



NSW Bureau of Crime
Statistics and Research

Crime and Justice Statistics

Bureau Brief

April 2000

REGIONAL ANALYSIS OF CRIME TRENDS IN NSW, 1999

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As at 31 December 1999, no major crime offence category was rising in NSW. Moreover, recorded offences were decreasing in seven of these categories. Over the two years to December 1999, a significant downward monthly trend was recorded in NSW for the offences of sexual assault, indecent assault/act of indecency and other sexual offences, robbery with a firearm, robbery with a weapon other than a firearm, break and enter – dwelling, break and enter – non-dwelling, and motor vehicle theft. Despite this overall decrease in crime in NSW, some geographical regions are still experiencing increases in crime for some categories of offence. In particular, within the Sydney region, the areas of Fairfield-Liverpool, Outer Western Sydney, Blacktown-Baulkham Hills, Lower Northern Sydney and Hornsby-Ku-ring-gai each experienced a significant upward trend in the incidence of more than one category of property offence over this time period. Outside Sydney, the Hunter and Murrumbidgee regions have experienced upward trends in property offences.

INTRODUCTION

Crime trends in NSW have shifted away from the widespread increases experienced in recent years. The annual crime statistics report *NSW Recorded Crime Statistics 1999* published by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research shows that, by December 1999, none of the sixteen major offence categories which are routinely tested for trend were trending upwards. Furthermore, seven of these categories were trending downwards.

This briefing paper summarises the trends in recorded crime in NSW as presented in *NSW Recorded Crime Statistics 1999*. In addition, regional trends are examined.

Firstly, recent crime trends in NSW are reviewed for each major offence category on an aggregate basis. Secondly, for the sixteen criminal offence categories which are analysed in detail in the annual report, trends are examined on a regional basis. Finally, regions exhibiting significant trends contrary to the overall NSW trend of either a decreasing or stable crime rate are examined at a more detailed level of regional disaggregation.

Notwithstanding the fact that the recorded crime statistics as they are reported here are of considerable use in monitoring trends in crime in NSW, these statistics should be interpreted with care for a number of reasons. Firstly, changes in recorded crime rates may also reflect changes in the willingness of the public to report crime to the police. This is particularly true for some personal offence categories such as sexual assault, and property crimes such as malicious damage to property, which are subject to under-reporting. Secondly, while the more detailed analysis of crime trends is mainly restricted to those offence categories which are reported to, rather than detected by, police, trends in recorded crime may also reflect changes in policing policy and activity. Finally, particular caution should be exercised when regional crime statistics are being compared, particularly for the less frequently occurring offences, such as robbery and sexual assault. This is because a very small change in the actual number of incidents may result in a disproportionately large change in derived ratios such as the percentage change over time or the rate per resident population.

For more detailed regional crime statistics, or for a copy of the full report, please contact the Information Officer at the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

SUMMARY OF TRENDS

Table 1 compares the trends in recorded crime which were reported in the 1998 and 1999 annual reports. Statistical trend tests were applied to check for a statistically significant upward or downward trend in the monthly number of incidents recorded by NSW police for the offence categories of assault, sexual offences, robbery offences, break and enter, motor vehicle theft, stealing and malicious damage. The trend tests cover the twenty-four month periods January 1997 to December 1998 (in the 1998 report), and January 1998 to December 1999 (in the 1999 report). Where a statistically significant trend is detected, the percentage change in the total number of recorded criminal incidents between the consecutive annual periods within the two-year interval is reported.

Significant downward trends

Over the twenty-four month period to December 1999, there was a statistically significant downward trend in the monthly numbers of recorded criminal incidents for the following offences:

- sexual assault (down by 10.2%)
- indecent assault, act of indecency and other sexual offences (down by 15.6%)
- robbery with a firearm (down by 24.3%)
- robbery with a weapon other than a firearm (down by 19.8%)
- break and enter – dwelling (down by 10.0%)
- break and enter – non-dwelling (down by 6.6%)
- motor vehicle theft (down by 10.5%).

