

# **The Size of the Crime Problem in Australia**

**(Second edition)**

David Biles



**AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY**

THE SIZE OF  
THE CRIME PROBLEM  
IN AUSTRALIA (SECOND EDITION)

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## INTRODUCTION

This report is a revised and extended version of a report published by the Institute under the same title in October 1979. The main difference between this and the first edition is that two more years of data have been added, so that 16 years of data over the period 1964-65 to 1979-80 are now available. It has also been possible to make some other minor improvements by eliminating 'discontinuities' in the trends that had been brought about by changes in the definitions of offences, or the inclusion or exclusion of Commonwealth offences, over the period. As far as possible these problems have been overcome in this report, and any adjustments that have been made are explained in footnotes. The basic data used in this report have been supplied to the Institute by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and Bureau staff have also made a number of checks and re-calculations when requested. The assistance of the Bureau is gratefully acknowledged.

The tables and graphs in this report represent the most comprehensive picture of the incidence of reported crime in Australia that can be drawn at this time. The picture is incomplete, however, as only seven categories of crime are included, and, at the time of writing, the most recent data is eighteen months old. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has prepared detailed plans to overcome these deficiencies and a draft classification of offences now being used by all Australian police forces contains definitions of 61 separate offences which can be compressed into 25 groups. No data have, however, yet been published using this classification. When the Bureau's plans are working fully this extended classification of offences will be used at all levels of the criminal justice system, and this will represent a significant advance on the present situation. In the meantime criminologists have no choice but to make such interpretations as they can from the limited information available.

The results of a much more sophisticated study, *Crime Trends in Twentieth-Century Australia*, by Satyanshu Mukherjee were published in November 1981 by the Institute in association with George Allen and Unwin. This book largely comprises an analysis of cases heard in law courts in all States and Territories over the period 1900 to 1978 in

relation to a number of social and economic variables. As a supplement to this major work the Institute published in September 1981 the *Source Book of Australian Criminal and Social Statistics 1900-1980* by Satyanshu K. Mukherjee, Evelyn N. Jacobsen and John R. Walker. This reference work will undoubtedly be widely used by researchers throughout the country.

It is also relevant to note the publication in June 1979 of the first national crime victims survey conducted in Australia. This survey 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. In addition to the Bureau's official report Institute staff have published ten papers in Australia and overseas journals on various aspects of the victimization survey. A list of these papers is appended to this report. 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 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 16-year period 1964-65 to 1979-80, 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 16 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*, No. 61, 1975-76, 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.

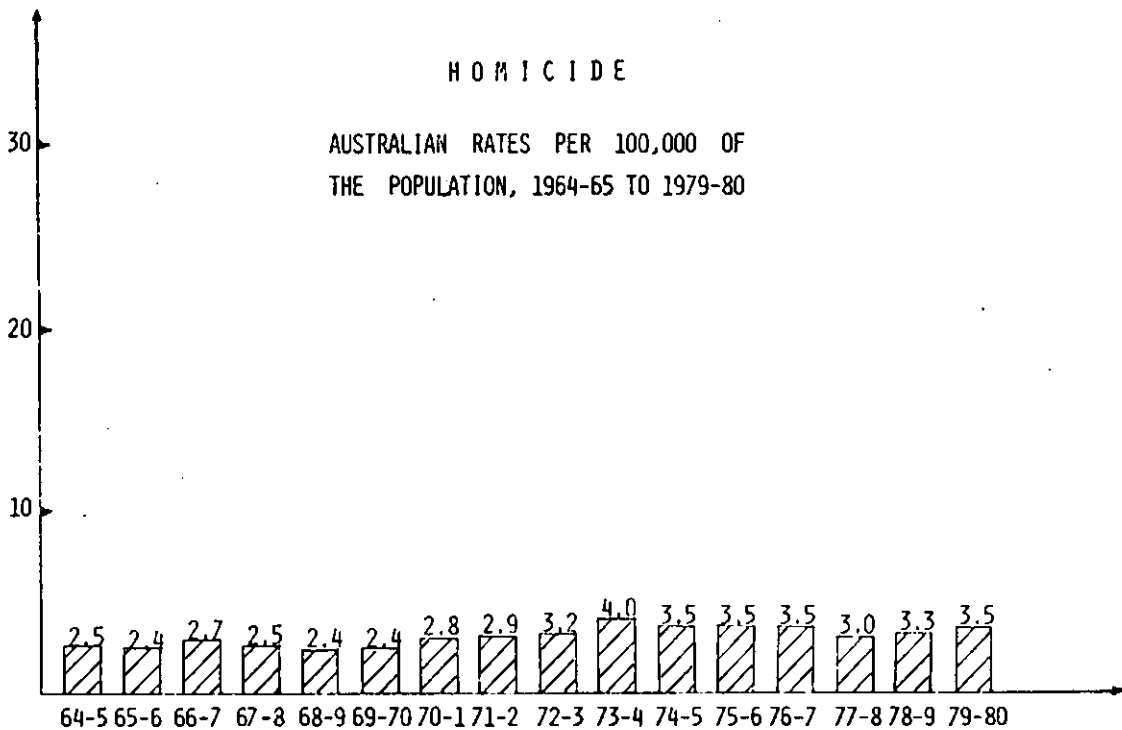
The Australian Bureau of Statistics has since 1970-71 supplied data on offences reported or becoming known to the Commonwealth Police, now the Australian Federal Police. For most offence categories the inclusion of these data makes little difference to the statistical trends, but for fraud, forgery etc. the inclusion of Federal offences makes a significant difference. For this offence category a separate statistical table showing fraud, forgery offences reported to or becoming known to Federal authorities from 1970-71 to 1979-80 is also given.

Each of the seven offences will now be considered in turn.

### Homicide

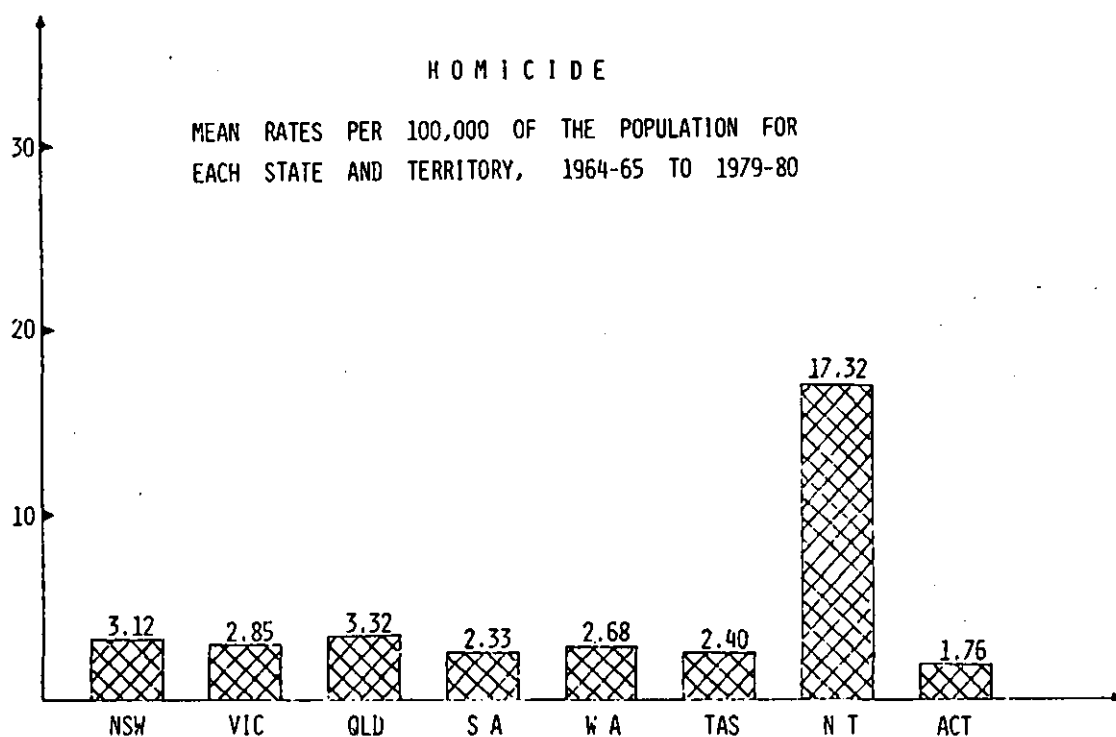
Homicide is unlawful killing and includes murder, attempted murder (that is, acts done with intent to murder) and manslaughter. In the first edition of this report homicide statistics from 1973-74 included manslaughter arising from motor traffic accidents and this prevented comparisons being made over the total period. The staff of the Australian Bureau of Statistics have now been able to exclude these cases in all but a few instances which are noted and therefore the data shown in Figure 1 is based on a relatively uniform definition of homicide being used over the 16-year period.

