



Residential Safety Audit



**Southern Cross
Housing**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During 2021 a community safety audit was conducted at a complex. This report presents an overview of the methodology that was used to undertake the audit and presents several recommendations that could be implemented by Southern Cross Housing, residents, and other organisations to help reduce the likelihood of criminal activity in and around the complexes. It also provides a platform for SCH to seek external assistance to implement actions via the submission of external grant to implement projects that aim to improve safety and strengthen residents' wellbeing.

The Safety Audit was undertaken using a collaborative approach and involved by Southern Cross Housing staff from within the Tenancy Team, representatives from the NSW Police and residents that reside in the three housing complexes that are located in the street.

The Safety Audit was undertaken in response to concerns about antisocial behaviour and malicious damage. These concerns were expressed by residents and by Housing Officers that are employed by Southern Cross Housing.

Residents that took part in the process have acknowledged that they understand that it isn't possible to make the complexes absolutely safe and that the recommendations are based upon information provided to SCH and observations that were made by the audit group at the time of the audit.

The audit group hopes that by implementing recommendations that are contained within this report, criminal activity will be reduced, and the safety of residents and their property will be increased. Members do however understand that completion of the report and the implementation of any recommended actions does not guarantee that the complexes will be free from criminal activity.

Recommended actions are provided at the conclusion of the report. The recommendations have been grouped into four areas, access control, improving natural surveillance, maintenance, and territorial reinforcement. All four areas form part of a crime prevention treatment known as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, a well known and accepted philosophy that has helped to reduce criminal activity in many settings throughout Australia.



INTRODUCTION

Community Safety Audits are a means of providing residents with an opportunity to work together to identify existing and potential locations and aspects of their built and natural environment that may stimulate the likelihood of crime.

The Safety Audit was conducted using a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) approach. CPTED is a crime prevention philosophy that is based on the theory that good design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime. CPTED aims to empower individuals with knowledge about factors, both in the built and natural environment, that can increase the likelihood of crime and provides an opportunity for residents to influence initiatives that change certain aspects of their environment to minimise the likelihood of crime. Actions that could be implemented to reduce the likelihood of criminal activity are grouped into four categories.



ACCESS CONTROL

Essentially this involves modifying the existing design of an area to physically obstruct or guide access by people and vehicles. The idea behind this is that if criminal behaviour does occur, the access control measures that are implemented will make it easy for legitimate residents to notice and to report the crime to police. Examples include deadbolts, alarms, windows, locks, fences, speed bumps and traffic signs.



TERRITORIAL REINFORCEMENT

This process includes activities that aim to modify the design of an area to clearly show that someone owns the area and cares about it. Modifications suggest to criminals that people are present in the area and that criminal behaviour may be reported to police. By implementing territorial reinforcement actions residents are clearly stating that their homes are not public property. Examples include landscaping, lighting, fencing improvements and signage.



NATURAL SURVEILLANCE

These are measures that attempt to activate spaces by encouraging the active use of the space. Strategies are based on the premise that generally, criminals will not commit crimes in areas where they feel exposed to observers and therefore there is greater likelihood that the crime will be witnessed and reported to Police. Examples included security lighting, activities that increase lines of sight and those that encourage greater use of spaces.



MAINTENANCE

The basic upkeep, repair and maintenance of a property. Neglected property can lead to further mistreatment of the property, while generally, well maintained properties elicit better property care. Improvements in maintenance directly impact the fear of crime due to residents perceptions of responsibility and caring in the neighbourhood. Examples include immediate removal of graffiti, landscape maintenance and painting.



The Safety Audit has been undertaken by staff within the Southern Cross Housing Communities Assist Team (SCH) and the Tenancy Team. Team members have worked collaboratively with representatives of the NSW Police Force and residents that live in the complex to assess the natural and built environment in which residents are living, including nearby parklands and other public spaces.

The objectives of the Safety Audit are to:

- Provide feedback to Southern Cross Housing regarding safety issues and to recommend actions that could be taken to improve resident safety and wellbeing
- Increase community responsibility for and supervision of the complex
- Improve partnerships between residents, NSW Police and other agencies
- Promote community cohesion and community pride at the complex.

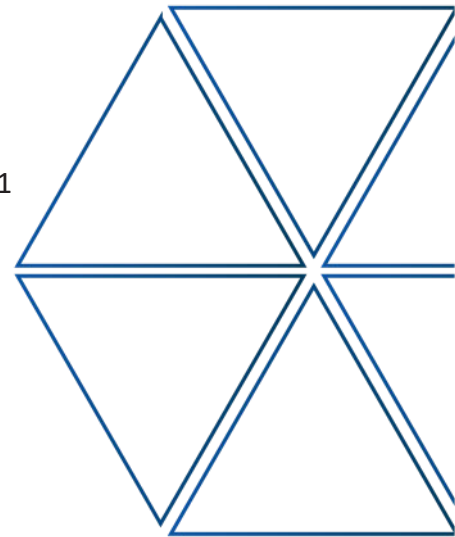


BACKGROUND

The complex Safety Audit was instigated as a result of concerns expressed by residents that live at the complex and Housing Officers that are responsible for managing tenancy agreements with residents that live in the complexes.

Housing Officers indicated that the following issues were occurring during the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021. The Housing Officers also noted that most residents at the complex were fearful of providing information that could assist Housing Officers to reduce the impacts of various issues because they feared negative repercussions from other tenants if they did so.

- Excessive noise and partying
- Unregistered vehicles in parking spaces
- Foot traffic disturbing residents, and jumping the back fence in Complex 1
- Verbal assaults
- Physical assaults occasioning in bodily harm
- Malicious damage to cars and units
- Intimidation
- Unit set on fire
- Unauthorised occupants disturbing the peace
- Alleged drug use
- Confirmed case of overdose due to drug use



LOCATION

This section would typically be about describing the location, layout, and surrounding environment of a housing complex.

