

Woollahra Community Safety and Crime Prevention Plan 2014 - 2017



Woollahra Community Safety and Crime Prevention Plan

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Executive Summary

The Woollahra Council's Community Safety and Crime Prevention Plan 2014 – 2017 (the Plan) aims to provide a framework of potential strategies that prevent crime, reduce the public's perceived fear of crime and increase community safety in Woollahra.

This Plan is used by Council to inform the four year Delivery Program and annual Operation Plan and is a review and update of the previous Crime Prevention Plan adopted by Council in 2007. 'Community safety' has been added to the Plan as, whilst a reduction in crime results in increased community safety, there are strategies that might increase community safety and the community's *perception* of safety that do not directly reduce crime. Examples of these are activities that protect and promote mental health or activities that foster community connections.

Woollahra Council's *Community Capacity Survey 2012* found that residents have very high levels of agreement that their area has a reputation for being a safe place. Although rates of crime are low in Woollahra and residents' perceptions of safety are high, crimes do still occur. The top 5 most frequent crimes for the Rose Bay Local Area Command in the 12 months 1 September 2012 to 31 August 2013 were (in descending order):

- malicious damage (often in the form of graffiti);
- fraud;
- break and enter a dwelling;
- stealing from a motor vehicle; and
- stealing from a dwelling.

Additional community safety concerns covered by this Plan are suicide prevention and domestic violence. Whilst available statistics regarding these safety issues are low, it is likely that these are prone to under-reporting.

Key strategies to further increase public perceptions of safety and to address crime include:

- raising awareness of home and community safety measures through education and promotion;
- raising awareness of positive mental health through education and skills development;
- identifying priorities for strategic action to decrease crime; and
- identifying priorities for strategic action to decrease fear of crime.

All agencies identified in the Plan as having a role to play in community safety and crime prevention have been consulted prior to finalising the Plan and this final document has been endorsed by the Woollahra Community Safety Committee.

Introduction

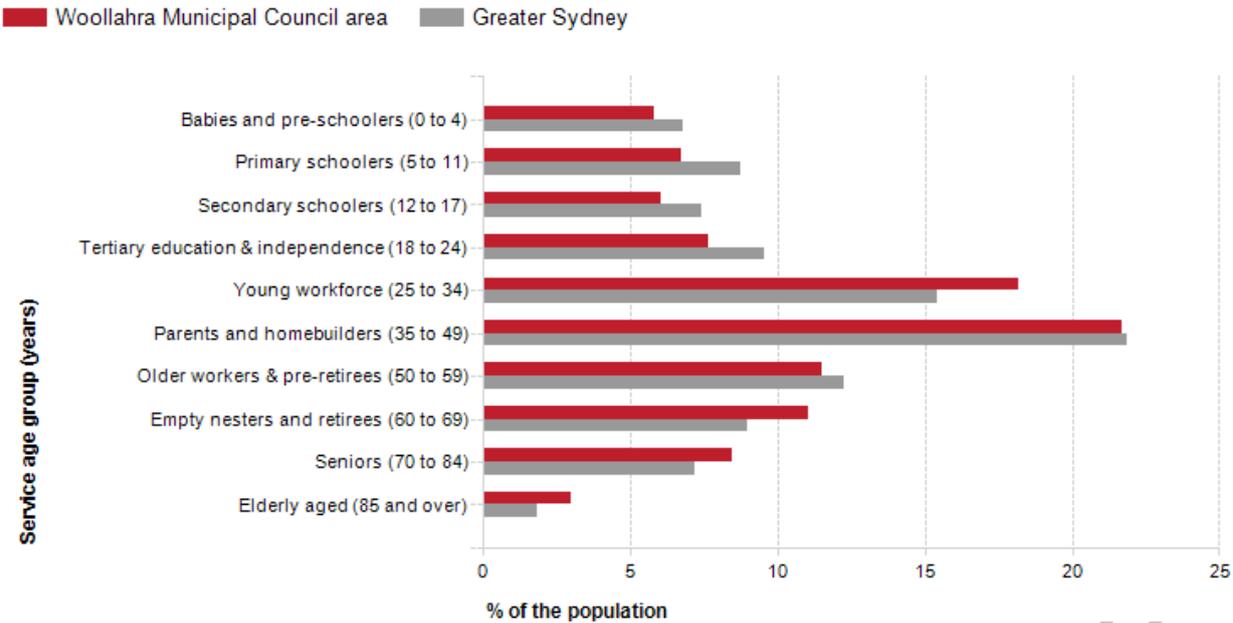
Plan Rationale

The Woollahra Community Safety and Crime Prevention Plan 2014 – 2017 is designed to guide the efforts of Woollahra Council, in partnership with others, in implementing projects to further raise safety and perceptions of safety and to reduce crime in the Woollahra Local Government Area (LGA).

