

Crime 1999/2000

Offences Against the Person

The broad offence division 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 nearly 60% of Offences Against the Person while Homicides account for approximately 1% (Figure 1). Thus, Assault offences tend to dominate person offences while Homicide will have little effect on the overall total.

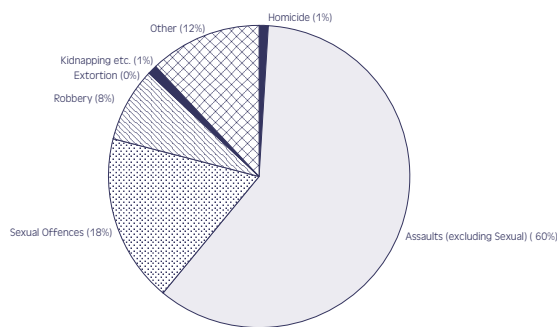


Figure 1: Offences Against the Person (%) - 1999/00

Overall, Offences Against the Person decreased by 2% in Queensland from 1998/99 to 1999/00. A total of 29,580 offences were reported to police in 1999/00, 586 fewer than for the previous financial year. Taking into account the growth of the Queensland population, the rate of person offences decreased by 4% to 828 offences reported per 100,000 persons.

Of the 29,580 Offences Against the Person reported to police during the 1999/00 financial year, 18,692 (63%) were cleared by the end of June 2000. In addition, 2,545 offences reported in previous periods were also cleared during 1999/2000.

Five of the eight regions recorded decreases in person offences, the largest of which was a 10% drop in Northern Region. While Central Region remained virtually unchanged, Far Northern and South Eastern Regions both recorded 5% increases in total person offences. Overall, person offences were higher in the northern part of the State.

Fifteen to nineteen-year-old males and females were most likely to have been victims of person

offences in 1999/00 followed closely by twenty-five to twenty-nine-year-old males. In the younger age groups (0 to 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 than females.

Males were more likely to be proceeded against for person offences compared with females. While only 17% of offenders were female, 17% 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 sharply with increasing age.

Of those who were found to have committed person offences approximately 58% were proceeded against through an arrest with a further 35% proceeded against through the service of a court notice. In approximately 56% of cases the victim was known to the offender.

Homicide

Following a 17% decrease reported for the 1998/99 financial year, Homicide offences have again decreased (by 13%) in 1999/00. In fact, the rate of Homicide offences reported for the period under review are the lowest experienced by Queensland since the late 1970s.

Although there were reductions in most of the Homicide sub-categories, the overall reduction was predominantly attributable to a reduction in Murder (67 to 53 offences) and Attempted Murder (125 to 115 offences). The result was a rate of 1 Murder and 3 Attempted Murders per 100,000 persons occurring in Queensland during the 1999/00 financial year.

Of the 211 offences reported in 1999/00, 87% were cleared in the same period. An additional 38 offences were cleared from previous periods.

Far Northern Region recorded the highest rate of Homicide offences (12 per 100,000 persons) while North Coast Region recorded the lowest (4 per 100,000 persons). Seven of the eight regions experienced decreases in this offence type (only Metropolitan North Region experienced an increase).

There were more male victims of Homicide than female at every age group except the twenty-five to twenty-nine year age group. In 62% of cases the victim was male and males aged thirty-five to thirty-nine years were most likely to be victims.

Males were also more likely than females to commit Homicide offences. In 1999/00 males aged twenty-five to twenty-nine years were most likely to offend. Approximately 84% of offenders were proceeded against through an arrest. For 65% of offenders the victim was known to them.

Assault

As stated previously, Assaults comprise approximately 60% of total Offences Against the Person and, as such, tend to dominate this broad offence division. Assaults increased by 2% from 17,477 offences reported in 1998/99 to 17,861 offences reported in 1999/00. This equates to a rate of 500 offences for every 100,000 persons. This increase is attributable to a 5% increase in Other Assaults as the number of Serious Assaults remained virtually unchanged from the previous year. Overall, 67% of Assaults reported in 1999/00 were cleared with a further 1,506 offences cleared from previous periods.

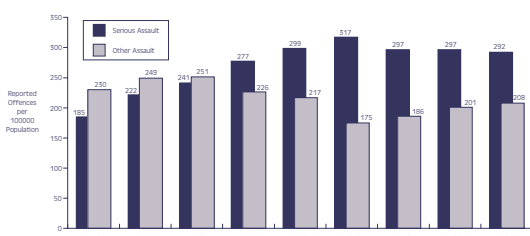


Figure 2: Reported Assaults, Queensland

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). 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 persons 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.

