



OFFICE OF  
CRIME STATISTICS  
AND RESEARCH

# OCSAR NEWS

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Government  
of South Australia

## Director's Report

As Christmas and year's end approaches it is always good to look back over what has been achieved over the past twelve months. For OCSAR, 2004 has been a busy and productive year.

On the evaluation front, in addition to assessing the effectiveness of a range of justice initiatives designed to respond to drugs and drug-related crime, we have completed evaluations of the Adelaide Dry Area Trial, Victims Support Services country roll-out, and two pilots run by the Legal Services Commission to reduce the numbers of remand prisoners.

In the research area, in response to continuing community concerns about youth offending, OCSAR has commenced several long term projects which aim to identify

the risk and protective factors associated with youth offending and to track the transition from juvenile to adult offending.

The high demand for statistical information on crime and the criminal justice system also continued throughout 2004, with the OCSAR website proving to be a key source of information for many stakeholders. To augment the range of statistical information available to the general public, OCSAR also commenced development of a web-based Crime Mapper which allows users to thematically map the distribution of crime for different geographical regions across the state.

Work on these and other projects will continue into 2005 while new projects, such as an evaluation of the Family

Violence Court, are being planned.

The coming year therefore promises new and interesting challenges.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to all OCSAR staff for their hard work throughout the year, to our broad range of stakeholders who continue to support us, and to the OCSAR Advisory Committee who have given clear guidance and direction to ensure the relevance of our work to evidence-based policy development within the Justice Portfolio.

Finally, on behalf of all the staff at OCSAR, I wish you a very happy Christmas and a safe and prosperous new year.

**Joy Wundersitz**

## Release of Crime and Justice Juvenile Justice Report

The second volume of OCSAR's three volume 'Crime and Justice in South Australia, 2003' series has been released. This volume focuses on *Juvenile Justice* and includes data for the 2003 calendar year. The report, which can be downloaded from our website, includes statistics on:

- Police apprehensions of juveniles and actions taken;
- Formal cautions administered by police;
- Attendance by juveniles at family conferences;
- Appearances by juveniles before the Youth Court;

- Juveniles held in custody in the Youth Training Centres.

### Key findings:

- 7,145 police apprehension reports involving young people were lodged during 2003 (8.8% lower than 2002).
- These 7,145 apprehension reports involved 4,365 discrete individuals (an average of 1.6 apprehensions per youth).
- *Larceny and receiving* constituted the major charge in 30.0% of all apprehensions.
- There were 2,054 formal

cautions given by police.

- There were 1,543 cases referred to a Family Conference.
- In 2003, 2,746 cases were finalised in the Youth Court.
- In approximately three quarters of these cases at least one charge was proved.
- On average, 62.09 young people were held in custody per day during 2003.

For further information please contact Natalie Gatis, ph (08) 8204 9569.

## Significant Events Register

The Significant Events Register is a Microsoft Access database that OCSAR maintains in-house to assist staff in research and analysis by providing a context for the interpretation of criminal justice data.

A number of categories of 'events' are included in the Register, such as:

**Legislative changes** which can effect the statistics because they alter the way the justice sector deals with criminal behaviour. For example, the commencement of the *Expiation of Offences Act 1996* on 3/2/1997 allowed for minor offences to be dealt with by expiation notice. One effect of this was a drop in the number of simple cannabis offences heard in the Magistrates Court.

**Police operations**, including phone-in days

which target a particular area or type of offending, may also result in an increase in the number of reported offences or apprehension statistics.

**A major event which creates large crowds** may affect the number of offences that take place at a given time because they present the opportunity for criminal behaviour to occur. Events which also include the consumption of alcohol may cause more reports of disorderly behaviour offences. Some public holidays fall into this category because major events are often held on those days.

**Administrative changes** affect the way in which matters are dealt with in the criminal justice system.

**School holidays** may explain an increase in youth offending, once again because the opportunity to offend is increased.

In mid 2003, the Criminal

Justice Data Quality Committee, comprising representatives from key areas of the Justice Portfolio, identified that other agencies were also maintaining events lists. A decision was made by the Committee that these separate lists be amalgamated. The resulting list is the Significant Events Register and would be maintained by OCSAR. Updates are provided to the contributing agencies on a quarterly basis. The South Australia Police, Courts Administration Authority, Department of Correctional Services and Child, Youth and Family Service all contribute to and have access to the Register.

