

The Size of the Crime Problem in Australia

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At the National Conference of the Australian Crime Prevention Council, held in Hobart in August 1979, a number of participants raised the question of whether or not crime was increasing in Australia, and, if so, by how much. It is disturbing that the answers to these questions are not generally known - especially to people concerned with crime prevention. The main reason for this state of affairs is that crime statistics are not available in Australia on a uniform, comprehensive and up-to-date basis. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has prepared plans for rectifying this deficiency, but at the present time the only uniform crime data available cover seven categories of crime and have been published in the Year Book Australia for each year since 1964. The substance of this paper is an analysis of these data, and the writer gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the staff of the Australian Bureau of Statistics for making these data available in a standardised form. The graphs and tables that follow would not satisfy any professional criminologist, but they are nevertheless the most comprehensive picture of crime in Australia that has yet been published.

The results of a much more sophisticated study covering the period 1900 to 1976 by Dr Satyanshu Mukherjee of the Australian Institute of Criminology will be available in the near future. This major study, based primarily on the numbers of charges and convictions in the courts of all States and Territories, relates criminal justice data to a number of social and economic factors. As this study covers a long time period it will present a different picture to that portrayed by the data used in this paper. It will also provide answers to a number of questions which have been vexing the minds of criminologists and criminal justice administrators for decades and will have implications for economic and social policy.

It is also relevant to note the publication in June 1979 of the first national crime victims survey conducted in Australia. This survey

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was undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in May 1975 and obtained information from more than 18,500 people in all parts of Australia except the Northern Territory and remote rural areas. Among other things this survey established reliable estimates of the rates of non-reporting of different types of crime. It was shown, for example, that whereas 90 per cent of the victims of motor vehicle theft reported the offences to the police, only 68.0 per cent of the victims of breaking and entering and 32 per cent of the victims of rape did so. Only 14 per cent of people troubled by nuisance telephone calls reported the matter to the police. For all types of crime covered in the survey the reportability rate was 42 per cent.

These facts are highly relevant to the interpretation of the data on offences reported to the police which follow. For some offences, such as rape, it is reasonable to assume that the official statistics represent only a minority of the offences which have occurred, and for all offences there is a 'dark figure' of unreported crime which cannot be shown in the graphs and tables.

The seven categories of crime to be considered here are : Homicide, Serious Assault, Robbery, Rape, Breaking and Entering, Motor Vehicle Theft, and Fraud, Forgery and False Pretences. For each offence a graph shows the Australian rate per 100,000 of the population over the 14-year period 1964-65 to 1977-78, and another graph shows the average rates for the same period for each State and Territory. A statistical table is also included for each offence which shows the actual numbers of offences reported together with the rates per 100,000 of the population for each State and Territory for each of the 14 years. From these tables crime rates for each State and Territory can be readily identified.

The key statistics used here are of 'Offences Reported or Becoming Known' and these are defined in the Year Book Australia as :

All incidents reported or becoming known to the police which are found to constitute offences within the scope of the crimes covered are included. Offences are shown as 'reported or becoming known' in the period during which it has been established that the incident constitutes a crime, not necessarily in the period when the incident occurred. However, the incident is included when the police are satisfied that a crime has been committed, even though it may be established in subsequent proceedings that no crime or a crime of a different nature was committed.

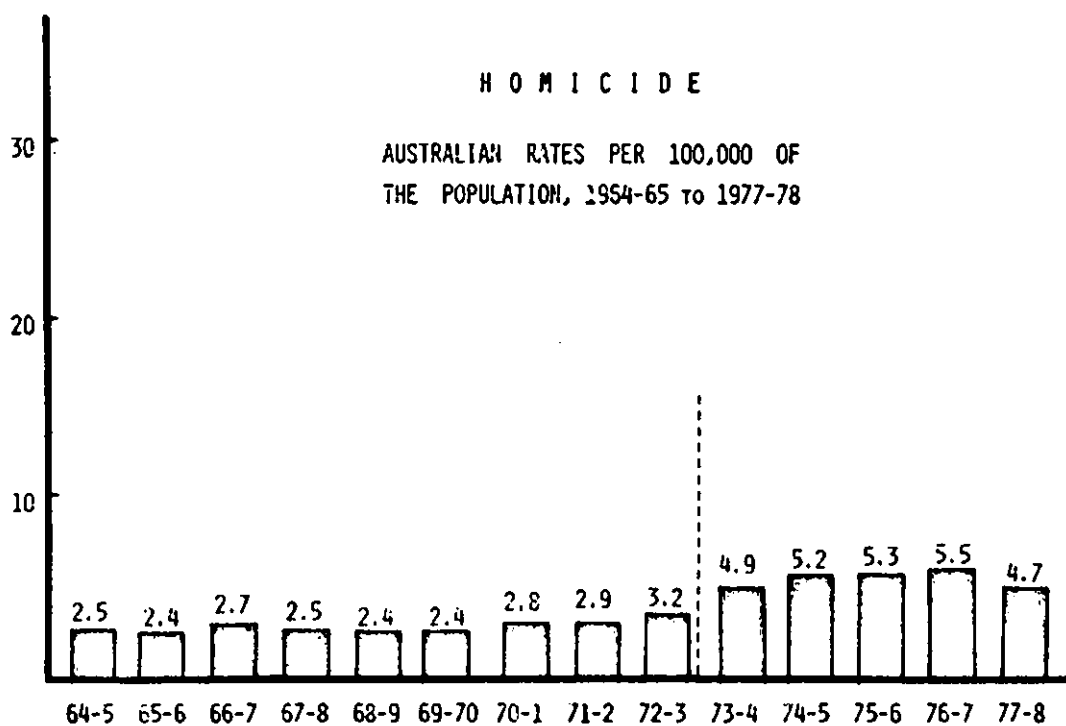
As far as possible, the offences are recorded in respect of the State in which the incident occurred, regardless of which police force undertakes investigations or prosecutions, or where an arrest is made. In the case of homicide, assault, robbery, and rape, one offence is counted in respect of each victim, regardless of the number of offenders involved. In the case of breaking and entering, and fraud, etc., one offence is counted for each act or series of directly related acts occurring at the same time and place, and under the same circumstances. Each motor vehicle stolen is counted as constituting a separate offence. Attempted crimes are counted as offences in the appropriate offence category.

Offences reported or becoming known to the Commonwealth Police prior to 1970-71 are not included. This omission makes little or no difference for most categories of crime, but it is estimated that approximately one-third of all cases of fraud, forgery and false pretences are dealt with by the Commonwealth Police. Each of the seven crimes will now be considered in turn.

Homicide

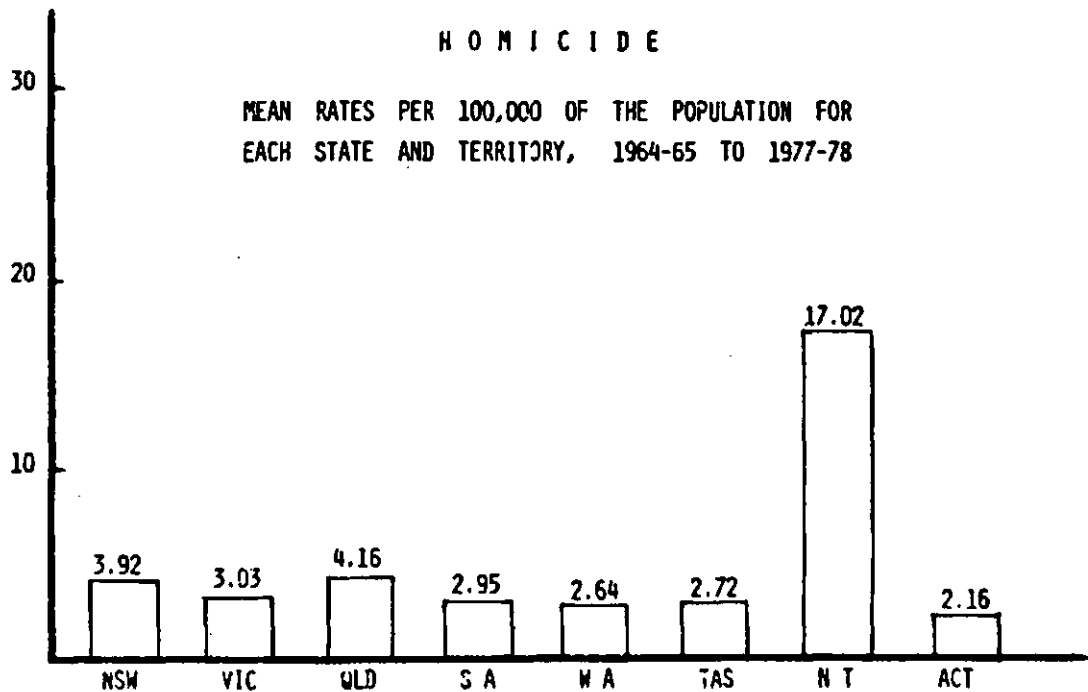
Homicide is unlawful killing and includes murder, attempted murder (that is, acts done with intent to murder) and manslaughter. As from July 1973 this offence category also includes manslaughter arising from motor traffic accidents and therefore the figures from 1973-74 onwards are not comparable with the earlier figures. The general Australian trend in homicide over the period 1963-64 to 1977-78 is presented in Figure 1 with the discontinuity of the definition shown by a dotted line.

