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Director's Report

When I took up the position of Director of OCSAR in June 1995, I was very much aware that the reputation the Office enjoyed, both within South Australia and nationally, for producing high quality statistical monitoring and research owed a great deal to the leadership provided by its previous directors.

Our founding Director was Professor Peter Grabosky who held the position from May 1978 until 1982. Peter faced the daunting task of setting up manual data collection systems, firstly for the Supreme and District Courts and later, for the Magistrates Court.

By this stage, the Office was producing two quarterly statistical reports. One was Crime and Justice in South Australia, which included information on offences reported to police, Supreme and District Court appearances, Correctional Services and juvenile offenders. The other quarterly statistical report was Courts of Summary Jurisdiction.

These were the precursors to our current statistical publication, still entitled Crime and Justice in South Australia, which is now published annually as a three volume set, and is arguably the most comprehensive compilation of criminal justice statistics in Australia.

Peter's successor was Dr Adam Sutton. During his time with the Office (from 1982 to 1989) he was an integral part of, and made a major contribution to, the planning of JIS – the mainframe Justice Information System on which much of the data collected by criminal justice

agencies in South Australia is now stored.

When Adam moved to Melbourne in 1989, Mr Frank Morgan became Director. He remained in that position from 1989 to 1994. During this period, JIS became operational, which meant that for the first time, the Office had access to a wealth of new electronic data collected by the agencies.

When Frank left in late 1994 to move to Perth, Ms Julie Gardner acted in the position for six months before I was appointed in June 1995.

To provide some insight into how far the Office has developed over the past 28 years or so, and how much the nature of its work has changed, we have asked each of the previous Directors to share some of their recollections about their time with the Office and to provide us with a brief snapshot of what they are doing now.

We begin with the experiences of Peter Grabosky, our founding Director.



OCSAR's four Directors - (L to R) Frank Morgan, Joy Wundersitz, Peter Grabosky and Adam Sutton

Evaluation of the SAVTRC Immobiliser Scheme

In 2005 and continuing in 2006, the South Australian Vehicle Theft Reduction Committee (SAVTRC) has operated an immobiliser scheme providing subsidised immobilisers to South Australian university and TAFE students. The scheme is open to students in the metropolitan area who drive older cars manufactured before 1997.

OCSAR have been undertaking an evaluation of the scheme, with a major report recently completed on the first year of the scheme's operation from February 2005 to January 2006. At regular intervals the evaluator has also been providing feedback on emerging issues to SAVTRC. The evaluation has used a multi-method approach involving surveys and interviews with a range of stakeholders from both the committee and the tertiary institutions.

After its first year of operation, nearly 250 immobilisers have been fitted to students' cars as part of the scheme. Participating students praised the scheme and indicated

that they either had or intended to recommend the offer to other students.

Whilst the overall response from students was lower than anticipated, it was acknowledged that students have competing priorities for their time and money, and immobilisers are difficult to promote as an attractive or "sexy" item. Students also indicated that the scheme required greater promotion, particularly in the form of face-to-face promotion on campus.

Design changes to the scheme supported by stakeholders included expanding the target group eligible for the offer and improving access to the offer. These changes commenced in 2006. In particular, the scheme has been expanded, to include apprentices recruited via the Motor Trades Association and high school students in the South Coast Local Service Area recruited via SAPOL's Community Programs Section and the Crime Reduction Unit. Eligible students can also be approved for participation at any RAA branch rather than just at their campus.

For further information regarding the Immobiliser Scheme, please contact Allan Bewley of the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure on 8343 2198.

Should you require further information regarding the evaluation, please contact Bevan Fletcher of the Office of Crime Statistics and Research on 8207 2157.

