The implementation of some of the actions in this Strategy is supported by financial assistance from the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments.
It is my pleasure to present Kingston’s Community Safety Strategy 2013-2017.

Kingston is a relatively safe and advantaged community. However, ongoing work is required to maintain and improve local safety. Within Kingston there are areas of disadvantage and particular population groups who are more at risk of poorer safety outcomes relating to injury, crime and hazards. Age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, isolation, disability, addiction, illness, or a history of prior criminal offences can affect a person’s likelihood of being in an unsafe situation. People who are at greater risk might experience safety concerns that others don’t, or safety concerns that affect all of us may have a greater impact on them. In addition to their vulnerability, they can be harder to engage in the prevention of, and response to, safety issues.

Perceptions of safety can also affect actual safety outcomes due to the resulting behaviour. Perceptions of safety are highly subjective and often not related to the actual risk of being unsafe. The reasons that people feel unsafe are varied and include actually being unsafe, the influence of media portrayals of the dangers in public, personal vulnerabilities, previous experience, and the unsafe appearance of places.

The Community Safety Strategy provides a strategic framework for Council to take action to improve the safety of all residents and visitors to Kingston. Annual action plans are informed by the Strategy which identifies the population groups, areas and issues within Kingston that are a priority for improving safety.

The Community Safety Strategy is a strategic plan that contributes to achieving Council Plan objective 2.6 “A community sense of pride in the amenity of our parks, streetscapes and public spaces.”

I encourage everyone in the community to work together and with Council to make Kingston a safer community.
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The Strategy draws together information about the safety concerns of the community and the actual evidence of crime, injury and hazards affecting Kingston. This information has been used to identify priority areas and objectives for safety issues that have the greatest impact on, or cause the most concern to Kingston residents and visitors.

From these priority areas and objectives (as illustrated in Figure 1), an action plan has been developed and will be reviewed each year during the life of the Strategy. The development, implementation and review of the Strategy will be overseen by the Community Safety Reference Group.

### Executive Summary

Kingston’s Community Safety Strategy 2013-2017 sets out the strategic direction of Council to work towards a safer community.

<table>
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<th>PRIORITY</th>
<th>GOAL</th>
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| 1 | SAFE BUILT ENVIRONMENT | 1.1 To improve safety through the design and use of public spaces in Kingston.  
1.2 To improve safety through the operation and maintenance of public spaces in Kingston. |
| 2 | COMMUNITY CONNECTION | 2.1 To strengthen the Kingston community’s ability to prevent and respond to safety concerns.  
2.2 To reduce the circumstances that foster crime, by increasing economic and social opportunities for people in Kingston. |
| 3 | PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO CRIME | 3.1 To reduce the incidence of domestic violence in Kingston.  
3.2 To reduce the incidence of crime in Kingston.  
3.3 To reduce the impact of problem gambling and the consumption of alcohol and other drugs on crime in Kingston. |
| 4 | INJURY PREVENTION | 4.1 To reduce the incidence of unintentional injury in Kingston.  
4.2 To reduce the incidence of intentional injury in Kingston and its impact on the Kingston community. |

Figure 1 Priority Areas
1. Introduction

The City of Kingston is located in the middle and outer southern suburbs of Melbourne, between 15 and 34 kilometres south-east of the Melbourne CBD. The population forecast for the City of Kingston in 2013 was 149,772.

Everyone has a right to feel safe and a responsibility to contribute towards a safer community. Kingston’s Community Safety Strategy 2013-2017 (the Strategy) sets out the strategic direction of Kingston City Council in contributing towards community safety.

In the Strategy, the term ‘community safety’ refers to factors that influence crime, injury and perceptions of safety. These factors include community isolation; personal and community vulnerabilities; hazards such as fires, storms, floods and heatwaves; public education, engagement and enforcement in response to personal and property crimes and domestic violence; and the safety and amenity of the built and natural environment.
Introduction

The Strategy contributes to the implementation of the Council Plan 2013-2017. The Council Plan is the key strategic plan that outlines Council’s Vision for the City as a ‘diverse, dynamic community where we all share a sustainable, safe, attractive environment and a thriving economy’. The Council Plan establishes Council’s priorities, objectives, strategies and planning framework to achieve the vision.

Council has many other strategic plans that contribute to improving safety in Kingston. It is intended that the Community Safety Strategy will complement, rather than duplicate, these other strategies. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between the Council Plan 2013-2017 and these other strategic plans.

