

**NATIONAL CRIME  
STATISTICS  
1995**

*The South Australian Perspective*

by

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*This Information Bulletin describes the findings, as they pertain to South Australia, of the third report of the National Crime Statistics Unit within the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The Bulletin details the number of crimes reported to police between January and December 1995 for a selected range of offence categories and places South Australian crime trends within the Australian context.*

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## INTRODUCTION

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Attempts to compare crime statistics across Australian jurisdictions have always been difficult because of the considerable variation in the criminal laws of Australian States and Territories, differences in the definitions used for particular offences and differences in the counting rules applied to those offences. In an attempt to overcome these problems, at the instigation of the Australian Police Ministers Council, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) formed a National Crime Statistics Unit in 1990. Its key function is to produce uniform national statistics on crimes reported to police. To this end, it has established a set of uniform offence classifications and counting rules which removes many of the past difficulties in comparing rates of crime between states.

This Information Bulletin outlines the findings of the third publication by the National Crime Statistics Unit (ABS, 1996: Cat. No 4510.0). It reports on the number of crimes that have been reported or become known to police between January and December 1995 for a selected range of offence categories. Some 1993 and 1994 figures obtained from the earlier National Crime Statistics Reports have also been included in the Bulletin for comparative purposes.

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## A METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

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It should be stressed that the statistics described here relate only to the number of crimes coming to police notice during 1995 rather than to all offending incidents which occurred. It is a well documented fact that a high proportion of offences are never brought to police notice. Moreover, the level of reporting varies considerably from one offence category to another. For example, a Crime and Safety survey conducted in South Australia in 1995 found that only 25.6% of victims of sexual assault reported the most recent incident to police, compared with 96.8% of victims of vehicle theft. Hence, the number of offences reported or becoming known to police does not necessarily provide an accurate assessment of the real level of crime in the community. While fluctuations in recorded crime may indeed reflect changes in the incidence of criminal behaviour, they could also be due to changes in people's willingness to report particular offences or changes in policing procedures.

Nor do these national crime data relate to discrete victims. The one victim may, in fact, be counted

several times. This applies, for example, in cases where a person has, during the one 'incident', been the subject of multiple offences - such as a kidnapping, rape and murder. That victim will be counted separately in each of these three offence categories. Alternatively, "a victim may be counted more than once within the same national offence subdivision if the multiple offences relate to different criminal incidents or are reported to police at different times" (A.B.S, 1996: 79).

A note of caution must also be sounded regarding comparability across states. While every effort is made by the ABS to ensure that these national statistics are uniform and comparable, it is inevitable that some differences will remain. Responsibility for deciding how a particular crime will be recorded is still vested in individual police jurisdictions and for some crimes, a high level of discretion exists in how to classify particular offences. 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 will inevitably result in some inconsistency from one police officer to another which, by its very nature, is extremely difficult if not impossible to eliminate. Nevertheless, these statistics are the most accurate currently available for inter-state comparisons.

Finally, it should be noted that the 1995 National Crime Statistics Report does not cover all offences, but only those for which nationally comparable definitions have been developed. These are:

- total murder and attempt murder
  - murder
  - attempt murder
- total manslaughter and driving causing death
  - manslaughter
  - driving causing death
- assault
- sexual assault
- kidnapping/abduction
- total robbery
  - armed robbery
  - unarmed robbery
- blackmail/extortion
- total unlawful entry with intent (equivalent to break/enter)
  - unlawful entry with intent involving the taking of property
  - unlawful entry with intent - other
- motor vehicle theft
- other theft.

Included in this 1995 list are two new categories not previously reported on - namely *assault* and *other theft*. In addition, further refinement of the

unlawful entry with intent category has been undertaken which differentiates according to whether property has or has not been taken.

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## COMPARISON OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA WITH OTHER JURISDICTIONS

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Table 1 and Figures 1 to 14 compare South Australian crime rates with those recorded for all other States and Territories and for Australia as a whole.

### *Murder, attempt murder, manslaughter, driving causing death*

The number of extremely violent crimes against the person recorded in Australia in 1995 was relatively small. In total, 321 murders, 301 attempted murders, 30 manslaughters and 314 driving causing death incidents came to police notice during the year. In total, these crimes accounted for only 0.09% of all crimes reported across the offence categories listed.

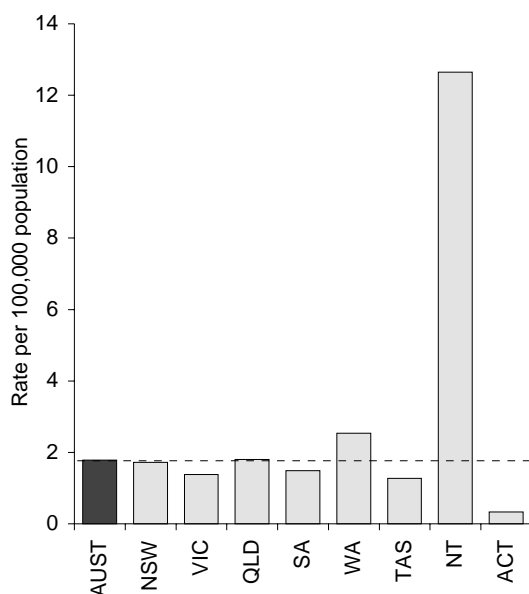
However, there were some obvious differences from one state to another, particularly in relation to murder, where the Northern Territory recorded a rate of 12.65 murders per 100,000 population compared with 2.54 for Western Australia and 0.33 per 100,000 population in the ACT (see Figure 1).

In 1995 South Australia recorded the second highest rate for attempted murder - the same as its relative position in 1994. There were, in fact, 2.71 attempted murder victims per 100,000 population in this State in 1995, which was 62% higher than the national rate of 1.67 per 100,000. Only Queensland had a higher rate - namely 3.63 per 100,000 (see Figure 2).

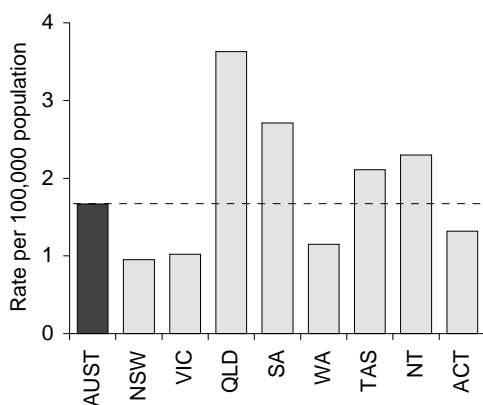
In contrast, in 1995 South Australia was below the Australian rate for murder, manslaughter and driving causing death (see Figure 3). As indicated in Table 1, of all Australian States and Territories, in 1995 South Australia recorded the third lowest offence rate for both murder and driving causing death and the second lowest offence rate for manslaughter.

