

ITEM 4 PUBLIC EXHIBITION - COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN 2026-2031

The draft Community Safety Plan 2026–2031 (draft Plan) provides a five-year action plan informed by local crime data, emerging trends and community feedback. Central to the draft Plan is a continued focus on collaboration with our long-standing partners including government agencies, service providers, community organisations and local residents.

Building on the foundations and successes of previous Community Safety Plans, the draft Plan outlines actions that aim to enhance community wellbeing, reduce opportunities for crime and strengthen the coordinated response between Council and our partners to proactively address the emerging needs of our community.

The draft Plan also reinforces Council’s broader commitment to fostering a safe, inclusive and resilient Wollongong, recognising that community safety is essential to a vibrant, thriving and liveable city.

RECOMMENDATION

Council endorse for public exhibition the draft Wollongong Community Safety Plan 2026-2031 from 25 March to 30 April 2026 inclusive.

REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Sue Savage, Manager Community Culture and Engagement
 Authorised by: Kerry Hunt, Director Community Services

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Draft Community Safety Plan 2026-2031

ACRONYMS USED IN REPORT

Abbreviation	Meaning
BOCSAR	NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CPTED	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
Draft Plan	Draft Community Safety Plan 2026–2031
DCJ	NSW Department of Communities and Justice
LED	Light-Emitting Diode

BACKGROUND

The draft Plan is Council’s sixth iteration of a Community Safety Plan and continues our long-standing commitment to improving safety and reducing crime across the Wollongong Local Government Area. Since Council first formalised its focus on community safety in the 1990s, successive Community Safety Plans have guided the development of partnerships, prevention initiatives and strategies that strengthen community capacity and promote a sense of safety.

The draft Plan provides a clear roadmap for the next five years, building on the foundations and achievements of earlier plans while advancing ongoing initiatives, responding to emerging issues and ensuring Council remains proactive and adaptable in its approach to community safety.

Past initiatives delivered under previous Community Safety Plans achieved strong outcomes across the city. Examples of success include targeted safety upgrades through the *Safer Cities: Her Way* program, (which improved perceptions of safety in MacCabe Park, Dapto Square and Port Kembla), rapid graffiti removal partnerships that significantly reduced vandalism, community safety audits that informed effective CPTED upgrades, and public art treatments, such as mural programs, that enhanced amenity while discouraging repeated graffiti.

Earlier Community Safety Plans incorporated a detailed, data-driven Crime Prevention Action Plan, targeting major crime types identified through Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) data. This evidence-based framework not only guided Council's focus on priority crime issues but also supported eligibility for Crime Prevention Compact Funding through the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ). With this funding program no longer available, the draft Plan shifts to a contemporary and flexible model aligned with Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. While still grounded in robust crime data and industry best practice, this updated approach places stronger emphasis on community feedback and perceptions of safety, ensuring a more holistic understanding of local priorities.

PROPOSAL

This report seeks Council endorsement of the draft Plan for public exhibition from 25 March to 30 April 2026. Following public exhibition, the draft Plan will be submitted to Council for adoption in June 2026.

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Development of the draft Plan was informed by broad community engagement, targeted stakeholder engagement, the collaboration of Council staff and supported by analysis of local crime data.

Community members shared their views on safety in their neighbourhoods and the Wollongong City Centre through the Community Safety Survey (formerly the Perceptions of Safety Survey), targeted workshops and discussions with Council staff at pop-up events. In total, 350 surveys were completed and 183 participants attended engagement activities. Themes emerging from community engagement included:

- Improved lighting, CCTV and other infrastructure to increase safety in public spaces
- Enhanced police and security visibility, particularly at night
- Greater support for homelessness services and access to stable housing
- Expanded mental health outreach and support
- Stronger responses to drug and alcohol-related concerns alongside improved treatment options
- Cleaner, well-designed and activated public spaces to reduce antisocial behaviour
- Safer roads, crossings and pathways for walking and cycling
- Increased access to safety education, crime prevention information and reporting guidance.

Council also undertook targeted consultation with key external stakeholders, including NSW Police, government departments, community networks, committees and a range of generalist and specialist services working across areas such as women's safety, graffiti prevention, homelessness and drug and alcohol support. These discussions provided insight into emerging issues, local service gaps and opportunities for coordinated action.

In addition to the engagement, a review of the 2021–2025 Community Safety Plan and an analysis of crime statistics from BOCSAR and local crime information provided by NSW Police was undertaken. This information has also informed the actions in the Plan.

A staff workshop was held to discuss findings, review local data and shape the proposed actions for the draft Plan. Follow up collaboration with various teams across Council including but not limited to Regulation and Enforcement, Development Assessment and Certification, City and Culture, Economic Development, Property and Recreation, City Works, Infrastructure Strategy and Planning, and City Strategy refined and confirmed the actions included in the draft Plan.

PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong 2035 Goal 4 ‘*We have a healthy, respectful and inclusive community*’. It specifically delivers on the following:

Community Strategic Plan 2035		Delivery Program 2025-2029
Strategy		Service
4.6	Work together to reduce crime and foster a safe, and resilient community	Community Programs

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The draft Plan supports environmental sustainability by prioritising resource efficient and low impact approaches to improving community safety. This includes the use of LED and solar lighting, durable materials that minimise waste and adaptable placemaking treatments that reduce environmental impacts over time. By embedding sustainable design principles into safety initiatives, the draft Plan helps create cleaner, more resilient public spaces that support long term community wellbeing.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The draft Plan identifies community safety issues using local crime data, community perceptions and feedback from residents, service providers, community organisations and NSW Police. It recognises risks related to antisocial behaviour, vulnerability and perceptions of safety, ensuring the Plan reflects local priorities and supports actions that strengthen wellbeing, prevent harm and promote a safer Wollongong.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Plan will be delivered primarily through existing operational and capital budgets, supported by staged implementation to manage resources effectively. Where appropriate, external grants will be sought to enhance specific initiatives. Integration into the Delivery Program and annual Operational Plans ensures costs remain controlled, transparent and aligned with organisational priorities.

DCJ Crime Prevention Compact funding is no longer available.

