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Recorded Crime - Victims

2004: The South Australian Perspective

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Introduction

This Information Bulletin summarises the key findings from *Recorded Crime, Australia: 2004*, released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on 23rd June 2005.

This 2004 report is the eleventh publication from the National Crime Statistics Unit (ABS, 2005: Cat No 4510.0), which was established within the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 1990 to produce uniform national statistics on crimes recorded by police. To this end, the Unit has established a set of uniform offence classifications and counting rules designed to remove the past difficulties in comparing rates of recorded crime between states. The report details the number of victims per offence category recorded by police between January and December 2004, and can be used:

- to examine changes in victimisation rates within South Australia between 2003 and 2004;
- to compare recorded crime rates in South Australia with other jurisdictions in 2004; and
- to compare South Australian and national crime trends from 1995 to 2004.

A methodological note

What official crime statistics measure

The statistics presented in the ABS report are official crime statistics. As such they are influenced by factors other than the actual incidence of offending in the community. They are, for example, dependent on:

- whether the victim of an offence chooses to report that offence to police; and
- how that report is interpreted and entered onto the system by police.

As a result, changes in official crime statistics from one year to another or from one jurisdiction to another may not reflect a change/difference in the actual level of offending, but may be due to changes/differences in people's willingness to report or changes/differences in how police record the data.

Counting rules

The counting rules applied by the ABS are victim based: that is, each victim within a distinct criminal incident is counted once per national offence subdivision. For example, within the *armed robbery* subdivision, if a victim reports being subjected to multiple armed robberies within the one incident, he/she will be counted only once in this subdivision. However, if in the one incident, the victim reports being robbed and also had his/her car stolen, he/she will be counted once under *robbery* and once under *motor vehicle theft* because each constitutes a different offence subdivision.

The statistics do not refer to discrete victims because a person who has experienced multiple incidents of victimisation during the year will be counted separately for each incident. For example, a person who reports to police that they have been robbed twice in 2004 will be counted twice.

Offences included in the national collection

Offences covered by the report include only those for which nationally comparable definitions have been developed. These are:

- homicide and related offences;
- kidnapping/abduction;
- robbery;
- blackmail/extortion;
- unlawful entry with intent;
- motor vehicle theft; and
- other theft.

Although included in previous reports, the 2004 report does not present data on assault and sexual assault as a recent project conducted by the ABS National Crime Statistics Unit (NCSU) investigating Differences in Recorded Crime Statistics (DiRCS) found evidence that the recording of these two offences was not comparable across states and territories.

The following points should also be noted:

- For some of these offence types – notably *homicide and related offences*, *kidnapping and abduction* and *blackmail/extortion* – numbers are extremely low and tend to fluctuate considerably from one year to another. Any attempt to draw comparisons across time

within the one jurisdiction, or to compare between jurisdictions is therefore difficult. Because of the small numbers involved, minor shifts in the actual numbers recorded by police will result in large (and therefore potentially misleading) percentage changes.

- With the exception of *murder* and *motor vehicle theft*, in all other categories actual and attempted incidents are combined. *UEWI*, for example, includes both successful unlawful entries as well as attempts.

Percentage changes in South Australia between 2003 and 2004

Table 1 details changes in the actual number of victimisations between 2003 and 2004, together with changes in the rate of victimisation per 100,000 population. The magnitude of the percentage increase/decrease per offence category differs slightly depending upon the type of measurement used.

Rates of recorded victimisations per 100,000 population in South Australia decreased in a number of the grouped offence categories in 2004, including:

- Total robbery (down by 6.6%);
- Blackmail/extortion (down by 27.5%);
- Total unlawful entry with intent (UEWI) (down by 6.7%); and
- Other theft (down by 10.2%).

In 2004, increases in victimisation rates were recorded for:

- Homicide and related offences (up by 11.3%);
- Kidnapping/abduction (up by 4.5%); and
- Motor vehicle theft (up by 2.5%).

(Please note that percentage changes within the *homicide and related offences* and *kidnapping/abduction* categories are subject to large fluctuations over time due to small numbers.)

Table 1 The number of victims and the rate of victimisation per offence category recorded in South Australia: 2003 compared with 2004