Offences where there was no upward or downward trend

Between January 1998 and December 1999, there was no statistically significant generally upward or

Table 1: Summary of NSW Recorded Crime Statistics 1998 and 1999: Comparison of twenty-four month trends and annual percentage changes for selected offence categories

<i>Offence category</i>	<i>January 1997 to December 1998</i>	<i>January 1998 to December 1999</i>
Murder	No significant trend	No significant trend
Assault	+6.2%	No significant trend
Sexual assault	-14.1%	-10.2%
Indecent assault, act of indecency and other sexual offences	-18.7%	-15.6%
Robbery without a weapon	No significant trend	No significant trend
Robbery with a firearm	No significant trend	-24.3%
Robbery with a weapon not a firearm	+29.7%	-19.8%
Break and enter – dwelling	+7.0%	-10.0%
Break and enter – non-dwelling	+6.8%	-6.6%
Motor vehicle theft	No significant trend	-10.5%
Steal from motor vehicle	+5.9%	No significant trend
Steal from retail store	No significant trend	No significant trend
Steal from dwelling	+7.7%	No significant trend
Steal from person	No significant trend	No significant trend
Fraud	No significant trend	No significant trend
Malicious damage to property	+11.9%	No significant trend

downward trend in the monthly numbers of recorded criminal incidents for any of the following offences:

- murder
- assault
- robbery without a weapon
- steal from motor vehicle
- steal from retail store
- steal from dwelling
- steal from person
- fraud
- malicious damage to property.

Significant upward trends

There were no offences which showed statistically significant upward trends in the monthly numbers of recorded criminal incidents over this period.

Level of crime reduction in NSW

The 1999 crime statistics report shows that the NSW crime rate is either stable or falling for each of the sixteen offence categories listed above. For some offences, the 1999 figures represent a levelling in crime rates, while for others they represent a return to a much lower incidence of crime. The publication *Key Trends in Crime and Justice NSW 1999* compares NSW crime rates for the major offence categories over a five-year period.

In 1999, four of the sixteen major offence categories have returned to a crime rate at or below the rate recorded in 1995. These four offences are: indecent assault / act of indecency and other sexual offences, robbery with a firearm, motor vehicle theft, and steal from retail store. The rates for a further three offence categories have returned to around 1996 levels. These offence categories are: sexual assault, break and enter – dwelling, and break and enter – non-dwelling. In 1999, the rates of assault, robbery without a weapon, robbery with a weapon other than a firearm and steal from a dwelling in NSW had dropped to around their 1997 levels. The rates of the remaining four offence categories, namely steal from a motor vehicle, steal from a person, fraud and malicious damage to property show little change between 1998 and 1999.

REGIONAL CRIME TRENDS

This section will examine significant trends in recorded crime for each of the sixteen major offence

categories noted above. Regional trends and increases are analysed by offence category, as follows:

- For each major offence category, the monthly number of recorded incidents in NSW Statistical Division (SD) and within each Statistical Subdivision (SSD) within Sydney SD are tested for a statistically significant upward or downward trend over two years (a total of 12 SDs and 14 SSDs). Significant trends are reported. (Note that there is no regional analysis of the murder offence category because of the small number of incidents recorded in NSW each year.)
- Where a significant trend is found in a region, the percentage change in the total number of incidents between consecutive twelve-month periods, January to December 1998 and January to December 1999, is reported. These results are summarised in Tables 2 and 3.
- Where a significant upward trend is detected in one of the 26 regions (and, thus, the regional trend differs from the overall State trend), monthly data at the next level of regional disaggregation are examined for a significant trend or annual increase in the total number of offences over the twenty-four months. For SSDs within Sydney SD, this next level of disaggregation is the level of Local Government Area (LGA). For SDs outside Sydney, the next level of disaggregation is SSD. (Crime rates in LGAs within country SSDs are not examined in detail because the number of incidents is often too small to allow meaningful discussion of percentage changes.) Furthermore:
 - Where the upward trend in an LGA within a Sydney SD, or in an SSD within a country SD is statistically significant, this will be noted. The percentage change between 1998 and 1999 in the number of recorded incidents will be calculated.
 - Where there is no statistically significant upward trend detected, but where an overall increase has been recorded in the incidence of the offence in the region, this is noted.

The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.

Note that where a significant upward trend or an increase in annual incidents has been detected over the two-year period, it is useful to compare the current rate of the offence within the region with the overall NSW rate for the same offence category.

While the incidence of a particular offence may have increased in a region, that area may still have a comparatively low crime rate. The situation where a crime rate is rising in an area which already has a high rate of that offence is more problematic, and will be identified.

Significant trends in NSW regions

For each of the major offence categories shown in Table 1, the monthly number of incidents between January 1998 and December 1999 was tested for a statistically significant upward or downward trend in each Statistical Division of NSW. Where a statistically significant trend was found, the percentage change between 1998 and 1999 in the total number of incidents recorded in that region was calculated. These percentage changes are shown in Table 2. Note that the offence categories of robbery without a weapon, steal from retail store, steal from dwelling and fraud are not shown in Table 2. This is because there was no statistically significant trend found in any NSW SD for this offence. In addition, the murder offence category is not included in this table because the annual number of incidents of this offence is too small to undertake a meaningful regional comparison.