CONCLUSION

Community safety relies on effective collaboration between Council and residents, NSW Police, community groups, local businesses and various other organisations at the local, state and federal levels. The draft Plan provides a framework for Council’s continuing role in crime prevention and community wellbeing and will guide our work over the next five years.



Wollongong City Council

Community Safety Plan 2026-2031

Draft

Acknowledgement

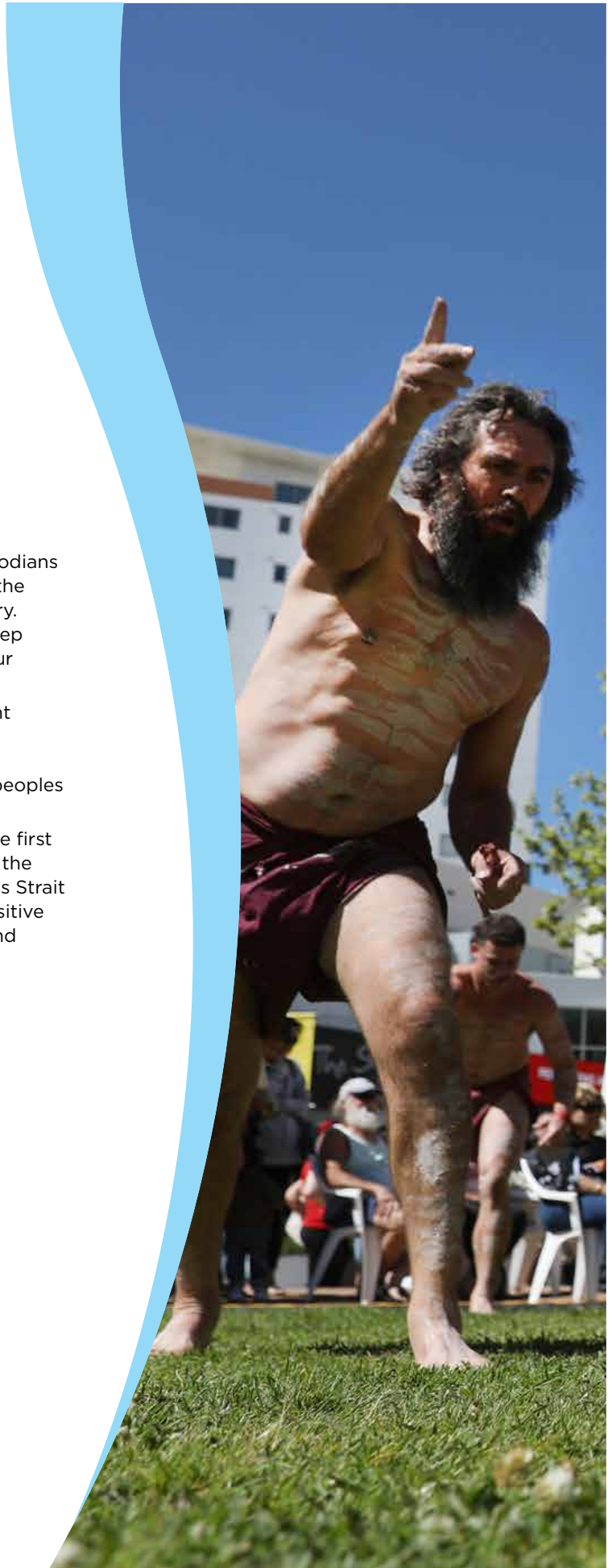
We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our city is built, the Aboriginal people of Dharawal Country. We recognise and appreciate their deep connection to this land, waters and our greater community.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and those emerging and extend our acknowledgement and respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who call this city home.

We recognise Aboriginal people as the first people to live in the area. We respect the living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and recognise the positive contribution their voices, traditions and histories make to the city.

Cover image: *Spinfest*, Crown St Mall

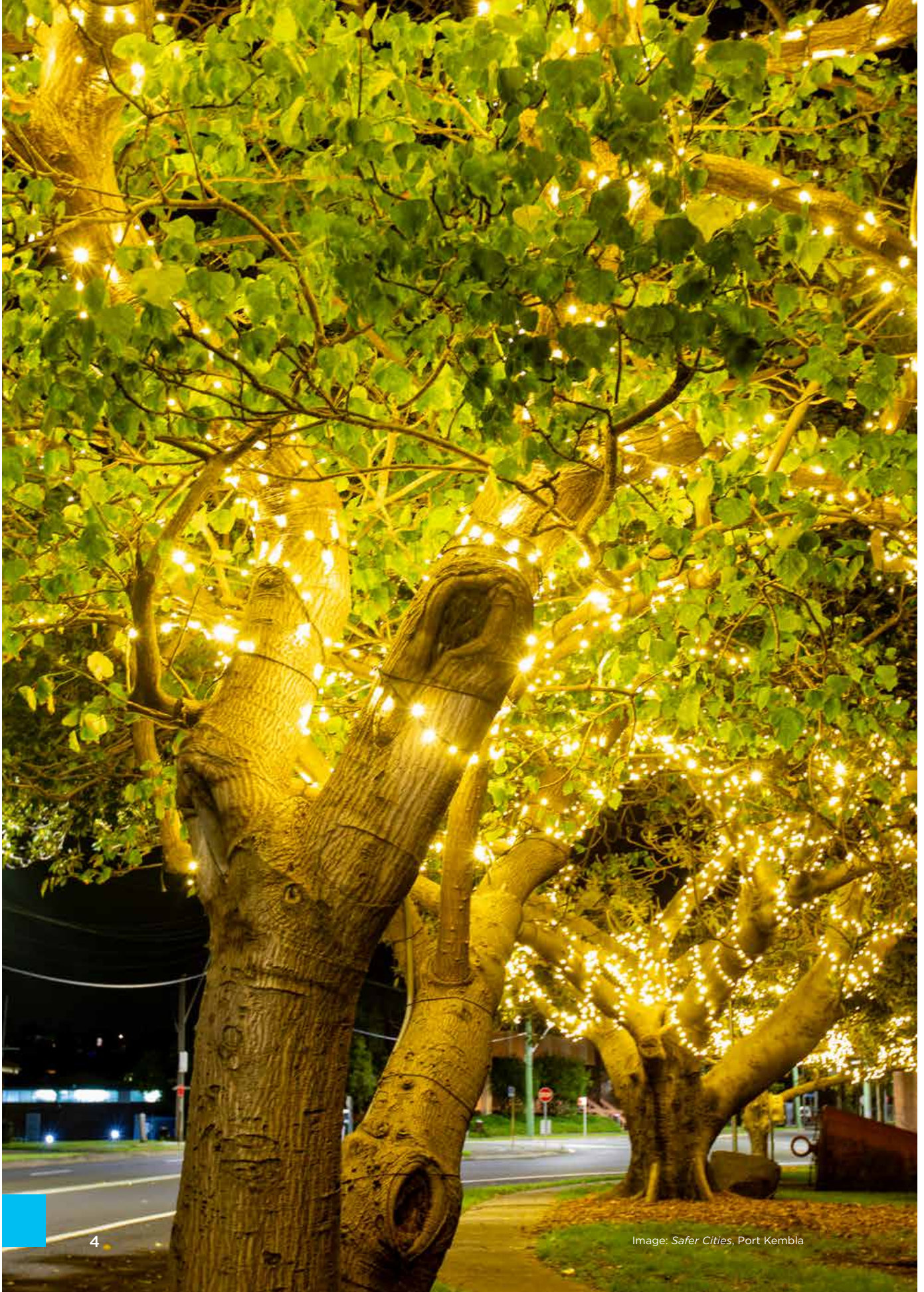
Image right: *Culture Mix*, Wollongong Arts Precinct



