Violence: Directions for Australia – 10 Years On

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Background

Public awareness of violence in Australia has been heightened by a number of heinous murders over the past decade, and more recently the shooting at Monash University in Melbourne, and by the vast media coverage that they attracted. No Australian state or territory has been spared such incidents, or their aftermath. The year 1987 saw two mass firearms homicides in Melbourne, resulting in sixteen deaths and twenty-two injuries.

Following the second of these shootings in 1987, Federal, State and Territory Governments agreed to the establishment of a national inquiry on violence, namely, the National Committee on Violence. This Committee was specifically asked to examine a range of issues concerning the level and nature of violence in Australian society, and to also put forth recommendations for the control and prevention of violence. In its final report, Violence: Directions for Australia, the Committee made 138 recommendations. (Download from **http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/vda/vda-exec02.html**)

Generally, most of the recommendations have been implemented in some form or other. The most successful recommendations include the establishment of:

- The Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards;

- The National Homicide Monitoring Program; and

- The National Child Protection Clearing House.

The recommendation of a broad plan of gun control, including a buyback program and the introduction of a uniform firearms licensing and registration regime across Australian States and Territories was implemented six years later, following the tragic events of the Port Arthur massacre. There are however, a number of recommendations that have still yet to be implemented. The most important reiterated through a number of recommendations is the need for outcome evaluations. There are many programs funded at the state and federal level, which aim to reduce and prevent violence and crime, but without rigorous evaluation, "how do we know what works and what doesn't"?

It has been more than ten-years since the publication of the National Committee on Violence report, but many of the issues identified in the report are still relevant today. For instance, how much violence is there in Australia, is it increasing, and most importantly, "how do we prevent it?" The aim of this paper is to examine these issues and to discuss what has changed since the writing of the report more than ten years ago, and directions for building a framework for further research on violence.

1. Is Australia a Violent Society?

The two questions most often asked by both key stakeholders and the general public are "how much violence is there in Australia?" and "Is it increasing?"

Is Australia violent? Compared to what? Compared to Cechnia, Colombia or Congo, the answer is no. We are probably more violent than Sweden, Switzerland or Singapore, however, there is a lot of debate about what is measured, how, and over what time period.

There are doubts as to whether these questions can actually be answered. "These doubts are not mundane anxieties about the reliability of crime comparisons between countries, though there is plenty of cause for concern on this issue. What is of more concern is uncertainty about what people regard as flowing from any answer to the question: "How violent is Australia?" (Weatherburn and Devery 1991, p. 23).

Put simply, there is definitional ambiguity as to what is a crime. We are still faced with terminological confusion about what crime is, about how it is measured, how crimes are ranked and about who suffers most, and who commits it. Most generalisations on crime as a whole are inaccurate because the term 'crime' denotes too wide a variety of events to be described by a single label. We must always distinguish between activities which harm people from those which irritate people, and carefully assess risk of threatening behaviour.

On a per capita basis considerably fewer people today appear before the courts than 100 years ago. Of those who do, fewer go to jail. But today, women who appear topless on the beach don't find themselves before the court, men who have sex with other consenting men don't find themselves before the court, but they did a generation ago. But men who bashed their wives and/ or children a generation ago did not find themselves before the court, but they do today. A generation ago crimes like Medicare Fraud, credit card fraud, hacking, were not part of the criminological lexicon.

How we define crime has much to do with our perception of safety. Despite highly publicised recent events, Australia is one of the safest countries in the world. Peoples' perceptions of safety however vary based on the activity and the time of day (see Table 1). For example, in 2000, 95 per cent of adult Australians surveyed felt 'safe' or 'very safe' at home alone during the day, whereas only 24 per cent of adult Australians felt 'safe' or 'very safe' on public transport after dark. Australians can go about their daily lives with little chance of their becoming the target of a criminal attack. But it does happen – and the prospect that it <u>might</u> happen worries a lot of people.

Table 1: Perceptions of Safety by Adult Australians, 2000

Perception of Safety	Proportion of adult Australians who felt 'safe' or 'very safe'
Being at home alone during the day	94.9
Being at home alone after dark	84.3
Walking or Jogging locally during the day	89.8
Walking or Jogging locally after dark	42.5
Being on public transport during the day	65.9
Being on public transport after dark	23.6

Source: Report on Government Services 2002, adapted from ABS, Population Survey Monitor, 2000

It is however important to keep in mind that the risk of victimisation is not the same for everyone. In other words, crime is not an equal opportunity predator. The chance of becoming a victim depends on where you live, how you live, who you are and who you know.

