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# Incidents and Offences recorded by Police in 2003

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This Bulletin is the first in a series of Information Bulletins and provides a descriptive summary of the statistics contained in the publication *Crime and Justice in South Australia 2003, Offences reported to Police, the Victims and Alleged Perpetrators*.<sup>1</sup>

This Bulletin is divided into two parts. The first part analyses the number of 'incident reports' submitted by Police in 2003, while the second part, 'Offences recorded by Police' focuses on the offences contained on those incident reports.

When an Incident is reported to becomes known to police, a Police Incident Report is filed. Each incident report may contain more than one offence. For example, if a person reports that their dwelling has been broken into and that they have been assaulted during the break-in, this may be recorded on the one incident report. Only incidents actually reported to police or which come to police attention result in an incident report being submitted. As such, the number of incident reports filed and the number of offences recorded is heavily dependent upon whether the victim of an offence chooses to report that offence.

Future Bulletins will contain the following information:

- Victims of offences recorded by Police; and
- Offences cleared by way of an apprehension.

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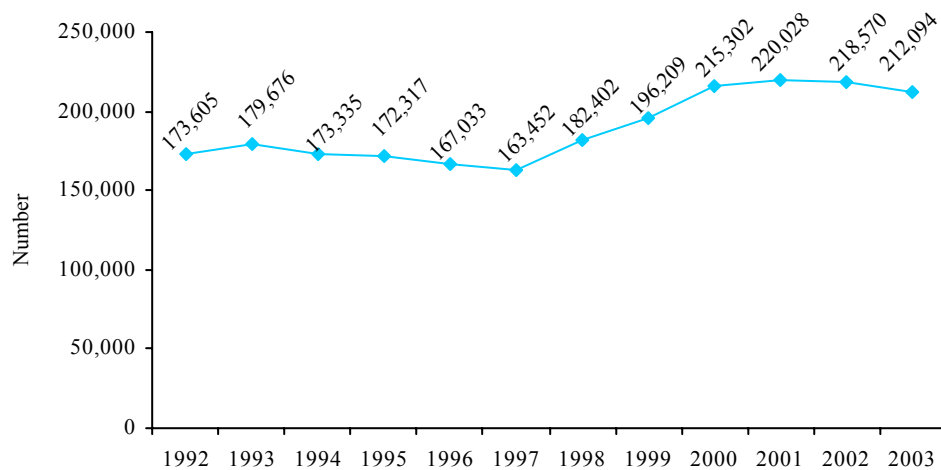
<sup>1</sup> "Crime and Justice in South Australia, 2003: Offences reported to Police, the Victims and Alleged Perpetrators" can be downloaded from the 'publications' page of the OCSAR website: [www.oscar.sa.gov.au](http://www.oscar.sa.gov.au)

## Police Incident Reports

The number of incident reports submitted by police in each of the years 1992 to 2003 is presented graphically in Figure 1<sup>2</sup>. As shown:

- In 2003 there were 212,094 incidents reported to police that resulted in the filing of a police incident report. This was 3.0% lower than the number filed the previous year.
- The number of incident reports submitted by police increased between 1997 and 2001. However, in 2002 and 2003 there was a slight decline in the number of reports filed.

Figure 1 Number of incident reports submitted by police, 1992 to 2003

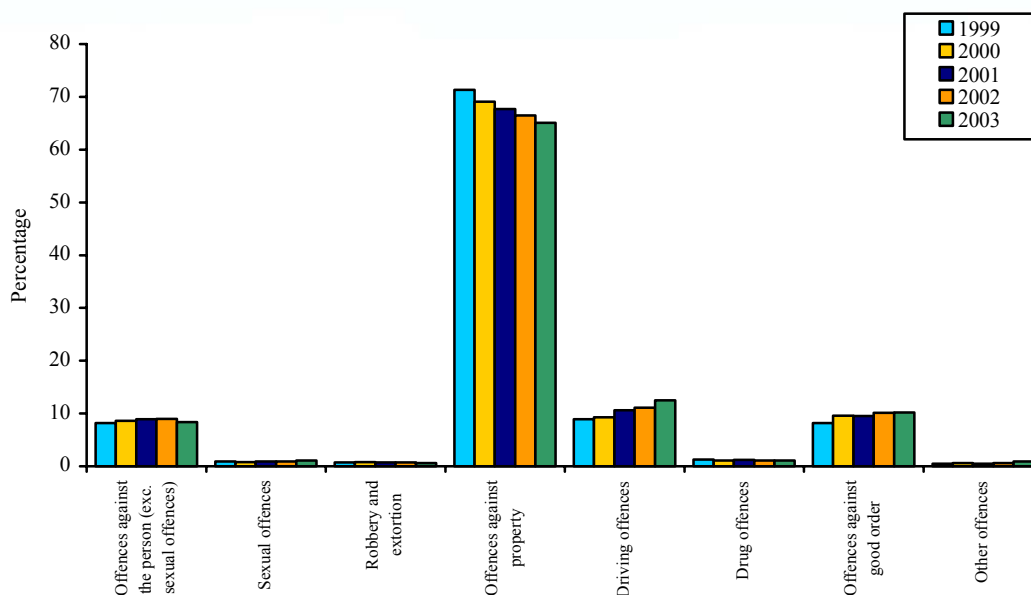


- The 212,094 incident reports submitted in 2003 contained 284,608 offences representing an average of 1.34 offences per report.
- The overwhelming majority (75.6%) of incident reports submitted in 2003 involved one offence only, while only 0.6% contained more than five offences.

<sup>2</sup> Computerised records are not available prior to 1992 and so it is not possible to make comparisons over a longer time period.

A profile of the ‘major offence’ listed per incident report is detailed in Figure 2. Given that the majority of incident reports contained one offence only, that offence would constitute the major charge. However, for the small proportion of reports that contained more than one offence, the major or most serious charge was defined as the offence that had the highest level JANCO. For comparative purposes, data for 1999 to 2002 are also included in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Major offence recorded per incident report, 1999 - 2003



