

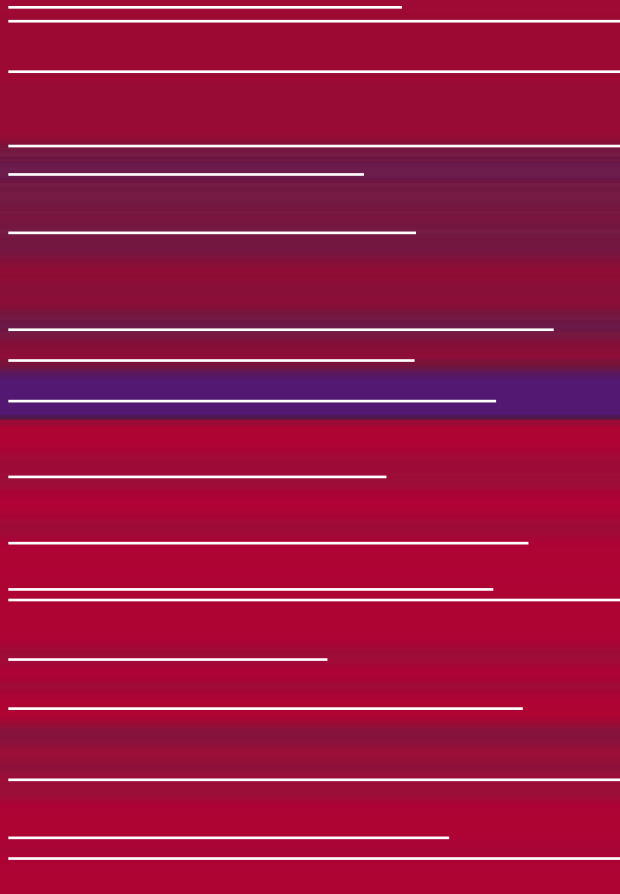


Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee

Inquiry into Crime Trends

SECOND REPORT

June 2001





PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA
DRUGS AND CRIME PREVENTION COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO CRIME TRENDS
Second Report

ORDERED TO BE PRINTED

June 2001

by Authority
Government Printer for the State of Victoria

No. 89 Session 1999–2001

Inquiry into Crime Trends
Second Report

ISBN: 0-7311-8179-4

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Functions of the Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee

The Victorian Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee is constituted under the *Parliamentary Committees Act 1968*, as amended.

Parliamentary Committees Act 1968

Section 4 EF.

To inquire into, consider and report to the Parliament on any proposal, matter or thing concerned with the illicit use of drugs (including the manufacture, supply or distribution of drugs for such use) or the level or causes of crime or violent behaviour, if the Committee is required or permitted so to do by or under this Act.

Terms of Reference

Received from the Legislative Council

1 March 2000

That pursuant to the *Parliamentary Committees Act 1968*, the Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee be required to inquire into, consider and report on the following:

‘The incidence of crime in Victoria and to report every six months to the Parliament on levels of crime, areas of emerging concern and (where suitable) options for crime reduction or control.’

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Introduction

Background and Data Sources

On 1 March 2000 the Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee received from the Legislative Council a reference to inquire into:

The incidence of crime in Victoria and to report every six months to the Parliament on levels of crime, areas of emerging concern and (where suitable) options for crime reduction or control.

This Report is the second of a series of crime trend reports presented to the Parliament of Victoria.

This Report draws on data published in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)¹ *Recorded Crime Australia 2000*, Cat. No. 4510.0, released on 30 May 2001, as well as selected data from Victoria Police,² *Crime Statistics 1999–2000*. The Report also makes reference to the Committee's first report to Parliament *Benchmarking Crime Trend Data 1995-2000*.

This Report examines crime data in two sections. The first section is an analysis and commentary on a number of the findings from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2000 National Crime Statistics. It provides detailed ABS National Crime Statistics information for each State and Territory in Australia on the following offence categories:

- Total recorded offences;
- Homicide offences;
- Assault offences;
- Robbery offences;
- Kidnapping/abduction offences; and
- Motor vehicle thefts.

1 There are a limited number of sources of official information sources relating to the nature and extent of crime in Victoria. At the National level, the Australian Bureau of Statistics releases an annual publication *Recorded Crime Australia*, which presents national statistics on crime recorded by police. These statistics provide indicators of the level and nature of recorded crime in Australia and offer a basis for measuring change over time. This data is extracted from State and Territory police according to specific uniform national counting rules. This ensures that the different State and Territory police data are directly comparable.

2 The primary source of Victorian crime statistical data is Victoria Police. It is a legislative requirement that Victoria Police provide annual crime statistical information. Victoria Police Crime statistics are released every year on a financial year basis.

Figures 1–20 present the following details, where appropriate, for each of these offence categories:

- The number of recorded offences;
- The rate of recorded offences per 100 000 population; and
- The percentage change in the recorded offence rates between 1999 and 2000.

Commentary and analysis of the information presented in the Figures are provided to highlight particular points of interest or concern.³

The second section details the Committee's concerns with the way that Victoria Police is presenting its crime statistics following its administrative and operational reorganisation from 17 Police Districts to 5 Regions. The Report explores the implications of this change, giving details of the Committee's concerns regarding the way in which crime statistical information is being collected, recorded and disseminated by Victoria Police and offers an alternative means of presenting crime statistics in the future.

Official Crime Statistics: A Cautionary Note

The problems and limitations of official crime statistics are well documented. However, it is important to revisit those issues regarding uses and limitations that are particularly relevant to an understanding of the crime statistics presented in this Report. For a full discussion of crime measurement techniques and problems see the Committee's Report, *Benchmarking Crime Trend Data 1995–1996 to 1999–2000*.⁴

Crime statistics, whether official or unofficial, are not and can not be a complete and accurate enumeration of criminal offending behaviour. At best they are an approximation of the nature and extent of crime. Crime statistics represent merely the 'known' aspect of crime as opposed to what criminologists refer to as 'the dark figure of crime', or the proportion that remains unknown. That being said, not all known crime will necessarily be included in official crime statistics as:

- Not all crime that comes to the attention of police will be officially recorded;
- Not all crime that has come to the attention of victims or other members of the public is reported to police;
- Not all crime detected by police will necessarily be recorded.

Issues in Relation to ABS National Crime Statistics

In addition to the general concerns with official crime statistics, there are a number of specific issues in relation to the interpretation of the ABS National Crime Statistics.

3 For detailed information on the research methods used see Appendix 2.

4 See also Appendix 1 in this Report.

The ABS provides the following caveats on the data reported in *Recorded Crime Australia 2000*:

- There is considerable variation in the criminal laws of Australian States and Territories. The ABS figures include only those offences for which nationally comparable definitions and counting rules have been developed (ABS 2001, p. 30).
- The national crime statistics are counted and reported on a calendar year basis (ABS 2001, p. 31). Victoria Police provides crime statistics on a financial year basis. This makes direct comparison between ABS and Victoria Police statistics problematic.
- The ABS uses a victim based counting rule. They only count the most serious offence per national offence category for each victim, within a distinct criminal incident (ABS 2001, p. 32). The definition of 'victim' varies according to the type of offence.

In addition, the ABS crime statistics are limited to the offence categories of homicide and related offences, assault, sexual assault, kidnapping/abduction, robbery, blackmail/extortion, unlawful entry with intent (UEWI), motor vehicle theft and other theft (ABS 2001). ABS statistics are only included in this Report where they relate directly to Victoria Police offence categories. For example, the ABS category of sexual assault is not included in this Report because Victoria Police uses categories for sexual assault of rape and sex (non-rape).

Issues in Relation to Victoria Police Crime Statistics

There are a range of issues to be aware of in interpreting Victoria Police Crime Statistics which are detailed in Appendix 1.

