

CRIME AND JUSTICE
IN
SOUTH AUSTRALIA
1999

-

OFFENCES REPORTED TO
POLICE, THE VICTIMS AND
ALLEGED PERPETRATORS

A statistical report

OFFICE OF CRIME STATISTICS
Attorney-General's Department

First published 2000 by

Office of Crime Statistics
South Australian Attorney-General's Department
GPO Box 464
ADELAIDE SA 5000

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Printed by Graphic Print Group

ISSN: 1443-0150

CONTENTS

PREFACE	xi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	xiii
INTRODUCTION	1
Using crime and justice reports	1
Comprehensiveness	1
Summary of 1999 statistics	4
1 OVERVIEW	11
1.1 Police incident reports	13
1.2 Offences reported or becoming known to police	16
Offences reported or becoming known in 1999: a profile	16
Shifts between 1998 and 1999	19
Longitudinal trends	23
Location of reported offences	41
1.3 Clearance status of offences	43
Clearance status of offences recorded by police in 1999	43
Total offences cleared in 1999	47
Longitudinal trends in level of clearance	51
1.4 Victims of offences recorded by police	53
Total offences recorded	54
Discrete individuals and average number of incident reports per individual	62
1.5 Offences cleared by way of an apprehension	64
Characteristics of alleged offenders involved in offences cleared by way of an apprehension	64
Relationship between charges laid, apprehension reports filed and discrete persons apprehended	70
Apprehension reports: some further details	73
Individuals apprehended by police: some further details	74
2 POLICE INCIDENT REPORTS	83
TABLE 2.1 Number of incident reports lodged per year, 1992-1999	85
TABLE 2.2 Number of offences per incident report	86
TABLE 2.3 Major offence recorded per incident report	87
3 OFFENCES REPORTED OR BECOMING KNOWN TO POLICE	89
TABLE 3.1 Number of offences for all offence groups	91
TABLE 3.2 Number of offences against the person (excluding sexual offences)	92
TABLE 3.3 Number of sexual offences - summary	93
TABLE 3.4 Number of sexual offences – rape and attempted rape	94
TABLE 3.5 Number of sexual offences – indecent assault	95
TABLE 3.6 Number of sexual offences – unlawful sexual intercourse	96
TABLE 3.7 Number of sexual offences – incest and other sexual offences	97

TABLE 3.8	Number of robbery and extortion offences	98
TABLE 3.9	Number of offences against property - summary	99
TABLE 3.10	Number of offences against property – burglary and break and enter	100
TABLE 3.11	Number of offences against property – fraud and misappropriation	102
TABLE 3.12	Number of offences against property – larceny and receiving	103
TABLE 3.13	Number of offences against property – property damage and environmental offences	104
TABLE 3.14	Number of driving offences	105
TABLE 3.15	Number of drug offences – summary	106
TABLE 3.16	Number of drug offences – possess and/or use drugs	107
TABLE 3.17	Number of drug offences – possess for sale/sell drugs	108
TABLE 3.18	Number of drug offences – produce or manufacture drugs	109
TABLE 3.19	Number of offences against good order	110
TABLE 3.20	Number of ‘other’ offences	112
TABLE 3.21a	Offences reported per metropolitan Local Government Area	113
TABLE 3.21b	Offences reported per country Local Government Area	114
TABLE 3.22	Top twenty-two areas from which motor vehicles were stolen	117

4 CLEARANCE STATUS OF OFFENCES 119

TABLE 4.1	Summary of all offence groups	121
TABLE 4.2	Offences against the person, (excluding sexual offences)	122
TABLE 4.3	Sexual offences - summary	123
TABLE 4.4	Sexual offences - rape	124
TABLE 4.5	Sexual offences – indecent assault	125
TABLE 4.6	Sexual offences – unlawful sexual intercourse	126
TABLE 4.7	Sexual offences – incest and other sexual offences	127
TABLE 4.8	Robbery and extortion offences	128
TABLE 4.9	Offences against property - summary	129
TABLE 4.10	Offences against property - burglary and break and enter	130
TABLE 4.11	Offences against property - fraud and misappropriation	132
TABLE 4.12	Offences against property - larceny and receiving	133
TABLE 4.13	Offences against property - property damage and environmental offences	134
TABLE 4.14	Driving offences	135
TABLE 4.15	Drug offences - summary	136
TABLE 4.16	Drug offences – possess and/or use drugs	137
TABLE 4.17	Drug offences – possess for sale/sell drugs	138
TABLE 4.18	Drug offences – produce or manufacture drugs	139
TABLE 4.19	Offences against good order	140
TABLE 4.20	Other offences	142
TABLE 4.21	Summary of all offence groups	143
TABLE 4.22	Offence against the person (excluding sexual offences)	144
TABLE 4.23	Sexual offences	145
TABLE 4.24	Robbery and extortion	146
TABLE 4.25	Offences against property	147

TABLE 4.26	Driving offences	148
TABLE 4.27	Drug offences	149
TABLE 4.28	Offences against good order	150
TABLE 4.29	Other offences	151
5 VICTIMS OF OFFENCES RECORDED BY POLICE		153
TABLE 5.1a	Age of all victims: offences against the person (excluding sexual offences)	155
TABLE 5.1b	Age of male victims: offences against the person (excluding sexual offences)	156
TABLE 5.1c	Age of female victims: offences against the person (excluding sexual offences)	157
TABLE 5.2a	Age of all victims: sexual offences	158
TABLE 5.2b	Age of male victims: sexual offences	159
TABLE 5.2c	Age of female victims: sexual offences	160
TABLE 5.3a	Age of all victims: robbery and extortion, larceny from the person	161
TABLE 5.3b	Age of male victims: robbery and extortion, larceny from the person	162
TABLE 5.3c	Age of female victims: robbery and extortion, larceny from the person	163
TABLE 5.4	Number of incident reports per victim by sex	164
6 OFFENCES CLEARED BY WAY OF AN APPREHENSION		165
TABLE 6.1a	Age of total alleged offenders: summary of all offence groups	167
TABLE 6.1b	Age of alleged male offenders: summary of all offence groups	168
TABLE 6.1c	Age of alleged female offenders: summary of all offence groups	169
TABLE 6.1d	Age of alleged offenders where sex is unknown: summary of all offence groups	170
TABLE 6.2a	Age of total alleged offenders: offences against the person (excluding sexual offences)	171
TABLE 6.2b	Age of alleged male offenders: offences against the person (excluding sexual offences)	172
TABLE 6.2c	Age of alleged female offenders: offences against the person (excluding sexual offences)	173
TABLE 6.3a	Age of total alleged offenders: sexual offences	174
TABLE 6.3b	Age of alleged male offenders: sexual offences	175
TABLE 6.3c	Age of alleged female offenders: sexual offences	176
TABLE 6.4a	Age of total alleged offenders: robbery and extortion	177
TABLE 6.4b	Age of alleged male offenders: robbery and extortion	178
TABLE 6.4c	Age of alleged female offenders: robbery and extortion	179
TABLE 6.5a	Age of total alleged offenders: offences against property - summary	180
TABLE 6.5b	Age of alleged male offenders: offences against property - summary	181
TABLE 6.5c	Age of alleged female offenders: offences against property - summary	182
TABLE 6.6a	Age of total alleged offenders: offences against property - burglary and break and enter	183
TABLE 6.6b	Age and sex of alleged offenders: offences against property -	

	burglary and break and enter	184
TABLE 6.6c	Age and sex of alleged offenders: offences against property - burglary and break and enter	185
TABLE 6.7a	Age of total alleged offenders: offences against property - fraud and misappropriation	186
TABLE 6.7b	Age and sex of alleged offenders: offences against property - fraud and misappropriation	187
TABLE 6.8a	Age of total alleged offenders: offences against property – larceny and receiving	188
TABLE 6.8b	Age of alleged male offenders: offences against property – larceny and receiving	189
TABLE 6.8c	Age of alleged female offenders: offences against property – larceny and receiving	190
TABLE 6.9a	Age of total alleged offenders: offences against property - property damage and environmental offences	191
TABLE 6.9b	Age and sex of alleged offenders: offences against property - property damage and environmental offences	192
TABLE 6.10a	Age of total alleged offenders: driving offences	193
TABLE 6.10b	Age and sex of alleged offenders: driving offences	194
TABLE 6.11a	Age of total alleged offenders: drug offences	195
TABLE 6.11b	Age of alleged male offenders: drug offences	196
TABLE 6.11c	Age of alleged female offenders: drug offences	197
TABLE 6.12a	Age of total alleged offenders: offences against good order	198
TABLE 6.12b	Age of alleged male offenders: offences against good order	199
TABLE 6.12c	Age of alleged female offenders: offences against good order	200
TABLE 6.13a	Age of total alleged offenders: other offences	201
TABLE 6.13b	Age and sex of alleged offenders: other offences	202
TABLE 6.14a	Age of alleged non-Aboriginal offenders: summary of all offence groups	203
TABLE 6.14b	Age of alleged Aboriginal offenders: summary of all offence groups	204
TABLE 6.14c	Age of alleged offenders where racial appearance is unknown: summary of all offence groups	205
TABLE 6.15a	Age of alleged non-Aboriginal offenders: offences against the person (excluding sexual offences)	206
TABLE 6.15b	Age of alleged Aboriginal offenders: offences against the person (excluding sexual offences)	207
TABLE 6.15c	Age of alleged offenders where racial appearance is unknown: offences against the person (excluding sexual offences)	208
TABLE 6.16a	Age and racial appearance of non-Aboriginal alleged offenders: sexual offences	209
TABLE 6.16b	Age of alleged Aboriginal offenders: sexual offences	210
TABLE 6.16c	Age of alleged offenders where racial appearance is unknown: sexual offences	211
TABLE 6.17a	Age and racial appearance of alleged offenders: robbery and extortion	212
TABLE 6.17b	Age of alleged offenders where racial appearance is unknown: robbery and extortion	213
TABLE 6.18a	Age and racial appearance of alleged offenders: offences against property - summary	214
TABLE 6.18b	Age of alleged offenders where racial appearance is unknown: offences against property - summary	215

TABLE 6.19a	Age and racial appearance of alleged offenders: offences against property - burglary and break and enter	216
TABLE 6.19b	Age and racial appearance of alleged offenders: offences against property - burglary and break and enter	217
TABLE 6.19c	Age of alleged offenders where racial appearance is unknown: offences against property - burglary and break and enter	218
TABLE 6.20a	Age and racial appearance of alleged offenders: offences against property - fraud and misappropriation	219
TABLE 6.20b	Age of alleged offenders where racial appearance is unknown: offences against property - fraud and misappropriation	220
TABLE 6.21a	Age of alleged non-Aboriginal offenders: offences against property – larceny and receiving	221
TABLE 6.21b	Age of alleged Aboriginal offenders: offences against property – larceny and receiving	222
TABLE 6.21c	Age of alleged offenders where racial appearance is unknown: offences against property – larceny and receiving	223
TABLE 6.22a	Age and racial appearance of alleged offenders: offences against property – property damage and environmental offences	224
TABLE 6.22b	Age of alleged offenders where racial appearance is unknown: offences against property - property damage and environmental offences	225
TABLE 6.23a	Age and racial appearance of alleged offenders: driving offences	226
TABLE 6.23b	Age of alleged offenders where racial appearance is unknown: driving offences	227
TABLE 6.24a	Age of alleged non-Aboriginal offenders: drug offences	228
TABLE 6.24b	Age of alleged Aboriginal offenders: drug offences	229
TABLE 6.24c	Age of alleged offenders where racial appearance is unknown: drug offences	230
TABLE 6.25a	Age of alleged non-Aboriginal offenders: offences against good order	231
TABLE 6.25b	Age of alleged Aboriginal offenders: offences against good order	232
TABLE 6.25c	Age of alleged offenders where racial appearance is unknown: offences against good order	233
TABLE 6.26a	Age and racial appearance of alleged offenders: other offences	234
TABLE 6.26b	Age of alleged offenders where racial appearance is unknown: other offences	235
TABLE 6.27a	Offences alleged, apprehension reports and alleged offenders: total per offence group	236

TABLE 6.27b	Offences alleged, apprehension reports and alleged offenders: male totals per offence group	237
TABLE 6.27c	Offences alleged, apprehension reports and alleged offenders: female totals per offence group	238
TABLE 6.27d	Offences alleged, apprehension reports and alleged offenders: Non-Aboriginal totals per offence group	239
TABLE 6.27e	Offences alleged, apprehension reports and alleged offenders: Aboriginal totals per offence group	240
TABLE 6.27f	Offences alleged, apprehension reports and alleged offenders: totals per offence group where racial appearance unknown	241
TABLE 6.28	Apprehension reports: sex by age of alleged offenders	242
TABLE 6.29	Apprehension reports: racial appearance by age of alleged offenders	243
TABLE 6.30	Apprehension reports: number of offences per report by sex of alleged offenders	244
TABLE 6.31	Apprehension reports: number of offences per report by racial appearance of alleged offenders	245
TABLE 6.32	Individuals: sex by age of alleged offenders	246
TABLE 6.33	Individuals: racial appearance by age of alleged offenders	247
TABLE 6.34	Individuals: number of apprehension reports per individual by sex	248
TABLE 6.35	Individuals: number of apprehension reports per individual by racial appearance	249
TABLE 6.36a	Individuals: number of apprehension reports per individual by age of total alleged offenders	250
TABLE 6.36b	Individuals: number of apprehension reports per individual by age of alleged male offenders	251
TABLE 6.36c	Individual number of apprehension reports per individual by age of alleged female offenders	252
TABLE 6.37a	Individuals: number of apprehension reports per individual by age of alleged non-Aboriginal offenders	253
TABLE 6.37b	Individuals: number of apprehension reports per individual by age of alleged Aboriginal offenders	254
TABLE 6.37c	Individuals: number of apprehension reports per individual by age for alleged offenders for whom racial appearance was unknown	255
TABLE 6.38a	Individuals: number of apprehension reports per individual by number of offences per individual for all alleged offenders	256
TABLE 6.38b	Individuals: number of apprehension reports per individual by number of offences per individual for alleged male offenders	257
TABLE 6.38c	Individuals: number of apprehension reports per individual by number of offences per individual for alleged female offenders	258
TABLE 6.39a	Individuals: number of apprehension reports per individual by number of offences per individual for alleged non-Aboriginal offenders	259
TABLE 6.39b	Individuals: number of apprehension reports per individual by number of offences per individual for alleged Aboriginal offenders	260
TABLE 6.39c	Individuals: number of apprehension reports per individual by number of offences per individual for alleged offenders for whom racial appearance was unknown	261

7 APPENDIX	263
A EXPLANATORY NOTES	265
Introduction	265
Definition of offence groups	266
Police incident reports	268
Offences reported or becoming known to police	269
Clearance status of offences reported	271
Victims of offences recorded by police	273
Offences cleared by way of an apprehension	275
B PUBLICATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF CRIME STATISTICS	283

PREFACE

Crime and Justice in South Australia: Offences Reported to Police, the Victims and Alleged Perpetrators is the first of a three volume report on crime and criminal justice statistics in South Australia which, in one form or another, has been published annually by the Office of Crime Statistics since 1987. While Volume 2 deals exclusively with young offenders and the juvenile justice system and Volume 3 focuses on adult courts and correctional services, Volume 1 (ie this volume) contains information on police-related activities for the period 1 January to 31 December 1999.

Five main sections are included in this report, as follows:

- the number of incident reports filed by police;
- the number of offences recorded by police;
- the number of offences cleared by police and the method of clearance;
- characteristics of victims who reported an offence to police; and
- characteristics of alleged perpetrators apprehended by police.

This report contains a much broader range of data than was included in the Police Statistics section of *Crime and Justice* reports prior to 1998. This expansion has been undertaken for several reasons: firstly, to accommodate the increased range and quality of data now available in this area from SAPOL; secondly, to provide more scope for descriptive text and analysis; and thirdly, to contribute more constructively to on-going community debate about crime and criminal justice in this State by ensuring that the media, policy makers and the general public have access to as much information as possible.

We trust that readers will find the production of three volumes of *Crime and Justice in South Australia* useful and informative.

Joy Wundersitz
Director
Office of Crime Statistics

July 2000

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Numerous people have contributed to this volume of *Crime and Justice in South Australia*. The Office of Crime Statistics acknowledges the assistance of staff from South Australia Police, including:

- Commander Dean Angus, Commander Geoff Edwards and Chief Inspector Ian McDonald;
- The Statistical Services Section, including Mr Theo Sarantaugas and Mr Ty Cheng; and
- The Offender History Unit.

Individual staff within the Office of Crime Statistics who were involved in the production of this report were as follows:

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INTRODUCTION

This report, covering the period 1 January to 31 December 1999, is the thirteenth *Crime and Justice* report to be based on a calendar year of reporting. Statistics in this report cover five main areas:

- the number of incident reports filed by police;
- the number of offences recorded by police;
- the number of offences cleared by police and the method of clearance;
- the characteristics of victims who reported an offence to police; and
- the characteristics of alleged perpetrators apprehended by police.

Using Crime and Justice reports

As with all quantitative data, the tables in this publication can give rise to misunderstanding and confusion unless assessed carefully. The notes that follow, combined with the detailed explanations outlined in the Appendix, are designed to assist understanding and correct interpretation of the data.

Comprehensiveness

In using this *Crime and Justice* report it is important to understand that it does not provide a comprehensive picture of the incidence and nature of offending in the community. The officially recorded crime statistics contained in this volume are influenced by a number of factors, as described below.

Incidents and offences reported to police

Sections 2, 3 and 4 of this report detail only those incidents and offences actually reported to police or which come to police attention. They are therefore heavily dependent on whether the victim of an offence chooses to report that offence. Victim surveys have indicated that many offences are never reported and so are never counted in official police statistics. The level of under-reporting also varies from one offence category to another. The most recent victimisation survey conducted in Australia in 1998 showed that, at one end of the spectrum, almost ninety five percent of motor vehicle thefts in South Australia were reported to police, while at the other end of the scale, the level of reporting of non-sexual assaults was 30.8% (ABS, 1999: Cat. No. 4509.0). This means that while police statistics for *larceny or illegal use of a motor vehicle* are likely to provide an accurate insight into the actual incidence of these offences in the community, they significantly underestimate the number of assaults.

Changes in the willingness of victims to report incidents to police will inevitably have an impact on recorded crime trends. In recent years, Governments in all states have introduced a range of measures designed to encourage more victims to report offences (particularly those involving sexual assault and domestic violence). As a result, any increase in recorded crime

levels may be due not to a shift in the actual incidence of illegal behaviour in the community but to a greater willingness by victims to bring those offences to police attention.

In the case of victimless crimes (such as *possess/use drugs*) the identification or detection of an offence rests predominantly with police. Here, official crime statistics may be influenced by policing practices, and in particular by the number and range of specialist operations conducted in any given year. For example, the number of *driving offences* coming to police attention over a given time period will rise significantly if the police dedicate more resources to enforcing motor traffic legislation. In South Australia, police statistics on drink driving offences increased noticeably following the introduction of random breath testing in 1981, with a particularly sharp rise occurring in 1997 when the number of drivers given a random breath test doubled. Survey data collected by the NRMA Road Accident Research Unit at the University of Adelaide indicate, however, that the proportion of individual drivers “over the limit” has actually been decreasing since 1982. Thus, while publicity about drink driving and increased levels of enforcement have served to reduce the actual incidence of this type of offending in the community, the number of officially recorded *drink driving offences* has increased due to greater enforcement activity by police. Cannabis legislation provides a further example. On 30 April 1987 South Australia introduced an expiation notice system covering the possession, cultivation or use of small amounts of cannabis by adults. This largely explains the 50% reduction between 1986 and 1988 in recorded *drug offences*.

The number of incidents and offences recorded by police during a given year are also dependent on how an event reported by a victim or observed by police is interpreted and entered onto the data collection system. While SAPOL has processes in place to provide direction to police officers, final responsibility for deciding whether a particular criminal incident will be recorded and how it will be recorded is still vested in individual officers. For some crimes, a high level of discretion exists in how to classify them. For example, the perceived intent needs to be judged before deciding whether an incident is defined as a *serious assault* or an *attempted murder*. This discretion may lead to some variation from one police officer to another in how they choose to define and record a particular incident. Police also have some discretion in terms of whether to actually file an incident report in the first place. Shifts in how police exercise this discretion will impact on the statistics. For example, it is widely acknowledged that in earlier decades, many domestic violence incidents to which police were called did not result in a formal incident report being filled out because police viewed such incidents as “internal” family matters. However, as the community’s awareness of and concern about domestic violence increased, so police willingness to formally record such incidents also increased. Thus, as with *sexual assault*, any long term upswing in domestic violence assaults over time may be due, not to a change in the actual frequency of such behaviour but to a greater willingness on the part of victims to report the matter to police and to a greater willingness by police to actually lodge an incident report, which will then be counted in the official statistics.

Changes in the efficiency of policing combined with improvements in the technologies available for actually recording data may also affect the official statistics. In some states, for example, police now have access to on-line computer charging which means that at a crime scene, they can enter details of the offence directly onto a computer rather than having to fill in forms by hand for later data entry. This may lead to improvements in both the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the data.

The influence potentially exerted by these factors on reported crime trends in this State therefore need to be borne in mind when interpreting the statistics contained in this report.

Characteristics of victims and apprehended persons

Similar interpretative issues also apply to Sections 5 and 6 of this report, which detail the characteristics of victims who contact police to report a crime and the characteristics of alleged perpetrators apprehended by police. As demonstrated later in this report, for certain categories of crime such as *property damage*, *break and enter* and *vehicle theft*, the number of crimes reported to police which are actually 'cleared' by the apprehension of a suspect is relatively low. As a result, those persons who are apprehended may not be representative of all those who actually commit these offences. Similarly, given that for offences such as *sexual assault*, many victims choose not to report the matter to police, it may be that those who do report such incidents differ in some ways from those who decide not to do so.

In summary, official crime statistics should be interpreted with extreme care. To facilitate this, readers are urged to consult the detailed explanatory notes contained in the Appendix.

Summary of 1999 Statistics

Police Incident Reports

- In 1999, 196,209 incident reports were submitted by police. Although the number of such reports declined steadily between 1993 and 1997, this trend changed in 1998, with an upswing of 11.6%. A further, but more moderate, increase (of 7.6%) occurred in 1999.
- The majority (83.6%) of incident reports submitted in 1999 involved one offence only. At the other extreme, there were 56 reports which involved more than 20 offences. The average number of offences per report was 1.24.

Offences reported or becoming known to police

- In 1999, there were 243,394 offences reported or becoming known to police.
- *Offences against property* dominated, accounting for almost two thirds (65.4%) of offences reported. In contrast, *sexual offences* and *robbery and extortion* each constituted less than 1% of offences reported, while *drug offences* accounted for only 1.9%. This offence profile was similar to that observed in previous years.
- In 1999, the number of offences recorded by police rose by 9.2%. However, much of this increase was due to a work practice change within SAPOL which affected the way in which *driving offences* were recorded. If those offences most affected by this practice change (notably *traffic*, *motor vehicle registration* and *driving licence* offences) are excluded from both the 1999 and 1998 data, then the extent of increase for the remaining offences recorded in 1999 is 3.9%.
- In contrast to 1998 when increases were recorded in six of the seven major offence categories, in 1999 most of the increase could be attributed to shifts in *property offences* and (as noted above) *driving offences*. Of the other five categories, the number of recorded *drug offences* increased slightly while the remaining four categories (*sexual offences*, *robbery and extortion*, *driving* and *against good order*) all recorded decreases, as outlined below.
- Following a marked increase in the total number of *offences against the person*, excluding *sexual offences* recorded in 1998, numbers dropped in 1999 by 6.9%. This included an 8.5% decrease in *other* (generally minor) *assault* (which annually accounts for three quarters of *against person* offences) and an 1.3% decrease in *assault occasioning*. While numbers are now comparable with those recorded during the 1994 to 1997 period, a steady increase in these categories during the 1980s and early 1990s means that numbers are still higher than during the previous decade.
- In 1999, *sexual offences* decreased by 3.6% which was contrary to the 6.6% increase recorded in 1998. This decrease included a 1.1% reduction in *rape* and a 4.2% decline in *indecent assault*. Because numbers in these categories have, in the main, been decreasing steadily since 1993, the figures recorded in 1999 were considerably lower than those recorded six years earlier. More specifically, the numbers of *rape* offences

and *indecent assault* recorded by police in 1999 were 18.6% and 25.8% lower respectively than in 1993. The one exception within the broad *sexual offence* category was that of *unlawful sexual intercourse*, which has been trending upwards since the early 1990s. In 1999, a further increase (of 28.1%) was recorded, with 1999 figures now higher than at any time since new counting rules were first introduced in 1993. (It should be noted though that numbers in this category are comparatively small, with only 155 such offences recorded in 1999.)

- In contrast to the substantial rise (of 46.2%) in the number of *robbery* offences reported to police in 1998, a decrease of 13.3% was recorded in 1999. The number of *other* (ie unarmed) *robberies*, which annually accounts for approximately two thirds of all *robberies* recorded by police, dropped by 11.0% (compared with a 38.4% increase in 1998) while the number of *armed robberies* declined by 17.2% (compared with a 61.4% increase in the previous year). While figures for both *total* and *unarmed robberies* are still higher than the low point recorded in 1997 they are nevertheless below the peak recorded in 1993. The same does not apply to *armed robbery*. Because of the substantial increase in this category in 1998, the 1999 figure is still higher than pre-1998 levels.
- Following a steady decrease between 1990 and 1997 in the number of recorded *offences against property* this trend was reversed in 1998 when an increase of 14.8% was recorded. A further (albeit more moderate) increase (of 8.0%) was recorded in 1999, with the result that the most recent figure is now higher than at any time in the past two decades. A number of specific offences within this broad category also recorded increases but in general, these were smaller in magnitude than those recorded in 1998, as outlined below:
 - The number of recorded *break and enter dwelling** offences rose by 5.3% (compared with an 18.9% increase in 1998). Nevertheless, because of a substantial downward trend in this category between 1991 and 1997, numbers are still lower than those recorded during the 1987 – 1994 period.
 - *Other break and enter** increased by 3.1% (compared with 15.2% in 1998) but again, because of a steady decrease in the mid 1990s, numbers are still lower than those recorded in the 1988 – 1994 period.
 - *Larceny/illegal use of a motor vehicle* went up by 9.4% in 1999 (compared with 35.9% in 1998). While numbers are now higher than the low point recorded in 1997, a substantial decrease in the early and mid 1990s means that the 1999 figure is still lower than those recorded in the early 1990s but higher than the low point recorded in 1997.
 - *Interfere with a motor vehicle* increased by 25.0% (compared with a 13.6% decrease recorded in the previous year). Nevertheless, due to a substantial drop between 1993 and 1994, the 1999 figure is still lower than when data first became available in 1992.

