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In reply please quote:

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MEDIA RELEASE

Validation of NSW police crime statistics: A regional analysis

Despite occasional media suggestions to the contrary, there is no evidence of any systematic non-recording of break and enter or motor vehicle theft by NSW police according to a report released today by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics.

The report contains the results of the first State-wide audit of local area command (LAC) police crime statistics conducted by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

The audit was initiated by the Bureau following a decline in NSW crime figures and the reports from the United States that some senior police in that country had been apprehended falsifying crime figures.

Earlier this year the Fairfield City Champion canvassed reports from local residents claiming that police in Cabramatta were not recording break and enter offences.

To test the validity of NSW police crime reports the Bureau compared trends in '000' emergency calls (which are not controlled by Local Area Commanders) with trends in crime recorded by each of the 80 LACs across New South Wales.

For the overwhelming majority of LACs there is a close correspondence between trends in '000' emergency calls for break and enter or motor vehicle theft and trends in the number of these offences recorded by police.

The few discrepancies which were observed by the Bureau stemmed from LACs where the number of emergency '000' calls was very low and where some statistical discrepancies would be expected.

Commenting on the figures, the Director of the Bureau, Dr Don Weatherburn, said that they provided reassuring evidence of the integrity of the crime recording system in New South Wales.

'Our investigation does not rule out the possibility of any deliberate non-recording of crime by any NSW police officer. However, it does suggest that such non-recording, if it exists, is not widespread and has not affected trends in break and enter and motor vehicle theft.'

'Nevertheless, in order to maintain public confidence in the integrity of NSW crime statistics the Bureau will expand its audit program to include other major offences such as assault and robbery.'

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