

# **Armed Robbery in Australia: 2003 National Armed Robbery Monitoring Program Annual Report**

**Maria Borzycki  
Yuka Sakurai  
Jenny Mouzos**

**Research and Public Policy Series**

**No. 62**

**Australian Institute of Criminology**

## **Australian Institute of Criminology Research and Public Policy Series**

- No. 45 *Review of Victoria Police Crime Statistics*, Carlos Carcach and Toni Makkai, 2002
- No. 46 *Homicide in Australia: 2001–2002 National Homicide Monitoring Program (NHMP) Annual Report*, Jenny Mouzos, 2003
- No. 47 *Drug Use Monitoring in Australia: 2002 Annual Report on Drug Use Among Police Detainees*, Toni Makkai and Kiah McGregor, 2003
- No. 48 *Serious Fraud in Australia and New Zealand*, 2003
- No. 49 *Sport, Physical Activity and Antisocial Behaviour in Youth*, Leesa Morris, Jo Sallybanks and Katie Willis, 2003
- No. 50 *Deaths in Custody in Australia: 2002 National Deaths in Custody Program (NDICP) Annual Report*, Lisa Collins and Muzammil Ali, 2003
- No. 51 *A Safe and Secure Environment for Older Australians*, Marianne James, Adam Graycar and Pat Mayhew, 2003
- No. 52 *Drugs and Crime: A study of Incarcerated Male Offenders*. Toni Makkai and Jason Payne, 2003
- No. 53 *Contract Killings in Australia*, Jenny Mouzos and John Venditto, 2004
- No. 54 *ACT Recidivist Offenders*, Toni Makkai, Jerry Ratcliffe, Keenan Veraar and Lisa Collins, 2004
- No. 55 *Homicide in Australia: 2002–2003 National Homicide Monitoring Program (NHMP) Annual Report*, Jenny Mouzos, 2004
- No. 56 *Women's Experiences of Male Violence: Findings from the Australian Component of the International Violence Against Women Survey*, Jenny Mouzos and Toni Makkai, 2004
- No. 57 *Regulation: Enforcement and Compliance*, Richard Johnstone and Rick Sarre, 2004
- No. 58 *Drug Use Monitoring in Australia: 2003 Annual Report on Drug Use Among Police Detainees*, Lee Milner, Jenny Mouzos and Toni Makkai, 2004
- No. 59 *Sentencing the Multiple Offender: Judicial Practice and Legal Principle*, Austin Lovegrove, 2004
- No. 60 *Online Credit Card Fraud against Small Businesses*, Kate Charlton and Natalie Taylor, 2004
- No. 61 *Bushfire Arson: A Review of the Literature*, Matthew Willis, 2004
- No. 62 *Armed Robbery in Australia: 2003 National Armed Robbery Monitoring Program Annual Report*, Maria Borzycki, Yuka Sakurai and Jenny Mouzos, 2004
- No. 63 *Drugs and Crime: A Study of Incarcerated Female Offenders*, Holly Johnson, 2004

# **Armed Robbery in Australia: 2003 National Armed Robbery Monitoring Program Annual Report**

---

Maria Borzycki  
Yuka Sakurai  
Jenny Mouzos

**No. 62**

**Research and Public Policy Series**



**Australian Government**  

---

**Australian Institute of Criminology**

© Australian Institute of Criminology 2004

ISSN 1326-6004  
ISBN 0 642 53872 7

Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cwlth), no part of this publication may in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, microcopying, photocopying, recording or otherwise), be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted without prior written permission. Inquiries should be addressed to the publisher.

Published by the Australian Institute of Criminology  
GPO Box 2944  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Tel: (02) 6260 9221  
Fax: (02) 9260 9201  
e-mail: [aicpress@aic.gov.au](mailto:aicpress@aic.gov.au)  
<http://www.aic.gov.au>

Typeset by Sarah Christensen  
Australian Institute of Criminology

National Armed Robbery Monitoring Program  
AIC project number 0003  
Ethics number PO44  
Dataset number 0021

## Foreword

---

The National armed robbery monitoring program (NARMP) was developed to monitor and report on armed robbery trends in Australia, on the recommendation of the Australasian Police Ministers' Council. Unlike other crime involving property theft, the real or implied violence associated with armed robbery can result in physical and often significant psychological trauma beyond the loss of material belongings. By examining armed robberies over time, especially the way weapons are employed in this crime, we can gain insights into how in the future we might best safeguard against armed robbery and its negative outcomes.

This inaugural annual report summarises information derived from the first year of NARMP data collection: 2003. The nearly 9,000 reported cases of armed robbery victimisation in Australia are examined in terms of the incident, the victim and the offender. Aspects of this crime that have not previously been closely examined, such as the type of property stolen from victims, are included and add detail to our understanding of armed robbery. The information derived from the NARMP complements other recorded crime data; a fuller picture of armed robbery in Australia is constructed because for the first time we have a range of characteristics to enable us to build better profiles. This picture can then assist law enforcement and those responsible for the development of crime-reduction initiatives.

The NARMP depends on the cooperation of the police services in each Australian state and territory to this national initiative. In its efforts to ensure that the AIC is providing information that is both useful and timely, several roundtables have been convened to assess the quality of the material being produced out of the NARMP. As part of its commitment to timeliness, separate six-monthly reports are provided to each jurisdiction. The AIC looks forward to working with police services to further enhance the program.

The utility of monitoring programs is often not evident for some years and requires a strategic investment in data and research. For example, the Institute's National homicide monitoring program (NHMP) is regarded as the best comprehensive national collection on homicide throughout the world, and has provided invaluable data to homicide squads across Australia. The program has been running for 15 years. As the data collection for the NARMP grows over time, it is hoped that the AIC will build a knowledge base for armed robbery that is commensurate with the information provided from the NHMP.

**Toni Makkai**  
**Director**  
**Australian Institute of Criminology**

## Acknowledgments

---

The Australian Institute of Criminology and the report's authors are grateful to police services in the states and territories who provide the information contained in the National armed robbery monitoring program (NARMP). Special thanks are extended to those staff within each of the police services who extract and compile data and liaise directly with the Australian Institute of Criminology, and whose assistance is essential to the compilation of the NARMP. The authors accept full responsibility for the analyses and interpretations presented in this report.

## Disclaimer

This research report does not necessarily reflect the policy position of the Australian Government.

# Contents

---

Introduction	1
Development of the NARMP	1
Compiling the NARMP	1
Definition of armed robbery	2
Explaining armed robberies	4
Analyses of the NARMP	5
Armed robberies	6
Location of armed robbery	6
Weapons use in armed robbery	9
Weapons use in different locations	10
Temporal aspects of armed robbery	12
Property stolen in armed robbery	14
Outcomes of armed robbery investigations	21
Armed robbery victims	22
Individual victims of robbery	22
Organisational victims of robbery	25
Victim resistance to offenders and victim injury	29
Armed robbery offenders	30
Characteristics of offenders and weapon use	33
Disguise use by offenders	35
The relationship between offender and victim	36
Summary	37
References	40
Technical appendix	42

---

## List of figures

Figure 1	Armed robbery victims in Australian jurisdictions	6
Figure 2	Total assessed value of property taken in armed robberies	19

## List of tables

Table 1	Location of armed robbery	7
Table 2	Weapons used in armed robbery	8
Table 3	Weapon combinations used in armed robbery	9
Table 4	Weapons used in armed robbery, as percentage of each location	11
Table 5	Time when armed robberies occurred, as percentage of day of the week	12
Table 6	Time when armed robberies occurred, as percentage of seasons	13
Table 7	Time when armed robberies occurred, as percentage of locations	14
Table 8	Types of property taken in armed robberies	15
Table 9	Property type taken in armed robberies, as percentage of location	18
Table 10	Average total value of property taken in armed robberies in different locations, by weapon type	20
Table 11	Most recent investigative outcome status of armed robberies, as percentage of first listed type of weapon	22
Table 12	Most recent investigative outcome status of armed robberies, as percentage of location	23
Table 13	Victim age group, as percentage of victim gender	24
Table 14	Weapons used against male and female victims of different ages, as percentage of weapon type by gender	25
Table 15	Locations where males and females of different ages were victimised, as a percentage of gender by age group	26
Table 16	Weapon use against organisational and individual victims, as a percentage of victim type	27
Table 17	Number of offenders victimising organisational and individual victims, as a percentage of victim type	27
Table 18	Age group of offenders victimising organisational and individual victims, as percentage of victim type	28
Table 19	Weapon type, as percentage of injury	29
Table 20	Number of offenders, as percentage of location	31



---

Table 21	Weapon type by single and multiple offenders, as percentage of number of offenders	32
Table 22	Offender age group, as percentage of offender gender	32
Table 23	Weapons used by males and female offenders of different ages, as percentage of age group for gender	33
Table 24	Locations robbed by male offenders of different ages, as percentage of age group	34
Table 25	Variables and valid cases in the NARMP 2003 data set	43
Table 26	Values within selected variables in the NARMP dataset	45

# Introduction

---

---

## Development of the NARMP

The National armed robbery monitoring program (NARMP) evolved in response to a 1999 resolution of the chief law enforcement officers in Australia and New Zealand,<sup>1</sup> which directed that research should be undertaken ‘to better understand the use of weapons in the commission of crime’. Following that resolution, the Australasian Police Ministers’ Council recommended the establishment of a program to monitor the specific weapons offence of armed robbery.<sup>2</sup> Since then, the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) has undertaken consultation with state and territory police services with the goal of developing a monitoring program. In furtherance of this goal, state and territory police services have provided data to the NARMP and analyses of these data permitted a closer examination of weapon use in armed robbery. The NARMP in its current form is the result of those endeavours. There are three overarching aims of the NARMP:

- to monitor trends in armed robbery, specifically trends in weapon use;
- to identify changes in trends; and
- to provide insight into the factors underpinning these trends.

This report summarises the findings to emerge from analysis of the first year of NARMP data (1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003). It is important to note that although the NARMP at present captures over 8,500 victims of armed robbery over a 12-month period, this is too short a timeframe to draw strong conclusions about long-term trends. This report is the first in a series of annual reports examining patterns in armed robbery in Australia. With each subsequent year, there will be a greater focus on the program’s second aim, the identification of changes in trends.

## Compiling the NARMP

The NARMP contains information describing all armed robberies reported to police. Statistical staff within each of the state and territory police services extract electronic information describing armed robberies from their respective operational databases. Information is extracted on a bi-annual basis, and incorporates all incidents occurring and/or reported during the specified six-monthly period (if extracted information contains all incidents reported during the specified period, it can potentially include armed robberies that occurred outside

---

1 Senior Officers’ Group resolution 7.6(D), 22 April 1999

2 Australasian Police Ministers’ Council meeting, 13 December 2000

---

the period in question). Data have been provided on the following characteristics of armed robbery:

- incidents – location, date and time, weapon, property taken, and investigation outcome;
- offenders – gender, age, relationships to victim (if any), and disguises worn; and
- victims – gender, age, injury suffered, and resistance offered.