It should be stressed, however, that the number of victims involved in all of these offence categories are very small, and so should be interpreted with caution. This is particularly true of manslaughter, where there was only one such crime recorded in South Australia in 1995 and none in 1994.

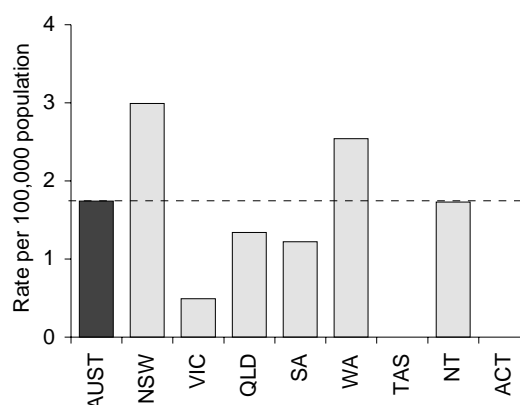
**Figure 1**  
Victims of murder by state/territory, 1995  
(rate per 100,000 population)



**Figure 2**  
Victims of attempted murder by state/territory, 1995  
(rate per 100,000 population)



**Figure 3**  
Victims of driving causing death by state/territory, 1995  
(rate per 100,000 population)



**Table 1**  
South Australian crime rates per 100,000 population compared with other States

Offence	SA rate per 100,000 population	Australian rate per 100,000 population	Rank order of South Australia in 1995*	Rank order of South Australia in 1994*	State/Territory with highest rate in 1995	
Murder/attempt murder	4.21	3.45	3	3	NT	14.95
murder	1.49	1.78	5	3	NT	12.65
attempt murder	2.71	1.67	2	2	QLD	3.63
Manslaughter and driving causing death	1.29	1.91	5	4	NSW	3.09
manslaughter	0.07	0.17	6	lowest	NT	1.15
driving causing death	1.22	1.74	5	4	NSW	2.99
Assault	912.96	560.26	2	n/a	NT	1,166.76
Sexual assault	92.13	70.95	2	2	WA	102.85
Kidnapping/abduction	5.29	2.60	2	2	NT	6.33
Robbery (total)	99.19	91.20	2	2	NSW	156.79
armed robbery	24.83	36.73	5	3	NSW	62.32
unarmed robbery	74.36	54.48	2	2	NSW	94.47
Blackmail/extortion	0.95	0.84	4	3	QLD	1.56
Unlawful entry with intent	2,080.39	2,131.92	5	5	WA	3,524.11
UEWI involving the taking of property	1,703.12	1,677.82	5	n/a	WA	2,537.56
UEWI - other	377.27	454.10	7	n/a	WA	986.55
Motor vehicle theft	676.80	703.00	3	3	WA	1,031.88
Other theft	3,451.70	2,712.89	3	n/a	WA	4,336.55

\* A ranking of one indicates the highest rate of offending.

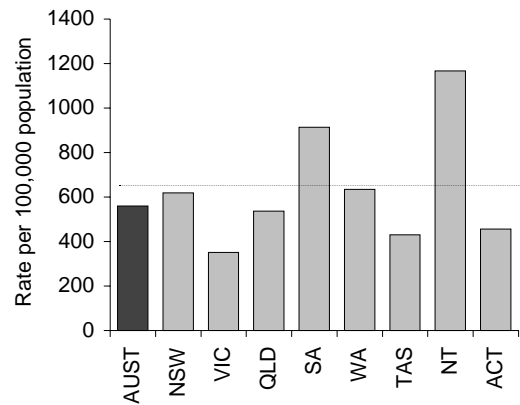
***Assault, sexual assault and kidnapping/abduction***

South Australia's rate for assault, sexual assault and kidnapping/abduction was above the Australian rate. As shown in Table 1 and Figure 4, this State recorded a rate of 912.96 per 100,000 population for assault, which was 63% higher than the national rate of 560.26 and was exceeded only by the Northern Territory, with a rate of 1,166.76 per 100,000 population.

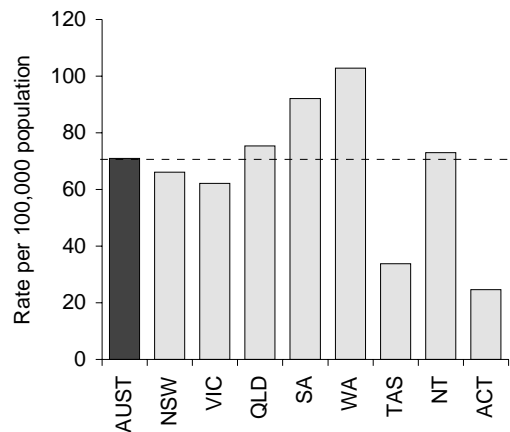
The reported sexual assault rate in South Australia in 1995 was 92.13 per 100,000 population, which was 30% higher than the national rate of 70.95 per 100,000, and second only to Western Australia's rate of 102.85 (see Figure 5). In part, the high figures recorded in South Australia could be attributed to the system of mandatory notification of child sexual abuse which has been in place in this State since 1969. This means that all doctors, nurses, schoolteachers, social workers and other professionals are legally required to report to police any suspected case of child sexual abuse. Such a system does not operate in all Australian states.

As shown in Figure 6, the 1995 South Australian kidnapping/abduction rate was 103% higher than the national rate - 5.29 per 100,000 compared with 2.60 for Australia as a whole. This placed South Australia in second position behind the Northern Territory. In relation to kidnapping/abduction, however, two points need to be stressed: first, there is evidence to suggest that the offence in South Australia relates mainly to unlawful imprisonments, rather than to more serious matters such as kidnapping for ransom; and second, because the numbers involved are extremely small (with 78 victims being recorded in South Australia in 1995 compared with 13,457 victims of assault), large percentage differences are produced by relatively small changes in absolute numbers.

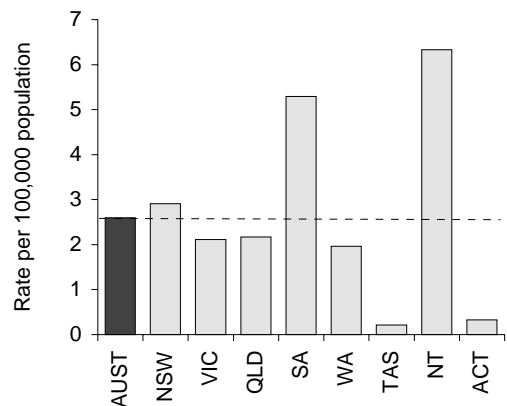
**Figure 4**  
Victims of assault by state/territory, 1995  
(rate per 100,000 population)



**Figure 5**  
Victims of sexual assault by state/territory, 1995  
(rate per 100,000 population)



**Figure 6**  
Victims of kidnapping/abduction  
by state/territory, 1995  
(rate per 100,000 population)



## Robbery

In relation to robbery, the 1995 results for South Australia contain both positive and negative elements. South Australia's total robbery rate was 99.19 per 100,000 population, which was 9% higher than the national rate of 91.20. This placed South Australia in second position behind New South Wales (see Figure 7). However, a different pattern emerges when total robbery offences are broken down into armed and unarmed robbery (see Figures 8 and 9). While South Australia's unarmed robbery rate was 36% higher than the Australian rate (74.36 per 100,000 population compared with 54.48), its rate for armed robbery was 32% lower than the national rate (24.83 compared with 36.73 per 100,000 population respectively). Thus, while this State had the second highest ranking for unarmed robbery, it was ranked fifth for armed robbery.

