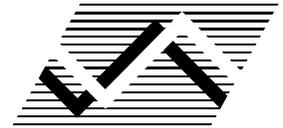


NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

NSW Attorney General's Department



DR. DON WEATHERBURN
DIRECTOR

In reply please quote:

11 September 2006

Media Release

Generation Y and Crime: A longitudinal study of contact with NSW criminal courts before the age of 21

Nearly one in 10 persons born in NSW in 1984 acquired a criminal record before the age of 21, according to a new study released today by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

To undertake this study, the Bureau obtained birth records of all people born in NSW in 1984 (the 1984 birth cohort) and then matched these records with court appearance data contained in the Bureau's Re-offending Database (ROD).

This is the first time such a study has been conducted in Australia.

The results show that most of those who appeared in court did so only once and not until after they had turned 18.

The most common offences for which members of the 1984 birth cohort appeared in court were *road traffic and motor vehicle regulatory offences*, particularly drink-driving offences.

Appearances for *murder, aggravated sexual assault and aggravated robbery* were comparatively rare, with 0.01 per cent appearing for *murder*, 0.1 per cent appearing for *aggravated sexual assault* and 0.4 per cent appearing for *aggravated robbery* before the age of 21.

Only 0.5 per cent of the entire cohort (i.e. about one in every 200) received a prison sentence before the age of 21.

The Bureau's study shows that recidivist offenders account for a disproportionately large proportion of all appearances in court.

The nine per cent of the 1984 birth cohort who appeared in court five times or more accounted for 36 per cent of the all court appearances by the cohort.

The 2.3 per cent who appeared in court 10 times or more accounted for 15 per cent of the cohort's court appearances.

Commenting on the findings, the Director of the Bureau Dr Don Weatherburn said that they highlighted the enormous potential savings in police and court time that could be gained from programs that reduce recidivism.

Further enquiries: Dr Don Weatherburn 0419-494-408 or 9231-9190.