

CPTED AND URBANISM – SOME TENSIONS

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(This paper draws heavily upon the contents of a Chapter entitled 'CPTED and Urbanism - what is it?' written by Wendy Bell for the recently published book "Urban Voices - Celebrating Urban Design in Australia' Editors John Byrne, Bill Chandler and Bruce Echberg et al for the Urban Design Forum Incorporated 2013. The author has the approval of the Editors to reprint sections of this chapter).

It provides a brief overview of the history of CPTED in each State of Australia, outlines some of the recent evaluations of CPTED application, and describes some of the tensions between different disciplines and sectors involved in the application of CPTED. The integration of CPTED into the micro and macro levels of urban design and planning throughout Australia and the adoption of CPTED principles within a social sustainability framework of good urban planning and design, through initiatives such as Local Government's role in Health and Wellbeing, 'Healthy Places and Spaces' and 'Greenstar Communities Places for People' shows that the relationship and contribution of CPTED to good city-making is strong.

What is it?

The practice of *Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)* emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s asserting that the built environment was an important determinant of crime. Early proponents were C. Ray Jeffery (1971) concurrently with the 'defensible space' theory of Oscar Newman (1973) and influenced the British situational crime prevention approach.

Newman saw that the design of much public housing encouraged crime and he translated his studies of residential areas in New York into four principles (Newman, 1975).

They are:

- **territoriality:** the capacity of the physical environment to create a feeling of neighbourhood and encourage residents to exercise surveillance over the area of defensible space:
- **surveillance:** the capacity of physical design to enable residents to casually and continually survey a public area:
- **image:** the capacity of design to improve building image and avoid stigma:
- **environment:** the influence of a neighbour's geographical juxtaposition with safe or unsafe areas.

Since that time, as its body of knowledge has grown, it has increasingly come to influence what is seen as part of the best practice design of urban environments.

The following section outlines the recognition of CPTED internationally and in Australia over the past thirty years.

How has it evolved?

The term is now widely used throughout the western world and, while 'CPTED' was replaced with '*Safety by Design*' in the UK and by '*Safer Design*' in some states of Australia, its principles were widely embraced by the 1980s amongst urban planners, criminologists and the police. By the late 1980s several state crime prevention unit personnel including Jan Ryan in Victoria, Sue Millbank in South Australia (SA) and Paul Cozens in Western Australia (WA) had promoted CPTED and started to forge links with Planning departments and the development sector.

New South Wales led the way in terms of the integration of CPTED into planning policy through its *Crime Prevention Guidelines* under section 79C of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* which was updated by the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning in 2001. For some time, an associated training program in *Safer by Design* has been run by the NSW Police Service to enable police, councils and practitioners to understand and apply the principles contained in these guidelines.

In Adelaide, the **South Australian** Crime Prevention Unit commissioned research in the Adelaide CBD (Bell Planning Associates 1991) and later a study of the application of CPTED in the outer suburbs of Adelaide (1992). The South Australian Government through Planning SA produced its first a CPTED Guide in 2002 and later incorporated the principles in planning policies which have been progressively adopted by many local government authorities in this state. CPTED training has been conducted regularly over the past 20 years, and many local authorities have trained planning staff or refer development applications to community safety staff for comment as part of development assessment.

The **Victorian** Government through Crime Prevention Victoria within its Justice Department was an early proponent of CPTED and piloted the CPTED training part of the national CPTED Framework in Victoria and commissioned the first set of *Safer Design Guidelines* for local governments in Victoria in collaboration with the DSE (Bell Planning Associates 2001). The final version of these guidelines (DSE 2005) was prepared by Steve Thorne, an Urban Designer. All Victorian Planning Schemes have been amended to require consideration of safety in the design of new proposals. As an indication of that Government's commitment to CPTED, it commissioned an inquiry into the Locally Based Approaches to Community Safety and Crime Prevention to examine the extent to which CPTED principles are used in local governments and planning jurisdictions and to report by June 2013. The scope of this inquiry was to see:

- how widely CPTED and the Safer Design Principles are incorporated in planning at a local level;
- how much planners and design professionals liaise with stakeholders skilled in crime prevention;

- whether local government planners, police, design professionals and other relevant stakeholders are trained in the theory and application of CPTED and safer design principles; and
- whether the Guidelines should be subject to a greater level of planning and urban design regulation.