* In calculating the 1999 figures, *break/enter* offences have been combined with the new criminal trespass offences. It should be stressed, however, that these are not directly comparable with *break/enter* offences applicable prior to 25 December 1999.

- *Larceny from a shop* rose marginally in 1999 (by 2.8% compared with 12.0% decrease in 1998) but due to a steady downward trend from 1992 to 1998 numbers are still lower than those recorded during the 1982 to 1997 period.
- Following a period of slight decline between 1995 and 1997, the number of total *damage property* offences increased by 14.7% in 1998 and by a further 15.9% in 1999. Numbers in this category are now higher than at any time since 1982.
- In contrast to these increases, several types of *property offence* actually recorded decreases in 1999. In particular:
 - *Break and enter shop** declined by 1.9% after a 14.7% increase in 1998. When combined with the substantial downward trend in this category which occurred between 1990 and 1997, the 1999 figure is still well below those recorded during the 1980s and early 1990s.
 - *Fraud and misappropriation* offences, which had risen steadily throughout the 1982 to 1998 period, actually declined by 32.8% in 1999. Numbers are now at their lowest point in a decade.
- In contrast to the slight increase (3.4%) in the number of *driving offences* recorded in 1998, in 1999 this category recorded a substantial rise (51.7%). As noted earlier, though, a change in police recording practices accounts for much of this increase, including:
 - a 34.9% increase in *dangerous, reckless or negligent driving*;
 - a 62.2% increase in *driving licence offences*;
 - a 18.2% increase in *traffic offences*; and
 - a 143.2% increase in *motor vehicle registration offences*.
- The one category not affected by the changes in recording is that of *drink driving*. The number of *drink driving and related offences* decreased in 1999 by 9.6%, with the most recent figures now lower than at any time since 1983. This drop may be partially explained by a decrease in the number of random breath tests conducted in 1999 (564,925 compared with 580,933 in 1998).
- The number of *drug offences* recorded by police in 1999 increased by 6.3% compared with a 3.0% decrease in 1998. Again, however, patterns varied from one offence type to another within this broad category. On the one hand, *possess and/or use drugs* increased as did *produce or manufacture drugs* and *possess for sale/sell drugs*. In contrast, *possess drug implements* and *fraudulent prescription offences* both decreased. As with *driving offences*, however, the number of such offences recorded in any given year is heavily dependent on police enforcement practices.

* In calculating the 1999 figures, *break/enter offences* have been combined with the new criminal trespass offences. It should be stressed, however, that these are not directly comparable with *break/enter offences* applicable prior to 25 December 1999.

- *Offences against good order* decreased by 8.4% in 1999, with the most recent figure now lower than at any stage during the previous five years.

Location of offences reported

- In 1999 the metropolitan area of Adelaide recorded more than double the rate of break and enter dwelling offences than did country areas of the state (37.7 per 1,000 dwellings compared with 18.2 per 1,000 dwellings respectively). The metropolitan area also recorded a higher rate of offences against the person, but here the differences were relatively small (13.1 per 1,000 population compared with 11.7 per 1,000 population in rural areas).

Clearance status of offences recorded by police

- Of the 243,394 offences recorded by police during 1999, 94,111 (38.7%) were cleared by the end of that year, while conversely, 61.3% remained uncleared.
- However, the clear up level varied depending on the type of offence involved with the lowest recorded for *property offences* (14.9% cleared by the end of 1999), followed by *robbery and extortion* (29.9% cleared). At the other end of the scale, over 99% of *driving offences* and *drug offences* were cleared – a finding which is to be expected given that police normally detect these offences at the time of their commission by the perpetrator.
- In addition to the 94,111 offences which were both reported and cleared in 1999, an additional 3,724 offences reported to police in earlier years were also cleared in 1999. This gives a total of 97,835 offences cleared in 1999.
- Of these 97,835 offences cleared, the majority (90.1%) were cleared by way of the apprehension of a suspect. A very small proportion of offences (0.8%) were designated as cleared on the grounds that they were unfounded, while 8.5% were cleared by the victim requesting that no further action be taken.
- However, the method of clearance varied depending on the type of offence involved. As expected, virtually all *driving* and *drug offences* were cleared by way of the apprehension of a suspect. In contrast, only 61.5% of *offences against the person* and 62.4% of *sexual offences* were cleared in this way. For these last two categories, the proportion cleared as a result of the victim requesting that no further action be taken was relatively high (36.8% in the case of *offences against the person* and 33.7% of *sexual offences*).
- When longitudinal trends in annual clearance levels were examined, using all offences reported from 1992 – 1999 and cleared by 31 December 1999, it was found that clearance levels were generally lower in 1999 than in previous years. This is inevitable given the comparatively short time available to police to complete their investigations. However, what was less expected is that, if the inevitable ‘drop off’ observed in 1999 is excluded, clearance levels within each of the major categories have not changed significantly over time.

Victims of offences recorded by police

In this section, only offences which involved a 'personal' victim were counted. This included all *offences against the person*, all *sexual offences*, all *robberies* directed against an individual and all *larceny from the person* offences.

- In 1999 there were 19,552 offences which involved a 'personal' victim.
- Of those 19,520 offences where the sex of the victim was recorded, just over one half (52.6%) involved males, while conversely, 47.4% involved females. This fairly even distribution of victims between males and females is in direct contrast to the male/female breakdown for alleged offenders, with males accounting for the majority of persons apprehended by police.
- Persons in the mid age ranges of 18 – 24 years and 25 – 34 years accounted for the highest proportion of personal victimisations reported to police in 1999 (21.1% and 24.7% respectively), while the very young and the elderly accounted for relatively small proportions.
- However, the age profiles of victims varied depending on the type of offence involved. For *sexual offences*, for example, young people aged less than 18 years accounted for one half of all such victimisations recorded in 1999 while those aged 45 and over accounted for only 7.5%. In contrast, for *larceny from the person*, of the 239 such victimisations recorded in 1999, 42.6% involved victims aged 45 and over while only 12.5% were aged less than 18 years.
- Age profiles also varied depending on the sex of the victim. For *robbery and extortion* offences, the highest proportion of male victims fell within the 10-17 year age group (35.7%) and then diminished as age increased. In contrast, the age profile of female victims of *robbery and extortion* remained relatively constant from the age of 10 years onwards; ie the likelihood of victimisation did not decrease with age. Similarly, for *larceny from a person*, the highest proportion of male victims were relatively young (with four in ten aged 10 – 24 and less than one in ten aged 60 and over). However, for female victims, almost one in three were aged 60 and over.
- The above information relates to the total number of offences involving a personal victim. However, the same victim may be subject to more than one offence and more than one incident during the course of the year. Another way of analysing the data, then, is to focus on the discrete number of victims who came to police attention in 1999. Over this twelve month period, 17,019 persons were victimised at least once. Nine in ten of these were victimised once only during the 12 month period, indicating that the level of repeat victimisation was low.

Offences cleared by way of an apprehension

- There were 89,346 charges laid by police in 1999 which was 11.7% more than in 1998. More than eight in ten (81.9%) of these charges were laid against males. While only a minority of charges laid involved females, this group accounted for 26.8% of all *larceny and receiving* charges (including 44.7% of all *larcenies from shops*) and 35.4% of all *fraud and misappropriation* charges.

- Of those charges laid in 1999 where the age of the alleged offender was recorded, relatively few involved older individuals with persons aged 60 and over accounting for only 1.3% of the total. In contrast, over one half of all charges (58.0%) were laid against persons in the 18 – 34 year age bracket. Just under one in five charges laid in 1999 involved juveniles (aged 10 – 17 years inclusive). The level of juvenile involvement varied, however, according to the type of charge. To illustrate, this age group accounted for only 5.9% of *fraud and misappropriation* charges but 45.2% of all *larceny/illegal use of a motor vehicle* charges.
- Of the 83,274 charges laid by police in 1999 where information on the racial appearance of the person was recorded, 12.7% involved persons of Aboriginal appearance. Again, however, this varied depending on the type of charge involved, with this group accounting for only 4.3% of all *drug offences* and 6.4% of all *sexual offences* cleared via apprehension, compared with 24.6% of all *robbery and extortion* offences and 31.8% of all *disorderly/offensive behaviour* charges.
- The 89,346 charges recorded in 1999 were contained in 48,782 separate apprehension reports. On average then, each apprehension report lodged by police during this twelve month period contained 1.83 charges. Over the same time period, a total of 32,225 discrete individuals were apprehended, giving an average of 1.51 apprehensions and 2.77 charges per person in 1999. Overall, these figures were slightly higher than those recorded in 1998.
- Males accounted for the majority of apprehension reports lodged (80.9%) and the majority of discrete individuals apprehended during 1999 (79.8%).
- Persons of Aboriginal appearance constituted 12.8% of all apprehensions and 9.5% of all person apprehended. Given that persons of Aboriginal descent constitute only 1.3% of the State's population aged 10 years and over, this indicates that their level of contact with the criminal justice system was 7.2 times higher than expected on a per capita basis.
- Of the 32,255 individuals apprehended in 1999, three quarters (75.5%) were apprehended only once during the 12 month period. However, there was a small group (719 or 2.2%) who were apprehended on six or more occasions with 95 persons recording 11 or more apprehensions. Younger individuals were more likely to experience multiple apprehensions during the 12 month period than older persons. Similarly, a higher proportion of person identified by police as Aboriginal were apprehended on more than one occasion in 1999 compared with non-Aboriginal persons (45.7% and 25.4% respectively).
- In 1999 a small proportion of individuals were responsible for a high proportion of all charges laid during the twelve month period. In fact, 10.0% of persons apprehended in 1999 were responsible for 37.9% of all charges laid by police. Similar findings applied to persons of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal appearance. More specifically, 20.9% of all Aboriginal persons apprehended in 1999 accounted for 54.8% of all charges laid against this group, while 20.9% of all non-Aboriginals apprehended accounted for 54.9% of all non-Aboriginal charges.

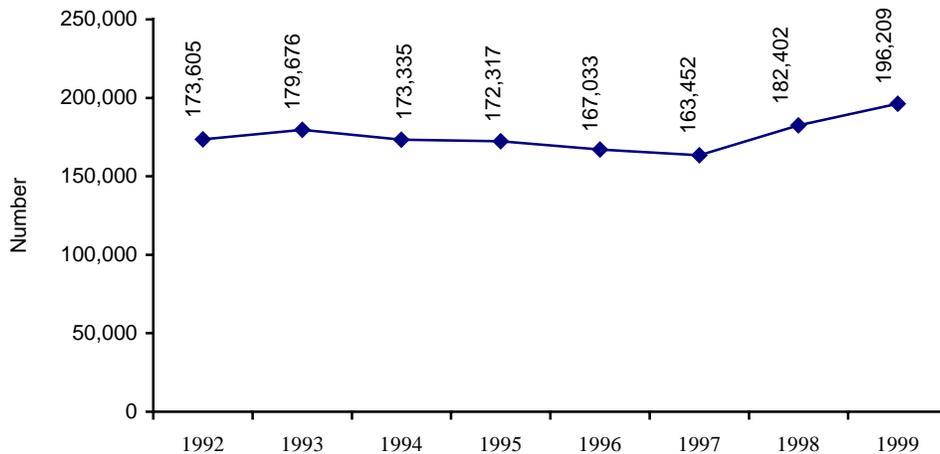
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OVERVIEW

1.1 POLICE INCIDENT REPORTS

In 1999 there were 196,209 incidents reported to police which resulted in the filing of a police incident report. As indicated in Figure 1, between 1993 and 1997, the number of incidents reports submitted by police decreased steadily each year, with the 1997 figure of 163,452 being 9.0% lower than the 179,676 recorded in 1993. However this trend changed in 1998, with an upswing of 11.6%¹. A further increase (of 7.6%) occurred in 1999.

Figure 1 Number of incident reports submitted by police, 1992 to 1999

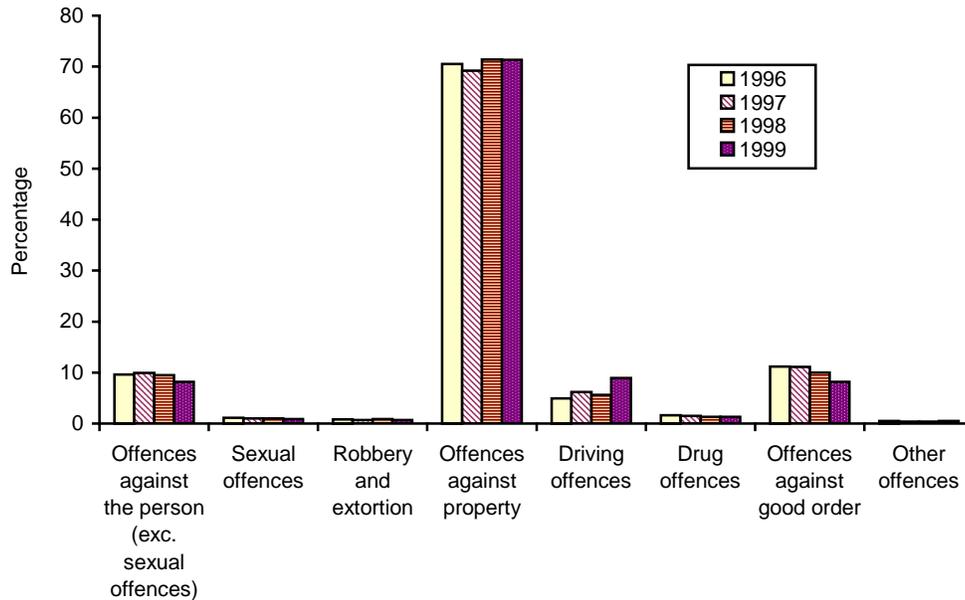


The overwhelming majority (83.6%) of incident reports submitted in 1999 involved one offence only. In contrast, only 0.2% contained more than five offences while 56 out of the 196,209 reports involved more than 20 offences. Overall, the 196,209 incident reports contained 243,394 offences (including offence counts). This represents an average of 1.24 offences per report which is similar to the average of 1.22 recorded in 1998.

A profile of the most serious offences listed per incident report is detailed in Figure 2. Given that most incident reports contained one offence only, that offence would constitute the major charge. However, for the small proportion of reports which contained more than one offence, the major or most serious charge was defined as that offence which had the highest level JANCO (see Appendix for explanation). For comparative purposes, data for 1996, 1997 and 1998 are also included.

¹ Note that computerised records are not available prior to 1992 and so it is not possible to make comparisons over a longer time period.

Figure 2 Major offence recorded per incident report, 1996 – 1999.



In 1999 the most serious offence listed in just over seven in ten reports (71.3%) was an *offence against property*. Within this category, the most prominent offences were *other larceny* (listed as the most serious offence in 25,795 reports), *larceny from a motor vehicle* (24,713 reports) and *property damage, excluding arson and explosives* (22,681 reports).

Burglary, break/enter dwelling also featured in a relatively high proportion of incident reports. However, for this offence type, identifying the actual numbers is difficult because of the introduction, on 25 December 1999, of new legislation which in effect replaced *burglary and break/enter* offences with *criminal trespass* offences. Thus, what was (until the 25 December 1999) recorded as *burglary or break/enter dwelling* is now recorded as either:

- *non-aggravated serious criminal trespass – place of residence*; or
- *aggravated serious criminal trespass – place of residence*; or
- *criminal trespass – place of residence*.

For the purposes of this report, to obtain a figure for *break/enter dwelling* comparable to that which applied in previous years, all incident reports which listed either the ‘old’ *break/enter* offence or any of the three new *criminal trespass in a dwelling* offences have been combined into a single category. On this basis, in 1999 there were 19,619 incident reports where this offence type was listed as the most serious.

Of the remaining offence categories, *driving offences*, *offences against good order* and *offences against the person (excluding sexual offences)* were the most prominent, but each featured as the major offence in less than 9% of all incident reports. The most prominent of the *driving offences* were *drink driving* (listed as the most serious matter in 5,728 incident

reports, *motor vehicle registration* offences (4,459 reports) and *driving licence* offences (3,434 reports). *Offences against good order* were distributed over a number of sub-categories, including *resist/hinder police* (listed as the most serious offence in 3,495 incident reports), *offences against a court or court* (2,963 reports), *graffiti and related offences* (1,721 reports), *disorderly, offensive behaviour* (1,687 reports) and *trespassing* (1,251 reports). Of the 16,178 incident reports in which an *offence against the person (excluding sexual offences)* was recorded as the most serious offence, the most prominent sub-category was that of *other* (mainly minor) *assault*. This featured in 12,127 reports (or 6.2% of all reports submitted in 1999). At the other end of the scale, very few incident reports involved either a *sexual offence* (0.9% of the total) or *robbery/extortion* (0.7%).

Figure 2 indicates that this pattern of recorded offending has remained relatively constant over time, with the major offence listed per incident report in 1999 being virtually the same as that recorded in both 1996, 1997 and 1998. Across all four years, *offences against property* dominated. The only minor change is that in 1999 a slightly higher proportion of incident reports involved a *driving offence* as the major offence (8.9% compared with approximately 6.0% in the previous years) and a slightly lower percentage involved an *offence against good order* (8.2% in 1999 compared with between 10% and 12% in previous years). The increase in the *driving offence* category is due to changes in police recording practices which came into effect in July 1999. (A more detailed explanation of these changes is provided in the next section of this report).

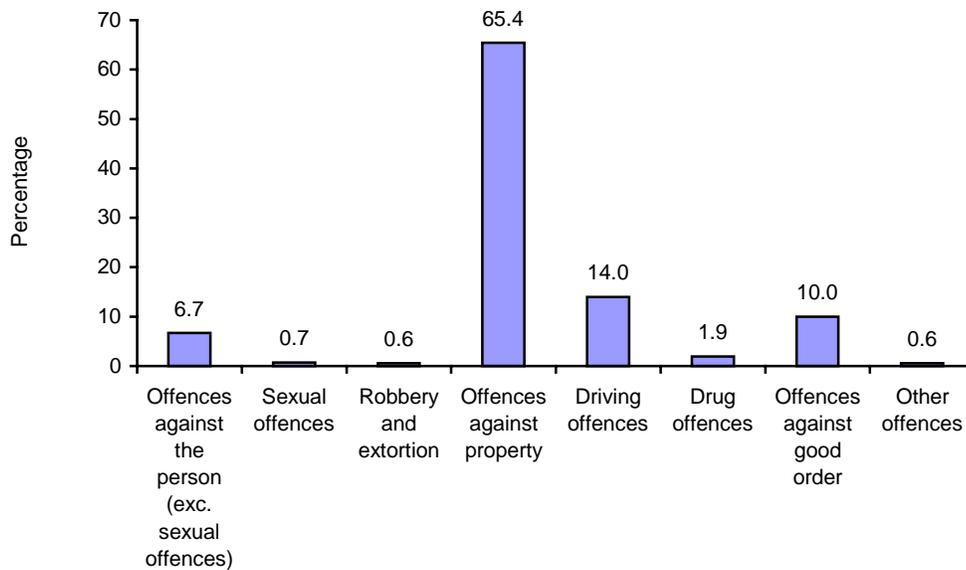
1.2 OFFENCES REPORTED OR BECOMING KNOWN TO POLICE

In the preceding section, information was presented on the number of incident reports submitted by police in 1999 and it was noted that a small proportion of these reports contained multiple offences and multiple counts of the one offence. The ensuing section details all offences and all offence counts reported, irrespective of whether they arose from the same or different incidents. In 1999, a total of 243,394 offences were recorded.

Offences reported or becoming known in 1999: a profile

As shown in Figure 3, *offences against property* dominated the 1999 offence profile, accounting for almost two in three offences recorded by police in this twelve month period. In contrast, *driving offences*, *offences against good order* and *offences against the person (excluding sexual offences)* accounted for only 14.0%, 10.0% and 6.7% respectively. *Sexual offences* and *robbery and extortion* each constituted less than 1% of offences reported, while *drug offences* accounted for only 1.9%.

Figure 3 Distribution of offences recorded by police, 1999



As shown in Table 1, the 1999 offence profile was very similar to that recorded in preceding years.

Table 1 Offences reported or becoming known to police, 1997 to 1999

Offence group	1997		1998		1999	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Offences against the person*	16,549	8.2	17,590	7.9	16,370	6.7
Sexual offences	1,738	0.9	1,852	0.8	1,786	0.7
Robbery and extortion	1,217	0.6	1,752	0.8	1,536	0.6
Offences against property	128,323	64.0	147,344	66.1	159,177	65.4
Driving offences	21,760	10.8	22,490	10.1	34,108	14.0
Drug offences	4,443	2.2	4,309	1.9	4,581	1.9
Good order offences	25,545	12.7	26,642	11.9	24,415	10.0
Other offences	1,044	0.5	976	0.4	1,421	0.6
Total	200,619	100.0	222,955	100.0	243,394	100.0

*excluding sexual offences

To provide a more detailed insight into the type of offences reported, in Tables 3.2 to 3.20 in Section 3 of this report these broad offence categories have been broken down into more detailed sub-categories.

A breakdown of *offences against the person (excluding sexual offences)* indicates that in 1999 the highest proportion of offences in this category involved *other assault* (n= 12,180 or 74.4% of the 16,370 *against person* offences recorded). The more serious offences of *assault occasioning actual or grievous bodily harm* accounted for only 1,808 (11.0%) of all *against person* offences. In 1999 there were 39 *murders* recorded by police and 40 *attempted murders*. Over the same twelve month period, 315 offences of *stalking* were recorded by police. This is 12.5% higher than the 280 reported in 1996, which was the first full year for which data were available following the introduction of this offence in June 1994.

As indicated earlier, relatively few *sexual offences* were reported to police in 1999. Of these, 603 (or 33.8% of the 1,786 *sexual offences* reported) involved either *rape or attempted rape* and 548 (30.7%) involved *indecent assault*. The number of *unlawful sexual intercourse* offences was very small (155 or 8.7% of all *sexual offences* reported). Of the 603 recorded *rapes/attempted rapes*, the overwhelming majority (90.5%) involved a female victim. The same finding applied to both *indecent assault* and *unlawful sexual intercourse* (where 78.6% and 81.3% respectively of the victims were female). In 1999, 12.6% of the *rape/attempted rape* victims were aged less than 12 years. This figure is much lower than that recorded in 1998 when almost one quarter (22.6%) involved a victim aged less than 12 years. The under 12 year age group also accounted for 221 (or 40.3%) of the 548 *indecent assaults* and 81 (52.3%) of the 155 *unlawful sexual intercourse* offences recorded in 1999. By comparison, in 1998 this age group accounted for 43.9% of the *indecent assaults* and 44.6% of the *unlawful sexual intercourse* offences.

Of the 1,479 *robbery* offences recorded by police over the twelve month period, almost two thirds (950 or 64.2% of all robberies) involved *unarmed robbery*. Of the 529 *armed robberies*, 86 involved the use of a firearm, while 443 involved another type of weapon. A

financial institution was listed as the victim in only 11 *armed robberies* and five *unarmed robberies*.

A breakdown of the key *offences against property* are depicted in Table 3.9 to 3.13 in Section 3 of this report.

- Within this broad grouping, the most prominent offence type was *larceny and receiving*. This accounted for one half (50.9%) of all *property offences*. Prominent within the *larceny and receiving* sub-category were *larceny from a motor vehicle* (n=25,372 or 15.9% of all *property offences*), *other larceny* (26,953 or 16.9%) and *illegal use/larceny of a motor vehicle* (n=12,033 or 7.6%).
- As noted earlier, legislative changes introduced on 25 December 1999 mean that offences committed on or after that date which previously would have been classified as *burglary* or *break/enter* are now recorded as *criminal trespass*. In 1999 there were 33,749 *burglary/break and enter offences* and a further 444 *criminal trespass offences*, giving a total of 34,193 offences in this broad category. Of those offences recorded as *burglary and break/enter*, 19,543 took place within a dwelling. A further 293 *criminal trespass offences* (including both *aggravated* and *non-aggravated*) occurred within a place of residence, giving an overall total of 19,836 such offences. This represents 12.5% of all *property offences*. In contrast, *break and enter shop* and *criminal trespass in a shop* together accounted for only 4,095 offences while *break and enter* or *criminal trespass in a school* constituted 1,697 offences reported.
- Of the 37,006 *damage property offences* recorded in 1999, only 2,376 involved arson or the use of explosives. Of the remaining 34,630 offences, the main targets were motor vehicles (17,834 offences or 11.2% of all *property offences*) and dwellings (6,024 or 3.8% of all *property offences*). A further 1,580 *property damage offences* involved schools.
- *Fraud and misappropriation offences* accounted for only 4.4% of all *property offences* recorded in 1999. *False pretences* was the most dominant in this group, accounting for 4,847 or 3.0% of all *property offences*.

Of the 34,108 *driving offences* recorded in 1999 (which excludes all traffic infringement notices), 4,729 (13.9%) involved *exceeding the prescribed concentration of alcohol*, while 3,589 (10.5%) related to *dangerous, reckless or negligent driving*. By far the most dominant offence within this category, however, was that of *motor vehicle registration offences*. These accounted for 12,953 offences or 38.0% of all driving matters recorded in 1999. *Driving licence offences* accounted for a further 6,537 (or 19.2%).

In 1999, 4,581 *drug offences* were recorded. Of these, the largest proportion involved either *possess and/or use drugs* (1,842 or 40.2% of all drug offences). For the offences of *possess and/or use drugs*, *possess for sale/sell drugs* and *produce or manufacture drugs* police generally recorded the type of drug involved. As would be expected, for the 3,429 offences where the type of drug was recorded, cannabis accounted for almost two thirds (2,149 or 62.7%). In contrast, opiates (mainly heroin) were involved in only 375 (10.9%), while 'other' drugs (mainly amphetamines) accounted for 905 (26.4%).

A breakdown of *offences against good order* reveals a fairly even spread across a number of sub-categories, including *offences against a court or court order* (4,084 or 16.7% of the 24,415 *against good order offences*), *resist/hinder police* (4,457 or 18.3%), *unlawful possession of weapons* (2,444 or 10.0%), *disorderly behaviour* (2,367 or 9.7%), and *graffiti and related offences* (2,009 or 8.2%).

