part in creating and maintaining a safer community. However, our role will vary, depending on the context and our degree of influence. Sometimes we will take a lead role in prevention initiatives and at other times we may be a partner, or a supporter and promoter.

Lead:

Actively build safety and security measures into our core business to make our community spaces safe (including towns, open spaces, and Council facilities). Manage, lead, deliver and communicate our crime prevention initiatives.

Partner:

Partial or shared responsibility with government or community organisations to work together and collaborate on local crime prevention initiatives. Build connections within the community to develop local solutions to crime issues. In this role Council will enable and strengthen the capacity of others to deliver crime prevention initiatives.

Support & Promote:

Assist the work of other organisations in our community, so that they can deliver programs and services aimed at preventing crime. Raise awareness of community initiatives which address crime issues and advocate for the needs of the agencies delivering them.

The Role of Police

Police have primary responsibility for crime and law enforcement within the Snowy Valleys. Their role is to prevent, detect and investigate crime in the region.

Our local Police provide a professional community-based policing service. Building partnerships with the community is central to their role and assists them in their crime prevention efforts. The Police work with Council to keep us informed of crime trends and issues that affect our towns and villages.

The role of Community Groups

Local community groups and voluntary organisations already provide many valuable programs which can help prevent crime. For example, they deliver a range of early intervention programs and other social services which assist vulnerable and high-risk sectors of the community. This plan seeks to support and promote the role of community groups in delivering those services.

The Role of Local Business

Local businesses can form important partnerships with Council, Police and other services to help prevent crime. They are an important link within the community and can provide information and assistance to enhance community safety. In some circumstances, they may sponsor community projects.

The Community's Role

The community also has a role to play. Community members can assist crime prevention efforts by providing information about crime to the Police, by keeping an eye out for their neighbours and by engaging with their community and taking part in local events.

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Developing this plan

To develop this plan, we began by researching our local context, so that we would have an accurate picture of local need. We examined official crime statistics and looked at trends in offending over the last ten years.

Statistics are just one part of the picture. Community consultation was an important feature of this plan's development, so that we could prioritise community concerns about safety and crime prevention in our towns.

We offered a number of opportunities for the community to have their say on crime prevention. These included:
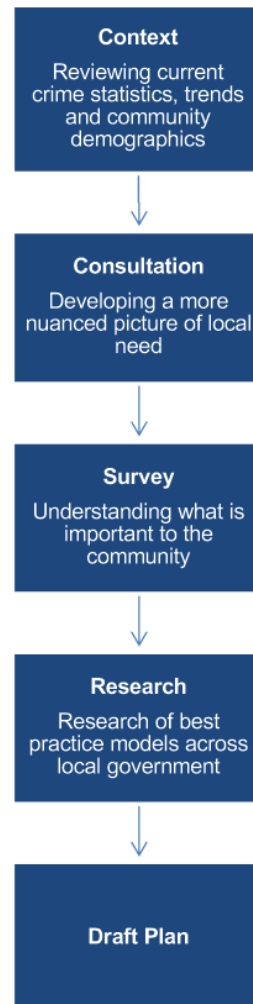
- 31 one-to-one interviews with key people from community groups, government organisations and local business.
- 13 group meetings with community organisations and committees.

We also developed and ran a Crime and Community Survey from August-October and received 147 responses from residents.

Before drafting the plan we researched evidence-based strategies that were suitable for implementation at the community level and were known to work for the crime issues we had identified.

We then used that information to develop a range of actions based on the information we had gathered – including our analysis of the data; what we had learned during consultation; and the results of the Crime and Community Survey.
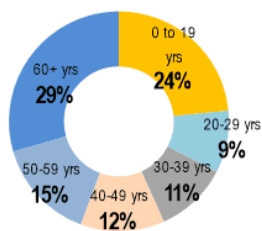
Together with other groups in the community - including police, government agencies, key community organisations and the community itself – we will all play a part in delivering the actions listed in this plan. The plan will build and strengthen our approach to community safety and add value to SVC work, both now and in the future.

Context
Reviewing current crime statistics, trends and community demographics

↓

Consultation
Developing a more nuanced picture of local need

↓

Survey
Understanding what is important to the community

↓

Research
Research of best practice models across local government

↓

Draft Plan

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Snowy Valleys at a Glance

Population

We are a region of

14,532 people

- 0 to 19 yrs **24%**
- 20-29 yrs **9%**
- 30-39 yrs **11%**
- 40-49 yrs **12%**
- 50-59 yrs **15%**
- 60+ yrs **29%**

Diversity

Indigenous (4.4%)

Born Overseas (8%)

Speaks Another Language at Home (3%)

