



**CRIME PREVENTION
STRATEGY**



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

We are committed to enhancing our wonderful lifestyle we enjoy in Lake Macquarie and a big part of this is ensuring that our community remains a safe place to live, work and raise our families. Council will continue to work closely with NSW Police and our Lake Macquarie Police District to ensure Lake Macquarie is a safer community.

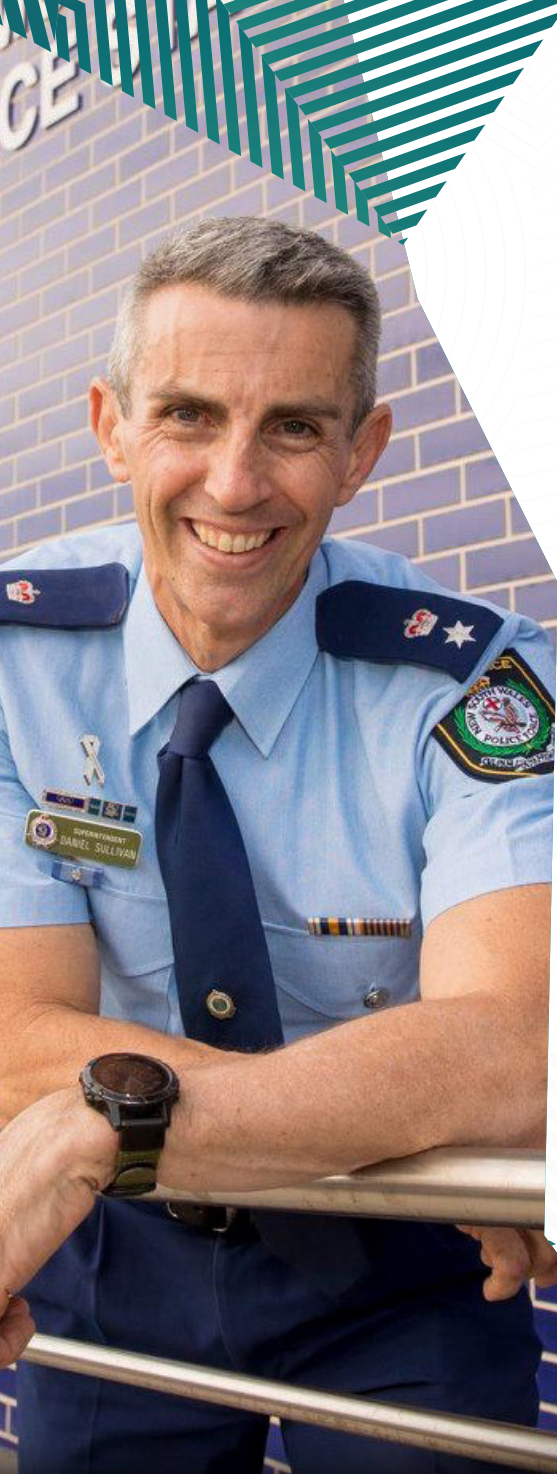
I'm very pleased to present this plan, which outlines Council's focus and steps out our role in partnership with police, community service providers, other government agencies and our community. The role of our community cannot be underestimated in preventing crime and we need your support for our work and the police to succeed in reducing crime across our City.

Through this strategy we will see a focus on the prevention of motor vehicle theft, fraud and malicious damage to property. I believe we are well placed to help manage crime prevention for these focus areas and we will do all we can to strengthen our sense of safety right across our community.

We have an incredible sense of community in our local neighbourhoods. By working together, we will help continue to prevent crime across our city and make Lake Macquarie an even safer place to live.

Councillor Kay Fraser
Lake Macquarie Mayor





MESSAGE FROM THE NSW POLICE DISTRICT COMMANDER

The Lake Macquarie Police District enjoys an excellent relationship with the Lake Macquarie City Council and is very pleased to be partners in the development of the Lake Macquarie Crime Prevention Strategy 2021–2024. The strategy builds on our efforts to continually improve the safety and quality of life of residents and visitors to the Lake Macquarie Local Government Area (LGA).

The Lake Macquarie Police District has a prevention first mindset when it comes to crime and this strategy will support the actions identified in targeting specific areas of violence, crime and fear in our community.

This strategy is a key vehicle of collaboration between our government and non-government partners and will enable us all to continue the already impressive reductions in crime rates across the LGA. Community engagement is the foundation on which local policing should be built. The community support that is required for us to police effectively is only possible through ongoing community engagement.

This strategy aligns with the crime prevention mindset of the Lake Macquarie Police District and highlights the need for community focused, co-ordinated, multi-faceted strategies and programs to address the issues identified. Our capability to partner with Lake Macquarie City Council has been increased with the introduction of our Crime Prevention Unit and our Aged Crime Prevention Officer (ACPO). The ACPOs are members of the Police District Crime Prevention Unit, whose primary responsibility is preventing, disrupting and responding to the exploitation, abuse and neglect of vulnerable people in the Ageing, Disability and Homelessness sectors.

