

# Crime 1998/99

## Offences Against the Person

The broad offence division of Offences Against the Person is comprised of a number of different offence sub-categories with the volume of offences reported differing significantly across sub-categories. For example, Assaults account for nearly 60% of Offences Against the Person while Homicides account for less than 1% (Figure 1). Thus, Assault offences tend to dominate Person Offences while Homicide will have little effect on the overall total.

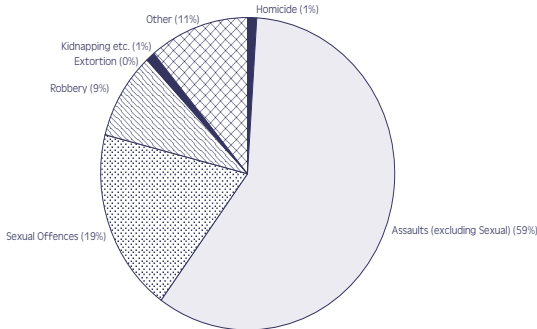


Figure 1: Offences Against the Person (%) - 1998/99

Reported Offences Against the Person rose by 7% between 1997/98 and 1998/99 from 28,300 to 30,141 offences. Taking into account the growth of the Queensland population, the rate of offences rose by 5% from 819 to 857 offences reported per 100,000 persons.

Of the 30,141 Offences Against the Person reported to police during the 1998/99 financial year, 63% were cleared by the end of June 1999, a 1% increase on the clearance rate reported in 1997/98. In addition, 2698 offences reported in previous periods were cleared during 1998/99.

Whilst most of the regions recorded similar rates, Far Northern and Northern Regions recorded rates significantly higher. All regions recorded increases except South Eastern (a 2% decrease) and Metropolitan North (unchanged from the previous year).

Fifteen to nineteen year old females were most likely to be victims of Offences Against the Person followed closely by twenty-five to twenty-nine year old males. In

the younger age groups (0 - 19 years) females were more likely to be victims than males while in the older age groups (20 years and older) males were more likely to be victims.

Males were significantly more likely to commit Offences Against the Person than females, particularly in the younger age groups. Males aged fifteen to nineteen years were most likely to offend with the likelihood of offending decreasing sharply with increasing age. Only 16% of offenders were female, with this figure remaining unchanged from that reported in 1997/98.

The relationship between the offender and victim was recorded in approximately 13,000 Offences Against the Person (excluding offences where the relationship was recorded as not applicable). Of these, the offender was known to the victim in 56% of cases and was unknown in 38% of cases (6% were not stated).

## Homicide

The low numbers involved in Homicide offences can result in large fluctuations from one year to the next. The figures for 1998/99 are the lowest experienced by Queensland since the early 1980's.

There was a 17% decrease in Homicide offences from 275 offences reported in 1997/98 to 228 offences reported in 1998/99. This equates to an 18% decrease in the rate of Homicide offences from 8 to 6 offences reported per 100,000 population. The overall decrease in Homicides is the result of decreases in Murder (67 to 63 offences), Attempted Murder (135 to 125 offences) and Manslaughter (69 to 38 offences) within which the largest reduction occurred in Driving Causing Death offences (57 to 32).

Approximately 87% of Homicide offences reported in 1998/99 were cleared in the same period. This figure remains unchanged from that reported in 1997/98. A further 199 offences were cleared from previous periods.

Overall, 72% of Homicide victims were male. In fact, males aged twenty-five to twenty-nine years were most likely to be victims with males aged twenty to twenty-

four not far behind. From the age of fifteen years, males were more likely to be victims of Homicide than females. Under the age of fifteen, however, females were more likely to be victims than males.

More males than females committed Homicide offences with males aged fifteen to nineteen years most likely to offend. In approximately 66% of cases, the victim was known to the offender.