The data set is in a victim-based format in which every victim of armed robbery is treated as a separate case: a single robbery incident may involve multiple victims, and so would result in multiple victim cases. Consequently, armed robbery incidents may appear multiple times in the NARMP if there were multiple victims, and individual victims may be described in the NARMP on multiple occasions if they have been involved in more than one armed robbery. For the purposes of this report therefore, the terms ‘armed robbery’ and ‘case’ actually refer to a victim of armed robbery unless otherwise stated.

Another consequence of a victim-based format is that when there are multiple victims associated with a single robbery incident, some variables will be counted multiple times across the dataset. For instance, weapon variables relate to a feature of the actual robbery incident in which the victim was involved, rather than to the victim per se. If a single firearm was employed in a robbery involving six victims, and each victim has been recorded in the NARMP, that single firearm will appear six times in the NARMP (once for each victim). Any interpretation of analyses should therefore be made cognisant of the fact that weapon numbers and percentages refer to the number of victimisations by different types of weapons rather than the actual number of weapons employed in armed robberies. This multiple counting issue also effects location and offender gender and age information, so similar interpretations should be applied to analyses employing these variables.

## Definition of armed robbery

In the NARMP, robbery offences were defined in a manner generally consistent with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), as those which

...involve the unlawful taking of property, with intent to permanently deprive the owner of the property, from the immediate possession of a person, or an organisation, or control, custody or care of a person, accompanied by the use, and/or threatened use of immediate force or violence. Robbery victims

---

can therefore be persons or organisations...Where a weapon was used in the committal of the offence, robbery is classified as armed otherwise it is classified as unarmed (ABS 2004, p. 40).<sup>3</sup>

Whilst there is consistency in what constitutes an armed robbery offence, there is no single set of characteristics that describe the typical armed robbery, although closer examination of this crime can reveal some commonalities. For example, earlier Australian research identified (at least) three armed robbery scenarios that differed in terms of offender method and choice of weapon, in general location, in victim injury, and in the financial gain accruing to robbers (Mouzos & Borzycki 2003). Scenarios include:

- opportunistic street muggings, which apparently involve little long-term planning, occur in public places, involve easily accessible weapons like knives or rocks, and tend to reap small rewards for perpetrators;
- amateur retail armed robberies, which take place in easily accessible retail settings, do not evidence extensive planning or hard-to-obtain weapons, and like above, result in small gains for offenders; and
- professional armed robberies, that show planning in the form of disguises, clear instructions to victims as to desired property, and less opportunistic weapons, such as firearms. This scenario usually takes place in retail locations and financial institutions, and can result in substantially higher offender takings compared to the other two scenarios.

Unfortunately, the information describing the armed robberies included in the NARMP is not as detailed as that contributing to the earlier research from which the scenarios emerged. However as noted, the NARMP does contain information relating to the armed robbery event, victim, and offender.<sup>4</sup> The following analyses therefore examine these three aspects of armed robberies reported to police in Australia in 2003, in an effort to identify patterns in offending. The format of this report follows this same breakdown of the armed robbery situation, first discussing aspects of the robbery itself, then of the victims, and finally, of the offender(s).

---

3 Jurisdictional differences in offence descriptions mean that this definition captures victims of 'armed robbery', 'robbery with a firearm', and 'robbery with an offensive weapon'. If a case was annotated to show no weapon use, but was nonetheless classified as one of the robbery offences involving a weapon, it was retained in analyses. The definition also captured both 'aggravated robbery' and 'robbery not further defined' where weapon use was explicitly recorded. Cases of 'aggravated robbery' and 'robbery not further defined' annotated to show 'no weapon use' have been excluded, as were all victims of 'non aggravated robbery', because by definition this latter offence cannot include conditions of aggravation such as weapon use.

4 The term offender is used to describe the (alleged) perpetrator of an armed robbery offence, regardless of whether or not a conviction has been secured.

---

## Explaining armed robberies

Data currently held in NARMP seem to support an opportunity-based explanation of armed robbery, such as the routine activity approach, where an offence requires a likely offender and a suitable target to come together in the absence of a capable guardian (e.g. see Felson & Clarke 1998). Within this approach, a guardian need not be a police officer but can be anyone whose presence might deter a would-be offender. This type of approach acknowledges that crime opportunities are highly specific to aspects of the crime situation, such as offender(s), victims (or targets, which can be both individual persons or organisations and locations), and the temporal aspects of the crime. By acknowledging that even within different types of offences, crime situations will vary, this way of conceptualising crime accounts for the fact that not all potential targets are equally vulnerable to attack, nor are all offenders equally likely to target all potential victims. An opportunity-based account such as the routine activity approach is not incompatible with the notion of typical scenarios, because scenarios allow ways of summarising sets of factors that can come together to create crime opportunities. They also provide a starting point for developing ways of reducing armed robbery opportunities because differing armed robbery situations can be used to tailor appropriate and specific crime reduction responses.

## Analyses of the NARMP

---

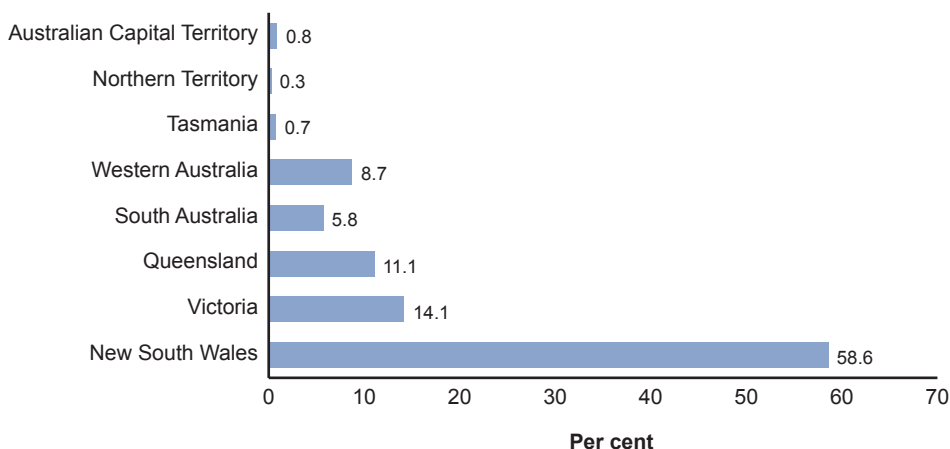
A total of 8,865 valid victim cases were examined for this report. Unfortunately all variables were not supplied for all cases, so there are differences in the numbers of cases contributing to the various analyses. Similarly, the level of detail provided by each jurisdiction varied, limiting the degree of specificity possible in some analyses. Where highly detailed information was extracted, case numbers are often small, thus care should be exercised in attempting to generalise those findings to circumstances beyond the actual cases examined.<sup>5</sup>

## Armed robberies

### *Location of armed robbery*

Over half (59%) of the reported armed robberies (that is, armed robbery victimisations) in Australia in 2003 occurred in NSW, whereas the smaller jurisdictions (NT, ACT and Tasmania) collectively accounted for a little less than two per cent (see Figure 1). It is impossible to assess if the spread of victimisations is exactly mirrored in the spread of actual armed robbery incidents because, as already noted, the database is in a victim-based format.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 1: Armed robbery victims in Australian jurisdictions**



Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

5 The technical appendix to this report contains a summary of the variables supplied, the valid cases for each, and technical points pertaining to cases (Table 25). A separate table details the specific data values that were collapsed in order to create the categories employed in analyses (Table 26).

6 The NARMP does not contain identifier information that would allow victims involved in the same incident to be linked together.



Armed robberies take place in a variety of locations (see Table 1), although the largest proportion of victimisations occurred in retail settings (46%, or 4,106 cases). Two-thirds of these victimisations occurred in locations simply classified as 'retail',<sup>7</sup> but of the remaining third where greater detail was available, the most often-victimised retail sites were service stations (9% of all locations; 20% of all retail locations). The next most common armed robbery location can collectively be called open public settings (3,750 cases, or 42%). This incorporates footpaths, transport-related and other open spaces accessible to the community. Of these cases, the majority of victimisations occurred on the street and footpath (n=2,157).

**Table 1: Location of armed robbery**

	Number	%
<b>Residential setting</b>		
Residential setting	527	6
Total	527	6
<b>Open public settings</b>		
Recreational settings (parks, cinemas etc; excluding licensed premises)	771	9
Transport-related settings (car parks, public transport, train, bus stations etc)	636	7
Open spaces excluding street and footpath (vacant lots, bushland etc)	186	2
Street and footpath	2,157	24
Total	3,750	42
<b>Other community settings</b>		
Education, health, religious, justice and other community settings	95	1
Administrative and professional settings	182	2
Wholesalers, warehouses, manufacturing and agricultural settings	32	<1
Total	309	4
<b>Retail settings</b>		
Retail settings with no further detail	2,728	31
Banking and financial settings	223	3
Pharmacies and chemists	277	3
Service stations	819	9
Licensed premises (bottle shop, pub, hotel and night club)	59	1
Total	4,106	46
<b>Other</b>		
Unspecified/other locations with no further detail, or not classified elsewhere	173	2
Total	173	2
Grand total	8,865	100

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

<sup>7</sup> Detailed location descriptions were not available for the majority of cases, thus findings regarding specific locations outside standard ABS coding do not necessarily reflect all robbery victimisations that occurred in those locations.

**Table 2: Weapons used in armed robbery**

	Number	%
Weapon used (with no further detail)	2	<1
No weapon use reported	19	<1
Unknown	107	1
Total	128	2
<b>Firearms</b>		
Firearm (with no further detail)	350	4
Shotgun	192	2
Rifle or airgun	73	1
Handgun	963	10
Sawn-off longarm	57	1
Replica firearm	31	<1
Other firearm (not classified elsewhere)	386	4
Total	2,052	22
<b>Knives</b>		
Knife with no further detail	4,149	44
Dagger	3	<1
Kitchen knife	7	<1
Scissors	75	1
Pocket knife	25	<1
Screwdriver	215	2
Other knife (not classified elsewhere)	39	<1
Total	4,513	48
<b>Syringes</b>		
Syringe	387	4
Total	387	4
<b>Other weapons</b>		
Other weapon type (with no further detail)	413	4
Club, baton or stick	208	2
Rock, stone or brick	21	<1
Tool	217	2
Blunt instrument (not classified elsewhere)	81	1
Bottle	87	1
Chemical spray	12	<1
Explosive or bomb	3	<1
Machete or axe	190	2
Sledgehammer	62	1
Crowbar or metal pipe	124	1
Other weapon (not classified elsewhere)	834	9
Total	2,252	24
Grand total	9,332	100

Note: Multiple weapon types were listed in some cases, therefore number refers to the number of weapon types, not the number of victim cases. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

Armed robbery can be thought of as an impersonal crime, insofar as one would assume that victims apparently chosen at random would have no prior relationship with the robbery offender. Interestingly, around one in twenty armed robberies (6%) took place in residential settings. It seems unlikely that offenders would randomly target private, residential premises without some prior knowledge of the location or its residents. The victim and offender in these settings may have some knowledge of each other prior to the event, which would make armed robbery in residential settings at odds with robbery in other locations. This victimisation in homes is explored in greater detail below, in the discussion of relationships between offender and victim.