Comparing Victoria's Crime Record with other States and Territories

Overview

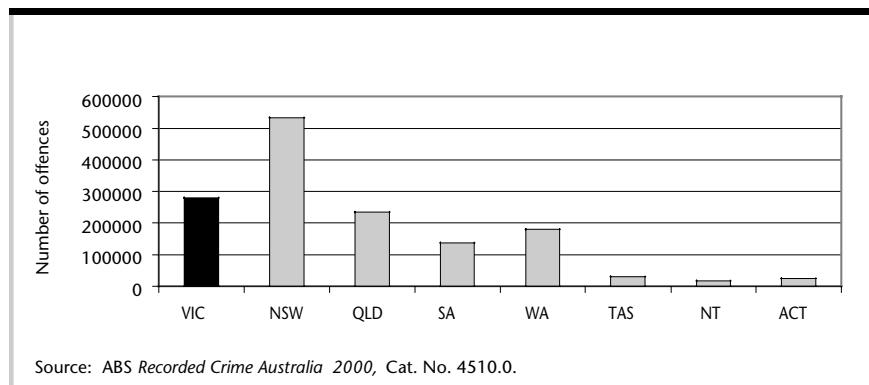
The ABS *Recorded Crime in Australia 2000* provides very useful comparative information in relation to the nature and extent of crime in each Australian State and Territory. In relation to Victoria in 2000 the Committee notes that:

- For the eighth successive year Victoria had the lowest overall recorded crime rate in Australia. This equated to a rate of 5859.7 recorded offences per 100 000 population. In comparison, the Australian national average recorded crime rate was 7480.3 per 100 000 population;
- Victoria had the lowest rates for both violent and non-violent offences;
- Victoria's recorded crime rate was 21.7 percent below the national average;
- Victoria's overall crime rate increased by 3.2 percent compared to the 1999 rate. In comparison, the Australian overall crime rate increased by 6.4 percent;
- Victoria returned the lowest murder and assault rates in Australia;
- Victoria recorded a 4.6 percent decrease in the rate of assault rate compared to the 1999 rate. The Australian assault rate increased by 3.9 percent; and
- Victoria experienced a 13.4 percent increase in the rate of motor vehicle theft compared to 1999 – the highest percentage in Australia. This was more than double the national increase of 6.1 percent.

Total Recorded Offences

Figure 1 shows the total number of recorded offences for each State and Territory in Australia for the calendar year 2000, as measured by National Crime Statistics.

Figure 1. Total recorded crime by State and Territory 2000

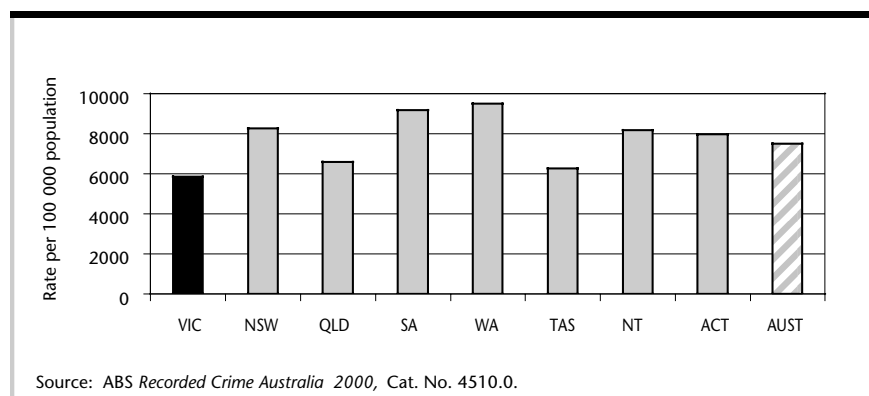


There were 279 269 offences recorded in Victoria in 2000. This total was the second highest in Australia behind New South Wales (532 969) in terms of overall counts of recorded crime. The 2000 total represents a 4.5 percent increase in the total number of recorded offences compared to the 1999 Victorian total of 267 264 offences.

Care must be taken in comparing the number of offences recorded by the different jurisdictions, as different population sizes will have an impact upon the number of crimes being recorded. To overcome these difficulties, data are converted to offence rates per 100 000 population. This controls for the differences between the States and Territories, which allows direct comparisons to be made regarding the amount of crime recorded.

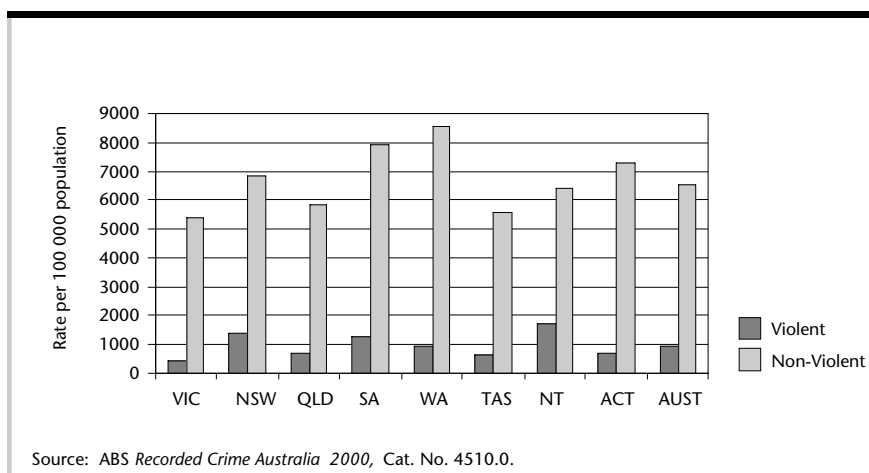
Figure 2 outlines the crime rates per 100 000 for each of the States and Territories, as well as providing a crime rate for the whole of Australia. These rates allow each of the jurisdictions to be compared both to each other and to Australia as a whole. The effect of converting raw numbers to rates is clearly demonstrated with Victoria's relative position changing from having the second highest number of offences in Figure 1 to having the lowest crime rate per 100 000 in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Total recorded crime rates per 100 000 population by State and Territory 2000



In 2000 Victoria recorded the lowest overall crime rate in Australia of 5859.7 per 100 000 population. Western Australia returned the highest overall crime rate in Australia in 2000, followed by South Australia. It is significant that Victoria’s rate was 21.7 percent below the national average of 7480.3 per 100 000 population, which is consistent with Victoria returning rates of around 20 percent below the national average every year since 1996.

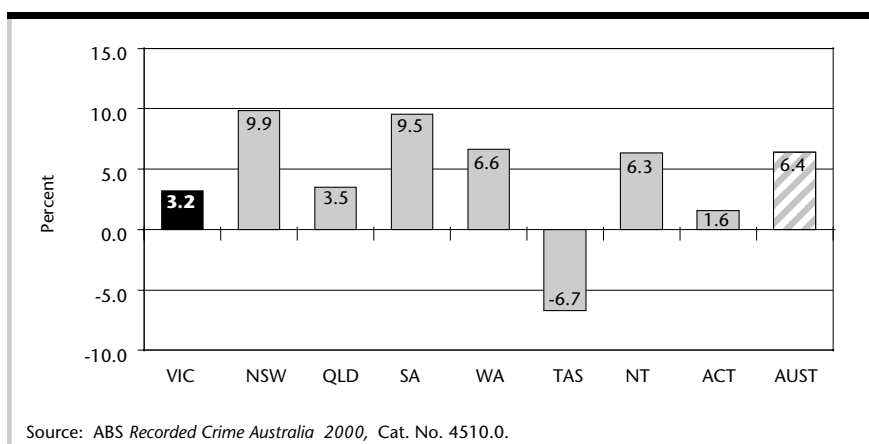
Figure 3. Violent and non-violent crime rates per 100 000 by State and Territory 2000.



Victoria had the lowest crime rates for both violent⁵ and non-violent⁶ offences in Australia in 2000. Victoria’s violent offence rate of 474.5 per 100 000 was half that of the Australian rate of 948.9 per 100 000.

The following figure shows percentage change in the State and Territory crime rates for 2000 compared to those of 1999 (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Percentage change in recorded crime rates per 100 000 population by State and Territory between 1999 and 2000



5 Violent offences include Homicide, Assault, Sexual assault, Kidnapping/abduction and Robbery.

6 Non-violent offences include Unlawful Entry With Intent, Motor vehicle theft and Other Theft.

Figure 4 shows that Victoria’s overall crime rate increased by 3.2 percent in 2000 compared to the rate for 1999. All other States, with the exception of Tasmania (6.7 percent decrease), recorded increases in their overall crime rates for 2000. New South Wales and South Australia experienced increases of more than 9 percent, while the Australian Capital Territory had a 1.6 percent increase. The overall Australian crime rate increased by 6.4 percent.

Homicide and Related Offences

The first offence category reported in the National Crime Statistics is that for homicide and related offences. This category includes individual counts for the offences:

- murder;
- attempted murder;
- manslaughter; and
- driving causing death.

These offences will be considered both as a total homicide and related offences category and as the four individual offences themselves.

Figure 5 represents the total numbers of homicide and related offences recorded by Australian jurisdictions in 2000.

