

AUSTRALIAN CRIME



FACTS AND FIGURES *1999*



AUSTRALIAN
INSTITUTE OF
CRIMINOLOGY

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Note

Because of rounding, some percentages may not add up to 100.

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Foreword

This compendium of the most recent available national information on crime in Australia is intended to serve as a ready reference. The number of different types of recorded crimes, their place of occurrence, victim details, responses of criminal justice agencies, and government resources directed to deal with crime are covered. A new addition this year is results from the 1998 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey *Crime and Safety Australia*, which are presented in Part 1 as 'Volume of Crime'.

While the Australian Institute of Criminology has been collecting data for the past 26 years, it is only since 1993 that Australia has had comparative statistics on recorded crimes for some major crimes, and only since 1996 that a limited set of statistics on cases/defendants processed in courts has become available.

It must be noted that crimes recorded by the police do not reflect the true level of crime in Australia. Crime and safety surveys in Australia and crime victims surveys from overseas clearly show that only about 40% of crimes are reported to the police by the victims.

Crime and the administration of justice are the responsibility of each State and Territory Government and their agencies publish State or Territory based reports. The Australian Bureau of Statistics attempts to provide a national picture and in recent years has produced a number of reports on crime related issues. The Australian Institute of Criminology adds value to these and other materials and this booklet uses this published information—information that is in constant demand.

The Australian Institute of Criminology prepares materials containing the latest data on crime and justice issues and produces a number of publications on a wide range of issues. Further information may be obtained by contacting the Institute (see back cover).

Adam Graycar
Director

October 1999

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It is common knowledge that police recorded crimes do not reflect the totality of crimes in Australia. Since the 1970s a number of industrialised countries have begun conducting national victimisation surveys to estimate the true extent of crime. The information gleaned from these surveys supplements the statistics produced by police services.

In Australia, four such surveys have been conducted by the ABS, *Crime and Safety Australia* for 1998 being the latest. This survey, conducted in April 1998, estimated 2.6 million crimes against individuals and their household property in the previous 12 months. Not all crime categories can be compared directly with police statistics. The household crime of motor vehicle theft is the one that compares well with police recorded crimes. Generally, the survey estimate is higher than the police statistics because it includes unreported crimes.

Crime and safety survey

The survey is conducted principally to obtain information on the level of victimisation in the community for five selected offences:

- break-in/attempted break-in
- motor vehicle theft
- robbery
- assault
- sexual assault

Information was collected from individuals and households about their experience of these selected crimes, and for the 12 months prior to the survey, whether these crimes were reported to police and crime-related risk factors.

Data was obtained from about 42 200 persons aged 15 years and over and from approximately 20 900 households.

Information on sexual assaults was only collected from females aged 18 years and over. It must also be noted that this survey only covers people living in private dwellings. It does not include such people as the homeless or those living in special accommodation, or crimes against commercial establishments or government agencies.

Table 1 presents information on the prevalence of victimisation by household and personal crimes across Australia in the 12 months prior to April 1998.

Table 1

**Victims of selected household and personal crimes, 1998
Number and prevalence of victimisation**

Offence	Victims	Prevalence (%)
Break-in	349 900	5.0
Attempted break-in	226 400	3.2
Break-in or attempted break-in	534 100	7.6
Motor vehicle theft	117 900	1.7
Total household victims	652 000	9.0
Robbery	79 100	0.5
Assault	618 300	4.3
Sexual assault	30 100	0.4
Total personal victims	727 500	4.8

- **The most commonly mentioned crime was assault which includes any incident where the victim was pushed, shoved, hit, attacked with a weapon etc. or threatened with violence. 618 300 people indicated they were a victim of assault, with a prevalence rate of 4.3% in the general population.**
- **The next most common crime was break and enter and attempted break and enter, with 534 100 households being victims of at least one break-in or attempted break-in.**

Repeat victimisation

Many victims suffer repeated incidents of crime. There were a total of 652 000 victims of household crime compared to 939 700 incidents, and 727 500 victims of personal crime compared to 1 698 200 incidents.

Table 2 presents the percentage of victims experiencing one or more incidents of victimisation in the 12 months prior to April 1998. Of those who were victimised, a significant proportion was victimised more than once.

Table 2
Percentage of victims by number of incidents of victimisation in the 12 months prior to April 1998

	Number of incidents		
	1	2	3 or more
	Percentage		
Break-in	80.2	15.2	4.7
Attempted break-in	67.1	24.4	8.5
Motor vehicle theft	90.8	7.3	1.9
Robbery	77.3	14.5	8.2
Assault	54.6	21.3	24.2
Sexual assault	73.0	9.9	17.1

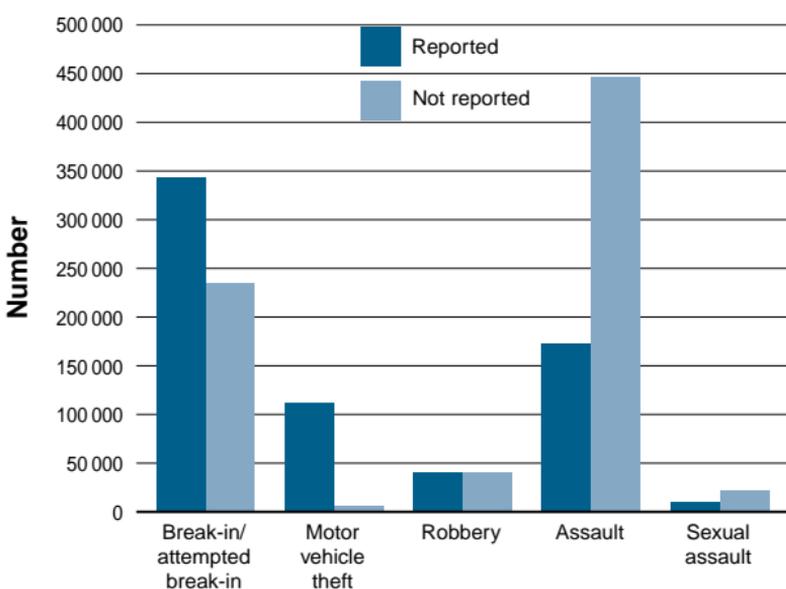
- **Repeat victimisation over the 12-month period was more likely to occur with assault than for other crimes covered in the survey, with 46% of assault victims experiencing two or more assaults.**
- **Victims of motor vehicle theft were the least likely to experience repeat victimisation in the 12-month period.**
- **Assault victims experienced an average of 2.5 incidents in the 12-month period, compared with an average of 1.6 incidents for victims of attempted break-in, 1.3 incidents for victims of actual break-in, 1.6 incidents for victims of sexual assault, 1.5 for victims of robbery and 1.1 for victims of motor vehicle theft.**

Reporting crime

It is well known that not all crime is reported to police, and rates of reporting vary depending on the type of offence. Of crime that is reported to police, not all is recorded by them.

Figure 1 displays the number of crimes that were reported/not reported to police following the most recent incident.

Figure 1
Reporting of crime to police, Australia 1998



- **Victims of household crime are more likely to report the incident to police than victims of personal crimes such as assault and sexual assault.**
- **The highest rate of reporting was for motor vehicle theft, with 95% of victims reporting the incident to police.**
- **The lowest rates of reporting were for assault and sexual assault, with only 28% and 33% of victims reporting the incidents, respectively.**
- **Many crimes were not reported to police because victims thought it was ‘too trivial/unimportant’, ‘there was nothing police could do’, or it was a ‘personal matter and they would take care of it themselves’.**

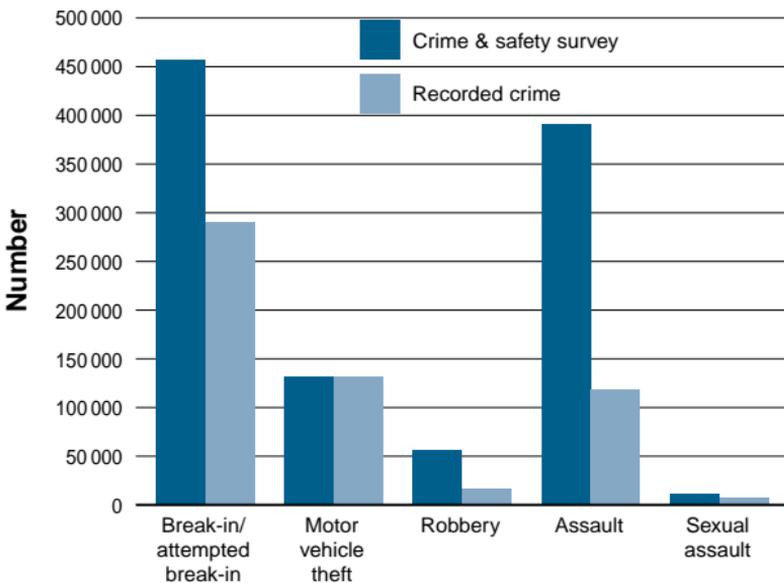
As mentioned previously, not all crime that is reported to police is recorded. There are many reasons why an incident that is reported to police may not be recorded as a crime. See Reference 1, p. 83.

Figure 2 displays a comparison between the level of crime reported to police, as indicated by victims participating in the crime and safety survey, and the level of crime recorded by police, as indicated by recorded crime figures. The

comparison is made for the number of incidents becoming known to/recorded by police from May 1997 to April 1998.

Please note that the crime and safety survey only covers people living in private dwellings, and does not include such people as the homeless or people living in special accommodation, or crimes against commercial establishments or government agencies. The recorded crime statistics in Figure 2 below have been made comparable in that they only include break and enters from households, and the personal crimes of robbery and assault are only for persons aged 15 and over and sexual assault only for females aged 18 and over.

Figure 2
Number of incidents becoming known to/recorded by police, May 1997 to April 1998



- **For most offences, the survey estimates of incidents becoming known to the police considerably exceed the number recorded by police. Motor vehicle theft is the only category where the numbers are similar.**
- **About 70% of robberies and assaults, and 50% of sexual assaults which survey participants indicated had been reported to police were not recorded as crimes.**

Source: Reference 1

2 RECORDED CRIME

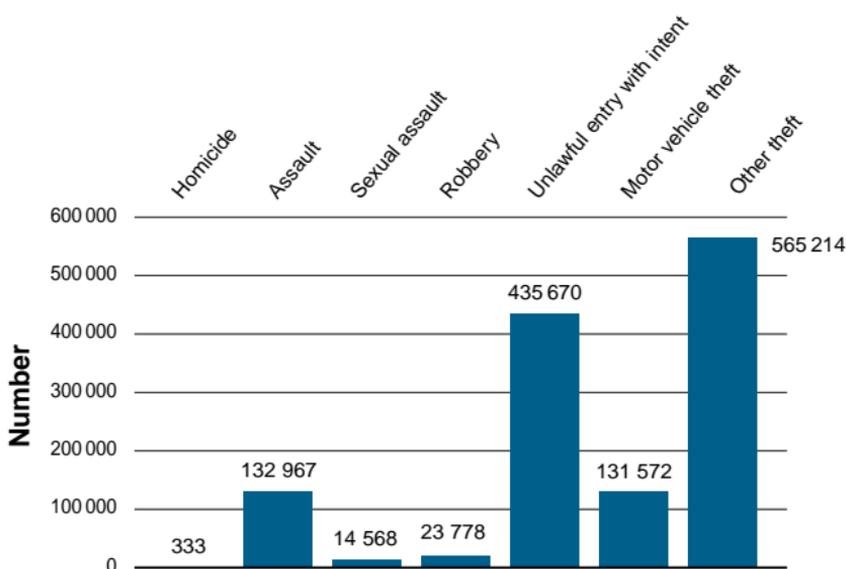
Crimes known to police

Figure 3 shows the number of criminal incidents recorded by police in 1998 for the following seven categories of major offences:

- homicide
- assault
- sexual assault
- robbery
- unlawful entry with intent (UEWI)
- motor vehicle theft
- other theft.

Data in Figure 3 include all recorded crimes and hence are not comparable with data in Figure 2.