Shifts between 1998 and 1999

In 1999, 243,394 offences were recorded compared with 222,955 in 1998. This represents an increase of 9.2%. Much of this increase was due to a substantial rise in the number of *driving offences* recorded which in turn, was largely attributable to a work practice change within SAPOL that came into effect in July 1999. Prior to this date, for a range of *driving offences* (including selected *traffic, motor vehicle* and *driving licence* matters) where an arrest was not considered necessary, a Traffic Breach Report was submitted to the Traffic Adjudication Unit within SAPOL. These were entered onto the BEAMS system but not onto the Police Incident Management System (PIMS) which provides the 'offences reported' data contained in this Crime and Justice Report. The only offences which were recorded on PIMS were those where the alleged perpetrator had been arrested by police and therefore required the completion of an apprehension report.

From July 1999, the Traffic Breach Report documents were discontinued. Henceforth, each incident (whether arrest or report based) had to go on an Apprehension Report and so was captured on PIMS.

In addition to *traffic, motor vehicle* and *licencing offences*, this change in recording practices affected the number of *dangerous, reckless* and *negligent driving* offences entered on PIMS. However, advice provided by SAPOL indicates that the resultant impact on these categories was less pronounced because in many instances, these offences occur in association with other offences which do require an apprehension report and so do get entered onto PIMS.

Drink driving and related offences have not been affected by these recording changes. In those situations where an expiation notice is not applicable, an apprehension report is always required.

In view of these work practice changes within SAPOL, a more appropriate assessment of shifts in recorded crime over the last twelve months may be derived by excluding from the total number of offences recorded in 1998 and 1999 those *driving offences* most affected by these changes. This leaves 215,470 offences recorded by police in 1999 compared with 207,304 in 1998 – an increase of only 3.9% rather than the 9.2% referred to earlier.

Of the remaining seven main offence types, *property* offences recorded the largest increase (of 8.0%) while *drug offences* increased by 6.3%. The other four categories (namely *offences against the person, sexual offences, robbery and extortion* and *offences against good order*) all recorded decreases which, in combination, amounted to 3,729 fewer offences than in 1998.

Within the *offences against property* category, the number of *fraud and misappropriation* offences actually declined (by 3,382). However, large increases were observed for *larceny and receiving* (up by 8,917 offences compared with 1998) and *property damage and environmental offences* (up by 5,083). The number of recorded *burglary and break/enter offences* also increased (by 1,215 offences).

The main contributor to the observed increase in the number of *driving offences* recorded was that of *motor vehicle registration offences*. These more than doubled (from 5,326 in 1998 to 12,953 in 1999). *Driving licence offences* also increased (up by 2,506 offences), while *dangerous, reckless and negligent driving* rose by 929 offences. All three were influenced by

the work practice change described above. In contrast, the one *driving offence* not affected by this change - namely *drink driving and related offences* - actually decreased (by 655) although it should be stressed that this offence type is also heavily influenced by policing practices, and in particular, by the number of random breath tests conducted each year.

A more detailed insight into the extent of change between 1998 and 1999 within each of the major offence types is provided in Table 2. It should be noted, though, that the number of offences in some categories is relatively low, with the result that any slight variation in absolute numbers will produce large percentage differences.

Table 2: Number of offences recorded by police, 1999 compared with 1998.

Offence	1998	1999	Percentage Change
<i>Offences against the person - total</i>	17,590	16,370	- 6.9%
Assault occasioning	1,831	1,808	- 1.3%
Other assault	13,306	12,180	- 8.5%
<i>Sexual offences - total</i>	1,852	1,786	-3.6%
Rape*	610	603	-1.1%
Indecent assault *	572	548	-4.2%
Unlawful sexual intercourse*	121	155	+28.1%
Other sexual offences*	549	480	-12.6%

Table 2: Number of offences recorded by police, 1999 compared with 1998 (continued).

Offence	1998	1999	Percentage Change
<i>Robbery - total</i>	1,706	1,479	-13.3%
Armed robbery*	639	529	-17.2%
Robbery with firearm*	134	86	-35.8%
Robbery with other weapon*	505	443	-12.3%
Other (unarmed) robbery	1,067	950	-11.0%
Unarmed robbery with violence*	657	556	-15.4%
Unarmed robbery without violence*	410	394	-3.9%
<i>Property offences - total</i>	147,344	159,177	+ 8.0%
Break/enter dwelling#	18,846	19,836	+ 5.3%
Break/enter shop#	4,175	4,095	-1.9%
Break/enter 'other' #	9,957	10,262	+ 3.1%
Larceny/illegal use of motor vehicle	11,001	12,033	+9.4%
Interfere with motor vehicle	3,173	3,967	+25.0%
Larceny from shop	5,675	5,836	+2.8%
Receiving/unlawful possession	2,595	2,432	-6.3%
Fraud and misappropriation	10,309	6,927	-32.8%
Damage property	31,922	37,006	+15.9%
<i>Selected driving offences- total</i>	22,490	34,108	+51.7%**
Drink driving and related offences	6,839	6,184	- 9.6%
Dangerous, reckless, negligent driving	2,660	3,589	+ 34.9%**
Driving licence offences	4,031	6,537	+62.2%**
Motor vehicle registration offences	5,326	12,953	+143.2%**
<i>Drug offences- total</i>	4,309	4,581	+6.3%
Possess and/or use drugs	1,750	1,842	+5.3%
Possess drug implement	1,018	871	- 14.4%
Fraudulent prescription offences*	195	185	-5.1%
Produce or manufacture drugs*	470	705	+50.0%
Possess for sale/sell drugs*	780	882	+13.1%
<i>Against good order</i>	26,642	24,415	-8.4%
Against a court or court order	3,990	4,084	+2.4%
Resist/hinder police	4,511	4,457	-1.2%
Unlawful possession of weapons	2,380	2,444	+2.7%
Trespass	1,827	1,976	+8.2%
Indecent/offensive language	1,378	1,126	-18.3%
Disorderly behaviour	2,507	2,367	-5.6%
Graffiti and related offences	2,113	2,009	-4.9%

Table 2: Number of offences recorded by police, 1999 compared with 1998 (continued).

Offence	1998	1999	Percentage Change
<i>Other Offences</i>	976	1,421	+45.6%

**Numbers in these categories are relatively small. Hence, small numerical changes may produce large percentage shifts.*

In calculating the 1999 figures, break/enter offences have been combined with the new criminal trespass offences. It should be stressed, however, that these are not directly comparable with break/enter offences applicable prior to 25 December 1999.

*** Increases can largely be explained by a work practice change within SAPOL.*

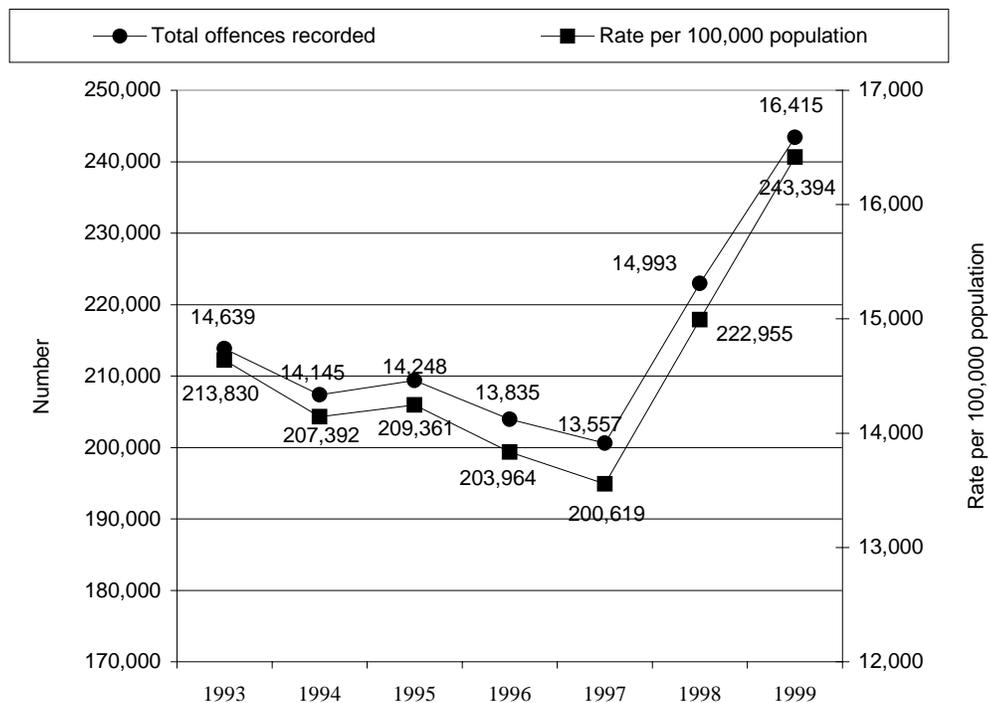
To provide a more accurate picture of longitudinal trends, the following section locates these recent shifts within a broader time frame.

Longitudinal trends

Total offences recorded by police, 1993 to 1999

Figure 4 depicts longitudinal trends in both the number of offences recorded and the rate of offences per 100,000 population for the period 1992 to 1999. As shown, over the seven year period depicted, the trend for both the number of offences and rates per 100,000 population were very similar. The total number of offences recorded by police in South Australia decreased (by 6.2%) between 1993 and 1997². During this same period, the rate of recorded offending also dropped (by 7.4%). However, in 1998 there was a sharp reversal in this trend, with numbers increasing by 11.1% and rates rising by 10.6%. In 1999, this upswing continued, with a 9.2% increase in the number of offences recorded and a 9.5% increase in the rate of offences recorded. However, as noted earlier, much of this increase was due to a work practice change within SAPOL which impacted on the way in which *driving offences* were recorded.

Figure 4 Total offences recorded, 1993 to 1999



Note: Part of the increase in 1999 is attributable to a change in police recording practices for traffic, motor vehicle and driving licence offences.

² It is not possible to go back earlier than this because of changes to the way in which offences were counted. These changes came into effect in 1993 and were designed to bring this State's counting rules into line with national standards introduced at that time by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.)

Selected offence categories, 1982 to 1999

In this section, longitudinal trends in selected offence categories are depicted. In interpreting these graphs over the eighteen year time frame depicted³, it should be noted that since 1992 the *Crime and Justice* report has used JANCO – the South Australian justice agencies’ refinement of the Australian National Classification of Offences – to categorise offences. Prior to 1992, offences were categorised using codes developed by the South Australian Police Department. Although in most instances offence categories under the two classification systems are comparable, there have been some changes. An offence category based on JANCO groupings might contain more or fewer laws than the same category under the old classification. Such additions (or occasionally deletions) tend to have a minimal impact on the figures. However, these changes mean that care should be taken when comparing figures before and after 1992. It should also be noted that offences dealt with by way of expiation notices, such as traffic infringement notices and cannabis expiation notices, are not included in this report. Finally, in Tables 3.2 to 3.20 of Section 3 of this report, the level of offence detail provided is greater than that in earlier *Crime and Justice* reports. For many of these detailed sub-categories, data relating to the period prior to 1998 are not presented and so longitudinal trends cannot be ascertained.

Offences against the person (excluding sexual offences)

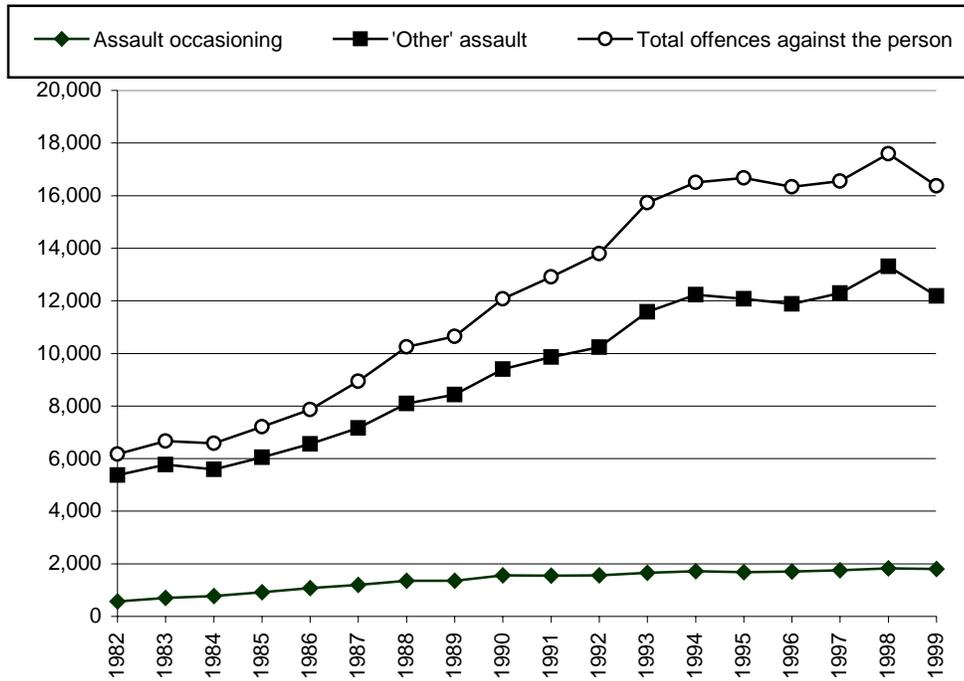
As shown in Figure 5, the total number of *offences against the person, excluding sexual offences* recorded by police increased steadily during the 1980s and early 1990s before levelling off between 1994 and 1997. In 1998, a marked increase occurred but this was matched by an equally sharp decrease in 1999. As a result the most recent figure is comparable to those recorded in the 1994 - 1997 period.

In view of the fact that *other (generally minor) assault* annually accounts for approximately three quarters of all *offences against the person* it is not surprising that longitudinal trends for this offence type closely mirror those for all *against person* offences. After a steady increase during the 1980s and early 1990s, and a period of stabilisation between 1994 and 1997, numbers subsequently increased noticeably in 1998 before dropping back again in 1999.

Assault occasioning, which has always accounted for only a small proportion of all *offences against the person* (11.0% in 1999) also increased during the 1980s and early 1990s but the extent of this increase was more moderate than that recorded for *other assault*. Following a period of stabilisation between 1994 and 1997, an increase of 4.6% was recorded in 1998. As was the case for *minor assault*, this increase was not maintained in 1999, with numbers dropping slightly by 1.3%.

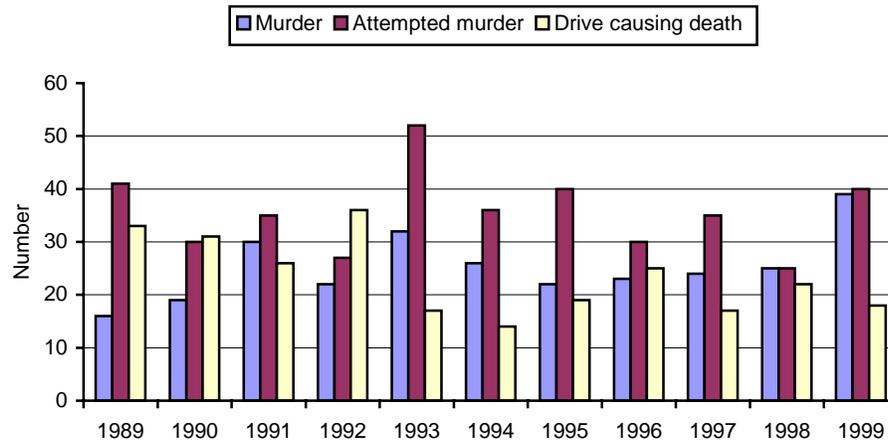
Figure 5 Offences against the person (excluding sexual offences), 1982 to 1999

³ Note that, while Figures 5 to 15 span an eighteen year time frame (1982 to 1999), because of space limitations Tables 3.2 to 3.20 in Section 3 of this report only cover an eleven year period (1989 to 1999). Data for the years 1982 to 1988 can be obtained from earlier *Crime and Justice* reports.



As indicated in Figure 6, the number of recorded *murders*, *attempted murders* and *drive dangerously causing death* offences have fluctuated considerably from one year to another but overall, have remained very low. *Murders* have ranged from 16 in 1989 to 32 in 1993 to 25 in 1998 to 39 in 1999. The increase observed in 1999 is largely due to the so-called "Snowtown" murders which involved 10 victims. The number of *attempted murders* recorded by police also fluctuated considerably over the past decade or so but in most of the years depicted, exceeded the number of *murders* recorded. During the eleven year period, 1989 to 1999, the highest number of *attempted murders* was recorded in 1993 (n=52) while the lowest number (25 cases) was recorded in 1998. The 1999 figure of 40 was higher than in 1998, but still on a par with numbers recorded a decade earlier in 1989 (n=41). In 1999 the number of *drive causing death* offences was slightly lower than in 1998 (18 compared with 22) and noticeably lower than in the late 1980s and early 1990s (18 in 1999 compared with 33 in 1989 and 36 in 1992).

Figure 6 Number of murder, attempted murder and drive causing death offences recorded by police, 1989 to 1999.



Sexual offences

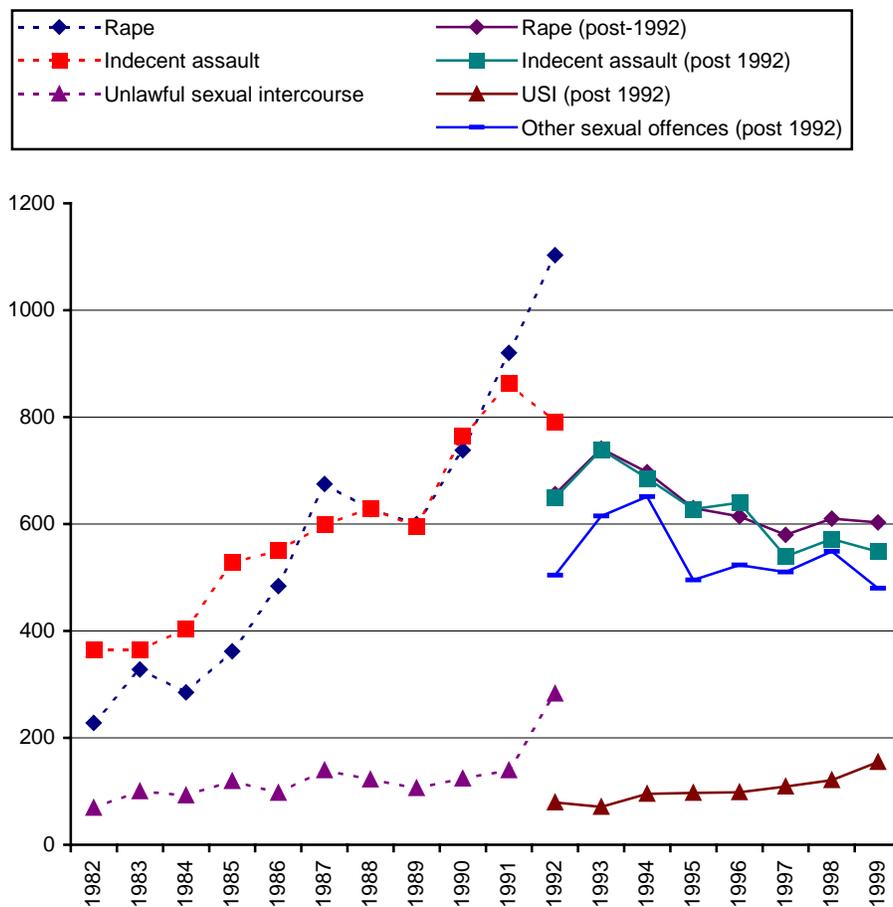
Figure 7 shows longitudinal trends in selected *sexual offences*. As noted in earlier *Crime and Justice* reports, the counting rules used to calculate the number of *sexual offences* reported to SAPOL changed in 1993 to bring them into line with national counting rules established by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Hence, 1999 data can only be accurately compared with figures recorded from 1993 onwards. (The Office of Crime Statistics did, however, recalculate 1992 data in accordance with the new counting rules to provide a point of comparison with the previous year, as shown in Figure 7). It should also be noted that the actual number of offences within this category is comparatively small. This tends to exaggerate the yearly fluctuations, with relatively small changes in actual numbers reported to police resulting in large percentage shifts.

Overall, since the early 1990s, the number of *sexual offences* recorded has generally declined (from 2,166 in 1993 to 1,786 in 1999). More specifically:

- The number of *rape* offences declined steadily between 1993 and 1997. Although a slight increase was recorded in 1998, this was reversed in 1999, with the most recent figure of 603 being slightly lower than the 610 recorded in the previous year, and 18.6% lower than the 741 recorded six years earlier in 1993.
- The number of *indecent assault* offences recorded by police has also decreased since 1993, with the lowest point occurring in 1997 when numbers dropped to 539. As was the case for reported *rapes*, numbers increased slightly in 1998 but this trend was not continued in 1999, when a decrease of 4.2% was recorded. Although the 1999 figure of 548 was still slightly higher than the 539 recorded in 1997, it was 25.8% lower than the 739 offences recorded in 1993.

- The category of *incest and other sexual offences* has fluctuated considerably from one year to another, particularly in the early to mid 1990s when numbers increased from 576 in 1992 to 651 in 1994 and then decreased to 495 in the following year. Between 1995 and 1998, numbers increased slightly but again this was followed by a decrease in 1999. In fact, the 1999 figure of 480 was the lowest recorded since new counting rules came into effect in 1993.
- Since 1993 the number of *unlawful sexual intercourse* offences recorded by police has increased steadily. This increase continued in 1999, when 155 such offences were recorded. This figure was 28.1% higher than that recorded in 1998 (n=121), and more than double that recorded in 1993 (n=71). It should be stressed, however, that numbers in this category are extremely low which means that small shifts in absolute numbers produce large percentage changes.

Figure 7 Sexual offences, 1982 to 1999



Robbery

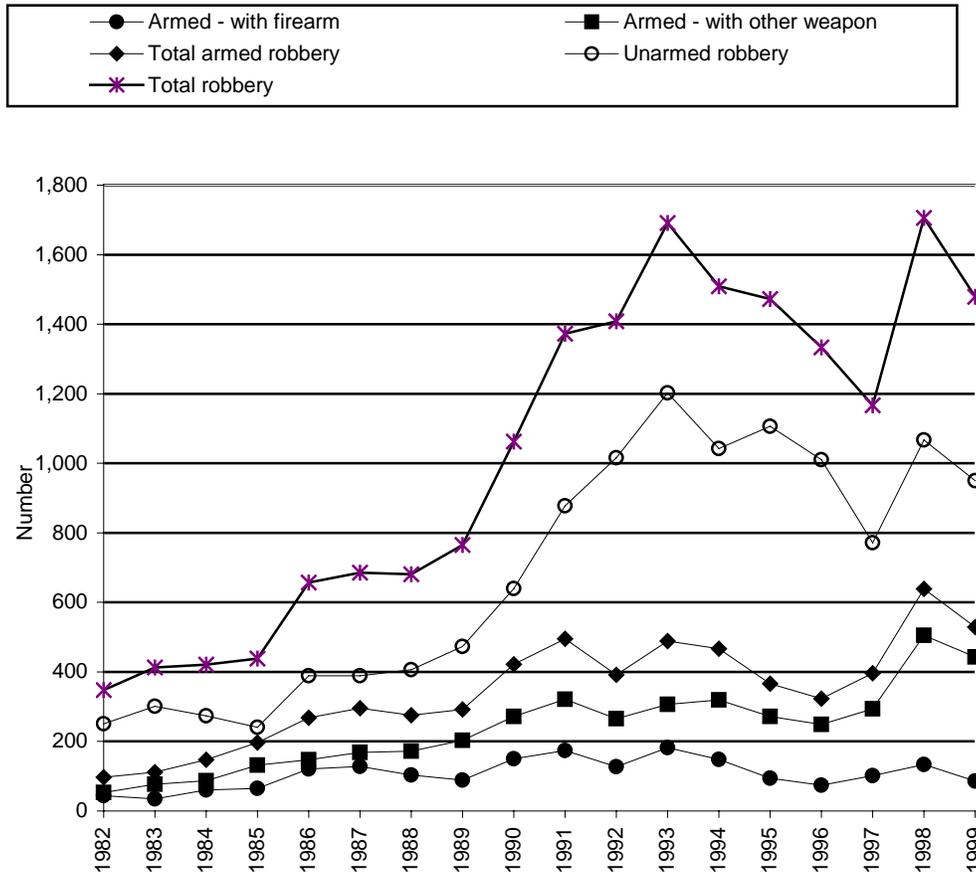
As is the case with *sexual offences*, the relatively low number of *robberies* recorded each year means that small numerical shifts can produce large percentage changes. As shown in Figure 8, the total number of *robbery offences* recorded by police increased substantially throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, reaching a peak in 1993. However, over the next four years this trend was reversed, with numbers decreasing by 31.0% between 1993 and 1997. As a result, the 1997 figure of 1,167 was the lowest recorded since 1990. In 1998, the situation changed dramatically, with an upswing of 46.2%. Although this increase was not sustained in 1999 (when numbers declined by 13.3%) the magnitude of this decrease did not match the magnitude of the 1998 increase. Hence, although the number of *robbery offences* in 1999 was consistent with that recorded in 1995, it was still well above the low point recorded in 1997.

Because the category of *other* (ie unarmed) *robbery* annually accounts for approximately two thirds of *total robbery* offences, longitudinal trends in this category generally parallel those for *total robberies*. As shown, *other robbery* rose sharply between 1985 and 1993, with a downward trend becoming established in the following year. Between 1993 and 1997, numbers dropped by 35.9% - from 1,202 to 771. A sharp upswing in 1998 was followed by a smaller decrease in 1999. As a result, the most recent figure for *unarmed robbery* (n=950) is still above the low point recorded in 1997, but nevertheless is 21.0% below the peak recorded in 1993.

In relation to *armed robbery* trends, after a steady increase during the 1980s, the 1991 to 1997 period was characterised by alternating rises and falls, reaching peaks of 495 and 489 in 1991 and 1993 respectively before dropping back to 392 and 323 in 1992 and 1996. In 1998, however, a much more substantial increase (of 61.4%) was recorded, with figures rising from 396 in 1997 to 639. Hence, although a downward trend was observed in 1999 (with numbers decreasing by 17.2%) the extent of this decrease was not sufficient to overcome the large upswing of the previous year. The number of *armed robberies* recorded in 1999 is therefore still higher than pre-1998 levels.