## Assault

As stated previously, Assaults comprise approximately 60% of total Offences Against the Person and, as such, tend to dominate this broad offence division. Reported Assaults increased by 5% in 1998/99 from those reported in 1997/98 largely due to an increase of 10% in Other Assault (non-serious). Serious Assault also increased from 10,250 offences recorded in 1997/98 to 10,470 offences recorded in 1998/99, an increase of 2%. The clearance rate for Assaults remains the same as that reported in 1997/98 at 68% with an additional 1589 offences cleared from previous periods.

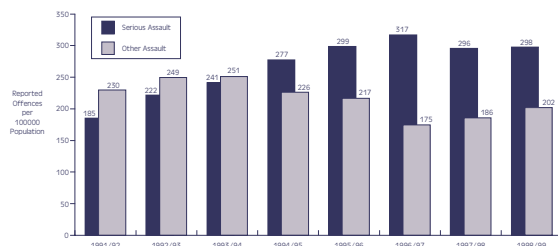


Figure 2: Reported Assaults, Queensland - 1998/99

Since 1994/95, the trend for Other Assault to be reported at a higher rate than Serious Assault has reversed. Recent years have seen much higher rates of Serious Assault (Figure 2).

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.

For every age group, there were more male victims than female. While males aged twenty-five to twenty-nine were more frequent victims than males in other age groups, females aged fifteen to nineteen were more frequent victims than those in other age groups. Victimization rates decrease significantly with increasing age.

Males were significantly more likely than females to commit an Assault (80% of offenders were male). Males

aged fifteen to nineteen years were most likely to offend, followed closely by males aged twenty to twenty-four years. From this age there is a downward trend as age increases. Overall, nearly 50% of offenders were males aged between fifteen and twenty-nine years.

## 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.

Overall, the number of reported Sexual Offences increased by 8% from 1997/98 to 1998/99. Both sub-categories of Sexual Offences increased: Rape and Attempted Rape rose by 19% while Other Sexual Offences rose by 7%. The increase seen in this offence category can be directly attributed to a large number of charges preferred against a single offender for incidents occurring over a number of years. The clearance rate of Sexual Offences rose from 67% in 1997/98 to 70% in 1998/99 with a further 712 offences cleared from previous periods.

The Sexual Offence category is the only offence category for which there are more female victims than male (78% of victims were female). Females aged between ten and nineteen years are most likely to be victims of Sexual Offences. In fact, females in these age groups comprise more than one-third of victims.

In total, only thirty-one females committed Sexual Offences in 1998/99, sixteen more than for the previous year. Thus, 98% of offenders were male. The age distribution of male offenders is unique for this offence type in that the distribution is almost uniform across age groups. The number of offenders is only slightly lower in the youngest and older age groups with males aged thirty to thirty-four and forty to forty-four most likely to commit a Sexual Offence. Approximately 83% of victims were known to the offender; 31% were family members (not including partners).

## Robbery

Robbery Offences increased by 9% in 1998/99. This follows increases of 5%, 8% and 9% over previous financial years. Factoring in the growth of the Queensland population, the rate of Robbery Offences

increased by 7% from 69 to 74 per 100,000 population of which 35% were cleared in the current period.

Armed Robbery rose by 5% from 1246 offences reported in 1997/98 to 1310 offences reported in 1998/99; Unarmed Robbery rose from 1,126 to 1,276 reported offences, an increase of 13%. Rates of Robbery have been increasing substantially since the late 1980's with this year's rate contributing significantly to the overall increase. Rates of Armed Robbery have overtaken rates of Unarmed Robbery over the past two financial years (Figure 3). Previously, Unarmed Robbery was reported at a higher rate than Armed Robbery.

