



Report

Recorded Crime in South Australia, Metropolitan South Australia and Regional South Australia

Crime Mapper 2007-2011

NATASHA ROSE & MICHELLE SCED

Office of Crime Statistics
and Research
Attorney-General's Department

GPO Box 464, Adelaide
South Australia 5001

ocsar@agd.sa.gov.au
www.ocsar.sa.gov.au

Introduction

This report provides an analysis of recorded crime data published in *Crime Mapper 2007-2011*. The report is intended to provide a high level summary of recorded crime in South Australia, Metropolitan South Australia and Regional South Australia.

Crime Mapper

Crime Mapper is an online application that provides the geographic distribution of recorded crime across South Australia. Two units of measurement are reported:

1. Number of offences - provides a count of all offences listed on all incident reports recorded by South Australia Police¹.
2. Rate per 1,000 estimated resident population - provides the number of offences as a rate per 1,000 estimated population residing in each given location.

Offences are categorised as follows:

- Offences against the person (homicide; major assault; other);
- Sexual offences (rape; indecent assault; unlawful sexual intercourse; other);
- Robbery & extortion offences (armed robbery; unarmed robbery; extortion);
- Offences against property (serious criminal trespass/break & enter; fraud & misappropriation; receiving/illegal possession of stolen goods; larceny/illegal use of a motor vehicle; other larceny; larceny from shops; larceny from a motor vehicle; arson/explosives; property damage & environmental offences);
- Offences against good order;
- Drug offences (possess/use drugs; sell/trade drugs; produce/manufacture drugs; possess implement for drug use; other);
- Driving offences (driving under the influence of alcohol/drugs; dangerous driving; driving licence offences; traffic offences; motor vehicle registration offences; other); or
- Other offences.

Recorded crime statistics are provided for the following geographic areas:

- South Australia;
- Metropolitan South Australia;
- Regional South Australia; and
- South Australian Local Government Areas.

When using *Crime Mapper* it is important to understand that the statistics it contains may not provide an accurate measure of the true prevalence or incidence of crime in a community. *Crime Mapper* statistics represent only those offences reported to police or which come to the attention of police. They can, therefore, be influenced by a number of factors, including victim reporting rates, the identification or detection of offences by police (in the case of 'victimless' crimes) and police interpretation and decision as to whether a crime has occurred. In addition, *Crime Mapper* does not include offences that are dealt with by way of expiation (e.g., speeding, littering, etc.).

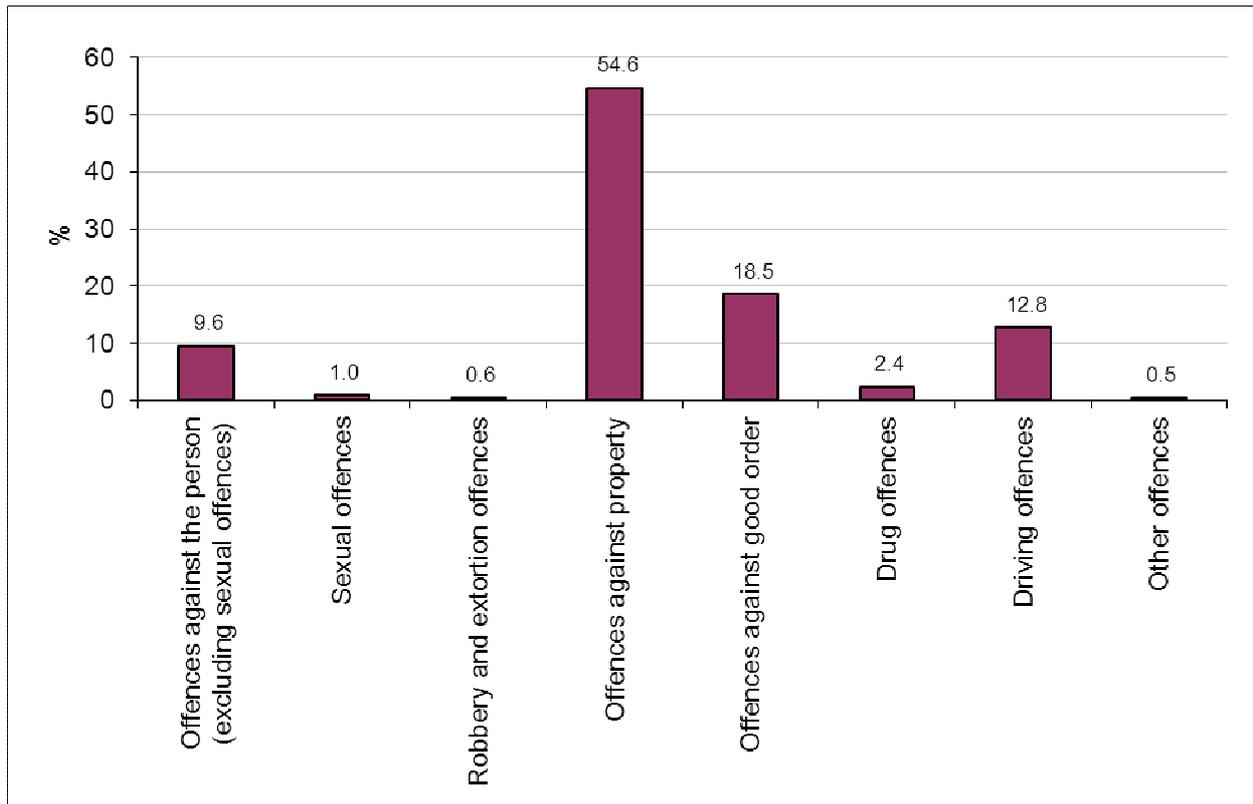
¹ Although *Crime Mapper* statistics are based on data sourced from South Australia Police (SAPOL), there may be slight differences between the offence counts published by SAPOL and those that appear in *Crime Mapper*. This is due to the use of different counting rules and the different classification of some offence types. Therefore, while the two sources of crime data are complimentary, they are not comparable.