University Educated

10%

Unemployment

5.4%

Snowy Valleys
New South Wales - 5.9%

SEIFA Score*

*Rating of economic disadvantage

SEIFA Rating — 2000, 1000, 0

Snowy Valleys

All New South Wales - Local Government Areas
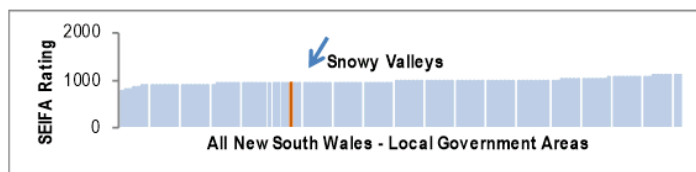
Lone Person Households

27% **Snowy Valleys**

New South Wales - 22%

Average Earnings

$577 per week - Personal

$1,122 per week - Household

Cost of Housing

Median Rent **$188** a week

Median Mortgage **$303** a week

Number of Cars

4.7% of households

30.5% of households

34.3% of households

19.2% of households

*11% of households not stated

Data sourced from .id the population experts

2018 IN REVIEW
Criminal Offending in Snowy Valleys

On average, each month:
- **3.2** Cars stolen
- **5.5** Domestic assaults
- **6.4** Theft from car offences
- **6.8** Homes broken into

Most recorded crime is **non-violent** in nature.

Offences against the Person 19%

All Snowy Valleys Offending

Property & Dishonesty Offences 50%

Drugs 5%

How we rank in New South Wales*
- **20th** for Motor Vehicle Thefts
- **24th** for Break and Enter (Dwelling)
- **27th** for Break and Enter (Non-Dwelling)
- **38th** for Steal from Motor Vehicle
- **52nd** for Domestic Assaults

*out of 119 Local Government Areas

Scene of the Crime
Most crime in the Snowy Valleys occurs in and around **residential areas**. Approximately:

6 out of 10 Assaults (Domestic & Non-Domestic)

7 out of 10 Break and Enters

7 out of 10 Stolen Cars

5 out of 10 Theft from Cars

Trends over the last five years
- Motor Vehicle Theft — Up 15.7%
- Break and Enters — Up 26.5%
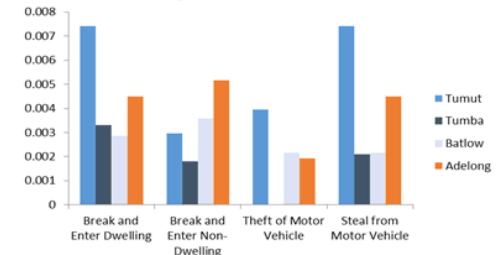- Steal from Cars — Stable
- Domestic Assaults — Stable

Drug Arrests
Marijuana, Amphetamines, Cocaine, Other drugs

Possession Offences

9 out of 10 drug offences were for possession.
Of those offences, 33 out of 45 were for Marijuana, 8 for Amphetamines, and 1 for Cocaine. 3 offences were for 'other' drugs.

Offenders
1 out of 3 offenders were aged 20-29

This compares to:

1 out of 10 of the wider Snowy Valleys Population aged 20-29
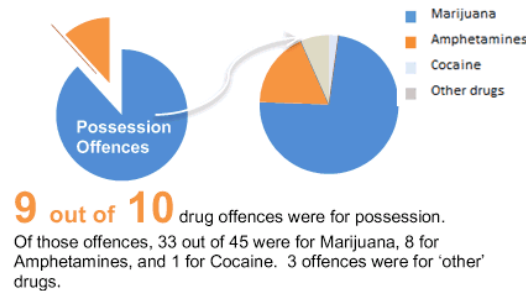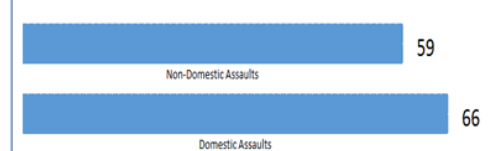
Town Comparisons
Tumut, Tumba, Batlow, Adelong

The Tumut area had the highest rate of offending per head of population for almost all opportunistic offences in 2018.

Assaults
Non-Domestic Assaults — 59
Domestic Assaults — 66

In 2018 the number of recorded assaults between people who shared a past or current domestic or intimate relationship outnumbered the number of assaults between unrelated people.

Taking Note: What you told us

To build a richer picture of what the crime data tells us, we spoke to a range of people and groups in our community. Here's what we heard:

Key Themes:

- There is general agreement, amongst those that we talked to, that most crime in our region is opportunistic and often petty in nature.

- There is high awareness of cars being stolen and burnt out in the region.

- People are very concerned about drugs in the community (particularly ICE), yet our drug statistics are comparatively low.

- Like many other regional towns – domestic and family violence is a hidden but an on-going issue for our community.

- There have been a few high-profile cases of alcohol-related assaults in recent times, but the overall impression is that the Liquor Accord is working well to prevent problems.