If you were recreating this part of a report, you would generally discuss:

- Where the complex is situated in relation to the town or main landmarks.
- The structure and design of the complex (e.g. number and type of units, whether single or double story).
- Facilities and features within the complex, such as community rooms, gardens, and parking areas.
- How the complex is divided or organised, for example if it's made up of several smaller sections.
- Surrounding land uses and neighbouring properties, such as nearby businesses, public reserves, or residential areas.
- Any relevant council information, such as zoning, land use plans, or details about nearby public spaces.

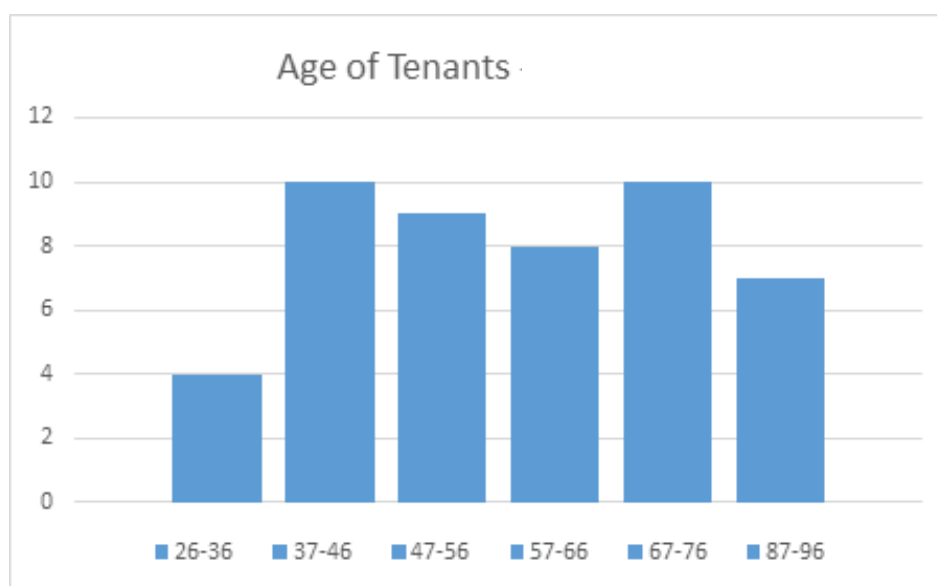
In summary, this section serves to provide context about the setting, physical layout, and surrounding environment of the housing site for readers who may not be familiar with the area.

Insert satellite image of area.



DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

The total resident population at the complex is 47 and the average age of residents is 59 . The youngest person is 26 years old and the eldest is 94. There are approximately 50% more males than females in three complexes, however complexes 2 and 3 contain roughly 50:50 split of males to females. Complex 1 is comprised of 18 males and 6 females.



METHOD

CPTED approaches to Crime and Safety reduction rely heavily on the early and sustained involvement of community members, in this case residents living in the complex. Initially all residents at the complex were invited to attend a community meeting where members from the SCH Communities Assist Team explained the proposed methodology and asked participants to explain what crime and safety issues were concerning them.

A second meeting was then held with residents to undertake a daytime safety audit of the three complexes. This meeting was closely followed by third meeting which was held at night and involved team members undertaking a night-time safety audit. Both audits involved residents, SCH staff and a member of the NSW Police Force. Safety Audit Assessment Sheets were completed for both (see Attachment 1. A final meeting was held with the residents and NSW Police Force member to review the draft Action Plan.

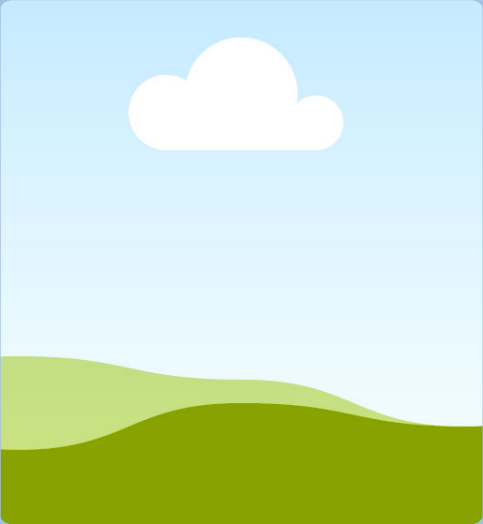
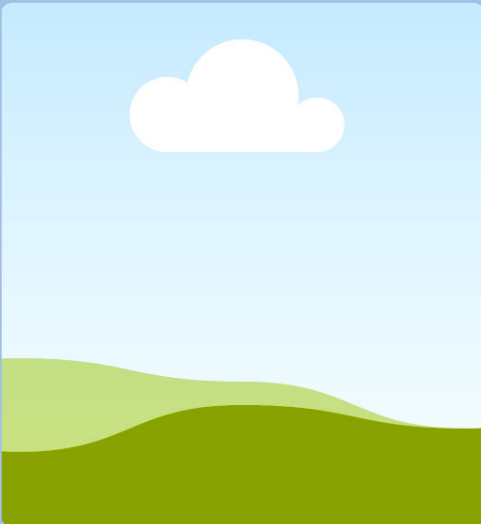
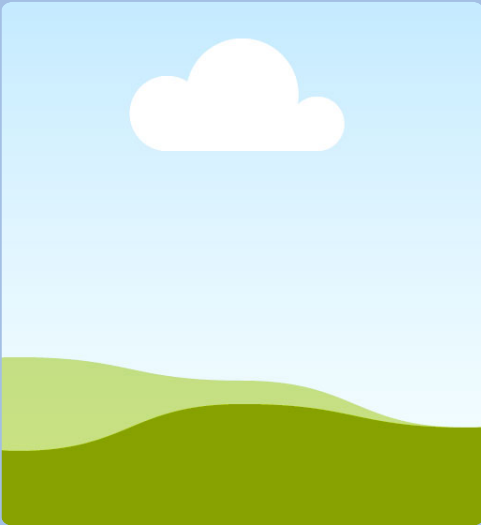
RESULTS