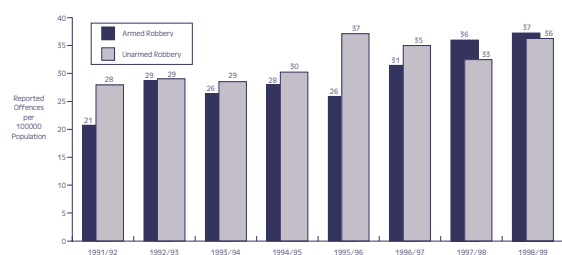


Figure 3: Reported Robbery Offences, Queensland - 1998/99

Robbery Offences tend to occur more frequently in the south east corner of the state and 1998/99 was no exception. In addition to recording the highest rate in Queensland, Metropolitan North Region also recorded a 23% increase for the current financial year compared with the last financial year. In fact, all regions except Far Northern and Northern recorded an increase in the rate of Robbery Offences.

Males aged fifteen to nineteen years were most likely to be victims of Robbery. In the younger age groups (under 30 years) males were significantly more likely to be victims than females. In the older age groups, however, victimisation rates are similar for males and females.

Of those offenders proceeded against for Robbery Offences in 1998/99, 88% were male and nearly 40% were males aged between fifteen and nineteen years (inclusive). Approximately 96% of offenders were younger than 40 years of age. As with most offence types, the risk of offending decreased significantly with increasing age.

### Extortion, Kidnapping / Abduction and Other

Extortion, the lowest in volume of the Offences Against the Person sub-categories, experienced a 4% decrease in 1998/99 from 72 to 69 offences. Of these, 51% were cleared (up from 43% cleared in 1997/98).

Kidnapping, Abduction, Deprivation of Liberty offences, etc also experienced a reduction (3%) from 411 offences in 1997/98 to 398 offences recorded in 1998/99. Approximately 66% of these were cleared in the 1998/99 financial year, increasing from the 1997/98 reported figure of 60%.

Other Offences Against the Person include offences such as Driving Causing Grievous Bodily Harm, Stalking, Illtreatment of Children, Defamation/Libel, Armed to Cause Fear, Endangering Lives on transport and Other Offences Endangering Life, *n.e.c.*. In 1998/99 Other Offences Against the Person increased by 12% from 2,806 to 3,140. Of these, 44% were cleared in the same period with this clearance rate higher by 2% from that reported previously. In addition, 200 offences reported in previous periods were cleared.

### Offences Against Property

The offence division of Offences Against Property is comprised of a number of offence sub-categories. As with Offences Against the Person, the contribution of each sub-category to the total differs significantly (Figure 4). In 1998/99, Other Theft (excl. Unlawful Entry)(formerly Stealing (excl. Motor Vehicle Theft)) accounted for 36% of total Offences Against Property and was the highest volume of the offence sub-categories. Unlawful Entry accounted for 26% of offences with Other Property Damage and Motor Vehicle Theft accounting for 19% and 7% respectively.

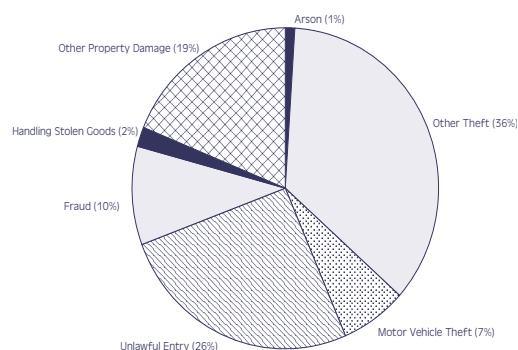


Figure 4: Offences Against Property (%) - 1998/99

Reported Offences Against Property increased 5% from 267,147 offences reported in 1997/98 to 280,408 offences reported in 1998/99. This year's figure equates to 846 offences reported per 100,000 population, an increase of 3% from that reported last financial year. Of all offences reported in the 1998/99 financial year, 24% were cleared with an additional 10,752 offences cleared from previous periods.

Metropolitan North Region recorded the highest rate of Property Offences at 9,431 per 100,000 population, an increase of 2% from the previous year. Northern Region experienced the highest increase (14%) followed closely by Metropolitan South Region (13%). South Eastern, Southern, Central and Far Northern Regions all recorded decreases of 2%, 2%, 8% and 3% respectively.

