



Performance audit report

New Zealand Police:
Dealing with
dwelling burglary
– follow-up audit





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New Zealand Police: Dealing with dwelling burglary – follow-up audit

This is a report under the authority
of section 16 of the Public Audit
Act 2001.

February 2006

ISBN 0-478-18148-5

Foreword

Dwelling burglary is a high incidence crime. It significantly affects its many victims, and ranks highly in people's fear of crime in their communities.

In 2001, my Office reported on how the Police investigate and work to prevent dwelling burglaries. We made a number of recommendations.

In 2004, during consultation on my *Draft Annual Plan 2004-05*, members of Parliament asked me to follow up on progress made by the Police since the 2001 report. Given the significance of burglary to many New Zealanders, I agreed to this request.

I am pleased to report that the Police have made considerable improvements since 2001 in how they deal with dwelling burglary. This includes more effective use of forensic and intelligence analysis, increased accountability for results, and a greater sharing of good practice. However, because many factors can affect crime rates, I have not been able to assess the extent to which the improvements have contributed to the generally downward trend in recorded dwelling burglary offences.

I thank the Police for their assistance and co-operation during my follow-up audit.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

K B Brady
Controller and Auditor-General

7 February 2006

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Summary

Dwelling burglary is an invasive crime. It occurs often, and is a cause of concern for many New Zealanders. Victimization surveys indicate that many of us fear being burgled. Reducing the number of dwelling burglary crimes is a priority for the New Zealand Police (the Police).

In 2001, we looked at how the Police deal with dwelling burglary. In this follow-up report, we examine the progress and changes made by the Police. We used a case study approach, and carried out our fieldwork in 4 diverse Police Areas. (Nationally, there are 12 Police Districts. Each District includes several Police Areas, which are local operational units of the Police.) We also reviewed documentation, and interviewed Police staff at the Office of the Commissioner and in the Royal New Zealand Police College.

Our findings

Overall, the Police have considerably improved the way they deal with dwelling burglary. However, because there are many and complex factors that can influence crime, we are unable to assess how much of the generally downward trend in recorded dwelling burglary offences is caused by those improvements.

Intelligence-led policing

Intelligence-led policing means using criminal intelligence analysis to identify factors contributing to crime, and directing Police resources towards addressing them. In 2001, the intelligence units operating in Police Areas did not have enough of a profile within the Police to meet their full potential.

Since then, the Police have prepared a national implementation strategy for an intelligence-led Crime Reduction Model. This has raised the profile and importance of intelligence units in the Police Areas we examined. Intelligence reports identifying major crime risks and factors contributing to crime are increasingly used to guide specific policing action plans, on a weekly and sometimes daily basis.

We saw more advanced intelligence analysis capabilities in our case studies at the District level, compared with the local Area level.

Identifying and sharing good practice for dealing with dwelling burglary

In 2001, we found limited formal sharing of good practice for dealing with dwelling burglary. The Police have improved their identification and sharing of good practice since then. Each of the 12 Districts has its overall performance formally reviewed twice a year by the Office of the Commissioner, with opportunities for improvement identified.

The Police are also working to better share good practice by having staff attend national conferences, having a senior management role in each District focused on identifying good practice, and using Police Area Clusters.

Police Area Clusters are a recent initiative. Police Areas are sorted into 5 different groups, based on socio-economic and demographic similarity. Police staff in some of the Clusters have started sharing good practice for tackling common factors contributing to crime.

Electronic sharing of good practice using the intranet and e-mail groups is increasingly important in the Police, but staff can experience some difficulties in retrieving information.

Using forensic techniques for investigating dwelling burglary

Forensic analysis and scene examinations are vital techniques used by the Police to investigate dwelling burglaries, and identify offenders. In 2001, we found that the Police were unlikely to have been making the best use of forensic science techniques. The techniques were used variably, and there were weaknesses in resource planning.

The Police have significantly improved their resource planning of the forensic techniques used to investigate dwelling burglaries. Since mid-2005, the Police have had a new contract with the Institute of Environmental Science and Research Limited (ESR) for the provision of forensic science services. Under this new agreement, the cost of forensic services ESR provides to the Police is based on the process used, not on the type of case. This offers substantial cost savings for each dwelling burglary case, and more transparency in the expected costs for the Police.

All of the Districts we looked at have introduced quality control measures for collecting forensic samples, and submitting them to ESR. The measures include having specialist officers trained in evidence gathering attend more burglary scenes, and using “gatekeepers” to approve and sign-off samples sent to ESR. The “gatekeepers” also ensure that the Districts’ forensics budgets are spent effectively.

Legislative and technological changes since 2001 have made it easier for the Police to obtain DNA from suspected and convicted burglars.

Monitoring against performance targets

In 2001, we found that the overall goals of the Police were not always carried through to operational planning. The Police's strategic direction and the operational planning of Districts and Areas are now more tightly aligned. There is greater accountability and urgency for meeting operational targets, including linking District Commanders' performance agreements to the results of District Performance Reviews.

The Crimes Amendment Act 2003 has changed the legal definition of burglary. This has created some coding difficulties for Police. For example, some offences that used to be coded as thefts are now categorised as burglaries. This may lead to coding inconsistencies between Districts.

Co-ordinated guidance for Police involved in investigating dwelling burglary

In 2001, we found scope within the Police for shared guidelines for dealing with dwelling burglaries.

The Police now make more use of their specialist burglary investigation staff. This improves the quality and consistency of burglary investigations.

Field Training Officers were introduced in 2003 as a way to co-ordinate the guidance given to new Police officers. Field Training Officers are experienced constables who provide mentoring and on-the-job supervision of new officers. We have some concerns about this scheme, including an adverse effect on recruitment to specialist sections of the Police, and the absence of formalisation or assessment systems.

Our recommendations

In this follow-up report, we recommend that:

1. the New Zealand Police consider seconding intelligence analysts in the Districts into intelligence units that are using advanced analysis techniques, to improve intelligence capabilities across all Districts and Areas;
2. the New Zealand Police formally evaluate the effectiveness of intelligence-led policing in reducing crime;
3. the New Zealand Police monitor progress of the Police Area Clusters initiative, including assessing its effectiveness in disseminating good practice. If applicable, the reasons why some of the Area Cluster groups do not interact should be identified and addressed;
4. the New Zealand Police review the existing electronic systems for disseminating good practice and information across all sections of the organisation, and assess whether the systems' accessibility and search functions can be improved;
5. the New Zealand Police update and maintain formal national guidelines for coding different crimes, to ensure consistency of reporting across all Districts; and
6. the New Zealand Police undertake a formal evaluation of the Field Training Officer role, to assess whether the scheme is working well and meeting its original aims, and how the Field Training Officer role might be affecting the recruitment needs of specialist sections of the Police.

Part 1

Introduction

Background

- 1.1 Dwelling burglary is an invasive and high incidence crime, and is a major cause of concern for many New Zealanders. The Government's crime reduction strategy has targeted burglary as a priority crime for reduction. The New Zealand Police (the Police) have aligned their own strategic outcomes to the Government's crime reduction strategy, and identified reducing burglary as a 3- to 5-year priority outcome.
- 1.2 In 2001, we published a report on what the Police were doing to investigate and prevent dwelling burglaries, and made some recommendations.¹ The Police recognised our findings in their National Dwelling Burglary Reduction Strategy, released in December 2002.
- 1.3 As part of the consultation on our Annual Plan for 2004-05, members of Parliament asked us to consider following up on progress made by the Police since our 2001 report. We agreed to this request, given the ongoing significance of dwelling burglary to New Zealanders, and the prioritisation by the Police of reducing the incidence of dwelling burglary.

