# Effective crime prevention strategies for local government

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## Introduction

• **Local government** is a key player in community based crime prevention in the development and implementation of local crime prevention initiatives.

• The NSW Department of Attorney General and Justice funds many local government crime prevention projects.

• To ensure investment in effective, evidence based crime prevention strategies, the the Department worked in partnership with the Australian Institute of Criminology to identify effective **crime prevention strategies** that were suitable for implementation by NSW local governments.

• The identified strategies were to address the following priority crimes:
  ➢ Non domestic violence related assault
  ➢ Break and enter (dwellings)
  ➢ Steal from dwelling
  ➢ Steal from motor vehicle
  ➢ Malicious damage
  ➢ Steal from person
  ➢ Steal from retail store

## Aims

Identify the crime prevention **strategies** which are **effective** in addressing our Priority crimes.

Identify which of these are **appropriate** for implementation by **local government**

Assist local government to **select, adapt** and **implement** the effective interventions
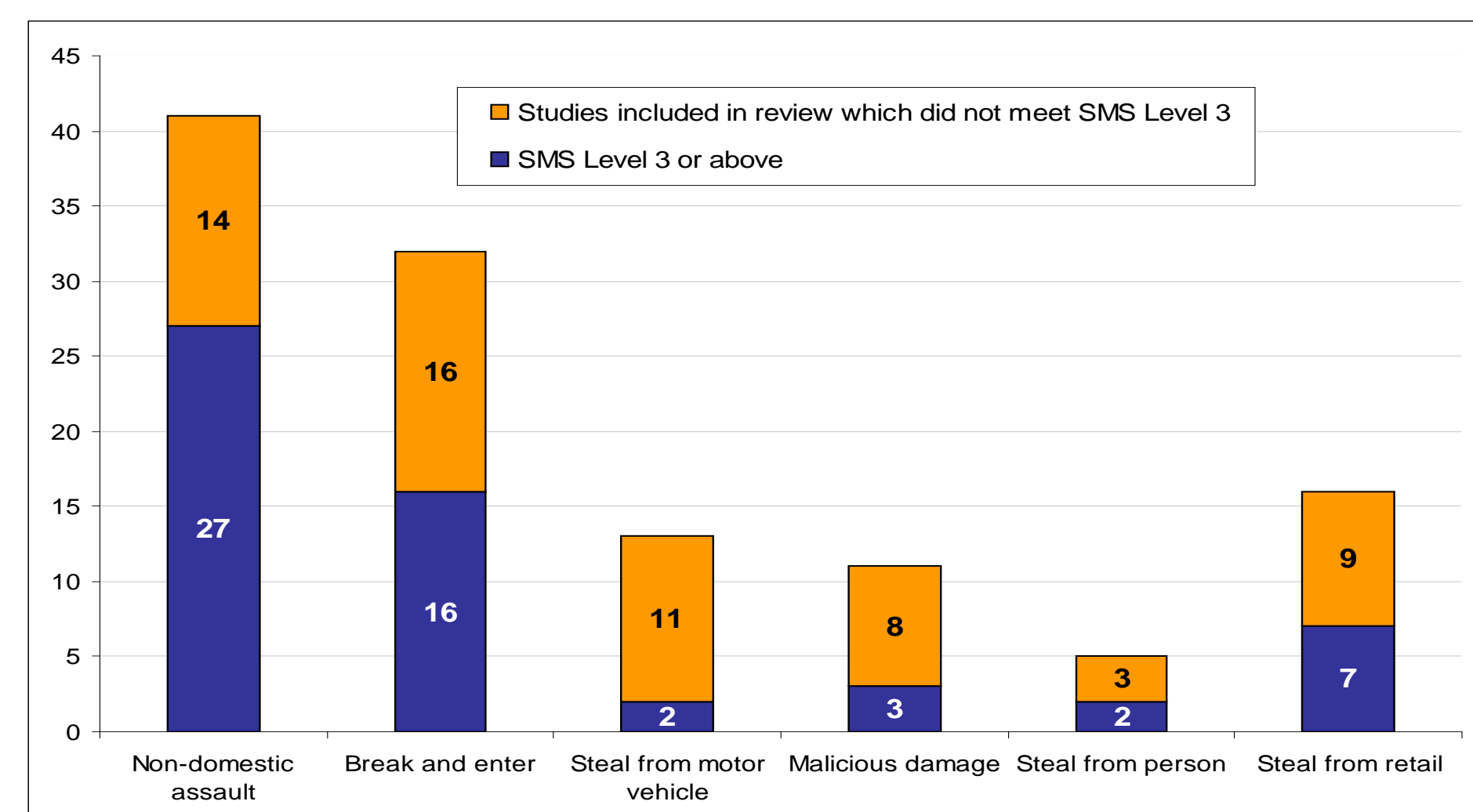
## Method

### Literature Review

A comprehensive literature review to identify crime prevention strategies that work for different types of crime and suitable in a local government setting was undertaken by the Australian Institute of Criminology in partnership with the NSW Department of Attorney General and Justice.

### Evaluation of studies – the SMS

Typically only studies of Level 3 or better on the Scientific Measurement Scale are considered rigorous enough for systematic reviews.

Level 3 studies include 'measures of crime before and after the program in experimental and comparable control condition'.

Of the 118 studies reviewed, 57 met this criteria. These studies are shown in blue in the figure below. All other studies which did not meet this criteria but were included in the review are shown in orange.



As the figure shows, the best evidence was found for strategies targeting non-domestic assault (27/41 studies) and break and enter (16/32).

Where we are faced with high levels of steal from motor vehicle, malicious damage or steal from person, however, we only have a handful of high quality studies to work with. We need to adopt more innovative approaches here, not only in terms of how we utilise the evidence, but how we tackle these crimes.

## Results

The following strategies are effective in reducing the priority crimes and are suitable for implementation by local government.

### Break and Enter (dwellings) / Steal from Dwelling

**Access control and awareness campaign** Improving household security combined with educating residents about reducing their risks of burglary.

### Non domestic violence related assault

**Improving lighting** Installing/upgrading lighting in areas experiencing high rates of assault at night.

**Multi-faceted strategies targeting alcohol related assault** in **entertainment precincts** A combination of approaches tailored to local circumstances, including codes of conduct for local licensed premise operators, educating licensed premise staff about dealing with intoxicated patrons, late night transport options.

### Malicious damage

**Access control, CPTED and education**
A combination of approaches tailored to the local area, including improving perimeter security, Improving general amenity of an area, educating potential offenders about possible consequences of offending.

### Steal from retail store

**Provide information and assistance to retailers**
Educating local retailers about how to reduce their risks of retail theft and assisting retailers to assess key risks in their stores.

## Results

### Steal from motor vehicle

**Lighting and other improvements**
Improving lighting in parking areas with high rates of theft from vehicles during night-time hours, Combined with access control measures and awareness campaigns about better protecting belongings.

**CPTED and access control** Designing car parking areas to reduce risks of theft eg through improving visibility, general amenity and pedestrian flow, combined with improved security eg perimeter fencing, security gates or parking attendants.

### Steal from Person

**CPTED and awareness campaigns** Designing areas to reduce risks of personal theft eg through improving visibility, encouraging pedestrian movement in underused space along with educating the public about how to better protect their belongings.

## Conclusion

• Our review highlights the critical need to rigorously **evaluate** more crime prevention strategies in a local government setting.

• In the absence of such work we are left to work with the **best available evidence** which we have used to develop the crime prevention strategies, here and adopt more innovative approaches.

## Acknowledgements