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 1979-80

	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	189 4.0	139 3.8	89 4.6	31 2.6	62 5.7	6 1.5	14 14.3	1 0.6
1974-75	161 3.4	118 3.2	73 3.7	30 2.4	61 5.5	14 3.5	19 27.1	1 0.5
1975-76	163 3.4	107 2.9	80 4.0	33 2.7	53 4.7	10 2.4	25 26.0	1 0.5
1976-77	173 3.5	117 3.1	88 4.3	31 2.5	39 3.3	9 2.2	29 28.2	3 1.4
1977-78	152 3.1	101 2.7	72 3.3	37 2.9	25 2.1	7 1.7	21 19.4	5 2.4
1978-79	164 3.3	122 3.2	92 4.2	37 2.9	39 3.2	7 1.7	16 14.0	1 0.5
1979-80	171 3.3	142 3.7	74 3.4	44 3.4	35 2.8	11 2.6	24 20.3	- -

NOTE In the above table the figures for Victoria for 1973-74, for the Northern Territory over the period 1973-76, and for Western Australia for the period 1973-80, include manslaughter by driving. In these cases the data are therefore not strictly comparable with the other data.

### 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.

The definitions of all offences considered in this report are given in *Australia Year Book*, No. 61, 1975-76, and in relation to serious assault the following statement is published: '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 the uniformity of interpretation, but these have not been wholly successful as the definition was apparently widened in the Northern Territory from 1978 to include any aggravated assault whether or not serious injury was caused or intended. Hence the remarkable increase in the Northern Territory figures for the most recent two years shown in Table 2.

FIGURE 3

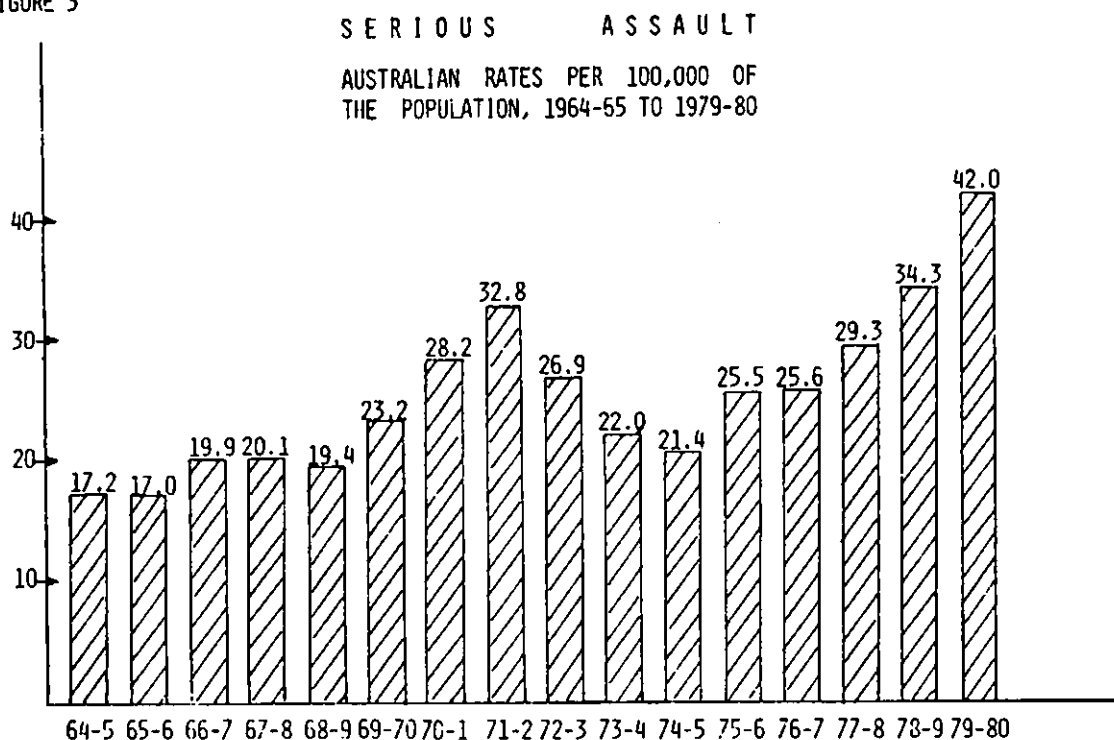
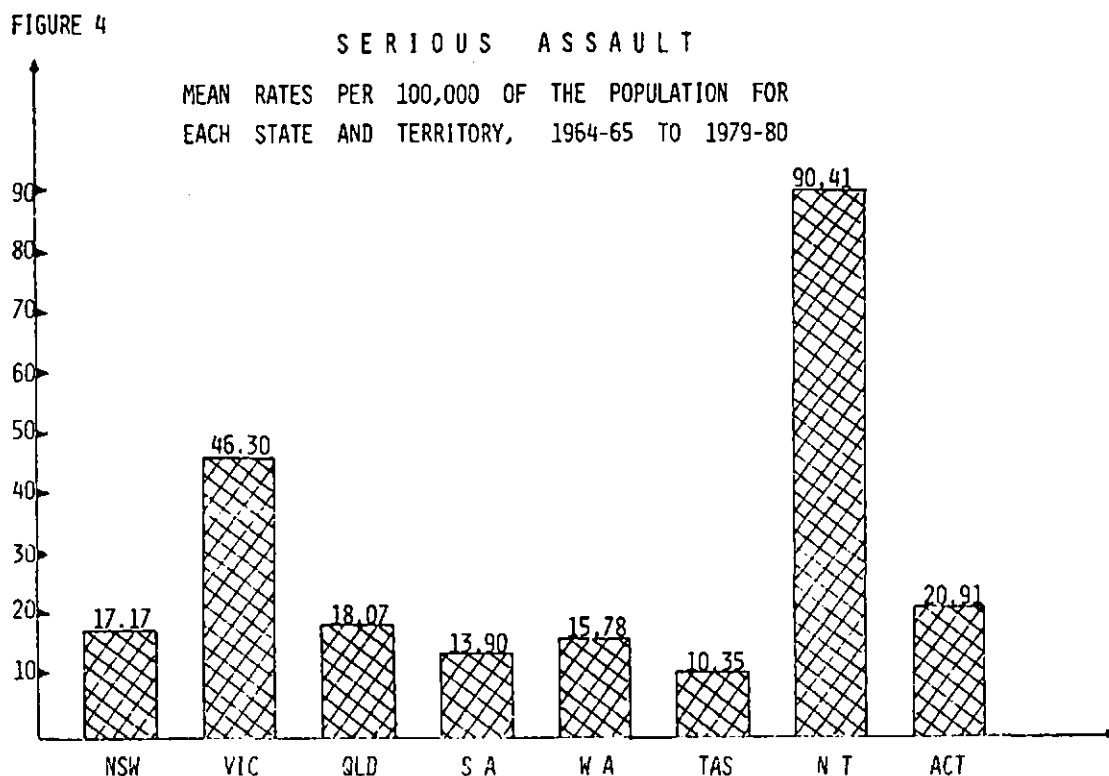


