

Crime 2002/2003

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 60% of Offences Against the Person while Homicide (Murder) accounts for less than 1% (Figure 1). Thus, Assault offences tend to dominate person offences while Homicide (Murder) will have little effect on the overall total.

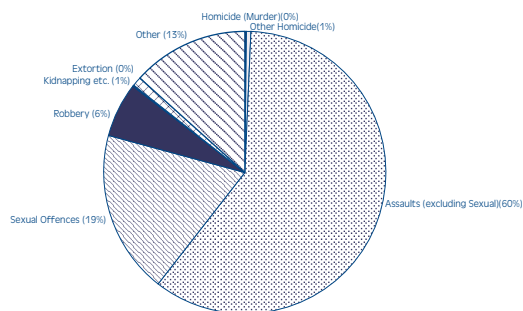


Figure 1: Offences Against the Person (%) - 2002/03

Overall, the number of Offences Against the Person remained virtually unchanged in Queensland from 2001/02 to 2002/03. A total of 32,468 offences were reported to police in 2002/03, 83 less than the revised figure from the previous financial year. Taking into account the growth of the Queensland population, the rate of person offences decreased by 2% to 858 offences per 100,000 persons.

Of the 32,468 Offences Against the Person reported to police during the 2002/03 financial year, 22,180 (68%) were cleared by the end of June 2003. An additional 3,441 offences reported in previous time periods were also cleared during 2002/03.

As with previous years, the northern part of the State (Far Northern and Northern Regions) experienced the highest rates of person offences while Metropolitan South Region experienced the lowest. The largest increase occurred in Central Region (due to a large number of Sexual Offences recorded in the region); the largest decrease occurred in Metropolitan North Region.

Fifteen to nineteen-year-old females were most likely to have been victims of person offences in 2002/03 followed by fifteen to nineteen year old males. In the

younger age groups (0 to 19 years), females were more likely than males to be victims of person offences with this trend reversed in the older age groups. From the age of twenty, males were more likely than females to be victims.

Males were significantly more likely to be proceeded against for person offences compared with females. While only 19% of offenders were female, 16% were male aged fifteen to nineteen years. The likelihood of offending peaked in the fifteen to nineteen 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 29% proceeded against through the service of a court notice. For approximately 58% of offenders the victim was known to them.

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 offences remained the same in Queensland for 2002/03 compared to the 2001/02. Of the 61 Homicides reported to police in 2002/03, 55 (90%) were cleared in the same period. An additional 9 offences were cleared from previous periods.

In addition to recording the largest increase in Homicides, Far Northern Region also recorded the highest rate in the State. Similarly, as well as experiencing the largest decrease, South Eastern Region recorded the lowest rate.

Approximately 67% of the victims of Homicide were male. The highest rate of Homicide offences occurred for males in the thirty to thirty-four age group.

Males were significantly more likely than females to commit Homicide. In 2002/03, males aged twenty to twenty-four years were most likely to offend. In 70% of cases the offender was known to the victim and of those persons proceeded against for Homicide, most (91%) were arrested.

Other Homicide

As with Homicide (Murder), Other Homicide is a low-volume offence category and is, therefore, subject to marked fluctuations from year to year and from area to area. The number of Other Homicide offences decreased by 16% during 2002/03 largely as a result of decreases in Attempted Murder (134 to 114 offences) and Manslaughter (16 to 9 offences).

Factoring in the increase of the Queensland population, Other Homicide offences decreased by 17% to a rate of 4 offences per 100,000 persons. Of the 168 offences reported to police in 2002/03, 157 (93%) were cleared in the same period. Additionally, 14 offences were cleared from previous periods.

Six of the eight regions recorded decreases in Other Homicide offences, the largest of which occurred in Metropolitan South Region. Only Southern and South Eastern Regions recorded increases. In fact, the increase in Southern resulted in that region experiencing the highest rate in the State.

Nearly three-quarters (74%) of the victims of Other Homicide were male with a high proportion of male victims aged fifteen to thirty-four years. At nearly every age group, males were more likely to be victims than females.