Far Northern (1066 per 100,000 persons) and Northern (814 per 100,000 persons) Regions recorded the highest rate of Assaults, although the rate for Northern Region decreased by 8%.

Metropolitan South Region recorded the lowest rate for the State at 333 offences per 100,000 population.

There were more male victims than female (62% of victims were male) at every age group. As with most offence types, the rate of victimisation decreased sharply with increasing age. Males aged twenty-five to twenty-nine years were most likely to have been victims of Assault.

Males were more likely than females to commit an Assault (80% of offenders were male) with males aged fifteen to nineteen years most likely to offend. Of those persons proceeded against, 53% were arrested and 40% were served with a court notice; 45% of offenders did not know the victim.

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 decreased by 14% from 6,266 offences reported in 1998/99 to 5,414 offences reported in 1999/00. This equates to a rate of 152 offences per 100,000 population. This overall decrease is attributable to an 8% decrease in Rape and Attempted Rape offences and a 15% decrease in Other Sexual Offences. Of those offences reported in the period under review, 71% were cleared with a further 567 offences cleared from previous years.

All regions except South Eastern (which experienced an 8% increase) and Far Northern (which experienced a 21% increase) recorded decreases in this offence type over the 1999/00 financial year.

The Sexual Offence category is the only offence category for which there are more female victims than male (81% of victims were female). Females aged between ten and nineteen years are most likely to be victims of Sexual Offences. In fact, females in this age bracket comprise more than one-third of victims.

In total, only 40 females committed Sexual Offences in 1999/00, 9 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-five to thirty-nine most likely to commit a sexual offence. For those proceeded against for Sexual Offences 65% were arrested and 27% were served with a court notice. For 82% of offenders the victim was known to them although the relationship was not stated for 7% so this figure may be higher.

Robbery

An 11% fall in Armed Robbery coupled with a 14% fall in Unarmed Robbery resulted in an overall 13% decrease in total Robbery offences for the 1999/00 financial year. A total of 2,264 offences were reported to police; this equates to a rate of 63 offences for every 100,000 persons. Of these, 35% were cleared in the period in which they were reported with an additional 132 offences cleared from previous years.

Rates of Robbery have been increasing steadily since the late 1980's so this year's figure, which halts the increasing trend, is a promising one. Since 1997/98 Armed Robbery has been more prevalent than Unarmed Robbery and this year is no exception (Figure 3). Previously, Unarmed Robbery was reported at a higher rate than Armed Robbery.

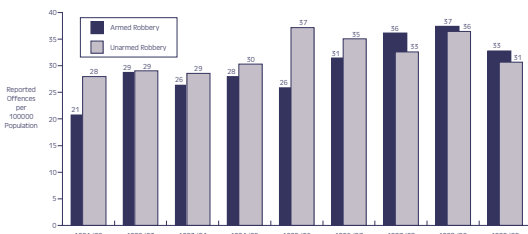


Figure 3: Reported Robbery Offences, Queensland

Robbery offences tend to occur more frequently in the south-east corner of the State and 1999/00 was no exception. Metropolitan North Region recorded the highest rate in the State (113 offences per 100,000 persons) despite a small decrease (1%) from the last financial year. Central Region recorded the lowest rate (35 offences per 100,000 persons). The largest decreases in the State were experienced by Southern Region (33%) and Metropolitan South Region (25%).

Under the age of forty years, males were more likely than females to be victims of Robbery with males aged fifteen to nineteen years most likely to be victims. After the age of forty victimisation rates were similar for males and females.

Males were significantly more likely than females to commit Robbery offences (84% of offenders

were male) and 70% of offenders were aged between ten and twenty-four years. Of those proceeded against for Robbery offences 84% were arrested. A large proportion of offences (33%) were committed against a company or an organisation. For over half of the offences, however, the victim was a person and was unknown to the offender.

Extortion, Kidnapping/Abduction and Other

Extortion, the lowest in volume of the Offences Against the Person categories, experienced a 1% decrease in 1999/00 from 71 to 70 offences. Of these, 46% were cleared in the same period.

Kidnapping, Abduction, Deprivation of Liberty etc offences, also experienced a reduction (18%) from 398 offences in 1998/99 to 328 offences recorded in 1999/00. Approximately 60% of these were cleared in the 1999/00 financial year with a further 35 cases cleared from previous years.