Offence group	Number of victims			Rate of victimisation per 100,000		
	2003	2004	% change	2003	2004	% change
Homicide and related offences	81	91	12.3	5.3	5.9	11.3
Murder	19	28	*	1.2	1.8	50.0*
Attempted murder	40	52	30.0	2.6	3.4	30.8
Manslaughter	3	0	n/a	0.2	0	n/a
Drive causing death	19	11	*	1.2	0.7	-41.7*
Kidnapping/abduction	34	36	5.9	2.2	2.3	4.5
Robbery (total)	1,321	1,239	-6.2	86.5	80.8	-6.6
Armed robbery	530	505	-4.7	34.7	32.9	-5.2
Unarmed robbery	791	734	-7.2	51.8	47.8	-7.7
Blackmail/extortion	61	44	-27.9	4.0	2.9	-27.5
Unlawful entry with intent	28,513	26,728	-6.3	1868.1	1,742.1	-6.7
UEWI involving the taking of property	18,379	17,030	-7.3	1,204.2	1,110.0	-7.8
UEWI - other	10,134	9,698	-4.3	664.0	632.1	-4.8
Motor vehicle theft	10,206	10,511	3.0	668.7	685.10	2.5
Other theft	58,162	52,500	-9.7	3,810.7	3,421.9	-10.2

* The number/rate of offences is too low to enable the effective use of percentages.

Prior to 2004, counts of *other theft* were incorrectly included in conjunction with *unlawful entry with intent involving the taking of property* offences. This has now been corrected. The revised figures for 2003, as reflected in Table 1, are therefore different from those included in the previous Information Bulletin (No. 38) published by OCSAR.

Comparison of South Australian crime rates in 2004 with the national average

Table 2 compares South Australian crime rates with those recorded for Australia as a whole. As shown, South Australia had a higher rate per 100,000 population than Australia for:

- *homicide and related offences* (5.9 compared with 3.9 respectively);
- *blackmail/extortion* (2.9 compared with 1.8);
- *motor vehicle theft* (685.1 compared with 437.2); and
- *other theft* (3,421.9 compared with 2,724.2).

South Australia had a lower rate per 100,000 population for *kidnapping/abduction* (2.3 compared with the national figure of 3.8).

South Australia had a higher rate for *unlawful entry with intent* than Australia (1,742.1 compared with 1,533.5). However, within this category, although South Australia recorded a markedly higher rate for *UEWI – other* it recorded a slightly lower rate for *UEWI involving the taking of property*.

South Australia had a slightly lower rate for total *robbery* than Australia (80.8 compared with 82.0). However, within this category, it had a higher rate for *armed robbery* but a lower rate for *unarmed robbery*.

Table 2 South Australian crime rates per 100,000 population compared with other states, 2004

Offence group	SA rate per 100,000 population	Australian rate per 100,000 population	Rank of order of SA in 2004#	State/Territory with highest rate in 2004	
Homicide and related offences	5.9	3.9	2	NT	8.5
Murder	1.8	1.3	2	NT	4.5
Attempted murder	3.4	1.5	1	SA	3.4
Manslaughter	0	0.2	n/a	NT	4.0
Drive causing death	0.7	0.9	5	VIC	1.2
Kidnapping/abduction	2.3	3.8	4	NSW	6.9
Robbery (total)	80.8	82.0	3	NSW	132.0
Armed robbery	32.9	29.8	2	NSW	42.6
Unarmed robbery	47.8	52.2	3	NSW	89.4
Blackmail/extortion	2.9	1.8	2	WA	3.7
Unlawful entry with intent	1,742.1	1,533.5	2	WA	2,251.3
UEWI involving the taking of property	1,110.0	1,117.1	4	WA	1,449.3
UEWI - other	632.1	416.4	3	WA	801.9
Motor vehicle theft	685.1	437.2	1	SA	685.1
Other theft	3,421.9	2,724.2	2	WA	3,972.8

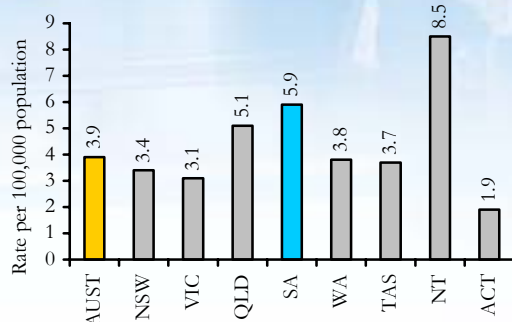
A ranking of one indicates the highest rate of recorded offending.

A comparison of South Australia with other jurisdictions in 2004

Figures 1 to 14 provide a more graphic illustration of the level of recorded victimisations in South Australia compared with other jurisdictions and the national average in 2004. *Manslaughter* figures are not included here because no such offences were recorded in South Australia in 2004.

Homicide and related offences

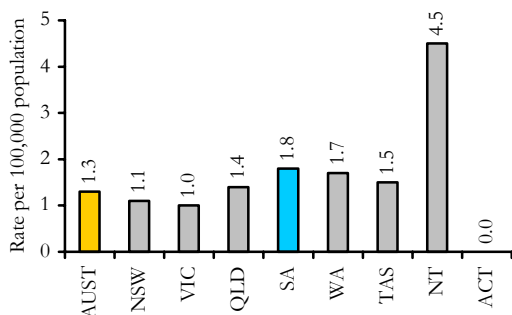
Figure 1 Victims of *homicide and related offences* by state/territory, 2004



The number of extremely violent crimes against the person recorded in Australia in 2004 was relatively small. In total, 789 *homicide and related offences* were recorded by police during the year.

