
5 POLICE SERVICES

5.1 Introduction

The police services reported on in this chapter comprise the operations of the police agencies of each State and Territory Government and include the ACT community policing function performed by the Australian Federal Police under arrangements between the Commonwealth and ACT Governments.

The main sources of information presented are:

- a police community perceptions survey, which measured community perceptions of police services and public safety;
- reported crime rates;
- outcome of investigations data; and
- some financial and resource data.

Investigation outcome information is reported for the first time in this Report, although only preliminary data were available. In addition, full year data from the survey of community perceptions of police services and public safety are presented for the first time.

Despite the data improvements, there remains insufficient information on police services' efficiency and resource use. While it is possible to report outputs and outcomes in certain areas of police activity, such as road safety, it is not possible at this stage to measure the resources used in producing these outputs. The development of a method for collecting and presenting comparable activity survey data will allow this information to be available in future Reports.

5.2 Profile of police services

5.2.1 Objectives and functions

Police services are one component of a larger justice system which also includes courts and corrective services. Police services are the principal means through which State and Territory Governments pursue law enforcement objectives: to protect, help and reassure the community; to prevent crime; and to enforce the law.

Police agencies undertake a wide variety of crime prevention and law enforcement tasks including: responding to reported crime; investigating crimes; enforcing road safety laws; providing support to the prosecution process; and providing custodial services for detainees.

Police also respond to a broad range of more general needs in the community. They assist emergency services, mediate family and neighbourhood disputes, direct traffic, deliver messages regarding death or serious illness, and give advice to the community on a variety of policing and crime issues (CJC 1996).

Crime prevention and law enforcement activities are generally divided into 'crimes against the person', 'crimes against property' and 'road safety'. There were 146 030 reported victims of crimes against the person (796 victims per 100 000 persons) in Australia in 1996.¹ Across jurisdictions, reported victims per 100 000 persons varied from 1635 in the NT to 465 in Victoria (Figure 5.1).² Crimes against property were much more frequent than crimes against the person (1 043 461 victims or 5699 per 100 000 persons).³ The rate per 100 000 persons was highest in WA (8156) and the NT (7589) (Figure 5.1). Nationally, there were 23 191 road deaths and hospitalisations in Australia in 1996–97 (FORS 1997).

5.2.2 Structure and funding

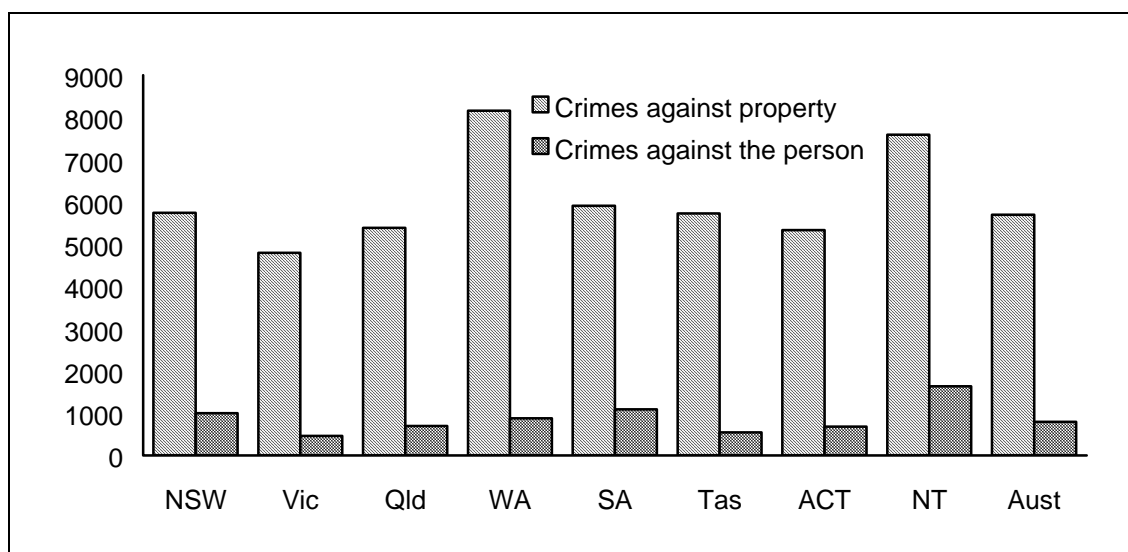
Policing activities are predominantly the responsibility of State and Territory Government police agencies. The Commonwealth Government operates the Australian Federal Police to enforce Commonwealth laws. They also provide a community policing service in the ACT on behalf of the ACT Government.

¹ Crimes against the person included: murder; attempted murder; manslaughter; driving causing death; assault; sexual assault; kidnapping/abduction; armed robbery; unarmed robbery; and blackmail/extortion.

² Certain other crimes, for example, drug offences, were not reported on.

³ Crimes against property included: unlawful entry with intent; motor vehicle theft; and other theft.

Figure 5.1: Reported victims of crimes, 1996 (victims per 100 000 population)^{a,b}



a Included only crimes covered in ABS 1997a.

b Figures were based on crimes reported to police.

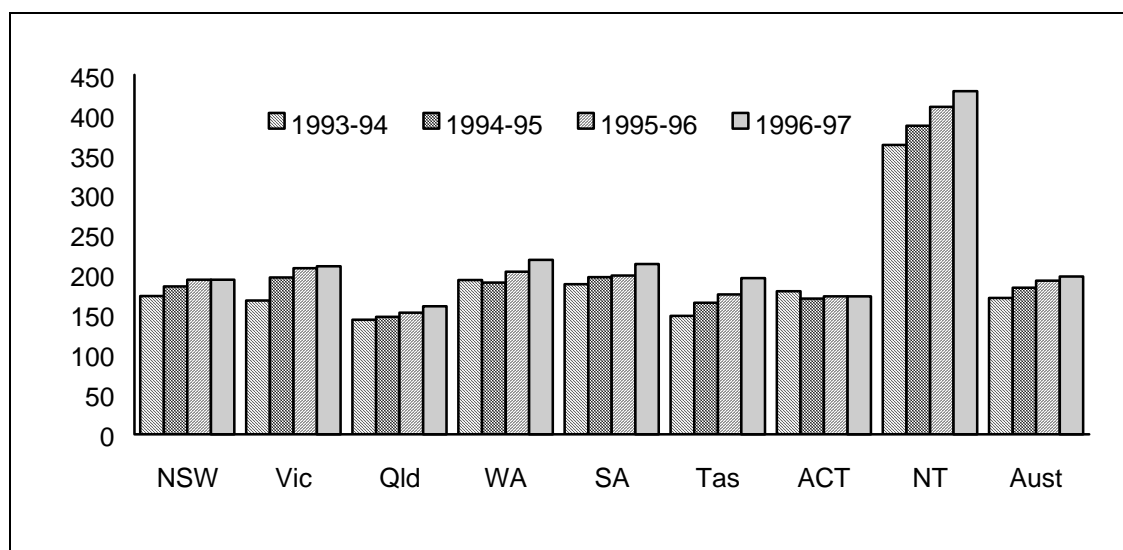
Sources: Tables 5A.30; 5A.42

Each jurisdiction's police service is autonomous, but there is significant cooperation between jurisdictions (for example, the Australasian Police Ministers' Council, the Commissioners' Conference and the various National Common Police Services).