Figure 5. Number of homicide and related offences by State and Territory 2000

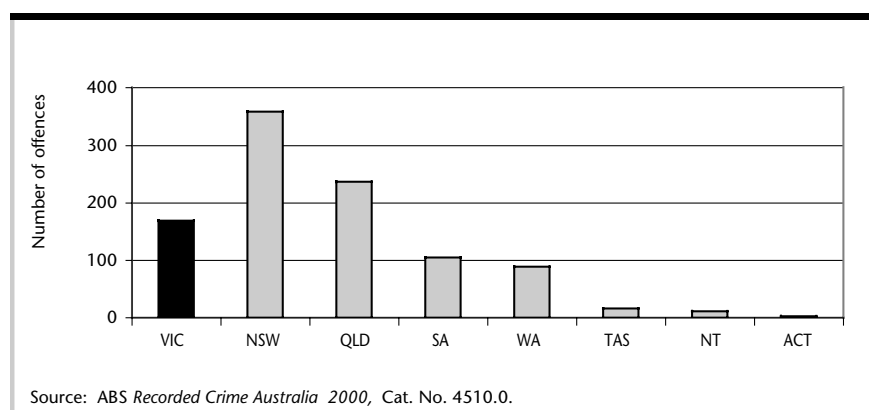


Figure 5 shows that Victoria recorded 169 homicide and related offences in 2000. This was one less than the 170 offences recorded in Victoria in 1999. New South Wales returned the highest count of 359 in 2000 while the ACT had 3.

Again, when we consider the number of homicide and related offences in terms of rates per 100 000 population a different pattern emerges regarding the relative position of the jurisdictions.

Figure 6. Homicide and related offences rate per 100 000 population by State and Territory 2000

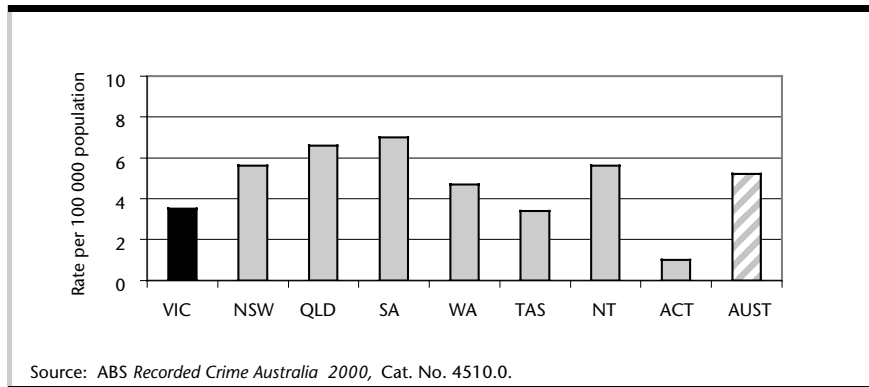


Figure 6 shows that South Australia had the highest homicide rate in Australia in 2000, at 7 homicides for every 100 000 residents. Victoria's 169 homicide offences gave it a rate of 3.5 recorded homicide offences per 100 000 population. This was the third lowest homicide rate in Australia behind Tasmania (3.4 per 100 000) and the ACT (1.0 per 100 000). The Australian homicide rate was 5.2 offences per 100 000 in 2000.

Figure 7. Percentage change in homicide and related offences rates per 100 000 population by State and Territory between 1999 and 2000

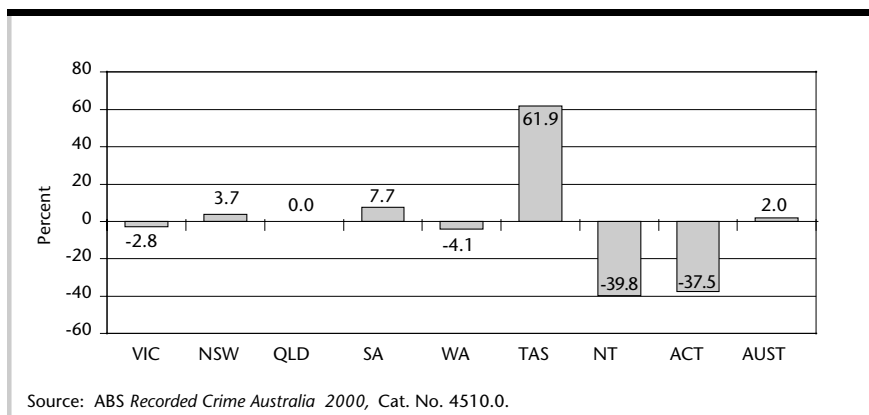


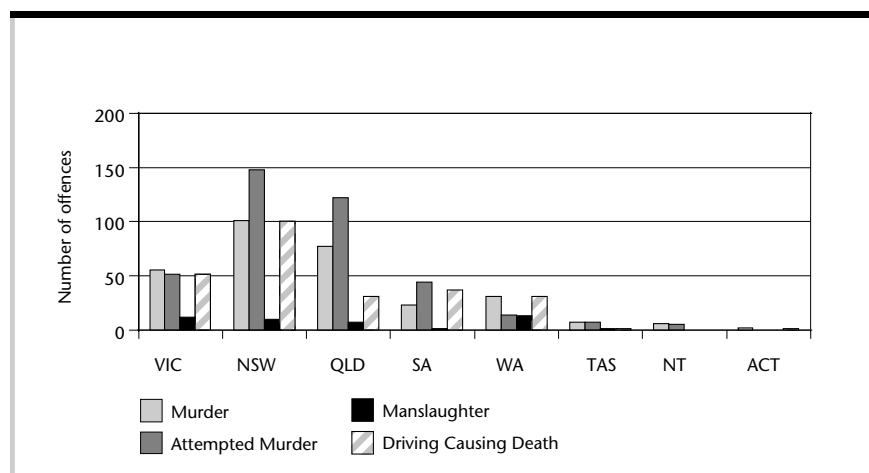
Figure 7 shows that Victoria's homicide rate fell by 2.8% in 2000 compared to the rate in 1999. In comparison, the Australian homicide rate rose 2 percent. Tasmania's rate increased by over 60 percent, however it must be stated that this represents an increase in the number of homicides from 10 to 16 offences.

Breakdown of Homicide and Related Offences

When the homicide and related offence category is broken down to its constituent offences, a clearer picture emerges in relation to the nature of homicide both in Victoria and throughout Australia. The homicide and related

offence category comprises the offences of murder, attempted murder, manslaughter and driving causing death.

Figure 8. Number of offences for each of the four homicide and related offences by State and Territory 2000



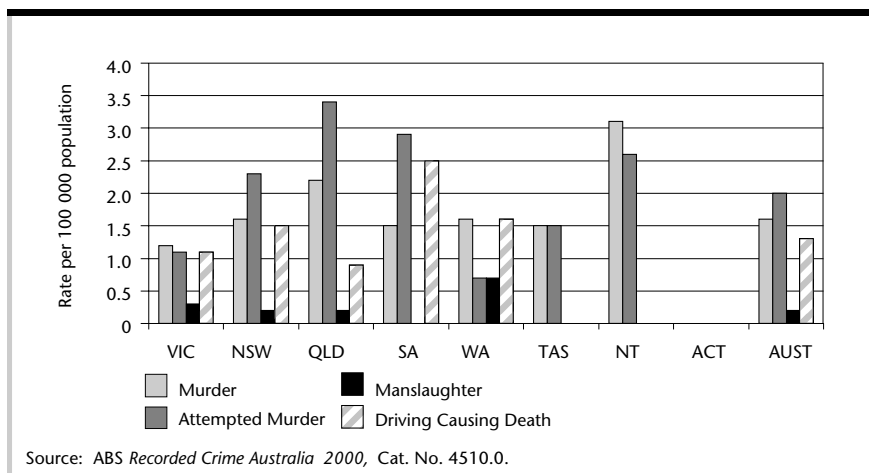
As stated above, there were 169 homicide and related offences in Victoria in 2000. These comprised:

- 55 murders;
- 51 attempted murders;
- 12 manslaughters; and
- 51 driving causing death.

In 1999 the comparative number of offences were:

- 62 murders;
- 57 attempted murders;
- 6 manslaughters; and
- 45 driving causing death.