Table 2 shows that the majority of significant trends found in NSW regions reflect NSW trends. That is, for those offences which show a significant downward Statewide trend, several SDs also show a downward trend. The only offence category for which an upward trend was detected in a number of regions is the category of malicious damage to property.

Table 2 also shows that some regions experienced several significant downward trends while other regions showed no downward trends. This does not suggest that the area with a significant decrease now has a lower crime risk than another area. While some SDs may have experienced a decrease over the two-year period examined, the rate of crime in 1999 may still remain higher in these regions than elsewhere in NSW. This discussion will be further developed when regional crime rates are examined for individual offence categories, in the next section, below.

Table 3 shows the results of monthly trend tests by offence category, and percentage changes between 1998 and 1999 in the annual total number of incidents recorded, for each Statistical Subdivision within Sydney. Again, most statistically significant downward

Table 2: Percentage change in number of recorded incidents in 1999, compared with 1998, for major offences showing statistically significant trends in NSW Statistical Divisions

Statistical Division	Assault	Sexual assault	Indecent assault	Robbery with a firearm	Robbery with a firearm	Break and enter – dwelling	Break and enter – non-dwelling	Steal from motor vehicle	Steal from person	Malicious damage
Sydney		-15	-25	-20	-11		-13			
Hunter	-31	-40						+8	+7	
Illawarra			-52	-34	-12	-27				
Richmond-Tweed	-48						+6	-29		
Mid-North Coast		-42							+5	
Northern					-16					
North Western						-26				
Central West	+17								+10	
South Eastern				*			-22		+9	
Murrumbidgee					-17		+46	+33	+9	
Murray					-13					
Far West										

* An upward trend was found but as there were only 31 incidents recorded over the 24-month period, the percentage change is not calculated.

Table 3: Percentage change in number of recorded incidents in 1999, compared with 1998, for major offences showing statistically significant trends in Sydney Statistical Divisions

Statistical Division	Assault	Sexual assault	Indecent assault	Other sexual offences	Robbery without a weapon	Robbery with a weapon	Break and enter – dwelling	Break and enter – non-dwelling	Motor vehicle theft	Steal from motor vehicle	Steal from retail store	Steal from dwelling	Fraud	Malicious damage
Inner Sydney	-10		-24			-31	-26	-25						
Eastern Suburbs						-45	-21	-28					+9	
St George–Sutherland	-15					-23	-15	+14	-13					
Canterbury–Bankstown	-16						-22	-16		-13				
Fairfield–Liverpool									+22					+15
Outer South Western Sydney					-48									
Inner Western Sydney						-15		-17		-33				
Central Western Sydney				+11	-37						+30			
Outer Western Sydney		-21			-55	-48	-20	+18	+20					
Blacktown–Baulkham Hills	-25	-27			-56	-26	-13	+17	+12	+13	+7	-23		
Lower Northern Sydney						-29		-20	+17					+2
Hornsby–Ku-ring-gai				+12		-13	+24							
Northern Beaches							-13					-30		
Gosford–Wyong						-36				-7				

trends in the individual Sydney regions were found for those offences which showed significant downward Statewide trends.

Regional trends for each offence category will be examined, in detail, below. For each major offence category, regions which showed a statistically significant upward or downward trend in the monthly number of recorded incidents will be highlighted.

TRENDS IN ASSAULT

Between January 1998 and December 1999, there was no overall significant trend in the monthly number of assault incidents recorded in NSW.

Significant downward trends

Two Statistical Subdivisions in Sydney, however, recorded a statistically significant downward trend in the monthly numbers of assault, as follows:

- St George–Sutherland SSD (down by 15%)
- Canterbury–Bankstown SSD (down by 16%).

The rate of assault in each of these areas is below the average NSW rate in 1999.

Significant upward trends

Over the two-year period, there was a statistically significant upward trend in assault in the following region:

- Central West SD (up by 17%)
 - increases in all areas: Lachlan, Bathurst–Orange and Central Tablelands SSDs.

A statistically significant upward monthly trend was found in both the Lachlan and Bathurst–Orange SSDs between January 1998 and December 1999. The rate of assault in each of the three SSDs which experienced an overall increase in incidence is higher than the average NSW rate in 1999.

TRENDS IN SEXUAL OFFENCES

Each of the sexual offence sub-categories showed a statistically significant downward trend in the recorded number of offences over the two-year period to December 1999. Regional trends will be examined for the three individual sexual offence categories of: sexual assault, indecent assault / act of indecency, and other sexual offences. Note that the latter two categories are combined when examining State trends.

