



Release date: 19 April 2000

MEDIA RELEASE

NSW Recorded Crime Statistics 1999

Figures released by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research today confirm that New South Wales is experiencing no upward trend and significant downward trends in most major categories of crime.

Over the 24 month period to December 1999, there was a statistically significant downward trend in monthly numbers of recorded incidents for the following offences:

- Robbery with a firearm (down 24%),
- Robbery with a weapon other than a firearm (down 20%),
- Break and enter dwelling (down 10%),
- Break and enter non-dwelling (down 7%),
- Motor vehicle theft (down 11%),
- Sexual assault (down 10%),
- Indecent assault and other sexual offences (down 16%).

No offence showed a statistically significant upward trend across the State. Trends in murder, assault, robbery without a weapon, steal from a motor vehicle, steal from a retail store, steal from a dwelling, steal from the person, fraud and malicious damage to property remained stable.

Four of the sixteen major offence categories (indecent assault/other sexual offences, robbery with a firearm, motor vehicle theft and steal from a retail store) are now either at or below the levels recorded in 1995.

The rates of a further three offences (sexual assault, break and enter dwelling and break and enter non-dwelling) have returned to around 1996 levels.

The remaining offences are either at their 1997 levels or showed little change between 1998 and 1999.

The trend in different parts of urban and regional NSW generally mirrors the State-wide trend, although upward trends in some offences were recorded in some regions.

The Central West Statistical Division (SD) recorded a 17 per cent increase in assaults.

The Central Western Sydney and Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Statistical Subdivisions (SSD) recorded increases in robbery without a weapon of 11 and 12 per cent, respectively (although note that the incidence of robbery in the latter SSD is still very low).

The South Eastern Statistical SD recorded more than a doubling in the number of robberies with a weapon other than a firearm (although note that the number of incidents recorded in 1999 in this SD was only 23).

continued over ...

The Hornsby Ku-ring-gai and St George Sutherland SSDs recorded increases in break and enter non-dwelling of 24 and 14 per cent, respectively (although the rate of break and enter non-dwelling in both SSDs is still well below the State rate).

The Bureau audited the police crime figures by comparing them with insurance claim figures and police emergency calls for service. Trends in these data generally mirror the trends in crime recorded by police on COPS, providing further confirmation that the downward trend in crime is not the result of any failure on the part of police to record crime.

Commenting on the figures the Director of the Bureau, Dr Don Weatherburn, said that they confirmed that the downward trend in crime identified by the Bureau in the middle of last year had continued and, in some cases accelerated.

‘There are still a few areas where crime appears to be rising but several of these areas have crime rates well below the State rate or involve relatively small numbers of offences’, he said.

Further enquiries:

Dr Don Weatherburn: 02 9231 9190 (wk), 0419 494 408 (mob)