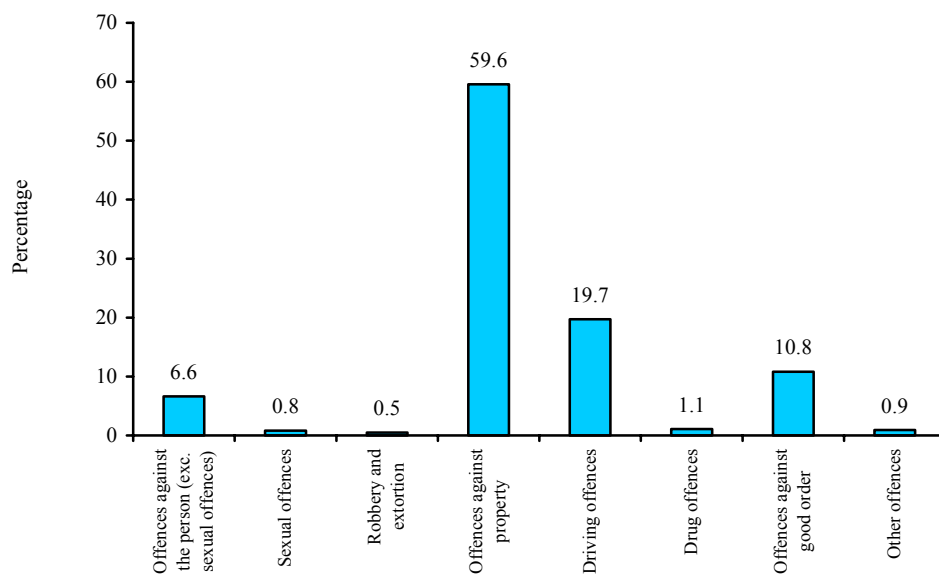
- In 2003, the most serious offence listed in the majority of incident reports was an *offence against property* (65.1%).
- Of the remaining offence categories, *driving offences*, *offences against good order* and *offences against the person* (excluding *sexual offences*) were the most prominent (12.5%, 10.2% and 8.4% respectively).
- At the other end of the scale, very few incident reports involved either an *other offence* (0.9%) or *robbery/extortion* (0.6%).
- Figure 2 indicates that the pattern of recorded offending has remained relatively constant over time, with the major offences listed in the 2003 incident reports virtually the same as those recorded in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002. Across all years, *offences against property* dominated, although the proportion of incident reports containing this major offence declined slightly over the period, while the proportion containing a *driving offence* increased slightly.

## Offences recorded by Police in 2003

In the previous section, information was presented on the number of incident reports submitted by police in 2003. The following section details all offences and all offence counts recorded, irrespective of whether they arose from the same or different incidents<sup>3</sup>. In 2003, a total of 284,608 offences were recorded.

As shown in Figure 3, *offences against property* dominated the 2003 offence profile, accounting for approximately six in ten offences recorded by police in this twelve-month period.

Figure 3 Distribution of offences recorded by police, 2003



<sup>3</sup> The exception to this rule is sexual offences. From 1993 the way in which sexual offences were calculated was changed to bring South Australia into line with other jurisdictions. From 1993 one offence was recorded for each victim regardless of the number of counts listed in the incident report.

As shown in Table 1, the 2003 offence profile was very similar to that observed in previous years.

Offence group	2001		2002		2003	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Offences against the person	19,752	6.7	19,766	6.7	18,903	6.6
Sexual offences	2,010	0.7	2,126	0.7	2,344	0.8
Robbery and extortion	1,741	0.6	1,689	0.6	1,390	0.5
Offences against property	185,132	63.0	181,845	61.2	169,604	59.6
Driving offences	49,265	16.8	53,449	18.0	55,928	19.7
Drug offences	4,800	1.6	3,896	1.3	3,144	1.1
Offences against good order	29,279	10.0	31,339	10.6	30,814	10.8
Other offences	1,898	0.6	2,842	1.0	2,481	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>293,877</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>296,952</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>284,608</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Breaking down these broad offence categories into more detailed sub-categories indicates that:

- Of the *offences against the person (excluding sexual offences)* recorded in 2003 the highest proportion of offences in this category involved *other assault* (74.9%). The more serious offences of *assault occasioning actual or grievous bodily harm* accounted for only 10.5% of all *against person* offences. In 2003 there were 19 *murders* and 41 *attempted murders* recorded by police.
- *Indecent assault* and *rape* each accounted for approximately one-third of the 2,344 *sexual offences* reported to police in 2003 (33.6% and 33.5% respectively). There were fewer *unlawful sexual intercourse* offences recorded (11.2% of all *sexual offences* reported).



- *Unarmed robbery* accounted for 60.8% of the 1,326 *robbery* offences recorded by police in 2003. Of the 520 *armed robberies*, only 14.4% involved the use of firearm.
- *Larceny and receiving* accounted for 54.4% of the 169,604 *property offences* recorded in 2003.
- Legislative changes introduced on 25 December 1999 replaced *break/enter* offences with a range of *criminal trespass* offences. This legislative change impacted on how offences within this category were counted. In 2003 there were 235 *burglary/break and enter offences*<sup>4</sup> and a further 28,828 *criminal trespass* offences, giving a total of 29,063 offences in this broad category, or 17.1% of all *property offences* recorded.
- Of the 42,991 *damage property* offences recorded in 2003, only 7.1% involved arson or the use of explosives. Of the remaining offences, the main targets were motor vehicles and other/not known (31.5% and 22.7% of all *property damage offences* respectively).
- *Fraud and misappropriation* offences accounted for only 3.1% of all *property offences* recorded in 2003. *False pretence* offences were the most dominant in this group, accounting for 3,068 or 1.8% of all *property offences*.
- Of the 55,928 *driving offences*<sup>5</sup> recorded in 2003, almost half involved *motor vehicle registration offences*. A further 19.2% involved *driving licence offences*, while 8.3% related to *exceeding the prescribed concentration* of alcohol and 7.9% involved *dangerous, reckless or negligent driving*.
- Just over half of the 3,144 *drug offences* recorded in 2003 involved *produce or manufacture drugs*. Cannabis accounted for over 94.5% of those offences where the type of drug was recorded. In contrast, opiates were not involved in any recorded offences, while 'other' drugs (mainly amphetamines) accounted for 5.5%.
- A breakdown of *offences against good order* reveals a fairly even spread across a number of sub-categories, including *resist/hinder police* (15.4% of the 30,814 *against good order offences*), *offences against a court or court order* (21.2%), *unlawful possession of weapons* (9.4%), *disorderly behaviour* (13.1%), and *graffiti and related offences* (12.4%).

## Shifts between 2002 and 2003

There were 284,608 offences recorded in 2003 compared with 296,952 in 2002, representing an decrease of 4.2%.

A more detailed insight into the extent of change between 2002 and 2003 within each of the major offence types is provided in Table 2. It should be noted, though, that the

<sup>4</sup> These were offences that occurred prior to 25 December 1995, but were reported during 2002.

<sup>5</sup> This figure excludes all traffic infringement notices.

number of offences in some categories is relatively low, with the result that any slight variation in absolute numbers will produce large percentage differences. As only some offences within each category have been included, the numbers will not necessarily sum to the total.