Figure 3
Number of crimes recorded by police, 1998



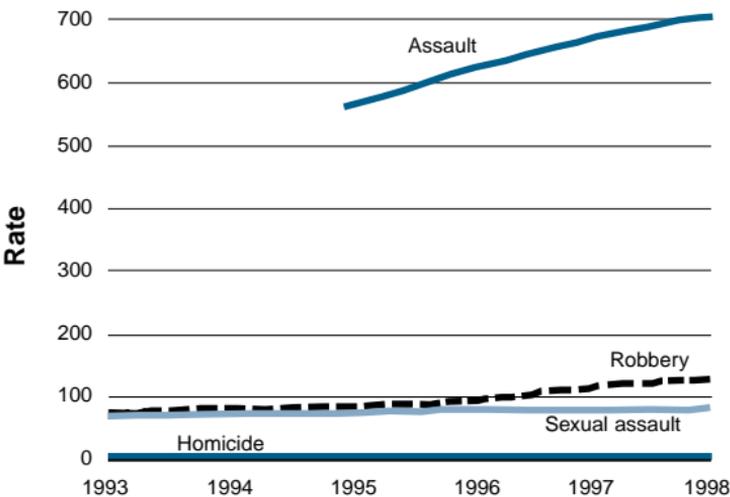
- **Of these selected crime categories, 'other theft' (which includes offences such as pickpocketing, bagsnatching and stock stealing) was the most commonly recorded crime, accounting for 43% of the total.**
- **The next most common offence was unlawful entry with intent, accounting for 33%, followed by motor vehicle theft at 10%.**

- **Together these property theft offences accounted for 86% of the seven major crimes.**
- **Assault was the most commonly recorded violent crime.**

Violent crime

'Violent crime' comprises homicide, assault, sexual assault and robbery. Figure 4 displays the trend in the rate of violent offences from 1993 to 1998.

Figure 4
Violent crimes recorded by police, 1993–98
Rate per 100 000 population



- **The rate of assault has increased 27% from 1995 to 1998, while the rate of robbery has increased 57% over the same period.**
- **The rate of both homicide and sexual assault has remained relatively stable over the six years.**

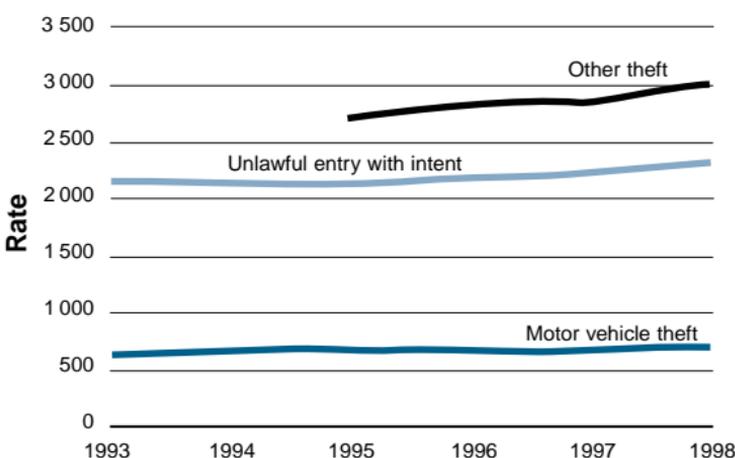
Property crime

The trend in the rate of property crime is shown in Figure 5. 'Property crime' comprises unlawful entry with intent, motor vehicle theft and other theft.

- **The rate of both unlawful entry with intent and other theft has been increasing slightly since 1995.**

- **The rate of motor vehicle theft has remained relatively stable over the six-year period shown in Figure 5.**

Figure 5
Property crimes recorded by police, 1993–98
Rate per 100 000 population



Location of crime

Table 3 lists the number of offences, by location, in each of the seven selected crime categories. ‘Location’ refers to the initial site where a criminal incident occurred. The type of location is determined on the basis of the location’s function, as follows:

- *residential location* (e.g. houses, garages/carports, motels, and hostels);
- *community location* (e.g. car parks, transport facilities, street/footpaths, and schools);
- *other location*: (e.g. retail premises, recreational facilities, government offices, and warehousing/storage).

- **The highest proportion of offences occurred in a residential location (41%). The crimes most likely to be committed in this location were homicide (60%), sexual assault (66%), assault (40%) and unlawful entry with intent (67%).**

- **The next most common place for a crime to occur was in a community location (31%), with robbery (51%) and other theft (39%) being the most prevalent there.**

Table 3
Number of crimes recorded by police, by location* where incident occurred, 1998

Crime	Location of crime		
	Residential	Community	Other
Homicide	203	102	26
Assault	52 578	50 297	27 148
Sexual assault	9 615	2 917	1 409
Robbery	1 606	11 801	9 779
Unlawful entry with intent	295 699	33 087	99 541
Motor vehicle theft	24 077	81 737	19 668
Other theft	129 409	207 286	201 140
Total	513 187	387 227	358 711

*This table excludes cases where the location was unspecified (n=44 989).

Figures 6 and 7 show the distribution of offences by location for violent crimes and property crimes respectively.

- **Violent offences most commonly occurred in community (39%) and residential (37%) locations.**
- **The highest percentage of property offences were committed in residential locations (40%).**

Figure 6
Violent crimes, by location where incident occurred, 1998

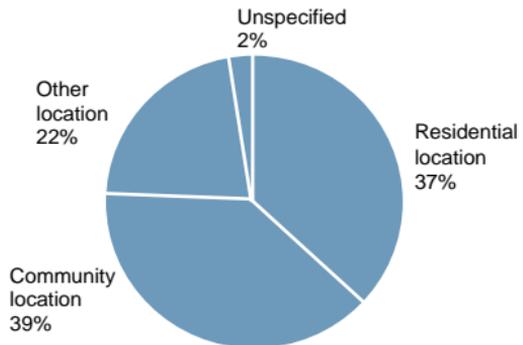
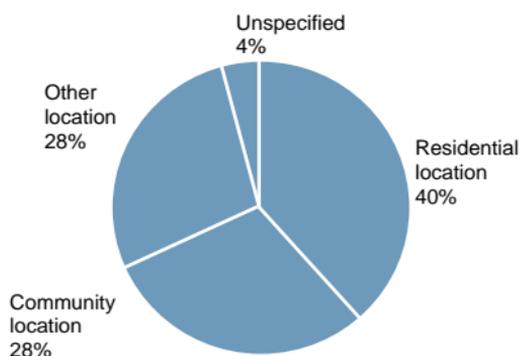


Figure 7
Property crimes, by location where incident occurred, 1998



Source: Reference 2

Homicide

The definition of homicide used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is the unlawful killing of another person. Homicide statistics discussed here include the following categories of offences:

- *Murder*: the wilful killing of a person either intentionally or with reckless indifference to life; and
- *Manslaughter*: the unlawful killing of a person caused:
 - without intent to kill, usually as a result of a careless, reckless or negligent act; or
 - intentionally but due to extreme provocation; or
 - when in a state of mind that impairs the capacity to understand or control one's actions.

■ **There were 333 homicide victims recorded by the police in Australia in 1998, with 1.8 victims per 100 000 population. This represents about a 9% decrease from the rate in 1997.**

■ **Of these, 284 (85%) were victims of murder, and the rest were victims of manslaughter.**

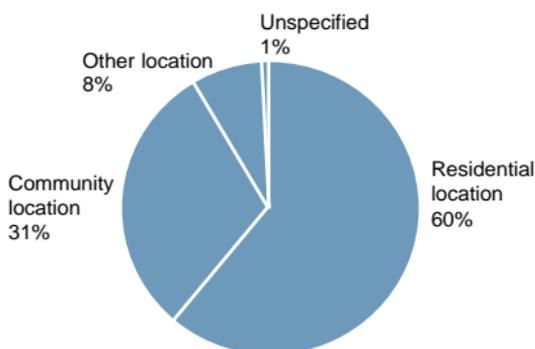
■ **Recorded homicides averaged less than one per day.**

Location of homicides

Figure 8 shows the percentages of homicides that occurred in the various location categories in 1998.

■ **Of all homicides occurring in Australia in 1998, 60% took place in residential locations, 31% in community locations and 8% in other locations.**

Figure 8
**Homicide,
by location
where incident
occurred,
1998**

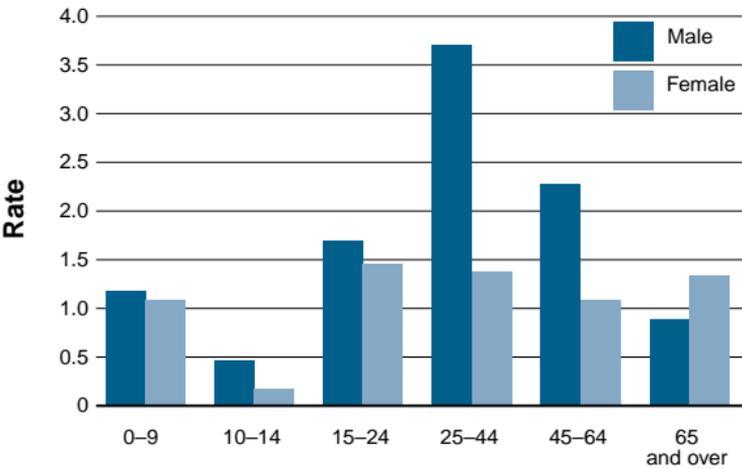


Source: Reference 2

Victims of homicide

Figure 9 shows the number of male and female homicide victims per 100 000 persons, by discrete age categories.

Figure 9
Age and gender of homicide victims, 1998
Rate per 100 000 relevant population



- In all age categories, except the 65 and over group, the probability of being a victim of homicide was greater for males than for females.
- Males in the 25 to 44 age group were most at risk of being a homicide victim, while females were most at risk when aged between 15 and 24.
- There was a marked drop in the number of 15 to 24-year-old male victims of homicide in 1998 compared to 1997; 23 as opposed to 63.
- The number of 45 to 64-year-old male victims of homicide in 1998 was 47, a much larger number than in 1997 which was 30.

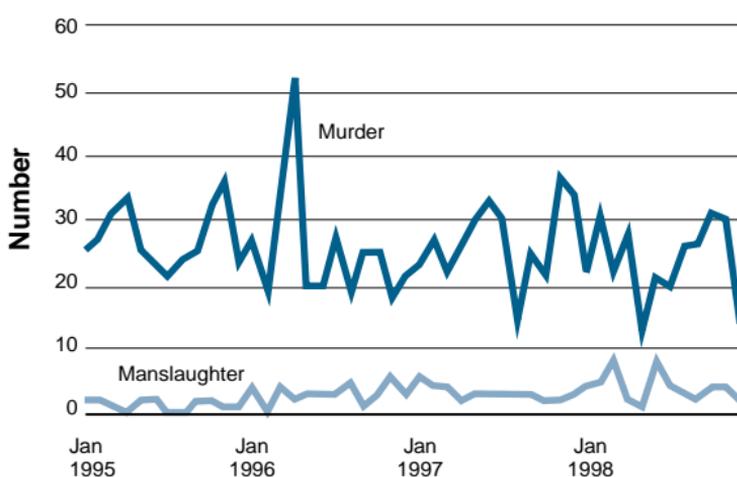
Sources: References 2 and 3

Trend in homicide

Figure 10 displays the trend in the number of recorded victims for the two components of homicide (murder and manslaughter) for each month between January 1995 and December 1998.

- **The number of murder and manslaughter victims remained relatively constant over the four-year period. The exception is the spike in the murder figures in early 1996; this is due principally to the massacre at Port Arthur in April 1996.**
- **The number of manslaughter victims for the period never exceeded nine in any one month.**

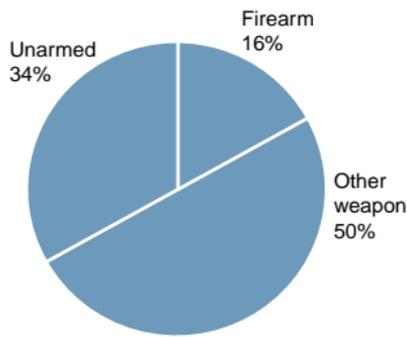
Figure 10
Monthly numbers of homicide victims, 1995–98



Weapons used in homicides

Figure 11 shows the percentage of homicides committed with various types of weapons. The category ‘other weapon’ includes any instrument or substance other than a firearm capable of inflicting damage, injury or death. This includes, but is not limited to, knives/sharp instruments, blunt instruments and rope. Also included in this category were nine cases in which the weapon used was not positively identified.

