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## **Robbery in South Australia**

by

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*This Information Bulletin examines trends in reported unarmed and armed robbery in South Australia during the past decade. It analyses such factors as the location and time when robbery occurs, the average value of goods stolen and the characteristics of victims.*

*It also profiles those offenders apprehended for robbery, including some details of their past offending history and the penalties imposed by the Courts.*

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## INTRODUCTION

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This Information Bulletin examines the extent and nature of reported robbery offences in South Australia, including:

- an analysis of the recorded rate of offending over the last 10 years;
- an analysis of the spatial and temporal characteristics associated with robbery offences;
- an analysis of offence characteristics, such as weapons used and the value of goods stolen;
- a profile of both victims and apprehended offenders; and
- an analysis of the responses by the criminal justice system to persons apprehended for robbery.

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## DEFINITION OF ROBBERY

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This report utilises the standard definition of robbery employed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics' National Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics, namely

*“robbery is the unlawful taking of property, without consent, under confrontational circumstances from the immediate possession, control, custody or care of a person accompanied by force or the threat of force or violence and/or by placing the victim in fear” (ABS, 1996a, p84).*

It is the threat or use of violence towards the victim that distinguishes this offence from larceny. In some instances, such as those involving handbag snatches, it may be difficult to determine if sufficient force is used for the offence to constitute robbery or whether it is, in fact, larceny from the person. Thus the figures may be subject to variation both across time and location due to differences in police charging practices.

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## SOME METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

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The statistics contained in this report relate only to the number of offences actually reported or coming to the attention of police. It is well documented that a number of robbery offences are never brought to police notice and are therefore never included in official statistics. In fact, a community based Crime and Safety Survey conducted in 1995 amongst individuals aged 15 years and older in South Australia found that only 54.0% of robbery victims reported the most recent incident to police (ABS, 1995). Hence the number of offences recorded in official police statistics do not necessarily provide an accurate assessment of the real level of such offences in the community, and while fluctuations in recorded crime may indeed reflect changes in the incidence of criminal activity, they could also be due to changes in people's willingness to report an offence. Other factors - such as changes in policing procedures - also influence the official statistics. These issues should be borne in mind when comparing figures either over time or across jurisdictions.

The counting rules used to generate the official statistics summarised here are victim based, where the victim may be either an individual or organisation. This means that one offence is

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counted per person/organisation per incident. For example, if during the process of robbing a store of goods, an offender also takes personal property from a customer in the store this whole incident is counted as two offences because there are two victims.

It should also be noted that the figures presented in this Information Bulletin may differ marginally from those published in other sources. This occurs because the police files are continually updated and corrected. As a result, data extracted from the system at one point in time may differ slightly from data extracted at a different time.

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## SOUTH AUSTRALIAN TRENDS

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### *What is the incidence of reported robbery in South Australia?*

In 1995 there were 1,472 robbery offences recorded by police. As shown in Figure 1, this represented only 0.7% of the 209,361 offences reported during that year.

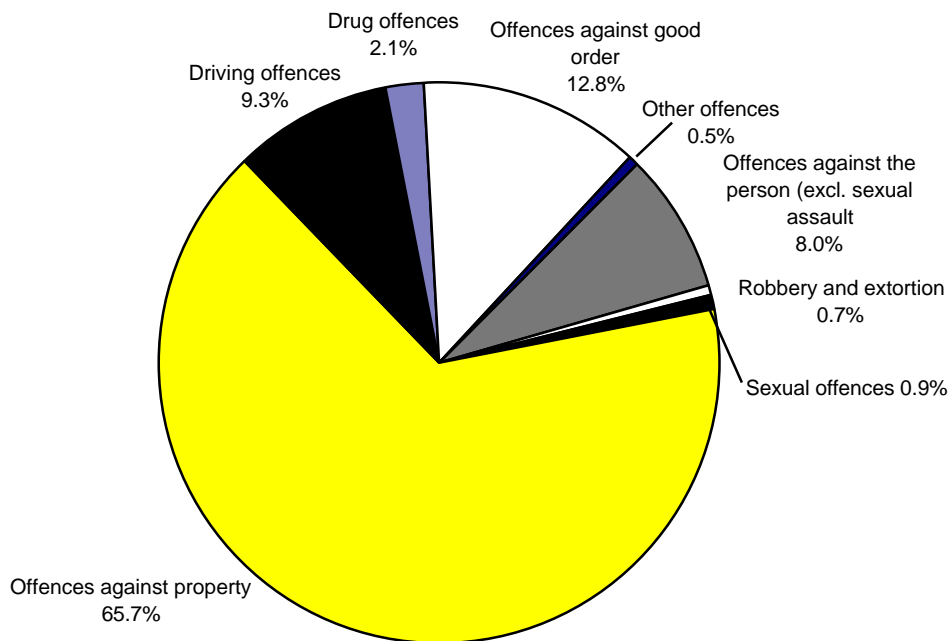
By contrast there were 137,579 offences recorded against property (65.7% of all crimes reported), 26,787 offences against good order (12.8% of the total) and 16,674 offences against the person (excluding sexual assault). Thus, despite the amount of media attention which is accorded to the more sensational incidents of robbery, this type of crime accounts for only a very small proportion of all offending behaviour reported or coming to police attention in South Australia in any given year.

Of the 1,472 robbery incidents reported in 1995, the overwhelming majority (75.1%) were unarmed robberies. By contrast, only 6.4% involved the use of a firearm while 18.5% involved the use of other types of weapons.

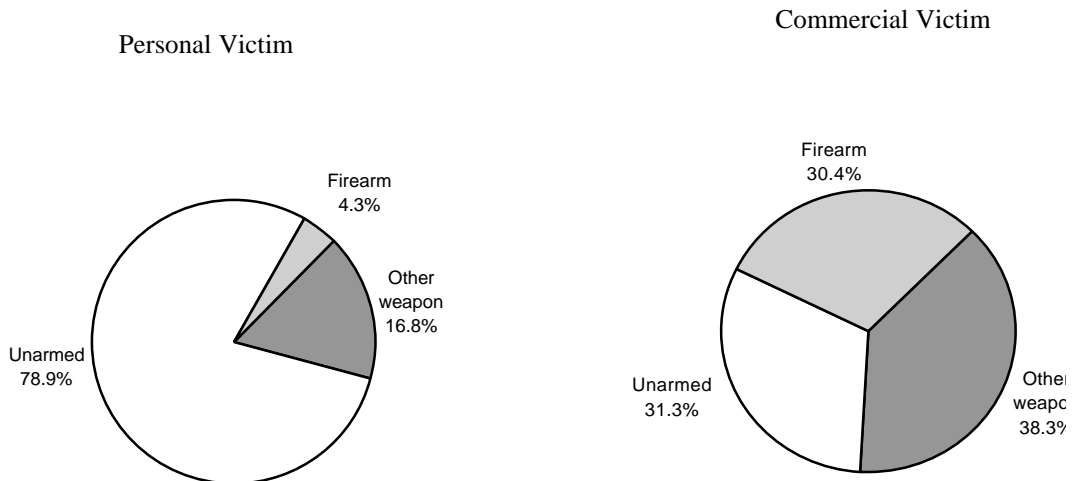
As one would expect, however, the proportion of armed to unarmed robberies varied depending on whether the victim was an individual or a commercial entity. As shown in Figure 2, of the 1,357 robberies where the victim was an individual, almost four in five (78.9%) did not involve the use of a weapon. Conversely, only 4.3% involved the use of a firearm, while 16.8% involved the use of some other weapon. The pattern was quite different for commercial victims, with almost seven in 10 (68.7%) involving the use of weapon.

In addition to this broad division between armed and unarmed robbery, all unarmed robberies are further differentiated according to whether or not they involved

**Figure 1**  
Types of Offences Reported to Police, 1995



**Figure 2**  
Proportion of armed to unarmed robberies by type of victim



the actual use of violence<sup>1</sup>. Of the 1,106 incidents of unarmed robberies reported to police in 1995, eight out of ten (82.3%) entailed the actual use of violence against the victim. This pattern did not vary depending on whether the victim was an individual or a commercial entity. In fact, 29 of the 36 unarmed robberies (80.6%) perpetrated against a commercial victim involved the use of violence, as did 82.3%

of those involving a personal victim.

One final aspect requiring comment is that, as indicated in Table 1, the overwhelming majority (92.2%) of robberies reported to police in 1995 involved a personal rather than a commercial victim. Thus, despite high profile television and newspaper coverage given to such incidents as bank hold-ups, these are clearly in the minority.

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## CLEAR UP RATES

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As outlined in Table 1, there was a 33.9% clear-up rate<sup>2</sup> for all types of robbery. While this is higher than the clear-up rate for offences against property (18.2%) it is markedly lower than the clear-up rate for offences against the person (78.2%).

To some extent this lower clear-up rate may be due to the fact that, unlike many incidents involving personal crimes, robbery offenders rarely have any prior relationship with, and are therefore unknown to, their victims. This makes the police task of locating the perpetrator more difficult. The percentage of incidents cleared was marginally higher for armed robberies than for unarmed robberies (38.3% compared with 32.5% respectively).

There were also some variations depending on whether the victim was an individual or a commercial entity, although the nature of that variation was not consistent. For example, the clear-up rate for armed robberies involving a weapon other than a firearm was higher for commercial than for personal victims (52.3% compared with 36.0%). By contrast, the situation was reversed for unarmed robberies involving the use of violence. Here, 27.6% of those directed against a commercial victim were cleared, compared with 35.6% of those directed against an individual.

