

Make crooks cranky in Bendigo

Jonathon Magrath

NEIGHBOURHOOD Watch Victoria has spent the last 40 years "making crooks cranky" across the state, but is it time a group returned to Bendigo?

Chief executive Bambi Gordon visited Bendigo Police station on Tuesday, August 15 as part of the organisation's 40th anniversary celebrations supported by BankVic, and to discuss the benefits of such a group.

A Neighbourhood Watch group would meet regularly with police and find out what's happening in the community, Ms Gordon said.

"As an accredited group, we give them access to all of our programs, our resources," she said.

"We hold their hand through the establishment phase, and they're there to help police do what police might need doing that shouldn't be taking up their time.

"If there's a particular area that's experiencing a lot of motor vehicle theft, for example, our group might go door-to-door, [or] do a letter-box drop to inform people of what's happening, but more importantly, how to prevent it happening in the future."

Ms Gordon said the difference between an official



Neighbourhood Watch Victoria CEO Bambi Gordon and BankVic relationship manager Rebecca Attard with Bendigo police members. Picture by Brendan McCarthy

They're there to help police do what police might need doing that shouldn't be taking up their time

Neighbourhood Watch group and a less-formal social media group was the regular, in-person meetings held by a group.

"It's all about the neigh-

hours getting to know each other in real life as well," she said.

"Getting together as a team of people to discuss what the issues may be.

"Not that you can't do that online ... but we find that using a combination of the online and the real world [is good].

"For example, going with police into a local shopping centre and having coffee with a cop and getting members of the public to come and chat about what their concerns may be, [it's] not something that's likely to happen on Facebook."

Ms Gordon said people

most likely to join a Neighbourhood Watch group were those who have had a "big life-stage change", such as moving houses or having children.

She said smaller groups concerned with things happening within a kilometre of their houses were preferred, with the possibility for a representative to meet with a "Bendigo-wide group".

For more information visit nhw.com.au.