

BizSafe gives boost to crime prevention

By Sergeant Steve Keeling, Media and Public Affairs Branch

Crime prevention received a boost recently with the six-month evaluation of the BizSafe initiative being hailed a success.

BizSafe is an innovative education program designed to help small to medium business operators reduce the risk of crime against their business, reiterating the Queensland Police Service's commitment to crime prevention and reflecting the emphasis of developing partnerships with the community.

The BizSafe program has been trialled in the Southern and North Coast Police Regions with introductory workshops being held in Ipswich, Toowoomba, Redcliffe, the Sunshine Coast, Gympie, Maryborough, Kingaroy and Bundaberg.

The 90-minute introductory workshops have been presented by officers and are designed to get small business operators thinking about some simple steps they can take to make their businesses more secure.

Speaking at the launch of BizSafe in March last year, Commissioner Bob Atkinson said that pre-empting and averting crime, rather than just reacting to crime once committed, provided many benefits.

"Crime Prevention is as much a community responsibility as it is the job of the police and through the BizSafe program, business operators can work together with the QPS to help reduce the risk of crime," Commissioner Atkinson said.

BizSafe is the first program to be rolled out under the new Queensland Government initiative, *Smart State, Safe State: Partnerships for a Safer Queensland*.

NRMA Business Insurance is part of the Insurance Australia Group – the first corporate entity to partner the Government under this agreement aimed at reducing risk and promoting safety.

NRMA Insurance State Manager Dan Musson said small businesses were often exposed to crime because many operators did not have the time or resources to evaluate and reduce security risks.

"Research by NRMA Business Insurance has shown small business owners are working harder at just running their business day to day and don't feel capable of proactively preventing crime.

"BizSafe gives them first-hand help from police and risk experts and helps them take simple, positive steps to reduce the risk of being a victim of crime," Mr Musson said.

The workshops have provided business owners an understanding of the nature of crime, the conditions that make crime possible and the extent of the problem of crime committed against businesses in the local area.

Feedback hinted that business owner participants felt the workshops were relevant to their business with the topics thought to be most important, including identifying and assessing business risks, shoplifting and stealing, preventing burglary and personal safety.

The six-month assessment also indicated the key workshop aims were fulfilled as the majority of participants made changes to their business security after attending.

It was also found that the victimisation rate of the participants who made changes after the workshop was half of the participants who had not made changes.

The most significant change made by businesses following the introductory workshops related to cash handling procedures, landscaping, the introduction of surveillance cameras and application of height identification markers on entry/exit doors.

BizSafe will be implemented statewide with about 47 workshops to be held by the end of the 2005-2006 financial year.

During the trial, the average number of businesses represented at each workshop was 28 and it is hoped the BizSafe message will reach at least 1,300 businesses throughout Queensland when fully introduced.

BizSafe is based on a Western Australia Police initiative, which was first conducted in 2002-2003 by the New South Wales Police Service in conjunction with NRMA Business Insurance and the New South Wales State Chamber of Commerce.

For further information about BizSafe, contact the Queensland Police Service Crime Prevention Unit on 3234 2111.



Sergeant Ashley Hull, Ipswich District Crime Prevention Coordinator discusses BizSafe with a member of the public.