This Plan is a resource for Council’s integrated planning and reporting framework and is used to inform actions within Council’s four year Delivery Program and annual Operation Plans.

The suburbs that are part of the Woollahra LGA include: Bellevue Hill, Darling Point, Double Bay, Edgecliff, Paddington (part), Point Piper, Rose Bay (part), Vaucluse (part), Watsons Bay and Woollahra. Woollahra’s 2011 estimated resident population was 56,986 people, with the age structure breakdown shown as below:

Age structure, 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2011 (Usual residence data)
Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.



This Plan builds on the efforts of many local residents, Councillors, Council staff, local business groups, community groups and the Police who have worked together since the first Police Community Consultative Committee was established in 1988. The role of that Committee was to identify and respond to community concerns about crime and safety. It is now named the Woollahra Community Safety Committee and meets every second month to discuss priorities for action and to coordinate activities throughout the Woollahra Municipality that address crime, safety and perceptions of safety issues.

This Plan details a list of strategies that can improve the safety of the community at large, encourage community members to take action to protect their own safety and to implement projects to safeguard the most vulnerable groups in Woollahra.

Background to Community Safety and Crime Prevention

Safety is the control of hazards to achieve an acceptable level of risk, recognising that it is not possible to eliminate all risk. A community that is safe is one where residents and visitors to the area are protected against physical, social, spiritual, emotional, occupational and psychological harm or undesirable events.

Security is where community members are protected, through crime prevention measures, from harm due to intentional criminal acts such as burglary or vandalism. Crime prevention can be initiated and implemented on three levels - primary, secondary and tertiary crime prevention. This Plan details primary and secondary crime prevention measures, including both situational and social crime prevention. By addressing primary and secondary crime prevention, the need to undertake tertiary crime prevention measures is reduced.

Primary crime prevention means addressing the problem before it happens. This involves reducing opportunities for crime and strengthening community and social structures. Primary prevention focuses on social and situational factors.

Secondary crime prevention aims to change those people who are at high risk of criminal behaviour or at high risk of becoming victims of crime. This involves educational and promotional activities and focuses on social factors.

Tertiary crime prevention means apprehension and punishment of offenders through the criminal justice system.

Situational Safety and Crime Prevention measures aim to reduce criminal activities by making crime more difficult, risky or less rewarding. This is achieved through:

- target hardening, removal and reduction (e.g. installation of security locks, car immobilisers);
- natural or casual surveillance (e.g. strategic placement of features such as windows and lighting so that users can be seen; locating cafes in parks so more people use the area);
- formal surveillance (e.g. increased police patrols, closed circuit TV, security guards);
- control of crime means (e.g. regulating availability of knives, spray cans, alcohol, drugs); and
- access control (e.g. controlling access to certain areas with physical barriers).

Social Safety and Crime Prevention measures aim to prevent crime by influencing the behaviour of potential offenders and influencing the awareness and attitudes of potential victims to improve their safety. This is achieved through:

- social programs and activities that aim to reduce the risk factors associated with offending and victimisation; and
- community education about personal safety.

As well as working to increase safety and reduce actual crime it is important to take steps to change false perceptions about the type and level of crime committed locally. Fear of crime can change people's lifestyles and day to day routines. Perceptions of crime are distorted by sensational media reporting of isolated incidents and lead to changes in behaviour, which ultimately increase risk to individuals. For example, a public place can become less safe when, out of fear, fewer people use it, as with reduced usage the level of natural surveillance is

reduced. Fear of crime can also detract from health and well-being, contribute to social isolation and have an impact on commerce in some areas.

Conversely, when crime figures reveal that there is an unknown or under-recognised problem it may be necessary to change community perceptions by raising awareness of the true nature of local crime and associated risks. For example, crime studies show that it is young men who are most often the victims of crimes such as assault, yet this is not well known in the community. Additionally, hidden crimes such as domestic violence may be under reported and strategies may be needed to raise community awareness and ensure that appropriate services are readily available when victims seek assistance. Mental health services also need to be readily available to protect those at risk of poor mental health and/or suicide.

