

NSW RECORDED CRIME STATISTICS 2001: REGIONAL ANALYSIS OF CRIME TRENDS

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Between January 2000 and December 2001, a significant upward monthly trend was recorded for four of the sixteen major crime categories in NSW, namely assault, fraud, robbery with a firearm and steal from person. During this two-year period there were also significant decreases in two major crime categories: break and enter – dwelling and indecent assault, act of indecency and other sexual offences. The monthly number of recorded incidents was stable for the remaining ten crime categories over this period.

The trends in most geographical regions in NSW reflect this general stability in crime for the majority of offence categories. Nevertheless, some areas experienced significant increases in crime for several categories of offence over this time period. In particular, the Statistical Divisions of Murrumbidgee and Sydney experienced an upward trend in more than three major offence categories. Within Sydney, four Statistical Subdivisions experienced significant upward trends for more than three major categories of crime over this time period. These areas were: St George – Sutherland, Outer South Western Sydney, Central Western Sydney and the Eastern Suburbs. The most commonly rising offences within these regions are those that are showing a significant upward trend at the State level.

INTRODUCTION

This briefing paper summarises the trends in recorded crime in NSW as presented in *NSW Recorded Crime Statistics 2001*.¹ Firstly, recent crime trends in NSW are reviewed for the sixteen major criminal offence categories. Secondly, regional trends are examined for these major offence categories in each of the twelve Statistical Divisions within NSW and in each of the fourteen Statistical Subdivisions within Sydney. Finally, regions exhibiting significant upward trends are examined at a more detailed level of regional disaggregation.

The recorded crime statistics reported here are useful for monitoring trends in crime in NSW, however these statistics should be interpreted with care.² Although changes in recorded crime rates may reflect changes in the number of crimes that occurred, the changes may also occur for one of the following 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 assault or sexual assault, and property crimes such as malicious damage to property, which are subject to variations in police reporting. Secondly, trends in recorded crime may reflect changes in policing policy and activity, particularly in the areas of drug crime and driving offences. For this reason, the analysis of crime trends in this paper is mainly restricted to those offence categories which are reported to, rather than detected by, police. Finally, when the number of recorded incidents is low, a very small change in the actual number of incidents may result in a disproportionately large change in derived ratios such as the rate per resident population or the percentage change over time. Subsequently, caution should be exercised when regional crime statistics are being compared, particularly for the less frequently occurring offences, such as robbery and sexual assault.

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

SUMMARY OF TRENDS

Table 1 compares the trends in recorded crime in NSW which were reported in the 2000 and 2001 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 the police for the offence categories of assault, sexual offences, robbery, break and enter, motor vehicle theft, stealing and malicious damage.³ The trend tests cover the 24-month periods January 1999 to December 2000 (in the 2000 report), and January 2000 to December 2001 (in the 2001 report). Where a statistically significant trend is detected, the percentage change between the annual number of recorded criminal incidents is reported.

Significant downward trends

Over the 24-month period to December 2001, there were two major offence categories showing a statistically

significant downward trend in the monthly numbers of recorded criminal incidents in NSW. These were:

- break and enter – dwelling (down by 3.2%)
- indecent assault, act of indecency and other sexual offences (down by 6%).

In contrast, 12 months ago there was no offence category showing a statistically significant downward trend.

Offences where there was no upward or downward trend

Between January 2000 and December 2001, there was no statistically significant upward or downward trend in the monthly numbers of recorded criminal incidents for any of the following offences:

- murder
- sexual assault
- robbery without a weapon
- robbery with a weapon not a firearm
- break and enter – non-dwelling
- motor vehicle theft

Table 1: Summary of NSW Recorded Crime Statistics 2000 and 2001: Comparison of twenty-four month trends and annual percentage changes for selected offence categories

<i>Offence category</i>	<i>January 1999 to December 2000</i>	<i>January 2000 to December 2001</i>
Murder	No significant trend	No significant trend
Assault	No significant trend	+ 7.6%
Sexual assault	No significant trend	No significant trend
Indecent assault, act of indecency and other sexual offences	No significant trend	-6.0%
Robbery without a weapon	No significant trend	No significant trend
Robbery with a firearm	No significant trend	+34.1%
Robbery with a weapon not a firearm	No significant trend	No significant trend
Break and enter – dwelling	No significant trend	-3.2%
Break and enter – non-dwelling	+8.1%	No significant trend
Motor vehicle theft	+8.2%	No significant trend
Steal from motor vehicle	+15.2%	No significant trend
Steal from retail store	No significant trend	No significant trend
Steal from dwelling	No significant trend	No significant trend
Steal from person	No significant trend	+27.8%
Fraud	No significant trend	+16.3%
Malicious damage to property	No significant trend	No significant trend

- steal from motor vehicle
- steal from retail store
- steal from dwelling
- malicious damage to property.

Significant upward trends

Between January 2000 and December 2001, there was a statistically significant upward monthly trend in the number of recorded criminal incidents in NSW for the following offences:

- robbery with a firearm (up by 34.1%)
- steal from person (up by 27.8%)
- fraud (up by 16.3%)
- assault (up by 7.6%).

There has been a substantial percentage increase in the number of robberies with a firearm. However, as noted above, when the total number of recorded incidents is low, a small change in the actual number of incidents may result in a relatively large percentage

change over time. The offence robbery with a firearm has the second smallest number of incidents discussed in this brief, after murder.

The percentage increase in the number of recorded steal from person offences is also large, but this increase is almost certainly due to a change in the way police record this offence. In August 2001, guidelines to NSW Police which clarified the interpretation of the steal from person offence category were published in the *Police Service Weekly*.⁴ Before August 2001, many steal from person incidents may have been included in the 'other theft' category; it appears that they are now being recorded correctly.

