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DIRECTOR

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MEDIA RELEASE

ABS Crime and Safety Survey - 1999 (NSW Commentary)

The latest crime victim survey figures released today by the ABS show that the risk of falling victim to crime in New South Wales was either the same or lower than the risk in 1999.

To compile the figures, the ABS surveys a representative sample of almost 10,000 people aged 15 years and over (in about 4,500 households) and asks them about their experiences of crime.

The survey covers the 12 month period to April, 2000 and covers both household crime (i.e. household break-in and motor vehicle theft) and personal crime (i.e. assault, robbery and sexual assault).

The household crime victimisation rate fell from 10.7 per cent in the 12 months to April 1999 to 9.4 per cent in the twelve months to April 2000. This is a drop of 12 per cent.

Although not statistically significant, the personal crime victimisation rate fell from 4.7 per cent to 4.4 per cent over the same period.

The ABS figures refute the popular assumption that crimes of violence are nearly always the work of predatory strangers.

Almost 50 per cent of assaults were committed by someone known to the victim of the offence. Remarkably, one out of every 10 victims of assault was assaulted by a family member.

A small proportion of persons and households account for a large proportion of crime victimisation in New South Wales.

In the case of assault, for example, almost 45 per cent of victims experienced more than one assault over the preceding 12 months. They accounted for 72 per cent of all assault incidents.

Twenty-four per cent of robbery victims experienced more than one robbery incident. They accounted for 45 per cent of all robbery incidents.

Seventeen per cent of households experienced more than one break and enter in the previous 12 months. They accounted for 34 per cent of all break and enter incidents.

Commenting on the figures, the Director of the Bureau, Dr Don Weatherburn, said that they are broadly consistent with trends in crime recorded by the NSW Police Service over the last two years.

'The high rates of repeat victimisation are of considerable importance for crime prevention policy', he said.

'They suggest that measures designed to protect the minority of individuals who are victimised more than once in any 12 month period would be a very effective and efficient way of reducing overall crime levels.'

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