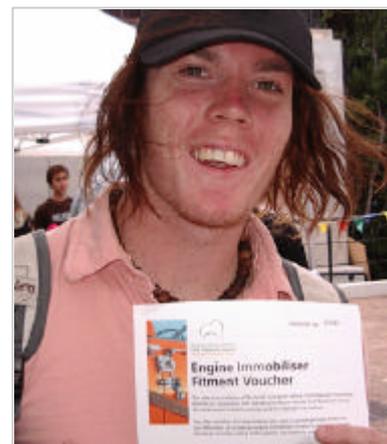


Photo: A student participating in the Immobiliser Scheme

Peter Grabosky's recollections

When I arrived [in Adelaide] (I think 31 July 1978), there was just me and a receptionist. That was it! Because of a hiring freeze, I had to make a special plea for a statistician. I succeeded, and we were able to engage (a statistician) within a couple of months.

We were physically located in the Public Trustee Building. The Attorney General's Office was next door and we shared our office suite with investigators from the Crown Law Department. In the fullness of time, we moved to the SGIC Building.

We set about establishing a system of statistics from the Supreme and District Criminal Courts. The Clerk of Arraigns and the Registrar of the District Court facilitated our access to case files. The data collection was paper based. (The forms we designed were published in our earliest reports). The statistician, assisted by the receptionist, essentially took the actual court files and transposed the data manually onto the forms. This was literally "ticks and crosses" stuff.

We then moved on to the Courts of Summary Jurisdiction. With the approval of the Chief Magistrate and Senior Clerk of Court, we designed forms and distributed them to Clerks of Court throughout the State. They then filled them out for all cases except breaches of Council by-laws and minor traffic violations, and posted them back to us in Adelaide.

In order to obtain access to records of previous convictions of each defendant, we obtained Cabinet approval to receive these data from Police. To assist in managing the paper flow, we recruited a clerical officer.

The Magistrates' Courts data were then entered into the State Mainframe Computer (this may have been a CDC Cyber) and we were able to generate the tables published in our early reports. I was very gratified to see that our statistics on the range of penalties imposed for certain offences were being used in support of appeals against sentence. Prior to that time, a solicitor would grab a handful of files of apparently similarly

situated cases, and present them to the court.

Our other statistics (Police, corrections and community welfare) were provided on paper by those contributing departments, and published as is, along with our court data.

Peter left the Office in 1981 to take up a position with the Australian Institute of Criminology and later becoming its Deputy Director. Currently Peter is Professor in the Regulatory Institutions Network of the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University.

Over the past 25 years, Peter has built up a formidable international reputation as a criminological researcher, and has published extensively in the areas of policing, public policy, regulatory crime, and electronic and cyber crime. He was elected a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia in 2003, is a member of the Campbell Collaboration Crime and Justice Coordinating Group, and also sits on the jury for the Stockholm Prize in Criminology.

Crime and Safety, Australia 2005: The South Australian Perspective

On 26 April 2006 the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) released the results from its 2005 national crime and safety survey (*Crime and Safety, Australia 2005*, cat. no. 4509.0). This survey provides an alternative source of data to official police statistics on the prevalence of selected household and personal crimes. It also provides information on the extent to which these crimes are reported to the police.

Household crime

In the 12 months prior to the survey an estimated 6.6% of South Australian households experienced at least one household crime (defined as a break-in, attempted break-in or vehicle theft). This was significantly lower than the figure of 8.2% obtained from the previous survey conducted in 2002. In terms of the specific household crimes surveyed, it was found that, in the 12 months prior to the 2005 survey:

- an estimated 2.9% of South Australian households were victims of at least one break-in. This was substantially below the 2002 figure (5.1%);
- an estimated 1.3% were victims of motor vehicle theft, which was again lower than in 2002 (1.8%); and
- as estimated 3.1% of South Australian households experienced at least one attempted break-in. This was comparable

with the victimisation level recorded in 2002 (3.0%).

According to the 2005 survey, the South Australian victimisation rate for household crime was higher than for the nation as a whole (6.6% compared with 6.2% respectively). As Figure 1 indicates, of the eight jurisdictions, South Australia had the fourth lowest prevalence rate for total household crime.