REGIONAL CRIME TRENDS

This section will examine significant trends in recorded crime at a regional level for the major offence categories noted above.

Regional trends are analysed by offence category as follows:

Table 2: Percentage change in number of recorded incidents in 2001, compared with 2000, for major offences showing statistically significant trends in NSW Statistical Divisions

Statistical Division	Assault	Other sexual offences	Robbery with a firearm	Robbery with a weapon not a firearm	Break and enter – dwelling	Break and enter – non-dwelling	Motor vehicle theft	Steal from motor vehicle	Steal from retail store	Steal from dwelling	Steal from person	Fraud	Malicious damage
Sydney	7	37	-4						28	28			
Hunter	9							8	23				
Illawarra			-25	14	27				41				
Richmond – Tweed			-15						40				
Mid-North Coast	9										-27		
Northern											-31	-6	
North Western		-31		19	-13		21						18
Central West			-66	-13	14	-22							17
South Eastern		-29	a							31			
Murrumbidgee	24			18	39		27	22	9	81			12
Murray			b	10			14						
Far West						43		57		69			

a Significant upward trend; numbers too small to show percentage increase (11 incidents in 2000; 32 incidents in 2001).

b Significant upward trend; numbers too small to show percentage increase (4 incidents in 2000; 10 incidents in 2001).

- Significant trends are reported for monthly recorded incidents over the 24-months to December 2001 within each NSW Statistical Division (SD) and each Statistical Subdivision (SSD) within Sydney SD (a total of 12 SDs and 14 SSDs). 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 12-month periods is shown in Table 2 for NSW Statistical Divisions and Table 3 for NSW Statistical Subdivisions within Sydney SD.
- Where a significant upward trend is detected in one of the 26 regions, monthly data at the next level of regional disaggregation are examined for

a significant upward trend. For SDs outside Sydney, the next level of disaggregation is the SSD. For SSDs within Sydney SD, this next level of disaggregation is the Local Government Area (LGA). These results are shown in Tables 4 and 5 respectively, at the end of this paper.⁵

Significant trends in NSW regions

For each of the major offence categories shown in Table 1, the monthly number of incidents between January 2000 and December 2001 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 2000 and 2001 was calculated. These percentage changes are shown in Table 2. Note that the offence categories sexual assault and robbery without a weapon are not shown in Table 2. This is

Table 3: Percentage change in number of recorded incidents in 2001, compared with 2000, for major offences showing statistically significant trends in Sydney Statistical Subdivisions

Statistical Subdivision	Assault	Other sexual offences	Robbery without a weapon	Robbery with a firearm	Robbery with a weapon not a firearm	Break and enter – dwelling	Break and enter – non-dwelling	Motor vehicle theft	Steal from motor vehicle	Steal from retail store	Steal from dwelling	Fraud
Inner Sydney										37	23	
Eastern Suburbs					11		18			37	20	
St George – Sutherland	12		77	52						33	55	
Canterbury – Bankstown	11	-12	43					-21				43
Fairfield – Liverpool					-16		-17	-27	-11	11	20	
Outer South Western Sydney	14	27			-10	29		16		22		
Inner Western Sydney		45										33
Central Western Sydney			64				6			27	40	
Outer Western Sydney	13							19				20
Blacktown			a		-11		-10	-15	-21	20	29	
Lower Northern Sydney				-19	-16					31	39	
Central Northern Sydney									18	35	23	
Northern Beaches						10			-21	36	34	
Gosford – Wyong	12	-25						22				

a Significant upward trend; numbers too small to show percentage increase (13 incidents in 2000; 31 incidents in 2001).

because there was no statistically significant trend found in any NSW SD for these offences. As noted above, 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 most regions in NSW experienced a growth in crime for at least one offence category. Steal from person and assault, which had significant trends in NSW also showed significant upward trends across several SDs. In addition, the offence categories of break and enter – dwelling, break and enter – non-dwelling, steal from motor vehicle, steal from retail store and malicious damage to property are trending upwards in several SDs. However, two offence categories with significant upward trends in NSW did not show significant upward trends in any of the country SDs; these were robbery with a firearm and fraud. Further details of upward trends will be provided later in this paper.

Table 2 also shows that some regions experienced a significant downward trend for some offence categories over this period. In particular, break and enter – dwelling, sexual offences other than sexual assault, robbery with a firearm, and fraud exhibited a downward trend in more than one SD. These downward trends will be noted in the discussion which follows, but will not be examined at the same disaggregated level of analysis as offences with upward trends (shown in Tables 4 and 5 at the end of this report).

It is useful to note at this point that a reported upward trend in a region does not suggest that the area with a significant increase now has a higher crime risk than another area. While some SDs may have experienced an increase over the two-year period examined, the rate of crime in 2000 may remain lower in these regions than elsewhere in NSW. This point 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, for each Statistical Subdivision within Sydney. As with Table 2, where a statistically significant trend was found, the percentage change between 2000 and 2001 in the annual total number of incidents was calculated. The offence categories of sexual assault and malicious damage to property are not included in Table 3 because there was no statistically significant trend found in any Sydney SSD for these offences.

As noted above, there were four offences showing an upward trend in NSW overall, namely assault, robbery with a firearm, steal from person and fraud. Each of these offences showed a significant upward trend across several SSDs within Sydney. Robbery with a firearm and fraud, which did not increase significantly in any country SDs, showed significant upward trends

in four SSDs and twelve SSDs respectively, in Sydney.

Table 3 also shows that some SSDs within Sydney experienced a significant downward trend for certain offence categories over this period. In particular, break and enter – dwelling, motor vehicle theft, steal from motor vehicle, and steal from retail store showed a downward trend in more than one SSD.

