



NSW RECORDED CRIME STATISTICS 2003: REGIONAL ANALYSIS OF CRIME TRENDS

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Between January 2002 and December 2003, there were no significant upward monthly trends recorded in any of the 16 major recorded crime categories in New South Wales. During the two year period there were significant decreases in eight major crime categories: robbery without a weapon, 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 person and fraud. The monthly number of recorded incidents was stable for the remaining eight crime categories over this period.

The trends in most geographical regions in New South Wales reflect, the State decrease or stability in crime for the majority of offences. The Sydney Statistical Division reported nine offence types trending downwards, which was more than double any other area. Sydney Statistical Division showed significant reductions in, break and enter – dwelling, break and enter – non-dwelling, motor vehicle theft and steal from motor vehicle in at least 11 of the 14 statistical subdivisions. Nevertheless, some regional areas reported no support for the State downward trends. Three New South Wales Statistical Divisions, Northern, Central West and Far West, did not report downward trends in any of the major crime categories. In the South Eastern SD three offences were trending upwards, more than any other region, but it should be noted that the crime rates in the South Eastern are generally below the state average. Comparing tables 2 and 3 reveals decreasing trends across the whole 14 Sydney Subdivisions but only scattered improvements in the state regions outside Sydney. The crime falls are also concentrated among theft offences rather than offences against the person.

INTRODUCTION

This briefing paper summarises the trends in recorded crime in New South Wales as presented in *New South Wales Recorded Crime Statistics 2003*. Firstly, recent crime trends in New South Wales are reviewed for the 16 major criminal offence categories. Secondly, regional trends are examined for these major offence categories in each of the twelve Statistical Divisions within New South Wales 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 New South Wales, however, these statistics should be interpreted with

care. Changes in recorded crime rates may reflect any of several things:

- There may have been a change in the number of crimes that have occurred;
- Public willingness or the ability to report crime to the police may have altered. This is particularly true for some personal offence categories such as assault or sexual assault, and property crimes such as malicious damage to property, that are subject to variations in police reporting;
- Trends may reflect changes in policing policy and activity. 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;

Table 1: Summary of NSW Recorded Crime Statistics 2002 and 2003: Comparison of twenty-four month trends and annual percentage changes for selected offence categories

<i>Offence category</i>	<i>January 2001 to December 2002</i>	<i>January 2002 to December 2003</i>
Assault	No significant trend	No significant trend
Sexual assault	No significant trend	No significant trend
Indecent assault, act of indecency and other sexual offences	No significant trend	No significant trend
Robbery without a weapon	-17.9%	-4.6%
Robbery with a firearm	No significant trend	No significant trend
Robbery with a weapon not a firearm	-36.5%	-19.3%
Break and enter – dwelling	-12.9%	-11.4%
Break and enter – non-dwelling	-20.9%	-12.8%
Motor vehicle theft	-22.2%	-17.3%
Steal from motor vehicle	-15.7%	-14.7%
Steal from retail store	7.5%	No significant trend
Steal from dwelling	No significant trend	No significant trend
Steal from person	No significant trend	-6.8%
Fraud	No significant trend	-15.2%
Malicious damage to property	No significant trend	No significant trend

- Where the number of recorded incidents is very 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. Caution should be exercised when regional crime statistics are being compared, particularly for the less frequently occurring offences, such as robbery and sexual assault.

SUMMARY OF TRENDS

Table 1 compares the trends in recorded crime in New South Wales reported in the 2002 and 2003 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*. The tests cover the 24-month period January 2001 to December 2002 (in the 2002 report), and January 2002 to December 2003 (in the 2003 report). When a statistically significant trend is detected, the percentage change between the annual numbers of recorded criminal incidents is reported.

Significant upward trends

Over the period considered to December 2003, no major offence showed a statistically significant upward

trend in the monthly numbers of recorded criminal incidents in New South Wales. In comparison, 12 months ago there was one major offence, *steal from retail store*, showing a significant upward trend. In 2001 there were four offences trending upwards: *assault, robbery with a firearm, steal from person and fraud*.