![Figure 2 Kingston Council Plan and Strategic Plans and Strategies](image)

**Figure 2** Kingston Council Plan and Strategic Plans and Strategies
2. Council’s Role

As a local government, Kingston Council is well placed to contribute to a safer community by:

- Developing partnerships with relevant organisations to address community safety issues;
- Facilitating and coordinating responses to community safety issues;
- Advocating on behalf of the Kingston community to improve community safety;
- Building the capacity of the community to prevent and respond to safety concerns through community education, reducing barriers to accessing safety information and strengthening community ties;
- Leading by example and working within the organisation to ensure community safety is improved through all of Council’s work;
- Building and maintaining safe public spaces;
- Working with developers to improve community safety through design; and
- Enforcing regulation designed to ensure standards of safety are adhered to.

In the City of Kingston, Council plays a key leadership and coordination role in contributing towards the actual and perceived safety of the community.
Community safety is a whole-of-government, whole-of-community issue.

In planning for local policy development, consideration is given to the priority issues outlined in international, national and state policies.

Policy and legislation relevant to the Strategy is discussed opposite.
INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (WHO, 1986) emphasises community ownership for identifying and addressing public health and community safety needs.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) appointed the Department of Social Medicine at Karolinska Institute in Stockholm as a WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion to implement a series of international conferences and establish a network of safe communities. This initiative is referred to as “International Safe Communities”.

A community can apply to be designated as an International Safe Community if they can demonstrate fulfilment of seven indicators:

1. An infrastructure based on partnership and collaborations, governed by a cross-sector group that is responsible for safety promotion in their community;
2. Long-term, sustainable programs covering genders and all ages, environments, and situations;
3. Programs that target high-risk groups and environments, and programs that promote safety for vulnerable groups;
4. Programs that are based on the available evidence;
5. Programs that document the frequency and causes of injuries;
6. Evaluation measures to assess their programs, processes and the effects of change; and
7. Ongoing participation in national and international Safe Communities networks.

NATIONAL INITIATIVES

The Australian Government provides policy direction on a number of specific topics related to community safety, crime and injury prevention, including:

- National Falls Prevention for Older People Plan: 2004 Onwards;
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Safety Promotion Strategy;
- The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022;
- National Drug Strategy 2010-2015; and the
- National Crime Prevention Framework.

STATE INITIATIVES

The Victorian Government responds to personal and public safety through the Criminal Justice System, Emergency Services, and Civil Justice System and through regulation and enforcement. Relevant Victorian Government policies include:

- A Fairer Victoria 2010: Real support – real gains;
- Safer Design Guidelines for Victoria;
- 2012-2015 Victoria’s Action Plan to Address Violence Against Women and Children: Everyone has a responsibility to act;
- Reducing the alcohol and drug toll. Victoria’s plan 2013 – 2017; and
4. Development of the Strategy

The Community Safety Reference Group (CSRG) was responsible for overseeing the development of the Community Safety Strategy.

The CSRG includes representation from Council, Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Country Fire Authority, State Emergency Service, Victoria Police, Australian Volunteer Coastguard, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Central Bayside Community Health Services, and VicRoads (illustrated in Figure 3).

The group meets quarterly to:

- Support the development, implementation and evaluation of the City of Kingston Community Safety Strategy and the Road Safety Strategy;
- Inform Council of existing and emerging community safety issues within the Kingston municipality; and
- Recommend strategies to address identified community safety issues in a coordinated and collaborative manner.
A Council project team was also established to undertake the day-to-day work of developing the Strategy.

Information was collated to inform the development of the strategy in four phases. Firstly, a benchmarking exercise was undertaken to review the existing strategy and other local government community safety and related strategies. Secondly, an international, national, state and local policy review was undertaken to gain an understanding of the current policy and political context in which the strategy will be implemented. Thirdly, data relating to safety in Kingston from the perspectives of crime, injury and hazards was analysed to identify safety issues impacting the Kingston community. Finally, community and stakeholder consultation was undertaken during November 2012 to January 2013. The consultation involved a telephone survey of 512 Kingston residents and nine workshops with the community and key stakeholders. The consultation aimed to identify and explore health, wellbeing and community safety issues in Kingston.

Information from the consultation for the Kingston visioning project “Living Kingston 2035” relating to community safety was also incorporated into the development of the Strategy. Survey and consultation reports are available from Council.

The information from the community consultation, together with benchmarking, policy and data analysis informed the development of the Year 1 Action Plan in consultation with the CSRG and 24 departments across Council.
5. Safety in Kingston

An analysis of safety data for Kingston was undertaken to inform the development of the Strategy. A snapshot of data as it relates to community safety in Kingston is provided opposite.

PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY

The 2011 VicHealth Indicators Survey found that 96.6% of people from Kingston felt safe or very safe during the day. This is consistent with the Southern Metro Region (SMR) of 96.7% and the Victorian State average of 97%.