Figure 3 shows the national trend for serious assault and it seems reasonable to explain the apparently decreasing rates over the period 1971-72 to 1974-75 as more likely resulting from changes in the interpretation of the definition of the offence than from actual decreases in the incidence of the crime. Conversely, the apparent increase in the rates seen in the most recent years may also be due to an intentional or unintentional widening of the definition being used. For these reasons 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.



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 1979-80, the most recent year for which data are available, there are significant differences in rates between jurisdictions which are highly suspect. As mentioned earlier the Northern Territory data for the most recent two years are clearly based on a different definition of serious assault.

TABLE 2

## S E R I O U S   A S S A U L T

CASES REPORTED AND RATES PER 100,000 OF THE POPULATION,  
BY STATES AND TERRITORIES, 1964-65 TO 1979-80

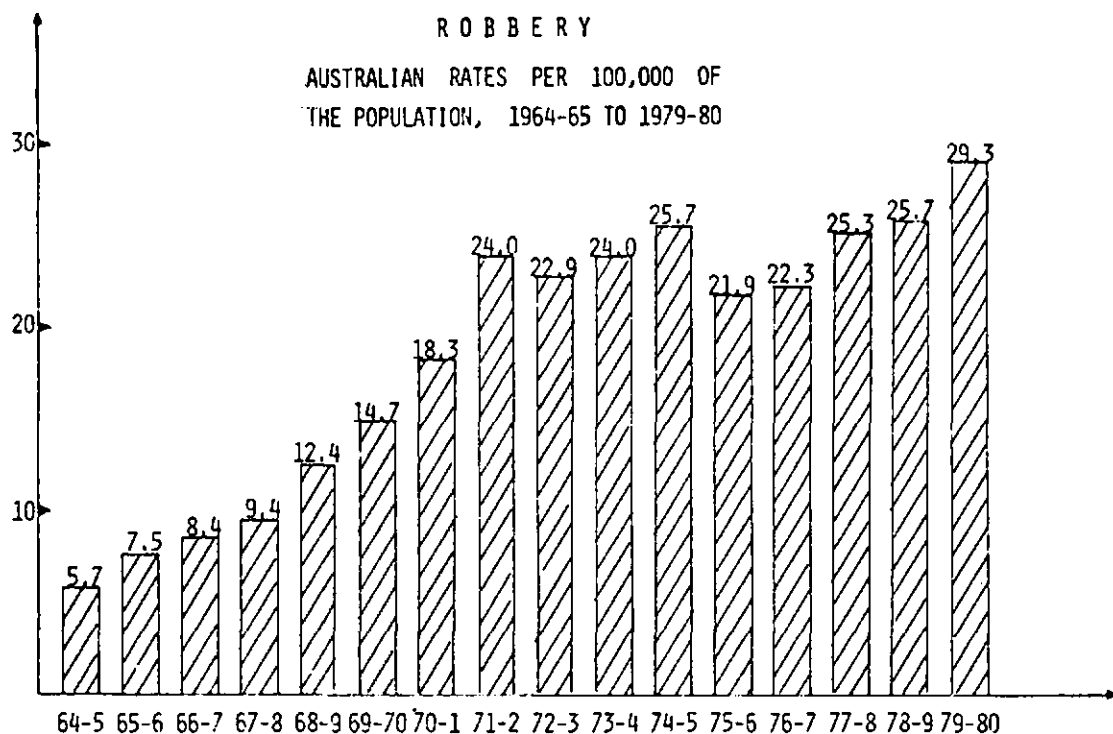
	N.S.W.	VIC.	QLD	S.A.	W.A.	TAS.	N.T.	A.C.T.
1964-65	481 11.6	1259 40.1	55 3.4	51 4.8	23 2.8	36 9.8	16 30.2	14 16.5
1965-66	502 11.9	1288 40.3	71 4.3	43 4.0	10 1.2	6 1.6	12 21.8	19 20.4
1966-67	545 12.8	1567 48.2	108 6.4	61 5.5	17 2.0	9 2.4	15 25.9	10 10.0
1967-68	561 13.0	1548 46.9	116 6.8	67 6.0	42 4.7	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	44 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 54.2	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 19.8
1977-78	1076 21.6	1531 40.3	738 34.3	262 20.4	367 30.3	85 20.6	42 38.9	53 25.1
1978-79	1134 22.5	1775 46.2	968 44.4	351 27.0	292 23.6	69 21.4	258 226.3	56 25.6
1979-80	1274 24.9	1910 49.3	1263 57.3	402 37.2	445 35.5	142 33.9	530 449.2	52 23.0

Robbery

This offence is defined to include 'situations where the offender uses or threatens to use violence, either immediately before,

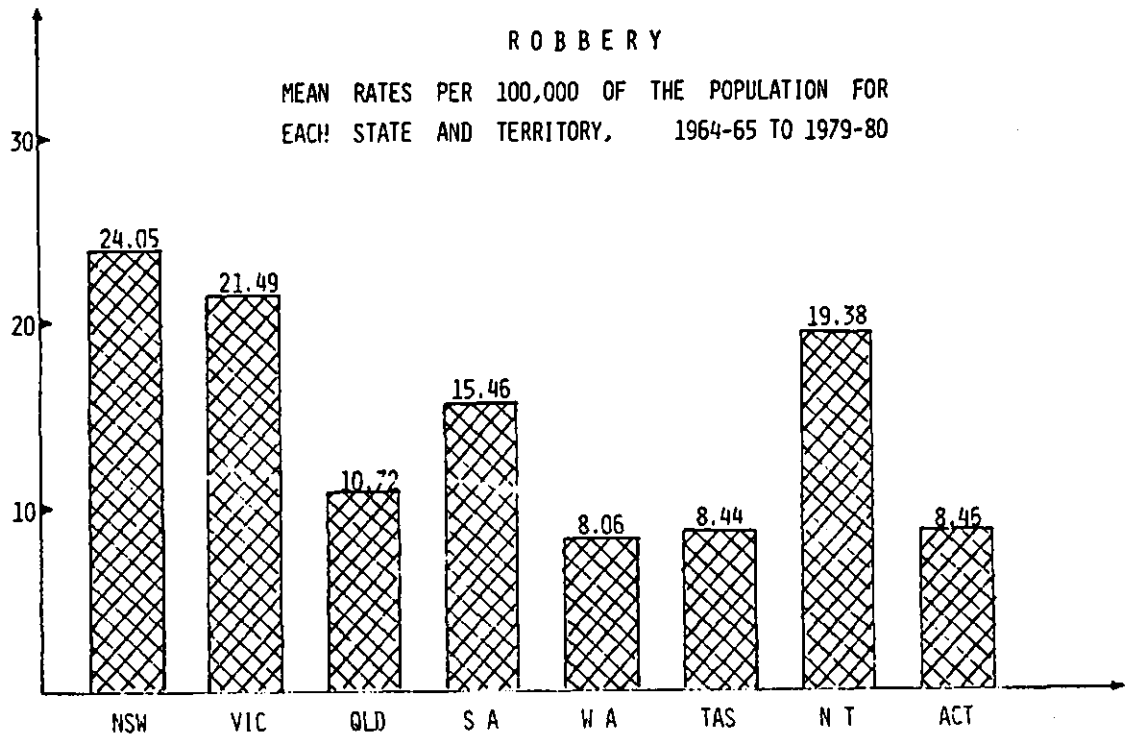
during or after the time of stealing, to any person or property in order to obtain the things stolen, or to prevent or overcome resistance to its being stolen'. Robbery may thus be seen as both an interpersonal and a property crime. The national trend in robbery rates over the period under review is 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, apart from 1979-80 when the highest rate was recorded.