Offences where there was no upward or downward trend

Between January 2002 and December 2003, there was no statistically significant upward or downward trend in the monthly numbers of recorded criminal incidents for any of the following offences:

- Murder
- Assault
- Domestic assault
- Sexual assault
- Indecent assault, act of indecency, other sexual offences
- Robbery with a firearm
- Steal from dwelling
- Steal from retail store
- Malicious damage to property

Significant downward trends

Between January 2002 and December 2003, there was a statistically significant downward trend in the

number of recorded criminal incidents in New South Wales for the following eight offences:

- Robbery without a weapon (down by 4.6%)
- Robbery with a weapon not a firearm (down by 19.3%)
- Break and enter – dwelling (down by 11.4%)
- Break and enter – non-dwelling (down by 12.8%)
- Motor vehicle theft (down by 17.3%)
- Steal from motor vehicle (down by 14.7%)
- Steal from person (down by 6.8%)
- Fraud (down by 15.2%)

The first six of the above offences were also trending downwards 12 months ago. The downward trends in *steal from person* and *fraud* are relatively recent.

REGIONAL CRIME TRENDS

This section examines 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:

- Significant trends are reported for monthly recorded incidents over the 24-months to December 2003 within each New South Wales Statistical Division (SD) and each Statistical Subdivision (SSD) within Sydney SD (giving 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 New South Wales 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 New South Wales SDs and Table 3 for New South Wales SSDs 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.

Table 2: Percentage change in number of recorded incidents over the 24 months to December 2003*, major offences showing statistically significant trends in NSW Statistical Divisions

Statistical Division	Assault	Sexual assault	Indecent assault	Robbery without a weapon	Robbery with a weapon	Robbery with 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	Malicious damage
Sydney	.	.	-4.4	-19.3	-12.2	-16.0	-21.3	-17.5	.	-8.0	-7.4	-16.0	.	.
Hunter	.	-24.2	.	-30.5	.	.	.	-12.4	.	.	.	.	.	.
Illawarra	.	.	-35.6	.	.	-20.8	.	-4.9	.	.	-12.5	.	.	.
Richmond-Tweed	-9.5	.	.	-22.3	10.2	.	.	-24.8	.	.
Mid-North Coast	.	-23.2	.	.	.	.	17.5	.	.	9.7	.	-18.4	.	.
Northern	6.1	.
North Western	-19.0	-11.2	.	.	.	-21.3	.	.
Central West	5.8	.
South Eastern	.	-25.7	.	.	.	.	25.2	12.6	.	.	.	.	9.5	.
Murrumbidgee	-10.6	-20.0	.	.	.	.	.	.	18.0	.	.	.	.	.
Murray	-16.8	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Far West

* Shows the results of a statistical test for a significant upward or downward trend in the monthly number of criminal incidents recorded over 24 months. Where the trend is significant the percentage change in the number of incidents between the last 12-month period and the preceding 12-month period is shown. A positive figure indicates a significant upward trend, whereas a negative figure indicates a significant downward trend. A blank space indicates either that there was no significant upward or downward trend.

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.

Significant trends in New South Wales regions

For each of the major offence categories shown in Table 1, the monthly number of incidents between January 2002 and December 2003 was tested for a statistically significant upward or downward trend in each SD of New South Wales. Where a statistically significant trend was found, the percentage change between 2002 and 2003 was calculated. These percentage changes are shown in Table 2. Note for example that the offence category *robbery with a firearm* showed no statistically significant upward or downward trend in any New South Wales SD.

Overall the New South Wales SDs reported 28 significant decreases in the incidence of major offences

and only nine significant increases (see Table 2). Six of the significant increases involved *theft* offences and three were for *malicious damage to property*. The SDs reporting these nine increases were Richmond – Tweed SD - one, Mid-North Coast SD - two, Northern SD - one, Central West SD - one, South Eastern SD - three, and Murrumbidgee SD - one.

In contrast, the Sydney SD did not report increases in any of the offences shown and reported decreases in nine of the offences considered (see Table 3).

Note that a reported upward trend in a region does not suggest that the area necessarily 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 2003 may remain lower in these areas than elsewhere in New South Wales.