At night, 68.1% of people in Kingston felt safe or very safe walking alone in Kingston. This was again consistent with the SMR and the Victorian state average (70.1% and 70.3% respectively).
CRIME IN KINGSTON

Kingston is a relatively safe municipality. Rates of reported crime in 2010/2011 to 2011/2012 have decreased, compared to an increase in total crime across Victoria. Consistent with increases in crime rates across Victoria, crime against the person, drug offences, other crime and family violence have all increased in Kingston. Crime against property has shown an overall reduction, although this crime category continues to have the highest number of offences recorded (Refer to Figure 4).

INJURIES IN KINGSTON

Overall reported injuries in Kingston increased during the three year period from 2009/10 to 2011/12. Seventy per cent of emergency department presentations (people presenting to the emergency department, but not admitted into hospital) and 90% of hospital admissions (people admitted into hospital) were for unintentional injury; 8% of hospital admissions and 3% of emergency department presentations were for intentional injury; and 2% of hospital admissions and 27.5% of emergency department presentations were for injuries of other or undetermined intent (Refer to Figure 5).

Hazards such as heatwaves, fires, storms and floods result in injury. Over the 4 year period from 2008/09 to 2011/12, the total number of hazards in Kingston increased slightly. The majority of calls were for ‘incidents’ such as car accidents, flooding, or incidents that did not involve fire or hazardous materials. False alarms were also prevalent. The rate of fires, hazardous incidents and medical responses fluctuated over 4 years (Refer to Figure 6).

The Unit 703 Chelsea SES Response Report identified a total of 387 storm and flood incidents in 2012. Of these incidents, 198 were for ‘tree down’ incidents, 123 ‘building damage’ incidents, 50 ‘tree down traffic hazard’ incidents and 16 ‘flood’ incidents (Refer to Figure 7).
6. Implementation and Evaluation

The Strategy is implemented by a number of departments across Council in partnership with external organisations. Each year the Action Plan will be reviewed and revised by the CSRG to ensure it remains relevant, is being implemented and is achieving its objectives. A summary report detailing key achievements of the plan will be published on the City of Kingston website each year.

Figure 8 illustrates the implementation and evaluation process for the Community Safety Strategy 2013-2017.
The built environment includes any space where the environment has been altered with infrastructure or landscaping. When these spaces are well designed and maintained, people experience feelings of safety, security, inclusion and general wellbeing.

1.1 To improve safety through the design and activation of public spaces in Kingston.

1.1.1 Incorporate safer design principles into the design of public spaces owned by Council and the assessment of applications to alter the built environment.

1.1.2 Continue to engage the community and stakeholders in the design of public spaces to ensure outcomes are achieved that best meet community needs and engender ownership of public spaces.

1.1.3 Conduct place-based safety audits with Victoria Police to identify appropriate measures to improve safety.

1.1.4 Work with local retail businesses to improve the presentation of their business.

1.1.5 Activate public spaces with infrastructure to support community activity.

1.1.6 Activate public spaces identified as a safety concern to the community with planned activities and events.

1.1.7 Develop a ‘safety considerations’ checklist to be utilised in the design and assessment of the built environment.

1.1.8 Develop and implement a CCTV policy and operational procedures.

1.2 To improve safety through the operation and maintenance of public spaces in Kingston.

1.2.1 Report any increases in alcohol or other drug litter to Victoria Police.

1.2.2 Continue syringe collection and beach cleaning services.

1.2.3 Continue to enforce local laws on illegal dumping.

1.2.4 Continue to implement and promote the Emergency Beach Markers project.

1.2.5 Display emergency information on structures and buildings used or accessed by the community.

1.2.6 Continue to engage community groups in community clean-up days to maintain and increase a sense of ownership over public spaces.
Community connection contributes to safety and perceptions of safety by increasing the social ties of individuals in the community and reinforcing positive social controls that deter criminal activity. People in socially connected communities are more resilient and empowered to take control of their own safety.

2.1 To strengthen the Kingston community’s ability to prevent and respond to safety concerns.

2.1.1 Reduce barriers for multicultural and indigenous communities to access emergency services.

2.1.2 Provide the community with information in relation to training, networking, grants and materials.

2.1.3 Continue to provide engagement opportunities for the community in community safety related matters.

2.1.4 Raise awareness of volunteering opportunities in Emergency Services and other safety organisations.

2.1.5 Inform and promote to the community the correct use of emergency numbers.

2.1.6 Develop a safety information portal on the City of Kingston website that enables easy access to online community safety information.

2.1.7 Promote funding opportunities for community safety initiatives through the Community Grants program.

2.2 To reduce the circumstances that foster crime, by increasing economic and social opportunities for people in Kingston.