A quick snapshot looks something like this:

Homicide:

The following Australian statistics include cases of both murder and manslaughter in 2000-01:

- 308 homicide incidents occurred in Australia, that is on average less than one event per day. The homicide rate is about 1.8 per 100,000 population - it has remained constant for many years
- 61 % of victims were male, 39 % were female.
- 89 % of offenders were male.
- More than 8 out of 10 homicides occurred between people who were known to one another.
- Of all homicides occurring in Australia, 57 % took place in residential locations, (at home) and 28 % in the street or some other open area.
- 22 % of homicides involved firearms.
- Victims of homicide were most likely to be males between 30 and 34 years of age, though children less than one year old have high victimisation rates.
- Compared to males, females were more likely to be killed following a domestic dispute (69 % to 21 %).
- Offenders were most commonly males between 15 and 24 years of age.

(Figures from 2000-01 National Homicide Monitoring Program Annual Report)

Serious Assault

Serious assault refers to the direct infliction of force, injury or violence upon a person and includes attempts and threats to harm. This category of violence includes grievous bodily harm, malicious wounding, assault occasioning actual bodily harm and aggravated assault. The following statistics exclude incidents of sexual assault.

Reported rates of serious assaults increased threefold throughout the 1980s. The increase, while real, may be magnified by changing social attitudes to what is acceptable behaviour, an increase in the inclination of victims to report incidents and broadening the police definition of serious assault.

In 2000:
- An average of 385 cases of assault were reported to police each day. This is a rate of 736 per 100,000 population
- 41 % of assaults occurred at residential locations.
- People aged 15 and 24 years were most at risk. This applies to both males and females.
- 57 % of victims of assault were male
- About 58 % of female victims were assaulted at home, whereas only 28 % of males were assaulted at home.
- The number of assaults has grown by an average of 7 % each year between 1995 and 2000. This is almost six times the annual growth of the Australian population over the same period.

(Figures from Australian Crime Facts and Figures 2001)

Sexual Assault

Sexual assault includes various forms of sexual activity that occur without the consent of one party. The statistics of sexual assault cover cases in which one party is deemed incapable of giving consent such as statutory rape and cases in which one of the parties is coerced or forced into an act such as forcible rape. Sexual assault also includes incidents of assault with intent to rape.

As previously mentioned, because of the nature of the crime the following figures may reflect a gross under-reporting of sexual assault incidents.

In 2000:
- An average of 43 cases of sexual assault were reported to police each day. This is a rate of 81 per 100,000 population
- 67 % occurred in residential locations
- 79 % of victims of sexual assault were female.
- Almost 71 % of sexual assault victims were under 25 years of age.
- In every age group females were more likely to be victims than males.
- 61 % of victims knew their offender. It is likely that of an additional 25 % of victims who did not state the identity, many knew the offender.

(Figures from Australian Crime Facts and Figures 2001)

Robbery

Robbery refers to the theft of property accompanied by the threat or use of force. Robbery can be further classified into armed and unarmed categories.

In 2000:

- An average of 64 robberies were reported to police each day. This is a rate of 121 per 100,000 population.

Of all robberies in 2000

- 59 % were unarmed
- 6 % involved a firearm
- 35 % were committed with a weapon other than a firearm.

Armed Robbery

- 46 % of armed robberies occurred in retail premises; 7 % occurred in residential locations
- Males aged between 15 and 24 years were at least twice as likely to become a victim of armed robbery than persons in any other age category.
- Males were more at risk of becoming a victim of armed robbery in all age categories than were females.

Unarmed Robbery

- 71 % of unarmed robberies occurred in the street or on public transport.
- 6 % of unarmed robberies occurred in residential locations.
- 60 % of victims of unarmed robbery were male.
- Males aged 15 to 19 were most victimised - the rate was 415 per 100,000 compared to 72 per 100,000 for the population as a whole.

(Figures from Australian Crime Facts and Figures 2001)

We know that victims of violent crime often know their attacker. This is most likely the case in homicide, where two thirds of victims are killed by a family member or an acquaintance; most assault victims know their attacker, around one half of robbery victims, and less than half of sexual assault victims know their attacker, although most sexual assaults are not reported to police, a point that we will return to later on.