### *Weapons use in armed robbery*

A total of 9,332 weapon descriptions were associated with the armed robbery victims recorded in the NARMP. This number exceeds the number of victims because some jurisdictions were able to supply information regarding multiple-weapon armed robberies.

Consistent with previous Australian research (e.g. Mouzos & Carcach 2001), knives were the most used weapons in armed robberies (4,513 or 48% of all weapons reported; see Table 2). Firearms made up a little over one-fifth of all weapons recorded in the NARMP (22%), whereas 'other weapons' constituted nearly one-quarter (24%). Only four per cent of reported weapons were syringes.

**Table 3: Weapon combinations used in armed robbery**

	Number	%
No specific weapon types listed	262	3
Single firearm	1,812	20
Single knife	4,122	46
Single syringe	365	4
Single 'other weapon'	1,768	20
Multiple firearms	36	<1
Multiple knives	85	1
Multiple syringes	2	<1
Multiple 'other weapons'	115	1
Firearm and knife	66	1
Firearm and 'other weapon'	86	1
Knife and syringe	9	<1
Knife and other weapon	120	1
Syringe and 'other weapon'	9	<1
Firearm, knife and 'other weapon'	8	<1
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,865</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

---

On average, 1.4 weapon types were employed per case (with a median score of one), suggesting that the majority of robberies involved only one weapon: analysis of the weapon types used in combination showed that single weapon types were employed in the vast majority (91%) of cases. Reports of robberies with multiple single weapon types (e.g. multiple firearms), or of different weapon types used in combination, were only a minority of cases (both 3% of all victims; see Table 3). This could be interpreted as meaning that offender(s) rarely use multiple weapons. It is more probable, however, that these data reflect the difficulty jurisdictions encountered when attempting to accurately extract information on multiple weapons, on multiple offenders, and/or to provide offender information when no offender(s) had been apprehended. These methodological issues are highly relevant, because until the reliability of data can be improved, it will be difficult to ascertain the number and nature of multiple weapon armed robberies.

Some jurisdictions were able to supply detailed weapon information, and analysis of these data highlight the seemingly opportunistic nature of the weapon choice of some offenders. Of the 1,005 'other weapons' described in detail, 59 per cent were tools (including machetes, axes and crowbars), and eleven per cent were objects that could be found at an outdoor site (bottles, rocks, stones or bricks). In contrast, the most commonly employed firearm was that which is most easily concealed but also (presumably) the most difficult to obtain because of the severe restrictions governing its ownership and the severe penalties imposed for its illegal use – the handgun (73% of the 1,316 firearms described in detail).

Detailed weapon information suggests that armed robberies in 2003 can be broadly categorised as either opportunistic or planned, at least in terms of the preparation potentially needed to obtain weapons.

### *Weapons use in different locations*

Weapons were not used in uniform proportions over all robbery sites (Table 4). In keeping with overall findings, knives were most commonly used in most locations,<sup>8</sup> but firearms were proportionally the most common weapons in recreational settings (42%), administrative and professional settings (44%), and banking and financial settings (49%). Although knives were the most common weapons in licensed premises (44%), nearly one in three robberies (32%) involved a firearm. Less than a quarter of service station and pharmacy robberies involved threat with firearms (22% and 17% respectively).

Firearms were not often used in street robberies (11%); knives made up the highest proportion (56%), with 'other weapons' employed in nearly three in ten street robberies (29%). This pattern is similar to that seen in transport related settings, but is at odds with the weapon use

---

8 Includes cases where weapon information included a valid value that at least specified a type of weapon or type of location (i.e. not simply 'unknown'; valid n=9204)

**Table 4: Weapons used in armed robbery, as percentage of each location**

Location	Firearm	Knife	Syringe	Other weapon	Number
<b>Residential settings</b>					
Residential setting	20	46	1	33	539
<b>Open public settings</b>					
Recreational settings (parks, cinemas, etc; excluding licensed premises)	42	33	1	23	871
Transport related settings (car parks, public transport, train and bus stations, etc)	13	53	6	27	637
Open spaces excluding street and footpath(vacant lots, bushland, etc)	8	64	4	24	193
Street and footpath	11	56	4	29	2,175
<b>Other community settings</b>					
Education, health, religious, justice and other community settings	17	53	3	27	98
Administrative and professional settings	44	29	1	26	196
Wholesalers, warehouses, manufacturing and agricultural settings	6	56	3	34	32
<b>Retail settings</b>					
Retail settings with no further detail	26	48	6	20	2,864
Banking and financial settings	49	25	2	24	239
Pharmacies and chemists	22	58	7	14	297
Service stations	17	55	4	24	828
Licensed premises (bottle shop, pub, hotel and night club)	32	44	0	25	57
Unspecified and other locations with no further detail, or not classified elsewhere	22	50	4	24	178
Total (per cent)	22	49	4	24	9,204

Note: Multiple weapon types were listed in some cases, therefore number refers to the number of weapon types, not the number of victim cases. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

pattern seen in recreational settings, the other 'public location' category. This anomaly may be because the recreational settings category encompasses public spaces that are probably subject to active security practices (e.g. cinemas, sporting venues and caravan parks). Recreational location weapon use patterns did resemble those seen in other presumably more secure locations, such as banking and financial, and administrative and professional settings. It is possible that security measures necessitate more offender planning, which may be related to less opportunistic weapon choice, or that hardened security results in

an escalation of weapon choice, from knives or other opportunistic weapons, to firearms. More detailed data and/or sufficient cases would allow for the modelling of these potential relationships.

Interestingly, service stations (retail locations known to engage in security measures), showed patterns of weapon use that most resemble street robberies: knives constituted the majority of weapons used, then 'other weapons', then firearms. This may be a function of the hours of operation of these sites: longer hours of operation – hours outside the times when one would expect numerous customers who could be potential witnesses – make them more accessible to opportunistic offenders. Opportunistic robbers may not consider the obstacles posed by hardened security, or might consider the risk posed by security outweighs the perceived high gains (cash and tobacco) associated with this location.

### *Temporal aspects of armed robbery*

There was little variation in the number of armed robberies perpetrated on different days of the week: the proportion of all robberies ranged between twelve per cent (Wednesdays) and sixteen per cent (Mondays). In general, the majority of robberies occurred in the evening and early morning (52% in the hours between 6pm and 3am). However, the spread over the time of day at which those robberies occurred was not the same for all days (Table 5). Over thirty-five per cent of weekend robberies (for these purposes, Friday, Saturday and Sunday) occurred between 9pm and 3am, whereas the equivalent figure was around thirty per cent for weekdays. Although this percentage difference appears minimal, it does represent a large number of cases, as day and time data were available for all but twelve cases.

**Table 5: Time when armed robberies occurred, as percentage of day of the week**

Time	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Midnight to 2.59am	17	10	10	11	10	14	15
3am to 5.59am	9	6	4	6	6	6	9
6am to 8.59am	4	6	5	4	5	5	4
9am to 11.59am	6	10	8	10	9	9	7
Midday to 2.59pm	10	14	13	15	11	11	9
3pm to 5.59pm	12	19	19	17	18	15	16
6pm to 8.59pm	19	17	19	16	20	17	18
9pm to 11.59pm	23	18	21	21	21	24	21
Number	1,372	1,387	1,208	1,096	1,163	1,308	1,318

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

**Table 6: Time when armed robberies occurred, as percentage of seasons**

Time	Summer	Autumn	Winter	Spring
Midnight to 2.59am	16	12	10	13
3am to 5.59am	8	6	5	8
6am to 8.59am	6	5	4	4
9am to 11.59am	8	7	9	9
Midday to 2.59pm	13	11	12	11
3pm to 5.59pm	15	16	20	16
6pm to 8.59pm	13	19	22	18
9pm to 11.59pm	22	24	18	21
Number	2,195	2,432	2,221	2,004

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

Monthly variation was only moderate (ranging from 7% of all robberies in September, to 10% in April), as was seasonal variation (23% of all robberies in spring, ranging to 27% in autumn).<sup>9</sup> Slight differences in the spread of time of day were observed, however, as a function of the season (Table 6): nearly four in ten (38%) summer time robberies occurred between 9pm and 3am, with less than three in ten (28%) taking place between 3pm and 9pm. This pattern was reversed in the winter, with forty-two percent reported as occurring in the late afternoon/early evening (3 to 9pm), and twenty-eight per cent taking place between 9pm and 3am. This may be a function of victim availability (more people about during warmer summer evenings) and/or greater offender activity (either because of more potential victims, or because of the more pleasant weather).

The time at which robberies occurred also varied with location (Table 7). Premises that one would assume would operate under conventional opening hours (i.e. 9am to 5pm), such as education and health facilities, administrative and professional settings, financial institutions, unspecified retailers and pharmacies, had the greatest proportion of victimisations in the afternoon (3 to 6pm; 25%, 42%, 34%, 21% and 37% respectively). This may reflect a conscious choice of time and location on the part of offenders, who possibly expect larger available cash floats later in the business day. In contrast, public space robberies (recreational and transport related settings, and the street and footpath) most often occurred in the late evening (9pm to midnight; 29%, 23% and 24% respectively). Service stations were most often robbed between midnight and 3am (28%). As discussed above, offenders might target service stations at a time when they expect there to be minimal witnesses and resistance to their crime, using weapons that are easily accessed and which can be anonymously and easily discarded, ignoring the security measures service stations often have in place.

<sup>9</sup> Season was calculated on the basis of calendar month; valid n=8,852.

**Table 7: Time when armed robberies occurred, as percentage of locations**

Location	24:00 to 2:59	3:00 to 5:59	6:00 to 8:59	9:00 to 11:59	12:00 to 14:59	15:00 to 17:59	18:00 to 20:59	21:00 to 23:59	N
Residential setting	14	8	5	6	13	12	17	25	522
Recreational settings	15	7	4	10	9	9	17	29	769
Transport related settings	11	4	3	10	14	18	16	23	636
Open spaces excluding street and footpath	19	10	2	10	14	16	17	12	186
Street and footpath	18	7	4	7	9	13	17	24	2156
Education, health, religious, justice and other community settings	14	5	4	8	13	25	17	14	95
Administrative and professional settings	2	1	2	14	30	42	8	3	182
Wholesalers, warehouses, manufacturing and agricultural settings	6	9	9	6	13	19	13	25	32
Retail settings with no further detail	6	4	6	9	14	21	22	18	2725
Banking and financial settings	2	0	17	23	15	34	4	6	223
Pharmacies and chemists	1	1	1	12	20	37	22	6	277
Service stations	28	20	3	2	3	4	13	26	819
Licensed premises	9	5	3	7	3	7	28	38	58
Unspecified and other locations	8	4	6	5	16	12	20	30	172

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

### *Property stolen in armed robbery*

The property stolen from victims was not recorded for all cases (valid cases n=3,336). The following discussion is, at best, broadly indicative of possible trends in the types of property stolen during armed robberies that occurred in 2003. This is because:

- of the varying detail in property descriptions;
- of the fact that these data were available for less than half of all victims; and
- up to only five property types could be recorded (and so sixth and subsequent types of property could not be considered).