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 1999/00 Other Offences Against the Person increased by 10% from 3,119 to 3,432 offences. Of these, 46% were cleared in the same period with this clearance rate higher by 2% from that reported previously. In addition, 258 offences reported in previous periods were also cleared.

Offences Against Property

The offence division 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 1999/00, Other Theft (excl. Unlawful Entry) accounted for 36% of total Offences Against Property and was the highest in volume of the property offence categories. Unlawful Entry accounted for 25% of offences with Other Property Damage and Motor Vehicle Theft accounting for 21% and 7% respectively. As such, this broad offence division tends to be dominated by Other Theft and Unlawful Entry with offence categories such as Arson having little effect.

Reported Offences Against Property rose by 8% from 281,532 offences reported in 1998/99 to 303,105 offences reported in 1999/00. This year's figure equates to a rate of 8,487 offences reported for every 100,000 persons. Of all

property offences reported in the 1999/00 financial year, 25% were cleared within the period. Furthermore, 11,800 offences were cleared from previous periods.

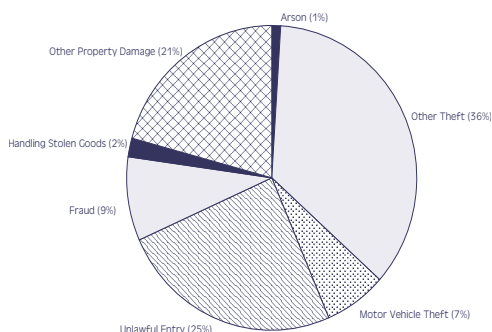


Figure 4: Offences Against Property (%) - 1999/00

In addition to recording the highest rate of property offences in the state (10,929 offences per 100,000 persons), Metropolitan North Region recorded the largest increase (15%). Metropolitan South and Central Regions also recorded sizeable increases (12% and 11% respectively) although Central Region continues to experience the lowest rate of property offences in the State.

Overall, property offences were more likely to be committed by males (78% of offenders were male). Nearly one-third (30%) of offenders proceeded against for property offences were male aged between fifteen and nineteen years. Of the total persons proceeded against 46% were arrested, 40% were served with a court notice and 12% were cautioned.

Unlawful Entry

Following a 2% decrease reported in last year's *Annual Statistical Review*, Unlawful Entry increased (4%) in 1999/00. A total of 75,988 offences were reported to police of which 12% were cleared with a further 3,053 cleared from previous periods.

Unlawful Entry - Dwellings (without violence) was predominantly responsible for the overall increase in Unlawful Entry offences increasing by 7% (Unlawful Entry - Dwellings with violence decreased by 8%). Unlawful Entry - Other Premises also increased (3%) while Unlawful Entry - Shops decreased (4%). Unlawful Entry - Dwellings involving violence has a much higher clearance rate (62%) than other Unlawful Entry

offences.

Metropolitan North Region experienced the highest Unlawful Entry rate in 1999/00 at 2,611 offences per 100,000 persons and the highest increase from the previous period at 13%.

Metropolitan South Region also increased (7%) and recorded the second highest rate at 2,552 offences per 100,000 persons. Central Region experienced the lowest rate of 1,452 offences per 100,000 population although it, too, recorded an increase (7%).

Most Unlawful Entry offences were committed by young males. In fact, 91% of offenders were male and 73% were male aged under twenty-five years. Of all offenders proceeded against for Unlawful Entry offences 60% were arrested, 10% cautioned and 28% served with a court notice.

Arson

Arson offences rose by 2% overall to 1,688 offences reported in 1999/00 of which 11% were cleared within the same period. At a rate of 47 offences per 100,000 population, this offence category has stabilised in recent years (see *Annual Crime Trends*, page 37).

Despite the largest decrease of 18%, South Eastern Region still recorded the highest rate of Arson offences (67 per 100,000 population). Northern Region experienced the largest increase from 23 to 36 offences per 100,000 persons (an increase of 54%). Central Region continues to exhibit the lowest rate of this offence type at 24 offences per 100,000 persons.

Over 94% of offenders were male. Fifteen to nineteen-year-old males were most likely to be proceeded against for Arson followed by ten to fourteen-year-olds. Approximately 61% of offenders were arrested, 11% cautioned and 25% served with a court notice.

Other Property Damage

The number of reported Other Property Damage offences increased by 14% from 54,491 to 62,346 offences. This equates to a rate of 1,746 offences for every 100,000 persons. Of those offences reported to police in 1999/00, 19% were cleared with an additional 1,529 offences cleared from previous time periods.