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

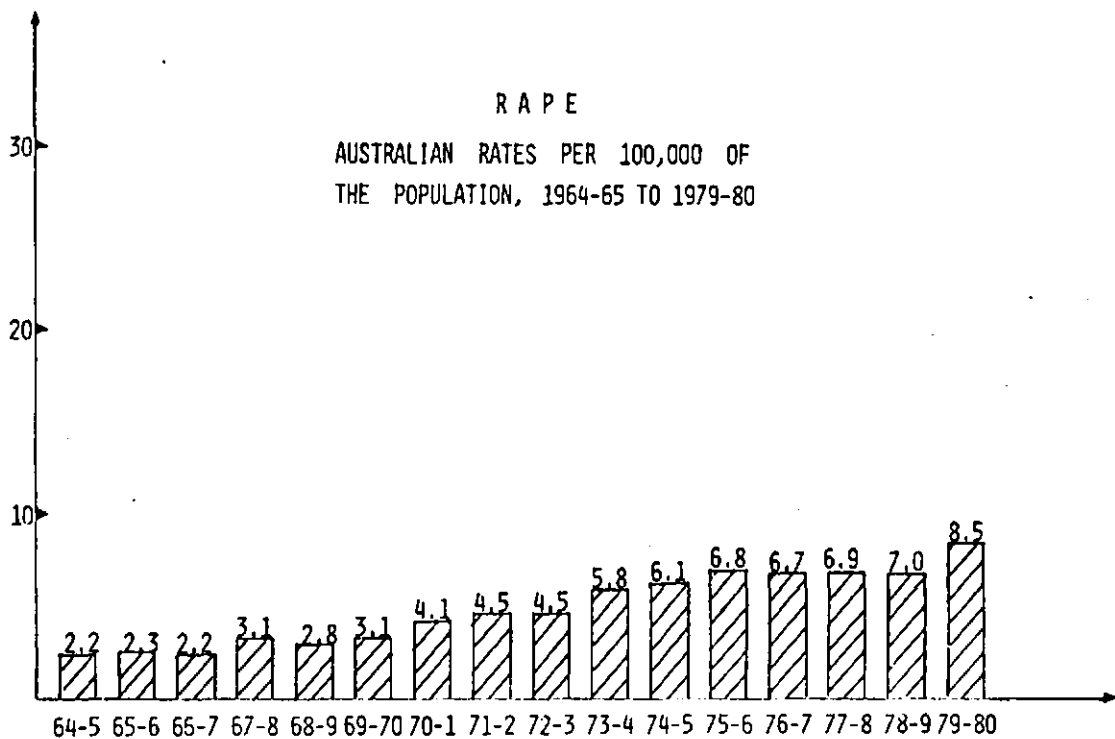
CASES REPORTED AND RATES PER 100,000 OF THE POPULATION,  
BY STATES AND TERRITORIES, 1964-65 TO 1979-80

	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	145 12.8	35 8.6	29 30.2	18 9.0
1976-77	1353 27.7	965 25.9	282 13.9	265 21.1	127 10.9	38 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
1978-79	1699 33.8	1170 30.4	281 12.9	328 25.3	127 10.3	51 12.3	13 11.4	14 6.4
1979-80	1990 38.9	1227 31.6	312 14.1	494 38.1	143 11.4	49 11.7	16 13.6	24 10.6

Rape

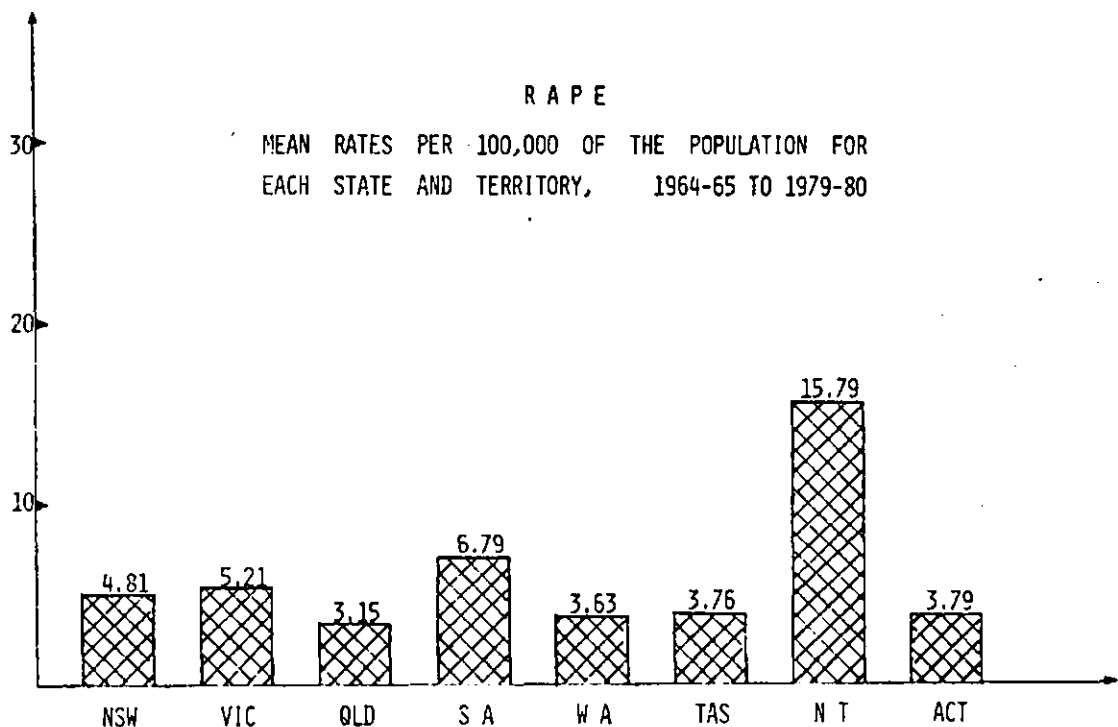
This offence includes attempted rape and assault with intent to rape, but excludes unlawful carnal knowledge and indecent assault. The national trend is indicated in Figure 7, and this suggests a near fourfold increase over the 16-year period.