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Message from the Lord Mayor

It doesn't matter whether you're at home, in a public space, at your work or when out and about in the community, knowing that you are - and that you feel - safe, is so important.

It's everyone's responsibility to foster safety and Wollongong City Council is proud of its role in creating a safe and resilient community.

As Lord Mayor, I'm proud to present Wollongong City Council's latest Community Safety Plan, which continues to build on the work we've done in recent years to improve perceptions and experiences of safety across our city and suburbs.

The goal of the document is to put into place steps and measures that support everyone in our community to feel safe at all times in our city.

It's a shared goal between residents, community groups, local services and the NSW Police, where we work together to build a safer, more inclusive and connected community.

In the development of this Plan, we didn't just look at the latest crime data and use this to inform the final document. We asked you, our community, how safe you feel, and how the design and condition of public spaces influence that feeling.

The end result is a Plan that has three focus areas: People, Place and Property. From these areas there are a series of actions that Council is committed to supporting between 2026 and 2031.

Through leadership and our active role in advocating for community safety, we will continue to grow Wollongong as a safe and welcoming city. We will continue to speak with and listen to our community as we deliver the actions within the Plan.

Thank you to all those who have been involved in this process, to date, and to those who will join us on the journey into the future. Ultimately, by working together we can create a city where everyone feels safe, valued and like they belong.

Lord Mayor of Wollongong
Councillor Tania Brown



Introduction

Wollongong City Council is committed to making our city safer for everyone whether you live, work or visit. This Community Safety Plan outlines how Council will work with residents, community groups, local services, NSW Police, and other government agencies to prevent crime and improve community safety and wellbeing. Safety is more than just reducing crime, it's also about how safe people feel, how well public spaces are designed, used and maintained, and how connected our community is.

Council has an important role in making our city's spaces safer and more welcoming. This includes planning and regulating development, maintaining public spaces, supporting local safety initiatives and educating and empowering community. Council also works closely with local police, businesses, service providers and community groups to strengthen partnerships and respond to local concerns.

This Plan is based on current crime data, research into safety trends and feedback from the community, who told us how safe they feel in their neighbourhoods and in the Wollongong CBD. Over the next five years, Council will take practical steps to reduce the opportunity for crime, improve perceptions of safety, and respond to emerging safety issues.

This Plan builds on the progress we've already made and sets a clear direction for the future. It includes actions that support safer public spaces, increasing community education and awareness and creating opportunities for social connection. By working together, we can make Wollongong a safer, more inclusive, and welcoming place for everyone.

Council will regularly review and report on the Plan's progress to ensure we're meeting our commitment and responding to the needs of our community.

Understanding Community Safety

Community Safety

Community safety is about creating public spaces that people can enjoy without fear for their own safety or the safety of others. A safe community helps people feel more confident, connected, and supported. Community safety is shaped by things like how well public spaces are designed and looked after, and how connected people feel to their community. When people feel safe, it can improve their physical and mental health. It also encourages them to take part in community life and to use parks, walk to local shops, and attend community events.

Crime Prevention

Crime Prevention is about reducing the chances of crime happening and limiting its impact on people and communities. It involves practical strategies to improve safety and reduce fear of crime.

Crime prevention includes:

- NSW Police, community groups, other agencies and Council working together
- Designing public spaces to discourage crime
- Raising community awareness and education
- Encouraging positive use of public areas
- Creating policies that support safety and wellbeing.

Image: Wollongong Train Station

Perception of Safety

Perception of safety is about how safe people feel in a place, which may be different to the actual crime rates of the area. It can be influenced by things like gender, age, cultural identity, past experiences, and the physical and social environment. People are more likely to feel unsafe in areas with poor lighting, graffiti, damaged property, or antisocial behaviour.

Creating public spaces that feel welcoming and well maintained can foster community connection, encourage active participation in community life and contribute to a thriving local economy.



Who is Responsible for Community Safety?

Keeping communities safe is a shared responsibility. It involves individuals, non-government organisations, and all levels of government – local, state, and federal. Everyone, including community members, have an important role to play in supporting safety and wellbeing.

Safety is influenced by many social, environmental, and economic factors, so no single group can solve safety issues on their own. Working together is essential to creating safe, welcoming, and connected communities.

NSW Government

The NSW Government works with councils, schools, health services, and community organisations to improve safety and wellbeing. They help keep communities safe by making laws, funding police and emergency services, and supporting health, housing, and transport systems. They also run programs to prevent crime and support people who may be at risk.