2011 Recorded Crime

A total of 199,247 offences were recorded by police across South Australia in 2011, a rate of 121.6 offences per 1,000 South Australian residents.

Offences against property accounted for more than half (54.6%) of all offences, followed by *offences against good order* (18.5%), and *driving offences* (12.8%) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Distribution of offences recorded by police, 2011.



Source: Calculated from statistics reported in *Crime Mapper 2007-2011*.

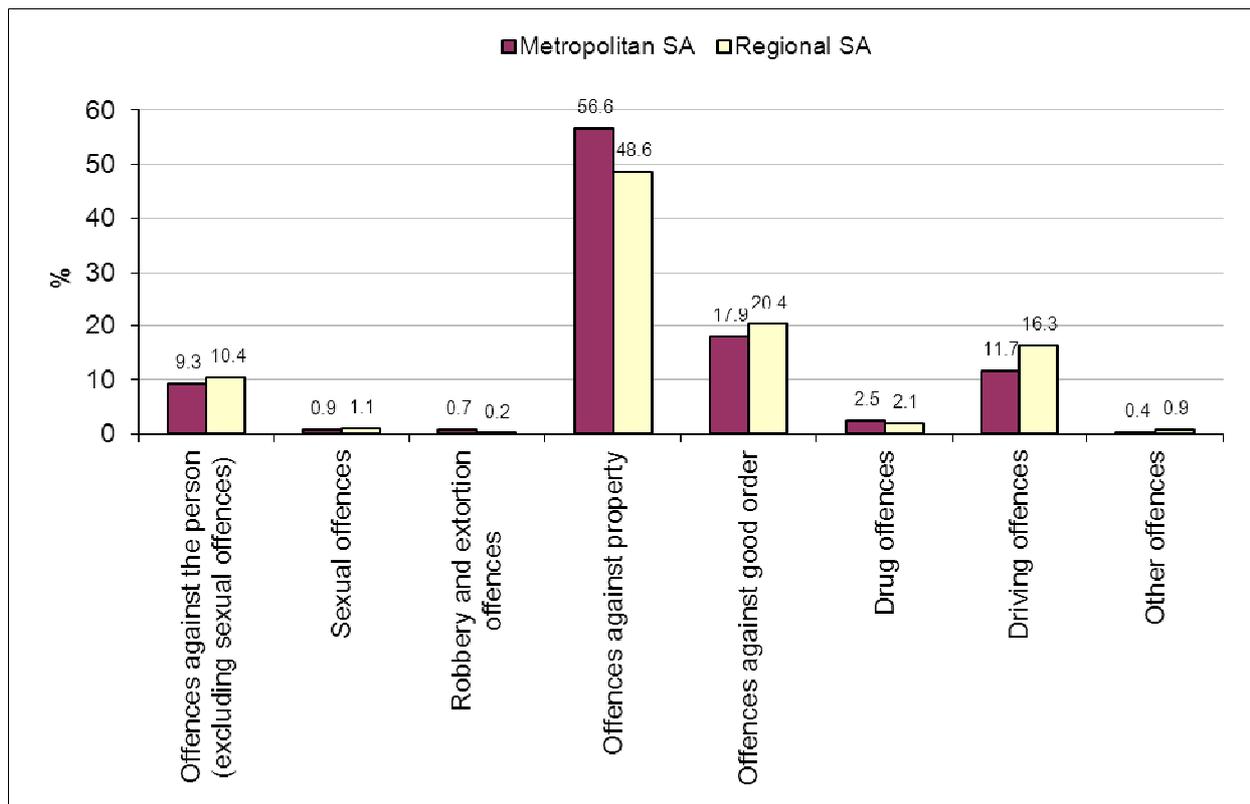
Three quarters of all offences (150,666) recorded in 2011 occurred in metropolitan South Australia² (125.0 per 1,000 population), 24.3% (48,396 recorded offences) occurred in regional South Australia³ (111.7 per 1,000 population) and the remaining 185 offences (0.1%) had an unknown location.