Figure 9. Offence rates for each of the four homicide and related offences per 100 000 population by State and Territory 2000

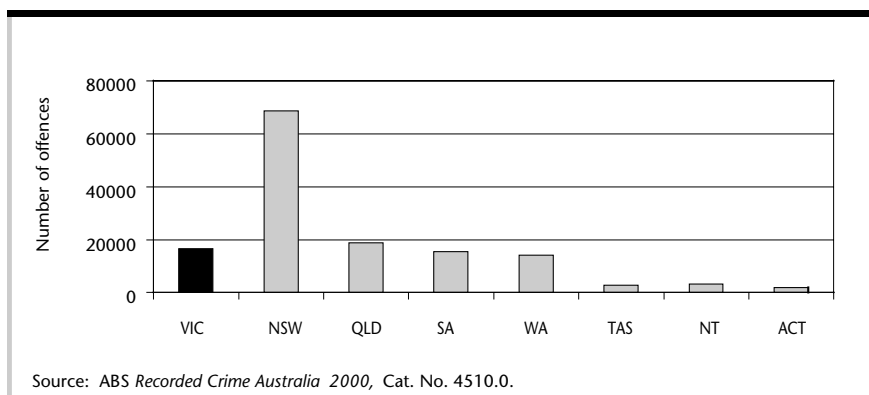


Victoria had the lowest murder rate of all States and Territories in Australia in 2000, at 1.2 per 100 000 population. The Australian murder rate was 1.6 per 100 000. The Northern Territory’s murder rate of 3.1 was almost twice as high as the national rate. Victoria’s attempted murder rate of 1.1 was the third lowest in Australia behind WA and ACT. The Australian attempted murder rate was 2 per 100 000. Victoria’s manslaughter rate of 0.3 per 100 000 was the second highest behind WA (0.7 per 100 000). The national rate was 0.2 per 100 000. Victoria’s driving causing death rate of 1.1 per 100 000 was below the Australian rate of 1.3 per 100 000.

Assault Offences

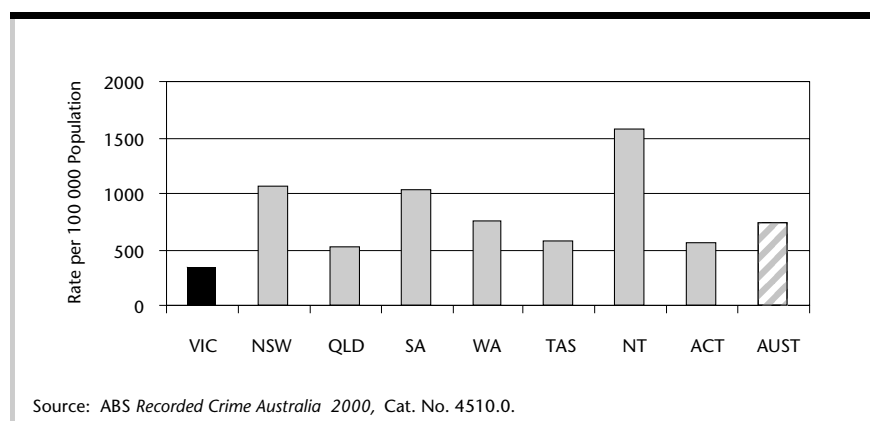
Victoria recorded 16 541 assault offences in 2000, which is down on the 17 121 recorded in 1999. New South Wales recorded 68 714 assaults – over four times as many as Victoria.

Figure 10. Number of assault offences by State and Territory 2000



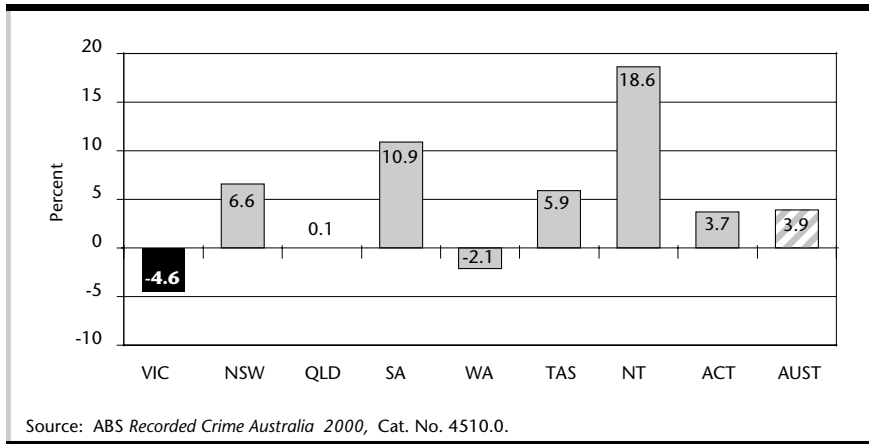
Questions have been raised over Victoria’s position in relation to its assault rate, particularly compared to New South Wales. ABS acknowledges that although national standards and classifications are used in compiling the statistics, different recording policies, laws and procedures operate in different jurisdictions (ABS 2001, p. 2). The Director of ABS National Crime Statistics Unit, in conversation with Committee staff, explained that the ABS has been compiling National Crime Statistics since 1993 and is satisfied that the figures are accurate. The time series data show that the Victorian assault rate over time has been consistent. National Crime Victim Survey data confirm that Victoria has the lowest assault rate in Australia (ABS 1998).

Figure 11. Assault rate per 100 000 population by State and Territory 2000



Victoria’s assault rate of 347.1 assaults per 100 000 population remains the lowest in the country. Significantly, its rate is only 47.1 percent of the national rate of 736.8 assaults per 100 000 population. The Northern Territory remains the jurisdiction with the highest assault rate. Its rate of 1 579.8 per 100 000 population in 2000 is four and a half times that of Victoria’s.

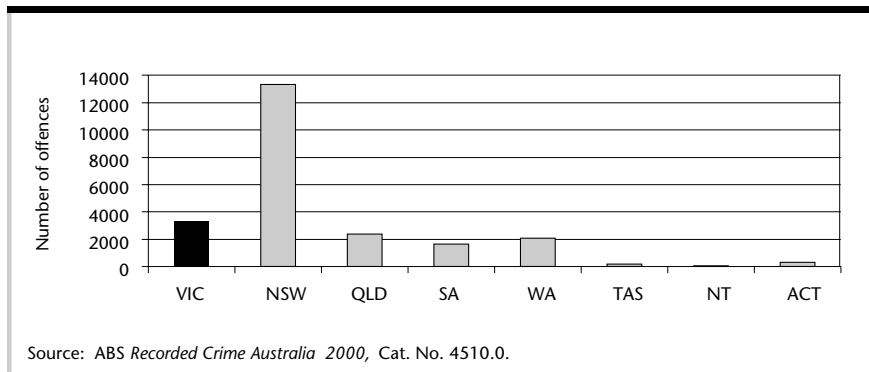
Figure 12. Percentage change in assault offence rates per 100 000 population by State and Territory between 1999 and 2000



Every State and Territory, with the exception of Victoria and Western Australia, experienced an increase in its assault rate in 2000. Victoria had a 4.6 percent reduction in the assault rate for 2000 compared to the 1999 rate, against a national increase of 3.9 percent. The Northern Territory stands out as having recorded an 18.6 percent increase in its assault rate, which is over four and a half times greater than the national increase.

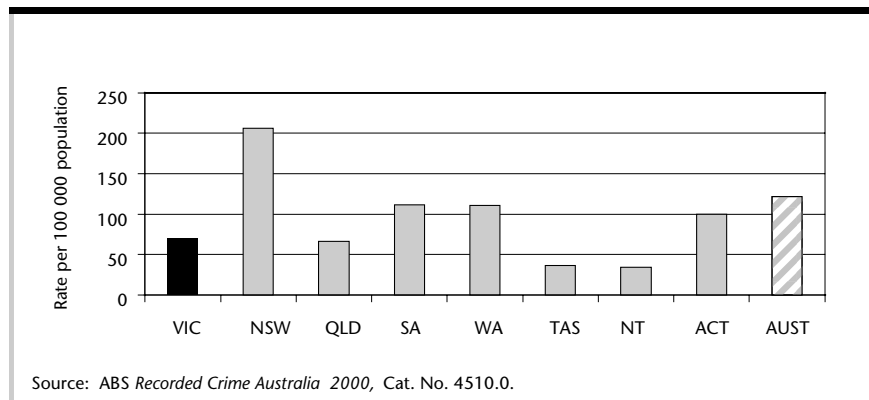
Robbery Offences

Figure 13. Number of robbery offences by State and Territory 2000



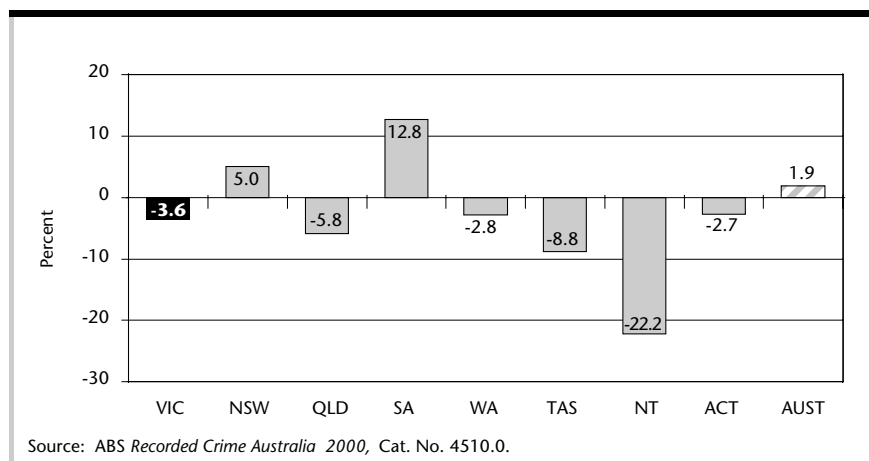
In 2000 there were 3 326 robberies recorded in Victoria. In 1999 Victoria had 3 408 recorded robberies. New South Wales recorded the most robberies in Australia with 13 325 recorded robberies, accounting for more than half of the 23 314 total recorded in Australia in 2000.

