

# Crime 2003/2004

## 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 56% 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.

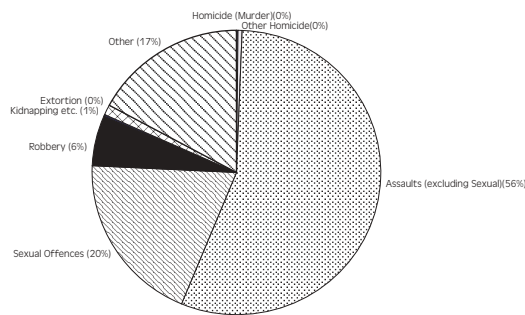


Figure 1: Offences Against the Person (%) - 2003/04

Overall, the number of Offences Against the Person increased by 6% in Queensland from 2002/03 to 2003/04. A total of 34,204 offences were reported to police in 2003/04, 1,899 more than the revised figure from the previous financial year. Taking into account the growth of the Queensland population, the rate of person offences increased by 3% from 853 to 881 offences per 100,000 persons.

Of the 34,204 Offences Against the Person reported to police during the 2003/04 financial year, 23,691 (69%) were cleared by the end of June 2004. An additional 3,169 offences reported in previous time periods were also cleared during 2003/04.

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 Metropolitan South Region; the largest decrease occurred in Central Region.

Fifteen to nineteen-year-old females were most likely to have been victims of person offences in 2003/04 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.

More males were proceeded against for person offences compared with females. While only 19% of offenders were female, 17% 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 56% were proceeded against through an arrest with a further 27% 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 (Murder) offences decreased by one offence in Queensland for 2003/04 compared to 2002/03. Of the 60 Homicides reported to police in 2003/04, 53 (88%) were cleared in the same period. An additional 4 offences were cleared from previous periods.

North Coast Region recorded the highest increase in the State, while Far Northern Region experienced the highest rate of Homicide (Murder) offences.

Approximately 65% of the victims of Homicide (Murder) were male. The highest rate of Homicide (Murder) offences occurred for males in the twenty to twenty-four, forty to forty-four and forty-five to forty-nine age groups which all exhibited rates of 4 offences per 100,000 resident persons.

Males were significantly more likely than females to commit Homicide (Murder) (87%). In 2003/04, males aged thirty to thirty-four years were most likely to offend. In 67% of cases the offender was known to the victim and of those persons proceeded against for Homicide (Murder), most (87%) were arrested.

\* Please note court notices include Notices to Attend only.

## 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 12% during 2003/04 largely as a result of decreases in Manslaughter (10 to 4 offences) and Driving Causing Death (50 to 30 offences).

Factoring in the increase of the Queensland resident population, Other Homicide offences decreased by 14% to a rate of 4 offences per 100,000 persons. Of the 156 offences reported to police in 2003/04, 139 (89%) were cleared in the same period. Additionally, 18 offences were cleared from previous periods.

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

Nearly two-thirds (66%) of the victims of Other Homicide were male with a high proportion aged fifteen to thirty-nine years. For 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 (90% of offenders were male). In 2003/04, males aged fifteen to nineteen years were most likely to offend. 78% of offenders were proceeded against through an arrest and for 54% of offenders the victim was known to them.

## Assault

As stated previously, Assaults comprise approximately 56% of total Offences Against the Person and, as such, tend to dominate this broad offence division. The number of Assaults in Queensland decreased by 1% from 2002/03 to 2003/04. This equates to a rate of 490 offences per 100,000 persons.

Assaults are again presented in four sub-categories for the second consecutive year to provide more detail about the types of Assaults that are occurring. The overall decrease in Assault is attributable to decreases in three of the four sub-categories of Assault. Of the 19,012 offences reported to police in 2003/04, 14,174 (75%) were cleared in the same period with a further 1,893 offences cleared from previous periods.

Recent years have seen higher rates of Serious Assault (Figure 2). A possible explanation for this is a broaden-

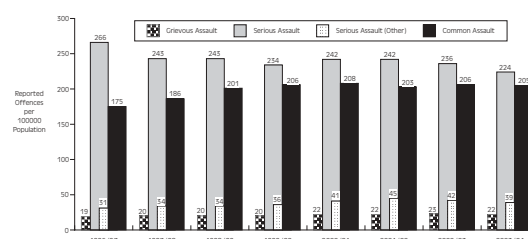


Figure 2: Reported Assaults, Queensland

ing 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. Far Northern and Central Regions recorded the largest increases while Northern Region recorded the largest decrease.