Males were significantly more likely than females to commit Other Homicide offences (80% of offenders were male). In 2002/03, males aged twenty to twenty-four years were most likely to offend. While 77% of offenders were proceeded against through an arrest, for 66% 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. The number of Assaults in Queensland increased by 2% from 2001/02 to 2002/03. This equates to a rate of 513 offences per 100,000 persons.

Assaults are presented in four sub-categories for the first time in this publication to provide more detail about the types of Assaults that are occurring. The overall increase in Assault is attributable to a 1% rise in Serious Assault and a 4% rise in Common Assault. Of the 19,420 offences reported to police in 2002/03, 13,979 (72%) were cleared in the same period with a further 2,106 offences cleared from previous periods.

Recent years have seen higher rates of Serious Assault

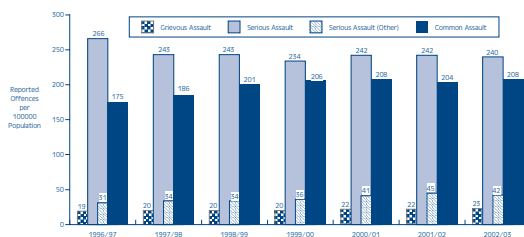


Figure 2: Reported Assaults, Queensland

(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 17). These offences peak around December of each year and fall to a low around July.

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

At every age group males were more likely than females to be victims of Assault. Males aged fifteen to nineteen and twenty-five to twenty-nine were most likely to be victims. From this age, the rate of victimisation decreased steadily with increasing age.

Males were also more likely to commit offences of Assault (78% of offenders were male) and this was the case for every age group. Males aged twenty to twenty-four years were most likely to offend. Of those persons proceeded against, 55% were arrested and 35% were served with a court notice; 43% 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 reported to police in 2002/03 decreased by 9% from the number reported in the previous financial year. This equates to a rate of 161 offences reported per 100,000 persons. This decrease is attributable to an 11% decrease in Other

Sexual Offences despite being offset by a 1% increase in Rape and Attempted Rape offences. Of those offences reported in 2002/03, 4,464 (73%) were cleared with an additional 786 cleared from previous periods.

Four offenders charged with over 760 offences in Central Region resulted in this region recording the largest increase in Sexual Offences in addition to recording the highest rate in the State. Metropolitan South Region recorded the lowest rate.

The Sexual Offence category is the only offence category for which there are more female victims than male (80% of victims were female). Females aged between ten and nineteen years were 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 59 females committed Sexual Offences in 2002/03. 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 older age groups with males aged fifteen to nineteen most likely to be proceeded against for a sexual offence. For those proceeded against, 63% were arrested and 17% were served with a court notice. For 82% of offenders the victim was known to them although the relationship was not stated for 8% so this figure may be higher.

Robbery

A decrease of 15% in the number of Armed Robberies reported to police in 2002/03 coupled with a 2% decrease in Unarmed Robbery lead to an overall 8% decrease in the number of Robbery offences reported in the year under review. A total of 2,023 offences were reported to police which equates to a rate of 53 offences per 100,000 persons. Of these, 788 (39%) were cleared in the period in which they were reported with an additional 122 offences cleared from previous periods.

Rates of Robbery have been increasing steadily since the late 1980's. Since 1997/98 Armed Robbery has been more prevalent than Unarmed Robbery. The last two years, however, have seen a reversal of this trend with Unarmed Robbery rates higher than Armed Robbery rates (Figure 3).

Robbery offences tend to occur more frequently in the south-east corner of the State and 2002/03 was no exception. Metropolitan North Region recorded the highest rate in the State despite a 12% decrease from

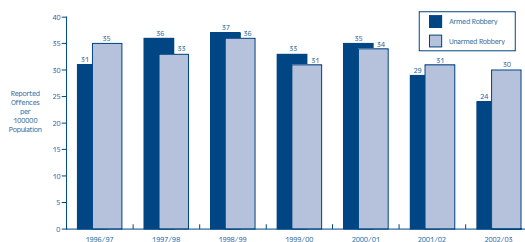


Figure 3: Reported Robbery Offences, Queensland

the previous year. South Eastern Region experienced a substantive decrease in Robbery while Central Region again experienced the lowest rate in the State.