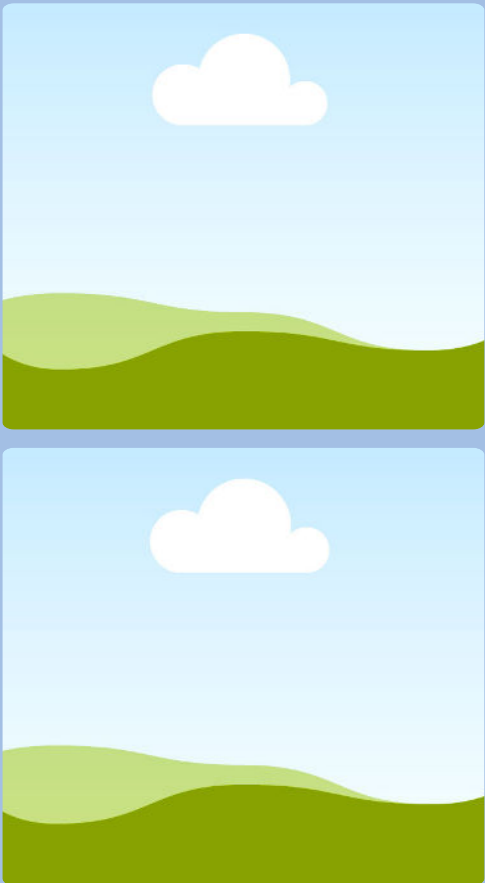
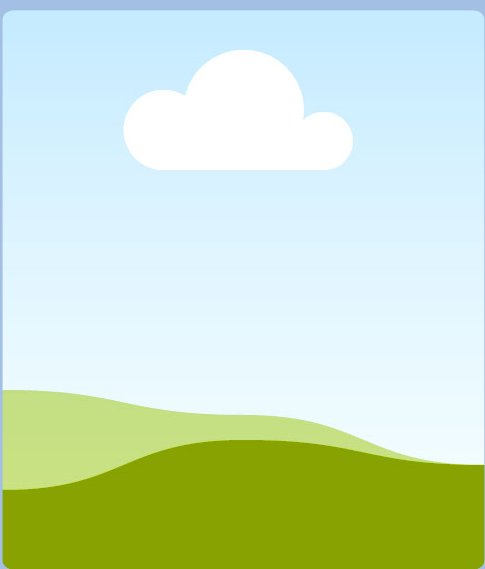
At the first meeting of the Safety Audit Group, the following issues were identified as being of concern.

Issue	Detail	Recommendation
Antisocial Behaviour	Improper use of personal security recording devices by some residents	Rules about the use of personal security devices to be distributed to all residents
	Back Fence – People climbing over the back fence at the rear of complex 2. Access route for people selling drugs.	Installation of CCTV and Sensor Light repair
	Back Fence – People climbing over the back fence at rear of complex 2 unit 8. Access route for people selling drugs	Increase fence height to prevent easy access
Criminal Activity	Drug dealing occurring within complex	Installation of CCTV at certain known trafficking routes within complex
	Residents' cars being maliciously damaged by keying	Installation of CCTV
Natural Environment	Overgrown bushes in places are providing good places for criminals to hide	Trim overgrown bushes
	Some trees are too large posing a hazard for residents	Trim trees
Built Environment	Not enough car parks leading to arguments amongst residents	Communications to be developed and distributed to all residents about parking
	Gutters are full of debris and need cleaning	Clean gutters
	Concern that fires evacuation procedures are nonexistent and alarms are not working	Check all fire alarms and distribute information about fire evacuation procedures
	Drains are blocked behind Units 11, 12, 13 and 14	Clean blocked drains
	Sensor lights are not working behind 2/2	Repair Sensor light
Health	Many residents appear to have serious mental health issues that are affecting themselves and neighbours	Utilise the Community room to run courses on Mental Health Support and other relevant support service information sessions
Lack of Trust	Many residents are scared to report incidents through fear of retaliation by neighbours	Work together as a group to complete this Safety Audit
	General lack of trust amongst residents in community	Conduct regular community sessions at the Community Centre



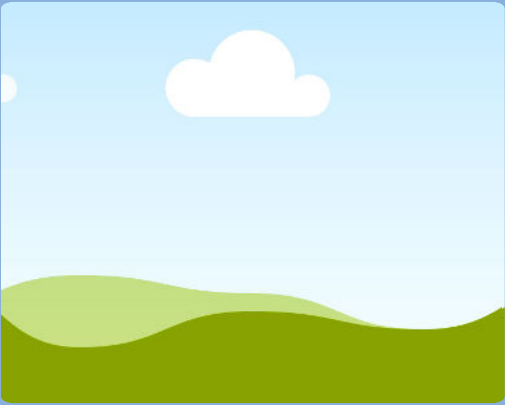
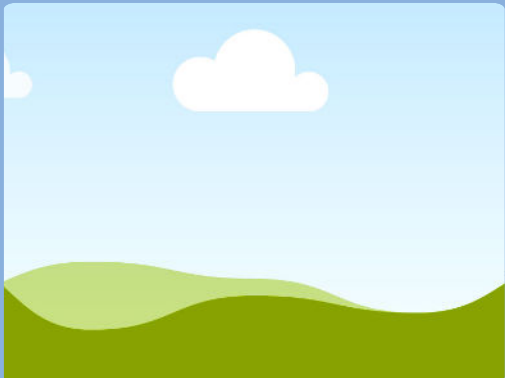
The following table provides details of the results of the daytime and night-time safety audits and recommendations that have been suggested by residents, representatives from the NSW police force and SCH tenancy officers.