Total recurrent expenditure on police across Australia was \$3.6 billion in 1996–97. Recurrent expenditure on police services in 1996–97 varied from \$430 per person in the NT to \$160 per person in Queensland.

There has been a general trend of rising police expenditure per person across Australia in recent years, although this has not been consistent across jurisdictions. Between 1993–94 and 1996–97 the average annual change in expenditure was -0.9 per cent (in real terms) in the ACT, whereas it was 6.4 per cent in Victoria and 4.7 per cent in the NT (Figure 5.2). Expenditure on police services in some jurisdictions in 1996–97 was affected by the need to establish infrastructure to administer the national guns buy-back program.

Figure 5.2: Police recurrent expenditure per person, 1993–94 to 1996–97 (in 1996–97 dollars)^a



^a There were some discrepancies in the data as a result of differences in the treatment of payroll tax and superannuation. The NT and the ACT did not include depreciation in their expenditure data. Tasmania, SA and Queensland had depreciation information available only for 1996–97; NSW, Victoria and WA had depreciation information available for all years. The reported increases in Tasmanian expenditure may be somewhat misleading as agencies were required to pick up superannuation/payroll funding for the first time during the period.

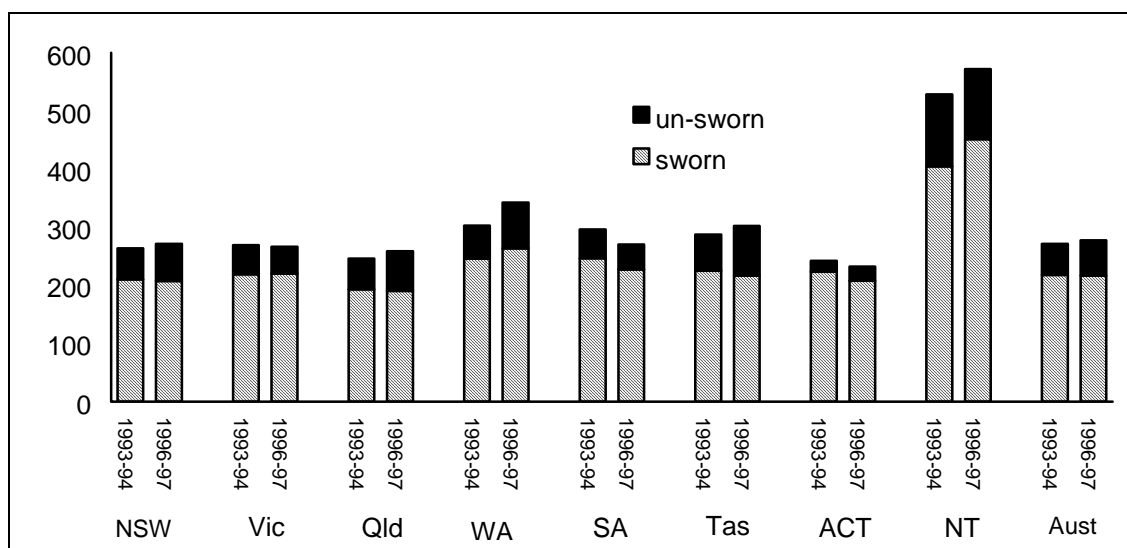
Sources and additional notes: Tables 5A.1 to 5A.8

Funding for police services comes almost exclusively from State and Territory Government budgets, with some specific purpose grants from the Commonwealth Government to State and Territory Governments for police services.

Most people involved directly in the delivery of police services are sworn police officers — employees recognised under each jurisdiction's Police Act. Sworn police officers exercise police powers such as the powers to arrest, summons, caution, detain, fingerprint and search. However, in recent years there has been a trend towards 'civilianisation' of police services, with some non-core activities undertaken by non-sworn officers or contracted to external providers.

Total police services staffing in Australia in 1996–97 was 51 486 — that is, 277 per 100 000 persons (217 were sworn police officers and 60 were civilian employees). This was slightly higher than the 1993–94 level (271 staff per 100 000 population). Staffing levels were highest in the NT (572 per 100 000) and lowest in the ACT (232 per 100 000) in 1996–97 (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3: Police staff, 1993–94 and 1996–97
(staff per 100 000 persons)



Sources and additional notes: Tables 5A.1 to 5A.8

Client groups

The whole community is, in the broadest sense, a ‘client’ of the police — protection, help and reassurance is provided for all individuals and everyone is required to comply with the law. A subset of the community has more direct dealings with the police and can be considered a specific client group. This latter group comprises:

- victims of crime;
- those suspected of committing offences;
- those involved in traffic-related incidents; and
- ‘third parties’ (such as, witnesses to crime and people reporting accidents).

In 1996–97, 49 per cent of people in Australia surveyed had some form of contact with police. The most recent contact in 59 per cent of these cases was initiated by the police, mainly for the purposes of random breath testing (66 per cent of cases), pursuing traffic violations (11 per cent) and asking for information (8 per cent). Contact initiated by a member of the public was mainly to report a crime (34 per cent), to ask for assistance (18 per cent) and to report an accident or suspicion (12 per cent each) (ABS 1997b).

Some people within the group having direct dealings with the police may have special needs which may affect the nature of the service they require — for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

5.3 Recent developments

5.3.1 Output-based management

Most jurisdictions in Australia have introduced some form of output-based management for police agencies. The terms used to describe these initiatives may differ, but they all have the following common features:

- the detailed identification, specification, measurement and quantitative reporting of the outputs produced by agencies;
- demonstrated links between outputs and the achievement of the outcomes desired by government for the community; and
- external reporting of output-based indicators.

All jurisdictions historically have reported on performance to some extent as part of their annual reporting process, but the introduction of output-based management is leading to the establishment of more rigorous budgeting and performance management systems.

A number of jurisdictions have identified discrete outputs for police agencies and now report against these outputs. Many jurisdictions are also implementing activity-based costing to report resource use against these outputs.

5.3.2 Activity-based surveys

Unlike many government departments, in which functions are organised on a divisional basis, 'general duties' police officers undertake many different policing activities. This makes it difficult to determine the specific resources directed to each of those activities.

To help identify resource deployment, many jurisdictions have recently introduced some form of activity survey to collect information on how police officers use their time. This data can significantly improve the quality of management information systems and comparative unit cost reporting.

Most of the surveys are of a preliminary nature so far, but it is anticipated that the quality of the information produced will improve significantly. Work is also underway at the national level to develop a framework of key outputs of crime investigations; road safety and traffic; judicial support; and general and tasked patrols (Box 5.1).