Table 2 Number of offences recorded by police, 2002 compared with 2003

Offence	2002	2003	Percentage change
<b>Offences against the person - total</b>	<b>19,766</b>	<b>18,903</b>	<b>-4.4%</b>
Assault occasioning	2,191	1,978	-9.7%
Other assault	14,493	14,151	-2.4%
<b>Sexual offences - total</b>	<b>2,126</b>	<b>2,344</b>	<b>+10.3%</b>
Rape*	628	786	+25.2%
Indecent assault*	725	788	+8.7%
Unlawful sexual intercourse*	254	262	+3.1%
Other sexual offences*	519	508	-2.1%
<b>Robbery - total</b>	<b>1,689</b>	<b>1,390</b>	<b>-17.7%</b>
Armed Robbery	487	520	+6.8%
Robbery with firearm*	79	75	-5.1%
Robbery with other weapon*	408	445	+9.1%
Other (unarmed robbery)	1,141	806	-29.4%
Unarmed robbery with violence	484	347	-28.3%
Unarmed robbery without violence	657	459	-30.1%
<b>Property offences - Total</b>	<b>181,845</b>	<b>169,604</b>	<b>-6.7%</b>
Serious criminal trespass dwellings#	18,306	14,928	-18.5%
Serious criminal trespass shop#	4,266	4,164	-2.4%
Serious criminal trespass 'other'	9,093	9,971	+9.7%
Larceny/Illegal use of motor vehicle	11,255	10,236	-9.1%
Interfere with motor vehicle	4,524	3,868	-14.5%
Larceny from shop	10,339	8,297	-19.8%
Receiving/unlawful possession	2,561	2,463	-3.8%
Fraud and misappropriation	6,523	5,260	-19.4%
Damage property	43,254	42,991	-0.6%
<b>Selected driving offences - total</b>	<b>53,449</b>	<b>55,928</b>	<b>+4.6%</b>
Drink driving and related offences	6,217	6,200	-0.3%
Dangerous, reckless, negligent driving	4,651	4,438	-4.6%
Driving licence offences	10,014	10,730	+7.1%
Motor vehicle registration offences	26,053	27,875	+7.0%
<b>Drug offences - total</b>	<b>3,896</b>	<b>3,144</b>	<b>-19.3%</b>
Possess and/or use drugs	571	484	-15.2%
Possess drug implement*	185	119	-35.7%
Fraudulent prescription offences*	93	70	-24.7%
Produce or manufacture drugs*	1,981	1,604	-19.0%
Possess for sale/sell drugs*	938	761	-18.9%
<b>Against good order - total</b>	<b>31,339</b>	<b>30,814</b>	<b>-1.7%</b>
Against a court or court order	6,035	6,545	+8.5%
Resist/hinder police	5,499	4,747	-13.7%
Unlawful possession of weapons	2,984	2,897	-2.9%
Trespass	2,481	2,208	-11.0%
Indecent/offensive language	1,039	886	-14.7%
Disorderly behaviour	4,031	4,042	+0.3%
Graffiti and related offences	3,253	3,806	+17.0%
<b>Other offences</b>	<b>2,842</b>	<b>2,481</b>	<b>-12.7%</b>

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

# The total includes a small number of break/enter offences that occurred prior to the introduction of serious criminal trespass offences in December 1999, but were reported in 2003.

As shown, two offence types - *sexual offences* and *selected driving offences* recorded clear increases in 2003, with *sexual offences* recording the greatest increase (10.3%). *Against good order* offences remained constant, while the number of *drug* offences recorded in 2003 was 19.3% lower than the 2002 figure and the number of *robbery offences* was 17.71% lower. *Offences against the person* and *Property offences* recorded slight decreases.

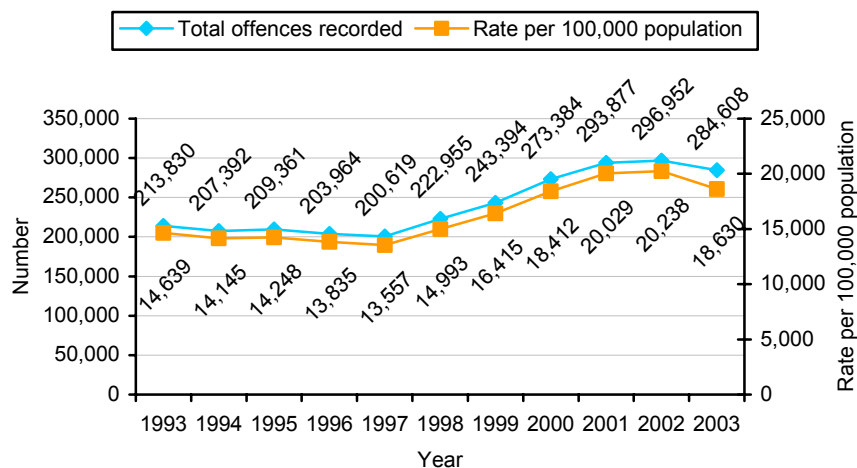
To provide a more accurate picture of longitudinal trends, the following section locates these recent shifts within a broader time frame.

### Longitudinal trends

Figure 4 depicts longitudinal trends in both the number of offences recorded and the rate of offences per 100,000 population for the period 1993<sup>4</sup> to 2002.

- Over the 10-year period depicted the trend for both the number of offences and rates per 100,000 population were very similar.
- The total number of offences recorded by police in South Australia has increased sharply since 1997, with the result that by 2003 the number of offences recorded was 41.9% higher than in 1997, and the rate per 100,000 was 37.4% higher.

Figure 4 Total offences recorded by police, 1993 to 2003



Note: Part of the increase in 1999 is attributable to a change in police recording practices for *traffic, motor vehicle* and *driving licence offences* that came in half way through that year. This also impacted upon the number of *driving offences* recorded in subsequent years.

<sup>4</sup> It is not possible to provide figures prior to this because of changes to the way in which offences were counted. These changes came into effect in 1993 and were designed to bring this State's counting rules into line with national standards introduced at that time by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

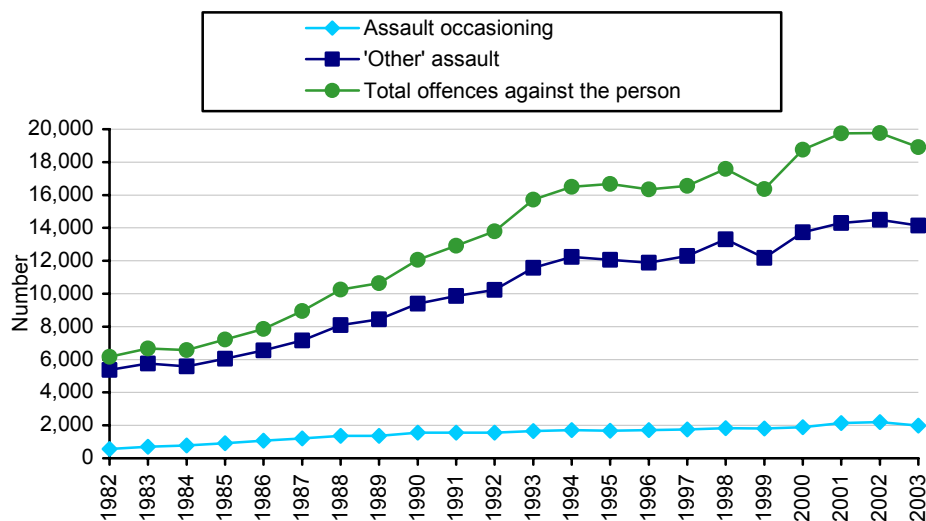


In this section, longitudinal trends in selected offence categories are depicted.<sup>5</sup>

### Offences against the person (excluding sexual offences)

- As shown in Figure 5, the total number of *offences against the person, excluding sexual offences* recorded by police has increased steadily since the early 1980s. However, there was a slight decrease in 2003.
- The overall trend for *other (generally minor) assault* has been upward, although the number recorded in 2003 was slightly lower than recorded in the previous two years. This trend mirrors that observed at the national level.
- *Assault occasioning*, which has always accounted for only a relatively small proportion of all offences against *the person* (10.5% in 2003), has also increased over the past two decades, with the number recorded in 2003 more than three times higher than in the early 1980s.