FIGURE 1



Little or no evidence of increase in homicide can be seen, but very significant differences between jurisdictions in the average rates are shown in Figure 2, with the Northern Territory having by far the highest average. Queensland has the second highest average rate, and the lowest is found in the Australian Capital Territory.

FIGURE 2



The full details of homicide cases reported or becoming known, and the rates per 100,000 of the population, for each State and Territory for each year are shown in Table 1. From this table trends can be identified for each jurisdiction and comparisons between jurisdictions can be made for any year in the period under review. (It should be noted for this and subsequent tables that in the Northern Territory, following Cyclone Tracy in 1974, there was a sudden drop in population which inflated the rate for 1974-75.)

TABLE 1

HOMICIDE

CASES REPORTED AND RATES PER 100,000 OF THE POPULATION,
BY STATES AND TERRITORIES, 1964-65 TO 1977-78

| | N.S.W. | VIC. | QLD | S.A. | W.A. | TAS. | N.T. | A.C.T. |
|---------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|----------|
| 1964-65 | 107 2.6 | 84 2.7 | 47 2.9 | 18 1.7 | 9 1.1 | 4 1.1 | 6 11.3 | 6 7.1 |
| 1965-66 | 113 2.7 | 78 2.4 | 48 2.9 | 14 1.3 | 12 1.4 | 7 1.9 | 8 14.5 | 1 1.1 |
| 1966-67 | 134 3.1 | 82 2.5 | 55 3.3 | 15 1.4 | 13 1.5 | 5 1.3 | 14 24.1 | 1 1.0 |
| 1967-68 | 134 3.1 | 59 1.8 | 48 2.8 | 26 2.3 | 8 0.9 | 8 2.1 | 14 21.9 | 3 2.8 |
| 1968-69 | 139 3.2 | 50 1.5 | 50 2.9 | 16 1.4 | 18 1.9 | 12 3.1 | 8 11.4 | 2 1.7 |
| 1969-70 | 122 2.7 | 83 2.4 | 28 1.6 | 29 2.5 | 12 1.2 | 13 3.4 | 7 9.2 | 1 0.8 |
| 1970-71 | 123 2.7 | 110 3.2 | 50 2.8 | 27 2.3 | 18 1.8 | 8 2.1 | 12 14.5 | 2 1.4 |
| 1971-72 | 131 2.8 | 110 3.1 | 44 2.4 | 35 3.0 | 33 3.1 | 13 3.3 | 10 11.2 | 4 2.6 |
| 1972-73 | 142 3.0 | 122 3.4 | 76 4.0 | 23 1.9 | 29 2.7 | 18 4.5 | 9 9.7 | 6 3.7 |
| 1973-74 | 245 5.2 | 139 3.8 | 130 6.7 | 45 3.7 | 62 5.7 | 9 2.3 | 14 14.3 | 4 2.3 |
| 1974-75 | 272 5.7 | 142 3.9 | 121 6.1 | 68 5.5 | 61 5.5 | 17 4.2 | 19 27.1 | 1 0.5 |
| 1975-76 | 273 5.7 | 127 3.4 | 152 7.6 | 74 6.0 | 53 4.7 | 16 3.9 | 17 17.7 | 2 1.0 |
| 1976-77 | 314 6.4 | 171 4.6 | 136 6.7 | 57 4.5 | 39 3.3 | 11 2.7 | 33 32.0 | 4 1.9 |
| 1977-78 | 301 6.0 | 139 3.7 | 121 5.6 | 49 3.8 | 25 2.1 | 9 2.2 | 21 19.4 | 5 2.4 |

Serious Assault

This offence is defined as 'unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe bodily injury, usually accompanied by the use of a weapon or by other means likely to produce death or great bodily harm'. This offence category excludes attempted murder, robbery, sexual offences and other offences in which bodily injury results from negligent acts or omissions.

For each year that data have been published for serious assault in the Year Book Australia the following statement has appeared : 'Uniform interpretation of this definition between States is especially difficult to effect'. The data on serious assault must therefore be interpreted with caution, especially for the early years in the period under review. Efforts have been made in recent years to improve uniformity of interpretation.

FIGURE 3

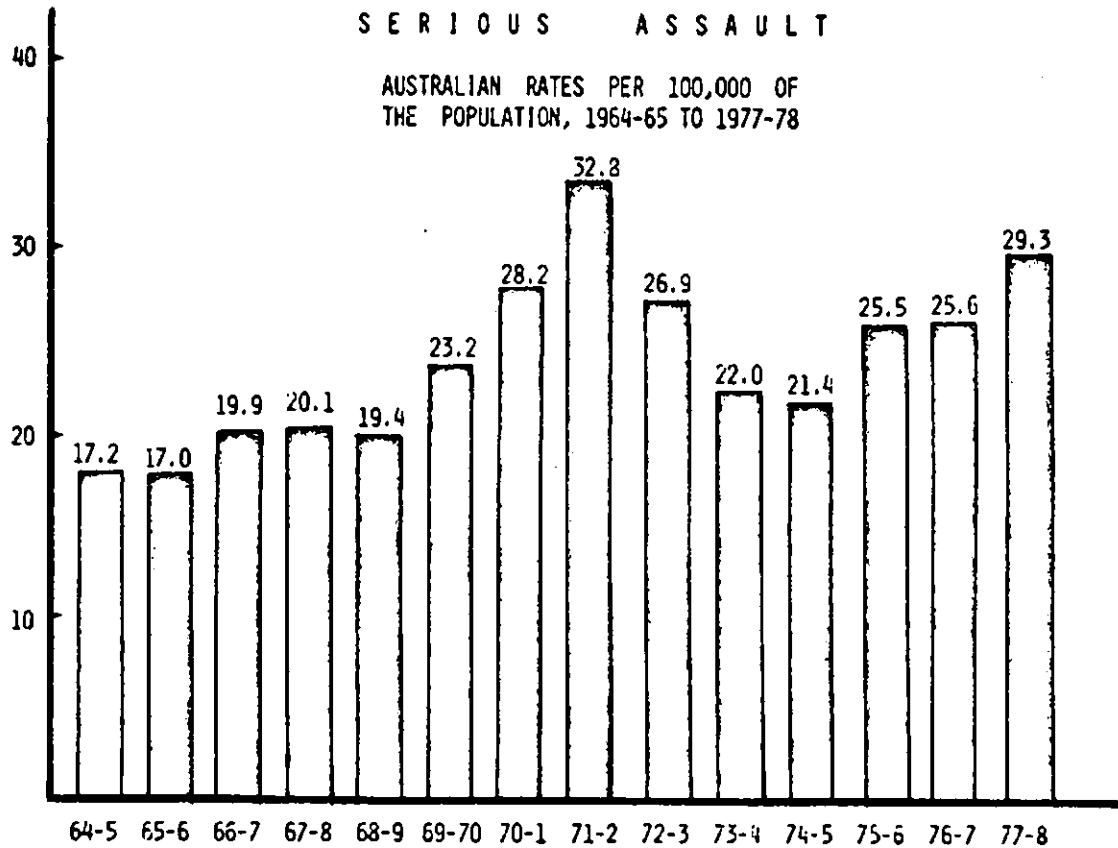
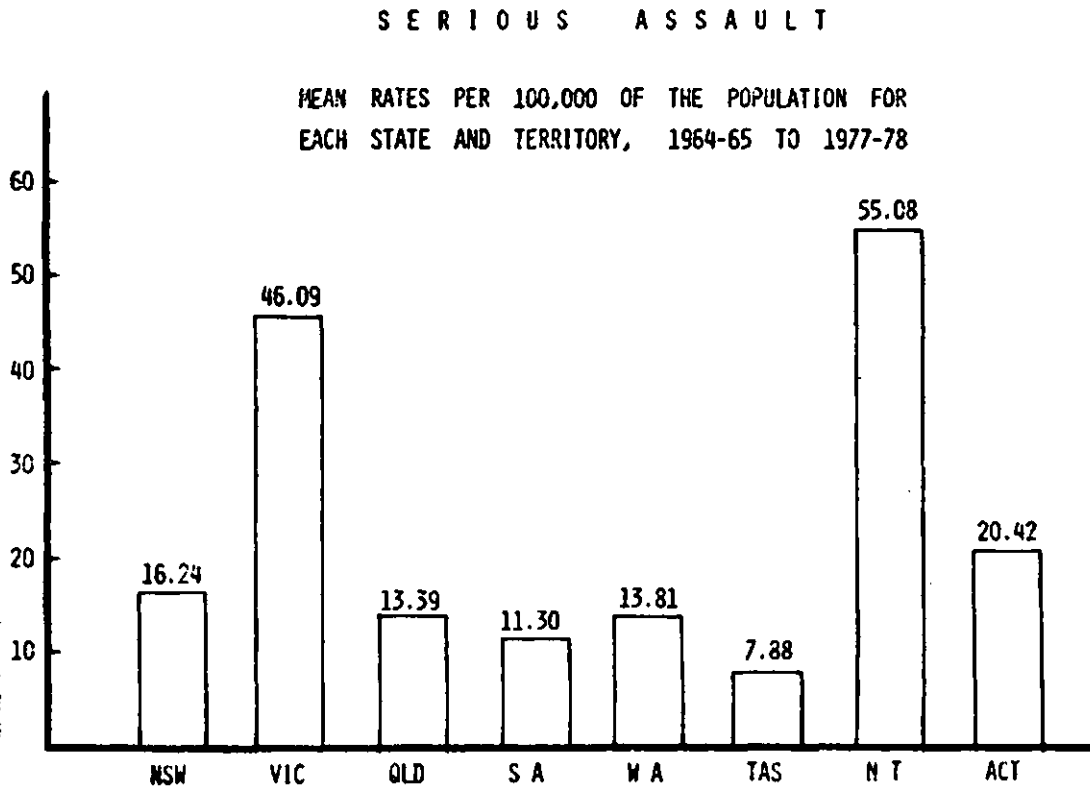


Figure 3 shows the national trend for serious assault and it seems reasonable to explain the apparently decreasing rates over the period 1971-72 to 1974-75 as more likely resulting from changes in the interpretation of the definition of the offence than from actual decreases in the incidence of the crime. For this reason the inter-jurisdictional comparisons shown in Figure 4 should be viewed with caution, and possibly more reliable comparisons could be made from the later years of the data shown in Table 2.