Personal crime

In the 12 months prior to the survey an estimated 5.0% of individuals aged 15 years and over in South Australia were the victims of at least one personal crime (defined as either a robbery, assault or sexual assault). This was comparable with the 2002 figure (4.9%).

As Figure 2 indicates, of the eight states and territories, South Australia was ranked third lowest for total personal crimes. Victoria had the lowest level of victimisation, while the Northern Territory had the highest.

Level of reporting to police

Survey respondents were also asked whether they had reported the latest victimisation to the police. In South Australia:

- 72.9% reported the most recent break-in to the police;

- 30.4% reported the most recent attempted break-in to the police;
- 86.5% reported the most recent motor vehicle theft to the police; and
- 37.4% reported the most recent assault to the police.

These results indicate that, while police generated statistics on vehicle thefts are likely to be reasonably accurate, they will substantially underestimate the number of attempted break-ins and assaults experienced by the community.

For the three household offence categories (break-in, attempted break-in and vehicle theft) the percentage of South Australian victims who indicated that they reported the most recent incident to police was lower in 2005 than in 2002. This means that, for these offences, the gap between actual victimisation rates and official statistics pertaining to offences recorded by police is larger now than previously. In comparison, the reporting rate for assault was higher in 2005 than in 2002.

A more detailed review of the South Australian findings from the 2005 Crime and Safety Survey is contained in OCSAR Information Bulletin #52 which can be downloaded from the publications page of our website (www.ocsar.sa.gov.au)

For further information contact Nichole Hunter, A/Manager, Research ph 8207 1513

Figure 1 Victimization rates for total household crime in the 12 months prior to 2005 survey

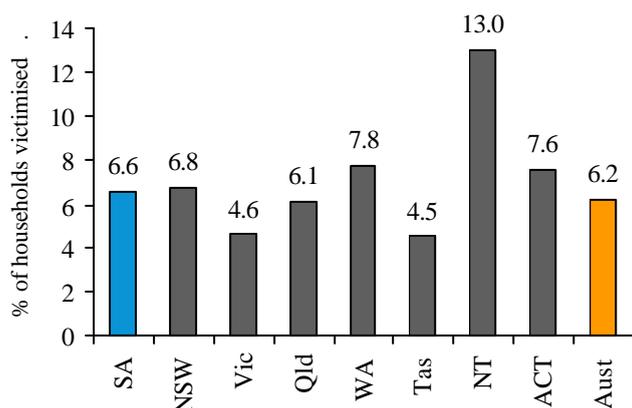
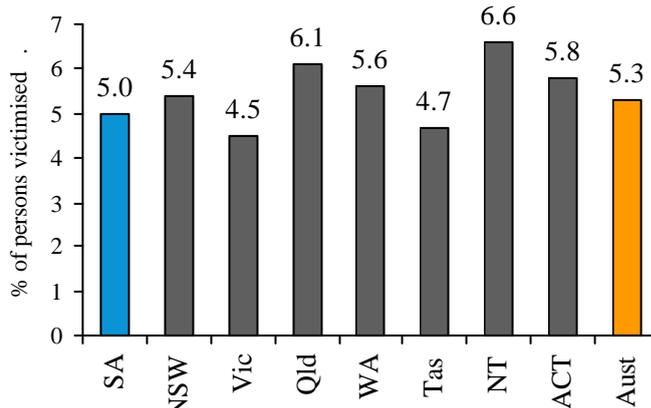


Figure 2 Victimization rates for total personal crime in the 12 months prior to 2005 survey



