



# News

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## Director's Report

To successfully fulfil its role of statistical monitoring and research into crime and criminal justice issues in South Australia, OCSAR is extremely fortunate to have access to a wealth of electronic data maintained by the criminal justice agencies which, in terms of its comprehensiveness and capacity for linking, is unique in Australia. This is, to a large extent, due to the existence of the integrated Justice Information System which, since the mid 1980s, has provided a common platform for agency applications, and for the sharing of unique Personal Identification Numbers which allow individuals and events to be tracked across the system.

Also unique to South Australia and the Justice Information System is the existence of several mainframe applications that allow standardised reporting across all criminal justice agencies of offence types and address-based information.

OCSAR's Data Management Team, headed by Carol Castle, manages two of these mainframe applications on behalf of the criminal justice community in South Australia; namely, Law Codes and Offence Codes, also known as JANCO Codes. We have undertaken this role since the mid 1980s, with Justice Technology Services managing the technical side of the applications on our behalf since late 1995.

The Law Code contains information about the particular piece of legislation in which an offence is defined, a description of the offence and the dates when the offence became operational and, if applicable, was repealed. Attached to each offence is the Maximum Statutory Penalty information for that offence and a pointer to the legislative reference that created that penalty.

The Offence Code classifies that offence according to the Australian National Classification of Offences (ANCO) system introduced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in 1985. The Offence (or JANCO) Codes, application is the JIS based version of that system. OCSAR has also created and maintains a PC based conversion table which allows agencies to report against the ASOC offence classification system introduced by the ABS in 1997.

Criminal justice agencies, such as SAPOL, CAA and DCS, use Law Codes and Offence Codes for both operational and criminal statistics reporting requirements. Both applications are also fundamental to the statistical monitoring and research work that OCSAR undertakes and are a vital component in any Offender Tracking exercises performed by OCSAR.

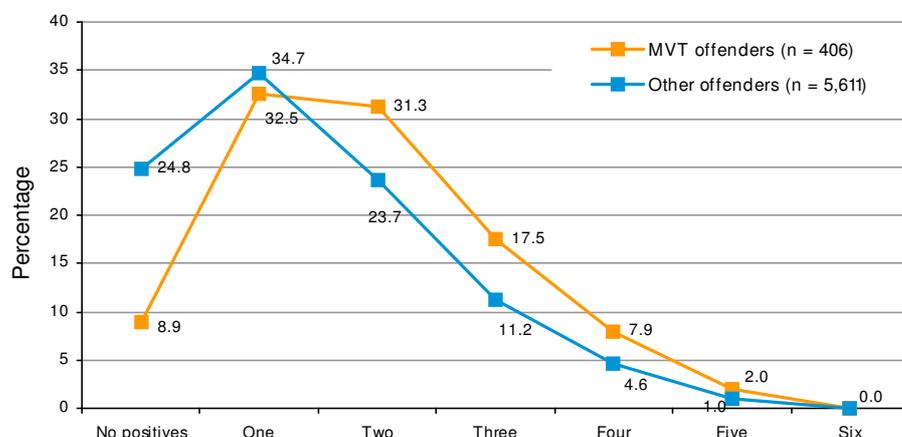
*Further information on Law Codes, Offence Codes and JASOC Codes is available on our website.*

## Drug Use Amongst Motor Vehicle Theft Offenders

Recent research by the National CARS Project has explored drug use amongst motor vehicle theft offenders using DUMA (Drug Use Monitoring in Australia) data. Self-report and urinalysis data were used to compare the characteristics of adult detainees apprehended for a motor vehicle theft (MVT) offence with those arrested for other offences. The following key findings were observed:

- MVT offenders were younger at the time of their first arrest than other offenders (17 years compared to 19) and were twice as likely to have been imprisoned in the past 12 months (39% imprisoned compared to 18%).
- Less than one in five MVT offenders reported that they were working full-time (14% compared to 27%).
- Nine out of ten (91%) MVT offenders tested positive to at least one drug and six out of ten (59%) tested positive to two or more drug types compared to 75% and 41% respectively amongst other offenders.
- Cannabis was the most frequent drug that both offender groups tested positive to (69% for MVT offenders and 57% for other offenders) followed by amphetamines (52% compared to 32%).