**Table 8: Types of property taken in armed robberies**

<b>Property</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Cash</b>	1,716	27
<b>Negotiable documents</b>		
Negotiable documents (no further detail)	6	<1
ATM card	60	1
Credit card	538	8
Cheque or money order	30	<1
Other neg doc (not classified elsewhere)	93	1
Total	727	11
<b>Identity documents</b>		
Identity documents (no further detail)	2	<1
Drivers licence	237	4
Other licence	20	<1
Passport	14	<1
Other ID document (not classified elsewhere)	495	8
Total	768	12
<b>Luggage</b>		
Wallet or purse	399	6
Handbag or briefcase	99	2
Other luggage (not classified elsewhere)	150	2
Total	648	10
<b>Personal electrical equipment</b>		
Electrical equipment (no further detail)	1	<1
Mobile phone or accessory	1,055	16
Personal stereo or TV or accessory	77	1
Laptop or PC or accessory	61	1
Personal organiser	6	<1
Camera or still or accessory	61	1
Camera or video or accessory	37	1
Electronic game or accessory	17	<1
Telecommunications excluding mobiles or accessories	28	<1
Other electrical (not classified elsewhere)	17	<1
Total	1,360	21
<b>Jewellery</b>		
Jewellery (no further detail)	1	<1
Ring	73	1
Earrings	22	<1
Chain	115	2
Watch	100	2
Other jewellery (not classified elsewhere)	59	1
Total	370	6
<b>Alcohol and drugs</b>		
Alcohol	11	<1
Tobacco	125	2
Drugs (illicit)	12	<1

Property	Number	%
Pharmaceuticals	8	<1
Prescription pad or form	3	<1
Other alcohol or drugs (not classified elsewhere)	5	<1
Total	164	3
<b>Weapons</b>		
Handgun	61	1
Knife	9	<1
Syringe	1	<1
Total	71	1
<b>Personal items not classified elsewhere</b>		
Personal items (no further detail)	17	<1
Other property (no further detail)	73	1
Clothing	65	1
Footwear	19	<1
Sports equipment	17	<1
Lighter or smoking accessory	6	<1
Book or publication or stationery	14	<1
Spectacles or binoculars	16	<1
Keyring or personal keys	90	1
Other personal items (not classified elsewhere)	21	<1
Total	338	5
<b>Conveyance</b>		
Vehicle (no further detail)	7	<1
Bicycle	16	<1
Fuel	1	<1
Conveyance accessories	32	<1
Total	56	1
<b>Other property not classified elsewhere</b>		
Cash register	20	<1
Safe or cash box	48	1
Foodstuffs or groceries	14	<1
Cosmetic, toiletry or perfume	9	<1
Furniture or homewares	6	<1
Tools or machinery or hardware	11	<1
Keys	7	<1
Documents (not classified elsewhere)	38	1
Retail goods (no further detail)	1	<1
Collectors items (not classified elsewhere)	11	<1
Medical equip excluding syringe	1	<1
Office equip excluding PCs or telecommunications	1	<1
Vending machine excluding poker machine	14	<1
Musical instrument	4	<1
Other property (not classified elsewhere)	10	<1
Total	195	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,413</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: Multiple property types were listed in some cases, therefore number refers to total property types, not total victim cases. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

---

Thirty-eight per cent of victim cases contained valid stolen property information. Of these, 1,237 recorded the theft of multiple property items, resulting in a total of 6,413 valid stolen property types listed in the NARMP (see Table 8). Over one-quarter (27%) of the reported property taken was categorised as cash, followed by mobile phones and/or accessories (16%). Given that wallet/purses, and handbag/briefcases made up eight per cent of reported property, it is not surprising that the common contents of these – credit and debit cards, and identity documents – were reported taken in roughly similar proportions (9% and 12% respectively).

The type of property stolen in robberies was not uniform across all locations (see Table 9). Cash constituted the overwhelming majority of the property taken in financial institutions and in licensed premises (70% and 73% respectively). Personal electrical equipment (mobile phones, stereos, electronic diaries, cameras, etc) accounted for between one-quarter and one-third of the property taken from what could be classified as muggings (robberies on the street and footpath, 28%; in transport related settings, 29%; and in open spaces, 26%). Personal electrical equipment made up a similar proportion of the property stolen in residential armed robberies (32%).

In general, the other types of property taken were consistent with the type of stock and items one would expect in the various locations. For instance, drugs and alcohol (presumably pharmaceuticals) in chemists (11%), in service stations (tobacco; 16%); and in licensed premises (alcohol and tobacco; 14%). A relatively high proportion of property taken in pharmacies was in the category 'negotiable documents' (25%), in other words credit and debit card related items. Both negotiable documents and identity documents account for a high proportion of the items taken in office-type locations (administrative and professional settings [19% and 18% respectively]; and education, health, religious, justice and other community settings [18% and 27% respectively]). Examination of detailed data showed that the high proportion of 'weapons' taken from the latter setting category (i.e. 14% from education, health etc settings) was primarily because of syringes that were stolen from health locations.

The value of the property stolen was also provided in some cases, even if actual property descriptions had not been supplied. In some instances, the total value was calculated as the sum of the value of each property type, whereas a single value was provided for other cases.<sup>10</sup> The average total value of property taken in robberies was \$6,464 (n=4,886), although there was considerable variation, with values ranging from zero to \$550,000 (see Figure 2). Because values tended to cluster around the lower end of the range, a more accurate measure of the mid-range value is the median, which was \$590.

---

10 As with the property type variables, the reliability of conclusions drawn regarding this variable are severely limited by missing data (which limits the number cases contributing to analyses and also because of unknown yet possibly systematic reasons why data are missing). Additionally, its validity is questionable because police officers in the jurisdictions supplying this variable are usually not required to obtain confirmation of initially entered values.

**Table 9: Property type taken in armed robberies, as percentage of location**

Location	Cash	Nego- table docu- ments	Identity docu- ments	Luggage	Pers. electric equip- ment	Jewel- ery	Alcohol and drugs	Weapons	Pers. items NEC	Con- vey- ance	Other prop. NEC	Number
Residential setting	20	9	13	8	32	5	1	1	3	1	7	290
Recreational settings	27	5	12	11	22	4	1	3	9	0	6	561
Transport-related settings	19	14	16	11	29	2	1	1	4	1	3	519
Open spaces excluding street and footpath	11	8	13	11	26	4	0	1	11	12	2	245
Street and footpath	18	10	14	15	28	5	1	0	5	1	3	2,077
Education, health, religious, justice and other community settings	11	18	27	7	11	9	2	14	2	0	0	56
Administrative and professional settings	25	19	18	2	21	4	0	8	1	0	2	191
Wholesalers, warehouses, manufacturing and agricultural settings	28	8	36	0	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	25
Retail settings with no further detail	34	15	10	7	13	9	3	0	2	0	6	1,684
Banking and financial settings	70	4	1	5	7	2	0	10	0	0	0	81
Pharmacies and chemists	38	25	7	8	3	2	11	0	1	0	5	122
Service stations	62	5	2	1	6	1	16	1	2	0	6	367
Licensed premises	73	0	0	5	5	0	14	0	0	0	5	22
Unspecified and other locations	17	12	9	8	24	20	0	5	3	1	1	173
Total %	27	11	12	10	21	5	3	1	4	1	4	6,413

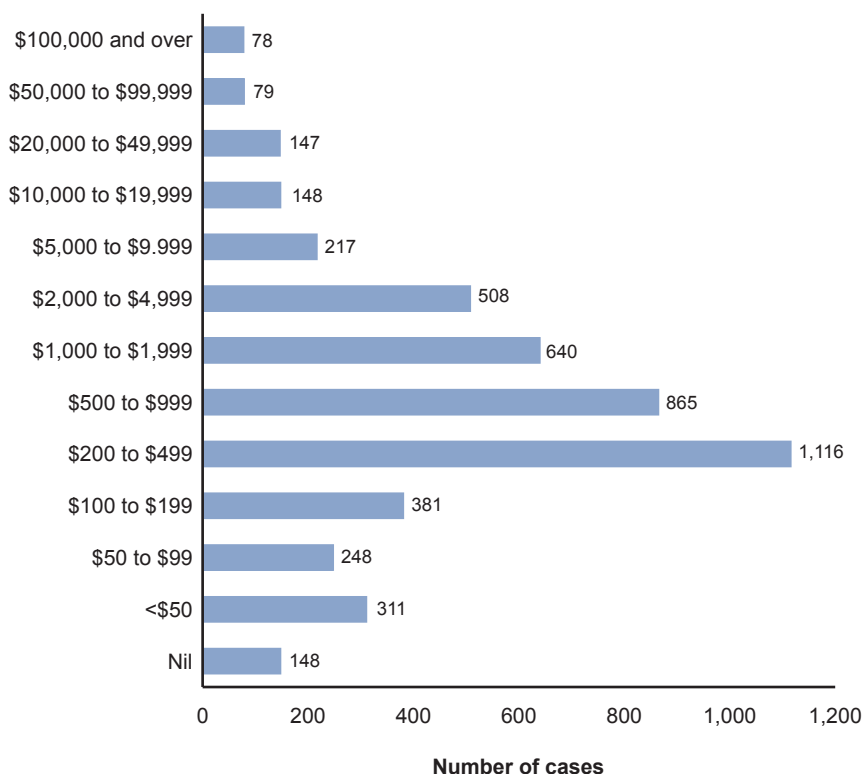
Note: 'NEC' refers to items to 'not elsewhere classified'. Multiple property types were listed in some cases, therefore the total refers to total property types, not total number of victim cases. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

Higher reported average values were associated with firearm robberies (mean=\$14,085; n=1,203) than with 'other weapons' (\$8,461; n=1,092) or knives (\$2,200; n=2,283). The smallest average takings were associated with syringe robberies (\$783; n=180). This pattern was generally consistent across all locations, and the exceptions that emerged – such as 'other weapons' resulting in higher average total values than firearms in financial and administrative/professional settings, and pharmacies – may simply be the result of the small number of cases contributing to average values (see Table 10).

