



**Table 1** Total number of persons shot by police and number and proportion involving persons with a mental illness, by year 1989–90 to 2010–11

Year	Persons shot by police (n)	Those who had mental illness (n)	Proportion with a mental illness (%)
1989–90	2	0	–
1990–91	5	1	20
1991–92	4	2	50
1992–93	4	0	–
1993–94	9	5	56
1994–95	6	4	67
1995–96	4	2	50
1996–97	7	3	43
1997–98	5	1	20
1998–99	2	0	–
1999–2000	11	3	27
2000–01	3	1	33
2001–02	2	2	100
2002–03	5	2	40
2003–04	7	5	71
2004–05	6	3	50
2005–06	3	1	33
2006–07	3	2	67
2007–08	3	2	67
2008–09	5	2	40
2009–10	3	2	67
2010–11	6	1	17
Total	105	44	42

dropped to four ( $\mu=4.2$ ), while the average number involving persons with a mental illness has remained at two ( $\mu=2.1$ ) each year.

Analysis of post-mortem toxicology results showed that in 53 (51%) fatal shootings, the deceased had consumed drugs and/or alcohol prior to the incident. Of the 44 persons with a mental illness who were shot by police, 25 (57%) had consumed drugs and/or alcohol prior to the incident.

To provide further context to the often difficult situations faced by police in the course of their duties, data was also collected about whether the person shot was in possession of a weapon at the time of the incident (see Table 2). It can be seen that in 34 (32%) police shootings, the deceased was in possession of a firearm, 41 (39%) incidents involved an alleged offender armed with a knife and 14 (13%) involved other weapons (such as an axe or crossbow).

For the remaining 16 (15%) police shootings, the alleged offender was not in possession of a weapon. Overall, for the last 22 years for which data have been collected, 89 (85%) police shooting incidents involved an alleged offender armed with a deadly weapon.

These data highlight the important role that ongoing monitoring plays in improving our understanding of the issues faced by operational police members on the front-line.

Further, they reinforce the difficult and sometimes dangerous nature of arrest-type situations, and underscore the need for police members to exercise care and caution when endeavouring to take a person into custody.

For more detailed analysis and discussion of police shooting incidents, please refer to the latest NDICP monitoring report, which is available on the AIC website ([www.aic.gov.au](http://www.aic.gov.au))

## References

Kesic D, Thomas S & Ogloff J 2010. Mental illness among police fatalities in Victoria 1982–2007: Case linkage study. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 44: 463–468

Lyneham M & Chan A 2013. *Deaths in custody in Australia to 30 June 2011 – Twenty years of monitoring by the National Deaths in Custody Program since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology

McCulloch J 1991. Police shootings and community relations, in McKillop S & Vernon J (eds), *The police and the community in the 1990's. Conference proceedings no. 5*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. [http://www.aic.gov.au/media\\_library/publications/proceedings/05/mcculloch.pdf](http://www.aic.gov.au/media_library/publications/proceedings/05/mcculloch.pdf)

**Table 2** Persons shot by police and number involving persons with weapon, by weapon type and year 1989–90 to 2010–11 (n)

Year	In possession of firearm	In possession of knife	In possession of other weapon <sup>a</sup>	No weapon	Total number of persons shot by police
1989–90	2	0	0	0	2
1990–91	4	1	0	0	5
1991–92	1	1	0	2	4
1992–93	1	1	0	2	4
1993–94	3	3	2	1	9
1994–95	1	3	1	1	6
1995–96	0	2	1	1	4
1996–97	2	3	1	1	7
1997–98	3	1	1	0	5
1998–99	0	1	0	1	2
1999–2000	2	5	4	0	11
2000–01	1	1	0	1	3
2001–02	0	2	0	0	2
2002–03	3	0	0	2	5
2003–04	2	4	1	0	7
2004–05	1	2	1	2	6
2005–06	2	1	0	0	3
2006–07	0	2	1	0	3
2007–08	1	1	1	0	3
2008–09	2	3	0	0	5
2009–10	1	2	0	0	3
2010–11	2	2	0	2	6
Total	34	41	14	16	105

a: Such as an axe, crossbow, explosives or motor vehicle