Figure 11
Weapons used in commission of homicides, 1998



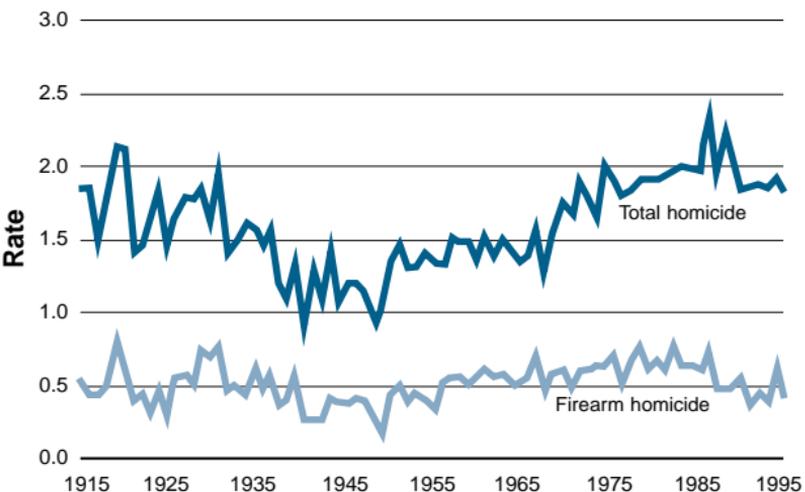
- **50% of homicides recorded in 1998 were committed with a weapon other than a firearm, and 34% involved no weapon.**
- **There was a decrease of almost 30% in the number of homicides by firearm from 1997 to 1998. A firearm was used in 54 (16%) homicides in 1998 compared to 76 (21%) in 1997.**

Source: Reference 2

Historical trend in total homicides and firearm homicides

Figure 12 shows the trend in total homicides and homicide by firearm from 1915 to 1997.

Figure 12
Homicides from 1915 to 1997
 Rate per 100 000 population



- **The average total homicide rate per year for the period was 1.6 per 100 000 total population, with the average rate for homicide by firearm being 0.5 per 100 000 total population.**
- **The lowest homicide rate this century was recorded in 1941; 0.8 per 100 000 population.**

Source: Reference 4

National Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology

Findings of the National Homicide Monitoring Program for the ten-year period 1989–99 will be included in *Australian Crime Facts and Figures 2000*.

Assault (excluding sexual assault)

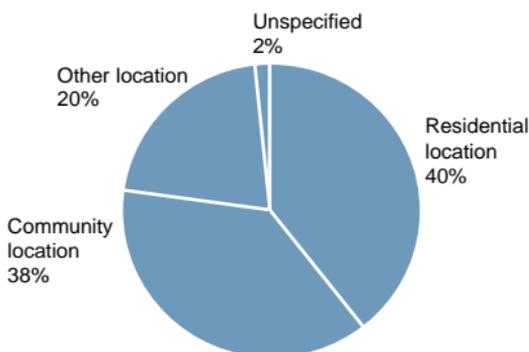
The ABS defines 'assault' as the direct infliction of force, injury or violence upon a person, including attempts or threats.

- **In 1998 there were 132 297 victims of assault in Australia recorded by the police: 709 victims per 100 000 population, a percentage increase of six from 1997.**
- **Recorded assaults averaged about 15 an hour across Australia.**

Location of assaults

Figure 13 shows the percentage of assaults that occurred in various locations in 1998.

Figure 13
Assault, by location where incident occurred, 1998



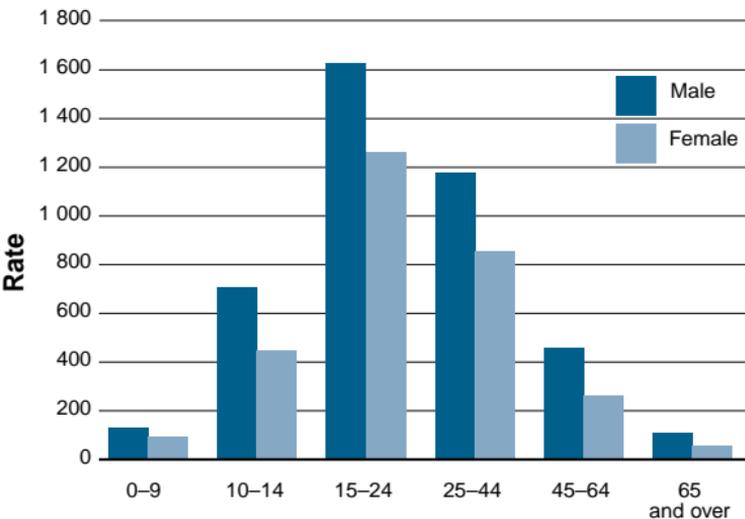
- **Assaults most commonly occurred in a residential location (40%).**
- **38% of assaults occurred in community locations, with the bulk of assaults on street/footpaths, which accounted for 23% of all recorded assaults.**
- **20% of recorded assaults took place in other locations, including recreational facilities (10%).**

Source: Reference 2

Victims of assault

Figure 14 displays the number of male and female victims of assault per 100 000 persons, by discrete age categories.

Figure 14
Age and gender of assault victims, 1998
Rate per 100 000 relevant population



- **Males exhibited higher victimisation rates than females for all age categories.**
- **Both males and females were most at risk of being a victim of assault while aged between 15 and 24.**

Sources: References 2 and 3

Table 4 and Figure 15 present the number of victims of assault by location, age and gender.

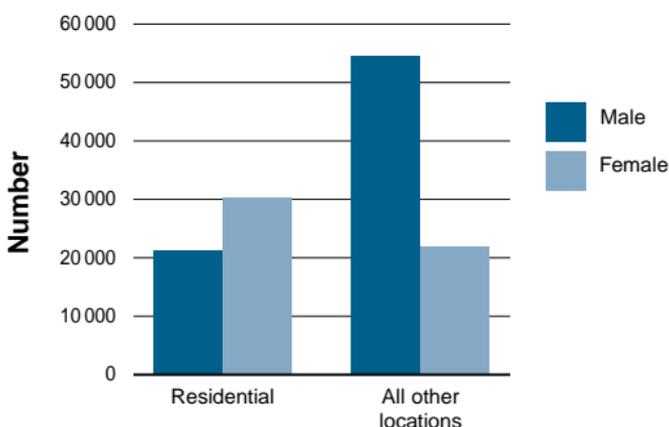
Table 4
Assault, by location* and gender and age of victim, Australia 1998

Age group	Location of assault			
	Residential		All other locations	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
0–9	1 014	772	642	318
10–14	984	892	3 584	1 852
15–24	4 857	8 112	16 866	8 094
25+	13 467	19 599	30 100	10 440
Not specified	983	863	2 751	1 072
Total	21 305	30 238	53 943	21 776

*This table excludes 2813 cases where the location was unspecified.

■ **About two-thirds of female victims in the 25+ age category were assaulted in homes, whereas two-thirds of their male counterparts were assaulted in non-residential locations.**

Figure 15
Assault, by location and gender of victim, Australia 1998



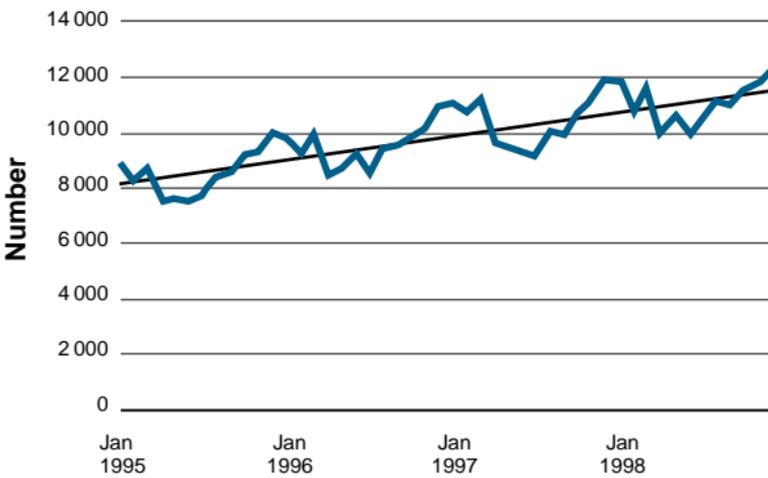
■ **A large majority (72%) of male victims was assaulted in non-residential locations, whereas a majority (58%) of female victims was assaulted in residential premises.**

Source: Reference 5

Trend in assaults

The trend in the number of recorded assaults for each month over the years 1995 to 1998 is illustrated in Figure 16.

Figure 16
Monthly numbers of assault victims, 1995–98



- **The monthly number of victims of assault was 8 845 in January 1995, reaching a high of 12 265 in December 1998.**
- **The data suggest that the number of recorded assault victims increased in the summer months.**
- **There appears to be an underlying upward trend in the number of assaults.**

Source: Reference 2

Sexual assault

The ABS definition of 'sexual assault' is a physical assault of a sexual nature, directed toward another person where that person:

- does not give consent; or
- gives consent as a result of intimidation or fraud; or
- is legally deemed incapable of giving consent because of youth or temporary/permanent incapacity.

This offence includes: rape, sexual assault, sodomy, buggery, oral sex, incest, carnal knowledge, unlawful sexual intercourse, indecent assault, and assault with intent to rape.

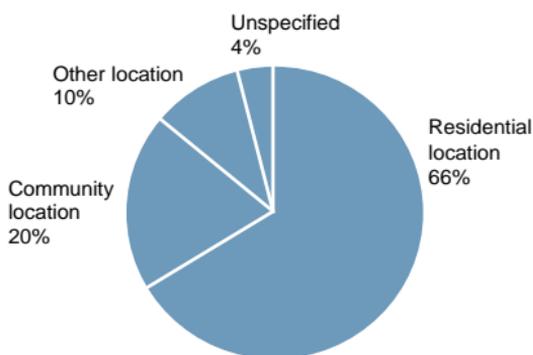
- **There were 14 568 victims of sexual assault recorded by the police in Australia in 1998, an increase of 1.5% from 1997.**

- **There were about 77 victims of sexual assault per 100 000 population.**
- **This figure amounts to approximately 1.7 recorded sexual assaults per hour across Australia.**

Location of sexual assaults

Figure 17 shows the percentage of sexual assaults occurring in various locations in 1998.

Figure 17
Sexual assault, by location where incident occurred, 1998



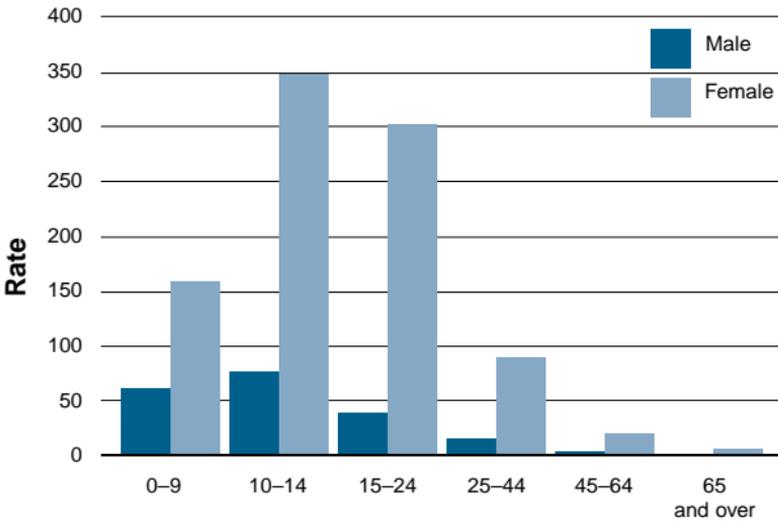
- **Of all recorded sexual assaults in Australia in 1998, 66% occurred in residential locations, with most of these being in private dwellings.**
- **20% of sexual assaults occurred in community locations. Sexual assaults on street/footpaths accounted for 7% of all recorded sexual assaults.**
- **Only 10% of recorded sexual assaults took place in other locations, including recreational facilities (5%).**

Source: Reference 2

Victims of sexual assault

Figure 18 displays the number of male and female victims of sexual assault per 100 000 persons, by discrete age categories.

Figure 18
Age and gender of sexual assault victims, 1998
 Rate per 100 000 relevant population



- **For all age categories, females were more likely to be victims of sexual assault than males.**
- **Both males and females in the 10-14 age range were most at risk of being victims of sexual assault.**
- **Almost 75% of victims of sexual assault were young people under the age of 25 years.**
- **The ABS Women's Safety survey revealed that only 15% of women who had experienced sexual violence in the last 12 months reported the incident to police. This indicates that Figure 18 may reflect gross under-reporting of sexual assault incidents.**

Sources: Reference 2, 3 and 6

Relationship between victim of sexual assault and offender

Table 5 shows the relationship between the victims of sexual assault and the offenders.