There are a number of possible reasons as to why firearm robberies might result in higher average losses. Locations with relatively high value property may employ more security. Offenders may need highly dangerous weapons in order to overcome that security – to instil fear and so ensure compliance from victims – but this ultimately results in larger gains for robbers. Another possibility is that the apparent link between firearms and higher average gains is in fact the product of offender planning: more professional offenders who engage in substantial pre-offence planning and also target properties with the potential for high

**Figure 2: Total assessed value of property taken in armed robberies**



Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

**Table 10: Average total value of property taken in armed robberies in different locations, by weapon type**

Location	Firearm		Knife		Syringe		Other weapon		Total	
	avg \$	n	avg \$	n	avg \$	n	avg \$	n	avg \$	n
Residential setting	16,775	34	964	97	1,395	1	3,148	72	4,372	204
Recreational settings	21,269	244	6,795	169	1,326	8	6,290	73	13,781	494
Transport related settings	8,843	48	683	148	646	22	3,369	79	2,714	297
Open spaces excluding street and footpath	3,037	14	599	80	593	4	1,153	35	1,001	133
Street and footpath	3,997	143	1,204	615	748	43	1,815	341	1,719	1,142
Education, health, religious, justice and other community settings	27,364	8	420	13	–	0	367	3	9,395	24
Administrative and professional settings	11,724	71	3,043	32	–	0	13,501	23	9,844	126
Wholesalers, warehouses, manufacturing and agricultural settings	350	1	6,793	8	–	0	1,596	9	3,836	18
Retail settings with no further detail	8,823	434	2,683	675	888	80	7,694	291	5,372	1,480
Banking and financial settings	78,273	46	15,427	28	149	2	221,389	22	90,850	98
Pharmacies and chemists	1,199	40	629	92	509	9	2,028	20	938	161
Service stations	5,967	82	1,277	260	445	8	981	91	2,073	441
Licensed premises	16,052	10	1,288	9	–	0	182	3	7,848	22
Unspecified and other locations	34,512	28	1,568	57	240	3	2,087	30	9,483	118
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,085</b>	<b>1,203</b>	<b>2,200</b>	<b>2,283</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>8,461</b>	<b>1,092</b>	<b>6,588</b>	<b>4,758</b>

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMMP 2003 [computer file]

---

takings may simply opt for such weapons. Regardless, data again suggest a subset of robberies that can be described by the high gain/dangerous weapon 'professional armed robbery' scenario.

### *Outcomes of armed robbery investigations*

Information contributing to the NARMP is extracted from police systems on a bi-annual basis, thus cases occurring towards the close of a six-month period cannot, by definition, have been investigated for as long as those occurring at the start of that same period. Because investigative outcome variables are not updated after the initial date of extraction, outcome data should not be treated as final, but rather as indicative of the state of robbery investigations at the time of data extraction. The reliability of this variable is further weakened because the length of time that elapsed between the last day of a data collection period and the time when data were extracted was not the same for all jurisdictions nor for the two reporting periods contributing to the data set. When considering the most recent outcome for the 6,142 victims for which data were available:

- 30 per cent of victim cases recorded that investigations were finalised, with offender(s) proceeded against;
- five per cent had been finalised (with no offender proceedings); and
- the majority (65%) were not finalised.

These same proportions held across the four main weapon types<sup>11</sup> (Table 11), although relatively wider variation was seen amongst the different location types (Table 12). For instance, around half of all robbery victimisations<sup>12</sup> occurring in financial settings (46%) and in pharmacies (50%) were finalised with the offender(s) proceeded against. In contrast, only twenty two per cent of street robberies had been finalised. This may reflect differences in the types of robberies that occur in locations. For example, financial institution robberies are relatively few in number and may involve a set of offenders who 'specialise' in this high-gain target. Police investigators may therefore be more familiar with likely offenders and employ intelligence-based strategies when policing these incidents. Street robberies are greater in number, appear to be more opportunistic (at least in terms of weapon use) and seem less effectively targeted (in terms of lower gains to offenders), and so are perhaps perpetrated by a wide variety of less-frequent offenders, all of which make their detection less likely.

---

11 Percentage based on first listed weapon type to overcome any double counting because of the multiple weapon types used in some cases.

12 For which most recent investigative outcome data were also available.

**Table 11: Most recent investigative outcome status of armed robberies, as percentage of first listed type of weapon**

Weapon	Not finalised	Finalised, no offender proceeded against	Finalised, offender proceeded against	Number
Firearm	65	3	33	1,144
Knife	65	6	29	3,084
Syringe	66	7	27	272
Other weapon	65	5	30	1,458
Total	65	5	30	5,958

Note: Most recent investigative outcome status refers to latest reported outcome at the time of data extraction from jurisdictional recording systems: this variable has not been refreshed since initial data extraction. The length of time elapsed from date of robbery to date of data extraction varies depending on when the robbery occurred during the time period examined and when data was extracted, which varied between jurisdictions. The first listed weapon was used rather than all weapons because some incidents employed multiple weapons. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

Unlike street locations, financial settings typically also have active security measures (e.g. security cameras, staff trained to note offender characteristics) that can assist investigators, and this might too be a factor in the differential clearance rates.<sup>13</sup>

## Armed robbery victims

Of the 8,865 victims detailed in the NARMP, 2,289 were categorised as organisations. It is quite probable that a number of these organisational victimisations were targeted in the same incidents as individual victims, but there are no identifying variables that would allow these cases to be linked. Therefore for the purposes of this report, the robbery of organisations and of individual persons is explored separately.<sup>14</sup>

### *Individual victims of robbery*

As already noted, targets of armed robbers are probably selected in a fairly opportunistic way. Given this, are there any features that tend to characterise people victimised by armed robbers? Analyses of victim age and gender show that victims were predominantly male (71% of all cases for which age and gender data was available) and tended to be aged in

<sup>13</sup> Other research has suggested that offenders employing firearms may have their offending detected less often over the course of their careers, possibly because of their professionalism (see Mouzos & Borzycki 2003, p. 35). Data relating to offender criminal histories are not available in the NARMP.

<sup>14</sup> If an organisation were subject to armed robbery, and individual(s) were also robbed of personal property in the same incident, both organisation and individual(s) would be counted as separate victims



**Table 12: Most recent investigative outcome status of armed robberies, as percentage of location**

Location	Not finalised	Finalised, no offender proceeded against	Finalised, offender proceeded against	Number
Residential setting	49	13	39	372
Recreational settings	78	2	20	440
Transport related settings	63	7	30	517
Open spaces excluding street and footpath	80	4	16	120
Street and footpath	72	6	22	1,661
Education, health, religious, justice and other community settings	56	9	35	66
Administrative and professional settings	78	2	20	105
Wholesalers, warehouses, manufacturing and agricultural settings	75	13	13	24
Retail settings with no further detail	62	4	35	1,842
Banking and financial settings	51	3	46	122
Pharmacies and chemists	48	2	50	143
Service stations	60	3	37	553
Licensed premises	56	4	40	55
Unspecified and other locations	74	7	19	122
<b>Number</b>	<b>3,999</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>1,830</b>	<b>6,142</b>

Note. Most recent investigative outcome status refers to latest reported outcome at the time of data extraction from jurisdictional recording systems: this variable has not been refreshed since initial data extraction. The length of time elapsed from date of robbery to date of data extraction varies depending on when the robbery occurred during the time period examined and when data was extracted, which varied between jurisdictions. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

their late teens and early adult years (15 to 34 years; 66% of men and 60% of women; see Table 13). Victims ranged in age from zero<sup>15</sup> to eighty-eight years, with an average of thirty years (median=26 years; n=6,368).

A closer examination of data on gender as a function of (first listed) weapon use showed that the manner in which individuals were robbed differed for males and females. Around half of the robberies experienced by men and by women involved knives (51% and 49% respectively),

15 Only four individual victims had a recorded age of zero.

**Table 13: Victim age group, as percentage of victim gender**

Age group	Male	Female	Number
<15 yrs	4	1	215
15 to 17 yrs	12	8	699
18 to 19 yrs	11	8	649
20 to 24 yrs	21	19	1,305
25 to 29 yrs	13	14	859
30 to 34 yrs	9	11	590
35 to 39 yrs	6	9	447
40 to 44 yrs	6	9	415
45 to 49 yrs	6	8	396
50 to 54 yrs	4	6	310
55 to 59 yrs	3	4	228
60 to 64 yrs	2	2	122
65 yrs and over	2	2	112
Number	4,498	1,849	6,347

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

although women were slightly more likely to be robbed with syringes (7%, versus 3% for males) and with firearms (24%, versus 20% for males). Proportions of robberies involving 'other weapons' also varied marginally with gender (females=21%; males=26%).

Weapon use was found to vary based on the gender and age of victims (Table 14). At least half of the robberies within each major class of weapon occurred in the eighteen to thirty-four years age grouping. This was true for both males and females victims. Despite male youths (i.e. those under 18 years of age) constituting a relatively small proportion of all male victims (16%), around one-fifth of both knife robberies and 'other weapon' robberies against male victims were perpetrated against youths. The equivalent proportion was less than twelve per cent for girls under eighteen years robbed with any weapon type, and males under eighteen robbed with syringes or with firearms. A disparity between men and women was also observed among the 35 to 59 year age group. Women so aged constituted forty per cent of all female firearm robbery victims, and around one-third of those were subject to knife, syringe and 'other weapon' robberies. Only thirty-three per cent of male victims of firearm robberies, around one-quarter of males subject to 'other weapon' attacks, and close to one-fifth of men robbed with syringes or with knives fell into this age bracket.

**Table 14: Weapons used against male and female victims of different ages, as percentage of weapon type by gender**

Age group	Male				Female				Total number
	Firearm	Knife	Syringe	Other weapon	Firearm	Knife	Syringe	Other weapon	
<15 yrs	1	6	1	4	0	1	3	2	209
15 to 17 yrs	5	14	11	15	6	8	9	9	671
18 to 19 yrs	6	12	13	13	6	10	5	8	628
20 to 24 yrs	21	22	27	20	19	20	13	18	1,268
25 to 29 yrs	14	13	16	12	14	14	16	14	835
30 to 34 yrs	13	8	7	8	11	9	18	12	575
35 to 39 yrs	8	6	6	6	8	10	10	7	429
40 to 44 yrs	8	5	3	6	9	8	8	10	402
45 to 49 yrs	8	4	5	6	9	8	5	8	385
50 to 54 yrs	5	4	6	5	9	5	5	5	301
55 to 59 yrs	4	3	3	3	5	4	3	5	221
60 to 64 yrs	3	2	0	1	3	2	1	0	119
65 yrs and over	4	1	1	1	1	1	4	2	109
Number	856	2,227	151	1,127	421	879	117	374	6,152

Note: Percentage based on only first listed weapon. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

These slight differences may be a function of the locations that victims frequent because of factors such as lifestyle: male youths may more often find themselves in those unguarded open spaces that are sites of muggings, whereas women in their middle adult years (by virtue of their professions) may be in those locations more likely to be the sites of firearm robberies, namely retail settings. An examination of victim age and gender as a function of location adds some support for this possibility: male youths were most often victimised on the street and in transport related settings (total of 65%), whereas forty-two per cent of women aged thirty-five to fifty-nine were victimised in generic retail locations (see Table 15).

