

**CITY OF MELBOURNE
SAFE CITY CAMERAS
PROGRAM**

**SAFE CITY CAMERAS PROGRAM
AUDIT COMMITTEE
REPORT**

1 January 2021 – 31 December 2021

**CITY OF MELBOURNE
SAFE CITY CAMERAS PROGRAM
AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Mr Dean Robertson
Director, City Safety, Security and Amenity
City of Melbourne
PO Box 1603M
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Mr Robertson

SAFE CITY CAMERAS PROGRAM AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

In accordance with the Safe City Cameras Program Audit Committee Terms of Reference, we submit our Report for the review period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021.

Yours sincerely,

Bill Horman AM APM	Margaret Rode	Paul Ryan
Consultant	Governance Professional	Barrister & Solicitor
Chairman	Member	Member
Appointed Chairman in 2018.	Appointed to Committee on 18/01/2018.	Appointed to Committee on 21/02/2018.

Signed *William Horman* Signed *Margaret Rode* Signed *Paul Ryan*

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1. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SAFE CITY CAMERA PROGRAM & AUDIT COMMITTEE

On 6 December 1995, the City of Melbourne (CoM) resolved to establish a closed-circuit television system in Melbourne's Central Business District to be known as the "Safe City Cameras Program" (the Program or SCCP). The CoM SCCP became operational on 27 February 1997. The SCCP helps create a safer environment and reduce crime levels by deterring potential offenders, helping in crime detection and providing evidence to assist in investigations and/or in Court.

The Program's aims are set out in the Safe City Cameras Program Manual and include:

- (a) aiding in the provision of a safer physical environment in the Melbourne CBD
- (b) assisting police to reduce crime levels by deterring potential offenders
- (c) aiding in early identification of criminal offences
- (d) generally assisting in emergency response.

The operation of the Program is regulated by "Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's), the Training Manual" and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Victoria Police.

The Program Manual incorporates a Code of Practice, Privacy Principles, Product (i.e. copy of CCTV footage) tracking and release provisions and general management processes.

The Program uses closed circuit cameras (CCTV) positioned throughout the Melbourne Central Business District (CBD).

The Program is one aspect of the CoM's strategy for a safer city. Others include:

- Safe City Taxi Ranks
- Accord with Melbourne liquor licensees
- Victoria Police and CoM lighting audits
- Promotion of visible police presence throughout the CBD
- Improved transport at night to and from the CBD
- Prohibition of consumption of alcohol in CBD public places
- Education, information and awareness campaigns.

2. SCCP OPERATIONS DURING 2020 AUDIT PERIOD

Cameras in Operation

The number of cameras at 2021 year end were:

- 101 Pan Tilt Zoom Cameras
- 76 Fixed Cameras
- 09 Taxi Rank and Help Point Cameras
- 01 Safe City CCTV Mobile Vehicle

making a total of 187 cameras¹.

The additional cameras are reported to be very beneficial as illustrated by the increased amount of applicable footage for the record number of incidents recorded. The majority of the new cameras were funded by the State Government.

The increased number of cameras and capacity has raised the question of needing a third camera operator to the Control Room team during peak times to maximise their effectiveness and value. There were approximately 380 more incidents in 2021 than in 2020 and during the calendar year a new record of 1,238 copies of footage was produced². Whilst a challenge may be space in the room, the Committee strongly supports consideration of additional support staff to the Control Room team. Exploring advancement in technology may also assist the program moving forward.

At the time of writing this report, Corona Virus Covid-19 was continuing to severely impact Australia and the rest of the world. The Victoria Government during 2021 again introduced tight restrictions, particularly in relation to social distancing and encouraged people to stay at home and work from home where that was possible. During 2020-2021 the City of Melbourne endured 262 days of lockdown (152 days in 2020 and 110 days in 2021)³ and the City of Melbourne showed leadership in making alternate arrangements for camera operations where practical to maintain its operations.

Significantly, a temporary back-up Control Room was established at a separate CoM location and the independent Audit Committee encouraged the City of Melbourne to review the practicality of making such arrangement permanent to give the Safe City Camera Program the capacity to continue live-feed to Victoria Police of CCTV coverage of the city in the event the existing Control Room is incapacitated for whatever reason and/or cause.

Requests for information regarding the Safe City Cameras' statistics of incidents may be directed to the Melbourne City Council.