**Table 1**  
Number of robbery offences reported or becoming known to police during 1995.

Offence	Incidents reported		Incidents cleared	
	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Armed Robbery</b>				
with firearm - commercial	35	2.4	13	37.1
with firearm - personal	59	4.0	22	37.3
<i>Total robbery with firearm</i>	<b>94</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>37.2</b>
with other weapon - commercial	44	3.0	23	52.3
with other weapon - personal	228	15.5	82	36.0
<i>Total robbery with other weapon</i>	<b>272</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>38.6</b>
<b>Total Armed Robbery</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>38.3</b>
<b>Unarmed Robbery</b>				
with violence - commercial	29	2.0	8	27.6
with violence - personal	881	59.9	314	35.6
<i>Total unarmed robbery with violence</i>	<b>910</b>	<b>61.8</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>35.4</b>
with no violence - commercial	7	0.5	3	42.9
with no violence - personal	189	12.8	34	18.0
<i>Total Unarmed robbery with no violence</i>	<b>196</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>18.9</b>
<b>Total Unarmed Robbery</b>	<b>1,106</b>	<b>75.1</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>32.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,472</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>33.9</b>

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### *Longitudinal trends in reported robbery statistics.*

As indicated in Figure 3, the total number of robberies reported to police in South Australia remained relatively stable during the period 1986 to 1989, but escalated substantially in the first part of the 1990s, reaching a peak of 1,691 offences in 1993.

However, since then this trend has been reversed. Between 1993 and 1994, robbery offences declined by 11.6% which was the first decline observed since 1983. A further decrease of 3.1% was recorded in 1995.

Longitudinal trends for the different types of robbery offences are also depicted in Figure 3. These varied quite considerably from one category to another. As indicated, the number of unarmed robberies escalated dramatically from 1989 to 1993, and it was this upswing which was primarily responsible for the large increase observed for the total robbery figures. Following the 1993 peak, however, unarmed robberies declined by 13.3% in 1994, but increased marginally by 6.1% in 1995.

By contrast, the number of armed robberies reported to police have remained far more stable over time. Although some increase was observed during the period 1989 to 1991, this subsequently levelled out and since 1993, there has been a decrease of 25%, with much of that being attributed to a decrease in robberies with firearms. In fact, in 1995, the number of reported robberies involving the use of firearms was the lowest recorded since 1989.

In summary then, Figure 3 indicates that, despite a significant increase in total robberies during the 1989 to 1993 period, that trend has now been reversed. Moreover, most of that increase was due to an escalation in one particular type of robbery - namely, unarmed robbery. This latter finding is more clearly depicted in Figure 4, which shows changes over time in the relative proportion of armed to unarmed robberies reported in this State. As indicated, in 1985, unarmed robberies accounted for just over one half (55.0%) of all robbery offences brought to police notice. By 1995, this had increased to 75.1%.

One possible explanation for this may be traced to discrepancies in the way in which police define unarmed robberies. As indicated earlier, differentiating between unarmed robbery and larceny from the person (particularly in relation to instances involving handbag snatches) may create problems, because of the difficulties involved in actually deciding whether or not a particular incident involves the threat or use of violence towards the victim. This dilemma is best illustrated by the advice given by *Williams and Weinberg (1986:254-255)*:

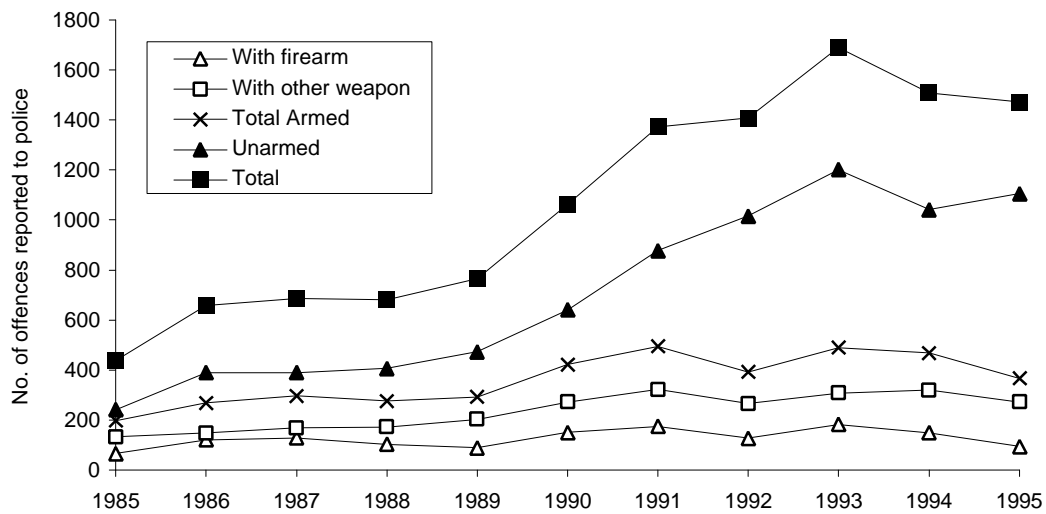
*"If the accused has snatched a bag from a victim (who was unaware that this was about to occur) and has used minimal force (that is, no more force than was necessary to snatch it from the victim's grasp) the offence will be larceny from the person. If the victim maintains a strong grip on the bag and the assailant uses force directly upon the victim's fingers to pry them open, the offence will be robbery. If however, the victim merely refuses to let go of the bag and the accused eventually pulls it away after a struggle, without applying force directly to the victim, it is doubtful that the offence of robbery is made out."*

Concerns about the potential for confusion in differentiating between unarmed robbery and larceny from the person prompted the Office of Crime Statistics, with the assistance of the Statistical Services Section within SAPOL and the Director of Public Prosecutions, to undertake a study of a randomly selected sample of 109 incidents which had been recorded by police as unarmed robberies against personal victims. A detailed analysis of the circumstances of each offence has been completed and indications are that some offences

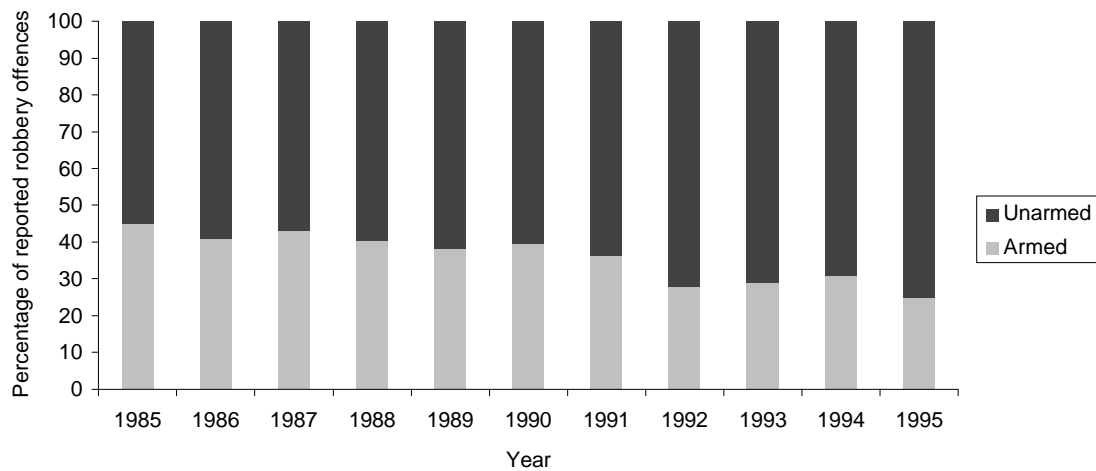
were designated as unarmed robberies when they should instead have been recorded as larcenies from the person (Barnett, 1997).

This confusion in differentiating between unarmed robbery and larcenies from the person may provide at least a partial explanation for the relatively high number of reported unarmed robberies in South Australia and their disproportionate increase over time.

**Figure 3**  
Robbery offences reported or becoming known to police, 1985 - 1995.



**Figure 4**  
Relative percentage of reported armed and unarmed robberies, 1985-1995.



## SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS

*Are robberies evenly distributed across the metropolitan area and the State?*

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Tables 2 and 3 present robbery rates per 1,000 residents in each South Australian Local Government Area (LGA) based on the location where the robbery occurred. As such, these rates include robbery offences perpetrated against both residents and non-residents of the LGA, and so do not indicate the average risk for actual residents. In addition, the risk to any particular person within an LGA may vary considerably from the average risk depending on such factors as the type and location of activities in which the person engages.

The Adelaide LGA (which encompasses the inner city region bounded by the parklands) accounted for almost one fifth (19.2%) of all reported robberies in the State in 1995. Its rate of 23.9 robberies per 1,000 residents was almost 24 times greater than the State average (1.00 per 1,000 residents), 19 times the metropolitan average (1.24 per 1,000 residents) and over eight times greater than the LGA with the next highest rate (namely Elizabeth).

It is not surprising that the Adelaide LGA should dominate the robbery statistics. The routine activities of residents in the greater metropolitan area bring many of them to the Central Business District for work, shopping and entertainment. The number of potential robbery victims and offenders in the Adelaide LGA therefore far outweighs the number of residents. However, while the pre-eminence of the city as a robbery site is no surprise, the extent of its dominance is notable.

Of the other metropolitan LGAs, Elizabeth recorded the highest robbery rate (2.9 per 1,000 resident population) followed by Glenelg (2.7) and Port Adelaide (2.3). Differences across the metropolitan area are presented more graphically in Figure 5.

Overall, the metropolitan rate for robbery of 1.24 is more than five times higher than the rate recorded outside the metropolitan area (0.22). In the country, the Peterborough council area had the highest rate (6.3) but this seems an anomalous figure produced by two robberies reported within a very small population of 317 people. Of the remaining country LGAs, Mount Gambier District Council and Port Augusta each recorded a rate of 1.2 per 1,000 resident population while Ceduna District Council had a rate of 1.1.