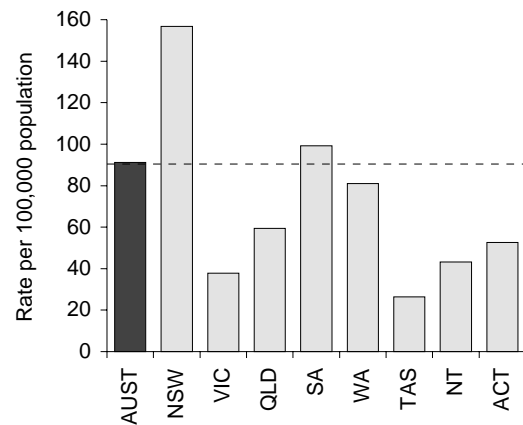
It is also noteworthy that armed robberies accounted for 25% of all robberies recorded in South Australia in 1995. This percentage was lower than for most other states. For example, armed robbery accounted for 44.4% of all reported robbery crimes in Victoria, 44.6% in Queensland, 47.8% in Western Australia and 39.7% in New South Wales. It is therefore the high incidence of unarmed robberies which accounts for South Australia's relatively high ranking for total robbery crimes.

Another point to note is that in comparison with other jurisdictions, in 1994 South Australia was ranked third highest for armed robberies but in 1995 it dropped to fifth position. Its ranking for unarmed robberies remained the same as in 1994; namely second.

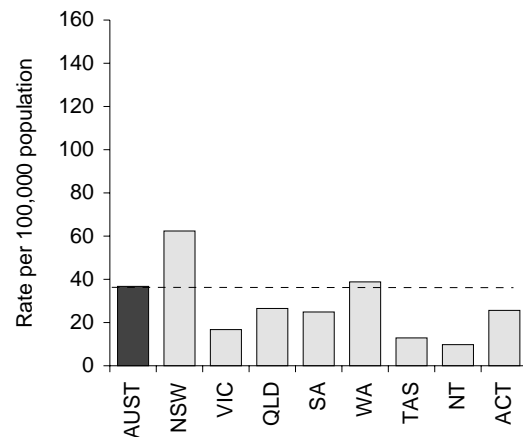
## Blackmail/extortion

In 1995 South Australia recorded a rate of 0.95 'victims' per 100,000 population for crimes involving blackmail or extortion. This figure was marginally higher than the national rate of 0.84 per 100,000 and compares with a rate of 1.09 in 1994. Overall, South Australia was ranked fourth in 1995 for reported blackmail/ extortion offences. It should be stressed though that, due to the extremely small number of offences involved (only 14 victims reported this offence to police in 1995) these results must be interpreted cautiously.

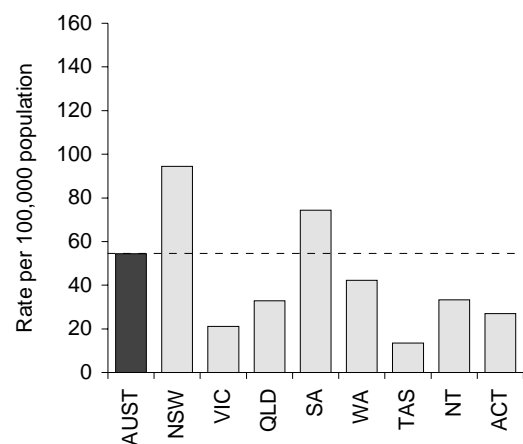
**Figure 7**  
Victims of robbery -total by state/territory, 1995  
(rate per 100,000 population)



**Figure 8**  
Victims of armed robbery by state/territory, 1995  
(rate per 100,000 population)



**Figure 9**  
Victims of unarmed robbery by state/territory, 1995  
(rate per 100,000 population)



**Unlawful entry with intent**

Cross-jurisdictional comparisons for unlawful entry with intent (UEWI) are depicted in Figures 10 to 12. This offence relates mainly to burglaries, and break and enters. In 1995, the reported rate for this offence in South Australia was 2,080.39 per 100,000 population, which was 2% below the Australian rate of 2,131.92. This State was ranked fifth for this offence in 1995, which was the same as its 1994 ranking.

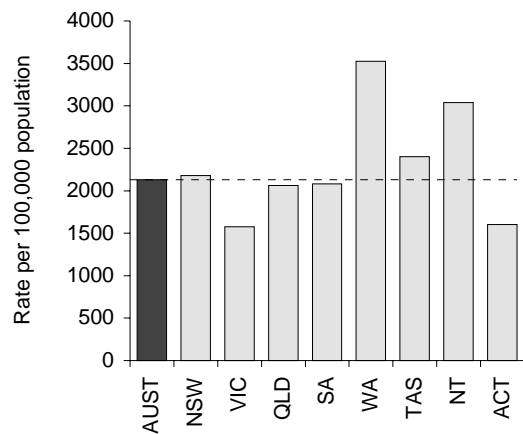
As was the case with robbery, however, some differences emerge when UEWI is differentiated according to whether or not property was taken. In South Australia, UEWI involving the taking of property accounted for 81.9% of all reported UEWI crimes. This was very similar to other states. For example, UEWI involving the taking of property accounted for 82.4% of all reported UEWI crimes in New South Wales and 79.2% in Victoria.

For UEWI where property was taken, South Australia recorded a rate of 1,703.12 per 100,000 population which was 1.5% higher than the national rate of 1,677.82. This State was ranked fifth behind Western Australia, the Northern Territory, Tasmania and New South Wales.

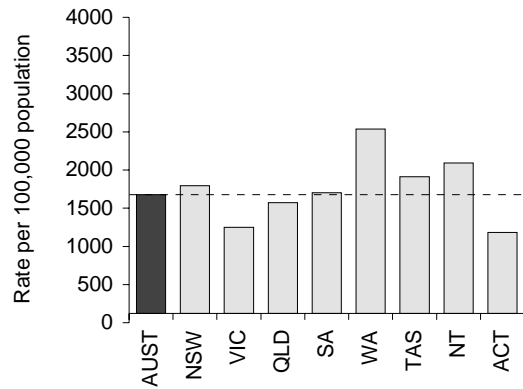
For UEWI-other, the South Australian rate was lower than the Australian rate (by 17%), which placed it in seventh position. Of all Australian states and territories, only Victoria recorded a lower rate.

