

NDLERF

Making sense of partnerships
A study of police and housing department
collaboration for tackling drug and related
problems on public housing estates

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Keith Jacobs
University of Tasmania

Terry Burke
Swinburne University of Technology

Meredith Green
Edith Cowan University

Sherry Saggers
Edith Cowan University

Ron Mason
University of Tasmania

Angela Barclay
Swinburne University of Technology

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Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ASB	anti-social behaviour
ASBO	anti-social behaviour orders
CSLG	Community Safety Liaison Group (Devonport)
DHW	Department of Housing and Works (Western Australia)
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
OoH	Office of Housing (Victoria)

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Executive Summary

In recent years, interdepartmental partnerships within the public sector have been heralded as effective instruments for addressing complex social problems. For example, it is claimed that they can motivate staff and facilitate innovative practices that lead to improvements in service delivery. However, though partnerships are widely promoted as a panacea within the sector, there is a paucity of research that has looked at them from a critical perspective or examined how they operate in practice.

The aim of this project is to explore the realities of partnership working by focusing on collaboration between the police and housing departments to tackle problems associated with illicit drug activity and anti-social behaviour (ASB) on three Australian public housing estates. The rationale for the project is that, though only a small minority of tenants are perpetrators, their actions can seriously blight the lives of their neighbours. Usually it is the housing department that responds to complaints relating to ASB but, in the more serious cases that are deemed criminal, the police also perform a role.

Three locations were chosen as case studies. East Devonport in Tasmania and Girrawheen in Western Australia are areas with a large public housing stock. In East Devonport ASB and illicit drug activities are seen as nascent problems while in Girrawheen these problems are viewed as more pervasive, but to date there has been only limited collaboration between the police and housing departments. Collingwood in Victoria includes a large system-built housing estate that has become a location for the buying and selling of drugs. In Collingwood, police and housing departments have, for many years, worked on a series of partnership projects to address the problem and to enhance community wellbeing.

The empirical component of the project entailed two stages. The first stage initiated meetings between the police and housing departments in order for them to agree to a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on partnership protocols. The second stage reported on existing and new activities undertaken by both departments over a twelve month period. The research methods entailed participant observation, secondary data collection and qualitative interviews with key personnel. The findings from the case studies are structured around three thematic areas: setting up partnerships, the benefits of partnerships, and the obstacles that can impact on partnership working.

Summary of Key Findings

Setting up partnerships

- Initiating partnerships is complex and challenging. While, in theory, both the police and housing departments are well disposed towards the idea, the steps involved require considerable energy and resources.
- Staff are busy carrying out a wide range of duties, and have only limited time to devote to meetings and collaborative practices.
- To initiate partnerships there has to be a shared understanding of the problems that require attention as well as agreement about the type of interventions that are required.
- The initial stage of a partnership can take considerable time and it is important to be realistic about what can be achieved.
- For partnerships to be sustained, there must be highly motivated and proactive staff.
- Partnerships that are imposed from the outside are less likely to be effective.

The benefits of partnership working

- Partnership working is seen as a way of creating networking opportunities and cooperation.
- Partnership working can enable individuals to establish a personal rapport that can facilitate information sharing and a more detailed understanding of the roles each department can perform.
- The regular contact that partnership working entails can lead to new and imaginative approaches to long-standing problems.
- In East Devonport, the police and housing departments had a successful partnership arrangement through the auspices of the Devonport City Council's Community Safety Liaison Group (CSLG) and 'Officer Next Door' program (a scheme that enabled police officers to rent public housing in locations with a high crime rate).
- In Girrawheen, cooperation took place through 'whole of government' forums organised by the municipal authority as part of a larger State Government initiative.
- In Collingwood, the extent of the drug problem on the estate was more developed than in either of the other two case locations. An extensive range of partnerships were in place. The most effective had been initiated at the local level and relied on small groups of staff working together, rather than being formally structured and operating at a strategic level.

The obstacles to partnership working

- Partnerships that require different departments to work together are likely to face bureaucratic impediments that can impact on the aims of collaboration.
- If targets are too ambitious or unrealistic, then energy and enthusiasm can quickly dissipate and frustration set in.
- A high turnover amongst participants can undermine any momentum that has been built up, and institutional knowledge is lost.
- It is difficult for staff to devise tangible outcomes unless they are properly resourced and budgets made available for implementation.
- Staff enthusiasm will quickly dissipate if there is not a commitment from senior officers and a budget to deliver partnership goals.
- Whilst the police and housing departments share similar concerns about the pernicious impact of ASB, there are different philosophies that inform their modes of intervention.
- Some housing departments and staff perceive their role in terms of welfare support - that is, protecting the rights of individual tenants - and there is reluctance by some to use punitive measures such as eviction as a sanction.
- The police, though committed to community-based approaches, operate within a hierarchical and sanction-orientated paradigm. For some participants, the different organisational philosophies can act as a barrier to joint action.

Conclusions

- The police and housing departments share a common concern about illicit drug-related activity and ASB. The practicalities of partnership working require a commitment from senior staff, enthusiasm and strong leadership from key individuals and a clear rationale for the partnership.
- Joint working can be effective on specific projects that are conceived at the local level and are adequately resourced.

- At the level of strategy, partnerships can be valuable forums for information sharing and networking. However, unless there are clear objectives and goals, the initial momentum can be dissipated and they can quickly become ineffective.
- It is important to understand that partnership practices can only achieve limited goals. The problems of illicit drug use and ASB within public housing estates are, in part, symptoms of more deep-seated causal factors such as poverty and social exclusion.
- Partnership working is most effective when the causal factors are addressed as part of a wider neighbourhood management strategy. The appendix to this report provides a 'good practice' guide on the issues that stem from the research.

Chapter one: Introduction

This report presents the findings of a project undertaken by a team of researchers based at the University of Tasmania (Hobart), Swinburne University of Technology (Melbourne) and Edith Cowan University (Perth) to explore the utility of partnerships between police and housing departments to tackle drug and ASB problems on public housing estates. The project was conducted over a two year period and entailed research in three locations: Collingwood (Victoria), East Devonport (Tasmania) and Girrawheen (Western Australia). Two important assumptions informed the project. Firstly, that anti-social behaviour (ASB) (for example, vandalism, litter, petty crime, intimidation and noise nuisance) and drug consumption are often intertwined. For example, noisy late night parties and conflicts between neighbours can be exacerbated by alcohol, some burglaries are committed to support drug addictions, and sporadic vandalism may be triggered by drug and alcohol consumption. Secondly, although partnership working is presented by government agencies as a model for tackling complex policy problems such as ASB and illicit drug activities, there has not been an Australian empirical study examining how it is experienced by key actors within the police and housing departments.

Research undertaken in Australia (Smart et al. 1994; Held 1998; Jacobs and Arthurson 2003; Jacobs et al. 2003, Dalton and Rowe 2004) has highlighted how many public housing residents have had to endure problems arising from ASB. The reasons for these behaviours are complex, but are associated with long-term marginalisation from mainstream institutions such as education and employment. Residents have pointed out their frustration when these problems are reported to the police and housing departments but continue unabated. From the departments' perspectives, ASB practices are difficult to remedy because many residents who report them do so anonymously for fear of retribution. Also, the multiple causes of ASB mean that many of the perpetrators do not respond to sanctions or punitive action. For all these reasons, ASB remains a complex and difficult issue to address.

1.1 Making sense of partnerships

In the context of public policy making, partnership is used as an amorphous term to cover a wide range of activities. Generally, partnerships are viewed as an instrument to achieve a more holistic approach to social problems and to overcome an insular approach to service delivery. They had their origins in the public sector reforms of the late 1980s and early 1990s, e.g. the belief in the need to focus on core activities, a focus on customer or client service, transparency of decision making and the use of performance indicators.

While the reforms were generally supported, there was growing awareness that certain aspects of good governance were being neglected, while some benefits had not been fully realised. The major elements creating a climate for greater receptivity to a 'whole of government' and partnerships approach in the late 1990s were:

- the constraints of a core business focus which in many cases denied the multiple roles of public departments, their community service obligations and the fact that many problems and issues transcended individual departments;
- the rediscovery of 'society' as a counter to the individualistic focus on clients or customers;

- the rediscovery of 'community' and 'locality', both as the location of social and economic problems and as the building blocks for solutions;
- the need for an emphasis on outcomes instead of inputs.

The importance of these points in relation to the research project is that the concept of partnerships was new. Coming into the twenty-first century there was not a lot of experience amongst governments and participating departments with partnerships and particularly with implementation. In many respects, governments and their partners have been on a learning curve. Partnerships can be understood as a set of networks between service providers designed to achieve a shared objective or goal. In practice, they can take different forms. For example, partnerships can be:

- *formal or informal*, i.e. built on explicit legal relationships and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) or based on cooperation without formal agreement;
- *funded or unfunded*, i.e. attached to a funding base related explicitly to the partnership, an allocation of existing funds or alternatively (or both) relying on the unpaid time and good will of participants;
- *dual department or multi-department*, i.e. between two departments or between multiple departments with the capacity to address an issue or problem;
- *hierarchical or devolved*, i.e. negotiated and agreed to at the top of an organisation or devolved to lower level staff to negotiate and implement;
- *macro or micro*. This refers to the scale of the action or activity to which the partnership relates. Macro relationships are designed to achieve high level outcomes, e.g. the redevelopment of a housing estate, while micro relationships are designed to achieve results on a smaller, perhaps more local, level but nevertheless with important outcomes, e.g. reducing the incidence of drug-related crime in the stairwells of a specific building.

1.2 Understanding organisational cultures

It was also important for the research team to take account of the different organisational cultures that influence staff perceptions within the police and housing departments. As discussed in the literature review, the police operate within a formal top-down hierarchical structure in which middle and lower ranking staff are required to follow rules and procedures. Housing staff have generally more autonomy and are, in theory at least, able to exercise a greater degree of discretion. Partnership working does not fit as easily with the traditional police command structure, although there is evidence (Fleming 2006) that this is changing as the police embrace more community-based responses to law enforcement.

1.3 Aims, objectives and research tasks

Though partnerships are widely viewed and promoted by Australian governments as an effective way to enhance service delivery and achieve a 'whole of government' approach, there is a paucity of research that explores, from a critical perspective, the practicalities of collaborative working. The project's overall aim was therefore to gauge the utility of police and housing partnerships to tackle ASB and drug-related activity. Specifically, the objectives of the project (as set out in the grant submission) were:

- to identify successful partnership arrangements taking place in other countries and assess their relevance for Australia;

- to identify practical ways in which law enforcement agencies can police social housing estates more effectively;
- to facilitate the establishment of and then evaluate three policing/housing partnerships in addressing drug-related problems (East Devonport, Tasmania; Richmond/Collingwood, Victoria; and Girrawheen, Western Australia);
- to compare the new working partnerships with more traditional law enforcement methods currently being deployed;
- to produce a best practice guide for housing managers and law enforcement agencies to address drug and alcohol-related issues on housing estates;
- to identify the practical steps necessary to ensure that each project's successes can be sustained in the long-term.

As a complex project, it was essential that proper consideration be given to the research tasks.

Following consultation, it was decided that the first task was to scope the practice base and academic literature on partnerships and assess its applicability for the Australian context.

The second task was to establish MoUs in each of the case study locations to facilitate and monitor partnership working between the police and housing departments. This required a number of steps including a series of consultation meetings with police, housing and community representatives, the establishment of steering committees, and an agreed data collection approach.

The third task entailed a process and outcome evaluation of police and housing partnership activity over a twelve month period. This included a commentary on the setting up of partnership arrangements, an assessment of the benefits which can accrue, and an identification of the obstacles that can arise.

1.4 Case study locations

The three locations were selected as case studies because, although they feature similar housing and crime issues, the degree to which these are considered a problem by the police and housing departments differs considerably.

Girrawheen is an outer suburb of Perth with a population of 8,571 (ABS 2001). Currently about one-fifth of the properties are publicly rented, though it is undergoing considerable change as the housing department has commenced policies to reduce the number of such properties in the area. In comparison with other neighbourhoods in Perth, it has a high crime rate and the average income of its residents is low. Drug and alcohol abuse are recognised as a factor in many property-related crimes by both the police and housing departments.

East Devonport is a suburb of Devonport, with a population of 4,097 (ABS 2001). It is just one kilometre from the CBD, the site of the Melbourne and Sydney ferry terminal and an area of public housing. There is little indication that drug-related problems are a significant issue for tenants who live there, although ASB incidents relating to noise nuisance and petty crime are reported to the housing department on a regular basis.

The Collingwood high-rise estate is located in the City of Yarra, a municipality in Melbourne's inner east only two kilometres from the CBD. Collingwood has a population

of 5,081 (ABS 2001). It is one of Melbourne's oldest suburbs and features a mixture of residential, industrial and commercial activity, with the residential area being largely working-class terrace housing from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but subject to substantial gentrification in the last two decades. There is evidence of considerable drug-related activity and both the police and housing departments have established a set of partnership practices to address the problems that arise.

1.5 Report structure

The report is organised in the following way. Chapter two provides a review of the literature and international best practice. Chapter three provides details on the data collection strategy undertaken in the three case study locations. Chapter four provides a brief profile of each location including socio-economic data from the 2001 census and crime data collected by law enforcement departments. Chapters five through to eight provide the findings from the data collection stage. Chapter five discusses the setting up of the partnerships and the issues that arose. Chapter six explores the benefits of partnership working, including developing working relationships, information sharing and acting as a catalyst for other projects. Chapter seven focuses on the obstacles that impact partnership working; for example, the lack of understanding about specific roles, the pressures of competing tasks and the problem of high staff turnover. Chapter eight concludes by discussing the outcomes of the project and the lessons learned; for example, securing ownership of the partnership, consultation issues and effectiveness of specific policies. Finally, the appendix provides a 'good practice' guide for police and housing practitioners on developing successful interdepartmental partnerships on public housing estates.

Chapter two: Scoping the evidence

In the introduction, it was noted that residents of public housing estates frequently encounter ASB problems relating to licit and illicit drugs. The harm associated with drug use is particularly prevalent amongst young males, with social disadvantage as an important contributory factor. Social disconnection accentuates risk: ‘family breakdown, loss of community, increasing mobility and weakened religious institutions are structural determinants undermining social stability that have been identified as developmental risk factors for drug-related harm’ (Loxley et al. 2004: 242). In recognition of the structural factors that can aggravate drug-related problems, policing methods have adopted a more community-focused approach. There has been a shift away from an exclusive reliance on law and order enforcement strategies to a more holistic approach known as ‘problem orientated policing’. The support for such methods has been buttressed by a recognition that enforcement alone is not a sufficient response to addressing long-term drug-related problems and that more civil and community-based approaches are required. In short, problem orientated policing is aimed at reconstructing social capital and social cohesion within a neighbourhood (White 2002). Within this paradigm, social problems are viewed as a consequence of the breakdown of community, and part of the solution is the development of a process for restructuring that community.