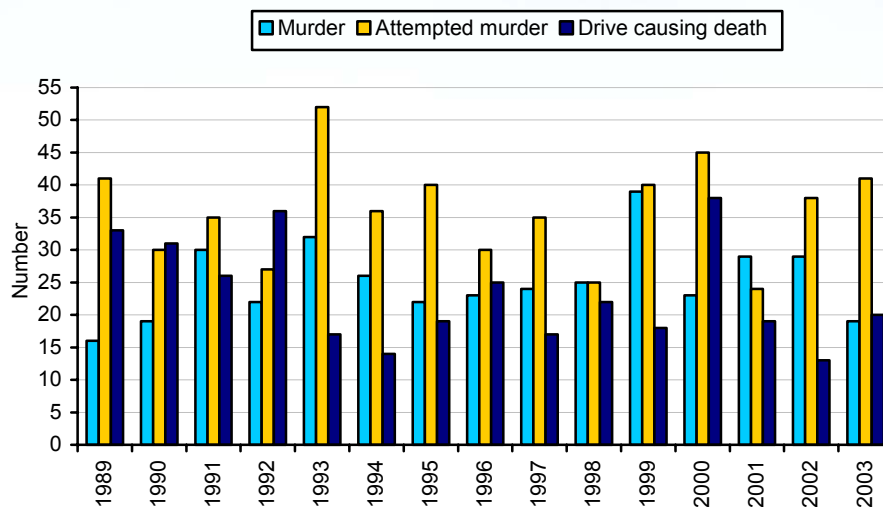
Figure 5 Selected offences against the person (excluding sexual offences), 1982 to 2003



<sup>5</sup> In interpreting these graphs over the time frame depicted, it should be noted that since 1992 the *Crime and Justice* report has used JANCO – the South Australian justice agencies’ refinement of the Australian National Classification of Offences – to categorise offences. These changes mean that care should be taken when comparing figures before and after 1992. It should also be noted that offences dealt with by way of expiation notices, such as traffic infringement notices and cannabis expiation notices, are not included in this report.

- As indicated in Figure 6, the numbers of recorded *murders*, *attempted murders* and *cause death by dangerous driving* offences have fluctuated considerably from one year to another over the period 1989 to 2003, but overall, have remained relatively low.

Figure 6 Number of murder, attempted murder and drive causing death offences recorded by police, 1989 to 2003

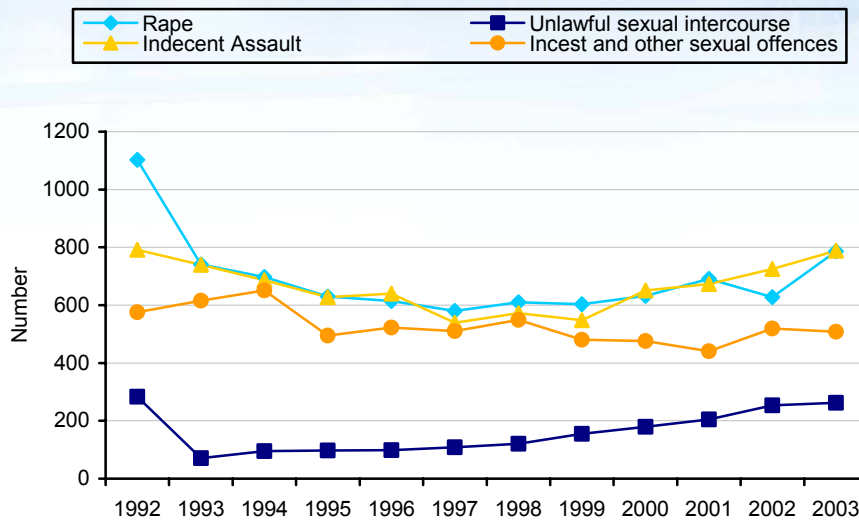


### Sexual offences

- During the 1990s, the number of *sexual offences* declined (from 2,166 in 1993 to 1,786 in 1999). However, from 2000 there was a reversal of this trend.
- As shown in Figure 7, after a slight (albeit fluctuating) upward trend between 1997 and 2001, the number of *rape* offences declined in 2002 before increasing again in 2003.
- *Indecent assault* offences also increased between 1997 and 2002, with a further rise in 2003.
- The number of *incest and other sexual offences* has fluctuated considerably from one year to another. While the number recorded in 2001 was the lowest since new counting rules came into effect in 1993, an increase in 2002 brought the level back to those observed in the mid 1990s. The 2003 figure is comparable with that recorded in 2002.
- Since 1993 the number of *unlawful sexual intercourse* offences recorded by police has increased, especially from 1998 onwards with the 2003 number the highest recorded
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- over the period depicted. Overall, however, numbers in this category are still relatively low.

Figure 7 Sexual offences, 1992 to 2003



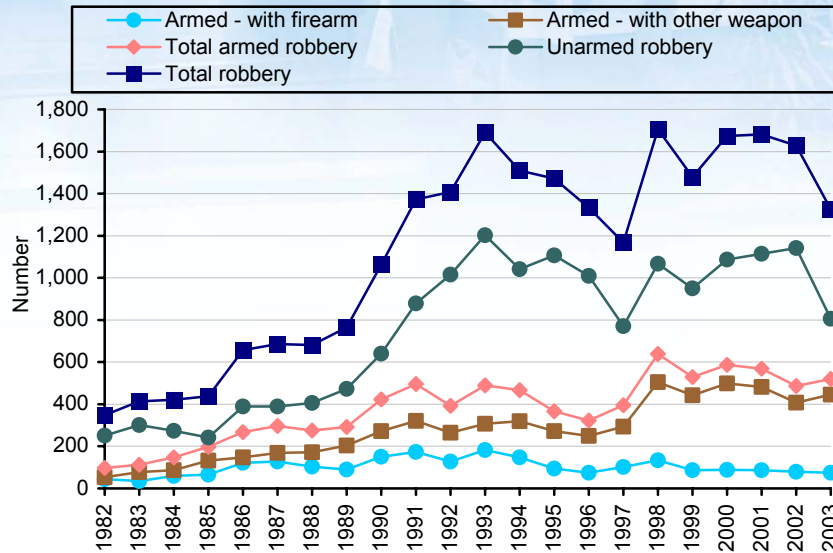
Note: Counting rules for sexual offences were changed in 1993 to conform with national standards. Figures for 1992 were recalculated in accordance with the new rules. As a result, 2003 data can only be compared accurately with figures from 1992 onwards.

## Robbery

As was the case with *sexual offences*, the relatively low number of *robberies* recorded each year means that small numerical shifts can produce large percentage changes.

- As shown in Figure 8, the total number of *robbery offences* recorded by police increased substantially between 1982 and 1993. Since then, numbers have fluctuated considerably.