Non-Government Organisations

Non-government organisations play an important role in community safety by delivering programs and services that address various challenges, like alcohol and drug awareness, homelessness and domestic and family violence. Their work helps prevent crime and supports different groups in the community

Community

Community members play a vital role in keeping their neighbourhoods safe. People who live in an area often understand local issues better than anyone else, so their involvement is important. Council is able to understand community needs by regularly engaging with community about their experiences. Residents also help prevent crime by taking everyday actions, like locking their cars and houses, watching out for neighbours and reporting suspicious behaviour. When people stay involved, report their concerns and take care of shared spaces, they help make the community safer and more connected for everyone.



Local Government

Local government is the level of government closest to the community and plays an important role in creating safe and welcoming environments. Councils are responsible for designing, building, and maintaining public spaces, and overseeing the planning and development of private properties.

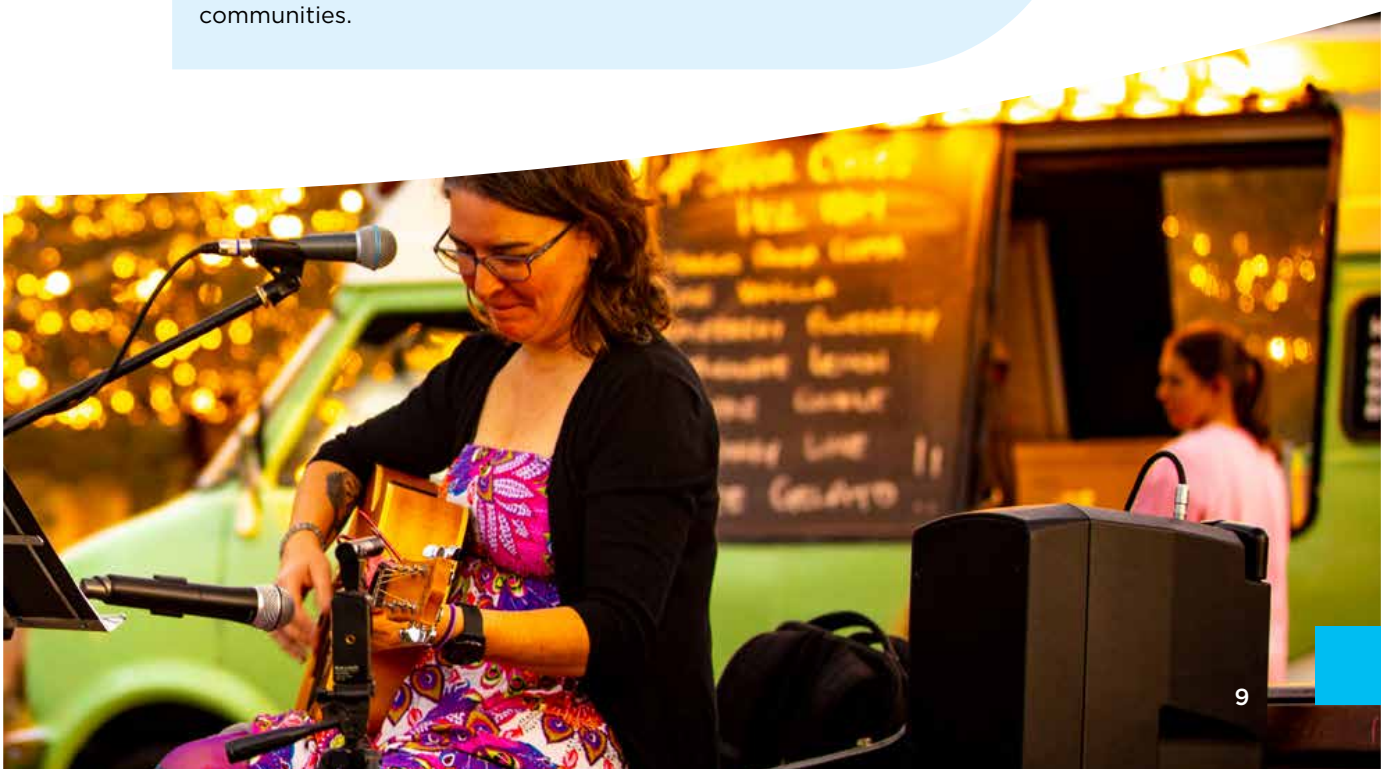
We also support crime prevention by delivering programs and services for the community, including people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. Councils work with local community groups and other partners to promote safety and wellbeing across the community.

Local government can also help to lead crime prevention efforts by collaborating with organisations that share similar goals. Councils can bring partners together, share information, raise awareness of safety issues, and advocate to state government for increased resources and programs to support their communities.

Wollongong City Council takes on different roles to support community safety:

- **Educate** - We provide community safety information and connect people to local services.
- **Advise** - We provide crime prevention advice to meet the needs of the community.
- **Partner** - We work together with government, other organisations, and the community to reach shared goals and outcomes.
- **Advocate** - We champion community priorities by seeking funding and/or advocating for changes to legislation to achieve positive outcomes for the community.

Image: *Safer Cities: Cinema in the Park*, MacCabe Park Wollongong



Partnerships and Collaboration

Improving community safety relies on us working closely with a range of partners. Council works with many organisations to plan, deliver and support community safety initiatives, and these partnerships are a key part of how we will deliver this Plan.

We collaborate with NSW Police, government departments, elected representatives, networks, committees, community groups, and both generalist and specialist service providers to understand emerging challenges and respond to community priorities. Working together strengthens our ability to meet local needs through a coordinated response that draws on shared expertise and strong relationships.

Through this collaborative approach, we focus on a range of priorities, including:

- women's safety
- youth safety
- anti-racism and discrimination
- homelessness
- graffiti prevention
- antisocial behaviour
- issues related to drugs and alcohol
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
- public space activation
- coordinated management of CCTV.

This collective effort strengthens the impact of our work and supports ongoing improvements in community safety.



Image: *Safer Cities: Walkshop*, Wollongong Train Station

Council's Planning Process

The Community Safety Plan 2026–2030 aligns with our Community Strategic Plan Our Wollongong, Our Future 2035 and supports our community's shared vision for Wollongong. As a Supporting Document within Council's planning framework, the Plan outlines the actions that will guide our work as we continue to make our city a safer place for everyone.