**Table 2**  
Rate of robbery offences per 1,000 residents by Local Government Area, 1995

Local Government Area	Population	Reported Robbery Offences	Rate per 1,000 residents
<b>Adelaide metropolitan area</b>			
Adelaide	11,843	283	23.9
Brighton (C)	19,104	10	0.5
Burnside (C)	39,563	20	0.5
Campbelltown (C)	45,915	31	0.7
Elizabeth (C)	28,241	81	2.9
Enfield (C)	62,279	85	1.4
Gawler (M)	17,068	21	1.2
Glenelg (C)	12,652	34	2.7
Happy Valley (C)	38,252	6	0.2
Henley & Grange (C)	14,377	13	0.9
Hindmarsh & Woodville (C)	88,234	88	1.0
Kensington & Norwood (C)	9,053	17	1.9
Marion (C)	77,037	68	0.9
Mitcham (C)	62,153	21	0.3
Munno Para (C)	37,505	24	0.6
Noarlunga (C)	93,164	97	1.0
Payneham (C)	16,242	15	0.9
Port Adelaide (C)	39,161	91	2.3
Prospect (C)	19,139	24	1.3
Salisbury (C)	112,307	146	1.3
St Peters (M)	8,216	7	0.9
Stirling (DC)	17,055	4	0.2
Tea Tree Gully (C)	96,206	59	0.6
Thebarton (M)	7,883	13	1.6
Unley (C)	36,284	34	0.9
Walkerville (M)	6,858	5	0.7
West Torrens (C)	43,686	38	0.9
Willunga (DC)	14,594	1	0.1
<b>Total - Adelaide metropolitan area</b>	<b>1,080,972</b>	<b>1,336</b>	<b>1.24</b>

Population data based on estimated resident population as at 30/6/95, ABS Catalogue 3204.4.  
LGAs with no robberies are omitted.

**Figure 5**

Rate of robbery offences per 1,000 residents by Adelaide metropolitan Local Government Areas, 1995.

**Table 3**

Rate of robbery offences per 1,000 residents by Local Government Area, 1995

Local Government Area	Population	Reported Robbery Offences	Rate per 1,000 residents
<b>Outside Adelaide metropolitan area</b>			
Angaston (DC)	7,060	1	0.1
Barossa (DC)	5,335	1	0.2
Berri (DC)	6,985	1	0.1
Ceduna (DC)	3,494	4	1.1
Cooper Pedy (DC)	2,285	1	0.4
Light (DC)	5,893	1	0.2
Mallala (DC)	7,159	2	0.3
Mannum (DC)	3,105	1	0.3
Meningie (DC)	4,001	2	0.5
Mount Barker (DC)	21,904	3	0.1
Mount Gambier (C)	22,666	3	0.1
Mount Gambier (DC)	5,143	6	1.2
Mount Pleasant (DC)	2,433	1	0.4
Murray Bridge (RC)	16,441	8	0.5
Peterborough (DC)	317	2	6.3
Port Augusta (C)	14,402	18	1.2
Port Elliot & Goolwa (DC)	8,401	2	0.2
Port Lincoln (C)	12,430	10	0.8
Port Pirie (C)	14,531	3	0.2
Rocky River (DC)	2,345	1	0.4
Roxby Downs (DC)	2,655	1	0.4
Strathalbyn (DC)	6,805	2	0.3
Victor Harbor (DC)	9,677	2	0.2
Waikerie (DC)	4,780	1	0.2
Wakefield Plains (DC)	4,805	1	0.2
Whyalla (C)	24,228	8	0.3
<b>Total - outside Adelaide metropolitan area</b>	<b>392,994</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>0.22</b>
Unknown	n/a	50	n/a
<b>Total for South Australia</b>	<b>1,473,966</b>	<b>1,472</b>	<b>1.00</b>

Population data based on estimated resident population as at 30/6/95, ABS Catalogue 3204.4.  
LGAs with no robberies are omitted.

#### *What are the most common sites for reported robberies?*

During 1995 the most common sites for those robberies which were reported or became known to police were streets (37.6%), shops (8.6%), dwellings (8.0%) and parking areas (8.0%). A further 7.0% of offences took place on public transport and in 4.1% of cases the victims were at a bus, train or tram stop. Those targets traditionally associated with robberies, such as banks and TABs, accounted for less than 2% of all reported robberies during 1995 (see Table 4).

Recent media concern about the number of so-called "home invasions" has generated a perception that the home is becoming an increasingly popular target.

However, statistics reveal that only 8.0% of all robberies reported to police during 1995 took place within a dwelling, flat or house, compared with 12.1% during 1984/85.

Just as the distribution of robberies across Local Government Areas depends on the type of business and other facilities within the area, so the actual sites where robberies occur vary depending on the type of offence - ie whether it was armed or unarmed and whether the victim was a person or a commercial institution. Of the 79 armed robberies involving a commercial victim, the main target was a shop (35.4%), followed by service stations (26.6%) and financial institutions (15.2%). Shops were also the main commercial target for unarmed robberies, with pharmacies representing the second most popular target. In combination, these two categories accounted for 63.9% of the 36 unarmed robberies of a commercial target reported to police in 1995.

The majority of armed robberies involving a personal victim took place either in the street (29.2%) or in a dwelling (18.0%). In the case of unarmed robberies directed against individuals, a much higher proportion occurred in the street (43.8% of the total), while only 6.2% took place in a dwelling, house or flat.

For the eight most common robbery locations, Table 5 presents the same statistics in a different format.

**Table 4**  
Site type by type of offence, 1995.

Type of location	Commercial				Personal				Total	
	Armed Robbery		Unarmed Robbery		Armed Robbery		Unarmed Robbery			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Automatic Teller Machine	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	1.4	15	1.0
Beach	-	-	-	-	3	1.1	12	1.1	15	1.0
Building	-	-	-	-	1	0.4	10	0.9	11	0.8
Bus/Train/Tram stop	-	-	-	-	1	0.4	58	5.5	59	4.1
Caravan park	-	-	-	-	1	0.4	-	-	1	0.1
Dwelling/Flat/House	1	1.3	-	-	51	18.0	65	6.2	117	8.0
Factory	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.1	1	0.1
Financial Institution	12	15.2	3	8.3	4	1.4	5	0.5	24	1.7
Government School	-	-	-	-	4	1.4	20	1.9	24	1.7
Hotel/Motel/Room	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.1	1	0.1
Licensed Premise/Hotel	5	6.3	1	2.8	6	2.1	16	1.5	28	1.9
Motor vehicle	-	-	-	-	11	3.9	14	1.3	25	1.7
National park/reserve	-	-	-	-	2	0.7	2	0.2	4	0.3
Office	-	-	2	5.6	-	-	3	0.3	5	0.3
Other	6	7.6	-	-	1	0.4	6	0.6	13	0.9
Parking Area	1	1.3	2	5.6	12	4.2	101	9.6	116	8.0
Pharmacy	4	5.1	5	13.9	3	1.1	2	0.2	14	1.0
Recreational/Amusement	-	-	1	2.8	5	1.8	22	2.1	28	1.9
Reserve	-	-	-	-	23	8.1	80	7.6	103	7.1
Scrub	-	-	-	-	1	0.4	5	0.5	6	0.4
Service station	21	26.6	1	2.8	17	6.0	3	0.3	42	2.9
Shed	-	-	-	-	1	0.4	-	-	1	0.1
Shop	28	35.4	18	50.0	23	8.1	56	5.3	125	8.6
Street	-	-	2	5.6	83	29.2	462	43.8	547	37.6
Surgery	-	-	-	-	3	1.1	-	-	3	0.2
TAB/Casino	1	1.3	-	-	-	-	3	0.3	4	0.3
Toilet- public	-	-	-	-	1	0.4	6	0.6	7	0.5
Transit System	-	-	1	2.8	22	7.7	79	7.5	102	7.0
Yard	-	-	-	-	5	1.8	8	0.8	13	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,055</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,454</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: There were 18 cases where victim information, including 'location type', was not available.

**Table 5**  
Type of robbery as a percentage of location type, 1995

Robbery	Bus/train/ tram stop %	Dwelling/ flat/house %	Parking area %	Reserve %	Service station %	Shop %	Street %	Transit system %
Armed	1.7	44.4	11.2	22.3	90.5	40.8	15.2	21.6
Unarmed	98.3	55.5	88.8	77.7	9.5	59.2	84.8	78.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>102</b>

As shown, of the 59 reported robberies which occurred at a bus, train and tram stop, only 1.7% involved the use of a weapon by the offender, as did 11.2% of those which occurred in a parking area and 15.2% of all street robberies. In contrast, 90.5% of all service station robberies were armed robberies, as were 44.4% of all robberies which took place in a dwelling, flat or house.