Dwelling burglary scale and trends

- 1.4 Burglary is defined under the Crimes Act 1961 (section 231) as any entering of a building or ship with intent to commit a crime or, having entered a building or ship, remaining in it without authority and with intent to commit a crime.² The legal definition of "building" includes permanent or temporary buildings or structures of any description, including tents, caravans, or houseboats. It also includes enclosed yards, and closed caves or tunnels.
- 1.5 Dwelling burglary includes only residential dwellings. It accounts for just over 9 percent of all recorded offences in New Zealand.³
- 1.6 Victimization surveys suggest a high level of public fear of being burgled. A national survey of crime victims, for example, found that just over one-third of survey respondents believed crime was a problem in their neighbourhoods, with burglary identified as a problem significantly more than any other crime.⁴ More than half of the burglary victims stated in the 2001 survey that they were affected either "very much" or "quite a lot" by being burgled.

1 *The Police: Dealing with Dwelling Burglary.*

2 The legal definition of burglary has been changed since our 2001 report. The Crimes Amendment Act 2003 broadened the definition of burglary by removing the element of breaking. Simply entering a building with intent to commit a crime is now sufficient for the offence to be classified as a burglary. Consequently, some offences that would previously have been defined as thefts are now recorded as burglaries. Some implications of this widened definition are discussed in Part 5.

3 Office of the Police Commissioner (2005), *New Zealand Crime Statistics 2004-2005.*

4 Morris, A; Reilly, J (2003), *New Zealand National Survey of Crime Victims 2001*, Ministry of Justice, page 28.

- 1.7 Police crime statistics are used to monitor burglary offending levels.⁵ There are 2 main aspects to monitoring dwelling burglary offences – the number of recorded offences, and the proportion of those recorded offences that are classified as resolved by the Police. A recorded offence is an offence that the Police are made aware of. A recorded offence is considered by the Police to be resolved when, after investigation, the likely offenders are identified and a decision is made on the action to be taken against them.

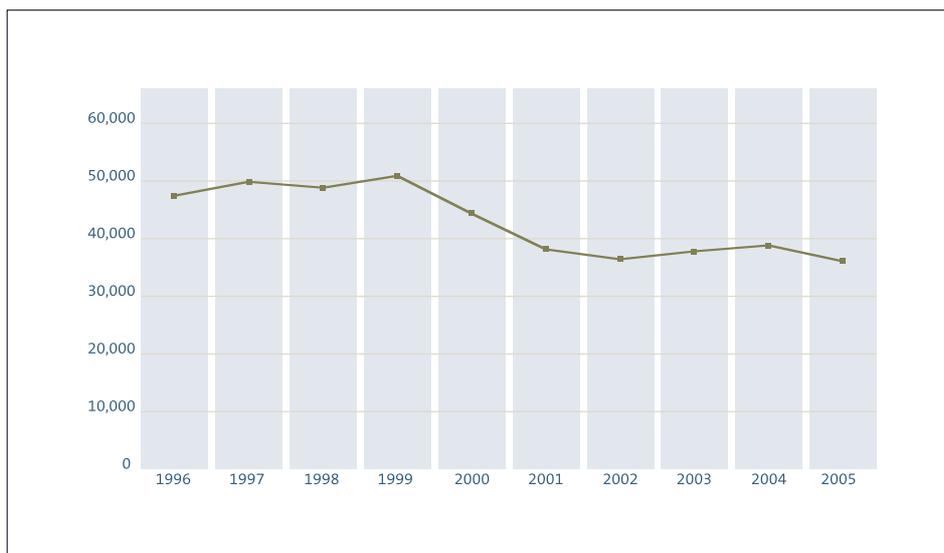
Trends in the number of recorded dwelling burglary offences

- 1.8 The number of recorded dwelling burglary offences between 1996 and 2005 is presented in Figure 1. Nationally, the number of recorded dwelling burglary offences dropped significantly, from around 50,000 each year in the late 1990s, to just over 36,000 in 2002. Since then, the number of recorded dwelling burglary offences increased slightly until 2004, before dipping again in the year to June 2005 to reach its lowest level in the last decade.

Figure 1

Total recorded dwelling burglary offences 1996-2005

There has been an overall decline in recorded dwelling burglary offences between 1996 and 2005 (data is for the years ended 30 June).



Source: Office of the Police Commissioner (2005), *New Zealand Crime Statistics 2004/2005*.

⁵ Police crime statistics rely on relatively consistent definitions and a complete record of a validated and reported crime. The Police consider recorded crime statistics to be a reliable indicator of the level of burglary offending because insurance companies usually require a Police report before accepting insurance claims.

1.9 Regionally, the incidence and trends of dwelling burglary offences vary widely. New Zealand has 12 Police Districts. There are 9 in the North Island, and 3 covering the South Island and Stewart Island. See Figure 2. To help compare crime statistics between Districts with different populations, the statistics are often presented on a per-population basis. Figure 3 shows that, in 2004-05, the number of recorded dwelling burglaries for every 10,000 people ranged from 36 in the Tasman District, to 144 in the Auckland City District. The national average was 88 dwelling burglaries for every 10,000 people.

Figure 2
Map of Police Districts

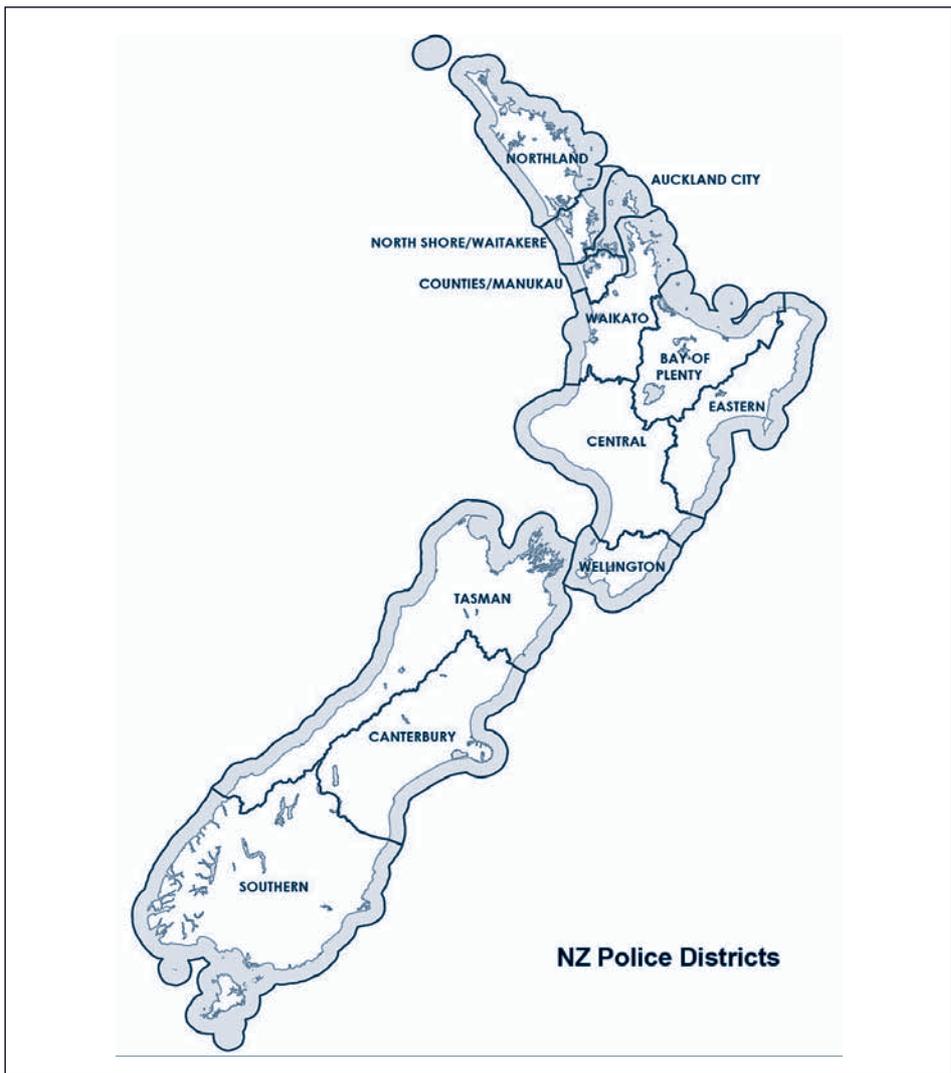
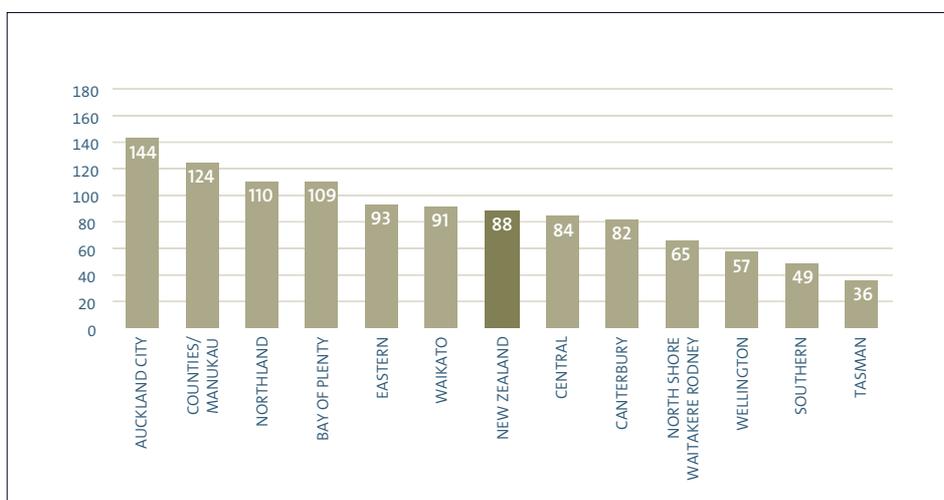