In homicide, males are most often killed by either a friend or an acquaintance whereas most females are killed by an intimate partner. A knife is the most common type of weapon used. Overall, just over half of all homicides occur between males, as a result of an altercation over alcohol, money, drugs or some other type of argument.

We know that many people are victimised in their homes, and that one's home is not the safe haven that we would wish it to be. While the overwhelming majority of robberies occur outside the home, the majority of sexual assaults occur inside the home, as do the majority of homicides. So too, do a variety of violent crimes that are loosely described as child abuse, elder abuse, and domestic violence.

We know that young males are twice as likely to become victims of assault as older males, and that males overall are twice as likely to become victims of assault as are females. Older females have the greatest fear, and the lowest risk. Unemployed people are twice as likely to be victims of assault as employed people.

What we do know about criminals refers mainly to street criminals and repeat offenders. Sophisticated and white collar crime is a vast playing field and we don't know very much about who criminals are, apart from the tiny minority who are caught.

2. Is Australia Becoming More Violent?

The interpretation of crime statistics is much more difficult than the interpretation of most other statistics. Trends are not always easy to discern, even though they may seem obvious. People experience crime and report it in different ways; authorities may choose to follow up or not; counting rules vary across time and place; legislation changes, and so too do definitions; law enforcement priorities vary and resources change, thus affecting activities and outcomes.

Many consider the rate of homicide to be the 'golden standard' of the level of violence in a society. In Australia, the homicide rate over the last twelve years has remained relatively stable, fluctuating between a rate of 1.6 and 2.0 per 100,000 Australians. In contrast, the rate of assault has increased considerably. In 1995, when the ABS first began collecting national data on assault, there were 101,710 assaults recorded in Australia. Six-years later, the number of assaults increased by 49 per cent to a high of 151,753 assaults.

While Australia is a much safer place than many comparable countries, three crimes of great concern to all have increased over the last 20 years. Burglary rates have increased by 111% since 1975; robbery rates by 255%; and motor vehicle theft rates by 103%. While the rates are much higher than 20 years ago, burglary rates and motor vehicle theft rates are well down on what they were five years ago.

Do these figures make sense? There are enormous variations around Australia. Why are the variations around Australia so great? Are police counting the same things? Are they counting them in the same way? And are the figures comparable with those of twenty, fifty and 100 years ago?

How does Australia compare with other countries? Crime rates generally in Australia have been close to the average of other wealthy Western nations. Comparing Australia to England and Wales, Canada, New Zealand, Japan, and the United States, Australia has neither the highest nor the lowest rate for any of the five major offence categories (homicide, robbery, assault, motor vehicle theft, larceny) (Barclay and Taveres 2001). Using the rate of homicide as an indicator, the United States recorded a homicide rate three times that of the rate in Australia in 2001.

The discussion so far on the level of violence in Australian society and whether it has been increasing has been based on police data, aggregated and worked by the ABS into uniform national crime statistics. But not all crimes are reported to the police, not all that are reported are recorded, not all that are recorded are acted upon, not all that are acted upon result in an apprehension, not all apprehensions lead to a court appearance, not all court appearances lead to a trial, not all trials lead to a conviction, not all convictions lead to a penalty.

But this is only part of the story. In addition to the uniform national crime statistics, the ABS has conducted four national victim surveys (1975, 1983, and 1993, and 1998). The results at face value, may be startlingly different. Victim surveys usually show much higher rates than police statistics. The reason is that when people are asked if they have been victims, they are more likely to report events that they thought were too trivial to report to the police, or events which would have been painful to proceed with (especially in cases of domestic violence or sexual assault). Different methods are used in different crime surveys, and the results are different - face to face interviews produce a different result to drop-off, mail back surveys. Correcting for methodological variation further complicates matters.

3. Private versus Public Social Control: Dealing with Violence

If crime statistics can be criminally unreliable, the biggest offence is what goes unreported. It is estimated that two-thirds of assaults are not reported because they occur in families and remain largely invisible. Crime figures similarly underestimate the incidence of sexual assault because of the level of non-reporting. Child abuse and neglect is another area where reporting to the authorities is quite low. When violence occurs within one's private home behind "closed doors", it is often viewed as a 'private matter'; the amount of formal social control is therefore very limited. In these cases, the criminal justice system does not get involved, and the 'victim' may seek assistance from the health and welfare sector.