Robert Peel the father of modern policing remarked, 'the police are the community and the community are the police'.

Community support for police and the work they do is fundamental to our success in reducing crime and making Lake Macquarie safer. I encourage everyone in Lake Macquarie to embrace the Lake Macquarie City Council Crime Prevention Strategy and to provide support for their community. With this support I am confident we can build on our previous success and sustain Lake Macquarie as the wonderful community we all enjoy.

Daniel Sullivan APM
Commander, Lake Macquarie Police District

WHY WE NEED A CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGY

Local government has an important role in community safety and crime prevention. This reflects a growing recognition that local councils are well placed to lead community crime prevention initiatives

(Australian Institute of Criminology 2012. Effective Crime Prevention Interventions for Implementation by Local Government. AIC Reports – Research & Public Policy Series 120. NSW Department of Attorney General & Justice).

Some of the reasons include:

- ① Research shows that a great deal of crime is very local in nature, and there is growing evidence about the increased effectiveness of crime prevention activities developed at a local level
- ① Local government is well placed to coordinate and manage crime prevention responses across the community through its existing mechanisms such as community consultative processes

- ① Local government is the level of government closest to and reflective of the needs of communities. Therefore, there is an increasing community expectation that local government will assume some level of responsibility for initiating or directing action for crime issues that are seen to be affecting local amenity and quality of life
- ① Local government frequently has the most appropriate management infrastructure and skill base for delivering the multi-agency programs that are often required.

It should be noted that the literature on crime prevention, while acknowledging the important role of local government, acknowledges local government's limited ability to effect change.



CONTEXT OF CRIME IN NSW AND LAKE MACQUARIE



In Australia, property crime rates have experienced a significant decline from around the turn of the millennium.

Between 2001-2013
VEHICLE THEFT

↓ **62%**

Between 2001-2013
BURGLARY

↓ **53%**

Between 2001-2013
ROBBERY

↓ **56%**

(Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) 2012/2016. Australian crime: Facts and figures 2011/2014. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology).

STATISTICAL INFORMATION FOR NSW INDICATES

between 2000-2012
THEFT

↓ **50%**

between 2000-2012
ROBBERY

↓ **33%**

Like most other Australian states and territories, NSW is currently in the midst of the largest and most protracted decline in crime on record; an experience it shares with New Zealand, Canada, the USA and much of Western Europe.

In Lake Macquarie between April 2016 – March 2020



occurrences of assault (non-domestic related), sexual offences (against children), break and enter non-dwelling, fraud, steal from retail store, drug offences and intimidation, stalking/harassment offences.



occurrences of robberies, steal from person, sexual offences (against adults) and incidents of domestic related assault.

RISE OF CYBERCRIME

The Australian Signals Directorate's Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) compiles reports from individuals, businesses and government departments about a range of different themed scams, online frauds and phishing campaigns (including most recently COVID-19 related information). The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC) Scamwatch page also has helpful information about different types of scams and how to prevent yourself becoming a victim. Cybercrime actors are pivoting their online criminal methods to take advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic.



On average each month, the ACSC receives about 4400 cybercrime reports through ReportCyber, and responds to 168 cyber security incidents. Since 10 March 2020, the ACSC has:



received more than 95 cybercrime reports (approximately two per day) about Australians losing money or personal information to COVID-19 themed scams and online frauds



responded to 20 cyber security incidents affecting COVID-19 response services and/or major national suppliers in the current climate



disrupted over 150 malicious COVID-19 themed websites, with assistance from Australia's major telecommunications providers, Google and Microsoft.

Those engaged in cybercrime activities continue to rapidly adapt their techniques in response to changes in the current environment. The ACSC is observing new phishing campaigns that align with breaking developments, such as government relief payments or public health guidance, within days, even hours, of these announcements occurring. Cybercriminals are also amending previously used methodologies or widespread scam campaigns with a COVID-19 theme. The ACSC strongly encourages all organisations and individuals to remain vigilant against the threat of COVID-19 themed cybercrime activity, including sophisticated scams, phishing emails and malicious websites.



LOCAL CRIME PRIORITIES FOR LAKE MACQUARIE

Total number of offences, trends, state ranking and comparison analysis

The following data (Table 1) has been obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics – NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR). In addition, the information presented ranks local government areas against crime categories supplied by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

