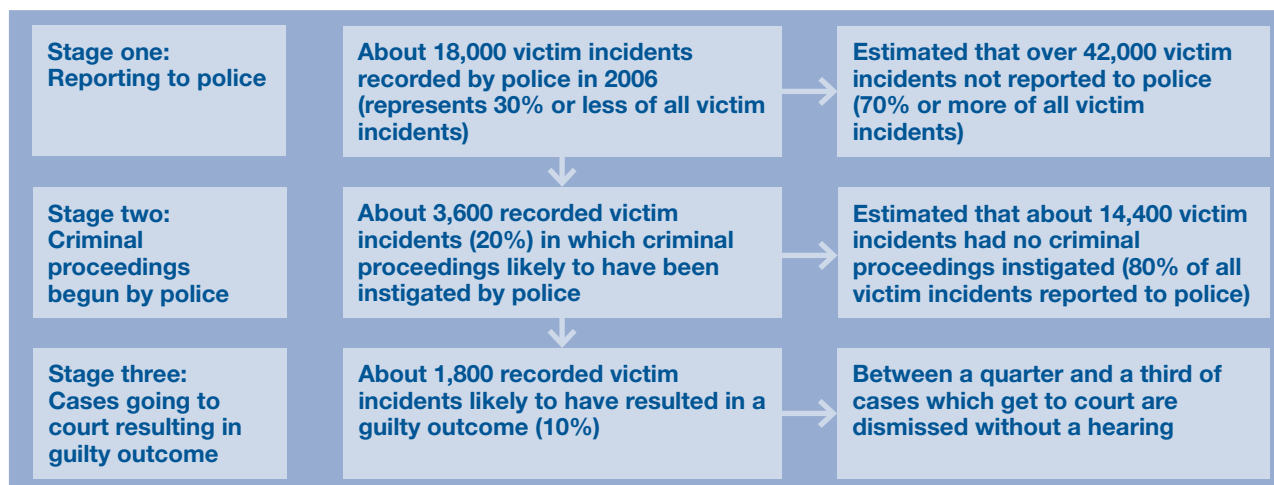


## ***Guilty outcomes in reported sexual assault and related offence incidents***

In 2006 more than 18,000 victim incidents of sexual assault and related offences were recorded by police across Australia (ABS 2007). Conservatively, this is estimated to represent only about 30 percent or less of all victim incidents of sexual offences as the vast majority of victims do not report to police. Of sexual offence incidents (including rape) which are reported to police, less than 20 percent result in charges being laid and criminal proceedings being instigated (Fitzgerald 2006; Heenan & Murray 2006). Of those cases which do get to court, between one quarter and a third of defendants plead guilty (Fitzgerald 2006). Between a quarter and a third of cases are dismissed without a hearing. Of defendants who plead not guilty where a decision is reached (about 40% of cases), about 4 in 10 are found guilty (Taylor 2007). As national data are not available to link the path between incidents reported to police and those which end up in court, the figure below simulates the proposed pathway by providing estimates of recorded victim incidents likely to result in a guilty outcome.

### Estimated likelihood of guilty outcomes for victim incidents involving sexual assault and related offences recorded by police



Note: A recorded victim incident may involve more than one offender and more than one sexual offence 'relating to physical contact of a sexual nature directed toward another person where that person does not give consent'. Cases prosecuted in court relate to individual defendants, not victims. This means the number of defendants prosecuted may differ from the number of victim incidents involved. The definition of a sexual offence in the ABS publication Recorded Crime-Victims differs from and is therefore not comparable with that in Criminal Courts Australia.

### **References**

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