

Crime 2008/09

Offences Against the Person

The broad offence group of Offences Against the Person is comprised of a number of different offence categories, with the volume of offences reported differing significantly across categories. For example, Assaults account for 64% of Offences Against the Person (Figure 1) while Homicide (Murder) accounts for less than 1%. Thus, Assault offences tend to dominate Offences Against the Person, while Homicide (Murder) will have little effect on the overall total.

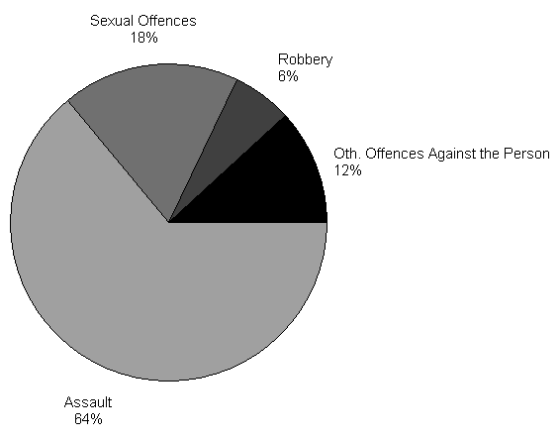


Figure 1: Offences Against the Person (%) - 2008/09*

Overall, the number of Offences Against the Person decreased by 1% in Queensland from 2007/08 to 2008/09. A total of 30,974 offences were reported to police in 2008/09, 322 less than the revised figure from the previous financial year. Taking into account the growth of the Queensland population, the rate of Offences Against the Person decreased by 3% from 729 to 705 offences per 100,000 persons.

Of the 30,974 Offences Against the Person reported to police during the 2008/09 financial year, 22,432 (72%) were cleared by the end of June 2009 compared with 73% cleared the previous year. An additional 3,515 offences reported in previous time periods were also cleared during 2008/09.

As with previous years, North Queensland (Far Northern and Northern Regions) recorded the highest rates of Offences Against the Person, while Metropolitan South Region recorded the lowest. Central and South Eastern Regions were the only two regions to record an increase of 2% and 6% respectively in the period under review.

Fifteen to nineteen year old females were most likely to have been victims of Offences Against the Person in 2008/09 followed by ten to fourteen year old females. In the younger age groups (zero to nineteen years), females were more likely than males to be victims of Offences Against the Person. From the age of twenty years, males were more likely than females to be victims. For 56% of victims of solved offences, the offenders were known to them.

More males were proceeded against for Offences Against the Person compared with females. While only 21% of offenders were female, 18% were male aged fifteen to nineteen years. The likelihood of offending peaked in the fifteen to nineteen year age group for both males and females and decreased with increasing age.

Of those who were found to have committed Offences Against the Person, approximately 57% were proceeded against through an arrest with a further 26% proceeded against through the service of a Notice to Appear.

Homicide (Murder)

Homicide (Murder) is a small volume offence category and, as such, is subject to sizeable fluctuations from one year to the next and from region to region.

The number of Homicide (Murder) offences decreased by 3 offences in Queensland for 2008/09 compared with 2007/08. Of the 49 Homicides reported to police in 2008/09, 43 (88%) were cleared in the same period. An additional 9 offences were cleared from previous periods.

Central Region recorded the highest increase and Northern and Southern Regions recorded the largest decrease of Homicide (Murder) offences within the State. The highest rate was recorded by Far Northern Region and the lowest rate was recorded by Metropolitan North Region.

This year, 67% of the victims of Homicide (Murder) were male. The highest rate of Homicide (Murder) offences occurred for males in the forty-five to forty-nine year age group which recorded a rate of 4 offences per 100,000 resident persons. In 48% of solved cases, the offender was known to the victim.

Males were significantly more likely than females to commit Homicide (Murder) (90%). In 2008/09, males aged fifteen to nineteen years were most likely to offend. In 97% of cases, the offender was proceeded against through an arrest.

Other Homicide

As with Homicide (Murder), Other Homicide is a low-volume offence category. Therefore, it is subject to marked fluctuations from year to year and from area to area. The number of Other Homicide offences increased by 18% during 2008/09, mostly as a result of an increase in Attempted Murder (17 offences).

Factoring in the increase of the Queensland estimated resident population, Other Homicide offences increased by 15% to a rate of 3 offences per 100,000 persons. Of the 113 offences reported to police in 2008/09, 99 (88%) were cleared in the same period. Additionally, 21 offences were cleared from previous periods.