Figure 8 Robbery offences, 1982 to 2003



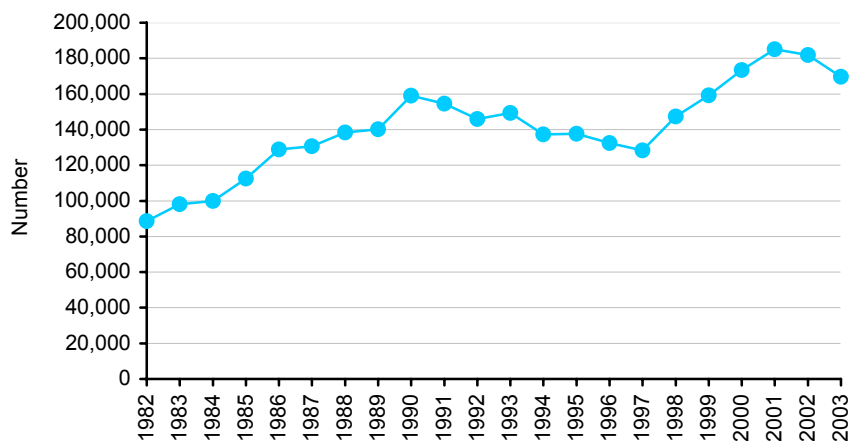
- Because the category of *other* (ie unarmed) *robbery* annually accounts for approximately two thirds of the *total robbery* offences, longitudinal trends in this category generally parallel those for *total robberies*, with the number recorded in 2003 being considerably below the peak of 1993.
- Despite marked annual fluctuations, the number of *armed robberies* showed an overall increase from 1982 to 1998 but have dropped slightly since then.
- In Figure 8, *armed robberies* are further broken down into *robbery with a firearm* and *robbery with other weapon*. As shown, trends in *robbery with other weapon* offences are generally similar to those observed for *total armed robberies*, with the number recorded in 2003 being slightly below the peak recorded in 1998.
- In contrast, the number of *robbery with firearm* offences reached their high point in the early 1990s, and have generally declined since. The 2003 figure is, in fact, comparable to that recorded almost two decades earlier.



### Property offences

- In contrast to *sexual offences* and *robbery offences*, the number of *property offences* recorded by police each year is comparatively large (169,604 in 2003).
- As Figure 9 indicates, there have been two periods of increase, from 1982 to 1990, and again from 1997 and 2001. As a result, the 2001 figure was the highest recorded over the period graphed. However, since 2002 there has been a decrease in the number of these offences recorded.

Figure 9 Total property offences, 1982 to 2003



- Part of the increase observed in 2000 and 2001 could be attributed to the introduction of new legislation relating to *serious criminal trespass* offences (see below). Prior to December '99, if, for example, a person broke into a house, stole some property and also caused damage, generally police recorded this as one offence only – namely break/enter dwelling. As a result of the new legislation, police now enter all associated offences, as well as the criminal trespass. This means that, while the number of actual incidents remains the same, the number offences recorded for those incidents are inflated. The offences most likely to increase because of this change in recording practices are *larceny* and *property damage*, which are often associated with, or attendant upon, a break in.

## Serious Criminal Trespass

Determining longitudinal trends for *serious criminal trespass* offences is somewhat problematic because of the passage of the *Criminal Law Consolidation (Serious Criminal Trespass) Amendment Act*. This piece of legislation, which came into effect on 25 December 1999, replaced *break and enter offences* with *criminal trespass offences*. More specifically, it introduced three new offence categories:

- *serious criminal trespass - non residential building*;
- *serious criminal trespass – place of residence*; and
- *criminal trespass – place of residence*.

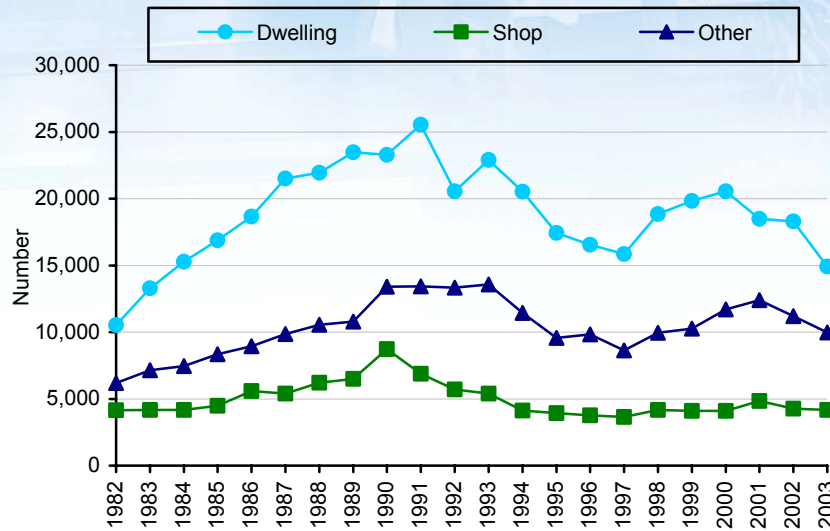
The two *serious criminal trespass* offences are further sub-divided into aggravated and non-aggravated, depending on whether an offensive weapon is used or whether there are multiple offenders. A third aggravating factor applies to *serious criminal trespass – place of residence*: namely whether another person is lawfully present in the dwelling at the time of the trespass, and the offender either knows of the other's presence or is reckless about whether anyone is in the place (*Criminal Law Consolidation (Serious Criminal Trespass) Amendment Act*; s170(2)(c)). This criterion was specifically included to 'capture' incidents of home invasion. The legislation also extends the definition of place of residence to include not only houses and flats, but any structure in which police consider the victim to be living at the time of the incident, such as a car or caravan.

Because these legislative changes came into effect several years ago, the majority of offences recorded in 2003 were classified as *criminal trespass offences*. However, there were some *break and enter offences* which, while reported to police in 2003, had occurred prior to the legislative change. To allow longitudinal comparisons, the following procedure has been followed:

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

While the new offence groupings are not entirely comparable with the old groupings, the procedure detailed above allows longitudinal comparisons to be drawn in Figure 10.

Figure 10 Serious Criminal Trespass, 1982 to 2003

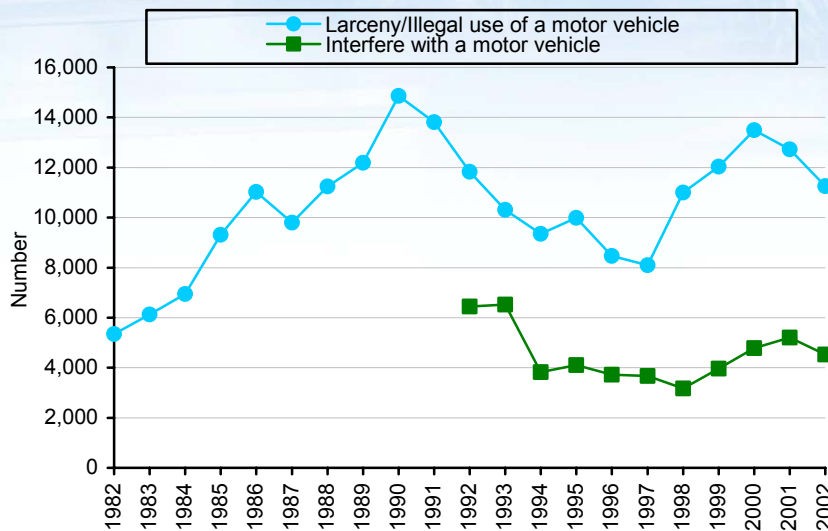


- As shown in Figure 10, *serious criminal trespass dwelling* offences increased sharply between 1982 and 1990, but since then have, despite annual fluctuations, shown a general downward trend. As a result, the latest figure is comparable with numbers recorded during the mid 1980s.
- After peaking in 1990, the number of *serious criminal trespass shop* offences first declined and then, since the mid 1990s, remained fairly stable. Numbers in 2003 are comparable with those recorded in the early 1980s.
- *Serious criminal trespass 'other' offences* have also fluctuated over the two decades depicted, with numbers in 2003 being lower than in the early 1990s but comparable with numbers recorded in the mid 1990s.