CRIME CATEGORY

CRIME CATEGORY	OCT 2016- SEPT 2017		OCT 2017- SEPT 2018		OCT 2018- SEPT 2019		3 YEAR TREND	3 YEAR AVERAGE RATE	3 YEAR NSW AVERAGE RATE	VARIANCE LAKE MACQUARIE RATE	CURRENT NSW RANKING (120 LGAS)
	INCIDENTS	RATE***	INCIDENTS	RATE***	INCIDENTS	RATE***					
Assault (non-domestic violence)	610	300.4	731	359.4	680	334.4	Stable	331.4	409.1	23% Less	67
Assault (alcohol related)	416	204.9	460	226.2	426	209.5	Stable	213.5	255.3	19% Less	Not available
Robbery	39	19.2	40	19.7	49	24.1	Stable	21	31.8	51% Less	54
Sexual Offences against Adults	77	48.9	132	83.8	104	66.0	Stable	66.2	176.2	166% Less	52
Sexual Offences against Children	324	708.1	340	742.6	402	878.1	Up 14%	776.2	548.6	41% More	Not available
Break and Enter Dwelling	717	353.1	660	324.5	641	315.2	Stable	330.9	342.9	4% Less	52
Break and Enter Non-dwelling	290	142.8	322	158.3	307	151.0	Stable	150.7	132.5	14% More	62
Motor Vehicle Theft	563	277.3	539	265.0	508	249.8	Stable	264	168.9	56% More	16
Steal from Motor Vehicle	1188	585.0	1206	593.0	1098	539.9	Stable	572.6	492.7	16% Less	26
Steal from Retail Store	768	378.1	698	343.2	801	393.9	Stable	371.7	321.7	16% More	27
Steal from Dwelling	531	261.5	470	231.1	465	228.6	Down 6.5%	240.4	247.7	3% Less	71
Steal from Person	76	37.4	59	29.0	59	29.0	Stable	31.8	54.5	71% Less	50
Fraud	1226	603.7	1492	733.6	1380	678.5	Stable	671.9	650.8	5% More	13
Malicious Damage to Property	1883	927.0	1898	933.2	1524	749.4	Stable	869.8	756.6	15% More	56
Disorderly Conduct	291	143.3	311	152.9	309	151.9	Stable	149.4	257.8	73% Less	81*
Drug Offences	663	326.4	735	361.4	947	465.6	Up 19.4%	384.5	613.8	60% Less	81**
Intimidation, Stalking and Harassment	812	399.7	871	428.3	879	432.2	Stable	420.1	410	3% More	68
Liquor Offences	56	27.6	73	35.9	52	25.6	Stable	29.7	146	392% Less	111

* Item defined as Offensive Conduct in the Local Government Area Ranking Tool

** Item defined as Possession and/or use of Cannabis in the Local Government Area Ranking Tool

*** Rate: calculated per 100,000 people

<http://bocd.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/bocd/cmd/ranking/Process> (viewed online 20/2/2020).



OFFENCES IN LAKE MACQUARIE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Over three years from October 2016 to September 2019, there are seven categories where the rate of offences (per 100,000) is higher in Lake Macquarie when compared to the NSW region. These offences include:

- ⊗ Motor Vehicle Theft (156%)
- ⊗ Sexual Assault against Children (141%)
- ⊗ Steal from Retail Store (116%)
- ⊗ Malicious Damage to Property (115%)
- ⊗ Break and Enter Non-dwelling (114%)
- ⊗ Fraud (105%)
- ⊗ Intimidation, Stalking and Harassment (103%).

Of 120 local government areas in NSW, Lake Macquarie ranks:

- ⊗ Thirteenth (13) for the offence of Fraud
- ⊗ Sixteenth (16) for the offence of Motor Vehicle Theft
- ⊗ Twenty-sixth (26) for the offence of Steal from Motor Vehicle
- ⊗ Twenty-seventh (27) for the offence of Steal from Retail Store.

In all other categories where NSW ranking is available, Lake Macquarie ranks outside the top 50.

NSW Office of Local Government (June 2014) classifies Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Newcastle and Wollongong as Regional Town/City (Group 5) in their report, Comparative Information on NSW Local Government.

CRIME CATEGORY

CRIME CATEGORY	LAKE MACQUARIE OCT 2018- SEPT 2019		AVERAGE RATE OF 4 LIKE COUNCILS	VARIANCE LAKE MACQUARIE RATE AGAINST AVERAGE RATE	MAITLAND OCT 2018- SEPT 2019		NEWCASTLE OCT 2018- SEPT 2019		WOLLONGONG OCT 2018- SEPT 2019	
	INCIDENTS	RATE*	RATE	%	INCIDENTS	RATE*	INCIDENTS	RATE*	INCIDENTS	RATE*
Assault (non-domestic violence)	680	334.4	442.9	Less by 32%	351	433.4	1088	670.1	711	333.6
Assault (alcohol related)	426	209.5	282.1	Less by 34%	238	293.9	623	383.7	514	241.2
Robbery	49	24.1	31	Less by 28%	13	16.1	84	51.7	69	32.4
Sexual Offences against Adults	104	66.0	125.4	Less by 90%	212	261.8	403	248.2	370	173.6
Sexual Offences against Children	402	878.1	760.3	More by 15%	179	849.5	257	785.7	242	527.8
Break and Enter Dwelling	641	315.2	410.9	Less by 30%	325	401.3	1014	624.5	645	302.6
Break and Enter Non-dwelling	307	151.0	186.7	Less by 23%	194	239.5	398	245.1	237	111.2
Motor Vehicle Theft	508	249.8	263.6	Less by 5%	200	246.9	563	346.8	449	210.7
Steal from Motor Vehicle	1098	539.9	730.8	Less by 35%	485	598.8	1864	1148.1	1356	636.2
Steal from Retail Store	801	393.9	518.6	Less by 31%	479	591.4	1005	619	1002	470.1
Steal from Dwelling	465	228.6	338.9	Less by 48%	307	379.1	838	516.1	494	231.8
Steal from Person	59	29.0	42.8	Less by 47%	22	27.2	148	91.2	51	23.9
Fraud	1380	678.5	679.2	Equal to rate	442	545.8	1583	975	1103	517.5
Malicious Damage to Property	1524	749.4	897.7	Less by 19%	738	911.2	1921	1183.2	1592	747
Disorderly Conduct	309	151.9	251.8	Less by 65%	235	290.2	464	285.8	595	279.2
Drug Offences	947	465.6	633.2	Less by 35%	591	729.7	1173	727.5	1300	610
Intimidation, Stalking and Harassment	879	432.2	484.9	Less by 12%	520	642.1	761	468.7	845	396.5
Liquor Offences	52	25.6	67.2	Less by 162%	37	45.7	121	74.5	262	122.9