Table 3 shows the results of monthly trend tests by offence category, for each SSD within Sydney.

Table 3: Percentage change in number of recorded incidents over the 24 months to December 2003*, major offences showing statistically significant trends in NSW Statistical Subdivisions

Statistical Subdivision	Assault	Sexual assault	Indecent assault	Robbery assault, act of indecency	Robbery without a weapon	Robbery with a weapon	Robbery with 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	Malicious damage
Inner Sydney	-16.0	-9.3	-19.5	-19.6	-10.3	.	.	-7.8	.	.	.
Eastern Suburbs	.	12.7	.	.	-29.6	.	-28.7	-30.5	-19.0	.	-10.5	.	.	-14.3	.
St George-Sutherland	-7.1	.	-12.6	.	-38.5	.	-22.2	-28.5	-30.7	.	.	.	.	-23.4	.
Canterbury-Bankstown	-14.2	-22.9	-15.6	-16.1	.	.	.	.	-28.0	.
Fairfield-Liverpool	-22.7	.	-22.4	-16.8	.	.	-20.5	-20.0	.	.
Outer South Western Sydney	.	.	-26.0	.	-56.8	.	.	-20.1	-15.3	.	8.1	.	.	.	.
Inner Western Sydney	-30.1	-10.6	-31.2	.	.	.	.	.	.	-30.2	.
Central Western Sydney	-11.5	-13.6	-23.6	-21.9	.	.	.	.	-12.5	.
Outer Western Sydney	.	.	-19.1	.	.	-5.2	-9.3	-23.3	-11.5	.	.	.	.	-15.5	6.5
Blacktown	-5.2	.	.	.	.	-18.6	.	-23.0	-14.4	.	.	.	.	.	.
Lower Northern Sydney	.	.	-18.0	.	.	-22.8	-13.3	-25.6	-24.2	.	-27.3	.	-24.2	.	.
Central Northern Sydney	.	44.2	-31.3	.	.	-20.1	-20.7	-21.4	-26.3	.	.	.	.	.	.
Northern Beaches	-12.4	-14.4	-29.4	-34.1	.	.	.	.	.	.
Gosford – Wyong	.	36.0	.	.	.	-23.3	-7.9	.	.	-19.9	.	.	.	.	.

* Shows the results of a statistical test for a significant upward or downward trend in the monthly number of criminal incidents recorded over 24 months. Where the trend is significant the percentage change in the number of incidents between the last 12-month period and the preceding 12-month period is shown. A positive figure indicates a significant upward trend, whereas a negative figure indicates a significant downward trend. A blank space indicates either that there was no significant upward or downward trend.

The offence category *robbery with a firearm* is the only offence among those tested that showed no statistically significant upward or downward trend in any SSD within Sydney. As with Table 2, where a statistically significant trend was found, the percentage change between 2002 and 2003 in the annual total number of incidents was calculated.

Table 3 shows that, with just a few exceptions, recorded crime in the 14 Sydney SSDs is overwhelmingly either stable or trending downwards. As reported above, there was a statistically significant downward trend in eight major offence categories in New South Wales in the 24 months to December 2003. Each of these offences showed significant decreases in a large number of Sydney SSDs. Almost all Sydney SSDs reported significant reductions in *motor vehicle theft*, (only Inner West and Gosford - Wyong were unchanged). Decreases in *steal from motor vehicle* were reported by 12 Sydney SSDs, *break and enter-dwelling* and *non-dwelling* fell in 11 Sydney SSDs, four Sydney SSDs showed decreases in *robbery without a weapon*, and five Sydney SSDs reported reductions in the number of *robberies with weapons other than firearms*.

Steal from dwelling and *fraud* also decreased significantly in two and seven Sydney SSDs respectively.

Three offences did show localised increases in some Sydney SSDs. These were *sexual assault, increased in three SSDs*, *steal from dwelling, increased in one SSD*, and *malicious damage to property, increased in one SSD*.

Regional trends for each offence category are examined in detail below. Regions that showed a statistically significant upward or downward trend in the monthly number of recorded incidents are noted below. The regions considered are the 12 New South Wales SDs and the 14 SSDs within the Sydney SD.

