Speech by Adam Graycar, Director, Australian Institute of Criminology:

"Crime and public policy"

presented at the University of New England, Armidale, 20 May 1998

© Australian Government
This speech is made available under the CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0 license:
http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/
Business at the heart of the Australian economy. Business creates Australia’s wealth, it provides jobs, it structures the way we live.

Crime against business is a problem not unique to Australia. It costs businesses around the world billions of dollars. But with a few notable exceptions, crime against business has been neglected by criminologists in Australia.

The Australian Institute of Criminology has played a leading role in combating crimes against business.

The AIC hosted the secretariat of the National Retail Crime Prevention Council during the 1980s. We conducted a conference on crimes against business a few years ago. AIC surveys of crime against business. I am pleased to learn that the Australian Bureau of Statistics is considering a survey of crimes against business, and I hope that the ABS will make the data available to researchers.
The Australian Institute of Criminology has long been a champion of crime prevention, and an internationally recognised leader in the field. Nearly a quarter of a century ago, when there was little interest in the subject elsewhere in Australia, or indeed, internationally, some of the Institute’s earliest publications were devoted to crime prevention. The AIC has been a real agenda setter in this area. The AIC has produced valuable documents on preventing retail crime, and on protecting counter staff against client aggression, as well as a Monograph on preventing retail theft.

Now, of course, crime prevention has become “flavour of the month,” and quite rightly so.

Later this year, the AIC will convene a conference on crime prevention through environmental design, a topic which has significant implications for the prevention of crime against business.

Basic awareness of risks, vulnerabilities, and remedies is an essential pillar in the construction of a crime prevention strategy. There is a tremendous opportunity for the private sector in the delivery of protection services especially in coping
with increasingly accessible technologies, and the whole gamut of IT security issues.

A 1997 survey of Australian businesses revealed that 37% had experienced some form of computer intrusion or other unauthorised use of information systems in the previous 12 months. Over 60% of these were from external sources. Over 90% suffered internal misuse, suggesting that a significant proportion were being hit from inside and outside.

Self defence

Australia’s competitiveness in the global economy is at risk. Losses due to crime detract from profit-and jobs. Imagine how many young people could be employed. Business as victims of crime/business as an important institution of crime control. self help/provision of goods and services for crime prevention/influencing market forces Trading on an image of safety/car parks boasting of their security record. Greater communication between criminologists and business. Business has been neglected by Australian Criminology. With the notable exception of the AIC. This is ironic because as the AIC has shown business victimisation rate exceeds that of households.
AIC’s work has shown that crime prevention is something more than a public relations exercise.

We last convened a National Conference on Crimes Against Business in Melbourne, 28 February to 2 March 1994. The focus of the conference was the results of the first Australian national survey of crimes against businesses. It is now time for another comprehensive national survey.

**Business can reduce crime vigilance/street life**

- commerce as Organizer of life’s activities
- patterns of differential victimisation

- We aspire to spread crime prevention knowledge throughout the business community.

- Contribution to crime prevention through product design.
- Safer/ less stealable cars

- consumer electronics with tracking devices

- Public/private co-production of crime prevention
• Criminologists can assist business: Challinger to Telecom (as it then was)
• and Coles Myer
• cost effectiveness// democratization of technology
• A great deal of crime against business does not reach police attention. This is often because of a commercial decision on the part of the enterprise image etc. understandable exercise of business judgment. but wider ramifications. Offender may strike other companies. discussion of incident may sensitize others to risk.

• I don’t propose to dictate how to go about one’s business but we wish to assist Australian enterprise in minimising its losses due to crime.

• Resources available for crime prevention vary between small corner store and large multiple retailers.

• Overlapping responsibilities: private/public police; private/public space
• interior layout and design of premises
• staff recruitment
• just as domestic violence is a crime, assault is a crime, shop stealing is a crime. We should avoid excessive reliance on the term shrinkage or shoplifting let us not contribute to the criminal’s vocabulary of extenuation.
• Some shopkeepers play Mozart to discourage youthful loiterers
• collect good info
• analyse known incidents & look for patterns
• develop strategies
• implement
• evaluate.