- Most people feel safe moving around our towns and villages – although there are one or two areas where residents can feel unsafe.

- Lighting in main streets is a concern in all of our major towns (Tumut, Tumbarumba, Adelong and Batlow).

- Like other regional towns, it is common for residents in the Snowy Valleys to leave their houses and vehicles unlocked and this contributes to our crime statistics.

- Many residents are concerned about the ability to get a fast response from police during high-risk times, such as the early hours of the morning.

- Delays and limitations in accessing government services are a concern for many in the region, particularly services related to child welfare, housing and mental health.

- The youth engagement programs offered in the community are viewed positively but residents perceive a gap in local social services (particularly for young juveniles) and would like to see a wrap-around approach for high-risk groups.

Who did we talk to?

- Police
- High Schools & Primary Schools
- TAFE
- Government Sector: Probation, Juvenile Justice, FACs, Education
- Hospitals and Health Services
- Local Community Support Groups
- Aboriginal Interest Groups
- Youth Groups
- Seniors
- Retailers
- Publicans
- Businesses
- Wagga Wagga Council

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Taking Stock: How you responded

Crime & Community Survey Results

Survey respondents who feel safe in their community during the day:

86% Women | **91%** Men

Survey respondents who feel safe in their community at night:

24% Women | **47%** Men

Survey respondents who believe crime in the Snowy Valleys is higher than average:

39% Tumut respondents | **17%** Respondents in other SVC areas

Survey respondents who believe that crime in the Snowy Valleys has increased in the last two years:

51% Tumut respondents | **31%** Respondents in other SVC areas

Survey respondents who do not feel safe alone in their homes:

7% All age groups | **14%** 25-34 year olds

Survey respondents who are very concerned that their car could be stolen:

44% Tumut Respondents | **19%** Respondents in other SVC areas

Survey respondents who are very concerned that their house will be broken into:

37% All SVC Respondents | **15%** Batlow respondents

Survey respondents who are very concerned that they could be attacked:

11% Tumut Respondents | **3%** Respondents in other SVC areas

Survey respondents who rated drug dealing as a big problem in the region:

70% All SVC respondents | **79%** Adelong Respondents

Survey respondents who have lost money due to internet scams

17% All age groups | **21%** Respondents aged over 45

Survey respondents who have been a victim of crime

30% Female respondents | **19%** Male respondents

For more detailed information refer to:
2018 in Review: A snapshot of criminal offending in the Snowy Valleys

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Taking Action: Priority Offences

Based on our analysis of crime data and what we had learned during consultation, we prioritised four key offence types in the development of this plan.

Vehicle Crime

In this category we included both Steal from Motor Vehicle and Motor Vehicle Theft. We grouped these offences together because they are crimes that are opportunistic in nature and similar strategies can help prevent them.

Motor Vehicle Theft covers offences where someone steals, or attempts to steal, a motor vehicle when they do not have prior authority, even if the vehicle is later abandoned. Joyriding is included in this category.

Stealing from motor vehicles is an offence where someone steals items from a vehicle, such as personal items, car accessories or car parts.

Rationale:
Crime statistics for these offences have peaked in the last five years and rates of motor vehicle theft, in particular, have been high. During consultation there was widespread awareness of this type of offending.

Break and Enters

Break and Enter offences are burglaries. They involve someone breaking and entering onto another's premises, land or property with the intent to commit a crime, most typically theft. Official crime counts for this offence are split into two categories – those related to residential premises (dwellings) and those related to other premises (non-dwelling).

Rationale:
Our Crime Statistics reflect a large increase in break and enter offences in recent years and we are well above the NSW Wales average for this type of offence (per head of population). Burglaries have a large impact on people's perceptions of safety and this offence was mentioned as a big concern to residents during community consultation.

Family and Domestic Violence

Family violence is any violent, threatening, coercive or controlling behaviour that occurs in current or past family, domestic or intimate relationships. This includes not only physical injury but direct or indirect threats, sexual assault, emotional and psychological torment, economic control, damage to property, social isolation and any behaviour which causes a person to live in fear.

Rationale:
The impact of domestic and family violence is serious and far-reaching. It can cause immediate and long-term harms to the health and well-being of those who experience it.

The number of domestic and family violence incidents recorded in the Snowy Valleys is above the New South Wales average, and because this type of offending is typically under-reported, we can assume that the actual level of offending in our community is higher. Statistics also suggest that rates of domestic violence are higher in regional areas than in cities and urban areas.

Drugs and Alcohol

Drug crimes in NSW range from possession or use of an illicit drug to offences involving the sale, manufacture, or illegal importation of a drug. Penalties vary according to the type and amount of drugs involved.

Rationale:

Drug and alcohol abuse is a serious problem.   The detrimental impact on people's lives can be enormous. Drug addiction doesn't just affect the drug-takers themselves, it also affects family, friends, employers and the community as a whole. Drug taking can also lead to other types of criminal offending.