*Rate: calculated per 100,000 people



COMPARISON OF OFFENCE RATES AMONG 'LIKE' LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS

When compared with three other local government areas having the same NSW Office of Local Government classification Regional Town/City (Group 5 – Maitland, Newcastle and Wollongong), there are three crime categories in which Lake Macquarie's rate is either higher or on par with the average rate of the four areas including:



Motor Vehicle Theft

Fraud

Sexual Offences against Children.

For the remainder of the offences listed, Lake Macquarie's rate is less than the average of the four local government areas by at least 12 per cent. In two thirds of the categories (12=67%), Lake Macquarie's rate is more than a quarter less than the average rate across like Council areas in these crime categories.

Based on the comparison of crime statistics (BOCSAR) and rankings provided by NSW Office of Local Government and Council's capacity to impact on rates of the offence, the two crime categories of **Motor Vehicle Theft** and **Fraud** are recommended for inclusion in the Lake Macquarie Crime Prevention Strategy.

In addition to the two priority crime categories identified through consultation with NSW Police, the crime category of Malicious Damage to Property (Graffiti and Anti-social Behaviour) has also been included due to the high rate of occurrence of this crime type across the City. In the year from April 2019–March 2020, BOCSAR data reports there were 1508 offences, which represents a figure at least 5 per cent higher than across NSW (BOCSAR 2020). While there has been a reduction in the number of reported offences, the situation remains stubbornly high and warrants the continuing commitment of Council to address this crime type through established partnerships and operational plans.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Council is committed in educating the community about domestic and family violence in all forms and strengthening the response to family violence through increased collaborations between services. As such, Domestic and Family Violence (D&FV) forms part of Council’s Key Priority Area 1: Keeping our children safe, in the *Child and Family Strategy 2021-2024*. While D&FV is not specifically identified in this strategy, Council officers work closely together on a range of initiatives to prevent, detect and resolve D&FV. Council also works closely with the Lake Macquarie Domestic Violence Committee to enhance service collaboration, host events and campaigns to increase awareness in the community, and advocate for increased funding and support for our local area.

CRIME PRIORITIES SELECTED FOR THIS STRATEGY

Lake Macquarie City Council has a proven record for the delivery of crime prevention programs to reduce crime, demonstrating the necessary capacity and expertise to contribute to a reduction in crime in the area. With regard to the identified crime categories (i.e. Motor Vehicle Theft and Fraud) Council has the necessary experience, resources and partnerships to contribute to further reductions in the number and rate of these offences in the area. Council can demonstrate it is well positioned to play a lead role in producing further reductions in these crime categories.

After completing an analysis of crime occurrences and rates using available data, the information was collated and presented to NSW Police. Council staff met with NSW Police to discuss the findings of the research, with a view to identifying crime priorities to target in this strategy.

In addition to the identification of crime priorities, officers of Lake Macquarie District Command provided the following information to assist with the development of the strategy and targeting of identified offences.

*Due to the specific nature of the offence of ‘Child Sexual Assault’ and the provision of services by NSW State Government to address this crime type, it was concluded in discussions with NSW Police that this type of crime falls outside the scope of the work of Local Government and will not be included in this strategy as a target crime.