Figure 3
Rate of dwelling burglary offences per 10,000 people 2004-05, by Police District

Police Districts with larger populations tend to have higher rates for every 10,000 people than Districts with smaller populations (data is for the year ended 30 June 2005, and has been rounded to whole numbers).



Source: Office of the Police Commissioner (2005), *New Zealand Crime Statistics 2004/2005*.

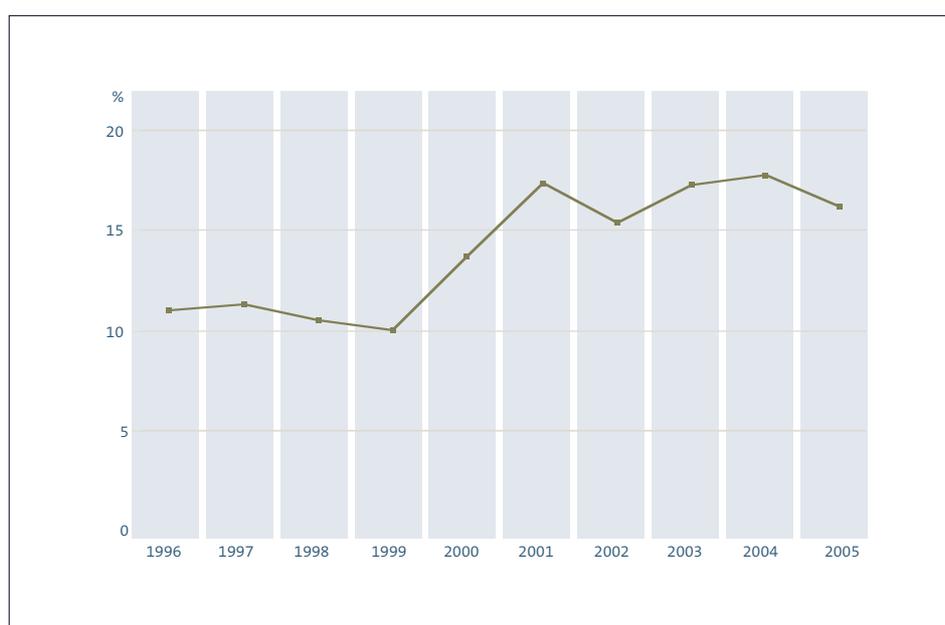
1.10 Most Districts have generally had a reduction in the number of recorded dwelling burglary offences since 1999-2000, although several appear to have remained largely unchanged since 2001. A notable exception is the Northland District, which has experienced an increase in the number of dwelling burglaries over the past couple of years.

Trends in the proportion of dwelling burglaries that are resolved

1.11 On a national basis, the resolution rate for recorded dwelling burglaries has hovered around 15-18% since 2001. A sharp improvement in the proportion of dwelling burglaries resolved between 1999 and 2001 ended a trend apparent in the late 1990s for the national resolution rate to remain at around 10-11%. These trends are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4
Resolution rates for dwelling burglary 1996-2005

There has been an upward trend in the proportion of resolved dwelling burglaries between 1996 and 2005 (data is for the years ended 30 June).

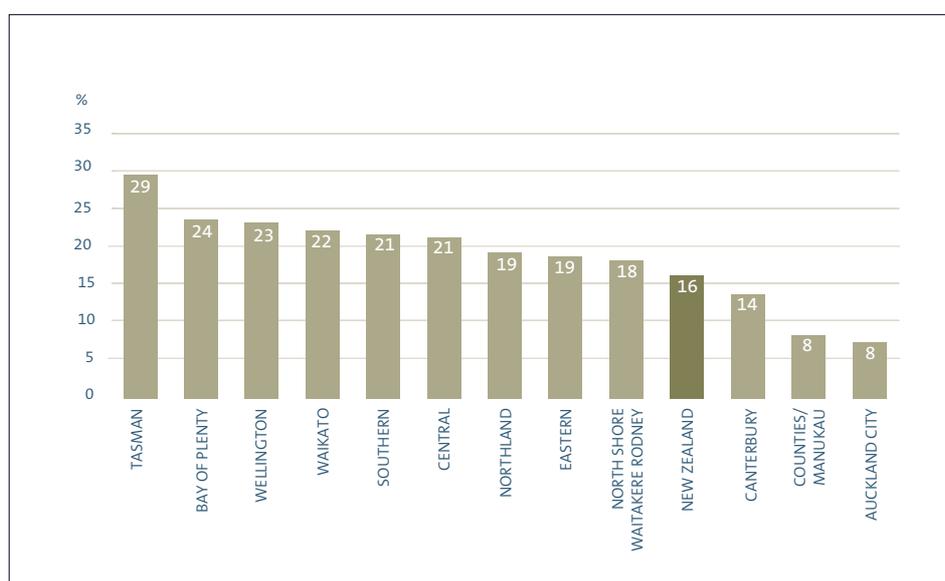


Source: Office of the Police Commissioner (2005), *New Zealand Crime Statistics 2004/2005*.

- 1.12 The resolution rates for dwelling burglary offences vary greatly between Police Districts. Figure 5 shows that, in 2004-05, resolution rates for dwelling burglary offences ranged from only 7.5% for the Auckland City District to nearly 29.4% in the Tasman District. Districts with higher populations tend to have lower resolution rates. This skews the national average towards the lower end of the range. Because of this, all but 3 Districts had resolution rates above the national average for the 2004-05 year.

Figure 5
Resolution rates for dwelling burglary 2004-05, by Police District

Police Districts with smaller populations tend to have higher resolution rates for every 10,000 people than Districts with larger populations (data is for the year ended 30 June 2005, and has been rounded to whole numbers).



Source: Office of the Police Commissioner (2005), *New Zealand Crime Statistics 2004/2005*.