Council's Integrated Planning Framework



Creating the Plan

This Plan builds on the work we have been delivering in line with our previous Community Safety Plans. This new Plan looks at the big picture. It responds not only to local crime data, but also to how safe people feel, and the priorities of local community groups, service providers, and residents. This approach will help us respond to the needs of our community and support their safety and wellbeing.

In developing this Plan, we looked back to reflect on what had been achieved with previous plans. This helped us understand what worked well, which actions should continue, and which ones were no longer needed.

Involving the community was an important part of developing this Plan. Between November 2024 and February 2025, people were invited to share their ideas through a Community Safety Survey, targeted workshops, and conversations with Council staff at pop-up events. This helped us understand how safe people feel in their neighbourhood and in the Wollongong CBD, what makes people feel unsafe, concerns about crime, and what they think should be priorities moving forward. This feedback has directly informed the actions of the Plan.

We also looked closely at data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) and local police to build a better understanding of crime in Wollongong. This helped us identify key issues and decide where to focus our efforts. Local organisations, service providers, and Police Area Commands also gave valuable input, helping make sure the Plan reflects both the data and the experiences of people in our community.

We continue to gather feedback from key stakeholders and the community on current and emerging safety issues. We have many methods in place to help us stay informed about what's happening in the community, including responding to customer inquiries, conducting safety audits, and participating in regular meetings with different agencies, like the Community Safety Interagency and the Wollongong Liquor Accord. This ongoing feedback plays an important role in guiding the delivery of the actions outlined in the Plan, ensuring the work we do stays current and continues to meet the community's needs.

What We Heard

Between November 2024 and February 2025, Council invited the community to share their experiences, concerns, and ideas about safety.



Key takeaways

People said they feel less safe at night, both in their local areas and in the Wollongong CBD.

Train stations, bus stops, and parks were mentioned as places where people feel unsafe in their neighbourhoods. The CBD, Wollongong Train Station and Crown Street (near the hospital) were named as places people felt most unsafe.

Many people expressed concern about being physically or verbally attacked, seeing aggressive behaviour and drug-related problems. People said more Police presence would make them feel safer.

About one in three people (35%) who filled out the survey said they had seen or experienced a crime in the past year, but less than half (46%) reported it to NSW Police. People said they didn't report it because they weren't sure how the Police would respond, didn't think it would help, or didn't believe it was necessary.

Most people get their safety information from social media.



Engagement Themes

Better lighting and surveillance

People said that more lighting is needed to illuminate public places like footpaths, shared paths, parks, car parks, and near public transport. They suggested upgrading existing lighting across the city, and using solar-powered lights, and motion-sensor lights. CCTV in areas with high crime and signs to show they're there, and emergency phones in quiet or dark places were also recommended to help people feel safer.

More police and security

Many people want to see more police and security officers, especially at night and in places like Crown Street Mall, MacCabe Park, entertainment areas, and transport hubs. They also said it's important for NSW Police and the community to build stronger relationships to improve trust and to make people feel more comfortable reporting crime.

Homelessness

Some people are concerned about the number of people sleeping rough, sharing that it affects their sense of safety in the community. It was suggested there could be more support for homelessness services and more social housing to give people a safe and stable place to live.

Mental health

Perceived mental health issues in public spaces were raised as a community concern impacting people's perception of safety. Some community members suggested better access to mental health support services and outreach programs would help people get the care they need.

Drug and alcohol concerns

Community members raised concerns about the effects of drug and alcohol use, including its link to antisocial behaviour. Some called for stronger action to address drug-related crime, while others emphasised the need for improved access to treatment and harm reduction services.

Making public spaces cleaner and more welcoming

Keeping public spaces clean and removing graffiti helps people feel safer. Hosting events, and outdoor dining can make areas feel livelier and reduce anti-social behaviour. People would also like better seating, lighting, and footpaths in our parks and along our streets and to make sure they are designed in a way that reduces hiding spots and loitering. Public art was suggested to make spaces more colourful and inviting.

Safer roads and footpaths

People raised concerns about road safety and walking or cycling around the city and in their suburbs. They suggested better pedestrian crossings, slower traffic in busy areas, and clearer paths for walking and riding would make them feel safer.

More community education and involvement

People want more information about how to stay safe, prevent crime, and report issues. They said that helping the community understand these things can make everyone feel safer and more confident.

Image: *Safer Cities: Cinema in the Park, MacCabe Park Wollongong*



Community Profile



223,400+ people call Wollongong Local Government Area home. This is expected to increase to 239,000+ by 2031¹



Wollongong Local Government Area is located on Dharawal Country. Wollongong is said to originate from the word **Woolyungah**, meaning Five Islands.

¹ Forecast.id, Population and household forecasts 2021 to 2046



39

median age²

31%

are under the age of 25

19%

over the age of 65²

45,084

born overseas²

33,886

speak a language other than English at home²

6,944

Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander²



14,458

need help in their day-to-day lives due to disability²

About 1 in 3

experience a long-term health condition²

6%

are unemployed³



25%

lone person households and 41% households with children³

64%

own their home outright or with a mortgage²

23%

renting privately²

7%

renting in social housing²

834

people homeless⁴

80

people sleeping rough⁵



In our 2024 Community Wellbeing Survey, most residents reported high satisfaction with their lives:

87%

with overall life⁶

86%

with personal safety and relationships⁶

84%

with standard of living⁶

2. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021, compiled and presented by profile.id

3. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021 & National Institute of Economic and Industry Research data, compiled and presented economy.id

4. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Estimating Homelessness: Census 2021, presented by Homelessness NSW

5. Homes NSW, 2025 NSW Statewide Street Count

6. Wollongong City Council, Community Wellbeing Survey 2024

Crime Profile

The following crime data has been sourced from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR). While official data provides valuable insights, it's important to remember that most crime goes unreported. That's one reason Council continues to engage with the community to better understand local safety concerns and respond to changing needs.