At the other end of the scale, Western Australia had the highest rate - 986.55 per 100,000 population. This was more than double that of South Australia.

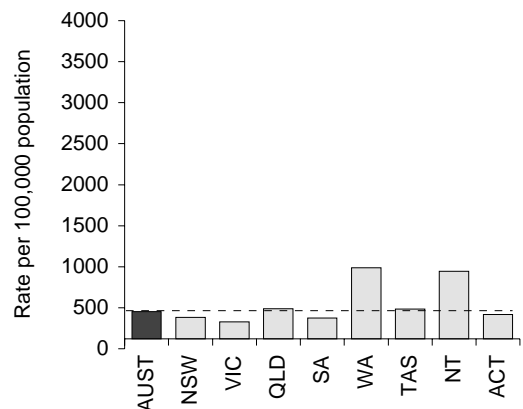
**Figure 10**  
Victims of total UEWI by state/territory, 1995  
(rate per 100,000 population)



**Figure 11**  
Victims of UEWI involving the taking of property by state/territory, 1995  
(rate per 100,000 population)



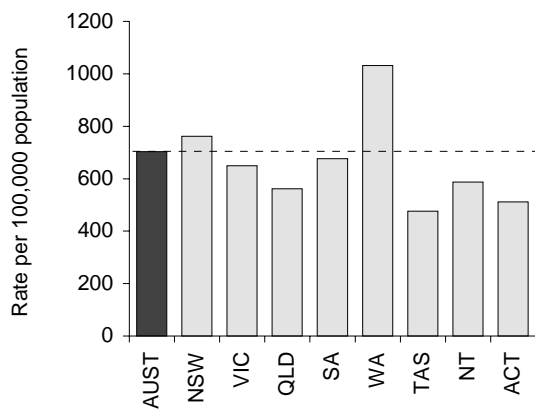
**Figure 12**  
Victims of UEWI - other by state/territory, 1995  
(rate per 100,000 population)



**Vehicle theft**

In 1995, the reported rate for vehicle theft in South Australia was 676.80 per 100,000 population which was 4% lower than the Australian rate of 703.00 per 100,000 population. This State was ranked in third position behind Western Australia and New South Wales. Its relative position vis-a-vis the other states therefore remained the same as in 1994.

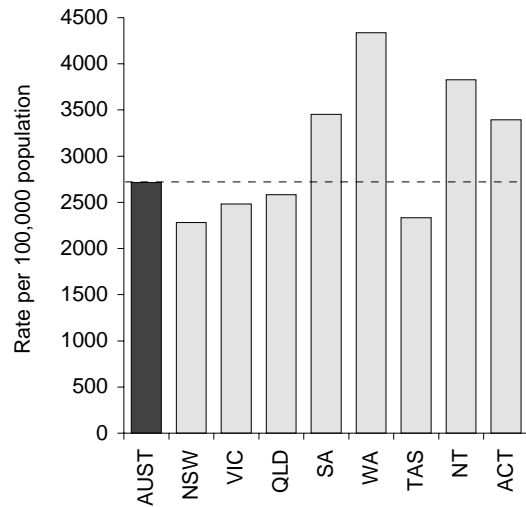
**Figure 13**  
Victims of motor vehicle theft by state/territory 1995  
(rate per 100,000 population)



**Other theft**

South Australia was 27% higher than the national rate for “other theft”, with a reported rate of 3,451.70 per 100,000 population compared with a rate of 2,712.89 for Australia as a whole. This State was ranked third behind Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Because ‘other theft’ was not included in the two previous National Crime Statistics Reports, it is not possible to identify whether South Australia’s position in relation to the other states has changed or not.

**Figure 14**  
Victims of 'other' theft by state/territory 1995  
(rate per 100,000 population)



**Summary**

In summary then, South Australia’s reported crime rates were lower than the national rate for six of the 14 distinct offence groups counted in the 1995 ABS report. By comparison, in 1994 its rates were higher than the national rate for all offence categories except manslaughter (where no cases were recorded), driving causing death and motor vehicle theft. South Australia’s overall position compared with the other states and territories has therefore improved. Nevertheless, it remains a point of concern that this State still has the second highest rate of the eight Australian jurisdictions for attempted murder, assault, sexual assault, kidnapping/abduction and unarmed robbery.



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## COMPARISON WITHIN SOUTH AUSTRALIA ACROSS TIME

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Given that this is the third set of uniform national figures produced by the ABS, it is now possible to look at changes within South Australia since 1993. While far more time needs to elapse before any definite longitudinal trends can be identified, some short-term shifts can now be measured. On the positive side:

- While the overall level of reported robberies in this State is still high, from 1993 to 1995 South Australia recorded a 14.2% decrease in total robberies while the national figure rose by 28.8%;
- Since 1993, the reported incidence of armed robbery in South Australia has decreased by 25.3% while increasing nationally by 24.5%;
- Despite a small rise during 1995, the number of unarmed robberies reported to police in South Australia has decreased by 9.6% since 1993, compared with a 31.7% increase nationally over the same time period;
- Since 1993 the number of sexual assault victims coming to police notice has decreased by 13.7% in South Australia compared with a 2.0% increase nationally; and
- Reported incidents of unlawful entry with intent in this State have also decreased since 1993 (by 26.2%) while the national figures have remained relatively stable.

On the negative side:

- Reported kidnapping/abduction offences increased by 13.0% in South Australia from 1994 to 1995 while decreasing by 14.1% nationally. However, the numbers within this category are very small (with only 78 victims coming to police attention in 1995) and so any observable trends must be treated with caution.

- The number of reported victims of motor vehicle theft increased by 6.7% in South Australia from 1994 to 1995, which is similar to the national increase. However, when 1995 figures are compared with 1993 data this State recorded a 3.0% decline, compared with a 12.7% increase for Australia as a whole.

A more detailed breakdown of trends per offence category is listed below.

### *Murder*

The total number of murder/attempted murder crimes reported to police in South Australia in 1995 showed no change from the 1994 situation with a total of 62 victims being recorded in each of those years (see Table 2). However, when broken down into subcategories, South Australia went against the national trend in two respects:

- First, between 1994 and 1995, actual murders in South Australia decreased by 15.4% (from 26 to 22) while at a national level, numbers increased by 11.5%; and
- Second, over the same two year period, attempted murders in this State increased by 11.1% (from 36 to 40) while decreasing nationally by 10.4%.

However, if trends are monitored over a three year, rather than a two year period, South Australia recorded decreases for both sub-categories. The number of reported murders decreased by 31.3% (from 32 to 22) compared with a national increase of 7.0%, while the number of reported murder attempts declined by 23.1% from 52 to 40. At a national level, attempted murders also declined over the three year period, but to a smaller extent (18.4%).