FIGURE 4



A careful scrutiny of Table 2 (over page) reveals some tendency towards increasing rates of serious assault in Western Australia, Queensland and South Australia, but these data cannot necessarily be regarded as reliable. It is difficult to accept, for example, that Victorians are two to three times as inclined to commit serious assault as are the citizens of New South Wales. Even in 1977-78, the most recent year for which data are available, there are significant differences in rates between jurisdictions which are highly suspect.

TABLE 2

SERIOUS ASSAULT

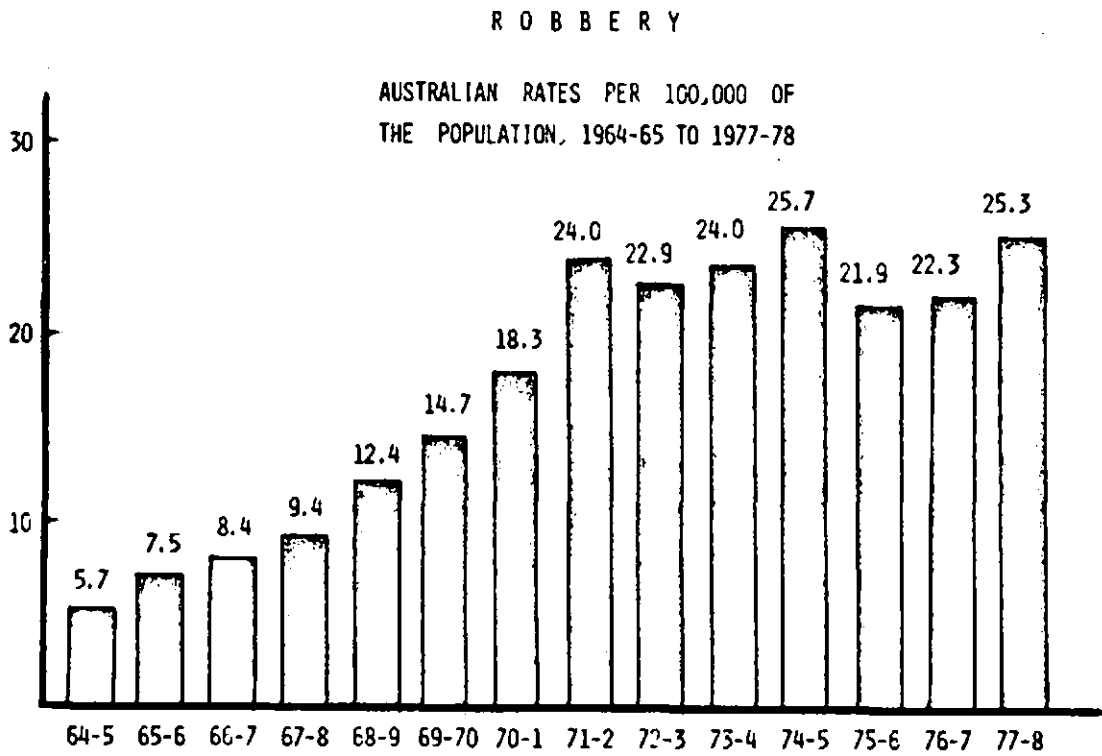
CASES REPORTED AND RATES PER 100,000 OF THE POPULATION,
BY STATES AND TERRITORIES, 1964-65 TO 1977-78

| | N.S.W. | VIC. | QLD | S.A. | W.A. | TAS. | N.T. | A.C.T. |
|---------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| 1964-65 | 481 11.6 | 1259 40.1 | 55 3.4 | 51 4.8 | 23 2.8 | 36 9.8 | 16 30.2 | 14 16.5 |
| 1965-66 | 502 11.9 | 1288 40.3 | 71 4.3 | 43 4.0 | 10 1.2 | 6 1.6 | 12 21.8 | 19 20.4 |
| 1966-67 | 545 12.8 | 1567 48.2 | 108 6.4 | 61 5.5 | 17 2.0 | 9 2.4 | 15 25.9 | 10 10.0 |
| 1967-68 | 561 13.0 | 1548 46.9 | 116 6.8 | 67 6.0 | 42 4.7 | 9 2.4 | 31 48.4 | 17 15.7 |
| 1968-69 | 658 15.0 | 1354 40.3 | 140 8.0 | 69 6.1 | 54 5.8 | 37 9.7 | 21 30.0 | 24 20.5 |
| 1969-70 | 657 14.6 | 1795 52.5 | 153 8.6 | 83 7.2 | 98 10.0 | 34 8.8 | 30 39.5 | 25 19.7 |
| 1970-71 | 757 16.6 | 2272 65.2 | 188 10.4 | 98 8.4 | 96 9.5 | 47 12.1 | 70 84.3 | 46 31.9 |
| 1971-72 | 828 17.8 | 2712 76.7 | 224 12.1 | 126 10.6 | 157 15.0 | 21 5.3 | 131 147.2 | 35 23.2 |
| 1972-73 | 877 18.7 | 1942 59.2 | 289 15.2 | 172 14.4 | 112 10.5 | 11 2.8 | 73 78.5 | 40 24.5 |
| 1973-74 | 905 19.1 | 1373 38.0 | 178 9.1 | 168 13.9 | 168 15.5 | 22 5.5 | 64 65.3 | 41 23.4 |
| 1974-75 | 908 18.9 | 1104 30.1 | 307 15.4 | 213 17.2 | 238 21.3 | 33 8.1 | 42 60.0 | 34 18.3 |
| 1975-76 | 837 17.4 | 1413 38.3 | 537 26.7 | 244 19.7 | 320 28.1 | 45 11.0 | 43 44.8 | 34 16.9 |
| 1976-77 | 895 18.3 | 1277 34.2 | 544 26.7 | 251 20.0 | 429 36.7 | 42 10.2 | 58 56.3 | 42 19.2 |
| 1977-78 | 1076 21.6 | 1531 40.3 | 738 34.3 | 262 20.4 | 367 30.3 | 85 20.6 | 62 38.9 | 53 25.1 |

Robbery

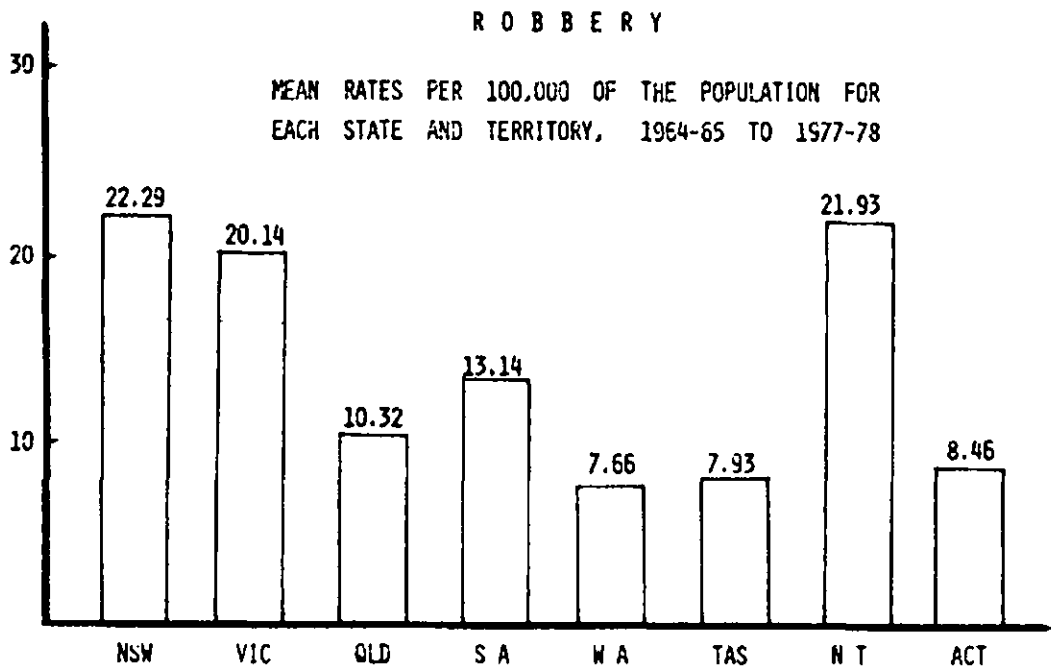
This offence is defined to include 'situations where the offender uses or threatens to use violence, either immediately before, during or after the time of stealing, to any person or property in order to obtain the things stolen, or to prevent or overcome resistance to its being stolen'. Robbery may thus be seen as both an inter-personal and a property crime. The national trend in robbery rates over the period under review is shown in Figure 5.