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## TEMPORAL CHARACTERISTICS

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### *Monthly and daily fluctuations*

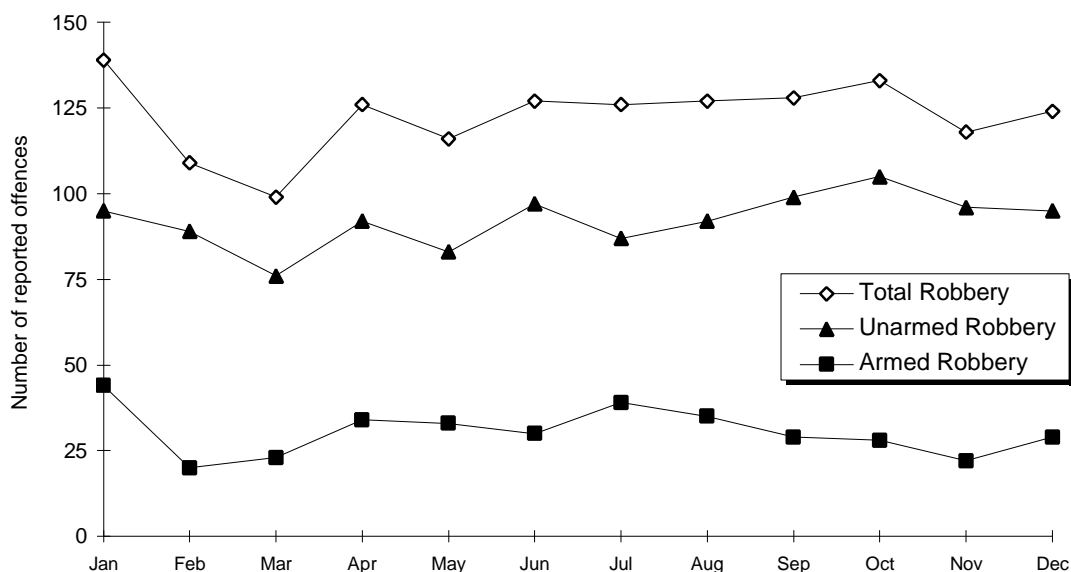
During 1995 an average of one armed robbery and three unarmed robberies were reported to South Australian police each day. As shown in Figure 6, the number of offences peaked during January with an average of 4.5 robberies reported per day (or 139 over the full month). The lowest number was recorded during March, with a daily average of 3.2 (or 99 for the month). Between April and December the number of robbery offences remained relatively stable.

As shown in Figure 7, when averaged out across the whole year, the most common days of the week for armed robberies were Fridays and Saturdays. Of the 366 armed robberies recorded during 1995, 60 (16.4%) took place on a Friday, while a further 60 occurred on a Saturday. In contrast, only 46 (12.6%) were reported on a Sunday.

For the remainder of the week (ie Monday to Thursday), numbers remained very stable. In the case of unarmed robberies, the largest numbers occurred on Thursdays (16.3%), Fridays (16.5%) and Saturdays (16.5%) but were less frequent on Tuesdays (11.0%), Mondays (12.1%) and Wednesdays (13.2%).

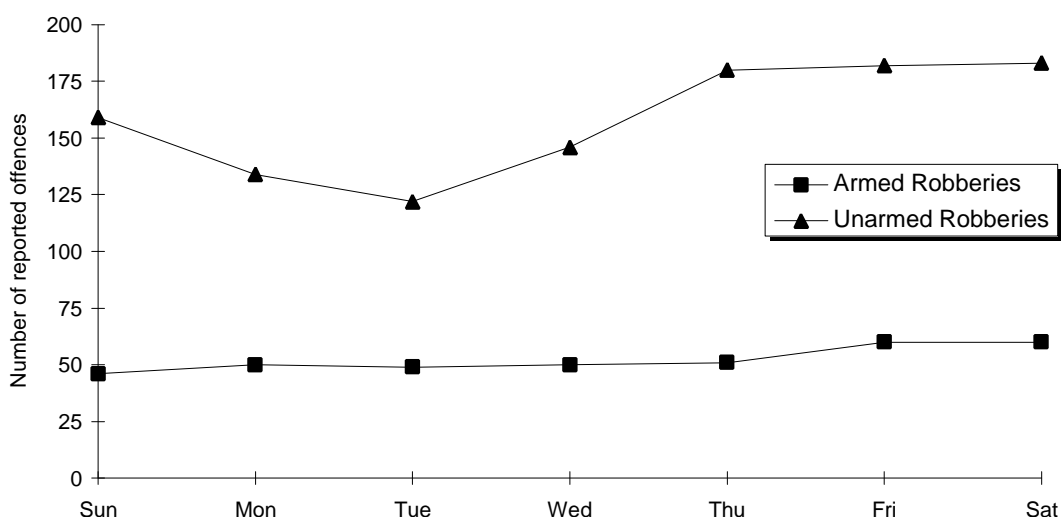
**Figure 6**

Number of robbery offences reported to police by month and type of offence, 1995.



**Figure 7**

Armed and unarmed robbery by day of the week, 1995



Compared with ten years ago, reported robbery offences are now more likely to occur during weekends. As shown in Table 6, 30.4% of all robberies brought to police notice during 1995 occurred on a weekend compared with only 25.5% during 1984/85. This may, in part, be due to the extended trading hours of many business which, in turn, means a greater number of potential victims being out and about during weekends.

**Time of the day**

While the data reveal that reported robberies are more likely to occur towards the end of the week and during weekends they also indicate that most take place in the afternoon and evening. During 1995, 70.9% of reported offences occurred between midday and midnight, including 21.5% between 3.01 pm and 6.00 pm (see Table 7).

This pattern varied slightly between armed and unarmed robberies, with armed robberies peaking between 9.01 pm and midnight (23.5%). Unarmed robberies, on the other hand, peaked between 3.01 pm and 6.00pm (23.9%) but were still frequent between midday and 3 pm and again from 6 pm to midnight (see Figure 8).

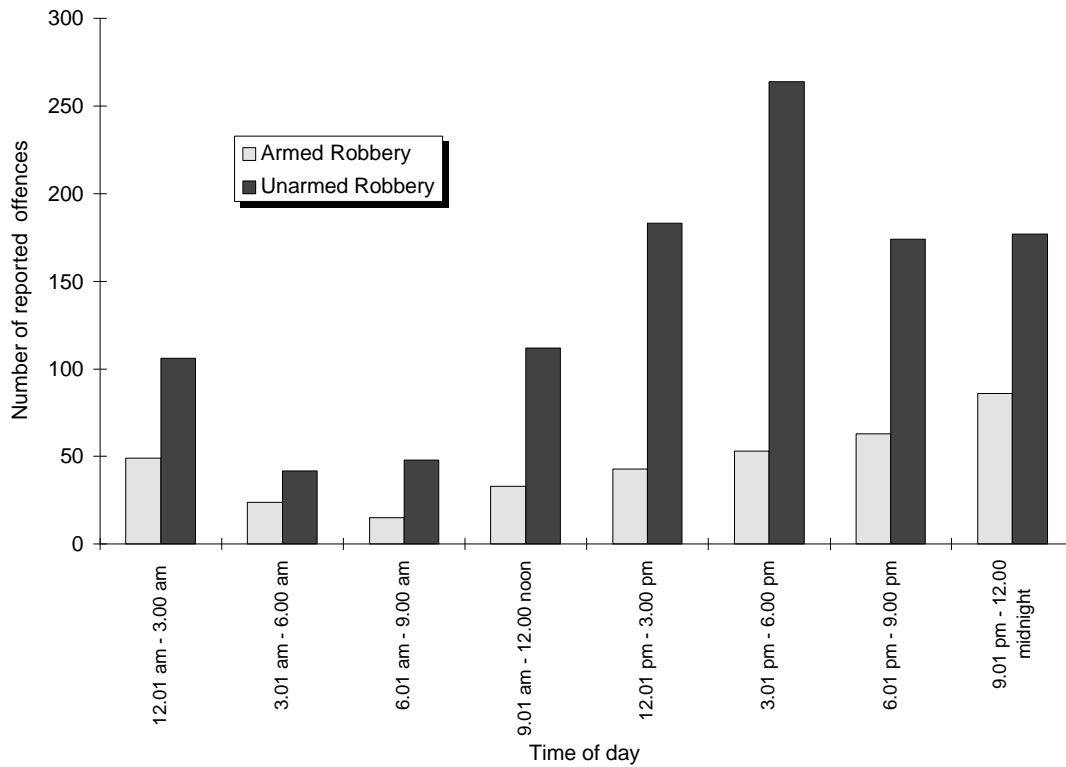
**Table 6**  
Day of week , 1984/85 and 1995

Day of week of incident	Percentage of all robberies	
	1984/1985	1995
Sunday	9.9	13.9
Monday	12.5	12.5
Tuesday	16.4	11.6
Wednesday	14.1	13.3
Thursday	17.7	15.7
Friday	13.8	16.4
Saturday	15.6	16.5

**Table 7**  
Time of day by type of offence, 1995

Time of day	Armed Robbery		Unarmed Robbery		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
12.01 - 3.00 am	49	13.4	106	9.6	155	10.5
3.01 - 6.00 am	24	6.6	42	3.8	66	4.5
6.01 - 9.00 am	15	4.1	48	4.3	63	4.3
9.01 - 12.00 noon	33	9.0	112	10.1	145	9.9
12.01 - 3.00 pm	43	11.7	183	16.5	226	15.4
3.01 - 6.00 pm	53	14.5	264	23.9	317	21.5
6.01 - 9.00 pm	63	17.2	174	15.7	237	16.1
9.01 - 12.00 midnight	86	23.5	177	16.0	263	17.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,106</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,472</b>	<b>100.0</b>

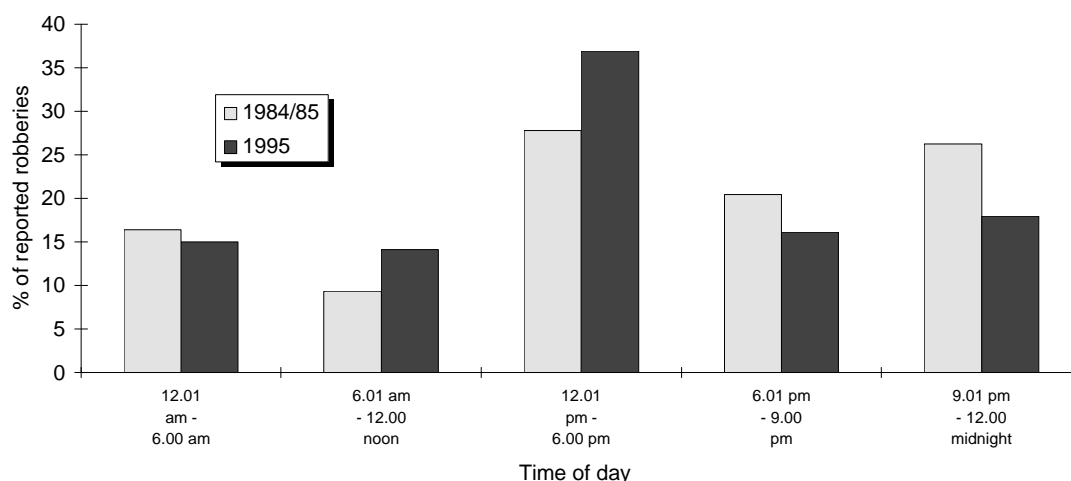
**Figure 8**  
Armed and unarmed robbery by time of day of offence, 1995.