OFFENCE	HOT SPOTS (GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS)	PRIORITY TIMES	VICTIMS AND OFFENDERS	UNIQUE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS (IF ANY)
Motor Vehicle Theft	Charlestown, Belmont, Morisset, Redhead, Boolaroo, Cardiff, Cooranbong	Overnight (between 6pm–6am)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offenders are generally those stealing vehicles for short journeys and hooning. Victims include boat owners on and around the Lake, and vehicle owners (including number plate theft). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stolen vehicles dumped in bushland. Tender boats stolen from Lake’s edge. Boats and trailers stolen. Unsecured trail bikes stolen.
Fraud	Charlestown, Mount Hutton, Glendale Morisset, Cardiff, Edgeworth, Belmont	No specific times for this offence (note: theft from motor vehicles generally occurs between 6pm–6am)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offenders commonly steal from motor vehicles leading to secondary fraud crime. They target residential settings and car parks. Victims include Service Station operators (drive offs), seniors (phone/email) and young people (ebay). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in theft from vehicles in car parks is a recent factor (train stations, shopping centres).
Malicious Damage	City Wide	Friday through to Sunday (3pm–12am)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority of malicious damage – graffiti of nuisance type (i.e. tagging) is completed by those aged 13–18 years old. Larger and more sophisticated graffiti damage is likely to be completed by those up to the age of 26 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent increase in the incidents of ‘crew tags’ used to mark out territory by groups. Graffiti attacks tend to target high profile locations (e.g. along major roads or railway corridors). Other types of malicious damage usually occur on public facilities in ad-hoc/ opportunistic fashion across the City.

ACTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

- SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT

Target Offence

Motor vehicle theft including all categories of registered and unregistered motor vehicles with a focus on categories of vehicles recommended by NSW Police (i.e. stolen vehicles dumped in bushland, tender boats, boats and trailers, unsecured trail bikes).

Environmental Factors (Situational analysis)

- ❑ Vehicles are stolen to use in the commission of other offences
- ❑ Four-wheel drive vehicles are stolen for parts
- ❑ Vehicle theft rates are high in areas of low socio-economic conditions to facilitate transportation
- ❑ Vehicle theft rates are high in more isolated areas where public transport options are limited or not provided
- ❑ Small boats used to reach vessels moored in the lake are stolen because generally they are not secured against theft (i.e. 42 boats stolen between 1/1/2019 – 24/2/2020) and some are used to access moored vessels
- ❑ Relaxed attitude of community towards the security of motorcycles/trail bikes and their storage making it much easier for theft to be carried out (i.e. not locked, stored in non-secure locations at home, garages left open)

Project

Council will apply a balance of universal education and targeted assistance to empower the community to take deliberate action to reduce theft of motor vehicles. This will be achieved by developing a broad-based media campaign to educate the community about the risks associated with not securing vehicles and include partnership with the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council to deliver the 'Stop Sneak Theft' campaign.

It will also be achieved through increased collaboration with NSW Police and Marine District Command to target high risk situations, improved partnership between Police and Council Rangers resulting in an improved response to dumped vehicles, and conducting shoreline safety audits in partnership with Marine District Command personnel.

Rationale

The rate of motor vehicle theft in Lake Macquarie remains higher than across NSW. In the year from October 2018 – September 2019 (BOCSAR 2020) statistical information available indicates that there were 508 incidents of vehicle theft, which represents 156 per cent of the rate for NSW. Lake Macquarie is ranked sixteenth (16) in NSW for occurrences of this crime category.

Evidence indicates that the implementation of a range of measures including raising community awareness and application of CPTED principles are effective measures to reduce this crime type. A focus on universal education and targeted interventions in high risk locations is likely to impact positively on the rate of motor vehicle theft.

Lead Agency and Partners

Council will assume a lead role in relation to facilitating collaborative responses with key stakeholder agencies including:

- ☉ Partner with National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council (NMVTRC) to conduct universal education campaign
- ☉ Improved collaboration with NSW Police, Council Rangers and 4WD user groups for the detection and identification of stolen vehicles
- ☉ Partner with NSW Police and Marine District Command regarding shoreline safety audits.

Stakeholders

- ☉ Police
- ☉ Residents

Objective

The implementation of a universal education campaign to raise awareness across the community, supported by a series of targeted collaborative measures between key stakeholder agencies and community groups to increase effective identification and reporting in hotspot locations, is expected to yield a reduction of 5 per cent in this crime category across the life of the strategy.

Expected Outcome

Adopting the measures outlined in this strategy is aimed at reducing the occurrence of motor vehicle theft by approximately 5 per cent. It is also anticipated that targeting this crime activity will impact on the occurrence of related secondary offences (i.e. other stealing offences). It is anticipated that a reduction in motor vehicle theft and related offences will reduce the financial resources being used to replace stolen vehicles, personal items and/or repair damaged to vehicles resulting from this crime activity. The strategy may also have a positive impact of a reduction in insurance premiums due a reduction in claims for replacement of vehicles, personal items and repair of damage to vehicles. A reduction in this offence may also lead to a reduction in the fear of crime or an increase in the sense of community safety as vehicle owners are empowered to strengthen security practices associated with vehicle use in addition to other evidence-based crime prevention initiatives as documented in this action plan.

Performance Measures

Reduce the opportunities for theft of motor vehicles in residential settings, contributing to a 5 per cent reduction in this crime category over implementation period.
Reduce the opportunities for theft of boats and trailers in residential settings and shoreline locations, contributing to a 5 per cent reduction in this crime category over implementation period.
Increase community awareness for the prevention of motor vehicle theft offences, contributing to a 5 per cent reduction in this crime category over implementation period.