Community Safety and Crime Profile of Woollahra

Woollahra Council's *Community Capacity Survey 2012* found that residents have very high levels of agreement that their area has a reputation for being a safe place. 25% of residents stated that there were places they would not go for safety reasons, which is fewer than in 2007 (32%). It should be noted that, of the areas that residents stated were unsafe, 42% were not in the Woollahra Municipal Council area. The large majority of residents feel safe walking in their area after dark: 52% of residents feel very safe and 39% somewhat safe, whilst only 1% feel very unsafe. Over half (51%) of residents feel it is 'somewhat-to-very likely' that if they lost a wallet or purse containing \$200, it would be returned with the money in it. 94% of residents stated that they would recommend the area to friends, with safety being one of the key reasons for this view.

Rates of crime in the Woollahra Municipality are low. Of those crimes that occur, the top 5 most frequent for the Rose Bay Local Area Command in the 12 months 1 September 2012 to 31 August 2013 were (in descending order):

- malicious damage (often in the form of graffiti);
- fraud;
- break and enter a dwelling;
- stealing from a motor vehicle; and
- stealing from a dwelling.

Statistics available from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) for these crimes for the calendar year 2012, along with the rate per 100,000 population, the 24- and 60-month trend and how Woollahra LGA ranks compared to other NSW LGAs are shown in the table below. Domestic violence is also included because, whilst Woollahra only ranks 129 out of 141 LGAs, it is likely that this crime is under reported (as it is likely also to be under reported in other LGAs).

Woollahra Local Government Area Recorded Crime Statistics Jan – Dec 2012

Offence type	No. of incidents	Rate per 100,000 population	24-month trend	60-month trend	2012 LGA rank*
Malicious damage to property	458	805	stable	-7%	101
Fraud	358	629	stable	-3%	22
Break & enter dwelling	319	561	stable	-10%	56
Steal form motor vehicle	288	506	stable	-16%	76
Steal from dwelling	240	422	+36%	stable	45
Assault – domestic violence related	77	135	stable	stable	129

*ranks only calculated for NSW LGAs with populations greater than 3,000 people (141 Councils)

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

It should be noted that, whilst malicious damage to property is the most common crime within Woollahra, compared to other LGAs, occurrences are relatively few. Fraud is less common in Woollahra than malicious damage to property but, compared to other LGAs, occurs at a much higher rate (see LGA rank*).

The Role of Council, the Police and the Community

A number of agencies have a role in community safety and the prevention of crime, including Federal, State and Local Government, the Police and the wider community. The combined efforts of these groups contribute to the reduction in and fear of crime in our community. Each of these groups is also represented on the Woollahra Community Safety Committee.

The role of the Woollahra Community Safety Committee is to:

- maintain partnership between Woollahra Council, Rose Bay Police LAC and community members in addressing local crime prevention, community safety and well-being issues.
- advise Woollahra Council on general trends in the community concerning public safety and well-being.
- input into strategies to increase safety and well-being and reduce crime and fear of crime in line with Woollahra Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan 2013 – 2017.
- undertake specific projects as decided by the Committee and in accordance with Council's Delivery Program and Operation Plan with working parties drawn from the Committee membership to steer projects.
- receive Police reports on local crime trends and crime prevention initiatives.

The Role of Council in Community Safety and Crime Prevention

Council has a long commitment to community safety and crime prevention. This commitment is demonstrated through the on-going facilitation of the Community Safety Committee that brings together Council, Police, community groups and residents interested in local safety issues and crime prevention every second month.

Council plays an important role in encouraging community safety by facilitating projects and programs that protect people against crime and promote issues such as mental health, as well as supporting others to undertake community activities that increase and strengthen community partnerships. Council also has an important role in crime prevention including: designing out crime; addressing the social causes of offending; and the promotion of crime prevention behaviours.

'Design Out' Crime

In 2001, the NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning wrote to all Councils with new *Guidelines under Section 79C of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* for 'Designing Out Crime'. Councils are required to consider these guidelines when assessing all Developments Applications (DAs).

Council can assist significantly with situational crime prevention measures that foster community safety by 'designing out' crime:

- from public spaces, by ensuring objects or situations that may create the chances for crime to occur are removed. In partnership with others, Council can encourage well cared for public spaces that encourage a sense of ownership by residents, thereby also increasing safety and perceptions of safety. When trained in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, Council officers can provide safety audits of existing or planned facilities to help prevent crime and reduce risks to residents.