The Northern Territory recorded the highest rate (8.5 per 100,000 population), followed by South Australia (5.9) and Queensland (5.1). All three states were above the national rate of 3.9.

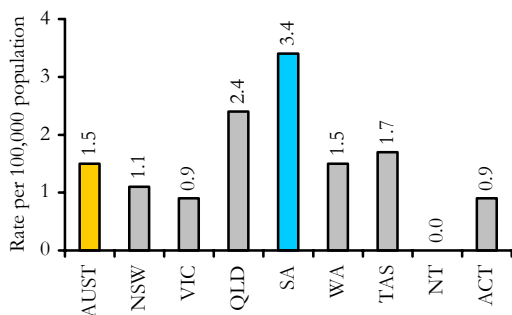
Figure 2 Victims of *murder* by state/territory, 2004



The Northern Territory *murder* rate of 4.5 was higher than that of any other jurisdiction.

South Australia recorded the second highest rate (1.8), which was above the national average of 1.3.

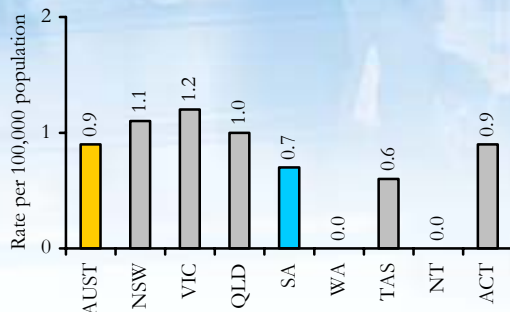
Figure 3 Victims of *attempted murder* by state/territory, 2004



Rates are extremely small across all jurisdictions.

South Australia recorded the highest rate for *attempted murder* (3.4 per 100,000 persons), which was more than double the national average.

Figure 4 Victims of *drive causing death* by state/territory, 2004



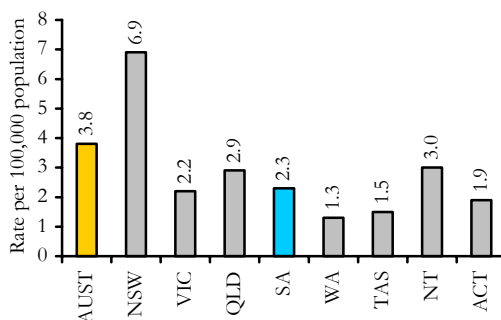
Again, recorded rates for *driving causing death* were extremely low across all jurisdictions.

They ranged from 0 in Western Australian and the Northern Territory to 1.2 per 100,000 population in Victoria.

South Australia's rate of 0.7 was slightly below the Australian rate of 0.9.

Kidnapping/abduction

Figure 5 Victims of *kidnapping/abduction* by state/territory, 2004



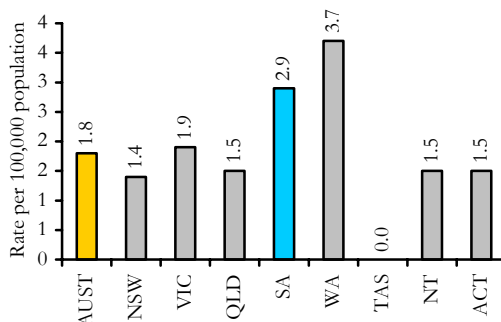
The recorded *kidnapping/abduction* rates across all jurisdictions were comparatively low, with only 768 such offences being recorded for Australia as a whole.

In South Australia in 2004 there were 36 such offences, which gave a rate of 2.3 per 100,000 population. This was below the national rate of 3.8 and was consistent with the rate recorded in Victoria.

The New South Wales rate was well above that of the other jurisdictions, at 6.9 per 100,000 population.

Blackmail/extortion

Figure 6 Victims of *blackmail/extortion* by state/territory, 2004

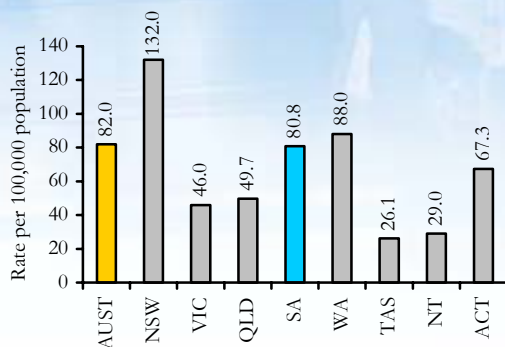


The actual number of *blackmail/ extortion* victims recorded in Australia in 2004 was very small (n=370).

