

Crime 2004/2005

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.

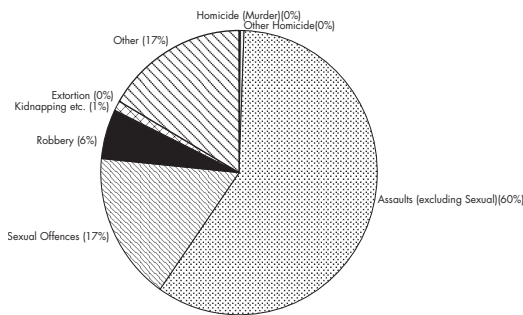


Figure 1: Offences Against the Person (%) - 2004/05*

Overall, the number of Offences Against the Person decreased by 4% in Queensland from 2003/04 to 2004/05. A total of 32192 offences were reported to police in 2004/05, 1250 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 6% from 861 to 811 offences per 100000 persons.

Of the 32192 Offences Against the Person reported to police during the 2004/05 financial year, 22877 (71%) were cleared by the end of June 2005. An additional 3411 offences reported in previous time periods were also cleared during 2004/05.

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. Central and Southern Regions were the only regions exhibiting increases (each recording a rise of 1%).

Fifteen to nineteen-year-old females were most likely to have been victims of person offences in 2004/05 followed by ten to fourteen year old females. In the younger age groups (zero to nineteen years), females

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

More males were proceeded against for person offences compared with females. While only 20% 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 56% were proceeded against through an arrest with a further 26% proceeded against through the service of a Notice to Appear. For approximately 57% 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 eight offences in Queensland for 2004/05 compared to 2003/04. Of the 53 Homicides reported to police in 2004/05, 50 (94%) were cleared in the same period. An additional 4 offences were cleared from previous periods.

Southern Region recorded the highest increase in the State (although this was small), while Northern Region experienced the highest rate of Homicide (Murder) offences.

Approximately 68% of the victims of Homicide (Murder) were male. The highest rate of Homicide (Murder) offences occurred for males in the thirty-five to thirty-nine year age group which exhibited a rate of 4 offences per 100000 resident persons.

Males were significantly more likely than females to commit Homicide (Murder) (86%). In 2004/05, males aged fifteen to twenty-four years were most likely to offend. In 65% of cases the offender was known to the victim and of those persons proceeded against for Homicide (Murder), most (89%) were arrested.

* Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Therefore, although the percentages are correct, they do not add to 100%.

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 18% during 2004/05 largely as a result of decreases in Attempted Murder (20 offences) and Driving Causing Death (12 offences).

Factoring in the increase of the Queensland resident population, Other Homicide offences decreased by 20% to a rate of 3 offences per 100,000 persons. Of the 138 offences reported to police in 2004/05, 128 (93%) were cleared in the same period. Additionally, 24 offences were cleared from previous periods.

Seven of the eight regions recorded decreases in Other Homicide offences, the largest of which occurred in Metropolitan South Region. Only Central Region recorded an increase (12%). Although Northern Region experienced a decrease of 20%, it recorded the highest rate in the State for the second consecutive year.

Over two-thirds (70%) of the victims of Other Homicide were male with a high proportion aged fifteen to nineteen, thirty to thirty-four and forty to forty-four 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 (79% of offenders were male). In 2004/05, males aged twenty to twenty-four years were most likely to offend. 73% of offenders were proceeded against through an arrest and for 60% 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 2003/04 to 2004/05. This equates to a rate of 486 offences per 100,000 persons.

Assaults are again presented in four sub-categories for the third consecutive year to provide more detail about the types of Assaults that are occurring. The overall decrease in the rate of Assaults is attributable to decreases in two of the four sub-categories of Assault. Of the 19268 offences reported to police in 2004/05, 14713 (76%) were cleared in the same period with a further 1814 offences cleared from previous periods.

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

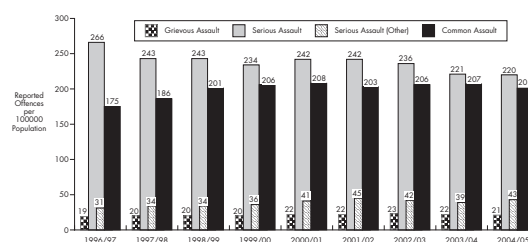


Figure 2: Reported Assaults, Queensland, 1996/97 to 2004/05

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.

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 North Coast Region recorded the largest decrease.