How we conducted our follow-up audit

- 1.13 We examined whether the way the Police deal with dwelling burglary has improved since our 2001 report.
- 1.14 We used a case study approach for this follow-up. The Police are nationally organised into the Office of the Commissioner, 12 Districts, and 12 Service Centres (such as police training, information technology, and communication centres). The 12 Districts are divided into 44 local operational units called Areas. Each Area can have several Police Stations within its boundary.
- 1.15 We concentrated our fieldwork on a review of documentation, and interviews at the Office of the Commissioner, the Royal New Zealand Police College, and 4 Police Areas.

- 1.16 The 4 Police Areas we visited were Christchurch Central, Counties-Manukau East, Kapiti-Mana, and Waikato West. We selected these 4 Areas so our case studies would cover:
- urban and rural areas;
 - areas with different socio-economic characteristics; and
 - areas with varying rates of recorded dwelling burglary offences.
- 1.17 Figure 6 summarises the characteristics of each of the 4 Areas that influenced our decision to select them.

Figure 6
Characteristics of the selected Police Areas

Police Area	Reason for selection
Christchurch Central	Urban area with pockets of high affluence. A District subject to recent organisational restructuring.
Counties-Manukau East	Rapidly growing population with diverse socio-economic characteristics and conditions. High incidence of crime . Part of a District (Counties-Manukau) with sustained high burglary offending rates and low resolution rates since 2001.
Kapiti-Mana	Diverse socio-economic characteristics and conditions. Suburban, but with some semi-rural areas. Part of a District (Wellington) that has experienced a reduction in burglary offending rates since 2001.
Waikato West	Predominantly rural population with some lower socio-economic characteristics.

- 1.18 In each Area, we interviewed a range of staff, including:
- Area Commanders;
 - Officers in charge of investigations;
 - Intelligence section managers and analysts;
 - Scene of Crime Officers (SOCOs); and
 - Frontline⁶ officers.
- 1.19 We also examined documents, and interviewed District Commanders and Policing Development Managers, for the Districts covering the 4 selected Areas.

6 According to the Police, “frontline” officers deal directly with the public.

Part 2

Intelligence-led policing

- 2.1 In this Part, we:
- briefly describe our 2001 findings about intelligence-led policing; and
 - set out our findings in 2005.

Intelligence-led policing in 2001

- 2.2 Intelligence-led policing refers to –

...the use of criminal intelligence analysis as an objective decision-making tool in order to facilitate crime reduction and prevention through effective policing strategies and external partnership projects drawn from an evidential base.⁷

- 2.3 In our 2001 report, we concluded that most intelligence units operating in Districts and Areas were hampered by their lack of profile within the Police. We found that many intelligence units:
- had staff recruitment and training difficulties, with no clear career path for intelligence analysts;
 - did not always feature in District Business Plans; and
 - mainly used only basic analytical techniques and systems.

- 2.4 We recommended that the Police consider undertaking a strategic and operational review of intelligence units, and examine the extent to which greater use of intelligence and crime pattern analysis could improve the effectiveness of directed patrolling.

Our findings in 2005

- 2.5 The Police have started making greater use of intelligence-led policing since our 2001 report. This has raised the profile of intelligence units, and increased their role in directing policing activities towards factors identified as contributing to crime.

The intelligence-led Crime Reduction Model

- 2.6 Since our report in 2001, the Police have established and begun to implement a New Zealand Crime Reduction Model (see Figure 7). A core component of the model is the use of intelligence-led policing to guide Police actions.

⁷ Ratcliffe, J.H (2003), *Intelligence-led Policing*, Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Intelligence, Australian Institute of Criminology.

Figure 7
The New Zealand Crime Reduction Model

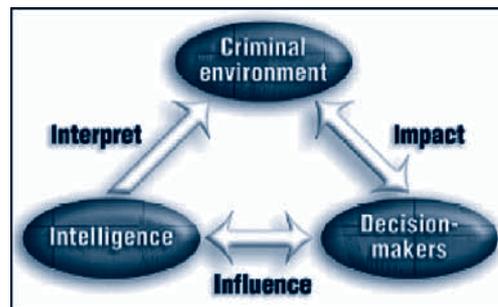
The Police, in consultation with international crime reduction researchers and practitioners, have established the New Zealand Crime Reduction Model.

The aim of the model is to provide “a consistent, integrated and cohesive approach to reduce crime and victimisation.”*

It is based on a premise that crime is not random, but, by using intelligence and crime pattern analysis, the Police can shift from reactive to proactive policing.

The Crime Reduction Model consists of 3 inter-related parts:

1. Interpretation of the criminal environment produces intelligence that can be acted on. This involves using crime science and problem analysis to identify practical ways to disrupt crime. Police then proactively target factors contributing to crime that have the biggest effect on offending rates:
 - hot offenders – active or recidivist offenders;
 - hot victims – repeat victims; and
 - hot locations, times and commodities – crime-prone areas, known popular crime offending times, and items commonly targeted by offenders.
2. The intelligence produced is used to influence decision-makers (such as Police managers and their community partners) to take action on identified factors contributing to crime, using:
 - strategic crime reduction and tactical meetings;
 - staff and resource deployment prioritisation; and
 - tactical deployment (such as targeting hot offenders and locations).
3. Decision-makers in the Police and community impact on the criminal environment by taking action to reduce crime opportunities, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of different tactics or initiatives undertaken.



* New Zealand Police (2005), *Statement of Intent 2005/2006*, page 14.

- 2.7 The Police finalised an implementation strategy for the Crime Reduction Model in mid-2003. The strategy came about after a national assessment undertaken by the Police in 2002-03 found that the implementation of an intelligence-led policing approach had, on a national scale, been largely ineffective up to that time.

- 2.8 The Crime Reduction Model has been widely adopted within the Police, especially for high incidence crimes like dwelling burglary. This has marked a shift away from a reactive “crime is random” approach to policing, towards a more proactive approach that emphasises the use of intelligence and crime pattern analysis to direct Police resources towards identified risk and factors contributing to crime.
- 2.9 Nationally, the Crime Reduction Model is used in the Statement of Intent to outline the Police’s operational approach to reducing crime and enhancing community safety. All the Districts of the case study Areas use the model to varying degrees, to define their goals and intentions in their annual District Business Plans. In the Police Areas, the model was understood and adopted at the “frontline” of policing. Area staff frequently referred to components of the model to explain their policing activities, and the model structures were displayed around Police Stations.

A higher profile for intelligence units

- 2.10 The shift to an emphasis on intelligence-led policing has raised the profile and importance of intelligence units. All Police Areas now have intelligence units, and most Districts are establishing their District-level intelligence capabilities.⁸
- 2.11 Intelligence briefings are increasingly used to guide the daily or weekly action plans of Police response units and specialist teams. This is an example of how the profile of intelligence-led policing has improved.
- 2.12 Intelligence reports typically interpret the local criminal environment according to the Crime Reduction Model (see Figure 7), identifying “hot locations” for reported crime, “hot suspects” (including people wanted on arrest warrants, or on bail), and emerging crime issues. These are used to assign Police units to, for example, directed patrols, bail checks, and enforcing curfews.
- 2.13 For example, Police in the Waikato West Area use a system of intelligence-led daily focus sheets, with non-negotiable tasks such as bail checks of “hot offenders” assigned to response units. Police in the Canterbury District use a weekly system where intelligence produces analysis of factors contributing to crime and shares the results with other sections. Ownership of the situation is then assigned to one of these other sections at a weekly meeting. The same meetings are used to report on progress.
- 2.14 Holding intelligence-led tasking meetings has raised the accountability requirements at different levels of the Police (discussed further in Part 5).

⁸ District-level intelligence capability tends to have a more strategic and long-term focus – for example, examining seasonal patterns of criminal offending. In contrast, Area-level intelligence tends to be more operational, and concentrates on shorter-term crime patterns.

