

Fencing

FACT SHEET



Overview

The purpose of this fact sheet is to support applications for fencing under the Community Safety Fund grants.

Improved fencing can be an effective crime prevention tool because:

- making it harder to physically access locations can discourage potential offenders by increasing the perceived effort associated with committing an offence
- defining a perimeter can encourage a sense of ownership, leading to improved surveillance and an increased risk of offenders being detected.

However, it is important to understand that in some situations fencing may be counterproductive. For example inappropriate fencing:

- may limit natural surveillance and provide cover for offenders, making it easier for crimes to be committed
- provide a canvas for graffiti and tagging.

Key questions

Before choosing fencing as your crime prevention solution, an overall security assessment is recommended. The following questions should be an initial prompt:

- What is the problem you are trying to address?
- When is the problem occurring? Is there any pattern? What do your local police say?
- How will legitimate users access the space?
- Who will benefit from the fencing? Will it support surveillance or help an offender?
- Is there any other way the problem could be tackled?
- Is fencing alone likely to address the problem?

Other important considerations

- The construction of fencing is governed by legislation and local planning rules. You must comply with all relevant regulations when planning your fence.
- Owners of land on both sides of a dividing fence have a general liability for funding the construction, maintenance and repair of the fence. An exception to this is where the fence adjoins Crown or Council land.
- In most cases, notice of any proposed fencing works must be given to adjoining property owners. Consult with neighbours and others likely to be impacted by your proposed fencing.
- You should become familiar with the provisions of the *Fencing Amendment Act 2014*, as this informs fencing choice and co-contribution responsibilities.
- If you are seeking grant funding to construct or replace a fence, the Community Crime Prevention Unit will consider co-contribution responsibilities when determining value for money. Provide evidence of any agreement with neighbours regarding the type and cost of fencing with your application as this may influence whether your application is recommended for funding.
- Fence design should be open-style to maximise surveillance from the street to the premises and from the premises to the street.
- Avoid solid fencing that is easy to climb and provides opportunities for concealment. Solid fencing may also become a target for graffiti.
- Consider height, durability, aesthetics, and the strength of any gates or locks.

Additional resources

The [Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria website](#) also provides information in relation to fencing laws.