

THE INCREASE IN 'OTHER OFFENCES' AND 'OTHER OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON'

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Between January 2002 and December 2003 there was a significant increase in the recorded incidence of other offences (up 27.8% from 2002 to 2003) and other offences against the person (up 12.5% from 2002 to 2003) in New South Wales. This paper provides information on which specific offence categories contributed to this growth.

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research publishes trend information on sixteen categories of crime (see Recorded Crime Statistics 2003). These categories have been selected because they provide an indication of underlying trends in offences that most people would regard as serious. There are a number of offence categories other than the 16 major offence categories for which trend results are not commonly reported. Offences not included in the 16 major categories include.

- Offences, such as *drug offences, betting and gaming offences and driving offences*, which reflect police enforcement activity rather than trends in the prevalence of offending.
- Offences that are relatively uncommon (e.g. *extortion/blackmail*);
- Offences that are comparatively minor (e.g. *prostitution offences, offensive conduct and offensive language*)
- Offences that are aggregations of a number of miscellaneous categories (such as *other theft, other offences and other offences against the person*).

In the 24 months to December 2003 the category *other offences* rose by 27.8 per cent. Over the same period the category *other offences against the person* rose 12.5 per cent. Both increases were statistically significant.

The upward trend in 'other offences'

Table 1 shows the 12 most common incident categories in *other offences*. In 2003 the offence category *transport offence* accounts for nearly one in two *other offences*. Most of the growth in *other offences* has come from *transport offences*.

Transport offences involve criminal incidents occurring on trains and railway stations. As can be seen from Table 2, most *transport offences* concern fare evasion or the breaching of rules that apply to train travel.

Figure 1 shows the trend in *transport offences* alongside the trend in *other offences* from January 1998 to December 2003. Not surprisingly, given the pattern shown in Table 1, the pattern of *other offences* closely mirrors that of its major subgroup *transport offences*.

The upward trend in 'other offences against the person'

The number of incidents of *other offences against the person* reported by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research increased by 12.5 per cent in the 24 months from January 2002 to December 2003.

Table 3 shows the five incident categories that form *other offences against the person*. The dominant incident category is *intimidation*, which accounted for 81 per cent of *other offences against the person* incidents in 2003.

Table 1: Trends in the recorded incidence of high volume incident categories within other offences

<i>Police incident category</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>24-month trend</i>	<i>Percentage of all 'other offences' in 2003</i>
Transport offence	24,504	43,662	up 78.2%	44.6
Telecommunications offence	11,263	12,424	up 10.3%	12.7
Trespass	7,336	7,277	stable	7.4
Other miscellaneous offence	4,513	4,195	stable	4.3
Animals – dog offences	3,305	3,137	stable	3.2
Consume alcohol in alcohol-free zone	3,090	3,030	stable	3.1
Liquor act – offence by licensee/employee	2,912	2,767	stable	2.8
Consume alcohol in public by minor	2,228	2,559	stable	2.6
Other street offence	1,632	2,556	up 56.6%	2.6
Liquor Act – offence by minor	1,307	1,594	up 22.0%	1.6
Marine / waterway act	1,017	1,582	up 55.6%	1.6
Liquor Act – Offence by customer not minor	1,450	1,551	stable	1.6
Remaining <i>other offences</i>	9,996	11,516	stable	11.8
<i>Other offences</i>	76,553	97,850	up 27.8%	100.0

Table 2: Offence group of charges laid in response to recorded incidents of transport offences¹

<i>ASOC² group of charges arising from transport offences</i>	<i>Percentage of all 'transport offence' charges</i>
Transport offence	44.6
Fare evasion	58.3
Transport offence (e.g. refuse to show ticket, consume alcohol on train)	22.7
Regulatory public order offence (e.g. smoke on train, feet on seats)	7.3
Offensive conduct (e.g. offensive language on trains)	4.4
Deception (e.g. giving a false name)	2.3
Trespass	0.8
Other charges for <i>transport offences</i>	4.2

1 This information is derived from charge records and does not consider transport offence matters where a charge was not recorded.
 2 Australian Standard Offence Classification devised by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Figure 1: Recorded incidents of other offences and the subset transport offences, January 1998 to December 2003