While community policing is frequently cited as an alternative paradigm to existing models, some academics have warned that it should not be seen as a panacea to the multi-faceted problems of drug-related crime. For example, James and Sutton (1998) argue that it not only remains under-theorised but also overlooks the practical barriers that hinder successful implementation. In particular, they question the paradigm that lies behind it, namely ‘that there is a law abiding majority out there waiting to embrace law enforcers if and when they [the police] snap out of their absorption with internal procedures and routines, and are ready to work with them [the community] to produce the social order which best conforms with local values and priorities’. This is seen as more ‘convenient fiction than reality’ (James and Sutton 1998: 23). Instead, communities exhibit all sorts of social cleavages and fissures: ‘The dilemma for police engaged in community harm minimisation is how to deal with self-interest, or more particularly with competing self-interests’. James and Sutton argue that a successful harm minimisation policy may require police to subordinate the interests of local groups that traditionally support law enforcement practices. While recognising the polemical nature of their critique, it highlights the political and systemic barriers that can impact on any police intervention targeting drug-related activity and the limitations to what can be achieved.

2.1 Advancing strategies to promote partnerships

A feature of community policing is the efforts made to work alongside other departments seeking to promote community wellbeing and neighbourhood renewal. There is considerable evidence from abroad that police departments have shown an interest in establishing partnership arrangements with public departments responsible for housing management practices and tenant forums. The primary impetus is to establish a more effective response to the problems associated with drugs along with ASB as, without effective intervention, they are likely to intensify. The next two sections report on relevant research from the United Kingdom and the United States.

2.2 United Kingdom

In the UK, public landlords view specific housing management practices as essential tools to address drug-related problems. Some innovations focus on social control, for example, tenancy allocation policies, introductory and starter tenancies, new tenancy agreements and neighbourhood warden schemes, while others are aimed at enhancing social inclusion; for example, environmental improvements, tenancy support and mediation services (Robinson and Flemen 2002). There is an expectation from tenants that public landlords will take action against the perpetrators of ASB and drug-related crime.

Alongside housing department activity, the Home Office has provided resources for the police to intensify their efforts in tackling drug-related problems. A research project on the efficacy of police activity highlights some of the challenges for police and other departments seeking to secure positive outcomes. Christmann et al. (2003) argue that an over-concentration on crime can overshadow other substantive issues. They point out that despite the public demand for greater police presence, it can, if acted upon, actually accentuate concern and anxiety. In Brighton, police have responded to this by keeping residents informed of their operational practice and development intentions.

Christmann et al. (2003) provide findings that are also relevant for our project by showing the limitations of intervention. For example, in the London Borough of Hackney, the targeting by police of crack cocaine dealing is viewed as only having limited impact; feedback from residents suggests that, following raids, drug users continue to roam the area to find their supply. Residents also expressed concern about suppliers not being evicted after their arrest. Christmann et al. argue that even when police are successful in fostering community reassurance, there is always a risk that, once police operations end, insecurity will again come to the fore. In Hackney, 'beat sweeps' were organised to coincide with the housing department's introduction of neighbourhood wardens. The positive outcomes that ensued from these sweeps were in part contingent on other activities taking place at the time, namely the empowerment of residents' associations and an increase in informal contacts between police and residents.

The importance of developing contact with residents and of considering local conditions is also taken up by Duke et al. (1996) in their evaluation of two community development projects (Brighton and Bradford) as part of the Home Office's initiative to establish Drug Prevention Teams. While Brighton's strategy entailed a phased plan of action to activate local networks (utilising top-down and bottom-up approaches), Bradford adopted a community empowerment model. Duke et al. (1996: 7) argue that 'the key point that emerges from this comparative study is the importance of being knowledgeable about the complexity of local conditions and sensitive to matters relating to this. The key factor which affects what happens is the shape and nature of existing networks in a locality'.

The need for the police to work closely with local residents (i.e. partnerships) is clearly important, but other issues also require attention if partnerships are to be effective. In this respect, there is a useful study by Newburn and Elliott (1998). Their review of anti-drug strategies was to explore the impact, three years after its introduction, of a large program entitled 'Tackling Drugs Together' that required police departments across England and Wales to publish anti-drug strategies. Community support, crime reduction and other positive outcomes were more likely when the police and other partners devised clearly agreed measures and performance protocols to address problems. Also, the study highlighted police concern that, without additional funds, the task of making partnerships succeed would affect other aspects of their work.

In summary, the UK research provides important insights into partnership programs. Firstly, the most effective partnerships entail staff coordination and commitment. Secondly, it is incumbent upon partnership ventures to agree on protocols and lines of responsibility so that staff time and resources are not wasted. Thirdly, intensive police activities in marginalised neighbourhoods can sometimes increase anxiety, and therefore work is required to reassure residents of the rationale for intervention.

2.3 United States

A feature of many US studies is the emphasis on practical measures that can be adopted to address drug-related problems (Green 1995). For example, some have examined the interface between police and housing departments and the benefits that can accrue from training and shared protocols. One such study (Campbell 2000) provides guidance for the police on establishing training programs for landlords. Campbell argues that effective property management by landlords can make a considerable difference in easing the problems associated with drug use. The project is intended to assist police in developing effective working relationships with landlords. It also includes guidance to help landlords manage their property.

Practical guidance in terms of addressing crime and drug-related problems can also be found in a report by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (1998). The focus, though ostensibly on gangs, has relevance to the NDLERF project in so far as it provides practical guidance on setting up community/police partnerships to tackle related crime issues. The report advances an incremental problem solving model that it refers to as SARA: scanning, analysis, response and assessment. It also advances a gang-problem triangle which contains three elements – an offender, a victim and a place – and suggests that each of these include third parties who seek to develop solutions. The key challenge for communities who wish to minimise the negative impact of gang activity is to work alongside these parties in partnership.

One of the difficulties with both reports is that they are overtly prescriptive and therefore overlook some of the more problematic aspects to partnership arrangements. A more analytical approach is provided by Hunsley (2003) who examines the difficulties that can arise in seeking to implement joined-up partnership approaches: ‘mobilising and sustaining broad based partnerships and community involvement has become part of a crime prevention orthodoxy, and unfortunately also part of frequent frustration in the implementation process. Partnerships are easier to put together than to keep operating effectively’. This wide-ranging review argues that there is a need for departments to stress positive outcomes; in particular, that ‘crime prevention could benefit from recasting some objectives into a more positive quality of life framework’. Hunsley (2003: 1-2) also warns that consultation procedures ‘can bring to the surface long-standing divisions, conflict and diverging self-interest’.

Another realistic appraisal is provided by Cohen (2000: 2) who argues that, at best, government departments can only hope to modify the connection between drugs and crime by engaging in a series of incremental steps, and therefore intervention should be targeted ‘at minimising the threat to community wellbeing and public safety’. His assessment is that drug-related crime is not amenable to grandiose approaches such as a ‘war on drugs’ and that the problematisation of drug-related activities makes it increasingly difficult for police departments to distinguish between those that have major social repercussions for the wider community and those that usually have a minimal impact. For Cohen, interventions, if they are to be effective, need to be properly resourced, clearly focused and realistic in their objectives.

The value of Popkin et al.'s (1995) research is the evidence collected about residents' views on police tactics to address drug problems in a Chicago public housing estate. The police strategy was to sweep the building for drugs and weapons. The authors argue that tenants who resided in 'better organised developments' were more sympathetic to the impact of police action. They suggest that police action to address drug problems needs to be undertaken within the context of community renewal programs. This research concords with the study by Duke et al. (1996) on the need to draw upon existing networks such as residents' associations and community forums when developing new partnerships.

The adoption of needs-based allocation policies has meant that the least well-off in society are over-represented in public housing, yet researchers rightly stress the pitfalls associated with simplistic interpretations. A study that recognises the complex networks within public housing is Ireland et al.'s (2003) comparative study of crime in Rochester (New York) and Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania). The authors examine the behaviour of adolescent respondents to a survey on crime from public and non-public housing areas and differentiate between large estates and small units of public housing. They are sceptical of broad-based initiatives, especially if there is evidence that the problems are generated elsewhere. They recommend that the police should work closely with housing departments and that allocation policies should seek to disperse families at risk, placing them in scattered units rather than in large high rise estates.

In a similar vein, Homel (1998) reports on a multi-department partnership in Boston across community, police and housing departments which sought to establish alternative pathways to deter young people from joining gangs. He stresses that partnership works best when departments share resources, have a common goal and accept responsibility for the success or failure of initiatives (see also Jacobs et al. 2003: 19 for a similar observation).

It is clear from the above research that partnerships require close liaison and coordination. However, there is a risk that bureaucracy will increase, and therefore care will be required to ensure that paperwork and unnecessary meetings are kept to a minimum. The inherent dangers are spelled out by Cook (2002) who warns that extensive consultation can lead to overload which, in turn, inhibits successful policy implementation. He maintains that consultation is a process, not an event, and that political and structural factors militate against policies to engage 'hard to reach' groups. Consultation and the resource implications associated with meetings are a particular challenge for residents who, unlike professionals, are not paid for their participation. Useful findings are also provided by Peterson et al. (2000) in their research on public housing and crime in Columbus (Ohio). They argue that neighbourhoods that provide institutional facilities (i.e. community and recreation centres) have more success in tackling neighbourhood crime, and that partnership approaches need to resource community participation in order to minimise the risk of withdrawal and apathy.

Some of the most insightful research on strategies to reduce the problems associated with drugs in public housing estates has entailed measuring the impact of intervention. For example, Brown and Perkins (2002) undertook a seven year evaluation of a poor neighbourhood in Salt Lake City, with data being collected pre- and post-regeneration. Their study looked at the relationship between regeneration and crime and notions of 'community'. Brown and Perkins argued that improvements undertaken by the housing authority (i.e. place improvement policies) generated a sense of wellbeing – an outcome that was as important as interventions to address the effects of crime. Mazerolle et al.'s (2000b) study of crime problems in six public housing localities in Jersey City reported on the outcomes of using problem-orientated policing methods. The authors argue that

carefully planned and coordinated activities, whereby the police work closely with housing departments, can lead to a reduction in crime. Their research provides details of the evaluation procedures used to measure policing activities, including a 'process analysis' and 'impact assessment' of activities.

US research projects that combine law enforcement and community development approaches appear in an Australian literature review on substance abuse by Loxley et al. (2004); for example, an evaluation by Dunworth et al. (1999) of a program funded by the Department of Justice known as the 'Weed & Seed' strategy. This has two basic aims: concentrated law enforcement aimed at drug offenders, and a community approach to restore neighbourhood wellbeing. The 'Seed' component entails partnership with local residents. The evaluation was undertaken in eight localities across the country, and the findings revealed that the strategy led to a proportionally greater fall in crime rates compared to localities where the strategy was not in place. Dunworth et al. recommended that funding should be in place for longer time periods and in fewer localities so as to maximise the effectiveness of an intervention.

Loxley et al. (2004: 199) also report on research that uses civil remedies to address problems relating to drugs; for example, Mazerolle et al. (2000a) used a randomised field trial to gauge the effectiveness of the 'Beat Health' program in Oakland (California). This provided intensive environmental management practices to improve the physical condition of the neighbourhood, along with policies to tackle ASB. The research team found that intensive management practices helped reduce the number of calls made to the police in relation to drug activity but not for other offence categories. They argued that civil remedies provide an additional set of interventions that can help address the problems associated with drug-related activity.

The US studies outlined above all have relevance for the NDLERF enquiry. Although each intervention rests on divergent philosophies and principles, they all point to the need for close cooperation and for departments to focus on practical policies that can have an impact. Incremental steps that are not too ambitious are likely to be more effective than grand sweeping policies that are unlikely to secure support or resources from partnership departments.

2.4 Australian research findings

In Australia, police activity to combat the impact of drug-related crime takes place under the auspices of the National Drug Strategy (Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy 2004). This entails a four-pronged approach: reducing demand, reducing supply, reducing drug-related harm, and developing a skilled workforce to respond to drug use. While Australian departments involved in drug-related problems have adopted a partnership approach, there has not been any detailed study of partnership approaches involving police and housing departments, although Judd et al. (2002) do make reference to partnership approaches and their relevance for crime reduction strategies in their review of environmental design.

There is, however, a considerable body of Australian literature on crime which is relevant for our project; for example, the Dalton and Rowe (2004) study of heroin users in an inner Melbourne high rise estate. Dalton and Rowe seek to rein in expectations that coordinated action can have a long-term impact. Their project team interviewed local drug users and department staff, and found that there are four reasons why high rise public housing is so attractive to drug dealers and how they are able to sustain themselves in spite of continued

law enforcement strategies. These are metropolitan location, physical design, shared suspicion of law enforcement amongst residents, and internal demand. The physical design makes it hard for police to operate effectively and conduct surveillance operations without being conspicuous. As the tenants, for a variety of social and cultural reasons, are suspicious of police, enlisting community support to tackle the problems was difficult. Dalton and Rowe also point out that drug problems have made this locality unpopular with applicants, despite its central location and the shortage of public housing, but then warn against policies that adopt a narrow law and order approach. They cite research by Fitzgerald (1999) suggesting that the impact of law and order crackdowns is likely only to be temporary or to result in displacement - that is, the problem moves to another locality. Their study provides a useful insight into the economic reasons for continued drug activity. In most drug dealing on estates, three groups gain: users obtain access to a reliable source, middlemen benefit by slicing off a small amount of profit from each transaction, and dealers profit from sales and from the cover provided by middlemen.

The problem of drugs has accentuated the marginalisation of public housing from mainstream society. Dalton and Rowe's controversial solution is that policy makers have two choices: they can either 'renovate the existing social arrangement' through measures such as security enhancement and community participation that could push the selling and use of drugs off the estate but to somewhere else, or (a much more radical proposal) seek to regulate drug markets, i.e. accept the illegality of the trade but tolerate its operation (Dalton and Rowe 2004: 242).

The efficacy of intervention strategies and the impact on local communities is covered in a wide-ranging review by Loxley et al. (2004). For example, they examine the impact of different types of intervention including police crackdowns (Loxley et al. 2004: 199). They argue the evidence base is inconsistent in that the effectiveness of crackdowns depends on local circumstances and the capacity of drug users to circumvent police activity. In South Australia, a crackdown known as 'Operation Mantle' to address street market drug activity across metropolitan Adelaide reduced local drug-related crime (cited in Williams et al. 2001). However, it is acknowledged from other evaluations that the common perception that police crackdowns result in displacement to other neighbourhoods is not always borne out by the evidence. Loxley et al. cite Braga (2001) who, in a study of Australian and US localities, found that displacement was quite limited and that there were unintended benefits that flow from targeted police crackdowns. Similar conclusions have been drawn by Ratcliffe's (2002) research on a burglary reducing initiative in Canberra. More recently, Mazerolle et al.'s (forthcoming) evaluation of the literature on drug law enforcement activities makes the case for proactive policing policies in preference to reactive/directed approaches; though they point out the evidence base is currently too limited to draw any firm conclusions about what strategies work best.

It has already been reported from the UK evidence that large-scale police intervention carries the risk of unintended negative consequences. This view is shared by Maher and Dixon (1999) in their study of law enforcement activity in Sydney's main street-level drug market. They argue that successful curtailment of drug market activities can both increase the health risks of those who participate in drug use and accentuate a switch to property crime as selling heroin is viewed as too risky.