In Figure 8, *armed robberies* are further broken down into *robbery with a firearm* and *robbery with other weapon*. As shown, recent trends in *robbery with other weapon* offences are similar to those observed for *total armed robberies*. Numbers fluctuated throughout the 1990s with a particularly low point recorded in 1996, followed by a slight increase in 1997 and a substantial increase of 71.8% (from 294 to 505) in 1998. Despite a downturn in 1999, figures for *robbery with other weapon* are now noticeably higher than at any stage prior to 1998. Longitudinal trends in the number of *robbery with firearm* offences is somewhat different. Although exhibiting similar alternating increases and decreases during the 1990s, the increase which occurred in 1998 was comparatively modest, with the figure recorded for that year still well below the earlier peaks of 1991 and 1993. As with the other robbery categories, figures again trended downwards in 1999, with the most recent figure of 86 being the lowest recorded since the mid 1980s.

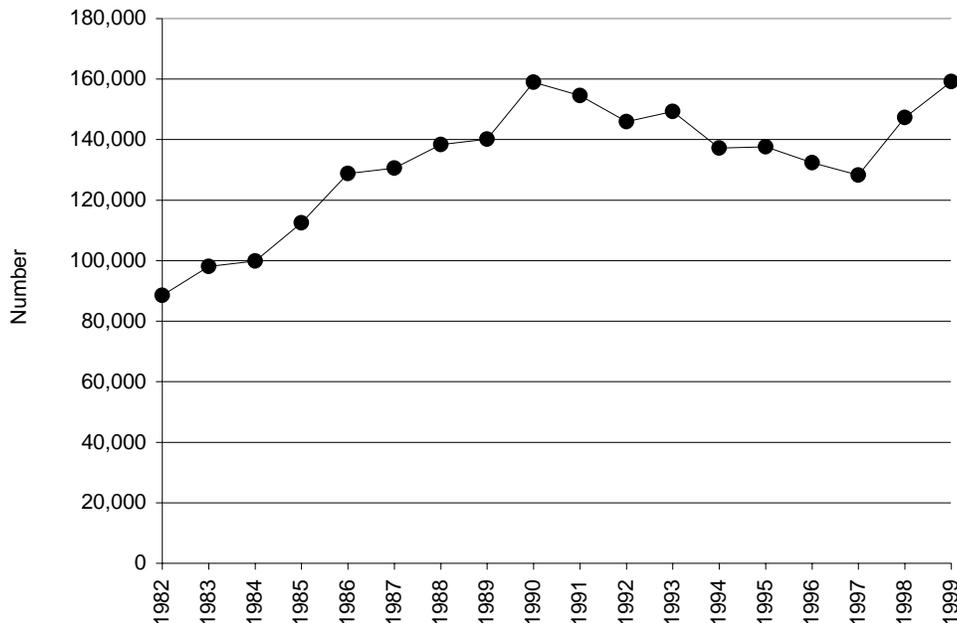
Figure 8 Robbery offences, 1982 to 1999



Property offences

In contrast to *sexual offences* and *robbery offences*, the number of *property offences* reported to police each year is comparatively large (159,177 in 1999). As Figure 9 indicates, numbers in this category increased during the 1980s, reaching a peak in 1990. This was followed by a general downward trend over the next seven years, with the 1997 figure being 19.3% lower than in 1990. Again, however, in 1998 this trend was reversed, with the total number of *property offences* increasing from 128,323 in 1997 to 147,344 – an upswing of 14.8%. This increase continued into 1999 (albeit at the more moderate rate of 8.0%), with the result that the most recent figure has now slightly exceeded the peak of 158,963 recorded in 1990. Similar trends apply to most of the sub-categories within this broad offence grouping.

Figure 9 Total property offences, 1982 to 1999



Break and enter

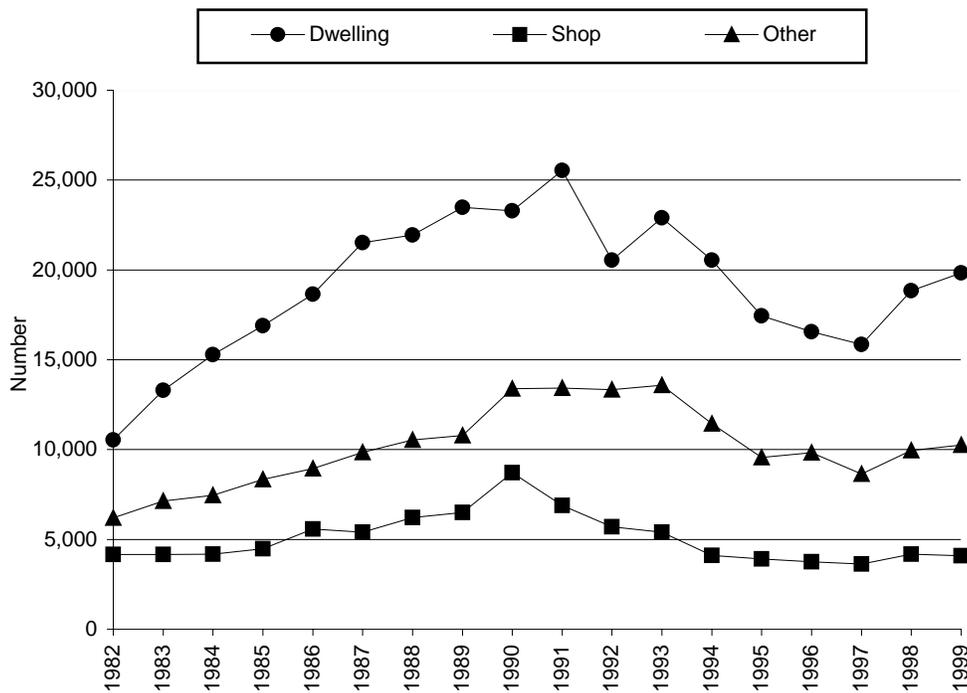
Extending longitudinal trends for *break and enter* offences into 1999 is somewhat problematic because of the recent passage of the *Criminal Law Consolidation (Serious Criminal Trespass) Amendment Act*. This piece of legislation, which came into effect on 25 December 1999, replaced *break and enter offences* with *criminal trespass offences*. More specifically, it introduced three new offence categories: *serious criminal trespass - non residential building*, *serious criminal trespass - places of residence* and *criminal trespass - places of residence*. The two *serious criminal trespass* offences are further sub-divided into aggravated and non-aggravated, depending on whether an offensive weapon is used or whether there are multiple offenders. A third aggravating factor applies to *serious criminal trespass - place of residence*: namely whether another person is lawfully present in the dwelling at the time of the trespass, and the offender either knows of the other's presence or is reckless about whether anyone is in the place (*Criminal Law Consolidation (Serious Criminal Trespass) Amendment Act*; s170(2)(c)). This criterion was specifically included to 'capture' incidents of home invasion. The legislation also extends the definition of "place of residence" to include not only houses and flats, but any structure in which police consider the victim to be living at the time of the incident, such as a car or caravan.

As noted above, these legislative changes did not come into effect until the last week of 1999. Nevertheless, some 444 *criminal trespass* offences were recorded in the seven days remaining in that calendar year. To allow comparison between 1999 figures and those of earlier years for *break and enter*, the following procedure has been followed:

- all *non-aggravated* and *aggravated serious criminal trespass* offences that occurred within a place of residence, together with all *criminal trespass in a place of residence* offences have been added to the *burglary and break and enter dwelling* category;
- all *non-aggravated* and *aggravated serious criminal trespass* offences that occurred in a shop have been added to the *break and enter shop* category; and
- all *non-aggravated* and *aggravated serious criminal trespass* offences that occurred in other locations have been added to the *other break and enter* category.

While the new offence groupings are not entirely comparable with the old groupings, the number of *criminal trespass* offences recorded in 1999 is too low to have any impact on the *break and enter* comparisons made below.

Figure 10 Break and enter offences, 1982 to 1999



As shown in Figure 10, a substantial increase in the number of *break and enter dwelling* offences during the 1980s was followed by a 37.9% decrease between 1991 and 1997, with the 1997 figure being the lowest recorded since 1984. However, this trend was reversed in 1998 when an 18.9% increase was recorded. A further, albeit relatively small, increase (of 5.3%) occurred in 1999. Hence, the most recent figure is 25.1% higher than the low point recorded in 1997. Nevertheless, it is still well below the peak recorded in 1991.

After a period of increase during the mid to late 1980s, *break and enter shop* offences more than halved in the 1990-1997 period, with the 1997 figure of 3,639 being the lowest recorded since data first became available in 1981. Although an increase was recorded in 1998 (with numbers rising by 14.7%), this trend was not maintained in 1999 when a slight downward

shift of 1.9% occurred. The most recent figure is therefore still below those recorded during the 1980s and early 1990s.

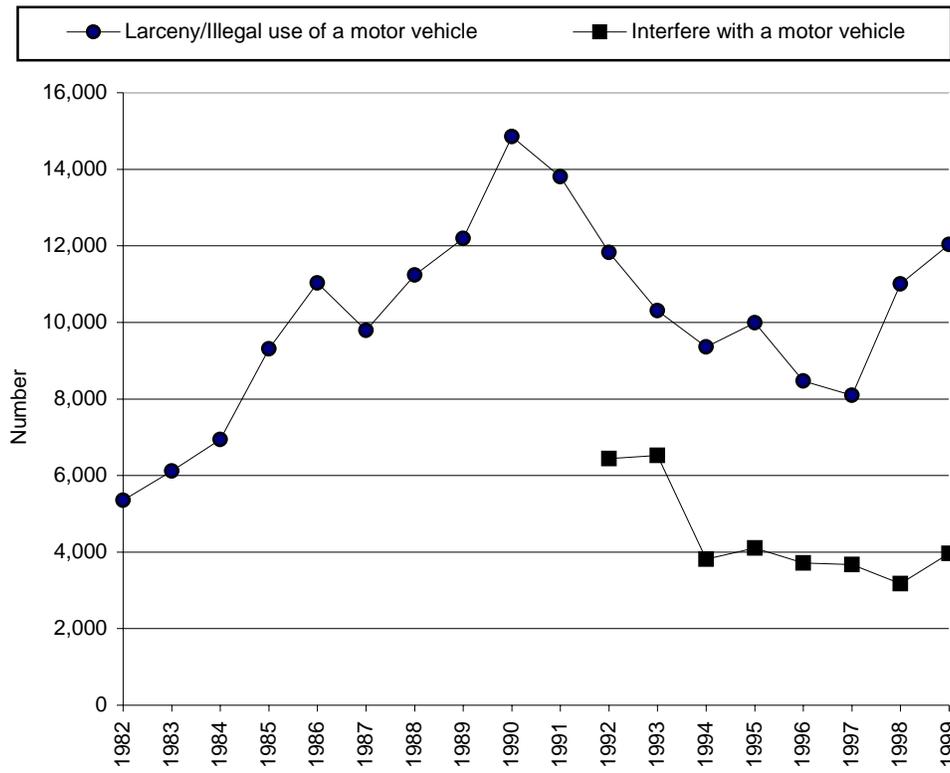
Break and enter 'other' offences also showed a general downward trend during the mid 1990s, decreasing by 36.3% between 1993 and 1997. Hence, despite an increase in 1998 (of 15.2%) and again in 1999 (of 3.1%) the most recent figure is still lower than those recorded in the 1988 – 1994 period.

Vehicle offences

Longitudinal trends in *larceny/illegal use of a motor vehicle* (see Figure 11) indicate a period of rapid increase during the 1980s, followed by a sharp decline in the 1990s. Apart from a slight rise in 1995, the downward trend initiated in 1991 continued until 1998 when numbers rose substantially by 35.9% (from 8,093 in 1997 to 11,001). Although this upward trend continued in 1999, the rate of increase was more moderate, with numbers rising by 9.4%. While the most recent figure is still considerably higher than the low point recorded in 1997, the extent of increase during the last two years has not been large enough to “wipe out” the gains of the previous years.

The number of *interfere with a motor vehicle* offences declined substantially between 1993 and 1994, with a slight downward trend persisting between 1995 and 1998. Hence, despite an increase of 25.0% in 1999, the most recent figure is still comparable with that recorded five years earlier.

Figure 11 Larceny/illegal use of a motor vehicle and interfere with a motor vehicle, 1982 to 1999

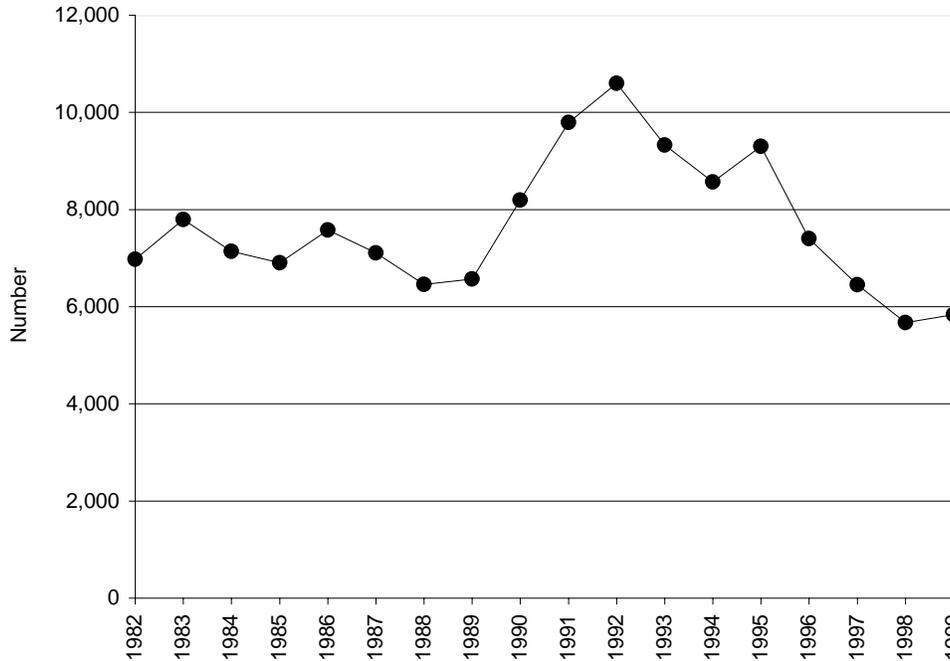


* The offence 'interfere with a motor vehicle' was included for the first time in

Shop theft

As indicated in Figure 12, *shop theft* remained relatively stable during the early and mid 1980s, before increasing in the later part of the decade and peaking in 1992. This was followed by a marked downward trend between 1992 and 1998, with the result that, despite a small rise (of 2.8%) in 1999, the most recent figure is still lower than those recorded at any stage during the 1982 – 1997 period.

Figure 12 Shop theft, 1982 to 1999



Fraud and misappropriation

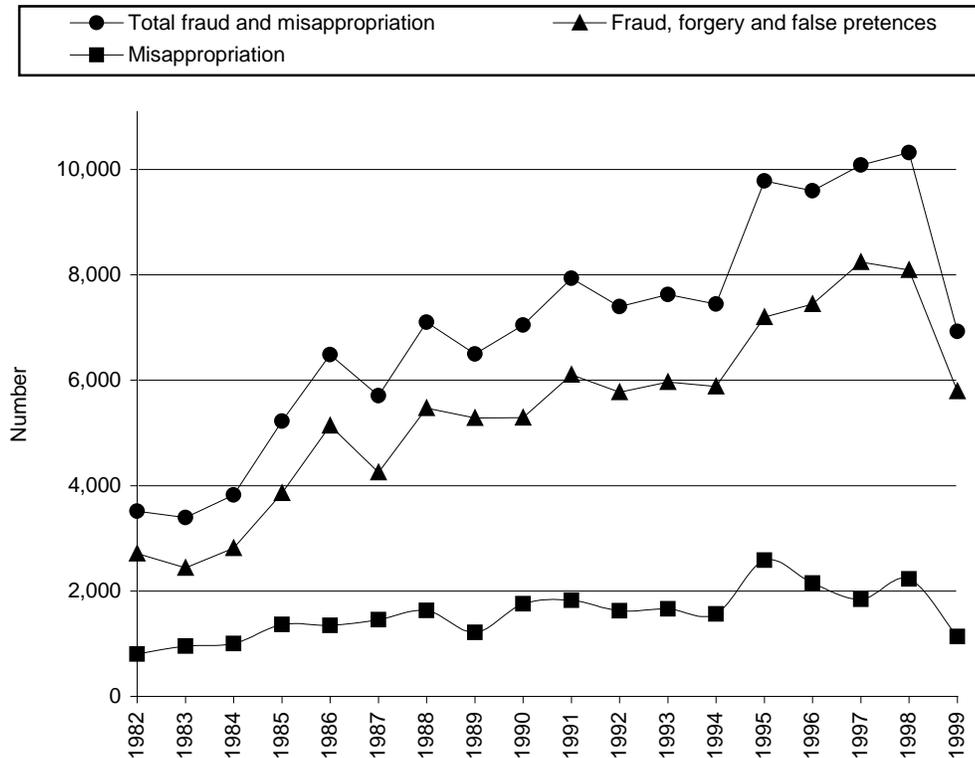
As indicated in Figure 13, *fraud and misappropriation* is one of the few property offences which did not record a decrease during the 1990s. Apart from a brief period between 1991 and 1994 when numbers stabilised, the overall trend throughout most of the 1980s and 1990s has been upward. However, this situation changed in 1999 when, again contrary to the pattern observed for most other property offences, numbers declined substantially by 32.8%. As a result, in 1999 the number of *fraud and misappropriation* offences recorded was at its lowest point in a decade.

The sub-category of *fraud, forgery and false pretences* exhibited generally similar trends to that of the total *fraud and misappropriation* category, with an upward trend in the 1980s, followed by a period of stabilisation between 1991 to 1994, and then a further upswing in the 1995 to 1997 period. Again, however, this trend has now been reversed, with a slight decrease in 1998 being followed by a substantial decline in 1999. The most recent figure of 5,791 is 29.8% lower than the peak recorded in 1997 and is on a par with numbers recorded in the first half of the decade.

Overall, *misappropriation offences* annually account for only a relatively small proportion of total *fraud and misappropriation* matters (16.4% of the 1999 total). After a period of relatively stability between 1990 and 1994, two periods of increase (one in 1995 and another in 1998) were both followed by periods of decrease (in 1996/97 and again in 1999). The downward shift in 1999 was relatively substantial, with numbers almost halving from 2,227

in 1998 to 1,136. As a result, the most recent figure is comparable to those recorded during the early part of the 1980s.

Figure 13 Fraud and misappropriation, 1982 to 1999



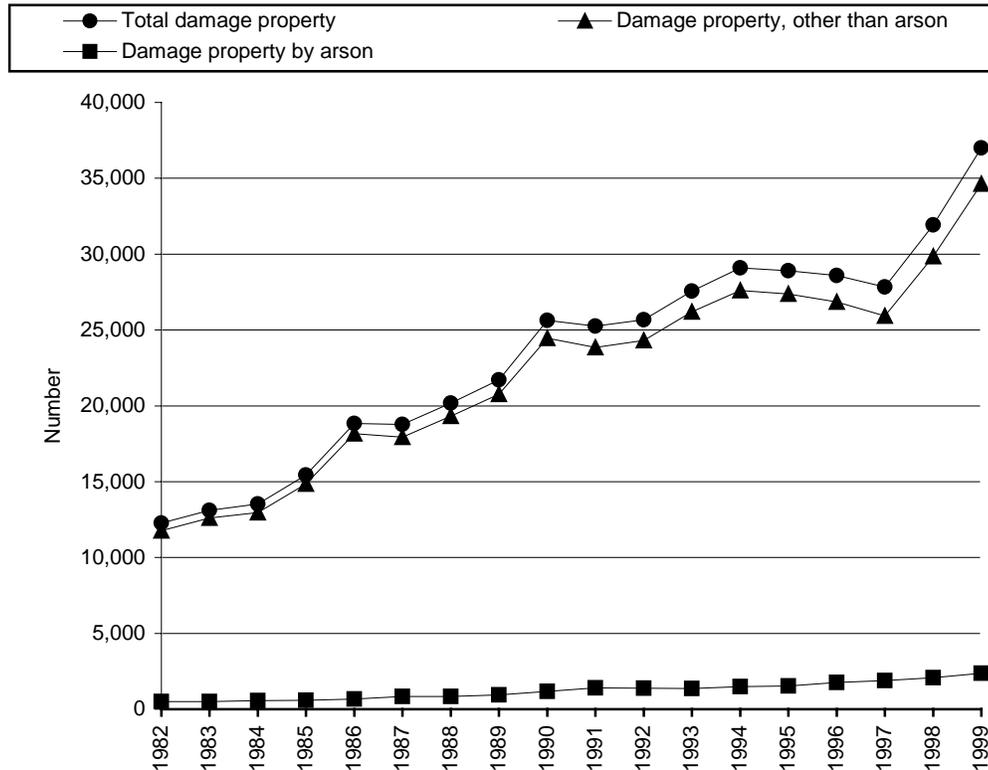
Damage property

Figure 14 depicts longitudinal trends in the number of *damage property* offences recorded by police. As shown, there was a steady increase in this category throughout the mid 1980s and early 1990s. Then followed a brief period between 1994 and 1997 when numbers declined slightly. However, this trend changed in 1998, when numbers rose by 14.7%. A further increase (of 15.9%) occurred in 1999 with the result that the most recent figure of 37,006 is three times greater than the 12,279 offences recorded seventeen years earlier in 1982.

A similar pattern was observed for *damage property other than arson* – a finding which is inevitable given that this sub-group accounts for the overwhelming majority of all *damage property* matters. While numbers trended steadily upward during the eighteen years depicted, the increases recorded in 1998 and 1999 were larger than any of the previous ones. As was the case for all *property damage* offences, the 34,630 *property damage (not arson) offences* recorded in 1999 were more than three times greater than the 11,274 such offences recorded in 1982.

The other offence – *damage property by arson* – annually accounts for only a very small proportion of all *property damage* offences. However, as was the case with other property offences, it has also trended upwards over the past several decades. A further increase (of 14.8%) was recorded in 1999 although it should be noted that, compared with the other property damage category depicted, numbers still remain relatively small (n=2,376 in 1999).

Figure 14 Damage property, 1982 to 1999



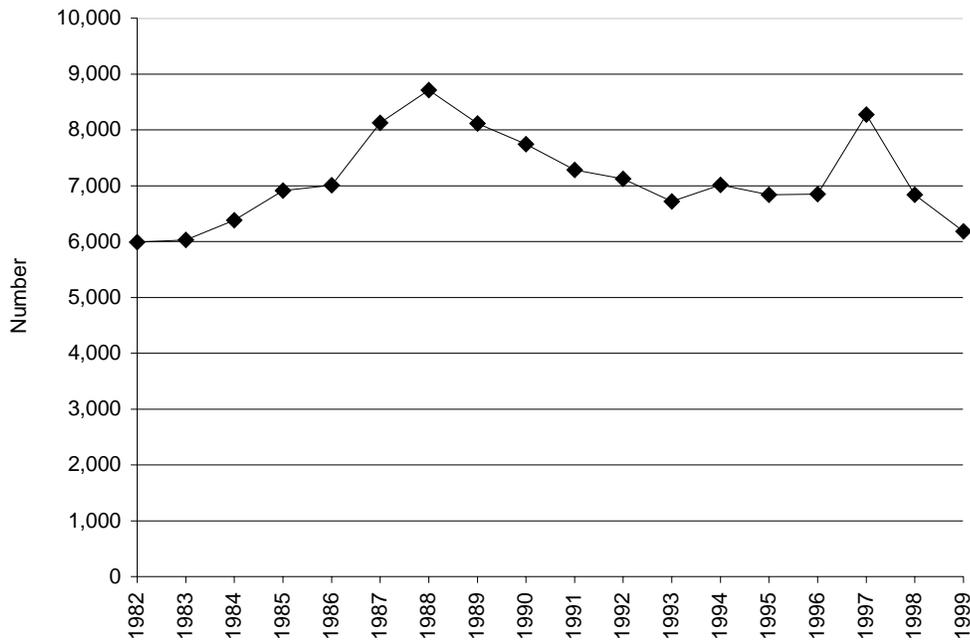
Of the other property offences not included in these graphs, *unlawful possession of property* (excluding *receiving*) increased steadily between 1989 and 1998. However, in 1999, a slight decrease (of 6.7%) was recorded. This is the first decrease to be recorded since 1988. The number of *receiving* offences increased substantially in the latter part of the 1980s, peaking in 1990. Since then, despite some fluctuations, an overall downward trend has persisted, with the 1999 figure of 598 being 48.1% lower than 1,153 recorded in 1990.

Drink driving and related offences

Figure 15 illustrates the number of reported *drink driving and related offences* from 1982 to 1999. This category, which was not affected by changes in SAPOL's recording practices, includes *driving under the influence*, *exceed the prescribed concentration of alcohol* and *refusing to give breath/blood sample*. After increasing during the early and mid 1980s, the number of reported *drink driving and related offences* trended steadily downward from 1988 until 1993, possibly due to a greater awareness of the likelihood of detection by random breath testing and of the dangers of drink driving conveyed in high profile television advertising campaigns. While figures stabilised between 1993 and 1996, there was a 20.8% increase in 1997 followed by an equally sharp decrease of 17.3% in 1998. A further decline occurred in 1999, with numbers dropping by 9.6% (from 6,839 to 6,184). It should be noted though, that the number of *driving offences* recorded is heavily reliant on police enforcement practices. To illustrate, the rise in the number of reported *drink driving* offences in 1997 coincided with a substantial increase in the number of random breath tests conducted in South Australia in that year. In 1997, 617,505 such tests were conducted compared with 323,216 in 1996 (an increase of 91.1%). Similarly, the drop in the number of reported *drink driving* offences in 1998 may be partially explained by a decrease in the number of tests conducted in that year (down by 5.9% from 617,505 to 580,933). A further decline occurred in 1999, with 564,925 random breath tests being recorded.⁴

⁴ The number of random breath tests cited for 1997, 1998 and 1999 exclude those people tested as a result of an accident or after being stopped for other traffic offences such as speeding.