TRENDS IN ASSAULT

Significant downward trends

One SD and two SSDs showed a statistically significant downward monthly trend in *assault* over the two years to December 2003.

- Murrumbidgee SD (down 10.6%)
- St George - Sutherland SSD (down 7.1%)
- Blacktown SSD (down 5.2%)

All other divisions showed no significant change.

Upward Trends

There were no significant upward trends in total *assaults*.

Table 6 shows trends in *domestic* and *non-domestic assault*. Northern Beaches SSD and Outer Western

Sydney SSD showed significant rises in *domestic assault*, however the rate of *domestic assault* in both areas remained below the state average.

TRENDS IN SEXUAL OFFENCES

Some areas showed statistically significant upward trends in the recorded incidence of *sexual assault* and some showed downward trends in *indecent assault, act of indecency, other sexual offences* between January 2002 and December 2003.

Sexual Assault

Significant upward trends

Three SSDs in Sydney showed a significant increase in the incidence of *sexual assault* over the two-year period to December 2003:

- Eastern Suburbs SSD (up 12.7%)
- Central Northern Sydney SSD (up 44.2%)
- Gosford - Wyong SSD (up 36.0%)

Gosford - Wyong was the only one of these areas to report rates of *sexual assault* above the state average.

Significant downward trends

There were no significant downward trends.

It should be remembered that the rate of reporting of *sexual assault* is very low and as such recorded crime statistics remain sensitive to relatively small changes in reporting levels.

Indecent assault, act of indecency, other sexual offences

Significant upward trends

There were no statistically significant increases in the incidence of *indecent assault, act of indecency, other sexual offences* over the two year period to December 2003.

Significant downward trends

One SSD and four SDs showed a significant fall in the incidence of *indecent assault, act of indecency, other sexual offences* over the two-year period to December 2003.

- Hunter SD (down 24.2%)
- Mid-North Coast SD (down 23.2%)
- South Eastern SD (down 25.7%)
- Murrumbidgee SD (down 20.0%)
- St George - Sutherland SSD (down 12.6%)

Mid North Coast SD, Murrumbidgee SD and the Hunter SD all have rates of *indecent assault* higher than the state average in 2003 despite reporting significant reductions.

TRENDS IN ROBBERY

The offence categories *robbery without a weapon* and *robbery with a weapon not a firearm* both showed statistically significant decreases in the number of recorded incidents over the two years to December 2003 (down 4.6% and 19.3% respectively). Over the same period there was no significant upward or downward trend in the incidence of *robbery with a firearm*. Robbery is generally confined to the Sydney SD.

Robbery without a weapon

As noted above, the recorded incidence of *robbery without a weapon* fell by 4.6 per cent over the two-year period from January 2002 to December 2003.

Significant upwards trends

No regions in New South Wales showed a significant upward trend for *robbery without a weapon* in the reference period.

Significant downwards trends

Two SDs and six SSDs showed significant downward trends in *robbery without a weapon* over the reference period.

- Sydney SD (down 4.4%)
- Illawarra SD (down 35.6%)
- Outer South Western Sydney SSD (down 26%)
- Outer Western Sydney SSD (down 19.1%)
- Lower Northern Sydney SSD (down 18%)
- Central Northern Sydney SSD (down 31.3%)

Of the areas showing significant decreases in *robbery without a weapon*, the only one to record a rate higher than the state average in 2003 was Sydney SD. The continued decrease in *robbery without a weapon* in Outer South Western Sydney dropped the rate of this offence in the area below the state average in 2003.

Robbery with a firearm

Over the two-year period January 2002 to December 2003, there was no statistically significant upward or downward trend in the incidence of *robbery with a firearm* in New South Wales. Nor did any SDs or SSDs report significant upward or downward trends in this offence.

Robbery with a weapon other than a firearm

As noted above the incidence of *robbery with a weapon not a firearm* fell in New South Wales by 19.3 per cent in the 24 months to December 2003,

Significant upward trends

As was reported last year, no regions in New South Wales showed significant increases in *robbery with a weapon not a firearm* over the time period considered.