For every age group (except for 0 to 4 years) males were more likely than females to be victims of Assault. Males aged 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 and this was the case for every age group (78% of offenders were male). Males aged fifteen to nineteen years were most likely to offend. Of those persons proceeded against, 54% were arrested and 34% were served with a court notice\*; 44% 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 2003/04 increased by 8% from the number reported in the previous financial year. This equates to a rate of 172 offences reported per 100,000 persons. This increase is attributable to a 17% increase in Rape & Attempted Rape Offences and a 6% increase in Other

\* Please note court notices include Notices to Attend only.

Sexual Offences. Of those offences reported in 2003/04, 4,741 (71%) were cleared with an additional 761 offences cleared from previous periods.

Four offenders charged with 310 offences in Central Region resulted in this region recording the highest rate in the State. However, this region has exhibited the largest decrease. Metropolitan North Region recorded the lowest rate.

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 were most likely to be victims of Sexual Offences. In fact, females in this age bracket comprise 43% of victims.

In total, only 73 females committed Sexual Offences in 2003/04. Thus, 97% 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 18% were served with a court notice\*. For 81% of offenders the victim was known to them although the relationship was not stated for 9% therefore this figure may be higher.

## Robbery

A decrease of 4 offences in the number of Armed Robberies reported to police in 2003/04 coupled with a 4% decrease in Unarmed Robbery lead to an overall 2% decrease in the number of Robbery offences reported in the year under review. A total of 1,959 offences were reported to police which equates to a rate of 50 offences per 100,000 persons. Of these, 867 (44%) were cleared in the period in which they were reported with an additional 140 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 three 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 2003/04 was no exception. Metropolitan North Region recorded the highest rate in the State despite an 8% decrease from the previous year. Central Region experienced a substantive decrease in Robbery (24%) while again experiencing the lowest rate in the State.

\* Please note court notices include Notices to Attend only.

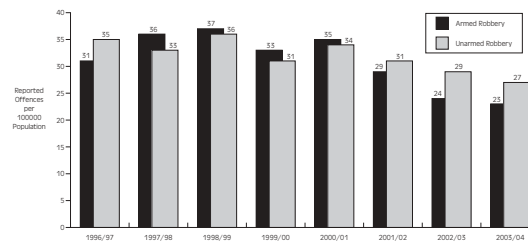


Figure 3: Reported Robbery Offences, Queensland

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 70% of all cases reported to police.

Males were significantly more likely than females to commit Robbery offences (90% of offenders were male) and 68% of offenders were aged between fifteen and twenty-nine years. Of those proceeded against for Robbery offences 81% were arrested. A large proportion of offences (15%) were committed against a company or an organisation. However, for over half of the offences (71%), 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, increased by 25% from 2002/03 to 2003/04 (from 53 to 66 offences). Of these, 48% were cleared in the same period.

Kidnapping, Abduction, Deprivation of Liberty etc. offences increased by 18% from 338 offences reported in 2002/03 to 398 offences reported in 2003/04. Approximately 60% of these were cleared in the 2003/04 financial year with a further 26 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 2003/04, Other Offences Against the Person increased by 37% from 4,280 to 5,869 offences. Of these, 59% were cleared in the same period with this clearance rate similar to that recorded previously. In addition, 325 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 2003/04, 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 accounted for 23% of offences with Other Property Damage and Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicles accounting for 17% and 5% respectively. As such, this broad offence division tends to be dominated by Other Theft (excl. Unlawful Entry) and Unlawful Entry with offence categories such as Arson having little effect.

The number of reported Offences Against Property decreased by 5% from 279,973 offences reported in 2002/03 to 265,413 offences reported in 2003/04. Factoring in the growth of the Queensland population, property offences were reported at a rate of 6,836 offences per 100,000 persons, a decrease of 8% from the previous year. Of all property offences reported in 2003/04, 29% were cleared in the same period with a further 14,316 offences cleared from previous periods.

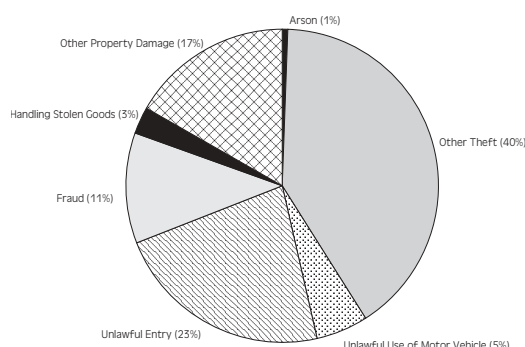


Figure 4: Offences Against Property (%) - 2003/04

All regions recorded decreases in property crime during 2003/04. Although South Eastern Region recorded the highest rate of property offences in the State, it also exhibited the largest decrease (12%) from the previous period.