Figure 14. Robbery rate per 100 000 population by State and Territory 2000



The 3 326 robberies recorded in Victoria translates to a rate of 69.8 victims per 100 000 population. This is considerably lower than the Australian rate of 121.7 offences per 100 000 and is almost one-third of the New South Wales rate of 206.2 per 100 000 population. Victoria’s robbery rate in 2000 was twice that of the Northern Territory, which returned the lowest robbery rate of 34.3 victims per 100 000 population.

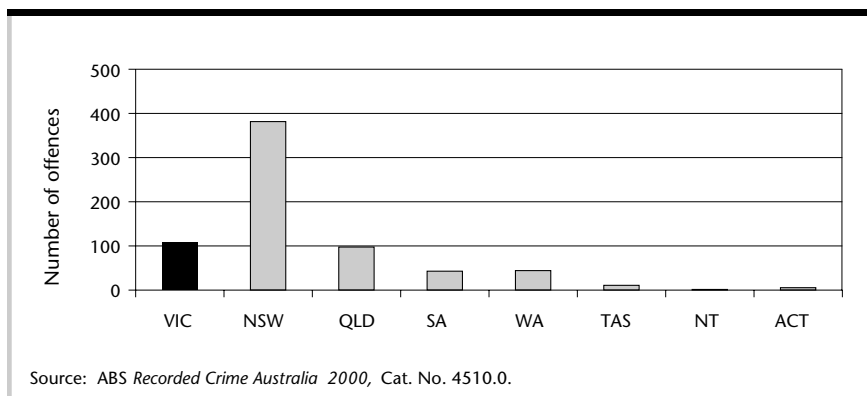
Figure 15. Percentage change in robbery offence rates per 100 000 population by State and Territory between 1999 and 2000



Victoria’s robbery rate per 100 000 has decreased by 3.6 percent in 2000 compared to the rate for 1999. The Northern Territory recorded a 22.2 percent reduction in its robbery rate, which was the largest reduction recorded in Australia. The Australian robbery rate increased 1.9 percent in 2000.

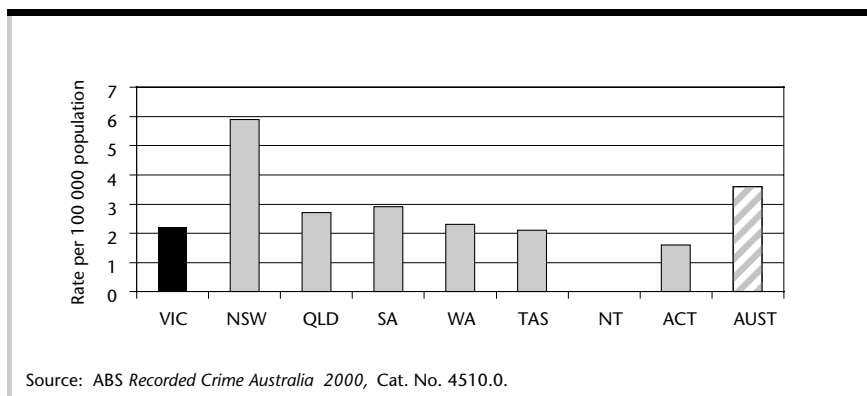
Kidnap/Abduction Offences

Figure 16. Number of kidnap/abduction offences by State and Territory 2000



As Figure 16 shows, there were 106 kidnapping/abduction offences recorded in Victoria in 2000, which is 18 less than in 1999. New South Wales recorded 382 kidnapping/abduction offences, which accounted for 55 percent of Australia’s total of 688.

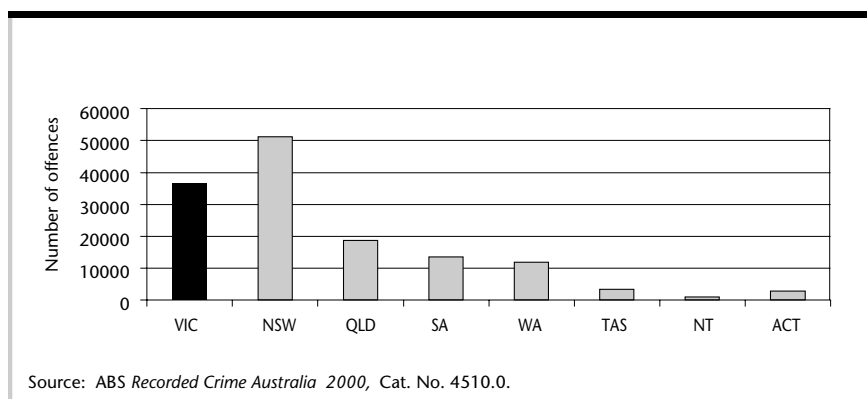
Figure 17. Kidnap/abduction rate per 100 000 population by State and Territory 2000



Victoria’s 2000 kidnap/abduction rate was 2.2 per 100 000. This means that its kidnapping rate has returned to the low levels recorded in 1995 and 1996 after two years of growth in 1998 and 1999. New South Wales (5.9 per 100 000 population) returned the highest rate of kidnap/abduction for the fifth year, while the ACT had the lowest (1.6 per 100 000). The Australian rate was 3.6 per 100 000. NT rates were not available for publication.

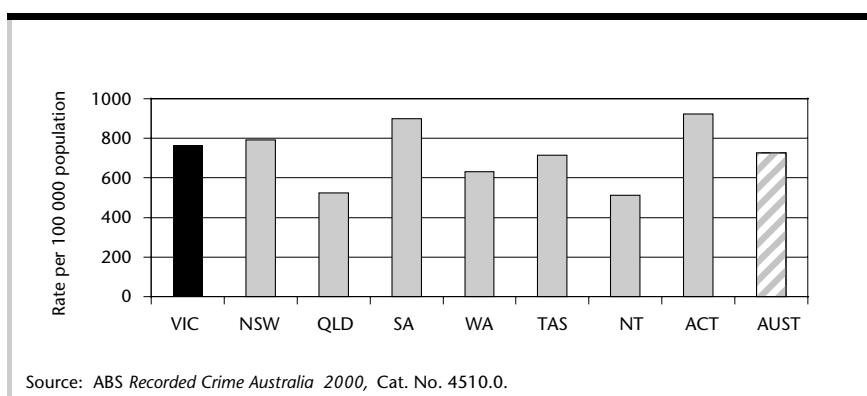
Theft of Motor Vehicle Offences

Figure 18. Number of theft of motor vehicle offences by State and Territory 2000



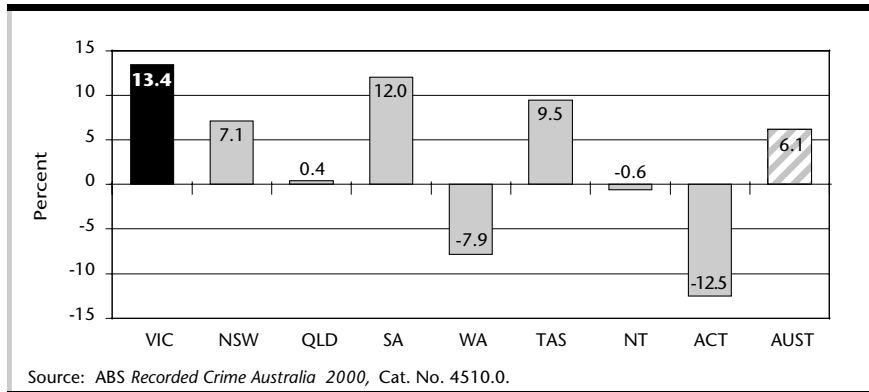
In 2000 there were 139 094 motor vehicles stolen in Australia. Of these, New South Wales recorded 51 249 motor vehicle thefts, Victoria recorded 36 591 and Queensland recorded 18 638. In 1999, by comparison, there were 129 552 stolen motor vehicles recorded, with New South Wales accounting for 47 355, Victoria for 31 877 and Queensland for 18 249.