At every age except those aged fifty-five years or more, 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 significantly more likely than females to commit Robbery offences (85% of offenders were male) and 71% of offenders were aged between fifteen and twenty-nine years. Of those proceeded against for Robbery offences 83% were arrested. A large proportion of offences (19%) were committed against a company or an organisation. For over half of the offences (62%), however, the victim was a person and was unknown to the offender.

Extortion, Kidnapping/Abduction and Other Offences Against the Person

Extortion, the lowest in volume of the Offences Against the Person categories, decreased by 15% from 2001/02 to 2002/03 (from 60 to 51 offences). Of these, 67% were cleared in the same period.

Kidnapping, Abduction, Deprivation of Liberty etc offences decreased by 1% from 344 offences reported in 2001/02 to 342 offences recorded in 2002/03. Approximately 60% of these were cleared in the 2002/03 financial year with a further 12 offences 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 2002/03, Other Offences Against the Person increased by 8% from 4,001 to 4,326 offences. Of these, 58% were cleared in the same period with this clearance rate higher by 6% from that reported previously. In addi-

tion, 388 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 2002/03, Other Theft (excl. Unlawful Entry) accounted for 42% of total Offences Against Property and was the highest in volume of the property offence categories. Unlawful Entry accounted for 23% of offences with Other Property Damage and Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicles accounting for 16% and 6% 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.

The number of reported Offences Against Property decreased by 5% from 292,976 offences reported in 2001/02 to 278,995 offences reported in 2002/03. Factoring in the growth of the Queensland population, property offences were reported at a rate of 7,370 offences per 100,000 persons, a decrease of 7% from the previous year. Of all property offences reported in 2002/03, 27% were cleared in the same period with a further 12,380 offences cleared from previous periods.

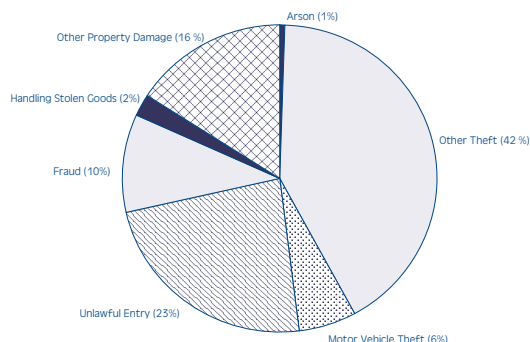


Figure 4: Offences Against Property (%) - 2002/03

The only region to record an increase in property crime was Southern (2%). All other regions recorded decreases, the largest of which was a 14% reduction in Southern Region. South Eastern Region recorded the highest rate of property offences in the State while Central Region recorded the lowest.

Overall, property offences were more likely to be committed by males (77% of offenders were male). Nearly one-third (27%) of offenders proceeded against for property offences were male aged between fifteen and nineteen years. Of the total persons proceeded

against for property offences, 44% were arrested, 41% were served with a court notice* and 13% were cautioned.

Unlawful Entry with Intent

The number of Unlawful Entry offences decreased by a substantive 7%. This equates to a 9% reduction in the rate once the growth of the Queensland population is taken into account. Of the 65,396 offences reported to police in 2002/03, 14% were cleared in the same period with a further 2,452 offences cleared from previous periods.

The number of Unlawful Entry of Dwellings decreased by 6%; the number of Unlawful Entry of Shops also decreased, by 14%, while Unlawful Entry of Other Premises fell by 5%.

All regions except Southern (which increased by 4%) recorded a decrease in Unlawful Entry offences. The largest decrease (17%) occurred in Northern Region; Metropolitan North also recorded a substantive decrease (14%). Central Region again experienced the lowest rate while Northern Region again experienced the highest.

Most Unlawful Entry offences were committed by young males. In fact, 91% of offenders were male and nearly 70% were male aged under twenty-five years. Of all offenders proceeded against for Unlawful Entry offences 61% were arrested, 11% cautioned and 25% served with a court notice*.

Arson

Arson is the lowest in volume of the property offence categories and, as such, exerts very little influence on the property offence total. Arson offences decreased by 13% from 2001/02 to 2002/03. The rate of offences decreased by 15% to 38 offences per 100,000 persons. Of the 1,436 offences reported in 2002/03, 205 (14%) were cleared in the same period. An additional 38 offences were cleared from previous periods.