This inquiry concluded that a number of challenges prevent the Guidelines from being implemented:

- whilst local government personnel were aware of the Guidelines they were not applying them development assessment or using them in developing their own local projects; and
- there is a lack of awareness of the Guidelines by developers and other professional groups.

The following principles underpinned the Committee's recommendations and are summarised as follows:

1. Crime prevention is more effective when part of an holistic approach to health, sustainability, community safety and 'liveability' as well as justice measures.
2. Safer design principles need to be implemented in conjunction with other crime prevention approaches.
3. Community capacity building and social capital are essential and integral aspects of addressing community safety issues in contemporary society.
4. In addressing crime prevention and community safety including safer design principles, evidence based strategies are essential.
5. A 'one size fits all' approach to applying safer design principles/CPTED does not address the specific issues, needs and requirements of individual local communities.
6. Effective crime prevention and community safety interventions require:
 - an understanding of the causes and factors leading to crime and antisocial behaviour
 - a unified service delivery model rather than agencies and those in local government working in silos;
 - an applied commitment to evidence based practice research, evaluation, and performance measurement supported by up-to-date data; and
 - the empowerment and participation of local communities in decision making, such as through safer design/CPTED audits.
7. Effective use of safer design principles and CPTED requires police to take a proactive community focused approach with regards to designing out crime, utilising specialist knowledge and training in this area.
8. Local government authorities are best placed to understand and reflect the particular needs and problems of their local community and to generate and deliver the most appropriate prevention interventions for their local communities including the application of the Guidelines.

In short, Victoria has monitored the application of CPTED in that state and the lessons learnt are of value to the progress of CPTED in other states and territories.

The **ACT** Government was active in the application of CPTED with the Attorney General's Department preparing one of the early Community Safety Strategies incorporating CPTED principles (1993). The ACT Planning Authority commissioned research into urban design and crime prevention (Bell, Gaston and Woodroffe 1995) with the centre of Canberra being the subject of a series of evaluations of the success of CPTED over the following 15 years. The ACT Government continues to require CPTED principles to be an integral part of major projects and reviews of land use.

Queensland was noted for its Centre for Crime Policy and Public Safety at Griffith University where Ross Homel also took an interest in CPTED and its implementation, as did John Minnery at QUT and later the University of Queensland. The Gold Coast City was one of the first councils in Queensland to adopt a CPTED Code in the mid 1990s. By 2007, the Queensland Government, principally through its Police Service but in partnership with the state planning agency, had developed a set of CPTED Guidelines (authored by John Byrne, an urban designer / planner) and an Implementation Guide. CPTED has since been integrated into State Planning Scheme policies.

In **Western Australia**, the Ministry of Justice took responsibility for crime prevention policy and, since 1991, the University of WA Crime Research Centre has been active in this field and Perth City Council developed CPTED planning policy in the early 1990s. Paul Cozens at the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Curtin University has been a long term expert in CPTED and its application to the fields of urban design and planning. There is now a Department of Corrections (DOC) CPTED strategy, a set of DOC planning guidelines and a DOC planning bulletin PB79 in that state. Of note is the Western Australian Planning Commission's document of 2006, 'Designing out Crime Planning Guidelines', which has been cited as an excellent example of a compliant guideline for the purposes of potential accreditation as a 'Greenstar Communities Places for People' certification being piloted by the Green Building Council of Australia.