- 2.15 The sophistication of the intelligence reports produced by intelligence sections varies. Some are only slowly moving away from simple “news and weather” reporting of what has happened in an Area, while others have more advanced reporting that includes detailed crime pattern mapping and analysis of emerging trends.
- 2.16 District intelligence sections tend to have more advanced intelligence capabilities than the Area intelligence sections in the case study Areas we looked at. District intelligence tends to involve more strategic crime analysis, including forecasting of crime using longitudinal analysis of historical crime statistics, and producing detailed environmental scans.

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the New Zealand Police consider seconding intelligence analysts in the Districts into intelligence units that are using advanced analysis techniques, to improve intelligence capabilities across all Districts and Areas.

Training and career paths for Police intelligence analysts

- 2.17 A higher profile for intelligence-led policing since 2001 has been accompanied by an increase in the number of specialist intelligence training courses available. In 2005-06, the Royal New Zealand Police College has scheduled 6 different types of intelligence training courses. In 2001-02, the College offered only 2 types of intelligence courses. Some Districts augment the nationally available training with their own District-level intelligence training.
- 2.18 Area intelligence units tend to have a relatively flat structure, are generally organised with an officer in charge of supervising analysts, and sometimes have administrative staff. This can limit career progression, especially for non-sworn staff. However, some District intelligence sections have more specialised positions such as strategic analysts (who undertake forecasting and environmental scans). There is some opportunity for Area-based intelligence staff to progress to more advanced roles at the District level.

Evaluation required of intelligence-led policing

- 2.19 Our 2001 report identified a need for more evaluation by the Police of the effect of different initiatives.

- 2.20 In our view, the effectiveness of intelligence-led policing should be formally evaluated, given the strategic and operational importance of the Crime Reduction Model to the Police. The Office of the Commissioner has an evaluation section for examining various Police projects and initiatives. Some small components of the Crime Reduction Model have been evaluated, but not the role of intelligence-led policing in reducing crime.
- 2.21 An evaluation of intelligence-led policing would need to consider how the approach is established to varying degrees across Districts. Targeted pilot evaluations of Districts or Areas where intelligence-led policing is advanced might therefore be useful.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the New Zealand Police formally evaluate the effectiveness of intelligence-led policing in reducing crime.

Part 3

Identifying and sharing good practice for dealing with dwelling burglary

- 3.1 In this Part, we describe:
- our findings in 2001 about how the Police formally identify, evaluate, and share good practice for dealing with dwelling burglary; and
 - our findings in 2005.

Identifying and sharing good practice in 2001

- 3.2 In 2001, the formal identification, evaluation, and sharing within the Police of good practice for dealing with dwelling burglary was limited.
- 3.3 Although there was some sharing of good practice between Districts and from the Office of the Commissioner, there was much scope for improvement. There was less interaction between managers at the Area level, and the interaction was mainly limited to other Areas within the same District.
- 3.4 We recommended that the Police consider:
- more formal evaluation of approaches, tools and practices that are considered to have high potential benefits if replicated across Districts; and
 - establishing methods for sharing good practice.

Our findings in 2005

- 3.5 Since 2001, the Police have significantly improved their formal mechanisms for identifying, evaluating, and sharing good practice.

The Office of the Commissioner's promotion of good practice

- 3.6 Nationally, we identified 2 groups within the Office of the Commissioner that have had a strong role in promoting good practice around the Police – the Policing Development Group, and the Organisational Performance Group.
- 3.7 The Policing Development Group was often cited in our case studies as a promoter of the adoption of intelligence-led policing throughout Districts. Although Districts (or their Commanders) have adopted the Crime Reduction Model with varying speeds since 2001, all are making greater use of intelligence-led policing.
- 3.8 To promote good practice, the Organisational Performance Group conducts bi-annual District Performance Reviews. The reviews aim to identify the performance strengths of a District, and provide non-prescriptive suggestions for improvement. The reviews involve a formal assessment of each District's performance against targets previously agreed between the Office of the Commissioner and the District. The reviews are discussed in more detail in Part 5.

- 3.9 We looked at District Performance Reviews for the 4 Districts covering the Police Areas we used as case studies. We compared the latest reviews (covering the year to 30 June 2005) with reviews completed in 2002-03. The performance review process has become increasingly sophisticated, and the latest reviews contain more detail and suggestions for improvement.

Sharing good practice between Districts and Areas

- 3.10 We identified 3 main ways the Police have increased, or are working to increase, the sharing of good practice between different Districts and Areas:
- Area Clusters;
 - conferences; and
 - setting up a Policing Development Manager role in Districts.
- 3.11 Area Clusters are a recent initiative managed by the Organisational Performance Group, and set up in association with both internal and external advisors. Police Areas have been grouped into 5 clusters, according to their socio-economic and demographic similarity (variables known to correlate with causing crime or reducing community safety). The aims of the clustering are to:
- encourage the identification and sharing of successful solutions to factors contributing to crime; and
 - enable benchmarking comparisons to be made between similar Areas.
- 3.12 In the Police Areas we studied, the Area Clusters initiative is generally regarded favourably, but progress has so far been limited. The Area Clusters were finalised in early 2005. Most Area Clusters have begun to meet and interact, and meeting documentation and attendee feedback indicates that members are exchanging good practice for addressing common factors contributing to crime.
- 3.13 The Area Clusters initiative has the potential to be a highly useful tool for Police to learn about new and effective ways to address factors contributing to crimes in their Areas. There is a risk, however, that some Areas may start assessing their performance against other Areas in their Cluster, instead of maintaining a national focus. Performance targets are set at the District level, in keeping with Police national objectives. Areas are therefore monitored against the performance targets of their Districts, not their Cluster.⁹

Recommendation 3

We recommend that the New Zealand Police monitor progress of the Area Clusters initiative, including assessing its effectiveness in disseminating good practice. If applicable, the reasons why some of the Area Cluster groups do not interact should be identified and addressed.

⁹ Monitoring against performance targets is discussed in more detail in Part 5.

- 3.14 The Police regularly organise conferences, and typically cater to specific ranks or roles. For example, there are regular District Commander, Area Commander, and Criminal Investigation Branch (CIB) conferences. The Policing Development Group of the Office of the Commissioner has also run conferences, in association with the Royal New Zealand Police College, that are used to disseminate new concepts such as the Crime Reduction Model.
- 3.15 We reviewed some of this conference material, and found that conferences commonly include presentations by international crime or policing experts and sharing of good practice. In our interviews, the Police spoke positively about the value of conferences for learning about good practice, and new ways to tackle factors contributing to crime. Part of the value of these conferences is the informal sharing of information that occurs between Police officers.
- 3.16 Policing Development Managers in each District are senior managers whose role has grown since our 2001 report. The positions were introduced during our 2001 audit. Policing Development Managers report directly to District Commanders, and are responsible for providing a formal link between the Police's national strategy and priorities, and District actions.¹⁰ They form a network for identifying good practice and disseminating it throughout their Districts.
- 3.17 The Policing Development Managers also extract relevant sections of the Statement of Intent and other Police strategy documents, and disseminate them to frontline officers and other staff. We consider this good practice because it helps communicate strategic direction throughout the Police.

Electronic sharing of information

- 3.18 The role of the Police intranet and e-mail groups has widened since 2001. They are now significant tools used by the Police for sharing information and good practice. The Policing Development Group and Organisational Performance Group of the Office of the Commissioner often use these communication methods to feature examples of good practice (both national and international examples).¹¹ An information-sharing tool originally set up to share information between District Policing Development Managers has also grown into a well-used source of good practice.

¹⁰ This includes having the major responsibility for producing District Business Plans and strategy documents.

¹¹ District and Area personnel can also submit initiatives.