FIGURE 5



From this graph it can be seen that during the period 1964-65 to 1971-72 there was a very dramatic increase in the rates but for the later years in the series there has been very little significant change.

FIGURE 6



The average rates for States and Territories shown in Figure 6 indicate that New South Wales, Victoria and the Northern Territory have a considerably worse problem with robbery than all other Australian jurisdictions. Annual rates for each State and Territory are shown in Table 3 and from this it can be seen that the tendency towards increase over the total period is relatively uniform for all jurisdictions.

TABLE 3

ROBBERY

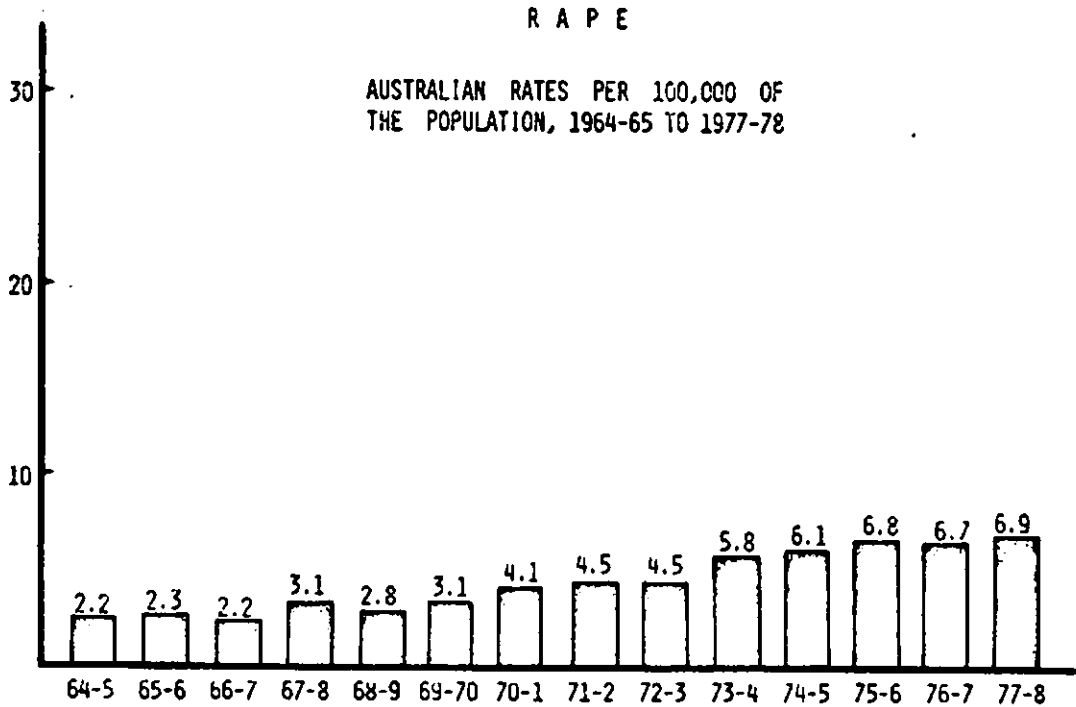
CASES REPORTED AND RATES PER 100,000 OF THE POPULATION,
BY STATES AND TERRITORIES, 1954-65 TO 1977-78

| | N.S.W. | VIC. | QLD | S.A. | W.A. | TAS. | N.T. | A.C.T. |
|---------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1964-65 | 234 5.6 | 289 9.2 | 60 3.7 | 27 2.6 | 19 2.3 | 8 2.2 | - - | 1 1.2 |
| 1965-66 | 323 7.7 | 365 11.4 | 89 5.4 | 42 3.9 | 18 2.1 | 18 4.9 | 2 3.6 | 7 7.5 |
| 1966-67 | 383 9.0 | 415 12.8 | 93 5.5 | 47 4.3 | 20 2.3 | 19 5.1 | 4 6.9 | 4 4.0 |
| 1967-68 | 428 9.9 | 478 14.5 | 82 4.8 | 55 4.9 | 36 4.0 | 22 5.8 | 6 9.4 | 9 8.3 |
| 1968-69 | 663 15.1 | 538 16.0 | 85 4.9 | 124 11.0 | 46 4.9 | 23 6.0 | 11 15.7 | 12 10.3 |
| 1969-70 | 822 18.3 | 697 20.4 | 100 5.6 | 117 10.2 | 40 4.1 | 26 6.7 | 10 13.2 | 8 6.3 |
| 1970-71 | 1089 23.8 | 770 22.1 | 175 9.7 | 138 11.8 | 76 7.5 | 32 8.2 | 22 26.5 | 11 8.0 |
| 1971-72 | 1608 34.6 | 877 24.8 | 213 11.5 | 187 15.8 | 112 10.7 | 48 12.2 | 33 37.1 | 21 13.9 |
| 1972-73 | 1457 31.0 | 872 24.4 | 302 15.9 | 182 15.2 | 89 8.3 | 51 12.9 | 24 25.8 | 19 11.7 |
| 1973-74 | 1519 32.1 | 891 24.6 | 294 15.1 | 262 21.6 | 130 12.0 | 46 11.5 | 20 20.4 | 22 12.6 |
| 1974-75 | 1705 35.5 | 889 24.2 | 343 17.2 | 288 23.2 | 141 12.6 | 46 11.4 | 39 55.7 | 16 8.6 |
| 1975-76 | 1319 27.4 | 826 22.4 | 332 16.5 | 269 21.7 | 143 12.8 | 35 8.6 | 29 30.2 | 18 9.0 |
| 1976-77 | 1352 27.7 | 965 25.9 | 282 13.9 | 265 21.1 | 127 10.9 | 30 9.2 | 19 18.4 | 21 9.9 |
| 1977-78 | 1716 34.4 | 1110 29.2 | 318 14.8 | 213 16.6 | 155 12.8 | 26 6.3 | 24 22.2 | 15 7.1 |

Rape

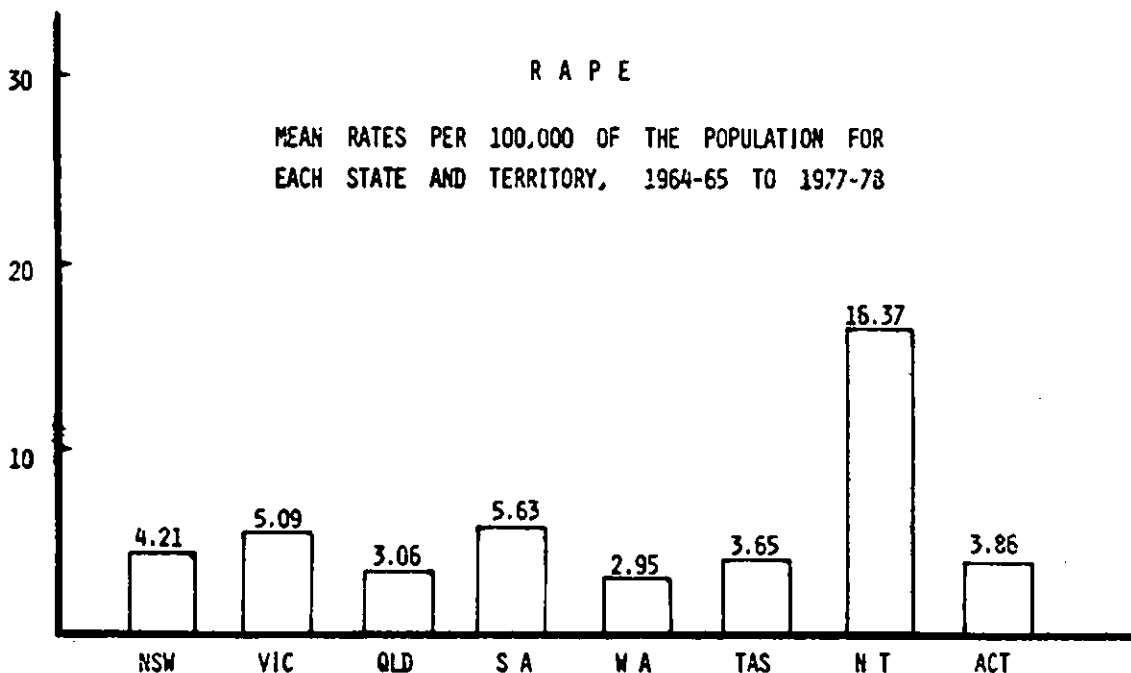
This offence includes attempted rape and assault with intent to rape, but excludes unlawful carnal knowledge and indecent assault. The national trend is indicated in Figure 7, and this suggests a threefold increase over the 14-year period.

FIGURE 7



As mentioned earlier the rate of non-reporting of rape is very high and it is possible that the increase shown in Figure 7 may be due to an increasing willingness of victims to report the offence. The influence of rape crisis centres, the feminist movement and changed court procedures which reduce the trauma for rape victims may have contributed to increased reportability, but, without repeated victimisation surveys, this is no more than speculation.

FIGURE 8



The average rates of reported rape for each State and Territory shown in Figure 8 indicate that the Northern Territory has a far higher incidence than any other jurisdiction. For this offence Western Australia has the lowest rate and South Australia the second highest. Details of the individual cases and rates are shown in Table 4. From this table it can be seen that the rates of increase have been relatively lower in Queensland, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory than in all other jurisdictions.