In **Tasmania** crime prevention policies have been under the auspice of the Tasmanian Police Force. Some local authorities including Glenorchy, Hobart, Clarence and Launceston Councils have adopted CPTED principles and there continues to be a strong link between the Police Department and local government. The leading local authority is understood to be the Glenorchy Council which actively applies CPTED to public realm projects and involves the police in design and planning.

The **Northern Territory** government established Regional Crime Prevention Councils and funded regional crime strategies which included CPTED projects and training. The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment developed CPTED guidelines for incorporation in their Planning Scheme in the mid 2000s.

Now, all state and territory governments have incorporated CPTED into planning policies and have guidelines in one form or another. Many universities include the subject in planning and urban design courses, so it is a widely accepted practice in urban planning and design.

Some Tensions

In the early days of CPTED application in Australia, it was largely academics, the police and criminologists who led the way, with urban designers and planners and their respective jurisdictions starting to adopt it in the mid to late 1990s onwards. Early tensions were apparent between those in crime prevention jurisdictions and criminological research, which had long associations with the crime prevention role of CPTED and rightly felt that they 'owned' CPTED as a crime prevention technique. On the other side, those in the built environment, such as planners, architects and urban designers considered that it was a field of urban design and planning policy which was their domain. This led to some difficulties early on as Crime Prevention Units of State Government agencies were keen to implement CPTED and develop urban design guidelines which were not readily embraced by State planning bodies. Those practitioners who bridged this gap were influential in implementing CPTED into urban planning and design. Of note is the fact the several of the authors of the more recent State Government CPTED/Safer Design Guidelines are Urban Designers (Bell, Thorne and Byrne) collaborating with Crime Prevention and Police jurisdictions and building bridges within the city-making domains.

However, the Australian and New Zealand Crime Prevention Ministerial Forum was established in the mid 1990s and had crime prevention and the built environment as one of its priorities which helped to progress CPTED policy in states and territories. By the late 1990s, it had developed a Policy Statement on CPTED which represented a commitment of all Australian Ministers to embed CPTED principles in the planning frameworks of their Jurisdictions to continue the process of designing out crime. The Framework had 3 components:

1. Overarching Principles of CPTED
2. An implementation framework and Commitment to Implementation; and
3. Source documents and Tools to assist in CPTED implementation including a Model CPTED Code, a set of Model CPTED Guidelines, A Community Safety Checklist for assessing planning applications and Training resources.

This led eventually to a commitment by those State and Territory Governments that had not already done so, to embrace CPTED as part of urban design and planning policies. It also facilitated the preparation by local governments of CPTED policies and guidelines; Brisbane City's being one example.

The Federal Government took a number of initiatives in this field and in crime data mapping, although little work was done to link crime statistics with urban design features until the then *Urban Futures Research Program* commissioned a report from Bell and Gaston on Crime Safety and Urban Form (AGPS 1995).

An early comparative analysis of the application of CPTED principles in Australia commissioned by the Local Government Associates of Queensland revealed that CPTED was actively applied in those local governments where the guideline documents were concise, where local communities were involved in their preparation and where there was support of the senior planning staff.

Some myths and facts

In spite of the “coming together” of CPTED and urban design dialogues, some sectors of the development industry have falsely claimed that CPTED principles justify ‘gated communities’ and culs-de-sac developments which they claim are safer than other types of more traditional developments. However, research undertaken in the UK has revealed that there is little empirical evidence to prove one form of street layout is much safer than another. There is however a need for more local research into the benefits of the application of CPTED. In January 2014 the University of Adelaide commenced a collaborative research project between the Faculties of Architecture, Social Science and Law to explore ways of preventing crime through environmental design for public spaces such as parklands, streets, alleyways, and parks in the City of Adelaide. The project comprises a review of existing CPTED literature, including relevant statistics, frameworks, approaches, guidelines and codes relevant to these case studies, investigation of applications of these guidelines and impact they may have, identification of gaps which may lead to further research.