¹ SCCP Executive Report 01/12/2021 to 31/12/2021.

² Ibid

³ Ibid

The CoM's SCCP website provides a map of locations of its cameras – but it should be noted that the location of cameras is subject to ongoing review and change.

Mobile Camera Vehicle

The Melbourne Safe City Camera Program has, in addition to fixed cameras, a Mobile Camera Vehicle, introduced in 2009. Footage from cameras in the Mobile Camera Vehicle is not directly fed to the SCCP Control Room but is downloaded at the end of each shift to the Program Management System and stored together with staff notes, running sheets and incident reports with footage from the Program's fixed cameras.

Control Room, Footage & CCTV Product

All fixed cameras feed footage, in real time, to screens located in the SCCP Control Room. Footage is recorded on the Video Management System ("VMS"). VMS screens are monitored 24 hours per day by Control Room Operators.

Control Room Operators may transfer incoming footage, in real time to dedicated monitors and control cameras to ensure detailed recording of any event. Control Room Operators notify police of incidents that they see unfolding and feed footage in real-time to Police Operation Centres.

When major events occur in Melbourne, and the State Police Operations Centre (SPOC) is operational police can select what cameras they want to view, but the Safe City Operators retain control of the cameras.

Control Room Operators make electronic or hand written notes, "running sheets" which are used for inputting the incident report in the Incident Management System. Such documents aid subsequent interrogation of the Incident Management System in relation to specific events and retrieval of relevant product (ie footage provided to police or others).

Footage in relation to an event is retained on the Council server for a minimum of 28 days (the Holding Period) after the event. In the absence of a request from police or other relevant agencies or individuals, it is then copied over. Should the Council receive a request for product from a relevant agency or individual within the Holding Period, two copies of the requested footage are made. One copy is provided to the requesting party and the other copy retained by Council for a minimum of two years, after which it is destroyed.

Product provided to Victoria Police

In 2016, Victoria Police and CoM agreed that police to whom product was provided would be responsible for its safe storage and ultimate destruction, when the product was no longer required by them.

Subsequently a copy of the Victoria Police instructions and procedures was provided to the Audit Committee and the SCCP Program Manual amended to incorporate the agreement.

During the 2021 review period no misuse or problem associated with product provided to Victoria Police was reported.

Dedicated Police Radio Base Station

The operational benefits for the Safe City Camera Program in having a dedicated police radio base station is evidenced by the increasing number of incidents the Control Room is alerted to via the police radio network.

CCTV Product - Dissemination Tracking and Destruction

Product continues to be made available only to those authorised under relevant provisions of the Program Manual, particularly Victoria Police, on submission of a completed Application Form.⁴ Release of product occurs only upon acceptance by applicants of necessary confidentiality, tracking, storage and destruction obligations as set out in the “Application for Access to Product” form, the Program Manual and the procedure as agreed between the City of Melbourne and Victoria Police.

The Operations Manual provides that in an emergency product may be released without a completed “Authorisation Application Form” although such a form must be completed within five days of any such release.

Applicants other than police are required to return the product to the Control Room when it is no longer required by them.

“Non-police” applicants for product are required to complete “Outcome Forms” and return them, along with the product, to the Control Room setting out the use to which the product was put and describing any “result”.

The Audit Committee noted that confirmation of destruction of 61 released product remained outstanding. This matter of concern was reported on and subject of a recommendation at the end of the Audit Report 2018. Concerted efforts were made during the current audit period to follow up through communication with relevant lawyers. The Audit Committee is satisfied that that no further action is required and it is safe to record that this recommendation has been completed.

⁴ See Page 13 of the Program Manual.

Control Room

Security

Access to the Control Room is strictly limited and controlled in accordance with provisions of the Safe City Camera Program Manual.

Major Refurbishment and Second Control Room/Alternative Arrangements to Protect Continuity of Operations

In 2018 the SCCP Control Room underwent a major refurbishment which included change to structure, design and layout of the room and major upgrades to hardware.

Police communications via the service provider were upgraded to all Safe City 900 Base Stations and Speakers, which allow the Operators to work more effectively at their respective workstations.

In March 2021 Management closed a second temporary Control Room set up in May 2020 in response to social distancing and other safety requirements in response to COVID.

The Committee notes the importance of the SCCP to city safety generally and of having alternative arrangements in place in the event of a threat to continuity of operations, and makes a recommendation at the conclusion of this report.