Number of classes of drugs that detainees tested positive to



- Nearly half (47%) of MVT offenders reported that they received income from a crime related source in the past 30 days compared to 23% of other offenders. Furthermore, 63% of MVT offenders who reported receiving income from a crime-related source tested positive to amphetamines (compared to 52%).
- MVT offenders were nearly twice as likely to report that most to all of the offences they had committed in the past 12 months were drug related (42% compared to 24%) and of those who reported that half or more of their crime was drug-related, 65% tested positive to amphetamines.

The findings of the study indicate that MVT offenders have a high incidence of drug use and show a strong link between drug use and criminal activity. The policy implications for these offenders are discussed in the paper.

*The report was produced by OCSAR's CARS team for the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council and can be downloaded from their website [http://www.carsafe.com.au/documents/CARSReportDrugUseAndMotorVehicleTheft\\_000.pdf](http://www.carsafe.com.au/documents/CARSReportDrugUseAndMotorVehicleTheft_000.pdf)*

## Evaluation of the Crime Prevention Education Program

The Crime Prevention Education Program is a curriculum-based program initiated by the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) and co-developed by representatives of both DECS and SA Police. It involves Year 6/7 teachers and police (where practicable), co-delivering education modules which are targeted at helping young people to:

- understand the consequences of crime and anti-social behaviours;
- develop constructive relations with police; and

- ultimately assist them to avoid involvement in criminal and anti-social activities.

The Office of Crime Statistics and Research undertook an evaluation of the program using a multi-faceted methodology including:

- Interviews with participating teachers, police, the program's Management Committee and those responsible for designing the curriculum;
- Surveys of teachers attending professional development sessions, a survey of the

program's Reference Group and feedback opportunities for parents of students undertaking the crime prevention lessons; and

- Pre and post-lesson surveying of students receiving the lessons, along with surveying students from comparison schools yet to teach the materials.

The program benefited strongly in its development from the collaborative partnership between DECS and SAPOL, particularly in the co-development of the

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# Release of Crime and Justice in South Australia, 2004, Adult Courts and Corrections

The third volume of OCSAR's three volume 'Crime and Justice in South Australia, 2004' series was released late last year. The statistics in this volume cover three main areas:

- Criminal matters finalised in the Magistrates Courts of South Australia;
- Criminal matters finalised in the Supreme and District Courts; and
- Persons supervised by the Department for Correctional Services, either as prisoners or while undertaking community-based correction orders.

## Key findings

- During 2004, there were 27,499 cases finalised in the Magistrates Court, which is 5.8% lower than the 29,206 cases finalised in 2003.
- *Driving offences* were listed as the major charge in approximately one quarter (27.7%) of these cases, while *offences against good order* accounted for a further 20.1% and *larceny and receiving* offences for

12.5%. At the other end of the scale, very few cases involved either a *sexual offence* (1.3%) or *robbery and extortion* (0.8%). In addition, 5.4% of cases involved *non-offence* matters. These consisted almost entirely of restraining orders.

- Of the 26,570 cases finalised in the Magistrates Court (excluding those committed to a higher court) just under three quarters (77.0% or 20,455 cases) resulted in a finding of guilt to at least one charge.
- Of these, one third (30.1%) received a fine as the major penalty, while approximately one quarter (27.9%) resulted in a driver's license suspension. Overall, 4.4% of cases resulted in direct imprisonment while 9.1% received suspended imprisonment.
- In 2004, there were 52 cases finalised in the Supreme Court and 924 finalised in the District Court, giving a total of 976. This was 7.2% lower than the number of cases disposed of in 2003.

- The majority of Higher Court defendants (76.2%) pleaded or were found guilty of at least one charge at trial. In 58.4% of cases the defendant pleaded guilty to either the major or a lesser charge. In a further 16.5% of cases, a trial was held which resulted in either a plea or finding of guilt. In another 3.0% of cases the major charge was dropped but there was a guilty outcome for another or lesser offence.
- The average length of imprisonment in the higher courts was just over four years (or 49.4 months, excluding sentences of life imprisonment). The average non-parole period set was just over three years (36.7 months).
- In 2004, there were 3,440 prisoners received into custody. Of the 3,381 prison receptions where legal status was available, 10.9% were sentenced prisoners, 0.6% were fine defaulters and 88.6% were on remand. The number of receptions in 2004 was 1.5% lower than recorded in 2003.
- In 2004, a slightly lower proportion of prison receptions involved sentenced prisoners (10.9% compared with 12.8% in 2003). In contrast, the proportion of admissions involving remanded prisoners was marginally higher (88.6% in 2004 compared with 86.6% in 2003) and the proportion of fine defaulters remained stable (0.6% of all receptions in 2003 and 2004).
- There were 8,809 community-based correction orders commenced in 2004, which was 4.0% higher than the 8,474 recorded in 2003. Over one-third (37.7%) involved some form of community work, and 9.8% involved home detention.