Sexual assault

Significant downward trends

The following two SDs in NSW and two SSDs within Sydney showed significant downward trends in sexual assault over the two-year period to December 1999:

- Hunter SD (down by 31%)
- Richmond–Tweed SD (down by 48%)
- Inner Sydney SSD (down by 10%)
- Blacktown–Baulkham Hills SSD (down by 25%).

While the rate of sexual assault in Inner Sydney SSD remains well above the average State rate in 1999, the rates in the Hunter region and in Blacktown–Baulkham Hills SSD have fallen from above the State average in 1997 and 1998 to a rate around the average NSW rate in 1999. The rate of sexual assault in Richmond–Tweed SD has almost halved over the two-year period and is now well below the NSW average.

Significant upward trends

There were no regions showing significant upward trends in sexual assault over this time period.

Indecent assault / act of indecency and other sexual offences

Significant downward trends

The following regions showed significant downward trends in the number of recorded incidents of indecent assault / act of indecency over the two-year period to December 1999:

- Sydney SD (down by 15%)
- Outer Western Sydney SSD (down by 21%)
- Blacktown–Baulkham Hills SSD (down by 27%)
- Hunter SD (down by 40%)
- Mid-North Coast SD (down by 42%).

Only Inner Sydney SSD showed a downward trend in other sexual offences (down by 24%).

The most marked decrease in the rate of sexual offences other than sexual assault was in the Hunter SD of NSW. In 1997 and 1998, the rate of these offences was above the average State rate. A sustained decrease has brought the rate to below the NSW average in 1999. The rates in Inner Sydney SSD, Richmond–Tweed SD and Outer Western Sydney SSD have remained above the average State rate in

1999 (though only marginally in the latter two regions), while the rates in Sydney SD overall and Blacktown–Baulkham Hills SSD were consistently below average over the three-year period.

Significant upward trends

There were no regions showing significant upward trends in indecent assault / act of indecency or other sexual offences over this time period.

TRENDS IN ROBBERY

Both armed robbery categories show a statistically significant downward trend in the monthly numbers of incidents recorded over the two years to December 1999. The offence category of robbery without a weapon was stable over the period.

The trends in robbery in NSW primarily reflect trends in robbery within the Sydney metropolitan area. Almost 90 per cent of all incidents of robbery recorded by NSW police occur in the Sydney SD. Significant changes in the incidence of these offences in non-metropolitan regions will therefore have little impact on the NSW trend. Nevertheless, it is useful to highlight any significant changes in the risk (as measured by the regional rate) experienced within any region of NSW. Significant trends will therefore be examined for each robbery sub-category, below.

Robbery without a weapon

Significant downward trends

There was no region showing a statistically significant downward monthly trend in robbery without a weapon over the two years to December 1999.

Significant upward trends

Although generally stable across NSW, two regions within Sydney SD showed statistically significant trends in the number of incidents recorded for the offence category of robbery without a weapon. In each of these regions, the trend was upwards, which contrasts with the overall trend in NSW. The LGAs within these regions which showed an increase in the number of recorded incidents of robbery without a weapon over this two-year period are noted.

- Central Western Sydney SSD (up by 11%)
 - increases in all areas: Parramatta, Penrith and Holroyd LGAs
- Hornsby–Ku-ring-gai SSD (up by 12%)
 - increases in both Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby LGAs.

There was a statistically significant upward trend in the number of recorded incidents over the twenty-four months in Parramatta LGA only. Each of the other LGAs noted above showed an increase in the total number of incidents over the two-year period, but not a sustained upward monthly trend. Note that although the two LGAs in the Hornsby–Ku-ring-gai SSD experienced an increase in the number of incidents, the actual rate of robbery without a weapon in that SSD remains well below the State average and is, in fact, the lowest rate of this offence within the Sydney SD in 1999. The rate of robbery without a weapon in the Central Western Sydney SSD, however, is well above the average State rate, and has been consistently ranked high among the Sydney SSDs in recent years. Furthermore, each of the LGAs within Central Western Sydney SSD which is noted above, namely Parramatta, Penrith and Holroyd LGAs had a rate of robbery without a weapon which was higher than the average State rate in 1999.

Robbery with a firearm

As was noted above, the offence category of robbery with a firearm showed a statistically significant downward trend over the two-year period from January 1998 to December 1999, with a 24.3 per cent decrease in NSW between 1998 and 1999.

Significant downward trends

The Sydney and Illawarra SDs showed a statistically significant downward trend in the incidence of this offence, with four areas within the Sydney region also recording a significant downward trend, as detailed below:

- Sydney SD (down by 25%)
- Outer South Western Sydney SSD (down by 48%)
- Central Western Sydney SSD (down by 37%)
- Outer Western Sydney SSD (down by 55%)
- Blacktown–Baulkham Hills SSD (down by 56%)
- Illawarra SD (down by 52%).