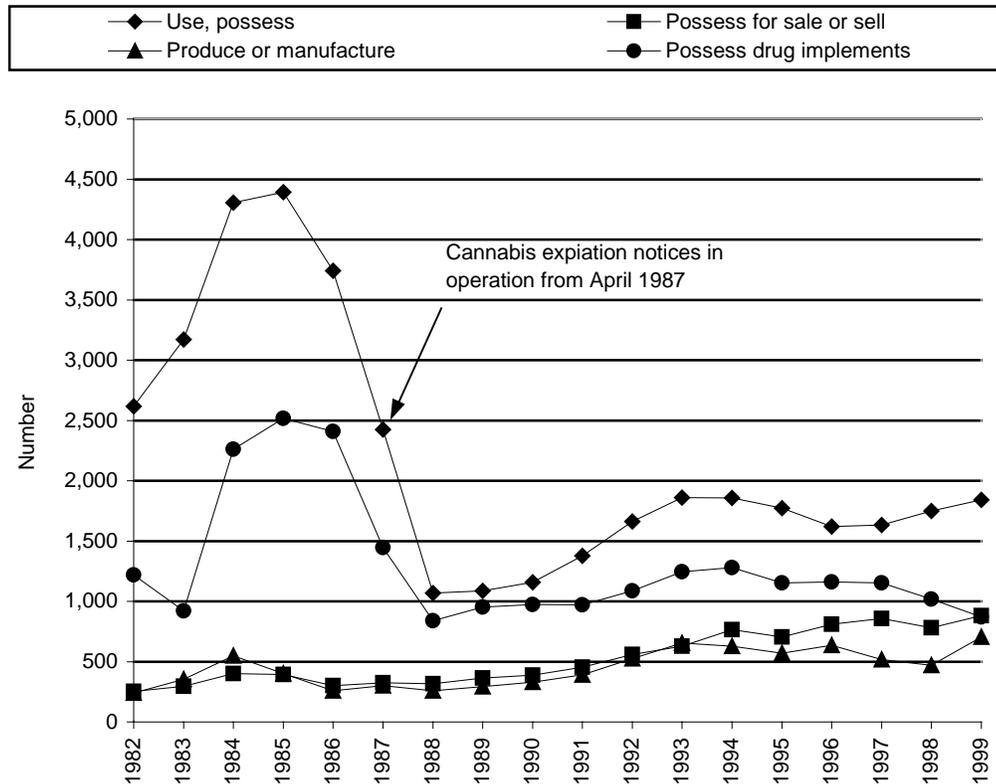
Figure 15 Drink driving and related offences, 1982 to 1999



Selected drug offences

Longitudinal trends in the number of selected *drug offences* coming to police attention are quite different from those of other offences largely because of the impact, in 1987, of the introduction of Cannabis Expiation Notices. Moreover, because *drug offences* are essentially victimless crimes, their detection rests predominantly with police. Hence, as with *driving offences*, the number of *drug offences* recorded in any given year is heavily reliant on police enforcement practices and in particular, on whether and how many special operations are launched which target drug offenders.

Figure 16 Selected drug offences, 1982 to 1999



The impact of Cannabis Expiation Notices was largely responsible for the dramatic decline in the number of *use/possess drug offences* and *possess drug implements* in 1987 and 1988. However, as shown in Figure 16, by 1989 the impact of the introduction of CENs had stabilised and thereafter, *use/possess drug offences* and *possess drug implement* exhibited similar trends, with both experiencing a period of slight to moderate increase between 1989 and 1994, after which numbers declined and stabilised. In 1998, however, trends for the two offences diverged, with *use/possess drug offences* increasing by 7.2% while *possess drug implement* decreased by 11.8%. This divergence persisted in 1999, with *use/possess drug offences* continuing to increase (by 5.3%) and *possess drug implements* continuing to decrease (by 14.4%).

Of those *drug offences* that were not affected by the introduction of CENs, the number of recorded *produce or manufacture drug matters* increased during the late 1980s and early 1990s before peaking at 655 in 1993. Over the next five years, despite annual fluctuations, numbers showed a very slight downward trend with the 1998 figure of 470 being 8.9% lower than in 1997 and 28.2% lower than the 655 recorded in 1993. However, in 1999, this changed, with the most recent figure of 705 being 50.0% higher than that recorded one year earlier in 1998. Numbers in this category are now higher than at any time over the 18 years

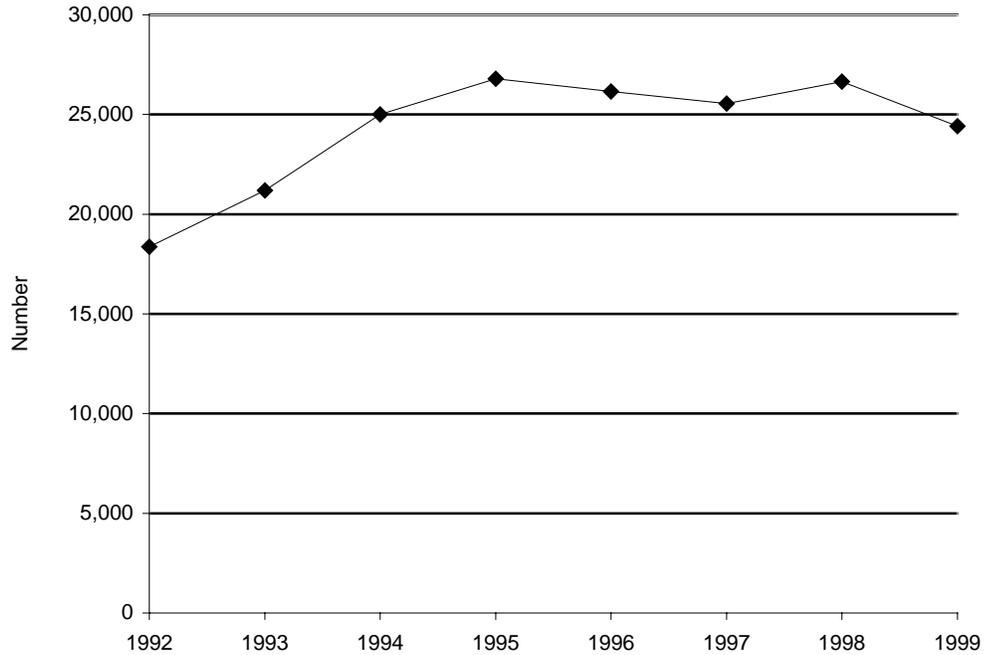
depicted. Again, however, it should be stressed that numbers are still comparatively low, with the result that small changes in absolute numbers produce large percentage shifts.

Despite annual fluctuations, the number of *possess for sale or sell drug* offences recorded by police has been increasing steadily since the late 1980s. Despite a slight dip in 1998, a further increase (of 13.1%) was recorded in 1999, with the result that the most recent figure is now higher than at any time during the period depicted. However, as was the case with *produce or manufacture drugs*, numbers are relatively small, and so any percentage shift should be interpreted with caution.

Offences against good order

Data for total *offences against good order* (depicted in Figure 17) were not available for the years prior to 1992. Since then, a period of increase between 1992 and 1995 was followed by a slight decrease in 1996 and 1997. Despite a brief up-turn in 1998, a downward trend was re-established in 1999, with figures now lower than at any time in the previous five years.

Figure 17 Offences against good order, 1992 to 1999



Location of reported offences

The number and rate of reported crime occurring in South Australian Local Government Areas (LGAs) is provided in Tables 3.21a and 3.21b in Section 3. While rates provide a crude basis for comparison between LGAs which have differing numbers of people, dwellings and businesses, it is important to recognise the limitations of such a listing.

In these tables, rates for *offences against the person* (which here includes the three categories of *offences against the person (excluding sexual offences)*, *sexual offences* and *robbery and extortion*) are calculated by dividing the number of such offences recorded in each LGA by the Estimated Mean Resident Population of that LGA as at 30 June 1999 (Australian Bureau of Statistics – residents only). Because the personal offence rate is based on the location of the offence rather than the address of the victim, it therefore includes offences involving residents and non-residents of the LGA. As a result, the rate does not indicate the average risk for persons actually living within each LGA. For example, the Adelaide LGA exhibits high rates of both personal and property crime. The city attracts thousands of non-residents who come there for work, shopping and entertainment. Hence, many of the crimes that occur in the Adelaide LGA involve victims who reside in other areas. Because of this, one should be wary of interpreting the crime rate in Adelaide as an indicator of victimisation for those actually living in the city. It is also possible that one's personal risk of victimisation within the city (like most other areas) varies depending on the nature of the activity one engages in while there.

For *break and enter dwelling*, the rate is calculated by dividing the number of offences by the number of dwellings in each LGA as at the 1996 census. Unlike population numbers for which the ABS published new estimates each year, the number of dwellings per LGA are not updated. Hence, it is necessary to rely on 1996 figures, which become increasingly inaccurate as the time between the reporting period and the census increases.

The total crime rate is presented as a rate per 1,000 population. However, readers should be aware that both personal and property offences are included. In these situations there is no obviously suitable denominator to generate a total crime rate. Some crimes are directed at dwellings, others at shops, others at individuals and still others at specific types of property (eg *larceny of a motor vehicle*).

Two final points should be noted: first, that particular care should be taken when examining country rates, as some LGAs have small populations and few offences; and second, that, although the Australian Bureau of Statistics changed the boundaries of some LGAs in 1998, the pre-1998 boundaries have been retained for this report.

In 1999, the metropolitan area of Adelaide recorded more than double the rate of *break and enter dwelling* offences than did country areas of the State (37.7 per 1,000 dwellings compared with 18.2 per 1,000 dwellings respectively). The metropolitan area also recorded a higher rate of *offences against the person*, but here the differences were relatively small (13.1 per 1,000 population compared with 11.7 per 1,000 population in rural areas). Within the metropolitan area itself, by far the highest rate of *offences against the person* occurred in the LGA of Adelaide (169.6 per 1,000 population), followed by Elizabeth (27.8 per 1,000 population), Enfield Parts B and A (25.9 and 20.5 respectively), Port Adelaide (17.9), Thebarton (16.5) and Noarlunga (15.2). The LGA with the lowest rate of *offences against the person* was East Torrens (2.5 per 1,000 population), followed by Stirling (3.7), Happy Valley (4.0), Brighton (4.4), Burnside (4.5) and Mitcham (4.6). The metropolitan LGA with the

highest rate of *break and enter dwelling* offences was Adelaide (82.7 per 1,000 dwellings), followed by Enfield Part B (82.3), Thebarton (77.5), St. Peters (68.6), Walkerville (61.3), Kensington/Norwood (57.6), Prospect (51.5) and Hindmarsh and Woodville (50.3). The lowest rates of *break and enter dwelling* offences were recorded in Willunga (18.3), Happy Valley (19.2), Stirling (20.9 per 1,000 dwellings), and Gawler (23.3) .

Outside of the metropolitan area, the highest rate of *offences against the person* occurred in the Local Government Areas of Coober Pedy (44.1 per 1,000 population), Hawker (41.3), Ceduna (32.3) and Port Augusta (31.0). Ceduna (39.6 per 1,000 population), Coober Pedy (112.4) and Port Augusta (52.8) also had relatively high rates of recorded *break and enter dwelling* offences.

Table 3.22 in Section 3 shows the locations with the highest number of motor vehicle thefts in 1999. Of the top twenty 'hot spots', eight were within the square mile of the city of Adelaide while another three adjoined the city. Outside the city, shopping areas featured prominently in the list, including Marion Shopping Centre, Tea Tree Plaza Shopping Centre, Noarlunga City Centre/Colonnades, Elizabeth City Centre, Arndale Shopping Centre and West Lakes Mall/Football Park. The area recording the greatest number of vehicle thefts was the Adelaide Parklands, with 340 reported thefts in 1999. This was followed by Rundle Mall/North Terrace (278 thefts) and the Marion Shopping Centre (182).

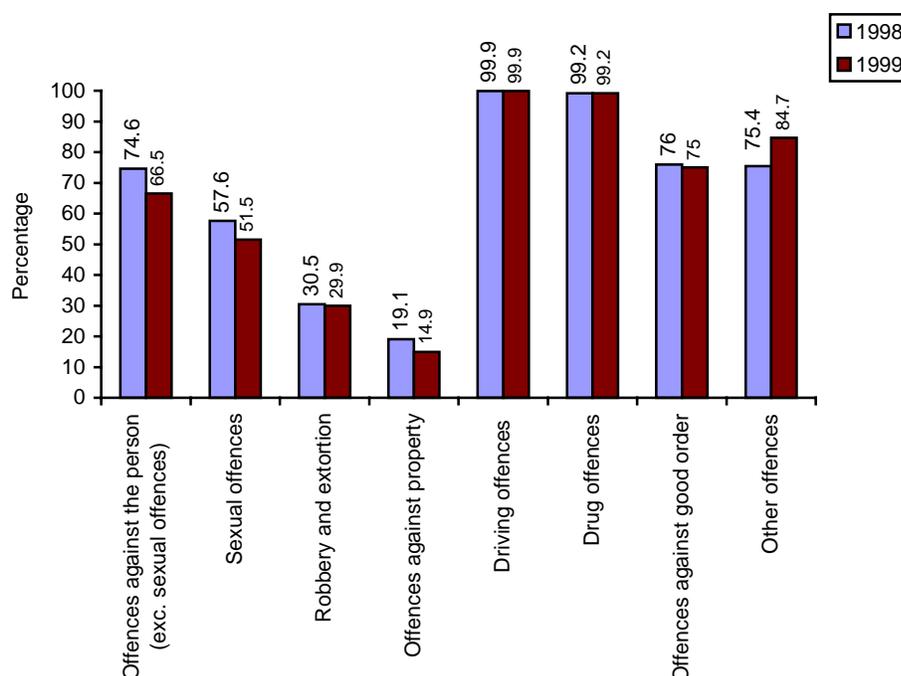
1.3 CLEARANCE STATUS OF OFFENCES

Clearance status of offences recorded by police in 1999

During 1999, of the 243,394 offences recorded by police, 94,111 (38.7%) were cleared by the end of the same year while conversely 61.3% remained uncleared. The proportion of offences cleared in 1999 was slightly lower than in 1998, when 40.6% of the 222,955 offences reported that year were also cleared that year.

As in 1998, however, the clear up level for those offences reported in 1999 varied considerably depending on the type of offence involved, as shown in Figure 18.

Figure 18 Percentage of offences per offence group recorded and cleared in the same year: 1998 and 1999



The lowest clear up level was recorded for *property offences* (14.9% cleared by the end of that year), followed by *robbery and extortion* (29.9%). Just over one half of the *sexual offences* reported to police in 1999 were cleared, as were two thirds of *offences against the person, excluding sexual offences*. However, the highest clear up levels (over 99%) were recorded for *driving* and *drug offences* – a finding which is to be expected given that police normally detect these offences at the time of their commission by the perpetrator.

Overall, clearance levels in 1999 were generally similar to those in 1998, although some small differences were evident. More specifically, for *offences against the person, sexual offences* and *offences against property* the level of clear-up was slightly lower in 1999 than in

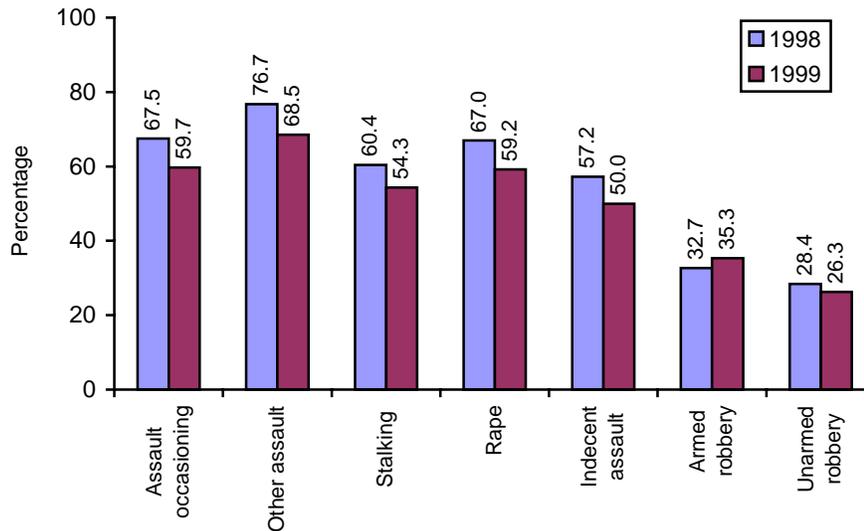
1998. For *other* offences, the opposite was true, with a clear-up level of 75.4% in 1998 compared with 84.7% in 1999.

Even within the broad offence groupings depicted above, the proportion of offences cleared varied depending on the type of behaviour involved, as described below. (Again, the exceptions are *driving* and *drug offences*, where the clear up level was virtually 100% across all sub-groups. This is because, as noted above, police generally only become aware of the offence at the point of apprehending the perpetrator).

Offences against the person, sexual offences and robbery

Figure 19 details the clear up levels for a selected range of *against person, sexual and robbery offences*. As was the case in 1998, the clear up rate for *other assault* in 1999 was higher than that for *assault occasioning actual or grievous bodily harm* (68.5% compared with 59.7% respectively). Similarly the clear up level for *rape* was higher than that for *indecent assault* (59.2% compared with 50.0% respectively). And overall, these rates were considerably higher than those recorded for either *armed* or *unarmed robbery* (35.3% and 26.3% respectively). For seven of the eight offences depicted, clear up levels were higher in 1999 than in 1998. The one exception was *armed robbery*, where 35.3% were cleared in 1999 compared with 32.7% in the previous year.

Figure 19 Percentage of offences recorded and cleared in the same year: clear up levels for selected *offences against the person, sexual offences and robbery offences*, 1998 and 1999.



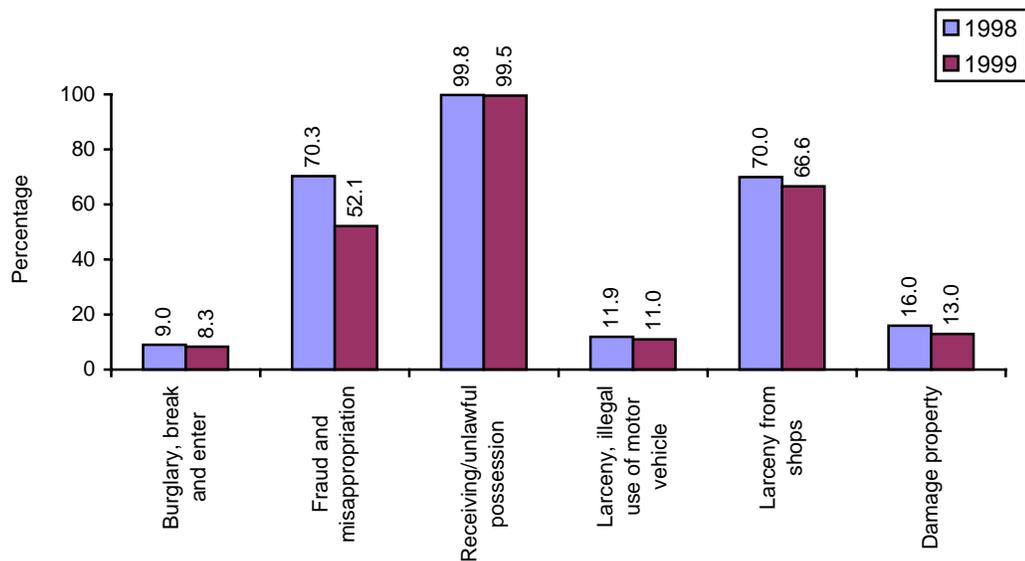
While the numbers are too small to graph, of the 39 *murders* reported to police in 1999, 25 were cleared while 14 remained unclear at the end of the year. Of the 40 *attempted murders*, well over three quarters (n=33) were cleared by the end of the year. Similarly 14 of

the 18 *drive causing death* offences reported in 1999 were cleared at the end of the 12 month period.

Property offences

As indicated above, the clear up level for *property offences* as a whole in 1999 was 14.9%. However, as indicated in Figure 20, this varied considerably depending on the type of *property offence* involved. *Burglary, break and enter* offences had the lowest clear up level (8.3% of all such offences), followed closely by *larceny, illegal use of a motor vehicle* (11.0%) and *damage property* (13.0%). However, at the other end of the scale, virtually all *receiving/unlawful possession* offences were cleared (99.5%) while two thirds of *shop larcenies* and one half of *fraud and misappropriation* matters were cleared. Again, the high clear up rate for *receiving/unlawful possession* is to be expected, given that these offences are often only detected when the alleged offender is caught by police. In contrast, vehicle thefts usually occur when the owner is not present to observe the commission of the offence or to identify the perpetrator. Again, clear up levels in 1999 were generally lower than in 1998, with the differences most pronounced in relation to *fraud and misappropriation*, where only 52.1% were cleared in 1999 compared with over 70.3% in 1998.

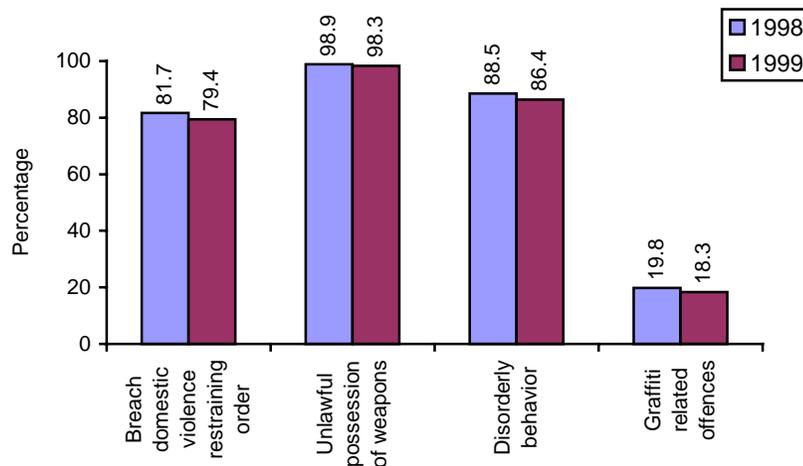
Figure 20 Percentage of offences recorded and cleared in the same year: clear up levels for selected *property offences*, 1998 and 1999.



Offences against good order

Overall, the clear up level for *offences against good order* was 75.0%. While this broad grouping contains a wide range of different offence types, for illustrative purposes only four have been included in Figure 21. As indicated, clear up levels varied from a low of 18.3% for *graffiti and related offences* to 98.3% for *unlawful possession of weapons*. These findings were similar to those observed in 1998.

Figure 21 Percentage of offences recorded and cleared in the same year: clear up levels for selected *offences against good order*, 1998 and 1999.



Total offences cleared in 1999

As noted earlier, of those 243,394 offences reported to police in 1999, 94,111 had been cleared by the end of the year. In addition, a further 3,724 offences were cleared which had been reported to police prior to 1999. This gives a total of 97,835 offences cleared during the 12 month period.

For all offence groups listed, the majority of offences cleared in 1999 were actually reported in the same year. Overall, only a very small proportion of clearances involved offences reported in previous years, although the proportion did vary slightly depending on the type of offence involved. For example, of the 11,728 *offences against the person* cleared in 1999, 7.1% were reported prior to 1999, while for *sexual offences*, *robbery offences* and *property offences*, the proportion was 13.7%, 10.2% and 8.7% respectively. At the other end of the scale, of the 34,060 *driving offences* cleared in 1999, only one involved a pre-1999 offence. This was an offence of *dangerous or reckless driving*, where the victim requested that no further action be taken.

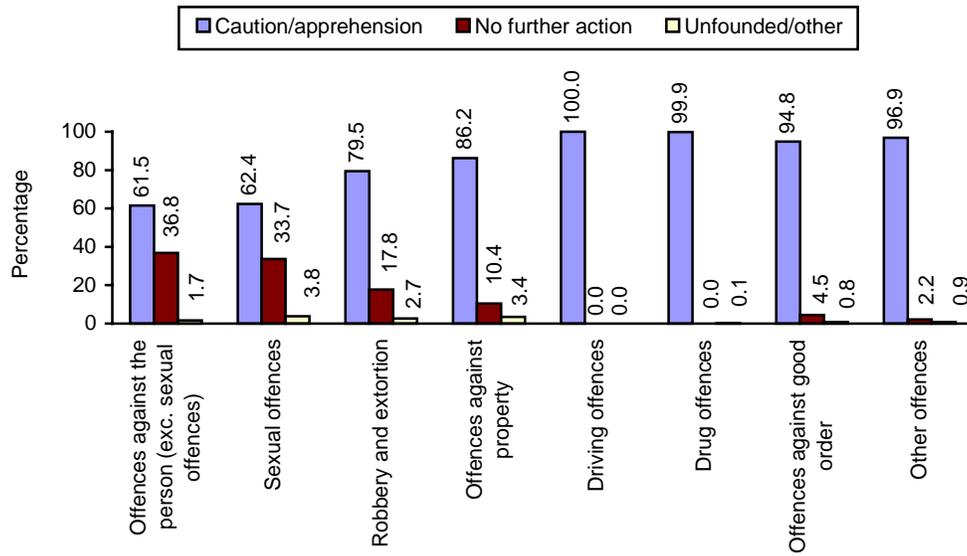
Method of clearance

Of the 97,835 offences actually cleared in 1999, the majority (88,195 or 90.1%) were cleared by way of the apprehension of a suspect. A very small proportion of offences (0.8%) were designated as cleared on the grounds that they were unfounded: ie following exhaustive inquiries, the police found no evidence that an offence had been committed. For 8,341 (8.5% of all offences cleared), the victim requested that the police take no further action. Finally, 0.5% were cleared by some 'other' method. 'Other' included the following categories:

- The accused or the complainant had died;
- The suspect had diplomatic immunity; or
- The charge had lapsed due to the limitation of time set out in legislation.

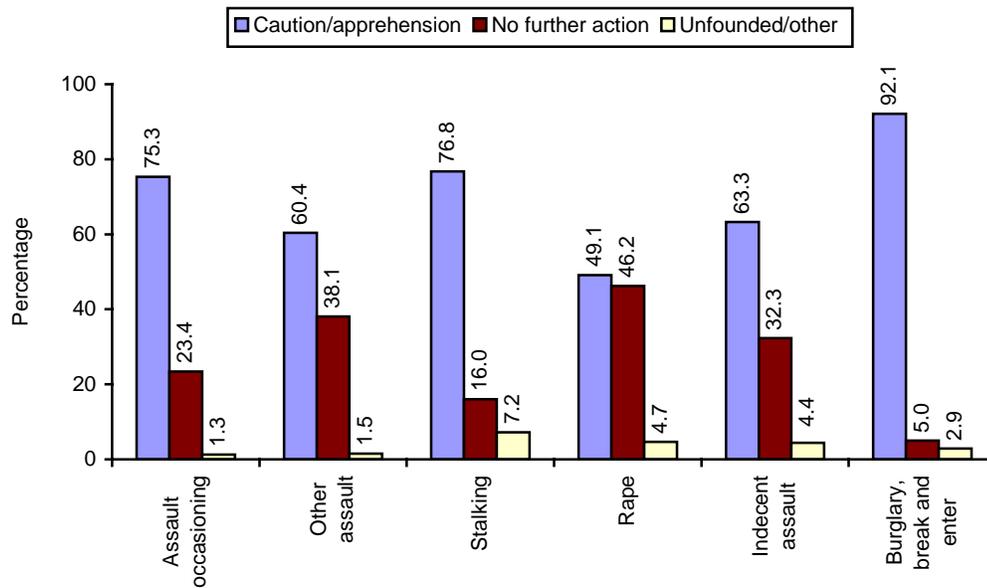
Once again, however, there were variations in the method of clearance depending on the type of offence category involved. As indicated in Figure 22, for *driving* and *drug* offences, virtually all were cleared by way of the apprehension of a suspect. In contrast, only 61.5% of *against person* offences were cleared by this method, as were 62.4% of *sexual offences*. For these two categories, the proportion which were cleared as a result of the victim requesting that no further action be taken was relatively high (36.8% of *offences against the person* and 33.7% of *sexual offences*.) In comparison, the victim withdrew the report in only 10.4% of *property offences*. These findings accord with anecdotal evidence that in a higher proportion of personal and sexual offences the offender is known (and is often related) to the victim, thereby increasing the likelihood that the victim will not pursue the matter.