Overall, property offences were more likely to be committed by males (79% of offenders were male). Over one-fifth (29%) of offenders proceeded against for property offences were male aged between fifteen and nineteen years. Of the total persons proceeded against for property offences, 39% were arrested, 44% were served with a court notice\* and 12% were cautioned.

\* Please note court notices include Notices to Attend only.

## Unlawful Entry with Intent

The number of Unlawful Entry offences decreased by a substantive 8%. This equates to a 10% reduction in the rate once the growth of the Queensland population is taken into account. Of the 60,129 offences reported to police in 2003/04, 16% were cleared in the same period with a further 2,550 offences cleared from previous periods.

The number of Unlawful Entry of Dwellings decreased by 9%, the number of Unlawful Entry of Shops also decreased by 7%, while Unlawful Entry of Other Premises also fell 7%.

All regions recorded a decrease in Unlawful Entry offences. The largest decrease (17%) occurred in Southern Region; Metropolitan North also recorded a substantive decrease (15%). 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 68% were male aged under twenty-five years. Of all offenders proceeded against for Unlawful Entry offences, 55% were arrested, 10% cautioned and 30% 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 Offences Against Property total. Arson offences increased by 7% from 2002/03 to 2003/04. The rate of offences increased by 4% to 39 offences per 100,000 persons. Of the 1,514 offences reported in 2003/04, 217 (14%) were cleared in the same period. An additional 38 offences were cleared from previous periods.

All regions except Central (which recorded a 10% decrease) recorded substantive increases in Arson offences. The largest was seen in Far Northern Region (25%). Metropolitan North and Central Regions recorded the lowest rates in the State while South Eastern Region again recorded the highest (despite experiencing an 8% decrease).

Approximately 91% 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 62% of offenders were arrested, 14% cautioned and 17% served with a court notice\*.

## *Other Property Damage*

Other Property Damage offences increased by less than 1% from 44,437 to 44,461 offences. This equates to a rate of 1,145 offences for every 100,000 persons. Of those offences reported to police in 2003/04, 11,782 (26%) were cleared with an additional 1,988 offences cleared from previous time periods.

All regions except Metropolitan North and Central recorded decreases in Other Property Damage offences with the increases being 6% and 3% respectively. Southern Region experienced a substantive decrease in Other Property Damage offences (12%) contributing to the region exhibiting the lowest rate in the State. Northern Region experienced the highest rate at 1,486 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 11% of offenders were female and only 15% of offenders were aged thirty years or more. In total, 39% of offenders were arrested for this offence type, 13% were cautioned and 36% 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 (14%) in Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicle offences. This reduction is equivalent to over 2,200 fewer offences reported during 2003/04 and over 3,300 fewer offences reported over the last two years.

In 2003/04, 14,267 Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicle offences were reported to police. Of these, 3,541 (25%) were cleared with an additional 807 offences cleared from previous periods (note: for recovery rates see Explanatory Notes). In 2003/04, Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicle offences were reported at a rate of 367 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 2003/04 was no exception despite significant decreases in two of the regions in this area. Northern was the only region which recorded an increase in the current period (5%). Although South Eastern Region experienced the largest decrease it also exhibited the highest rate in the State. Central Region recorded the lowest rate at 157 offences per 100,000 persons.

Males aged fifteen to nineteen years were most likely to offend (40% of male offenders were in this group).

Including females in this age group, 45% of all offenders were aged fifteen to nineteen years. Approximately 57% of offenders were arrested and 32% were served with a court notice\*.

## *Other Theft (excluding Unlawful Entry)*

Other Theft (excl. Unlawful Entry) offences fell by 7% from 2002/03 to 2003/04. 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 2003/04, 107,403 offences were reported to police of which 25% were cleared. A further 4,888 were cleared from previous periods.

All sub-categories of Other Theft offences exhibited decreases: Stealing from Dwellings and Steal from Vehicles were down by 10% and 11% respectively and Steal from Shops and Other Premises were down by 2% and 6% respectively. Approximately 77% 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 despite the fact that these regions recorded the largest decreases of 13% and 12% respectively. The lowest rate again occurred in Southern Region for the fifth consecutive year.

The proportion of female offenders for Other Theft was higher than for most offence types at 29%, 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 47% were served with a court notice\* and 18% (mostly juvenile) were cautioned.

## *Fraud*

Increases in Fraud by Computer and Other Fraud (16% and 25% respectively) and decreases in Fraud by Credit Card (28%) and Fraud by Cheque (30%) resulted in an overall increase of 2% in total Fraud offences.

Of the 30,279 offences reported in 2003/04, 17,710 (58%) were cleared in the same period with a further 3,922 offences cleared from previous periods.