### Vehicle offences

- As shown in Figure 11, the number of *larceny/illegal use of a motor vehicle* offences increased steeply between 1982 and 1991, followed by a period of decrease. A second, albeit less pronounced, upswing occurred between 1998 and 2000, but again, this seems to have peaked, with numbers declining since 2001.
- The number of *interfere with a motor vehicle* offences, after a substantial drop between 1993 and 1994, has shown no clear upward or downward trend since then.

Figure 11 Larceny/illegal use of a motor vehicle and interfere with a motor vehicle, 1982 to 2003

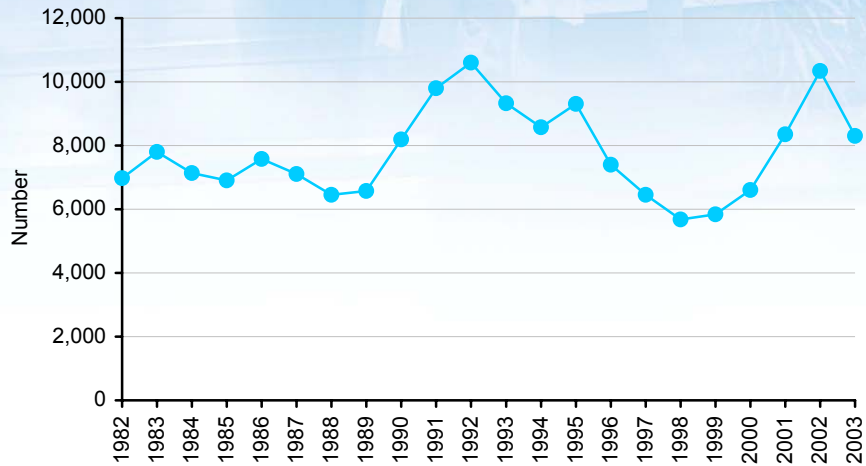


### Shop theft

- After peaking in 1992, the number of *shop theft* offences declined until 1998, before trending upwards again. Particularly strong increases occurred in 2001 and 2002 before a decrease in 2003 (see Figure 12). In part, these increases could be attributed to changes in SAPOL recording practices associated with the introduction, in late 1999, of the legislation relating to *serious criminal trespass*, which meant that if a shop was broken into and goods stolen, not only was the offence of *serious criminal trespass* recorded, but so was the associated offence of *shop theft*. A second coding change also occurred as a result of that legislation. *Offences against service stations*, which had previously been classified within the ‘other theft’ category, were now re-coded to the ‘shop theft’ category. In November 2001 Shop Theft Infringement Notices (STINs) were introduced as an alternative to prosecution for theft of goods up to the value of \$150.



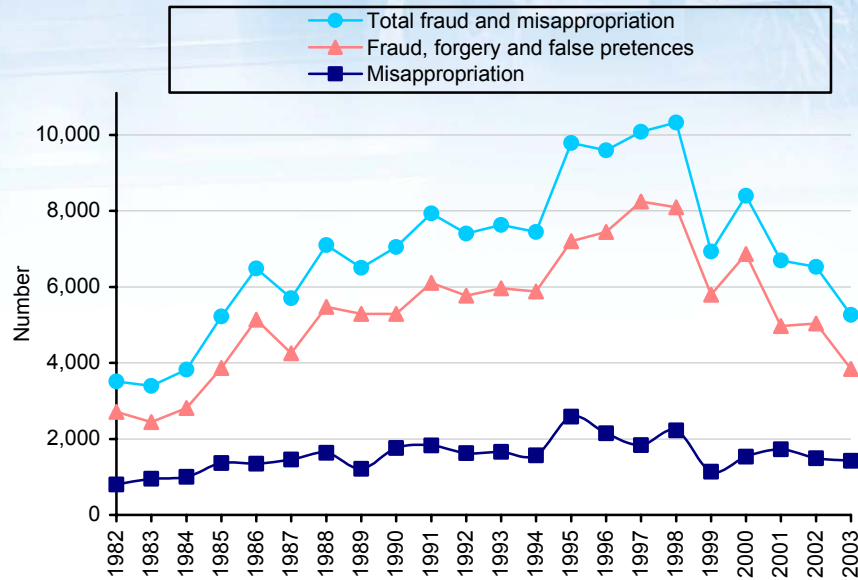
Figure 12 Shop theft, 1982 to 2003



### *Fraud and misappropriation*

- As indicated in Figure 13, until 1998 the overall trend in the number of recorded *fraud and misappropriation* offences has been upward. However, in recent years numbers have generally declined. The most recent figure is the lowest since the late 1980s.
- The trend for the sub-category of *fraud, forgery and false pretences* is generally similar to that of the total *fraud and misappropriation* category.
- *Misappropriation offences* account for only a relatively small proportion of total *fraud and misappropriation* matters (27.0% of the 2003 total). While an overall increase was recorded between 1982 and 1995, numbers generally decreased to 1999, remaining relatively stable after that time.