materials between the two agencies. The evaluation revealed that the program has the support of a wide range of stakeholders. This is due in part to the well supported subject matter of crime prevention. Importantly, teachers praised the quality and relevance of the curriculum materials, whilst students enjoyed the lessons.

Police involvement in the classroom was shown to potentially add value to the delivery of the program but their participation was generally not seen as essential for the subject matter to be effectively delivered.

The student survey demonstrated that the lessons led to statistically significant

improvements in some knowledge areas and, to a lesser extent, improvements in crime-related attitudes in students. Particularly encouraging were student comments regarding their enhanced knowledge of the consequences of crime upon both their own future if they were to offend and upon the victims of crime.

Whilst it cannot be determined that this will lead to a reduction in future offending by students, this self-reported attitude improvement is one of the most encouraging outcomes of the program.

*For further information please contact Bevan Fletcher, Senior Research/Evaluation Officer on phone number (08) 8207 2157.*

*Copies of all three volumes of Crime and Justice in South Australia can be downloaded from the publications page on the OCSAR website: [www.ocsar.sa.gov.au](http://www.ocsar.sa.gov.au)*

## The Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology 19th annual conference

OCSAR sent two representatives to the 19th annual Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology (ANZSOC) conference held in Hobart in early February: Joy Wundersitz (Director); and Nichole Hunter (Acting Manager of Research).

Hosted by the University of Tasmania, the conference was attended by delegates from a range of countries, including Canada, India, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, South Africa and Taiwan.

After the official opening by The Governor, His Excellency, the Honourable Mr William Cox, the conference commenced with a plenary session entitled "refuges and human rights", containing papers from Margaret Piper (Consultant) and Sharon Pickering (Monash University). In keeping with the overall conference theme of "Criminology and Human Rights", subsequent papers focused on state crime, environmental crime, incarceration and the war on terror, among other topical issues.

Sessions held on the final day, including the plenary "Prisoners and Human

Rights", were shared with the International Conference on Penal Abolition (ICOPA), which immediately followed the ANZSOC conference. This shared session included Debbie Kilroy (Sisters Inside, Queensland), David Brown (University of New South Wales) and Kim Pate (Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies).

As well as offering the opportunity to present OCSAR's research and obtain feedback from our peers, the conference also allowed us to hear about projects being undertaken in other jurisdictions and enabled us to establish or renew contacts with colleagues engaged in similar areas of study. We look forward to meeting up again at the 20th annual conference, scheduled to be held in Adelaide in September 2007.



Some of the South Australian contingent at the conference (from L to R): Rick Sarre (University of South Australia), Marinella Marmo (Flinders University), Andrew Goldsmith (Flinders University), David Bamford (Flinders University), Sue King (Hawke Research Institute) and Nichole Hunter (Office of Crime Statistics and Research).

## Staff Developments

In recent months OCSAR has welcomed two new staff members.

**Dr. Sharon Casey** commenced work at OCSAR in January on a six month secondment from the School of Psychology at the University of South Australia.

Sharon, who has a doctorate in Forensic Psychology, will be working as Principal Researcher for a study examining South Australia's high rate of motor vehicle theft. The study is primarily a qualitative analysis of vehicle theft from the offender's perspective and will look at

issues such as:

- What are the circumstances that surround an individual's initial involvement in car crime;
- What factors influence the continued involvement in car crime; and
- What factors influence deterrence from car crime.

In January **Rasika Amerasinghe** (pictured) also joined OCSAR as a Senior Researcher and Data Analyst. Rasika, who has a Bachelor of Engineering (Biomedical) from Flinders University, will be responsible for the analysis and

dissemination of the South Australian data from the Drug Use Monitoring in Australia (DUMA) study. We welcome both Sharon and Rasika, who are sure to contribute significantly to the work of the Office.