Metropolitan North Region experienced the highest rate of Other Property Damage offences during the 1999/00 financial year (2,237 per

100,000 population) in addition to recording the largest increase from 1998/99 to 1999/00 (37%). Metropolitan South Region also recorded a sizeable increase in this offence type (24%) while Northern Region recorded a 10% increase resulting in the second highest rate for the State (2,174 offences per 100,000 population).

As with most offence types, fifteen to nineteen-year-old males were most likely to be proceeded against for Other Property Damage offences. Only 13% of offenders were female and only 17% of offenders were aged thirty years or more. In total, 49% of offenders were arrested for this offence type, 13% were cautioned and 36% were served with a court notice.

Motor Vehicle Theft

From 1995/96 to 1997/98, Motor Vehicle Theft was decreasing sharply in Queensland. Last year's *Annual Statistical Review*, however, reported a 14% increase which effectively halted this downward trend. In 1999/00, Queensland again experienced an increase (8%) which brings the crime rate for this offence close to the high rates experienced prior to the downward trend.

In 1999/00, 20,008 Motor Vehicle Theft offences were reported to police of which 20% were cleared (for recovery rates see Explanatory Notes). An additional 670 offences were cleared from previous years. In 1999/00, a Motor Vehicle Theft offence was reported at a rate of 560 offences for every 100,000 persons.

Rates of Motor Vehicle Theft were highest in the south-east corner of the State. In 1999/00, Metropolitan North Region experienced the largest increase of 33% making it the second highest rate in the State (746 offences per 100,000 population). Only South Eastern Region was higher while Metropolitan South Region was marginally lower (at 833 and 719 offences per 100,000 persons respectively). Despite a 28% increase, Central Region recorded the lowest rate at 221 offences per 100,000 population.

Males aged fifteen to nineteen years were most likely to offend (44% of offenders were in this group). Including females in this age group, 50% of offenders overall were aged fifteen to nineteen years. Approximately 57% of offenders were arrested and 34% were served with a court notice.

Other Theft (excluding Unlawful Entry)

Other Theft (Stealing) offences rose by 7% from 1998/99 to 1999/00. This category is the

highest in volume of the property offence categories and, thus, this increase has a significant impact on property offences as a total. In 1999/00, 108,284 offences were reported to police of which 21% were cleared.

Stealing from Dwellings and from Vehicles both exhibited a 15% increase while Shop Stealing increased by 10%. These increases were slightly offset by a small decrease in Other Stealing offences. Approximately 73% of Shop Stealing offences were cleared which was the highest clearance rate for the Other Theft sub-categories.

Metropolitan North Region experienced the largest increase (18%) in the rate of Other Theft offences resulting in the highest rate for this offence type in the State (3,877 per 100,000 population). South Eastern Region followed closely with 3,578 offences reported for every 100,000 persons. The only region to experience a decrease was Far Northern (2%) while Southern Region recorded the lowest rate (2,350 per 100,000 persons).

The proportion of female offenders for Other Theft was higher than for most offence types at 30%, or just under one-third. For both males and females those in the fifteen to nineteen year age group were most likely to offend. Arrest rates are low for this offence type at 34%; while 43% were served with a court notice, 21% (mostly juvenile) were cautioned.

Fraud

Decreases in Fraud by Cheque and Other Fraud (by 13% and 5% respectively) were offset by a 38% increase in Fraud by Credit Card. The result was an overall increase of 2% in total Fraud offences. One offender (charged with over 1,500 offences) was predominantly responsible for this increase.

Of those offences reported in 1999/00, 72% were cleared in the same period with a further 3,681 cleared from previous periods.

Metropolitan South Region experienced the largest increase in Fraud offences at 33% (largely due to one offender [see above]) followed closely by Southern Region (30%). Despite a 23% decrease Metropolitan North Region recorded the largest rate at 1,144 offences per 100,000 population. Far Northern Region recorded the lowest rate (417 per 100,000 population) after experiencing a 33% decrease.

Fraud is unique in that the age of those proceeded against tends to be older when compared with

other offence types and 1999/00 was no exception. Those in the twenty-five to twenty-nine year age group were most likely to offend for both males and females. In addition, rates are still relatively high in older age groups. Arrest rates and notices served are approximately equal for Fraud at 47% and 48% respectively.

Handling Stolen Goods

Handling Stolen Goods offences increased by 20% from 5,185 offences reported in 1998/99 to 6,226 offences reported in 1999/00. All sub-categories contributed to the overall increase, the largest increase being a 60% rise in Possess Property Suspected Stolen offences. The fact that two offenders were charged with 270 offences significantly contributed to this increase. Of those offences reported in 1999/00, 96% were cleared with an additional 141 offences cleared from previous periods.

