



Neighbourhood Watch
Let's watch out for each other

Guide for VicPol Members



About this document

“The partnership between Victoria Police and Neighbourhood Watch goes back almost 40 years and is as relevant today as when it was established in 1983. This partnership embodies the belief of Sir Robert Peel, the founder of modern policing, that “the police are the public and the public are police”. I therefore see collaboration between local police and their Neighbourhood Watch on local community safety priorities as essential to ensuring the community feels safe and is safe. I look forward to this partnership continuing for many more years to come..”

- Chief Commissioner Shane Patton,
Victoria Police

At Neighbourhood Watch Victoria we are committed to community engagement and driving community connections.

We are about working with police and using our trusted voice to help you be connected to your local community.

We are about doing the legwork to connect and educate neighbours so that you can get on with your important duties in driving down crime.

We are about preventing crime through education and motivation, in partnership with you.

This document aims to answer any questions you may have about how Neighbourhood Watch can help you day to day.

Have a read through – and if you need any help at the grass roots in your community, or are searching for resources that can help you connect and engage, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Bambi Gordon
CEO
Neighbourhood Watch Victoria



Neighbourhood Watch FAQs

And how we can help you with Community Engagement

What is Neighbourhood Watch (NHW)?

NHW is a community-based crime prevention program which aims to improve the quality of life within a neighbourhood by minimising preventable crime and promoting closer community ties. The program relies on the community and the police working together in a partnership to achieve this.

What are the objectives of NHW?

NHW aims to:

- remove barriers between community members and local police
- minimise the incidence of preventable crime
- deter criminal activity by increasing the probability of apprehension
- reduce the fear of crime
- increase the reporting of crime and suspicious behaviour
- improve the degree of personal and household security through education
- support the crime prevention activities of Victoria Police.



Where is Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) located in Victoria?

There are 4,500 NHW volunteers in groups spread across 55 of the 79 municipalities in Victoria.

How do I find out if there is a NHW group in my PSA?

Check with your proactive unit and if they don't know, click this link: <https://nhw.com.au/connect/> to find out where the groups are located.

If there is a NHW group in my PSA, how do I make contact with them?

If the name of the local NHW contact isn't shown on the list, email the NHW State Office at admin@nhw.com.au or tel: 03 8533 0372.

Who do I contact if there is no local NHW on the list?

Contact the NHW State Office at admin@nhw.com.au or tel: 03 8533 0372.

Are neighbourhood watch members all retirees?

No. Many of the office bearers of a local group are retired – as they have the time to take care of the administration. But members tend to be 35 to 54, with children, living in urban and regional areas.

How does NHW work?

In approximately 55 Local Government Areas (LGAs) there is a local Neighbourhood Watch Group. The group can comprise anywhere from 10 to 700 plus members and operate at a suburb, town, estate, street level.

The local groups are supported by the State Office who prepares campaign and educational material to share both with Member Groups and the broader community through social media, events, newsletters.

Where there is no local group the State Office aims to support activities in that community until a new group is formed.

Groups meet with their local police regularly to find out what are the local crime issues. They then undertake events, letterbox drops, present seminars, produced newsletters, all to assist in building awareness of the local crime issues promoting target hardening and encouraging people to report suspicious activity.

What can NHW do to support the police in my area?

As well as the support in reducing crime, NHW can:

- provide a link between the police in your PSA and the local community
- undertake tasks for the police that don't need a sworn officer, e.g. doing a letterbox drop in the local areas to advise residents of crime hot spots and importantly the things they can do to prevent crime in their neighbourhood, such as locking cars
- work side by side with you at your community events, e.g. if you are asked by a local organisation, retirement home or school to conduct meet and greets or presentations, NHW can attend with you to be helpers on the day: setting up rooms, chatting to attendees, handing out information documents
- promote your events to our extensive social media following, and within both our general statewide eNewsletters and local newsletters - promotion at a state and local level
- conduct presentations on crime prevention topics to local community groups and schools when VicPol members do not have the time.

Why do people join NHW?

Though sometimes it is because they have been a victim of crime, interest in joining is strongest where there are new housing developments, estates. People build or move into their forever home, they have kids, and protecting family and property is important to them. They also recognise that NHW is about neighbours getting to know each other which adds to feelings of security and general wellness.

What does it cost to join NHW?

Membership of NHW is free.

How effective is NHW in reducing crime?

Over the past 30 years, we have seen crime reduction rates of 40% or more in areas that have NHW groups. This coincides with increased levels of 'perceptions of safety' amongst community members.

For assistance, contact your local NHW group, or contact the NHW State Office at admin@nhw.com.au, or tel: 03 8533 0372.

Photo: The NHW Victoria Mini House is available for events.

Resources

Neighbourhood Watch has articles, slide shows, flyers, signage, social media posts, images, that address a broad range of crime types:

- Theft of motor vehicle
- Theft from motor vehicle
- Residential burglary
- Tradies tools
- Crime prevention for new builds and estates
- Illegal dumping
- Cyber crime
- Crime prevention for small business

We are always adding to our resources so if there is a topic missing, let us know.

Online tools for the community

Encourage members of the community to complete a comprehensive self-assessment at: www.HowSafelsMyPlace.com.au to generate a report of the simple things they can do to protect their home, property and family.

The How Safe Is My Place resource also includes an interactive mini house that is available for your events.

Visit www.nhw4kidsvic.com.au – the new elearning portal for parents and their children to prepare for travelling in the community alone.



Our history

About us

Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) was launched by Victoria Police in 1983 – the first such NHW group in Australia.

It is a not for profit registered charity with approximately 4,700 members/volunteers primarily in metropolitan Melbourne, a volunteer board and a small team at State Office.

We are no longer a Police program, but we work in partnership with Victoria Police. At present, our funding is primarily from the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

Where once success was measured by the number of volunteers within the organisation, we now look at success as the reach and impact of our brand on educating and motivating people to ‘target harden’ against crime and to connect to their community.

The reach and impact of our brand is enhanced by our volunteers working with their neighbours and local communities at the grass roots.

Our mission

To be a vibrant, inclusive and effective organisation that improves the safety and security of community life across Victoria. We do this by supporting our members and partners in promoting crime prevention and social inclusion, to achieve resilient communities.

Our vision

Connected, informed and empowered communities in which people feel safe and secure.

Our values

Passion means we use our drive and commitment to energize, engage and inspire others.

Integrity means we are consistently open, honest, ethical and genuine, building trust in our brand, organisation and people.

Respect means we recognise that a strong, resilient and peaceful society celebrates and encourages diversity of experience, culture, beliefs, language, gender and age.

Our role

Create connected communities that are motivated and educated to undertake crime prevention activities by:

- Protecting and enhancing the NHW brand
- Providing strategic leadership to the Affiliated NHW Groups in Victoria
- Strengthening the partnership of police, community and organisations, working together to prevent crime and improve the safety, security and the quality of life for all Victorians
- Coordinating the Neighbourhood Watch program, including the facilitation of information exchange between groups throughout the State of Victoria
- Identifying and developing best practice, evidence-

based crime prevention responses to ultimately encourage community participation in building safe and confident communities

- Improving community awareness and participation in watching out for and reporting suspicious behaviour





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