An Analysis of Drug Court Drop Outs

The Office of Crime Statistics and Research (OCSAR) has been involved in evaluating the Adelaide Magistrates Drug Court (AMDC) since its inception in May 2000. Past research has focused on process issues (see McRostie and Harrison, 2002) as well as Drug Court outcomes (see Corlett, Skrzypiec and Hunter, 2004). More recently a study was completed which provided a descriptive profile of those people who participated in the Drug Court program during the first 38 months of its functioning (see Skrzypiec, 2006a). The study found that the AMDC appears to be servicing similar clientele to those Drug Courts operating in other jurisdictions in Australia – single, non-Indigenous males who have a history of property offences and who have experienced some time in prison prior to being accepted into the Drug Court program. A notable finding was that for most Drug Court participants, drug use had commenced prior to adulthood, with nearly 70% reporting that they had started abusing drugs before they turned 18.

The study found that during the first 38 months of the Drug Court's operation 26.2% of participants had completed the program and 55.9% had been terminated. The remaining 17.9% voluntarily withdrew. The most common reason for being terminated was for non-compliance,

with participants not necessarily being terminated for drug use or offending episodes.

A comparison between *Completers* and *Terminated* found that *Completers* were more likely than *Terminated* to report that they had started abusing alcohol prior to adulthood, that they felt socially isolated and were having financial difficulties at the point of assessment, while those who had been terminated were more likely to report that they had limited family support at the time of assessment (see Skrzypiec, 2006b).

Statistical analysis found three factors which were significant predictors of termination. The most significant predictor was *limited family support*, which increased the odds of termination by a factor of 5.2. Having a *criminal career that spanned seven years or more* before joining the program was another significant predictor and this factor more than doubled (x 2.5) the odds of termination. However, the third factor, *reporting that alcohol abuse began prior to adulthood*, decreased the odds of being terminated (by 60%).

However, it is important to state that the findings presented should be treated with caution and to recognise that they pertain only to the AMDC during its first 38

months of operation and cannot be generalised to any other Drug Court.

For more information about this study contact Grace Skrzypiec, Project Officer on ph 8207 1692.

OCSAR's Drug Court Evaluation Reports:

McRostie, H. and Harrison, A. (2002). *Evaluation of the Drug Court Pilot Program: Interim Report 1*. Office of Crime Statistics and Research, Attorney-General's Department, Adelaide, South Australia.

Corlett, E., Skrzypiec, G. and Hunter, N. (2004). *Offending Profiles of SA Drug Court Pilot Program "Completers"*. Office of Crime Statistics and Research, Attorney-General's Department, Adelaide, South Australia.

Skrzypiec, G. (2006a). *The South Australian Drug Court: A profile of participants during its first thirty eight months of operation*. Office of Crime Statistics and Research, Attorney-General's Department, Adelaide, South Australia.

Skrzypiec, G. (2006b). *The South Australian Drug Court: An Analysis of Participant Retention Rates*. Office of Crime Statistics and Research, Attorney-General's Department, Adelaide, South Australia.

Staff Developments

Laura O'Connor recently joined OCSAR as a Senior Research Officer with the Comprehensive Auto-theft Research System (CARS) project. Laura has recently completed her Honours degree in Criminal Justice, with a focus on the social and cultural phenomenon of rioting.



Laura will be involved in a number of research projects relating to car theft, both in South Australia and

nationally. She is currently working on a study of the effectiveness of Immobilisers as a means of increasing vehicle security in Australia. Laura will also assist with the CARS quarterly and yearly reports and the provision of data to clients both internal and external.



We also welcome **Alex Pearce** who has joined OCSAR on a short term contract as a Senior Research and Statistical Officer. Alex has previously worked as a research assistant and social research tutor in the School of Psychology at the University of Queensland.

Alex will be involved in the development of

research assessing the impact of the Criminal Law Consolidation (Abolition of Time Limit for Prosecution of Certain Sexual



Offences) Amendment Act (2003). This research will investigate the effects of removing immunity from prosecution for certain sexual offences alleged to have been committed between November 1952 and December 1982.

OCSAR welcomes these two new staff members to our team.