- 3.19 A system has been set up to allow Police staff to submit brief summaries of initiatives that work to reduce crime or crashes, and increase community safety. The summaries are placed on the Police intranet under a “what works” best practice section of case studies. The intention of this initiative is to share successful responses to specific factors contributing to crime, and reduce the potential for “reinventing the wheel”.
- 3.20 We reviewed an example specific to dwelling burglary, submitted by the Wellington Area about the creation of a dedicated Burglary Attendance Squad. The submission concisely:
- summarised the project and its objectives;
 - explained the specific problems it aimed to address (increased reported burglaries and Police response issues); and
 - outlined the effect of the initiative (including improved Police response times, and a marked decrease in reported burglaries).
- 3.21 There is wide knowledge of, and referral to, these electronic sources of good policing practice in the case study Areas we examined. However, Police staff have some difficulty finding material, because a number of different databases and other information sources have evolved, covering similar content. A formal examination of how the systems can be streamlined or integrated with each other would help build on the progress already made by the Police.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that the New Zealand Police review the existing electronic systems for disseminating good practice and information across all sections of the organisation, and assess whether the systems’ accessibility and search functions can be improved.

Part 4

Using forensic techniques to investigate dwelling burglary

- 4.1 In this Part, we discuss:
- how the Police were using forensic techniques in 2001 for investigating dwelling burglaries; and
 - our findings in 2005.

Using forensic techniques in 2001

- 4.2 We concluded in our 2001 report that the Police were unlikely to be making the best use of forensic science techniques in their crime investigations. The Districts' use of forensic tools and services varied, with no clear rationale for the differences. Further, there was no systematic resource planning for the forensic services used, based on cost and effectiveness.

- 4.3 We recommended that Districts:
- set priorities for the use of various forensic techniques on the basis of cost and effectiveness; and
 - improve their resource planning for the use of forensic science.

Our findings in 2005

- 4.4 A number of forensic and scene examination techniques may be used by Police to investigate dwelling burglaries. These include:
- fingerprints (including palm prints);
 - shoe prints;
 - scene analysis using photography;
 - document examination; and
 - DNA analysis of specimens left at the scene (such as blood, hair, saliva, or skin cells).
- 4.5 Fingerprints have traditionally been used for burglary investigation, and remain the most important evidence source. The importance of gathering DNA samples has increased in recent years with advances in DNA technology. The Police undertake fingerprint analysis internally at 4 Fingerprint Sections around the country, while the Institute of Environmental Science and Research Limited (ESR)¹² is the sole supplier to the Police of forensic science services (including DNA analysis) for criminal investigations.

¹² ESR is a Crown Research Institute that provides a range of commercial scientific services.

Resource planning for forensic services at Police national level

- 4.6 The Police budget for ESR forensic services has increased from \$9.9 million in 2000-01 to \$18.8 million for 2005-06. This lets the Police make greater use of forensic services for criminal investigations. The annual number of cases submitted to ESR for forensic analysis has increased from 6532 in the year to 30 June 2002, to 9466 in 2004.
- 4.7 A new contract was signed in 2005 between the Police and ESR for the provision of forensic services. This agreement took effect from 1 July 2005, and is scheduled to last 3 years. It has replaced the contract in place at the time of our 2001 audit.
- 4.8 The new contract has a substantially different costing structure to its predecessor. ESR now charges the Police for forensic services based on the process used. For example, a forensic process such as DNA analysis of a sample from a burglary scene has a set service charge. Similarly, analysis of physical evidence such as firearms, fibres or chemicals, also has a set charge based on the process used for forensic analysis.
- 4.9 The old contract between the Police and ESR used a costing structure based on case types. The fees charged by ESR for submissions were based on the type of incident that the Police had attended, regardless of the amount of forensic evidence to be analysed. For example, there were set fees for burglaries, assaults, and homicides.
- 4.10 In our view, the new costing structure for forensic services provided by ESR will produce significant benefits for the Police. For forensic samples from burglaries, the new agreement offers substantial cost savings for each case, and more transparency in expected costs. For most burglary cases, the DNA analysis will be subject to a set fee.

Quality controls over the use of forensics

- 4.11 The Police have put in place quality control measures to counter the risk of poor quality or non-cost-effective samples being submitted to ESR from Districts. This was an issue identified in our 2001 audit. Since November 2004, the Police have employed a former senior detective, based within ESR, to provide quality control over submissions.

- 4.12 All the case study Districts we examined now have “gatekeepers” to review and approve each sample submitted to ESR for analysis. The aim is to ensure both quality and cost control. These gatekeepers are normally senior detectives or heads of forensics (or their delegates), who are knowledgeable about the required quality for submissions. They also tend to be responsible for the District forensic budget, or know what that budget is. In our view, this is an effective way for Districts to help ensure quality and budgetary control of their use of forensic services.
- 4.13 In the Districts and Areas we looked at, Scene of Crime Officers (SOCOs) tried to attend every dwelling burglary scene, or identified which scenes they could more usefully attend. SOCOs are specialist Police staff trained in obtaining physical and forensic evidence from crime scenes (such as fingerprints, DNA samples, or securing evidential exhibits). In some Areas, SOCOs attend burglary scenes with other specialist burglary investigation officers.¹³ Having SOCOs attend burglary scenes partly reflects a greater Police focus on reducing high incidence crimes. It is also another form of quality control, because SOCOs are usually more skilled at gathering physical and forensic evidence than general duty officers.

The effect of technological and legislative changes

- 4.14 Technological advances and legislative changes mean that DNA is now substantially easier to obtain from offenders than was the case in 2001. The Criminal Investigations (Bodily Samples) Amendment Act 2003 contains 3 main changes that have increased the ease with which Police can obtain DNA from suspected or convicted burglars:
- burglary was made an offence for which Police can compulsorily take DNA samples from suspects;
 - Police were given the power to obtain DNA samples from imprisoned burglars; and
 - the collection of DNA samples using buccal (mouth) swabs was permitted.
- 4.15 Under the Act, suspects can now administer their own DNA swabs with a simple saliva test (before this, collecting DNA meant taking blood samples and using medical personnel). Collecting DNA samples is now cheaper, and there are more samples on the national DNA database. The number of DNA profiles on the national DNA database has grown from 24,713 as at 30 June 2002, to 55,829 at 30 September 2005. For the last quarter of 2001, 38% of the samples taken from crime scenes were linked to profiles on the DNA database. The rate has grown to 56% for the 3 months to the end of September 2005.

¹³ The advantages of having specialist Police staff attend burglary scenes are discussed in Part 6.

Part 5

Monitoring against performance targets

- 5.1 In this Part, we describe:
- our findings in 2001 in relation to the Police's measuring and monitoring of their performance relating to dwelling burglary; and
 - our findings in 2005.

Monitoring against performance targets in 2001

- 5.2 We concluded in our 2001 audit that the Police had started establishing performance measures, but there were few targets addressing how the Police operate.
- 5.3 The Police had embraced business planning, but there was a weakness in the translation of overall goals into operational business plans.