Of the subdivisions noted above, only Central Western Sydney has a recorded rate of robbery with a firearm which is above the average NSW rate.

Significant upward trends

There were no regions showing significant upward trends in robbery with a firearm over this time period.

Robbery with a weapon other than a firearm

Over the two-year period January 1998 to December 1999, there was a statistically significant downward trend in the recorded number of incidents of robbery with a weapon other than a firearm in NSW. The total number of incidents recorded in NSW decreased by 19.8 per cent between 1998 and 1999.

Significant downward trends

A significant downward trend was experienced in two NSW SDs over this period, while one region experienced a significant upward trend. Within Sydney SD, seven of the total fourteen subdivisions showed a significant downward trend, as detailed below:

- Sydney SD (down by 20%)
- Inner Sydney SSD (down by 31%)
- Eastern Suburbs SSD (down by 45%)
- St. George–Sutherland SSD (down by 23%)
- Outer Western Sydney SSD (down by 48%)
- Blacktown–Baulkham Hills SSD (down by 26%)
- Lower Northern Sydney SSD (down by 29%)
- Gosford–Wyong SSD (down by 36%)
- Illawarra SSD (down by 34%).

Of the regions listed above, only the Inner Sydney SSD has a rate of this offence greater than the average NSW rate in 1999.

Significant upward trend

There was one region in NSW showing a significant upward monthly trend over the two-year period. The rate of robbery with a weapon other than a firearm recorded in the South Easter SD more than doubled between 1998 and 1999. Note, however, that the total number of incidents recorded in this region in 1999 is still very small (a total of 23 incidents recorded, compared with Sydney SD which, though showing a significant downward trend over the two-year period, recorded 3,071 incidents in 1999).

TRENDS IN BREAK AND ENTER OFFENCES

Each of the offence categories of break and enter – dwelling and break and enter – non-dwelling showed

a significant downward trend in this year's report, with a decrease in the number of recorded incidents between 1998 and 1999 of 10.0 per cent and 6.6 per cent, respectively. Regional trends and rate increases will be examined separately for each category.

Break and enter - dwelling

Many regions in NSW and Sydney recorded a significant downward trend in the number of incidents recorded monthly for the offence category of break and enter-dwelling. There was no region which showed an upward trend.

Significant downward trends

A statistically significant downward trend between January 1998 and December 1999 in the number of recorded incidents of break and enter - dwelling offences was found in the following regions:

- Sydney SD (down by 11%)
- Inner Sydney SSD (down by 26%)
- Eastern Suburbs SSD (down by 21%)
- St.George–Sutherland SSD (down by 15%)
- Canterbury–Bankstown SSD (down by 22%)
- Inner Western Sydney SSD (down by 15%)
- Blacktown–Baulkham Hills SSD (down by 13%)
- Hornsby–Ku-ring-gai SSD (down by 13%)
- Illawarra SD (down by 12%)
- Northern SD (down by 16%)
- Murrumbidgee SD (down by 17%)
- Murray SD (down by 13%).

Significant upward trends

There were no regions showing significant upward trends in break and enter – dwelling over this time period.

Break and enter - non-dwelling

Significant downward trends

A statistically significant downward trend in the number of recorded incidents of break and enter - non-dwelling was found in the following regions:

- Illawarra SD (down by 27%)
- North Western SD (down by 26%)
- Outer Western Sydney SSD (down by 20%)
- Northern Beaches SSD (down by 13%).

Significant upward trends

There were two regions in Sydney where a significant upward trend was recorded in contrast with the overall State trend. The LGAs within these regions which showed an increase in the number of recorded incidents of break and enter – non-dwelling are noted.

- Hornsby–Ku-ring-gai SSD (up by 24%)
– increases in both Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai LGAs
- St.George–Sutherland SSD (up by 14%)
– increases in Rockdale, Sutherland and Kogarah LGAs.

Significant upward trends were recorded in Hornsby, Rockdale, and Sutherland LGAs. Despite these increases, the rate of break and enter – non-dwelling remains well below the average State rate in each of the regions noted above.

TRENDS IN MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT

There was an overall downward trend in motor vehicle theft offences between January 1998 and December 1999 in NSW, with an overall decrease of 10.5 per cent between 1998 and 1999.

Significant downward trends

Several NSW regions showed a significant downward trend in the monthly number of incidents, as follows:

- Sydney SD (down by 13%)
- Inner Sydney SSD (down by 25%)
- Eastern Suburbs SSD (down by 28%)
- St.George–Sutherland SSD (down by 13%)
- Canterbury–Bankstown SSD (down by 16%)
- Inner Western Sydney SSD (down by 17%)
- Lower Northern Sydney SSD (down by 20%).