Figure 22 Method of clearance for all offences cleared in 1999 by offence group



A further breakdown of selected *against person* and *sexual offences* is contained in Figure 23. As shown, a comparatively high proportion of reported *rapes*, *indecent assaults* and *other assaults* cleared in 1999 involved the victim withdrawing the allegation (46.2%, 32.3% and 38.1% respectively), compared with 16.0% of *stalking* offences and 23.4% of *assault occasioning grievous or actual bodily harm*. For comparative purposes, the method of clearance for one property offence – *burglary, break and enter* – has also been included. As shown, the proportion cleared by way of apprehension in 1999 was extremely high (92.1%) while the proportion where the victim withdrew the allegation was low (5.0%).

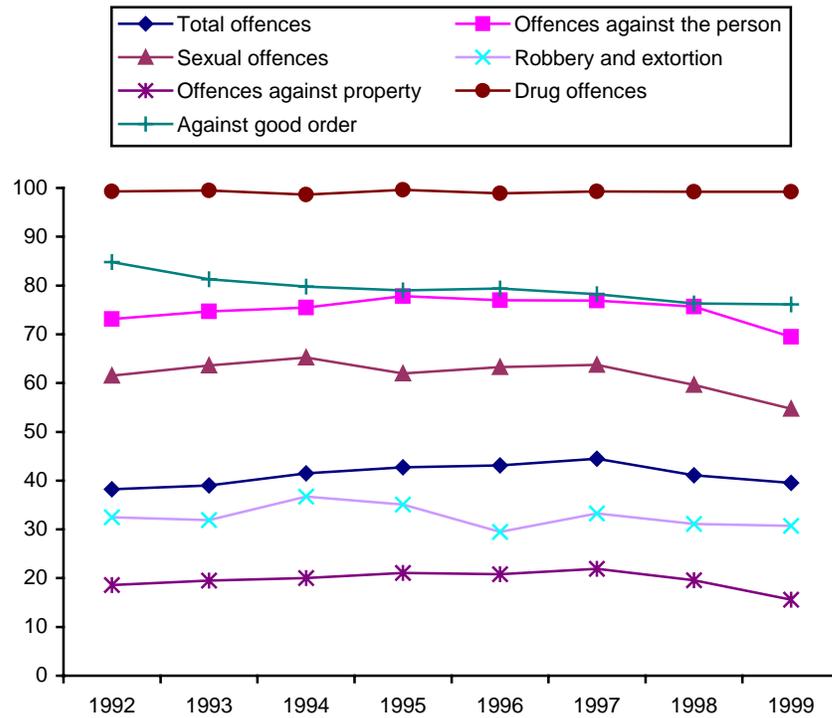
Figure 23 Method of clearance for selected *against person* and *sexual offences* cleared in 1999



Longitudinal trends in level of clearance

The clearance data presented in Tables 4.1 to 4.20 in Section 4 of this report relate primarily to offences reported in the 1999 calendar year. Given that police would have had relatively little time to clear these offences, particularly those reported late in the year, it is possible that the percentage of offences cleared in 1999 may be lower than the level of clearance for offences reported in earlier years. To place the most recent data into a broader context, and to identify whether the level of clearance and the method of clearance for the eight major offence categories has changed over time, Tables 4.21 to 4.29 in Section 4 of this report provide details on the clearance status, as at 31 December 1999, of all offences recorded in the years 1992 to 1999. This means that for those offences reported in 1992, police have had at least seven years to clear them compared with less than one year for those offences reported in 1999.

Figure 24 Percentage of offences cleared as at 31 December 1999 by year of report



Note: driving offences have not been included because in each of the years depicted, the level of clearance equalled or exceeded 99.9%.

As indicated in Figure 24, differences in the percentage of offences cleared per year varied considerably depending on the type of offence involved. *Drug offences* recorded the highest clearance levels while *offences against property* had the lowest proportion cleared. These differences remained consistent over time.

In terms of longitudinal trends, the percentage of offences cleared per category was generally lowest for those reported in 1999. This finding is inevitable, given the relatively short time available for police to 'solve' the crime. However, what is less expected is that for each of the offence categories depicted, the 1999 clearance levels were not markedly different from those recorded in previous years – a finding which suggests that the majority of matters are cleared within a relatively short space of time. For example, for *offences against the person*, 73.1% of those reported to police in 1992 had been cleared by 31 December 1999 compared with 69.5% of those reported in 1999. Having an additional seven years to clear the 1992 offences therefore did not make a substantial difference for this offence category. A similar finding applied to *robbery and extortion*, with 32.5% of such offences reported in 1992 being

cleared by the end of December 1999 compared with only a slightly lower figure of 30.7% of those reported in 1999.

Of the seven offence groups depicted, the 'drop off' in the clearance level for matters reported in 1999 compared with earlier years was most pronounced for *against the person* and *sexual offences*. For *offences against the person*, clearance levels dropped from over 75% during the 1994 to 1998 period to 69.5% in 1999. For *sexual offences*, clearance levels in the early and mid years of the decade remained relatively stable, generally hovering around the 62% to 63% mark. However, this fell to 59.6% for offences reported in 1998 and to 54.7% for those offences recorded in 1999.

The other aspect to emerge from Figure 24 is that, if we exclude the inevitable 'drop off' observed for offences reported in 1999, the level of clearance per offence category has not changed significantly over time. For several offence categories (notably *offences against the person* and *property offences*) the level of clearance increased slightly between 1992 and 1997 (from 73.1% to 76.9% in the case of *against person* offences and from 18.6% to 21.9% for *property offences*), while for other offences (notably *against good order* offences) the level of clearance declined slightly (from 84.8% to 78.2% respectively). However, these shifts are not significant.

1.4 VICTIMS OF OFFENCES RECORDED BY POLICE

Section 5 of this report provides information on those victims who reported an offence to police during 1999. The offence categories selected for inclusion cover all *offences against the person*, all *sexual offences*, all *larcenies from the person* and all *robbery and extortion* offences directed against an individual. Those *robbery and extortion offences* perpetrated against a corporation have been excluded, as have all *drug and driving offences* because these do not generally involve a victim. *Offences against property* have also been omitted because of potential biases arising from how the information is reported to police. In the case of a house break, for example, if the property is jointly owned by a husband and wife, then both are victims. However, police only record the details of one of these individuals – usually the one who actually reports the offence. If house breaks are usually reported by the male, then the data will show a potentially misleading preponderance of males as victims of this particular type of offence.

It should also be stressed that Tables 5.1 to 5.3 in Section 5 contain several sets of figures, each based on different counting rules. The reader is advised to consult the Appendix for a full explanation of these rules. However, a brief description is provided below.

- **Total offences.** In the body of each table, victim details are counted once for each different offence group recorded per incident report. To illustrate: if, in the one incident report filed by police, the victim claimed that they had been assaulted twice and stalked once, that victim would be counted once under assault and once under stalking. However, if they filed an assault report in January and another in April, they would be counted twice under the assault category because these related to two separate incidents.
- **Total victims per offence group.** In the far right hand column of each table, victims are counted once per offence group, irrespective of how many incident reports were filed during the course of the year. For example, in Table 5.1a of Section 5 there were 10,848 victims of *other assault*. This means that during 1999, 10,848 individuals reported being the victims of at least one *other assault*. If, over the course of the year, the same individual was subjected to multiple assaults on different occasions, they were still only counted once. However, if they were subjected on the first occasion to an *assault* and on the second occasion to *stalking*, they would be counted under each of these offence types.
- **Total victims per age group.** The bottom row of each table details the total number of victims per age group. To illustrate, in Table 5.1a of Section 5, there were 321 victims aged 0–9 years who, during 1999, were subject to at least one *offence against the person*. If the victim experienced more than one such offence during the course of the year, and fell within the 0 – 9 year age bracket on each of those occasions, that person was counted only once. However, if, over the course of these incidents, the person moved into the next age grouping of 10 – 13 years, they would be counted again in that next age bracket.
- **Discrete individuals.** Finally, in the bottom right hand corner of each table is a single figure which details the total number of discrete individuals who, during the course of the year, were victimised at least once, irrespective of their age or the category of offence involved. In Table 5.1a for example, there were 14,270 discrete individuals who, during

1999, experienced at least one *offence against the person*. This applied irrespective of how many different types of *against person* offences they experienced or whether their age changed from one incident to another.

Total offences recorded

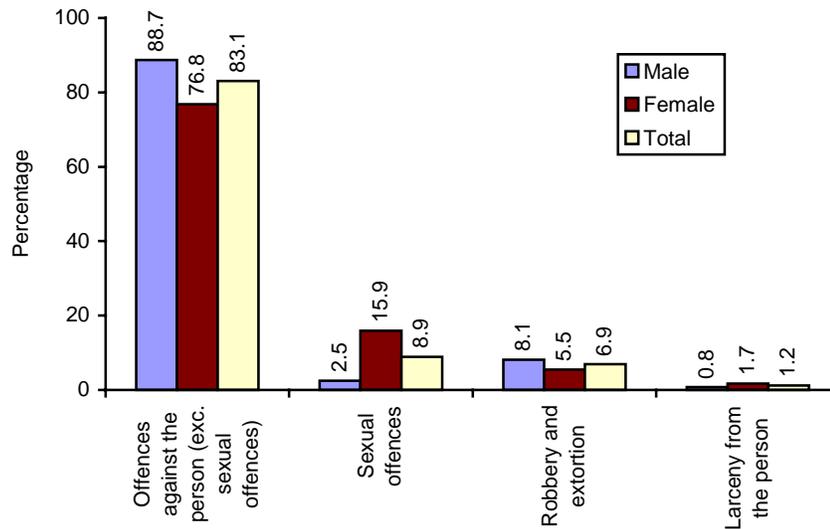
In 1999 there were 19,551 recorded offences which involved a 'personal victim' (ie the victim was an individual, rather than a corporation or property). Of those 19,520 offences where the sex of the victim was recorded, 52.6% involved males while conversely, 47.4% involved females. The fact that there was a fairly even distribution of males and females amongst the victims is in direct contrast to the finding (as described in the next section) that males accounted for the overwhelming majority of persons apprehended in 1999 for allegedly committing offences.

As indicated in Figure 25, of the 19,551 offences perpetrated against an individual, over eight in 10 involved an *offence against the person*. In contrast, *sexual offences* accounted for only 8.9% of offences involving a personal victim, while *robbery and extortion* constituted 6.9% and *larceny from the person* made up 1.2%.

Within the *offences against the person* category, *other assault* was the most prominent, accounting for three quarters of all *against person offences* perpetrated against an individual victim. In contrast, only just over one in 10 *against person* matters involved an *assault occasioning actual or grievous bodily harm*. *Sexual offences* were more evenly distributed, with *rape* and *indecent assault* each constituting approximately one third of offences within this broad grouping while *other* sexual offences made up almost one quarter. Of the *robbery offences* where a personal victim was involved, over two thirds (68.2%) did not involve the use of a weapon.

There were some minor differences between males and females in the type of offences perpetrated against them. A higher proportion of offences involving male victims entailed an *offence against the person* (88.7% compared with 76.8% of offences directed against females). This was largely due to the higher level of male victimisation for *assault occasioning grievous or actual bodily harm* (13.5% of all male victimisations compared with 4.6% of all female victimisations) and *other assault* (64.5% compared with 59.3% respectively). A slightly higher proportion of male than female victimisations also involved *robbery* (7.9% compared with 5.4% respectively). In contrast, proportionately more female than male victimisations involved a *sexual offence* (15.9% compared with 2.5% respectively). Very few males or females were subjected to a *larceny from the person* (0.8% and 1.7% respectively).

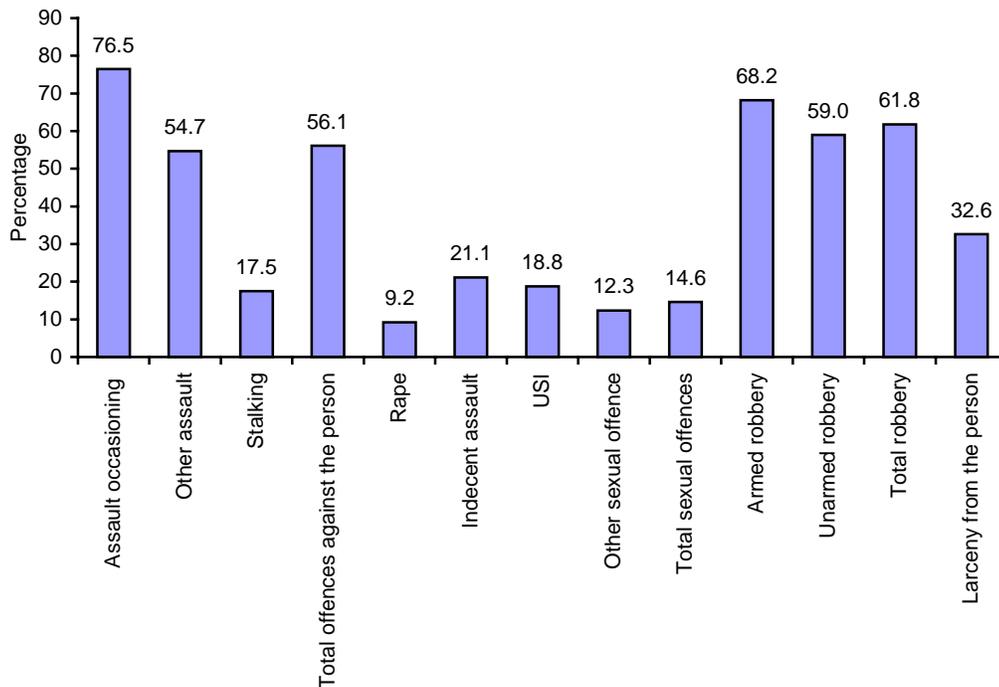
Figure 25 Offences involving a 'personal' victim: offence type by sex, 1999



These different patterns for males and females are more clearly illustrated in Figure 26, which depicts the proportion of males per selected offence type. Given that males accounted for 52.6% of all reported victimisations involving an offence directed against an individual, they were over-represented in the categories of *assault occasioning grievous or actual bodily harm* (where they constituted 76.5% of the 1,809 such victimisations where information on the sex of the victim was recorded) and both *armed* and *unarmed robbery* (68.2% and 59.0% respectively). In contrast, males were under-represented as victims of *stalking* (accounting for only 17.5% of the 292 victimisations in this category where information on the sex of the victim was available), all forms of *sexual assault* (where they accounted for only 9.2% of all *rapes*, 21.1% of all *indecent assaults* and 18.8% of all *unlawful sexual intercourse* offences) and *larceny from the person* (32.6%).

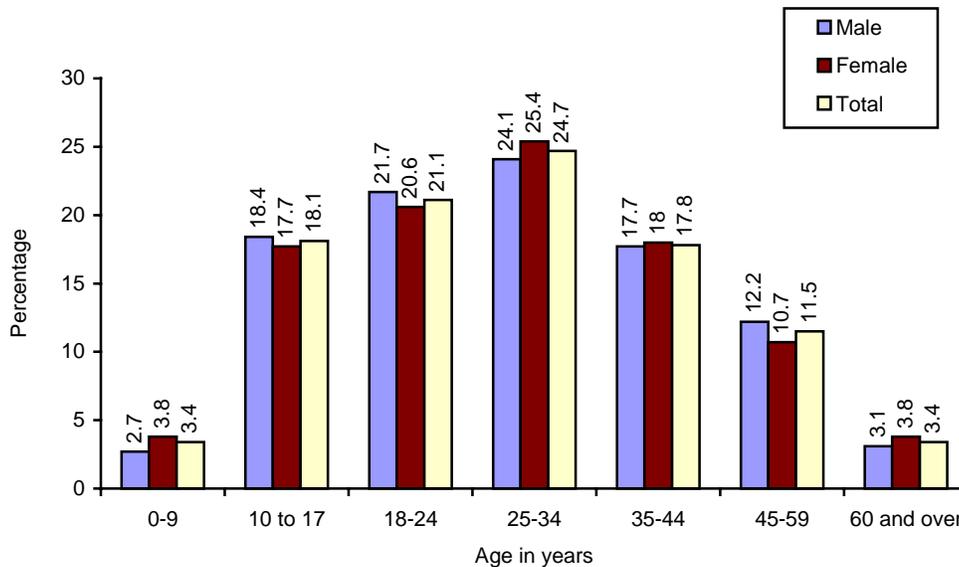
While Figure 26 excludes those offence types where numbers were relatively small, it is worth noting that of the 39 *murders* recorded by police in 1999, just over three quarters of the victims were male. Males were also the victims of 28 of the 39 *attempted murders* recorded that year and 12 of the 18 victims of *drive causing death*.

Figure 26 Offences involving ‘personal’ victims recorded by police: males as a proportion of all recorded offences by offence type, 1999.



The age profiles of victims involved in ‘personal’ offences recorded by police in 1999 are detailed in Figure 27. (Note that here, each victim is counted once per age group, irrespective of the number or type of victimisations experienced during the year. For example, a victim who, during the ages of 10 - 17 years, experienced an *assault*, a *rape* and a *robbery* would be counted only once. However, if that same victim was aged 10 - 17 at the time of the *assault* and *rape* but had turned 18 when the *robbery* occurred he/she would be counted once in the 10-17 year age bracket and once in the 18 - 24 year group.) As shown, persons in the mid age ranges of 18 – 24 years and 25 – 34 years accounted for the highest proportion of ‘personal’ victimisations reported to police in 1999 (21.1% and 24.7% of all such offences respectively), while the very young and the elderly accounted for relatively small proportions. In fact, individuals aged less than 10 accounted for only 3.4% of all ‘personal’ offences recorded over the 12 month period, as did those aged 60 years and over. These findings run counter to a common perception within the community that the elderly are more likely to be the victims of crime than other age groups. Figure 27 also indicates a similar age profile for both male and female victims.

Figure 27 Offences involving a ‘personal’ victim recorded by police: age by sex of victims, 1999



Note: For this graph, victims were counted once per age group irrespective of the type of victimisation or the number of times they were revictimised during the twelve month period.

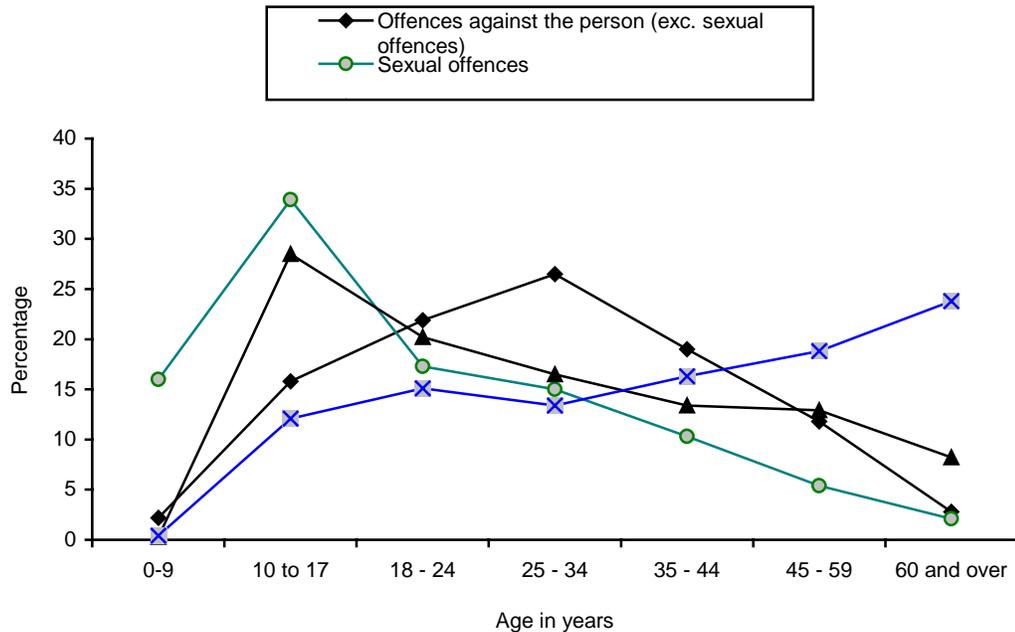
However, the age profiles of victims varied considerably depending on the type of offence involved. As indicated in Figure 28, the age profile for victims of *offences against the person, excluding sexual offences* closely mirrors the pattern for total offences described above. For the *against person* offence category, the highest proportion of victims were in the mid-age ranges of 18 – 24 years (21.8%) and 25 - 34 years (26.5%), with only a very small proportion aged 0 – 9 (2.2%) or 60 years and over (2.8%).

In contrast, for *sexual offences*, the peak age was 10 – 17 years, with persons in this category accounting for one third (33.9%) of all *sexual offence* victimisations recorded by police in 1999. A further 16.0% were aged 0 – 9 years. In total then, one half of all recorded *sexual offence* victims were young people aged less than 18 years. In contrast, the older age groups of 45 years and over accounted for only 7.5% of all *sexual offence* victims. The age profile of persons subjected to a *robbery and extortion* was somewhat similar, in that the highest proportion (28.5%) of victims fell within the 10 – 17 year age group in 1999. After the age of 17, as age increased so the likelihood of being the victim of a *robbery and extortion* generally decreased. However, the extent of decrease for the 45 - 59 and 60 and over age groups was not as pronounced as it was for *against person* and *sexual offences*.

The age profile of persons subject to a reported *larceny from the person* was different again. Here, as age increased, so did the likelihood of victimisation. In fact, of the 239 victims recorded in 1999 where information on age was available, almost one quarter (23.8%) were in

the 60 years and over age bracket, while a further 18.8% involved persons aged 45 - 59 years. At the other end of the scale, only 12.5% were aged less than 18 years. For this type of offence then, it is the elderly who are more likely to be targeted than younger persons, probably because of their vulnerability.

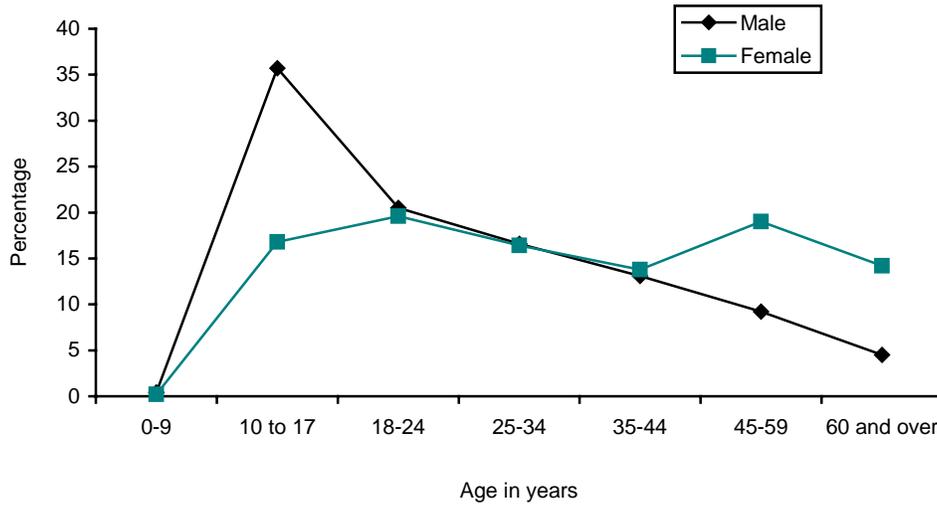
Figure 28 Offences involving a 'personal' victim recorded by police: age profile of victims by offence type, 1999



Note: For this graph, victims were counted once per age group per offence category, irrespective of the number of times they were revictimised within that offence category during the twelve month period.

As indicated earlier, when all offences of a personal nature were combined, the age profiles for male and female victims were very similar. However, this was not necessarily the case when age profiles were disaggregated according to the specific type of offence involved. For example, as indicated in Figures 29 and 30, male/female age profiles for both *robbery and extortion* and *larceny from the person* offences were dissimilar. In relation to the former, the highest proportion of male victims fell within the 10 - 17 age category (35.7%). For male victims from the age of 17 onwards, as age increased so the proportion of victims decreased, with only 4.5% of male *robbery and extortion* victims being aged 60 year and over. In contrast, the age profile of female *robbery and extortion* victims remained relatively constant across all but the youngest age group, ranging from approximately 17% in the 10-17 and 25-34 year age categories to about 19% in the 18-24 and 45-59 year categories. In effect then, for female victims of those *robbery and extortion* offences recorded by police in 1999, there was no decrease in the likelihood of victimisation as age increased.

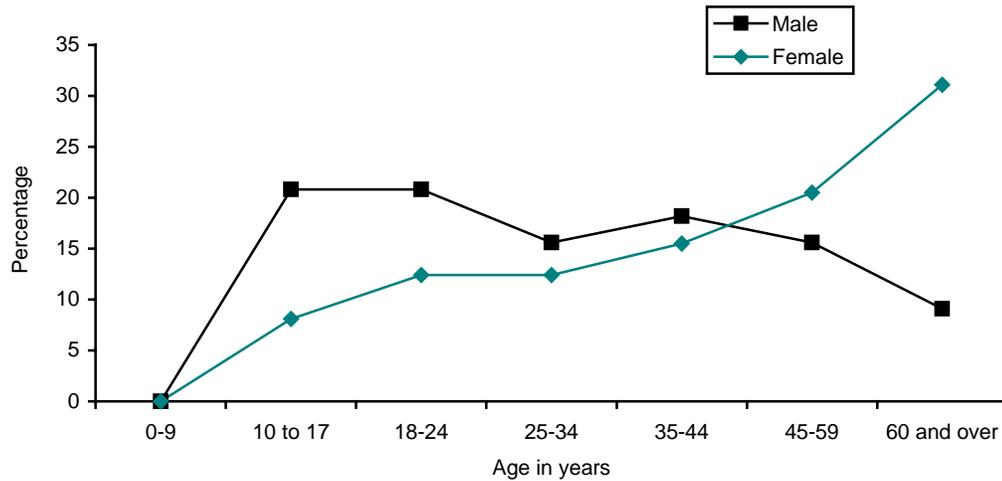
Figure 29 *Robbery and extortion offences recorded by police; age profiles of victims by sex, 1999*



Note: For this graph, victims are counted once per age group, irrespective of the number of times they were revictimised within the robbery and extortion category.