A substantive increase (70%) in Southern Region resulted in this region recording one of the highest rates in the State. This was due to police proceeding against one offender for more than 1,900 offences. Only Metropolitan North Region recorded a higher rate of

\* Please note court notices include Notices to Attend only.

Fraud offences. A sizeable decrease in North Coast 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 2003/04 was no exception. Also, a relatively higher proportion of females commit Fraud offences compared with other offence types. Approximately 33% 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 twenty to twenty-four age group were most likely to offend. Arrest rates and court notices\* served were 33% and 57% respectively.

### *Handling Stolen Goods*

Increases in most sub-categories of Handling Stolen Goods offences resulted in an overall increase of 14%. Of the total 7,360 offences reported to police in 2003/04, 7,102 (96%) were cleared with a further 123 offences cleared from previous periods.

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

As with most offence categories, males were most likely to commit Handling Stolen Goods offences (78% 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\* (58%) although 35% 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 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, Other Offences increased by 10% statewide from 127,652 offences recorded in 2002/03 to 139,946 offences recorded in 2003/04. This equates to a rate of 3,604 offences per 100,000 persons.

\* Please note court notices include Notices to Attend only.

Six of the eight regions recorded increases in total Other Offences, the largest of which occurred in South Eastern Region (21%). Rates are traditionally higher in the northern part of the State and 2003/04 was no exception. Metropolitan South Region again experienced the lowest rate.

### *Drug Offences*

Sizeable increases in all Drug Offence sub-categories resulted in a 19% increase in the total. Possess Dangerous Drugs and Other Drug Offences are the largest in volume of the sub-categories and, as such, exert the greatest influence on the Drug Offence total. These sub-categories increased by 11% and 18% respectively.

Far Northern Region again recorded the highest rate in the State despite the fact that this region recorded the largest decrease in the State. Metropolitan South Region recorded the lowest rate while South Eastern Region recorded the largest increase (62%). Northern and North Coast Regions were the only other regions to record decreases.

### *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 2003/04 financial year saw a 17% increase in Breach of Domestic Violence Protection Orders. A total of 9,027 offences were reported to police, equating to a rate of 233 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 during the last two years.

While Metropolitan North Region again recorded the lowest rate of offences in the State, the northern regions again recorded the highest. Metropolitan South Region was the only region to experience a decrease, although the decrease was small (3%). The largest increase occurred in Metropolitan North Region (35%), although North Coast and South Eastern Regions also recorded a sizeable increase of 28% and 26% respectively.

## *Weapons Act Offences*

The number of Weapons Act offences decreased by 10% from 5,198 offences reported in 2002/03 to 4,658 offences reported in 2003/04. The overall decrease is attributable to decreases in most weapons sub-categories except Bomb, possn and/or use of and Possn and/or use other weapons, restricted items. The largest decrease was a 32% fall in the Weapons Act Offences - Other category.

Only Central and South Eastern Regions recorded increases in Weapons Act Offences, although both were small. The largest decrease occurred in Northern Region (28%). The higher rates are generally seen in the northern regions and 2003/04 was no exception. Similarly, the lowest rate usually occurs in Metropolitan South Region and the current year was consistent.

## *Good Order Offences*

Good Order Offences increased by 8% from 2002/03 to 2003/04. A total of 30,798 offences were detected by police which equates to a rate of 793 offences for every 100,000 persons. An increase in Resist, hinder etc. and Fare Evasion Offences contributed to the overall increase, although the increase in Resist, Hinder, Obstruct Police offences (8%) (the highest in volume of the Good Order sub-categories), had the most impact on the total.

Only three regions, Far Northern, Northern and Southern recorded decreases, although all were small. The largest increase occurred in Central Region (23%). The higher rates are generally seen in the northern regions and 2003/04 was no exception. Similarly, the lowest rate traditionally occurred in Metropolitan South and the current year was consistent.

On 1 April 2004, amendments were made to the *Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act, 1931*, section 7AA. The offence of "Public Nuisance" was created to replace the offences of Indecent Behaviour, Language Offences and Disorderly Conduct. Due to the small time period elapsed between the introduction of the category and the end of the financial year, these offences have been incorporated into the total of Good Order Offences only, and have not been displayed separately throughout this publication.

## *Traffic and Related Offences*

Traffic and Related Offences fell by 1% from 37,385 to 37,094 offences. All sub-categories exhibited decreases of which the largest was a 41% decrease in Interfere with Mechanism of a Motor Vehicle. 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 decreased by 1%.

Despite recording a substantive increase in Traffic Offences, Metropolitan South Region still recorded the lowest rate in the State. Five of the eight regions recorded decreases of which the largest was seen in Northern Region (17%). 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.