Drug use is an overwhelming concern for residents of the Snowy Valleys. During community consultation, this problem was mentioned more often than any other issue. Although Snowy Valleys' statistics for this type of offending are relatively low, ICE use is known to be a growing problem in regional areas.

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Action Plan

Actions for this plan are drawn from our analysis of what we heard during consultation and are clustered under the four aspirations for this plan. Special attention is given to the four priority crime categories identified during analysis: Vehicle Crime, Break and Enters, Domestic Violence and Drugs and Alcohol.

1.   Reduce Opportunities for Criminal Offending

Strategy	Action	Desired Outcome	Measures	Responsibility	Funding	Timeframe
Improve pedestrian lighting in main streets and car parking areas:	As part of lighting upgrades with Essential Energy – conduct an audit of pedestrian lighting in and around main streets and residential areas to identify a priority schedule of improvements to address particular problem 'dark areas'.	Improved visibility and heightened natural surveillance in main streets and residential areas at night.	Audit of lighting completed. Priority schedule of improvements identified and scheduled.	**Lead:** Snowy Valleys Council **Partner:** Essential Energy	Subject to Funding	2020-2025

Increase surveillance in main streets and car parking areas:	Partner with Police and consult with the Chamber of Commerce to explore options to fund the installation and ongoing operation of CCTV in main streets.	Improved surveillance at business and retail premises within the region.	Consultation completed.	**Lead:** Snowy Valleys Council & NSW Police **Partners:** Local Businesses	Subject to Funding	2020
Plan and design Council-controlled public spaces and facilities with attention to safety and security:	Conduct site-audits of Council-controlled public spaces (including open spaces, facilities and amenities) against CPTED principles to identify where improvements can be made.	Increased perceptions of safety in Council-controlled public spaces.	# of site audits completed. Priority schedule of improvements identified and scheduled.	**Lead:** Snowy Valleys Council	Subject to Funding	2020-2025
	During planned upgrades of Council's amenities, use CPTED public toilet models to identify where improvements can be made.	Safe, secure and functional toilets and amenities in the region.	# of vandalism events in Council toilets and amenities.	**Lead:** Snowy Valleys Council	Subject to Funding	2020-2025

	Provide ongoing Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) training to Council staff overseeing the planning and design of public spaces and new developments.	Increased knowledge of CPTED principles amongst Council staff.	% of staff successfully completing training.	**Lead:** Snowy Valleys Council	Subject to Funding	As required
Reduce the opportunities for motor vehicle theft and theft from cars:	Reduce opportunities for motor vehicle theft by supporting Police with awareness raising campaigns and disseminating information on car security measures through the SVC website.	Increased awareness of the need to lock vehicles	# of website views # of theft from vehicle offences	**Lead:** NSW Police **Support & Promote:** Snowy Valleys Council	Subject to Funding	As required
	Use CPTED principles when reviewing relevant development applications to ensure lighting in car parking areas will comply with Australian Standards.	New developments within the region comply with lighting standards.	# of developments that meet lighting standards	**Lead:** Snowy Valleys Council **Partners:** Local Businesses / Retailers	Existing	Ongoing

Engage youth in local activities and events as a diversion from criminal activity and anti-social behaviour:	Investigate opportunities for activating places for young people across the region.	Engaged and occupied youth.	# of activation activities delivered	**Lead:** Snowy Valleys Council	Subject to Funding	2020-2021
	Identify opportunities to support and promote programs undertaken by community partners that are aimed at diverting high risk youth.	Engaged, occupied and informed youth.	# of supporting actions undertaken	**Lead:** Local Schools and Community Groups **Support & Promote:** Snowy Valleys Council NSW Police	Subject to Funding	Ongoing
Continue to monitor and identify emerging crime trends, issues and hotspots in the Snowy Valleys Region:	Regularly examine BOSCAR's release of LGA crime statistics.	Quick response to emerging trends and community concerns.	Evidence-based awareness of current crime levels in the region	**Lead:** Snowy Valleys Council	Existing	Ongoing
	Regularly engage with Police to collect current localised information and identify opportunities for SVC to support Police efforts.	Strengthened relationships with SVC Police.	# of meetings attended	**Partners:** NSW Police & Snowy Valleys Council	Existing	Ongoing

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| | Develop improved reporting systems within Council to monitor, manage and maintain Council data on the operation of Council-controlled CCTV and the number and nature of vandalism and graffiti events. | Improved awareness of the volume and nature of events within SVC-managed spaces, including associated costs. | Accurate and accessible count of events occurring within Council-managed spaces in the region.\n\nAccurate $ estimate of costs to repair vandalism, remove graffiti and operate cameras in Council-managed spaces. | **Lead:** Snowy Valleys Council | Subject to Funding | Ongoing |