For *larceny from the person*, the highest proportion of male victims fell within the younger age categories, with the 10 – 17 year and 18 – 24 year groupings each accounting for 20.8%. The proportion then diminished gradually as age increased, with less than 10% falling within the 60 and over group. However, the reverse was true for females. As age increased, so did the likelihood of victimisation within this group, with the result that the highest proportion of female victims (31.1% of the total) were in the oldest category of 60 years and over. This tends to confirm the anecdotal evidence that older women are the most vulnerable to *larceny from the person* offences (notably bag snatches).

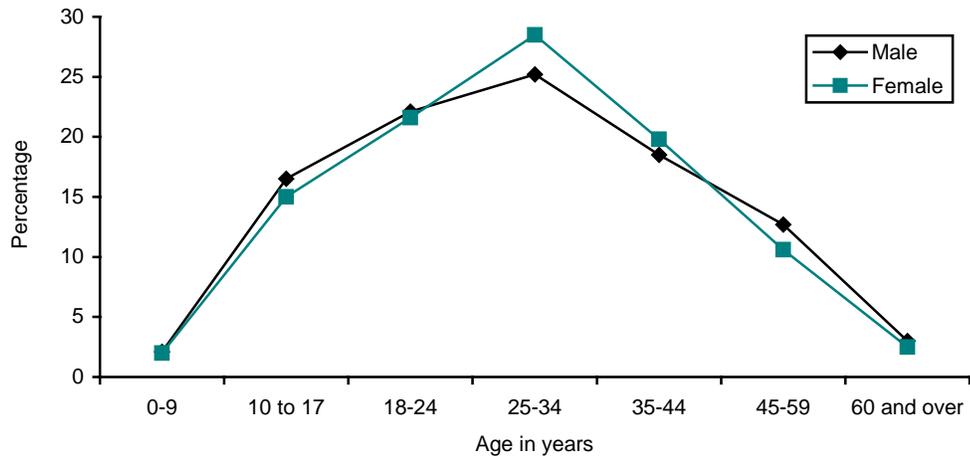
Figure 30 *Larceny from the person* offences recorded by police: age profiles of victims by sex, 1999



Note: For this graph, victims were counted once per age group, irrespective of the number of times they were revictimised within the larceny from a person category during the twelve month period.

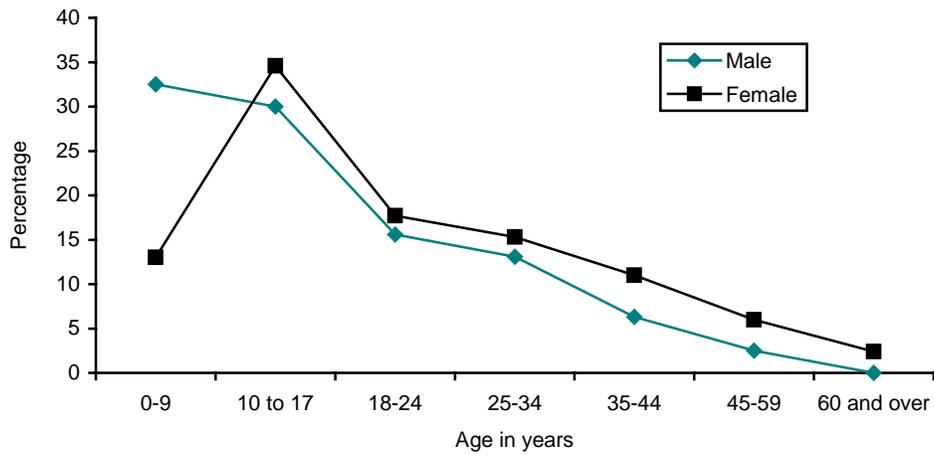
As depicted in Figure 31, the age profile for male victims of an *offence against the person* was very similar to that of female victims. The same could be said for *sexual offences* (Figure 32) with one exception: a much higher proportion of male victims fell within the youngest age group of 0 – 9 years (32.5% compared with only 13.0% of female victims). This raises the possibility that, at least in relation to those offences reported to police, males are more vulnerable to child sexual abuse than females.

Figure 31 *Offences against the person* recorded by police: age profile of victims by sex, 1999



Note: For this graph, victims were counted once per age group, irrespective of the number of times they were victimised within the offences against the person category during the twelve month period.

Figure 33 *Sexual offences* recorded by police: age profile of victims by sex, 1999



Note: For this graph, victims were counted once per age group irrespective of the number of times they were revictimised within the sexual offences category during the twelve month period.

Discrete individuals and the average number of incident reports per individual

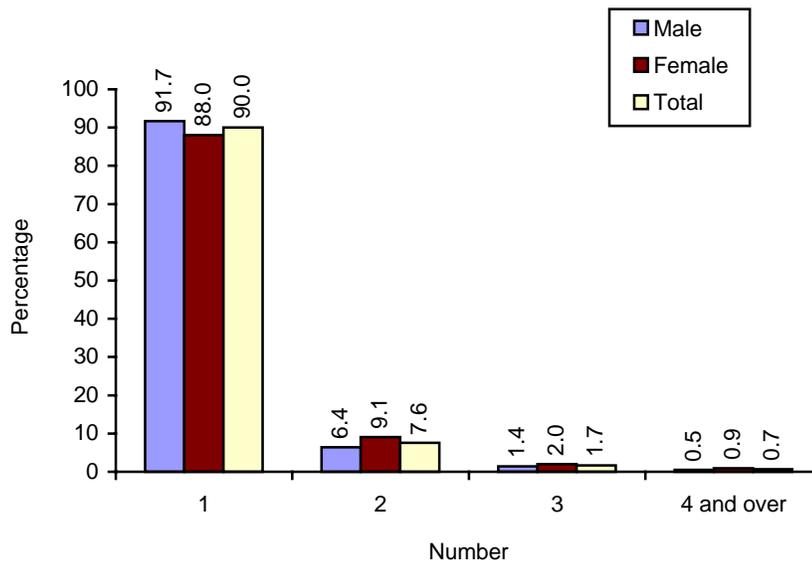
The information provided above does not relate to the number of discrete individuals victimised during 1999. In determining the age profiles outlined above, for example, a victim who was subjected to more than one *sexual offence* during the year and changed age brackets from one victimisation to another was counted separately in each age group. In the ensuing section, details are provided on both discrete individuals as well as the level of revictimisation during the twelve month period.

In 1999 there were 17,019 individuals who, during the course of the year, were subject to at least one 'personal' offence. This figure was 6.1% lower than the 18,127 victims recorded in 1998. Details on the sex of the victim were not recorded for 31 of the victims in 1999. Of the remaining 16,988 individuals, 9,182 (54.0%) were male while 7,806 (46.0%) were female.

As indicated in Figure 33, nine in ten victims were the subject of only one incident report during the course of the 12 months. Conversely, only a small proportion (10.0%) were listed as the victims in two or more incident reports. Overall then, the level of repeat victimisation was extremely low. However, it is worth noting that there were 16 individuals who were the subject of six or more incident reports during 1999.

There were only minor differences between males and females in terms of the number of incident reports lodged, with a slightly higher proportion of female than male victims being the subject of more than one report (12.0% of females compared with 8.3% of males.)

Figure 34 Number of incident reports per victim by sex, 1999



1.5 OFFENCES CLEARED BY WAY OF AN APPREHENSION

Offences cleared via the lodgement of an apprehension report may involve the alleged perpetrator either being cautioned, arrested or reported by police.

In the following analysis of apprehension data, several different units of analysis are used. In the first section below, information is presented on all charges laid. However, unlike the counting rules used in the tables contained in Section 3 and 4 of the report, this does not include multiple counts of the same offence. For example, if an alleged offender has been charged on the apprehension report with three counts of *assault* - which generally indicates the one victim and the one incident - only one *assault* is recorded. However, if the offender has been charged with three separate *assault* offences, all are counted because this usually indicates three different victims and three different incidents.

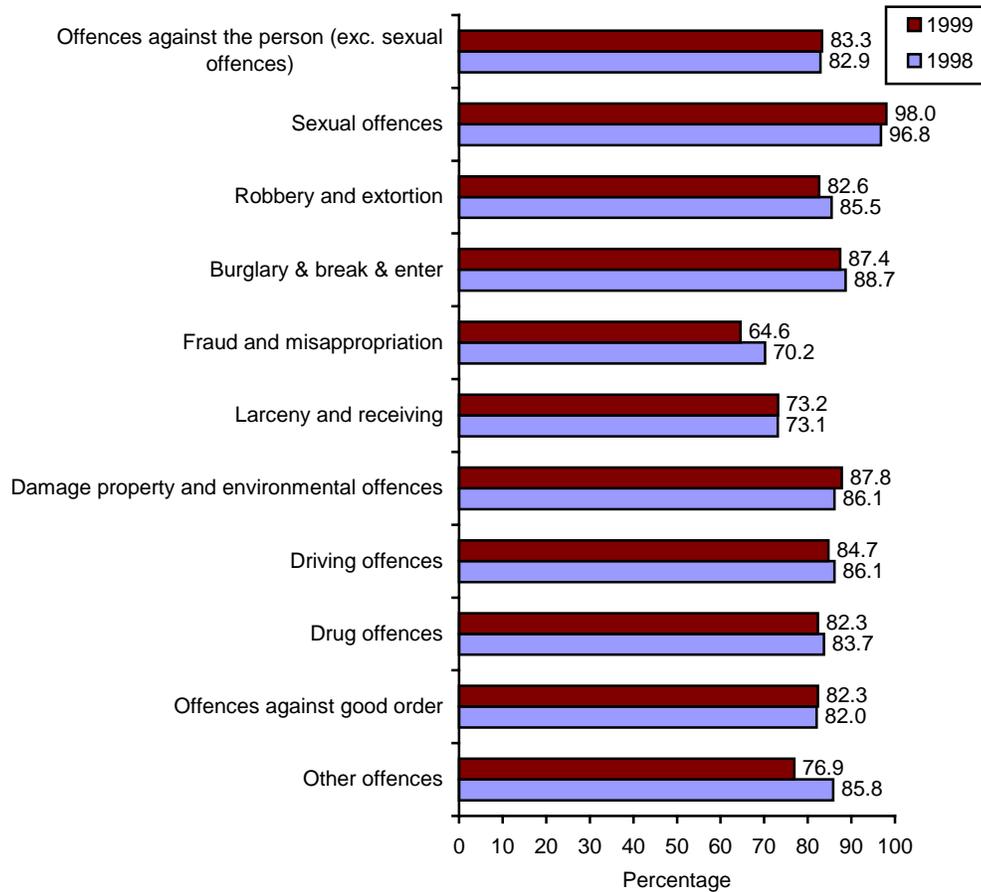
In the second section below, information is presented on the number of actual apprehensions and the number of discrete individuals involved in those apprehensions. This is relevant given that there can be more than one offence per apprehension report, and the same person may be apprehended on more than one occasion during the course of a single year.

Characteristics of alleged offenders involved in offences cleared by way of an apprehension

In 1999 89,346 offences were cleared by way of an apprehension report. This figure was higher (by 11.7%) than the 79,991 offences cleared via apprehension in 1998. As was the case in previous years, more than eight in 10 (81.9%) of those charges for which information on the sex of the alleged offender was recorded involved males, although this percentage varied depending on the type of offence involved (see Figure 34), reaching a high of 98.0% for *sexual offences*. Conversely, while only a minority of charges were laid against females, this group accounted for 26.8% of all *larceny and receiving* offences charged (including 44.7% of all *larcenies from shops*) and 35.4% of all *fraud and misappropriation* charges.

Overall, the proportion of males involved in offences cleared via apprehension remained relatively stable between 1998 and 1999 although it was slightly lower for *fraud and misappropriation* offences and *other* offences. In 1999 males accounted for 64.6% of all *fraud and misappropriation* charges compared with 70.2% in 1998, and 76.9% of all *other* offences compared with 85.8% in the previous year.

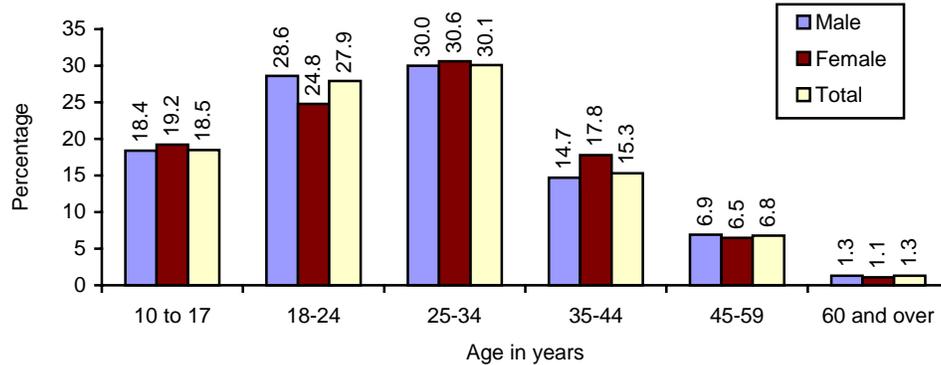
Figure 34 Charges laid by police in 1998 and 1999: proportion per offence type involving males



Of the 89,312 charges listed in the apprehension reports filed in 1999 where the age of the alleged offender was recorded, relatively few involved older individuals. Persons aged 45 - 59 years accounted for only 6.8% of all charges, while those aged 60 years and over constituted only 1.3%. In contrast, over one half of all charges (58.0%) were allegedly committed by persons in the 18 - 34 year age group while a further 18.5% involved juveniles (aged 10 - 17 inclusive).

Figure 35 shows that overall, there were very few age differences between males and females involved in those offences cleared in 1999 by way of an apprehension. For both groups, those aged 18 - 24 and 25 - 34 years dominated, accounting for 58.6% of all charges involving males and 55.4% of all charges involving females. Similarly, relatively few males or females were aged 45 years and over.

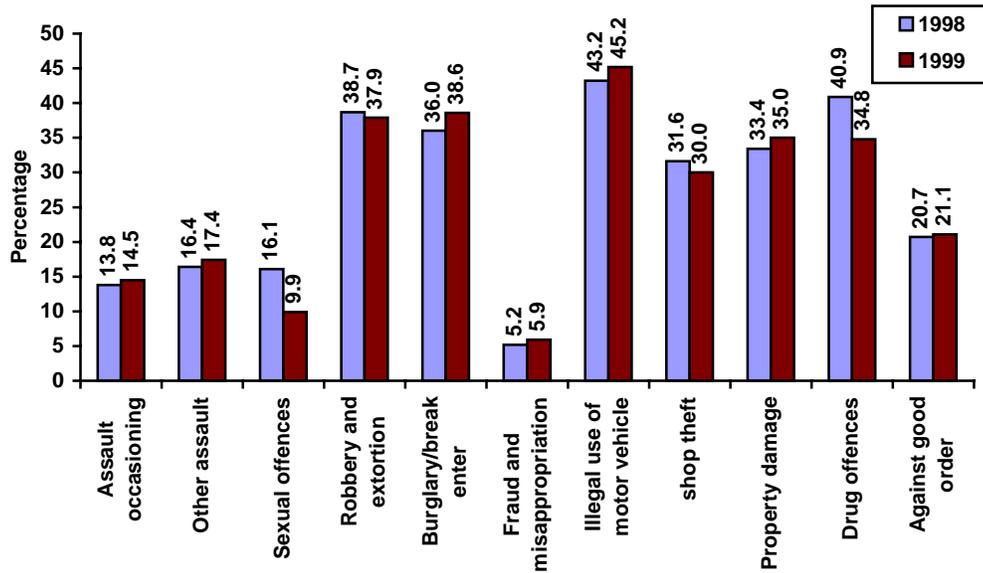
Figure 35 Charges laid by police in 1999: age of alleged offenders by sex



As noted earlier, just under one in five charges laid in 1999 involved juveniles (aged 10 – 17 years inclusive). However, this proportion varied depending on the type of offence involved. At one end of the scale, juveniles constituted only 8.0% of all *driving offences* cleared by way of apprehension and 5.9% of all *fraud and misappropriation* charges. At the other end of the scale, they were involved in 38.6% of all *burglary and break and enter* charges. This age group also accounted for 37.9% of all *robbery and extortion* charges, 34.4% of all *larceny* charges (including 45.2% of all *larceny/illegal use of motor vehicle* offences) and 35.0% of all *property damage* charges. Another offence category which involved a high proportion of juveniles was that involving the use of illicit drugs. Overall, 34.8% of *drug offences* laid by police in 1999 involved young people. However, this figure is misleading because adults who are detected in possession of cannabis for personal use are given a Cannabis Expiation Notice and so are not included in these data. The fact that juveniles cannot receive CENs artificially inflates the extent of juvenile involvement in total illicit drug charges. A more detailed analysis indicates that, while juveniles accounted for 73.0% of all *use/possess cannabis* charges and 77.3% of all offences involving the *possession of a drug implement*, they were involved in only 7.0% of *use/possess opiate or other drug*, 9.4% of *possess for sale or sell drugs* and only 7.1% of *produce/manufacture drugs*.

The proportion within each offence category cleared by way of a juvenile apprehension in 1999 was very similar to that recorded in 1998 (see Figure 36). Only two small differences warrant comment. In 1999, a slightly lower proportion of *sexual offences* laid involved juveniles (9.9% compared with 16.1% in 1998). The same applied to *drug offences*, with juveniles accounting for 34.8% of all such charges laid in 1999 compared with 40.8% in 1998. It should be stressed, however, that these data do not necessarily indicate that juveniles actually committed more or fewer offences within these categories than other age groups. It simply means that they were apprehended more or less often by police for such offences. Because of their comparative immaturity, they may simply have been more visible to police and so more vulnerable to apprehension.

Figure 36 Juveniles as proportion of all charges laid by police: 1998 compared with 1999

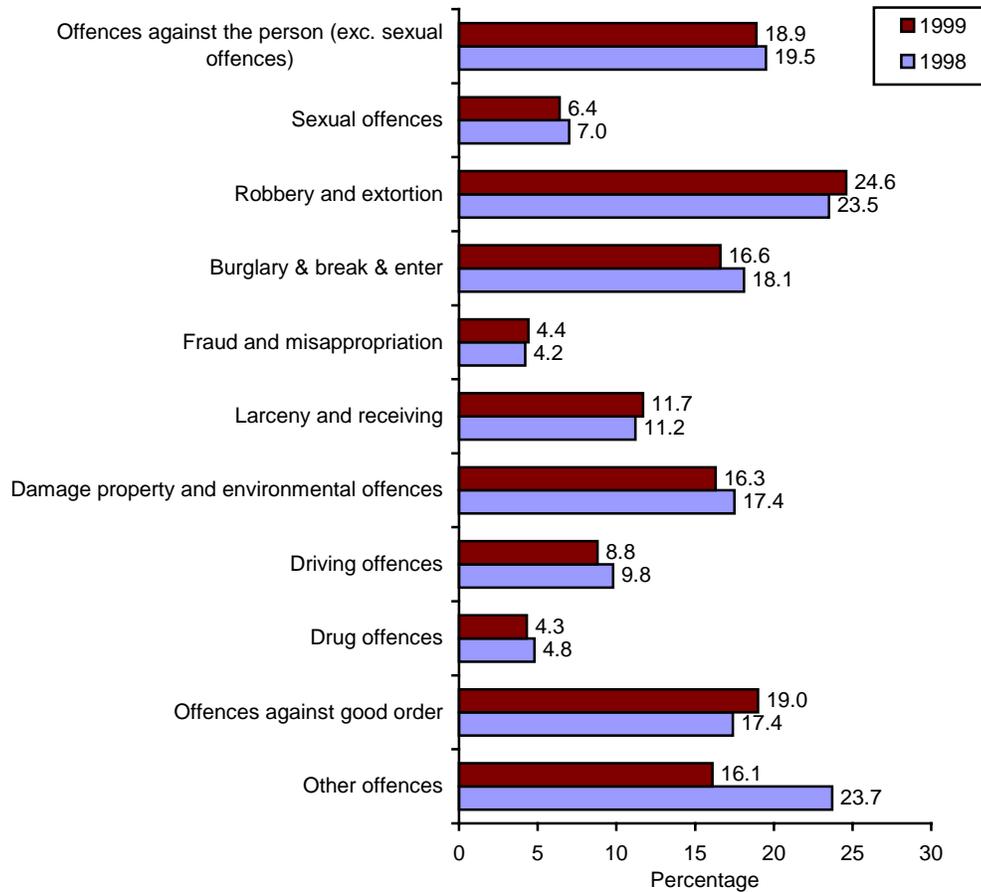


Offences cleared in 1999 by way of an apprehension: racial identity of persons charged.

Of the 89,346 charges laid by police in 1999, information on racial appearance was available for 83,274 or 93.2%. Of these 83,274 charges, 10,552 (12.7%) involved persons considered by police to be of Aboriginal appearance. Although this was slightly lower than in 1998 (when persons identified as Aboriginal accounted for 13.3% of all charges laid) it still points to a significant over-representation of Aboriginal persons within the South Australian criminal justice system, given that this group constitutes only 1.3% of all persons aged 10 years and over resident in this State in 1999.

However, the extent of Aboriginal involvement varied considerably depending on the type of charge, as indicated in Figure 37.

Figure 37 Charges laid by police in 1998 and 1999: proportion per offence category involving persons of Aboriginal appearance



As shown, persons of Aboriginal appearance accounted for 24.6% of all *robbery and extortion* charges in 1999 where racial appearance was recorded, 19.0% of all *against good order* charges, 18.9% of all *against person* offences laid, 16.6% of all *burglary, break and enter* charges and 16.3% of all *property damage and environmental* charges. At the other end of the scale, of all *fraud and misappropriation* charges listed on the 1999 police apprehension reports where relevant information was available, only 4.4% involved persons of Aboriginal appearance, as did 4.3% of all *drug offences* and 6.4% of all *sexual offences*. Overall, these figures were relatively similar to those recorded in the previous year. The only difference of note was the lower proportion of Aboriginal persons charged with *other* offences in 1999 compared with 1998.

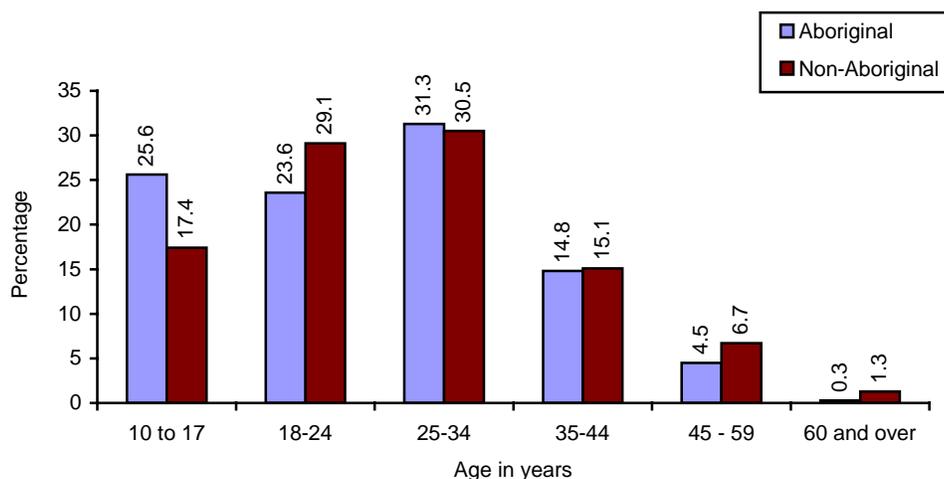
One offence category where Aboriginal persons have always been over-represented is that of *offences against good order*. As noted above, in 1999 persons of Aboriginal appearance accounted for 19.0% of all such charges laid where relevant information was recorded.

However, this varied depending on the type of *good order* offence involved. At one end of the scale, Aboriginals accounted for only one of the 505 *consorting and prostitution* charges laid and 8.7% of the 2,345 *unlawful possession of weapons* charges. At the other end of the scale, this group accounted for 27.2% of all *indecent/offensive language* charges, 31.8% of all *disorderly/offensive behaviour* charges where information on racial identity was available and 21.9% of all *resist/hinder police* charges.

In interpreting these figures though, it should be stressed that they do not indicate the proportion of offences within each category which were actually committed by Aboriginal persons. They simply indicate the proportion who were apprehended. Given the low clear up rate for many offences (see earlier discussion) it may be that, because of their greater visibility, persons of Aboriginal appearance are simply more vulnerable to detection than other Australians.

A comparison of the age profiles of persons charged with offences in 1999 indicate some minor Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal differences (see Figure 38). As indicated, for those offences where information on racial appearance was recorded, a higher proportion of those laid against Aboriginal persons involved individuals aged 10 - 17 years (25.6% compared with 17.4% of all offences alleged against non-Aboriginals). At the other end of the scale, a slightly lower proportion of offences alleged against Aboriginals in 1999 involved persons aged 45 and over (4.8% compared with 8.0% of offences attributed to non-Aboriginals).

Figure 38 Charges laid by police in 1999; age by racial appearance



Relationship between charges laid, apprehension reports filed and discrete persons apprehended

As indicated in Table 6.27a of Section 6 of this report, there were 89,346 charges recorded in 1999. These were contained within 48,782 apprehension reports. This means that, on average, each apprehension report lodged by police during this twelve month period

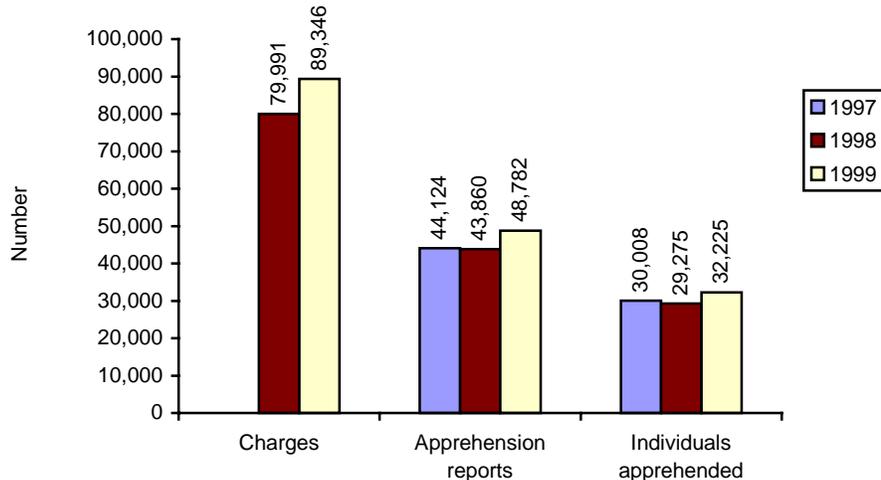
contained 1.83 charges. Over the same time period, a total of 32,225 discrete individuals were apprehended. On average then, each person was apprehended 1.51 times, with an average of 2.77 charges laid per individual over the twelve month period.