Two of the eight regions recorded decreases in the rate of Other Homicide offences, the largest of which occurred in South Eastern Region. Far Northern and Northern Regions recorded the highest rate per 100,000 persons for Other Homicide in the State.

Just under two-thirds (65%) of the victims of Other Homicide were male with a high proportion aged fifteen to thirty-nine years. For every age group, except for those aged five to fourteen years, males were more likely to be victims than females. In 53% of the solved cases, the offender was known to the victim.

Males were significantly more likely than females to commit Other Homicide offences (85% of offenders were male). In 2008/09, males aged twenty to twenty-four years were most likely to offend. Seventy-six percent of offenders were proceeded against through an arrest, while 19% were issued with a Notice to Appear.

Assault

Assaults comprise approximately 64% of total Offences Against the Person. As such, they tend to dominate this broad offence group. The number of Assaults in Queensland increased by 3% from 2007/08 to 2008/09. This equates to a rate of 449 offences per 100,000 persons in 2008/09.

The overall increase in the rate of Assaults is attributable to increases in Serious Assault, Serious Assault (Other) and Common Assault. Of the 19,721 assaults reported to police in 2008/09, 15,062 (76%) were cleared in the same period with a further 1,759 offences cleared from previous periods.

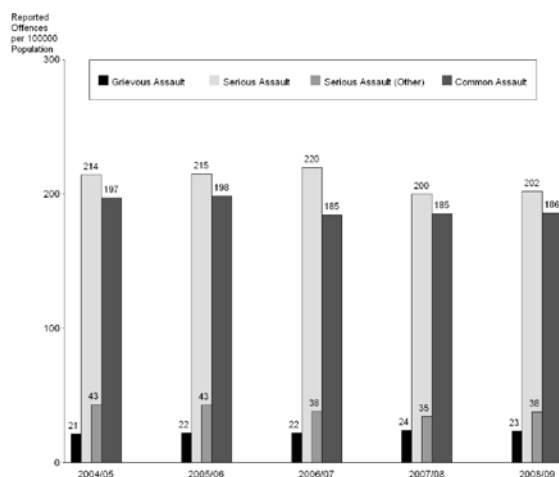


Figure 2: Reported Assaults, Queensland, 2003/04 to 2008/09

Higher rates of Serious Assault were seen between 2004/05 and 2006/07 (Figure 2). A possible explanation for this is a broadening of the definition of Serious Assault to include, for example, assault of a person aged sixty years or more, assault on physically impaired people and assaulting a police officer in the execution of duty.

The seasonal influence on the occurrence of Assaults can be seen clearly in monthly crime trends (see page 19). These offences peak around December of each year and fall to a low around July.

As with previous years, Far Northern and Northern Regions recorded the highest rates of Assault in the State while Metropolitan South Region recorded the lowest. South Eastern Region recorded the largest increase in the rate of Assault, while Metropolitan North Region recorded the greatest decrease.

For all age groups, males were more likely than females to be victims of Assault. Males aged fifteen to twenty-nine were most likely to be victims. From age thirty, the rate of victimisation for males decreased steadily. The age of victimisation for females peaked at the fifteen to nineteen year age cohort. From this age, victimisation decreased respectively for each age group. For 53% of victims of solved offences, the offender was known to them.

Across all age groups, males were also more likely to commit offences of Assault (75% of offenders were male). Males aged fifteen to nineteen years were most likely to offend. Of those people proceeded against, 53% were arrested and 32% were served with a Notice to Appear.

Sexual Offences

Sexual offences are particularly affected by an unpredictable variability in the reported rates due to the fact that offences occurring decades ago are still being reported to police. As offences are counted against the period in which they are reported, rather than when they occurred, increases in crime statistics do not always equate to an increase in victimisation.

The number of Sexual Offences reported to police in 2008/09 decreased by 19% from the number reported in the previous financial year. The number reported equates to a rate of 127 offences reported per 100,000 persons. The decrease in the rate is attributable to a decrease of 19% in both Rape and Attempted Rape Offences and Other Sexual Offences. Of those offences reported in 2008/09, 4,044 (73%) were cleared, with an additional 1,276 offences cleared from previous periods.

All Regions recorded decreases in Sexual Offences which directly attributed to a 21% decrease for Queensland in 2008/09. Northern Region recorded the greatest decrease of 42% while Metropolitan South Region recorded the lowest rate.

