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In reply please quote:

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Crime & Place:**

### **An Analysis of Assaults & Robberies in Inner Sydney**

An analysis of assault and robbery 'hot spots' by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research has revealed the five worst locations in Inner Sydney.

They are Darlinghurst Road, Kings Cross; Oxford Street, Darlinghurst; George Street, CBD (particularly outside Town Hall Railway Station and the George Street cinema complex); George Street, Wynyard/The Rocks; and Redfern Station.

Darlinghurst Road experienced an average of one assault per day and one robbery every three days.

Oxford Street experienced an average of one assault per day and one robbery every three days.

George Street in the CBD experienced an average of one assault per day and one robbery every one to two days.

George Street, Wynyard/The Rocks, experienced an average of one assault every one to days and one robbery per week.

Redfern Station experienced one assault every two days and one robbery every two days.

Assaults tended to cluster around licensed premises. Seventeen per cent of all assaults in Inner Sydney occurred on licensed premises and an unknown percentage occurred immediately outside licensed premises.

Assaults inside licensed premises accounted for 33 per cent of all assaults recorded in Kings Cross.

Compared with assaults, robberies were more likely to occur in less well lit streets away from main thoroughfares.

Assault victims and offenders tended to be about the same age (i.e. between 21 and 30) with most offenders being male but about one quarter of victims being female.

Most (85%) assault offenders were solo offenders. Only a small percentage of assault victims were seriously injured. Only 11 per cent of assaults involved weapons.

Robbery offenders generally tended to be younger (i.e. 16-25) than their victims. Most robbery offenders were male but about a quarter of their victims were female. Robbery incidents split fairly evenly between one offender and more than one offender.

Assault incidents peaked in the warmer months, with the number of assault incidents in March 1996 being nearly twice as high as the number in July 1995. The peak time for assault was midnight to 3.00 a.m. on weekends.

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As with assaults, the peak months for robbery were the warmer months and the peak time was between midnight and 3.00 a.m. on weekends. However, compared with assaults, a slightly higher percentage of robberies tended to occur in the evenings between 6.00 p.m. and midnight.

As well as analyzing 'hot spots' of recorded crime, the Bureau conducted interviews with victims of assault and robbery who were treated at St Vincent's Hospital Casualty Department or who reported the offence to Police.

The interviews with assault victims revealed that 40 per cent of victims had consumed alcohol immediately before the assault. In fact more than 20 per cent had consumed four or more drinks in the two hours before the attack.

The vast majority (84%) of assault victims were Caucasian with about 11 per cent of the assault victims surveyed saying that the apparent motive was racism and about 13 per cent saying that the motive for the assault was homophobic.

Victims of robbery were less likely to have been drinking than victims of assault but a quarter of the robbery victims had nonetheless been drinking in the two hours before the offence.

A smaller percentage of robbery victims were seriously injured compared with assault victims. About 25 per cent of robberies involved a weapon of some kind but firearms were used in only 3.5 per cent of robberies.

One quarter of the victims of robbery were residents of the area in which they were robbed. About 20 per cent of robbery victims were approached by someone on the pretext of seeking assistance or help.

Commenting on the findings, the Director of the Bureau, Dr Don Weatherburn, said that, above all, they highlighted the value of geographical mapping of crime to crime control.

"Identifying and tracking the 'hot spots' and 'hot times' for crime would allow police to mobilize both their own and the community's resources more effectively in fighting crime", he said.

"As the Government has also recognized, with the establishment of the Kings Cross Place Management Project, it is also extremely important to ensure clear lines of accountability for the management of places which tend to present public order problems."

The Bureau report also argues that active enforcement of liquor licensing laws would help reduce the number of assaults in Inner Sydney, while getting more heroin users into methadone treatment would help reduce the number of robberies in Inner Sydney.

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