All regions except Metropolitan South (which recorded a 1% increase) recorded substantive decreases in Arson offences. The largest was seen in Central Region (30%). Metropolitan North recorded the lowest rate in the State while South Eastern Region again recorded the highest (despite experiencing an 18% decrease).

Approximately 88% 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 55% of offenders were

arrested, 13% cautioned and 27% served with a court notice*.

Other Property Damage

Other Property Damage offences decreased by 15% from 52,320 to 44,438 offences. This equates to a rate of 1,174 offences for every 100,000 persons. Of those offences reported to police in 2002/03, 10,529 (24%) were cleared with an additional 1,704 offences cleared from previous time periods.

All regions except Far Northern recorded decreases in Other Property Damage offences but even the increase in this region was only 1%. The largest decreases occurred in Metropolitan North (27%) and Metropolitan South (25%). Central Region experienced the lowest rate in the State while Northern Region experienced the highest.

As with most offence types, fifteen to nineteen-year-old males were most likely to be proceeded against for Other Property Damage offences. Only 12% of offenders were female and only 16% of offenders were aged thirty years or more. In total, 42% of offenders were arrested for this offence type, 16% were cautioned and 39% were served with a court notice*.

Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicle

Following a significant decrease reported in the last Annual Statistical Review, the current publication again documents a sizeable decrease (6%) in Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicle offences. This reduction is equivalent to over 1,000 fewer offences reported during 2002/03 and over 4,000 fewer offences reported over the last two years.

In 2002/03, 16,563 Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicle offences were reported to police. Of these, 3,672 (22%) were cleared with an additional 798 offences cleared from previous periods (note: for recovery rates see Explanatory Notes). In 2002/03, Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicle offences were reported at a rate of 438 offences for every 100,000 persons.

Rates of Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicles are traditionally higher in the south-eastern corner of the State and 2002/03 was no exception despite significant decreases in the two metropolitan regions of Brisbane. Only two regions recorded increases. South Eastern Region experienced both the largest increase and the highest rate in the State. Similarly, in addition to recording the largest decrease, Central Region also recorded the lowest rate.

Males aged fifteen to nineteen years were most likely to offend (41% of offenders were in this group). Including females in this age group, 46% of offenders overall were aged fifteen to nineteen years. Approximately 62% of offenders were arrested and 28% were served with a court notice*.

Other Theft (excluding Unlawful Entry)

Other Theft (Stealing) offences fell by 1% from 2001/02 to 2002/03. This category is the highest in volume of the property offence categories and, thus, exerts a significant influence on property offences as a total. In 2002/03, 115,996 offences were reported to police of which 23% were cleared. A further 3,911 were cleared from previous periods.

While Stealing from Dwellings and Steal from Vehicles were down by 7% and 5% respectively, Steal from Shops and Other Premises were up by 4% and 2% respectively. Approximately 76% of Shop Stealing offences were cleared and this was the highest clearance rate for the Other Theft sub-categories.

As with previous years, the highest rates of Other Theft occurred in South Eastern and Metropolitan North Regions. The lowest rate again occurred in Southern Region despite the fact that this region was the only one to experience an increase. Northern and Metropolitan North Regions both recorded the largest decrease (8%).

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 31%; while 46% were served with a court notice*, 20% (mostly juvenile) were cautioned.

Fraud

Increases in Fraud by Computer and Credit Card (by 24% and 9% respectively) were offset by a 3% decrease in Other Fraud and a 2% decrease in Fraud by Cheque. The result was an overall increase of 1% in total Fraud offences.

Of the 28,768 offences reported in 2002/03, 17,277 (60%) were cleared in the same period with a further 3,393 offences cleared from previous periods.

A substantive increase (19%) in South Eastern Region resulted in this region recording the highest rate in the

State. Only Central Region recorded a higher increase (44%). Similarly, a sizeable decrease in Northern Region resulted in this region experiencing the lowest rate in the State.