As stated earlier, Judd et al. (2002) examine the linkages between police and housing interventions to address crime on public housing estates. They argue that crime and its associated problems have been an important incentive for housing renewal programs and other interventions, with most incorporating physical renewal alongside social and

community programs. Examples include stock reduction and the introduction of mixed tenure schemes as well as intensive management. Judd et al. (2002: 33) report that crime prevention policies are similar to those developed elsewhere; that is, an increased focus on partnership and collaboration with law enforcement departments and the local community. These changes reflect a shift towards problem-orientated policing and partnership policing, seeking to develop a response to patterns of recurring incidents and associated community concerns, rather than simply responding to individual crimes as and when they occur.

Judd et al. (2002) summarise crime prevention initiatives that have been undertaken in three Australian states: New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia. In New South Wales and Queensland, the Premier's Department takes a lead role in the development of strategy. In South Australia, there is no overall state protocol but the government has in place a local crime prevention committee program which is coordinated by a crime prevention unit. Community policing initiatives are viewed favourably in all three states, and policies are in place to further cooperation with government departments.

The recently revised National Drug Strategy (2004) emphasises the importance of 'strengthening partnerships between the three tiers of government and local communities'. Research by Jacobs et al. (2003) highlights the procedures which housing departments have used to tackle ASB, including drug activity. In general terms, they have adopted a reactive approach to problems associated with drug-related activities; that is, they respond to tenant concerns at an individual level but have not adopted proactive partnerships with the police or other departments. Some innovative practices that have been established include good neighbours policy, mediation practices and tenant complaint procedures. In some states, as part of the National Drug Strategy, housing departments are represented on interdepartmental boards to tackle drug-related crime, but it is unclear whether the decisions made at these meetings filter down to the local areas. For example, the New South Wales police service has established a community safety plan with resources set aside to encourage officers to patrol neighbourhoods. In Queensland, crime prevention strategies have been adopted under the rubric of problem orientated policing. This entails identifying crime 'hot spots' and then taking steps to increase the visibility of police; for example, neighbourhood patrols and police shopfronts.

Shield (2002), Judd et al. (2002), Jacobs and Arthurson (2003) and Jacobs et al. (2003) all provide details of key state and territory initiatives to reduce crime and ASB within public housing localities. The most significant initiatives include the 'Officer Next Door' program, established in Tasmania in 1998 with the aim of providing a police presence on public housing estates vulnerable to crime. Police officers and their families are provided with a property at a reduced rent in return for a six monthly report. Jacobs and Arthurson's (2003) study of ASB policies in the Bridgewater region found that both the police and housing departments regarded the scheme as successful in helping to break down barriers between the police and the local community. Other examples of partnerships include a police/community liaison group which was formed on the Bridgewater estate. This met on a monthly basis and was a forum in which the community and government departments with a presence in the locality could share common concerns and advance solutions. Though the housing department had no involvement, Community Corrections in Tasmania operate a diversionary program, 'Offending Is Not the Only Choice', a cognitive skills project to help young people move away from criminal activity.

In Victoria, Shield (2002) reported that the Office of Housing and Crime Prevention Victoria established an interdepartmental committee in 2001 to coordinate anti-crime strategies in public housing. In New South Wales, Judd et al. (2002) reported the implementation of local

crime prevention action plans by the government and intensive tenancy management plans to provide a more locally-focused housing management approach in eight localities across the state. South Australia has established drug action teams, many of which participate in intensive community renewal program, with neighbourhood development officers working within each locality. In Queensland, the government has put in place a crime prevention strategy, 'Building Safer Communities', that seeks to address the problems associated with and the causes of crime. It operates in a number of specified communities.

A problem identified in the Australian context is the difficulty of sharing information effectively. Jacobs and Arthurson (2003) reported that there was anxiety amongst police and housing professionals about sharing information about individuals in relation to ASB because of the strict protocols regarding confidentiality of client files. This was seen by both departments as a major impediment to effective collaboration (Jacobs et al. 2003: 24).

It is evident from the Australian studies outlined above that considerable work is already taking place to develop effective strategies. However, there has not been any detailed study undertaken specifically to explore partnerships between the police and housing departments per se. Like the UK and US studies, the Australian research highlights the general benefits that can accrue from effective partnerships, but it needs to be recognised that these policies are unlikely to lead to long-term changes in the pattern of drug distribution in public housing areas or the culture surrounding drug-related activity. At best, effective partnerships can lead to improved community wellbeing, especially a heightened sense of security amongst residents, but are unlikely to result in any lasting changes in drug market activity. Partnerships need to be properly resourced, but care must be taken to ensure that they are not too cumbersome or bureaucratic. In short, their aims should be realistic, feasible and not overly ambitious.

2.5 Summary

The literature discussed in this chapter illustrates that strategies to address drug-related crime are informed by competing principles and philosophies. In general terms, problem-orientated and community policing models place more emphasis on the structural factors that accentuate social disadvantage and lifestyle choices, while traditional strategies focus largely on enforcement and social control. In Australia, intervention by the police and other departments is moving towards more community based models that recognise the need for policies to address the underlying factors that accentuate drug-related activity, alongside appropriate and realistic enforcement policies. For this reason, partnerships in which the police work with other departments and community representatives are generally regarded positively.

However, there are still significant gaps in knowledge about the practices of partnership working, in particular how practitioners experience the day-to-day realities of collaborative projects. For example, what steps are required to embed successful projects? What are the challenges that arise when seeking to develop partnerships? The next chapter sets out the methods that have been used to address these gaps.

Chapter three: Data collection strategy

The literature review in the previous chapter provided examples of the police and housing partnerships that have been developed in Australia and abroad. This chapter sets out the data collection strategy for the empirical part of the project. The methods of data collection were designed to map the institutional arrangements adopted by police and housing departments. In all three case studies, semi-structured interviews were held with the housing staff responsible for the localities. Informal interviews were held with people from support departments operating on the estates and, in both Girrawheen and Collingwood, meetings that involved various partners were held on the estates.

The data sources were similar in all three locations, as follows.

Primary sources

- Interviews with police, housing department representatives, tenants and welfare departments (twenty in total). We sought to gather perceptions of crime in the localities and explore the utility of partnership working practices between police and housing departments. We encouraged our interviewees to provide a reflexive account of the salient issues; for example, staff were asked open-ended rather than closed questions, and invited to give their own personal perceptions rather than reiterate the formal rationales that can be found in policy documents. By taking this approach, we were able to gather useful 'insider' perspectives on the realities of partnership working.
- Focus groups with tenants and housing staff (five in total). Those involved were also asked open-ended questions and we found that the interactions between them generated a rich source of material.
- Participant observation at meetings (eight in total). The scope of the project required us to initiate meetings between police and housing departments so that MoUs could be discussed and agreed. These meetings generated valuable information on the practicalities of establishing partnerships and the pitfalls that can arise.

The interview material and focus group discussions were recorded to ensure accuracy of data collection unless interviewees requested otherwise.

Secondary sources

- Police department crime statistics.
- Housing department correspondence and policy reports on ASB.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001 census.

Though secondary data on crime and housing was necessary as background information, it was not feasible to generate meaningful statistical comparisons between the localities to ascertain (in quantitative terms) the extent to which the partnership agreements have made an impact on drug-related activity.

3.1 Categorising partnerships

In Chapter one, it was claimed that partnership working is a relatively new phenomenon and that there has been only a limited knowledge base about its operation. In understanding the benefits and challenges, it was important to make explicit the three types of partnerships that are in place within the case study locations:

- *Strategic partnerships* are typically ‘whole of government’ initiatives with strategic objectives set by, or broadly in line with, the major government objective of the day. The Neighbourhood Renewal program in Victoria and the North-West Metro regional meetings in Western Australia are examples.
- *Local area committee partnerships* draw together the various stakeholders at the spatial or organisational level who are involved in implementing a strategic partnership. These committees identify the specific ideas, objectives, actions and priorities of the partnership for this level. Two examples are the Community Safety Liaison Group (CSLG) in Devonport and the ‘New North, New Living’ project in Girrawheen.
- *partnerships* bring together the people - sometimes in the form of a sub-committee, other times just as individuals - who progress the local area partnership. An example is the meetings established in Girrawheen as part of the MoU.

3.2 Thematic analysis

Our thematic analysis entailed gathering the data collected from our interviews and focus group discussions and gauging the validity of views provided. We did this by exploring how these matched other research studies on partnerships reported in the literature review. The key thematic areas for categorising the data were:

- issues that affected the setting up of partnerships, e.g. organisational context, type of partnerships, challenges and concerns;
- benefits of partnership working, e.g. networking opportunities, familiarity and rapport, diversity of approaches;
- obstacles associated with partnership working, e.g. reporting mechanisms, staffing issues, target setting, tensions between and within departments;
- outcomes and lessons that can be learned from partnership interventions on public housing estates.

In analysing the data and focus group transcripts, it was evident that perceptions of the benefits and obstacles were broadly similar for both police and housing departments.

Chapter four: Case study profiles

The introduction to this report contained a brief description of the three case study localities. This chapter presents additional information by summarising the socio-economic data and crime statistics provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the police. Though all three locations are relatively disadvantaged, it is Collingwood which has the most serious illicit drug problem.

4.1 Girrawheen

Girrawheen has suffered from a negative social stigma for many years, along with its neighbouring suburbs of Koondoola and Balga. In the late 1990s Girrawheen and surrounds became part of a project initiated by the Department of Housing and Works (DHW) to renew areas with high concentrations of public housing tenants, a high level of crime and ASB, and poor amenities. In the Girrawheen area this is known as the 'New North, New Living' project, which aims to reduce public housing over ten years from 31 per cent to about 12 per cent.

4.1.1 Services and Facilities

Girrawheen is well serviced by the main government departments (DHW, Community Development, Justice) which are located in the same building in the neighbouring suburb of Mirrabooka. There is a community health centre and mental health service, as well as the nearby North Metro Drug and Alcohol Centre. The Department for Community Development in this area covers 11 suburbs in which there are 300 children in care (personal communication). Drug and alcohol issues are related to 70 per cent of these cases. Between 1999 and 2002, physical abuse decreased, sexual abuse remained the same, and neglect (often related to drug and alcohol use) increased by 20 per cent.

There are also numerous non-government services located in and around Girrawheen, concerned with housing and homelessness, financial and legal matters, and employment, as well as specific services for migrants and refugees, Indigenous people, children and families and young people. Staff from the City of Wanneroo, in which Girrawheen is located, also provide youth workers, financial counsellors and community development workers.

Police services for Girrawheen operate out of the station in the nearby suburb of Warwick. However, community policing, including drug and alcohol liaison officers, youth liaison officers and other crime prevention activities, are based further away at Hillarys police station and cover the whole of the North-West Metro region, which is 817 sq km in size and has a population of approximately 231,000.

There are four state primary schools in Girrawheen, a Christian private school and a state high school. The Hainsworth community centre provides recreational facilities and meeting rooms for community use, and there are 11 parks or reserves.

Map 1: Girrawheen



4.1.2 Housing

Around 80 per cent of Girrawheen residents live in separate houses, 14 per cent in semi-detached, row or terrace houses or townhouses, and nearly 5 per cent in flats, units or apartments (ABS 2001).

The median rent in Girrawheen was \$50 to \$99 per week, while in Western Australia as a whole it was \$100 to \$149 (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2001). There was a higher percentage of people renting public housing. Between 2002 and 2004 there were 85 evictions from public housing: 64 because of rent arrears, 19 because of ASB, and two because of the low standard at which the property was being kept.

As part of the 'New North, New Living' project, public housing in Girrawheen and surrounding areas will be reduced by two-thirds. In 1998 it comprised 31 per cent of the total housing, in 2005 about 20 per cent, and by 2009 it will comprise 12 per cent. Communities are expected to benefit from higher property values, increased employment, reduced crime and fear, and the transformation of run-down areas. However, some public housing tenants do need to be relocated, which is voluntary, and all relocation expenses are paid by DHW.

The renewal project is government funded through DHW, but is being managed by Satterley Real Estate, a private company. The project involves selling refurbished public housing properties, demolishing some, and refurbishing the remainder. All are refurbished to the same level. Properties are not sold to investors, because the aim is to have a higher proportion of owner-occupiers in the area. The renewal project also involves environmental improvements (including street beautification and traffic management) and community development initiatives. Satterley Real Estate has been working with the City of Wanneroo constructing streetscapes and improving park areas and has been involved with community-based projects.

Photograph 1: Girrawheen



4.1.3 Demographic profile

In 2001, Girrawheen had a total population of 8,571 (ABS 2001). About 75 per cent are over 15, including 7.25 per cent over 65, with the median age being 30, a little lower than the state's median age of 34. Nearly 7 per cent of the population in Girrawheen are Indigenous, about double the figure for Western Australia as a whole. Around 34 per cent of residents were born overseas, which is also higher than the Western Australian figure of 26.8 per cent (ABS 2001). Of those born overseas, around 10 per cent were born in north-west Europe and another 10 per cent in south-east Asia. While the figures for north-west Europe reflect those of the whole of Western Australia, only 3.3 per cent of people in Western Australia were born in south-east Asia. There are also anecdotal reports of high numbers of migrants from Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan settling in the area in recent years, which may be confirmed in the 2006 census. Fifty-seven per cent of people are part of 'couple' families with children, with an additional 26 per cent being part of one-parent families. Sixteen per cent are in coupled families without children. In comparison, there are more coupled families with children (61 per cent) and without children (24 per cent) and fewer one-parent families (14 per cent) in Western Australia.

4.1.4 Education, employment and income

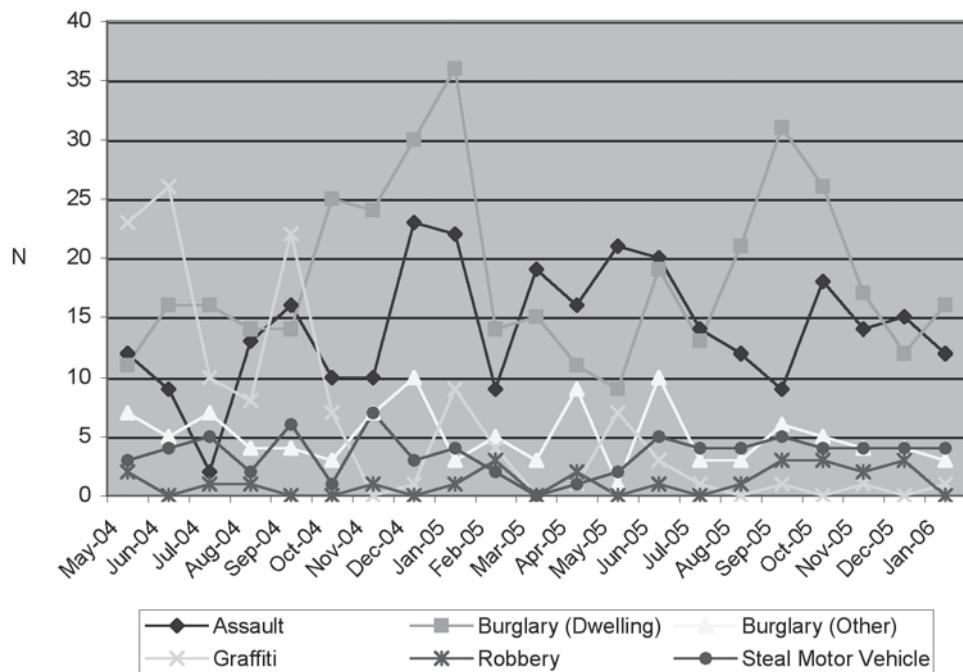
Of those aged over 15 who had completed their schooling, 26 per cent had completed year 12, compared to around 38 per cent in Western Australia. Only about 20 per cent had post-secondary qualifications, with the majority holding a certificate level qualification, compared to 35 per cent of Western Australians as a whole.