Of those offenders proceeded against for Offences Against Property, 31% were male aged fifteen to nineteen years. Males were more likely to offend at every age group than females, who made up only 21% of offenders. As with most offence types, the risk of offending dropped dramatically as age increased with 80% of offenders aged under 30 years.

### **Unlawful Entry**

Unlawful Entry offences decreased in 1998/99 by 2% from 74,537 to 72,832 offences. Factoring in the growth in population from 1997/98 to 1998/99, the rate of Unlawful Entry offences decreased by 4% from 2,157 to 2,072 offences per 100,000 persons. Of all offences reported in the 1998/99 financial year, 13% were cleared, with this figure remaining unchanged from that reported in the previous financial year. A further 2,287 offences were cleared from previous periods.

Unlawful Entry of Dwellings decreased by 4% although there was a 5% increase in the numbers of offences involving violence (from 777 to 813 offences). Unlawful Entry of Shops rose by 10%, although the clearance rate associated with this offence sub-category rose by 1% to 16%, slightly higher than for Unlawful Entry as a whole.

Northern Region experienced the highest rate of Unlawful Entry in 1998/99 at 811 offences per 100,000 population. This figure was 1% higher than that reported for the 1997/98 financial year. Far Northern, Southern and Metropolitan South Regions also recorded increases of 6%, 3% and 2% respectively. Central, South Eastern and Metropolitan North Regions all experienced sizeable decreases in Unlawful Entry rates of 21%, 10% and 12% respectively.

Most Unlawful Entry offences were committed by young males. In fact, 41% of all offenders proceeded against were male aged fifteen to nineteen years while 58% were male aged ten to nineteen years. Only 5% of offenders were aged over thirty-five years and only 10% were female.

### **Arson**

Arson offences increased by 2% between 1997/98 and 1998/99 after recording no change between 1996/97 and 1997/98. Thus, this offence category has stabilised in recent years (see page 37 for yearly trends). A total of 1,673 offences were reported to police in 1998/99 of which 9% were cleared.

The highest rate of Arson Offences (83 per 100,000 population) occurred in South Eastern Region, which also experienced an increase of 4% from the rate recorded in this region previously. Far Northern Region reported the largest decrease of 11% while Metropolitan North Region reported the largest increase (9%). Central Region recorded the lowest rate of Arson Offences at 21 per 100,000 population, one quarter of that recorded in South Eastern Region.

Of those individuals proceeded against for Arson, 87% were male. Fifteen to nineteen year old males were most likely to commit an offence followed by ten to fourteen year old males. Only 27 females were proceeded against for Arson Offences.

### **Other Property Damage**

Following a 3% decrease between 1996/97 and 1997/98, Other Property Damage offences increased by 7% between 1997/98 and 1998/99. In total, 54,430 offences were reported to police during 1998/99 of which approximately 18% were cleared.

Northern Region experienced the highest rate of Other Property Damage offences during the 1998/99 financial year (1,981 per 100,000 population). Both Northern and North Coast Regions recorded sizeable increases in this offence type of 18% and 22% respectively. Far Northern, Southern and South Eastern Regions all recorded decreases while the rate recorded by Metropolitan South Region remained unchanged from the previous year.

As with most offence types, fifteen to nineteen year old males were most likely to be proceeded against for Other Property Damage offences. Only 11% of offenders were female. Furthermore, only 8% of offenders were aged over thirty-five years.

## Motor Vehicle Theft

The previous two Statistical Reviews reported significant decreases in Motor Vehicle Theft of 6% and 11% respectively. For the year under review, this trend was reversed showing a 14% increase across Queensland from 16,294 offences reported in 1997/98 to 18,577 offences reported in 1998/99. This equates to a rate of 528 offences reported for every 100,000 persons. Approximately 21% of all Motor Vehicle Theft reported to police in 1998/99 was cleared, an increase of 1% from the previous financial year.