Figure 2 compares the 2011 offence profiles of metropolitan South Australia to regional South Australia. In both locations, *offences against property* accounted for the majority of total offences, followed by *offences against good order* and *driving offences*. However, the proportions differed slightly between the two locations. For metropolitan South Australia, *offences against property* comprised 56.6% of total offences compared to 48.6% for regional South Australia. In contrast, *offences against good order* and *driving offences* comprised a greater proportion of total offences in regional South Australia than in metropolitan South Australia.

² Metropolitan South Australia refers to the Adelaide Statistical Division as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) (1216.0).

³ Regional South Australia refers to all areas of South Australia outside of the Adelaide Statistical Division.

Figure 2. Distribution of offences recorded by police according to region, 2011.



Source: Calculated from statistics reported in *Crime Mapper 2007-2011*.

2011 versus 2010

In 2011 there were 1,943 fewer offences recorded than in the preceding year (a reduction of 1.0%). This decrease, however, was not as marked as has been seen in previous years (see 5-year recorded crime trends - over page) and was predominantly due to decreases in regional SA (1,467 fewer offences, or a 2.9% decrease) compared to metropolitan SA (472 fewer crimes, or a decrease of 0.3%).

When offence category is taken into consideration, a slightly different pattern emerges.

Table 1. Difference and percentage change in recorded offence numbers for South Australia, Metropolitan SA and Regional SA according to offence category, 2011 versus 2010.

	South Australia		Metropolitan SA		Regional SA	
	<i>Difference</i>	<i>% change</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>% change</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>% change</i>
Offences against the person*	+ 525	+ 2.8	+ 449	+ 3.3	+ 66	+ 1.3
Sexual offences	+ 15	+ 0.8	- 69	- 4.9	+ 74	+ 15.8
Robbery and extortion offences	- 73	- 6.1	- 76	- 6.8	+ 2	+ 2.4
Offences against property	+ 1,182	+ 1.1	+ 1,221	+ 1.5	- 8	- 0.0
Offences against good order	- 1,242	- 3.3	- 629	- 2.3	- 605	- 5.8
Drug offences	- 240	- 4.7	- 27	- 0.7	- 213	- 17.5
Driving offences	- 1,878	- 6.9	- 1,088	- 5.8	- 806	- 9.3
Other offences	- 232	- 17.8	- 253	- 28.5	+ 23	+ 5.6
Total offences	-1,943	- 1.0	- 472	- 0.3	- 1,467	- 2.9

Source: Calculated from statistics reported in *Crime Mapper 2007-2011*.