TABLE 4

R A P E

CASES REPORTED AND RATES PER 100,000 OF THE POPULATION,
BY STATES AND TERRITORIES, 1964-65 TO 1977-78

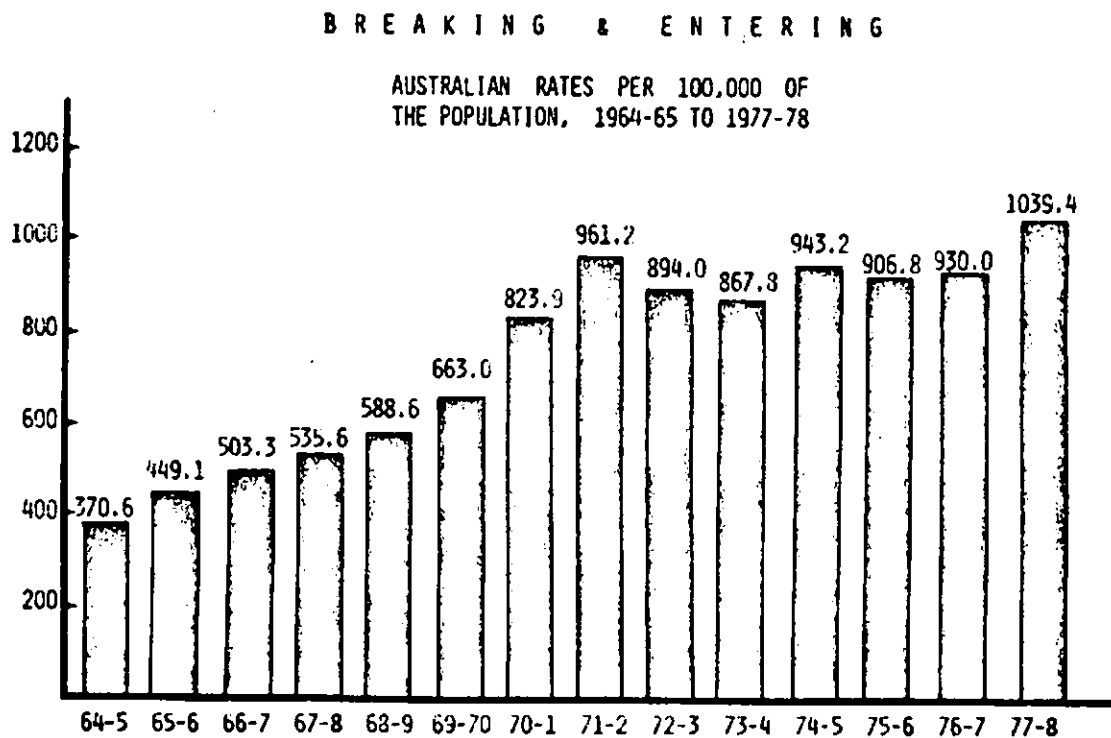
| | N.S.W. | VIC. | QLD | S.A. | W.A. | TAS. | N.T. | A.C.T. |
|---------|------------|------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| 1964-65 | 60 1.4 | 93 3.0 | 50 3.1 | 20 1.9 | 10 1.2 | 7 1.9 | - | 3 3.5 |
| 1965-66 | 78 1.9 | 95 3.0 | 40 2.4 | 24 2.2 | 9 1.1 | 6 1.6 | 3 5.5 | 4 4.3 |
| 1966-67 | 69 1.6 | 106 3.3 | 29 1.7 | 23 2.1 | 9 1.0 | 11 2.9 | 9 15.5 | 3 3.0 |
| 1967-68 | 91 2.1 | 166 5.0 | 43 2.5 | 49 4.4 | 3 0.3 | 12 3.2 | 6 6.3 | 2 1.9 |
| 1968-69 | 105 2.4 | 142 4.2 | 29 1.7 | 36 3.2 | 5 0.5 | 7 1.8 | 7 10.0 | 6 5.1 |
| 1969-70 | 116 2.6 | 162 4.7 | 35 2.0 | 24 2.1 | 7 0.7 | 12 3.1 | 21 27.6 | 7 5.5 |
| 1970-71 | 173 3.8 | 198 5.7 | 61 3.4 | 31 2.6 | 15 1.5 | 21 5.4 | 16 19.3 | 2 1.4 |
| 1971-72 | 184 4.0 | 181 5.1 | 72 3.9 | 61 5.1 | 33 3.1 | 24 6.1 | 16 18.0 | 6 4.0 |
| 1972-73 | 206 4.4 | 181 5.1 | 88 4.6 | 46 3.8 | 31 2.9 | 16 4.0 | 15 16.1 | 8 4.9 |
| 1973-74 | 308 6.5 | 209 5.8 | 66 3.4 | 101 8.3 | 31 2.9 | 17 4.3 | 25 25.5 | 9 5.1 |
| 1974-75 | 364 7.6 | 212 5.8 | 75 3.8 | 91 7.3 | 43 3.8 | 11 2.7 | 22 31.4 | 7 3.8 |
| 1975-76 | 342 7.1 | 273 7.4 | 64 3.2 | 131 10.6 | 71 6.2 | 25 6.1 | 7 7.3 | 7 3.5 |
| 1976-77 | 307 6.3 | 264 7.1 | 77 3.3 | 148 11.8 | 93 8.6 | 17 4.1 | 15 14.6 | 7 3.3 |
| 1977-78 | 365 7.3 | 233 6.1 | 72 3.3 | 172 13.4 | 98 8.1 | 16 3.9 | 17 15.7 | 10 4.7 |

Breaking and Entering

The definition of this offence is 'breaking and entering a building (or entering a building and breaking out) and committing or intending to commit a crime'. Burglaries and attempted breaking and entering offences are included in this category. The national

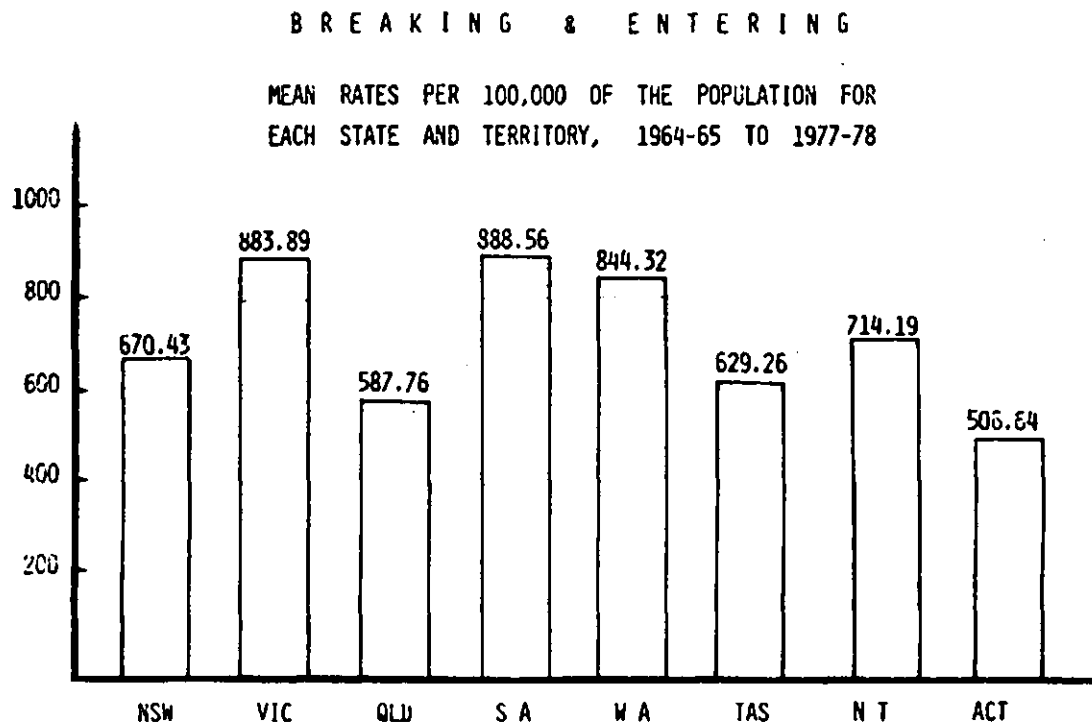
trend for this offence is shown in Figure 9 and it can be seen that, as with robbery, the major increases occurred over the period 1964-65 to 1971-72. It should be noted that the incidence of breaking and entering is many times more frequent than all of the inter-personal offences dealt with earlier.

FIGURE 9



The average rates for each State and Territory for breaking and entering are shown in Figure 10. From this it can be seen that the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland have the lowest rates.

FIGURE 10



The full statistical details relating to this offence are shown in Table 5 and from this table it can be seen that the pattern of increase has been relatively uniform in all jurisdictions, the only exception being Tasmania where the rate of increase has been slower.