### *Organisational victims of robbery*

Organisations were threatened with firearms in a slightly higher proportion of cases than individual victims (29%, versus 21% for persons), and with knives and 'other weapons' slightly less often (46% and 21% respectively for organisations, versus 50% and 24%; see Table 16). There was also variation between organisations and individuals in the number of offenders involved in their victimisation. Somewhat unexpectedly, organisational victims

**Table 15: Locations where males and females of different ages were victimised, as a percentage of gender by age group**

Location	Male				Female				Number
	<18	18–34	35–59	60+	<18	18–34	35–59	60+	
Unspecified and other locations	3	2	2	2	4	2	2	0	131
Residential setting	3	7	10	12	3	6	8	14	467
Recreational settings	8	9	11	17	5	8	7	5	562
Transport related settings	16	10	6	6	15	8	4	11	578
Open spaces excluding street and footpath	6	3	2	1	5	2	1	2	179
Street and footpath	49	40	24	15	27	24	13	20	2017
Education, health, religious, justice and other community settings	2	1	1	4	2	1	2	0	79
Administrative and professional settings	<1	1	3	4	1	2	5	6	114
Wholesalers, warehouses, manufacturing and agricultural settings	<1	<1	1	0	0	0	<1	0	20
Retail settings with no further detail	12	15	30	27	34	34	42	35	1532
Banking and financial settings	0	2	2	1	1	3	4	3	126
Pharmacies and chemists	<1	<1	2	7	2	5	7	6	156
Service stations	<1	9	7	5	1	3	3	0	365
Licensed premises	<1	1	<1	0	1	<1	<1	0	21
<b>Number</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>2,437</b>	<b>1,143</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>966</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>6347</b>

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

**Table 16: Weapon use against organisational and individual victims, as percentage of victim type**

Weapon	Organisation	Individual	Number
Firearm	29	21	1,974
Knife	46	50	4,213
Syringe	4	4	374
Other weapon	21	24	1,990
Number	2,227	6,324	8,551

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

**Table 17: Number of offenders victimising organisational and individual victims, as percentage of victim type**

No. of offenders	Organisation	Individual	Number
1	68	57	1,296
2	22	25	510
3	6	10	191
4	2	5	86
5	2	3	56
Total	684	1,455	2,139

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

were subject to a higher proportion of attacks by single offenders (68%) than were individuals (57%; Table 17), although the numerous limitations of offender data may lie behind this pattern rather than any genuine differences (see section below for the detail of offender data limitations).

A greater proportion of organisational victims were robbed by offenders in older age groups, relative to individual victims: sixty-eight per cent of the reported armed robbers victimising organisations were aged between twenty and forty-nine years, in contrast to the fifty-two percent of those similarly aged robbing individual persons. Stated differently, nearly half

(48%) of the reported offenders robbing individuals were aged under twenty years, whereas only thirty-one per cent of armed robbers victimising organisations were in their teens or younger (see Table 18). This could occur because:

- older offenders may have the necessary experience to effectively target the (presumably) more secure organisational victims;
- older offenders may have less fear of the consequences of capture associated with more secure (and therefore presumably harder to breach) premises because of a longer history of escaping detection. Alternatively, they may be less fearful because they may have experienced the justice consequences of armed robbery on multiple occasions, minimising any deterrent effect detection may have once held; or
- older offenders may be more 'professional', and so only target victims known to provide guaranteed and sizeable gains.

**Table 18: Age group of offenders victimising organisational and individual victims, as percentage of victim type**

Offender age	Organisation	Individual	Number
<15 yrs	2	6	170
15 to 17 yrs	14	24	734
18 to 19 yrs	15	18	591
20 to 24 yrs	28	25	900
25 to 29 yrs	16	10	403
30 to 34 yrs	13	10	384
35 to 39 yrs	7	4	165
40 to 44 yrs	3	2	77
45 to 49 yrs	1	1	40
50 to 54 yrs	<1	<1	8
55 to 59 yrs	<1	<1	5
60 to 64 yrs	<1	<1	2
65 yrs and over	0	0	0
<b>Number</b>	<b>1,010</b>	<b>2,469</b>	<b>3,479</b>

Note: Total differs to other analyses because some victim cases involved multiple offenders: if multiple offenders were listed, the associated victim was counted once for each offender. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

**Table 19: Weapon type, as percentage of injury**

Injury	Firearm	Knife	Syringe	Other weapon	Number
No injury noted	14	62	7	17	560
Minor injury	14	56	3	26	373
Serious injury	8	50	0	42	38
Emotional trauma	19	63	4	14	129
Total %	15	60	5	20	1100

Note: Percentage based on first listed weapon type only. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.  
Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

### *Victim resistance to offenders and victim injury*

Victims may meet offenders' demands with complete compliance or with full or partial resistance. Although the NARMP can record information regarding victim resistance, it is inconsistently recorded by police and difficult to extract from police recording systems. Only sixty-three cases contained information regarding resistance, and of these, the majority (59%) were annotated as 'no resistance noted'. Fourteen per cent involved physical resistance, eleven per cent escape by the victim, and the remainder, verbal resistance to offender demands. The minimal data meant no further analyses involving resistance were undertaken.

Similar recording and extraction issues relate to the variable of victim injury. Of the 1,135 cases containing a non-missing value, over half were coded as 'no injury noted' (50%) or not applicable (2%). One-third were annotated as involving a minor injury, three per cent involving a serious injury, and twelve per cent resulted in emotional trauma.

Although injury data were only available for around one-eighth of victims, the relative proportions of knives, firearms, syringes and other weapons used against this subset of victims was generally similar to that seen across all cases in the NARMP (Table 19). For instance, knives were involved in the highest percentage of cases within each injury category.<sup>16</sup> However, the relative proportions of general weapon use were not mirrored within each of the injury categories. For example, firearms made up about one-fifth of all weapons used in the NARMP, and were also the weapons used against twenty per cent of victimisations resulting in emotional trauma, but firearms were involved in only eight per cent of the cases associated with serious injury. In contrast, 'other weapons' were used in forty-two per cent of cases in which serious injury were recorded, but they constituted only

<sup>16</sup> Proportions were not identical to the national weapon use pattern, which may be a function of the relatively small number of cases with valid injury data and the fact that only a minority of jurisdictions were able to supply this variable (if overall weapon use patterns in those individual jurisdictions able to supply injury data vary from the national pattern, patterns in the subset of cases containing injury data will also be likely to vary).

---

twenty-four cent of all weapons in all NARMP cases. Injury data are quite unreliable, and apparent patterns may not be borne out when better quality data are accumulated. However if they are genuine effects, differences may be due to more lethal weapons exacting better victim compliance; less threatening weapons may necessitate additional measures such as actual violence in order to elicit the same compliance. Alternatively, less experienced or less professional offenders, who are more prone to respond to victims with actual violence, may use more opportunistic weapons.

## Armed robbery offenders

Police information systems are not all equally capable of extracting the details of multiple offenders when compiling victim files, and even when able, the NARMP records details of only up to five offenders per victim. Logically, offender information detailing more than simply the gender of offenders can only be reported if offenders have been apprehended. These factors combine to mean that offender information is neither completely reliable nor truly representative of all armed robbers in Australia. Mindful of these factors, valid data describing the gender of 3,540 reported offenders were recorded in the NARMP. These offenders were linked to 2,156 victim cases, of which the average number of offenders per victimisation was 1.6 (median=1). The reported number of offenders ranged between one and five.

An examination of the number of offenders associated with victimisations in different locations showed that of the cases where the number of offenders was available, single offenders were involved in at least half of the robberies in virtually all locations (see Table 20). In general, offender pairs were reported in between one-fifth and one-quarter of cases, although there is the suggestion<sup>17</sup> that groups of offenders (i.e. two or more) did not equally target all locations. Multiple offenders were responsible for around one-quarter of robberies in pharmacies, and three in ten in service stations and licensed premises, and over one-third of those in unspecified retail settings. In a very different pattern, more than one offender was linked to around half of the robberies in recreational settings (51%) and on the street (49%), and in transport related locations (43%), and financial settings (44%).

It seems unlikely that the same types of groups would target both financial settings and perpetrate muggings in open public locations, because these settings have very different levels of security. The former is perhaps the most secure of all sites, but the latter is usually unguarded or otherwise unprotected. Unfortunately, the number of cases is too small to permit a meaningful exploration of other ways these multiple offender cases might differ with the various locations (e.g. offender disguises).

---

<sup>17</sup> Offender number data was not equally available for all locations, therefore case numbers are extremely small for some sites.



**Table 20: Number of offenders, as percentage of location**

Location	Number of offenders					Number
	1	2	3	4	5	
Residential setting	62	21	13	3	1	165
Recreational settings	49	20	9	17	5	108
Transport related settings	57	27	14	0	1	176
Open spaces excluding street and footpath	55	27	14	5	0	22
Street and footpath	51	29	11	6	2	424
Education, health, religious, justice and other community settings	58	31	8	0	3	36
Administrative and professional settings	71	29	0	0	0	28
Wholesalers, warehouses, manufacturing and agricultural settings	42	8	0	0	50	12
Retail settings with no further detail	64	23	8	2	3	752
Banking and financial settings	56	23	0	19	2	64
Pharmacies and chemists	77	9	11	3	0	75
Service stations	69	22	5	1	3	242
Licensed premises	70	17	4	9	0	23
Unspecified and other locations	62	28	3	0	7	29
Total %	60	24	9	4	3	2,156

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

The relative proportions of weapons used varied for offenders acting alone and in groups of different sizes (Table 21). Robberies by single offenders and by offender pairs and trios involved knives in around half of all cases (53%, 49% and 53% respectively), with firearms used in around one-fifth of cases (21% for solo robbers, 18% for pairs and 21% for trios). Larger groups of offenders showed slightly different weapon usage: groups of five offenders were associated with slightly more firearm victimisations (27%) and fewer knives (39%), with groups of four robbers associated with the largest proportion of firearms (45%) and the smallest of knives (31%). Syringes were not used when more than three offenders were involved in an incident. Varying patterns of weapon use may be one way to differentiate the larger offender groups targeting seemingly highly disparate locations (street versus financial settings), and as more data accumulates in the NARMP, this possibility can be examined.

As with armed robbery victims, the overwhelming majority of offenders were male (91%; valid n=3,212). The majority of the male offenders (where information on age was available) were in their teens and early to mid-adult years (15 to 34 years, 87%). Although females constituted a much smaller proportion of reported offenders (9%), the majority of these were

**Table 21: Weapon type by single and multiple offenders, as percentage of number of offenders**

No. of offenders	Firearm	Knife	Syringe	Other weapon	Number
1	21	53	5	21	1,269
2	18	49	4	29	503
3	21	53	0	26	189
4	45	31	0	25	85
5	27	39	0	34	56
Total %	21	51	4	24	2,102

Note: Percentage based on first listed weapon type only. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.  
Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

**Table 22: Offender age group, as percentage of offender gender**

Age group	Male	Female	Unknown	Total %
<15 yrs	5	8	8	5
15 to 17 yrs	22	18	8	21
18 to 19 yrs	17	13	0	17
20 to 24 yrs	26	21	8	26
25 to 29 yrs	11	16	8	12
30 to 34 yrs	11	11	25	11
35 to 39 yrs	4	7	0	5
40 to 44 yrs	2	2	8	2
45 to 49 yrs	1	2	33	1
50 to 54 yrs	<1	0	0	<1
55 to 59 yrs	<1	0	0	<1
60 to 64 yrs	<1	0	0	<1
65 yrs and over	0	0	0	0
Number	3,179	314	12	3,505

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.  
Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

also aged from 15 to 34 years (79%; see Table 22). In cases where at least two offenders were involved, the majority of offender pairs (80% of 851 cases) were male. Only three per cent involved two females, with the remainder made up of male–female pairs.