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 noted.

TRENDS IN ASSAULT

There was a statistically significant upward monthly trend in the number of assault incidents recorded between January 2000 and December 2001 in NSW, with an overall increase of 7.6 per cent between 2000 and 2001.

Note that in the 2001 annual report, the State trend for assault has been analysed for both domestic and non-domestic related assault. (This distinction is identifiable from police records.) The trends are examined separately because domestic-related assault trends are particularly affected by the willingness of victims to report the crime, and do not necessarily reflect underlying crime trends in the community. Trends in non-domestic related assaults, however, are more likely to reflect movements in underlying crime rates. Table 6, at the end of this report, details the annual percentage changes for regions which showed a statistically significant trend for either non-domestic or domestic related assault over the two-year period. The statistics quoted in this section, however, refer to total assault.

Significant downward trends

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

Significant upward trends

The following four SDs in NSW and five SSD within Sydney SD showed significant upward trends in assault over the two-year period to December 2001:

- Murrumbidgee SD (up by 24%)
- Hunter SD (up by 9%)
- Mid-North Coast SD (up by 9%)
- Sydney SD (up by 7%)
- Outer South Western Sydney SSD (up by 14%)
- Outer Western Sydney SSD (up by 13%)
- Gosford – Wyong SSD (up by 12%)
- St George – Sutherland SSD (up by 12%)
- Canterbury – Bankstown SSD (up by 11%).

Note that Table 6 shows that the increase in total assault recorded in the St George – Sutherland and Canterbury – Bankstown Statistical Subdivisions was primarily due to an increase in reported incidents of domestic assault. The growth in assault for these SSDs may therefore reflect increased willingness to report this offence. It should also be noted that while Hunter SD, Sydney SD, Outer Western Sydney SSD, St George – Sutherland SSD and Canterbury – Bankstown SSD showed a significant upward monthly trend in assault during this 24-month period, the rate of assault in these regions remains well below the average NSW rate.

TRENDS IN SEXUAL OFFENCES

There was no statistically significant upward or downward trend in the monthly number of sexual assaults recorded in NSW over the two-year period to December 2001. However, there was a statistically significant downward trend for the offence category indecent assault, act of indecency and other sexual offences. Between January 2000 and December 2001 there was a 6.0 per cent reduction for this offence in NSW.

In this section, regional trends will be examined for the offence category indecent assault, act of indecency and other sexual offences only. This is because there were no regions showing a statistically significant trend (upward or downward) for the sexual assault offence category over the two-year 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 for the offence category indecent assault, act of indecency and other sexual offences over the two-year period to December 2001:

- North Western SD (down by 31%)
- South Eastern SD (down by 29%)
- Gosford – Wyong SSD (down by 25%).

Despite this recent decrease, the rate of sexual offences other than sexual assault in North Western SD remains well above the average State rate. The rate of sexual offences other than sexual assault in South Eastern SD and Gosford – Wyong SSD are slightly above the average State rate.

Significant upward trends

There were no regions showing significant upward trends for the offence category indecent assault, act of indecency and other sexual offences over this time period.

TRENDS IN ROBBERY

The offence categories of robbery without a weapon and robbery with a weapon other than a firearm showed no significant upward or downward monthly trend in the number of recorded incidents over the two years to December 2001 in NSW. There was a statistically significant upward trend in robbery with a firearm during this time with an overall increase of 34.1 per cent. However the total number of recorded incidents of robbery with a firearm remains low compared with other offences. The trends in robbery at the State level primarily reflect trends in robbery within the Sydney metropolitan area, since almost 90 per cent of all incidents of robbery recorded by NSW police occur in the Sydney SD.

As mentioned earlier, because the number of recorded incidents of robbery are low, small changes in the actual number of robberies can result in disproportionately large changes in the percentage increase or decrease over time. Regional trends will be examined separately for each category.

Robbery without a weapon

Significant downward trends

There was one SSD in Sydney showing a statistically significant downward monthly trend in robbery without a weapon over the two years to December 2001:

- Canterbury – Bankstown SSD (down by 12%).

Significant upward trends

Although generally stable across NSW, two regions within Sydney SD showed statistically significant upward trends in the number of incidents recorded for the offence category of robbery without a weapon:

- Inner Western Sydney SSD (up by 45%)
- Outer South Western Sydney SSD (up by 27%)

Inner Western Sydney SSD now has the second highest rate of robbery without a weapon in NSW and double the State rate.

Robbery with a firearm

As noted above, the offence category of robbery with a firearm rose by 34.1 per cent over the two-year period from January 2000 to December 2001.

Significant downward trends

There were no regions in NSW showing significant downward trends in robbery with a firearm over the time period.

Significant upward trends

There was one Statistical Division and four Sydney Statistical Subdivisions that showed a significant upward trend in robbery with a firearm over this time period.

- Sydney SD (up by 37%)
- Blacktown SSD (up by 138%)
- St George – Sutherland SSD (up by 77%)
- Central Western Sydney SSD (up by 64%)
- Canterbury – Bankstown SSD (up by 43%).

Although there has been a substantial percentage increase in the number of robbery with a firearm offences recorded in Blacktown SSD, the rate of offences is still below the NSW rate. This is not the case for Canterbury – Bankstown or Central Western Sydney where the rate of robbery with a firearm is approximately three times that of NSW.

Note that the percentage increases in some regions are based on very small numbers of incidents in each year.

Robbery with a weapon other than a firearm

Over the two-year period January 2000 to December 2001, there was no statistically significant upward or downward trend in the recorded number of incidents of robbery with a weapon other than a firearm in NSW.