Western Australia recorded the highest rate in Australia, while South Australia recorded the second highest rate. The latter may be attributable to the introduction, in 1999, of new offences dealing with the contamination of foods which, in South Australia, are grouped within the *blackmail/ extortion* category.

Robbery

Figure 7 Victims of all *robbery* by state/territory, 2004

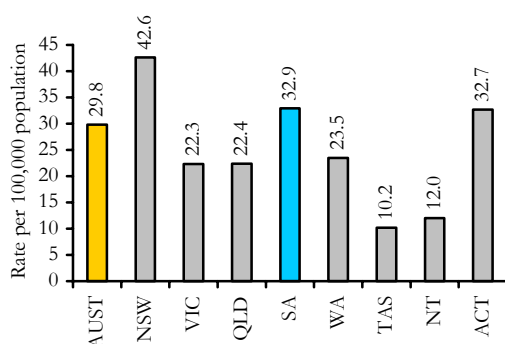


In 2004 South Australia recorded the third highest rate of *total robbery* in Australia, although it was slightly below the national average.

The figure for New South Wales was well above that of the other jurisdictions (132.0).

The lowest rate was recorded in Tasmania (26.1).

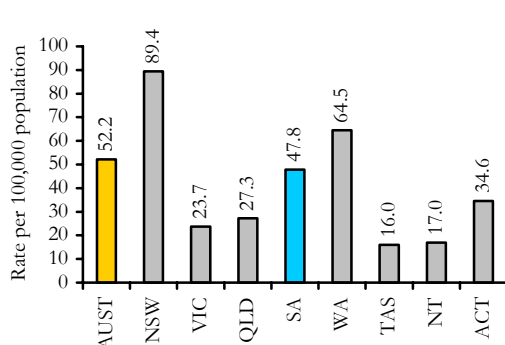
Figure 8 Victims of *armed robbery* by state/territory, 2004



In relation to *armed robbery*, South Australia had the second highest rate of the eight jurisdictions, although it was well below that recorded in NSW.

The jurisdiction with the lowest *armed robbery* rate in 2004 was Tasmania.

Figure 9 Victims of *unarmed robbery* by state/territory, 2004



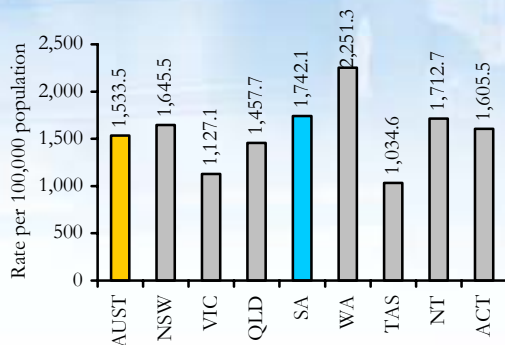
South Australia's *unarmed robbery* rate was the third highest in Australia, but below the Australian average.

The New South Wales rate for *unarmed robbery* was well above that of all other jurisdictions.

The lowest rate of *unarmed robbery* was recorded by Tasmania.

Unlawful entry with intent

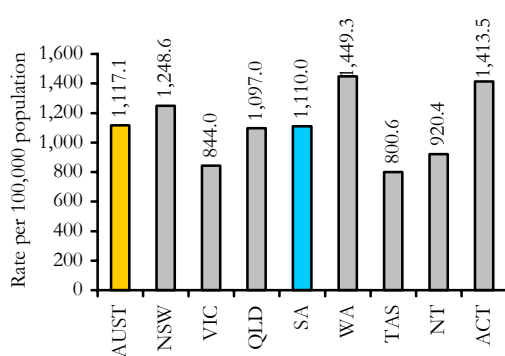
Figure 10 Victims of all *UEWI* by state/territory, 2004



Unlawful entry with intent (UEWI) is the unlawful entry of a structure with the intent to commit an offence such as theft, property damage or any offence against an individual. This category therefore incorporates burglary, break and enter and some stealing offences.

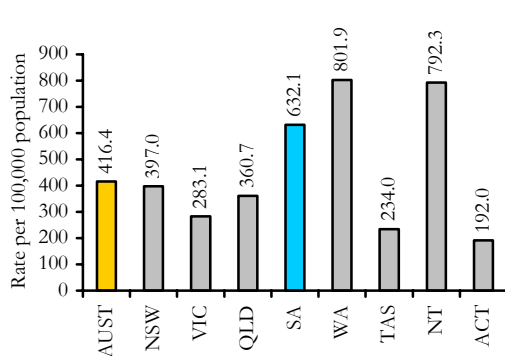
In 2004 South Australia was ranked second for *unlawful entry with intent*, behind Western Australia.