Figure 13 Fraud and misappropriation, 1982 to 2003

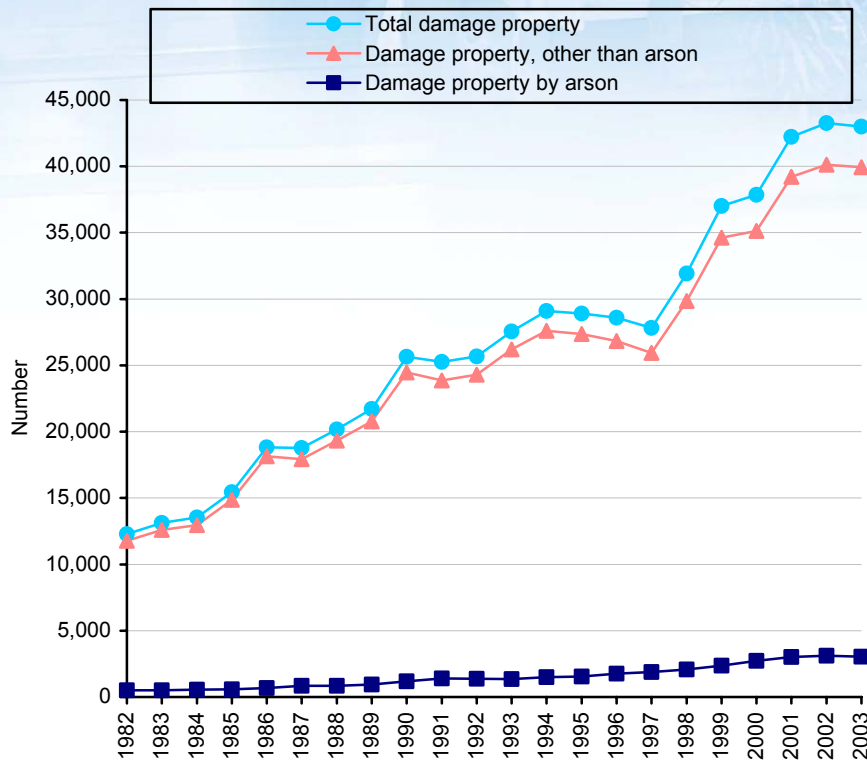


### Damage property

- Figure 14 depicts longitudinal trends in the number of *damage property* offences recorded by police. Overall, there has been a steady increase in this category throughout the period depicted, with a slight decrease recorded in 2003<sup>6</sup>. Again, part of the increase could be attributed to the fact that, since late 1999, any criminal damage attendant upon a ‘break in’ is now recorded, whereas previously only the primary offence of break and enter had been entered on the incident report.
- An almost identical pattern was observed for *damage property, other than arson* – a finding that is inevitable given that this sub-group accounts for the overwhelming majority of all *damage property* matters.
- As was the case with other property offences, *damage property by arson* has also trended upwards over the past few decades followed by a slight decrease in 2003, although it should be noted that, compared with the other *property damage* category depicted, numbers still remain small.

<sup>6</sup> The linking of school’s property reports to their funding arrangements may have resulted in an increase in property damage reports in recent years.

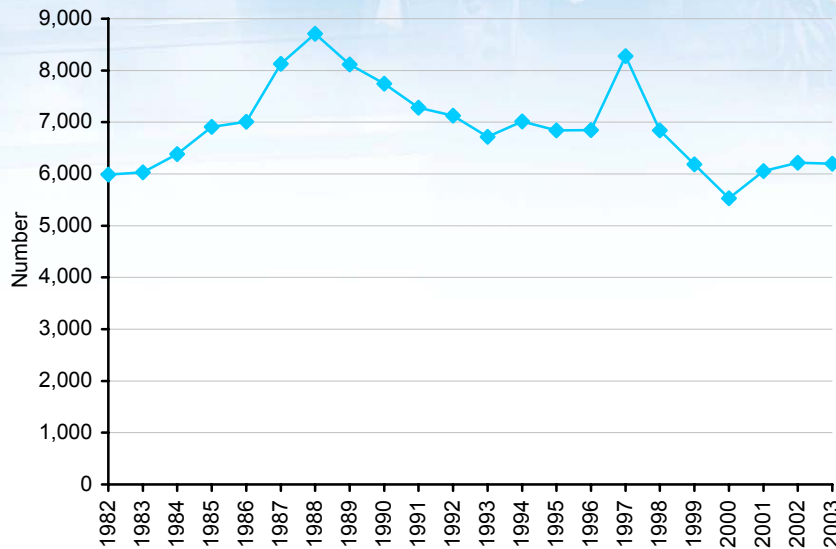
Figure 14 Damage property, 1982 to 2003



### Drink driving and related offences

- Figure 15 illustrates the number of recorded *drink driving and related offences* from 1982 to 2003. This category includes *driving under the influence, exceed the prescribed concentration of alcohol* and *refusing to give breath/blood sample*. Although numbers have fluctuated considerably over the period depicted, the figure recorded in 2003 was amongst the lowest for the twenty year period.
- It should be noted though, that the number of *drink driving offences* recorded is heavily reliant on police enforcement practices, such as the number of random breath tests conducted.

Figure 15 Drink driving and related offences, 1982 to 2003



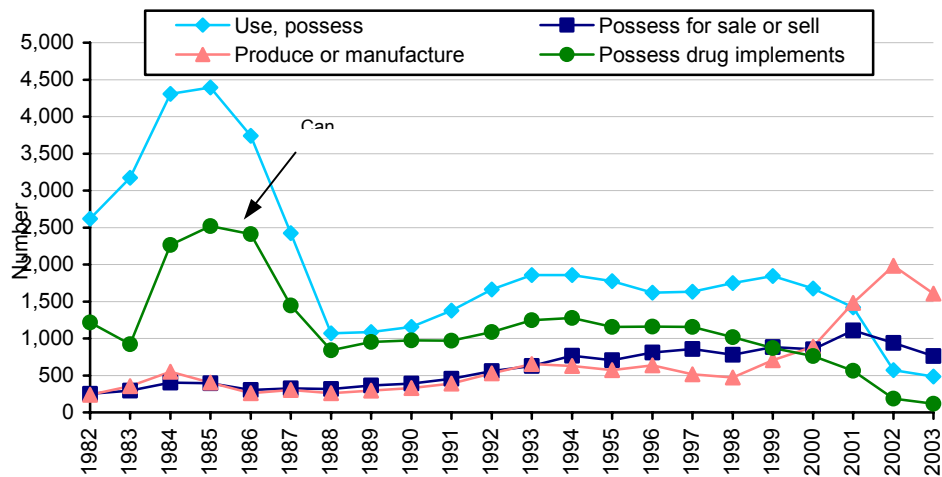
### Selected drug offences

- Longitudinal trends in the number of selected *drug offences* coming to police attention are quite different from those of other offences largely because of the impact, in 1987, of the introduction of Cannabis Expiation Notices. Moreover, because *drug offences* are essentially victimless crimes, their detection rests predominantly with police. Hence, as with *driving offences*, the number of *drug offences* recorded in any given year is heavily reliant on police enforcement practices and in particular, on whether and how many special operations are launched which target drug offenders.
- As shown in Figure 16, the number of *use/possess for use* offences, which had remained relatively stable throughout the 1990s, decreased substantially in 2002 and again in 2003, with the result that the latest figure is by far the lowest recorded since 1982. This decrease may be attributed to the introduction of the Police Illicit Drug Diversion Initiative, which commenced operation in September/October 2001. Under this scheme, adults and juveniles detected in possession of small amounts of illicit drugs are no longer apprehended by police but instead are given educational material or diverted to assessment and treatment programs. While this Initiative impacts directly on the number of persons apprehended for a drug offence, it also affects the number of offences recorded because, under SAPOL recording practices for victimless crimes such as *drug offences*, the lodgement of an Apprehension Report automatically generates a corresponding Incident Report.