Significant downward trends

A significant downward trend in the number of recorded incidents of robbery with a weapon other than a firearm was experienced in three regions over this period:

- Central West SD (down by 66%)
- Illawarra SD (down by 25%)
- Lower Northern Sydney SSD (down by 19%).

The annual rate for this offence is below the State average in each of these three regions.

Significant upward trends

There were three regions showing a significant upward monthly trend over the two-year period:

- South Eastern SD (up by 191%)
- Murray SD (up by 150%)
- St George – Sutherland SSD (up by 52%).

Despite the large percentage increases in robbery with a weapon other than a firearm in South Eastern SD, Murray SD and St George – Sutherland SSD, the rate remains below the State average for each of these three regions.

Note that the percentage increases in some regions are based on very small numbers of incidents in each year.

TRENDS IN BREAK AND ENTER OFFENCES

The number of recorded incidents of break and enter – dwelling showed a significant downward trend over the two years to December 2001, decreasing by 3.2 per cent in NSW. The offence category of break and enter –

non-dwelling remained stable over the same time period. Regional trends will be examined separately for each break and enter category.

Break and enter – dwelling

Significant downward trends

A statistically significant downward trend between January 2000 and December 2001 in the number of recorded incidents of break and enter – dwelling offences was found in the following regions:

- Richmond – Tweed SD (down by 15%)
- Central West SD (down by 13%)
- Sydney SD (down by 4%)
- Fairfield – Liverpool SSD (down by 16%)
- Lower Northern Sydney SSD (down by 16%)
- Blacktown SSD (down by 11%)
- Outer South Western Sydney SSD (down by 10%).

Despite the significant decrease in each of the Sydney regions noted above, the rate of break and enter – dwelling in these regions remains above the average State rate. The rate of this offence in both Richmond – Tweed SD and Central West SD, however, is well below the NSW average.

Significant upward trends

There were three SDs and one SSD within Sydney SD showing significant upward trends in break and enter – dwelling in the 24-months to December 2001:

- North Western SD (up by 19%)
- Murrumbidgee SD (up by 18%)
- Murray SD (up by 10%)
- Eastern Suburbs SSD (up by 11%).

Although showing a significant increase in the rate of break and enter – dwelling over this period, the rate of this offence in Murrumbidgee and Murray SDs remains well below the State average. However, North Western SD and the Eastern Suburbs SSD of Sydney had two of the highest rates of break and enter – dwelling in NSW.

Break and enter – non-dwelling

As was noted above, the offence category of break and enter – non-dwelling did not show a significant trend over the two-year period from January 2000 to December 2001, in NSW.

Significant downward trends

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

- North Western SD (down by 13%).

Although the rate of break and enter – non-dwelling has decreased in the North Western SD, it still has the second highest rate in the State.

Significant upward trends

There were three SDs and two SSDs within Sydney that showed a significant upward monthly trend in the number of recorded offences of break and enter – non-dwelling in this time period.

- Murrumbidgee SD (up by 39%)
- Illawarra SD (up by 14%)
- Central West SD (up by 14%)
- Outer South Western Sydney SSD (up by 29%)
- Northern Beaches SSD (up by 10%).

The rate of break and enter – non-dwelling in Illawarra SD, Murrumbidgee SD, Central West SD and Outer South Western Sydney SSD is above the State average. The only exception among the above regions is the Northern Beaches SSD, which has one of the lowest rates in the State.

TRENDS IN MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT

There were no significant upward or downward monthly trends in the number of recorded motor vehicle theft offences between January 2000 and December 2001 in NSW. Regional trends will be examined below.

Significant downward trends

There was one SD in NSW and two SSDs in Sydney that recorded a statistically significant downward trend in the monthly number of recorded incidents of motor vehicle theft over the two-year period to December 2001.

- Central West SD (down by 22%)
- Fairfield – Liverpool SSD (down by 17%)
- Blacktown SSD (down by 10%).

The recorded rates of motor vehicle theft are generally highest in the more densely populated regions of NSW, including most SSDs in Sydney. Consequently, although Fairfield – Liverpool and Blacktown SSDs show significant reductions in the rate of motor vehicle theft, they are both substantially above the average rate in NSW. Conversely, Central West SD now has the second lowest rate in NSW.

Significant upward trends

There were two SDs in NSW and two SSDs within the Sydney region which showed a statistically significant upward trend for the offence category of motor vehicle theft:

- Far West SD (up by 43%)
- Illawarra SD (up by 27%)
- Eastern Suburbs SSD (up by 18%)
- Central Western Sydney SSD (up by 6%).

Only one SD outside Sydney recorded a rate of motor vehicle theft in 2001 which was higher than the State rate; this was Illawarra SD. Illawarra SD and Central Western Sydney SSD have two of the highest rates of motor vehicle theft in the State.

TRENDS IN STEALING OFFENCES

Three of the four categories of stealing offences covered in the annual crime statistics report, namely steal from motor vehicle, steal from retail store and steal from dwelling, did not show a statistically significant upward or downward trend in NSW. For the offence category of steal from person, however, there was a statistically significant upward monthly trend over the two-year period January 2000 to December 2001, with an overall increase of 27.8 per cent. However, this increase was largely due to a change in the way police recorded this offence (see endnote 4). Regional trends will be examined separately for each stealing category.

Steal from motor vehicle

As noted above, there was no statistically significant trend in steal from motor vehicle offences for NSW as a whole, between January 2000 and December 2001.

Significant downward trends

There were two SSDs within Sydney showing a statistically significant downward monthly trend in steal from motor vehicle offences over this time period:

- Canterbury – Bankstown SSD (down by 21%)
- Blacktown SSD (down by 15%).

The rate of steal from motor vehicle in both of these SSDs is below the NSW average rate.

