



DR. DON WEATHERBURN
DIRECTOR

In reply please quote:

Release date: 17 September 1997

MEDIA RELEASE

NSW Criminal Courts Statistics 1996

The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research today released its annual report on the operation of the NSW Criminal Court system.

There has been little change to the profile of offences coming before the criminal courts.

Driving and theft offences are the most common offences dealt with by the Local Courts while offences against the person and theft offences are the most common offences dealt with by the Higher Criminal Courts.

The Bureau's report shows that the overwhelming majority of persons charged with criminal offences in New South Wales end up convicted of those offences.

Eighty-three per cent of charges in the Local Courts and 75 per cent of cases in the Higher Criminal Courts either result in a plea of guilty or are found proven.

The percentage of persons given a sentence of imprisonment remained stable in the Local Court but rose from 54 per cent to 61 per cent in the Higher Criminal Courts.

The length of sentence imposed on convicted offenders by the Higher Criminal Courts also rose slightly. In 1995, 61 per cent of convicted offenders received sentences of less than two years. In 1996 this figure fell to 57 per cent.

The report also contains the first comprehensive data on apprehended violence orders issued by the Local Court.

In 1996 a total of 20,344 apprehended violence orders were granted by the courts, 69 per cent of these being for domestic violence and 31 per cent being for personal violence.

On a per capita basis the highest rates at which domestic violence orders were issued were in rural areas of New South Wales such as the Far West, North Western, Murray and Mid-North Coast regions.

In the Sydney Statistical Division, the highest per capita rates of domestic violence orders were obtained by residents in the Outer South Western Sydney, Inner Sydney, Fairfield-Liverpool, Blacktown-Baulkham Hills and Gosford-Wyong subdivisions.

Further enquiries:

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