TABLE 5

B R E A K I N G A N D E N T E R I N G

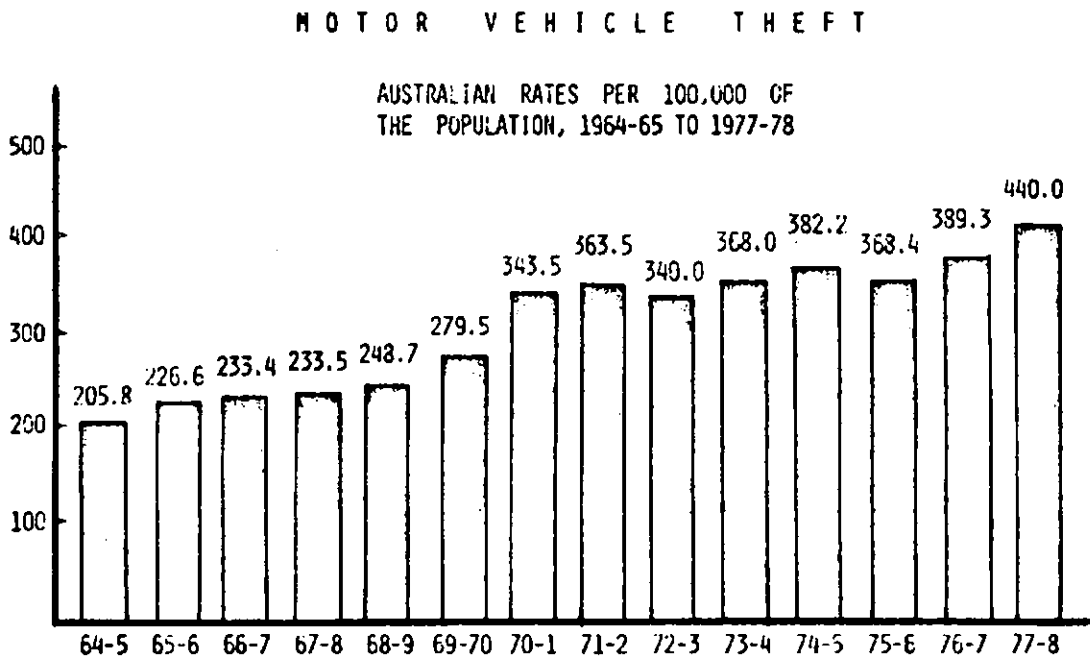
C A S E S R E P O R T E D A N D R A T E S P E R 1 0 0 , 0 0 0 O F T H E P O P U L A T I O N ,
B Y S T A T E S A N D T E R R I T O R I E S , 1 9 6 4 - 6 5 T O 1 9 7 7 - 7 8

| | N.S.W. | VIC. | QLD | S.A. | W.A. | TAS. | N.T. | A.C.T. |
|---------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1964-65 | 9466 228.5 | 16906 538.8 | 5401 332.0 | 4653 442.3 | 3020 370.2 | 1911 520.7 | 149 281.1 | 299 351.8 |
| 1965-66 | 12032 285.7 | 22051 690.0 | 5979 360.4 | 6009 554.8 | 3438 410.3 | 1701 459.7 | 159 272.7 | 312 335.5 |
| 1966-67 | 13584 317.9 | 24268 747.3 | 6270 371.4 | 7837 709.2 | 4799 556.1 | 1603 428.6 | 142 244.8 | 419 419.0 |
| 1967-68 | 17126 395.9 | 25474 771.5 | 6515 379.9 | 7754 694.8 | 4364 489.3 | 1849 489.2 | 251 392.2 | 412 381.5 |
| 1968-69 | 20677 469.8 | 25628 763.4 | 7642 448.6 | 7575 669.2 | 6768 721.5 | 2365 617.5 | 262 374.3 | 378 323.1 |
| 1969-70 | 24245 539.9 | 29644 866.5 | 9050 508.4 | 8499 739.7 | 7272 744.3 | 2760 713.2 | 310 407.9 | 438 384.3 |
| 1970-71 | 36775 804.0 | 33796 970.6 | 11847 653.4 | 9664 826.0 | 8073 799.2 | 2954 757.4 | 587 707.2 | 637 451.6 |
| 1971-72 | 46873 1007.8 | 38148 1078.2 | 14333 773.9 | 12109 1021.9 | 8025 765.0 | 3071 781.4 | 875 983.1 | 633 419.2 |
| 1972-73 | 42292 900.4 | 34988 977.0 | 13627 717.6 | 12172 1016.9 | 9631 903.5 | 2742 632.4 | 734 789.2 | 861 528.2 |
| 1973-74 | 38718 817.2 | 32892 909.6 | 13999 719.0 | 13352 1102.5 | 11563 1008.7 | 2324 582.5 | 1055 1076.5 | 1236 706.3 |
| 1974-75 | 43722 910.3 | 36521 951.8 | 14387 721.5 | 14628 1160.6 | 14633 1326.7 | 2564 633.1 | 920 1314.3 | 1203 646.8 |
| 1975-76 | 41135 853.6 | 33525 909.3 | 13657 778.2 | 14027 1132.1 | 14013 1252.5 | 2792 682.6 | 978 1018.8 | 1196 595.0 |
| 1976-77 | 42142 865.6 | 37547 1001.5 | 14313 703.2 | 14561 1160.2 | 14433 1235.7 | 2835 658.1 | 1141 1107.8 | 1512 713.2 |
| 1977-78 | 49392 991.4 | 41773 1195.0 | 15256 761.2 | 15273 1189.5 | 14532 1202.5 | 3145 753.3 | 1111 1028.7 | 1746 827.5 |

Motor Vehicle Theft

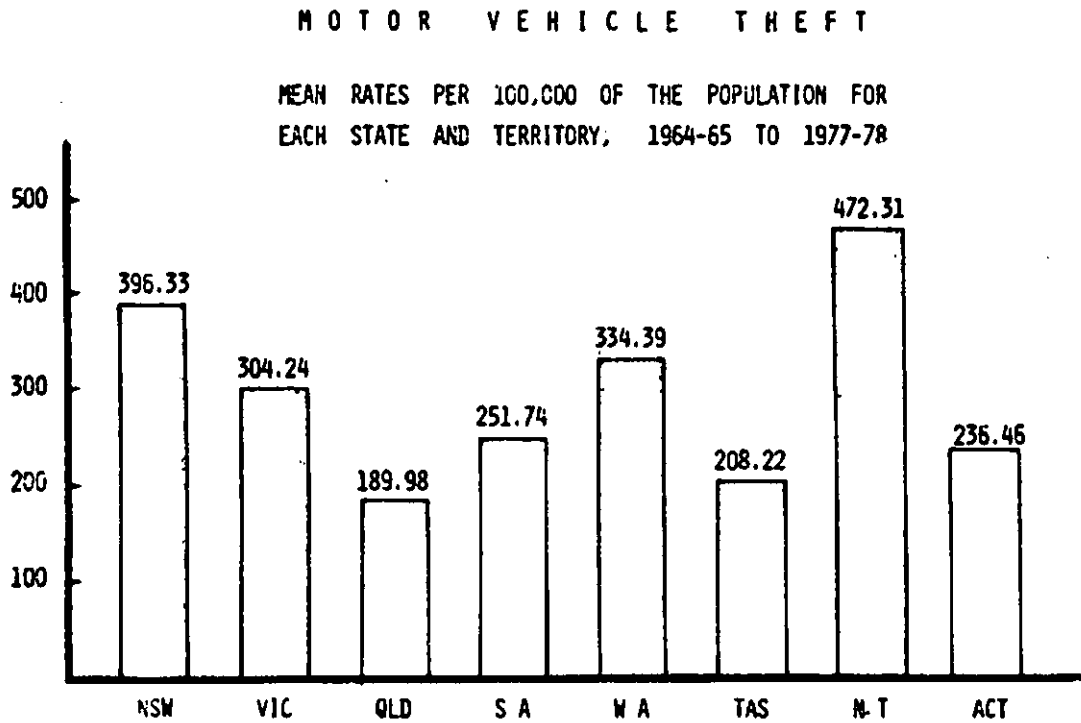
This offence includes 'illegal, unlawful or unauthorised use, use without consent, unlawfully assuming control, etc., no matter under which legislation these offences are prescribed'. Cases where the vehicle is not actually driven away and attempts at illegal use are included in this definition but cases of 'interference' are excluded. This definition implies that the widely known term of 'joy riding' is covered by this definition.

FIGURE 11



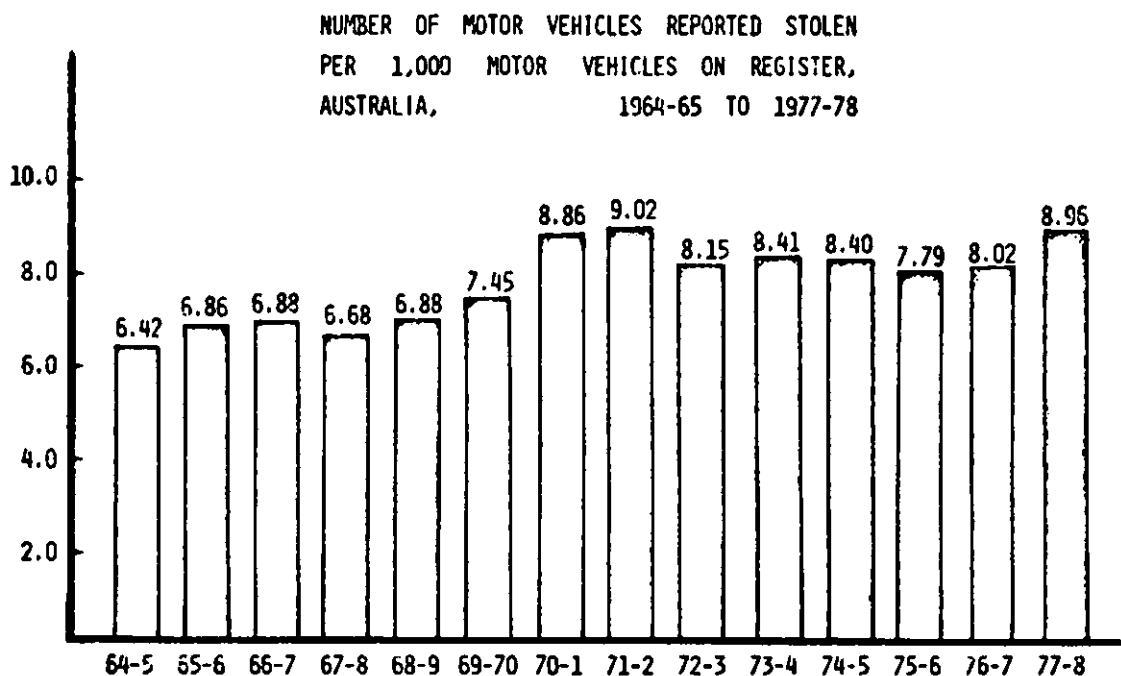
The general pattern of rates per 100,000 of the population is shown in Figure 11 and indicates an approximate doubling of the incidence of this offence in the 14 years under review. The inter-jurisdictional comparisons, shown in Figure 12, indicate that the Northern Territory has the highest average rate, followed by New South Wales and Western Australia.