Issue	Photo	Recommendations
Antisocial Behaviour & Health and Wellbeing Issues		
Fence at the rear of complex 2 is damaged. Rubbish is being dumped Residents are fearful of activity in the area and of encounters of any kind with people that are in this area, particularly those that live close to the fence. The area is very poorly lit at night and the sensor light at the back of Unit 2 isn't working. 	 	Repair fence with high level anti human wire. Install CCTV to deter. Contact Developer to make them aware of the issue, perhaps they can assist with installation cost to install new anti climbable fencing? Install warning signs around complexes about dumping of illegal rubbish and penalties Actively promote availability of Clean Up Crew to residents to remove large rubbish items Contact Aldis etc. to remove trolleys Repair sensor light at the back of Unit 2 Ensure there is an incident reporting sheet for Housing Officers to complete and that tenants are aware that they can log incidents with their Housing Officer. Review the register with residents regularly to identify solutions that can be implemented.
People jumping over fence at the back of Complex 2 (mostly younger people). Providing access point for people selling drugs.		Raise fence height to discourage access

Issue	Photo	Recommendations
Antisocial Behaviour & Health and Wellbeing Issues		
Suspected high use within complex. Drug dealers living within complex.		Encourage tenants to report drug dealing/use by distributing relevant written information and promotional material. Provide opportunity for service providers to utilise the Community Centre for outreach services. Undertake a community clean up the complex day Create a Welcome to the complex pack Pack that provides information about support services that can assist residents with AOD issues. Pack could also contain information about parking etc.
Loose stones and bricks laying around which can be used as projectiles.		Residents work with SCH Clean Up Crew to remove rocks and large objects.

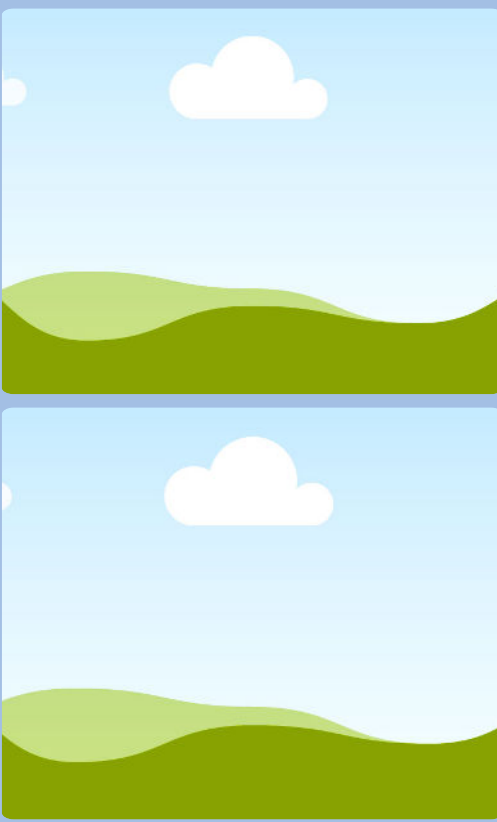


Issue	Photo	Recommendations
Malicious Damage		
Residents cars are being keyed. This is especially prevalent at Unit 3 complex where direct access to other areas of the complex is obtained through the back of the parking area. Keying is occurring in all car parks. Fences can be used to define the property boundaries and restrict access to the property. Fences and gates should be constructed to fortify the individual’s needs and requirements.	  	Install fencing at the back of Complex 2 carpark Possibly look at installing CCTV in car park areas Install warning signs in complex’s advising that malicious damage will not be tolerated and provide information regarding reporting mechanisms Encourage residents to immediately report malicious damage to Housing Officer

Issue	Photo	Recommendations
Natural Environment		
Trees over outside fence to neighbouring park providing concealment areas.		Working Bee comprised of residents and SCH Clean Up Crew to trim trees
Trees in neighbouring park providing concealment areas. No infrastructure to encourage use of the Reserve. Looks like a waste land.		Ask Council to trim trees Residents to lobby Council to develop a plan of management to activate the space with playground equipment and a BBQ or other space activating activities.
Some entrances are concealed and could be made better so that trees do not obstruct entry and exit. Some trees and gardens need trimming to improve sight lines.	 	Residents to map specific areas of concern and provides plan to SCH SCH trims bushes accordingly to proline of sight.

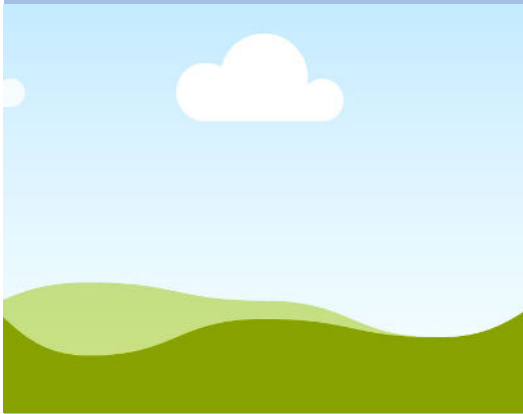


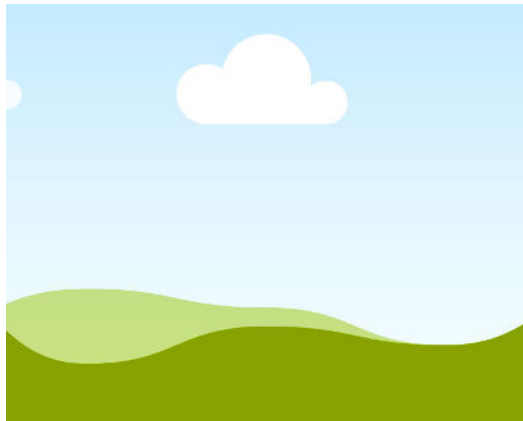
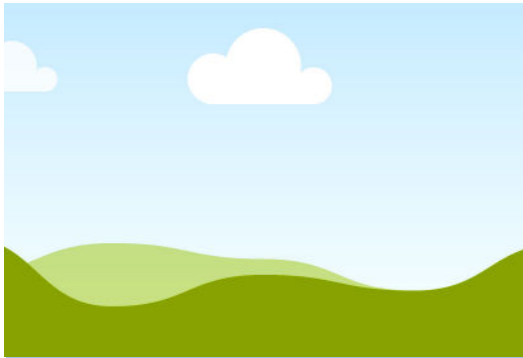
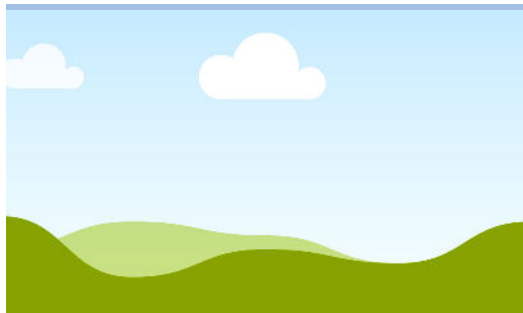
Issue	Photo	Recommendations
Built Environment		
Concrete stained from past fire and tragic event, provides a sad reminder for tenants of the tragedy.		SCH clean up area.
Some doors are jammed open, encouraging access to complexes by anyone.		SCH replace doors with ones that fit.