For every age group, 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 32% were served with a Notice to Appear; 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 2004/05 decreased by 10% from the number reported in the previous financial year. This equates to a rate of 139 offences reported per 100,000 persons. This decrease in the rate is attributable to a 1% decrease in Rape & Attempted Rape Offences and a 16% decrease in Other Sexual Offences. Of those offences reported in

2004/05, 3766 (68%) were cleared with an additional 748 offences cleared from previous periods.

Far Northern Region exhibited a 2% increase in offences, hence, recording the highest rate in the State. North Coast Region exhibited the largest decrease followed closely by Central and Metropolitan South Regions. Metropolitan South Region also recorded the lowest rate.

The Sexual Offence category is the only offence category for which there are more female victims than male (83% 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 group comprise 45% of total victims.

In total, only 69 females committed Sexual Offences in 2004/05. 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 15% were served with a Notice to Appear. For 80% of offenders the victim was known to them. This figure may be higher given that 9% of all relationships were not stated.

Robbery

A decrease of 9% in the number of Armed Robberies reported to police in 2004/05 coupled with an 8% 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 1800 offences were reported to police which equates to a rate of 45 offences per 100000 persons. Of these, 824 (46%) were cleared in the period in which they were reported with an additional 109 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 four 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 2004/05 was no exception. Metropolitan South Region recorded the highest rate in the State despite a 7% decrease from the previous year. Although Central Region experienced a substantive increase in Robbery (23%), it again experienced the lowest rate in the State.

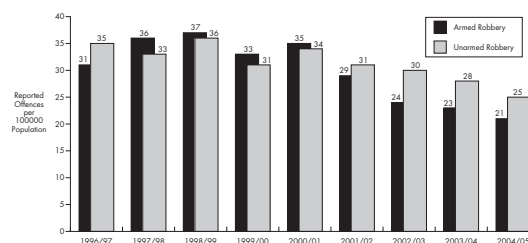


Figure 3: Reported Robbery Offences, Queensland, 1996/97 to 2004/05

For almost 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 68% of all cases reported to police.

Males were significantly more likely than females to commit Robbery offences (88% of offenders were male) and 76% of total offenders were aged between fifteen and twenty-nine years. Of those proceeded against for Robbery offences 81% were arrested. A large proportion of offences (11%) were committed against a company or an organisation. However, for almost three quarters of offences (74%), 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 29% from 2003/04 to 2004/05 (from 69 to 49 offences). Of these, 69% were cleared in the same period.

Kidnapping, Abduction, Deprivation of Liberty etc. offences decreased by 12% from 411 offences reported in 2003/04 to 362 offences reported in 2004/05. Approximately 60% of these were cleared in the 2004/05 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 2004/05, Other Offences Against the Person decreased by 11% from 5642 to 5015 offences. Of these, 63% were cleared in the same period with this clearance rate being two percentage points greater than that recorded previously. In addition, 680 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 2004/05, 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 22% of offences with Other Property Damage and Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicles accounting for 18% and 6% 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 10% from 265122 offences reported in 2003/04 to 238327 offences reported in 2004/05. Factoring in the growth of the Queensland population, property offences were reported at a rate of 6006 offences per 100000 persons, a decrease of 12% from the previous year. Of all property offences reported in 2004/05, 30% were cleared in the same period with a further 12395 offences cleared from previous periods.

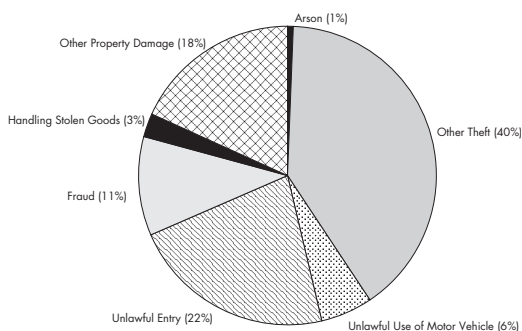


Figure 4: Offences Against Property (%) - 2004/05*

All regions recorded decreases in property crime during 2004/05. Although South Eastern Region recorded the highest rate of property offences in the State, it also exhibited one of the largest decreases (12%) from the previous period. Southern Region recorded the largest decrease (15%) while Central Region recorded the lowest rate (4508 offences per 100000 persons).

Overall, property offences were more likely to be committed by males (77% of offenders were male). Over one-fifth (26%) of offenders proceeded against for property offences were male aged between fifteen and nineteen years. Of the total persons proceeded against for property offences, 40% were arrested, 44% were served with a Notice to Appear and 11% were cautioned.

* Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Therefore, although the percentages are correct, they do not add to 100%.

Unlawful Entry with Intent

The number of Unlawful Entry offences decreased by a substantive 12%. This equates to a 14% reduction in the rate once the growth of the Queensland population is taken into account. Of the 52913 offences reported to police in 2004/05, 17% were cleared in the same period with a further 2034 offences cleared from previous periods.

The number of Unlawful Entry of Dwellings decreased by 15%, the number of Unlawful Entry of Shops also decreased by 12%, while Unlawful Entry of Other Premises fell by 6%.

All regions recorded a decrease in Unlawful Entry offences. The largest decrease (19%) occurred in Metropolitan South Region; Metropolitan North and Central Regions also recorded substantive decreases (16% and 17% respectively). 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, 90% of offenders were male and nearly 65% were male aged under twenty-five years. Of all offenders proceeded against for Unlawful Entry offences, 54% were arrested, 11% cautioned and 30% served with a Notice to Appear.

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 decreased by 1% from 2003/04 to 2004/05. The rate of offences decreased by 3% to 38 offences per 100,000 persons. Of the 1,488 offences reported in 2004/05, 288 (19%) were cleared in the same period. An additional 38 offences were cleared from previous periods.

Five of the eight regions recorded minor increases in Arson offences. The largest of which was seen in Central Region (4%). Metropolitan North and Central Regions recorded the lowest rates in the State while South Eastern Region again recorded the highest (61 reported offences per 100000 persons).

Approximately 93% of offenders were male. Fifteen to nineteen year old males were most likely to be proceeded against for Arson followed by twenty to twenty-four year olds. Approximately 67% of offenders were arrested, 12% cautioned and 14% served with a Notice to Appear.

Other Property Damage

Other Property Damage offences decreased by 2% from 44456 to 43462 offences. This equates to a rate of 1095 offences for every 100000 persons. Of those offences reported to police in 2004/05, 11613 (27%) were cleared with an additional 1385 offences cleared from previous time periods.

All regions except Metropolitan South and Southern recorded decreases in Other Property Damage offences with the increases being 0.3% and 4% respectively. Although Northern Region experienced the largest decrease in Other Property Damage offences (15%) it continues to exhibit the highest rate in the State. Central Region experienced the lowest rate at 989 offences per 100000 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 16% of offenders were aged thirty years or more. In total, 37% of offenders were arrested for this offence type, 16% were cautioned and 38% were served with a Notice to Appear.

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 799 fewer offences reported during 2004/05 and over 4000 fewer offences reported over the last three years.

In 2004/05, 13432 Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicle offences were reported to police. Of these, 3448 (26%) were cleared with an additional 595 offences cleared from previous periods (note: for recovery rates see Explanatory Notes). In 2004/05, Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicle offences were reported at a rate of 339 offences for every 100000 persons.

Rates of Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicles are traditionally higher in the south-eastern corner of the State and 2004/05 was no exception despite significant decreases in two of the regions in this area. Far Northern was the only region which recorded an increase in the current period (7%). Northern Region experienced the largest decrease while South Eastern Region exhibited the highest rate in the State. Central Region recorded the lowest rate at 140 offences per 100000 persons.

Males aged fifteen to nineteen years were most likely to offend (46% of male offenders were in this group).

Including females in this age group, 46% of all offenders were aged fifteen to nineteen years. Approximately 58% of offenders were arrested and 32% were served with a Notice to Appear.

Other Theft (excluding Unlawful Entry)

Other Theft (excl. Unlawful Entry) offences fell by 11% from 2003/04 to 2004/05. 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 2004/05, 95426 offences were reported to police of which 26% were cleared. A further 3476 were cleared from previous periods.

All sub-categories of Other Theft offences exhibited decreases: Stealing from Dwellings and Steal from Vehicles were down by 9% and 11% respectively and Steal from Shops and Other Premises were down by 6% and 13% 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 despite the fact that these regions recorded the largest decreases of (14% for each). Central Region exhibited the largest decrease (17%) resulting in this region recording the lowest rate (1828 offences per 100000 persons).

The proportion of female offenders for Other Theft was higher than for most offence types at 31%, 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 30%, while 50% were served with a Notice to Appear and 16% (mostly juvenile) were cautioned.

Fraud

Although Queensland recorded an increase in Fraud by Computer offences (40%), decreases in Fraud by Credit Card (36%), Fraud by Cheque (19%) and Other Fraud (10%) resulted in an overall decrease of 15% in total Fraud offences.