We looked at crime data for Wollongong Local Government Area from October 2024 to September 2025 to get a better understanding of local trends. Since COVID-19 and lockdowns had a strong effect on crime patterns, we decided it was more useful to focus on the trends of the last two years, instead of five. We have also compared Wollongong's crime rates with those across NSW to see how our city is doing in relation to the rest of the state.



Key Takeaways

Crime rates spiked during April, May and September

The most prevalent time for crimes is on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday between 12pm - 6pm.

Most crimes are non-alcohol related (81%).

Most offenders are males (77%), aged between 25-44 (53%).

Most victims were females (63%) especially in crimes such as domestic violence assaults (69%), sexual offences (82%), and intimidation, stalking and harassment (65%), and breach of Apprehended Violence Orders (AVO) (78%).

Most crimes occurred in residential properties (53%), particularly malicious damage and domestic violence assault..

Outdoor/public places made up 19% of places where crimes were committed, followed by car parks (7%) and retail (6%).

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

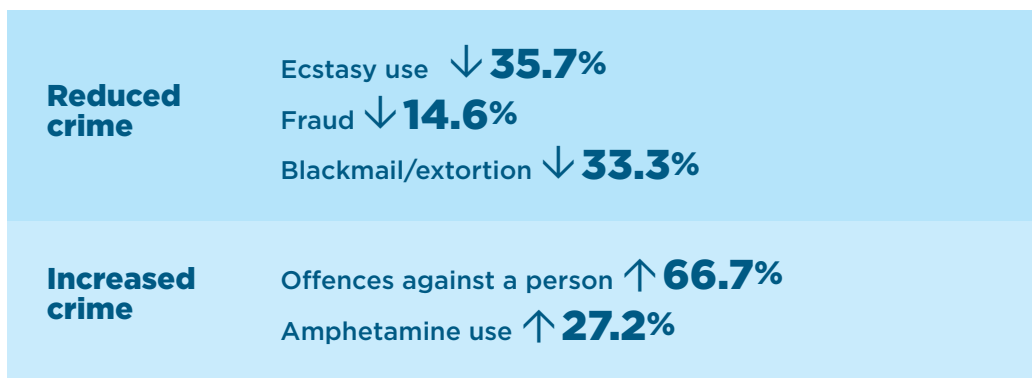


Top 5 Major Crimes reported for the Wollongong Local Government Area

Rank	Crime	Number of incidents	Rate per 100,000 Wollongong LGA	Rate per 100,000 NSW
1	Malicious damage	1276	582.3	556.7
2	Other stealing	1164	531.2	242.1
3	Steal from retail	1098	501.0	360.1
4	Steal from motor vehicle	1040	370.1	305.3
5	DV assault	803	366.4	453.4

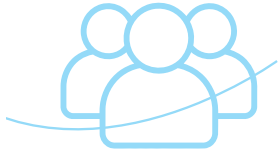
Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

Crime Trends



Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. Trends reflect the period October 2023 to September 2025.





People

This focus area is about helping people feel safe, supported, and connected in their communities. Safety is more than just preventing crime it's also about how safe people feel at home, out in public, and within their community. Everyone experiences safety differently, and some groups may face unique challenges based on age, background, personal circumstances or previous experiences.

It's important we continue to work closely with residents, local organisations, and NSW Police to raise awareness, share safety information, and respond to community concerns. By building strong relationships, promoting inclusion, and supporting social connection, we can create a safer Wollongong for everyone.

Things you can do:

- Be aware of your surroundings and trust your instincts.
- Look out for your friends, neighbours, and family.
- Learn about local safety issues and how to report crime.
- Report crime or suspicious behaviour to NSW Police or Crimestoppers.
- Travel with others, when possible, especially at night.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.
- Get involved in community activities to help build safer neighbourhoods.
- Report scams, fraud, or online crime to the E-Safety Commission.

Our everyday work

Promote community safety information to raise awareness of key safety issues

Deliver projects and activities that aim to reduce crime and increase the perception of safety in the community

Partner with NSW Police to promote safety information that addresses high levels of crime and crime trends


Participate in local networks who have an interest in community safety to share information and coordinate responses to emerging issues

Advocate on behalf of the community to share their safety concerns

Continue to engage with the community to identify, understand and respond to local safety issues

Deliver programs and initiatives that build social cohesion and strengthen feelings of belonging

Implement strategies to embed the NSW Child Safe Standards in our workplace

Initiatives we've delivered 

Safer Cities: Her Way Wollongong
Wollongong City Council worked with Transport for NSW, inviting local women, girls and gender-diverse people to share their experiences and safety concerns through community mapping, day and night 'walkshops', high school workshops, and a co-design workshop with council staff. Together, we looked at safety in MacCabe Park, Dapto Square and Port Kembla Town Centre. We trialed 29 changes like better lighting, signs, landscaping, events and maintenance. After the changes were made, we asked the community for feedback, and the response was overwhelmingly positive. People reported feeling safer and more comfortable in these spaces, highlighting the impact of thoughtful design and upkeep on perceptions of safety. This program was funded by the NSW Government, through the Safer Cities program led by Transport for NSW.

Scams training
Council partnered with ID Support NSW to run free information sessions at our Libraries to help people stay safe online and protect themselves from identity theft. In session, participants learned how to spot scams, check their credit history, and understand why it's important to use strong passwords. They also had the chance to speak one-on-one with the ID Support team for personalised advice.

Child Safe Organisation
Wollongong City Council is committed to being a Child Safe Organisation. We follow the NSW Child Safe Standards to help keep children and young people safe. This means we work to prevent abuse, respond to concerns, and listen to children's voices. We believe every child has the right to feel respected, empowered and protected. Council is working hard to build a safe and supportive environment for children in our community.

Responding to Homelessness
Council has responded to the increasing issue of homelessness in our community by strengthening internal relationships and working closely with external partners—including people with lived experience of homelessness. Key initiatives include hosting multiple round tables with homelessness services; co designing accessible information materials and online resources; delivering library outreach; contributing to locally produced films; and raising awareness amongst our staff and the community. This work aims to reduce stigma and support vulnerable people to feel safe, informed and connected with their community. Council's new cross divisional Rough Sleepers Coordination Group guides consistent responses to ensure people are connected with help and that our public spaces are maintained for everyone to safely enjoy. Homelessness is a complex issue that no single organisation can resolve alone. Council works as part of a broader network of services and community partners who each play an important role in supporting people experiencing homelessness.