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2.   Increased Community Confidence and Heightened Perceptions of Safety

Strategy	Action	Desired Outcome	Measures	Responsibility	Funding	Timeframe
Create physical environments where people feel safe:	As part of lighting upgrades with Essential Energy – conduct an audit of lighting in and around main streets and residential areas to identify a priority schedule of improvements to address particular problem 'dark areas'.	Improved visibility and heightened natural surveillance in main streets and residential areas at night.	Audit of lighting completed Priority schedule of improvements identified and scheduled.	**Lead:** Snowy Valleys Council **Partner:** Essential Energy	Subject to Funding	2020-2025
	Conduct site-audits of Council-controlled public spaces (including open spaces, facilities and amenities) against CPTED principles to identify where improvements can be made.	Increased perceptions of safety in Council-controlled public spaces.	# of site audits completed Priority schedule of improvements identified and scheduled.	**Lead:** Snowy Valleys Council	Subject to Funding	2020-2025

	Support the allocation of Council resources for the timely repair of vandalism and removal of graffiti in high visibility areas of Council maintained property.	Tidy and appealing appearance of SVC parks, streets and amenities maintained.	% of high visibility graffiti incidents removed within 2-3 days	**Lead:** Snowy Valleys Council	Existing	Ongoing
	Implement activities that encourage activation and community use of public places.	Increased surveillance in public spaces.	# of cultural activities delivered	**Lead:** Snowy Valleys Council	Subject to Funding	2020-2021
Raise awareness of ways that residents can reduce the risk of victimisation (such as car theft and burglary):	In partnership with Police, increase public awareness of ways to minimise risk of victimisation (eg. through SVC website / social media).	Improved awareness and knowledge of crime prevention strategies.	# of items posted # of webpage views	**Lead:** NSW Police **Partner:** Snowy Valleys Council	Existing	Ongoing
Monitor Community Perceptions of Safety to identify and address emerging concerns:	Approach SVC residents every 2-3 years to understand community concerns and perceptions of crime in the region through a community survey.	Improved awareness of community perceptions and concerns about crime and safety.	Increased ratings of safety in survey of residents (compared to benchmark).	**Lead:** Snowy Valleys Council **Partner:** NSW Police	Subject to Funding	2023

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3.   Enhanced Partnerships and Collaboration

Strategy	Action	Desired Outcome	Measures	Responsibility	Funding	Timeframe
Increase collaboration and coordination between government and community groups working to reduce the incidence and effect of crime:	Schedule a regular agenda item at the quarterly Interagency Meeting to specifically focus on crime prevention.	Provide opportunities for inter-agency networking, information sharing, training, education and awareness raising. Improved collaboration on crime prevention activities	# of meetings held # of groups attending	**Lead:** Snowy Valleys Council (Convenor) **Partners:** NSW Police; Community Groups and Government agencies	Subject to Funding	2020-2025
Support local initiatives which aim to reduce the incidence of family violence, child abuse and elder abuse:	Identify opportunities to support local initiatives which address family violence, child abuse and elder abuse.	Strengthened and integrated approach to raising awareness of family violence in the community.	# of information sessions, inter-agency events and campaigns held on domestic and family violence within the region	**Lead:** State and Community Groups **Partner:** NSW Police **Support & Promote:** Snowy Valleys Council	Subject to Funding	Ongoing

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Support community initiatives which aim to minimise the harm from alcohol and drug addiction:	Continue to manage and review the provision of alcohol-free zones in the region.	Discourage anti-social drinking behaviour and provide safe and enjoyable open places for the community to use.	# of reports of alcohol-related issues in public spaces	**Lead:** Snowy Valleys Council	Existing	Ongoing
	Identify opportunities to support and promote locally-led community programs which address drug and alcohol education.	Increased awareness of the harms arising from drug and alcohol abuse amongst youth in the region.	# of programs delivered by community groups	**Lead:** State and Community Groups **Partner:** NSW Police **Support & Promote**: Snowy Valleys Council	Subject to Funding	Ongoing
	Continue to support and assist the local Liquor Accord to promote responsible drinking behaviour.	Responsible drinking behaviour amongst youth and local community.	# of meetings attended	**Lead:** Liquor Accord Partners **Support & Promote:** NSW Police Snowy Valleys Council	Subject to Funding	Ongoing

