

Victoria Police – Organisational Policy Statement

Neighbourhood Watch Victoria

Context

The Victoria Police Capability Plan 2016 - 2025 outlines eight Blue Paper transformational pathways, including; a 'victim-centric' focus – a stronger focus on victims, prevention and reduction of harm and, 'partnerships' focus – stronger partnerships and co-production with stakeholders. Working with the community and partner agencies to build the capacity of Victorians to contribute to being and feeling safe is a Victoria Police priority. Neighbourhood Watch Victoria (NHW) provides a platform for every community member to take responsibility and be involved in crime prevention.

Victoria Police supports the principle that NHW continue to work towards becoming an independent organisation that is more relevant and better engaged with the community. Victoria Police firmly believes that NHW, as a key partner, has an important role to perform in supporting and promoting crime prevention and community safety awareness and activities.

The NHW Strategic Plan¹ aims to lead and educate the community in safety, security and crime prevention by partnering with Victoria Police and other organisations to encourage community participation in building safe and confident communities. NHW is committed to strengthening the partnership of Victoria Police and the community by working together to prevent crime and improve safety, security and the quality of life for all Victorians².

Policy

1. Victoria Police Commitment

In building the capacity of NHW to achieve its purpose, Victoria Police may provide guidance, direction, and involvement in the development and implementation of police initiated crime prevention and community safety initiatives. To achieve this we aim to:

- Empower NHW to implement their Strategic Plan in support of Victoria Police priorities (Capability Plan 2016 – 2025). This will be achieved by providing guidance, direction and endorsement at a state and local level;

¹ Neighbourhood Watch Strategic Plan 2014-2017 'Growing Safer Communities Together'

² Ibid.

- Encourage NHW activities that aim to engage, educate, and inform the community in order to prevent crime and improve community safety. Victoria Police, in consultation with the Community Crime Prevention Unit, Department of Justice and Regulation, will provide leadership and guidance in relation to crime prevention priorities, best practice and beneficial activities;
- Encourage NHW activities that foster community resilience and cohesion. This will be achieved by providing guidance, direction and endorsement at a state and local level ;
- Actively communicate with NHW and community members regarding crime prevention and community safety using 'Eyewatch' (Police Service Area (PSA) based facebook pages), and other suitable mediums;
- Provide guidance to the NHW Board of Management and the NHW Chief Executive Officer to support NHW in achieving its strategic objectives.

2. Victoria Police Activities

Victoria Police is committed to the ongoing collaborative relationship with NHW and to continuously improve our engagement with the Victorian community. To achieve this:

- Where possible we will provide information about local crime trends and patterns to assist NHW in raising community awareness and promoting relevant crime prevention strategies to the community.
- Where possible each PSA will have a nominated Police Liaison Officer (PLO) for NHW related activities and inquiries.
- A PLO, when requested by NHW, will attend local NHW meetings where priorities and resources permit and at the discretion of the Local Area Commander.
- Designated NHW PLOs will disseminate police related educational information and resources on crime prevention and community safety to NHW for sharing with the broader community.
- NHW local committee management activities will be co-ordinated and managed by NHW.

This will ensure that Victoria Police:

- Provide opportunities for NHW volunteers and community members to become involved in Victoria Police led, multi-faceted, crime reduction strategies;
- Contributes to building the level of support for Eyewatch and NHW in local areas;
- Works collaboratively with NHW in order to improve stakeholder and community engagement and enhance outcomes;
- Utilises NHW resources where practicable to assist in crime prevention, community reassurance, public order and road safety strategies;
- Considers NHW as a resource to assist Victoria Police in the implementation of police-initiated crime prevention/ community safety strategies, programs and projects.

Responsibility

All Victoria Police employees are responsible for proactively promoting crime prevention and community safety. The following positions and groups have specific responsibilities with NHW;

Local Area Commanders

The Local Area Commander is responsible for liaison, interaction, leadership and engaging the support of NHW where practicable as part of community and stakeholder engagement.

Inspector – Tasking and Coordination

The Divisional Inspector for Tasking and Coordination is responsible for utilising local resources or proactive policing personnel where practicable to assist in crime reduction, community safety and road safety strategies. Tasking and Coordination may provide opportunities to utilise NHW or other community members to achieve this aim.

Police Liaison Officer

Provide opportunity for NHW or other community members to become actively involved in Victoria Police initiated crime prevention, community safety and road safety projects. Be actively involved in the Tasking and Coordination process within their PSA or Division to identify opportunities for NHW volunteers or other community members to become involved in such strategies or projects.

Victoria Police Advisors – Neighbourhood Watch Victoria Board of Management

Represent the interests for Victoria Police at State NHW Board of Management meeting by ensuring adherence to policy and procedures for Victoria Police Employees in their dealings with NHW.

Marketing the program to employees of Victoria Police and providing assistance to the NHW Board of Management that may be agreed upon from time to time in the furtherance of the NHW mission.

Operational policy references

The Organisational Policy Statement is implemented through the following Policy Rules and Procedure and Guidelines:

- VPMP Community Policing
- VPMG Community safety and liaison

Further advice and information

For further advice and assistance regarding this Organisational Policy Statement, contact Safer Communities Unit, Community Safety Division email: safercommunitiesunit@police.vic.gov.au

Update history

Date of first issue	24/06/13	
Date updated	Summary of change	Force File number
03/07/17	Update of references to Victoria Police practices and organisational focus	FF – 113452