Issue	Photo	Recommendations
Built Environment		
In some areas wooden fences need repair.		SCH repairs fences.
The only existing signage are no smoking signs. Signage indicating evacuation procedures and other emergency information could be displayed at the entry to all complexes. Warning signs should be displayed around the perimeter of the property as a warning of security measures implemented. Include a reminder that criminal activity will not be tolerated, and offenders will be prosecuted. Thieves look for other clues, like CCTV cameras to confirm if security treatments do exist. Examples of warning signs may include: • Warning: Trespassers will be prosecuted; and /or • Warning: This property is under electronic surveillance		Signage to be developed by Working Group? Emergency and evacuation signs displayed Provide a common notice board in complex to provide important information for residents such as what to do in the event of an emergency and who to report emergencies to. Community notice board could be kept up to date by a resident who liaises with the CA Team and/or Housing Officer regarding the placement of notices.



Issue	Photo	Recommendations
Built Environment		
Insufficient parking spaces leading to resident arguments		Allocate parking for visitors and distribute rules about parking to all residents. Encourage residents to ride a bike. Provide a spot for securing of bicycles
No maps are available to guide visitors and emergency services to units within complexes. These could be positioned on the road near mailboxes. Mailboxes are often filled with junk mail, creating a heightened awareness of when residents are away. Mailboxes are generally in poor condition. It is important to have signage on display for deliveries contractors and emergency services to contact the appropriate person for access. The street numbers must be prominently displayed at the front of the building with individual unit numbers or grouped numbers. The numbers should be a minimum height of 120mm and be visible at night.		Signage to be developed by Working Group? Emergency and evacuation signs displayed Provide a common notice board in complex to provide important information for residents such as what to do in the event of an emergency and who to report emergencies to. Community notice board could be kept up to date by a resident who liaises with the CA Team and/or Housing Officer regarding the placement of notices.
Steps and footpath are not connected near Complex 2 providing a significant trip hazard		SCH undertake repairs

Issue	Photo	Recommendations
General Amenity		
Damaged Garbage Bins		Provide information to all tenants about how to go about getting a replacement bin.

Issue	Photo	Recommendations
Lighting		
All entrances to complexes should have adequate overhead lighting. Some appear not to be working		Provide information to all tenants about how to go about getting a replacement bin.
Round Complex lights are very dirty and not providing bright light		SCH to clean lights
Round Complex lights are very dirty and not providing bright light		Ask Council to consider installing additional street lighting in area



RECOMMENDATIONS



ACCESS CONTROL

- » Repair fence at rear of Complex 1, Contact the owner land at the rear of Complex 1 to make them aware of the issue and seek a collaborative solution to the installation of new fencing
- » Install portable CCTV camera in the area and appropriate signage warning of CCTV. Provide written warning to all residents that the area is not to be used as through traffic area and that the area is being monitored by CCTV
- » Raise fence height at the back of Complex 2 to discourage access
- » Install fencing at the back of Complex 1 car park.
- » Possibly look at installing CCTV in all car park areas. Install appropriate signage warning of CCTV. Provide written warning to all residents that car parks are being monitored by CCTV and malicious damage to residents cars will be reported to police.





TERRITORIAL REINFORCEMENT

- » Install warning signs around complexes about dumping of illegal rubbish and penalties *Actively*
- » Promote availability of Clean Up Crew to residents to remove large rubbish items and have a set day per annum that residents can place large items outside for pick up
- » Contact Aldis etc. to remove trolleys and communicate to tenants that they should not leave trolleys in the area of they risk fines
- » Ensure there is an incident reporting sheet for Housing Officers to complete and that tenants are aware that they can log incidents with their Housing Officer. Review the register with residents every six months to regularly to identify solutions that can be implemented.
- » Encourage tenants to report drug dealing/use by distributing relevant written information and promotional material.
- » Provide opportunity for service providers to utilise the Community Centre for outreach services.
- » Undertake a community clean up the complex day. Perhaps line up to fit in with annual National Clean up Australia Day
- » Install signage at the front of each complex. Sign to clearly indicate the location of units within each of the three complexes
- » Install emergency and evacuation signs at the entry points to all complexes
- » Install a community notice board outside the community centre. Important SCH notices to be placed in the notice board, including procedures that can be used by residents to report criminal activity
 - » Create a Welcome to “X” Pack that provides information about support services that can assist residents with AOD issues. Pack could also contain information about parking etc.
 - » Install warning signs in complex’s advising that malicious damage will not be tolerated and provide information regarding reporting mechanisms
- » Clearly indicate which parking spaces are reserved for visitors in each of the three car parks
- » Install bike rack outside the front of the community centre
- » Provide no junk mail stickers to all residents
- » Provide information to all tenants about how they can have their broken bins replaced by Shoalhaven City Council
- » Residents to lobby Shoalhaven City Council to develop a plan of management to activate the space with playground equipment and a BBQ or other space activating activities