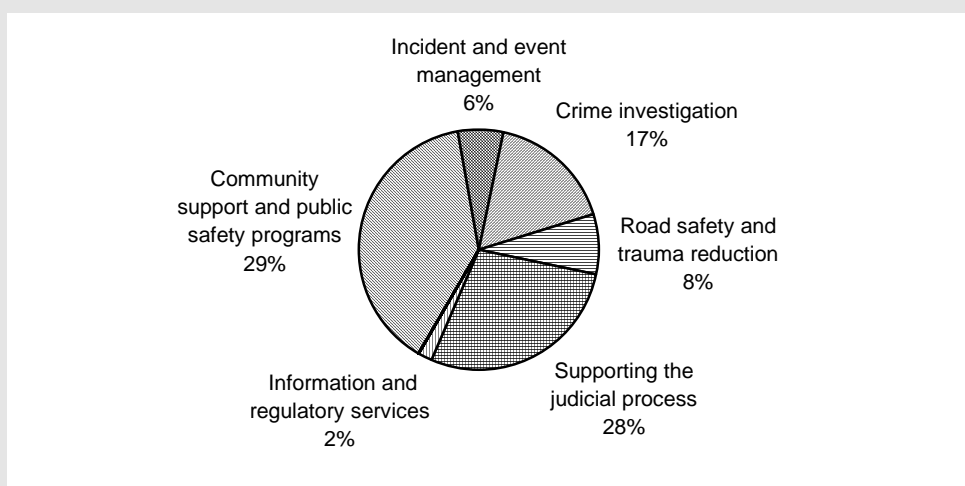
Box 5.1: Activity surveying in Victoria Police

In 1997 the Corporate Planning Division of the Victoria Police conducted their first trial sample of an activity survey to measure the activities performed by police members in operational districts. The survey was conducted over one week and involved all staff from operational districts across the state. The remaining departments of the Victoria Police will also be incorporated in the coming year to provide valuable information for output budgeting.

Below are the results of the first trial survey conducted by Victoria Police of operational districts.

Victoria Police, General Policing Department

Output Percentages



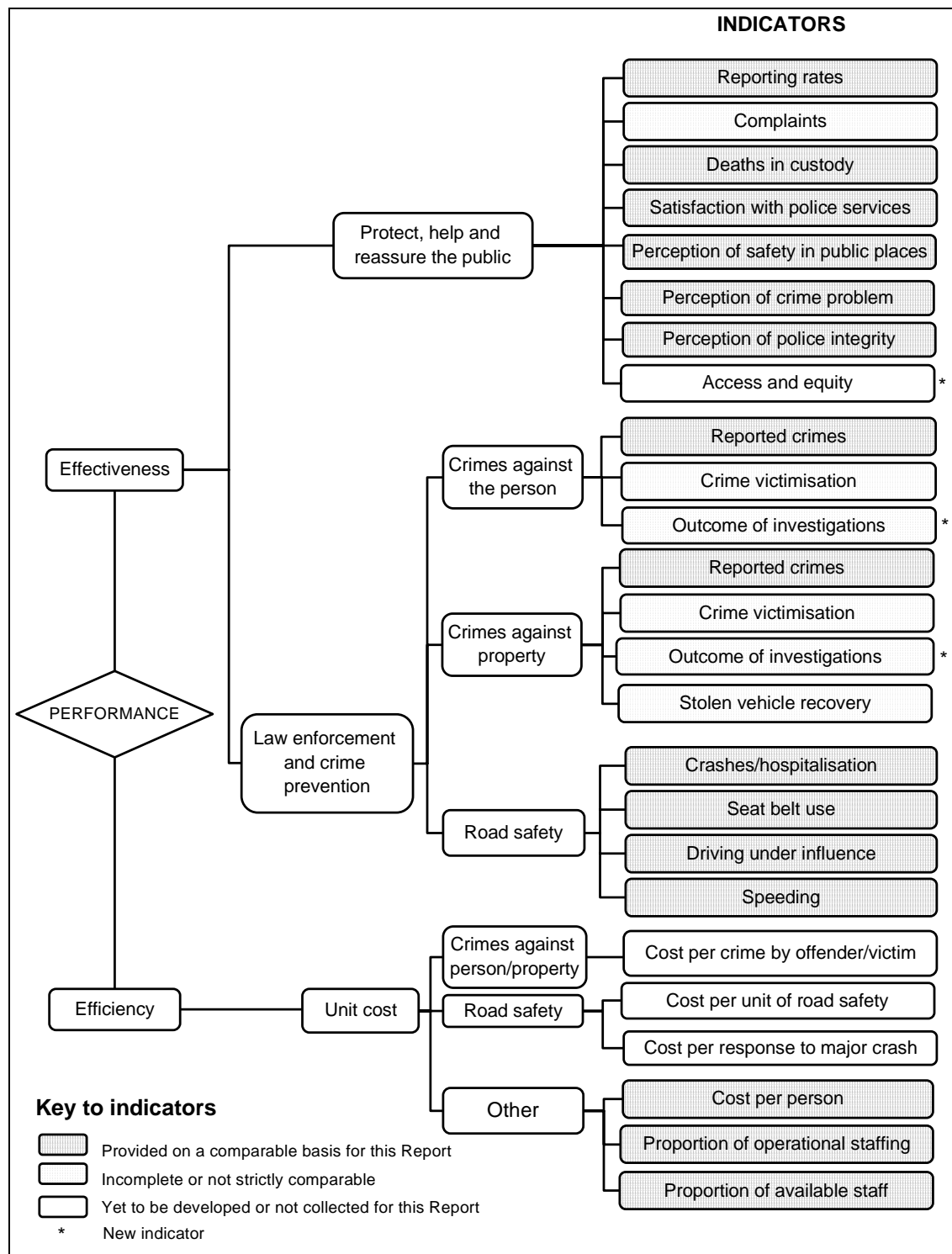
The next stage of the process is to combine the activities of all Departments and match them to the associated costs. It is anticipated that this process will be successfully operating for the next budget cycle. This information will provide a strong basis for output costings, efficiency measures and resource allocation.

Source: Victoria Police 1997 unpublished

5.4 Framework of performance indicators

The police services framework of indicators (Figure 5.4) is built around three overarching objectives: to protect, help and reassure the community; to prevent crime; and to enforce the law (Box 5.2). The indicators for the objectives of crime prevention and law enforcement are divided into 'crimes against the person', 'crimes against property' and 'road safety'. Definitions of all indicators are provided in Attachment 5A.

Figure 5.4: Performance indicators for the police services sector



Box 5.2: Objectives for police services

There are three overarching objectives of police services in Australia:

- *to protect, help and reassure the community* — activities include formal and informal contact with the community (for example, responding to calls for assistance, community consultation and support);
- *to prevent crime* — activities include maintaining a visible police presence, providing community safety and education programs, cautioning and undertaking diversion schemes; and
- *to enforce the law* — activities include investigating crime, identifying and apprehending alleged offenders and assisting the prosecution of alleged offenders, managing traffic and, in some jurisdictions, managing detainees.

5.4.1 Recent changes in indicators

An important element of ‘law enforcement’ is bringing offenders to justice. This is achieved through investigating crimes, bringing charges against individuals and supporting the prosecutions process. An indicator has been established — ‘outcomes of investigations’ — which provides information on the results of the investigations process. The framework has also been expanded to include indicators regarding access and equity for special needs groups, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

5.4.2 New and better quality data

Preliminary data are available for outcomes of investigations for July to October 1996. It is anticipated that significantly better quality data will be available for the indicator in the next Report. Results of the police community perceptions survey are available for the four quarters to March 1997. A review of the survey has also been conducted, focusing on ways to improve the relevance of the survey questions and to identify possible additional questions.

5.5 Future directions

A number of developments are proposed for both the indicators and the data collected for reporting in this chapter.

5.5.1 Outcomes of investigations

Only partial information (based on a three-month period) was available on outcomes of investigations. A full year of data should be available for the 1999 Report. The ABS also proposes to expand the range of offences for which information is available and to increase the level of detail at which information is available.

Data on outcomes of investigations provide useful information, but further work is required to develop measures of success in bringing offenders to justice, because this requires tracking alleged offenders through court processes.