Significant upward trends

Three NSW Statistical Divisions and two Statistical Subdivisions within Sydney showed a statistically significant upward trend in the monthly number of steal from motor vehicle offences recorded over the two-year period:

- Murrumbidgee SD (up by 27%)
- North Western SD (up by 21%)
- Murray SD (up by 14%)
- Outer Western Sydney SSD (up by 19%)
- Outer South Western Sydney SSD (up by 16%).

Four of the five regions listed above recorded a rate of steal from motor vehicle which was below the average State rate. North Western SD was the exception, with the third highest rate of steal from motor vehicle in the State.

Steal from retail store

There was no significant upward or downward Statewide monthly trend in the incidence of steal from retail store offences. Regional trends are discussed below.

Significant downward trends

Three SSDs within Sydney SD experienced a significant downward trend in the monthly number of steal from retail store incidents over the two-year period:

- Fairfield – Liverpool SSD (down by 27%)
- Northern Beaches SSD (down by 21%)
- Blacktown SSD (down by 21%).

Despite the decrease in recorded incidents of steal from retail store in Blacktown SSD, the rate of this offence is above the State average. However, the rate of steal from retail store offences on the Northern Beaches SSD is almost half that of the State.

Significant upward trends

There were three country regions and two regions within Sydney which showed a significant upward monthly trend in steal from retail store offences over the period January 2000 to December 2001:

- Far West SD (up by 57%)
- Murrumbidgee SD (up by 22%)
- Hunter SD (up by 8%)
- Gosford – Wyong SSD (up by 22%)
- Central Northern Sydney SSD (up by 18%).

Despite the increase in incidents, the rate of steal from retail store offences in Central Northern Sydney SSD remains the lowest in the State. In the Far West SD and Gosford – Wyong SSD the rate of this offence is above the State average, while in Murrumbidgee and Hunter SDs it is below the State average.

Steal from dwelling

In NSW, 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 2000 to December 2001.

Significant downward trends

One region showed a significant downward monthly trend in steal from dwelling offences over the period:

- Fairfield – Liverpool SSD (down by 11%).

Most of the SSD within Sydney have a lower rate of steal from dwelling than overall rate for NSW. The significant downward trend in Fairfield – Liverpool SSD has given this region the second lowest rate for steal from dwelling in the State.

Significant upward trends

One region in country NSW showed a significant upward monthly trend over the period:

- Murrumbidgee SD (up by 9%).

Murrumbidgee SD has a higher rate of steal from dwelling than the State average, along with every other country SD.

Steal from person

There was a statistically significant upward monthly trend recorded for this offence in NSW over the 24-month period January 2000 to December 2001, with an annual increase of 27.8 per cent. As noted earlier, this increase was largely due to a change in police recording methods (see endnote 5).

Significant downward trends

There was no region showing a statistically significant downward trend for this offence over the two-year period.

Significant upward trends

Two-thirds of the Statistical Divisions in NSW and Subdivisions within Sydney recorded an upward trend for the offence category steal from person, as follows:

- Murrumbidgee SD (up by 81%)
- Far West SD (up by 69%)
- Illawarra SD (up by 41%)
- Richmond – Tweed SD (up by 40%)
- South Eastern SD (up by 31%)
- Sydney SD (up by 28%)
- Hunter SD (up by 23%)
- Inner Sydney SSD (up by 37%)
- Eastern Suburbs SSD (up by 37%)
- Northern Beaches SSD (up by 36%)
- Central Northern Sydney SSD (up by 35%)
- St George – Sutherland SSD (up by 33%)
- Lower Northern Sydney SSD (up by 31%)
- Central Western Sydney SSD (up by 27%)
- Outer South Western Sydney SSD (up by 22%)
- Blacktown SSD (up by 20%)
- Fairfield – Liverpool SSD (up by 11%).

Despite the large number of regions that showed an increase in the rate of steal from person offences, all of the country SDs listed above recorded a rate lower than the average State rate in 2001, with most being less than half the average State rate. Seven out of the ten Sydney SSDs that showed a significant increase in steal from person offences also had a rate lower than the State average for this offence. The SSDs within Sydney that had a higher rate than the State for this offence, and a significant increase, were the Inner

Sydney, Eastern Suburbs and Central Western Sydney SSDs. The rate of steal from person is nearly nine times greater in Inner Sydney than NSW as a whole, with well over one-third of all incidents within NSW occurring in Inner Sydney SSD.

TRENDS IN FRAUD

Over the two-year period from January 2000 to December 2001, there was a statistically significant upward trend in the monthly number of recorded fraud incidents in NSW, with a 16.3 per cent increase between 2000 and 2001. Regional trends are examined below.

Significant downward trends

There were two country NSW regions which showed a significant downward trend in the monthly number incidents recorded for this offence:

- Northern SD (down by 31%)
- Mid-North Coast SD (down by 27%).

Along with most country SDs, the rate of fraud incidents for Northern and Mid-North Coast SDs are substantially below the rate for NSW.

Significant upward trends

Sydney SD, and twelve of the fourteen SSDs within Sydney, showed a significant upward trend in fraud between January 2000 and December 2001:

- Sydney SD (up by 28%)
- St George – Sutherland SSD (up by 55%)
- Canterbury – Bankstown SSD (up by 43%)
- Central Western Sydney SSD (up by 40%)
- Lower Northern Sydney SSD (up by 39%)
- Northern Beaches SSD (up by 34%)
- Inner Western Sydney SSD (up by 33%)
- Blacktown SSD (up by 29%)
- Central Northern Sydney SSD (up by 23%)
- Inner Sydney SSD (up by 23%)
- Eastern Suburbs SSD (up by 20%)
- Fairfield – Liverpool SSD (up by 20%)
- Outer Western Sydney SSD (up by 20%).