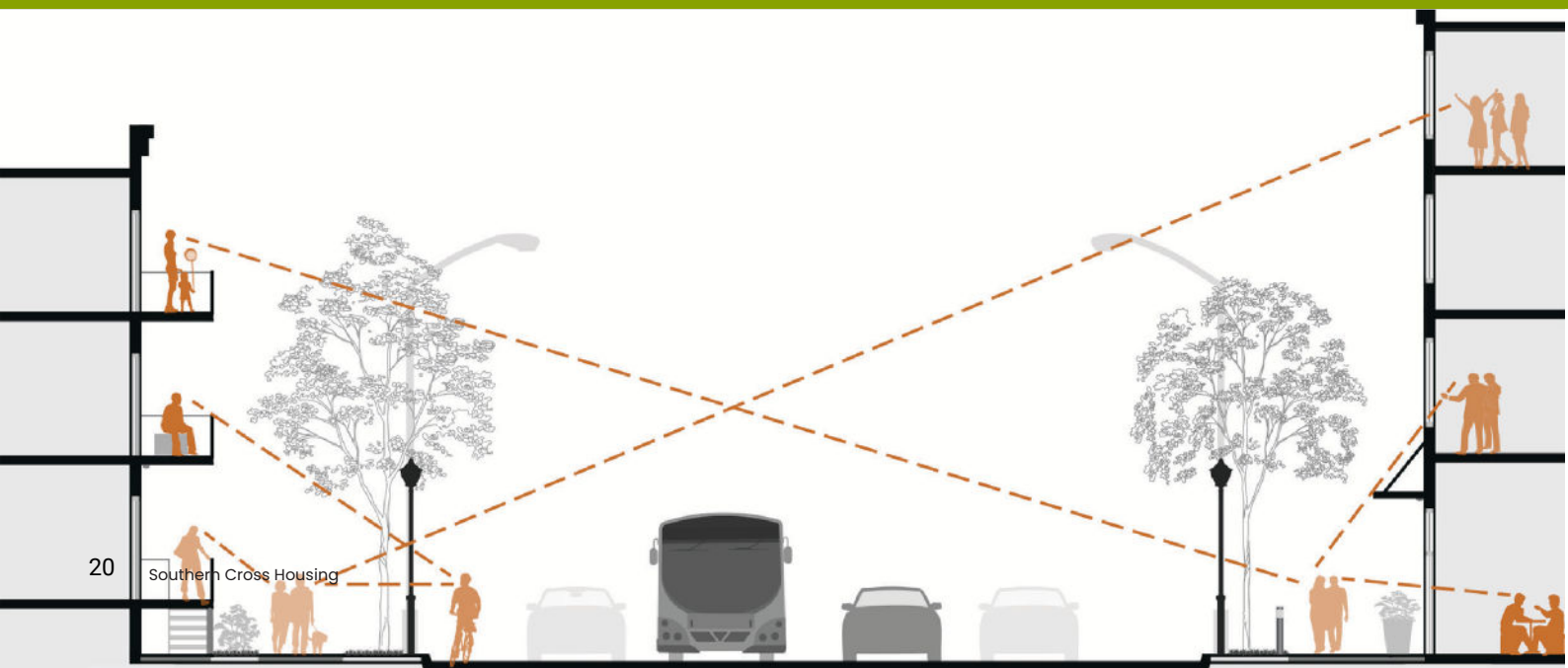
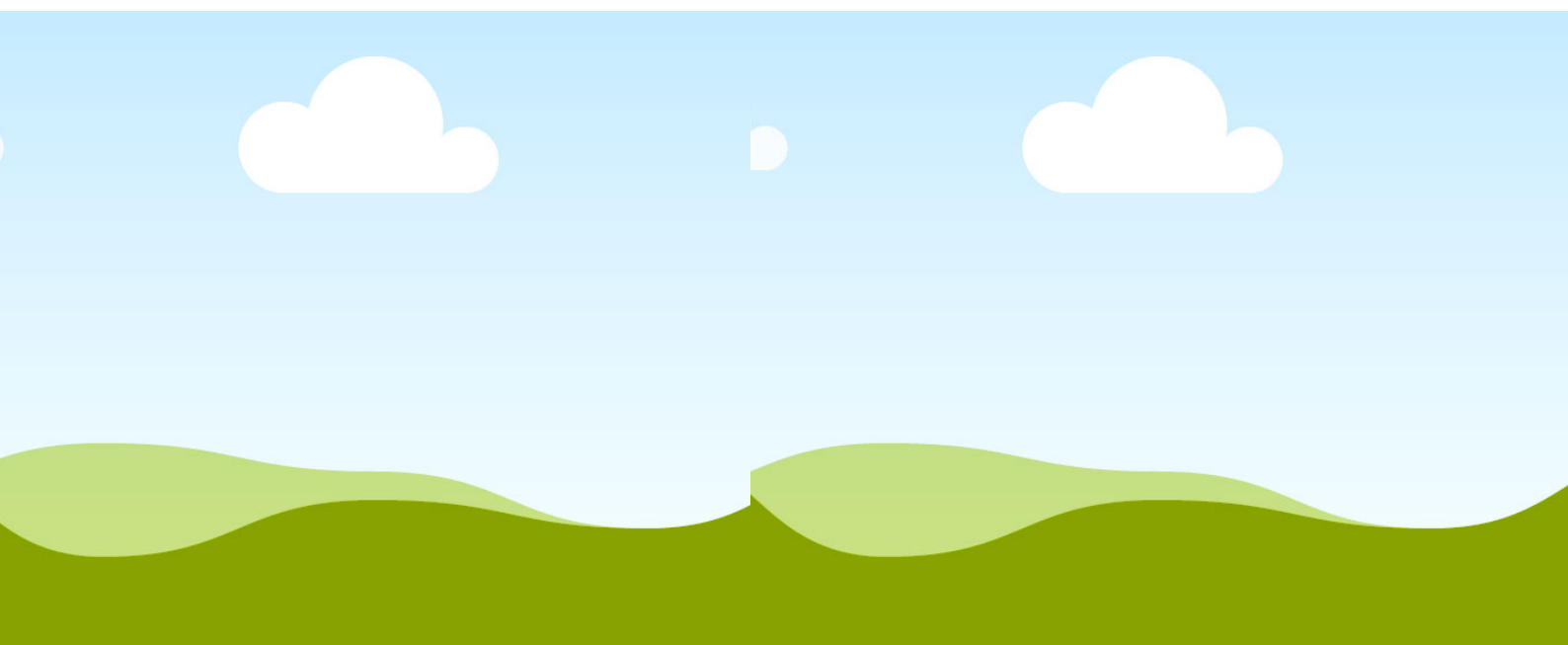