Our findings in 2005

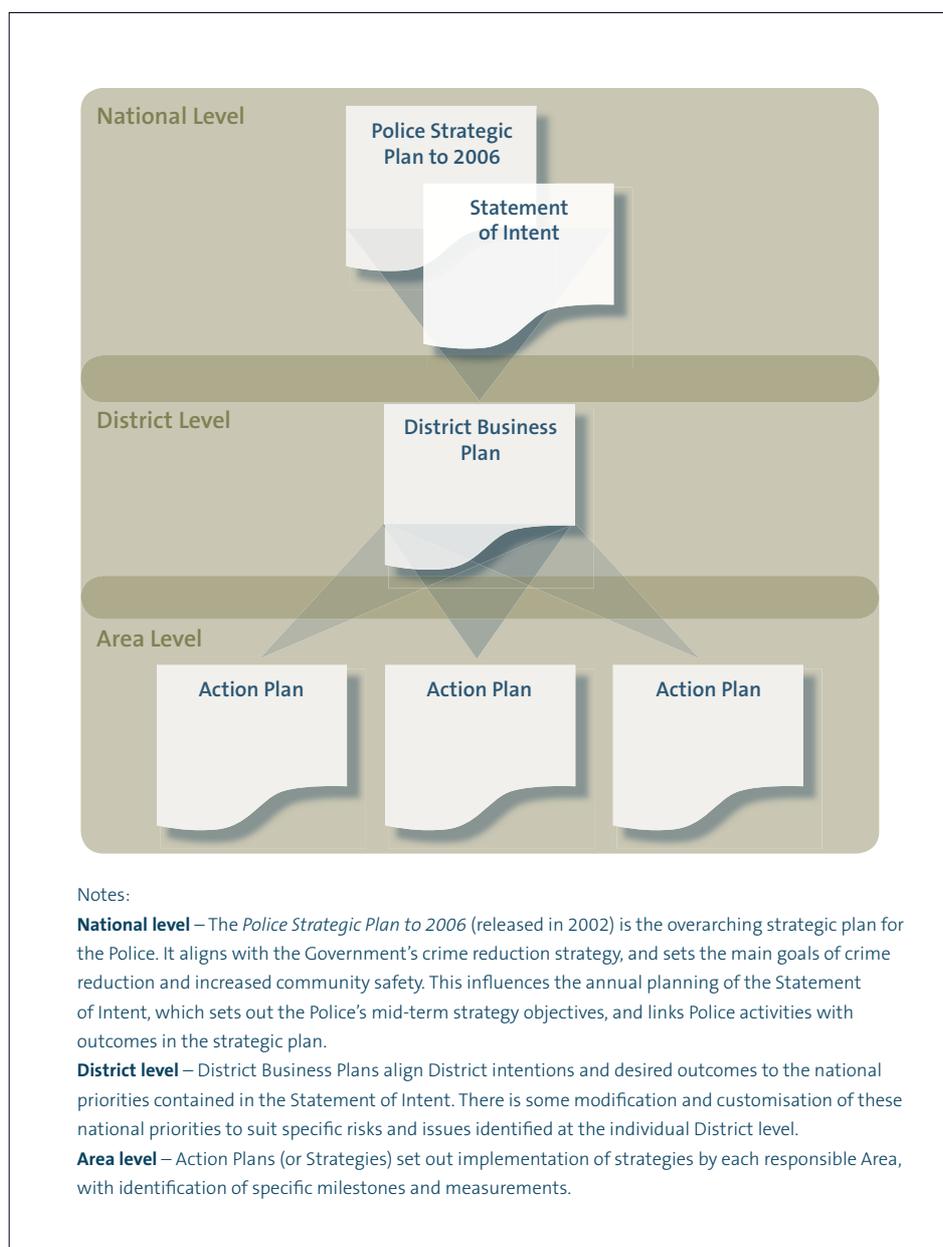
- 5.4 There is now strong alignment between the Police's strategic direction and the operational planning used at District and Area levels. There is greater accountability and urgency for reaching performance targets than there was in 2001.

Police business planning

- 5.5 We examined Police business planning documents. We looked at how the objectives and outcomes of the Statement of Intent are translated into operational plans, at both District and Area levels.
- 5.6 Police national strategic priorities, business planning in the Districts, and operational planning at the Area level are all tightly aligned. Figure 8 shows the planning links in the 4 case study Areas and Districts we examined. Although there was some variation in the terminology or processes used in each of the 4 Districts, the translation of Police strategic goals into operational business plans was broadly similar.

Figure 8
Police business planning, from national strategy to operational Area plans

The national strategy flows into District Business Plans, and then into operational Area Plans.



- 5.7 At the District level, District Business Plans and their performance targets are closely aligned to the targets and intended outcomes contained in the Statement of Intent, but with some modification to reflect the prioritisation of specific crime issues or characteristics in each District.
- 5.8 At the more operational Area level (covering frontline policing), in the case studies we examined, the focus is on using practical Action Plans or their equivalents.¹⁴ The operational plans set out the implementation of strategies by each responsible Area, and identify specific measurable milestones. Police management are acknowledging that all Police staff do not need to be familiar with all the detail of strategic plans, but they do need to know about the operational elements and targets that affect them. In our view, this is an effective way to translate overall strategic goals into operational tasks.
- 5.9 All case study Districts and Areas we examined had burglary reduction action plans or strategies.¹⁵ These plans tended to:
- specify key milestones or tasks to be achieved (for example, targeting “hot” burglary offenders or locations);
 - allocate responsibility for achieving specific milestones and tasks to specific staff or roles (e.g. Area Commanders, intelligence units);
 - include performance measures covering how the action plan will be achieved; and
 - set out intended outcomes (for example, a reduction in the number of recorded burglary offences).

Monitoring performance at District and Area level

- 5.10 In the case study Areas and Districts we looked at, the Districts were imposing greater accountability and urgency on Police personnel for meeting strategic and operational targets, including the overarching goals of crime and crash reduction, and enhancing community safety.
- 5.11 The performance agreements of District Commanders are directly linked to the results of the District Performance Reviews conducted twice yearly by the Office of the Commissioner. The reviews are part of a wider shift by the Police, evident since our 2001 report, to move towards a performance framework. As we noted in Part 3, these reviews analyse a District’s performance against agreed performance targets, are non-prescriptive, and identify strengths and opportunities for improvement.

¹⁴ The terminology used across Districts for these operational documents varied. They were called “Area Plans” in a couple of the Districts, and “District Strategies” or “District Action Points” in the others. However, the purpose of the documents was similar.

¹⁵ Canterbury and Wellington Districts have burglary-specific reduction plans. The other 2 Districts combine burglary with other high incidence crimes (because of similar issues concerned with their policing). The Counties-Manukau District has a burglary and vehicle crime reduction strategy, and the Waikato District has a high incidence crime reduction action plan covering burglary, violence, and vehicle crime.

- 5.12 The District Performance Review starts with an individual performance agreement negotiated between each District Commander and either the Police Commissioner or one of the 2 Deputy Commissioners. The performance agreements incorporate the measures and targets contained in the Statement of Intent. We note that the Police have recently moved towards a more collaborative setting of performance targets. District Commanders, as members of the Police Executive, are now more involved in agreeing performance targets.
- 5.13 The review involves a visit to a District by Organisational Performance Group staff, and seconded analysts from different sections of the Police. Overall performance of the District is assessed, using interviews and analysis of monthly and weekly District performance statistics. Districts are given an opportunity to list their strengths and challenges. A draft performance review report is then prepared and sent back to the District for consultation. A final report is tabled at a District Management Meeting, with the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner highlighting key issues. The Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner then privately undertakes a performance appraisal of the District Commander, based on the results of the District Performance Review.
- 5.14 The District Performance Reviews for the Canterbury, Counties-Manukau, Waikato, and Wellington Districts are detailed and robust appraisals. Each review contains a broad performance appraisal, assessing not only District performance against crime targets, but also wider organisational performance issues. These include human resources indicators and the results of public satisfaction surveys. In our view, linking District Commanders' performance agreements to the results of the reviews is an effective way to promote greater accountability against performance. District Commanders we interviewed echoed this opinion, with increased accountability and urgency to improve overall performance in their Districts commonly cited as outcomes of the review process.

Accountability for performance

- 5.15 Overall, the accountability requirements for performance are significantly higher than they were in 2001. District Commanders are now more accountable for the performance results of their Districts, and they seek accountability for performance from Area Commanders. In the Districts and Areas we examined, there is at least monthly, if not weekly, monitoring of crime statistics against targets. Because of this, Police staff at the Area level are more regularly aware of levels of offending. This allows greater targeting of resources and response to risk, especially when it is incorporated with analysis by the intelligence units.