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 victimization 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 Queensland 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

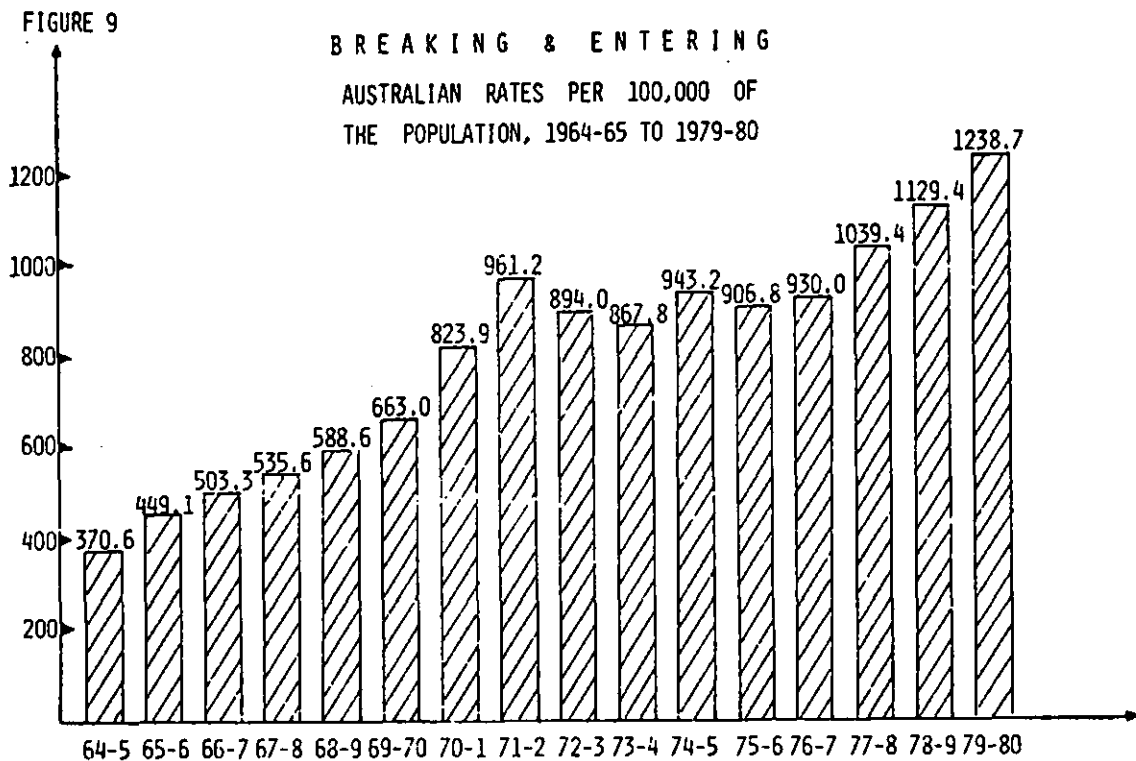
## R A P E

CASES REPORTED AND RATES PER 100,000 OF THE POPULATION,  
BY STATES AND TERRITORIES, 1964-65 TO 1979-80

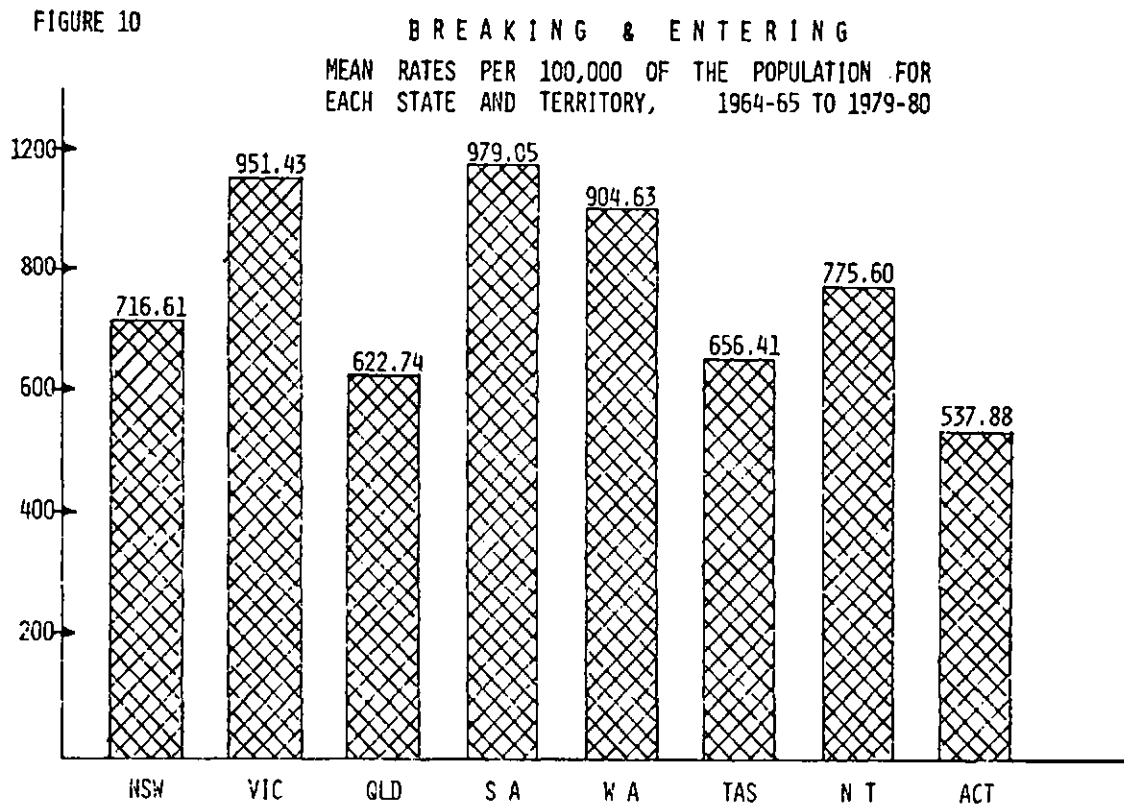
	N.S.W.	VIC.	QLD	S.A.	W.A.	TAS.	N.T.	A.C.T.
1964-65	60 1.4	93 3.0	50 3.1	20 1.9	10 1.2	7 1.9	-	3 3.5
1965-66	78 1.9	96 3.0	40 2.4	24 2.2	9 1.1	6 1.6	3 5.5	4 4.3
1966-67	69 1.6	106 3.3	29 1.7	23 2.1	9 1.0	11 2.9	9 15.5	3 3.0
1967-68	91 2.1	166 5.0	43 2.5	49 4.4	3 0.3	12 3.2	4 6.3	2 1.9
1968-69	105 2.4	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 3.8	148 11.8	93 8.0	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
1978-79	419 8.3	215 5.6	61 2.8	165 12.7	96 7.8	22 5.3	13 11.4	7 3.2
1979-80	491 9.6	247 6.4	105 4.8	222 17.1	112 8.9	16 3.8	29 24.6	8 3.5

### 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. The last four years of the period also show a clear tendency towards increase. 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.



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.