Comparing the 1995 situation with that of a decade earlier (1984/85) suggests that a greater proportion of those offences which come to police notice are now being committed during daylight hours. As shown in Figure 9, in 1995, 51.0% of all reported robbery offences took place in daylight between 6.01 am and 6.00 pm, compared with 37.1% during 1984/85. Conversely, in 1995, proportionately fewer robberies occurred from 6 pm to midnight and from midnight to 6 am.

The timing of offences also varies from one target group to another. For example, in 1995, 88.1% of all service station robberies took place between 6.01 pm and 6.00 am. Street robberies, by contrast, were almost equally likely to occur during the day (48.4% between 6.01 am and 6.00 pm) or the night (51.6% between 6.01 pm and 6.00 am.)

**Figure 9**  
Time of day of robbery offence, 1984/85 and 1995.



## INCIDENT CHARACTERISTICS

### *A profile of the weapons used in armed robberies*

In 1995/96<sup>3</sup>, of the 353 reported incidents of armed robbery, 144 (40.8%) involved a knife (see Table 8). This was followed by firearms (24.0%) and clubs, batons and sticks (12.5%). There were seven occasions when an offender used a hypodermic needle to threaten their victim, a finding which reflects society's increasing problem with both drugs and diseases such as AIDS and hepatitis.

Longitudinal trends in the types of weapon used are depicted in Figure 10. As indicated, the proportion of armed robberies involving the use of a firearm peaked in 1987/88, when these types of weapons accounted for 44.6% of all armed robbery offences reported to police. Figures then dropped dramatically in 1988/89 and 1989/90, before increasing again in the following year. However, since 1990/91, the proportionate use of firearms has decreased steadily, such that in 1995/96, firearms were used in only 24.1% of all armed robberies, which is the lowest figure recorded during the eleven year period.

This decrease in the proportionate use of firearms may be due to the apparent displacement from the traditional armed robbery targets, such as banks, towards "softer" targets. Alternatively, it may reflect the increasing number of juveniles now being apprehended for robbery and the fact that they probably find it difficult to obtain firearms.

By contrast, after a brief period of increase in the mid 1980s, since 1988/89 the proportion of reported armed robberies involving the use of knives has remained relatively stable, at around the 40.0% level. In 1988/89, for example, knives accounted for 41.4% of all armed robberies, compared with 40.8% in 1995/96.

The use of 'other' types of weapons has fluctuated considerably during the past 11 years, with very pronounced upswings (such as in 1985/89) being followed by significant decreases (as in 1990/91). More recently, the proportionate use of 'other' types of weapons has been increasing such that in 1995/96, this category accounted for a higher proportion of all armed robberies than at any stage in the previous eleven years.

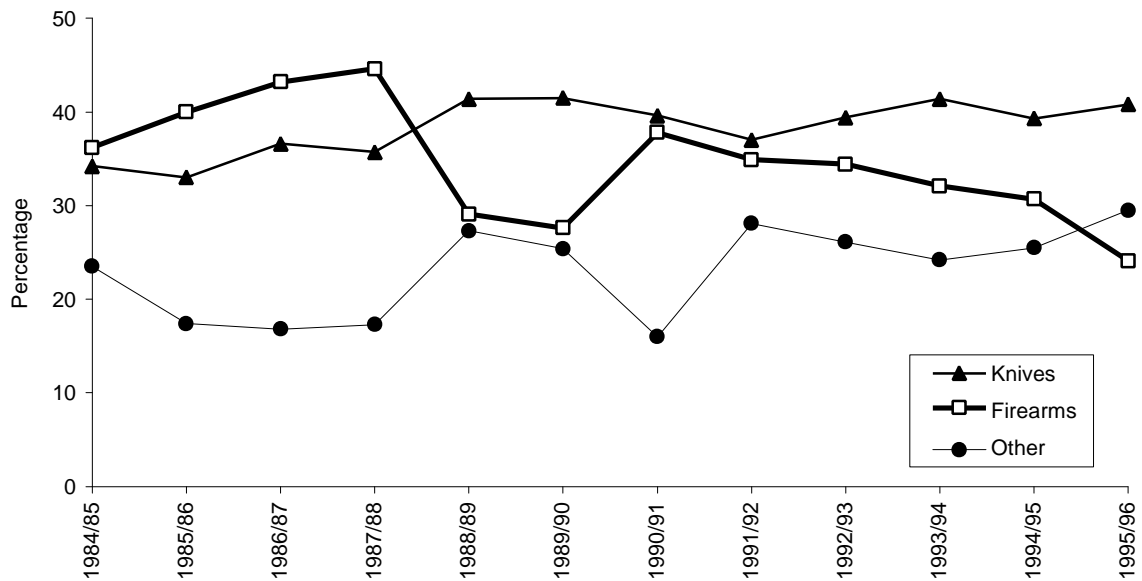


**Table 8**  
Type of weapons used in armed robberies, 1995/96

Weapon Used	Total	
	No.	%
Pistol	42	11.9
Rifle/Air rifle	7	2.0
Shotgun	15	4.2
Other firearm	21	5.9
Club/stick/baton	44	12.5
Hypodermic	7	2.0
Knife	144	40.8
Rock/Stone	6	1.7
Tool	12	3.4
Other weapon	35	9.9
Unknown	20	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: In three cases victim data were unavailable.

**Figure 10**  
Type of weapons used in armed robberies in 1984/85 and 1995/96.



*What is the average value of goods stolen?*

Based on the data presented in Table 9, a typical robbery offence yields relatively small returns for the offender, with the overall median value of goods stolen in all robberies reported to police during 1995 being \$69.50. Indeed, almost one third (32.5%) of all offences yielded \$10 or less for the offender and in 46.4% of cases the total value of goods stolen was \$50 or less. At the other end of the scale, only 4.2% of robberies involved property valued at more than \$2,000.

Similar results were found for both armed and unarmed robberies as well as personal and commercial victims. For example, 48.6% of all armed robberies and 45.7% of all unarmed robberies yielded \$50 or less. Bearing in mind that armed robbery carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, the risks and associated penalties appear to substantially outweigh the returns.

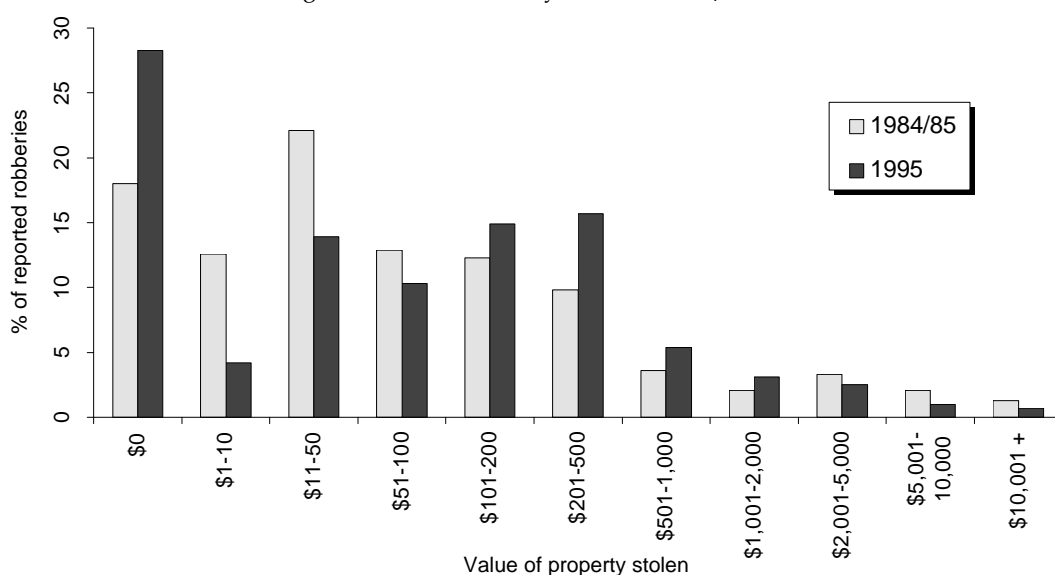
Likewise, the greater risks which are sometimes involved in attacking a commercial target as opposed to a personal target were not offset by substantially more lucrative rewards. The median value of goods stolen from personal victims was \$65 compared with \$158 from commercial victims. Furthermore, 44.3% of robberies against commercial victims yielded only \$100 or less.

However, some caution may be required in interpreting the value of the property stolen. The large proportion (28.3%) of cases where the value of property stolen was recorded as zero may denote that nothing was stolen or alternatively it could simply indicate that the value had not been recorded. While it is acknowledged that a proportion of these cases may be instances where the value of property was not recorded (which, in turn, would affect the median values presented in Table 9) it is not possible, using only the statistical data files, to distinguish between these two possibilities.