- After a period of relative stability in the mid to late 1990s, the number of recorded *produce or manufacture drug* offences increased substantially in 2001 (by 66.9%) and then again in 2002 (by 33.9%) followed by a decline in 2003 (of 19.0%), with the result that numbers over the last three years are now higher than at any time over the 21 years depicted. One contributor to this is the fact that, on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2001, the number of cannabis plants that a person could possess and still be eligible for a Cannabis Expiation Notice was reduced from three to one. This change meant that persons detected with two or three plants who would previously have received a CEN were henceforth charged with *produce or manufacture*.
- Despite annual fluctuations, the number of *possess for sale or sell drug* offences recorded by police has been increasing steadily since the early 1980s, with a particularly strong increase in 2001. In 2002 and 2003 there were slight decreases in the numbers recorded, with the latest figures similar to those recorded in the mid 1990s.

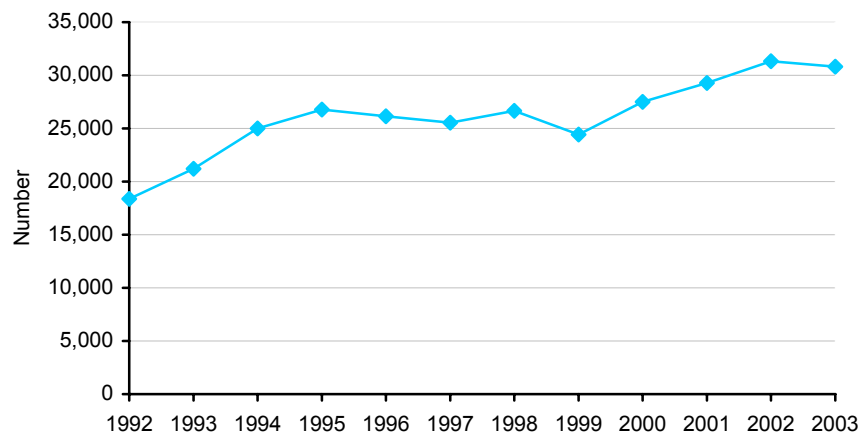
Figure 16 Selected drug offences, 1982 to 2003



### Offences against good order

- Data for total *offences against good order* (depicted in Figure 17) were not available for the years prior to 1992. As shown, since 1992, there has been an overall increase in these offences peaking in 2002 before a slight decline in 2003.
- In part, these increases could be attributed to pro-active policing practices, rather than to an actual rise in this type of crime in the community. While SAPOL has set, as one of its targets, a 5% reduction in the number of *offences against the person* and *against property*, no reduction target is applied to *public order offences*. In fact, a steady or increase in the number of these offences detected by SAPOL is regarded as positive.

Figure 17 Offences against good order, 1992 to 2003



## Location of recorded offences

The number and rate of recorded crime occurring in South Australian Local Government Areas (LGAs) and Statistical Divisions is provided in Tables 3.21a and 3.21b of the *Crime and Justice in South Australia, 2003: Offences reported to police, the Victims and Alleged Perpetrators* report.

While rates provide a crude basis for comparison between areas that have different numbers of people, dwellings and businesses, it is important to recognise the limitations of such a listing.

In these tables, rates for *offences against the person* (which here includes the three categories of *offences against the person (excluding sexual offences)*, *sexual offences* and *robbery and extortion*) are calculated by dividing the number of such offences recorded in each LGA/Statistical Division by the population of that LGA/Statistical Division as recorded by the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing 2001. Because the personal offence rate is based on the location of the offence rather than the address of the victim, it therefore includes offences involving residents and non-residents of the region. As a result, the rate does not indicate the average risk for persons actually living within each LGA/Statistical Division. For example, the Adelaide LGA exhibits high rates of both personal and property crime. The city attracts thousands of non-residents who come there for work, shopping and entertainment. Hence, many of the crimes that occur in the Adelaide LGA involve victims who reside in other areas. Because of this, one should be wary of interpreting the crime rate in Adelaide as an indicator of victimisation for those actually living in the city. It is also possible that one's personal risk of victimisation within the city (like most other areas) varies depending on the nature of the activity one engages in while there.

For *serious criminal trespass*, the rate is calculated by dividing the number of offences by the number of dwellings in each LGA/Statistical Division as at the 2001 Census.

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

Particular care should be taken when examining country rates, as some LGAs have small populations and few offences.

While acknowledging these limitations, the key points to emerge from this analysis are:

- In 2003, the LGA of Adelaide recorded the highest rate of offending per 1,000 population (1,645.8). This was followed by Coober Pedy (651.3), Port Augusta (334.2), Ceduna (311.2), Port Adelaide/Enfield (278.6) and Playford (265.3).
- The LGA of Adelaide also had the highest rate of *offences against the person* (161.2 per 1,000 population). The LGA with the second highest rate was Coober Pedy (61.6), followed by Unincorporated South Australia (47.8), Ceduna (37.0), Port Augusta (34.1), and Playford (25.1).
- In contrast to rates for *all offences* and *offences against the person*, the highest rate for *serious criminal trespass* was recorded by the LGA of Adelaide (48.1 per 1,000 dwelling). This was followed by Coober Pedy (46.0), Walkerville (41.6), Playford (40.5), Port Adelaide/Enfield (40.3) and Charles Sturt (34.1).
- In 2003, the Adelaide Statistical Division (which approximately equates to the Adelaide Metropolitan Area) recorded an offending rate of 198.3 per 1,000 population. This was lower than the 234.1 recorded for the Northern Division (which incorporates the subdivisions of Whyalla, Pirie, Flinders Ranges and Far North). The statistical division that recorded the lowest rate was Outer Adelaide (108.7 per 1,000 population), which includes the subdivisions of Barossa, Kangaroo Island, Mt Lofty Ranges and Fleurieu.
- The Northern Statistical Division recorded the highest rate of *offences against the person* (22.3 per 1,000 population). This was considerably higher than any other statistical division, with the next highest rate recorded by Murray Lands (15.9), followed by Adelaide (15.5) and then Eyre (14.0). The lowest rate of 7.9 offences per 1,000 population was recorded for the Outer Adelaide Division.
- The highest rate of *serious criminal trespass* in 2003 was recorded by the Adelaide Statistical Division (27.2 offences per 1,000 dwellings). The Northern Division was second highest (19.0), with the rates in the other Divisions ranging between 7.8 and 15.7 offences per 1,000 dwellings.

The area recording the greatest number of vehicle thefts in 2003 was Adelaide Parklands, with 176 recorded thefts. This was followed by Tea Tree Plaza Shopping Centre (123 thefts), North Terrace/King William Street/Grenfell Street/Frome Road (106) and Elizabeth City Centre (97). Also featured on the list were a number of districts within the square mile of the city of Adelaide (such as Hindley Street/Casino/Convention Centre and the Entertainment Centre) as well as shopping centres outside the city (such as Noarlunga/Colonnades, Parabanks, Arndale and Marion).



## SUMMARY

- After increasing during the late 1990's, the number of Incident Reports submitted to Police in 2003 was lower than recorded in the previous two years.
- Likewise, the number of offences recorded by Police was lower in 2003 than in 2001 or 2002.
- In 2003, as in previous years, *offences against property* remained the most commonly recorded offence type.
- With the exception of *sexual offences* and *driving offences*, all major offence categories recorded a decrease in 2003.

For further details download the full report at [www.ocsar.sa.gov.au](http://www.ocsar.sa.gov.au)