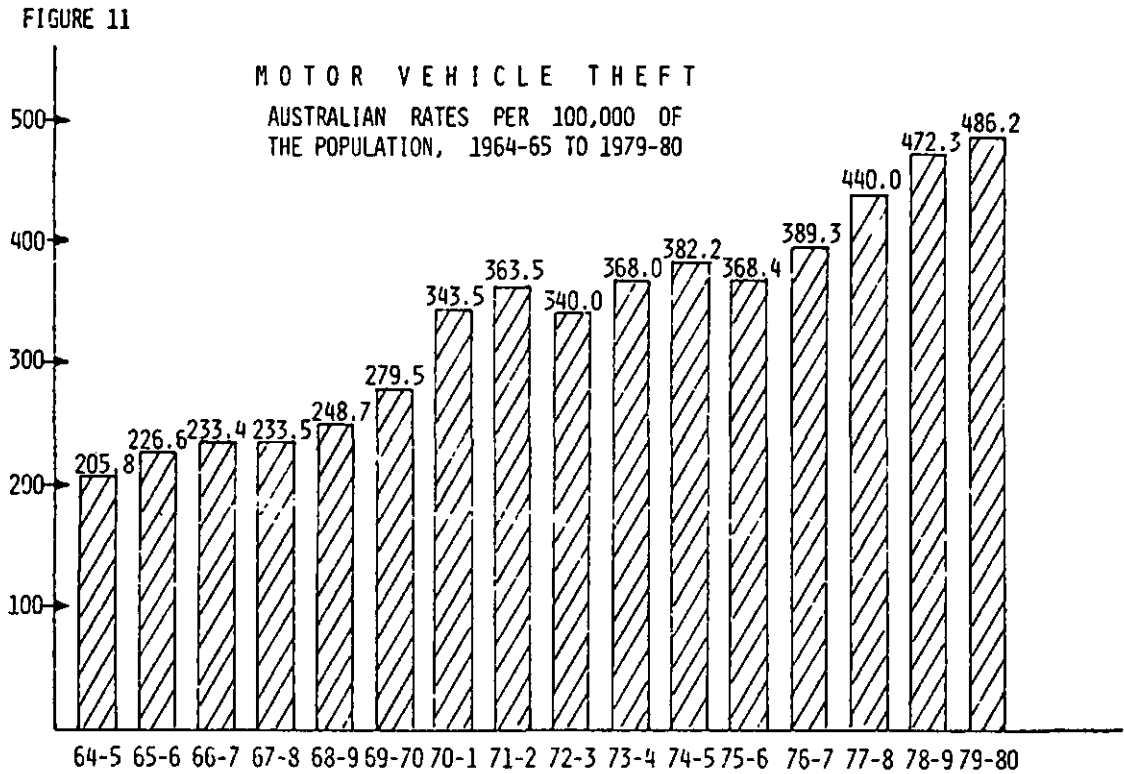
The full statistical details relating to this offence are shown in Table 5 and from this table it can be seen that the pattern of increase has been relatively uniform in all jurisdictions, the only exception being Tasmania where the rate of increase has been slower.

TABLE 5

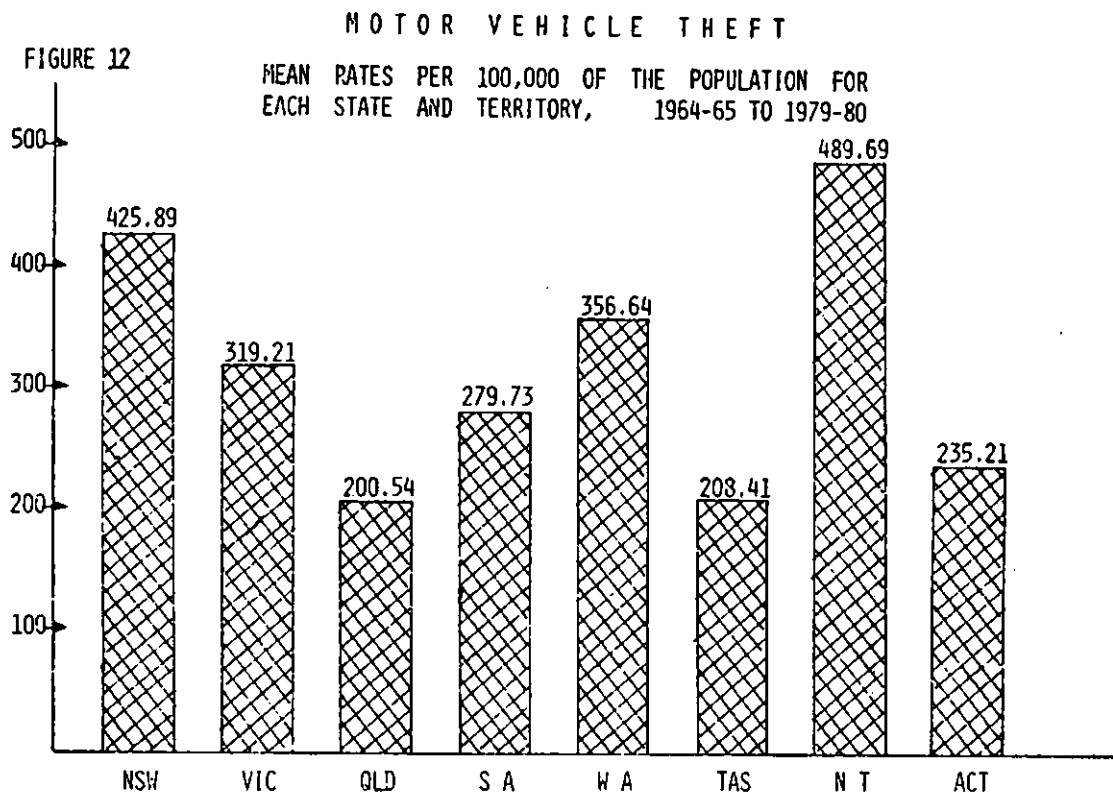
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	N.S.W.	VIC.	QLD	S.A.	W.A.	TAS.	N.T.	A.C.T.
1964-65	9466 228.5	16906 538.8	5401 332.0	4653 442.3	3028 370.2	1911 520.7	149 281.1	299 351.8
1965-66	12032 285.7	22051 690.0	5979 360.4	6009 554.8	3438 410.3	1701 459.7	150 272.7	312 335.5
1966-67	13584 317.9	24288 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	4384 489.3	1849 489.2	251 392.2	412 381.5
1968-69	20677 469.8	25628 763.4	7842 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	488 384.3
1970-71	36775 804.0	33796 970.6	11847 653.4	9664 826.0	8073 796.2	2954 757.4	587 707.2	637 461.6
1971-72	46873 1007.8	38148 1078.2	14333 773.9	12109 1021.9	8075 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 692.4	734 789.2	861 528.2
1973-74	38718 817.2	32892 909.6	13999 719.0	13352 1102.6	11563 1066.7	2324 582.5	1055 1076.5	1236 706.3
1974-75	43722 910.3	34921 951.8	14387 721.5	14628 1180.6	14833 1326.7	2564 633.1	920 1314.3	1203 646.8
1975-76	41135 853.6	33525 909.3	15657 778.2	14027 1132.1	14013 1232.5	2792 682.6	978 1018.8	1196 595.0
1976-77	42142 863.6	37347 1001.5	14318 703.2	14561 1160.2	14433 1235.7	2835 688.1	1141 1107.8	1512 713.2
1977-78	49392 991.4	45573 1199.0	16366 761.2	15273 1189.5	14550 1202.5	3145 763.3	1111 1028.7	1746 827.5
1978-79	50815 1010.0	52613 1368.3	18053 827.4	17970 1384.4	16073 1298.3	3454 830.3	1341 1176.3	1677 765.8
1979-80	54706 1069.7	57382 1480.1	20023 907.7	23873 1840.6	17009 1355.3	3614 862.5	1457 1234.7	1689 747.3