Significant downwards trends

Consistent with the downward state trend, two SDs and five Sydney SSDs recorded significant downward trends in *robbery with a weapon not a firearm* in the time period considered.

- Sydney SD (down 19.3%)
- Hunter SD (down 30.5%)
- Inner Sydney SSD (down 16.0%)
- Eastern Suburbs SSD (down 29.6%)
- St George - Sutherland SSD (down 38.5%)
- Outer South Western Sydney SSD (down 56.8%)
- Inner Western Sydney SSD (down 30.1%)

Despite showing significant downward trends, Inner Sydney SSD and Inner Western Sydney SSD continued to report the highest rates of *robbery with a weapon not a firearm* in the state in 2003.

TRENDS IN BREAK AND ENTER OFFENCES

The recorded incidence of *break and enter - dwelling* and *break and enter - non-dwelling* continued to fall, showing significant downward trends in the in the 24 months to December 2003 (down by 11.4% and 12.8% respectively).

Break and enter - dwelling

The state downward trend in the offence of *break and enter - dwelling* was reflected in a large number of regions within New South Wales.

Significant upward trends

No SDs or Sydney SSDs showed significant upward trends in the number of *break and enter - dwelling* incidents in 2003.

Significant downward trends

Consistent with the state trend, two of the 12 New South Wales SDs and 11 of the 14 SSDs within Sydney showed significant decreases in *break and enter - dwelling* in the 24 months to December 2003.

- Sydney SD (down 12.2%)
- Richmond - Tweed SD (down 9.5%)
- Inner Sydney SSD (down 9.3%)
- Canterbury - Bankstown SSD (down 14.2%)
- Fairfield - Liverpool SSD (down 22.7%)
- Inner Western Sydney SSD (down 10.6%)
- Central Western Sydney SSD (down 11.5%)
- Outer Western Sydney SSD (down 5.2%)
- Blacktown SSD (down 18.6%)

- Lower Northern Sydney SSD (down 22.8%)
- Central Northern Sydney SSD (down 20.1%)
- Northern Beaches SSD (down 12.4%)
- Gosford - Wyong SSD (down 23.3%)

Despite recording significant decreases in *break and enter - dwelling*, Inner Sydney SSD and Inner Western Sydney SSD continue to report high rates of this offence.

Break and enter – non-dwelling

Significant upward trends

No region in New South Wales showed a significant upward trend in the incidence of *break and enter - non-dwelling* between January 2002 and December 2003.

Significant downward trends

As was reported last year, the frequency of *break and enter - non-dwelling* was in decline in most of the state in the 24 months to December 2003.

- Sydney SD (down 16.0%)
- Illawarra SD (down 20.8%)
- Murray SD (down 16.8%)
- Inner Sydney SSD (down 19.5%)
- Eastern Suburbs SSD (down 28.7%)
- St George - Sutherland SSD (down 22.2%)
- Canterbury - Bankstown SSD (down 22.9%)
- Inner Western Sydney SSD (down 31.2%)
- Central Western Sydney SSD (down 13.6%)
- Outer Western Sydney SSD (down 9.3%)
- Lower Northern Sydney SSD (down 13.3%)
- Central Northern Sydney SSD (down 20.7%)
- Northern Beaches SSD (down 14.4%)
- Gosford - Wyong SSD (down 7.9%)

TRENDS IN MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT

The incidence of motor vehicle theft fell by 17.3 per cent in New South Wales between January 2002 and December 2003.

Significant upward trends

Two regions in New South Wales showed an increase in the incidence of *motor vehicle theft* over the period considered.

- Mid-North Coast SD (up 17.5%)
- South Eastern SD (up 25.2%)

The rate of *motor vehicle theft* in both these areas remains well below the state average.

Significant downward trends

Though the incidence of *motor vehicle theft* fell in only two out of the twelve New South Wales SDs the trend in the Sydney SD, one of these, has impacted considerably on the state result. Other than Inner Western Sydney SSD and Gosford - Wyong SSD, all SSDs within the Sydney SD reported significant decreases in this offence.