**Table 9**  
Value of property stolen by type of robbery and victim

Value of property stolen	Commercial		Personal		Total	
	Armed Robbery	Unarmed Robbery	Armed Robbery	Unarmed Robbery	Number	Percent
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
\$0	26	12	111	267	416	28.3
\$1 - \$10	2	1	9	50	62	4.2
\$11 - \$50	1	5	29	170	205	13.9
\$51 - \$100	4	0	21	127	152	10.3
\$101 - \$200	8	3	33	176	220	14.9
\$201 - \$500	9	6	39	177	231	15.7
\$501 - \$1000	6	2	17	54	79	5.4
\$1,001-\$2,000	9	4	8	24	45	3.1
\$2,001-\$5,000	5	2	12	18	37	2.5
\$5,001-\$10,000	3	1	5	6	15	1.0
\$10,001+	6	0	3	1	10	0.7
<b>Mean (\$)</b>	<b>\$2,132.60</b>	<b>\$659.44</b>	<b>\$751.3</b>	<b>\$261.97</b>	<b>\$467.49</b>	
<b>Median (\$)</b>	<b>\$175.70</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>	<b>\$42.00</b>	<b>\$70.00</b>	<b>\$69.50</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>1,070</b>	<b>1,472</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Figure 11**  
Value of goods stolen in robbery offences, 1984/85 and 1995.



*Has the value of goods stolen increased or decreased over the last 10 years?*

Figure 11 reveals that, compared to 10 years ago, current robberies are less likely to net sums greater than \$2000 (7.1% of all robberies in 1984/85 compared to 4.2% in 1995). However, they are also less likely to “strike out” with amounts of only \$100 or less (63.5% in 1984/85 and 56.7% in 1995). Instead, offenders are more likely to come away with more medium-range amounts (ie property valued between \$101 and \$2,000) than they were ten years ago (39.1% in 1995 compared with 27.8% in 1984/85).

Again, however, a note of caution is needed. As indicated in Figure 11, in 1995 a higher percentage of cases recorded a \$0 value of goods stolen, compared with 1984/85. This may indicate a higher proportion of missing data.

**VICTIMS**

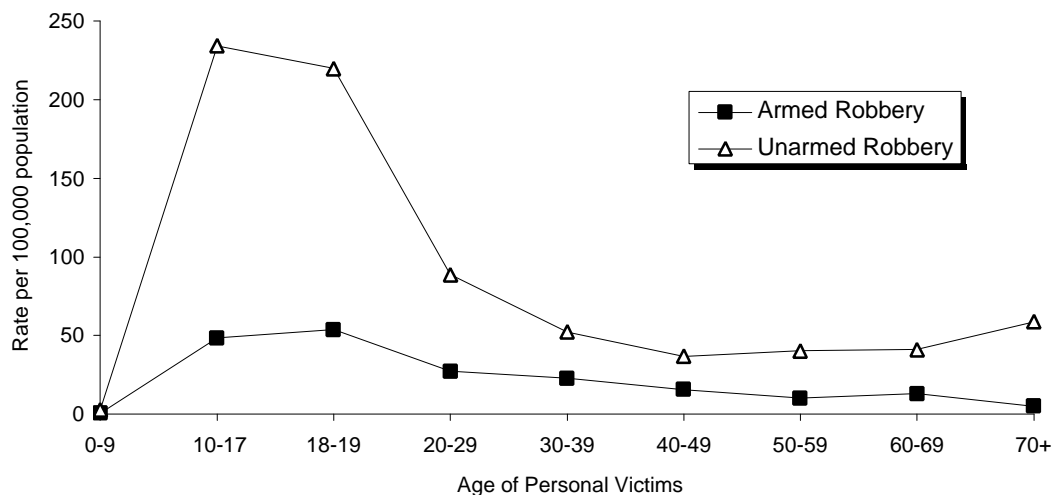
*Who are the victims of armed and unarmed robbery?*

A total of 1,339 individuals were recorded as robbery victims in South Australia during 1995. This equates to a rate of 90.8 victims per 100,000 residents, or more specifically, 19.3 per 100,000 population for armed robbery and 71.6 per 100,000 for unarmed robbery. (A total of 115 robberies during 1995 involved a non-personal victim. These have been excluded here.)

As shown in Figure 12, individuals aged 10-17 years have the highest victimisation rate for unarmed robbery (234.3 per 100,000 population) and the second highest victimisation rate for armed robbery (48.5 per 100,000 population). These statistics suggest that the level of victimisation amongst this section of the community is three times greater than the State average. Furthermore, community surveys (ABS, 1986) reveal that younger victims (15-19 years old) are approximately half as likely to report all offences to police compared with victims aged 55-59, suggesting that the true level of victimisation amongst juveniles and young adults may be substantially higher.

For instances of armed robbery, individuals aged 18-19 years were the most frequent targets, with a victimisation rate of 53.7 per 100,000 population. As can be seen in Figure 12, beyond the age of 19 an individual's risk of becoming a victim of armed robbery declines, with the rate of victimisation amongst individuals aged 70 years or more falling to 5.0 per 100,000 population.

**Figure 12**  
Victims of robbery per 100,000 age specific population, 1995.



For unarmed robbery the pattern was slightly different. Although individuals aged 10-17 were at the greatest risk (with a rate of 234.3/100,000 population), individuals aged 18-19 were also targeted (220.0/100,000 population). The victimisation rate for 20-29 year olds was 88.7/100,000 and declined to a low of 36.8/100,000 amongst 40-49 year olds.

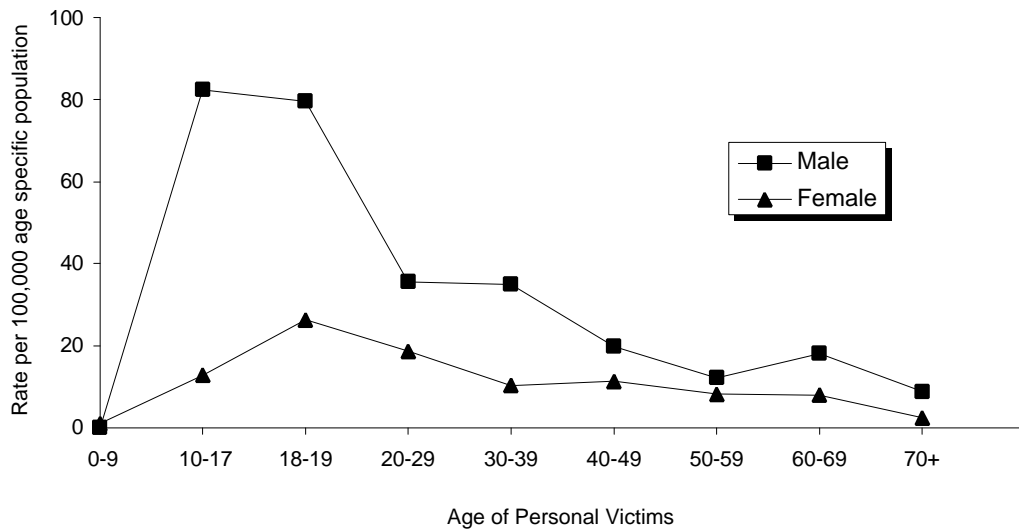
Figure 13 displays the reported victimisation rates for armed robbery by both age and sex of victims. According to these official statistics, for armed robbery men are at a greater risk of victimisation than women across all age groups. The average victimisation rate for males was 28.8/100,000 population compared with 9.8/100,000 for females. This sex difference was greatest amongst individuals in the high risk age groups (ie 10 to 19 years) and decreased with increasing age.

The age and sex victimisation rates for unarmed robbery, as displayed in Figure 14, portray a slightly different pattern. While the overall victimisation rate for reported unarmed robberies is greater for males (82.5/100,000) than females (60.8/100,000) the data reveal that below the age of 30, males recorded an unarmed robbery victimisation rate of 43.8/100,000 population, which was more than double that for females of the same age (68.7). From the age of 30 onwards, however, the victimisation rates were higher amongst females than males and this difference increased with age. For example, females aged 30-39 recorded a victimisation rate of 56.8/100,000 population, a level 18.8% higher than their male counterparts (47.8/100,000).

Between the ages of 40-69, this difference increased to 63.7% (females = 48.3/100,000 and males 29.5/100,000) while females aged 70 or older were victimised at a rate 100% higher than similarly aged males (74.0 and 37.0 per 100,000 population respectively). Furthermore, the victimisation rate for females aged 70 or older was 53.2% higher than that of females aged 40-69. This reverses the general trend observed for males. It also differs from the male and female trend observed for armed robbery, which indicated a decreasing victimisation rate with age for individuals aged 20 or more. These higher unarmed robbery victimisation rates for older women may be the result of offences involving handbag snatches.

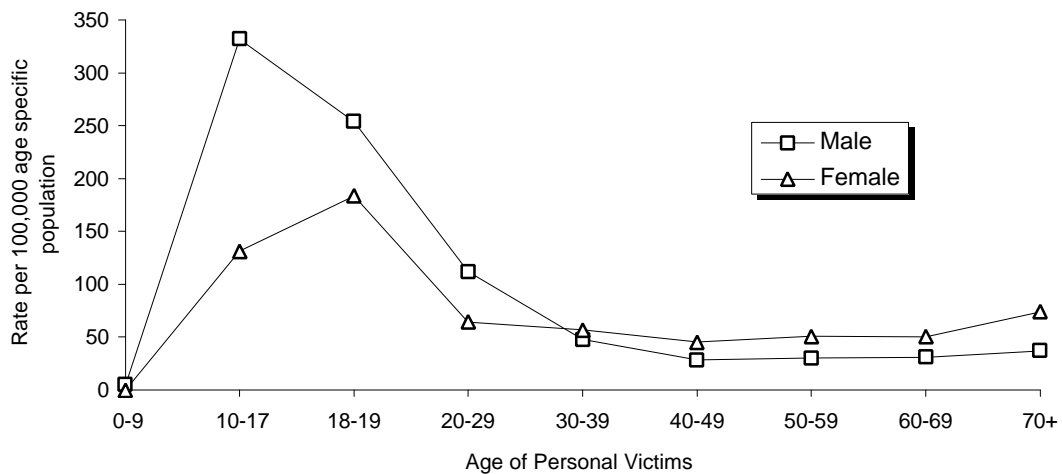
**Figure 13**

Victims of armed robbery per 100,000 age specific population by sex, 1995.