Communication with Police

Control Room Staff are in direct radio contact with police. SCCP Mobile Camera Vehicle staff are in direct contact with Control Room staff. The Audit Committee reports there is a very close working relationship between the Control Room Operators and police. There is also a close working relationship between Victoria Police and the City of Melbourne management generally in regard to planning and operational matters, particularly relating to safety, security and counter-terrorism strategies and management of emergency responses.

MOUs

Current in 2021 were CoM Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with Victoria Police and separately, the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission and Emergency Management Victoria.

Public Address Speakers

A Memorandum of Understanding between Victoria Police and Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) was signed in 2017 utilizing the SCCP hardware with public address speakers being fitted onto cameras at CBD locations to be used in emergency situations.

The speakers can be used to provide an audible warning sound and a message from police to the public in an emergency situation. The speakers were not required to be used during 2021.

Victoria Police Monitoring Assessment Centre

Since December 2016, the Victoria Police Monitoring Assessment Centre (MAC) has been able to select live-feeds from CCTV cameras in the CBD.

In view of the importance of the role of the Victoria Police MAC, its relationship with the SCCP and the live-use of SCCP footage, the Audit Committee maintains its interest in being kept informed as to any relevant impacts on the arrangements.

The Chairman and Audit Committee members visited the Victoria Police Monitoring Assessment Centre in 2018 and in 2019 and were provided with a detailed overview of its operations, access and use of the live SCCP camera coverage. COVID restrictions prevented site visits in 2020 and 2021.

City Safety- the Counter-Terrorism Environment & the SCCP

Major incidents in past years involving vehicles posing a threat to the lives and safety of CBD users, demonstrated the importance of the SCCP in prevention, deterrence, critical incident response and providing footage to form part of the police investigation as well as evidence when matters are before the Coroner or criminal prosecutions proceed to Court.

COVID restrictions meant reduced pedestrian and vehicle activity as well as other public safety threats throughout much of 2021.

Disparity between Program's Aims &c Operating Procedures

During the reporting period, the CCTV Audit Committee did not become aware of any allegation or complaint claiming or suggesting there was a disparity between the Program's Aims and Operating Procedures.

Complaints

The CoM website provides advice for members of the public to facilitate complaints about the Program operation.

The Program Manual also sets out a process by which complaints can be made about the operation of the Program.⁵

Any complaint lodged against the SCCP is the subject of focus by the Audit Committee.

No complaint was received in 2021.

⁵ Safe City Cameras Program Manual p.16

Freedom of Information

FOI requests lodged relevant to the SCCP are a subject of focus by the Audit Committee.

Two Freedom of Information requests was lodged during 2021.

Victorian Auditor-General's 2018 Review of CCTV Camera Operations

During 2018 the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) carried out an extensive review of the Public Safety and Corporate CCTV cameras of a number of local governments including the City of Melbourne's Safe City Camera Program.

The VAGO report "*Security and Privacy of Surveillance Technologies in Public Places - September 2018*" can be found here:

<https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-09/20180919-Surveillance-Technologies-in-Public-Places.pdf>

While the VAGO report was generally favourable, the Audit Committee noted there were areas where the SCCP (Public Safety CCTV) was not fully compliant and made recommendations addressing those issues. The recommendations have been progressively implemented and reported on.

3. SCCP CCTV AUDIT COMMITTEE

Establishment

CoM made the Program's operation subject to audit against its protocols and operating procedures by an independent committee called the Melbourne Safe City Camera Audit Committee. The Audit Committee is required to report to the CoM annually pursuant to the Committee's Terms of Reference. The Report is available to the public.

Independent auditing of the Program's operation is intended to:

- (a) ensure congruence between the Program's operation and the parameters set out in the Operations and Training Manual and the Program Manual;
- (b) promote public confidence in the Program by making its operation transparent and accountable;
- (c) ensure the Program's efficient, effective operation and management;
- (d) support continuous improvement of the program through consideration and implementation of Audit Committee recommendations ; and

- (e) identify any incidents of non-compliance with the terms of the Operations and Training Manual or the Program Manual.

From inception, the CoM SCCP Audit Committee has been and continues to be independent of the Program operation.