- 5.16 The case study Districts use various forms of “tactical tasking meetings”. Some tactical tasking meetings involve regular meetings between Area Commanders and the District Commander. For example, one of the Districts we visited uses a system of performance reports. Area Commanders are sent out a performance report template ahead of the monthly meeting with the District Commander. These reports detail specific crime issues in an Area, and require the Area Commander to formally report on what action they have taken to address the factors contributing to crime, including what the results have been.
- 5.17 In another District, Area Commanders and senior District management meet weekly with the District Commander. These crime co-ordination meetings assign ownership of specific factors contributing to crime to various Police personnel. The personnel are then held accountable, by the District Commander, for reporting the actions taken to address them. These forms of tactical tasking meetings appear to be rigorous methods for raising both accountability and urgency for addressing identified factors contributing to crime.
- 5.18 Tactical tasking meetings are used in some Areas, with officers in charge of individual Police Stations also formally reporting on performance, and being held accountable by the Area Commander.

Coding of burglary offences for performance monitoring

- 5.19 To enable useful comparisons across all Police Districts and Areas, coding of crimes has to be consistent. In the case of burglary, the legal definition has changed since our 2001 audit. The Crimes Amendment Act 2003 widened the definition of burglary by removing the need for breaking to have occurred in association with unlawful entry. Because of this, some offences that would previously have been defined as thefts are now recorded as burglaries. The change in the legal definition of burglary has created some coding difficulties for Police. For example, there is some uncertainty in the case of multi-level buildings with different tenants, whether incidents should be coded as one burglary, multiple burglaries, or theft.
- 5.20 Different interpretations of the legal definition of burglary, and when to apply it, may be creating offence coding inconsistencies between different Districts, and even Areas. Some of the Districts we visited are trying to address this issue by writing their own guidelines for coding crimes such as burglary and theft. However, to ensure consistency, national guidelines need to be followed by all Districts. We were told that national coding guidelines do exist, but need updating and improving.

5.21 We note that independent research commissioned by the Police in 2004 suggests that the effect of the Crimes Amendment Act 2003 on the coding of burglary statistics may be minimal. The research found that less than 1% of examined burglary offences were incorrectly coded as other offence types. However, we found a perception from our interviews with some officers that miscoding is a significant issue.

Recommendation 5

We recommend that the New Zealand Police update and maintain formal national guidelines for coding different crimes, to ensure consistency of reporting across all Districts.

Part 6

Co-ordinated guidance for Police involved in investigating dwelling burglary

- 6.1 In this Part, we set out:
- our findings about co-ordinated guidance in 2001; and
 - co-ordinated guidance for investigating dwelling burglary in 2005.

Co-ordinated guidance in 2001

- 6.2 In 2001, we concluded that there was scope for the Police to use more detailed, shared guidelines for dealing with burglary investigations. This would reduce duplication of effort, inconsistent approaches to the same tasks, and lost opportunities to share new approaches.

Our findings in 2005

- 6.3 The New Zealand Police is a de-centralised organisation, with much autonomy devolved to the 12 Districts. This management structure, combined with substantial diversity of socio-economic and demographic conditions between different regions, has led to the Districts adopting some different operational approaches. This means that how the Police organise themselves for burglary investigations, including on-the-job training and informal information sharing, is important.

Dedicated burglary attendance and investigation teams

- 6.4 A common way to improve performance is to use specialist burglary investigation staff for scene attendance and subsequent investigation. Figure 9 summarises the different dedicated or specialist teams (excluding SOCOs) involved in burglary investigation in the 4 Police Areas we studied.
- 6.5 Although there are terminology and structure differences in the 4 Areas we examined, they share some common characteristics. First, some of the Areas have introduced dedicated teams to be the first to attend the scene of reported burglaries. In the case of Christchurch Central Area, an Incident Reporting Centre was introduced in 2005 as a District-level reporting desk for burglaries and other crimes where an offender was no longer at the scene.¹⁶ Second, all 4 Areas have specialist teams that focus on investigating high-incidence crimes.

¹⁶ We understand that the Wellington District is also planning a pilot of a single reporting desk for the District.

Figure 9
Dedicated burglary investigation staff in the case study Police Areas

Police Area	Use of dedicated personnel for investigating dwelling burglaries
Christchurch Central	Volume crime team – Investigates high incidence crimes such as burglary.
	Incident Response Centre – A District-level reporting desk for members of the public to report burglaries (where an offender is no longer at the scene) and minor “cold” crimes. Call-takers receive training from SOCOs on how to make initial assessments over the telephone. These assessments include whether sufficient evidence exists at the scene to arrange for a SOCO to attend the scene.
Counties Manukau East	Burglary Attendees Team – The team’s role is to attend burglary scenes within 24 hours, and carry out the initial investigation for every dwelling burglary. Police officers from response units are rotated through the team. Burglary Tasking Squad – A tactical crime response unit that concentrates on investigating crimes such as burglary.
Kapiti-Mana	Burglary Response Team – A specialist team that attends, with a SOCO, every dwelling burglary. Crime Control Unit – A dedicated crime investigation squad.
Waikato West	Law Enforcement Team – A specialist team that concentrates on investigating high incidence crimes, including burglary.

6.6 We identified several potential advantages of dedicated burglary attendance and investigation teams:

- accuracy, consistency, and quality of reporting can be improved by using dedicated staff;
- response times can be shortened by not having attending staff diverted to other policing tasks;¹⁷
- identification of “hot offenders”, “hot locations”, and “hot victims” is enhanced (including learning the operating methods of prolific and recidivist burglars);
- specialist burglary investigation training can be used and targeted; and
- other frontline Police staff are freed from investigating historical burglaries to concentrate on other factors contributing to crime.

¹⁷ Some of the Areas we examined have introduced tight response processes for burglary cases, such as requiring attendance at the scene of all reported burglaries within 24 hours.

6.7 In our case studies, although we observed potential advantages with dedicated burglary response staff, we also noted that their resourcing came out of existing District or Area budgets. The Police therefore prioritised resources, with burglary and other crimes targeted for attention. It is likely that the use of dedicated burglary attendance or investigation teams may not be a practical or an efficient use of staff and resources in some other Areas. This includes Areas where the number of staff is small in each station, or the incidence of burglary is low compared with other crimes.

Field Training Officers

6.8 Field Training Officers are an initiative for “on-the-job” co-ordinated guidance, introduced by the Police since our 2001 report. Field Training Officers are experienced constables who are paid an extra annual allowance to provide mentoring and on-the-job training to probationary constables.¹⁸ The role was originally conceived as a way to retain experienced officers on frontline policing duty in metropolitan Auckland, but was introduced in all Districts as part of a national pay round in August 2003.

6.9 In our view, the Field Training Officers scheme has the potential to be an important way for new Police officers to receive on-the-job training and supervision in practical policing activities such as burglary investigation. It is also useful in Districts or Areas where staff turnover, or the number of probationary constables, is high.

6.10 However, we have 2 concerns with the way the scheme is organised:

- It may have contributed to recruitment difficulties for specialist Police sections, such as the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB). The Police should assess the extent to which this has happened.
- No national assessment systems are in place relating to the role (for either the probationary officer or the mentor), although some Districts have introduced their own training sessions for the role based on an initial course prepared by the Royal New Zealand Police College.

Recommendation 6

We recommend that the New Zealand Police undertake a formal evaluation of the Field Training Officer role, to assess whether the scheme is working well and meeting its original aims, and how the Field Training Officer role might be affecting the recruitment needs of specialist sections of the Police.

¹⁸ Probationary constables are new Police officers who have completed their initial training at the Royal New Zealand Police College, and have been assigned to a District for a 2-year probationary period.

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