*If you have any questions regarding the Significant Events Register, please contact Lynne Sampson, Codes Project Officer, on 82071786.*

## Greening of the Office of Crime Statistics and Research

OCSAR's recycling program commenced in mid 2004 and has recently been adopted by the entire Justice Strategy Division.

OCSAR's move to recycle office waste is aligned with the SA Greening of Government Operations framework (<http://www.greening.sa.gov.au>) to minimize waste and landfill.

All employees have willingly volunteered their time, on a rotational roster, to ensure that they and their workplace are contributing to a more friendly, sustainable work environment.

We encourage other agencies reading this newsletter to review their own recycling approach.

## Staff Profile - Norah Fahy

Norah Fahy joined the Office of Crime Statistics and Research in April 2004 as a Senior Research and Evaluation Officer. In this role, Norah's primary responsibility is to undertake an evaluation of the Magistrates Courts Assessment and Referral Drug Scheme (CARDS), which is one of a number of specialist or diversionary schemes recently established in South Australia under the National Illicit Drug Strategy.

A key focus of Norah's activities has been to establish collaborative partnerships with the CARDS Steering Committee,

scheme co-ordinators, staff and other key stakeholders to implement research design and methodologies for the evaluation.

Prior to her appointment at OCSAR, Norah completed a PhD in Politics at Flinders University, which investigated the impact of illegality on women involved in commercial sex in South Australia. Whilst completing her PhD she also worked as a researcher with senior academic staff at the Institute for Social Research, University of South Australia on a wide range of projects, although a particular focus was investigating the technological communication

concerns of people with disability. During this time, Norah also worked as an academic tutor and lecturer in the areas of politics and social inquiry methods.

Prior to this she worked as a Research Fellow at the Department of General Practice, Flinders University, on two projects, concerned with diagnostic guidelines within general practice and the dissemination of general practice research findings.

Since joining OCSAR, Norah has completed an information paper on early findings from the evaluation, presented to the CARDS Steering Committee and also presented a paper at the

OCSAR 'Illicit Drugs and Crime' Seminar, held in December, 2004.



*Dr Norah Fahy  
Senior Research and  
Evaluation Officer  
BA (Hons) PhD*

## Illicit Drugs and Crime: Exploring South Australia's Response

On 9th December OCSAR held a full-day seminar highlighting the research of the Office in relation to a range of programs from the community and justice sectors that target illicit drug users and drug-related crime, along with research exploring the links between illicit drug use and crime. The purpose of the seminar was to:

- Provide an opportunity to share the key findings from our drug-related work with policy makers, practitioners and the community;
- Provide a forum for discussing the implications of those findings for policy and strategic development; and
- To promote further critical thinking and analysis of the South Australian Justice

Portfolio's broad ranging response to illicit drugs and crime.

Attendees at the seminar were drawn from a wide cross-section of government, including policy makers, police, project staff, community development workers and other interested individuals. Presentations from OCSAR staff focused on evaluation and research conducted by the Office. Evaluation findings were presented on the South Australian Drug Court, the Police Drug Diversion Initiative, the Court Assessment and Referral Drug Scheme (CARDS), Drug Action Teams, Indigenous Drug Action Teams and a rural community resilience project.

Many of the initiatives outlined above are part of

the continuum of responses developed by South Australia in response to the National Illicit Drug Strategy.

Research concerning the link between illicit drugs and crime was highlighted in a presentation by OCSAR Director, Joy Wundersitz, whilst further detail was presented concerning Drug Use Monitoring in Australia and Drug Use Careers of Offenders, which both involve OCSAR analysing South Australian data from national projects auspiced by the Australian Institute of Criminology.

Along with presentations by OCSAR's team of researchers and evaluators, presentations were also provided by representatives and panellists from South Australia Police, the Department for Correctional Services, the Social Inclusion Unit, the

Department of Health and the Justice Strategy Division.

We thank each of the presenters and panellists for their involvement, along with all attendees for their interest and contributions on the day. All staff from OCSAR are thanked for their roles in preparing for the day and assisting the successful conduct of the seminar.

OCSAR is committed to disseminating our research findings at a range of forums. We intend to hold future information sessions and seminars to inform government and other relevant agencies and stakeholders of our research.

## What's New at OCSAR

### Evaluation of Drug Action Teams

OCSAR recently completed a long term evaluation, on behalf of SAPOL, of Drug Action Teams across the state. The evaluation focused on the extent to which the objectives of the initiative were being achieved, the level of satisfaction with the initiative, its strengths and weaknesses, and areas for improvement. OCSAR staff now look forward to working with SAPOL to implement some of the report's recommendations.