FRAUD

Target Offence

Fraud offences including fuel non-payment resulting from theft of number plates, credit card fraud, fraudulent online activities and falsifying documents to acquire medications.

Environmental Factors (Situational analysis)

- ⊗ Vehicle number plates are stolen to use in the commission of other offences (e.g. petrol theft from service stations which increases when price of fuel rises)
- ⊗ Easy facilitation of credit card fraud through pay-wave facilities
- ⊗ The increased motivation for theft from motor vehicles is facilitated by people leaving valuables unsecured in vehicles and the knowledge that the proceeds of this crime type can be used for pay-wave fraud
- ⊗ Facilitation of fraud through online purchase of goods not supplied (i.e. ebay fraud)
- ⊗ Use of forged or non-genuine documents to acquire medications (e.g. forged scripts)
- ⊗ Technology being used to obtain private financial information (e.g. scanning personal information, email and phone scams).

Project

Council will apply a balance of a universal education campaign and targeted programs to empower the community to take deliberate action to reduce both the opportunity and resultant fraud offences. This will be achieved developing a broad-based media campaign to educate the community about the risks associated with not securing personal identification, financial cards and general vehicle security where valuables are targeted (e.g. residential settings, shopping centre and commuter car parks).

The universal awareness raising campaign will be complemented through the delivery of programs to target groups to increase actions to prevent theft of information and goods that result in fraud offences. This shall include:

- ⊗ resourcing retail outlets and staff regarding point of sale fraud prevention
- ⊗ information to retail pharmacy outlets regarding point of sale fraud prevention
- ⊗ presentations and information to high risk groups regarding theft of personal information and fraudulent online activities (e.g. seniors groups, young people)
- ⊗ information and resources to vehicle owners to facilitate increased security of number plates.

Rationale

The rate of fraud in Lake Macquarie remains higher than across NSW. In the year from October 2018 – September 2019 (BOCSAR 2020) statistical information available indicates there were 1380 incidents of fraud, which represents 105 per cent of the rate for NSW. Lake Macquarie is ranked thirteenth (13) in NSW for occurrences of this crime category.

As supported in the literature, a combination of measures including awareness raising, securing personal goods and information, and targeting high risk groups with educational-type programs is likely to have the greatest yield in reducing incidents in this crime category. As recommended by NSW Police in consultations for the development of this strategy, incidents of fraud in the Lake Macquarie area reflect a range of situational characteristics which have been considered in the design of the interventions proposed. This includes targeting vehicle owners to secure number plates, educating retail staff about the fraudulent use of credit cards, raising awareness among seniors and young people about online scams and alerting pharmacy retailers about forging of medication documentation. (Australian Institute of Criminology. Australian Crime: Facts and Figures 2011/2014. Canberra)

Lead Agency and Partners

Council will assume a lead role in relation to facilitating collaborative responses with key stakeholder agencies including:

- ☉ Retail owners and shopping centre management
- ☉ Liquor Accord members
- ☉ Pharmacy outlets
- ☉ Seniors and neighbour groups
- ☉ High schools and youth leadership groups.

Objective

The implementation of a universal awareness raising campaign across the community, supported by a series of targeted education-type interventions with key stakeholder groups in the community, is expected to yield a reduction of 5 per cent in this crime category across the life of the strategy.

Stakeholders

- ☉ Lake Macquarie Liquor Accord
- ☉ Service/Petrol Stations
- ☉ Shopping Centres/Retailers

Expected Outcome

Adopting the measures outlined in this strategy is aimed at reducing the occurrence of fraud by approximately 5 per cent.

It is anticipated that a reduction in fraud offences will reduce the financial loss experienced by residents, retailers and financial institutions when this crime occurs. The strategy may also have a positive impact of a reduction in insurance premiums due a reduction in claims for financial loss experienced by victims of this crime.

A reduction in this offence may lead to a reduction in the fear of crime or an increase in the sense of community safety as residents and business operators are empowered to strengthen security practices to reduce incidents of fraud in addition to other evidence-based crime prevention initiatives as documented in this action plan.

Performance Measures

Reduce the opportunities for fraud to be perpetrated in retail settings, contributing to a 5 per cent reduction in this crime category over implementation period.

Reduce the opportunities for fraud to be perpetrated through falsification of medical documents, contributing to a 5 per cent reduction in this crime category over implementation period.

Reduce the opportunities for fraud to be perpetrated against vulnerable groups in online settings, contributing to a 5 per cent reduction in this crime category over implementation period.

Increase community awareness for the prevention of fraud offences, contributing to a 5 per cent reduction in this crime category over implementation period.

MALICIOUS DAMAGE TO PROPERTY

Note: It is important to acknowledge that the crime category of malicious damage has not been recommended as a priority area for action by NSW Police for inclusion in the Crime Prevention Strategy but has been included due to high occurrence of the crime in the area and Council's ongoing resourcing commitments to resolve incidents in this crime category.