- Sydney SD (down 21.3%)
- North Western SD (down 19.0%)
- Inner Sydney SSD (down 19.6%)
- Eastern Suburbs SSD (down 30.5%)
- St George-Sutherland SSD (down 28.5%)
- Canterbury - Bankstown SSD (down 15.6%)
- Fairfield - Liverpool SSD (down 22.4%)
- Outer South Western Sydney SSD (down 20.1%)
- Central Western Sydney SSD (down 23.6%)
- Outer Western Sydney SSD (down 23.3%)
- Blacktown SSD (down 23.0%)
- Lower Northern Sydney SSD (down 25.6%)
- Central Northern Sydney SSD (down 21.4%)
- Northern Beaches SSD (down 29.4%)

The areas with the highest rates of motor vehicle theft, Inner Sydney SSD, Canterbury - Bankstown SSD and Central Western Sydney SSD, are among those showing significant decreases.

TRENDS IN STEALING OFFENCES

Four types of stealing are among the sixteen major crime categories considered here and none of these showed a significant increase in the reference period. *Steal from motor vehicle* decreased by 14.7 per cent and *steal from person* decreased by 6.8 per cent between 2002 and 2003, whilst *steal from dwelling* and *steal from retail store* remained stable in the period.

Steal from Motor Vehicle

As mentioned above, the incidence of *steal from motor vehicle* fell 14.7 per cent from 2002 to 2003 following a similar percentage fall for the period 2001 to 2002.

Significant upward trends

Only one region in New South Wales showed an increase in *steal from motor vehicle*.

- South Eastern SD (up 12.6 %)

However, the rate of *steal from motor vehicle* in the South Eastern SD remains the lowest rate of all NSW SDs as was the case in 2001 and 2002.

Significant downward trends

The downward state pattern was evident in five New South Wales SDs and 12 Sydney SSDs.

- Sydney SD (down 17.5%)
- Hunter SD (down 12.4%)
- Illawarra SD (down 4.9%)
- Richmond - Tweed SD (down 22.3%)
- North Western SD (down 11.2%)
- Inner Sydney SSD (down 10.3%)
- Eastern Suburbs SSD (down 19.0%)
- St George - Sutherland SSD (down 30.7%)
- Canterbury - Bankstown SSD (down 16.1%)
- Fairfield - Liverpool SSD (down 16.8%)
- Outer South Western Sydney SSD (down 15.3%)
- Central Western Sydney SSD (down 21.9%)
- Outer Western Sydney SSD (down 11.5%)
- Blacktown SSD (down 14.4%)
- Lower Northern Sydney SSD (down 24.2%)
- Central Northern Sydney SSD (down 26.3%)
- Northern Beaches SSD (down 34.1%)

Inner Sydney SSD remains the area with the highest rate of *steal from motor vehicle*, at more than three times the state average.

Steal from Retail Store

Steal from retail store did not show a significant increase or decrease between 2002 and 2003.

Significant upward trends

Two New South Wales SDs showed significant increases in the incidence of *steal from retail store* between January 2002 and December 2003.

- Richmond - Tweed SD (up 10.2%)
- Murrumbidgee SD (up 18.0%)

Significant downwards trends

One Sydney SSD showed a significant decrease in the incidence of *steal from retail store* between January 2002 and December 2003.

- Gosford - Wyong SSD (down 19.9%)

The rate of *steal from retail store* in Gosford - Wyong is equivalent to the state average.

Steal from dwelling

In the 24 months to December 2003, the incidence of *steal from dwelling* was stable in New South Wales.

Significant upward trends

One Sydney SSD and one SD in New South Wales showed a significant increase in *steal from dwelling*.

- Outer South Western Sydney SSD (up 8.1%)
- Mid-North Coast SD (up 9.7%)

Significant downward trends

One SD and two SSDs within Sydney showed significant decreases in *steal from dwelling*.

- Sydney SD (down 8.0%)
- Eastern Suburbs SSD (down 10.5%)
- Lower Northern Sydney SSD (down 27.3%)

Despite the decrease in recorded incidents of *steal from dwelling* in the Inner Sydney and Eastern Suburbs SSD, the rate of this offence is above the New South Wales average.