Figure 11 Victims of *UEWI involving the taking of property* by state/territory, 2004



In 2004 the rate of *UEWI involving the taking of property* for South Australia was slightly lower than the national rate and considerably lower than that of Western Australia, the ACT and NSW.

Figure 12 Victims of *UEWI - other* by state/territory, 2004

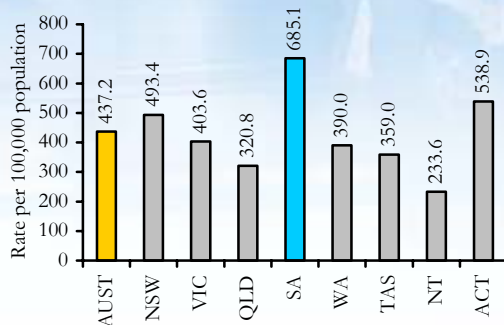


In 2004 South Australia was ranked third for *Unlawful entry with intent - other*, behind Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

The ACT recorded the lowest rate.

Motor vehicle theft

Figure 13 Victims of *motor vehicle theft* by state/territory, 2004



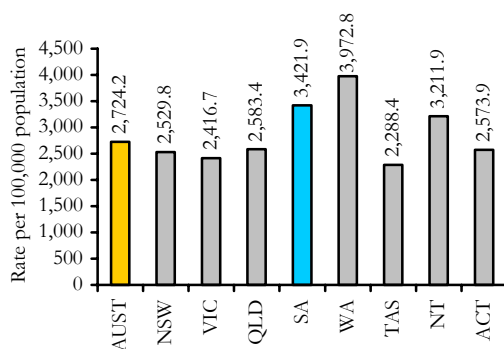
South Australia recorded the highest rate of *motor vehicle theft* in Australia in 2004.

The Northern Territory had the lowest rate.

South Australia's high rate may, in part, be due to the fact that it has one of the oldest fleets in Australia.

Other theft

Figure 14 Victims of *other theft* by state/territory, 2004



Other theft is the taking of another person's property permanently and illegally, but without force, threat of force, use of coercive measures, deceit or having gained unlawful entry to any structure.

In 2004 the recorded rate for *other theft* in South Australia was the second highest of any state or territory, behind Western Australia.

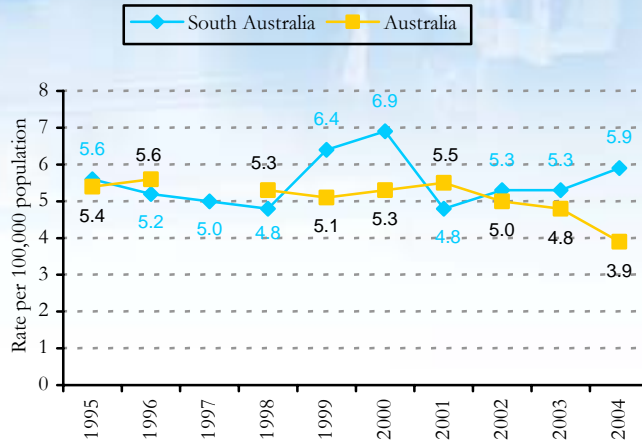
Tasmania recorded the lowest rate of *other theft*.

Comparisons across time

The following section compares South Australian victimisation rates per 100,000 persons with Australian rates. It should be noted that *manslaughter* has been excluded because of the extremely small numbers involved.

Murder, attempted murder and drive causing death

Figure 15 Total *homicide and related offences* 1995-2004

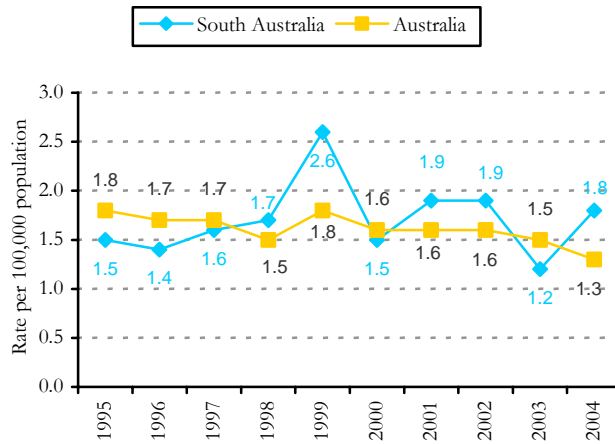


Recorded crime rates for *homicide and related offences* have remained relatively low over the past ten years for both SA and the nation as a whole.

In SA, apart from an increase in 1999 (due to the 'bodies in a barrel' murders) and 2000 (due to a higher number of *drive causing deaths*) *homicide* rates have fluctuated between 5.3 and 5.9 per 100,000 population.

However, in 2004, while the national rate decreased, the SA rate increased. Consequently, SA's rate in 2004 is now well above the national rate of 3.9.