FIGURE 12



For this offence it is possible to relate the number of incidents to the number of motor vehicles on the register and this has been done in Figure 13. From this graph it can be seen that the risk of an individual motor vehicle being stolen or illegally used has not increased at the same rate as was suggested by the data in Figure 12. This discrepancy is explained by the fact that Australian motor vehicle ownership rates have increased at a faster rate than the population increase over the period in question.

FIGURE 13



Because of the high reportability of motor vehicle theft, these data may be regarded as more reliable than those applying to any other crime category. The detailed statistics shown in Tables 6 and 7 are therefore worthy of close scrutiny. From these tables it can be seen that there are interesting and sometimes large differences between the States and Territories in the frequency of motor vehicle theft and it is possible that some of these differences are explained by reference to police and media campaigns which have aimed at reducing this crime.

TABLE 6

MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT

CASES REPORTED AND RATES PER 100,000 OF THE POPULATION,
BY STATES AND TERRITORIES, 1964-65 TO 1977-78

| | N.S.W. | VIC. | QLD | S.A. | W.A. | TAS. | N.T. | A.C.T. |
|---------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1964-65 | 11553 278.9 | 7028 224.0 | 1724 106.0 | 1328 126.2 | 991 121.1 | 378 103.0 | 68 128.3 | 145 170.6 |
| 1965-66 | 12546 297.9 | 8148 254.9 | 1779 107.2 | 1453 134.2 | 1376 164.2 | 470 127.0 | 92 167.3 | 208 223.7 |
| 1966-67 | 12934 302.7 | 8931 274.8 | 1642 97.3 | 1465 132.6 | 1543 178.8 | 497 132.9 | 95 163.8 | 225 225.0 |
| 1967-68 | 12675 293.0 | 8734 264.5 | 1528 89.1 | 1870 167.6 | 1960 218.8 | 670 177.2 | 160 250.0 | 199 184.3 |
| 1968-69 | 14111 320.6 | 9242 275.3 | 1930 110.4 | 1770 156.4 | 2034 216.8 | 732 191.1 | 199 284.3 | 185 158.1 |
| 1969-70 | 16609 369.8 | 10278 300.4 | 2534 142.4 | 1956 170.2 | 2209 226.1 | 581 150.1 | 250 328.9 | 267 210.2 |
| 1970-71 | 20408 446.2 | 12054 346.2 | 3668 202.3 | 2357 201.5 | 3358 331.2 | 850 217.9 | 437 526.5 | 369 267.4 |
| 1971-72 | 21112 453.9 | 12370 349.6 | 4549 245.6 | 2990 252.3 | 3975 378.9 | 1208 307.4 | 368 413.5 | 349 231.1 |
| 1972-73 | 18047 401.3 | 11057 308.8 | 4739 249.6 | 3380 282.4 | 4338 406.9 | 1148 289.9 | 593 637.6 | 412 252.8 |
| 1973-74 | 21112 445.6 | 10253 302.9 | 5016 257.6 | 4172 344.5 | 5214 481.0 | 1064 271.7 | 677 690.0 | 598 341.7 |
| 1974-75 | 22301 464.3 | 11194 305.1 | 5451 273.4 | 4679 377.6 | 5524 494.1 | 1052 259.8 | 797 1138.6 | 542 291.4 |
| 1975-76 | 21759 451.7 | 10880 295.1 | 5199 258.4 | 4846 391.1 | 5279 464.3 | 1032 252.3 | 605 630.2 | 495 246.3 |
| 1976-77 | 23443 490.4 | 13067 350.4 | 5189 254.9 | 4456 358.2 | 5499 470.8 | 858 208.3 | 675 655.3 | 481 226.9 |
| 1977-78 | 27018 542.3 | 15487 407.4 | 5709 265.5 | 5516 429.6 | 6394 528.4 | 933 226.5 | 645 597.2 | 593 281.0 |

TABLE 7

MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT

RATES PER 1,000 MOTOR VEHICLES ON THE REGISTER,
BY STATES AND TERRITORIES, 1964-65 TO 1977-78

| | N.S.W. | VIC. | QLD | S.A. | W.A. | TAS. | N.T. | A.C.T. |
|---------|----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1964-65 | 11553 9.16 | 7028 6.90 | 1724 3.32 | 1328 3.49 | 991 3.55 | 378 3.20 | 68 4.86 | 145 5.00 |
| 1965-66 | 12546 9.50 | 8148 7.64 | 1779 3.22 | 1453 3.66 | 1376 4.66 | 470 3.79 | 92 6.13 | 208 6.30 |
| 1966-67 | 12934 9.43 | 8931 8.08 | 1642 2.84 | 1465 3.54 | 1543 4.87 | 497 3.79 | 95 5.94 | 225 6.25 |
| 1967-68 | 12675 8.80 | 8734 7.57 | 1528 2.52 | 1870 4.37 | 1960 5.78 | 670 4.89 | 160 8.89 | 199 4.98 |
| 1968-69 | 14111 9.30 | 9242 7.59 | 1930 3.03 | 1770 3.99 | 2034 5.56 | 732 5.05 | 199 9.48 | 185 4.11 |
| 1969-70 | 16609 10.30 | 10278 8.03 | 2534 3.77 | 1956 4.18 | 2209 5.55 | 581 3.85 | 250 10.42 | 267 5.34 |
| 1970-71 | 20408 12.02 | 12054 8.94 | 3668 5.18 | 2357 4.81 | 3358 7.94 | 850 5.38 | 437 16.19 | 369 6.47 |
| 1971-72 | 21112 11.62 | 12370 8.77 | 4549 6.06 | 2990 5.86 | 3975 8.76 | 1208 7.32 | 368 11.87 | 349 5.37 |
| 1972-73 | 18847 9.96 | 11057 7.43 | 4739 5.91 | 3380 6.31 | 4338 9.09 | 1148 6.71 | 593 17.97 | 412 5.80 |
| 1973-74 | 21112 10.56 | 10953 6.95 | 5016 5.82 | 4172 7.29 | 5214 10.28 | 1084 6.06 | 677 19.34 | 598 7.77 |
| 1974-75 | 22301 10.60 | 11194 6.69 | 5451 5.99 | 4679 7.79 | 5524 10.27 | 1052 5.60 | 797 20.97 | 542 6.53 |
| 1975-76 | 21769 10.04 | 10880 6.11 | 5199 5.50 | 4846 7.70 | 5279 8.93 | 1032 5.16 | 605 18.33 | 495 5.56 |
| 1976-77 | 23443 10.56 | 13067 7.24 | 5189 4.99 | 4496 6.83 | 5499 8.70 | 858 4.14 | 675 18.75 | 481 4.96 |
| 1977-78 | 27018 11.80 | 15487 8.35 | 5709 5.17 | 5516 8.14 | 6394 9.46 | 933 4.38 | 645 15.36 | 593 5.93 |

It can be seen from these data that the most recent rates for Western Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory are lower than the rates found in those jurisdictions during earlier years, but the national trend is dominated by the larger numbers found in New South Wales and Victoria. In these two States there has been apparently little or no reduction in this offence.