Significant upward trends

In contrast, there were two regions in NSW which showed a statistically significant upward trend for this offence:

- Murrumbidgee SD (up by 46%)
– increases in Central and Lower Murrumbidgee SSDs
- Richmond–Tweed SD (up by 6%)
– increase in Tweed Heads SSD.

The upward monthly trend was also significant in each of the subdivisions noted above. Note, however, that despite the significant upward trends, the rate of this offence in 1999 remained below the average State rate in each of these regions.

TRENDS IN STEALING OFFENCES

The four categories of stealing offences covered in the annual crime statistics report, namely steal from motor vehicle, steal from retail store, steal from dwelling and steal from person, did not show a statistically significant upward or downward trend in the 1999 report. Regional information shows that while there was no overall NSW trend, there were some significant monthly trends experienced in a number of geographical areas. Most of these trends are upward and most are within the Sydney SD.

TRENDS IN STEAL FROM MOTOR VEHICLE

Significant downward trends

There was no region showing a statistically significant downward monthly trend in steal from motor vehicle offences over this time period.

Significant upward trends

Although there was no statistically significant upward or downward trend in the monthly incidence of this offence category Statewide, several regions showed a statistically significant upward trend over the two-year period, as detailed below. LGAs in Sydney and SSDs within country SDs which contributed to the increase in that region are noted.

- Hunter SD (up by 8%)
 - increases in both Newcastle and Balance Hunter SSDs
- Murrumbidgee SD (up by 33%)
 - increases in Lower and Central Murrumbidgee SSDs
- Fairfield–Liverpool SSD (up by 22%)
 - increases in both Fairfield and Liverpool LGAs
- Outer Western Sydney SSD (up by 18%)
 - increases in Penrith and Hawkesbury LGAs
- Blacktown–Baulkham Hills SSD (up by 17%)
 - increases in both Blacktown and Baulkham Hills LGAs

- Lower Northern Sydney SSD (up by 17%)
 - increases in all areas: Hunters Hill, North Sydney, Mosman, Lane Cove, Ryde, and Willoughby LGAs.

Note that a statistically significant trend at the lower level of regional disaggregation was restricted to the Lower and Central Murrumbidgee, and Newcastle SSDs, and to the Sydney Local Government Areas of Liverpool, Penrith, Blacktown, Hunters Hill, and North Sydney.

Only a small number of the areas listed above showed a 1999 rate higher than the State average. These areas were Fairfield–Liverpool SSD and Fairfield LGA, Penrith LGA, and Lower Northern Sydney SSD and three LGAs within that SSD, namely North Sydney, Mosman and Lane Cove LGAs.

TRENDS IN STEAL FROM RETAIL STORE

There was no significant Statewide monthly trend in the incidence of steal from retail store offences.

Significant downward trends

Two regions within Sydney SD experienced a significant downward trend, and two a significant upward monthly trend, over the two-year period, as detailed below:

- Inner Western Sydney SSD (down by 33%)
- Northern Beaches SSD (down by 7%).

Significant upward trends

The following Sydney regions showed a significant upward monthly trend over the time period:

- Outer Western Sydney SSD (up by 20%)
 - increases in all areas: Penrith, Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains LGAs
- Blacktown–Baulkham Hills SSD (up by 12%)
 - increases in both Blacktown and Baulkham Hills LGAs.

Both Penrith and Blacktown LGAs also showed a statistically significant upward trend in the recorded number of monthly incidents of steal from retail store offences. Note that of those regions noted above for increases in this offence, only the Outer Western Sydney SSD, Penrith LGA, and Blacktown LGA showed a recorded rate above the NSW average in 1999.

TRENDS IN STEAL FROM DWELLING

There was no statistically significant upward or downward trend in the monthly number of incidents of steal from dwelling recorded over the two-year period from January 1998 to December 1999.

Significant downward trends

One Sydney region showed a significant downward monthly trend over the period:

- Canterbury–Bankstown SSD (down by 13%).

Significant upward trends

One Sydney region showed a significant upward monthly trend over the period:

- Blacktown–Baulkham Hills SSD (up by 13%)
– increases in both Blacktown and Baulkham Hills LGAs.

Although Blacktown LGA showed a significant upward trend, the rate of steal from dwelling in this region is below the State average rate in 1999.

TRENDS IN STEAL FROM PERSON

There was no statistically significant upward or downward monthly trend recorded for this offence in NSW over the twenty-four month period January 1998 to December 1999.