While the number of victims recorded in these two categories are small and should be interpreted cautiously, the results for South Australia are encouraging.

**Table 2**  
Murder/attempted murder - number of victims and rate per 100,000 population, 1993 - 1995

	Number of victims			% change		Rate/100,000 population		
	1995	1994	1993	since 1994	since 1993	1995	1994	1993
<b><i>Murder</i></b>								
Aust.	321	288	300	+11.5	+7.0	1.78	1.61	1.70
SA	22	26	32	-15.4	-31.3	1.49	1.77	2.19
<b><i>Attempted</i></b>								
Aust.	301	336	369	-10.4	-18.4	1.67	1.88	2.09
SA	40	36	52	+11.1	-23.1	2.71	2.45	3.55
<b><i>Total</i></b>								
Aust.	622	624	669	-0.3	-7.0	3.45	3.50	3.79
SA	62	62	84	0.0	-26.2	4.21	4.22	5.64

***Manslaughter and driving causing death.***

The number of reported victims of manslaughter in South Australia is too small to allow any valid longitudinal comparisons. The numbers involved in driving causing death are also very small, with 18 reported to police in 1995, compared with 15 in 1994 and 17 in 1993 (see Table 3). As a result, no conclusions can be drawn regarding temporal trends at

a state level. Even at a national level no clear patterns are evident, with the 59.4% increase recorded from 1994 to 1995 contrasting markedly with the 11.3% decrease observed between 1993 and 1994. These results merely reflect the type of annual fluctuations which can be expected for offences involving relatively small numbers.

**Table 3**  
Manslaughter and driving causing death - number of victims and rate per 100,000 population, 1993 - 1995

	Number of victims			% change		Rate/100,000 population		
	1995	1994	1993	since 1994	since 1993	1995	1994	1993
<b><i>Manslaughter</i></b>								
Aust.	30	32	37	-6.3	-18.9	0.17	0.18	0.34
SA	1	0	5	*	-80.0	0.07	0.00	0.21
<b><i>Driving causing death</i></b>								
Aust.	314	197	222	+59.4	+41.4	1.74	1.10	1.26
SA	18	15	17	+20.0	+5.9	1.22	1.02	1.16
<b><i>Total</i></b>								
Aust.	344	229	259	+50.2	+32.8	1.91	1.28	1.60
SA	19	15	22	+26.7	-13.6	1.29	1.02	1.37

\*Percentage change from 1994 not applicable as there were no reported victims of manslaughter in South Australia in 1994.

## Assault

This offence category was not included in the 1993 or 1994 National Crime Statistics Report. Therefore no longitudinal comparisons are possible. As indicated in Table 4, South Australia's recorded assault rate of 912.96 per 100,000 population was 63% higher than the national rate of 560.26. This was the second highest rate in Australia in 1995.

**Table 4**

Assault - number of victims and rate per 100,000 population, 1995

	Number	Rate/100,000 population
Aust.	101,149	560.26
SA	13,457	912.96

## Sexual Assault

As shown in Table 5, between 1994 and 1995, the number of reported victims of sexual assault in South Australia decreased by 8.3% from 1,481 to 1,358. This contrasts with the slight increase of 0.7% observed at the national level. This downward trend in South Australia becomes more pronounced if data are compared across a longer

time period (ie from 1993 to 1995). Over this three year period, sexual assaults in this State decreased by 13.7%, compared with a 2.0% increase at the national level.

Despite this positive finding, however, South Australia still has the second highest rate of reported sexual offences in the country. As noted earlier, this may in part be due to this State's mandatory reporting system for child sexual abuse.

## Kidnapping/Abduction

Reported kidnapping and abduction crimes increased by 13.0% in South Australia from 1994 to 1995, as shown in Table 6. This followed an 8% decrease from 1993 to 1994. Over the last three years then, the number of victims of this type of offence has increased marginally by 4.0% - from 75 cases to 78 cases. Again, while the overall numbers are small and should be interpreted with some caution, the South Australian trends are contrary to those observed at a national level, where kidnappings/abductions have decreased by 25.3% since 1993.

When compared with other jurisdictions this State was ranked second for this offence in 1995, which was the same as its ranking in 1994.

**Table 5**

Sexual assault - number of victims and rate per 100,000 population, 1993 - 1995

	Number of victims			% change		Rate/100,000 population		
	1995	1994	1993	since 1994	since 1993	1995	1994	1993
Aust.	12,809	12,722	12,555	+0.7	+2.0	70.95	71.32	71.11
SA	1,358	1,481	1,573	-8.3	-13.7	92.13	100.79	107.53

**Table 6**

Kidnapping/abduction - number of victims and rate per 100,000 population, 1993 - 1995

	Number of victims			% change		Rate/100,000 population		
	1995	1994	1993	since 1994	since 1993	1995	1994	1993
Aust.	469	546	628	-14.1	-25.3	2.60	3.06	3.56
SA	78	69	75	+13.0	+4.0	5.29	4.70	5.13

## Robbery

While the overall level of reported robberies in South Australia is quite high, there have been some positive changes during the past three years, as shown in Table 7. In particular:

- From 1994 to 1995, the number of total robbery victims coming to police notice in South Australia decreased by 3.5% compared with a 17.9% increase for Australia as a whole. The difference is even greater when 1993 and 1995 reports are compared. Since 1993 the number of reported robberies decreased by 14.2% in South Australia while it rose by 28.8% nationally over the same period.
- Armed robbery reports decreased in South Australia by 21.6% from 1994 to 1995 and by 25.3% from 1993 to 1995. For Australia as a

whole, armed robberies increased during the same period by 31.4% from

1994 to 1995 and by 24.5% from 1993 to 1995. The trend in South Australia is therefore the reverse of the national trend.

- Although unarmed robberies increased by 4.6% in South Australia from 1994 to 1995, this was lower than the national increase of 10.2%. When 1995 figures are compared with 1993 figures, unarmed robbery decreased by 9.6% in South Australia. Again, this is in direct contrast to national trends, which have shown a 31.7% increase since 1993.

Thus, while South Australia is still ranked second in Australia for total robberies and unarmed robberies, the situation does seem to be improving.