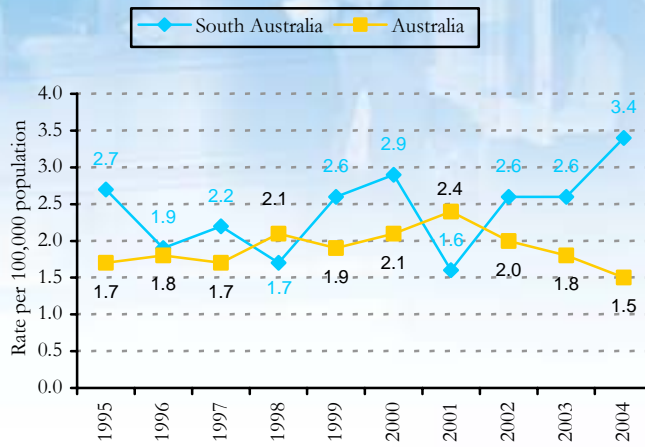
Figure 16 *Murder* 1995-2004



The *murder* rate in South Australia has remained below 2.0 per 100,000 population apart from a spike in 1999 due to the 'bodies in a barrel' murders.

Rates for both South Australia and Australia as a whole have remained relatively stable over the period.

Figure 17 *Attempted murder* 1995-2004

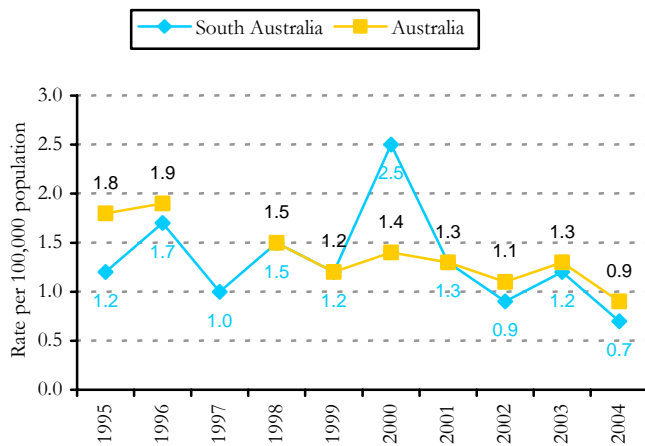


Despite annual fluctuations, the South Australian *attempted murder* rate remained relatively stable between 1995 and 2003. However, an increase was recorded in 2004.

In comparison, the Australian rate increased slightly between 1995 and 2001, before decreasing in recent years.

As a result of these divergent trends, in 2004 SA's *attempted murder* rate of 3.4 was more than double the national average of 1.5, which is the largest difference so far recorded.

Figure 18 *Drive causing death* 1995-2004

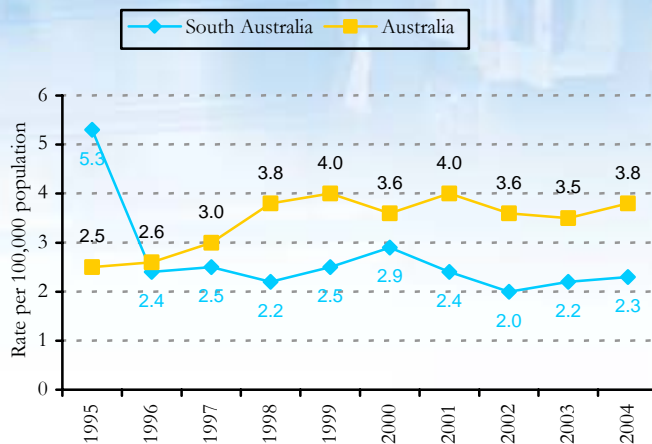


With the obvious exception of 2000, the South Australian rate for *drive causing death* has remained generally comparable with the Australian rate throughout the ten years depicted.

(Note: The national rate was not available for 1997.)

Kidnapping/abduction

Figure 19 *Kidnapping/abduction* 1995-2004

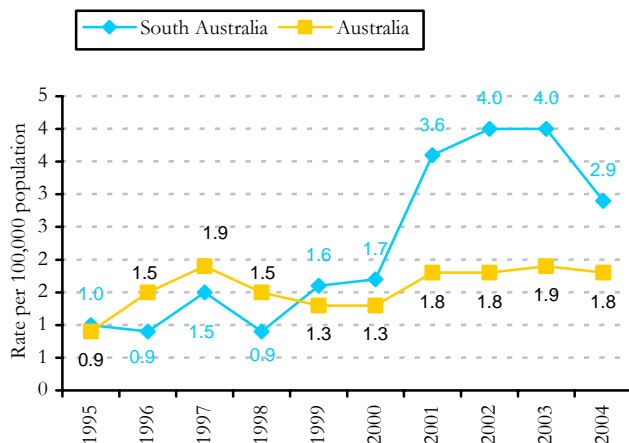


The rate of recorded victimisation for *kidnapping/abduction* has remained relatively low over the nine year period, 1996 to 2004.