The Sexual Offence category is one of two offence categories for which there are more female victims than male (84% of victims were female). Females aged between ten and nineteen years were most likely to be victims of Sexual Offences. Females in this age group comprise 50% of total victims. For 74% of victims of solved offences, the offender was known to them. In 32% of solved cases, the offender was a family member.

In total, 98 females committed Sexual Offences in 2008/09. Thus, 96% of offenders were male. The age distribution of male offenders is unique for this offence type in that the distribution is almost uniform across all age groups with the exception of fifteen to nineteen year olds. The number of offenders is only slightly lower in the older age groups, with males aged fifty years and over representing 20% of all sexual offenders. For those proceeded against, 65% were arrested and 11% were served with a Notice to Appear.

Robbery

An increase of 15% in the number of Armed Robberies reported to police in 2008/09 coupled with a 3% increase in Unarmed Robberies led to an overall 8% increase in the number of Robbery offences reported in the year under review. A total of 1,881 offences were reported to police, which equates to a rate of 43 offences per 100,000 persons. Of these, 962 (51%) were cleared in the period in which they were reported, with an additional 147 offences cleared from previous periods.

The Rates of Robbery increased steadily since the late 1970's, peaking in 1998/99. Since 1998/99 the rate of Robbery offences has been showing a decreasing trend. Although Unarmed Robbery has remained constant over the past two years, Armed Robbery has recorded an increase of 12% (Figure 3).

Robbery offences tend to occur more frequently in the south-east corner of the State as was the case in 2008/09. South Eastern Region recorded the largest increase of 34% and also recorded the highest rate of Robbery in the State. Although Central Region recorded a 10% increase, this area recorded the lowest rate in the State.

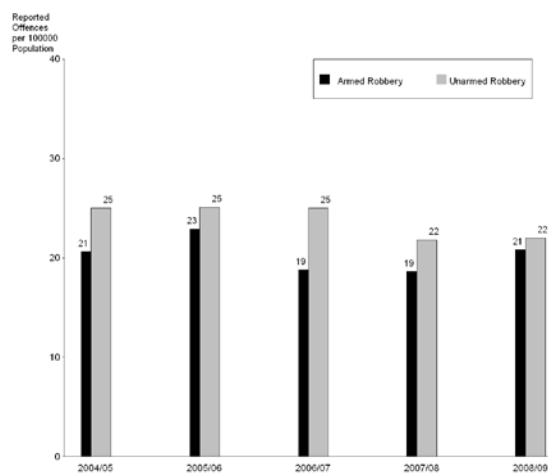


Figure 3: Reported Robbery Offences, Queensland, 2003/04 to 2008/09

For every age group, males were more likely than females to be victims of Robbery, with males aged fifteen to nineteen years most likely to be victims. Males were victim to Robbery in 73% of all cases reported to police. For the majority of victims (80%) of solved Robbery offences, the offender was unknown to them.

Males were significantly more likely than females to commit Robbery offences (86% of offenders were male) and 73% of total offenders were aged between fifteen and twenty-nine years. Of those proceeded against for Robbery offences, 81% were arrested and 10% issued with a Notice to Appear.

Other Offences Against the Person

The category of Other Offences Against the Person includes offences such as Kidnapping and Abduction, Deprivation of Liberty, Extortion, Stalking and Life Endangering Acts.

In 2008/09, Other Offences Against the Person increased by 4% from 3,484 to 3,640 offences. When taking into account the growth of Queensland's population, the rate increased by 2%. Of the 3,640 reported Other Offences Against the Person, 61% were

cleared in the same period. In addition, 303 offences reported in previous periods were also cleared.

Females represented 52% of victims of total Other Offences Against the Person. People most likely to be victims of Other Offences Against the Person were female and aged between ten and nineteen years. For 63% of victims of solved offences, the offender was known to them.

Offences Against Property

The offence group of Offences Against Property is comprised of a number of offence categories. As with Offences Against the Person, the contribution of each category to the total differs significantly (Figure 4). In 2008/09, Other Theft (excl. Unlawful Entry) accounted for 40% of total Offences Against Property and was the highest in volume of the property offence categories. Unlawful Entry with Intent accounted for 22% of offences, with Other Property Damage and Fraud accounting for 21% and 9% respectively. As such, this broad offence group tends to be dominated by Other Theft (excl. Unlawful Entry) and Unlawful Entry with Intent, with offence categories such as Arson having little effect.