The unemployment rate in Girrawheen is 17.8 per cent, compared to an overall Western Australian rate of 7.5 per cent. Around 35 per cent of those employed are in part-time positions. Over half the workforce is made up of 'tradespersons and related workers', 'intermediate clerical, sales and service workers' and 'labourers and related workers' (ABS 2001). The median individual weekly income bracket was \$200 to \$299, compared to \$300 to \$399 for Western Australia (ABS 2001). There are higher numbers of low income earners and lower numbers of high income earners in Girrawheen when compared to the rest of Western Australia.

In summary, compared to Western Australia as a whole, Girrawheen has significantly higher levels of unemployment, lower levels of training and education, and lower levels of income. However, these figures are based on the ABS census data from 2001. It is likely that these figures have changed because of the renewal project that has been occurring since then.

4.1.5 Crime

Figure 1: Crime rates, Girrawheen, 2004-05



Based on Figure 1, it appears that there may have been a reported decrease in graffiti over 2004-05. The figure also shows that burglary (dwelling) peaked between October 2004 and January 2005, and again between August and October 2005. However, the figures between November 2005 and January 2006 were about half those of the previous year. Similarly, the peaked figures for assault during December 2004 and January 2005 are not as high the following year. The figures for robbery, motor vehicle theft and burglary (other) do not show any significant changes.

4.2 East Devonport

The City of Devonport has a population of 23,030 and is the major entry point for visitors to Tasmania travelling by ferry from Melbourne. The suburb of East Devonport is approximately one kilometre from the town centre on the east bank of the River Mersey. It is a residential area but also the location of the ferry terminal and some light industry. In 2001, 4,097 people resided in East Devonport (ABS 2001). The area contains a mix of public and private housing, including separate dwellings and semi-detached or groups of housing units. These ranged from complexes comprising as little as three units to those with over 20 units. While public housing is 'sprinkled' throughout Devonport, the highest concentration is in East Devonport. It has a large green belt through its centre, with a football field, and ends on paddocks to its east.

Photograph 2: East Devonport



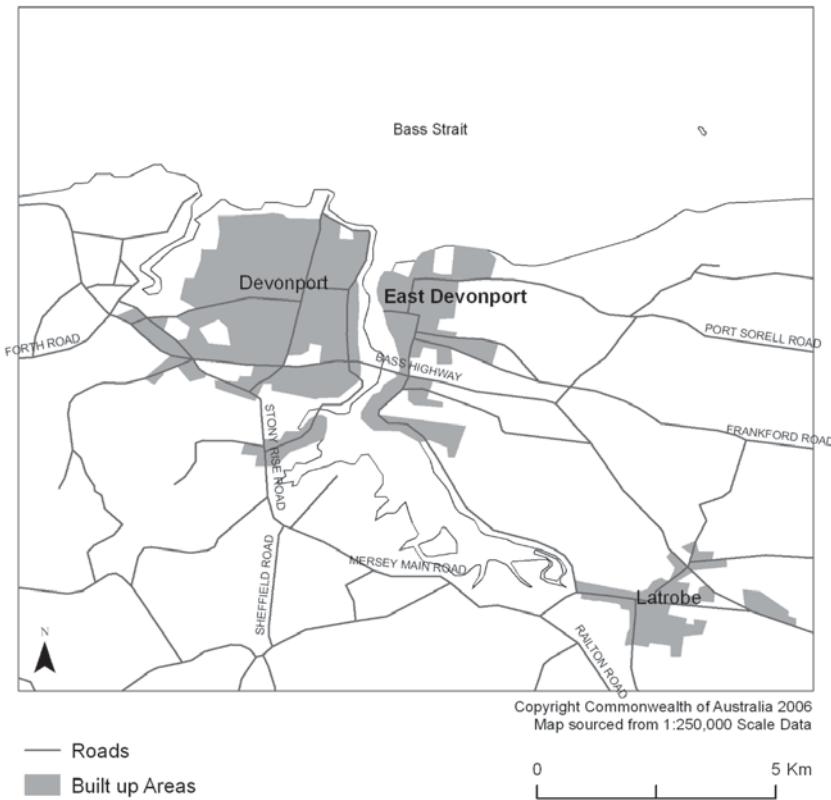
4.2.1 Housing

Seventy-three per cent of East Devonport residents live in a separate dwelling, while 12 per cent live in semi-detached or terrace housing (ABS 2001). A further 13 per cent live in a flat or other dwelling (primarily caravans).

Generally, smaller proportions of those in East Devonport fully own their houses (38.5 per cent) compared to Tasmania (44 per cent), with a similar picture emerging for those purchasing their homes (22 per cent East Devonport, versus 29 per cent Tasmania). Further, a far greater proportion of East Devonport residents are in public housing (21 per cent) than in Tasmania as a whole (7 per cent).

Median rents were between \$50 and \$99 per week, compared to \$100 to \$199 for Tasmania, with public housing rents being significantly lower than private rents. Eighteen per cent of renters paid between \$1 and \$50 per week, 38 per cent paid between \$50 and \$99, and 35 per cent paid between \$100 and \$149 (ABS 2001).

Map 2: Devonport



4.2.2 Demographic profile

Twenty-two per cent of residents are under 15 and a further 12 per cent are between 15 and 25, meaning that just on one-third of the population are under 25. At the other end of the scale, 15 per cent are over 65. The median age is 36, the same as for Tasmania as a whole.

Eighty-six per cent of residents were born in Australia. Nearly 5 per cent of the population identified as Aboriginals or Torres Strait Islanders. Most of those born overseas came from the Asia Pacific region (ABS 2001).

4.2.3 Education and employment

Generally, educational outcomes are significantly lower than for Tasmania as a whole. Fewer residents had completed year 12: 16 per cent compared to 29 per cent. A greater proportion had ended their schooling at years 8, 9 or 10.

Generally, labour participation rates for East Devonport were lower in both full-time and part-time employment than for Tasmania as a whole. Thus, 55 per cent were employed full-time in Tasmania, but only 47 per cent in East Devonport. Similarly, 33 per cent were employed part-time in Tasmania, compared to 30 per cent in East Devonport. The most telling statistic of labour participation rates is the level of unemployment: 19.6 per cent in East Devonport, nearly double that for Tasmania (10.1 per cent).

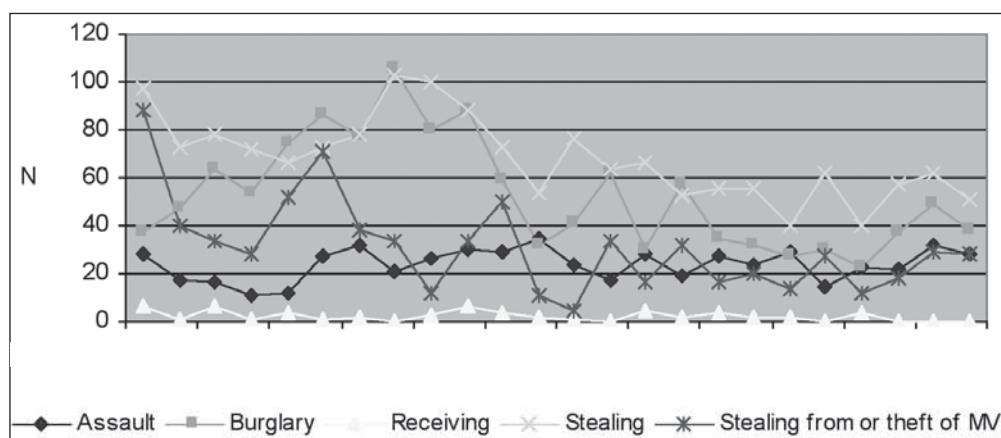
A smaller proportion of East Devonport residents were employed in management and administration or as professional workers when compared to Tasmania as a whole. Conversely, a higher proportion were engaged in transport and labouring.

East Devonport might therefore be characterised as being a predominately blue-collar area. Of the main vocations listed in ABS data, 4 per cent of residents work in agriculture or forestry, 19 per cent in manufacturing, 15 per cent in retail, and 9 per cent in transportation and storage, and another 9 per cent in health and community services.

There was a higher proportion of low paid workers in East Devonport than in Tasmania as a whole. Median individual weekly income was \$200 to \$299 compared to \$300 to \$399 for Tasmania, while median family weekly income for East Devonport was \$500 to \$599, compared to \$700 to \$799 for Tasmania (ABS 2001).

4.2.4 Crime

Figure 2: Crime rates, Devonport, 2004-05



The main crimes reported in Devonport are stealing, burglary and injury to property. Stealing and burglary trended upwards to a peak in August/September then dropped quite dramatically until December. Both started and ended the year in relatively the same position, which might indicate a cyclical pattern. Motor vehicle theft peaked in June then fell in December, while assaults remained relatively steady, starting with around 36 in January and ending with around 40 in December.

Of the total offences committed during the period of review, 19 per cent were in East Devonport, and the remaining 81 per cent in Devonport. Devonport is the business and retail centre, so it is not surprising that most offences would be committed there. For East Devonport, the main offences are arson, aggravated burglary and stealing, motor vehicle theft and trespass, whereas shoplifting, robbery, receiving stolen goods and deceit (fraud, uttering, not paying etc.) are more widespread in the business and retail centre.

We were also able to collect additional qualitative information from interviews with residents, police and housing officers in East Devonport. The main issue identified was low level ASB; for example, the frequency with which young men drive around in their cars at high speed, mostly late at night (described as 'hooling'). ASB such as noise nuisance and litter also led to neighbourhood disputes, often between younger and older tenants. For example, it was not uncommon for older tenants to complain to housing staff about activities such as noisy late night parties, vandalism and litter. Drugs were not identified as a major problem, although anecdotally it was suggested that alcohol is often a trigger.

4.3 Collingwood

The Collingwood estate is a large public housing development in inner Melbourne, comprising three high rise system-built towers (200 flats per tower) and 280 low rise flats. Most of the 880 flats have two or three bedrooms. In 2005, the estate accommodated around 1,600 people, the size of a smallish country town. As already stated in the introduction, illicit drug activity is a major problem. Resident satisfaction surveys over the last six years or so all put this as the worst aspect of high rise living, with 85 per cent of respondents to the 2002 Collingwood Neighbourhood Renewal Community Survey saying drugs and alcohol were the main problems on the estate.

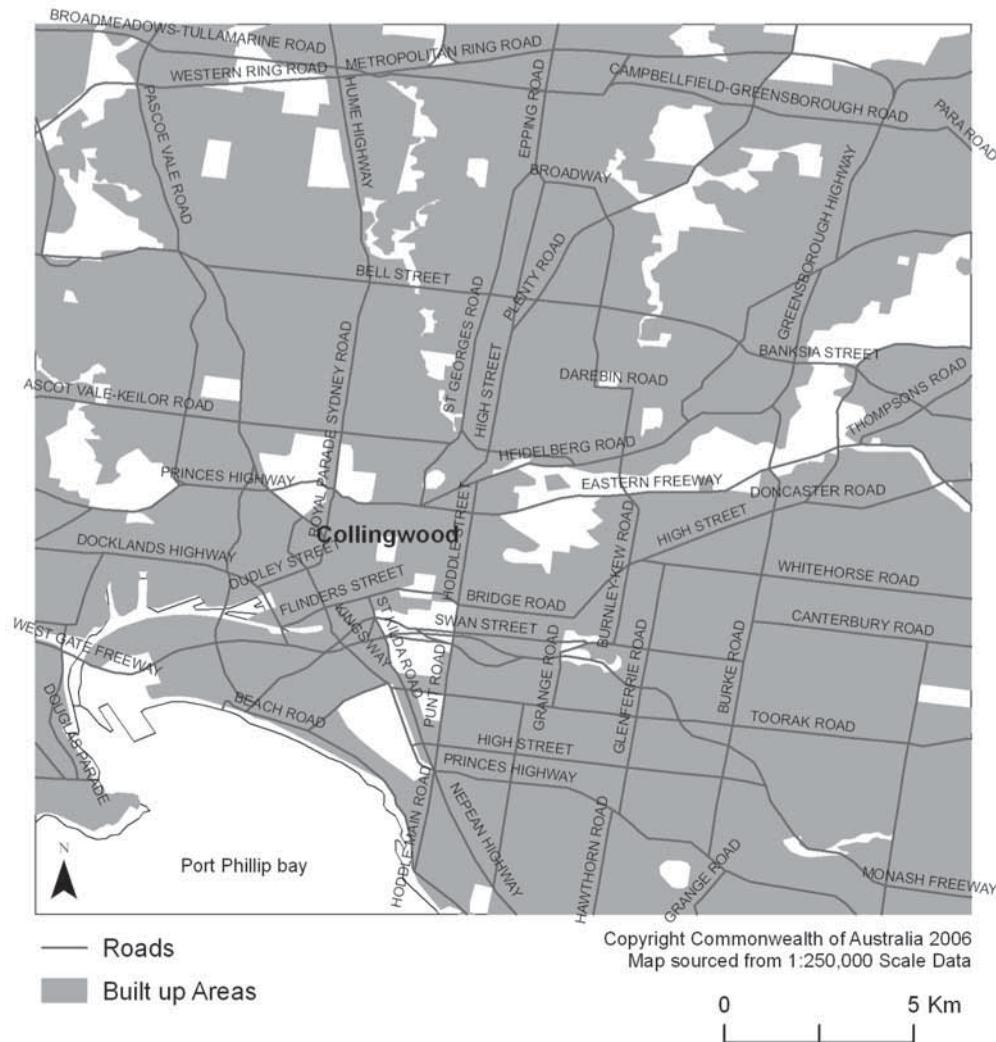
Photograph 3: Collingwood High Rise



4.3.1 Housing

Two-thirds of Collingwood residents live in a flat, unit or apartment, and a further 25 per cent in a semi-detached or terrace house. Fewer than 10 per cent live in a separate house. Just on 20 per cent either own or are buying their home, while 19 per cent are renting. Twenty-one per cent were in public housing. Median monthly housing loan repayments were \$1,200 to \$1,399, while the median weekly rent was \$100 to \$149.

Map 3: Collingwood



4.3.2 Demographic profile

In the 1960s and 1970s, the major household types were low income families, but increasingly these are now of a migrant background, most notably newly arrived Vietnamese. The 1980s also saw a dramatic increase in one-parent families. By 2000 the effects of changes to housing allocations in conjunction with changes to the wider economic and social context, including the growth of drug-related activities on the estate, had resulted in a vastly changed tenancy and stock profile.