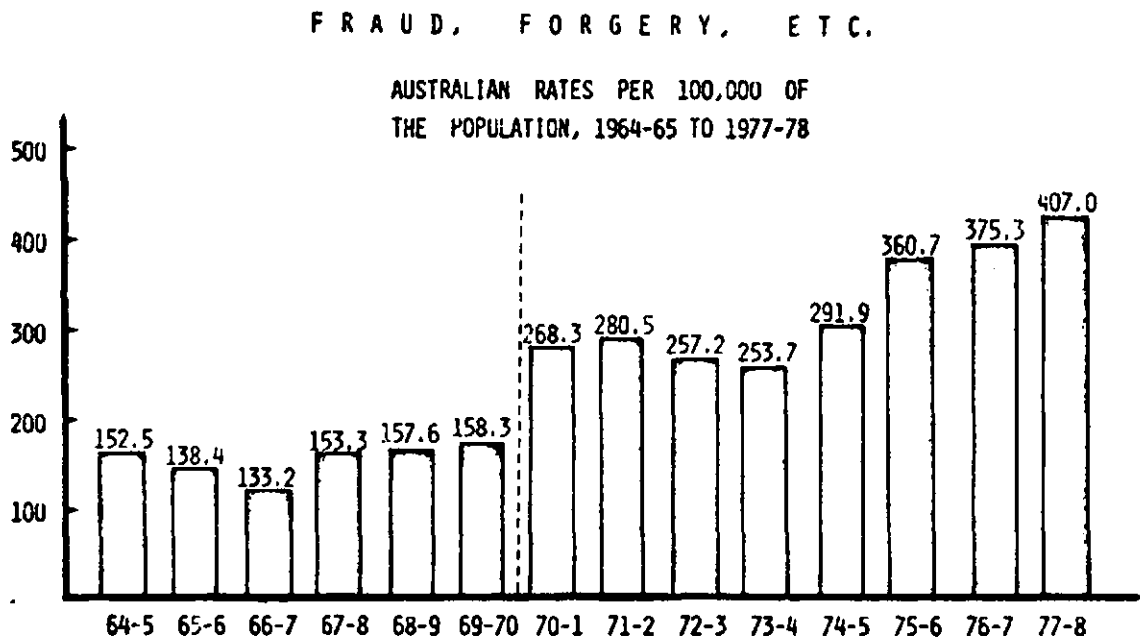
Fraud, Forgery, etc.

This offence category is defined to include 'all types of fraud, forgery, uttering, falsification of records, false pretences, secret commissions, imposition, fraudulent dealings in goods subject to hire purchase, obtaining credit by fraud, and offences involving false claims,

deception, trickery, cheating or breaches of trust. Also included are embezzlement, fraudulent misappropriation, fraudulent conversion and stealing by a bailee, servant or trustee, etc. Forgery and/or uttering of bank notes is excluded'. This offence may be assumed to cover the field popularly referred to as 'white collar crime'.

Figure 14 shows the national trend over the period under review and the discontinuity between 1969-70 and 1970-71, with the inclusion of offences dealt with by the Commonwealth Police as indicated by a dotted line.

FIGURE 14

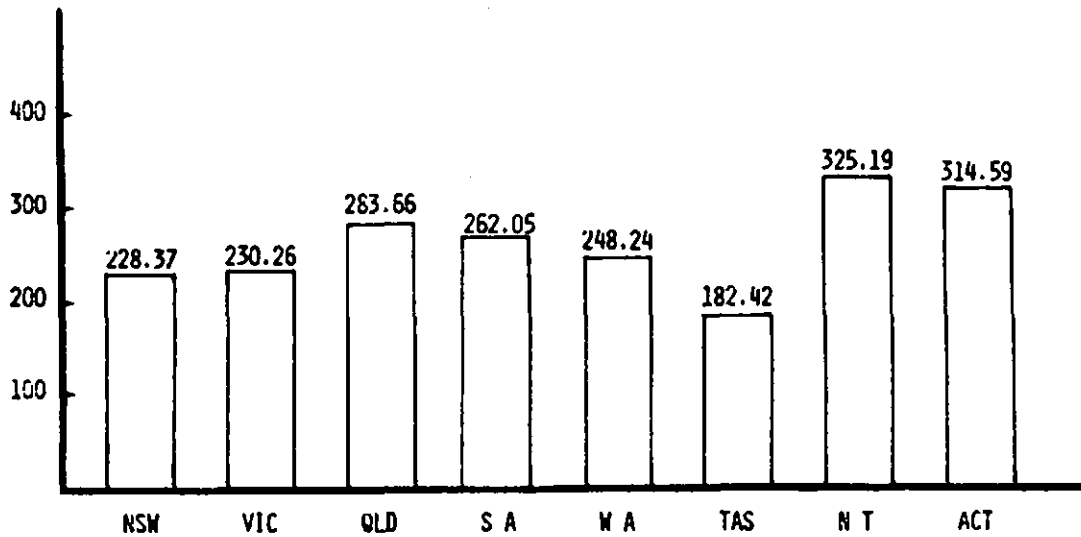


The average rates for fraud, forgery, etc. for all States and Territories are shown in Figure 15 and from this it can be seen that Tasmania clearly has the lowest rate.

FIGURE 15

F R A U D , F O R G E R Y , E T C .

MEAN RATES PER 100,000 OF THE POPULATION FOR EACH STATE AND TERRITORY, 1964-65 TO 1977-78



The detailed statistics for this offence are shown in Table 8 and a clear tendency towards increase is to be seen in all jurisdictions.

TABLE 8

F R A U D , F O R G E R Y , E T C .

CASES REPORTED AND RATES PER 100,000 OF THE POPULATION, BY STATES AND TERRITORIES, 1964-65 TO 1977-78

| | N.S.W. | VIC. | QLD | S.A. | W.A. | TAS. | N.T. | A.C.T. |
|---------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1964-65 | 6636 160.2 | 4093 130.4 | 3079 189.2 | 1813 172.3 | 1055 129.0 | 292 79.6 | 72 135.8 | 168 197.6 |
| 1965-66 | 5622 133.5 | 4013 125.6 | 2843 171.4 | 1607 148.4 | 1076 128.4 | 306 82.7 | 156 233.6 | 302 324.7 |
| 1966-67 | 5534 129.5 | 3673 113.0 | 2685 159.1 | 1966 177.9 | 1136 131.6 | 200 53.5 | 124 213.8 | 280 280.0 |
| 1967-68 | 6427 148.6 | 3964 120.0 | 3858 225.0 | 1848 165.6 | 1379 153.9 | 437 115.6 | 170 265.6 | 164 151.9 |
| 1968-69 | 5836 132.6 | 4346 129.5 | 4062 232.4 | 2211 195.3 | 1549 165.1 | 674 176.0 | 274 391.4 | 192 164.1 |
| 1969-70 | 6169 137.4 | 3700 108.2 | 3837 215.6 | 3090 268.9 | 1932 197.7 | 600 155.0 | 130 171.1 | 183 144.1 |
| 1970-71 | 11299 247.0 | 10185 292.5 | 4517 249.1 | 4164 355.9 | 2490 245.6 | 869 222.8 | 205 247.0 | 308 223.2 |
| 1971-72 | 13459 289.4 | 8686 245.5 | 6573 354.9 | 3488 294.3 | 2619 249.7 | 843 214.5 | 248 278.7 | 293 194.0 |
| 1972-73 | 12565 267.5 | 7898 220.6 | 4796 252.6 | 3810 318.3 | 2670 250.5 | 1100 277.8 | 358 384.9 | 472 289.6 |
| 1973-74 | 10245 216.2 | 7889 218.2 | 5586 288.9 | 5964 492.5 | 2489 229.6 | 777 194.7 | 289 285.7 | 426 243.4 |
| 1974-75 | 14768 307.5 | 10047 273.8 | 5932 297.5 | 3612 291.5 | 3167 283.3 | 932 230.1 | 312 445.7 | 593 318.8 |
| 1975-76 | 15372 319.0 | 15982 433.5 | 8293 412.2 | 3238 261.3 | 4103 360.9 | 809 197.8 | 559 582.3 | 701 348.8 |
| 1976-77 | 18349 376.0 | 14166 373.9 | 8946 439.4 | 3604 287.2 | 3524 301.7 | 984 238.8 | 503 488.3 | 1695 799.5 |
| 1977-78 | 16578 332.8 | 16453 432.9 | 10446 465.9 | 3072 239.3 | 7844 648.3 | 1798 315.0 | 409 378.7 | 1529 724.6 |

Conclusion

The graphs and tables incorporated in this paper have been presented in full so that other people may interpret and analyse the data to suit their particular needs. The level of interpretation applied here has been kept to a minimum, but it is clear that since 1964-65 there has been a significant increase in most categories of crime in Australia. If the seven categories of crime are added together it can be seen that the overall crime rate in Australia increased from 756.5 per 100,000 in 1964-65 to 1952.6 in 1977-78, an increase of 158.1 per cent above the population increase. During this period the population increased by 25.5 per cent, an annual average of 1.8 per cent, while the actual number of offences reported or becoming known increased by 224.0 per cent, an annual average of 16.0 per cent.

Apart from the general tendency towards increasing crime in Australia as a whole, the different crime rates for different States and Territories are of particular interest, as are the different patterns found for different crimes. It is suggested that these data are worthy of close scrutiny with a view to identifying the particular legislative provisions, police policies, and sentencing and correctional practices that seem to be effective. The effects of social, economic and educational policies should also be examined. Thus the crime data presented in this paper generate a number of hypotheses that could be tested by further research. Many of these hypotheses will be examined in the long-term research of Dr Mukherjee that was mentioned earlier.

Crime in Australia is naturally a matter of widespread concern to the public, but there is no evidence in this paper that would justify panic or a demand for even harsher penalties being imposed on that small proportion of offenders who are detected and convicted. Even though some crime rates, particularly for robbery and breaking and entering, increased dramatically in the 1960s, it seems that rates for most serious offences have been relatively stable for most of the 1970s. It should also be borne in mind that violent crime rates in Australia are generally low by international standards.

What is needed in this country is a cool and rational appraisal of our current crime problem and the identification of strategies and approaches to the prevention of crime which can be shown to be effective. It is to be hoped that the time has passed when intuition and emotion were accepted as adequate bases for the determination of crime prevention and criminal justice policy.
