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In reply please quote:

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MEDIA RELEASE

Recent trends in recorded crime and police activity in Cabramatta

Arrests are up and crime is down or stable in Cabramatta according to a new report on the suburb's crime problems released today by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

The Bureau began closely monitoring trends in crime and police activity in Cabramatta after it released findings to a NSW Legislative Council enquiry into Cabramatta policing in November 2000 showing an increase in crime and a fall in arrests for drug offences.

Over the 24 months to December 2001, recorded crime in Cabramatta for all major violent and property offence categories was either stable or falling.

The most notable changes were a 37 per cent decrease in the number of motor vehicle theft offences between 2000 and 2001, and a 25 per cent decrease in steal from a motor vehicle offences over the same period. Unarmed robberies decreased by five per cent while robberies with a non-firearm weapon decreased by seven per cent.

Rates of assault, robbery with a firearm and steal from the person remained stable but the rates of robbery with a firearm and steal from the person remained higher in Cabramatta than across the State as a whole.

The downward trends in crime in Cabramatta coincided with a substantial (50 per cent) increase in the number of all offenders proceeded against by way of arrest and charge, rather than court attendance notice.

They also coincided with a 44 per cent increase in the number of knife searches and a ten fold increase in the number of occasions on which police exercised their powers to 'move on' suspected drug dealers and users.

Between 2000 and 2001 the number of arrests for dealing and trafficking in narcotics remained stable but arrests for use and possess and dealing and trafficking in cocaine increased.

According to the Director of the Bureau, Dr Don Weatherburn, the jump in arrests for cocaine offences is linked with the shortage of heroin in Cabramatta and elsewhere.

'As the heroin shortage took hold in the first few months of 2001, heroin users began switching from heroin to cocaine. Police have responded to this new trend by increasing the level of enforcement they direct at cocaine users and dealers', he said.

Commenting on the overall findings the Dr Weatherburn said that the downward trend in crime in Cabramatta observed by the Bureau is very encouraging.

'Cabramatta has a long way to go before it is as tranquil as Ku-ring-gai but it has shown signs of real improvement in crime over the last two years'.

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