One useful way of structuring preventive activity is to have a clear understanding of
• Risk factors and

- Protective factors

Risk factors that are associated with violent behaviour can be classified into three categories:
- Individual factors including genetic, biological, psychological and personality characteristics.
- Family factors.
- Wider social factors.

(these are dealt with in other Australian Institute of Criminology publications)

It is difficult, if not impossible to estimate the incidence of child abuse and neglect because the statistics reflect only cases that are reported to the authorities and obviously the number of unreported cases is unknown. In Australia, the only national source of information on child abuse and neglect is the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW 2002) who reported that in 2000-2001, 4.76 per 1,000 children from the ages of 0 – 16 were the subject of substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are more likely to be the subject of a substantiation than other Australian children. In 2000-01, in all jurisdictions except Tasmania, the rate of Indigenous children in substantiations was higher than the rate for other children. In Victoria, for instance, the rate of Indigenous children who were the subject of a substantiation was 9.5 times higher than the rate for other children, in Western Australia it was 7.6 times higher and in South Australia 7.3 times higher.

However, research into child sexual abuse, for instance, suggests that the unofficial estimates are much higher than that reported by the AIHW. These estimates have ranged from figures of 1 in 4 girls to somewhere between 1 in 12 boys as being victims of sexual abuse (for further discussion on the prevalence of child sexual abuse in Australia, New Zealand and the United States, see James 1996). Other sources of child abuse statistics (see Bartollas 1993) suggest that physical abuse and neglect occur in approximately 1 in 20 families with children and the incidence of neglect is double that of abuse. However, while the official statistics are obviously an under-estimate, some of the unofficial figures are fraught with distortions produced by dubious definitions of what constitutes the abuse of children and often by the use of very biased sampling techniques.

4. Directions for the Future: One Solution Does Not fit All

This brings us to the question: so what has changed since the writing of the report *Violence: Directions for Australia* in 1990? One of the most significant changes has been the gradual development of our knowledge base in the crime and justice area. The criminal justice system was once described "as the land that the information age has forgotten" (Neal 1991, p. 41). This is no longer the case.

Prior to the implementation of recommendation 103, very little was known about which factors place an individual at an increased risk of homicide victimisation and offending. Today, the National Homicide Monitoring Program has collected information on over 4,000 homicides that have occurred in Australia, and has contributed significantly to our knowledge base not only on general patterns and trends, but also on the subsets of homicide: intimate partner homicide, child homicide, unsolved homicides. The availability of timely information in area of great public concern assists policy makers to make informed judgements.

In 1992, the National Child Protection Clearing House was established at the Australian Institute of Criminology. The aim of the Clearing House was to compile information on child abuse and neglect from within Australia and overseas and to disseminate this information as widely as possible to people and organisations involved in the area. A major restructure of the AIC in 1995 meant that the Clearing House was not longer perceived to be part of core business activities and it was subsequently moved to the Australian Institute of Family Studies where it continues to operate very successfully.

A number of the recommendations set forth in *Violence: Directions for Australia* were concerned with increasing the number and quality of violence prevention initiatives. These recommendations cover areas as diverse as crime prevention through environmental design, which would affect housing and public transport authorities, to violence prevention for Indigenous communities through improved health strategies.

The Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards ("the Awards") are a government sponsored awards ceremony, which supports and encourages the best violence prevention programs running around Australia. The Awards were initiated in November 1991, and are the perfect arrangement to identify, monitor and develop the successful and practical crime reduction strategies which have come about, in part, due to the recommendations outlined in the report more than ten years ago.

Building our knowledge base in one way to better equip ourselves to tackle the crime problem, but it is crucial that we are fully aware that "one solution does not fit all". This is especially relevant when you consider homicide. You cannot simply have one anti-homicide policy. It is widely acknowledged that homicide is not one type of crime, but that it consists of a variety of subsets dependent upon the circumstances of the event and the interaction between the victim and the offender. Many of the subsets of homicide (intimate-partners, children (especially the very young), and the elderly) differ from the other in important ways. Understanding that there are differences between various themes of homicide enables one to specifically examine the corresponding preventative measures that not only target the risk factors associated with homicide victimisation and offending, but also the specific types of violence and behaviours associated with an increased risk. As homicide is multi-faceted, a combination of approaches is required that will specifically address some of the different types of homicidal encounters in Australia.