Table 5
Victims of sexual assault, by gender and victim–offender relationship, 1998

	Male	Female	Total
	Number		
Family member	541	2 517	3 058
Known: non-family member	918	3 729	4 647
Stranger	268	1 651	1 919
Not stated	898	3 745	4 643
Total	2 625	11 642	*14 267
	Percentage		
Family member	20.6	21.6	17.2
Known: non-family member	35.0	32.0	29.8
Stranger	10.2	14.2	16.8
Not stated	34.2	32.2	36.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Excludes 301 cases where gender of victim was unknown.

- **In more than one-third of the incidents, the relationship between the victim and offender was either not stated or inadequately described.**
- **It is likely that this not stated category includes mainly cases where the offender was known to the victim. The ABS Crime and Safety Australia survey estimates that about 83% of sexual assault offenders were known to the victim, while about 17% were strangers/unknown.**
- **The victim–offender relationship was similar for both males and females. Almost half the victims, both males and females, were sexually assaulted by offenders known to them. Where known, the offender was most likely to be a non-family member.**

Sources: References 1 and 2

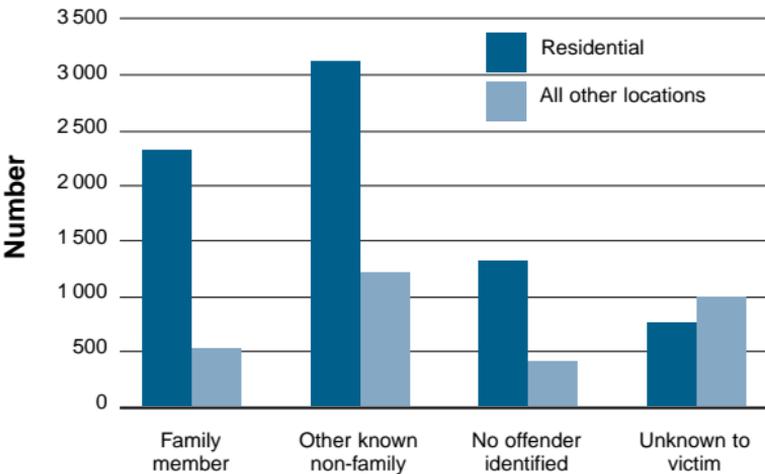
Table 6 and Figure 19 present victims of sexual assault, whose relationship to offender was known, by age, gender and location of crime. Please note that these data are adapted from cross-tabulations of five variables (gender, age, victim–offender relationship, location and State) received from the ABS. As such, the numbers do not include all incidents published in *Recorded Crime Australia 1998* and Table 5.

Table 6

Sexual assault, by victim–offender relationship, location and gender of victim, Australia 1998

Relationship	Location of sexual assault					
	Residential			All other locations		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Family member	358	1 974	2 332	118	437	555
Known: non-family	563	2 562	3 125	263	972	1 235
No offender identified	256	1 059	1 315	69	368	437
Unknown to victim	131	640	771	113	887	1 000
Total	1 308	6 235	7 543	563	2 664	3 227

Figure 19

Sexual assault, by location and victim–offender relationship, Australia 1998

- **Over 70% of the victims were assaulted in residential premises.**
- **Over a quarter of the victims were sexually assaulted by a family member.**
- **Overall about 16% of the victims were sexually assaulted by strangers; for those victims sexually assaulted in residential premises only 10% were by strangers.**

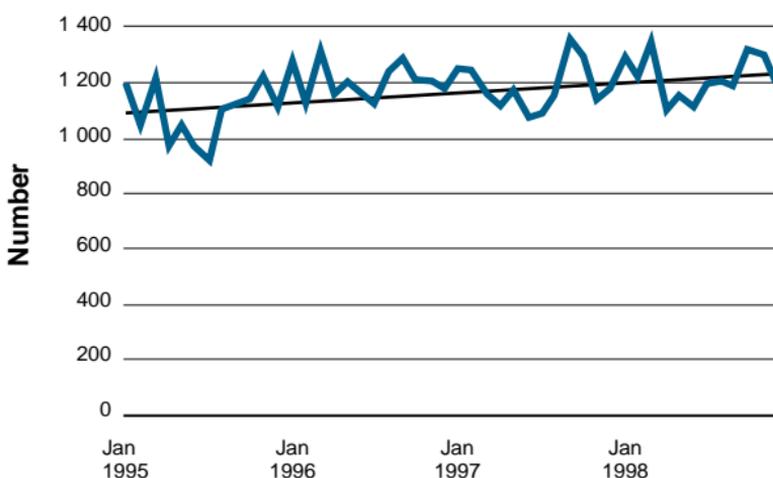
Source: Reference 5

Trend in sexual assault

Figure 20 shows the trend in recorded sexual assaults for each month for the years 1995 to 1998.

Figure 20

Monthly numbers of sexual assault victims, 1995–98



- It appears there has been a slight increase in the underlying trend of monthly incidents over the time period.
- The average number of sexual assault victims per month for the period was approximately 1 168.

Source: Reference 2

Robbery

'Robbery', as defined by the ABS, is the unlawful taking of property, without consent, accompanied by force or threat of force. Robbery victims can be persons or organisations.

Types of robbery

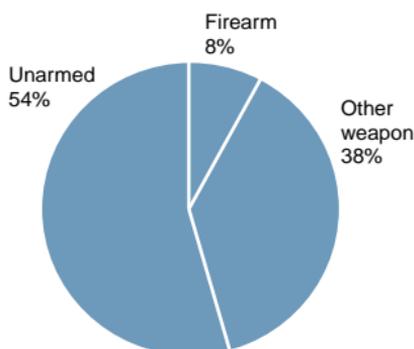
Robbery is divided into the following two categories of offences:

- *Armed robbery*. This is robbery conducted with use of a weapon. (A weapon is any object used to cause fear or injury. It also includes imitation weapons and implied weapons: e.g. where a weapon is not seen by the victim but the offender claims to possess one).

- *Unarmed robbery*: This is robbery conducted without the use of a weapon.

The percentages of armed and unarmed robberies in 1998 are given in Figure 21.

Figure 21
Types of robbery, 1998

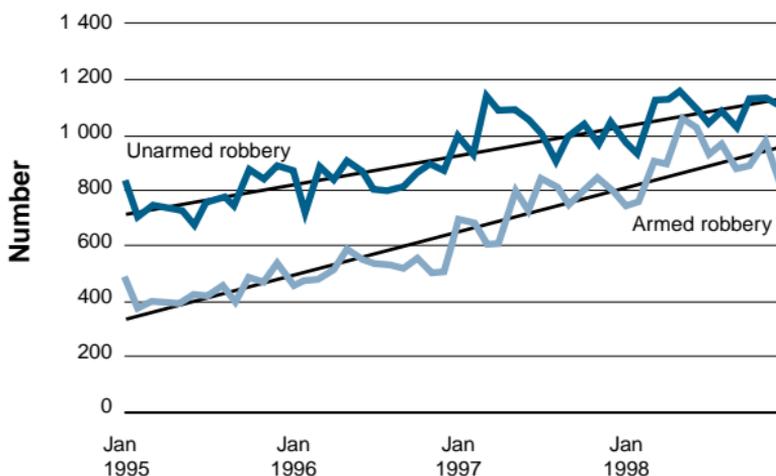


- **There were 23 778 robbery victims in Australia recorded by the police in 1998, with 127 victims per 100 000 population. This represents an increase of 10.6% from the rate in 1997. Of these, 54% were unarmed robberies, 38% were committed with a weapon other than a firearm, and 8% were committed with a firearm.**
- **In 1 013 (9%) robberies the type of weapon was not further defined. This figure was included in the category 'other weapon', however it is possible that the weapons used in some of these robberies were firearms.**
- **The average rate of total recorded robberies was about 2.7 an hour across Australia.**

Trend in robbery

Figure 22 displays the trend in armed and unarmed robberies for each month over the years 1995 to 1998.

Figure 22
Monthly numbers of robbery victims, 1995–98

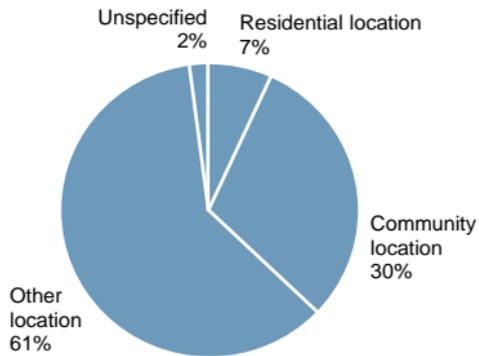


- **The trend lines appear to exhibit a constant upward trend over the four years.**
- **The number of armed robberies was consistently lower than the number of unarmed robberies, however there has been a greater increase in the number of armed robberies over the period.**
- **Armed robberies have increased by 69% from 1995, while unarmed robberies have only increased by 33%.**
- **The number of armed robberies was 493 in January 1995 and 834 in December 1998, while the number of unarmed robberies was 832 in January 1995 and 1 110 in December 1998.**

Armed robbery

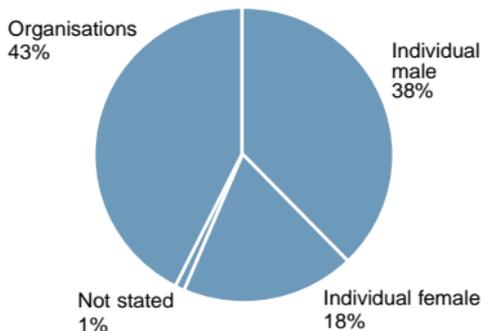
Figure 23 shows the percentage of armed robberies occurring in various locations in 1998, while Figure 24 shows the categories of victims (whether male, female or an organisation).

Figure 23
**Armed robbery,
 by location
 where incident
 occurred,
 1998**



- **There were 10 850 armed robberies recorded in Australia in 1998. This represents almost a 20% increase from the number of armed robberies recorded in 1997.**
- **61% of armed robberies occurred in 'other locations' including retail premises (50%).**
- **30% took place in community locations, with a large proportion being committed on street/footpaths (20%).**

Figure 24
**Victims of
 armed
 robbery,
 1998**

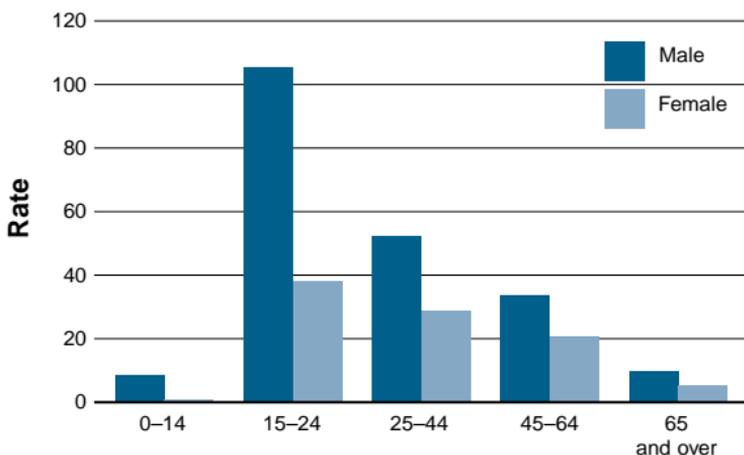


- **43% of armed robberies were directed against organisations.**
- **Of the individuals who were victims, the majority were male.**

Source: Reference 2

The numbers of male and female victims of armed robbery per 100 000 persons are given in Figure 25, grouped into discrete age categories.

Figure 25
Age and gender of armed robbery victims, 1998
 Rate per 100 000 relevant population



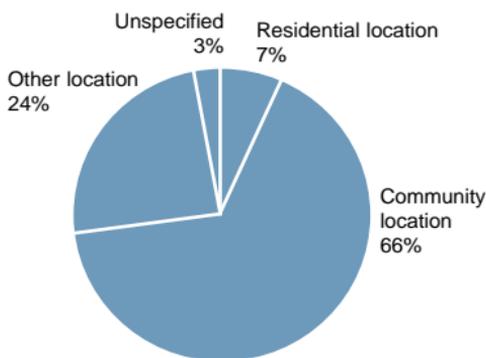
- **In all age categories, males were more at risk of being a victim of armed robbery than were females.**
- **Males aged between 15 and 24 were at least twice as likely to become a victim of armed robbery than persons in any other age category.**

Sources: References 2 and 3

Unarmed robbery

Figure 26 shows the percentage of unarmed robberies that occurred in various locations in 1998.