4.   Engaged and Informed Community

Strategy	Action	Desired Outcome	Measures	Responsibility	Funding	Timeframe
Support neighbourhood based initiatives which increase the opportunity for neighbours to connect and reduce the risk of criminal activity:	Find opportunities to raise awareness and engagement in neighbourhood-based crime prevention initiatives (such as Neighbourhood Watch groups and Crime Stopper activities).	Increased participation in neighbourhood crime prevention initiatives. Increased surveillance within neighbourhoods. Increased neighbourhood cohesion and response to crime risks.	Amount of active participation in neighbourhood crime-prevention initiatives # of reports of suspicious or criminal activity made to police by neighbours or residents Residents' ratings of safety (compared to benchmark)	**Lead:** Local Community Groups (eg. Neighbourhood Watch) **Partner:** NSW Police **Support & Promote**: Snowy Valleys Council	Subject to Funding	Ongoing
	Encourage local residents to take ownership of their neighbourhood safety and increase their use of local parks and spaces.	Greater natural surveillance in neighbourhood parks and spaces. Increased neighbourhood cohesion and response to crime risks.	# of neighbourhood-initiated events held in local parks and spaces Residents' ratings of safety (compared to benchmark)	**Lead:** Local Community Groups (eg. Neighbourhood Watch) **Support & Promote**: Snowy Valleys Council and NSW Police	Subject to Funding	Ongoing

Raise awareness of ways that residents can reduce the risk of victimisation (such as car theft and burglary):	In partnership with Police, increase public awareness of ways to minimise the risk of victimisation (eg. through SVC website / social media).	Improved awareness and knowledge of crime prevention strategies.	# of items posted # of webpage views	**Lead:** NSW Police **Partner:** Snowy Valleys Council	Existing	Ongoing

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SAFER SNOWY VALLEYS

APPENDIX 1:
SUMMARY REPORT
COMMUNITY SURVEY

Summary of findings

Background and methodology

- The purpose of this survey was to develop a picture of Snowy Valleys residents' perceptions about crime in the region
- The survey was conducted using a mix of self-complete questionnaires and face-to-face interviews
- The questionnaire took 10 minutes to complete (on average) and asked a range of questions relating to feelings of safety, experiences of crime and concerns about offending in the region
- In total 147 residents of the Snowy Valleys participated and were surveyed between September and October 2019
- IMPORTANT NOTE: Respondents were sampled using a convenience sample and therefore results may not be representative of the wider Snowy Valleys' population

Residents' sense of safety

Overall, most people who responded to our survey felt safe living in the Snowy Valleys region (see Table 1). Fewer than one in twenty survey respondents (4%) said that they didn't feel safe. 72% said they either felt 'safe' or 'very safe' living in the region, although 21% said they sometimes felt safe and sometimes felt unsafe. Residents living in the Tumut area were the most likely to say they felt unsafe (6% of Tumut respondents).

Table 1: Respondents feelings of safety living in the Snowy Valleys

Very safe	30	21%
Safe	74	51%
Sometimes unsafe	36	25%
Unsafe	6	4%
Total	146	100%

1 respondent not stated

We asked participants how safe they felt moving around their nearest town during the day (see Table 2). Responses showed that participants felt overwhelmingly safe, with 49% saying they felt 'very safe' during the day and a further 39% saying they felt 'safe'.

Table 2: Respondents' daytime feelings of safety

Very safe	72	49%
Safe	57	39%
Sometimes unsafe	16	11%
Unsafe	2	1%
Total	147	100%

1

However, when we compared these results with respondents' ratings of safety at night, the picture was very different (see Table 3). Only 12% of respondents said they felt 'very safe' moving around the region after dark and 19% said they felt 'safe'. The respondents most likely to feel 'unsafe' or 'sometimes unsafe' at night were women (61% of the women in our survey). Although a large proportion of men in our survey also felt 'unsafe' or 'sometimes unsafe' after dark (40% of all male respondents).

Table 3: Respondents' night-time feelings of safety

Very safe	18	12%
Safe	28	19%
Sometimes unsafe	51	35%
Unsafe	29	20%
Don't go out after dark	21	14%
Total	147	100%

When alone in their homes, 67% of the people who responded to our survey said that they either felt 'safe' or 'very safe' (see Table 4). However, a small number of respondents (7%) also told us they didn't feel safe alone in their own homes. Both males and females were equally likely to describe themselves as feeling 'unsafe' alone in their homes (7% of female respondents and 7% of male respondents). However, residents living in the Tumut region were more likely than residents living elsewhere to describe themselves that way (11% of Tumut respondents compared with only 2% of respondents living in other SVC towns).

Table 4: Respondents' feelings of safety when alone in their own homes

Very safe	51	35%
Safe	45	31%
Slightly Unsafe	41	28%
Unsafe	10	7%
Total	147	100%

46% of residents told us that there were areas of their town where they didn't feel safe. In Tumut, residents commonly mentioned particular neighbourhood streets in and around the Common. Respondents also mentioned areas with poor lighting at night; skateparks; supermarket carparks; public toilets; areas at the edge of town; areas behind main streets; bush areas; and parks and open spaces.