Figure 19. Theft of motor vehicle rate per 100 000 population by State and Territory 2000



Victoria's theft of motor vehicle rate in 2000 was 767.8 per 100 000 population, up from 677.1 per 100 000 in 1999. Victoria's rate was slightly above the national average rate of 726.2 victims per 100 000 population. The Australian Capital Territory returned the highest rate of motor vehicle theft, with 924.6 per 100 000 population, but returned the second lowest number of motor vehicles stolen – 2 874. This is due to the ACT having a small resident population compared to the other jurisdictions in Australia.

Figure 20. Percentage change in theft of motor vehicle offence rates per 100 000 population by State and Territory between 1999 and 2000



Victoria recorded a 13.4 increase in the rate of motor vehicle thefts compared to 1999, which was the highest rate of increase in the country at over twice the national rate of increase of 6.1 per cent.

Summary

The Committee notes that for the eighth year in succession Victoria had the lowest overall recorded crime rate in Australia. Victoria also had the lowest rates for both violent and non-violent offences for 2000.

Concerns Regarding the Collection and Dissemination of Victoria Police Crime Statistics

Victoria Police Crime Statistics 1999–2000

Finalised crime statistics, supplied to the Committee by Victoria Police, showed that there had been no changes to the number of offences reported in the provisional crime statistics for the financial year 1999–2000. As this data has been analysed previously (Victoria Parliament 2000) the Committee sees little use in conducting further analysis or making further comment on these figures.

Publication of Victoria Police Crime Statistics

It is with regret that the Committee believes it is necessary to place on the public record some of the difficulties encountered in obtaining statistical information from Victoria Police. In particular, the Committee is concerned that the Victoria Police Crime Statistics 1999–2000, which were due to be published in November 2000, have still not been published at the tabling of this Report in June 2001. While the Committee understands that the Victoria Police Statistical Services faced severe staffing shortages during this period, the Committee is of the belief that it is the responsibility of Victoria Police to provide the information in a timely manner.

While the Committee has no further comment to make with regard to the crime statistics themselves, it does, however, have serious concerns about the changes that have been made to the way in which the crime statistics are now being presented and reported by Victoria Police.

Regional Reporting of Crime Statistics

It is a matter of public record that in November 1999 Victoria Police changed their administrative and operational boundaries from 17 Districts to 5 Regions⁷, each with up to 5 divisions⁸, under the Local Priority Policing Strategy Statewide Management Model. In the statistical information provided to it by Victoria Police, the Committee noted that crime statistics are now being reported on a

7 See Appendix 3 for a map detailing the new regional boundaries.

8 See Appendix 4 for a list of the Regions, Divisions and Police Stations.

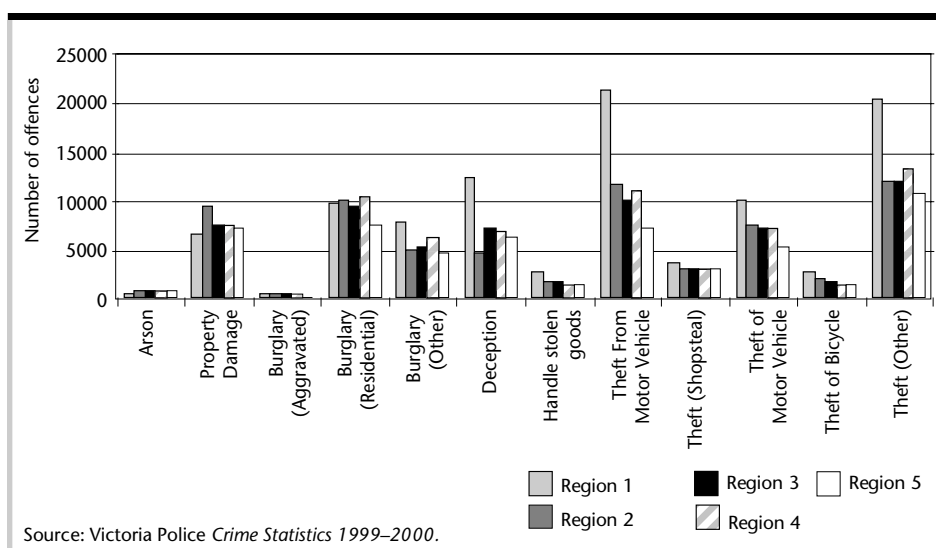
Regional basis rather than by the prior District basis. That is, crime in Victoria is now being reported for 5 Regional areas rather than by the 17 District areas. The Districts had been differentiated by urban/suburban and rural areas, making comparisons of the crime rates amongst different areas of the State more apparent and more meaningful. The current regional reporting presents serious problems in comparing and contrasting different areas of the State in any but the most superficial manner. This results in the loss of valuable data.

There are clear and very real problems in making meaningful comparisons between these regional structures, as they present vastly different demographic and policing challenges which in turn renders comparisons between the Regions all but meaningless. Four of the five Regions – Regions 2, 3, 4, and 5 – are comprised of both urban/suburban and rural areas, while Region 1 is comprised of the CBD, inner Melbourne and urban/suburban areas. In presenting Regional crime rates, Victoria Police is giving the impression that all of the individual communities within the Region share identical crime rates. For example, in Region 3, Maldon, which is a small rural community, is represented as having the same crime rate as Broadmeadows. This is clearly not the case.

Another concern is that Region 1 includes the Melbourne CBD and Southbank areas, which attract large numbers of non-residents during different times of the day. This will have the effect of inflating both the Region 1 crime numbers and rates, as rates are calculated using the resident population as the denominator. While the Committee acknowledges that this situation existed under the old District based reporting system, it believes that the Regional based reporting has brought no improvement.

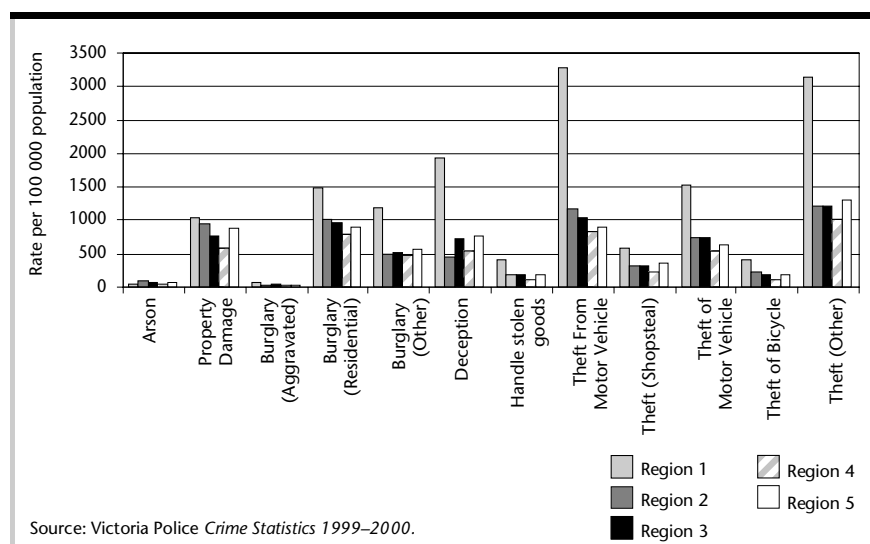
By way of example, Figures 21 and 22 show regional comparisons of the number and rate of the various property offence categories. These have been reported by Victoria Police for the financial year 1999–2000.

Figure 21. Recorded offences against property by region 1999–2000



As Figure 21 indicates, the numbers reported for arson, property damage, aggravated burglary and residential burglary offences are distributed fairly evenly across the regions. These offence categories are not particularly location specific; that is, they have an equal chance of occurring in any of the regions. It is when we consider the offence categories of burglary other, deception, theft from motor vehicle, theft of motor vehicle and theft other, in particular, that the problems become most pronounced. Region 1 is clearly differentiated from the other regions for these offence types. The very high urbanisation of Region 1 with its inclusion of the CBD and major entertainment venues, generating very large volumes of non-resident populations for significant portions of the day and night, lends itself to increased exposure to these types of offences.

Figure 22. Recorded offences against property by region 1999–2000 rate per 100 000 population



When these offences are considered in terms of the rate per 100 000 population, this situation becomes even more pronounced.