The highest rates of fraud are found in the more central SSDs within Sydney. In particular, Eastern Suburbs, Inner Sydney, Inner Western Sydney, Central Western Sydney, Canterbury – Bankstown, Fairfield – Liverpool, Blacktown and Lower Northern Sydney SSDs all had significant increases in fraud with rates of fraud above the NSW rate. The other SSDs that showed significant increases namely St George – Sutherland, Northern Beaches, Central Northern Sydney and Outer Western Sydney recorded rates of fraud below the average rate for NSW.

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 2000 and December 2001. Regional trends are examined below.

Significant downward trends

One SD showed a statistically significant downward monthly trend in malicious damage to property offences over this time period.

- Northern SD (down by 6%).

Despite the decrease in malicious damage to property offences in the Northern SD, the rate of this offence remains above average for the State, along with the rates in most country SDs.

Significant upward trends

There were three NSW country SDs which recorded a significant upward trend in the monthly number of recorded incidents of malicious damage to property:

- North Western SD (up by 18%)
- Central West SD (up by 17%)
- Murrumbidgee SD (up by 12%).

The rate of malicious damage to property in the North Western, Central West and Murrumbidgee SDs is above the average State rate in 2001, along with the majority of country SDs. The North Western SD now has the highest rate of malicious damage to property in the State.

SUMMARY

The regional trends in recorded crime for 15 major offence categories have been summarised in this paper.

Table 1 shows an improvement in crime for five offence categories at the State level. The three property crime categories which were rising in last year's report, namely break and enter – non-dwelling, motor vehicle theft and steal from motor vehicle, are now stable. In addition, two crime categories which showed stability in the 24 months to December 2000, are now showing a downward trend, namely, indecent assault, act of indecency, other sexual offences, and break and enter – dwelling.

Overall, the most problematic crime categories for NSW in 2001 are assault, fraud and robbery with a firearm. Each of these categories showed statistically significant upward Statewide trends over the 24-month period from January 2000 to December 2001. There were also statistically significant upward trends in most regions for the offence category of steal from person, but this was largely due to a change in recording practice (see endnote 4 and earlier discussion).

For the assault offence category, Tables 2 and 3 show that between January 2000 and December 2001 nine out of the 26 NSW regions (12 NSW SDs and 14 Sydney SSDs) recorded an upward monthly trend. Table 6 showed, however, that the increase in two of these regions was due to an upward trend in domestic-related assault. For fraud there are now thirteen regions trending upwards and two downwards. This increase occurred exclusively within Sydney. Similarly, the robbery with a firearm offence category showed significant upward trends in four regions, all within Sydney.

There were significant decreases in the offence categories: break and enter – dwelling, sexual offences other than sexual assault, robbery with a weapon not a firearm, motor vehicle offences and steal from retail store. However, for the latter three offences there were a similar number of regions with significant upward trends as there were with downward trends.

NOTES

- 1 Allen J. et al. 2002, *New South Wales Recorded Crime Statistics 2001*, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Sydney.
- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 NSW Police Service 2001, *Police Service Weekly*, Vol 13, no. 31 p.10, NSW Police Service, Sydney.
"Law notes 27: Steal from the person" clarified the recording of steal from person offences (as opposed to the general 'stealing' classification). There was a substantial increase in the number of steal from person offences recorded by NSW Police from the month of publication (August 2001) onwards.
The article stated "... the crime of steal from the person involves a personal confrontation and the potential for personal conflict and force or fear. In such circumstances, it does not matter whether the property stolen is on the person of the victim or in the victim's immediate presence. The latter is sufficient." An illustration of the term 'steal from the victim's immediate presence' described an offender grabbing jewellery from the counter of a shop while a salesman was standing at the counter.
- 5 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 problematic, and is identified in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4: NSW Statistical Divisions with upward trends in crime rates for major offence categories: January 2000 to December 2001

Offence category	Significant upward trends in NSW Statistical Divisions (SD), other than Sydney SD	Increases in Statistical Subdivisions (SSD) within listed Statistical Divisions
Assault (total)	Murrumbidgee SD* (24%) Hunter SD* (9%) Mid-North Coast SD* (9%)	Central Murrumbidgee SSD* (26%) Lower Murrumbidgee SSD (19%) Newcastle SSD* (9%) Balance Hunter SSD (9%) Clarence SSD (11%) Hastings SSD (7%)
Robbery with a weapon not firearm	South Eastern SD* (191%) Murray SD* (n/a)	Southern Tablelands SSD (n/a) Queanbeyan SSD (n/a)
Break and enter – dwelling	North Western SD* (19%) Murrumbidgee SD* (18%) Murray SD* (10%)	Central Macquarie SSD* (26%) Macquarie – Barwon SSD (6%) Central Murrumbidgee SSD* (21%) Lower Murrumbidgee SSD (10%) Upper Murray SSD (25%) Murray – Darling SSD (14%) Albury SSD* (10%) Central Murray SSD (6%)
Break and enter – non-dwelling	Murrumbidgee SD* (39%) Illawarra SD* (14%) Central West SD* (14%)	Lower Murrumbidgee SSD* (40%) Central Murrumbidgee SSD* (39%) Wollongong SSD* (15%) Balance Illawarra SSD (9%) Central Tablelands SSD* (21%) Bathurst – Orange SSD (18%) Lachlan SSD (4%)
Motor vehicle theft	Far West SD* (43%) Illawarra SD* (27%)	Far West SSD* (43%) Balance Illawarra SSD (38%) Wollongong SSD* (26%)
Steal from motor vehicle	Murrumbidgee SD* (27%) North Western SD* (21%) Murray SD* (14%)	Central Murrumbidgee SSD* (31%) Lower Murrumbidgee SSD (17%) Central Macquarie SSD* (27%) Macquarie-Barwon SSD (13%) Central Murray SSD (20%) Albury SSD* (14%) Upper Murray SSD (7%) Murray Darling SSD (6%)
Steal from retail store	Far West SD* (57%) Murrumbidgee SD* (22%) Hunter SD* (8%)	Far West SSD* (57%) Lower Murrumbidgee SSD (26%) Central Murrumbidgee SSD* (20%) Balance Hunter SSD (12%) Newcastle SSD* (8%)

* indicates statistically significant upward monthly trend

'**bold italics**' indicates that the rate of offences per 100,000 population in that region is **higher** than the State rate in 2001.

n/a indicates less than 10 offences occurred in a year.