The link between crime, safety and public areas is complex but there is general agreement that there are particular areas and elements which are more vulnerable than others, and CPTED now promotes management responsibility and ownership of public spaces playing a major role in increasing the safety of places.

CPTED is not a single focus, universal solution to crime, given the complexity and variety of ways of thinking about crime in the community. The physical environment can be planned, designed or manipulated so that the opportunities for some forms of crime can be controlled, particularly at the micro neighbourhood level. The major crime prevention approaches of relevance to urban form, such as CPTED, are concerned primarily with the local or neighbourhood setting rather than the city as a whole. Several state planning jurisdictions have specifically incorporated CPTED principles into local policy settings such as *Streets and Homes* (Vic 2002). The ‘defensible space’ theory of Newman (1972) was concerned primarily with crime prevention in public housing, while the ‘second generation’ CPTED approach purports to be a means of understanding the relationship between environment and human behaviour and crime.

However, none of these approaches are aimed at the macro- or city-wide scale, although links have been drawn at this scale, between crime, urban form and related socio-demographic characteristics of the population. Studies of the macro-environment emphasise the characteristics of urbanisation, city size, population density and urban structure as they relate to crime. The nature of activities or land use patterns across a city and the distribution of attractors are also linked to levels and patterns of crime. Activities generated by recreational and entertainment venues, particularly where these are concentrated, are linked to higher levels of outdoor violence and vandalism. The proximity of businesses and strip shopping is also an indicator of higher crime levels. This has relevance to aspects of urban form such as housing policy, public housing allocation policies, and employment and facility location.

In the studies at the micro or neighbourhood scale, there is overwhelming agreement that socioeconomic factors are more influential than environmental factors in the levels and patterns of crime, so CPTED practitioners should be wary of exaggerating its role as a crime prevention technique, but rather should view it as an integral part of good urban design at the micro-level.

Conclusion

In conclusion CPTED is now well integrated into the micro level of urban design and planning policies in all states and territories at either the state or local government level.

It is now part of the Social Planning content of many design and planning courses at Universities in Australia and is the subject of numerous training courses run by the private and public sectors.



Figure 1: Health Spaces and Places Heart Foundation



CPTED has become one of the emerging threads of a more integrated approach to health, wellbeing and social sustainability with connections, for example, to the *Healthy Places and Spaces* guide prepared by the Planning Institute of Australia, *Healthy by Design* by the Heart Foundation (Victoria) and the Green Building Council's pilot guideline for *Greenstar Communities Places for People* accreditation for developers and all levels of government.

However, there is a need for more empirical evidence to demonstrate and/or amend a link between CPTED implementation in particular settings and crime levels. As CPTED becomes embedded in planning systems, there is a risk that police agencies will withdraw resources

and “delegate” the field to the planners, thus denying or weakening the on-the-ground CPTED role of police officers and the flow of data to support or refine planning practice.

CPTED started with a focus on the physical environment as part of a Situational Crime Prevention Approach. However, it was in the early 1990s that a ‘Second generation’ CPTED emerged where management and maintenance were acknowledged as equally relevant and, in recent years, the social context had been given a greater emphasis, with research in the UK showing that community activities and access to human services were factors that affect crime and perceptions of safety.

Around Australia a significant number of academics and practitioners continue to publish articles and undertake research on the subject. Some state governments including Victoria have taken a particular interest in monitoring progress in the implementation of CPTED at the local government level.

The relationship and contribution of CPTED to good city-making is strong.