Target Offence

Malicious damage is broadly defined as the intentional 'destruction or defacement of public, commercial and private property' (Howard 2006 in AIC 2012).

Environmental Factors (Situational analysis)

Research shows that the majority of malicious damage incidents occur between 3pm and midnight with a peak between 6pm and 9pm from Friday through to Sunday. Other important characteristics reported include:

- ☉ alcohol being an important contributing factor
- ☉ regional areas experience higher rates
- ☉ vandals primarily target residential property, private cars and commercial premises
- ☉ graffiti damage is most often caused to residential properties and educational facilities
- ☉ young people are generally the main perpetrators.

Rapid removal of graffiti shares characteristics with CPTED as they both involve improving the general amenity of an area with the aim of increasing community feelings of safety and pedestrian movement through the area, thereby providing more opportunities for natural surveillance. Rapid removal also has the benefit of reducing the rewards offenders associate with the commission of a graffiti offence. (Australian Institute of Criminology. Australian Crime: Facts and Figures 2011/2014. Canberra)

Project

A range of measures will continue to be implemented by Council to prevent where possible, and respond in a timely manner to the crime of malicious damage. These measures include but are not limited to

- ☉ resourcing the timely removal of graffiti and repair of damage on public property
- ☉ increasing capacity of the community for the timely removal of graffiti
- ☉ raising community awareness about reporting incidents of graffiti.

Rationale

The rate of Malicious Damage in Lake Macquarie remains higher than the NSW rate. In the year from October 2018 – September 2019, BOCSAR data reports there were 1524 occurrences, which represents 115 per cent of the rate across NSW (BOCSAR 2020). BOCSAR ranks Lake Macquarie fifty-sixth (56) in the State with regard to this crime category.

Malicious damage is the most commonly reported criminal offence in NSW. Approximately 87,000 incidents were reported to NSW Police in 2011, of which 8 per cent were graffiti related. This offence continues to have a substantial impact on communities. Determining the true cost and frequency of malicious damage is difficult due to under-reporting and the absence of a centralised body to coordinate reporting and information. Apart from the considerable monetary costs, graffiti and vandalism can undermine a community's feeling of safety, reducing the quality of life of residents and possibly leading to further criminal activity where left unchecked (LaGrange 1999 in AIC 2012). (Australian Institute of Criminology. Australian Crime: Facts and Figures 2011/2014. Canberra)



Lead Agency and Partners

Council will assume a lead role in relation to facilitating collaborative responses with key stakeholder agencies including:

- ☑ Justice NSW - Juvenile Justice
- ☑ Shopping Centre Management
- ☑ Business Owners
- ☑ Community Organisations/Youth Services
- ☑ Residents and Neighbourhood Groups.

Objective

The measures adopted in this action plan are based on evidence about increasing the difficulty for offenders to commit malicious damage offences and timely response to repair damage when it occurs with the aim of reducing the occurrence of this offence by 5 per cent across the period of implementation.

Research indicates that as the majority of malicious damage is opportunistic in nature, improved design and planning (e.g. application of CPTED principles) is likely to reduce the prevalence of this crime activity. This includes the use of the following strategies:

- ☑ use of polycarbonate laminates instead of glass
- ☑ selection of injection moulded seating over other materials
- ☑ application of anti-graffiti paint on vulnerable surfaces.

Literature about effective strategies available to local government to address malicious damage activity include measures relating to the application of CPTED principles to design of structures and places, rapid removal of graffiti, community education and awareness raising, and improving lighting of public places.

(Australian Institute of Criminology. Australian Crime: Facts and Figures 2011/2014. Canberra)

Stakeholders

- ☑ Local Government
- ☑ NSW Department of Communities & Justice - Juvenile Justice
- ☑ NSW Police
- ☑ Rotary NSW – Graffiti Removal Day

Expected Outcome

Adopting the measures outlined in this strategy is aimed at reducing the occurrence of malicious damage by approximately 5 per cent over the period of implementation.

Continued compliance in design of developments with CPTED good practice.

Maintain timely response for the removal of graffiti from public utilities, commercial premises and private property.

Performance Measures

Assessment of development applications and Council project designs to ensure CPTED principles are applied to reduce crime opportunity, including damage resistant designs, materials and management plans for damage restoration.

Agreed service standards for the removal of graffiti and repair of vandalism on public property that Council is responsible are maintained.

Provision of resources to assist property owners with the repair of damage on public utilities, commercial and residential premises.