From 1996 onwards the South Australian rates have been lower than the Australian rates.

Blackmail/extortion

Figure 20 *Blackmail/extortion* 1995-2004



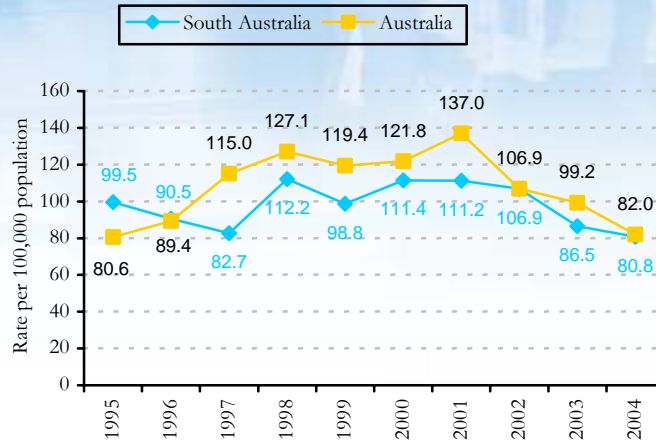
Blackmail/extortion rates increased substantially in South Australia between 2000 and 2003, before decreasing in 2004. In comparison, national rates remained relatively stable over the 10 year period.

The marked increase in SA in 2001 may be partly attributable to the introduction in 1999 of new offences dealing with the contamination of goods which, in this state, are grouped within the *blackmail/extortion* category.

It should also be noted that the overall number of *blackmail/extortion* offences in South Australia is low (44 in 2004).

Robbery

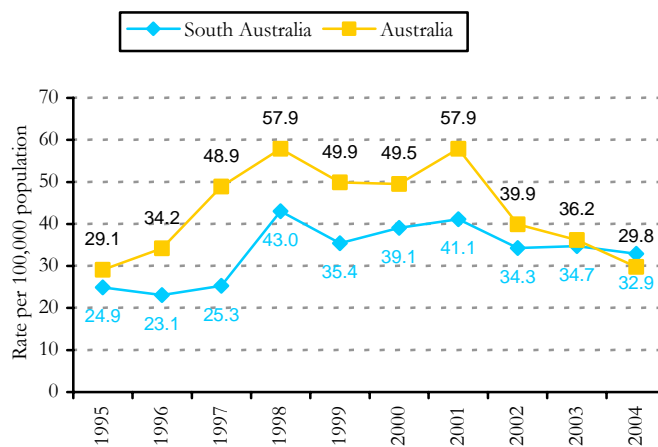
Figure 21 *Total robbery* 1995-2004



The rate of *robbery* in South Australian has been lower than or equal to the national rate for most of the period depicted.

Robbery rates for both South Australia and Australia have decreased since 2001. However, this decrease has been more pronounced for Australia than South Australia.

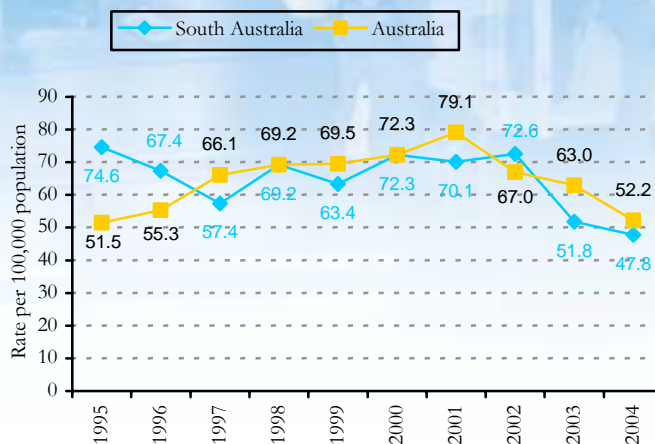
Figure 22 *Armed robbery* 1995-2004



The South Australian *armed robbery* rate was lower than the Australian rate between 1995 and 2003.

However, as a result of a marked decrease in the national figure in 2002 and further decreases in 2003 and 2004, the South Australian rate is now, for the first time, marginally higher than the national figure.