**Table 7**  
Robbery - number of victims and rate per 100,000 population, 1993 - 1995

	Number of victims			% change		Rate/100,000 population		
	1995	1994	1993	since 1994	since 1993	1995	1994	1993
<b>Armed</b>								
Aust.	6,631	5,046	5,324	+31.4	+24.5	36.73	28.29	30.15
SA	366	467	490	-21.6	-25.3	24.83	31.78	33.50
<b>Unarmed</b>								
Aust.	9,835	8,922	7,465	+10.2	+31.7	54.48	50.02	42.28
SA	1,096	1,048	1,213	+4.6	-9.6	74.36	71.32	82.92
<b>Total</b>								
Aust.	16,466	13,968	12,789	+17.9	+28.8	91.20	78.30	72.43
SA	1,462	1,515	1,703	-3.5	-14.2	99.19	103.10	116.42

**Table 8**  
Blackmail/extortion - number of victims and rate per 100,000 population, 1993 - 1995

	Number of victims			% change		Rate/100,000 population		
	1995	1994	1993	since 1994	since 1993	1995	1994	1993
Aust.	152	156	142	-2.6	+7.0	0.84	0.87	0.80
SA	14	16	27	-12.5	-48.1	0.95	1.09	1.85

### ***Blackmail/Extortion***

The number of reported victims of blackmail/extortion in South Australia is extremely small, with 14 coming to police notice in 1995, compared with 16 in 1994 and 27 in 1993. Hence, although there does seem to be a downward trend in this offence category, the results, shown in Table 8, should be interpreted with caution. Similarly, although Australia as a whole recorded a slight decline in blackmail/extortion crimes between 1994 and 1995, the numbers are still small. Moreover, if trends are measured over the three year, rather than the two year period, the reverse situation applies, with the number of victims of blackmail/extortion actually increasing from 142 to 152.

### ***Unlawful entry with intent***

As indicated in Table 9, reported victims of unlawful entry with intent decreased by 14.4% in South Australia during 1995, following on from a 13.8% decrease during the previous 12 months. Since 1993 then, South Australia has experienced a 26.2% decrease in these crimes, while nationally the figures have remained relatively stable (with only an 0.7% increase observed since 1993).

**Table 9**  
Unlawful entry with intent - number of victims and rate per 100,000 population, 1993 - 1995

	Number of victims			% change		Rate/100,000 population		
	1995	1994	1993	since 1994	since 1993	1995	1994	1993
<b><i>Total</i></b>								
Aust.	384,897	379,505	382,245	+1.4	+0.7	2,131.92	2,127.46	2,164.91
SA	30,665	35,822	41,579	-14.4	-26.2	2,080.39	2,437.87	2,842.23
<b><i>Taking of property</i></b>								
Aust.	302,914	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,677.82	n/a	n/a
SA	25,104	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,703.12	n/a	n/a
<b><i>Other</i></b>								
Aust.	81,983	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	454.10	n/a	n/a
SA	5,561	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	377.27	n/a	n/a

**Table 10**  
Motor vehicle theft - number of victims and rate per 100,000 population 1993 - 1995

	Number of offences			% change		Rate/100,000 population		
	1995	1994	1993	since 1994	since 1993	1995	1994	1993
Aust.	126,919	119,469	112,578	+6.2	+12.7	703.00	669.73	637.60
SA	9,976	9,350	10,292	+6.7	-3.0	676.80	636.31	703.53

### *Motor vehicle theft*

Table 10 shows the number and rate per 100,000 population of motor vehicle theft victims for Australia and South Australia, 1993 to 1995. South Australia experienced a 6.7% increase in reported motor vehicle thefts from 1994 to 1995. This closely approximates the 6.2% increase observed at a national level during the same two year period. However, a different picture emerges if 1995 figures are compared with 1993 data. Over this period, South Australia recorded a 3.0% decrease, while Australian vehicle theft crimes increased by 12.7%.

### *Other theft*

This is the first year that 'other theft' has been included in the national crime figures released by the ABS and therefore no longitudinal comparisons are possible. In 1995 South Australia recorded the third highest rate for this offence, behind Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

**Table 11**

'Other theft' - number of victims and rate per 100,000 population 1995

	Number	Rate/100,000 population
Aust.	489,785	2,712.89
SA	50,878	3,451.70

**Table 12**

Number of victims coming to police attention and rate per 100,000 population South Australia, 1995

Offence	Victims reported to police		
	number	%	Rate per 100,000 population
Other theft	50,878	47.1	3,451.70
Unlawful entry with intent	30,665	28.4	2,080.39
Assault	13,457	12.5	912.96
Motor vehicle theft	9,976	9.2	676.80
Robbery	1,462	1.4	99.19
Sexual assault	1,358	1.3	92.13
Kidnapping/abduction	78	0.1	5.29
Attempted murder	40	0.0	2.71
Murder	22	0.0	1.49
Manslaughter and driving causing death	19	0.0	1.29
Blackmail/extortion	14	0.0	0.95
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>107,969</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>7,324.90</b>

## THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SITUATION IN 1995

In this third section, a more detailed analysis of the South Australian situation for 1995 is provided, with particular emphasis on the characteristics of the victim, the relationship between victim and offender, the location of the offence and the use of a weapon.

Table 12 lists the offence categories in order of frequency. As shown, other theft and unlawful entry with intent accounted for 75.5% of the total number recorded across all selected offence categories in South Australia in 1995. By contrast, serious offences against the person (kidnapping, murder, manslaughter, blackmail) accounted for only 0.16%. A total of 41 persons were killed as a result of murder, manslaughter and culpable driving in this State in 1995.

### *Age and gender of victims*

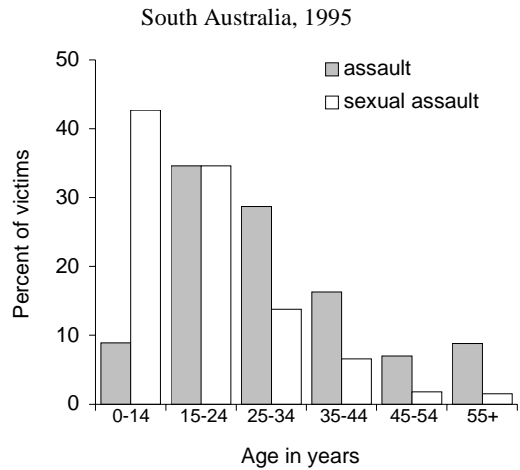
- Nine (40.9%) of the 22 reported murder victims in South Australia in 1995 were aged between 25 and 44, while six (27.3%) were aged 65 and over. Almost three quarters (72.7%) were male. Of the 40 victims of attempted murder, 23 (57.5%) were aged 25 - 44, while 80.0% were male. However, because of the small numbers in both offence groups, these results should be treated with caution.

- The small number of victims recorded for driving causing death also makes interpretation difficult. In South Australia in 1995, 18 victims of this offence came to police notice, with 11 of these being aged 20 - 44. The number of female victims was the same as the number of male victims (n=9 each).
- While the majority of assault victims (63.3%) were aged 20 to 44, and involved males (58.2%), the pattern was quite different for sexual assault. Here, almost one half of the victims (42.7%) were aged 0 to 14, while 85.5% were female. The differences between assault and sexual assault are depicted more graphically in Figures 15 and 16.
- A similar pattern was observed for Australia as a whole. At a national level, for those cases where age was recorded, 63.2% of victims of assault were aged 20-44, while only 8.8% were aged 14 or less. However, for sexual assaults, 45.2% of victims were aged 14 or less while only 31.5% were aged 20-44. In relation to gender, for Australia as a whole, 82.1% of sexual assault victims were female compared with 38.7% of assault victims.