- from private spaces by encouraging residents and commercial property owners to adopt safe design measures for their private property. This occurs through planning controls and the DA approvals process. All residential flat buildings are assessed using State Environmental Planning Policy #65 (SEPP65) that requires an assessment of safety and security issues in flat developments. Larger developments are referred to the local Police Area Command for their comments.

Address Social Causes of Offending

Council can have a role in addressing the underlying social causes of crime by seeking to influence the behaviour of those most likely to offend. This can be done by strengthening social infrastructure, for example youth recreational opportunities and whole of community facilities and libraries, to reduce risk factors associated with offending. Council further supports others in developing programs to address social issues through the Community and Cultural Grants Program.

Promote Crime Prevention Behaviour

Council can assist to maximise community awareness of safety issues through improving the availability and accessibility of safety information. Council may work directly with local residents and community groups to participate in local safety campaigns and activities, as well as the promotion of safety measures through local media.

Other Council Community Safety Functions

Council has a responsibility for traffic management (including parking restrictions, the installation of traffic calming measures and speed limits), tree management (including the removal of unsafe trees and tree pruning) and other community safety issues such as the Swimming Pool Amendment Act 2012 legislation that requires residents to register their pools. Council is also an active member of the Gap Park Masterplan working party. As each of these areas of community safety has alternative plans and consultation methods they are not a part of this Plan.

Actions for Council identified within this Plan are reflected in Council's integrated planning and reporting framework and incorporated within Council's four year Delivery Program and the annual Operational Plans.

The Role of Police in Community Safety and Crime Prevention

Through *community policing* initiatives Police are able to foster close links with residents. For example, Police carry out community safety information programs by engaging in partnerships with residents and business groups through the Community Safety Committee and attending Residents Associations meetings. Police also have Police Transport Commands (PTCs) that patrol all forms of public transport to prevent anti-social behaviour.

Through these mechanisms, Police are more aware of local issues and can then undertake proactive crime prevention and community safety activities tailored to local needs, such as distribution of appropriate crime prevention information and by increasing police patrols of problem places at appropriate times.

Police take a *problem oriented policing* approach to crime through their Pro-active Crime Prevention Teams (PCT). PCTs meet daily to review intelligence received from the local community, analyse crime patterns and direct police patrols to trouble spots. Through PCTs,

Police find local solutions to crime, improve service delivery and accountability and allow community input into the deployment of police resources.

Since 2013, every Local Area Command throughout NSW is now on Facebook. It provides details about how to report crime and has photographs and CCT footage of local criminal activity (www.facebook.com/RoseBayLAC).

Paradoxically improved Police effectiveness in pro-active policing can lead to higher crime figures rather than lower statistics. For example, rises in the incidence of traffic offences or drug detections can indicate that Police are detecting more crime but that does not mean that more crime is occurring. Similarly, a successful community campaign to encourage reporting of crime would also result in an apparent increase in crime statistics.

The Role of the Community in Community Safety and Crime Prevention

The community at large can assist community safety and crime prevention efforts by providing information about crime to Police and by working in partnership with Police through initiatives such as Volunteers in Policing, Residents Associations and Community Safety Committees.

Reporting Crime

An accurate statistical record of the level of crime in a community depends upon crimes being reported to Police. If crimes are not reported they cannot be resolved or prevented. However many victims of crime do not report crime or attempted crime to the police for a variety of reasons. Police have attempted to make it easier for the general public to report crime by setting up hotlines such as:

- PAL (Police Assistance Line 131 444) for minor crimes which are not in progress, do not involve traumatised victims or require urgent police attention or attendance.
- Crime Stoppers (1800 333 000) for reporting information about crime or criminal behaviour anonymously. Police use this information to solve crimes and to apprehend offenders.
- Rose Bay Local Area Command Facebook: www.facebook.com/RoseBayLAC
- Community members can also contact Police Stations directly or use the police, fire, ambulance emergency telephone number of 000.

Residents' Associations

Several versions of neighbourhood associations have taken over from the former Neighbourhood Watch program that has now been disbanded. These groups complete similar work, for example through neighbourhood participation in preventing and reducing property crime and improving personal safety.

Community Safety Committee

By participating in a Community Safety Committee members of the community can identify issues of local concern, and suggest strategies that are appropriate to local circumstances and most likely to be effective in their community.