5.5.2 Efficiency indicators

A set of efficiency indicators has been developed for police services (based on individual activities or outputs), but the data needed to report on these indicators are not yet available.

Most jurisdictions are undertaking activity surveys (refer to Box 5.1, Victorian example) to allow expenditure allocations on an internal basis. All jurisdictions are also exploring ways of establishing activity equivalencies across jurisdictions, which will allow comparable unit cost information to be drawn from the various surveys in the future.

5.5.3 General expenditure information

There were some discrepancies in the financial data as a result of differences in the treatment of various expenditure items (for example, superannuation). These issues are being addressed, which should allow fully comparable data to be available for the 1999 Report.

5.5.4 Access and equity indicators

Access and equity indicators will be developed further during 1998, particularly indicators that provide more performance information on the interaction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with police services.

5.6 Key results

5.6.1 Protect, help and reassure the public

The majority of Australians surveyed were satisfied with the services provided by police, with 69 per cent of people being 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with police services in 1996–97. People were most satisfied in Victoria, where 74 per cent of people were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied', compared with 64 per cent in Queensland (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5: Proportion of respondents who were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with police services, 1996–97 (per cent)

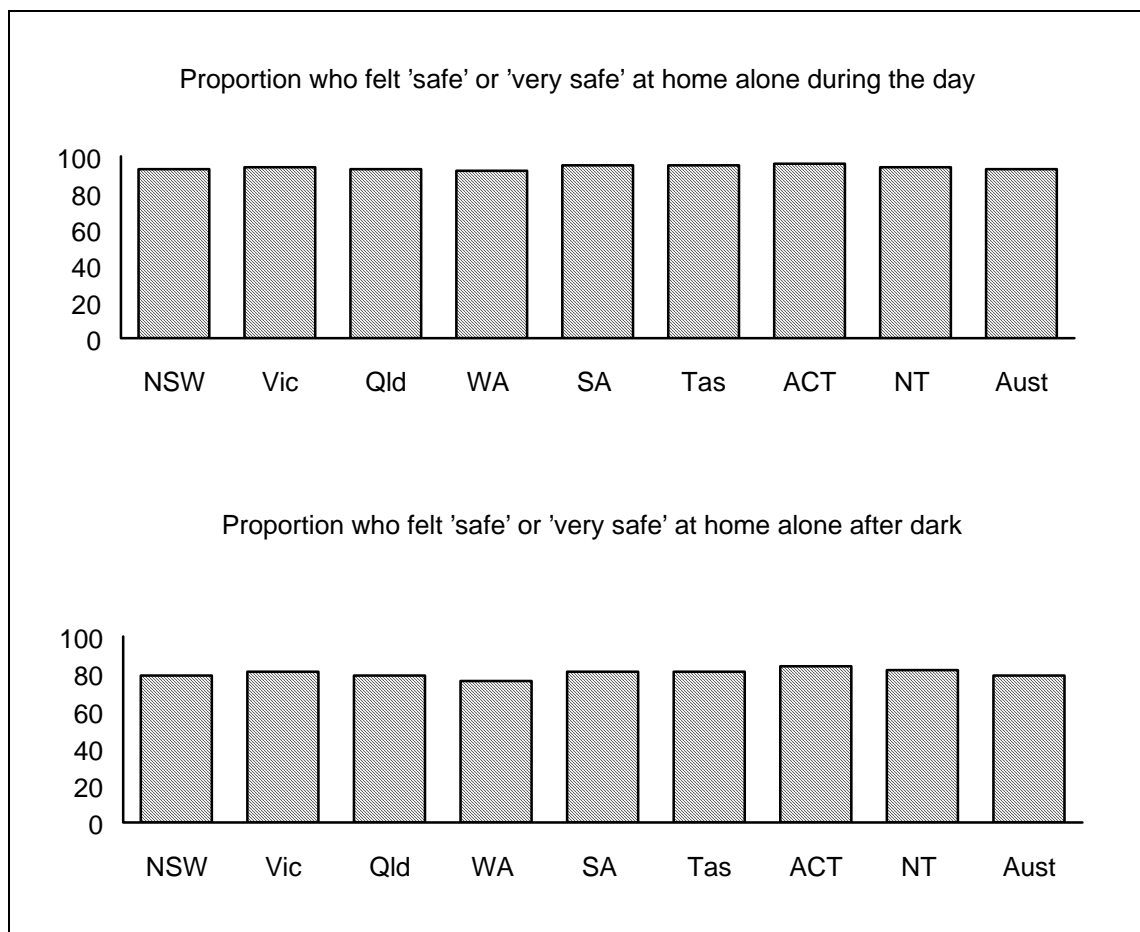


Source: Table 5A.9

An important objective of police services is to 'reassure the public', ensuring the community feels safe (within themselves and regarding their property) in public and private. The police community perceptions survey provided information on perceptions of safety. In general, while there were not significant differences between jurisdictions, more respondents felt safe in Tasmania, the NT and the ACT, while fewer felt safe in NSW and WA.

In all states and territories, over 90 per cent of respondents felt safe or very safe at home alone during the day. Over 70 per cent of respondents felt safe at home alone after dark (Figure 5.6).

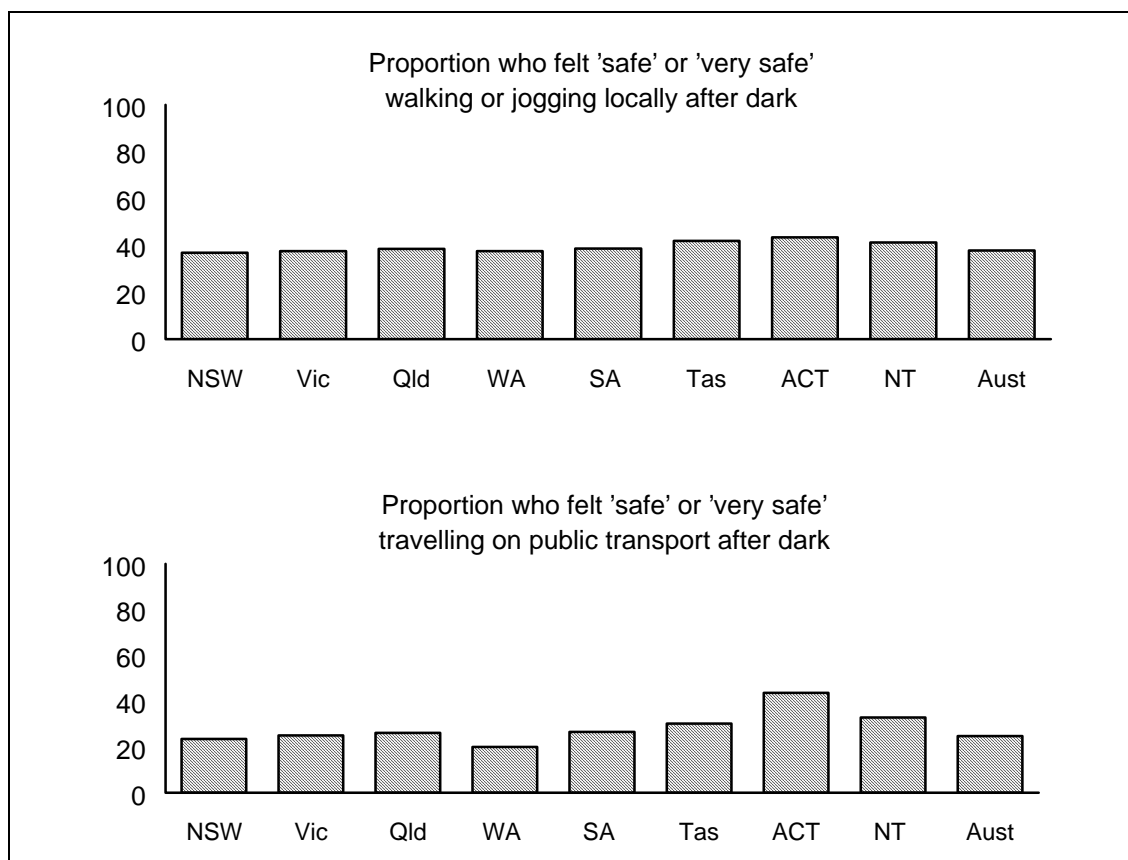
Figure 5.6: Perception of safety in home, 1996–97 (per cent)