**Figure 15**

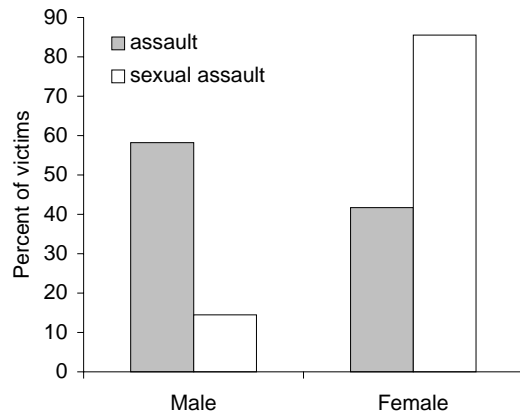
Victims of assault and sexual assault by age

- A somewhat similar pattern emerged for reported victims of kidnapping/abduction. In South Australia in 1995, 61.5% of the victims of this particular offence were in the 0-14 year age group, while 67.9% were female. At the national level, 47.3% of kidnapping/abduction victims were aged less than 15 while 65.9% were female.
- In terms of armed robbery, 21.6% of crimes reported to police in South Australia did not involve a personal victim. This compares with 24.6% for Australia as a whole. In those cases where an actual person (rather than, for example, a bank or retail outlet) was victimised, almost one half (46.0%) were aged 20-44 years, while 13.9% were aged 45-64. Only 4.9% were age 65 and over. At the other end of the scale, a surprisingly high proportion of victims (27.5%) were juveniles aged 10-17 years. At the national level, juveniles accounted for only



**Figure 16**

Victims of assault and sexual assault by gender  
South Australia, 1995



11.3% of armed robberies involving a personal victim and where the age of that victim was specified. Those aged 20-44 represented 58.9% of the total. The age profile of armed robbery victims in South Australia therefore tends to be younger than for Australia as a whole.

- A similar pattern emerged for unarmed robberies. Of the 1,059 cases involving personal victims whose age was specified, 376 (35.5%) were juveniles aged 10-17 years, compared with 21.6% for Australia as a whole. More specifically, 16.6% of South Australian victims were aged 10 - 14 which was almost twice the national figure of 8.7%. The reason for these age differences have not yet been identified.

### *Relationship between victim and offender*

The relationship between the victim and offender for offences recorded in South Australia in 1995 is shown in Table 13.

- In six of the 22 murders which came to police notice, the offender was a member of the victim's family. In a further 11 cases, a non-family member known to the victim was involved. Only five murders were, therefore, committed by a stranger.
- By contrast, 40.0% (16 out of 40) of attempted murder victims did not know the offender.
- In relation to assaults, 57.7% of offenders were known to the victim. This included 19.0% of cases where the offender was a family member and 6.5% of cases where the offender was an ex-partner. Conversely, 38.5% of assaults involved strangers.
- The proportion of sexual assault cases where the offender was known to the victim was particularly high, namely 74.6%. This included 23.4% of cases where a direct family member

was listed as the offender. Comparable national figures were not available for 1995. However, for those states for which reliable data were recorded - notably Tasmania and the Northern Territory - a somewhat similar pattern to that of South Australia was observed, with offenders known to the victim accounting for 66.3% and 65.4% of all sexual assault incidents in Tasmania and the Northern Territory respectively.

- The pattern was quite different for reported kidnapping/abduction crimes. Of the 78 victims in South Australia who came to police attention in 1995, the overwhelming majority (80.8%) did not know the perpetrator. By contrast, only two of the 78 offenders were a family member, while 10 involved a non-family member. The figures given for other Australian states contained too many unknown values to provide any reliable comparative information.
- The relationship between offender and victim was not listed for robbery offences or for offences against property.

**Table 13**  
Relationship of offender to victim for selected offences reported to police, South Australia 1995

Relationship	Murder		Attempted murder		Assault		Sexual Assault		Kidnapping/ abduction	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
<b>Known to victim</b>	17	77.3	23	57.5	7,759	57.7	1,013	74.6	13	16.7
Family member	6	27.3	7	17.5	2,554	19.0	318	23.4	2	2.6
Non-family member	11	50.0	16	40.0	5,205	38.7	695	51.2	11	14.1
<b>Unknown to victim</b>	5	22.7	16	40.0	5,185	38.5	282	20.8	63	80.8
<b>Not stated</b>	0	0	1	2.5	513	3.8	63	4.6	2	2.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	22	100.0	40	100.0	13,457	100.0	1,358	100.0	78	100.0

**Note:** Manslaughter/driving causing death and blackmail/extortion are omitted because of the high percentage of unknown values. No information on relationship between offender and victim was given for robbery or property offences.

### *Location*

The type of location where the South Australian criminal incidents took place are outlined in Table 14.

- The majority (14 out of 22 or 63.6%) of murders in this State occurred in a residential location. By contrast, only four occurred in a community location such as an open space (n=3) while two took place in a retail area.

- Of the 40 reported incidents of attempted murder, one half occurred in a residential location. Of the remainder, 42.5% occurred in a community setting such as a street or footpath (n=10) or a car park (n=5).
- In relation to sexual assaults, as expected a very high proportion (70.0%) occurred in a residential location. Relatively few took place in a community location such as the street or



footpath (5.4%), educational facility (2.8%) or a 'conveyance in transit' (4.1%).