### Motor Vehicle Theft

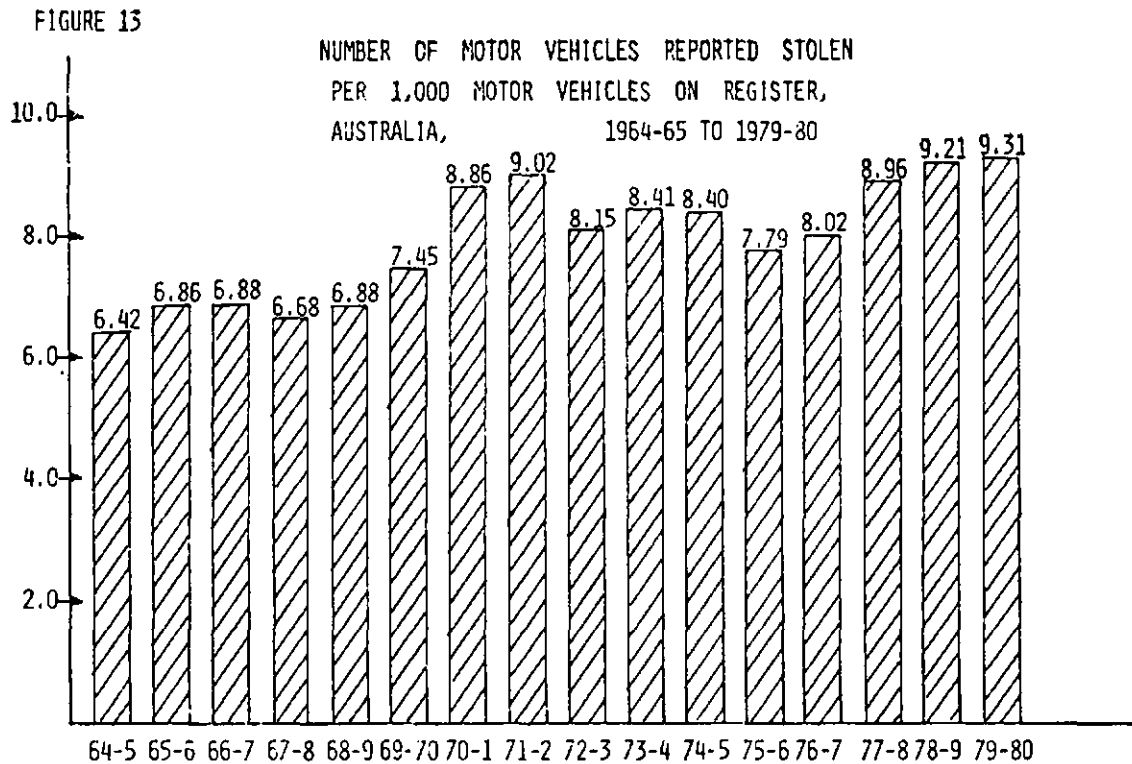
This offence includes 'illegal, unlawful or unauthorised use, use without consent, unlawfully assuming control, etc., no matter under which legislation these offences are prescribed'. Cases where the vehicle is not actually driven away and attempts at illegal use are included in this definition but cases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



The general pattern of rates per 100,000 of the population is shown in Figure 11 and indicates that the incidence of this offence has more than doubled in the 16 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. Relatively low motor vehicle theft rates are noted for Queensland and Tasmania.



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.



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. There is little or no evidence, however, to support the hypothesis that the compulsory fitting of steering locks reduces the incidence of car stealing.

TABLE 6

## MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT

CASES REPORTED AND RATES PER 100,000 OF THE POPULATION,  
BY STATES AND TERRITORIES, 1964-65 TO 1979-80

	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 39.1	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	18847 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	10953 302.9	5016 257.6	4172 344.5	5214 481.0	1084 271.7	677 690.8	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	21769 451.7	10680 295.1	5199 258.4	4846 391.1	5279 464.3	1032 252.3	605 630.2	495 246.3
1976-77	23443 480.4	13067 350.4	5189 254.9	4496 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
1978-79	30978 615.7	15833 411.8	6052 277.4	6492 500.2	6347 512.7	780 187.5	706 619.3	550 251.1
1979-80	33237 649.9	16906 436.1	5991 271.6	5850 451.0	6427 512.1	972 232.0	712 603.4	456 201.8



TABLE 7

## MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT

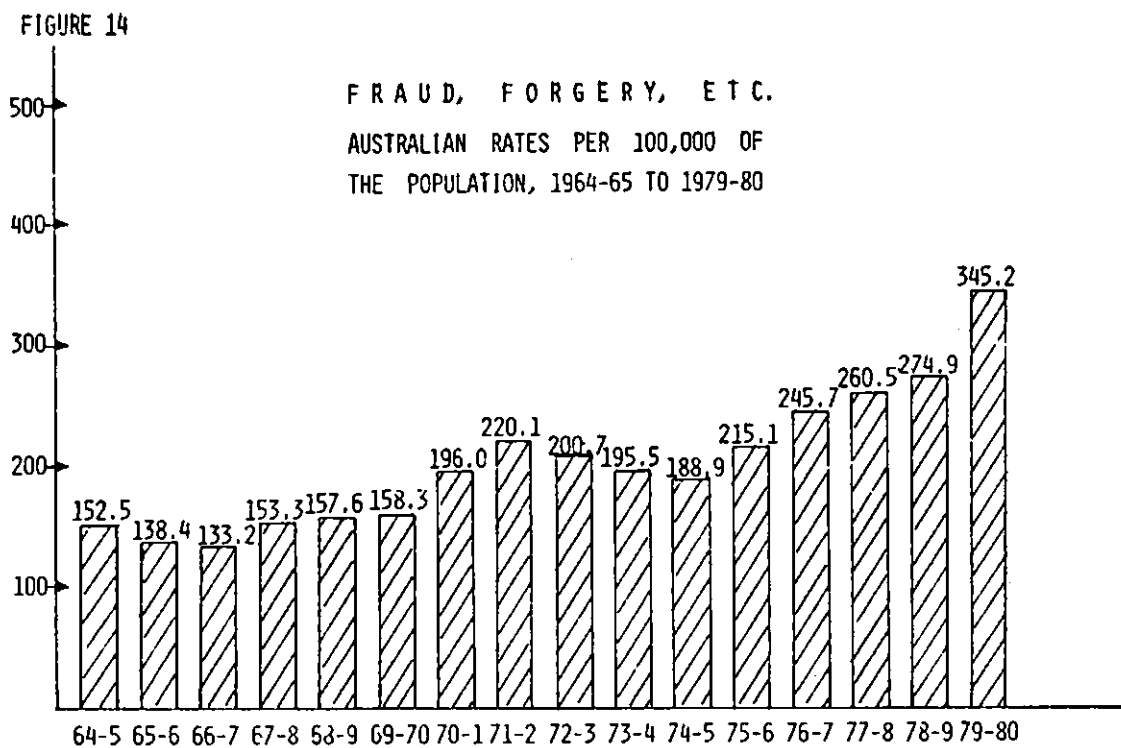
RATES PER 1,000 MOTOR VEHICLES ON THE REGISTER,  
BY STATES AND TERRITORIES, 1964-65 TO 1979-80

	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
1978-79	30978 12.84	15833 8.02	6052 5.12	6492 9.42	6347 8.82	780 3.44	706 15.35	550 5.14
1979-80	33237 13.18	16906 8.63	5991 4.77	5850 8.25	6427 8.63	972 4.23	712 15.15	456 4.34