### Crime and Justice in South Australia, 2003-Juvenile Justice

This particular volume (part of

a three volume set) deals exclusively with young offenders and the juvenile justice system. Statistics in this report cover the period 1st January 2003 to 31st December 2003.

### Crime and Justice in South Australia, 2003-Adult Courts and Corrections

This is the final volume of a three volume report. This report focuses on criminal matters finalised by the Magistrates, District and Supreme Courts, as well as persons supervised by the Department for Correctional Services, either as prisoners or while undertaking community based correction orders.

It is anticipated that this will be the last Crime and Justice series in this format.

### Offending Profiles of SA Drug Court Pilot Program 'Completers'

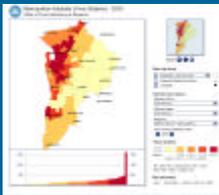
The Drug Court Pilot Program, which commenced operation in May 2000 at the Adelaide Magistrates Court, aims to prevent further offending by ensuring effective interventions and treatment for participants whose offending is linked in some way to illicit drug use. This evaluation examines whether this aim is being achieved by comparing the offending profiles of participants before and after program completion.



*From all the staff at OCSAR we wish you a Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.*



*Crime Mapper*  
now available on  
the OCSAR  
website.



*Crime Mapper* is a new interactive application that enables users to map the geographic distribution of recorded offences for the Adelaide metropolitan area. Users can also request crime and demographic profiles of any local government or statistical local area

Access *Crime Mapper* via  
[www.ocsar.sa.gov.au](http://www.ocsar.sa.gov.au)

*The next issue  
of OCSAR  
NEWS will be  
released in  
February 2005.*

## Successes of the SA Drug Court

The Drug Court Pilot Program, which commenced operation in May 2000 at the Adelaide Magistrates Court, aims (amongst other things) to prevent further offending by ensuring effective interventions and treatment for participants whose offending is linked in some way to illicit drug use. The evaluation examined whether this aim was being achieved by comparing the offending profiles of participants, including both the frequency and severity of recorded offending, before and after program completion.

By 31 March 2004, 43 individuals had completed the program and had at least six month 'free time' in which to offend post program. The evaluation focused on this group. The main findings were that:

- Over three quarters of 'completers' had lower detected offending levels post-program compared

with pre-program.

- Nearly one quarter of 'completers' were not charged with any offence in the post-program period;
- The total number of events charged against the 'completers' dropped from 420 pre-program to 183 post-program. This difference was statistically significant.
- 65% of program 'completers' were apprehended for less serious offences post-program.
- In the pre-program period, approximately 90% of completers had been charged with at least one serious offence. Post-program, the percentage in this category decreased to around one third.
- Despite these positive findings, there was a small group of 'completers' who recorded an increase in the

number and/or seriousness of their offending or who continued to offend at a similar rate and/or level of severity post-program.

Overall, while the evaluation was not in a position to prove conclusively that the Drug Court Pilot Program is achieving its aim of reducing offending amongst drug dependent individuals, the fact that 10 of the 43 'completers' were not apprehended during the post-program 'free time' interval and that, of those who continued to offend, the majority were charged with fewer and/or less serious offences in the post-program period provides some indication that the program may be having a positive effect.

Further information can be found in the evaluation report, entitled *Offending profiles of SA Drug Court Pilot Program 'completers'*, which is available on the OCSAR website.

## Staff Departures

In November, **Elissa Corlett** left OCSAR after completing her one year contract as a Senior Research Officer.

During that time she was responsible for evaluating the Drug Court Pilot Program and she recently completed a report on the offending profiles of program graduates.

Beyond her direct work activities, Elissa contributed to the Office by implementing the 'office recycling program'.

Since leaving, Elissa has been pursuing consultancy activities in her principle area of expertise as an Organisational Psychologist, particularly in relation to workplace dynamics, human resources, workshops and public speaking. She is also keen to pursue her research and advocacy work in relation to ecological issues and programs

on both a professional and volunteer basis.

We wish her all the best in this exciting career move.



Also on the move is **Rob Potter** who, after almost five years with the National CARS team, has secured an ongoing position as Statistician, Accountability and Strategic Futures, within DECS.

In his role as Senior Research Officer with National CARS, Rob has been an integral part of

the production of regular statistical reports, endless data requests and research into all aspects of vehicle theft, including analyses of the effectiveness of types of engine immobilisers.

Rob's out-going personality and sense of humour will be missed around the office and we wish Rob well in his new role. We also wish Rob and his wife, Cecelia, well with the upcoming birth of twins.