- By contrast, of the 78 kidnappings/ abductions, two thirds (66.7%) occurred in a community location, with the street or footpath accounting for most of these (40 out of 52). A further 11.5% took place in some "other" location such as a recreational site. Conversely, only 19.2% occurred in a residential setting. This pattern was generally similar for Australia as a whole where 63.8% of kidnapping/ abductions took place in a community location, 10.9% occurred in an 'other' location while only 22.6% happened in a residential setting. The locational difference between sexual assault and kidnapping/abduction mirrors the differences already observed for victim-offender relationships. As noted earlier, sexual assault victims generally knew the perpetrator, while kidnapping/abduction victims usually indicated that the offender was a stranger.
- Locational patterns for assault were more evenly distributed, with residential and community locations accounting for 43.0% and 38.0% respectively. Within these broad groupings, the most common locations were private dwellings (31.3%), the street or footpath (23.9%) and retail outlets (11.6%).
- Almost 45% of reported armed robberies in South Australia occurred in locations designated as "other" - notably the retail sector (30.1%). These figures were generally lower than for most other Australian states. In New South Wales, for example, 48.1% of armed robberies occurred in a retail area, while a figure of 47.0% was recorded for Australia as a whole. In South Australia only 4.4% occurred in a bank - a figure which was generally similar to the national figure of 5.5%. A further 38.5% of armed robberies in South Australia took place in a community location - notably on the street or footpath (22.7%) or at a transport terminal, car park or on a 'conveyance in transit' (12.9%). Residential locations accounted for 16.4% of South Australia's armed robberies, compared to 8.8% nationally.
- In South Australia unarmed robberies mainly occurred on the street or footpath (42.9%), at a transport terminal or car park (22.0%), in a recreational area (9.6%) or retail outlet (9.6%). Only 6.7% occurred in a residential setting.
- Residential locations were the main target for offences involving unlawful entry with intent. Retail locations accounted for a further 13.2%. The same pattern emerged for 'UEWI - other'. Here, 51.1% involved a private dwelling, while 15.2% involved a retail outlet. This pattern was generally similar across Australia.
- The majority of motor vehicle thefts in South Australia took place from either outbuildings/residential land (24.0%) or the street/footpath (44.4%). The location of vehicle theft did vary considerably, however, from one state to another. In Western Australia, for example, 42.0% of vehicle thefts occurred from an outbuilding or residential land, compared with only 6.3% in Queensland and 13.1% in New South Wales. By contrast, in Western Australia, only 12.5% of vehicles were stolen from the street/footpath, compared with 46.9% in Victoria. These locational differences are somewhat difficult to explain, and should be interpreted with some caution because of the considerable variations between these jurisdictions in the proportion of cases where location was not specified. For example, in South Australia, the type of location was not recorded in 28.5% of cases, compared with 0.2% in Western Australia, 2.7% in Victoria, 21.0% in Queensland and 4.0% in New South Wales.
- For 'other theft', only 26.0% occurred in a residential location. This included 16.2% from an outbuilding or residential land. A further 29.3% occurred on a conveyance in transit, and 21.6% occurred in a retail outlet.

**Table 14**  
Type of location where the criminal incident occurred, South Australia 1995.

Location	Murder		Attempted murder		Assault		Sexual Assault	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Residential	14	63.6	20	50.0	5791	43.0	951	70.0
Community	4	18.2	17	42.5	5118	38.0	254	18.7
Other	4	18.2	3	7.5	2452	18.2	139	10.2
Unspecified	0	0	0	0	96	0.7	14	1.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>0.457</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1358</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Location	Kidnapping/ abduction		Armed robbery		Unarmed robbery	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Residential	15	19.2	60	16.4	73	6.7
Community	52	66.7	141	38.5	761	69.4
Other	9	11.5	164	44.8	255	23.3
Unspecified	2	2.6	1	0.3	7	0.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,096</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 14 continued**  
Type of location where the criminal incident occurred, South Australia 1995.

Location	UEWI-property taken		UEWI - other		Motor vehicle theft		Other theft	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Residential	17,649	70.3	3,473	62.5	2,394	24.0	13,215	26.0
Community	1,512	6.0	472	8.5	4,480	44.9	22,212	43.7
Other	5,938	23.7	1,616	29.1	258	2.6	15,285	30.0
Unspecified	5	0.0	0	0	2,844	28.5	166	0.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,104</b>	<b>100.</b>	<b>5,561</b>	<b>100.</b>	<b>9,976</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>50,878</b>	<b>100.0</b>
		0		0				

### **Weapon used**

Information regarding the extent to which a weapon was used in the commission of an offence together with the type of weapon used is outlined in Table 15. As shown, in South Australia:

- Only 11 out of 1,358 (0.8%) sexual assaults reported to police in 1995 involved the use of a weapon. In fact, of all Australian states, South Australia recorded the lowest use of a weapon in the commission of sexual assaults (0.8% compared with the national figure of 2.0%). Similarly, very few assaults (8.6%) and kidnapping/abductions (3.8%) involved a weapon.
- By contrast, 19 of the 22 murders and all 40 attempted murders involved a weapon.

Firearms were used in 31.8% of murders and 27.5% of murder attempts.

- In relation to robberies, 25% of these crimes reported to South Australian police in 1995 did involve the use of a weapon. By contrast, for Australia as a whole, weapons were used in 40.3% of robberies. In fact, South Australia recorded the second lowest use of weapons in robbery crimes of all Australian states. Of the 25.0% of incidents where a weapon was used, the majority of these involved a weapon other than a firearm (254 out of 355 incidents or 71.5%). Firearms were used in 94 (or 6.4%) of robberies, compared with the national figure of 12.5%.

**Table 15**  
Use of a weapon in the commission of the offence, South Australia 1995.

Use of weapon	Murder		Attempted murder		Assault		Sexual assault		Kidnapping/abduction		Robbery	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
<b>Weapon used</b>	19	86.4	40	100.0	1,153	8.6	11	0.8	3	3.8	366	25.0
Weapon - n.f.d	1	4.5	0	0	69	0.5	0	0	0	0	18	1.2
Firearm	7	31.8	11	27.5	37	0.3	1	0.1	0	0	94	6.4
Other weapon	11	50.0	29	72.5	1,047	7.8	10	0.7	3	3.8	254	17.4
<b>No weapon used</b>	3	13.6	0	0	12,304	91.4	1,347	99.2	75	96.2	1,096	75.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	22	100.0	40	100.0	13,457	100.0	1,358	100.0	78	100.0	1,462	100.0

Note: One incident of manslaughter was reported to South Australian police in 1995. This incident involved the use of a firearm.

## CONCLUSION

The 1995 National Crime Statistics released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics contain both positive and negative outcomes for South Australia. On the negative side, this State was above the national rate for attempted murder, assault, sexual assault, kidnapping/abduction, robbery (total and unarmed), blackmail/ extortion, UEWI involving the taking of property and other theft. Moreover, when compared with the other seven states and territories it had the second highest ranking in six of these categories - namely, attempted murder, assault, sexual assault, kidnapping/abduction, total robberies and unarmed robberies.

However, on the positive side, South Australia was below the national rate for the categories of murder, manslaughter, driving causing death, armed robbery, unlawful entry with intent (total and "other") and motor vehicle theft.

Other positive results include the fact that, since 1993, the number of sexual assault and robbery victims coming to police attention has decreased - by 13.7% and 14.7% respectively. These trends are contrary to those observed at the national level where increases in both categories have occurred from 1993 to 1995. Similarly, reported incidents of unlawful entry with intent have also decreased in South Australia (by 26.2%) while the national figure has remained relatively stable. Hence, even though three years of data are clearly not sufficient to draw any firm conclusions regarding longitudinal trends, there are

some positive signs that certain types of reported crime may be declining in this State.

As noted at the beginning of the Bulletin, however, it should be stressed that these statistics detail only those offences coming to police notice, rather than to all criminal incidents which occur in the community. Hence, while the changes noted here may be due to changes in the actual incidents of crime, they may also reflect shifts in reporting levels or police practices.

Despite some interpretational difficulties, these statistics provide the most valid data for interjurisdictional comparison so far available. For this, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and in particular the National Crime Statistics Unit, is to be commended.

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