Source: Table 5A.27

In all states and territories, a minority of respondents felt 'safe' or 'very safe' when walking or jogging after dark. Perception of safety while walking or jogging after dark was highest in the ACT (44 per cent reporting feeling 'safe' or 'very safe') and lowest in NSW (37 per cent). The proportion of respondents who felt 'safe' or 'very safe' when travelling on public transport after dark was highest in the ACT (44 per cent) and lowest in WA (20 per cent) (Figure 5.7).

Figure 5.7: Perception of safety in public places, 1996–97 (per cent)

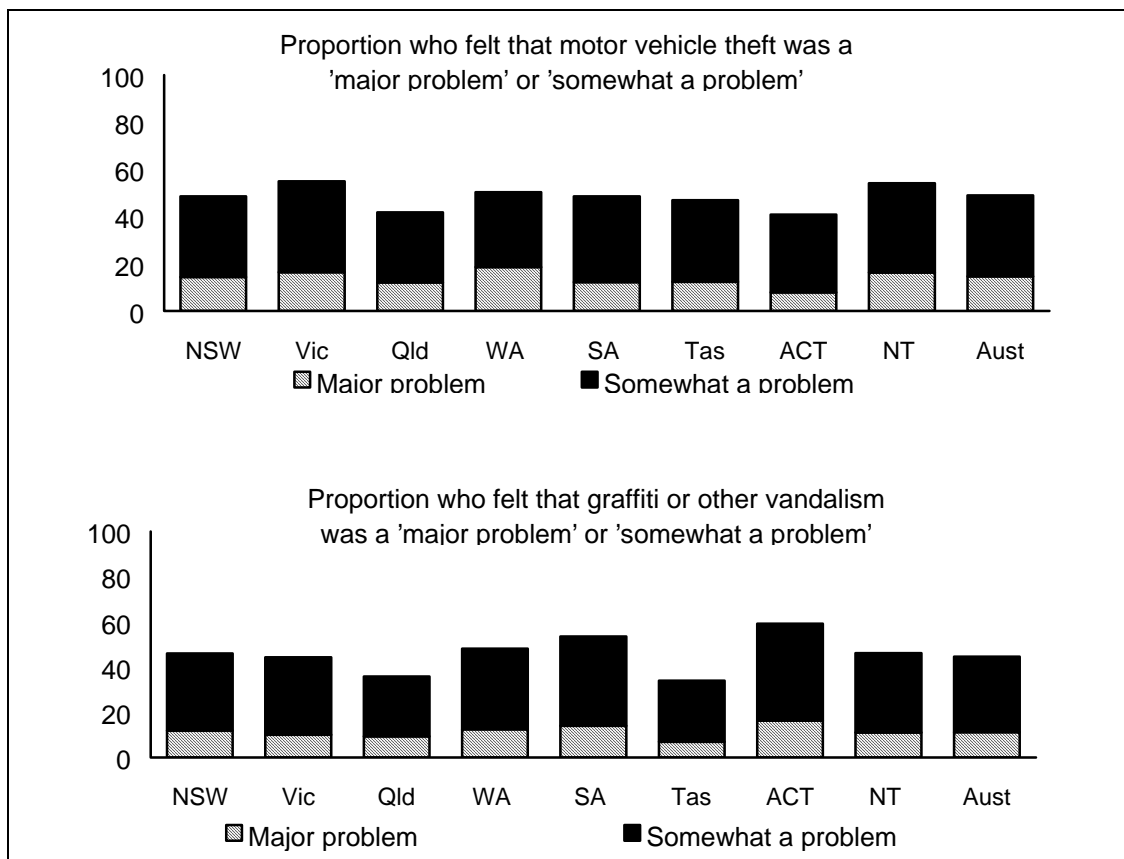


Source: Table 5A.27

Motor vehicle theft was a common form of crime — there were 122 931 reported victims of motor vehicle theft in Australia in 1996 (ABS 1997a). Forty-nine per cent of respondents believed that motor vehicle theft was a 'major problem' or 'somewhat of a problem' in 1996–97. This perception was most prevalent in Victoria (55 per cent) and least prevalent in the ACT (41 per cent).

A similar proportion of respondents (45 per cent) believed graffiti and vandalism to be a 'major problem' or 'somewhat of a problem'. This proportion ranged from 59 per cent in the ACT and 54 per cent in SA, to 34 per cent in Tasmania and 36 per cent in Queensland (Figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8: Perception of problems in the neighbourhood, 1996–97 (per cent)



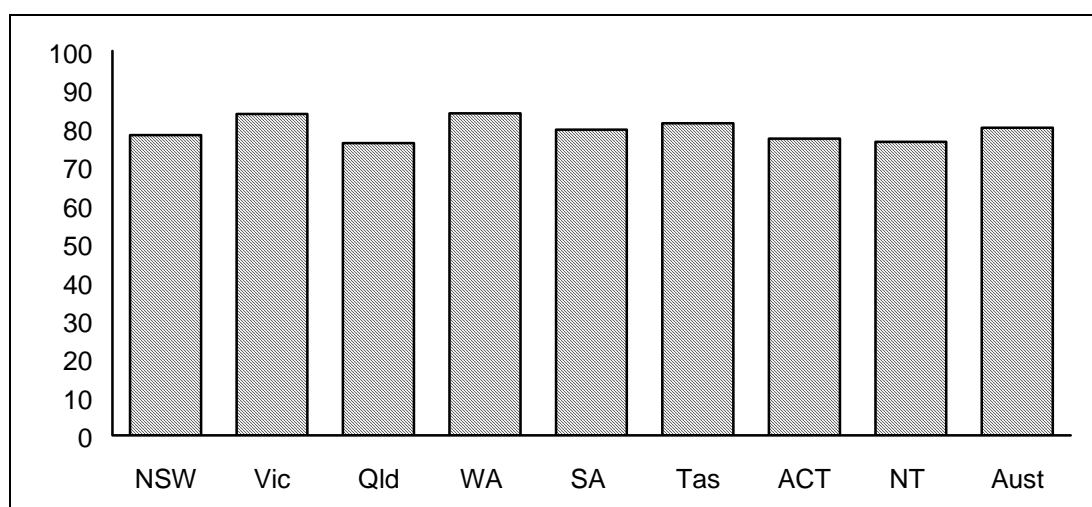
Source: Table 5A.28

In both Victoria and WA, 84 per cent of respondents were ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with the service they received during their last contact with police, while in both Queensland and the NT, 76 per cent of people were in these categories (Figure 5.9).