**Figure 14**

Victims of unarmed robbery per 100,000 age specific population by sex, 1995.



*Are robberies more likely to be perpetrated by strangers or by individuals known to the victim?*

As indicated earlier, the relatively low clear-up rates recorded for robbery offences may be partly due to the lack of any prior relationship between victims and offenders in most robberies. During 1995, 91.3% of all reported robberies and 90.6% of reported robberies where the victim was a person (as opposed to a commercial target), the offender was not known to the victim. This notion that robberies are almost always committed by strangers, along with the fact that they involve the use or threat of violence, helps to explain why this offence generates such concern and fear within the community.

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## OFFENDERS

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### *What is the profile of the typical offender apprehended for robbery?*

Police apprehension statistics provide details on those alleged adult offenders who have been arrested or reported or to those alleged juvenile offenders who have been dealt with by way of a formal caution, referral to a family conference or referral to the Youth Court. It does not include those juveniles who were dealt with by way of an informal caution. It should also be stressed that (as indicated earlier) only one third of all incidents of reported robbery in 1995 were cleared by police. In other words, in a high proportion of cases the perpetrator was never caught. It may be then, that the personal profiles of those individuals who are apprehended may not be the same as those who manage to avoid detection.

According to police records, there was a total of 574 apprehensions for robbery offences during 1995. These 574 apprehensions comprised 416 distinct individuals, including 331 (79.6%) who were apprehended only once and 85 (20.4%) who were apprehended on two or more separate occasions during 1995. Overall the 416 distinct individuals were each apprehended an average of 1.4 times during 1995.

Males constituted 75.8% (n=435) of the apprehensions and females 24.2% (n=139). Females were more likely to be apprehended for unarmed robbery, accounting for 29.3% of such apprehensions compared with only 8.0% of all alleged offenders apprehended for armed robbery (see Table 10).

Thus, while females were 11.5 times more likely to be apprehended for unarmed than armed robbery offences (17.2 compared with 1.5 apprehensions per 100,000 population) males were only 2.5 times more frequently apprehended for unarmed than armed robbery (42.2 compared with 17.2 apprehensions per 100,000 population).

As was the case with victims, an analysis of the age profile of apprehended suspects reveals that juveniles (10 - 17 year olds) and young adults (aged 18-19 years) dominate, accounting for almost six out of every 10 robbery apprehensions (see Table 11).

While the overall apprehension rate was 39 per 100,000 population, the rate amongst 10 - 17 and 18 - 19 year olds was 167.2 and 186.7 respectively. As shown in Figure 15, amongst males the rate of apprehension for all robbery offences increased from 195.2/100,000 amongst those aged 10-17 to 323.9 for individuals aged 18-19. For females, however, the apprehension rates were highest amongst individuals aged 10-17 (137.7 per 100,000 population compared to 42.0 amongst 18-19 year olds). Interestingly, females aged 10-14 years were apprehended at a higher rate than males of a similar age (females = 112 per 100,000; males = 97 per 100,000).

The median age of individuals apprehended for armed robbery was 23.6 years but only 17.6 years for those apprehended for unarmed robbery.

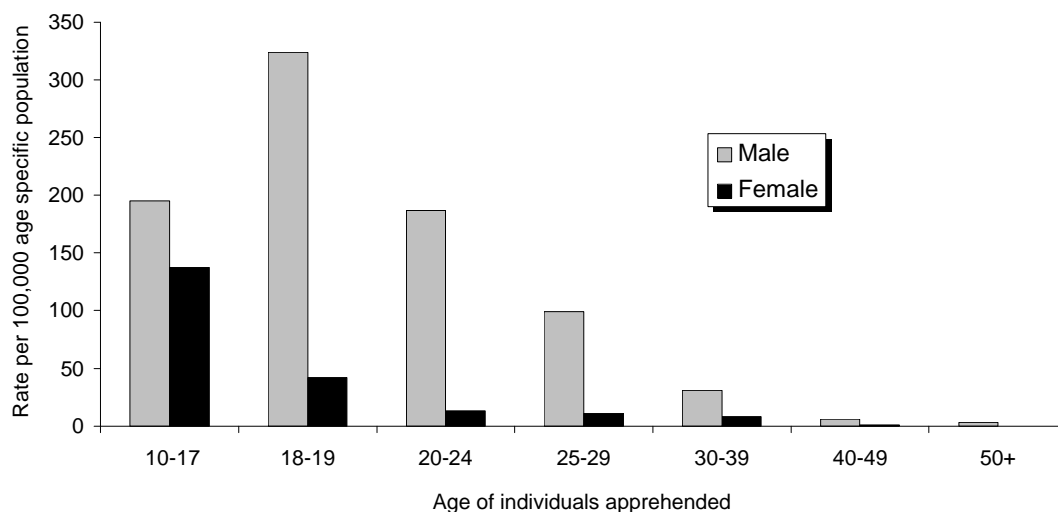
**Table 10**  
Gender of alleged offenders and type of robbery, 1995.

Gender of alleged offender	Armed Robbery		Unarmed Robbery		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	126	92.0	309	70.7	435	75.8
Female	11	8.0	128	29.3	139	24.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 11**  
Age of alleged offenders by gender and type of robbery, 1995.

Age of alleged offender	Armed Robbery		Unarmed Robbery		Total	
	Male No.	Female No.	Male No.	Female No.	No.	%
10 - 17	29	6	132	102	269	46.9
18 - 19	19	0	46	8	73	12.7
20 - 24	22	0	83	7	224	39.0
25 - 29	36	2	20	4	62	10.8
30 - 39	14	3	22	6	45	7.8
40 - 49	1	0	5	1	7	1.2
50 +	5	0	1	0	6	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Figure 15**  
Rate of offenders per 100,000 age specific population, 1995.



In proportionate terms, juveniles were far more likely to be apprehended for unarmed rather than armed robbery (145.4 compared with 21.8 per 100,000 population) than was the case with adults (18.2 per 100,000 for unarmed robbery and 9.2 per 100,000 for armed robbery).

While the age breakdown suggests a relatively high involvement by juveniles in robbery offences, this may not be entirely accurate. As noted earlier, apprehension statistics reflect only those alleged offenders who 'get caught' by police. Hence they may over-represent young offenders who, because of their inexperience, greater risk taking and greater visibility, may be more likely to be caught than more experienced adult offenders.

*Has the proportion of juveniles apprehended for robbery offences increased?*

As was demonstrated in Table 11, young offenders constituted a large proportion of those individuals apprehended in 1995 for robbery offences, but has this proportion increased over the last decade? Table 12 reveals that, in total, the number of individuals apprehended for robbery has increased by 191% between 1984/85 and 1995. During the same period the number of juveniles (aged 10-17 years) apprehended has increased by 290%. Stated differently, juveniles accounted for 35.0% of all apprehensions during 1984/85 and 46.9% during 1995. Closer examination of the data reveals that the increase in juvenile apprehensions has been due to a substantial increase in the number of female juveniles caught by police. During 1984/85 females aged 10-17 accounted for only 5.1% of all robbery apprehensions. Yet by 1995, this figure had risen to 18.8%. This increase in female juvenile apprehensions has been most pronounced in the 'unarmed robbery' category. In 1984/85, juvenile females accounted for only 8.7% of all apprehensions for this offence, but by 1995, this had increased to 23.2%. By contrast, the proportion of unarmed robbery apprehensions involving juvenile males remained relatively stable - 30.8% in 1984/85 compared with 30.2% in 1995.

**Table 12**  
Number of juvenile and adult offenders apprehended, 1984/85 and 1995.

Offence	1984/85		1995	
	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Armed Robbery</b>				
Male 10 - 17 years	27	29.0	29	21.2
Female 10 - 17 years	1	1.1	6	4.4
Male 18+ years	65	70.0	97	70.8
Female 18+ years	0	0	5	3.6
Total	93	100.0	137	100.0
<b>Unarmed Robbery</b>				
Male 10 - 17 years	32	30.8	132	30.2
Female 10 - 17 years	9	8.7	102	23.3
Male 18+ years	54	51.9	177	40.5
Female 18+ years	9	8.7	26	5.9
Total	104	100.0	437	100.0
<b>Total Robbery</b>				
Male 10 - 17 years	59	29.9	161	28.0
Female 10 - 17 years	10	5.1	108	18.8
Male 18+ years	119	60.4	274	47.7
Female 18+ years	9	4.6	31	5.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>100.0</b>