### *Characteristics of offenders and weapon use*

The victim-based organisation of the NARMP means that the weapons used by each and every offender cannot be recorded. Rather, weapons used against a victim, and the offender(s) who robbed that victim are recorded, but individual weapons are not linked to individual offenders. In order to gain some picture of any differences in weapon use as a function of the offender gender and age, the first listed offender's age and gender was cross-tabulated with the first listed weapon. Results show that knives generally made up the largest proportion of weapons associated with both male and female offenders (Table 23). A slightly different pattern observed among males aged 30 to 44 years may reflect a sort of 'professionalisation' – an increase in the planning that robbers engage in – where they use

**Table 23: Weapons used by males and female offenders of different ages, as percentage of age group for gender**

Age group	Male				Female				Total no.
	Firearm	Knife	Syringe	Other weapon	Firearm	Knife	Syringe	Other weapon	
<15 yrs	3	61	4	32	0	71	14	14	76
15 to 17 yrs	11	58	2	29	0	74	0	26	324
18 to 19 yrs	18	50	2	30	37	42	0	21	304
20 to 24 yrs	19	54	4	23	18	36	24	21	529
25 to 29 yrs	16	59	5	20	44	33	0	22	290
30 to 34 yrs	40	36	5	19	4	58	21	17	315
35 to 39 yrs	32	43	3	21	10	50	20	20	131
40 to 44 yrs	38	35	0	27	60	40	0	0	60
45 to 49 yrs	17	71	4	8	0	0	14	86	31
50 to 54 yrs	43	57	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
55 to 59 yrs	80	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
60 to 64 yrs	0	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	1
65 yrs and over	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0
Total % for gender	21	51	4	24	19	47	11	23	2,073

Note: Percentage based on first listed weapon type only, and calculated for only first listed offender. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

**Table 24: Locations robbed by male offenders of different ages, as percentage of age group**

Location	<15	15-17	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50+	No.
Residential setting	1	6	6	6	9	8	9	14	13	8	141
Recreational settings	13	9	5	2	2	4	1	11	13	0	93
Transport related settings	20	14	15	6	5	6	2	0	4	0	163
Open spaces excluding street and footpath	4	2	2	<1	0	1	0	4	0	0	20
Street and footpath	39	33	28	17	18	8	13	7	13	8	388
Education, health, religious, justice, other community settings	1	2	2	<1	<1	3	0	4	0	0	25
Administrative and professional settings	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	4	0	0	24
Wholesalers, warehouses, manufacturing, agricultural settings	0	1	2	<1	<1	<1	0	0	0	0	12
Retail settings with no further detail	16	22	29	42	42	41	42	39	38	31	697
Banking and financial settings	0	1	1	4	3	4	9	5	0	15	63
Pharmacies and chemists	0	1	0	5	6	6	5	2	0	0	68
Service stations	6	7	9	15	12	10	16	7	21	31	220
Licensed premises	0	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	0	8	20
Unspecified and other locations	0	2	1	2	<1	1	2	4	0	0	25
<b>Number</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1,959</b>

Note: Offender categories capturing those aged 50 years and over have been collapsed into a single category because of the very small number of cases. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology NARMP 2003 [computer file]

---

proportionally more harder to obtain weapons (such as firearms) relative to their younger counterparts. Apparently anomalous findings among men in middle and later adulthood (i.e. 45 years and above) and women of all ages are likely to be as a result of the very small number of cases contributing to these subgroups.

A similar examination of location as a function of the first listed offender also hints at a sort of professionalisation of male robbers as they grow older (Table 24). Nearly half (49%) of all armed robberies by youths (i.e. under 18 years) occurred in transport related settings and on the street (i.e. muggings), whereas only around three in ten (29%) took place in retail settings of any kind. Amongst eighteen and nineteen year old males, the proportions shifted, with four in ten robberies (41%) occurring in any retail setting, and only forty-three per cent in street and transport locations. For offenders aged between twenty and thirty-nine, one-fifth (20%) of robberies were street or transport muggings, whereas sixty-five per cent took place in the retail settings. Among these older offenders, at least one in eight (13%) armed robberies took place in a service station. Of course given that this data set is only a snapshot of a subset of all offenders it impossible to unequivocally state if these patterns reflect the 'maturation' of individuals, or if they are simply a cohort effect, where unknown generational factors cause offenders of different ages to select different locations. At present, an offender identifier is not available to allow individuals to be tracked over time; however this possibility could be explored in the near future if appropriate offender information were to be incorporated into the NARMP.

### *Disguise use by offenders*

A minimal amount of offender disguise information was available in the NARMP: only 129 victim cases contained any sort of disguise information, providing a total of 175 records regarding disguise (due to multiple disguise elements or multiple offenders). Disguise information is not a mandatory reporting field in most jurisdictions, and even when this information is recorded in police systems, it is difficult to extract in a victim-based format. This is unfortunate, because disguise can be (an albeit limited) proxy for the level of offender planning (see Borzycki 2003), as well as providing useful information about robbery modi operandi. Given the paucity of disguise data, comment is limited to noting that:

- forty per cent of these records referred to a mask;
- one in twenty (5%) to an improvised face covering;
- sixteen per cent to other accessories or simply the presence of an unspecified disguise; and
- a disguise was not seen or noted, or not applicable in the remainder of cases.

---

### *The relationship between offender and victim*

As already mentioned, armed robbery can be thought of as more impersonal than other violent offences such as murder or assault, because often no relationship exists between offender and victim prior to the incident. When considering only robberies against individual persons (i.e. excluding organisations), the parties were unknown to each other in around nine out of ten (91%) of the 1,779 specified offender-victim relationships.<sup>18</sup>

An exception to this pattern emerged with robberies in residential locations: of the 179 relationships between individual victims and offenders linked to this location category, fifty-one per cent reported that parties were unknown, but three per cent recorded that offenders were related to victims, and the remainder (45%) were known non-family members. Residential armed robbery appears unlike that which occurs in other settings, because the level of anonymity typically associated with the offence seems greatly reduced. This has implications for crime reduction strategies targeting this location, because traditional target hardening is neither possible nor likely to deter the offender committed to obtaining property from a specific residential location.

---

<sup>18</sup> These relationships are linked to 1,587 individual victims. As with offender age and gender data, data collection and extraction factors have severely limited the reliability and validity of relationship variables.

## Summary

---

---

The major findings to emerge from the NARMP show that Australian armed robberies in 2003:

- occurred mostly in retail settings or in other public spaces (of which the majority took place on the street or footpath);
- involved mostly threats with knives (which were around half of all the weapons used), followed by 'other weapons' (nearly one-quarter of weapons), then firearms (a little over one-fifth of weapons), and finally, by syringes (less than one in twenty listed weapons);
- took place mostly in the evening and early morning (over half between 6pm and 3am), although the spread of robberies over the day varied slightly as a function of weekends as opposed to weekdays, and with the seasons;
- netted robbers different types of property, although cash was the type of item most commonly taken (just over one-quarter of all property types listed);
- resulted in large variation in the value of offender takings, ranging from \$0 to \$550,000, which seems a function of unique robbery situational factors, such as weapon and location;
- were mostly perpetrated against organisations, and boys and men aged between fifteen and thirty-four years; and
- were slightly different in form depending on whether victims were individual persons or organisations (e.g. different patterns of weapon use).

Some variables within the NARMP are unreliable and of less than optimal validity, yet analyses of these have pointed to some possible trends that should be monitored as better quality information and more cases accumulate in the data set. For instance:

- young men and boys constitute the majority of offenders, although it seems that choice of weapon may vary with offender age, suggesting a possible professionalisation of offenders as they grow older;
- offenders operating in pairs, trios or gangs target slightly different locations to offenders operating alone, although there appears to be different forms of multiple offender robbery, differentiated by the types of locations targeted and the weapons used; and
- offenders and victims rarely know each other prior to a robbery event, although robberies in residential premises appear to be an exception to this pattern.



---

Analyses of offenders, victims and aspects of the robbery, such as location and weapon, suggest that the three robbery scenarios developed in earlier research can still usefully describe some armed robberies that occurred in 2003. Data suggest that recent victimisations do range between:

- unplanned opportunistic, low yield robberies in the street and certain retail sites, by individuals using weapons that are easily accessible; and
- those involving hard-to-obtain weapons against hardened targets, resulting in higher value losses by victims.

It is possible that an additional factor differentiating scenarios is offender age, with older offenders linked to seemingly better planned, less opportunistic armed robbery. A further type of robbery scenario has also been suggested: that occurring in a residential location, with the offender known to the victim, although the small number of cases has prevented any detailed exploration or extrapolation of other characteristics.

Findings were discussed within a framework that considers aspects of the crime situation, namely the routine activity approach, which requires an offender and target to come together in the absence of a guardian before an opportunistic crime like armed robbery can occur. Good data are available in the NARMP to evaluate individual targets, although current information regarding non-person targets, such as detailed location information, lacks the specificity needed for in-depth analysis. No information is currently available regarding 'guardianship', although detailed location knowledge would allow educated speculation regarding both formal security and the less formal aspects of certain locations that might tend to guard against crime. The level of detail contained in weapon descriptions also ranges from highly informative to quite general. Ideally, this variable will too contain specific information for all future cases, allowing a detailed exploration of weapons beyond the four major weapon classes currently employed in analyses.

Similarly, more in-depth analyses would be possible with more cases containing valid and detailed information regarding offenders and their disguises, victim injury and resistance, and property taken from those victims. The number of cases contained in the NARMP will increase over time, but in order to the conduct complex analyses that allow robbery situations to be modelled and that allow strong conclusions based on statistical testing to be drawn, valid, reliable and more detailed information within those cases will need to be accumulated.