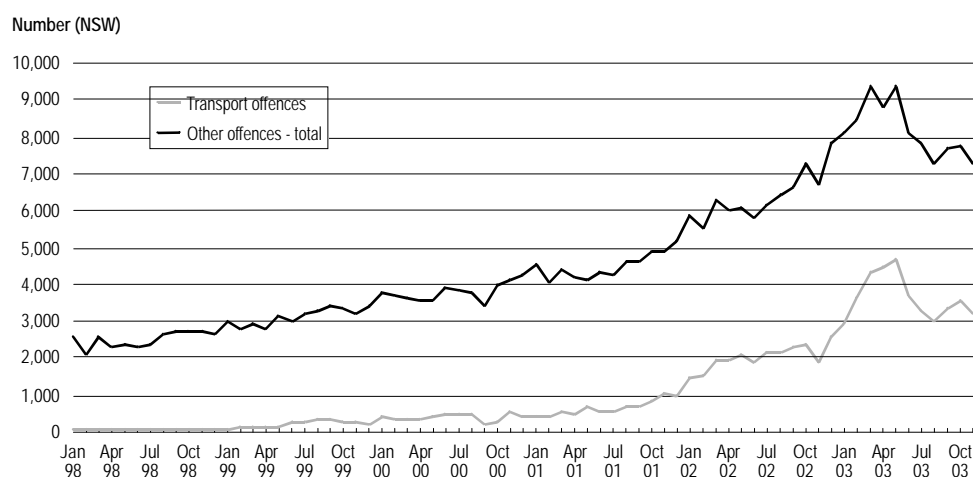


Table 3: Trends in police incidents within *other offences against the person*

<i>Police incident category</i>	2002	2003	24 month trend	Percentage of all 'other offences' in 2003
Intimidation	4,794	5,423	up 13.1%	81.1
Other miscellaneous offence against the person	857	986	up 15.1%	14.8
Malicious damage intent injure/endanger	269	259	stable	3.9
Negligent act cause GBH	4	5	stable	0.1
Offence against transport service	15	10	stable	0.1
Other offences against the person	5,939	6,683	Up 12.5%	100.0

The most common charge laid in response to an *intimidation* incident is 'Stalking or intimidating with the intention of causing another person to fear physical or mental harm' (see Appendix A).

Figure 2 shows the monthly number of *other offences against the person* incidents along with the incidence of its major subcategory *intimidation*. It is obvious that the increase in *other offences against the person* is primarily attributable to an increase in *intimidation* incidents (up 13.1%).

Why have *transport and intimidation offences* increased?

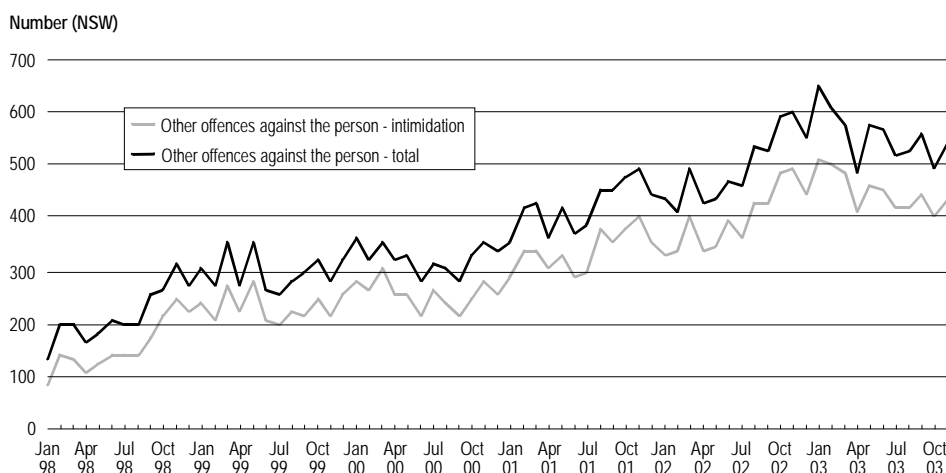
The increase in the recorded incidence of *transport offences* between January 2002 and December 2003 is probably due to an increase in enforcement activity on the railway network over this period. In the first half of 2002 there were between 200 and 220 transit police in New South Wales. Following a restructure in July 2002 the number of transit police has steadily grown to reach 293 in March 2004. Active enforcement of transport offences

was also stepped up during the conduct of Operation Hawke for nine months from the beginning of 2003. During this operation the State Rail Authority funded extra transit police to police particular trains and stations.

Evidence of the increased enforcement can be seen in the number of trains patrolled, which rose from 59,000 trains patrolled in 2002 to 85,500 trains patrolled in 2003.