In addition, Queensland had the lowest victimisation rate in 1998 (453.98 per 100,000 persons) as reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics' *Recorded Crime* (Catalogue 4510.0).

While South Eastern Region reported the highest rate of Motor Vehicle Theft at 812 offences per 100,000 population, Northern Region recorded the highest increase between 1997/98 and 1998/99 (61%). North Coast, Metropolitan North and Metropolitan South Regions also recorded sizeable increases of 23%, 9% and 24% respectively. Far Northern and Southern both reported decreases of 4% while Central Region recorded a decrease of 11%.

A total of 5,479 offenders were proceeded against for Motor Vehicle Theft of which 5% were aged over thirty-five years and 10% were female. Just over 51% of offenders were males aged fifteen to nineteen years making them the most frequent offenders. Over half of all female offenders were also aged between fifteen and nineteen (inclusive) resulting in a total of 57% for all offenders in this age group.

## Other Theft (excluding Unlawful Entry)

Reported Other Theft (excluding Unlawful Entry) offences rose by 8% between 1997/98 and 1998/99 from 93,113 to 100,748 offences. Taking into account the population increase, the rate increased by 6% to 2,866 offences per 100,000 population. Of those offences reported in the 1998/99 financial year, 21% were cleared with this figure remaining unchanged from that reported for the previous year.

Vehicles (Steal from/Enter with Intent) is shown this year as a separate offence sub-category of Other Theft (excluding Unlawful Entry). Stock Stealing is now included under the sub-category of Other Stealing. All sub-categories increased with Vehicles (Steal from/Enter

with Intent) increasing by 17%, the largest increase, and Stealing from Dwellings increasing by 11%.

The highest rate of Other Theft (excluding Unlawful Entry) occurred in South Eastern Region (3,450 per 100,000 population) followed closely by Metropolitan North Region (3,272 per 100,000 population). The largest increase in the rate of this offence type for the year under review occurred in Metropolitan South Region (19%). Rates in Far Northern and South Eastern Regions remained virtually unchanged from the previous year.

The proportion of female offenders for Other Theft was higher than for most offence types at 29%, or just under one-third. The rate of male offenders was highest for the fifteen to nineteen age group while for females the highest rate occurred for ten to fourteen year olds.

## Fraud

There was a statewide increase of 5% in Fraud Offences largely due to a 26% increase in Fraud by Credit Card. A total of 27,034 offences were reported to police in 1998/99 of which 70% were cleared. In addition, a further 3,847 offences were cleared from previous periods.

Most regions experienced an increase in the rate of reported Fraud Offences with Metropolitan North Region experiencing the largest increase of 16%. Far Northern, Central and Southern all recorded reductions of 12%, 15% and 22% respectively. Metropolitan North reported the highest rate of Fraud Offences at 1,432 per 100,000 population while Southern Region recorded the lowest rate at 469 offences per 100,000 population.

Fraud is unique in that the age of those proceeded against tended to be older when compared with other offence types. For males and females, offenders are most frequently aged between twenty and twenty-four years. Also, nearly one-third (30%) of offenders are female. For males particularly, substantial numbers of offenders are older (61% of male offenders were aged twenty-five to forty-nine years).

## Handling Stolen Goods

Reported Handling Stolen Goods offences increased 4% from 4,922 offences reported in 1997/98 to 5,114 offences reported in 1998/99. Of these, 96% were cleared, an increase of 1% on offences cleared in 1997/98. The overall increase in this offence type is attributable to increases in the sub-categories of Possess

Property Suspected Stolen (24%) and Possess, Receive, Dispose of Tainted Property (17%).

Metropolitan North Region recorded the highest rate of Handling Stolen Goods Offences (9,193 per 100,000 population) while Central Region recorded the lowest (112 per 100,000 population). Far Northern Region recorded a 19% decrease while Metropolitan South recorded a 19% increase.

As with most offence types, males and females aged fifteen to nineteen years were most likely to commit Handling Stolen Goods Offences and the likelihood of offending decreased with increasing age. Approximately 23% of offenders were female.