As of 2001 there were 5,081 people residing in Collingwood. The median age was 30. Thirteen per cent were under 15, and 28 per cent were under 25 years. Over half of the population was under 35. A further 17 per cent were between 35 and 45, with 11 per cent being over 60.

Over two-thirds (68 per cent) of Collingwood residents were Australian born, with the next largest group (16 per cent) being born in south-east Asia. Europeans (southern and northern) comprised a further 12 per cent. In respect of background, 42 per cent were of northern European heritage and 21 per cent of Asian (including south-east Asian) heritage. Just over a half of residents were defined as being in a family. Of these, 32 per cent were a couple with children, a similar proportion (33 per cent) had

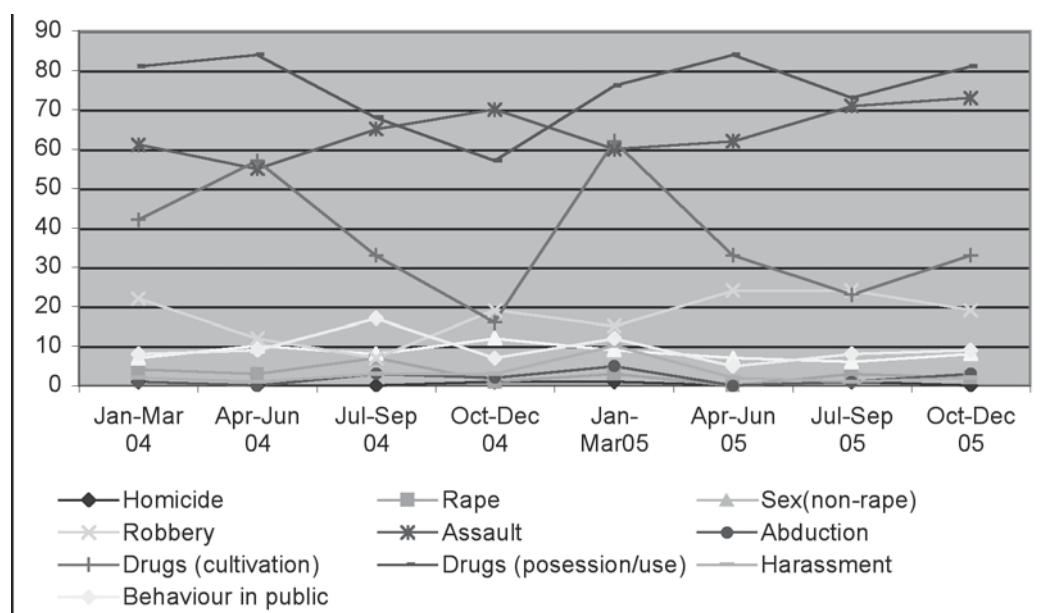
no children, 29 per cent were single parents with children, while the remaining 6 per cent were defined as 'other' family.

4.3.3 Education and employment

Fifty-two per cent of Collingwood residents had completed year 12 or its equivalent. Just over half (52 per cent) were in the labour force, while 27 per cent were not. Of those employed, 68 per cent worked full-time, and 29 per cent part-time. As of 2001, the unemployment rate was 12.9 per cent. Median weekly individual income was \$300 to \$399, while median weekly household income was \$700 to \$799.

4.3.4 Crime

Figure 3: Crime rates, Collingwood, 2004-05



The chart within Figure 3 identifies the crimes reported to the police over a two year period. It reveals the extent of the pervasiveness of drug-related activity. Further evidence is provided by data compiled for the City of Yara for the period 2004-05. Crimes per thousand residents were five times higher than the state average, with drug offences accounting for a substantial proportion. Around 4,000 people were processed by police for drug cultivation, manufacture or trafficking, with a quarter of these being picked up on a street, lane or footpath. Around 9,000 people were also processed for possession or use, with a third of these being picked up on a street, lane or footpath.

Looking more specifically at the Collingwood estate, an analysis of 'security incidents' in one of the three towers for just one month, December 2004, shows a very large incident rate, equivalent to 8,000 a year, with most of it drug-related (see Table 1).

Table 1: Security Incidents, Collingwood High Rise Tower, December 2004

Categories of incident	Number of incidents logged
Drug dealing	12
Drug use	154
Loitering	101
Police called on site	47
Syringes found	27
Threats and assaults	23
Visitors refused entry	250
Other	78
TOTAL	692

Source: Office of Housing (2004) Chubb Security log (unpublished)

4.4 Summary

This chapter provided some socio-economic and crime data for each of the three localities. Though Girrawheen and East Devonport public housing tenants are victims of crime and ASB, it is Collingwood that has the most serious problems. The buying and selling of drugs is a major source of concern for tenants. It is likely that Collingwood's problems are exacerbated because it is located in the inner city near major arterial roads and public transport links. Also, the physical design of the estate with its stairwells, lifts and utility rooms makes policing more difficult, and land use arrangements mean that there are large areas of open public space.

The next three chapters present the empirical findings of the research project, beginning with a discussion of how the partnerships were established.

Chapter five: Setting up the partnerships

The time preceding a partnership agreement is when the key actors have to be enlisted, the resource implications considered and the scope of the partnership determined. It can be a period of complex negotiation as different departments assess their role and the amount of commitment they can expend. Furthermore, the initiators of any partnership project need to identify individuals who will be able to prioritise its aims.

In the case of this project, the challenges were considerable in that the research team were effectively 'outsiders' with no organisational connection to either the police or housing departments. Initially they had to make explicit the benefits of the project to convince the key actors in each of the localities that it was worth endorsing. In this chapter, some of the challenges that arose in the period before the signing of the three MoUs are identified, alongside a description of how these were addressed.

The establishment of any organisational partnership does not take place in a vacuum. Staff are already busy responding to existing pressures and meeting the demands placed upon them. New working arrangements require considerable effort, and it is imperative that a convincing case is made to persuade staff to invest their time in the project. For this reason, the initial stage required the research team to act as facilitators in the three localities. The most urgent task was to make contact with local police and housing representatives and to work towards securing MoUs so that evaluations could commence.

In hindsight, it is now apparent that the period preceding the establishment of the MoUs was the most difficult part of the project. The work proved invaluable in understanding the challenges of bringing together representatives from government departments with demanding workloads and diverse policy objectives.

5.1 Organisational context

The different organisational contexts determined the form of the cooperation between the police and housing departments. In Devonport and Girrawheen, the absence of an explicit drug-related problem meant that there was no pressing rationale for extensive collaboration models and it was evident at the start of the research that formal contact between the two departments was minimal. In the Girrawheen area, many community policing activities (drug and alcohol liaison officers and youth officers) operate not from Girrawheen itself but from Hillarys and cover the whole of Perth's North-West Metro region. As stated, in East Devonport, contact between the police and the housing department took place through the monthly CSLG, as well as informal contact under the auspices of the 'Officer Next Door' program.

Collingwood was quite different and altogether more complex. The police had since 1999 operated a Safer Communities Program out of which some collaborations had arisen; for example, the Police/Community Consultative Committee which includes representatives from local government, residents and community groups. There was also a Neighbourhood Advisory Team within the estate with representatives from the City of Yarra, the housing department and the police, and within this there was a working group specifically on community safety. In the initial meetings with the police and housing departments it was made clear that the project should seek to audit existing protocols and networks rather than embark on a new partnership per se. Table 2 provides a summary of the main partnerships that have been established in Collingwood.

Table 2: Partnership activities, Collingwood Estate, 2000-05

Projects and activities	Initiating department	Date implemented	Partners	Status	Objective
City of Yarra Local Safety Committee	Police	2000	OoH, police, City of Yarra, local traders	Ongoing	Raise awareness of local safety issues and create opportunities for information exchange
Increase frequency of walk-around audits	OoH	June 2005	OoH, Chubb Security, police, City of Yarra	Ongoing	Reassure tenants of security presence and identify areas of potential risk
Establish protocols for service providers	OoH	June 2005	Working group, police, Chubb Security, OoH	Ongoing	Improved management procedures
Security Issues Forum for 253 Hoddle Street	OoH	Jan. 2005	OoH, Chubb Security, police	Complete	Information and education
Review protocols for reporting between housing department, police and Chubb security	OoH	Oct. 2005	OoH, Chubb Security, police	Ongoing	Improved management procedures
Develop educational strategy to encourage greater trust between residents	OoH	Oct. 2005	OoH, Chubb Security, police	Ongoing	Information and education
Collingwood Conversations: anti-discrimination lecture series	OoH	June 2004	Community Safety Working Group (CSWG), various	Ongoing	Information and education
Community relationship with police and Chubb Security	Police	Oct. 2003	CSWG, police, Chubb Security	Ongoing	Community building

Community Safety Month forum	OoH	Oct. 2003	City of Yarra, CSWG, police, OoH, Chubb Security	Complete	Information and education
Community safety news (in community languages) in The Link newsletter	OoH	Oct. 2003	OoH, Chubb Security, police	Ongoing	Information, education and community building
Crime and Violence Prevention Award and \$5,000 prize	OoH	April 2005	Neighbourhood Advisory Team	Received	Crime prevention and community building
Review of CCTV camera placement in high rises	OoH	March 2005	OoH, Chubb Security	Complete	Crime prevention
Estate walk-around audit	OoH	From Dec. 2003	CSWG	Ongoing	Crime prevention and resident reassurance
Ground floor stairwell alarms and concierge desks operational in high rises	OoH	April 2005	OoH, Chubb Security	Ongoing	Crime prevention
Development of drug strategy for estate	Police OOH	Feb. 2005	OoH, police	Ongoing	Crime prevention and improved management procedures
Increased police presence on estate	Police	Jan. 2005	Police, OoH	Ongoing	Crime prevention and resident reassurance
Education strategy for residents on what to do if you find a discarded syringe	OoH	Oct. 2005	OoH, police	Ongoing	Information and education
Neighbourhood Watch news (in community languages) in The Link newsletter, including encouraging reporting of crime	OoH	March 2005	OoH, CSWG, police	Ongoing	Information and education

Neighbourhood Watch program introduced	Police	Aug. 2004	Police, CSWG, OoH	Ongoing	Information, education and crime prevention
Neighbourhood Watch property marking sessions at Info Centre and Harvest Festival	Police	March and April 2005	Police	Complete	Information and education
Security Resourcing Review – input to OoH decision making	OoH	Oct. 2004	CSWG	Ongoing	Crime prevention
Training for Chubb Security staff on youth issues	OoH	Oct. 2004	Youth worker, Chubb Security, OoH	Ongoing	Information and education
Welcome process – getting to know your neighbours increases passive security and helps residents feel safe	OoH	April 2004	OoH, Collingwood Community Information Centre, Health and Wellbeing Working Group	Ongoing	Community building

Source: Adapted from Holland (2006)

5.1.1 *Obstacles*

The research team encountered some obstacles in this process; the most significant relate to the organisational context in each of the localities. In Devonport, there was a perception amongst both the police and housing staff that ASB, though an issue, was not a major problem, and furthermore there was already an existing forum for dialogue through the Community Safety Liaison Group (CSLG). A police officer felt that East Devonport was not particularly different from other areas in terms of policing and that most residents were law abiding:

Ninety per cent of the East Devonport community are law abiding, the other 10 per cent aren't. If I could take 20 people out of East Devonport, then most of the problems would go.

These comments give an indication as to why there was no immediate rush by the police to embrace a new partnership with the housing department.

In Girrawheen, drug-related activity was not seen as an especially pressing problem either. Currently the housing department's focus on addressing ASB and drug-related issues is through the 'New North, New Living' renewal project. The police are required to respond to the usual crime issues that affect any deprived neighbourhood; for example, burglary, assault and motor theft. Though it was recognised that drug use

is likely to be a factor related to property theft, Girrawheen is not seen as being any more problematic than other neighbourhoods with a similar economic and social profile.

However, in Collingwood, it was recognised that drug-related activity was a major problem that required intervention from both the police and housing departments, with a complex set of relationships involving other layers of government already in place. In this respect, Collingwood's illicit drug problem acted as a spur for partnership interventions between the two departments.

5.1.2 Negotiating memoranda of understanding

It is important to make explicit that the three MoUs were shaped by arrangements already in place, and both the police and housing departments' perspectives on the research project were informed by their own working experiences in tackling housing and crime-related issues. Yet there were other factors that determined the type of MoU that could be agreed. For example, in Devonport, after a number of introductory meetings it became evident that locally-based staff were reluctant to embrace an extensive joint partnership project with demanding objectives or to sign off on any MoU without the prior approval of more senior staff at head offices. In hindsight, this reluctance was understandable, given that they already had to grapple with a busy work schedule and were being asked to take on a new project that, in their view, was initiated not from within their organisations but by outsiders based within academic institutions. Similar issues arose in Girrawheen. Staff wanted to know, for instance, what the implications of the project would be and how it would affect their existing workloads.

The discussions were protracted as it was evident that all three projects had to be manageable in terms of staff time. Our approach in both East Devonport and Girrawheen was to explain that the MoUs should include activities that had already been established. In East Devonport, it meant reporting mainly on existing activities, though some modifications were made to police traffic patrols. In Girrawheen, it meant further developing the networks already established as part of the 'New North, New Living' project.

Collingwood was quite different in that it had an identifiable drug problem, with dealers using the estate as a location to sell. In response, senior officers had established two strategic partnerships focusing on community safety issues (Neighbourhood Advisory Team and Police/Community Consultative Committee). However, these did not have a significant day-to-day impact for police or housing staff working on the estate.

In all three locations, we set up a series of meetings to provide reassurance for staff and effectively sell the project to the police and housing departments. In East Devonport, meetings took place in August 2004 with police and housing representatives. Further meetings took place in October and November 2004 with staff from welfare organisations and a final series of meetings with senior police and housing staff in December 2004 and February 2005. In Girrawheen, meetings took place with community organisations, the housing department and the police in August, October and November 2004 and March 2005. In Collingwood, meetings were held in August, October and December 2004 and March 2005.

A common set of concerns was raised in these meetings: whether there was a budget for the partnership, how the money could be spent, who the partnership was accountable to, what reporting mechanisms would be established and what outputs were required. As already stated, our role was to provide reassurance about the aims of the research, that it was focused on exploring the practicalities of partnership working and the benefits that can accrue as well as the challenges that arise. Our effort to reassure staff that the partnerships would not lead to a major change in existing practices or an increase in bureaucracy was crucial in ensuring the MoUs were eventually signed off and the evaluation could commence.

Additional concerns were raised in East Devonport and Girrawheen about the extent of the drug problem and whether it was significant enough to merit a formal partnership with the police specifically in relation to this issue. Consider the following quote from a housing officer in East Devonport:

It is not housing's role to police alcohol and drug issues. If tenants have issues with alcohol and drugs, then they are encouraged to call the police.