Community Safety Initiatives

Members of the community can improve community safety by participating in community awareness days and events. This may include, for example, organising a local community barbeque to celebrate Neighbour Day to foster community spirit and consequently reduce people's fear of crime.

Action Plan

The specific crimes and community safety issues identified in section 3 have led to the development of the following action plan. Key strategies to further increase community safety, public perception of safety and to address the most common crimes in Woollahra include:

- raising awareness of home and community safety measures through promotion and education;
- identifying priorities for strategic action to increase community safety;
- identifying priorities for strategic action to decrease crime; and
- identifying priorities for strategic action to decrease fear of crime.

Maintained or improved vigilance combined with yet further raising of the community's perception of safety will continue to ensure Woollahra is, and is perceived to be, a safe place to live.

The issues and actions in the table below are consistent with Council's strategic planning documents and are incorporated in Council's four year Delivery Program and annual Operation Plans.

Crime/safety issue addressed	Action	Rationale	Responsibility	Timeframe	Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Malicious damage (often in the form of graffiti) Fraud Break and enter a dwelling Stealing from a motor vehicle Stealing from a dwelling 	Rose Bay Local Area Command to monitor and report to the Council's Community Safety Committee	To identify issues and raise awareness as required	Lead Agencies: Rose Bay LAC Partner Agency: Community Safety Committee	Ongoing	Awareness campaigns developed as required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Malicious damage (often in the form of graffiti) Fraud Break and enter a dwelling Stealing from a motor vehicle Stealing from a dwelling 	Provide grants to community organisations to support community and cultural services and activities	To fund community activities that provide social recreational alternatives and that foster community connections	Lead agency: Council Partner Agencies: Community groups	Twice each year	Diversionary activities available for the community, increased community trust
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Malicious damage (often in the form of graffiti) 	Promotion of Council's online graffiti reporting tool on the WMC website	To encourage the immediate removal of graffiti	Lead Agency Council Partner Agency: Woollahra community	Ongoing	Reported graffiti removed within 48 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Malicious damage (often in the form of graffiti) 	Youth Services Forum network meetings	To provide young people with other outlets to express themselves	Lead Agency: Youth Services Forum	Every 2 nd month	Youth services aware of services, programs and projects to promote to young people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Malicious damage (often in the form of graffiti) 	Maintenance of public spaces and places	To encourage people to take pride in their neighbourhood and feel safe	Lead Agency: Council	Ongoing	Attractive and well cared for public facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Malicious damage (often in the form of graffiti) 	Police Youth Liaison Officer visits with local schools	To strengthen student/police relationships	Lead Agency: Police	Ongoing	Increased trust of and respect for police amongst students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Malicious damage (often in the form of graffiti) 	Participation in Youth Week planning and activities	To provide young people with alternative recreational activities	Lead Agency Council Partner Agencies: WAYS, Waverley Council	Annually	More young people diverted to healthy recreational activities

Crime/safety issue addressed	Action	Rationale	Responsibility	Timeframe	Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraud • Stealing from a motor vehicle 	Promotion of safety actions, including personal safety	To encourage people to store and dispose of personal details in a secure manner and to lock cars and not leave valuables on display	Lead Agencies: Police, Community Safety Committee Partner agency: Council	As required	A reduction in fraud rates and fewer thefts from motor vehicles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break and enter a dwelling • Stealing from a dwelling 	Promotion of home safety measures to the wider community	To encourage people to close windows, and install window and door locks	Lead Agencies: Police, Community Safety Committee Partner agency: Council	As required	More homes that are more secure, reduced ability for break and enter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break and enter a dwelling 	Awareness programs for seniors	To prevent tricked or forced entry into homes	Lead Agencies: Police, Council	As required	Decreased forced entry statistics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stealing from a motor vehicle 	Well designed and well lit car parks	To reduce the opportunity for theft from cars	Lead Agency: Council	On-going	Fewer thefts from motor vehicles and increased community sense of safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stealing from a motor vehicle 	Educational letter drop on car windows	To raise awareness about not leaving valuables in the car	Lead Agency: Police Partner Agency: Community Safety Committee	As required	Reports of steal from a motor vehicle decreased in areas targeted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicide prevention and mental health promotion 	Continue to develop the community mental health education and information program	Adults and seniors need knowledge to make informed decisions	Lead Agency: Council	On-going	Information about mental health and personal resilience included in Skill Up sessions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicide prevention and mental health promotion 	Information about mental health included in Youth Week and provided to members of the Woollahra Youth Services Forum	Young people need knowledge of mental health support services	Lead Agencies: Council, WAYS	Annually	More young people knowledgeable about where to access mental health support services