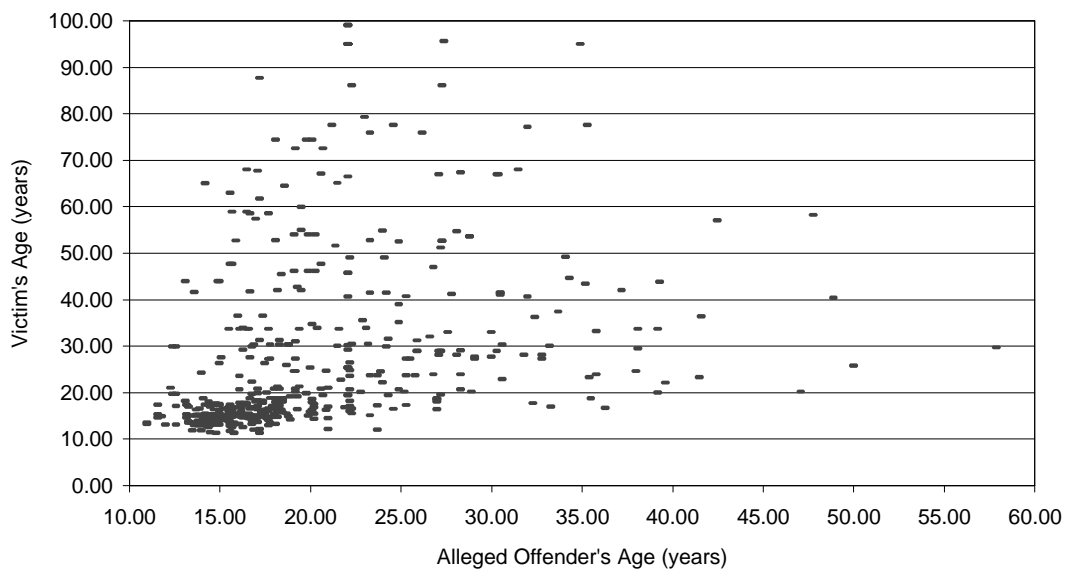
Expressed as a rate of the age specific population, there were 167.2 juvenile apprehensions per 100,000 population during 1995 compared to 39.0 per 100,000 in 1984/85. For females aged 10-17 years the apprehension rate has risen from 11.6 per 100,000 population in 1984/85 to 137.7 per 100,000 population in 1995, while for males the respective rates were 65.0 and 195.2.

The reasons for this increase in female apprehensions are unclear. On the one hand, it may reflect increasing female involvement in this type of offending behaviour. However, it may also be partly due to changes in the way police respond to young women, in light of shifting attitudes generated by the feminist movement.

### *Who is robbing whom?*

Cross-tabulating the age of the victims with the age of the apprehended offenders shows that in the majority of incidents, it is a case of offenders targeting victims of a similar age (see Figure 16.) Overall, 50.5% of incidents (where the age of both the offender and the victim was known) involved individuals within the same age group. Moreover, robberies involving juveniles as both victims and offenders constituted 38.7% of all incidents. In contrast, juveniles were less likely to attack older victims, with only 15.9% of robberies against victims aged 60 or more being perpetrated by a juvenile.

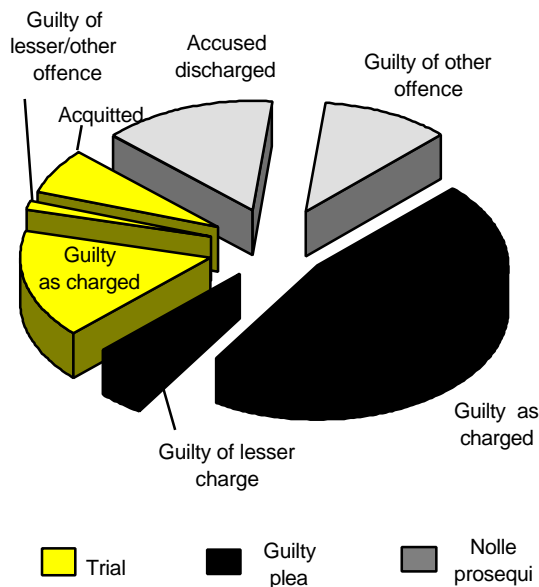
**Figure 16**  
Scattergram of alleged offender's age by victim's age, 1995.



*What penalties do convicted armed and unarmed robbers receive?*

The vast majority of adult defendants charged with either armed or unarmed robbery have their cases finalised in the District or Supreme Court. During 1995, there were a total of 150 cases finalised in the Higher Courts where robbery was the major charge. Of these, 93 (62.0%) were convicted as charged, 5.3% were convicted of a lesser or other offence, 6.7% were acquitted and 14.7% were discharged after the Crown enter a nolle prosequi. A more detailed breakdown of outcomes is presented in Figure 17.

**Figure 17**  
Outcome of cases finalised in District/Supreme Court, 1995.



Of those individuals who were convicted of the major charge of robbery, 82.3% were sentenced to immediate imprisonment, with the average period being 58.7 months. A further 16.7% of convicted offenders were given a suspended sentence, while only one case received another type of penalty - in this case, the offender was placed on a good behaviour bond. However, as expected, the likelihood of imprisonment, as well as the average term imposed, varied depending on the type of robbery involved. As indicated in Table 13, all robberies involving the use of a firearm resulted in direct imprisonment with an average term of 51.5 months. By contrast, only 56.2% of cases involving unarmed robbery without violence resulted in a direct prison sentence, with an average sentence of 13.9 months.

With respect to juveniles, in 1995 there were 36 youths apprehended for robbery who were dealt with by way of a family conference. There were also 174 cases finalised in the Youth Court where robbery was the major charge. Amongst those cases dealt with in the Youth Court, 73 (42.0%) were proven, 55 (31.6%) were dismissed for want of prosecution and 26 (14.9%) were withdrawn. Suspended detention was handed down as the major penalty in 34.8% of proven robbery cases. In a further 27.2% of cases the major penalty imposed was a community service order and direct detention accounted for 14.1% of cases.

**Table 13**  
Penalties imposed by Supreme and District Court for the major charge of robbery, 1995

Penalty	Robbery with firearm		Robbery with other weapon		Unarmed robbery with violence		Unarmed robbery with no violence		Total robbery	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Imprisonment	28	100.0	18	85.7	24	77.4	9	56.2	79	823
Suspended	0	0.0	3	14.3	6	19.4	7	43.8	16	16.7
Imprisonment Other	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.2	0	0.0	1	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## SUMMARY

This Information Bulletin has focused on those robbery offences reported or becoming known to police in South Australia in 1995. The main findings are as follows;

- In 1995 in South Australia, a total of 1,472 robbery offences were reported or came to police notice, which represented only 0.7% of all offences recorded that year.
- Of these 1,472 robberies, only 6.4% involved the use of a firearm and 18.5% involved some other form of weapon. The remaining 75.1% were all unarmed robberies.
- The total number of robbery offences reported to police increased during the latter part of the 1980s and early 1990s, with a peak of 1,691 reached in 1993. Since then, total robbery offences have decreased by 13%.
- The main contributor to the increase in reported robberies during the 1989-1993 period was a substantial rise in the number of reported unarmed robberies. By contrast, the number of armed robberies reported to police remained relatively stable during the 1989-1993 period and since 1993 has decreased by 25%.
- As a result of the substantial increase in unarmed robberies noted above, armed robbery offences now account for a smaller proportion of all reported robberies than at any stage during the previous 11 year period.
- Approximately one in every five robberies reported in South Australia take place within the Adelaide Local Government Area. Its rate is almost 24 times greater than the State average.
- The most common sites where robberies occurred were in the street (37.6%), in shops (8.6%), dwellings (8.0%) and parking areas (8.0%). Banks and TABs accounted for less than 2% of all robberies reported to police during 1995.
- Armed robberies were more frequent on Fridays and Saturdays, and between 9.01 pm and midnight. Unarmed robberies, on the other hand, were most likely to occur on a Thursday, Friday or Saturday and between 3.01 pm and 6.00 pm.

- 
- In 1995/96, firearms featured in just under one quarter of reported armed robbery offences, with the proportion of armed robberies involving a firearm decreasing in recent years. In 1987/88, for example, the percentage of armed robberies involving a firearm was 44.6%, compared with 24.1% in 1995/96. The extent to which knives are used in armed robberies has remained stable over the past eight years. Knives were involved in 41.4% of all armed robberies in 1988/89 compared with 40.8% in 1995/96.
  - The median value of goods stolen in all robbery offences during 1995 was \$69.50. Almost one third of all incidents yielded the offenders \$10 or less, while only 4% of incidents involved property valued at more than \$2,000.
  - Victimization rates were greatest amongst those aged 10-17 years (282.8/100,000 individuals) and 18 - 19 years(273.7/100,000 individuals).
  - In general, victimisation rates decreased substantially beyond the age of 20, although a small increase was observed in the unarmed victimisation rates amongst females aged 70 years or over.
  - Of alleged offenders, 46.9% were aged 10-17 which indicates that, in addition to being the primary targets of robberies, they are also the most frequent offenders amongst those apprehended by police. Amongst alleged offenders aged 10-14, females recorded higher apprehension rates than males (112/100,000 for females compared to 97 for males).
  - Juveniles accounted for 47% of individuals apprehended for robbery offences during 1995 compared with 35% during 1984/85. A significant factor here has been the substantial increase in the apprehension rate of female juveniles which has risen from 11.6/100,000 individuals in 1984/85 to 137.7/100,000 individuals during 1995.
  - Over three quarters of alleged offenders apprehended during 1995 had at least a prior conviction at the time of apprehension, although most of these were for offences other than robbery. In fact only 16.2% had a prior conviction for a robbery offence.
  - Almost four in every 10 alleged offenders had served a period of either juvenile detention and/or adult imprisonment for a previous conviction. However, only one fifth of these individuals had served a period of detention and/or imprisonment for a prior robbery conviction.
  - Of those offenders convicted in the District or Supreme Court during 1995 82.3% were sentenced to a period of imprisonment, the average being 74.4 months for armed robbery and 35.4 months for unarmed robbery.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>All armed robberies are, by definition, classified as violent.

<sup>2</sup>An offence is defined as “cleared” if :

- An alleged offender(s) has been arrested, cautioned, reported or is protected by diplomatic immunity;
- Investigations revealed no offence occurred, or it was decided that no further action would be taken; and
- The alleged offender and/or complainant dies.

<sup>3</sup>To ensure consistency for the longitudinal analysis, police data for the 1995/96 financial year has been used, rather than the calendar year of 1995.

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