In East Devonport, community groups were reluctant to participate in a law enforcement initiative. We learned from our meetings that community organisations such as Anglicare and the Salvation Army dealt with individual or family cases within a counselling context for problems including drug addiction, domestic violence and gambling. Their point of intervention was at an individual level, not targeted at addressing problems at the level of the wider community. Furthermore, in East Devonport, the police pointed out that existing contacts were already in place through the Devonport CSLG and so additional meetings to discuss East Devonport specifically were not absolutely necessary. In Collingwood, these issues did not arise. In fact, it was widely recognised by all the key actors that collaboration was essential to address the complex set of problems that existed on the estate in relation to the buying and selling of drugs.

All of these issues featured in our discussions in the meetings we had with staff. In each of the localities, we recognised soon after the research project commenced that securing agreement would require, firstly, a realistic approach that did not make onerous demands on key staff. Secondly, any agreement would need to incorporate existing practices. Thirdly, our evaluation would be more insightful if its focus was directed at uncovering some of the practical challenges that confront departments seeking to establish new projects.

5.2 The agreements

Tables 3, 4 and 5 provide the content of the MoUs signed by police and housing representatives in the three case studies. Our objective in each was broadly similar: to collect data about partnership practices and audit activity over a twelve month period.

Table 3: East Devonport Memorandum of Understanding

Housing Tasmania to:
Initiate small-scale environmental improvement works
Coordinate housing support provided to tenants
Review allocations policies for the locality
Assess the utility of the probationary tenancy scheme
Promote community development activities
Provide data on tenant complaints, tenants' hot line, ministerial correspondence and other relevant information to the university research team
Police to:
Provide core data and record information to the university research team
Shift target traffic operations so that one of five operational shifts is located in East Devonport (i.e. vehicle inspections and random breath tests)
Jointly Police and Housing Tasmania to:
Hold monthly meetings of senior police and housing service management staff to develop and review areas of common interest (commencing March 2005)
Continue supporting the 'Officer Next Door' program

Table 4: Collingwood Memorandum of Understanding

Office of Housing to:
Permit senior staff to be interviewed in relation to local drug control initiatives
Coordinate housing support provided to tenants
Provide access to policy reports in order to be able to document joint initiatives with police
Assist Swinburne in assessing the utility of drug control initiatives
Identify any community development activities in relation to initiatives and provide data or contacts for potential review
Provide data on tenant complaints, tenants' hot line, correspondence and other relevant information to the university research team
Police to:
Provide core data and record information to the university research team
Provide staff to participate in interviews in order to evaluate police initiatives around drug prevention on high rise housing estates
Provide access to policy reports in order to facilitate documentation of initiatives
Jointly Police and Office of Housing to:
Hold two-monthly meetings of senior police and housing service management staff to develop and review areas of common interest
Continue supporting existing initiatives around drug prevention on high rise estates

Table 5: Girrawheen Memorandum of Understanding

Department of Housing and Works to:
Continue the 'New North, New Living' project
Coordinate housing support for tenants:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the Supported Housing Assistance Program • Continue to enforce the tenancy conditions of tenants with drug problems and ensure that these conditions are appropriate • Provide additional support and consideration (including allocation decisions) to tenants with a history of drug and alcohol problems
Provide relevant data to the university research team; for example, tenant complaints, tenants' hot line details, ministerial correspondence and other relevant information
Police to:
Provide a list of proactive strategies in Girrawheen to be continued throughout the life of the project
Provide data to the university research team:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime data for the suburb of Girrawheen • Information about the performance of proactive policing strategies • Information about the outcomes of mobile policing and other specific operations being conducted in Girrawheen
Jointly Police and Department of Housing and Works to:
Establish collaboration with other departments dealing with drug-and alcohol-related problems in Girrawheen:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate through the North-West Metro regional meetings, which bring together government departments under the 'whole of government' approach
Obtain local knowledge:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine efforts to encourage the community to report alcohol-and drug-related problems. This will be actioned through local community groups, including the Girrawheen Progress Association, Gurradoola and the local drug action group
Sharing police and housing data:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet as part of the steering committee every six weeks in order to progress this project

5.3 Summary

A more detailed discussion of the obstacles that impact on partnership working is provided in Chapter 7, but at this juncture it is helpful to consider some issues that arose during the period leading up to the signing of the MoUs. Firstly, as researchers based at universities, it became apparent that our capacity to secure the support of staff within the police or housing department required considerable work to prepare the ground and engender trust amongst the key actors.

In the meetings we set up to secure the partnership we had to convince staff that this stage of the research was not about us imposing an agenda for them to pursue reluctantly. Rather, we explained that the partnership required both departments to feel satisfied that their commitment within the MoU was feasible and not too onerous. We achieved this object

but, on reflection, it is now apparent that the lead-in time to set up the partnerships should have been longer. This would have enabled us to address concerns more effectively and to secure MoUs that were more output-focused than the ones that were signed.

However, the MoUs provided the research team with the agreement necessary to observe meetings, collect data and, most importantly, interview key actors. As stated in Chapter 3, we were especially interested in hearing some of the ‘insider’ and more critical perspectives.

Issues that arose in setting up the partnerships will be returned to in the final section of the report. The following two chapters provide a summary of some key findings that emerged, including the benefits that accrue from partnership working and the obstacles that can reduce its effectiveness.

Chapter six: Benefits of partnership working

In the previous chapter, it was noted how partnerships were initially seen by key local actors. For example, those in East Devonport perceived that drug-related issues were not a major problem in the locality, and that police and housing staff were already involved in an existing forum, the CSLG. In Collingwood, the complex network of activities in place deterred staff from making any new commitments, while in Girrawheen the housing department was strategically focused on the 'New North, New Living' project.

In this chapter, we report on the 12 month period following the signing of the MoUs and explore some of the views of key actors in each of the three localities. In spite of the difficulties that arose, we gathered during the period of evaluation a range of positive viewpoints about the benefits that can accrue from partnership working, such as networking opportunities, engendering familiarity and rapport amongst participants, information sharing protocols and fostering new practices. The first part of the chapter reports on the individual benefits for staff, followed by a discussion of the organisational benefits. As noted in Chapter 3, the police and housing staff are influenced by different organisational cultures; however, the perceptions on partnership working were broadly similar in their support.

6.1 Networking opportunities

One of the most important benefits for individuals was the opportunity for networking. For example, respondents in all three localities highlighted how the partnership had enabled them to acquire knowledge of the responsibilities of other departments. In particular, such exposure to, and discussions with, other departments encouraged people to transcend traditional professional boundaries and establish connections with others. A police interviewee was one of many respondents who was positive about partnership working. His comments relate to the partnership meetings initiated after the MoU in Girrawheen:

In relation to the outside departments, to see what their approach to it was going to be like and the initiatives they were going to be using. It's actually good to hear from a lot of different departments. Being a police organisation, we might liaise with some of these departments but we don't have a chance to all the time. But to actually to see how they go about their business has been interesting.

A police officer also spoke positively about the extensive partnerships in place to deal with drug-related problems on the Collingwood estate, reflecting on the networks that have been established across the boundaries of government:

Partnerships changed the way we thought about what we did ... it was something government departments did not do ten years ago. But it is something we are really encouraged to do now.

6.2 Familiarity and rapport

A second positive feature of partnership working practices that interviewees reported related to a sense of familiarity and rapport. In Girrawheen, the familiarity that developed between police and housing staff was viewed positively. Interviewees felt that good working relationships enabled them to share information more easily, both formally and informally. Individual respondents discussed how it is more effective if you know a particular person in a department. For example, a police officer spoke of the benefits of working with a particular housing officer:

I now have that rapport with a housing staff member from Homeswest [now DHW] ... So I've found that already I have a very, very good rapport with Homeswest, which I never had. I wouldn't have known who to contact before in Homeswest.

Further evidence of the importance of good working relations between individuals as a basis for collaboration is provided by a housing officer working in Collingwood:

I cannot over-emphasise the importance of qualities that an individual brings to a job. Empathetic employees with a shared history of high rise management can make a huge contribution to achieving positive outcomes for their clients, as opposed to those who are just going through the motions.

6.3 Regular contact

Familiarity and rapport between people take time to forge. The opportunities are enhanced because partnerships require regular meetings to discuss progress and action on issues that require attention. Having an opportunity to meet staff from police or housing departments and engage in discussions about shared issues was identified by most respondents as useful. In East Devonport, interviewees identified the usefulness of the CSLG, as made clear by a housing officer:

Lots of good information flowed from the Community Safety Liaison Group. It enables us to make regular contact with the police, the city council and other interested parties. I have found it to be effective in helping us follow up on neighbourhood complaints. For example, we established protocols to deal with requests for information on our tenants from outside departments including the police. An official form is now available for the police to contact us in matters where a criminal investigation might commence.

Another housing officer who attended the CSLG stated that it has:

Given me an opportunity to set out our expectations about tenant responsibilities and our objectives. It provides an excellent forum for interdepartmental collaboration.

Similar endorsements were made about the meetings convened for the partnership in Girrawheen. A housing interviewee said that the meetings:

Gave us the opportunity to look outside the normal boundaries which we work in and to work probably closer than we ever have with police and learn what they're doing and [understand] their frustrations as well with what they are faced with ... So in terms of beneficial involvement, it is all positive.

Another Girrawheen housing respondent was very positive about the theory of partnership but more circumspect about the outcomes that can be delivered:

The concept was fantastic. If it was to deliver what it set out to deliver, yeah, definitely, it would have been great. I think the objectives of it were very good. It was just a case of trying to deliver on those.

So far in this chapter, most of the discussion has been on the individual benefits that can accrue. The next two sections identify the organisational benefits; for example, information sharing and the scope for developing new projects and experimentation.

6.4 Information sharing

It was evident from the comments by interviewees that information sharing between police and housing staff takes place both formally and informally. For example, in Girrawheen, although the two departments had assisted each other with information prior to the MoU, it was felt that the project had cemented this relationship. Quite often, this information sharing occurred outside formal meetings. A housing interviewee reported that:

We worked a bit closer with Girrawheen and Koondoola - that is, Warwick police - and I was able to talk with a source there, an individual source who was aware of the project and aware of the need for cross-departmental collaboration. So there was some information – some of it was formal, some of it was informal ‘off the record’ stuff – which did benefit some of our housing practices. It meant, for example, that we weren’t going to be putting applicants into an area where they were going to be vulnerable or exposed to serious criminal activity.

Another staff member from housing in Girrawheen expressed similar views:

Sourcing information [from police] relating to our clients and our client base enabled us to deal with the police a bit more and promoted a better understanding and interaction with them so we were, on occasion, made aware of areas where there were some activities of criminal activity, which has assisted us with our allocation process, if there is a known black spot.

The importance of information sharing in addressing illicit drug-related activity is clearly identified in the two quotations above. For the housing officers, it meant that they could sensitise their allocation policy to minimise risk for new households. Information sharing is at the heart of successful partnership working, enabling access to outside expertise and knowledge. For the problems of ASB and illicit drug activities, this is particularly useful, though care is required to ensure there is no breach of confidentiality rules prohibiting information dissemination.

6.5 Diversity of partnership practices

The second organisational benefit that partnerships can facilitate is new thinking and innovation. As already noted, a defining feature of the Collingwood case study was the variety of partnerships that had been used to address illicit drug activity; for example, a ‘tenancy verification’ partnership in which the housing department and the police worked together to prevent properties being used as sites for drug dealing. In November 2000, a ‘sweep’ of all flats on the estate by a housing officer found that 10 per cent of occupants could not verify they were legal tenants. One housing officer estimated that as many as 120 flats out of a total of 880 were used for dealing.

On the Collingwood estate, the police and housing departments worked together to identify disparities between the recorded leaseholders and those actually living in particular flats. It became clear that some had a flow of multiple short-term residents and that leases were being ‘sold’ to drug dealers. Within a month of the partnership, 80 people were arrested on drug-related charges. About 50 people were removed from the estate.

While the tenancy verification was seen as a success in the short term by disrupting the drug market, in the long term it was recognised that the problem would return when intensive police operations moved elsewhere. For this reason, the police and housing departments engaged in periodic verification checks to convey to residents that there was an ongoing interest in security issues and intolerance towards illicit drugs. The other notable projects in which they collaborated included Neighbourhood Watch and a review of security protocols with the private security contractors (Chubb) employed on the estate (see Table 2).

Respondents reported that all of these partnerships yielded positive outcomes. As one police officer in Collingwood commented:

Having a diversity of partnerships that deal with the underlying causes of drug use and crime is beneficial.

A housing officer in Collingwood offered a more elaborate account of the attributes required for partnerships:

I would identify good relations, mentoring and leadership and the willingness to take risks as critical for the acceptance of initiatives by both organisations. For implementing risky initiatives which are almost everything to do with drugs and crime, you need people – particularly those in leadership positions – who are willing to take the risk.

East Devonport interviewees also valued partnerships that encompassed different components. The utility of the CSLG has already been mentioned. Also valued as a beneficial partnership arrangement was the 'Officer Next Door' program, which is seen as an effective instrument to deter crime by providing a visible police presence and enhance information gathering. Consider the following comments from a housing officer:

Having a police officer in the area certainly changes the way things happen. We had two police properties in Canning Drive, which backs on to a field where [opium] poppies have been grown. Crops are rotated, and in the last 12 months there has not been any poppies growing there. The 'Officer Next Door' program is mutually beneficial. Many of our tenants like the fact that police are close by.

In Girrawheen, the North-West Metro regional meetings brought together departments, including police and housing, to adopt a 'whole of government' approach to service delivery. This forum was primarily strategic, so specific issues such as ASB, drugs and crime were addressed at the level of generality. It was also attended by regional managers of government agencies who were not actively involved in the partnership work for this project.

6.6 Summary

This chapter has identified the positive aspects of partnership working in the three localities for individuals and organisations as a whole. Interviewees reported that it provides opportunities for extensive networking that enable key personnel to acquire valuable knowledge about the priorities of other departments. They also reported that it facilitates the scope to engender rapport with colleagues in other departments and to share information in productive ways. Successful partnership required regular meetings and a commitment from staff to progress the agreed outcomes.

Finally, the chapter reported back on some organisational benefits that can accrue. The most extensive benefits were evident in Collingwood, where the problem of illicit drug activity is most severe. Partnership working on the estate has been used for a number of years as a way of addressing residents' concerns, and includes activities such as periodic tenancy verification checks to minimise illegal occupancy of dwellings by drug dealers. Partnership practices also take place but in a less intensive way in East Devonport and Girrawheen; for example, the CSLG and 'Officer Next Door' program in Devonport and the North-West Metro regional meetings in Perth.

In the next chapter, as a way of building up a comprehensive understanding of partnership practices, the more problematic aspects are explored, including the barriers that can arise when partnerships are established between departments with different strategic objectives.

Chapter seven: Obstacles that impact on partnership working

As stated in the introduction, one of the objectives of the research project was to make explicit the disjuncture between the rhetorical proclamations in support of partnership working and the realities experienced by practitioners involved. To do this, it was necessary to identify the key barriers that impact on effective working. A number of these have been discussed in Chapter 6 which highlighted how the partnerships were established. For example, the MoUs were seen by some interviewees as problematic as they were conceived by 'outsiders' rather than locally-based staff. We also learned that, in all three localities, the commitments established within the MoUs were modest in scope, in recognition of the other tasks which both the police and housing departments have to grapple with.