NSW Police advise that the increase in the incidence of *intimidation* incidents may reflect improved recording of stalking offences as a result of police officer education programs. NSW Police advise that since March 2002 NSW Police have been delivering a training package titled 'The Investigation of Domestic Violence' which is more comprehensive and practical than previous domestic violence investigation training. Since March 2002 all new domestic violence liaison officers, persons moving into team leader roles and some general duties officers have completed this module. In addition, in June 2003 the NSW Police ran a Professional Development Day addressing stalking crimes.

Figure 2: Recorded incidents of *other offences against the person* and the subset *intimidation*, January 1998 to December 2003



**APPENDIX:
Description of charges arising from
selected COPS incident categories**

Description of charges arising from selected COPS incident categories: *Transport offences*

<i>No. of charges 12 mths to Sept 03</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>NSW Rail Safety (General) Regulation 2003</i>	<i>Description</i>
4591	31.4	5(1)(b)	A person must not, without reasonable excuse, travel on a train unless the person (or someone accompanying the person) holds a valid ticket for the person's travel.
2168	14.8	5(1)(a)	A person must not, without reasonable excuse, travel on a train unless the fare for the person's travel has been paid.
715	4.8	10	A person who is on a train or in a restricted area of a station must make his or her ticket available for inspection or processing by an authorised officer on that officer's request (includes return portion of ticket).
697	4.1	15(1)	A person must not smoke on any train or on any part of railway land or any part of monorail works that is roofed or otherwise covered.
606	4.1	Rail Safety Regulation 1999 8(1)	A person must not, without reasonable excuse, travel on a train without holding a valid ticket for the travel concerned. (Person of or over 18 years)
600	3.8	17(1)	A person must not drink any intoxicating liquor or any train, any railway land or any part of monorail works.
551	3.1	9(1)	A person must not travel on a train on the authority of a concession ticket unless the person is, because his or her age, occupation or status, entitled to the concession ticket.
458	4.8	13(1)(a)	A person must not on any train, on any railway land or on any part of monorail works wilfully use offensive language

Description of charges arising from selected COPS incident categories: *Telecommunications offences*

<i>No. of charges 12 mths to Sept 03</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Commonwealth Crimes Act 1914</i>	<i>Description</i>
580	64	85ZE(1)(a)	A person must not intentionally use a carriage service supplied by a carrier with the result that another person is menaced or harassed.
184	20	85ZE(1)(b)	A person must not intentionally use a carriage service supplied by a carrier in such a way as would be regarded by reasonable persons as being, in all the circumstances, offensive.
26	3	85ZK(1)(b)	A person shall not use equipment connected to a telecommunications network in, or in relation to, the commission of an offence against a law of the Commonwealth or of a State or Territory.

Description of charges arising from selected COPS incident categories: *Other street offences*

<i>No. of charges 12 mths to Sept 03</i>	<i>Percentage</i>		<i>Description</i>
541	42		No Law Part assigned
131	10	Summary Offences 11(1)	A person under the age of 18 years possess liquor in a public place
65	5	Crimes Act 93C(1)	Affray – a person who uses or threatens unlawful violence towards another and whose conduct is such as would cause a person of reasonable firmness present at the scene to fear for his or her personal safety is guilty of affray.
45	4	Summary Offences 6(A)	Enter boat or vehicle without consent of owner / occupier

Description of charges arising from selected COPS incident categories: *Intimidation*

<i>No. of charges 12 mths to Sept 03</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>S Crimes Act</i>	<i>Description</i>
1,952	64	562AB(l)	Stalks or intimidate with the intention of causing the another person to fear physical or mental harm.
538	18	60(1)	Intimidate police officer in the execution of the officer's duty, although no actual bodily harm is occasioned to the officer.
146	5	s 545B(1)(i)	Use intimidation/violence to unlawfully influence another person.

Description of charges arising from selected COPS incident categories: *Other offences against the person*

<i>No. of charges 12 mths to Sept 03</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Crimes Act 1900</i>	<i>Description</i>
55	14	93C(1)	A person who uses or threatens unlawful violence towards another and whose conduct is such as would cause a person of reasonable firmness present at the scene to fear for his or her personal safety is guilty of affray.
51	13	562AB(1)	A person who stalks or intimidates another person with the intention of causing the other person to fear physical or mental harm.
44	11	33B(1)(a)	Any person who uses, attempts to use, threatens to use or possesses an offensive weapon or instrument with intent to prevent or hinder the lawful apprehension or detention either of himself or herself or any other person.