Of the 25522 offences reported in 2004/05, 16165 (63%) were cleared in the same period with a further 4746 offences cleared from previous periods.

A substantive increase (76%) in Far Northern Region resulted in this region recording one of the highest rates in the State. This was due to police proceeding against two offenders for more than 890 offences.

Only Metropolitan North Region recorded a higher rate of Fraud offences. A sizeable decrease in Northern Region (15%) resulted in this region experiencing the lowest rate in the State. Southern Region exhibited the largest decrease (45%).

Fraud is unique in that the age of those proceeded against tends to be older when compared with other offence types and 2004/05 was no exception. Also, a relatively higher proportion of females commit Fraud offences compared with other offence types. Approximately 37% of offenders were female. Both males and females in the twenty to twenty-four year age group were most likely to offend. Thirty-eight percent of offenders were arrested, while 54% were issued with a Notice to Appear.

Handling Stolen Goods

Decreases in all sub-categories of Handling Stolen Goods offences resulted in an overall decrease of 17%. Of the total 6084 offences reported to police in 2004/05, 5867 (96%) were cleared with a further 121 offences cleared from previous periods.

Metropolitan North Region again recorded the highest rate of Handling Stolen Goods offences while Central Region recorded the lowest rate. All regions recorded decreases with Central Region exhibiting the largest.

As with most offence categories, males were most likely to commit Handling Stolen Goods offences (76% of offenders were male) and males in the fifteen to nineteen year age group were most likely to offend. Offenders were more likely to be served with a Notice to Appear (58%) although 36% 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 4% statewide from 140637 offences recorded in 2003/04 to 146559 offences recorded in 2004/05. This equates to a rate of 3694 offences per 100000 persons.

Half of the eight regions recorded increases in total Other Offences, the largest of which occurred in Metropolitan South Region (10%). Rates are traditionally higher in the northern part of the State and 2004/05 was no exception. Metropolitan South Region again experienced the lowest rate while Far Northern Region exhibited the highest.

Drug Offences

Sizeable increases in the two major sub-categories of Drug Offences resulted in a 1% 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 both increased by 7%.

Far Northern Region again recorded the highest rate in the State despite the fact that this region recorded the second largest decrease in the State. Metropolitan South Region recorded the lowest rate while Metropolitan North Region recorded the largest increase (29%). Metropolitan South and North Coast Regions were the only other regions to record increases (13% and 10% respectively).

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 2004/05 financial year saw a 6% increase in Breach of Domestic Violence Protection Orders. A total of 9492 offences were reported to police, equating to a rate of 239 offences per 100000 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 three years.

While Metropolitan North Region recorded the lowest rate of offences in the State, the northern regions again recorded the highest. Northern, Central and Metropolitan South Regions recorded sizeable increase while South Eastern and Far Northern were the only regions to record decreases (7% for each).

Weapons Act Offences

The number of Weapons Act offences decreased by 13% from 4656 offences reported in 2003/04 to 4029 offences reported in 2004/05. The overall decrease is attributable to decreases in all weapons sub-categories. The largest decrease was a 28% fall in the Weapons Act Offences - Other category.

All Regions recorded decreases in Weapons Act Offences during the 2004/05 financial year. The largest decrease occurred in Central Region (35%). The higher rates are generally seen in the northern regions and 2004/05 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 6% from 2003/04 to 2004/05. A total of 32551 offences were detected by police which equates to a rate of 820 offences for every 100000 persons. An increase in Resist, hinder etc., Fare Evasion and public nuisance type offences contributed to the overall increase. Public nuisance type offences, being the largest group of offences had the most impact on the outcome.

Only three regions, Northern, Central and North Coast recorded decreases. The largest increases occurred in Southern and South Eastern Regions (18% for each). Higher rates are generally seen in the northern regions and this occurred again in 2004/05. 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. This Act was repealed on 20 March, 2005 and was replaced by the *Summary Offences Act, 2005*.

Traffic and Related Offences

Traffic and Related Offences increased by 14% from 37187 to 42513 offences. All sub-categories exhibited increases of which the largest was a 38% 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 8%.

Despite recording the largest increase in Traffic and Related Offences, Metropolitan South Region still recorded the lowest rate in the State (837 offences per 100000 persons). All of the eight regions recorded increases. The highest rates were recorded in Far Northern and 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 pages 135-138.