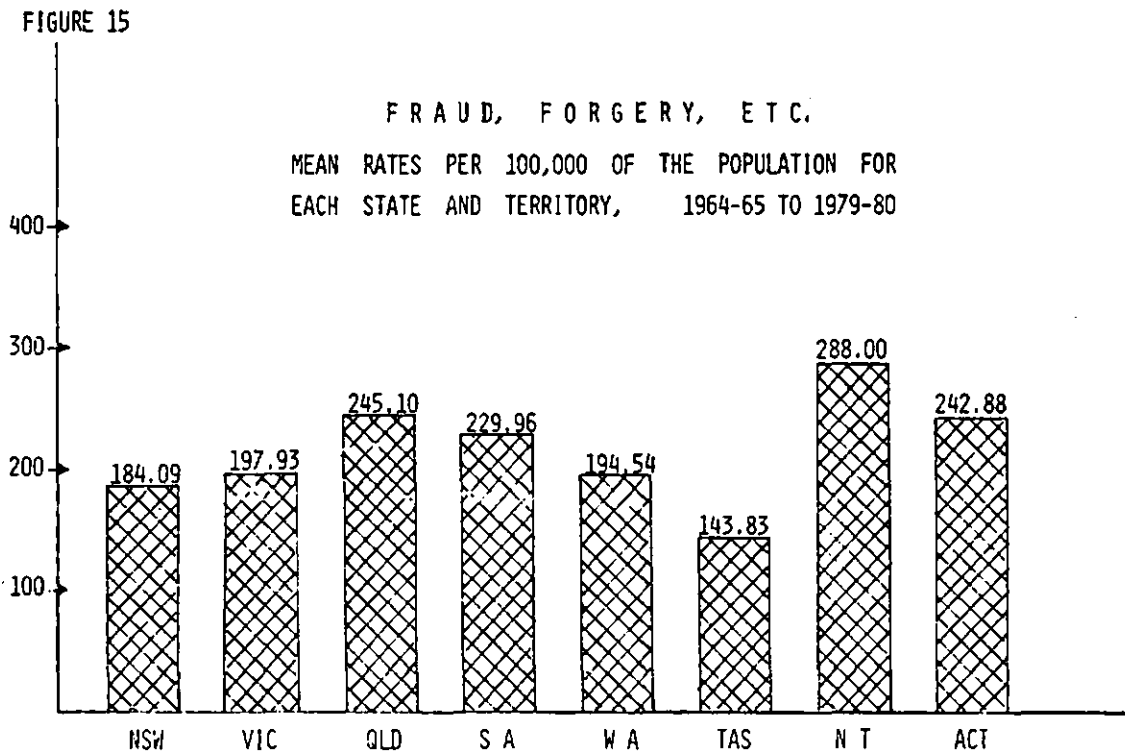
It can be seen from these data that the most recent rates for Queensland, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory are lower than the rates found in those jurisdictions during earlier years, but the national trend is dominated by the larger numbers found in New South Wales and Victoria. The consistently high, and recently increasing, rate in New South Wales must be regarded with serious concern. There is a clear need for detailed examination and explanation of motor vehicle theft in this State.

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. These data, and those given in Figure 15 and Table 8, exclude offences reported or becoming known to the Australian Federal Police, formerly the Commonwealth Police.



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.



The detailed statistics for this offence are shown in Table 8 and a clear tendency towards increase is to be seen in all jurisdictions. In this table no data are given for the Australian Capital Territory for 1979-80 as since the amalgamation of the A.C.T. Police and Commonwealth Police to form the Australian Federal Police in October 1979 it has not been possible to differentiate between fraud/forgery offences against the laws of the Territory from those against Federal laws. The 712 offences in the Australian Capital Territory for that year are shown in Table 9 in which fraud/forgery offences against Federal laws are given for the period 1970-71 to 1979-80. It is noted that Federal offences in this category constitute approximately one-third of all such offences.

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 1979-80

	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	156 283.6	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	8062 176.3	6269 180.0	3758 207.3	3471 296.7	2088 205.9	733 187.9	205 247.0	231 167.4
1971-72	10329 222.1	6266 177.1	5609 302.9	3059 258.1	2021 192.7	654 166.4	248 278.7	226 149.7
1972-73	9643 205.3	5802 162.0	3896 205.2	3282 274.2	1983 186.0	915 231.1	334 359.1	423 259.5
1973-74	7253 153.1	5684 157.2	4577 235.1	5440 449.2	1859 171.5	543 136.1	236 240.8	353 201.7
1974-75	6773 141.0	7676 209.2	4517 226.5	2980 240.5	2304 206.1	489 120.7	281 401.4	456 245.2
1975-76	5403 112.1	12373 335.6	5286 262.7	2478 200.0	2571 226.1	438 107.1	221 230.2	482 239.8
1976-77	12776 261.8	9267 248.5	5043 247.7	2509 199.9	2269 194.3	594 144.2	278 269.9	1156 545.3
1977-78	12623 253.4	10428 274.3	7329 340.9	1739 135.4	2905 240.1	911 221.1	243 225.0	710 336.5
1978-79	14289 284.0	10380 270.0	6566 300.9	2642 203.5	3336 269.5	547 131.5	615 539.5	1048 478.5
1979-80	15064 294.6	16526 426.3	8817 399.7	3805 293.4	3949 314.7	808 192.8	419 355.1	-

TABLE 9

F R A U D, F O R G E R Y, E T C.  
FEDERAL OFFENCES REPORTED, 1970-71 TO 1979-80

	<u>No. of Offences Reported</u>
1970-71	9,220
1971-72	7,797
1972-73	7,391
1973-74	7,711
1974-75	9,818
1975-76	15,004
1976-77	17,897
1977-78	20,741
1978-79	25,224
1979-80	20,799

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 2153.4 in 1979-80, an increase of 184.6 per cent above the population increase. During this period the population increased by 26.8 per cent, an annual average of 1.7 per cent, while the actual number of offences reported or becoming known increased by 260.7 per cent, an annual average of 16.3 per cent.

It is worth noting, however, that offences of personal violence (homicide, serious assault, robbery and rape) comprise less than four per cent of the offences considered in this report. This proportion would be reduced even further if the high-volume offence of theft or larceny had been included.

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, 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.

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. There is, however, another indication of increase at the end 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.

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## List of articles based on:

1975 GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY: CRIME VICTIMS, ref. no. 4105.0, AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS, CANBERRA, 1979

1. 'Overview of Findings from the First Australian National Crime Victims Survey', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 13, March 1980, pp. 41-51. (J. Braithwaite and D. Biles)
2. 'The Mental Health of the Victims of Crime', *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 23-2, 1979, pp. 129-134. (D. Biles, J. Braithwaite and V. Braithwaite)
3. 'On Being Unemployed and Being a Victim of Crime', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 14-3, 1979, pp. 192-200. (J. Braithwaite and D. Biles)
4. 'Crime Victims and the Police', *Australian Psychologist*, 14-3, 1979, pp. 345-355. (D. Biles and J. Braithwaite)
5. 'Crime Victimization in Australia: A Comparison with the U.S.', *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 3, 1980, pp. 95-110. (J. Braithwaite and D. Biles)
6. 'Crime Victimization Rates in Australian Cities', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, 16-1, 1980, pp. 79-83. (J. Braithwaite and D. Biles)
7. 'Fear of Crime in Australia', *Proceedings of the Third International Symposium on Victimology*, Muenster, 1979. (J. Braithwaite, D. Biles and R. Whitrod)
8. 'Comment on Gottfredson and Hindelang: Verifiability and Black's *The Behavior of Law*', *American Sociological Review*, 45-2, 1980, pp. 334-340. (J. Braithwaite and D. Biles)
9. 'Women as Victims of Crime: Some Findings from the First Australian National Crime Victims Survey', *The Australian Quarterly*, Spring 1980, pp. 329-339. (J. Braithwaite and D. Biles)
10. 'Victims and Offenders: The Australian Experience', *World Perspectives on Victimization and Fear of Crime* (in press). (J. Braithwaite and D. Biles)