Fraud is unique in that the age of those proceeded against tends to be older when compared with other offence types and 2002/03 was no exception. Also, a relatively higher proportion of females commit Fraud offences compared with other offence types. Approximately 38% of offenders were female. For males, those in the twenty-five to twenty-nine age group were most likely to offend whilst, for females, those in the thirty to thirty-four age group were most likely to offend. Arrest rates and notices served were 47% and 49% respectively.

Handling Stolen Goods

A 17% increase in Possess, Receive, Dispose of Tainted Property resulted in an overall increase of 7% in Handling Stolen Goods offences. Of the total 6,398 offences reported to police in 2002/03, 6,192 (97%) were cleared with a further 84 offences cleared from previous periods.

Metropolitan North Region again recorded the highest rate of Handling Stolen Goods offences while North Coast Region recorded the lowest rate. Northern Region experienced the largest decrease in offences while South Eastern Region experienced the largest increase.

As with most offence categories, males were most likely to commit Handling Stolen Goods offences (77% 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 court notice (53%) although 40% 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 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 14% statewide from 111,513 offences recorded in 2001/02 to 127,495 offences recorded in 2002/03. This equates to a rate

of 3,368 offences per 100,000 persons.

All eight regions recorded increases in total Other Offences, the largest of which occurred in South Eastern Region (22%). Rates are traditionally higher in the northern part of the State and 2002/03 was no exception. Metropolitan South Region again experienced the lowest rate.

Drug Offences

Sizeable increases in all Drug Offence sub-categories resulted in a 15% increase in the total. The most influential increases occurred in the Possess Dangerous Drugs (12%) and Other Drug Offence (17%) sub-categories.

Far Northern Region again recorded the highest rate in the State (in fact, the rate in the region was nearly double that of the State). Metropolitan South Region recorded the lowest rate. Northern Region was the only region to record a decrease while South Eastern Region recorded the largest increase (44%).

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 2002/03 financial year saw a 16% increase in Breach of Domestic Violence Protection Orders. A total of 7,820 offences were reported to police, equating to a rate of 207 offences per 100,000 persons. It should be noted that the *Domestic and Family Protection Act 1989* was expanded in March 2003 to include intimate personal, familial and informal carer relationships. This will impact on the number of reported Breaches of Domestic Violence Protection Orders reported for 2002/03.

While Metropolitan North Region again recorded the lowest rate of offences in the State, the northern regions again recorded the highest. Far Northern Region was the only region to experience a decrease, although the decrease was small. The largest increase occurred in Southern Region, although Metropolitan South also recorded a sizeable increase.

Weapons Act Offences

The number of Weapons Act offences increased by 5% from 4,931 offences reported in 2001/02 to 5,179 offences reported in 2002/03. The overall increase is

attributable to increases in all weapons sub-categories except Unlawful Possession of Concealable Firearm and Weapons Act Offences - Other. The largest increase was a 35% rise in Bomb, possess and/or use offences.

Only two regions, Central and South Eastern, recorded decreases in Weapons Act Offences, although the decrease in South Eastern was substantive (22%). The largest increase occurred in Southern Region. The lowest rates occurred in the metropolitan regions of Brisbane while the highest occurred in the two northern regions.

Good Order Offences

Good Order Offences increased by 11% from 2001/02 to 2002/03. A total of 28,459 offences were detected by police which equates to a rate of 752 offences for every 100,000 persons. Increases in all sub-categories contributed to the overall increase, although the increase in Resist, Hinder, Obstruct Police offences (14%), the highest in volume of the Good Order sub-categories, had the most impact on the total.

Only two regions, Far Northern and Metropolitan North, recorded decreases, although both were small. The largest increase occurred in Southern Region (20%). The higher rates are generally seen in the northern regions and 2002/03 was no exception. Similarly, the lowest rate occurred in Metropolitan South and the current year was no exception.

Traffic and Related Offences

Traffic and Related Offences rose by 18% from 31,500 to 37,276 offences. All sub-categories exhibited increases of which the largest was a 72% 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 Offence total. This sub-category increased by 9%.

Despite recording a substantive increase in Traffic Offences, Metropolitan South Region still recorded the lowest rate in the State. In fact, all eight regions recorded increases of which the largest was seen in Metropolitan North Region (33%). The highest rates were in the two northern regions.

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 page 135.

* Please note court notices include Notices to Attend and Notices to Appear.