There are two ways to prevent crime. The first is to make crime more difficult to commit, more risky and less rewarding by putting in place measures such as better security, increased surveillance and property marking. This is the most commonly understood type of crime prevention and can be applied to most situations in which crime is likely to occur. This approach targets the crime-prone situation rather than the offender. It is sometimes called <u>situational crime prevention.</u>

For example, situational crime prevention strategies aimed at reducing violence between males could focus on: reducing violence in licensed venues; reducing pub hopping and related violence; closed circuit television; and improved street lighting.

The second approach aims to prevent criminal behaviour. It addresses the underlying social causes of offending and seeks to influence the attitudes and behaviour of those most likely to offend so they are less inclined to do so. This is done by reducing the risk factors long known to be associated with offending (such as poor parenting and school failure) and enhancing protective factors (such as good parenting and school success). This approach targets the potential offender rather than the crime. It is sometimes called <u>social crime prevention or criminality prevention.</u>

In the areas of domestic violence and child abuse and neglect, addressing these issues often requires a multi-disciplinary approach. These are issues that move beyond the realm of the criminal justice system into the health sector. Research suggests that there are two ways of conceptualising the prevention of intimate violence: (1) preventing violence from occurring in the first place; or (2) preventing re-abuse and escalation to lethal violence (Morely & Mullender 1994).

Preventing violence from occurring in the first place is referred to as a primary prevention measure. These measures usually operate at the societal level and are more based in educating the public that domestic violence is unacceptable in any form, emphasising that it is crime that will not go unpunished (Browne & Herbert 1997). Primary prevention specifically attempts to influence the "root causes" of crime through social, economic, health and education policies (Korn, Putt & James 1996).

There is now a move to situate child abuse and neglect within the continuum of interventions which address multiple aspects of family behaviours. As child abuse is a relatively low incidence variable, an evaluation of change in the rate of occurrence requires large study samples and extensive data collection which is a costly exercise. The efficacy of tackling portions of the problem of child abuse apart from broader societal needs is not known. And, perhaps prevention can only come in tandem with efforts to reduce poverty, improve health care and make children's issues a national priority. Increased resources are now being put into early intervention programs across Australia are still in th

In the United States, the Elmira Prenatal/Early Infancy Project is perhaps the best example we have of a fully evaluated longitudinal early intervention program. This program is designed to provide prenatal and postnatal visits by qualified and specifically trained paediatric nurses to rural homes in the vicinity of Elmira, New York. The home visits centre on three major activities: providing parent education, enhancing social support by family and friends, and linking the family with other health and human services. This project has been cited as one of the most rigorous and persuasive studies of the effects of a prevention strategy, and provides particularly strong empirical evidence that child abuse prevention works. A cost savings analysis conducted by the RAND Corporation (Karoly et al 1998) found that while there were no net savings to government or society from families in the lower risk group, savings flowed from single parent and low-income families. These savings, which included reduced welfare, criminal justice expenses and increased tax revenue, exceeded the cost of the program four-fold well before the child's 4th birthday.

There are many examples of early intervention programs that have now been introduced throughout Australia in the city, in the country and in Aboriginal communities. It is still early days for the results of the evaluations.

Whether early intervention should be introduced universally or to "high-risk" families is still a policy dilemma. Lack of evaluation means that we still do not know if programs that appear to "fail" with high risk families could work with lower-risk families and if early intervention might prevent low-risk families from becoming high-risk families.

A key preventative strategy for intimate partner violence is immediate and effective interventions for victims of abuse in order to minimise their risk of re-victimisation. Strategies aimed at preventing abuse from re-occurring are referred to as secondary prevention measures. These will largely take the form of support through "Domestic Violence Crisis Services" operational in all Australian jurisdictions. Such national services assist in the provision of safe emergency housing, information, counselling and assistance during the peak life threatening period which is often when women prepare to leave their violent partner or during the period of estrangement (Wilson & Daly 1993).

Tertiary prevention in this field has traditionally focussed on perpetrator programs for men, either voluntary ('socially mandated') or court mandated (Korn et al. 1996). Men's programs were developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a parallel development to women's refuges and shelters. Some suggest that men's perpetrator programs developed to overcome the 'weaknesses' found in traditional individual, couple or family approaches. New strategies that focus on the perpetrator of the violence had to be developed, given the number of concerns raised regarding couple or family based approaches (Keys Young 1999).