Figure 26
Unarmed robbery, by location where incident occurred, 1998

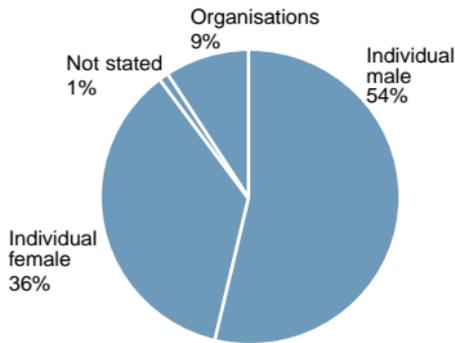


- **There were 12 928 incidents of unarmed robbery recorded in Australia in 1998. This represents a 5.5% increase from the number of unarmed robberies recorded in 1997.**

- **Two-thirds of unarmed robberies occurred in community locations, including 46% on street/footpaths.**
- **A further 24% of unarmed robberies were committed in other locations, such as retail premises (14%).**

Figure 27 groups the victims of unarmed robbery into the categories of male, female and organisations.

Figure 27
**Victims of
unarmed
robbery,
1998**

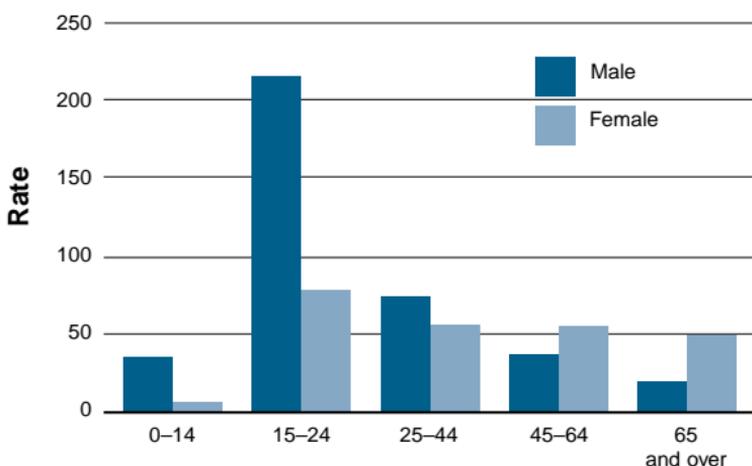


- **90% of the victims of unarmed robbery were individuals, compared to 56% for armed robbery incidents.**
- **The majority of victims of unarmed robbery were male (54%).**

Source: Reference 2

Figure 28 shows the number of male and female victims of unarmed robbery per 100 000 persons for discrete age categories.

Figure 28
Age and gender of unarmed robbery victims, 1998
 Rate per 100 000 relevant population



- **People in the 15–24 age group were most likely to be victims of unarmed robbery.**
- **In the younger age groups (44 and under), males were more at risk of becoming victims of unarmed robbery than females. However, females in the older age groups (45 and over) were more at risk than males.**

Sources: References 2 and 3

Unlawful entry with intent (UEWI)

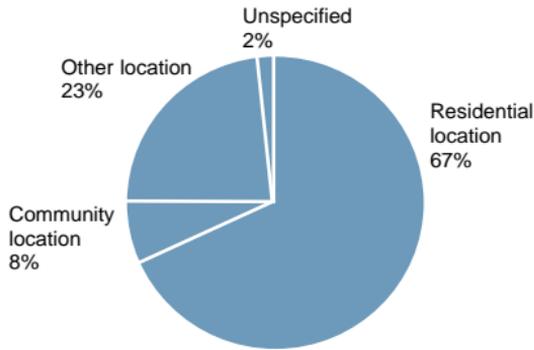
'Unlawful entry with intent' is defined by the ABS as the unlawful entry of a structure with the intent to commit an offence. UEWI offences include burglary, break and enter and some stealing.

- **In 1998 there were 435 670 incidents of UEWI recorded by the police in Australia, with 2 324 victims per 100 000 population. This is a 3.3% increase from the number recorded in 1997.**
- **The rate of unlawful entry in residential locations was much higher at 4 191 per 100 000 households.**
- **The average rate of occurrence of a UEWI was 50 per hour, or almost one every minute across Australia.**

Location of unlawful entry with intent

Figure 29 shows the percentage of UEWIs occurring in various locations in 1998.

Figure 29
Unlawful entry with intent, by location where incident occurred, 1998

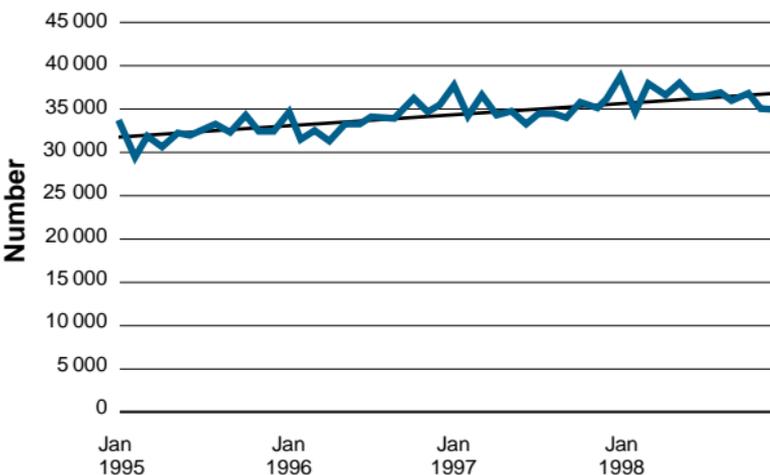


- **67% of UEWIs occurred in residential locations, a large majority of which were private dwellings.**
- **23% of UEWI offences were committed in other locations, including retail premises (12%).**
- **8% of recorded UEWIs took place in community locations, including educational facilities (5%).**

Trend in unlawful entry with intent

Figure 30 shows the trend in recorded UEWIs for each month over the years 1995 to 1998.

Figure 30
Monthly numbers of unlawful entry with intent offences, 1995–98



- **The trend line appears to exhibit a slight rise over the four-year period.**
- **The average number of incidents per month was 34 163.**

Source: Reference 2

Motor vehicle theft

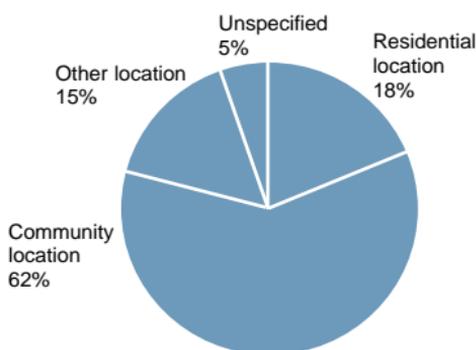
The ABS definition of motor vehicle theft is the taking of a motor vehicle unlawfully or without permission, but it excludes damaging and tampering or interfering with motor vehicles. Under this category are motor vehicles such as cars, motor cycles, campervans and trucks.

- **In 1998, there were 131 572 motor vehicles recorded as stolen by the police, with 702 victims per 100 000 population.**
- **Recorded motor vehicle thefts averaged one every four minutes across Australia in 1998.**
- **In Australia in 1998 one motor vehicle was stolen for every 89 registered vehicles.**

Location of motor vehicle theft

Figure 31 shows the percentage of motor vehicle thefts that took place in various locations in 1998.

Figure 31
Motor vehicle theft, by location where incident occurred, 1998



- **Of all recorded motor vehicle thefts in Australia in 1998, 62% occurred in community locations; 41% from a street/footpath and 13% from a car park.**

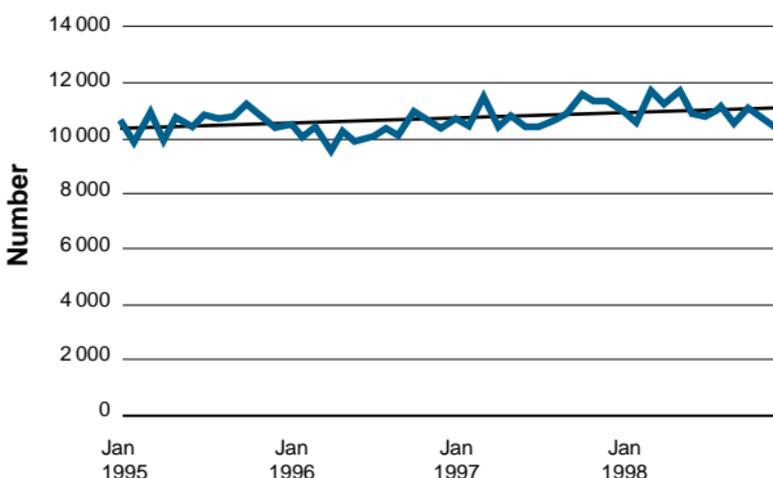
- **18% of motor vehicle thefts were committed in residential locations.**
- **15% of motor vehicle thefts took place in other locations, such as a retail premises (10%).**

Trend in motor vehicle theft

Figure 32 displays the trend in motor vehicle theft for each month over the period 1995 to 1998.

Figure 32

Monthly numbers of motor vehicle thefts, 1995–98



- **The number of motor vehicle thefts appears to be relatively stable, at a little over 10 000 per month for the years 1995 to 1998.**
- **Motor vehicle theft was at its lowest point in April 1996.**

Source: Reference 2

Other theft

The ABS defines 'other theft' (stealing) as the taking of another person's property with the intention of permanently depriving the owner of the property illegally and without permission, but without force, threat of force, use of coercive measures, deceit or having gained unlawful entry to any structure even if the intent was to commit theft.

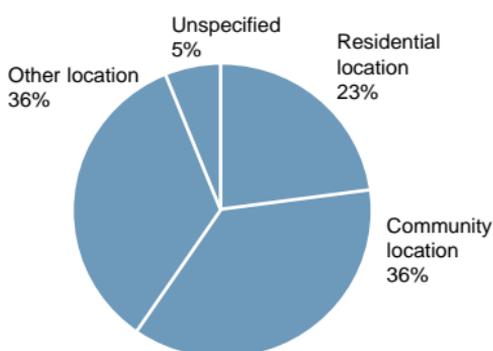
This offence includes such crimes as pickpocketing, bagsnatching, stealing, theft from a motor vehicle, theft of motor vehicle parts/accessories/petrol, stealing of stock/domestic animals, and theft of non-motorised vehicles/boats/aircraft/bicycles. It is the largest category of all crime.

- **A total of 565 214 incidents of other theft was recorded by the police in 1998, with 2 856 victims per 100 000 population in Australia. This represents a 6.5% increase from the number recorded in 1997.**
- **A little over one 'other theft' occurred every minute across Australia in 1998.**

Location of other theft

The percentages of other thefts occurring in various locations in 1998 are depicted in Figure 33.

Figure 33
Other theft, by location where incident occurred, 1998

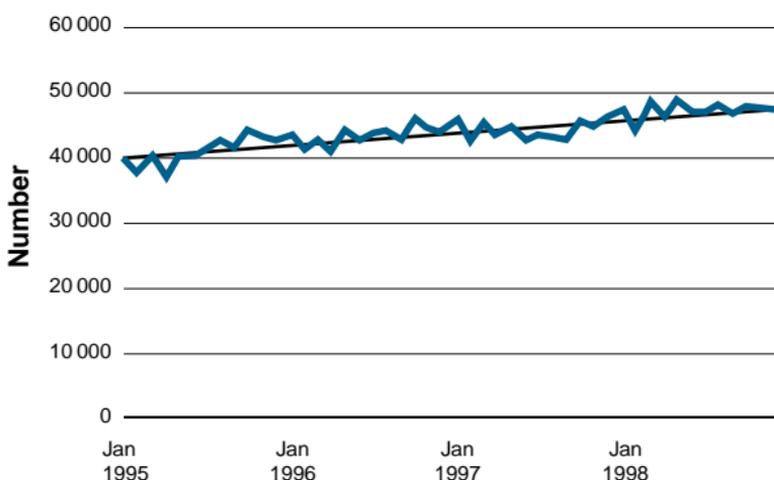


- **Stealing was equally common in community and 'other' locations.**
- **Of all recorded incidents of stealing, 36% took place in community locations. Of these, 18% were from a street/footpath and 10% from a transport location.**
- **36% of stealing incidents took place in other locations, such as a retail premises (24%).**
- **In 23% of cases, other theft occurred in a residential location.**

Trend in other theft

The trend in other theft for each month over the four years 1995 to 1998 is illustrated in Figure 34.