The number of reported Offences Against Property for the 2008/09 period remained steady when compared with the 2007/08 period. Factoring in the growth of the Queensland population, Offences Against Property were reported at a rate of 4,618 offences per 100,000 persons in 2008/09, a decrease of 2% from the previous year. Of all Offences Against Property reported in 2008/09, 31% were cleared in the same period with a further 8,999 offences cleared from previous periods.

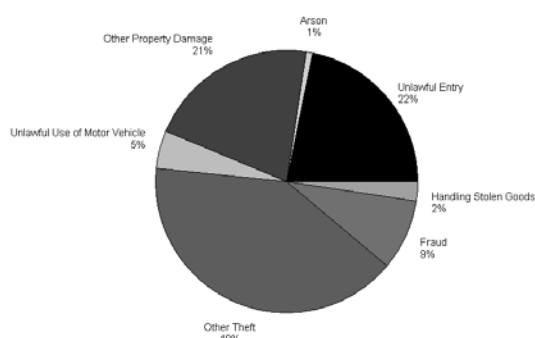


Figure 4: Offences Against Property (%) - 2008/09*

South Eastern Region recorded the highest rate of Offences Against Property (5,392 offences per 100,000 persons) in the State, while Metropolitan North Region recorded the largest decrease (8%). North Coast Region recorded the lowest rate (3,854 offences per 100,000 persons).

Overall, Offences Against Property were more likely to be committed by males (76% of offenders were male).

Over one quarter (28%) of offenders proceeded against for Offences Against Property were male aged between fifteen and nineteen years. Of the total people proceeded against for Offences Against Property, 35% were arrested, 47% were served with a Notice to Appear and 13% were cautioned.

Unlawful Entry

The number of Unlawful Entry offences decreased by 2%. This equates to an 4% reduction in the rate once the growth of the Queensland population is taken into account. Of the 44,348 offences reported to police in 2008/09, 20% were cleared in the same period with a further 2,156 offences cleared from previous periods.

The number of Unlawful Entry of Dwellings decreased by 3%, the number of Unlawful Entry of Shops increased by 2% and Unlawful Entry of Other Premises decreased by 1%.

Three of the eight regions recorded increases, the largest of which was Central Region (13%). Despite South Eastern Region recording a decrease of 4% in Unlawful Entry offences, the region recorded the highest rate in the State (1,217 offences per 100,000 persons). Northern Region recorded the largest decrease of 20% in the period under review.

Most Unlawful Entry offences were committed by young males. In fact, 90% of offenders were male and approximately 60% were male aged under twenty-five years. Of all offenders proceeded against for Unlawful Entry offences, 51% were arrested, 10% cautioned and 32% served with a Notice to Appear.

Arson

Arson is the lowest in volume of the Offences Against Property categories and, as such, exerts very little influence on the Offences Against Property total. Arson offences increased by 16% from 2007/08 to 2008/09. The rate of offences increased by 14%, from 29 to 33 offences per 100,000 persons. Of the 1,457 offences reported in 2008/09, 297 (20%) were cleared in the same period. An additional 22 offences were cleared from previous periods.

Far Northern and Metropolitan North Regions recorded decreases of 9% and 7% respectively. The majority of regions recorded increases, the largest of which was recorded in South Eastern Region (27%). Similar to previous years, South Eastern Region recorded the highest rate (56 offences per 100,000 persons). Metropolitan North Region recorded the lowest rate of Arson offences (18 offences per 100,000 persons). This year, 86% of offenders were male compared to 87% recorded in the previous year. Fifteen to nineteen

year old males were most likely to be proceeded against for Arson. Approximately 66% of offenders were arrested, 10% cautioned and 13% served with a Notice to Appear.

Other Property Damage

The number of Other Property Damage offences reported 2008/09 remained constant when compared to the previous financial year. The rate of offences decreased by 2%, from 996 to 975 offences per 100,000 persons. Of those offences reported to police in 2008/09, 11,661 (27%) were cleared during this period, with an additional 1,320 offences cleared from previous time periods.

Northern Region recorded the highest rate of 1,204 offences per 100,000 persons. The largest decrease was recorded by Metropolitan South Region (9%). This region also recorded the lowest rate of Other Property Damage offences (808 offences per 100,000 persons).

As with most offence types, fifteen to nineteen year old males were most likely to be proceeded against for Other Property Damage offences. Only 14% of offenders were female and only 15% of offenders were aged thirty years or more. In total, 32% of offenders were arrested for this offence type, 16% were cautioned and 48% were served with a Notice to Appear.

Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicle

Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicle offences decreased by 4% in 2008/09 following a sizeable decrease of 11% reported in 2007/08. This reduction is equivalent to 387 fewer offences reported during 2008/09.

In 2008/09, 9,557 Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicle offences were reported to police. Of these, 2,618 (27%) were cleared during this period, with an additional 518 offences cleared from previous periods (note: for recovery rates see Glossary, page 151). In 2008/09, Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicle offences were reported at a rate of 218 offences for every 100,000 persons.

Southern and Far Northern Regions were the only two areas to record increases of 6% and 8% respectively. Metropolitan South and Metropolitan North Regions recorded the largest decreases while Central Region recorded the lowest rate of 142 offences per 100,000 persons.

Males aged fifteen to nineteen years were most likely to commit Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicle offences (41% of male offenders were in this group). Forty-six percent of all offenders were aged fifteen to nineteen years. Approximately 55% of offenders were arrested and 31% were served with a Notice to Appear.

Other Theft (excluding Unlawful Entry)

Other Theft (excluding Unlawful Entry) offences increased by 4% from 2007/08 to 2008/09. This category is the highest in volume of the Offences Against Property categories and thus exerts a significant influence on property crime as a total. In 2008/09, 82,064 Other Theft offences were reported to police, of which 28% were cleared during this period. A further 2,441 were cleared from previous periods.

All sub-categories of Other Theft offences recorded increases: Steal from Vehicles (3%), Other Stealing (2%), Shop Stealing (8%) and Stealing from Dwellings (8%). Approximately 74% of Shop Stealing offences were cleared during the 2008/09 period, making this the highest clearance rate within the Other Theft sub-categories.

The highest rate of Other Theft (excluding Unlawful Entry) occurred in South Eastern Region while the lowest rate was recorded in Central Region in the year under review. Far Northern Region recorded the highest increase (9%) and Metropolitan North Region recorded the largest decrease (3%) of Other Theft (excluding Unlawful Entry) offences during 2008/09.

The proportion of female offenders for Other Theft was higher than for most other offence types at 36%, or just over one third. For both males and females, those in the fifteen to nineteen year age group were most likely to commit Other Theft offences. Arrest rates are low for this offence type at 25%, while 52% were served with a Notice to Appear and 19% (mostly juvenile) were cautioned. Ninety-three percent of offenders cautioned were juvenile (i.e. aged between ten and sixteen years).

Fraud

Queensland recorded a decrease in most sub-categories of Fraud offences during the current period: Fraud by Credit Card offences (9%), Identity Fraud offences (14%) and Fraud by Cheque offences (32%). This resulted in an overall decrease of 8% in total Fraud offences. Fraud by Computer offences was the only category to record an increase (12%) in 2008/09.

Of the 17,768 offences reported in 2008/09, 12,518 (70%) were cleared in the same period with a further 2,345 offences cleared from previous periods.

Metropolitan North Region recorded the highest rate of Fraud offences despite recording a 11% decrease. Southern Region recorded the largest decrease (23%) while South Eastern Region recorded the greatest increase (7%).

Historically, fraud was unique in that the age of those proceeded against tended to be older when compared with other offence types, though this trend appears to have shifted over recent years. A relatively higher proportion of females commit Fraud offences compared with other offence types. Approximately 38% of offenders were female. Males aged twenty to twenty-four years and females aged fifteen to nineteen years were most likely to commit Fraud offences. Thirty-two percent of offenders were arrested, while 62% were issued with a Notice to Appear.

Handling Stolen Goods

Decreases in all of the sub-categories of Handling Stolen Goods offences resulted in an overall decrease of 18%. Of the total 4,777 offences reported to police in 2008/09, 4,370 (91%) were cleared in the same period, with a further 197 offences cleared from previous periods.

Metropolitan North Region recorded the highest rate of Handling Stolen Goods offences despite recording the largest decrease of 38%. North Coast Region recorded the lowest rate in the year under review.

As with most offence categories, males were most likely to commit Handling Stolen Goods offences (76% of offenders were male) and males in the fifteen to nineteen year age group were most likely to offend. Offenders were more likely to be served with a Notice to Appear (57%) although 33% were arrested.