The most common reason for dissatisfaction with police services was that police ‘took no action’. This reason accounted for 46 per cent of dissatisfied respondents in NSW, down to 26 per cent in WA.

Reasons such as ‘no interest shown’ and ‘unfriendly/impolite’ or ‘unhelpful’ police services accounted for dissatisfaction with customer service. In Queensland, 38 per cent of dissatisfied respondents reported ‘no interest shown’, while 24 per cent reported this reason in SA.

Figure 5.9: Respondents 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with police services during last contact, 1996–97 (per cent)



Source: Table 5A.21

In Victoria, 41 per cent of dissatisfied respondents reported 'unfriendly/impolite' service, while 20 per cent gave this reason in SA (Table 5.1). (Note respondents to the survey were able to give more than one reason.)

Table 5.1: Reasons given for dissatisfaction with police services in most recent contact, 1996–97 (per cent)^a

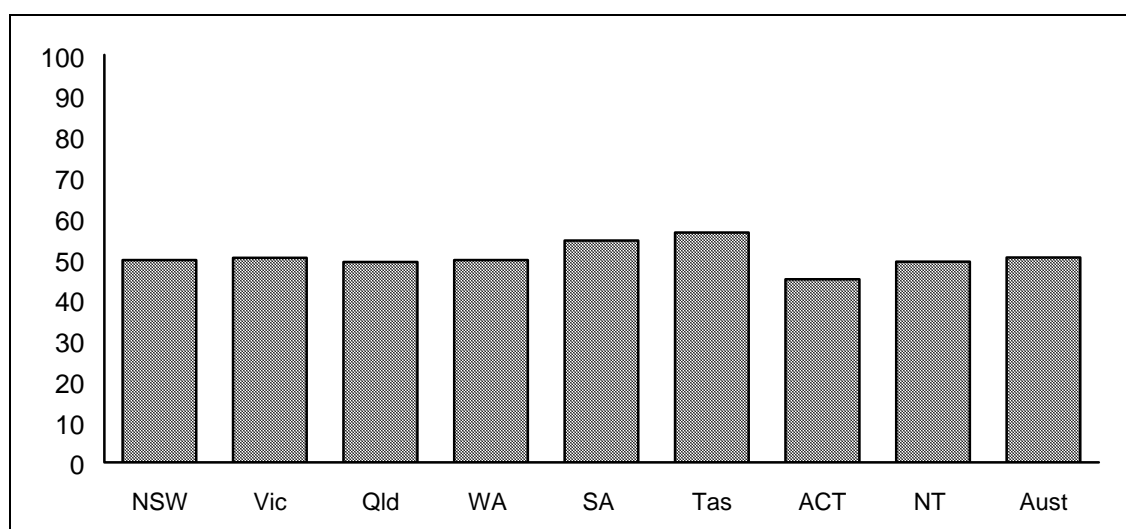
	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Took no action	46	32	33	26	33	30	33	37	37
No interest shown	31	27	38	27	24	31	32	36	31
Kept waiting	29	12	27	19	22	23	22	30	24
Unfriendly/impolite	31	41	32	28	20	22	28	24	32
Unhelpful	31	21	21	26	25	26	26	25	26
Not kept informed	29	21	20	24	17	15	23	33	23
Unprofessional/unfair	26	31	24	25	24	20	24	24	26
Made false accusation	10	15	11	12	8	16	10	7	11
Used unnecessary force	6	3	4	2	3	5	2	4	4
Used complex language	3	4	3	2	8	0	6	2	3
Other	9	11	11	15	9	12	14	10	10

a The sum of the percentages was larger than 100 per cent for each jurisdiction because respondents could choose more than one reason.

Source: Table 5A.23

Important aspects of police services' performance are the ability of various individuals and groups of individuals to access services, and the service they receive. Over half of the Tasmanian respondents (56 per cent) agreed that police treat people 'fairly and equally', while 50 per cent of respondents agreed in NSW, Victoria and WA, and 45 per cent agreed in the ACT (Figure 5.10).

Figure 5.10: Proportion of respondents who 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that police treat people fairly and equally, 1996–97 (per cent)



Source: Table 5A.15

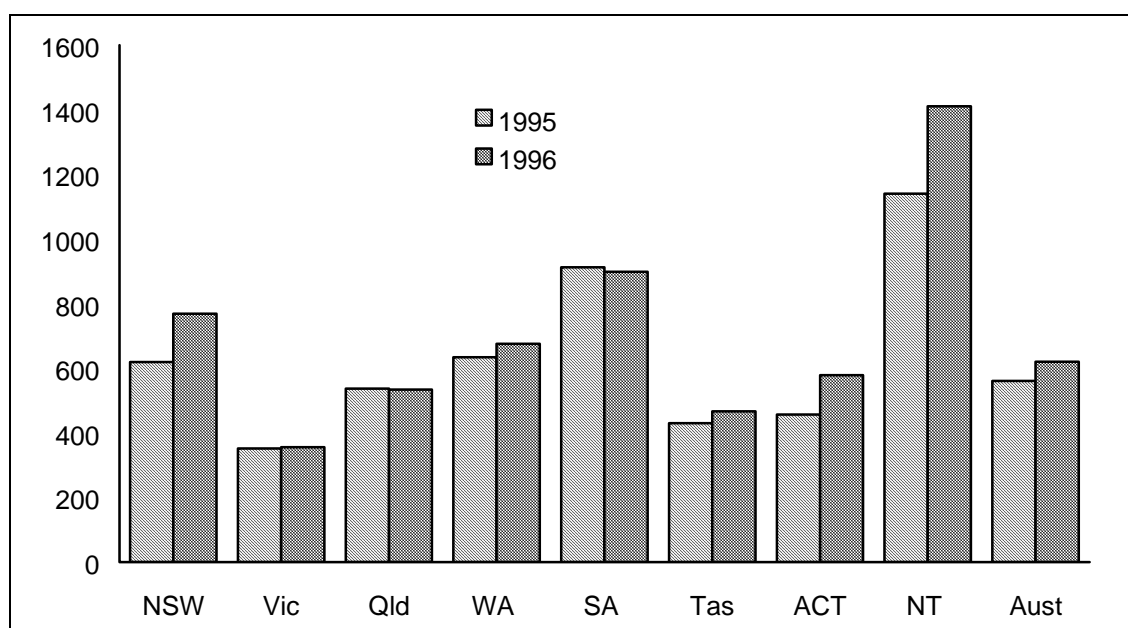
5.6.2 Law enforcement and crime prevention — crimes against the person

The number of reported victims of assault per 100 000 persons in 1996 was highest in the NT (1411 victims per 100 000 persons), SA (899) and NSW (770). It was lowest in Victoria (356 victims per 100 000 persons) and Tasmania (466) (Figure 5.11).

Data on outcomes of investigations into reported assaults were available from five jurisdictions. The highest proportion of investigations finalised within 90 days was in SA (74 per cent) and the lowest in Tasmania (48 per cent).

Proceedings against an alleged offender had begun after 90 days (for cases of assault recorded between July and October 1996) in 55 per cent of cases investigated in Victoria compared with 45 per cent of cases in Tasmania (Table 5.2).