Figure 34
Monthly numbers of other theft, 1995–98



- **The trend line shows that there has been a slight rise over the four-year period.**
- **The average number of stealing incidents recorded each month for the four-year period was 43 863.**

Source: Reference 2

4 CRIMINAL COURTS

Structure of the criminal courts in Australia

There is a hierarchy of criminal courts at both the Commonwealth and the State or Territory levels:

- *Magistrates' courts*: a lower court level that deals with relatively minor or summary criminal offences. Under some circumstances, this court may also deal with less serious indictable offences. They are also responsible for conducting preliminary (committal) hearings for indictable offences.
- *Intermediate (district/county) courts*: a higher court level that, together with the supreme court, deals with the more serious crimes. These courts hear the majority of cases involving indictable crimes.
- *Supreme courts*: the highest level of court within a State or Territory. They deal with the most serious crimes.

Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory do not have intermediate courts and all relevant charges are dealt with at the supreme courts. In States with both supreme and intermediate courts, a large majority of charges are decided at the intermediate courts.

All State, Territory and Commonwealth courts handle a number of matters that appear in the court system for the first time. Almost all criminal charges are lodged for the first time at the magistrates' court level.

National statistics on charges, trials, and sentencing of suspects at all levels of courts are not yet available in Australia. However, the Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes a limited amount of statistics on defendants whose cases were initiated and finalised at higher criminal courts. (Higher courts comprise those at the intermediate and supreme court levels, where defendants charged with serious or indictable offences are dealt with, and where appeals and civil cases are also heard.)

In addition, for the last few years the Industry Commission has produced statistics on the number of lodgments at each court level.

Sources: References 7 and 8

The criminal court process

Case flows

Cases passing through the courts generally share the following common elements:

- lodgment: the initiation of the matter with the court;
- pre-trial discussion and mediation between the parties;
- trial; and
- court decision: judgment or verdict followed by sentencing.

Lodgments

The largest number of lodgments is processed by magistrates' courts in their criminal jurisdictions.

- **Over 1.7 million cases were initiated in magistrates' courts in 1997–98. These cases accounted for 98.2% of all lodgments in the criminal courts.**
- **Only 1.5% (27 400) of cases were initiated in the intermediate courts and 0.3% (5 100) of cases in the supreme courts.**
- **66% of the criminal matters initiated in magistrates' courts were of a minor nature.**
- **There has been a 21% increase in the number of lodgments received by courts throughout Australia since 1994–95.**

Hearings

Hearings, particularly full court hearings and trials, are the primary cost driver for court administrations. Hearings encompass court trials in the criminal and civil jurisdictions, as well as inquests and inquiries in the coronial jurisdiction.

- **Nationally, there were approximately 543 000 court hearings in 1997–98, 390 783 of a criminal nature.**
- **The majority of criminal hearings (93%) took place in the magistrates' courts.**

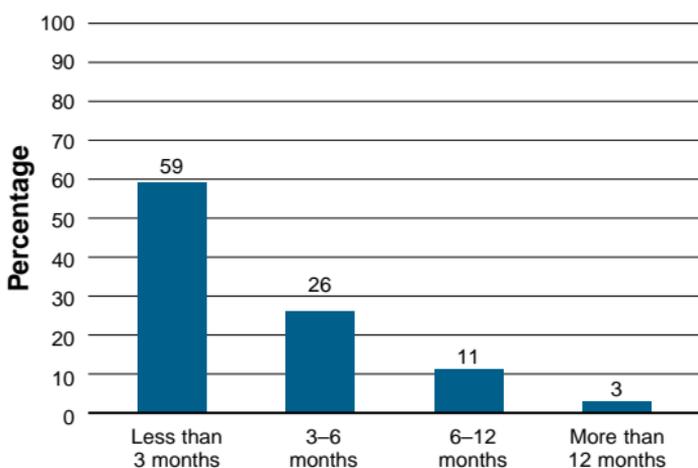
Timeliness

The duration between the lodgment of a matter with the court and its finalisation is referred to as 'timeliness'. Generally, lower courts complete a greater proportion of their workload more quickly because the disputes and prosecutions heard are less complex than those in higher courts, and cases are of a routine or minor nature.

Committals are the first stage of hearing indictable offences in the criminal justice system. A magistrate assesses the sufficiency of evidence presented against the defendant and decides whether to commit the matter for trial in a superior court. Defendants are often held in custody pending a committal hearing or trial if ordered. The timely conduct of the committal hearing is therefore important for timely adjudication of the charges against the defendant.

Figure 35 shows the percentage of committal (criminal) matters finalised in magistrates' courts in 1997–98.

Figure 35
Committal (criminal) matters finalised, magistrates' courts, 1997–98

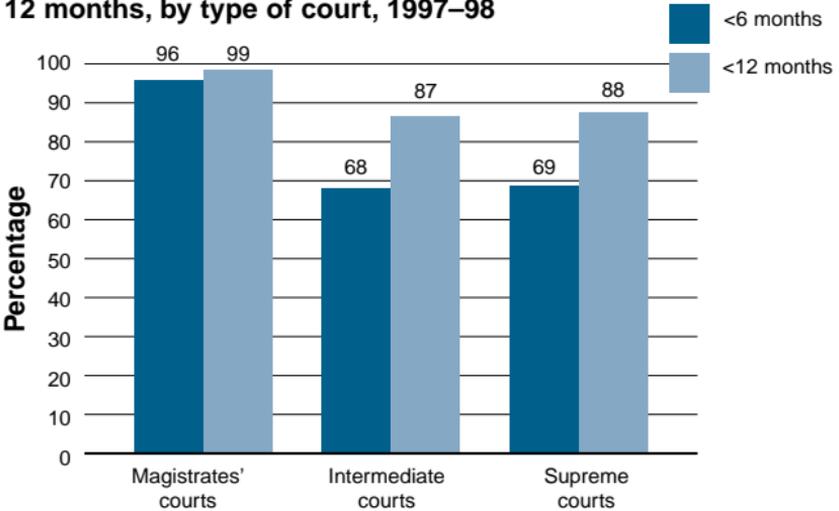


- **On average, 59% of committal hearings in 1997–98 were finalised within three months of the receipt of charges by the court, and a further 26% were finalised in the subsequent three months.**

Figure 36 shows the percentage of non-appeal criminal matters finalised within six and 12 months of lodgment, in the magistrates', intermediate and supreme courts.

Figure 36

Non-appeal criminal matters finalised in less than 12 months, by type of court, 1997–98



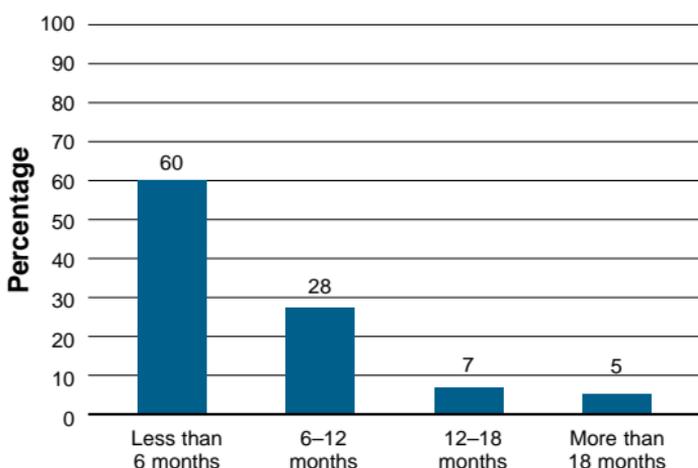
- **Magistrates' courts finalised at least 96% of criminal cases within six months in 1997–98.**
- **The intermediate courts had the lowest percentage of non-appeal criminal matters finalised within six months (68%), with a further 19% finalised in the following six months.**

Appeals from lower courts are predominantly heard by the district courts and supreme courts of the States and Territories. The full bench of the federal court also hears appeals from a single federal court justice.

Figure 37 shows the percentage of appeal matters finalised in supreme/federal courts in 1997–98.

Figure 37

Appeal matters finalised, supreme/federal courts, 1997–98



- **On average, 60% of criminal appeals were finalised within six months.**
- **A further 28% were finalised in the subsequent six months.**

Source: Reference 7

Court decision

In the main, defendants' cases are finalised at the higher courts in one of the following two ways:

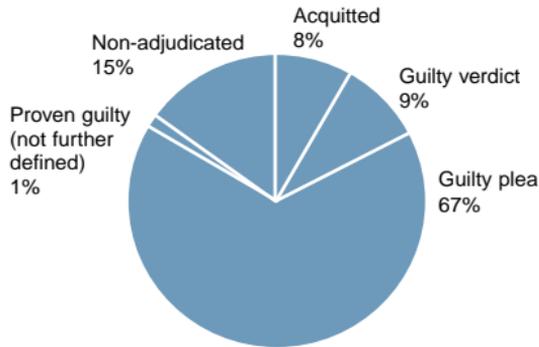
- *adjudicated*: determined whether or not guilty of the charges based on the judges decision; and
- *non-adjudicated*: a method of determining the completion of a case, thereby making it effectively inactive.

Figure 38 shows the percentage of defendants' cases finalised in the intermediate and supreme courts in 1997–98, by the method of finalisation.

A defendant is a person or corporation who has been charged before a court with a criminal offence(s) and brought before the court to face the charge(s).

Defendants finalised refers to defendants who had a final outcome for all charges in the higher courts.

Figure 38
Defendants' cases finalised in higher courts, by method of finalisation, 1997–98

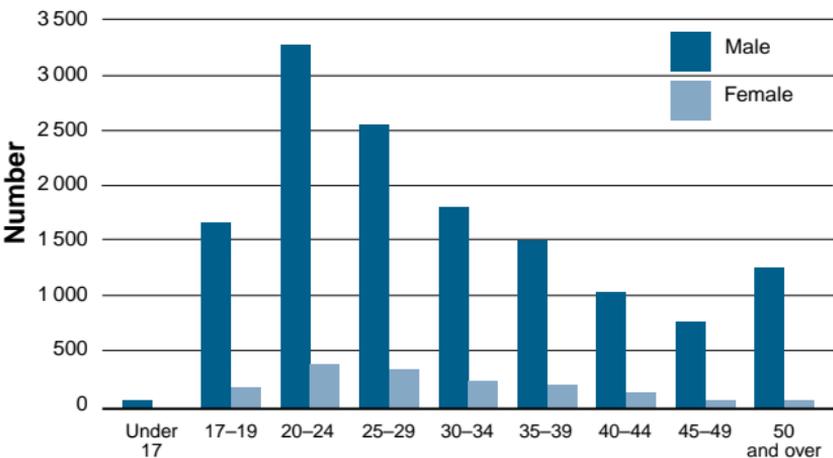


*Excludes Queensland defendants finalised by a bench warrant being issued.

- In 1997–98 there were 16 406 defendants finalised in the higher courts. This represented an increase of 4.8% on 1996–97, when 15 657 defendants were finalised.
- Overall, 77% of the accused persons whose cases were heard by a higher court were found guilty of an offence.
- In only 8% of cases was the defendant acquitted of an offence.

Figure 39 shows the number of male and female defendants in each age category whose cases were finalised in 1997–98.

Figure 39
Number of defendants finalised, by age and gender, 1997–98



- There is a vast difference in the number of males and females appearing before the higher courts. In all age groups males were more highly represented than females.

- **The highest number of defendants, both male and female, was in the 15–24 age group.**

Source: Reference 8

Sentencing

There is a variety of sentencing options available at each court level:

- fine
- good behaviour bond
- probation order
- suspended sentence
- community supervision
- community custody
- home detention
- periodic detention
- imprisonment

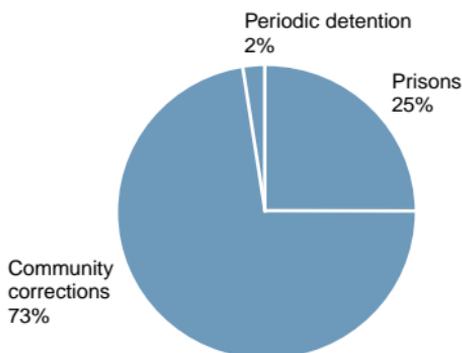
At present there are no national figures on the number of persons sentenced in each particular category.