2

Perceptions of Crime

Respondents were asked whether they felt local crime levels in the Snowy Valleys area were above average, average or below average (see Table 5). Most survey participants (41%) felt that the crime rate in their town was 'about average' and had gained this impression through their discussions with others and news reports in the region. However, 29% felt that the crime rate was 'higher than average'. Only 13% felt that crime rates were lower than the average and a further 17% of respondents said they didn't know.

Table 5: Respondents perceptions of current crime levels in the region

Above average	42	29%
Average	59	41%
Below average	18	13%
DK	25	17%
Total	144	100%

*3 respondents not stated

In a follow-up question, respondents were asked whether they thought crime had increased or decreased in the last two years. Most respondents felt that the crime rate was higher (at 43%), while others felt it was about the same (35%). Only 8% of respondents thought the crime rate was lower than two years ago and 14% said they didn't know. Respondents most likely to think that the crime rate was higher were those respondents living in the Tumut region (at 51%), while respondents living in other towns were more inclined to think the crime rate in their town had remained the same (49%).

Table 6: Respondents perceptions of recent change to crime levels

Higher	53	43%
About the same	44	35%
Lower	10	8%
DK	17	14%
Total	124	100%

*Sub-sample (4 not stated & 19 not applicable responses removed)

Main sources of information about crime

Like people in most other towns and cities, respondents in the Snowy Valleys develop their impressions about local crime from three key sources:
- Media reports (including social media; local newspaper; local radio; and television)
- Conversations with friends and family
- Personal observations and experiences of crime

Only one respondent in our survey said that they got their information from official sources.

3

Concerns about crime in the region

When we asked respondents about specific crimes that might concern them, we found that the crimes that respondents were most concerned about were opportunistic crimes - such as burglary and having personal property stolen or damaged.

For example, almost all respondents in our survey (93%) expressed some level of concern (either 'very concerned' or 'a little concerned') that their property would be stolen or damaged (see Table 7).   Over half of the respondents who lived in Tumut (51%) rated themselves as 'very concerned' about this type of offending.

Table 7: Respondents' level of concern about theft and damage of property

Very concerned	58	40%
A little concerned	77	53%
Not at all concerned	10	7%
Total	145	100%

2 respondents not stated

The level of concern was almost as high for Burglary (see Table 8). More than one in three of the respondents in our survey rated themselves as 'very concerned' that their homes would be broken into (40%). Tumut and Adelong respondents were the most likely to rate themselves this way (at 44% and 43% respectively), whereas the proportion of respondents rating themselves as 'very concerned' was lower amongst Tumbarumba respondents (at 30%) and lowest amongst Batlow respondents (at only 15%).

Table 8: Respondents' level of concern about burglary

Very concerned	54	37%
A little concerned	74	51%
Not at all concerned	17	12%
Total	145	100%

2 respondents not stated

Levels of concern were slightly lower for motor vehicle theft, although remained high, with 32% stating that they felt 'very concerned' that their car would be stolen (see Table 9). A much larger proportion of Tumut respondents felt 'very concerned' (44%) compared with those who lived in other parts of the region (19%).

Table 9: Respondents' level of concern about having their car stolen

Very concerned	38	32%
A little concerned	48	40%
Not at all concerned	33	28%
Total	119	100%

Sub-sample (4 not stated & 24 not applicable responses removed)

4

Respondents were also concerned about having personal items stolen from their cars. Although 31% of all respondents said they were 'very concerned' that they would have property stolen from their car when it was parked in a public place - only 28% felt the same level of concern when their vehicle was parked at home (see Tables 10 and 11).

The proportion of respondents who told us that they were 'very concerned' that property would be stolen from their car when it was parked in a public place was highest amongst Tumut respondents (at 41%) and half that amount amongst respondents who lived elsewhere (20% of other respondents).

Table 10: Respondents' level of concern about theft from their car when parked in a public place

Very concerned	37	31%
A little concerned	46	38%
Not at all concerned	37	31%
Total	120	100%

*Sub-sample (3 not stated & 24 not applicable responses removed)

Table 11: Respondents' level of concern about theft from their car when parked at home

Very concerned	33	28%
A little concerned	48	40%
Not at all concerned	39	33%
Total	120	100%

*Sub-sample (3 not stated & 24 not applicable responses removed)

Despite a relatively high level of concern about crimes related to their vehicles and personal property, respondents were a lot less concerned that they would be physically attacked (see Table 12). Only 8% of survey participants told us that they felt 'very concerned' about being attacked in their nearest town.

Table 12: Respondents' level of concern about being physically attacked

Very concerned	11	8%
A little concerned	79	54%
Not at all concerned	55	38%
Total	145	100%

*2 respondents not stated

5

Perceptions of Problem Behaviours

Respondents were asked to consider a range of behaviours and tell us whether they felt those behaviours were a problem in the region.