Actions

Explore new ways of sharing important safety messaging with community

Educate the community about the different ways they can report crime and encourage them to report when appropriate

Promote community education programs to raise awareness about fraud, scams and online safety

Engage with diverse community groups and respond to their safety concerns

Support and partner with local groups and organisations to raise awareness and respond to domestic and family violence

Work with partner agencies in a coordinated response to homelessness

Explore opportunities to support anti-racism initiatives that strengthen community safety and inclusion

Support initiatives that improve safe drinking culture and share information about available support for alcohol, drug, and vaping related issues

Deliver the Community Safety Survey to understand more about community safety concerns and perceptions of safety.



Different community groups may experience crime differently due to factors like discrimination, social exclusion, or limited access to support. Some groups may also be more vulnerable to certain types of crime, including hate crimes.

Groups that may have different experiences of crime include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities
- Older people
- LGBTQIA+ individuals
- People with disability
- Young people

Understanding these differences helps Council create safety initiatives that are inclusive and meet the needs of everyone in the community.

Women, particularly young women often experience community safety differently. They may feel less safe in public spaces, using public transport, or being out at night. Concerns about safety can affect how freely they move around their neighbourhoods. Young women, in particular, may avoid certain places or activities because they don't feel safe. Creating safer spaces, improving lighting, and encouraging respectful behaviour can help women feel more confident and included in their communities.

Many people in our community are doing it tough — facing challenges that can sometimes play out in public spaces. While this can make other members of our community feel unsafe, it's important to remember those in difficult circumstances are often more vulnerable to crime and exploitation. Everyone has the right to feel safe and welcome in our public spaces. Council works to uphold this by fostering respectful use of shared spaces, responding with compassion, and connecting people to the support they need.





Place

This focus area is about making public spaces safer, more welcoming, and easier to enjoy for everyone. Well-designed and well-maintained places, like parks, streets, and transport hubs can help people feel more confident and connected.

Council uses many design principles, including Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), as well as community safety audits, and community feedback to improve lighting, visibility, and access to improve our public places. Clean and vibrant spaces encourage people to spend time outdoors, connect with others, and take part in community life.

When public places feel safe, they enhance peoples physical and mental wellbeing, reduce antisocial behaviour, and help build stronger communities.

Things you can do:

- Use well-lit paths and public areas, especially at night.
- Sit in busy areas or near safety features like lights or safety phones.
- Report unsafe or damaged public spaces to Council.
- Enjoy local parks, playgrounds, beaches pools and join in on community events.
- Encourage safe use of shared spaces like parks and footpaths.
- Report graffiti.
- Participate in community clean up days.

Our everyday work

Continue to assess building development applications using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to improve safety outcomes

Maintain and improve the amenity of public spaces through regular maintenance, cleaning, waste services, and infrastructure upgrades

Undertake community safety audits of hot spot locations and provide recommendations to improve safety and amenity

Deliver and support diverse public events and activations to strengthen community connections, enhance public places and improve feelings of safety

Provide and maintain a high-quality CCTV network across the Local Government Area and upgrade where appropriate

Continue to review and analyse Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) data to monitor crime trends and identify hotspot locations

Seek external funding opportunities to deliver community safety initiatives in response to community needs

Deliver placemaking projects to improve safety, public amenity and promote social connection

Share information with state agencies to support the planning and delivery of large-scale urban renewal projects

Continue to encourage and enable the revitalisation of Wollongong Central Business District (CBD)

Image: Basketball Court, Port Kembla



Initiatives we've delivered



Safety Audits

Council undertakes community safety audits when community, Police or Council staff raise concerns about safety in certain areas. These audits look at things like lighting, visibility and how spaces are used, to see what might make people feel unsafe or lead to crime or bad behaviour. After the audit, a report is written that identifies the main safety issues and provides recommendations on ways to make the area safer for everyone.

Placemaking in MacCabe Park

As part of the Safer Cities: Her Way program, local women and girls told us they felt unsafe in places like MacCabe Park, Wollongong Train Station and Piccadilly Centre. They were worried about antisocial behaviour and harassment, especially from people affected by drugs and/or alcohol. To help make these areas feel safer, we held family-friendly evening events aimed at women and young people to bring people together in the space. We added fairy lights to trees to brighten the park and make it more welcoming after dark.

Reviewing Development Applications

When new developments are planned, Council uses Safer by Design principles to give feedback to applicants on how to make places safer and help prevent crime. These principles focus on designing buildings and public spaces in ways that improve safety by making sure areas are easy to see and move through, using good lighting, and adding security tools like cameras. This includes both natural surveillance (like open sightlines and visibility) and technical surveillance (like CCTV). Council has staff with specialist skills who review development applications and give feedback on how to design spaces that reduce the chance of crime and help people feel safer.

Upgrades to Dapto Square

As part of the Safer Cities: Her Way program, we undertook a project focussed on making Dapto Square feel safer and more welcoming. We made changes like moving benches to help reduce antisocial behaviour and encourage people to connect. We added a stage, a SMART pole with CCTV and phone charging docks. We also added a new shade sail and softfall to the playground, plus fairy lights, a neon art wall, flowers and artwork throughout the area. Solar lights were installed in the car park near Dapto Train Station. To bring people into the space, we held weekly music events and monthly movie nights.

Bus Stop Murals

Graffiti prevention murals have been painted on bus shelters in Corrimal, Wollongong and Warrawong—places that often get tagged with graffiti. When shelters are vandalised, it can make people feel unsafe. Council uses public art to help improve how these spaces look and feel. This is an effective way of reducing the instances of graffiti.



Image: Safety audit walk-through with Police, Council staff and members of the public.

Actions

Update the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) chapter of the Wollongong Development Control Plan

Upskill staff in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to embed crime prevention in planning and design.

Support safe participation in the Night Time Economy by fostering welcoming, inclusive, and well-managed spaces for evening activities

Develop a strategic approach to improve lighting in key locations across the Local Government Area to enhance safety, visibility, and public amenity.