Persons under corrective services

As mentioned in Section 4, there is a variety of sentencing options available to the courts. Corrective service authorities manage the offenders placed under these sentencing options, which include imprisonment, community corrections and periodic detention.

Figure 40 shows the percentage of offenders sentenced to these various corrective options.

Figure 40
Offenders, by type of corrective program, 1997–98



- **In the financial year 1997–98, an average of 74 810 persons were serving a sentence under custodial or community based corrective programs.**
- **The largest percentage (73%) of offenders served their sentence under a community correction program.**
- **Of the 25% of sentenced offenders who were in prison custody in Australia in 1997–98, 72% were being held in secure prisons, while the remaining 28% were in facilities with lower levels of security.**
- **2% of offenders were serving periodic detention orders, which are only available to offenders in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.**

Source: Reference 7

Prisons

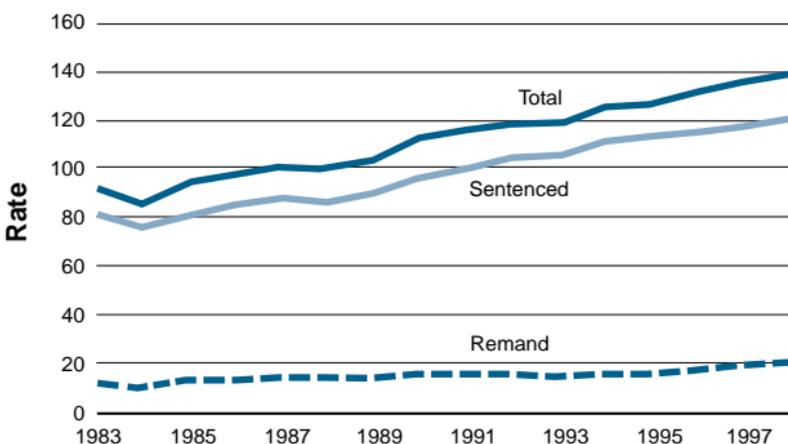
A national prison census for Australia was initiated in 1982 by the Australian Institute of Criminology, which conducted these censuses annually until 1993. This role was taken over by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 1994. The census is conducted on 30 June each year.

Trends in prison population

As prison data has been collected by these two different organisations, it is possible that there may be slight inconsistencies in the data collection process. For this reason, the long-term trend data should be used with caution. Also, being the first year of the census, the 1982 data show some inconsistencies in definitions, and hence the long-term trend for imprisonment rates shown in Figure 41 and Figure 43 begins in 1983.

It should be noted that prisons hold both sentenced prisoners and those on remand (unsentenced).

Figure 41
Prisoners in Australia, 1983–98*
Rate per 100 000 population over age 16



* For some years there were also prisoners classified as 'not defined'. Therefore, the number of sentenced prisoners and remandees may not always sum to the total, although the discrepancies are minor.

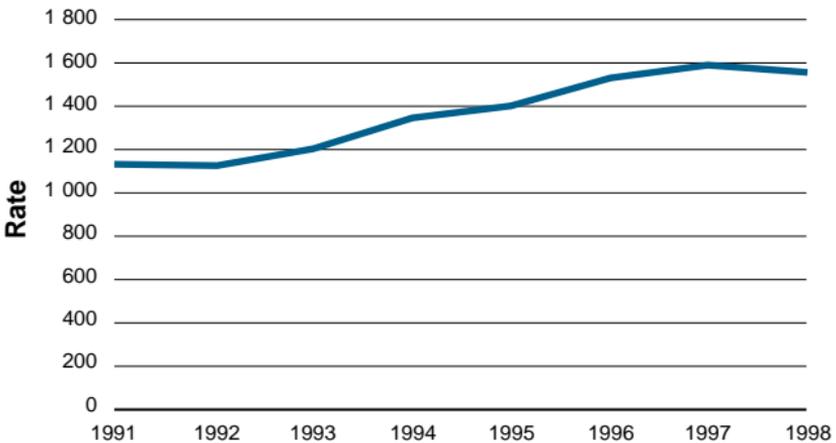
■ **Between 1983 and 1998, the overall imprisonment rate has increased from 91.6 to 139.2 per 100 000 relevant population, an increase of 52%.**

- **During this 16-year period, the imprisonment rate of sentenced prisoners has increased by 48% and that of remandees by 88%.**

Sources: References 3, 9 and 10

Data on prisoners by Aboriginality has been made available since the 1987 prison census. However, due to consistency problems with Indigenous population figures, Figure 42 depicts only the imprisonment rate of Indigenous persons from 1991 to 1998. These data include both sentenced prisoners and remandees.

Figure 42
Indigenous prisoners, 1991–98
 Rate per 100 000 Indigenous population over age 16



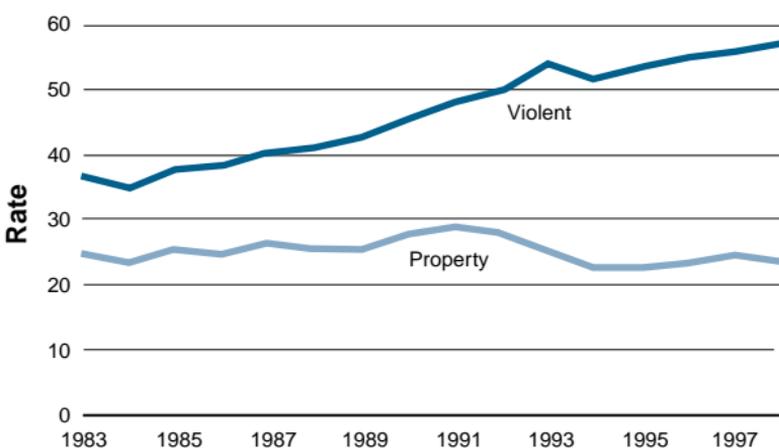
- **The rate of Indigenous prisoners per 100 000 relevant population has increased by 39% since 1991.**
- **The total number of Indigenous people in prison on 30 June 1998 was 3 750, a rate of 1558 per 100 000 Indigenous population over age 16.**
- **This imprisonment rate was almost 14 times higher than the rate for non-Indigenous prisoners.**

Sources: References 3, 9, 10 and 11

Figure 43 depicts imprisonment rates of those convicted of violent and property offences. Violent prisoners are those convicted of homicide, assault, sex offences and robbery.

Prisoners convicted of property offences include those charged with break and enter and with other theft (including motor vehicle theft).

Figure 43
Sentenced prisoners, by type of crime, 1983–98
Rate per 100 000 population over age 16



- **The imprisonment rate of violent prisoners has increased by 56% since 1983.**
- **Since the early 1990s, the rate for property offenders has been declining; the 1998 rate is the lowest since 1985.**
- **The increase in the overall imprisonment rate in Australia appears largely due to the increases in prisoners being sentenced for violent offences.**

Sources: References 3, 9 and 10

Prisoners in 1998

A total of 19 906 persons were in custody in Australian prisons on the night of 30 June 1998; this corresponds to a rate of 139 per 100 000 persons over age 16. Of these, 17 118 were sentenced prisoners and 2 788 were remandees.

- **Just under 6% of all prisoners were women.**
- **20 to 24-year-olds had the highest imprisonment rate, at 321 per 100 000 population over age 16.**

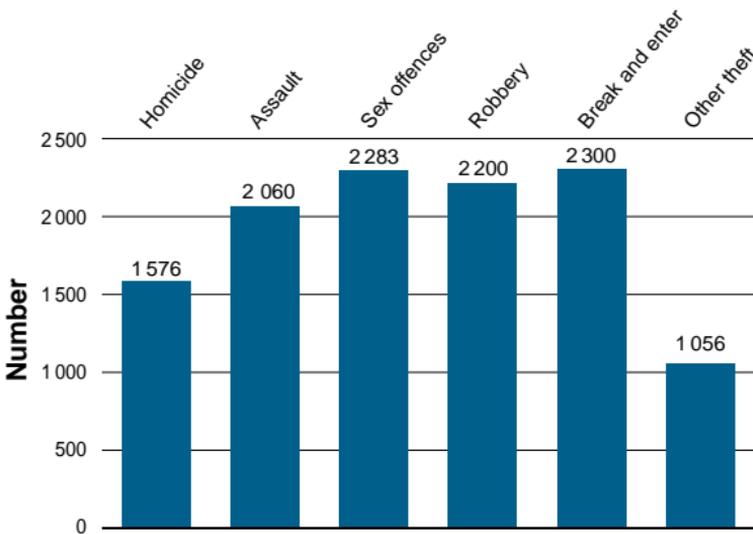
■ **The imprisonment rate for 20 to 24-year-old males was 594 per 100 000 male population over age 16.**

Offenders can be sentenced to a prison term for one or a number of offences. The offence for which a prisoner is categorised as being incarcerated is the offence that is deemed 'most serious'.

Figure 44 shows the number of sentenced prisoners, by their most serious offence, in six major offence categories.

The category of 'other theft' in Figure 44 also includes those found guilty of motor vehicle theft. Owing to the seriousness of motor vehicle theft, other theft can be considered a good proxy for prisoners sentenced for motor vehicle theft.

Figure 44
Sentenced prisoners, by most serious offence, 1998



■ **Prisoners sentenced for the violent offences of homicide, assault, sex offences and robbery account for about half of all sentenced prisoners.**

■ **The largest single category of offenders was sentenced for break and enter (13% of all sentenced prisoners).**

In 1997–98 four States in Australia had private prisons. Over 15% of Australia's prisoners in that year were detained in private prisons.

Sources: References 7, 9 and 10

Community corrections

Community corrections comprise a variety of non-custodial programs, which vary in the extent and nature of supervision, the conditions of the order, and the restrictions on the person's freedom of movement in the community. They generally provide either a non-custodial sentencing alternative or a post-custodial mechanism for re-integrating prisoners into the community under continued supervision.

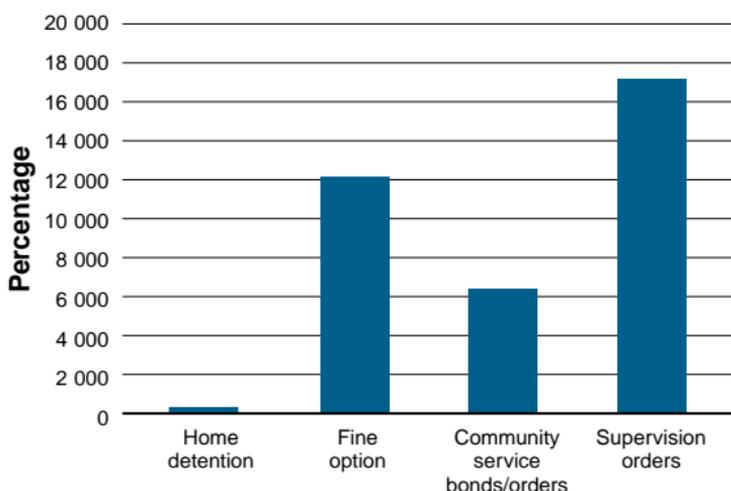
Post-custodial programs include parole, release on licence, pre-release orders and some forms of home detention. Orders imposed by the court as a sentencing sanction include suspended sentences, court-imposed home detention, community service orders, probation, intensive supervision orders and recognisance.

■ **Across Australia in 1997–98 there were 54 893 offenders per day, on average, serving community correction orders.**

■ **This corresponds to a rate of 480 per 100 000 population over age 16.**

Figure 45 shows the average daily offender populations for various community correction options being served in 1997–98.

Figure 45
Average daily community corrections populations*, 1997–98

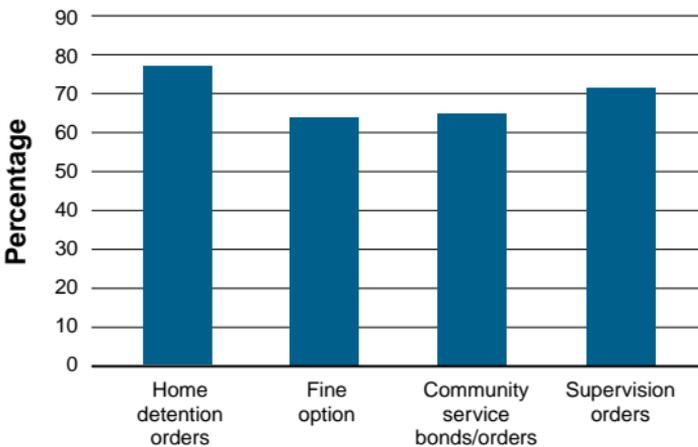


* These figures exclude New South Wales and Victorian community correction populations.