Other Offences

Other Offences is a broad collection of disparate offence categories. These categories are distinct from Offences Against the Person and Property in that they are generally offences detected by police rather than being reported by the public. Drug Offences, Traffic Offences and Prostitution Offences are examples of this. Trends and patterns in the levels of Other Offences are therefore often indicative of specific initiatives of the Police Service rather than being indicative of the level of crime actually occurring. As such, increases are often seen as a positive improvement of police detection rates.

As a total, the number of Other Offences decreased by 1% statewide from 168,306 offences recorded in 2007/08 to 167,448 offences recorded in 2008/09. This equates to a rate of 3,813 offences per 100,000 persons in 2008/09.

Five of the eight regions recorded decreases in total Other Offences with Metropolitan South recording the largest decrease of 12%. Rates are traditionally higher in the northern part of the State and this trend was again repeated in 2008/09. Far Northern Region

recorded the highest rates, while Metropolitan South Region recorded the lowest rate.

Drug Offences

Decreases in all sub-categories of Drug Offences contributed to an overall decrease of 9%. When taking into account the growth of Queensland's population, Drug Offences recorded a decrease of 11%.

Far Northern Region recorded the highest rate of Drug Offences in the State. The only increase was recorded by South Eastern Region (7%). The largest decrease (27%) was recorded by Southern Region and Metropolitan South Region recorded the lowest rate (767 offences per 100,000 persons).

Breach of Domestic Violence Protection Orders

Breach of Domestic Violence Protection Orders are a breach of a court order and, as such, are classed as "Regina" offences; hence, the inclusion under Other Offences and not Offences Against the Person.

The 2008/09 financial year saw a 5% increase in the number of Breach of Domestic Violence Protection Orders. A total of 8,567 offences were reported to police, equating to a rate of 195 offences per 100,000 persons.

Metropolitan Regions recorded the lowest rate of Breach of Domestic Violence Protection Order offences in the State, while the northern regions again recorded the highest. Metropolitan North Region recorded the largest decrease (9%). Far Northern Region recorded the highest rate at 438 offences per 100,000 persons.

Weapons Act Offences

The number of Weapons Act Offences decreased by 12% from 3,905 offences reported in 2007/08 to 3,432 offences reported in 2008/09. The overall decrease is attributable to decreases in four of the five weapons sub-categories. The largest decreases were a 41% fall in "Bomb, possession and/or use of" and a 28% fall in Unlawful possn conc. Firearm sub-categories.

Seven of the eight regions recorded decreases in Weapons Act Offences during the 2008/09 financial year. Far Northern and Metropolitan South Regions recorded the largest decrease of 24% apiece. During 2008/09, Far Northern Region recorded the highest rate of 142 offences per 100,000 persons while Metropolitan South Region recorded the lowest rate of 54 offences per 100,000 persons.

Good Order Offences

Good Order Offences increased by 3% from 2007/08 to 2008/09. A total of 50,700 offences were detected by police which equates to a rate of 1,154 offences for every 100,000 persons. An increase in Fare Evasion and Public Nuisance offences contributed to the overall increase. Public Nuisance offences, being the largest sub-category, had the most impact on the outcome.

Northern Region recorded the largest increase of 19% which attributed to the region recording the highest rate for Good Order Offences. Higher rates are generally seen in the northern regions and this occurred again in 2008/09. Similarly, the lowest rate traditionally occurs in Metropolitan South Region and the current year was consistent.

Traffic and Related Offences

Traffic and Related Offences increased by 2% from 41,153 to 42,073 offences. Two of the four sub-categories recorded increases of which the largest was a 17% increase in Disqualified Driving. Drink Driving is the largest in volume of the sub-categories and, as such, exerts the greatest influence on the Traffic and Related Offences total. The rates for this sub-category recorded a 2% decrease per 100,000 persons.

Metropolitan South Region recorded the largest decrease while Metropolitan North recorded the lowest rate. Southern Region recorded the largest increase of 22% in the period under review. Far Northern Region recorded a 2% decrease even though the region recorded the highest rate of 1,559 offences per 100,000 persons.

Please note that the Traffic and Related Offences category referred to above includes Dangerous Operation of a Vehicle, Drink Driving, Disqualified Driving and Interfere with the Mechanism of a Motor Vehicle only. For information on Speed and Red Light Camera Notices or Random Breath Tests please refer to the Traffic section on pages 135-137.

Due to the implementation of the new administrative system QPRIME, the recording methodology applied to Disqualified Driving has been changed. Hence, caution should be exercised when comparing the 2007/08 and 2008/09 figures for Disqualified Driving and total Traffic and Related Offences with previous years.