Steal from person

The incidence of *steal from person* showed a significant downward trend (down 6.8% year on year) in the 24 months from January 2002 to December 2003.

Significant upward trends

No regions in NSW reported a statistically significant increase in *steal from person* over the reference period.

Significant downward trends

Regions in the state that reported a significant decrease in *steal from person* for the period were:

- Sydney SD (down 7.4%)
- Illawarra SD (down 12.5%)
- Inner Sydney SSD (down 7.8%)
- Fairfield - Liverpool SSD (down 20.5%)

The rate of *steal from person* is highest in Inner Sydney SSD, Eastern Suburbs SSD and Inner Western Sydney SSD. Illawarra SD and Fairfield - Liverpool SSD are below the state average.

Trends in Fraud

The recorded incidence of *fraud* showed a statistically significant downward trend of 15.2 per cent between January 2002 and December 2003 in New South Wales. There were many areas within the state that recorded significant decreases in this offence over this time.

Significant upward trends

There were no significant upward trends in the recorded incidence of *fraud* in any New South Wales SDs or Sydney SSDs during the period.

Significant downward trends

Four New South Wales SDs and seven Sydney SSDs recorded decreases in the incidence of *fraud* in the 24 months to December 2003.

- Sydney SD (down 16.0%)
- Richmond – Tweed SD (down 24.8%)
- Mid-North Coast SD (down 18.4%)
- North Western SD (down 21.3%)
- St George – Sutherland SSD (down 23.4%)
- Canterbury – Bankstown SSD (down 28.0%)
- Fairfield – Liverpool SSD (down 20.0%)
- Inner Western Sydney SSD (down 30.2%)
- Central Western Sydney SSD (down 12.5%)
- Outer Western Sydney SSD (down 15.5%)
- Lower Northern Sydney SSD (down 24.2%)

Trends in Malicious Damage to Property

The incidence of *malicious damage to property* showed no significant recorded increase or decrease in New South Wales between January 2002 and December 2003.

Significant upward trends

Three New South Wales SDs and one Sydney SSD showed significant upward trends in *malicious damage to property* over this time period.

- Northern SD (up 6.1%)
- Central West SD (up 5.8%)
- South Eastern SD (up 9.5%)
- Outer Western Sydney SSD (up 6.5%)

Of the regions trending upwards in *malicious damage to property*, all have rates higher than the state average.

Significant downward trends

One Sydney SSD showed a significant decrease in the incidence of *malicious damage to property* over this time period:

- Eastern Suburbs SSD (down 14.3%)

Eastern Suburbs SSD has a lower recorded rate of *malicious damage to property* than the state average.

SUMMARY

The regional trends in recorded crime for 16 major offence categories have been summarised in this paper. In general the rates of criminal incidents for all these offence categories is either stable or trending down. Table 1 shows a continuation of all the significant downward trends from 2002 to 2003 (though at slightly reduced rates) as well as the addition of two more significant downward trends (*steal from person* and *fraud*). The only offence reported to be rising in last year's report, *steal from retail store*, is now stable.

The patterns of decline in the eight major offences trending downwards were evident across much of Sydney. The incidence of *break and enter – dwelling*, *break and enter – non-dwelling*, *motor vehicle theft* and *steal from motor vehicle* all fell in at least 11 of the 14 Sydney SSDs.

The area in the state with the greatest number of offences increasing was the South Eastern SD. Three offences rose in this region in the 24 months to December 2003: *motor vehicle theft*, *steal from motor vehicle* and *malicious damage to property*. One offence showed a significant decrease: *indecent assault, act of indecency and other sexual offences*. Despite these upward trends South Eastern SD generally reported rates below the NSW average. The Sydney SD reported the highest number of falls in offending rates with nine significant downward trends.

Some other regional areas showed little evidence of the state downward trends in crime. Northern SD, Central West SD and Far West SD reported no decreases in any of the 16 major crime categories. The Murray SD reported a decrease only in *break and enter – non dwelling*. Sydney SSDs on the other hand all reported significant downward trends in at least three offences. In general 2003 seemed to show stable rates for crimes against the person and decreasing rates of property related crimes.