Figure 5.11: Reported victims of assault, 1995 and 1996
(victims per 100 000 persons)^a



a Figures were based on crimes reported to police.

Source: Table 5A.30

Table 5.2: Assault: outcomes of investigations after 90 days,
1 July to 31 October 1996 (per cent)^a

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>
Investigation not finalised	na	38	32	na	26	52	28	na
Investigation finalised:								
- no offender proceeded against	na	7	19	na	27	3	25	na
- offender proceeded against	na	55	49	na	47	45	47	na
- Total (investigation finalised)	na	62	68	na	74	48	72	na
Total	na	100	100	na	100	100	100	na

na not available.

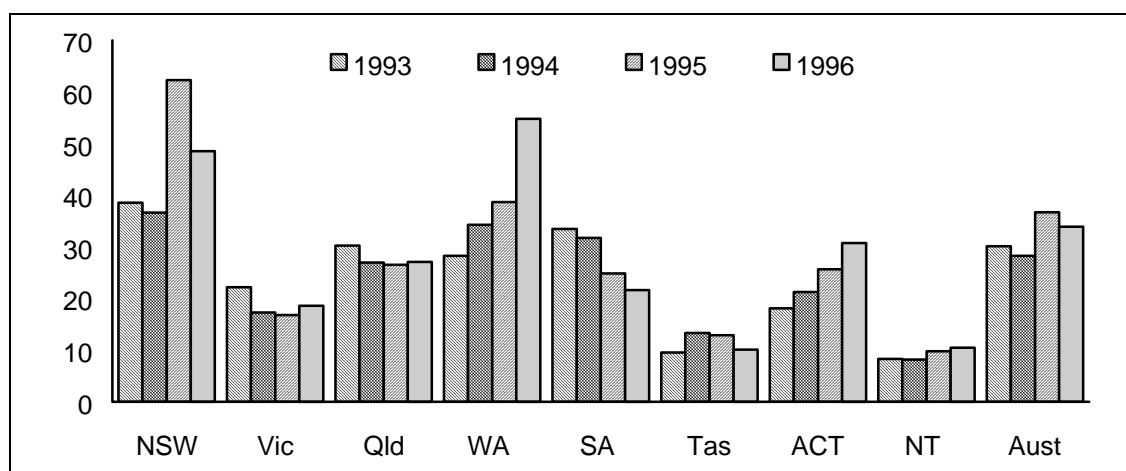
a Preliminary data only.

Source and additional notes: Table 5A.35

There was a small increase in the number of reported armed robberies from 30.2 to 34.0 reported victims per 100 000 persons over the four years to 1996. However, there was significant variation in the trends across individual jurisdictions. The rate in WA increased in each of the four years — from 28.3 reported victims per 100 000 persons in 1993 to 54.8 in 1996 (the highest rate of any jurisdiction). The 1996 rate was also high in NSW (48.6 reported victims per 100 000 persons). The ACT rate increased each year — from 18.1 in 1993

to 30.8 in 1996. The rate fell each year in SA — from 33.5 in 1993 to 21.6 in 1996. The 1996 rate was lowest in the NT (10.4 reported victims per 100 000 persons) and Tasmania (10.1 reported victims per 100 000 persons) (Figure 5.12).

Figure 5.12: Reported victims of armed robbery, 1993 to 1996 (victims per 100 000 persons)^a



a Figures were based on crimes reported to police.

Source: Table 5A.30

The outcomes of investigations into armed robbery varied across jurisdictions. The highest rate of finalisation of investigations was 40 per cent in Victoria; the lowest was 26 per cent in SA. After 90 days, proceedings against an alleged offender commenced in 39 per cent of investigations in the ACT compared with only 25 per cent of cases in SA (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3: Armed robbery: outcomes of investigations after 90 days, 1 July to 31 October 1996 (per cent)^a

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
Investigation not finalised	na	60	61	na	74	63	61	na
Investigation finalised:								
- no offender proceeded against	na	6	3	na	1	0	0	na
- offender proceeded against	na	34	36	na	25	37	39	na
- Total (investigation finalised)	na	40	39	na	26	37	39	na
Total	na	100	100	na	100	100	100	na

na not available.

a Preliminary data only.

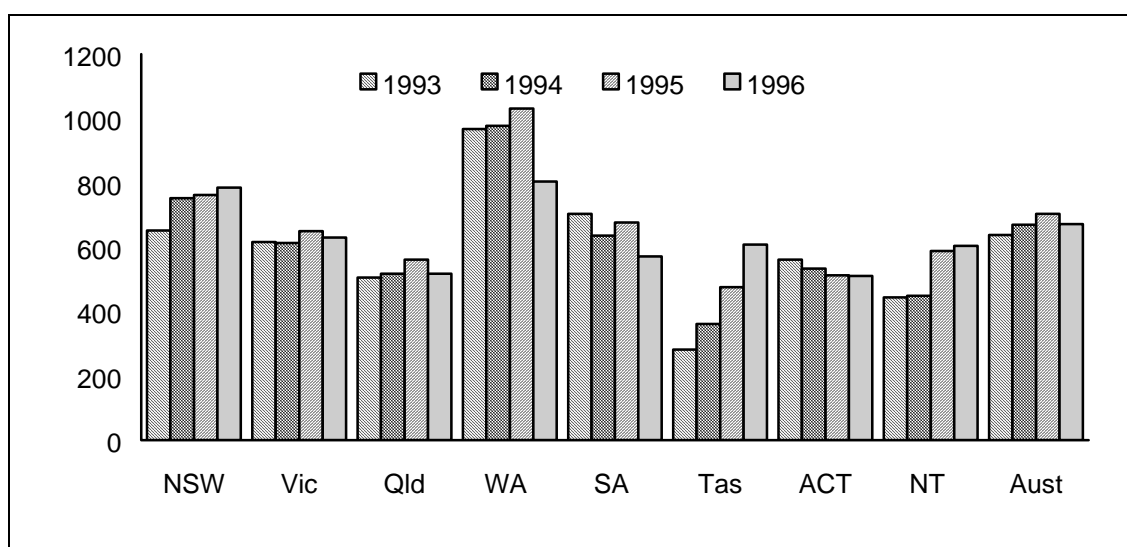
Source and additional notes: Table 5A.38

5.6.3 Law enforcement and crime prevention — crimes against property

Motor vehicle theft made up 12 per cent of all recorded theft in 1996. The highest incidence of motor vehicle theft was in WA, where there were 804 recorded victims per 100 000 persons in 1996. The lowest recorded incidence was in the ACT, where there were 510 victims per 100 000 persons in 1996 (Figure 5.13).

The recorded incidence of motor vehicle theft over the four-year period to 1996 decreased in WA (967 victims per 100 000 persons in 1993 to 804 in 1996) and SA (704 to 572). The largest increases were recorded in Tasmania, where the rate climbed from 282 to 608 (although this was still below the national rate), NSW (651 to 786) and the NT (444 to 604) (Figure 5.13).

Figure 5.13: Reported victims of motor vehicle theft, 1993 to 1996 (victims per 100 000 persons)^a



a Counts of victims were based on the number of motor vehicles reported stolen to police.

Source: Table 5A.42

Generally, fewer investigations of crimes against property were finalised after 90 days than of crimes against the person.

