Release date: 22 August 2001

MEDIA RELEASE

The facts on sexual assault in Bankstown

The factual evidence on sexual assault in Bankstown provides no support whatsoever either for the claim that sexual violence in that area is more prevalent than anywhere else in the State or for the claim that that the incidence of sexual assault is rising in Bankstown.

As the accompanying graph and analysis shows, the recorded rate of sexual assault in Bankstown has remained stable since 1995, mostly remaining under 10 offences per month.

The only change to this pattern occurred in the month of June 1999, when 70 incidents of sexual assault were recorded by Bankstown police.

These offences were not committed by members of a gang. Police advise me that they were mainly committed by a single individual (Lesley Ketteringham) who has since been charged, convicted and imprisoned for committing a number of wilful and obscene exposure offences.

The accompanying table shows the recorded rate of sexual assault where more than one offender (i.e. one 'POI') was involved for different areas of New South Wales. As can be seen from the fourth column of the table, the recorded rate of sexual assaults involving multiple offenders is not as high in Bankstown as it is in several other areas of the State.

The recorded rate of this type of sexual assault is nearly twice as high in the Northern Statistical Division and more than twice as high in the North Western Statistical Division. Areas such as the Central West and Far West of NSW also have significantly higher recorded rates of sexual assaults involving multiple offenders than Bankstown.

It is, of course, true, that many sexual assaults are not reported to police. There is no reason to believe, however, that victims of sexual violence are any more reluctant to report that violence to police in Bankstown than they are in any other area of the State.

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