

together with the University of Technology, Sydney, inspired by the long-running Designing Against Crime Centre in London (Thorpe and Gamman 2011; Gamman et al. 2012). Its remit is to use design practices to revolutionize the way we achieve safety and security in society. In its first funding period, 2008 to 2013, the DOC center has delivered around 100 projects to 40 partner organizations. Central to the DOC approach is the pledge to—wherever possible—avoid the creation of “countermeasures” to crime, as these countermeasures create a climate of wariness and fear that destroys the social fabric of our public spaces and our society. First let’s turn to three sample projects will help to demonstrate the Designing Out Crime center’s approach to solving the open, complex, dynamic, and networked safety problems that our societies face.

CASE 8

The entertainment district:

On creating infrastructure for the city at night

Kings Cross, the entertainment district in the City of Sydney, has experienced continuous problems. With its bars and clubs and its slightly grubby nightlife (it has a history as a red-light district), this area attracts about 30,000 young people on a Friday or Saturday night (figure 2.4). All the activity is concentrated along a narrow 500-meter stretch of road where the big clubs and many bars are located. The problems that occur include drunkenness, fights, petty theft (pick-pocketing), and minor drug-dealing. Late at night, the situation often gets out of hand, there is sporadic violence, and people get hurt—sometimes seriously. This crime problem seems deceptively simple: the common solution would be to invest in extra measures to counter the excesses and to punish the perpetrators. Over the years, the government has been trying to solve this problem by using these strong-arm tactics, mainly through increasing the police presence and installing CCTV cameras. Clubs have also been encouraged to hire their own security personnel. All this visible extra security has now made the entertainment district a pretty grim public environment, but although the number of arrests has increased, additional security measures don’t seem to enhance public safety.

Designers from the Designing Out Crime center took on this project, quickly reframing the issues that were presented to them by the local council