### **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 reported to police by the public. Drug Offences, Traffic Offences and Prostitution are examples of this. Trends and patterns in the levels of Other Offences are therefore often indicative of changing priorities 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, Other Offences increased by 5% statewide from 94,072 offences recorded in 1997/98 to 99,173 offences recorded in 1998/99. This equates to a rate of 2,821 offences per 100,000 persons.

The highest rate of Other Offences was seen in Far Northern Region (5,439 per 100,000 population) with the lowest rate occurring in Metropolitan South Region (1,828 per 100,000 population) Southern region exhibited the largest increase over the 1998/99 financial year of 14%.

### **Drug Offences**

In total, 33,570 Drug Offences were detected by police in 1998/99, 3% less than was recorded in 1997/98. The overall decrease occurred as a result of reductions in all offence sub-categories except Trafficking (which rose by 9%). The largest decrease was recorded for Produce Dangerous Drugs at 21%. Possession of Dangerous Drugs, the largest volume offence sub-category, remained virtually unchanged from the figure recorded for the previous financial year.

Although Far Northern Region recorded the highest rate of Drug Offences (1,735 per 100,000 population) in 1998/99, this region also recorded the largest decrease (17%) in the number of reported offences. Rates were similar for the remaining regions with Metropolitan South recording the lowest at 686 per 100,000 population.

### **Breach of Domestic Violence Protection Orders**

This is the first year that Breach of Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVO) are reported as a separate sub-category under Other Offences. Breach of DVOs 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 1998/99 financial year saw an 8% increase in Breach of DVOs to 5,177 offences. This equates to a rate of 147 offences reported for every 100,000 persons. The highest rate for the state was recorded in Far Northern Region (406 offences per 100,000 population), nearly three times higher than the state average, while the lowest was recorded in Metropolitan North Region (72 offences per 100,000 population).

### **Weapons Act Offences**

This is the second of the Other Offences reported as a separate sub-category for the first time in this current Statistical Review. Weapons Act Offences increased by 20% from 3,637 offences reported in 1997/98 to 4,357 offences reported in 1998/99. A substantive increase of 123% in Possession and/or Use Other Weapons, Restricted Items was largely responsible for the overall increase in Weapons Act Offences, although all sub-categories except Unlawful Possession Firearm - Other experienced increases.

All regions except Far Northern and Metropolitan North experienced increases in Weapons Act Offences between 1997/98 and 1998/99 with the largest increase occurring in North Coast Region (54%). Despite a 12% decrease, Far Northern Region remained the highest for the state at 262 offences per 100,000 persons. Metropolitan North, Metropolitan South and South Eastern Regions all recorded rates below the state average.

## **Good Order Offences**

Good Order Offences increased by 19% between 1997/98 and 1998/99. Approximately 586 offences were reported in 1998/99 for every 100,000 persons. The overall increase can be attributed to increases in every offence sub-category except Language Offences, the largest of which was a 33% increase in Resist, Hinder, Obstruct Police. Indecent Behaviour and Disorderly Conduct rose by 18% and 14% respectively.

Substantive increases in Good Order Offences were experienced by every region except Metropolitan North. While South Eastern recorded the largest increase (48%), Northern recorded a 17% rise, which succeeded in bringing the recorded rate to just below that reported for Northern, the highest in the state.

## **Traffic and Related Offences**

Traffic and Related Offences rose from 25,735 offences reported in 1997/98 to 26,754 offences reported in 1998/99, an increase of 4%. All sub-categories except Interfere with Mechanism of Motor Vehicle experienced increases of which Dangerous Operation of a Vehicle was the highest at 15%.

Far Northern Region again experienced the highest rate of Traffic Offences (1,434 per 100,000 population) while Metropolitan South recorded the lowest (464 per 100,000 population). Central Region recorded the largest decrease (11%) whereas North Coast recorded the largest increase (15%).