Membership 2021

During the 2021 audit period the three member independent SCCP Audit Committee consisted of long-serving member Mr Bill Horman AM APM who was appointed Chairman, with 2018 appointees, Ms Margaret Rode (Governance Professional and Community Representative) and Mr Paul Ryan (Solicitor).

Meetings of SCCP Audit Committee 2021

During 2021 the SCCP Audit Committee met on the following dates, using electronic means, as a consequence of COVID restrictions:

- 10 February 2021
- 14 April 2021
- 9 June 2021
- 11 August 2021
- 13 October 2021
- 8 December 2021.

Between formal Committee meetings, the Chairman communicated with the independent members of the Audit Committee. The independent members consider the “catch-up” discussions to be valuable and wish to resume meeting face-to-face on a regular basis between formal meetings of the Audit Committee when COVID restrictions allow.

A schedule of meetings and attendees is attached: see Appendix A.

Support to SCCP Audit Committee

The Audit Committee wishes to express its appreciation for support throughout the audit period, provided by:

- Mr Dean Robertson, City of Melbourne Director City Safety, Security and Amenity
- Ms Christine Drummond, City of Melbourne Emergency Management Coordinator
- Mr Craig Buckingham, City of Melbourne Team Leader Security Services

- Victoria Police, the biggest single-user of the Program product,⁶ was represented at all meetings of the CCTV Audit Committee which significantly enhanced discussions, including police use of Product and police interaction with the Control Room. The Police representatives report at each meeting outlining some aspects of crime and particular incidents involving the police and SCCP and Control Room.

The Police representatives were:

- Senior Sergeants from Melbourne West attended various meetings as a consequence of Senior Sergeant Mick Wilmott (a regular attendee over several years), being assigned by Victoria Police to other roles from time to time, (including as Acting Inspector) and not available:
- Senior Sergeant Andrew Brady – representing Melbourne East
- Other police members who attended meetings during 2021 were:
 - Senior Sergeant David Barlow and Sergeant Nick MacDonald
 - Senior Sergeant Victoria Fields.

Continuity of police representation is viewed as important by the Audit Committee members and involvement was consistent throughout 2021.

Of particular value to the Committee throughout the audit period were Mr Buckingham's monthly Program Management Reports containing statistics, comparisons, and commentary on incidents, as well as reports containing statistics on hits on the website provided by Ms Drummond.

The monthly Program Management Reports regularly featured expressions of police appreciation of the professionalism of the SCCP Operators and comments as to their good work in particular instances.

The Victoria Police representatives at the Audit Committee meetings also regularly commented on the effectiveness of the SCCP Operators in relation to specific Incidents.

4. SCCP AUDIT COMMITTEE – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2021

CoM Response to Recommendations set out in 2020 Report

At each Audit Committee meeting, the CoM reported on the progress/completion of each of the 2020 Report's recommendations.

⁶ CCTV recorded material.

Summary of SCCP activity in 2021

The CCTV Audit Committee found that the Safe City Camera Program operated efficiently and effectively throughout the review period.

COVID restrictions on freedom of movement through the major part of 2021 resulted in some changes in the types of incidents detected and police activity in the Melbourne CBD.

During the review period, the SCCP recorded a record total of 5588, up from 5234 in the same period in 2020 – but the impact of COVID-19 with some form of stay at home restrictions for a significant period. It should also be noted that the lack of people on the streets may have impacted on the types of incidents coming to notice. Fewer people in the streets in some instances made it harder for alleged offenders to conceal their crimes and easier for Operators to observe and notify police enabling rapid apprehension.

The five (5) most reported incident categories during 2021 were:

(i)	Public Order	1050 incidents up from 1,007
(ii)	Assault	895 incidents up from 708
(iii)	Theft/Attempted Theft	643 incidents down from 680
(iv)	Traffic-related matters	668 incidents up from 580
(v)	Welfare Checks	698 incidents up from 535
	Note: Drug-related matters	147 incidents down from 300

Coming out of Covid restrictions, as the city's pedestrian numbers slowly increased some interesting spikes in Incident Types have been noted in the areas of Assault, Burglary, Criminal Damage, Drunk (Impaired) or Erratic Driver, Theft from Motor Vehicle, Traffic Matters and Welfare Checks.⁷

In 2021 the SCCP produced a new record of 1,238 copies of footage (higher than 1,027 previously) with 1,161 true copies collected. The ratio of footage to incidents is 439 incidents / 103 cases = 4.26 incidents for every one true copy – which is an excellent result⁸.