The largest increase of Handling Stolen Goods offences (80%) occurred in Central Region and largely resulted from a large number of charges against two offenders. Metropolitan North Region also recorded a sizeable increase (41%) resulting in the highest rate for the State at 284 offences per 100,000 population. In fact, every region except South Eastern recorded increases in this offence type.

As with most offence categories, males were more likely to commit Handling Stolen Goods offences (78% of offenders were male) and those in the fifteen to nineteen year age group were most likely to offend for both males and females. Offenders were more likely to be served with a court notice (54%) although 39% 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 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 99,549 offences recorded in 1998/99 to 104,498 offences recorded in 1999/00. This equates to a rate of 2,926 offences per 100,000 persons.

All regions except South Eastern (which recorded an 11% decrease) recorded increases in total Other Offences, the largest of which occurred in North Coast Region (10%). The highest rate was seen in Far Northern Region (5,897 offences per 100,000 population) while the lowest occurred in Metropolitan South Region (1,850 offences per 100,000 population).

Drug Offences

In total, 36,075 Drug Offences were detected by police in 1999/00, 2,255 more (7%) than were detected in 1998/99. This overall increase is attributable to increases in all Drug Offence sub-categories except Produce Dangerous Drugs (which decreased by 1%). The most significant increases were an 8% rise in Other Drug Offences, a 6% rise in Possession of Dangerous Drugs and a 7% rise in Supply of Dangerous Drugs.

All regions except South Eastern (which recorded an 11% decrease) recorded increases in detected Drug Offences. Northern and Metropolitan North Regions both recorded the largest increase at 19% although Far Northern Region continued to detect the highest rate at 2,037 offences per 100,000 persons. Metropolitan South Region recorded the lowest rate of 733 offences per 100,000 population.

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 1999/00 financial year saw a 5% increase in Breach of Domestic Violence Protection Orders. A total of 5,381 offences were reported to police which equates to a rate of 151 offences per 100,000 persons.

Far Northern Region recorded the highest rate while Metropolitan North Region recorded the lowest (412 and 81 offences per 100,000 population respectively). In fact, the rate recorded in Far Northern Region was nearly three times higher than the State average.

Weapons Act Offences

Weapons Act Offences increased by 25% from 4,383 offences reported in 1998/99 to 5,488 offences reported in 1999/00. Substantive increases in Possession and/or Use Other

Weapon, Restricted Items (30%) and Weapons Act Offences - Other (49%) were predominantly responsible for the increase. It should be noted that two offenders were charged with approximately 650 offences between them which significantly contributed to the overall increase in this offence type.

Weapons Act Offences increased in all regions except Far Northern and Southern, both of which recorded figures virtually unchanged from the previous year. North Coast Region recorded the largest increase (62%) largely due to a substantive number of offences preferred against two offenders. Despite being the only region to decrease, Far Northern continued to record the highest rate in the State at 262 offences per 100,000 persons.

Good Order Offences

Good Order Offences increased by 3% from 1998/99 to 1999/00. A total of 21,167 offences were detected by police which equates to a rate of 593 offences for every 100,000 persons. Increases in Disorderly Conduct (2%), Resist, Hinder, Obstruct Police (6%) and Fare Evasion (6%) were offset by decreases in Indecent Behaviour (2%) and Language Offences (3%).

In addition to recording the largest increase in Good Order Offences (14%), Far Northern Region recorded the highest rate in the State (1,322 offences per 100,000 persons). Metropolitan South Region recorded the largest decrease (21%) which resulted in the lowest rate (258 offences per 100,000 population). Metropolitan North, Southern and North Coast all recorded increases of 7%, 10% and 11% respectively.

Traffic and Related Offences

Traffic and Related Offences fell by 1% from 26,883 to 26,721 offences. All sub-categories except Disqualified Driving (which increased 8%) exhibited decreases, the most significant of which was a 2% fall in Drink Driving offences.

Traffic Offences were down in the south-east corner of the State with Metropolitan North, Metropolitan South and South Eastern all recording decreases (10%, 13% and 9% respectively). While the Brisbane Metropolitan regions recorded the lowest rate in the State, Far Northern and Northern Regions recorded the highest at 1,470 and 1,275 offences per 100,000 population respectively.

Please note that the Traffic and Related Offences referred to above include 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 page 131.