Figure 23 *Unarmed robbery* 1995-2004



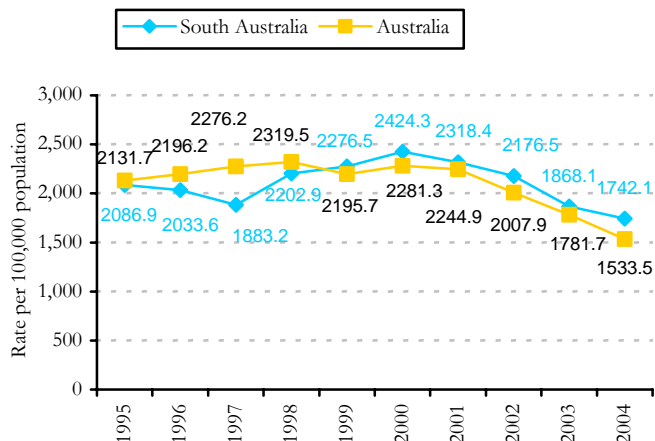
Trends in the *unarmed robbery* rate in South Australia are generally comparable with those for Australia.

After a period of relative stability, South Australia recorded a sharp decrease in 2003 followed by another decrease in 2004, with the latest figure the lowest recorded in this state over the period depicted.

Australia as a whole also recorded decreases in recent years, and like SA, is now at its lowest level since 1995.

Unlawful entry with intent

Figure 24 Total *unlawful entry with intent* 1995-2004

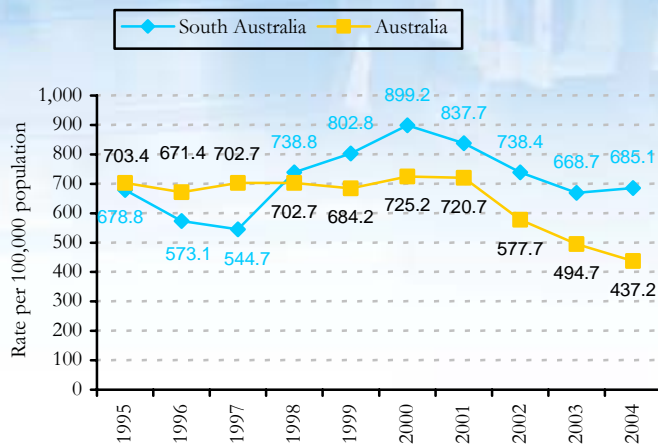


Since 2000 both the national and state figures have experienced downward trends. As a result South Australia's *unlawful entry with intent* rate of 1,742.1 in 2004 is the lowest figure recorded over the 10 year period (1995 to 2004). The national rate of 1,533.5 is also the lowest recorded in the 10 year period.

Nevertheless, throughout the period, the South Australian rate remained slightly higher than the Australian rate.

Motor vehicle theft

Figure 25 *Motor vehicle theft* 1995-2004



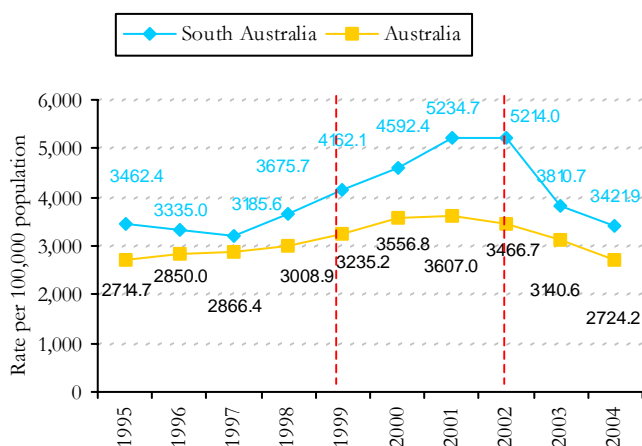
South Australian rates for *motor vehicle theft* increased substantially between 1997 and 2000, while national rates remained relatively stable. From 2000 to 2003, this upward trend in SA was reversed, with rates decreasing by 25.6%. Over the same period the national rate also decreased, by 31.8%. However, in 2004 the South Australian rate increased slightly, while the national rate continued to decline.

As a result of these trends, the difference between the South Australian

motor vehicle theft rate and the national average was more pronounced in 2004 than at any time in the previous five years (685.1 compared with 437.2 per 100,000 population). As noted earlier, this, in part, reflects the fact that South Australia has one of the oldest fleets in Australia.

Other theft

Figure 26 *Other theft* 1995-2004



Both the South Australian and national rates for *other theft* increased between 1997 and 2001, with the South Australian increase being larger than that recorded nationally. As a result, in 2001 and 2002 the South Australia rate was considerably above the national rate.

Part of the South Australian increase in this period was due to the legislative changes introduced in December 1999, which replaced *break/enter offences* with *serious criminal trespass*. Under the old legislation, any goods stolen during a

break-in were recorded under the general charge of *break/enter*. However, under the new legislation, a second offence of *other theft* was also recorded. This, in effect, led to double counting for the one 'incident'. To rectify this, in 2003 and 2004, the offence of *other theft* was no longer included in the national figures if it occurred in association with a *UEWI*. This second change in counting rules largely explains the obvious decrease in *other theft* recorded for SA in 2003 and 2004.