Findings 2021

The Safe City Camera Program Audit Committee reviewed the operation of the Melbourne Safe City Camera Program for the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021 in accordance with

⁷ SCCP Executive Report 01/12/2021 to 31/12/2021

⁸ Ibid

its Terms of Reference and the relevant provisions of both the Program Manual and the Training Manual.⁹

COVID restrictions prevented the Audit Committee from making direct observations, but Management reported regularly to Committee meetings and provided assurances that:

- (i) No instances of disparity between the Program's aims, protocols and operating procedures.
- (ii) No complaints about the Program were made during 2021.
- (iii) No evidence of failure by SCCP staff to observe security protocols and standard operating procedures as set out in the Training Manual.
- (iv) The Program and its operations were effectively and efficiently managed and coordinated.
- (v) There were no new major events requiring the supply of cameras into either the Melbourne Events Operations Centre or the State Government Operations Centre.
- (vi) No evidence that Control Room Operators' entries on the Program Management System failed to comply with the requirements set out in the provisions of the Operations and Training.
- (vii) No evidence of access to the Control Room outside the scope of the standard operating procedures and security protocols.
- (viii) Program staff maintained professional, cordial, efficient and effective interaction with authorised persons including police, other stakeholders and members of the public who visited the SCCP Control Room.
- (ix) No evidence of improper dissemination or use made of any Product.
- (x) No members of the public or stakeholders raised any public interest issues.
- (xi) Two Freedom of Information request was received from an individual following a slip/fall on the footpath, but no footage was available.

Relationship with Victoria Police, CoM Staff – impacts of COVID

The relationship between Victoria Police and the SCCP is crucial to its effectiveness and, ultimately, city safety and security.

⁹ The Training Manual includes Standard Operating Procedures.

The Audit Committee commends the high level of communication and co-operation between Control Room Operators and members of Victoria Police and other emergency services personnel.

The Audit Committee particularly commends the Program staff and City of Melbourne Management on the way they adapted to changed circumstances and requirements resulting from COVID 19 and its severe impacts on people's working and personal lives in 2020 and 2021 yet managed to keep the Safe City Cameras Program operational throughout the period.

5. CONSIDERATIONS FOR CITY OF MELBOURNE AND THE FORTHCOMING REVIEW PERIOD

2021 SCCP Audit Committee's Recommendations

The following recommendations are put forward by the Audit Committee 2021 for consideration by the City of Melbourne, Victoria Police and for attention of the SCCP Audit Committee in 2022.

1. Melbourne City Council to amend protocols and procedures regarding the release of footage to ensure that a party requesting the footage, including law firms or/and other organisations to provide
 - organisation name
 - contact name
 - name of client they are representing
 - file/reference number
 - address
 - phone number
 - email address
 - safe city incident number, and

require the requesting party to acknowledge that it will return the footage once no longer legitimately required.

2. Melbourne City Council to report to the Safe City Camera Program Audit Committee with confirmation of the security measures in place to protect the camera system including from hacking and other interference.
3. Melbourne City Council to provide the Audit Committee with information and regular updates on the City of Melbourne's strategic plan for improving city safety, security and amenity and liaison with community groups on its implementation.

4. The City of Melbourne to advise the Audit Committee as to its Business Continuity Plan with regards to Disaster Recovery and continuity of the Safe City Camera operations in the event to the SCCP Control Room being rendered inoperative.

APPENDIX A

Schedule of Meetings 2021 – dates and attendance

Dates of Meeting

Member	10/02/21	14/04/21	9/06/21	11/08/21	13/10/21	08/12/21
BH	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
MR	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
PR	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
CD	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
CB	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
DR	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y
MW	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
AB	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N
DB				Y		
NM				Y		
VF						Y

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

BH BILL HORMAN (Chair)
MR MARGARET RODE
PR PAUL RYAN

CITY OF MELBOURNE

CH CHRISTINE DRUMMOND
CB CRAIG BUCKINGHAM
DR DEAN ROBERTSON

POLICE

MW Senior Sergeant MICHAEL WILMOTT
AB Senior Sergeant ANDREW BRADY
DB Senior Sergeant DAVID BARLOW
NM Sergeant NICK MACDONALD (Presentation on VPMAC)
VF Senior Sergeant VICTORIA FIELDS