## References

---

- 
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2004. *Recorded crime – victims* cat no 4510.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Borzycki M 2003. Bank robbery in Australia. *Trends and issues in crime and criminal justice* no 253. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology
- Felson M & Clarke RV 1998. *Opportunity makes the thief: practical theory for crime prevention*. Police research series paper 98. London: Home Office Policing and Reducing Crime Unit
- Mouzos J & Borzycki M 2003. *An exploratory analysis of armed robbery in Australia*. Technical and background paper series no 7. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology
- Mouzos J & Carcach C 2001. *Weapon use in armed robbery*. Research and public policy series no 38. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology

## Technical appendix

---

**Table 25: Variables and valid cases in the NARMP 2003 data set**

<b>Variable description</b>	<b>Valid cases</b>	<b>Level of detail supplied</b>
Unique victim reference number (except Tasmania, where unique incident number)	8793	
Jurisdiction	8865	
Month incident occurred (or was reported, in VIC, Tas and SA)	8865	
Year in which incident occurred (or was reported, in VIC, Tas and SA)	8865	
Offence code, as per ANCO, JANCO or ASOC	8865	
Location where armed robbery occurred	8865	ABS coding scheme (n=7829) Detailed description (n=1036)
First listed weapon	8729	ABS coding scheme (n=5187) Detailed description (n=3542)
Second listed weapon (where applicable and extractable)	532	ABS coding scheme (n=218) Detailed description (n=314)
Third listed weapon (where applicable and extractable)	71	ABS coding scheme (n=22) Detailed description (n=49)
Victim age at time of incident	6368	Valid cases exclude organisational victims (n=2289)
Victim gender	6552	Valid cases exclude organisational victims (n=2289)
Relationship of first listed offender to victim	7446	ABS coding scheme (n=7401) Detailed description (n=45)
Relationship of second listed offender to victim (where applicable and extractable)	207	ABS coding scheme (n=195) Detailed description (n=12)
Relationship of third listed offender to victim (where applicable and extractable)	65	ABS coding scheme (n=60) Detailed description (n=5)
Relationship of fourth listed offender to victim (where applicable and extractable)	20	ABS coding scheme (n=17) Detailed description (n=3)
Relationship of fifth listed offender to victim (where applicable and extractable)	9	ABS coding scheme (n=8) Detailed description (n=1)
Investigation outcome at 30 days (or at time of file extraction)	5887	ABS coding scheme (n=5712) Detailed description (n=175)
Investigation outcome at 90 days	5540	ABS coding scheme (n=5269) Detailed description (n=271)
Investigation outcome at 180 days	5626	ABS coding scheme (n=5285) Detailed description (n=341)
Count of valid number of victims per case (or number of charges per case in the ACT)	3648	Age of first listed offender at time of incident
Age of second listed offender at time of incident	840	
Age of third listed offender at time of incident	335	
Age of fourth listed offender at time of incident	142	
Age of fifth listed offender at time of incident	56	

Gender of first listed offender	2156	
Gender of second listed offender	851	
Gender of third listed offender	335	
Gender of fourth listed offender	142	
Gender of fifth listed offender	56	
Day of the week on which incident occurred	8853	
Time of day in which incident occurred	8852	
Type of property taken in incident, first type listed	3336	
Type of property taken in incident, second type listed	1237	
Type of property taken in incident, third type listed	804	
Type of property taken in incident, fourth type listed	615	
Type of property taken in incident, fifth type listed	433	
Value of property taken in incident, first type listed	2631	
Value of property taken in incident, second type listed	717	
Value of property taken in incident, third type listed	398	
Value of property taken in incident, fourth type listed	290	
Value of property taken in incident, fifth type listed	210	
Disguise element (first listed) worn by first listed offender	129	
Disguise element (second listed) worn by first listed offender	8	
Disguise element (first listed) worn by second listed offender	37	
Disguise element (second listed) worn by second listed offender	1	
Disguise element (first listed) worn by third listed offender	0	
Disguise element (second listed) worn by third listed offender	0	
Disguise element (first listed) worn by fourth listed offender	0	
Disguise element (second listed) worn by fourth listed offender	0	
Disguise element (first listed) worn by fifth listed offender	0	
Disguise element (second listed) worn by fifth listed offender	0	
Resistance offered by victim	63	Level of detail varied from yes/no response to description of resistance offered
Injury to victim	1135	Level of detail varied from yes/no response to description of injury sustained

Note: ABS coding scheme refers to the national standards employed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics National Crime Statistics Unit (NCSU)

**Table 26: Values within selected variables in the NARMP dataset**

Variable	Value	Includes
Offence code	Armed robbery	JANCO robbery with a firearm, financial institution JANCO robbery with offensive weapon, financial institution JANCO robbery with firearm, other location JANCO robbery with offensive weapon, other location ANCO armed robbery ASOC robbery not further defined (if weapon use explicitly stated) ASOC aggravated robbery (if weapon use explicitly stated)
Location	Unspecified and other locations	Unspecified locations Other locations with no further detail or not elsewhere classified Toilet or change rooms Animal shelter or pound Building or mining site, or unspecified private land Rubbish tip Military area
	Residential settings	Residential location or non-private dwelling with no further detail or not classified elsewhere House or duplex, flat or unit Caravan, tent or bush camp Private dwelling with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Boarding house, quarters or hostel Hotel (non-licensed), motel or holiday accommodation Nursing or retirement home
	Open public settings	Recreational settings Recreational setting with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Sporting with no further detail Hall or function centre Caravan park Park, oval, picnic area, rest area, wildlife park or zoo Theatre or cinema Transport related settings Transport, transport terminal, conveyance in transit or car park with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Bus stop, train station, taxi rank, airport, fire or ambulance depot, marina or harbour, or railway line Public transport (bus, train or taxi) or private transport Rail car park, airport car park, shopping centre car park, council car park, or commercial parking station Community open spaces Community open space with no further detail or not classified elsewhere

	<p>Bush area, river, lake or ocean, riverbank or ocean shore</p> <p>Street or footpath</p> <p>Street or footpath with no further detail or not classified elsewhere</p> <p>Street, footpath, bike path, other path, bridge or overpass</p>
Other community settings	<p>Educational, health, religious, justice or other community settings</p> <p>Educational, health, religious, justice or other community setting with no further detail or not classified elsewhere</p> <p>School, TAFE, university or library</p> <p>Hospital, doctors surgery, dental surgery or community or baby health centre</p> <p>Prisons or lock-up, police premises or law courts</p> <p>Place of worship or religious residence</p> <p>Childcare centre or crèche</p> <p>Art gallery or museum</p> <p>Cemetery</p> <p>Administrative and professional settings</p> <p>Administrative and professional setting with no further detail or not classified elsewhere</p> <p>Government office</p> <p>Other professional office</p> <p>Wholesalers, warehouses, manufacturing and agricultural settings</p> <p>Wholesalers, warehouses, manufacturing and agricultural setting with no further detail or not classified elsewhere</p> <p>Wholesaler, warehouse or storage</p> <p>Manufacturing setting</p> <p>Farm or other agricultural setting</p>
Retail settings	<p>Unspecified retail settings</p> <p>Retail settings with no further detail</p> <p>Retail sales settings with no further detail or not classified elsewhere</p> <p>Post office</p> <p>Workshop, caryard, sale yard</p> <p>Jewellers</p> <p>Shopping centre</p> <p>Supermarket</p> <p>Retail entertainment settings with no further detail or not classified elsewhere</p> <p>Gambling parlour</p> <p>Restaurant or take-away food store</p> <p>Brothel or adult entertainment venue</p> <p>Banking and financial settings</p> <p>Banking and financial setting with no further detail or not classified elsewhere</p> <p>Bank, building society or credit union</p> <p>ATM external to branch</p>



		Chemists or pharmacies Service stations Licensed premises Licensed premise with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Hotel, tavern or night club Bottle shop
Weapon(s)	Firearms	Firearm with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Shotgun Rifle or airgun Handgun Sawn off longarm Replica firearm
	Knives	Knife with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Dagger Kitchen knife Pocket knife Scissors or screwdriver
	Syringes	Syringe
	Other weapons	Other weapon with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Club, baton or stick Rock, stone or brick Bottle Chemical spray Explosive or bomb Drug Machete or axe Sledgehammer Crowbar or metal pipe Tool as weapon with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Blunt instrument not classified elsewhere Vehicle as weapon
Relationship of offender(s) to victim	Known to victim	Family member Family members with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Partner (spouse or de facto) Parent, child or sibling Non-family member Non-family members with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Acquaintance or friend, including boy/girlfriend Professional or employment relationships Housemate or border Neighbour Ex-partners
	Unknown to victim	Offender unknown to victim

	Not applicable	Organisational victims
Investigative outcome(s)	Not finalised	Investigation not finalised with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Investigation continuing or uncleared Investigation pending
	Finalised, no offender proceeded against	Investigation finalised and no offender proceeded against with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Unable to proceed Lapsed, unfounded or withdrawn Other result or civil action
	Finalised, offender proceeded against	Investigation finalised and offender proceeded against with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Court proceedings with no further detail, arrest or other court proceedings Non-court proceedings (caution, diversion, other non-court proceedings)
	Other outcome	Other outcome with no further detail or not classified elsewhere
Type(s) of property taken	Cash	Cash or currency
	Negotiable documents	Negotiable documents with no further detail or not classified elsewhere ATM or debit, or credit card Cheque, postal or money order
	Identity documents	Identity documents with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Drivers or other licence Passport
	Luggage	Luggage with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Wallet or purse Handbag or briefcase
	Personal electrical equipment	Electrical equipment with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Mobile phone or accessory, or other telecommunication equipment Personal stereo, TV or accessory Laptop, PC, personal organiser or accessory Camera (video or still) or accessory Electronic game or accessory
	Jewellery	Jewellery with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Ring, earring, chain or watch
	Alcohol and drugs	Alcohol and drugs with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Alcohol or tobacco Illicit drugs Pharmaceuticals or prescription form/pad
	Weapons	Weapons with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Longarm, handgun or firearm not classified elsewhere

		Knife or syringe Explosive or chemical spray Club or baton
	Personal items not classified elsewhere	Clothing and footwear Spectacles or binoculars Sports equipment Lighter, key ring or keys Book, publication or personal stationery Other personal items with no further detail or not classified elsewhere
	Conveyances	Car, motorbike, van, truck, or vehicle with no further detail Caravan, boat or other vessel Bicycle or other conveyance (include skateboard etc) Fuel or conveyance accessory Conveyance or accessory with no further detail or not classified elsewhere
	Other property not classified elsewhere	Other property with no further detail or not classified elsewhere Cash register, safe or cash box ATM or EFTPOS equipment Foodstuff or grocery Cosmetic, toiletry or perfume Furniture or homeware Tools, machinery or hardware Retail goods with no further detail Key or document (non-personal) Collectors item not classified elsewhere Other optics excluding spectacles, binoculars and camera Medical equipment excluding syringe Office equipment excluding personal computer or telecom related Vending machine or poker machine Musical instrument
Disguise element(s)	Mask	Mask with no further detail Balaclava, comic mask or hood
	Other planned disguise	Other planned disguise with no further detail Fake beard, moustache or wig Cosmetics or face paint
	Improvised face covering	Improvised face covering with no further detail Scarf or bandanna Hooded top, top pulled over face, or stocking Helmet
	Other accessories	Other accessories with no further detail Glasses, hat or cap Gloves

Victim resistance	No resistance noted	
	Verbal resistance	Refusing to comply Verbally threatening offender
	Physical resistance	Physical contact with offender(s) Attempting escape
	Escape	
Victim injury	No injury noted	
	Minor injury	
	Major injury	Require emergency treatment
	Injury	Injury with no further detail
	Death	
	Emotional trauma noted	





Australian Government

Australian Institute of Criminology

## Research and Public Policy Series

### No. 62

This annual report summarises information derived from the first year of the National Armed Robbery Monitoring Program in 2003. The nearly 9,000 reported cases of armed robbery victimisation in Australia are examined in terms of the incident, the victim and the offender. Aspects of this crime that have not previously been closely examined, such as the type of property stolen from victims, are included and add detail to our understanding of armed robbery. This picture can then assist law enforcement and those responsible for the development of crime-reduction initiatives.

ISBN 0 642 53872-7



9 780642 538727