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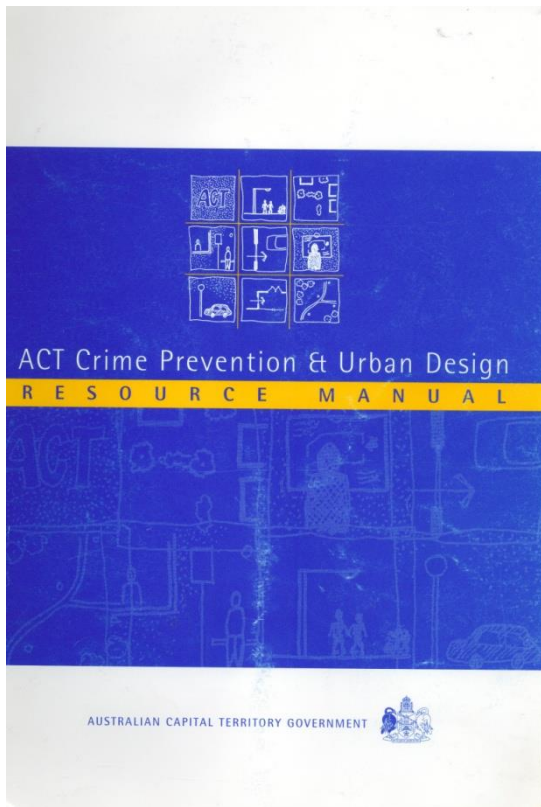


Figure 2: ACT Crime Prevention and Urban Design Guidelines

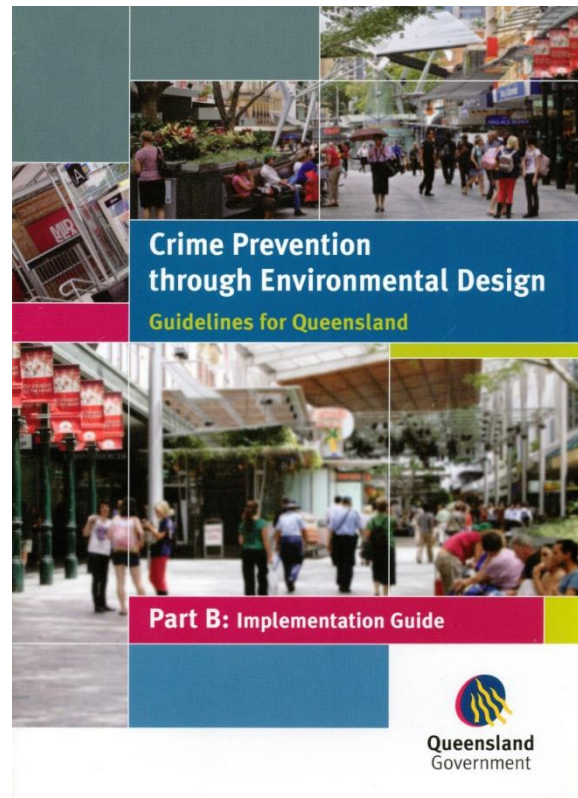


Figure 3: Queensland CPTED Guidelines

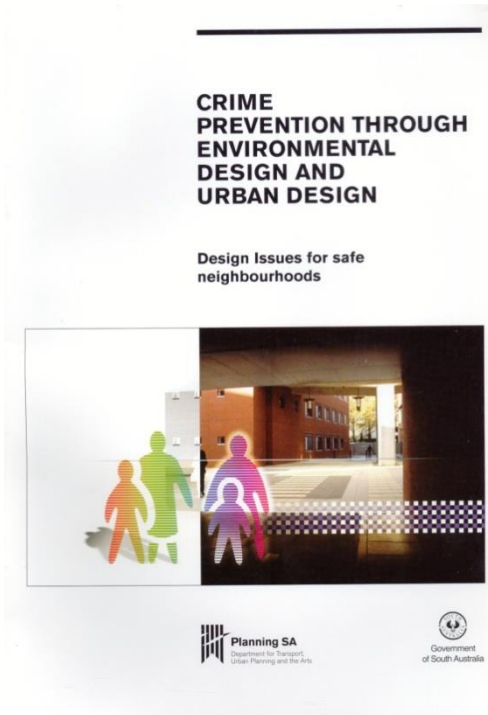


Figure 4: South Australian CPTED guidelines



Figure 5: Safer Design Guidelines for Victoria

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