After 90 days, investigations of reported motor vehicle theft were finalised in 21 per cent of cases in Queensland and in only 3 per cent of cases in Tasmania. In Queensland, 15 per cent of investigations resulted in proceedings against an alleged offender after 90 days of investigation, compared with 3 per cent of cases in Tasmania (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: Motor vehicle theft: outcomes of investigations after 90 days, 1 July to 31 October 1996 (per cent)^a

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>
Investigation not finalised	na	89	78	na	89	97	90	na
Investigation finalised:								
- no offender proceeded against	na	3	6	na	3	0	3	na
- offender proceeded against	na	9	15	na	8	3	7	na
- Total (investigation finalised)	na	12	21	na	11	3	10	na
Total^b	na	100	100	na	100	100	100	na

na not available.

a Preliminary data only.

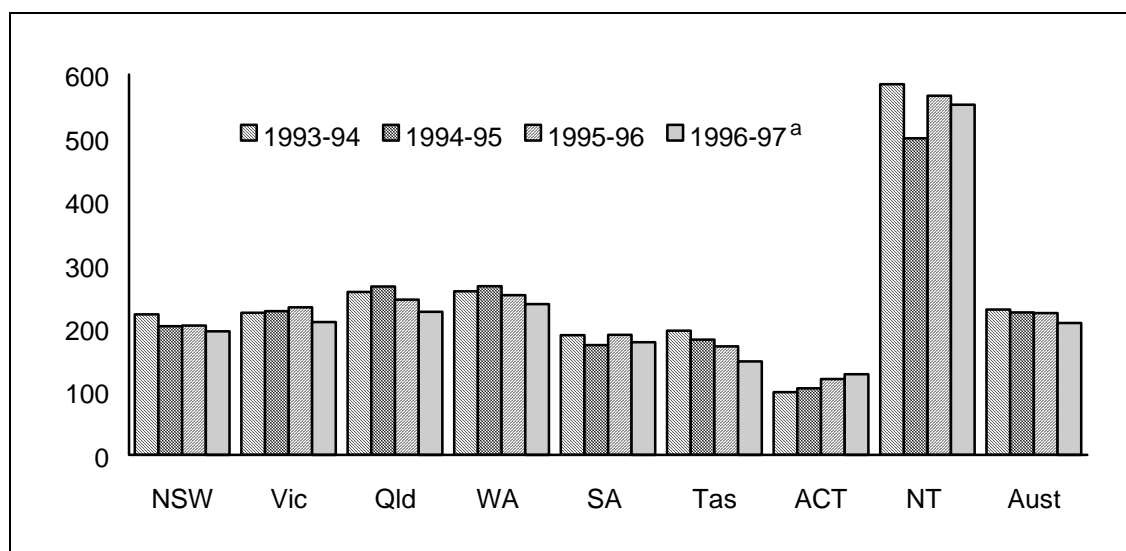
b Totals may not sum to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Source and additional notes: Table 5A.46

5.6.4 Law enforcement and crime prevention — road safety

Road safety is an important objective of government. Policing is one of a number of government activities to reduce road crashes and related road deaths and hospitalisations (another activity is 'black spot' reduction programs). Road deaths and hospitalisations per 100 000 registered vehicles declined slightly throughout Australia between 1993–94 and 1996–97. All states and territories except the ACT experienced a decline over the period (Figure 5.14).

Figure 5.14: Road fatalities and hospitalisations, 1993–94 to 1996–97 (per 100 000 registered vehicles)



a Estimates of hospitalisations were based on data for the three quarters to March 1997.

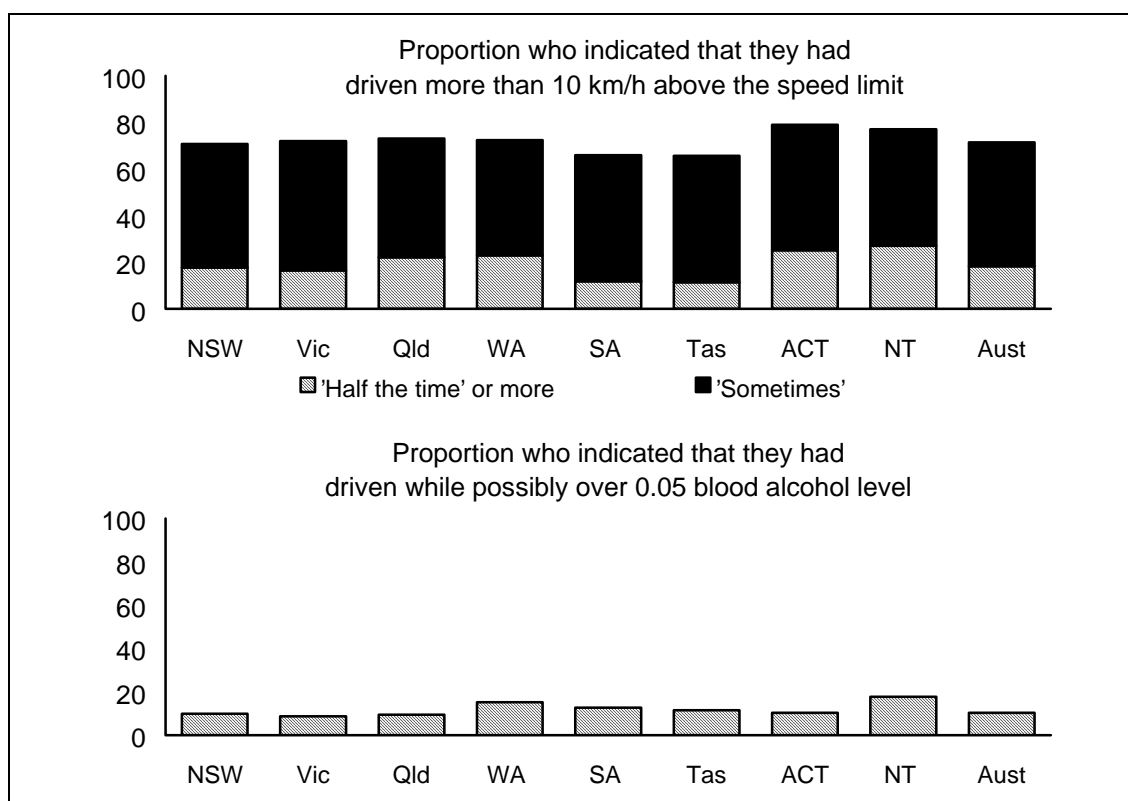
Source: Table 5A.52

It is difficult to establish the extent to which policing impacts on road deaths and hospitalisations. One main aim of police service road safety programs is to attempt to change road users' behaviour so to reduce the risk of road crashes.

The police community perceptions survey measured three types of road safety behaviour: wearing seat belts; travelling more than 10 kilometres per hour above the speed limit; and driving while possibly over the 0.05 blood alcohol limit.

Nationally, 18 per cent of drivers surveyed reported travelling more than 10 kilometres per hour above the speed limit 'half the time' or more, with the highest proportion being in the NT (27 per cent) and the lowest in Tasmania (11 per cent). Of drivers surveyed, 10 per cent acknowledged that they drive when possibly over the 0.05 blood alcohol limit 'sometimes' or more often. This proportion ranged from 18 per cent in the NT to 9 per cent in both Victoria and Queensland (Figure 5.15).

Figure 5.15: Acknowledged adverse road safety behaviour, 1996–97 (per cent)



Sources: Tables 5A.50; 5A.51