Drug dealing was the problem which received the highest ratings, with respondents overwhelmingly describing this as a 'big problem' in the region (at 70% - see Table 13). This was true for all four towns – however both Tumut and Adelong respondents were slightly more likely than respondents from Tumbarumba and Batlow to rate it this way (with around three out of four Adelong and Tumut respondents describing it as a 'big' problem compared with two out of three people in Tumbarumba and Batlow).

Table 13: Respondents' perceptions of drug dealing in their town

Big problem	102	70%
Small problem	33	23%
Not a problem	11	8%
Total	146	100%

1 respondent not stated

Respondents also expressed their concerns about a range of other problem behaviours (see Table 14), with the greatest level of concern expressed about speeding cars and abandoned or burnt out vehicles.

Table 14: Respondents' perceptions of problem behaviours in their town

	Big Problem	Small Problem	Not a Problem
Speeding Cars	41%	48%	11%
Abandoned or burnt out cars	41%	32%	27%
Graffitti and Vandalism	37%	51%	12%
Harassment and Intimidation	25%	51%	25%
Drunk or rowdy behaviour	28%	56%	16%

6

Experiences of Crime

We asked respondents about their experiences of crime in the Snowy Valleys region. The majority of survey respondents (66%) had not been a witness to any criminal offending in the last two years. However, amongst the 34% who told us that they had witnessed a crime in recent years, drug-dealing was the offence mentioned most often. As one respondent told us *'I live just down the road from the local drug dealer'.*

Respondents had witnessed a wide range of other crime-types, although not in large numbers. Dishonesty offences were often mentioned by respondents – most notably break-ins and car thefts, but shoplifting also featured. Illegal hunting was named by one respondent and others had witnessed cases of vandalism and arson. Several people referred to assaults, abuse and domestic violence.

One in four of our survey participants were themselves victims of crime (26%). Not all victims of a crime supplied details of their experience. However, the crimes that were named by respondents ranged from having their cars broken into (the offence most commonly mentioned), having their cars stolen, harassment, domestic violence, having their home broken into, and being threatened with a gun.

A deeper analysis of our results showed that victims of crime were also more likely than non-victims to rate themselves as feeling 'unsafe' living in the Snowy Valleys (50% of victims compared with 11% of non-victims).

We also asked respondents if they had ever lost money through the internet. 17% of survey takers said they had. Almost all of these experiences involved fraudulent card transactions although one or two respondents told us they had lost fairly large amounts of money through more elaborate scams.

7

Confidence in Police

We gave respondents the opportunity to rate the performance of local police (see Table 15). Respondents usually rated Police positively, telling us that they thought the local Police were doing a 'good' or 'very good' job in the area (at 60%).

A number of respondents wrote in unsolicited comments to this question and appeared to understand that Police were operating under difficult circumstances. The following comment typifies these sentiments: *"I think our local Policeman is great and very supportive to our community - but he can't be everywhere."*

When respondents did express concerns about Police, it was often about the availability of police at high risk times such as the early hours of the morning, or a desire to have more Police stationed in the area. One respondent explained *'I feel uncomfortable about the police station being unmanned at night and having to call through to Wagga. If something does happen and I'm a victim, I'd like to have somewhere / someone to call and have a response ASAP.'*

Table 15: Respondents' ratings of Police performance

Very good	20	14%
Good	66	46%
Not good	36	25%
No opinion either way	21	15%
Total	143	100%

4 respondents not stated

8

Support for CCTV

We also asked respondents whether they supported the idea of CCTV in main streets or whether they preferred other options to reduce crime (see Table 16). The large majority of people who responded to our survey said they supported the use of CCTV, although 10% said they would prefer to use other methods and 11% had no opinion.

Table 16: Respondents' support for CCTV

Support CCTV	112	79%
Prefer other options	14	10%
No opinion either way	16	11%
Total	142	100%

*5 respondents not stated

Respondents who supported CCTV did not make any further comments, but a number of those that didn't provided some elaboration. As one respondent explained *'I don't want to see CCTV cameras. Makes everyone feel watched. It's intrusive for everyone.'*

Perceived causes of crime

Finally, respondents were asked for their views on the major causes of crime in the region. A high proportion of respondents mentioned drug-dependence as the major cause of crime. As one respondent pointed out: *'Drug use is a problem but should be treated as a health problem, not a criminal problem.'*

Unemployment was another factor commonly mentioned as a major cause of crime, while others felt that poor education and poverty contributed to the problem.

Poor parenting was sometimes blamed for the crime rate, while others felt that there needed to be greater repercussions when people were caught offending.

However, as one respondent wrote "*The causes of crime are complex and varied. There is rarely one main cause of crime and I believe prevention (eg. early intervention for at risk children through parenting and preschool programs) is the best plan of attck for common crime.*"

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Snowy Valleys Council

SAFER SNOWY VALLEYS
CRIME PREVENTION PLAN 2020 - 2025

Leading, Engaging and
Supporting Strong and
Vibrant Communities

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