Significant downward trends

Over the two-year period, one NSW region showed a statistically significant downward trend for this offence:

- Richmond-Tweed SD (down by 29%).

Significant upward trends

Two Sydney regions recorded an upward trend for this offence, as follows:

- Central Western Sydney (up by 30%)
– increases in all areas: Parramatta, Auburn and Holroyd LGAs
- Blacktown–Baulkham Hills (up by 7%)
– increase in Blacktown LGA only.

Both Parramatta and Blacktown LGAs also showed a statistically significant upward trend. Of the areas above for which the incidence of this offence category increases between 1998 and 1999, only the Central Western Sydney SSD, and Parramatta and Auburn LGAs recorded a rate higher than the NSW average in 1999.

TRENDS IN FRAUD

Over the two-year period from January 1998 to December 1999, there was no statistically significant generally upward or downward trend in the monthly number of recorded fraud incidents.

Significant downward trends

Two regions within the Sydney SD, however, showed a significant downward trend in the monthly number incidents recorded for this offence, as follows:

- Blacktown–Baulkham Hills SSD (down by 23%)
- Northern Beaches SD (down by 30%).

Significant upward trends

There were no regions showing significant upward trends in fraud over this time period.

TRENDS IN MALICIOUS DAMAGE TO PROPERTY OFFENCES

There was no statistically significant upward or downward State trend in the monthly number of recorded incidents of malicious damage to property between January 1998 and December 1999.

Significant downward trends

There was no region showing a statistically significant downward monthly trend in malicious damage to property offences over this time period.

Significant upward trends

Many regions, mostly outside Sydney, showed significant upward trends in the number of malicious damage to property offences over the period. Furthermore, the 1999 rate in each of the country regions which showed a significant upward trend was above the State average rate in 1999. The NSW SDs and Sydney SSDs which recorded a significant upward trend are detailed below. Details of the subdivisions within each region which recorded an increased number of incidents over the period are noted.

- Central West SD (up by 10%)
– increases in the Central Tablelands, Lachlan and Bathurst–Orange SSDs
- South Eastern SD (up by 9%)
– increases in Queanbeyan, Snowy, Lower South Coast and Southern Tablelands SSDs
- Murrumbidgee SD (up by 9%)
– increases in the Central and Lower Murrumbidgee SSDs

- Hunter SD (up by 7%)
 - increase in Newcastle SSD
- Mid-North Coast SD (up by 5%)
 - increases in the Clarence and Hastings SSDs.
- Fairfield–Liverpool SSD (up by 15%)
 - increases in Fairfield and Liverpool LGAs
- Eastern Suburbs SSD (up by 9%)
 - increases in Randwick, Woollahra and Waverley LGAs
- Lower Northern Sydney SSD (up by 2%)
 - increases in Willoughby, Lane Cove, Hunters Hill and Mosman LGAs.

As was noted above, the rate of malicious damage to property in each of the NSW SDs and SSDs which experienced an increase is above the average State rate in 1999. In addition, several of the subdivisions recorded a statistically significant upward trend. These regions were Central Tablelands and Lachlan SSDs (within the Central West SD), Queanbeyan SSD (in South Eastern SD), and the Central Murrumbidgee, Newcastle, and Clarence SSDs.

There were also three Sydney SSDs which showed a statistically significant upward trend for this offence, namely the Fairfield–Liverpool, Eastern Suburbs and Lower Northern Sydney SSDs. Of the LGAs listed above, Fairfield, Randwick and Willoughby LGAs showed a significant upward trend in the number of incidents recorded monthly for this offence over the two-year period. Note that none of the regions within Sydney had a rate of malicious damage to property which was higher than the average State rate in 1999.