This chapter discusses some of the other problematic aspects of partnership working. It draws on interviews with staff to identify their concerns, including inadequate reporting mechanisms, the problematisation of illicit drug activity, the impact of staff turnover, establishing targets and outputs, a lack of momentum once partnerships are underway, time constraints impeding collaboration, and interdepartmental and intradepartmental tensions.

7.1 Reporting mechanisms

Successful partnerships require clear reporting mechanisms to enable a flow of communication between departments. Meetings are the most effective way of achieving this, but there is a danger that, without a clear plan of action and specific targets, they can become ineffectual. On the other hand, a too demanding partnership with objectives that are difficult to deliver can demoralise participants and result in withdrawal or inertia. Equally important are the lines of communication within departments themselves. It is essential that those who engage in partnership working disseminate their knowledge to other staff within their department.

In East Devonport and Girrawheen, lines of communication between police and housing departments were effective, but in Collingwood certain reporting arrangements within the Office of Housing were problematic. For example, the team responsible for housing regeneration – the neighbourhood renewal manager and staff – did not report to the housing services manager for the estate. This meant that their roles would overlap, and one of the neighbourhood renewal staff pointed out how some partnerships 'never reached their full potential because of the interdepartmental ambiguities'.

Similar issues were raised at a workshop about partnerships held in Girrawheen with representatives from a range of government departments. While other departments were interested in becoming involved with the partnership between police and housing, one of the barriers was the different departmental jurisdictions, which often means there is no overlap. This makes it difficult to identify relevant stakeholders and to coordinate partnerships. Even with the partnership between police and housing, responsibilities for policing in Girrawheen were spread across two jurisdictions.

East Devonport and Girrawheen are far less complex than the partnerships established within Collingwood, and this was probably the reason why interviewees did not voice any concerns relating to lines of reporting. However, some argued that the drug and ASB problems were not sufficient in scale to merit extensive partnership working practices. Their concerns are discussed below.

7.2 The extent of an illicit drug problem

The impact of drug-related activity was an issue for police in both East Devonport and Girrawheen. In East Devonport, the problem was viewed as nascent and limited to a core of mainly young people. In Girrawheen, there was agreement about the extent of the problem but some uncertainty about how partnerships could be effective. In contrast, drug-related activity in Collingwood was viewed as endemic and there were a series of collaborative projects already in place (as listed in Table 2, Chapter 5).

As already noted (in Chapter 5), the East Devonport police and housing department meetings to discuss shared concerns were soon considered superfluous because of the overlap with the work of Devonport's CSLG. Following changes in personnel, the meetings were discontinued. The police representative who attended the initial meetings described them as 'uneventful':

[Our initial meetings were] uneventful as there are no tenants or locations that require a case managed approach at this time. The meetings though have worked well for several addresses in West Devonport and resulted in several tenants being relocated following joint action on complaints from the community.

Similar concerns were raised in Girrawheen. Illicit drug activity and ASB were seen as pervasive problems but, over time, participants voiced their concern that their meetings were not particularly effective in developing a forward strategy. On reflection, the lack of clear protocols and the difficulty of devising appropriate responses, were important factors that led to meeting attendees expressing their unease. One police officer was especially critical:

It just seemed that we went over a lot of ground that has been properly covered for a long time and this has been sort of an ongoing problem and to sort of rehash what you have spoken about before, it was sort of like going back and everyone said what they had to say and nothing much more was said about anything else.

It is apparent that, for successful partnerships to address complex problems such as illicit drug use, there has to be a clear sense amongst the participants that the problem is significant enough to merit additional resources and that the partnership can actually achieve successful outcomes. The perception of the project amongst staff in East Devonport and Girrawheen indicates that the partnership established could only make a minimal impact.

7.3 Staff turnover

A major impediment that can stall effective partnership working is high staff turnover. In particular, when those with responsibilities for leading the partnership leave, it can often mean that momentum is undermined. In all three localities, joint activities were affected by staff turnover. In East Devonport, the lead officers in both the police and housing departments left to take up positions elsewhere. The specific regular meetings were discontinued, although the impact of this was probably negligible as monthly contact between the two agencies was maintained through the CSLG.

In Girrawheen, staff changes in both departments, including the police superintendent, also impacted on collaboration. Consider these remarks by a housing interviewee about the impact for the partnership steering committee:

The difficulties from a practical point of view stem from a high turnover of staff. We have had more police attend the meetings than you can poke a stick at, we have had policy changes and we haven't been able to have a level of consistency, apart from me, from day one.

This high turnover means that institutional knowledge is often lost. Though new appointees can bring enthusiasm to their position, it can take considerable time to establish rapport in the context of partnerships.

7.4 Lack of targets and outputs

Another obstacle that can impact on partnership is a lack of specific and measurable goals or outputs. Staff may have good reasons not to be too ambitious in setting up partnerships with demanding goals, especially when they are already fully committed in other areas of their work. Yet, without goals, momentum can falter and disillusionment can set in. The partnership meetings in Girrawheen generated a level of frustration among those who attended. Consider this comment from a housing staff member:

The project has got some very good things about it and these problems need to be addressed, but it also rehashed old stuff that had already been discussed at length.

There was an understanding of broad objectives and there was agreement that reducing illicit drug use was relevant to Girrawheen. However, the respondents discussed the lack of targets regarding the specifics of the project; for example, the strategies to be put in place to achieve these goals and how the outcomes of the project would be measured. A police representative commented that it was difficult to take action following the meetings, and there was also some confusion about staff roles within the partnership:

I think we could have some more clear guidelines on what we were going to sort of tackle and each one given more projects, like we are going to look at the problems in a particular street or district or whatever, statistic-wise what sort of trouble do we have in those areas, and it gives you something to work at, at the end of the day.

These comments highlight the tension within any partnership arrangement. On the one hand, objectives that are too onerous can be quickly deemed unachievable because of other pressures (for example, staff leaving, new priorities being established). On the other hand, projects that set their aims too low or are not sufficiently resourced can quickly dissipate and lead to stasis.

In East Devonport, the partnership agreement was not over-ambitious. Its objectives were modest, reflecting the fact that there was already a forum where the police and housing departments shared information. Collingwood police and housing departments are engaged in a wide range of joint activities, but most of these are not formal arrangements but ad hoc collaborations across areas of common interest. A housing estate manager summarised the interactions in the following way:

There were no joint programs as such, nor were there formal arrangements like MoUs. Working cooperatively with the local police superintendent, we just started the process of creating and implementing various initiatives.

Some respondents identified the vagueness surrounding targets as an inherent weakness. However, target setting is not something that should be imposed at the start of a project, but is best commenced after each of the partners understand the resource implications necessary to achieve targets.

7.6 Lack of momentum

In the light of the above discussion, a fifth obstacle that impacts on partnership working is a lack of momentum. In Girrawheen, interviewees felt that following the signing of the MoU, it became difficult to establish a rationale for the regular meetings. For example, according to a police officer:

It plateaued out a little bit ... It seemed as though every time you went to a meeting it was the same thing that was discussed and we seemed as though we didn't evolve any further than that. That is how I sort of felt. It just seemed as though it didn't gain any momentum, didn't get up.

Lack of momentum was also an obstacle in East Devonport. As the CSLG meetings were judged to be successful and useful for gathering information, there was no compelling reason to have additional meetings.

Lack of momentum or dissipation of partnership objectives over time also occurred in some of the initiatives set up in Collingwood. For example, interviewees recalled how a lack of momentum or resistance to the goals of a partnership could be an indication of more deep-seated tensions between and within departments. Consider the following quote from an interviewee from the Office of Housing. He argued that a drug management strategy for the estate faltered because of conflict between service delivery staff and those working within the neighbourhood renewal team about the delegation of responsibilities:

There was resistance in the service delivery arm to such directions because some of the recommended strategies cut across departmental boundaries and it would mean an additional workload in an already pressurised work environment.

Similar problems were experienced in East Devonport. The partnership was viewed as a top-down imposition initiated by senior police and housing personnel based in Hobart and it was apparent that staff were very busy meeting their existing obligations. For example, responding to a wide range of policy directives and ministerial requests took up much of the time of senior housing staff.

Most interviewees were aware that a charismatic person in a senior position could bolster successful partnerships, as pointed out by a police officer in Girrawheen:

You have to have a commitment from each person ... somebody of a higher ranking like an inspector or superintendent can give it [the partnership] a bit more drive.

The interest in partnership working can easily dissipate, particularly when new initiatives are being launched frequently. The practicalities require energy and a belief among staff in the value of the project. Without these, partnerships will cease to function effectively.

7.6 Time constraints

Participants in the three projects had only a limited amount of time to expend. In Girrawheen, while the initial meeting (in which the partnership commitment was established) was well attended by representatives from a range of levels within both the police and housing departments, the number declined over the course of the year. Regular attendees included the regional accommodation manager, a senior DHW policy officer, a sergeant, and police drug and alcohol officers. Respondents suggested that this was due to staff from both departments being busy and not prioritising the project. Consider these comments from one police officer:

I don't think we spent enough time on this because there are other things we have to do. So the actual time spent on this project wasn't what we should have done. That's

being honest. You sort of think, 'I have got to do that and I have got to do that', and before you know it the week has gone again and you haven't got around to it. And you don't sort of put enough into it and you sort of have to prioritise what you can do.

Similar obstacles were evident in Collingwood and East Devonport. Partnership working requires staff to re-conceptualise their working practices and engage in activities that require cooperation from individuals from other organisations. In this respect, the risks are high, as success depends on collaborating departments working effectively. It is likely that the ambivalence towards partnership working is indicative of these realities.

7.7 Interdepartmental and intradepartmental tensions

The final obstacle to effective working relates to tensions both within and across departments. We have noted some anxiety within housing departments about adopting a law enforcement approach. Interviewees identified themselves as welfare professionals there to assist those in housing need. Similarly, community groups we approached at the start of the project were reluctant to lend their support to law enforcement initiatives in East Devonport because they saw their role more in terms of providing support to individuals and families in need, rather than engaging in strategic partnerships.

It was also the case that police and housing departments have different reporting mechanisms and ideologies. At a risk of over-simplification, the police operate within a hierarchical structure, are closely scrutinised by the media and are under considerable pressure to achieve specific targets in community-safety. Philosophies underpinning public housing differ across the country, and within single bureaucracies. In Girrawheen, the emphasis was on the legal management of tenancies rather than the welfare of tenants. However, in other states, housing departments are mainly welfare-orientated (that is, highly targeted) in their approach. As a result, many housing staff view crime as a police concern, rather than as a matter that requires their involvement. These ideologies are of course changing and, in recent years, the police have striven to be more community-orientated, while housing departments place increasing pressure on staff to adopt a businesslike approach as a way of reducing costs. Nevertheless, the different approaches certainly can act as a barrier impeding partnership working.

In Collingwood, an Office of Housing interviewee also explained how organisational tensions can occur within departments:

It is to be expected in any organisation that there will be tensions between a head office and its delivery arm or between departments because of their different goals and objectives. What is important is that these tensions be worked through with a view to ensuring that the interests of the clients – in this case, public housing tenants – are put first.

Other tensions that can arise relate to competing understandings about how drug issues should be addressed. Current policy is focused on reduction; that is, curbing their pernicious impact on the community as a whole. It is not uncommon, however, for individuals within departments to hold different views on how drug use should be policed. The lack of a shared understanding can lead to tensions and, in this respect, attitudes towards drug use can be symbolic of wider ideological disputes, as acknowledged by a police interviewee in Collingwood:

Sometimes, there is conflict at council level, as one of the key participants a supporter of legalisation permitting drug use.

Another example of how interdepartmental and intradepartmental tensions can hinder partnerships was evident in Collingwood. We learned that some police perceived the Office of Housing as unwilling to use eviction as a sanction against tenants who breached, in a major way, the rules of their tenancy. It was felt that this reluctance undermined police efforts to reduce crime on the estate. We also learned that different approaches within the Office of Housing about the efficacy of eviction led to tensions. For example, the neighbourhood renewal manager wanted to work with the police superintendent to evict tenants who were known to sell illicit drugs. They were both willing to make representations to the administrative appeal tribunal to help facilitate procedures. However, their efforts were thwarted as evictions policy was under the remit of the housing management branch of the Office of Housing where there was not the same enthusiasm for such a proactive approach.

How police and housing departments should address drug-related problems is clearly contested. There is a range of views about what constitutes effective intervention. We know from research by Jacobs and Arthurson (2003) that housing managers are divided in their views about the appropriateness of sanction-based approaches. Some want a more punitive approach towards tenants who engage in ASB, while others are more welfare orientated, drawing upon a model of housing management practice that emphasises support and pastoral care.

7.8 Summary

This chapter has discussed some of the major barriers that can impact on effective partnership working. In East Devonport and Girrawheen, the rationale was enough to initiate collaboration, but it became evident that there was insufficient momentum to embed the project. In addition, pressures to meet existing objectives and a perception that the project was a top-down initiative introduced by outsiders compounded the sense of unease amongst staff.

In Collingwood, the picture is more complex. In contrast to East Devonport or Girrawheen, drug-related activity is perceived as a major problem that undermines community safety. Both the police and housing departments have collaborated informally and formally to develop initiatives to address this. There has also been a sustained community focus alongside physical renewal programs to improve the infrastructure of the estate. As discussed in the final chapter, there is a perception by both the police and the Office of Housing that their collaboration has contributed to a reduction in drug and crime activity on the estate, but there is a sense too that the range of initiatives are unwieldy and difficult to manage.

Chapter eight: Conclusion

This concluding chapter begins by noting some of the key outcomes from the three case study locations, followed by a discussion of the policy issues that ensue from the research.

8.1 Outcomes

This report has used qualitative data from three locations to develop an understanding of the realities that confront practitioners involved in partnerships. The empirical research findings can be contrasted with the promotional literature (identified in the literature review) that makes the theoretical case for more partnership working. The findings indicate that police and housing partnerships to tackle drug-related problems are (in theory) viewed positively by both departments. However, there are a range of factors that can undermine partnership working, including lack of time, staff turnover, absence of an identifiable problem and competing interdepartmental perspectives on the appropriate modes of intervention.

In all three localities, progress following the signing of MoUs was varied. On the positive side, the partnerships engagement enhanced the scope for networking opportunities, leading to information sharing about areas of common concern and continued support for existing arrangements such as the 'Officer Next Door' program and CSLG in East Devonport and for new initiatives such as an audit of drug and alcohol education in schools in Girrawheen. In Collingwood, the research provided an audit of existing partnership activities and made explicit the linkages between the police and Office of Housing that have been established over recent years. While there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that these collaborations had an impact on reducing crime and drug-related activity, they can be seen as part of a range of interventions, including physical renewal and community building programs, that have led to improvements for residents.