Undertake and advocate for safety upgrades at public transport hubs and surrounding areas by improving lighting, visibility, signage, wayfinding, and transport frequency.

Support and deliver initiatives aimed at improving pedestrian safety

Work with relevant partners to educate community about responsible and safe use of e-scooters, e-bikes.

Monitor, review and renew Alcohol Free Zones and Alcohol Prohibited Areas to reduce alcohol-related antisocial behaviour in designated public areas.



Property

Protecting homes, vehicles, and businesses from crime such as theft, vandalism, and fraud is an important part of creating a safer community. Council works with residents, NSW Police, and local organisations to promote crime prevention, support graffiti removal, and raise awareness about property safety.

Everyone can take simple steps to protect their belongings, like locking doors, reporting suspicious behaviour, and learning about online safety. Council also provides education around scams, home security, and safe use of personal devices. These combined efforts help reduce the likelihood of people experiencing crime and improve people's sense of safety.

Things you can do:

- Lock your doors and windows at home.
- Don't leave valuables in plain sight and lock your vehicles.
- Learn about home security and share tips with neighbours.
- Install good lighting around your home or business.
- Support local businesses by reporting suspicious activity.
- Report graffiti in public places.
- Remove graffiti quickly from your property - call council for a free Graffiti Removal Kit.
- Use green screening or murals on fencing or large blank walls to discourage graffiti.

Our everyday work

Conduct rapid removal of graffiti from Council assets to maintain clean and safe public spaces

Support the removal of graffiti from non-council assets by community volunteers

Share information about graffiti removal, prevention and reporting

Continue to seek funding opportunities for graffiti prevention projects

Conduct regular maintenance of public spaces

Initiatives we've delivered



Traffic Signal Boxes - anti graffiti murals

Council worked with local artists to paint bright, colourful murals on 60 traffic signal boxes across Wollongong. These areas were often targeted by graffiti, so the project aimed to stop vandalism, make public spaces look better, and build community pride. After 12 months, 68% of the boxes stayed graffiti-free. People in the community have shared lots of positive feedback, saying the artworks make them happy and that they would like for the program to continue.

Graffiti Removal Volunteers

Volunteer partnerships play an important role in helping manage graffiti across Wollongong. Groups like Corrective Services NSW, Dapto Rotary, the Flagstaff Group, and local community members volunteer their time to clean graffiti from non-Council property. Some of these groups have been volunteering in graffiti removal for over 15 years. All volunteers are trained to make sure graffiti is removed safely and effectively. Their ongoing commitment helps reduce the impact of vandalism and builds pride and safety in our community.

Graff Off Events

Council works with Lake Illawarra Police and young offenders to help remove graffiti across Wollongong Local Government Area. This partnership gives young people a chance to make a positive contribution to the community while learning about the impact of vandalism. Graffiti removal happens once a month, with Council choosing locations based on reports and community feedback. The program helps clean up public spaces, encourages responsibility and pride for the young people involved. Restoring these areas helps improve perceptions of safety and makes these places feel more welcoming.

Actions

Deliver graffiti prevention projects in identified locations to reduce vandalism and improve amenity in public spaces

Undertake research to determine the feasibility of a creative building site hoardings program to improve the look of public spaces during construction projects and discourage graffiti

Support local businesses in hot spot locations by providing information on crime prevention and safety.

Promote community education programs to increase awareness of stealing from motor vehicles and motor vehicle theft

Share and promote information to increase awareness about home security and safety

Review and update Graffiti Management Policy

Delivering the Plan

Council will deliver the Community Safety Plan between 2026 and 2031. The actions have been included in the plan to set a direction for responding to local crime data, community feedback, and emerging safety concerns. By delivering these actions, we aim to improve safety outcomes across the city and support a more connected and confident community. The Plan is intended to be flexible and responsive. It will evolve over time to reflect changes in crime trends, community priorities, and available resources. Council will work in partnership with local organisations, NSW Police, and service providers to ensure the Plan remains relevant and effective.

Integration

The Community Safety Plan will be integrated into Council's broader planning framework, including the four-year Delivery Program and annual Operational Plan. This ensures that safety actions are aligned with Wollongong's Community Strategic Plan and embedded into Council's everyday work.

Implementation

Delivery of the Plan will be guided by a detailed implementation plan. This plan further expands on the actions under each focus area and includes timeframes and responsibilities. Some actions will be delivered as part of Council's business-as-usual while others may require new partnerships, community involvement, or additional resources. The implementation plan will help track our progress and guide our commitment to making our city safer.

Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation will be ongoing throughout the life of the Plan. We will use a range of tools to measure progress, including crime statistics, community surveys, community feedback, and case studies. This information will help us measure the impact of the Plan and identify areas for improvement. Evaluation will also ensure that actions remain relevant and continue to meet the needs of our diverse community.

Reporting

Council will report on the delivery of the Plan through a variety of methods:

- Annual reports to Council outlining progress on key actions
- Quarterly updates to community
- Pop-up sessions to share updates and gather feedback from community
- Formal meetings with community groups, service providers and Police.

Resourcing

Many of the actions in the Plan will be delivered using existing resources. Where additional funding is needed, we will explore external grants and consider new funding as part of our annual budget process. Some actions may also involve reviewing current practices to improve efficiency and better meet community needs.

Thank You

Thank you to everyone who helped shape the Community Safety Plan. We really appreciate the time, ideas, and support from community members, local organisations, NSW Police, and service providers.

Your input helped us understand what safety means to different people and what matters most to you. Thanks to your involvement, we've created a plan that reflects the needs of our community and sets a clear path forward.

We look forward to working together to make Wollongong a safer and more connected place for everyone.



Image: Open Street Festival, Port Kembla



On Dharawal Country, from the mountains to the sea, we value and respect each other, our places, past, and future. We will be a sustainable, connected, vibrant, and innovative city, with a diverse economy.

We are a sustainable and climate resilient city

We have well planned, connected, and liveable places

We foster a diverse economy, and we value innovation, culture, and creativity

We have a healthy, respectful, and inclusive community



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