The Committee acknowledges the difficulties that Victoria Police face in striking a balance as to what statistical information is presented and how to present it in the most cost effective, efficient and effective manner. However, it believes that the regional reporting of statistical information does not serve the best interests of the Victorian community, as it results in a loss of valuable, location specific, comparative information. It is the Committee’s view that if Victoria Police reported crime according to the current 23 regional divisions many of its concerns would be alleviated because more specific and accurate data would be provided. **From a comparative point of view, the information provided to the Committee by Victoria Police, in its present form, has little use.**

The Committee stresses that these concerns are not to be interpreted as being criticisms of Victoria Police. Rather, they are meant to be a constructive call for Police statistics to be more useful, relevant and meaningful.

The Law Enforcement Assistance Program

The Committee considers that the Law Enforcement Assistance Program (LEAP) information management system has serious problems. The Committee has received both direct and anecdotal evidence that LEAP does not adequately record crime reports taken by Victoria Police members. Victoria Police are required to hand-write crime reports and fax them to the Central Data Entry Bureau, where they are manually entered onto LEAP by public service staff. The Committee is concerned that this system presents numerous potential sources of error.

In comparison, five jurisdictions (New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory, South Australia, Western Australia), operate systems where the police officer enters the crime report directly onto the information management system when the crime is detected. In the remaining two jurisdictions (Queensland, Tasmania) police officers telephone a central data entry bureau and dictate the crime report to the operator. Then the operator enters it onto the system.

The Committee believes that as a matter of urgency Victoria Police should provide sufficient resources to update its system in line with the best systems operating in Australia and internationally.

The Committee intends to report further on this matter in the near future.

Appendix 1

Issues to be Aware of in Interpreting Victoria Police and ABS Statistics

There are a number of specific issues, in addition to the general issues of official crime statistics, which need to be understood in the interpretation of Victoria Police and ABS statistics.

- There are over 4000 individual statutory and common law offences recorded on the Victoria Police Law Enforcement Assistance Program (LEAP) database. These have been grouped into 27 broad offence categories. These categories have been further subdivided into four general classes: Crime Against the Person, Crime Against Property, Drug Offences and Other Crime (Victoria Police 2000a, p. 6).
- Victoria Police and ABS offence statistical recording and reporting categories do not necessarily conform to legal offence definitions.
- An extremely important point to recognise is that *only the most serious offence* in a distinct course of criminal conduct is recorded in official statistics, even though multiple charges may be laid for the one incident. For example, if an offender carrying a firearm commits an armed robbery and assaults a staff member, only the armed robbery is recorded, although the offender would be charged with armed robbery, assault and possession of a firearm. An offender who is in possession and admits using an illicit drug will have only the possession, the more serious offence, counted in official statistics, although he or she would be charged with both offences (Victoria Police 2000a, p. 5).
- The LEAP figures include all crimes, family incidents and missing persons, brought to police attention in the financial year, *regardless of when the offence actually occurred*. Offences are only included in the statistics when a crime report has been completed (Victoria Police 2000a, p. 5).
- The 1999–2000 Victoria Police crime figures are subject to change (Victoria Police 2000b, p. 1) Victoria Police statistics are produced from the LEAP database, which is a 'live' database and is continuously being updated. It is often the case that crime figures published in previous years are adjusted either upwards or downwards to reflect late additions or refinements to the data in later years. Care must be taken in interpreting changes in recorded crime before yearly figures are finalised, which in some cases may be two or three years later.
- Recorded crime can also reflect changes in community or business procedures. For example, reporting rates for a number of theft, burglary and other offences are clearly influenced by insurance company

regulations requiring a police report of the offence, before a claim is paid (Walker 1994, p. 10), (Mukherjee 1996, p. 77).

Many companies are reluctant to report fraud offences committed against them to police, preferring to either handle the investigation in-house, or to engage another private company with specialist skills to investigate. The AIC reports that the 1999 KPMG *Fraud Survey*, found that 33.3% of organisations surveyed failed to report frauds committed against them to police, preferring to deal with the matter internally or by dismissing the internal offender (Smith 1999, p. 3).

- Victoria Police reports crime statistics over a financial year, while ABS statistics are reported by calendar year. This means that Victoria Police and ABS data are not directly comparable.
- Operational decisions made by police have a direct effect on recorded crime statistics. Police periodically conduct blitz operations against certain offences such as jay walking, drug possession, street begging and prostitution offences, which can drive the figures up for those particular offences.
- There are periodical changes to offence and counting categories, legal definitions of offences and changes to regional boundaries, which affect the comparability of crime statistics (Mukherjee 1996, p. 77). Extreme care must be taken to ensure comparisons of crime statistics over time or between jurisdictions are made using like statistics.
- Extreme care must be taken particularly in relation to interpreting National Crime Statistics. While a great deal of work has been done to ensure maximum statistical comparability across State and Territory jurisdictions, there are differences in legislation, police practice, interpretation and processing that will affect the direct comparability of National Crime Statistics.
- Rises in the crime rate do not necessarily reflect an increase in actual crime. They could be a reflection of increased public confidence in police, which means that the public are less fearful of making a report to police or more confident that police will be able to solve their case. It could also reflect increased public awareness of the importance of reporting offences to police and/or less community tolerance towards crime (Carcach 1997). Indermaur also suggests that rises in the crime rate could be the result of a range of factors that he labels 'police productivity'. These factors include increased police numbers, improvements in technology, record keeping and data base management (Indermaur 1996, p. 4).

Appendix 2

Data Sources and Process

ABS data were entered into a number of Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and charts were produced.

Rates per 100 000 population were obtained for the National and Regional Crime Statistics offences by dividing the recorded number of offences for each jurisdiction or region by the Australian Bureau of Statistics' estimated resident population of the state that year, and multiplying the result by 100 000.

The charts were then scrutinised for any apparent trends. These were then commented upon where appropriate.

It is important to have an understanding of the different counting rules used in collating the data cited in this Report.

ABS counting rules

The ABS publication *Recorded Crime in Australia 2000* (4510.0) provides indicators of the level and nature of selected crime recorded by police in Australia, as well as a means for measuring change over time. The national crime statistics have been compiled according to national standards and classifications developed by the ABS. In January 1999, the ABS changed its classification from the Australian National Classification of Offences (ANCO) to the Australian Standard Offence Classification (ASOC). ASOC was developed to update and address recognised deficiencies in ANCO and has led to significant improvements in the comparability of crime statistics on both a State and national level (ABS 2000, p. 2).

There is considerable variation in the criminal laws of Australian States and Territories. The ABS figures include only those offences for which nationally comparable definitions and counting rules have been developed (ABS 2001, p. 30).

The national crime statistics are counted and reported on a calendar year basis.

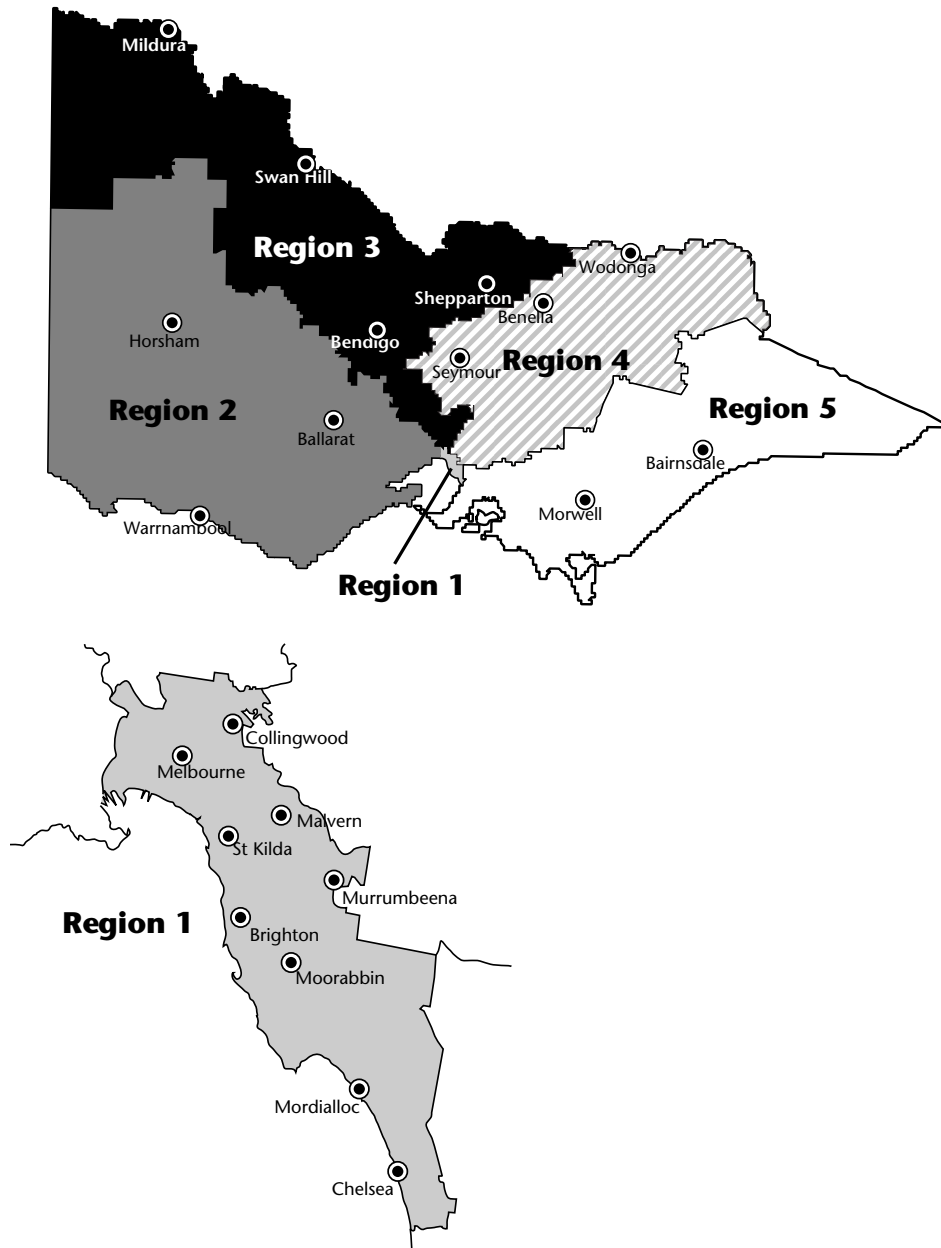
The ABS uses a victim based counting rule. They only count the most serious offence per national offence category for each victim within a distinct criminal incident (ABS 2001, p. 31). The definition of 'victim' varies according to the type of offence:

- Homicide offence category, one offence is counted per person per incident (ABS 2000, p. 116).
- Assault offence category, one offence is counted per person per incident (ABS 2000, p. 116)
- Kidnapping/abduction offence category, one offence is counted per person per incident (ABS 2000, p. 117).

- Robbery offence category, one offence is counted per person/organisation per incident. For example, if a bank with several customers present is robbed, this is counted as one robbery with the victim being the bank. If personal property is also taken from two customers, there are three victims, the bank and two customers; hence the number of robberies counted is three (ABS 2000, p. 117).
- Motor vehicle offence category, one offence is counted per motor vehicle per incident. If three cars are stolen from a house, then three motor vehicle thefts are counted (ABS 2000, p. 117).
- For multiple offence incidents where the same victim is subjected to multiple offences belonging to different offence categories, one offence, the most serious, is counted within each offence category. For example, if a person is kidnapped and raped by two offenders, one kidnapping/abduction and one sexual assault would be counted (ABS 2000, p. 118)

Appendix 3

Map of Victoria Police Regional Boundaries: November 1999



Appendix 4

Victoria Police Regional and Divisional Structure: November 1999

Region 1

Division	District Name	Police Station
1	Melbourne	Carlton City Patrol Group Melbourne City St Kilda Road
2	Stonnington	Malvern Prahran
	Yarra	Collingwood Fitzroy Richmond
3	Glen Eira	Caulfield Elsternwick Glenhuntly Murrumbeena
	Port Phillip	St Kilda South Melbourne
4	Bayside	Brighton Sandringham
	Kingston	Cheltenham Chelsea Moorabbin Mordialloc

Region 2

Division	District Name	Police Station
1	Brimbank	Sunshine
	Hobsons Bay	Altona North Laverton Williamstown
	Maribyrnong	Footscray Maidstone
	Melton	Melton
2	Geelong	Corio Drysdale Geelong Lara Ocean Grove Portarlington Queenscliff
	Surf Coast	Anglesea Lorne Torquay Winchelsea
	Wyndham	Werribee
3	Ballarat	Ballarat Buninyong Learmonth
	Central Goldfields	Avoca Beaufort Dunolly Landsborough Lexton Maryborough
	Moorabool	Ballan Bacchus Marsh Creswick Clunes Daylesford Gordon Inverleigh Linton Meredith Rokewood Smythesdale Trentham

Region 2

Division	District Name	Police Station	
4	Horsham	Apsley Dimboola Edenhope Goroke Horsham Harrow Jeparit Kaniva Natimuk Nhill Rainbow	
	North Grampians	Ararat Elmhurst Hopetoun Murtoa Rupanyup Speed Warracknabeal Willaura	Beulah Halls Gap Lake Bolac Minyip St Arnaud Stawell Woomelang
5	Corangamite	Beech Forest Cobden Camperdown Forrest Port Campbell Timboon	Birregurra Colac Cressy Lismore Skipton Terang
	South Grampians	Balmoral Branxholme Coleraine Casterton Cavendish Dunkeld Dartmoor Hamilton Heywood Merino Portland Penshurst	
	Warrnambool	Koroit Mortlake Macarthur Port Fairy Warrnambool	

Region 3

Division	District Name	Police Station	
1	Darebin	Northcote Preston East Preston Reservoir	
	Whittlesea	Epping Mill Park Whittlesea	
2	Hume	Melbourne Airport Broadmeadows Craigieburn Sunbury Westmeadows	
	Moonee Valley	Avondale Heights Flemington Moonee Ponds	
	Moreland	Brunswick Coburg	
3	Bendigo	Axedale Eaglehawk Goornong Raywood	Bendigo Elmore Heathcote
	Macedon Ranges	Bridgewater Castlemaine Inglewood Lancefield Macedon Mitiamo Pyramid Hill Romsey Wedderburn	Boort Gisborne Kyneton Malmsbury Maldon Newstead Riddells Creek Tarnagulla Woodend
4	Campaspe	Cobram Gunbower Katamatite Nathalia Rushworth Stanhope Tongala	Echuca Kyabram Nurmurkah Rochester St James Tungamah Yarrawonga
	Shepparton	Dookie Mooroopna Shepparton Tatura	Murchison

Region 3

Division	District Name	Police Station
5	Mildura	Birchip Culgoa Charlton Donald Merbein Mildura Murrayville Ouyen Red Cliffs Sea Lake Underbool Wycheproof Werrimull
	Swan Hill	Cohuna Kerang Koondrook Lake Boga Manangatang Nyah West Piangil Quambatook Robinvale Swan Hill

Region 4

Division	District Name	Police Station
1	Banyule	Greensborough Heidelberg Heidelberg West
	Manningham	Doncaster Warrandyte
	Nillumbik	Diamond Creek Eltham Hurstbridge
2	Boroondara	Ashburton Balwyn (Kew) Camberwell Hawthorn Kew
	Monash	Clayton Glen Waverley Mount Waverley Oakleigh
	Whitehorse	Burwood Box Hill Nunawading
3	Knox	Boronia Knox
	Maroondah	Croydon Ringwood
	Yarra Ranges	Belgrave Healesville Lilydale Mooroolbark Mt Evelyn Monbulk Olinda (Belgrave) Warburton Yarra Glen Yarra Junction
4	Delatite	Benalla Euroa Jamieson Mt Buller Mansfield Nagambie Violet Town Woods Point

Region 4

Division	District Name	Police Station
4	Mitchell	Alexandra Broadford Eildon Kilmore Marysville Pyalong Seymour Wallan Yea
5	Wangaratta	Bright Dederang Falls Creek Glenrowan Myrtleford Mt Hotham (Bright) Mount Beauty Moyhu Whitfield Wangaratta
	Wondonga	Beechworth Corryong Chiltern Mitta Mitta Rutherglen Tallangatta Tangambalanga Wodonga Walwa Yackandandah

Region 5

Division	District Name	Police Station	
1	Frankston	Frankston	
	Mornington Peninsula	Dromana Hastings Mornington Rosebud Rye Sorrento	
2	Cardinia	Bunyip Emerald Koo-Wee-Rup Lang Lang Pakenham	
	Casey	Cranbourne Narre Warren	
	Dandenong	Dandenong Springvale	
3	Bass Coast	Cowes Inverloch Loch Leongatha Mirboo North Meeniyan Sam Remo Toora Wonthaggi	Foster Korumburra
	Baw Baw	Drouin Neerim South Ercia-Rawson Trafalgar Warragul	
	La Trobe	Boolarra Churchill Morwell Moe Traralgon	
4	East Gippsland	Bruthen Cann River Mallacoota Omeo	Buchan Lakes Entrance Orbost Swifts Creek
	Wellington	Briagolong Heyfield Maffra Rosedale Stratford Sale Yarram	

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