Due to recent changes in the counting rules used by the Office of Crime Statistics to determine the number of charges laid, 1998 and 1999 data relating to offences charged cannot be compared with those recorded in 1997. However, as indicated in Figure 39, the number of charges laid in 1999 was higher (by 11.7%) than in 1998. Similarly, the number of apprehension reports submitted and the number of individuals apprehended by police in 1999 were also higher than in either 1998 and 1997.

Overall, the averages recorded in 1999 were either similar to or slightly higher than those recorded in the previous year(s): namely,

- 1.83 charges per apprehension report in 1999 compared with 1.82 charges in 1998;
- 1.51 apprehension reports per individual in 1999 compared with 1.50 in 1998 and 1.47 in 1997; and
- 2.77 charges per individual in 1999 compared with 2.73 charges per individual in 1998.

Figure 39 Number of apprehension reports and discrete individuals apprehended: 1999 compared with 1997 and 1998.

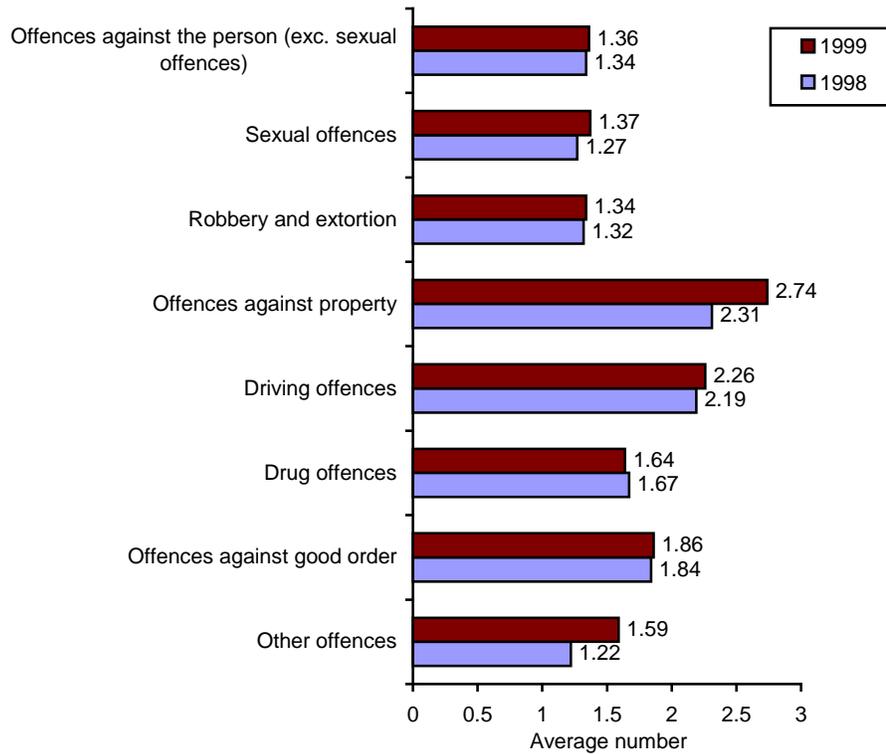


Note: comparable data on charges laid in 1997 is not available

Figure 40 shows the average number of charges per alleged offender per offence group. (In preparing this graph, it should be noted that if, over a twelve month period, the one person is apprehended for different types of offences - for example, for an *offence against property* and for *drug offences* - he/she will be counted once in each discrete offence grouping.) For each person apprehended in 1999, there was an average of 2.77 charges laid. However, this varied slightly depending on the type of offence involved. For example, those persons apprehended in 1999 for a *property offence* faced an average of 2.74 such charges during the year. For individuals charged with a *driving offence*, the average was 2.26. At the other end of the scale, persons charged with an *offence against the person* faced an average of 1.36 such charges, while for those charged with a *sexual offence*, the average number was 1.37. For all offence categories except that of *drug offences*, the average number of charges laid per

individual was similar to or slightly higher in 1999 than in 1998. This difference was particularly pronounced for *against property* offences, with an average of 2.74 offences per individual recorded in 1999 compared with 2.31 in 1998.

Figure 40 Average number of charges per individual per offence group, 1999 compared with 1998

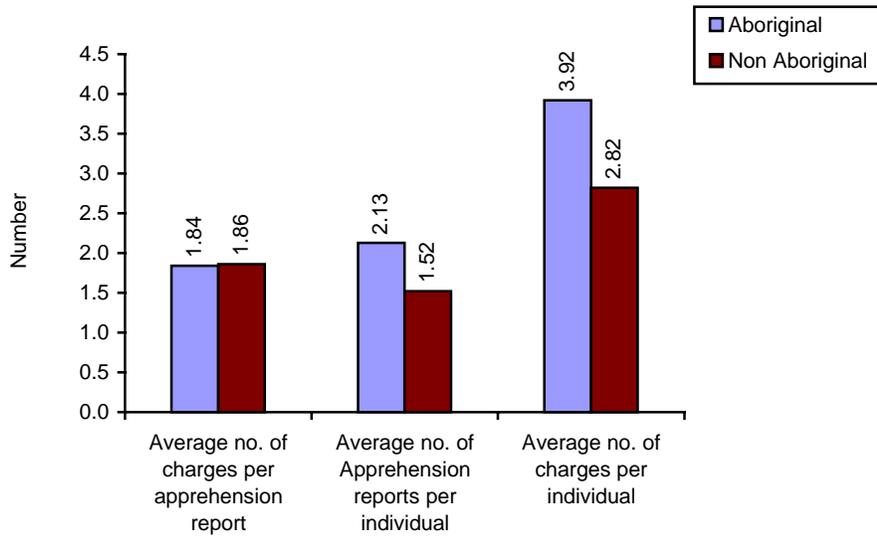


Males accounted for the majority of apprehension reports lodged (80.9% of the 48,771 reports where information on the sex of the offender was recorded). This group also accounted for 79.8% of those 32,215 discrete individuals apprehended where relevant data were available.) On average, the number of charges per apprehension report was slightly higher for males than females (1.86 compared with 1.73 respectively). The same applied in relation to the average number of apprehension reports per individual (1.53 for males compared with 1.44 for females) and the average number of charges per individual (2.84 for males compared with 2.49 for females.)

As noted earlier, persons of Aboriginal appearance account for 12.7% of the 83,274 charges laid by police in 1999, where relevant information was available. They also accounted for 12.8% of all apprehensions and 9.5% of all persons apprehended where information on racial appearance was recorded.

As shown in Figure 41, in 1999, when compared with non-Aboriginals, the average number of apprehension reports and the average number of charges laid per individual was higher for persons of Aboriginal appearance. However, there were no clear differences between the two groups in terms of the average number of charges per apprehension report.

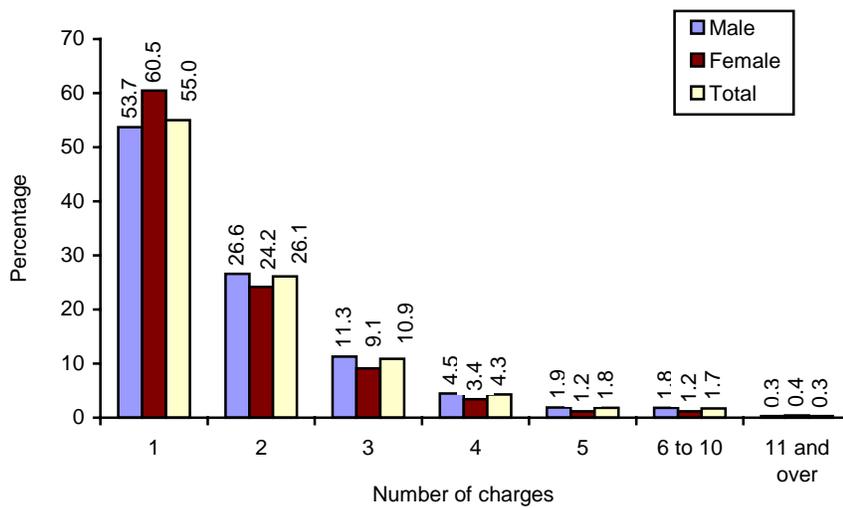
Figure 41: Average number of charges laid, apprehension reports lodged and individuals apprehended; comparison between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals, 1999.



Apprehension reports: some further details

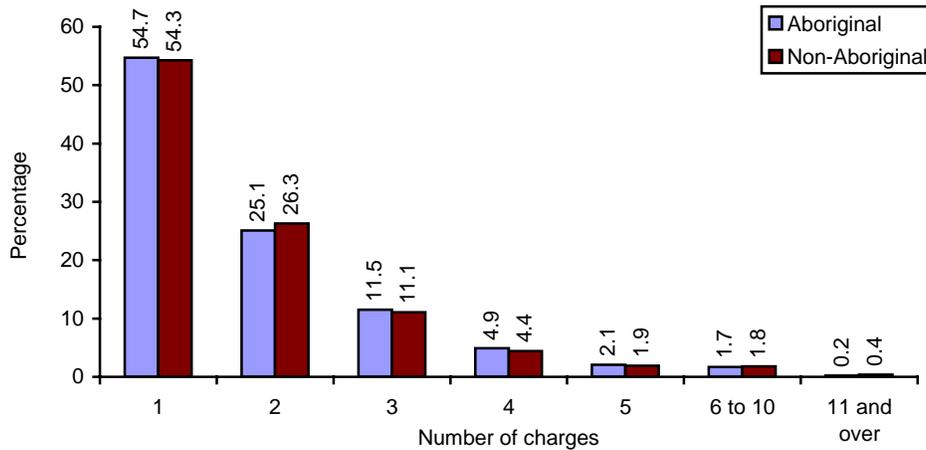
An alternative way of considering the relationship between charges laid and apprehension reports is by looking at the actual number of charges per report rather than the average number of charges. As indicated in Figure 42, over one half (55.0%) of all apprehension reports submitted by police in 1999 involved one charge only, while a further 26.1% involved two charges. At the other end of the scale, only 2.0% of these reports listed six or more charges, including 152 reports (0.3%) with 11 or more charges. This pattern held true for both males and females, although the proportion of reports involving one charge only was slightly higher for females than males (60.5% compared with 53.7% respectively).

Figure 42 Apprehension reports filed by police in 1999: number of charges per report by sex



There were no Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal differences in the number of charges per apprehension report, with 54.7% of all Aboriginal reports and 54.3% of all non-Aboriginal reports involving one offence only (see Figure 43).

Figure 43 Apprehension reports filed by police in 1999: number of charges per report by racial appearance



Tables 6.28 and 6.29 in Section 6 of this report also provide details on the age, sex and racial appearance of those persons listed on all apprehension reports. However, because these profiles are similar to those provided for offences cleared via an apprehension, no further analysis is presented here.

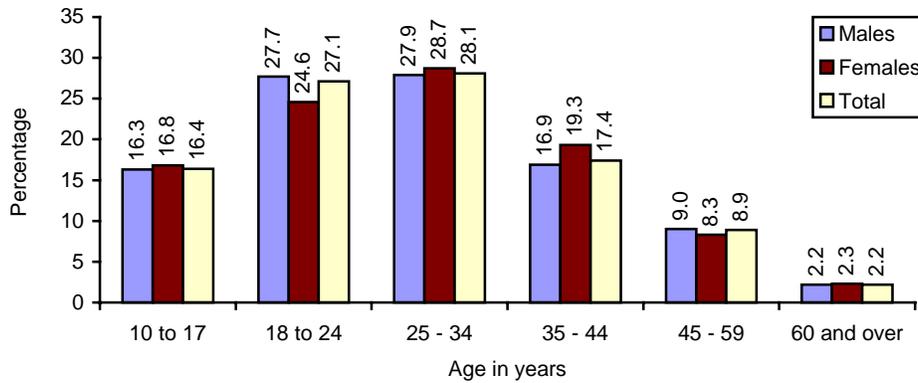
Individuals apprehended by police: some further details

Tables 6.32 to 6.39 in Section 6 of this report focus on the number of discrete individuals apprehended by police in 1999. In these tables, each individual is counted once only, irrespective of the number of times they were apprehended during the course of the year or how many offences they were charged with. The tables detail their age, sex and racial appearance, as well as providing more information on the number of times each individual was apprehended and the total number of offences each person was charged with over the twelve month period.

Age, sex and racial appearance of persons apprehended

As noted earlier, 32,225 individuals were apprehended at least once by police during 1999. Information on the sex of 10 of these persons was not available. Of the remaining 32,215, the majority (79.8%) were male.

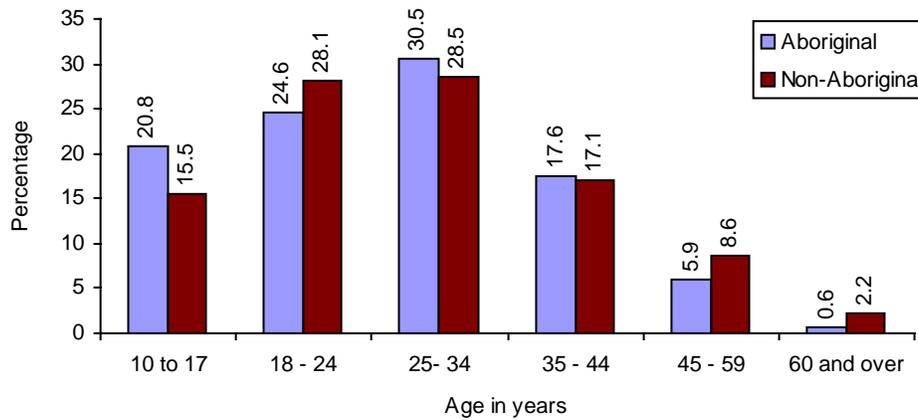
Figure 44 Discrete individuals apprehended by police in 1999: age by sex



As indicated in Figure 44, the majority of individuals apprehended were either aged 18 - 24 years (27.1% of the total) or 25 - 34 years (28.1%). Very few (2.2%) were aged 60 and over. Figure 44 also indicates close similarities in the age profile of males and females apprehended in 1999. For both groups, the 18 - 24 and 25 - 34 year age categories dominated, together accounting for 53.3% of females and 55.6% of males.

Of the 32,225 individuals apprehended in 1999, information on racial appearance was not recorded for 3,767 (or 11.7%). As noted earlier, persons of Aboriginal appearance accounted for 9.5% of the remainder. Given that persons of Aboriginal descent constitute only 1.3% of South Australia's population aged 10 years and over, this indicates that their level of contact with the criminal justice system was 7.2 times higher than would be expected on a per capita basis. While the age profiles of the two groups were generally similar, Aboriginal persons apprehended by police in 1999 tended to be slightly younger than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. As shown in Figure 45, 20.8% of Aboriginal persons apprehended in 1999 were aged 10 - 17 years (compared with 15.5% of non-Aboriginals) while at the other end of the scale, only 6.5% of Aboriginal individuals were aged 45 and over compared with 10.8% of non-Aboriginals.

Figure 45 Discrete individuals apprehended by police in 1999: age by racial appearance

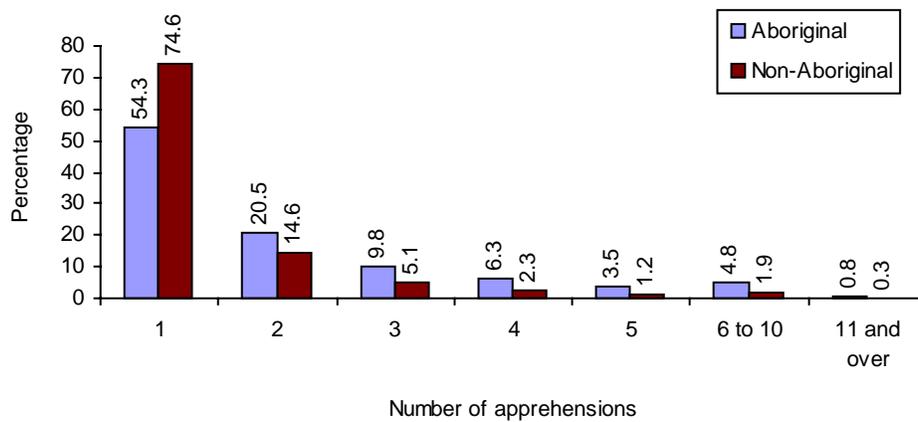


Number of apprehensions per individual

Of the 32,225 persons apprehended in 1999, three quarters (75.5%) were apprehended on one occasion only during the twelve month period while a further 13.8% were apprehended on two occasions. However, there was a small group of individuals (719 or 2.2% of the total) who were apprehended on six or more occasions, with 95 persons recording 11 or more apprehensions. There were no significant sex differences in the frequency of apprehension, with the overwhelming majority of both males and females being apprehended only once in 1999 (74.5% and 79.1% of respectively).

There were, however, some clear Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal differences in the number of apprehensions per individual. As indicated in Figure 46, a much lower proportion of Aboriginals were apprehended only once (54.3% compared with 74.6% of non-Aboriginals) while a higher proportion recorded five or more apprehensions in the 12 month period (9.1% of Aboriginals compared with 3.4% of non-Aboriginals respectively.)

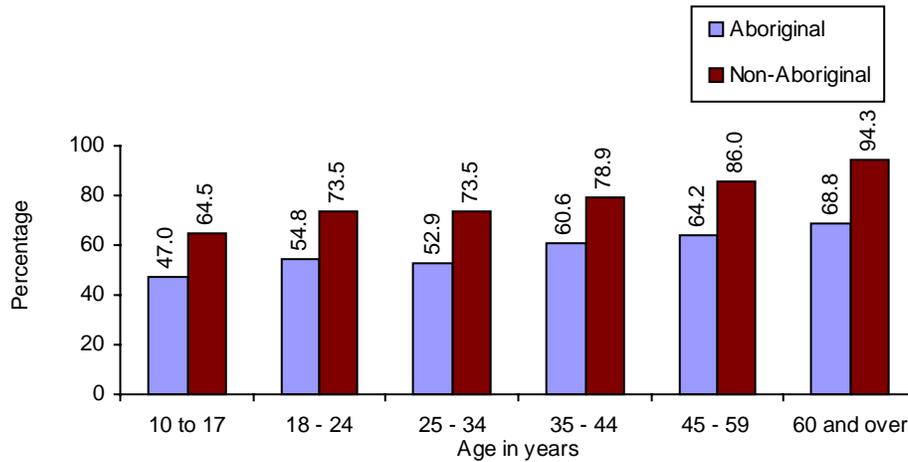
Figure 46 Discrete individuals apprehended by police in 1999: number of apprehensions per individual by racial appearance



While the majority of individuals were apprehended only once irrespective of age, it was found that younger individuals were more likely to experience multiple apprehensions than were older persons. Of those apprehended individuals aged 10 - 17, 66.7% experienced one apprehension only in 1999. At the other end of the scale, of those persons aged 60 and over, almost all (94.6%) were apprehended only once. This pattern held true for both males and females.

While it also applied to persons of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal appearance, the proportion per age group who experienced one apprehension only was noticeably lower for Aboriginal than non-Aboriginal persons. As Figure 47 shows, less than one half (46.8%) of Aboriginal persons aged 10 - 17 years who came into contact with police in 1999 experienced one apprehension only compared with almost two thirds (64.5%) of 10 - 17 year old non-Aboriginals. At the other end of the scale, 64.2% of apprehended Aboriginals aged 45 - 59 experienced one apprehension only compared with 86.0% of non-Aboriginals in this age category. For those aged 60 and over, the differences were even greater, with 68.8% of Aboriginals in this age category experiencing one apprehension only during 1999 compared with 94.3% of non-Aboriginals.

Figure 47 Discrete individuals apprehended by police in 1999: proportion per age group experiencing one apprehension only by racial appearance



Number of charges per individual

Of the 32,225 distinct individuals apprehended by police in 1999, just under one half (14,076 or 43.7%) were charged with one offence only, while a further 24.3% had two allegations laid against them. Only a small proportion (10.0%) were charged with six or more offences. There were some minor sex differences, with a slightly higher proportion of females facing one offence allegation only (49.7% compared with 42.2% of males).

While very few individuals were charged with more than five offences, a significant finding emerges when the data are analysed in a different way. As indicated in Table 3 below, there were 14,076 individuals who, during the course of the year, were charged with one offence only. This means that in total, they accounted for 14,076 offences. In other words, 43.7% of all individuals apprehended in 1999 accounted for 15.8% of all offences recorded. However, at the other end of the scale, the 3,231 individuals who were charged with six or more offences accounted for 33,819 of the allegations laid. In other words, 10.0% of persons apprehended in 1999 were responsible for 37.9% of all charges laid by police. These results clearly indicate that in 1999, a comparatively small group of individuals accounted for a disproportionately large proportion of all allegations laid by police during this twelve month period. This pattern was very similar to that identified in 1998 when, at one end of the spectrum, 44.9% of individuals accounted for 15.8% of all allegations, while at the other end, 9.7% accounted for 37.9% of all charges.

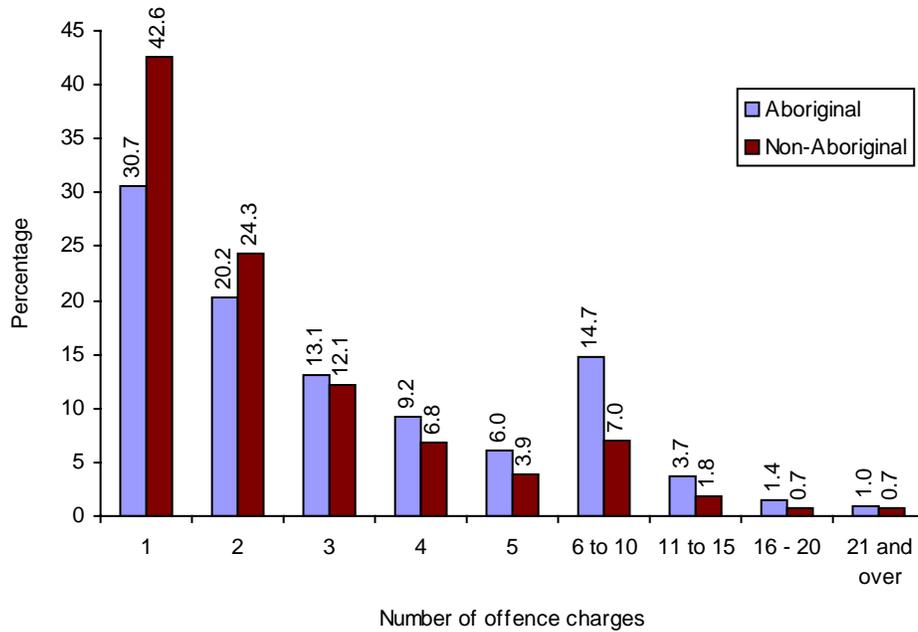
Table 3 Proportion of individuals compared with proportion of offence charges accounted for by those individuals, 1999

14,076 persons @ 1 offence each = 14,076 offences	43.7% of all individuals apprehended accounted for 15.8% of all allegations
7,827 persons @ 2 offences each = 15,654 offences	24.3% of individuals apprehended accounted for 17.5% of all allegations
3,771 persons @ 3 offences each = 11,313 offences	11.7% of individuals apprehended accounted for 12.7% of all allegations
2,116 persons @ 4 offences each = 8,464 offences	6.6% of individuals apprehended accounted for 9.5% of all allegations
1,204 persons @ 5 offences each = 6,020 offences	3.7% of individuals apprehended accounted for 6.7% of all allegations
3,231 persons @ 6 + offences each = 33,819 offences	10.0% of individuals apprehended accounted for 37.9% of all allegations

At the most extreme end of the scale, there were 423 persons charged with more than 15 offences. As would be expected, only a very small number of these (29 or 6.9% of the 423) were apprehended on only one occasion. In contrast, 304 persons or 71.9% of the total accumulated these offences during the course of six or more apprehensions.

The number of offences alleged per individual varied according to racial appearance. As shown in Figure 47, a lower proportion of apprehended Aboriginal persons had only one offence alleged against them during the course of the year than was the case for apprehended non-Aboriginals (30.7% compared with 42.6% respectively). At the other end of the scale, 20.8% of apprehended Aboriginals faced six or more charges compared with only 10.2% of non-Aboriginals.

Figure 47 Discrete individual apprehended by police in 1999: number of offence charges by racial appearance



Nevertheless, a similarly small proportion within each group accounted for a similarly high proportion of all offences. More specifically, 20.9% of all Aboriginal persons apprehended in 1999 accounted for 54.8% of all charges laid against this group by police, while 20.9% of all non-Aboriginals apprehended accounted for 54.9% of all non-Aboriginal charges (see Table 4).

Table 4 Proportion of individuals compared with proportion of offence charges accounted for by those individuals in 1999: an Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal comparison

Number of offences per individual	Aboriginal persons apprehended	Non-Aboriginal persons apprehended
1	30.7% of individuals apprehended accounted for 7.8% of all allegations	42.6% of individuals apprehended accounted for 15.1% of all allegations
2	20.2% of individuals apprehended accounted for 10.3% of all allegations	24.3% of individuals apprehended accounted for 17.2% of all allegations
3	13.1% of individuals apprehended accounted for 10.0% of all allegations	12.1% of individuals apprehended accounted for 12.9% of all allegations
4	9.2% of individuals apprehended accounted for 9.4% of all allegations	6.8% of individuals apprehended accounted for 9.7% of all allegations
5	6.0% of individuals apprehended accounted for 7.7% of all allegations	3.9% of individuals apprehended accounted for 7.0% of all allegations
6	20.9% of individuals apprehended accounted for 54.8% of all allegations	10.2% of individuals apprehended accounted for 38.2% of all allegations