**Table 4: NSW Statistical Divisions with upward trends in crime rates
for major offence categories: January 2000 to December 2001, continued**

Offence category	Significant upward trends in NSW Statistical Divisions (SD), other than Sydney SD	Increases in Statistical Subdivisions (SSD) within listed Statistical Divisions
Steal from dwelling	Murrumbidgee SD* (9%)	Lower Murrumbidgee SSD (12%) Central Murrumbidgee SSD (8%)
Steal from person	Murrumbidgee SD* (81%) Far West SD* (69%) Illawarra SD* (41%) Richmond – Tweed SD* (40%) South Eastern SD* (31%) Hunter SD* (23%)	Central Murrumbidgee SSD* (131%) Lower Murrumbidgee SSD (19%) Far West SSD* (69%) Wollongong SSD* (45%) Balance Illawarra SSD (21%) Balance Richmond – Tweed SSD* (40%) Tweed Heads SSD (40%) Snowy SSD (n/a) Southern Tablelands SSD (59%) Lower South Coast SSD (17%) Newcastle SSD* (25%)
Malicious damage to property	North Western SD* (18%) Central West SD* (17%) Murrumbidgee SD* (12%)	Macquarie – Barwon SSD (19%) Central Macquarie SSD* (19%) Upper Darling SSD (13%) Central Tablelands SSD* (37%) Lachlan SSD* (16%) Bathurst – Orange SSD* (12%) Lower Murrumbidgee SSD* (14%) Central Murrumbidgee SSD* (11%)

* indicates statistically significant upward monthly trend

'bold italics' indicates that the rate of offences per 100,000 population in that region is **higher** than the State rate in 2001.

n/a indicates less than 10 offences occurred in a year.

Table 5: Sydney Statistical Subdivisions with upward trends in crime rates for major offence categories: January 2000 to December 2001

Offence category	Significant upward trends in Statistical Subdivisions (SSD), within Sydney Statistical Division	Increases in Local Government Areas (LGA) within Sydney Statistical Subdivisions	
Assault (total)	Outer South Western Sydney SSD* (14%)	Campbelltown LGA* (15%) Camden LGA (13%) Wollondilly LGA (5%)	
	Outer Western Sydney SSD* (13%)	Hawkesbury LGA (19%) Blue Mountains LGA (15%) Penrith LGA* (11%)	
	Gosford – Wyong SSD* (12%)	Wyong LGA (17%) Gosford LGA* (8%)	
	St George – Sutherland SSD* (12%)	Kogarah LGA (18%) Rockdale LGA (12%) Sutherland LGA (11%) Hurstville LGA (8%)	
	Canterbury – Bankstown SSD* (11%)	Bankstown LGA* (12%) Canterbury LGA* (10%)	
	Robbery without a weapon	Inner Western Sydney SSD* (45%)	Burwood LGA* (67%) Strathfield LGA* (43%) Ashfield LGA (39%) Concord LGA (33%) Drummoyne LGA (10%)
		Outer South Western Sydney SSD* (27%)	Wollondilly LGA (n/a) Campbelltown LGA (28%) Camden LGA (19%)
		Blacktown SSD* (138%)	Blacktown LGA* (138%)
		St George – Sutherland SSD* (77%)	Hurstville LGA (n/a) Rockdale LGA (118%) Kogarah LGA (n/a) Sutherland LGA (14%)
		Central Western Sydney SSD* (64%)	Parramatta LGA* (112%) Holroyd LGA* (82%)
Canterbury – Bankstown SSD* (43%)	Canterbury LGA (66%) Bankstown LGA* (30%)		
Robbery with a firearm	St George – Sutherland SSD* (52%)	Rockdale LGA* (84%) Kogarah LGA (68%) Sutherland LGA (51%) Hurstville LGA (10%)	
Robbery with a weapon not a firearm			
Break and enter – dwelling	Eastern Suburbs SSD* (11%)	Waverley LGA* (17%) Woollahra LGA (11%) Randwick LGA (9%)	
Break and enter – non-dwelling	Outer South Western Sydney SSD* (29%)	Campbelltown LGA* (37%) Camden LGA (12%) Wollondilly LGA (6%)	
	Northern Beaches SSD* (10%)	Pittwater LGA (27%) Manly LGA (17%) Warringah LGA (0%)	

* indicates statistically significant upward monthly trend

'bold italics' indicates that the rate of offences per 100,000 population in that region is higher than the State rate in 2001.

n/a indicates less than 10 offences occurred in a year.