CRIME PREVENTION ACTION PLAN

The monitoring and evaluation of the strategy has been embedded in the following action plan. Council's Community Planner for Safer Communities will be responsible for ensuring the implementation and evaluation of the program. Council will rely on the cooperation of NSW Police to provide relevant statistical and crime information for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation of the strategy, along with regular review of statistical information provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics - Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT

ACTION	PERFORMANCE	TIME FRAMES	FUNDING REQUIRED	MILESTONES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Partner with the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council (NMVTRC) to deliver the 'Stop Sneak Theft' campaign.	When offered, apply for and deliver motor vehicle theft prevention campaign.	Annually	\$15,000 per annum funded by NMVTRC	Progress monitored in monthly management reporting Final acquittal reporting to funding body	Monitoring of crime occurrences reported by BOCSAR
Support NSW Police identification of 4WD groups and collaboration with Council Rangers to increase reporting of dumped vehicles.	Identification of 4WD user groups across the city. Facilitate improved collaboration between Council Rangers and NSW Police for identification of dumped vehicles	Three months Ongoing	In-kind	Actions identified in monthly management reports Actions reported in progress and final report to Crime Prevention Unit	Statistical information provided by NSW Police
Conduct education campaign with residents to raise awareness about need to secure non-registered vehicles to avoid theft.	Production of education materials Dissemination of education materials	One month Six months	\$5,000	Action identified in monthly management reports Actions reported in progress and final report to Crime Prevention Unit	
Partner with NSW Police and Marine District Command to conduct security audit of shoreline boat security.	Security audits are conducted at target locations	Six months	In-kind	Action identified in monthly management reports Actions reported in progress and final report to Crime Prevention Unit	
Develop and provide information to boat owners to prevent theft of boats and trailers.	Design, produce and disseminate information to boat owners	Six months	\$5,000	Action identified in monthly management reports Actions reported in progress and final report to Crime Prevention Unit	

FRAUD

ACTION	PERFORMANCE	TIME FRAMES	FUNDING REQUIRED	MILESTONES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Deliver education campaign to residents to increase protective actions that can be taken to reduce risk to becoming victims of fraud.	Production of education materials Delivery of broad-based media campaign	One month Six months	\$15,000 \$20,000	Action identified in monthly management reports Actions reported in progress and final report to Crime Prevention Unit	Monitoring of crime occurrences reported by BOCSAR
Deliver education campaign to residents to increase protective actions that can be taken to prevent theft of motor vehicle registration plates.	Production of education materials Delivery of broad-based media campaign	One month Six months	Integrated into program above	Action identified in monthly management reports Actions reported in progress and final report to Crime Prevention Unit	Statistical information provided by NSW Police
Produce and supply information and point of sale materials to retailers/shopping centre management and businesses to reduce PayWave and credit card fraud.	Design and production of point of sale resource Dissemination of resource to retailers and business operators	One month Six months	\$2,000	Action identified in monthly management reports Actions reported in progress and final report to Crime Prevention Unit	Information provided by program partners
Partner with NSW Police in providing information to pharmacy operators to raise awareness of fraudulent medication activities.	Design and production of education materials Number of pharmacy operators to which the materials are supplied	Two months Six months	\$2,000	Action identified in monthly management reports Actions reported in progress and final report to Crime Prevention Unit	
Conduct education sessions and provide information to seniors groups about risk of identity theft and scams.	Develop presentation materials Number of presentations delivered to seniors groups	One month Six months	In-kind	Action identified in monthly management reports Actions reported in progress and final report to Crime Prevention Unit	
Produce and disseminate information to young people about the risks of online financial transactions and fraud.	Develop education materials Disseminate materials to young people across multiple communication platforms	One month Six months	\$2,000	Action identified in monthly management reports Actions reported in progress and final report to Crime Prevention Unit	



MALICIOUS DAMAGE

ACTION	PERFORMANCE	TIME FRAMES	FUNDING REQUIRED	MILESTONES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Reduce opportunity for malicious damage to occur by providing CPTED advice to consent authority regarding development applications to ensure design and materials used in developments are damage resistant, and management plans are in place for timely repair of damage to property.	Provide ongoing advice to Council's development compliance team to monitor the uptake of damage resistant designs, materials and management plans for damage restoration.	Ongoing	In-kind	Reviewed monthly through Council reporting processes	Provision of advice to Development Assessment and Compliance Department
Maintain rapid response to incidence of damage by continued allocation of adequate resources within Council for the rapid removal of graffiti and repair of other types of malicious damage on public property under the responsibility of Council.	Continue to resource current timely response to the removal of graffiti and repair of vandalism on public property that Council is responsible to maintain.	Annual	\$250,000 per annum provided by Council	Annual review of progress in July each year	Instances of removal of graffiti from property and infrastructure maintained by Council
Maintain and improve rapid response to incidence of damage through partnership with other government agencies and community-based programs for the timely removal of graffiti on public utilities, commercial and private properties.	Improve response times for repair of damage on public utilities, commercial and residential premises.	Ongoing	\$20,000 per annum provided by Council	Reviewed monthly through Council reporting processes	Ongoing partnership with external groups for the removal of graffiti from site other than that which Council is responsible to maintain

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Table with promotional materials including small posters, toy cars, and bowls of candy. The tablecloth features the Lake Macquarie City Council logo and website information.

Lake Macquarie City Council
www.lakemac.com.au

For more information



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