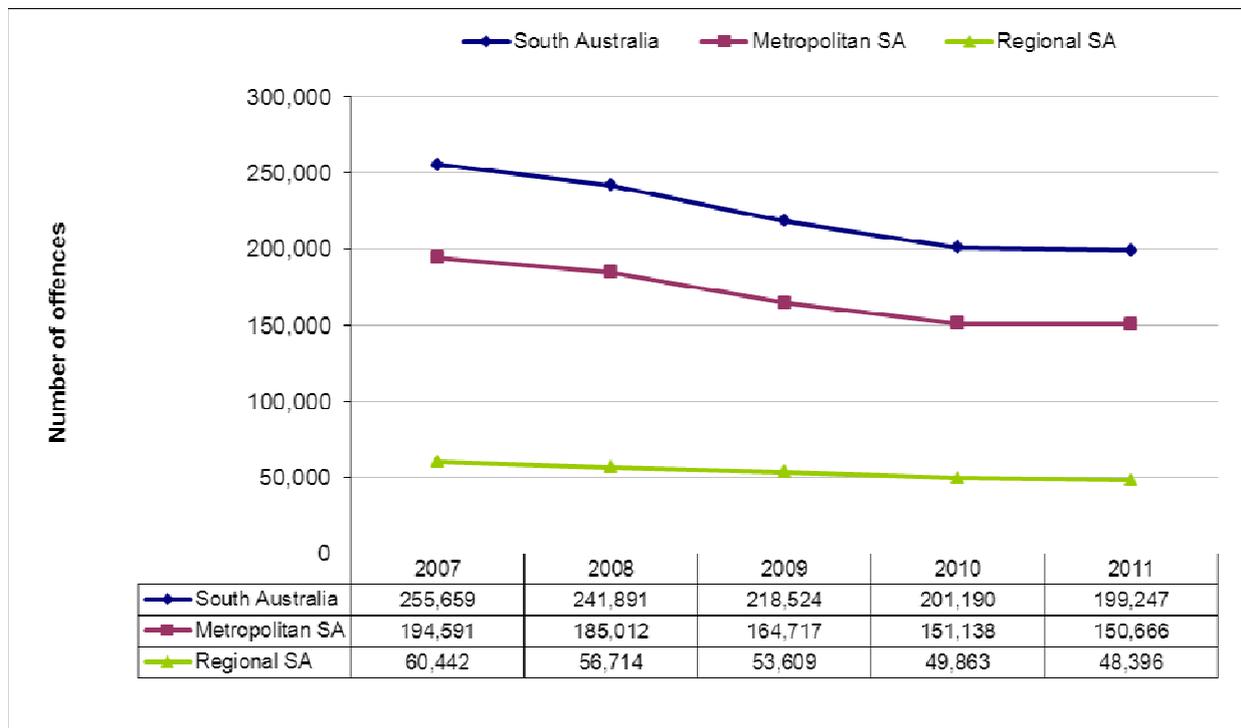
* Excludes sexual offences.

5-year recorded crime trends

Recorded crime in South Australia has demonstrated year on year decreases since 2002. Between 2007 and 2011, the total number of offences recorded by police has decreased by an average of 6.0% each year (or approximately 14,103 offences annually). This has resulted in a 22.1% reduction in offences recorded over the five-year period. In other words, there were 56,412 fewer offences recorded in 2011 than in 2007.

The total number of offences recorded by police decreased in both metropolitan and regional South Australia between 2007 and 2011 (see Figure 3). For metropolitan South Australia, total offences decreased by 22.6% (43,925 offences). The decrease for regional South Australia was less pronounced at 19.9% (12,046 offences).

Figure 3. Total offences recorded by police for South Australia, Metropolitan SA and Regional SA, 2007 to 2011.



Source: Crime Mapper 2007-2011.

Table 2 shows the change in recorded offence numbers between 2007 and 2011 according to the eight major offence categories. As can be seen, the observed reduction in recorded crime across South Australia has mostly been due to significant and stable reductions in *offences against property* (down 18.8%, or 25,184 offences) and *driving offences* (down 54.7%, or 30,833 offences). These decreases have been offset by comparatively small increases in *drug offences* (up 74.9%, or 2,067 offences) and *other offences* (up 7.6%, or 75 offences).

Similar offence-related trends were found in metropolitan and regional South Australia (see Table 2).

Table 2. Difference and percentage change in recorded offence numbers for South Australia, Metropolitan SA and Regional SA according to offence category, 2011 versus 2007.

	South Australia		Metropolitan SA		Regional SA	
	<i>Difference</i>	<i>% change</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>% change</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>% change</i>
Offences against the person*	- 618	- 3.1	- 778	- 5.3	+ 180	+ 3.7
Sexual offences	- 537	- 22.0	- 434	- 24.4	- 96	- 15.0
Robbery and extortion offences	- 202	- 15.2	- 212	- 17.0	+ 13	+ 18.1
Offences against property	- 25,184	- 18.8	- 22,011	- 20.5	- 2,902	- 11.0
Offences against good order	- 1,180	- 3.1	- 436	- 1.6	- 659	- 6.2
Drug offences	+ 2,067	+ 74.9	+ 1,854	+ 94.2	+ 223	+ 28.6
Driving offences	- 30,833	- 54.7	- 21,907	- 55.4	- 8,884	- 53.0
Other offences	+ 75	+ 7.6	- 1	- 0.2	+ 79	+ 22.4
Total offences	- 56,412	- 22.1	- 43,925	- 22.6	- 12,046	- 19.9

Source: Calculated from statistics reported in *Crime Mapper 2007-2011*.

* Excludes sexual offences.

Note. This analysis fails to take into account annual variability in the number of offences.