2.2.1 Improve access to employment through programs that link people with local employment opportunities.

2.2.2 Promote opportunities for volunteering, traineeships and work placements.

2.2.3 Continue to refer clients and community members to appropriate health and employment services.

2.2.4 Provide educational opportunities and training in local community learning facilities to improve employment pathways.
Preventing and responding to property and personal crime will improve safety and reduce fear of crime. Property crimes include offences such as arson, property damage, burglary, deception, theft and handling stolen goods. Crimes against the person include crimes such as homicide, rape, other sexual offences, robbery, assault and abduction/kidnapping. Alcohol and other drug use and problem gambling are significant contributing factors to many crimes. Taking action against domestic violence is a priority for Commonwealth, State and Local governments. Domestic violence is a term used to describe a range of behaviours used by one person in a relationship to control the other. These behaviours range from emotional and mental abuse to physical and sexual violence.

3.1 To reduce the incidence of domestic violence in Kingston.

3.1.1 Coordinate the Preventing Violence Against Women working group.

3.1.2 Promote gender equity, equality and respectful relationships in community settings with the support of national and state campaigns, such as White Ribbon.

3.1.3 Assess community members engaged with Council services to determine their safety at home and make appropriate referrals.

3.1.4 Work to change community attitudes towards domestic violence by educating the public about the range of behaviours that constitute domestic violence.

3.2 To reduce the incidence of crime in Kingston.

3.2.1 Educate the community about home security, including the prevention of break-ins.

3.2.2 Raise awareness of theft of/from vehicles and advise the community to secure their vehicles and remove all valuables.

3.2.3 Educate businesses about business security.

3.2.4 Continue to implement the graffiti management program.

3.3 To reduce the impact of problem gambling and the consumption of alcohol and other drugs on crime in Kingston.

3.3.1 Reduce the impact of problem gambling on the Kingston community through the implementation of the Kingston Gaming policy.

3.3.2 Work in partnership with Victoria Police to reduce alcohol consumption in identified locations.

3.3.3 Consider the development of an Alcohol Policy outlining Council’s position on licenced premises.

3.3.4 Review liquor licence and planning permit applications relating to licenced premises referred from the Victorian Government.

3.3.5 Coordinate the establishment of Alcohol Free Zones as required.

3.3.6 Work with the Southern Metropolitan Region Liquor Licensing Project to address the cumulative impact of outlet density and alcohol related harms.

3.3.7 Support programs that encourage the responsible service of alcohol by clubs.

3.3.8 Support the establishment by community based providers of alcohol and drug services in Chelsea.
Injuries are often a preventable burden on the community that can be reduced through improved public education, infrastructure, diligence and technology.

4.1 To reduce the incidence of unintentional injury in Kingston.

4.1.1 Educate the community on the prevention of unintentional injury and available reporting mechanisms for identified risks.

4.1.2 Prevent unintentional injury in the community through the provision of home care services.

4.1.3 Support the emergency services to deliver water, fire, flood, heatwave and storm safety information and education programs to the community.

4.2 To reduce the incidence of intentional injury in Kingston and its impact on the Kingston community.

4.2.1 Continue to improve mechanisms to identify and respond to individuals showing an intention to injure themselves.

4.2.2 Continue to refer people to mental health services, and offer counselling services to young people.

4.2.3 Participate in networks and programs to reduce bullying in schools, particularly for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people.

4.2.4 Educate the community to better understand mental illness.

4.2.5 Work in partnership to promote mental health messages, and support services and activities that contribute towards good mental health.

4.2.6 Work with public transport authorities to reduce the incidence of suicide along the Frankston and Dandenong train lines through Kingston.
8. Conclusion

Kingston is a relatively safe community, with lower crime rates compared with the southern metropolitan region and Victoria as a whole, and over the past four years there has been a reduction in injuries.

This Strategy has been developed to provide strategic direction to address safety concerns, facilitate the allocation of resources to the priority issues, and ensure action is taken.

The Strategy sets out priority areas, goals, objectives and strategic actions that have been developed in consideration of the views expressed by the community and key stakeholders through the consultation process and evidence about the impact of crime and injury in Kingston.

The Community Safety Reference Group oversees the development, implementation and evaluation of the Strategy.
How you can contribute to Community Safety

• Be Informed! Make sure you have all the relevant safety information to protect yourself, your friends and family and your home
• Join or establish a community group such as a residents association, a 'friends' group, adopt-a-park group, village committee or preventing violence group
• Volunteer with an Emergency Service organisation or a support service
• Join Neighbourhood Watch or work with neighbours to improve safety in your street.
• Report crime to:
  Police ☏ 000, or
  Crime Stoppers ☏ 1800 333 000, ☐ vic.crimestoppers.com.au