**Table 4: NSW regions with upward trends in crime rates, selected offence categories:
January 1998 to December 1999**

<i>Offence category</i>	<i>Significant upward trends in NSW Statistical Divisions (SD), or Statistical Subdivisions (SSD) within Sydney SD</i>	<i>Increases in SSDs within SDs other than Sydney, or Local Government Areas within Sydney SSDs*</i>
Assault	Central West SD (17%)	Lachlan SSD (24%)* Bathurst-Orange SSD (15%)* Central Tablelands SSD (7%)
Robbery without a weapon	Hornsby-Ku-ring-gai SSD (12%) Central Western Sydney SSD (11%)	Ku-ring-gai LGA (18%) Hornsby LGA (8%) Hornsby LGA (8%) Parramatta LGA (19%)* Penrith LGA (15%) Holroyd LGA (3%)
Robbery with a weapon not a firearm	South Eastern SD #	Queanbeyan SSD*# Southern Tablelands SSD # Lower South Coast SSD # Snowy SSD #
Break and enter - non-dwelling	Hornsby-Ku-ring-gai SSD (24%) St George-Sutherland SSD (14%)	Hornsby LGA (28%) * Ku-ring-gai LGA (16%) Rockdale LGA (23%)* Sutherland LGA (16%)* Kogarah LGA (12%)
Motor vehicle theft	Murrumbidgee SD (46%) Richmond-Tweed SD (6%)	Lower M'bidgee SSD (60%)* Central M'bidgee SSD (40%)* Tweed Heads SSD (48%)*
Steal from motor vehicle	Murrumbidgee SD (33%) Hunter SD (8%) Fairfield-Liverpool SSD (22%) Outer Western Sydney SSD (18%) Blacktown-Baulkham Hills SSD (17%) Lower Northern Sydney SSD (17%)	Lower Murrumbidgee SSD (35%)* Central Murrumbidgee SSD (33%)* Newcastle SSD (9%)* Balance Hunter SSD (2%) Liverpool LGA (40%)* Fairfield LGA (4%) Penrith LGA (34%)* Hawkesbury LGA (26%) Blacktown LGA (17%)* Baulkham Hills LGA (17%) Hunters Hill LGA (42%)* North Sydney LGA (36%)* Mosman LGA (22%) Lane Cove LGA (7%) Ryde LGA (7%) Willoughby LGA (1%)
Steal from retail store	Outer Western Sydney SSD (20%) Blacktown-Baulkham Hills SSD (12%)	Penrith LGA (22%)* Hawkesbury LGA (27%) Blue Mountains LGA (11%) Blacktown LGA (12%)* Baulkham Hills LGA (15%)
Steal from dwelling	Blacktown-Baulkham Hills SSD (13%)	Blacktown LGA (14%)* Baulkham Hills LGA (9%)

Table 4 continued: NSW regions with upward trends in crime rates, selected offence categories: January 1998 to December 1999

<i>Offence category</i>	<i>Significant upward trends in NSW Statistical Divisions (SD), or Statistical Subdivisions (SSD) within Sydney SD</i>	<i>Increases in SSDs within SDs other than Sydney, or Local Government Areas within Sydney SSDs*</i>
Assault	Central West SD (17%)	Lachlan SSD (24%)* Bathurst-Orange SSD (15%)* Central Tablelands SSD (7%)
Steal from person	Central Western Sydney SSD (30%) Blacktown-Baulkham Hills SSD (7%)	Parramatta LGA (44%)* Auburn LGA (28%) Holroyd LGA (4%) Blacktown LGA (12%)*
Malicious damage to property	Central West SD (10%) South Eastern SD (9%) Murrumbidgee SD (9%) Hunter SD (7%) Mid-North Coast SD (5%) Fairfield-Liverpool SSD (15%) Eastern Suburbs SSD (9%) Lower Northern Sydney SSD (2%)	Central Tablelands SSD (28%)* Lachlan SSD (19%)* Bathurst-Orange SSD (2%) Queanbeyan SSD (16%)* Snowy SSD (31%)* Lower South Coast SSD (6%)* Southern Tablelands SSD (3%)* Central Murrumbidgee SSD (10%)* Newcastle SSD (9%)* Clarence SSD (9%)* Hastings SSD (1%)* Fairfield LGA (19%)* Liverpool LGA (11%)* Randwick LGA (13%)* Woollahra LGA (5%)* Waverley LGA (4%)* Willoughby LGA (15%)* Lane Cove LGA (14%)* Hunters Hill LGA (10%)* Mosman LGA (2%)*

* indicates statistically significant upward monthly trend

number of incidents too small for meaningful calculation of percentage changes

*'italics' indicates that the 1999 rate in the region is **higher** than the State rate for that offence*

NOTES

1 For further discussion, see Matka, E. 1997, *Uses and Abuses of Crime Statistics*, Crime and Justice Bulletin No.11, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Sydney.

2 The statistical test used is Kendall's rank order correlation test for trend; see, for example, Conover, W. J. 1980, *Practical Non-Parametric Statistics*, 2nd edn, John Wiley and Sons, pp. 256-260. A 5% two-tailed test was used to determine whether there was an increasing or decreasing trend in the monthly rates of recorded criminal incidents. Some month-to-month variations in the rates of recorded criminal incidents suggest seasonal factors may be at work. The test for trend is not sensitive to seasonal variations; it is sensitive only to a generally increasing or decreasing trend over the time period examined.

3 See Table 1.3 in Doak, P. 2000, *Key Trends in Crime and Justice NSW 1999*, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Sydney (due for publication in May 2000).