Crime/safety issue addressed	Action	Rationale	Responsibility	Timeframe	Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicide prevention and mental health promotion 	Support and develop networks and strategies that aim to reduce suicide	Working in partnerships with other groups and organisations will result in a greater impact	Lead Agencies: Council, Life Line, Black Dog Institute, Rose Bay LAC Partner Agencies: Community Safety Committee, Eastern Sydney Suicide Prevention Network	On-going	More people aware of where to access mental health support services and more organisations able to refer people on
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicide prevention and mental health promotion 	Participation in implementing the Gap Park Masterplan	Providing support and increased prevention of self-harm through physical barriers may deter those ambivalent about self-harm	Lead Agencies: Council, Life Line, Black Dog Institute, Rose Bay LAC Partner Agencies: Community Safety Committee	On-going	CCTV, secure fencing and emergency help lines in place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic violence 	Raise awareness to encourage the reporting of domestic violence	Victims of domestic violence need to be aware that they have options to report in a safe and supportive manner and that domestic violence is unacceptable	Lead Agencies: Council, Eastern Suburbs Domestic Violence Network (ESDVN) Partner Agencies: Police	On-going	Increase in reported rates of domestic violence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic violence 	Support and promotion of White Ribbon Day and the White Ribbon Campaign	To encourage and support more people to be advocates for women's safety	Lead Agency: Council	Annually	Increased numbers of people willing to speak up about domestic violence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic violence 	Promotion of healthy relationships through support for Breaking the Silence program	To prevent young people from developing unsafe relationship patterns	Lead Agency: COSIES Partner Agency: Council	On-going	More primary school students supportive of positive relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic violence 	Training in the LOVE BITES program	Appropriate trained workers are needed to provide the workshops in local schools	Lead Agencies: Council, The Deli Women and Children's Refuge	On-going	More people trained locally able to provide workshops in local high schools

General community safety and crime prevention

Action	Rationale	Responsibility	Timeframe	Outcome
Convene the Community Safety Committee	To maintain the partnership between Woollahra Council, Rose Bay Police LAC and community members	Lead agency: Council, Rose Bay LAC Partner Agencies: Members of the community	Meetings held every 2 nd month	Committee members input into strategies to increase safety and reduce crime and fear of crime and may undertake specific projects as required
Conduct the 'Skill Up' program of training and information sessions	The Woollahra community need knowledge and skills to make informed decisions	Lead agency: Council Partner Agency: Community members	Once a month	Increased numbers of people with knowledge and skills in safety measures eg emergency 1 st aid, learner driver training
Support the Woollahra 50+ Walking Group	To build community networks and connections	Lead agency: Council Partner Agency: Community members	Ongoing	Increased connections and trust between community members, more people sharing outdoor spaces
Promotion of Alcohol Management Programs with the Liquor Accord	To encourage safe and informed practices of licensed premises in the area	Lead Agencies: Liquor Accord, Office of Gaming and Racing, Council	Ongoing	A reduction in the 'last drink' statistics, linking criminal activity to where the offender had their last drink
Promotion and enforcement of New Year's Eve strategic planning including alcohol restrictions	Fewer intoxicated people reduces the likelihood of criminal activity	Lead Agencies: Council, Police	Annually	Reduced New Year's Eve crime statistics, increased community perception of safety
Provision of information about community safety on Council's website and in the Wentworth Courier	The wider community needs knowledge to make informed decisions	Lead Agency: Council	Ongoing	More people more aware of personal safety measures and support services
Promote and support community members to participate in Neighbour Day	To increase community connections	Lead Agency: Council Partner Agencies: Local individuals and groups	Annually	Increased perception of community safety as more people are connected with each other
Inclusion of questions about perceptions of safety in the Community Capacity Survey	To monitor perceptions against benchmarks to identify future activities	Lead Agency: Council	Every few years	Council able to develop activities in response to perceptions

References

Woollahra Council, Community Safety Plan, 2007

Woollahra Municipal Council website

Woollahra Community Capacity Survey 2012

Woollahra Social and Cultural Plan 2013 - 2023

Rose Bay Local Area Command, statistics 1990 – 2009

Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research Statistics web site -

http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll_bocsar.nsf/pages/bocsar_onlinequeries

NSW Police Force website:

http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/community_issues/crime_prevention/safer_by_design