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In reply please quote:

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## MEDIA RELEASE

### What lies behind the growth in fraud?

The number of fraud offences recorded by the NSW Police rose 16 per cent between 2000 and 2001 and a lot of the increase is coming from people who fill up their cars with petrol and drive off without paying for it.

This surprising finding emerged from a study by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research into the reasons behind the growth in fraud.

The Bureau found that the number of service station frauds rose from 4,624 in 2000 to 6,366 in 2001, a 38 per cent increase. The increase in service station or service station supermarket frauds accounted for more than half of the total increase in fraud offences recorded by NSW Police between 2000 and 2001.

Increases in service station fraud have been noticeable in all areas of the State, with the exception of the Murray Statistical Division which recorded a 48 per cent drop in such frauds.

The largest significant increases in Sydney were recorded in the Statistical Subdivisions of St George Sutherland (up 167%), Canterbury-Bankstown (up 84%) and Central Western Sydney (up 59%).

The major increase in country areas was in the Illawarra Statistical Division, which recorded a 126 per cent increase in service station fraud between 2000 and 2001.

Service station frauds are fairly evenly spread throughout the week but are a little more prevalent on Sunday and Saturday than on other days. The peak time for service station fraud is between 6.00pm and midnight.

Commenting on the problem the Director of the Bureau, Dr Don Weatherburn, said that the simplest way of preventing it was to require pre-payment of petrol, at least in areas and at times when the offence is particularly prevalent.

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