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DIRECTOR

In reply please quote:

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MEDIA RELEASE

Absconding on bail

Nearly 15 per cent of those charged by police and granted bail by the NSW Local Courts are absconding while on bail.

For some categories of offence, the figure is even higher, with nearly 30 per cent of those charged with theft offences (other than motor vehicle theft) absconding while on bail.

These findings emerged today from a study of absconding on bail by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

The study shows that repeat offenders are more likely to abscond on bail than those without a criminal record.

Seventeen per cent of those with prior convictions who were granted bail by the NSW Local Courts in 2000 absconded while on bail, compared with just four per cent of those who had no prior convictions.

Defendants charged with multiple offences were also more likely to abscond on bail.

In the Local Courts in 2000, about 12 per cent of those charged with one offence, and granted bail, absconded. This figure rose to 15 per cent for those charged with two offences, 19 per cent for those charged with three offences and 20 per cent for those charged with four or more offences.

The Bureau study shows that 85 per cent of those refused bail by the Local Court are subsequently convicted. However only 51 per cent of those refused bail end up with a prison sentence.

Commenting on the findings the Director of the Bureau, Dr Don Weatherburn, said that they showed that absconding on bail by Local Court defendants was a serious problem, particularly among repeat offenders.

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