RECOMMENDATIONS

NATURAL SURVEILLANCE



- » Repair sensor light at the back of Unit 2, Complex 1 Trim bushes accordingly to
- » maximise sight lines around all complexes - See Attachment 2 for proposed plan
- » Clean all outside lighting fixtures outside lighting
- » Liase with Shoalhaven City Council regarding installation of additional street lighting near Reserve



MAINTENANCE

- » Working Bee comprised of residents and SCH Clean Up Crew to trim trees at boundary of Reserve and remove large rocks and other potential items that can be used as projectiles
- » Submit a request to Shoalhaven City Council to trim trees at Reserve
- » SCH clean up area of stained concrete at Complex 1
- » SCH undertake audit of complex entry doors to ensure functionality including ability to close securely
- » SCH undertake an audit of the complexes fencing and undertake repair program
- » Repair steps and footpath near Complex 2 to prevent trip hazard





ATTACHMENT 1: SAFETY AUDIT ASSESSMENT SHEET

The questionnaire was completed by undertaking an audit during the day and night with residents from complexes.

No	Question	YES	NO
STREET NUMBER			
1	Is the street number clearly visible from the street?		✓
2	Is the street number visible at night?		✓
BUILDING DESIGN			
3	Does the building have access control (key/swipe/intercom)?		✓
4	Is the individual entry and exit data saved in a storage system?		✓
5	Is the data storage system located in a secure area?		✓
6	Have entry/exit points to the property been limited?	✓	
7	Are there any hiding or concealment places outside the entrance to the building?	✓	
8	Does the building allow for natural surveillance from the street and neighboring property?		✓
9	Do the buildings have any signs of graffiti?	✓	✓
SIGNAGE			
10	Are there signs located at the entry of the complex?		✓
11	Are the entry signs easy to read?		✓
12	Are security signs displayed relating to the security i.e., alarm alerts or resident only access?		✓
13	Are warning signs displayed relating to malicious damage or illegal dumping of rubbish?		✓
14	Are there warning or caution signs displayed relating to pedestrian and vehicle traffic?		✓
15	Are emergency and evacuation signs displayed?		✓
16	Are warning signs displayed relating to CCTV (if installed)?		✓
17	Are signs displayed inside the building that explain what types of incidents to report and who or where to report them (Police, Council, SCH)?		✓
18	Is there a common notice board displaying important information for residents?		✓
19	Do exit, entry, smoke and emergency doors display keep closed or do not obstruct?		✓
FENCES & GATES			
20	Are perimeter fences erected around the property?	✓	
21	Are the fences in good condition?		✓

No	Question	YES	NO
22	Do the perimeter fences restrict access adequately?		✓
23	Can the fence line be used to climb and give access to the building or secured areas?	✓	
24	Are gates fitted and can they be secured?		✓ - no gates
25	Do the gates self-close?		✓ - no gates
26	If the complex is gated is quick access available to Emergency Service agencies?		✓ N/A
LANDSCAPING			
27	Do trees or gardens obstruct the view of the property from street level?	✓	
28	Are shrubs or hedges about 1 metre high?		✓
29	Are there trees with foliage, lower branches less than 2 metres high from ground level?	✓	
30	Can trees and garden be trimmed to allow natural surveillance of the property?	✓	
31	Is the landscaping regularly maintained?	✓	
32	Can a person hide behind or in the garden?	✓	
33	Can stones, rocks, bricks or ornaments be collected anywhere in the complex and be used as projectiles?	✓	
SECURITY LIGHTING			
34	Is there external lighting installed and is it operating?	✓	
35	Are the lights set on timers?	✓	
36	Are the lights set on timers?	✓	
37	Are there external sensors		✓
CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION			
38	Does the complex have CCTV?		✓
39	Does the system record footage?		✓
40	Does the footage store for a period over 21 days?		✓
41	Do cameras cover communal spaces?		✓
42	Do cameras cover mailboxes or mail collection areas?		✓
BALCONYS			
43	Are balcony doors and windows on all levels locked and secured when balcony is not in use?	✓	
44	Can lower-level balconies be accessed by scaling fences, walls, trees, garbage bins or parked vehicles?	✓	
45	Are balconies fitted with sensor lights?		✓
MAILBOX			
46	Are mailboxes affixed to the front of the property?	✓	
47	Does the mailbox area have sufficient lighting and is not obscured by plants or other objects?	✓	✓