NOTES

- 1 Moffatt S., Goh, D. and Fitzgerald, J., 2004, *New South Wales Recorded Crime Statistics 2003*, 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 edition, John Wiley and Sons, pp. 256-260. A five per cent 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 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 identified in Tables 4 and 5.

**Table 4: NSW Statistical Divisions with upward trends in crime rates
for major offence categories: January 2002 to December 2003**

Offence category	Significant upward trends in NSW Statistical Divisions (SD), other than Sydney SD	Increases in Statistical Subdivisions (SSD) within listed Statistical Divisions
Motor vehicle theft	South Eastern* (25.2%) Mid-North Coast* (17.5%)	Snowy (94.4%) Southern Tablelands* (61.4%) Lower South Coast (7.6%) Queanbeyan (6.4%) Hastings* (34.3%) Clarence (1.4%)
Steal from motor vehicle	South Eastern* (12.6%)	Southern Tablelands (27.9%) Queanbeyan (14.1%) Lower South Coast (6.9%)
Steal from retail store	Murrumbidgee* (18%) Richmond-Tweed* (10.2%)	Central Murrumbidgee* (18.1%) Lower Murrumbidgee (17.8%) Tweed Heads* (43.8%)
Steal from dwelling	Mid-North Coast* (9.7%)	Hastings* (25.7%)
Malicious damage to property	South Eastern (9.5%) Northern (6.1%) Central West (5.8%)	Queanbeyan* (31.5%) Lower South Coast* (18.6%) Southern Tablelands* (3.7%) Northern Tablelands* (20.6%) North Central Plain* (11.1%) Lachlan* (14.7%) Bathurst-Orange* (6.7%)

* indicates statistically significant upward monthly trend

'**bold italics**' indicates that the rate of offences per 100,000 population in that region (with population more than 3,000) is **higher** than the State rate in 2003.

**Table 5: Sydney Statistical Subdivisions with upward trends in crime rates
for major offence categories: January 2002 to December 2003**

Offence category	Significant upward trends in Statistical Subdivisions (SSD), within Sydney Statistical Division	Increases in Local Government Areas (LGA) within Sydney Statistical Subdivisions
Sexual assault	Central Northern Sydney* (44.2%) Gosford-Wyong* (36%) Eastern Suburbs SD* (12.7%)	Hornsby* (84.2%) Kuringai (30%) Baulkham Hills (17.4%) Gosford (44.9%) Wyong (26.4%) Waverley (57.1%)
Steal from dwelling	Outer South Western Sydney* (8.1%)	Campbelltown* (13.1%) Wollondilly* (12.8%)
Malicious damage to property	Outer Western Sydney* (6.5%)	Hawkesbury* (18.3%) Blue Mountains (9.8%) Penrith (2.1%)

* indicates statistically significant upward monthly trend

'**bold italics**' indicates that the rate of offences per 100,000 population in that region (with population more than 3,000) is **higher** than the State rate in 2003.

Table 6: Percentage change in recorded incidents of assault in 2003, compared with 2002, for regions showing statistically significant trends*

<i>Statistical Division</i>	<i>Total assault</i>	<i>Non-domestic</i>	<i>Domestic assault</i>
Sydney			
Inner Sydney			
Eastern Suburbs			
St George – Sutherland	-7.1		
Canterbury – Bankstown			
Fairfield – Liverpool			
Outer South Western Sydney			
Inner Western Sydney			
Central Western Sydney			
Outer Western Sydney			12.6
Blacktown	-5.2	-6.5	
Lower Northern Sydney			-17.6
Central Northern Sydney			
Northern Beaches			14.0
Gosford – Wyong			
Hunter			
Illawarra			
Richmond – Tweed			
Mid-North Coast			
Northern			
North Western			
Central West			
South Eastern			
Murrumbidgee	-10.6	-10.9	
Murray			
Far West			
New South Wales			

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

'**bold italics**' indicates that the rate of offences per 100,000 population in that region (with population more than 3,000) is **higher** than the State rate in 2003.