Explaining reductions in recorded crime trends

Driving offences

The decrease in recorded *driving offences* can largely be attributed to legislative change. Changes to the *Motor Vehicles Regulations 1996*, which made offences relating to driving unregistered and uninsured expiable, came into operation on 1 June 2009. Expiable offences are not counted in *Crime Mapper*. Consequently, recorded motor vehicle registration offences decreased from 25,891 in 2007 to 3,601 in 2011 (a reduction of 22,290 recorded offences) accounting for almost three quarters of the observed decrease in driving offences.

Property offences

The decrease in recorded property offences is more difficult to explain. According to research undertaken in New South Wales, property crime rates are influenced by a range of factors including drug use, the criminal justice response to property crime, and economic factors. Declining trends in property crime are therefore proposed to be associated with a decrease in the rate of drug use, an increase in the number of people seeking drug treatment, an increase in the imprisonment rate for property offences, a fall in long-term unemployment and an increase in average weekly earnings (Moffatt, Weatherburn & Donnelly, 2005). There is evidence to suggest that some of these factors have been present in South Australia. For example, in South Australia:

- The number of people accessing opioid pharmacotherapy treatment increased from 2,417 in 2002 to 3,183 in 2011 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2012).
- The number of drug and alcohol treatment episodes provided by publicly-funded government and non-government treatment agencies increased from 7,440 in 2002-03 to 9,092 in 2009-10 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2011).
- Unemployment rates fell from 7.4% in December 2001 to 4.4% in August 2008. Since then, unemployment rates have fluctuated, increasing to a high of 5.8% in February 2011 and finishing at 5.3% in December 2011 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012a).
- Average weekly earnings increased from \$755.50 in November 2006 to \$921.60 in November 2011, a 22.0% increase. (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012b).

Contrary to expectation, drug use (including heroin use) in South Australia remained stable between 2007 and 2010 (Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia, 2011). Drug related offences also increased during this period (see 'Drug offences' below). However, this was the result of increases in offences relating to the sale or trade of drugs, production or manufacture of drugs and the possession of implements for drug use. Drug *possession* and drug *use* offences increased by a total of 95 offences whereas offences related to the *sale, production, manufacture or possession of implements* increased by 1,648 in the 5 year period.

Crime prevention techniques and technologies are also likely to have contributed to the decline in property crime. For example, the increasing number of registered cars with car immobilisation systems will have contributed to reductions in *larceny and illegal use of a motor vehicle* offences (Kriven & Ziersch, 2007; CARS, 2011).

Drug offences

The increases in *drug offences* can be explained, at least in part, by a combination of legislative change and changes in policing activity. Between 2007 and 2011, the following legislation commenced:

- The *Criminal Law Consolidation (Drink Spiking) Amendment Act 2007* commenced on 1 April 2007. This Act introduced the specific offence of food or drink spiking.
- Section 14 of the *Controlled Substances (Serious Drug Offences) Amendment Act 2005* commenced on 3 December 2007. This section introduced a range of new offences relating to the sale and manufacture of controlled drug precursors, trafficking commercial and large commercial quantities of controlled drugs, and selling, supplying or administering controlled drugs to a child.
- The *Summary Offences (Drug Paraphernalia) Amendment Act 2008* commenced on 8 June 2008. This Act introduced provisions which made it illegal to sell equipment for use in connection with the consumption of controlled drugs and amended the *Controlled Substances Act 1984* to introduce the offence of selling drug-related equipment to children.
- Section 4 of the *Controlled Substances (Possession of Prescribed Equipment) Act 2007* commenced on 19 October 2008. This section introduced offences relating to the possession of prescribed equipment (e.g., hydroponic equipment for cultivating controlled plants, equipment for manufacturing a controlled drug and documentation outlining how to cultivate or manufacture a controlled plant/drug).
- The *Controlled Substances (Controlled Drugs, Precursors and Cannabis) Amendment Act 2008* commenced on 10 September 2009. This Act increased the penalties associated with the cultivation of hydroponic cannabis, and required the courts to treat amphetamines alongside the most serious category of illegal drugs.
- The *Controlled Substances (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2010* commenced on 28 November 2010. This Act increased the penalties associated with trafficking in a controlled drug in areas such as licensed premises and events where members of the public are gathered for entertainment purposes.
- The *Controlled Substances (Offences Relating to Instructions) Amendment Act 2011* commenced on 28 August 2011. This Act makes the sale, possession with intent to sell, supply or intent to supply, a document that contains instructions for the manufacture of a controlled drug or the cultivation of a controlled plant an offence. The Act also makes the possession of prescribed equipment or a prescribed quantity of a controlled precursor with the intent to supply to another person an offence.

In addition, during the five-year period, SAPOL regularly undertook specialised policing operations targeting drug-related crimes, particularly the sale of controlled drugs (SAPOL Annual Reports 2007; 2012).

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