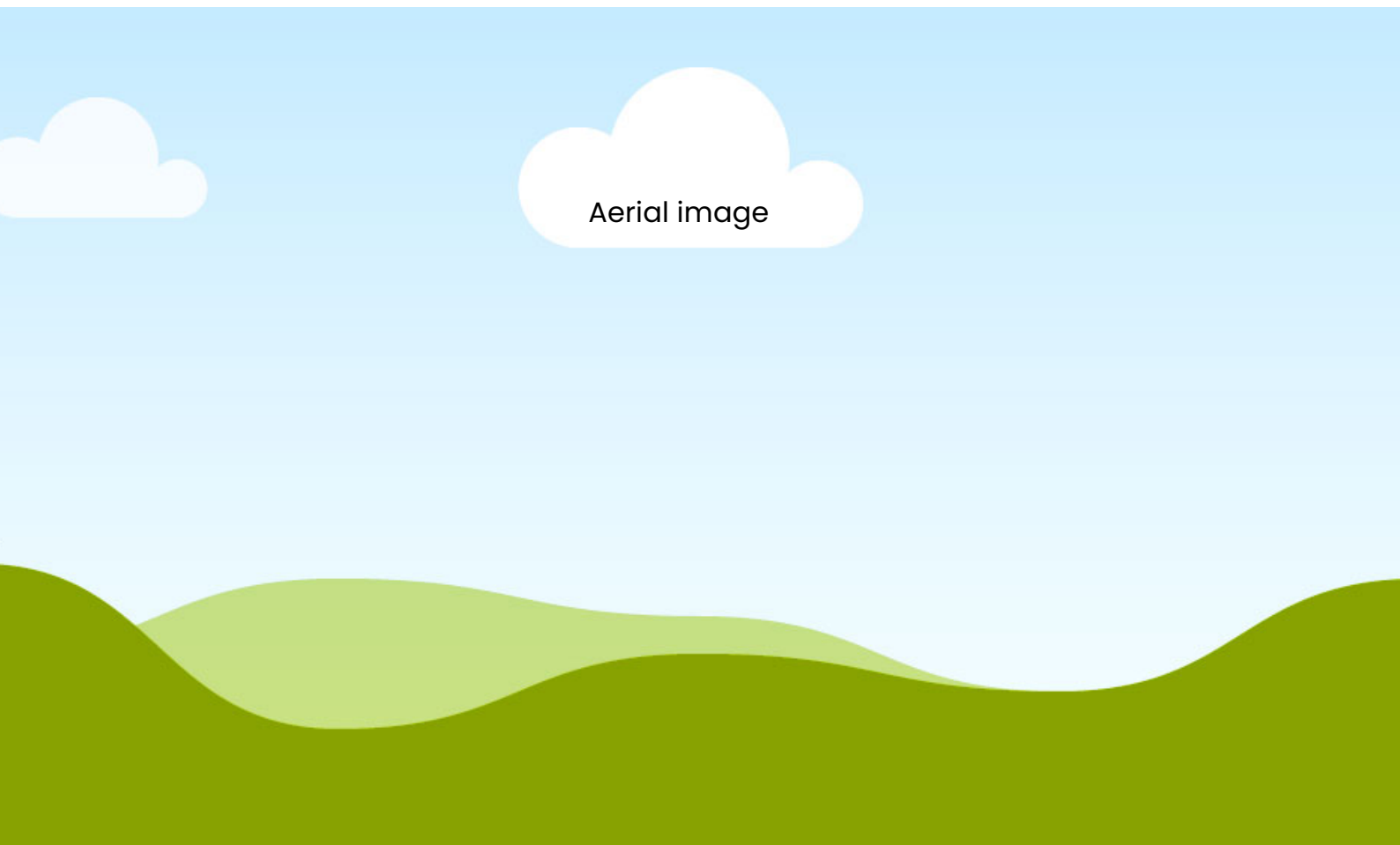
No	Question	YES	NO
48	Are the mailboxes of solid construction and securely fixed to the ground, fence, or wall?	✓	
49	Are the mailboxes grouped together in one block?		✓
50	Is front face of mailboxes built into brickwork and flush with the bricks	✓	
51	Are the slots to receive mail narrow enough to only allow standard sized envelopes to enter		✓
52	Are locks installed on all mailboxes?	✓	
53	Are locking devices that are difficult to tamper with installed on mailboxes		✓
54	Is each letter box numbered?	✓	
55	Is there a no junk sign displayed for all mailboxes	✓	
56	Is junk mail removed regularly from mailboxes?		✓
PARKING			
57	Is there street parking for residents?	✓	
58	Can vehicles be tailgated on entry to parking areas?	✓	
59	Are there hiding or concealment places around garage entry?	✓	
60	Do all residents lock and secure their parked vehicles?	✓	
61	Is there allocated parking for visitors?		✓
62	Are there places to secure bicycles?		✓
GARBAGE			
63	Can garbage bins be poisoned and climbed as a latter to gain access to a building?	✓	
64	Are garbage bays adequately secured to restrict unauthorized use	✓	
DOORS			
65	Have residents been instructed not to allow strangers into the building?		✓
66	Have residents been instructed to never supply keys to strangers?	✓	✓
67	Are entry and exit points clearly identified?		✓
68	Are communal or emergency exit doors self-closing?		✓
69	Are fire doors used for emergency exits only?		NA
70	Do any fire doors have obstructions interfering with access?		NA
71	Are the fire doors alarmed?		NA
72	Are external doors and frames of solid construction?	✓	
73	Are external door hinges affixed so they cannot be removed?	✓	
74	Are deadlocks installed on residents' doors?	✓	
75	Are peep holes installed on residents' doors?	✓	
76	Are security or screen doors installed on residents' doors?	✓	
77	Are sliding doors fitted with suitable locks?	✓	

No	Question	YES	NO
78	Are window locks fitted to windows?	✓	
79	Have residents been instructed to remove keys from windows and doors when they are not home?		✓
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES			
80	Are reporting measures in place for residents to notify management about concerns or incidents?	✓	
81	Are residents encouraged to inform Police about criminal activity and criminal offences?	✓	
82	Are reported crimes and occurrences in and around the building reviewed by management?		✓
83	Is there provision for Emergency Services access to the building during the day and night?	✓	
84	Is there an effective process or tool to communicate with all residents?	✓	
85	Do the residents ever meet to discuss concerns or safety and security issues?	✓	
86	Are emergency contact numbers clearly displayed?		✓
NEARBY PARKLANDS			
90	Are Council Parks or reserves located close by?	✓	
91	Can the Council parks or reserves be improved to increase usage?	✓	



ATTACHMENT 2: GARDEN MAINTENANCE MAPPING

The below diagram provides an overview of vegetation mapping exercise that was conducted as part of the project. Circled areas show where bushes and hedges should be trimmed.



**We would like
to take this
opportunity to
thank all of those
involved.
Working together
to reduce violence,
crime and fear.**





**Southern Cross
Housing**