Table 5: Sydney Statistical Subdivisions with upward trends in crime rates for major offence categories: January 2000 to December 2001, *continued*

Offence category	Significant upward trends in Statistical Subdivisions (SSD), within Sydney Statistical Division	Increases in Local Government Areas (LGA) within Sydney Statistical Subdivisions
Motor vehicle theft	Eastern Suburbs SSD* (18%)	Randwick LGA (20%) Woollahra LGA (17%) Waverley LGA (16%)
	Central Western Sydney SSD* (6%)	Auburn LGA* (12%) Holroyd LGA (5%) Parramatta LGA (3%)
Steal from motor vehicle	Outer Western Sydney SSD* (19%)	Penrith LGA* (31%) Blue Mountains LGA (2%)
	Outer South Western Sydney SSD* (16%)	Camden LGA (27%) Wollondilly LGA (21%) Campbelltown LGA (14%)
Steal from retail store	Gosford – Wyong SSD* (22%)	Wyong LGA* (43%) Gosford LGA (8%)
	Central Northern Sydney SSD* (18%)	Hornsby LGA (22%) Baulkham Hills LGA (16%) Ku-ring-gai LGA (13%)
Steal from person	Inner Sydney SSD* (37%)	South Sydney LGA* (85%) Marrickville LGA (35%) Sydney LGA (21%) Botany Bay LGA (19%) Leichhardt LGA (19%)
	Eastern Suburbs SSD* (37%)	Waverley LGA* (46%) Randwick LGA* (34%) Woollahra LGA (31%)
	Northern Beaches SSD* (36%)	Pittwater LGA* (170%) Manly LGA (34%) Warringah LGA (13%)
	Central Northern Sydney SSD* (35%)	Hornsby LGA* (68%) Ku-ring-gai LGA (18%) Baulkham Hills LGA (16%)
	St George – Sutherland SSD* (33%)	Sutherland LGA* (61%) Rockdale LGA* (37%) Kogarah LGA (25%) Hurstville LGA (3%)
	Lower Northern Sydney SSD* (31%)	Lane Cove LGA* (211%) North Sydney LGA* (39%) Ryde LGA (26%) Willoughby LGA (24%) Hunters Hill LGA (n/a)
	Central Western Sydney SSD* (27%)	Parramatta LGA* (49%) Holroyd LGA (24%)
	Outer South Western Sydney SSD* (22%)	Camden LGA (43%) Wollondilly LGA (n/a) Campbelltown LGA* (21%)
	Blacktown SSD* (20%)	Blacktown LGA (20%)
	Fairfield – Liverpool SSD* (11%)	Liverpool LGA* (19%) Fairfield LGA (7%)

* indicates statistically significant upward monthly trend

'**bold italics**' indicates that the rate of offences per 100,000 population in that region is **higher** than the State rate in 2001.

n/a indicates less than 10 offences occurred in a year.

**Table 5: Sydney Statistical Subdivisions with upward trends in crime rates
for major offence categories: January 2000 to December 2001, *continued***

Offence category	Significant upward trends in Statistical Subdivisions (SSD), within Sydney Statistical Division	Increases in Local Government Areas (LGA) within Sydney Statistical Subdivisions
Fraud	St George – Sutherland SSD* (55%)	Rockdale LGA* (62%) Sutherland LGA* (57%) Hurstville LGA* (48%) Kogarah LGA* (48%)
	Canterbury – Bankstown SSD* (43%)	Bankstown LGA* (44%) Canterbury LGA* (41%)
	Central Western Sydney SSD* (40%)	Holroyd LGA* (43%) Parramatta LGA* (41%) Auburn LGA* (33%)
	Lower Northern Sydney SSD* (39%)	North Sydney LGA* (56%) Hunters Hill LGA* (52%) Lane Cove LGA* (43%) Willoughby LGA* (42%) Mosman LGA* (40%) Ryde LGA* (21%)
	Northern Beaches SSD* (34%)	Warringah LGA (42%) Manly LGA* (24%) Pittwater LGA (21%)
	Inner Western Sydney SSD* (33%)	Drummoyne LGA* (54%) Strathfield LGA* (50%) Burwood LGA* (41%) Ashfield LGA (16%)
	Blacktown SSD* (29%)	Blacktown LGA* (29%)
	Central Northern Sydney SSD* (23%)	Baulkham Hills LGA* (34%) Hornsby LGA (15%) Ku-ring-gai LGA (15%)
	Inner Sydney SSD* (23%)	South Sydney LGA* (50%) Sydney LGA (24%) Marrickville LGA (14%) Leichhardt LGA (2%)
	Eastern Suburbs SSD* (20%)	Randwick LGA (31%) Waverley LGA (11%) Woollahra LGA (9%)
	Fairfield-Liverpool SSD* (20%)	Fairfield LGA* (27%) Liverpool LGA* (11%)
	Outer Western Sydney SSD* (20%)	Penrith LGA* (28%) Hawkesbury LGA (7%)

* indicates statistically significant upward monthly trend

'**bold italics**' indicates that the rate of offences per 100,000 population in that region is **higher** than the State rate in 2001.

n/a indicates less than 10 offences occurred in a year.

Table 6: Percentage change in recorded incidents of assault in 2001, compared with 2000, for regions showing statistically significant trends*

<i>Statistical Division</i>	<i>Total assault</i>	<i>Non-domestic</i>	<i>Domestic assault</i>
Sydney	7	6	
Inner Sydney			
Eastern Suburbs			
St George – Sutherland	12		25
Canterbury – Bankstown	11		29
Fairfield – Liverpool			
Outer South Western Sydney	14	17	9
Inner Western Sydney			
Central Western Sydney			
Outer Western Sydney	13	14	
Blacktown			
Lower Northern Sydney			-13
Central Northern Sydney			
Northern Beaches			
Gosford – Wyong	12	11	
Hunter	9	8	12
Illawarra			14
Richmond – Tweed			
Mid-North Coast	9	11	
Northern			
North Western			
Central West			
South Eastern			
Murrumbidgee	24	18	33
Murray			
Far West			
New South Wales	7.6	6.4	10.2

* All regions are shown in this table, but percentage changes are only shown for those regions where the 24-month trend was statistically significant.