On the negative side, significant barriers and obstacles impacted on all three partnerships. For example, the setting up of the partnerships in the initial stage of the research provided an indication that the support for the project was guarded, and staff turnover alongside other pressures had an impact on the progress subsequently achieved. However, the fact that these obstacles arose did provide an opportunity to identify and comment on some of the challenges in partnership working and to understand more comprehensively the barriers that both the police and housing department staff face when seeking to set up collaborative projects.

8.2 Lessons learned

What are the key lessons to be learned from our research? Firstly, the police and housing departments that manage public housing neighbourhoods share a common concern in minimising illicit drug-related activity because of its known link with crime and ASB. Yet institutional barriers and the realities of organisational working practices undermine the capacity for a partnership approach. There is a disjuncture between the theoretical arguments in support of partnership working and the experiences of those who are required to participate.

From a theoretical perspective, it is clear that partnership working is viewed in positive terms, but our research sheds light on the extent to which it can be challenging and onerous for staff. This is especially the case for organisations such as the police and housing

departments. It is only in the last few years that Australian police authorities have formally stated their commitment to work in partnership with other departments, so activities to date have been largely undertaken at the behest of senior officers, but without additional resources (Fleming 2006). In addition, the police have to wrestle with the demands of working within a hierarchical command and control structure, while at the same time being expected to adopt flexible and community-based responses (Fleming and Rhodes 2005). In housing departments there is, in theory at least, encouragement for partnership working practices, but lack of resources and competing priorities have hindered their establishment. There is a gulf between the desire for collaborative working and the actual realities of policy implementation.

Secondly, whilst illicit drug-related issues are a concern to the police and part of their law enforcement responsibilities, this is less clear for housing departments. Housing officers generally see their role in terms of welfare or property management, and they were reluctant to adopt a law enforcement approach in relation to drugs. In fact, from our interviews with housing staff, it was evident that law enforcement was not seen as part of most housing managers' roles. Thus the rationale for shared partnership working with the police was more complex than initially envisaged. At a practical level, it was difficult for police and housing departments to invest resources and time in the formal components of partnership working. In Collingwood, the pressures to engage in collaborative working practices were immediate because the problems of crime and ASB were more apparent than in either East Devonport or Girrawheen. The challenge was to keep abreast of all the initiatives that were already in place and to map their impact for community safety policies.

The concerns raised by staff in Girrawheen, in particular, stem from a perception that the outcomes expected from the project were not able to be met, given the short timeline and the lack of resources provided for partnership working. In East Devonport, police and housing staff were already involved in an existing forum. In this sense, the issues that arose in each location can be viewed as a microcosm of the challenges that need to be overcome in any interdepartmental collaboration surrounding a complex problem such as illicit drug use or ASB.

In hindsight, the research evidence gathered for this report shows that partnership working is labour-intensive and challenging. Other major impediments include staff turnover that can sap partnerships of institutional knowledge and dissipate any initial momentum. Given the institutional barriers that can impede partnership work, it is pertinent in this concluding chapter to consider how partnership working could be more effective and what steps can be taken to address the problems that arise. Each of the three case studies contained examples of policy success and failure to help us understand the policies that are required and the obstacles that can hinder partnership working.

8.2.1 Rationale for partnership

An important lesson that emerges is that partnerships cannot be easily imposed on front-line staff. In both East Devonport and Girrawheen, the idea of a partnership involving greater cooperation between the police and housing departments was initially endorsed but the practicalities of achieving outcomes proved difficult. Housing staff were busy dealing with existing priorities, including the day-to-day issues that have to be addressed by all public landlords, such as allocations, rent arrears and repairs and maintenance. Staff in Girrawheen (although not East Devonport) had the added pressure of dealing with the work demands of the 'New North, New Living' renewal project that required rehousing a large numbers of tenants. From the housing perspective, the idea of a partnership with the police

to tackle illicit drugs was not a sufficient priority, hence the difficulty in securing outputs from the meetings. In Collingwood, the rationale for partnerships was clear and obvious to all staff. Drug-related activity was on a far greater scale than anything taking place in either Girrawheen or East Devonport and, because of this, the case for partnership working was more compelling. Effective partnership working requires a convincing internal rationale because of the work involved and the extra demands placed on staff. Partnerships imposed upon staff from the outside are unlikely to be effective (Wildridge et al. 2004).

8.2.2 Commitment from individuals

A strong rationale for a partnership, while necessary, is not sufficient by itself to ensure that partnership working is successful. Other factors need to be in place. Our research suggests that collaborative working in areas that are complex and difficult to manage, such as public housing estates, require people with a level of skill and a commitment to making the partnership succeed. Those who engage in partnership working also require strategic support from senior staff and policy makers. In short, there has to be both a commitment from the top and front-line staff to overcome the barriers that can impede progress. It is the interpersonal relationships between staff which determine the effectiveness of collaborative working. These are not easily imposed from above but usually evolve through mutual trust and shared working objectives.

8.2.3 Task focus

A commitment to partnership working requires considerable energy, and people with skills to push the boundaries. Ideally, it requires policy champions within departments who can generate enthusiasm and energy amongst their colleagues. A policy champion should be someone who is able to generate resources and has excellent persuasive skills to cajole other members of the partnership when required. They must also encourage a task orientation with clear and achievable goals and mechanisms for appraisal.

8.2.4 Education and training

Education and training must be prioritised. In the case of the police, there is some in-house education and training around some of the issues and principles that sit behind partnerships, such as principles of community policing and communications skills. In the case of housing staff, there is no systematic leadership training around partnerships.

The necessary skills can be summed up under three headings: problem solving, risk assessment and networking. Problem solving is required because problems will inevitably arise and partnerships can become inert without effective intervention. All partnerships entail risk, so it is necessary for staff to have the confidence to operate according to their own judgement rather than follow rules from above. Finally, successful partnerships require networking attributes, so staff have to feel confident in new situations and to engage with colleagues from other departments in a common project.

8.2.5 Capturing knowledge

One of the most pressing requirements is to embed shared knowledge to overcome staff turnover problems. An important requirement of continuing any partnership is the dissemination of knowledge and experience. Partnership goals need to be communicated to new staff members if the momentum is to be maintained.

8.2.6 Partnership size

It is evident that those who engage in partnerships must not become over-ambitious or unrealistic. However tempting it is to make a big impression, the best projects are small and locally-focused. Those that are too ambitious will dissipate energy and sap resources. There is a danger that large and unwieldy projects become partnerships in name only, with staff who might have been initially enthusiastic soon being put off by the inability to meet clear objectives. As we heard from staff interviewed, partnerships can easily become inert 'talk fests'.

The evidence from Collingwood indicates that small-scale projects are likely to be more effective than a few highly visible but probably one-dimensional ones. Such projects allow for multiple objectives (education, information exchange, drug use and/or crime prevention, community building and better security management practices) and the potential to engage a wider cross-section of staff and residents. People who may be interested or have relevant skills in one area may not have them in another.

8.2.7 Causal factors

Finally, policing and housing partnerships are made easier and potentially more effective if paralleled by related social and resident partnerships which address some of the causes of drugs and crime, such as lack of employment, health problems, and personal dignity at the individual level and the lack of community cohesion at the neighbourhood level. The conclusion to be drawn is that effective crime and safety partnerships are not about dealing with the symptoms alone but about addressing the underlying causes, as far as that is possible within a place management strategy.

Appendix: A 'good practice' guide

This appendix summarises some of the 'good practice' issues that stem from the research project. It discusses two of the influential theories that inform policy intervention, the context for action, and the issues that arise when departments undertake partnership working.

What are partnerships?

Partnerships are collaborations between departments to promote a holistic approach for tackling problems. In the context of public housing, they are perceived as an effective way of pooling knowledge to tackle difficult issues such as crime and ASB.

Types of partnerships

Partnerships can encompass various formats. For example, they may be strategic partnerships operating across departments, or area committee partnerships that bring together key stakeholders at the local level to establish priorities, or informal 'action' partnerships to implement a specific program. These are not necessarily exclusive; there could be a nested set of partnerships whereby a strategic partnership cascades down through committee partnerships to local informal ones. However, it needs to be made clear what form of partnership it is and the relationships between them, if any.

Understanding anti-social behaviour and illicit drug activity

There are competing interpretations that have been put forward to understand ASB and illicit drug activity. The most influential are *structuralist* and *underclass* interpretations.

Structuralist interpretations emphasise underlying causal factors; for example, poverty, unemployment and under-funding of welfare provision. Their combination accentuates problems experienced by residents of low income neighbourhoods. In general, those who adopt a structuralist perspective emphasise community-based interventions to problems and more resources for such neighbourhoods.

Underclass interpretations see problems such as ASB and illicit drug activity as arising from individual fecklessness. Their proponents argue that policies to address these problems require strong punitive action by law enforcement departments, alongside incentives to take up employment and training opportunities.

Both of these interpretations have informed many of the policy interventions to address crime and ASB on public housing estates.

Organisational cultures

The different professional cultures within the police and housing departments can make partnership working challenging. It is important to appreciate the different cultures that inform practices if conflicts and misunderstanding are to be avoided.

Housing departments

Historically, most staff working for housing departments have embraced a welfare approach to delivery services. They have perceived their role as providing support for disadvantaged tenants and, while supportive of community-based partnerships, there has been a reluctance to engage in sanctions-based approaches to crime and anti-social behaviour. However, in recent years, there has been a shift of emphasis and a greater readiness by some housing departments to take a more proactive stand against tenants who engage in ASB. This change in organisational culture has made it less problematic for staff to work alongside the police to develop protocols that emphasise a sanctions-based approach.

Law enforcement agencies

The police operate within a tight, formal, top-down organisational structure; however, there is an increasing willingness to embrace more community-based approaches to law and order. For example, they have played a role in educational programs targeted at young people to address the causal factors associated with drug addiction. Such willingness has also made it easier for the police to work alongside other government departments. It is also important to recognise that, on large public housing estates, security is often contracted to private firms, and these should be drawn into the partnership net.

Staff in both departments share similar challenges, they both have to operate within tight budgets, and they are both expected to respond to a raft of new initiatives. In practice, developing new and ambitious partnership projects requires resources and commitment from senior staff. And while we can talk about organisational cultures, we also have to recognise that within any organisational culture there can be sub-cultures which might be resistant to change, to the partnership objectives or to the methods used to achieve outcomes. Understanding organisational sub-cultures can be important in achieving successful partnerships.

Intervention strategies: Some UK and US examples

In recent years, UK and US police and housing departments have initiated schemes to tackle ASB and drug-related problems on public housing estates. These include - community partnerships, public health initiatives for combating substance abuse, and punitive measures such as 'anti-social behaviour orders' (ASBOs) and eviction.

Law enforcement approaches: usually short-term and mostly focused on particular issues (such as drug dealing) and ASB; for example, 'hot spot' targeting in areas where drug problems are extensive, intelligence-based targeting of 'at risk' households, and eviction policies such as 'One strike and you're out' adopted nationally in the US in 1997. In the UK, the Labour Government introduced ASBOs to enable local authorities to restrict the movement of persistent perpetrators within public housing areas:

Community development approaches: aim to help tenants to feel more positive about their neighbours. Housing departments have also set up mediation services for those involved in neighbourhood disputes.

Education approaches: the police have sought to work alongside other government departments; for example, drug information sessions in schools and youth clubs.

Allocation policies: sensitising allocation policies to minimise neighbourhood conflict; for example, not placing too many young families in the same street.

Tenure diversification: increase the number of properties available for sale, in order to break up large, monolithic estates and create a more mixed community profile.

Environmental improvements: to reduce residents' fear of crime and opportunities for crime; for example, crime prevention, public safety and security assessments and physical security upgrades.

'Officer Next Door' programs: enable a small number of police officers to obtain public housing at a cheap rent in areas with high crime rates.

Estate upgrade and neighbourhood renewal: the process of redevelopment of a problem estate, both in terms of design features (modification and realignment of stock, e.g. smaller units) and of community development. Reducing crime and opportunities for crime is only one part of a neighbourhood renewal strategy.

Successful partnerships

There is a substantial literature that identifies the critical success factors for partnership working. Most of it stresses the importance of good communication, adequate resources, and clear and realistic objectives. Complex partnerships are more difficult to manage than small informal arrangements. The most important factors are set out in the diagram below.¹

Factors for successful partnerships

Context	History of collaboration or cooperation Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader Favourable political and social milieu
Membership	Mutual respect and trust Broad cross-section of participants Partnership working seen as compatible with self-interest Willingness to compromise
Purpose	Attainable goals and objectives Shared vision and willingness to accept responsibility for successes and failures Identifiable problem that requires action
Process	Participants have a shared stake in the process Flexible approach to problems Clear lines of responsibility Appropriate pace of development

¹ This diagram draws on the Wilder Research Center's review of partnership success factors. See Mattessich et al. (2001), cited in Wildridge et al. (2004).

Communication	Open, frequent and informal Address concerns when they arise Consult widely
Resources	Sufficient funds, staff, time and budget Skilled leadership

Barriers

As most of the literature on partnership working is prescriptive and focuses on what staff should be doing, there is a paucity of information on the problematic aspects and the problems that arise. Arguably, the most significant difficulty for any partnership project seeking to address crime and ASB is that most interventions are scoped to address the symptoms rather than the causal factors. In practice, partnership working can usually achieve only limited goals, and may end in disappointment because the aims were over-ambitious. Other important barriers that can impede partnerships include:

- incompatible philosophies about the appropriate action required;
- uncertainty and confusion about roles;
- high level of staff turnover;
- unrealistic expectations about what can be achieved ('quick fix' solutions rarely work);
- internal organisational conflict or tension (the sub-cultures problem);
- lack of data and inadequate evaluation protocols;
- lack of attention to implementation and over-emphasis on strategic planning;
- formal bureaucratic approaches which tend to undermine efforts to establish rapport and trust between departments;
- appointment or involvement of the wrong people, e.g. lacking in organisational knowledge, networking skills and people skills.

Consultation

Some partnerships require public consultation. However, this should be carefully planned and not too onerous, to avoid resident fatigue and apathy. It is also important to recognise that intensive police activities in marginalised neighbourhoods can sometimes increase anxiety, therefore work is required to reassure residents of the rationale for intervention. Some possible ways of consultation include:

- information and promotional materials;
- local newspaper articles;
- meetings (but not too many);
- alcohol and drug free events for young people;
- launches and media events.

Evaluation

Finally, all partnerships should be evaluated in a straightforward and uncomplicated way. Evaluation is often seen as a way of portraying departments in a positive light, thus it emphasises success factors rather than making explicit any problems that have arisen. However, these types of promotional evaluations are usually uninformative. The best evaluations are those that look at the challenging aspects of programs and identify the difficulties that need addressing. Evaluations that are wide-ranging and critical are more useful for organisations that are seeking to refine their working practices. Evaluation should be considered from the very start of the partnership. Any decision to evaluate after the event may be hampered by the fact that the appropriate processes (e.g. data provision, record collection) were not set up at the start with an evaluation in mind and therefore there is an inadequate base for evaluation.

Ways forward

Partnership working requires careful planning, adequate budgets, and a shared commitment from staff about the problem to be addressed and the strategies that are required. These can assist in policy implementation, but it is essential that all those who engage in partnership working are realistic about what can be achieved.

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