- **Supervision orders are the most common community correction option used, with 17 163 offenders under supervision orders in 1997–98 (does not include New South Wales and Victoria).**
- **Fine option orders and community service bonds/orders are also common, with 12 137 and 6 365 offenders, respectively, serving these corrective options in 1997–98.**

Figure 46 shows the successful completion of various community correction orders completed in 1997–98.

Figure 46
Successful completion of community correction orders, 1997–98



- **Almost 75% of all community correction orders were successfully completed in 1997–98.**
- **Home detention orders had the highest percentage of successful completion (77%), while fine option orders had the lowest (63%).**

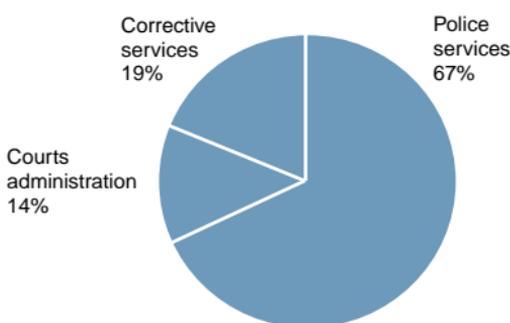
Source: Reference 7

Justice expenditure

According to the *Report on Government Services 1999*, the total government expenditure on justice in 1997–98 was approximately \$5.6 billion.

The largest component of the justice system was police services, which accounted for approximately 67% of the total justice-related expenditure covered by the report. Corrective services accounted for a further 19%, and court administration accounted for the remaining 14% (see Figure 47).

Figure 47
Composition of government expenditure on justice, 1997–98



Police

Policing activities are predominantly the responsibility of the police agencies of State and Territory Governments, with the Australian Federal Police also providing a community policing service in the ACT on behalf of the ACT Government. Funding for these services comes almost exclusively from State and Territory government budgets, with some specific purpose grants being provided by the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth Government operates the Australian Federal Police. The figures discussed below exclude resource data for the AFP.

Expenditure

Information on expenditure for Australian police services in 1997–98 is presented in Table 7. The total recurrent expenditure on police services across Australia was \$3.8 billion. This amounts to \$202 for every person in Australia. Recurrent expenditure on staff salaries accounted for 80% of this total expenditure.

Table 7

Expenditure on Australian police services, 1997–98

Expenditure	(\$000)
Total recurrent expenditure	3 747 920
Total capital expenditure	201 915
Total expenditure	3 949 835
Staff Salaries	(\$)
Average police staff salaries	59 129
Average non-police staff salaries	38 015

Source: Reference 7

Staffing

Most people involved directly in the delivery of police services are sworn police officers (employees recognised under each jurisdiction's Police Act). Sworn police officers exercise police powers such as the powers to arrest, summons, caution, detain, fingerprint and search.

In recent years there has been a trend towards 'civilianisation' of police services, with some non-core activities undertaken by non-sworn officers or contracted to external providers.

- **The total police services staffing in Australia in 1998 was 53 247. This averages out at 284 per 100 000 persons (222 sworn police officers and 62 were civilian employees).**
- **There were 41 620 sworn police officers and 11 627 civilian employees making up Australian police services in 1998.**

Data for the various categories of police staff in each jurisdiction in 1998 are given in Table 8.

Table 8

Composition of police services, by jurisdiction, as at 30 June 1998

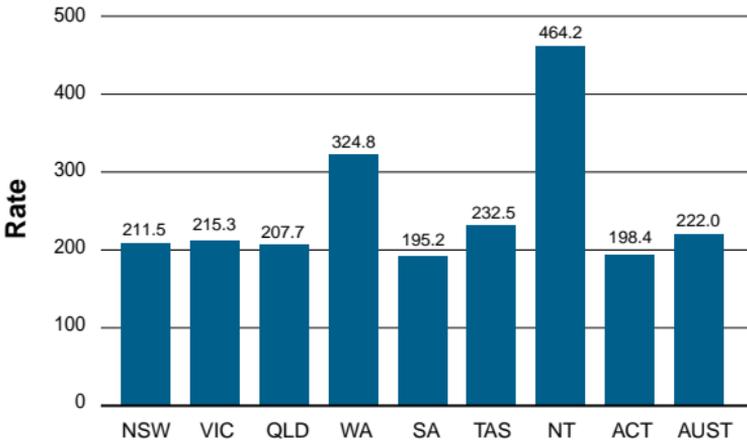
Jurisdiction	Sworn police officers	Civilian	Total
NSW	13 414	3 831	17 245
Vic.	10 033	1 879	11 912
Qld	7 178	2 576	9 754
WA	4 830	1 878	6 708
SA	3 574	775	4 349
Tas.	1 097	395	1 492
NT	882	234	1 116
ACT	612	59	671
Aust.	41 620	11 627	53 247

- **New South Wales had the largest police service across Australia, while the Australian Capital Territory had the smallest.**
- **Western Australia employed the highest proportion of civilian staff (28%), and the Australian Capital Territory employed the lowest (9%).**
- **Since June 1995 there has been a 4% increase in the number of sworn police officers and a 26% increase in the number of civilian employees in the police services of Australia.**

Sources: References 7, 12 and 13

Figure 48 shows the number of sworn police officers per 100 000 population for each jurisdiction for 30 June 1998.

Figure 48
Sworn police officers per 100 000 population, by jurisdiction, as at 30 June 1998



- Generally there is not much difference across jurisdictions in the number of sworn police officers per 100 000 population, with the exception of the Northern Territory and Western Australia, which are above the national average.
- The Northern Territory had the largest number of police officers per 100 000 population (464.2), while South Australia had the smallest (195.2).
- When using police strength data, the area that police have to cover is also important. Victoria has a relatively small area, whereas the area of the Northern Territory is very large.
- Victoria has 44 police officers per 1000km², while the Northern Territory has only one.

Sources: References 3, 12 and 13

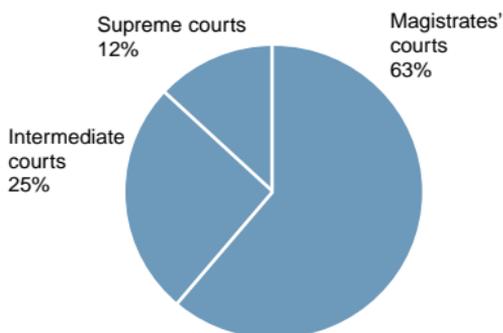
Court administration

Court administration agencies throughout Australia provide a range of services integral to the effective performance of the judicial system. These agencies work with the judiciary and the community to provide a court system that allows the prompt resolution of disputes and appropriate access to justice for the community.

- **The total recurrent expenditure by State, Territory and Commonwealth court authorities was a little over \$714 million in 1997–98, an increase of 4% since 1994–95.**
- **Expenditure for criminal court administration was \$355 656 000 for 1997–98.**

Figure 49 shows the division of expenditure between the three levels of criminal courts in 1997–98.

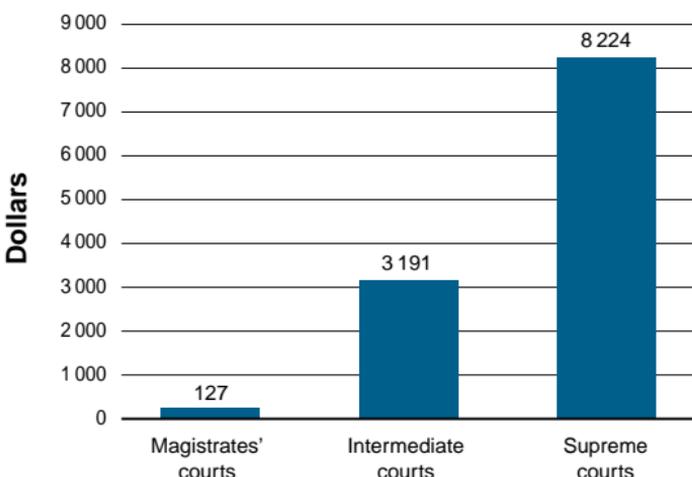
Figure 49
Total expenditure (less in-house revenue) for criminal courts, 1997–98



- **The magistrates' courts incurred 63% of total criminal court expenditure, followed by the intermediate courts (25%) and then the supreme courts (12%).**

Figure 50 shows the average expenditure per case lodgment in the criminal courts. The higher the level of court, the more expensive each criminal case lodgment becomes. This is because the more complex and lengthy cases are tried in the higher courts.

Figure 50
Average expenditure per criminal case lodgment, 1997–98



- **Average expenditure per criminal case lodgment ranged from \$127 in the magistrates' courts to \$8 224 in the supreme courts.**

Source: Reference 7

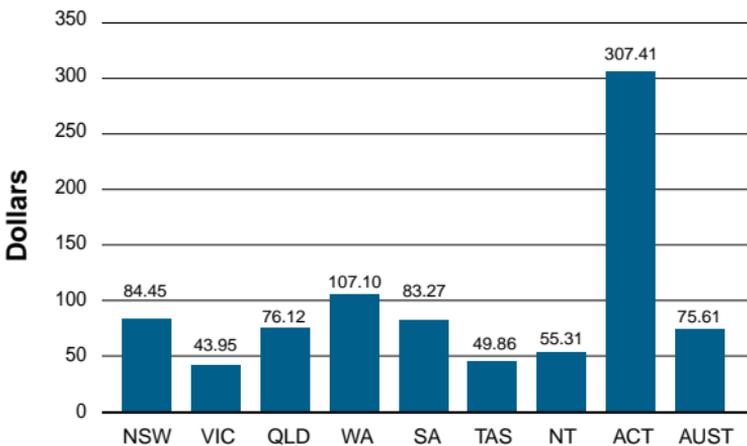
Corrective services

Resources allocated for corrective services in Australia are divided into two broad categories: prisons and community corrections.

Total recurrent expenditure on corrective services in Australia was approximately \$1 065 million in 1997–98; \$955 million (90%) for prisons and \$110 million (10%) for community corrections. This corresponds to a figure of about \$76 for every adult in Australia.

Figure 51 shows recurrent expenditure on corrective services per head of adult population (17+) for each jurisdiction in 1997–98.

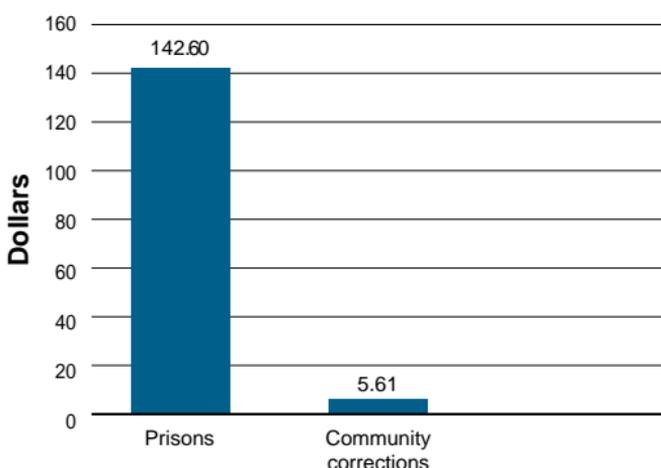
Figure 51
Recurrent expenditure on corrective services per head of adult population, 1997–98



- **Recurrent expenditure on corrective services per head of adult population in 1997–98 ranged from \$43.95 in Victoria to \$307.41 in the Northern Territory.**

Figure 52 shows the average expenditure per day for each offender by Australian corrective services in 1997–98.

Figure 52
Corrective services expenditure per offender per day, 1997–98



- **Expenditure per prisoner per day was \$142.60 in 1997–98. This figure was 25 times more than that spent on offenders in community correction programs each day.**
- **Expenditure per offender sentenced to community correction programs per day was only \$5.61.**
- **Overall in 1997–98 approximately \$52 000 was spent on each prisoner and \$2 050 on each offender sentenced to community correction programs.**

Source: Reference 7

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