Protective factors can be examined within the following framework:

- increasing the effort required of the offender to commit the violence

- increasing the risk of the offender being apprehended, and

- decreasing the potential rewards.

- eliminating excuses.

While many of the recommendations of the Report have been implemented, there are several inter-related recommendations which have yet to be fully implemented and bear significantly on how we approach the prevention issue.

Recommendation 4 states that *Programs and policies for the prevention and control of violence should be subject to rigorous, independent evaluation and provision for such evaluation should be incorporated in the design and budget of the program.*

The Cambridge-Somerville Youth Study is an example of the need for outcome evaluations. They investigators hypothesised that delinquency arose through general social deprivation. By offering friendly guidance and social support, healthy activities after school, tutoring and medical assistance they thought that this should reduce delinquency. The program was designed according to very strict scientific principles to ensure a valid evaluation. Boys were matched into pairs according to similar age, social background, biological somatotype and temperament. Each boy was then randomly assigned to either a control or treatment group.

After 5.5 years, the results indicated that almost equal numbers of the control and the treatment group did better than had been anticipated at the beginning of the project, indicating that the treatment had little effect. Around 30 years after the experiment, those boys that had been in the treatment group were more likely to have been convicted for crimes, they died an average of five years younger and were more likely to have been diagnosed alcoholic, schizophrenic or manic depressive.

These results suggest that the treatment program was not beneficial, with parts of it being harmful. Most probably, some of the boys from the study bonded together, encouraging each other's deviant values in the same way that deviant parent encourage their sons' deviance by asking for reports of school fights or other types of misbehaviour.

This was one early intervention program to have shown to be detrimental to the lives of the participants. This signals the need for evaluation. Evaluation must not simply consist of process evaluation. Credible **outcome** evaluation must be incorporated into the normal operation of intervention programs. Right from the genesis of any intervention program, a full outcome evaluation must be an integral part.

But is the criminal justice system the best one for the job of early intervention? Are the risk factors for violence not best managed by other sectors of the community? Lower educational achievement, higher unemployment, socio-economic disadvantage, parental neglect and abuse. These are all indicators that fall outside the scope of criminal justice in an

early intervention framework (McDonald, 2000). In fact a recent review of early intervention programs showed that few, if any, were based in the criminal justice sector (Roadmap, c.2000). Is this because crime is only a symptom?

Conclusion

Why we experience certain rates of violence is a real mystery to criminologists, anthropologists, psychiatrists and psychologists. We all have distressing things happen to us, yet the vast overwhelming majority of us do not try to solve the problem through violence. There are obviously some fundamental neurological and sociological unknowns.

From a policy point of view, things like expanding the number of police, giving them better technology, setting longer prison sentences, imposing or abolishing the death penalty have had no effect on the rate of violence, which has remained fairly constant in most countries. Neither money nor science have helped us solve this activity, which is the cause of so much fear in Australia. It seems however, that there are significant issues in education policy and mental health policy - much more so than in justice policy.

I want to propose a 4-part strategy, but there won't be time to go through it all
1. Strengthening social capital
2. Working with people
3. Building partnerships
4. A commitment to an evidence-based approach backed by evaluation.

Focussing on the second point, working with people, we need to be keenly aware of three groups of people

- those who commit violence;
- those who are the victims or have a higher risk than most of being victims;
- those who legitimise and/or promote a culture which is conducive to crime.

By understanding these, and the risk and protective factors that I have discussed we can make significant progress.

We are continually adding to our knowledge about how violence is caused and how it can be prevented. We need to build a solid research base with strong program evaluation to help us know better what works and what doesn't. The future lies both in the further accumulation of accurate information and the implementation of programs to prevent violence.

We have our task cut out for us, but one thing we do know is that anticipating crime of the future and dealing with it is no easy feat. One agency alone cannot deal with the crime problem. A multi-disciplinary approach is required, and the ability to work together towards a common goal. Lets us not also forget that although we have come a long way since the Report was first written in terms of what we know and don't know, there are still many areas where our data and information sources are deficient. In other words, we still

need to push for better data. Without it addressing the crime problem in the future will test us severely. What we know is that however we anticipate crime in the future, it is not going to be a continuation of the past.

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Recommendations from the report*: Violence: Directions for Australia* can be downloaded from:
http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/vda/vda-exec02.html

Additional statistics on violence and crime in Australia (by subject) can be found at:
http://www.aic.gov.au/stats/

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