

## Homicide

The definition of homicide used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is the unlawful killing of another person. Homicide statistics discussed here include the following categories of offences:

- *Murder*: the wilful killing of a person either intentionally or with reckless indifference to life; and
- *Manslaughter*: the unlawful killing of a person caused:
  - without intent to kill, usually as a result of a careless, reckless or negligent act; or
  - intentionally but due to extreme provocation; or
  - when in a state of mind that impairs the capacity to understand or control one's actions.

■ **There were 360 homicide incidents recorded by the police in Australia in 1997, with about two victims per 100000 population. Of these, 322 (89%) were victims of murder, and the rest were victims of manslaughter.**

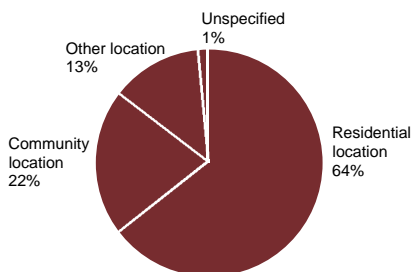
■ **Recorded homicides averaged approximately one per day.**

## Location of homicides

Figure 6 shows the percentages of homicides that occurred in the various location categories in 1997.

■ **Of all homicides occurring in Australia in 1997, 64% took place in residential locations, 22% in community locations and 13% in other locations.**

Figure 6  
**Homicide,  
by location  
where incident  
occurred,  
1997**

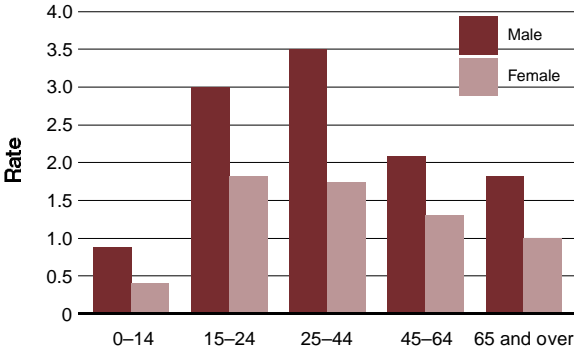


Source: Reference 1

## Victims of homicide

Figure 7 shows the number of male and female homicide victims per 100 000 persons, by discrete age categories.

Figure 7  
Age and gender of homicide victims, 1997  
Rate per 100000 relevant population



- In all age categories, the probability of being a victim of homicide was greater for males than for females.
- Males in the 25 to 44 age group were most at risk of being a homicide victim, while females were most at risk when aged between 15 to 24.

Sources: References 1 and 2

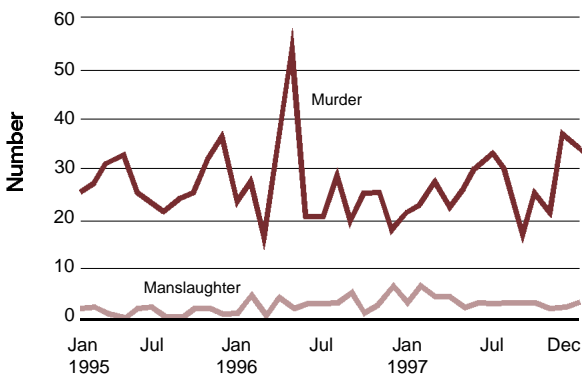
## Trend in homicide

Figure 8 displays the trend in the number of recorded victims for the two components of homicide (murder and manslaughter) for each month between January 1995 and December 1997.

- The number of murder and manslaughter victims remained relatively constant over the three-year period. The exception is the spike in the murder figures in early 1996: this is due principally to the massacre at Port Arthur in April 1996.

- The number of manslaughter victims for the period never exceeded six in any one month.

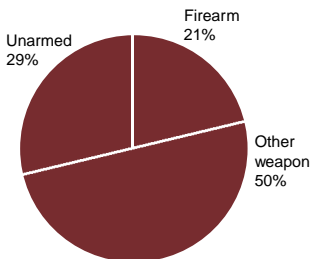
Figure 8  
Monthly numbers of homicide victims, 1995-97



## Weapons used in homicides

Figure 9 shows the percentage of homicides committed with various types of weapons. The category 'other weapon' includes knives/sharp instruments, blunt instruments, and rope. Also included in this category were eight cases in which the weapon used was not positively identified.

Figure 9  
Weapons used in commission of homicides, 1997



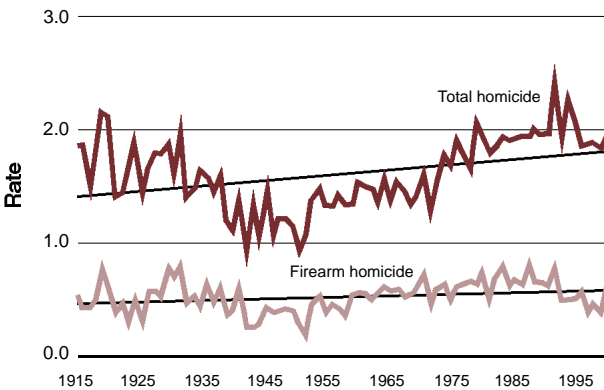
- 50% of homicides recorded in 1997 were committed with a weapon other than a firearm.
- A firearm was used in 21% of homicide cases.

Source: Reference 1

## Historical trend in total homicides and firearm homicides

Figure 10 shows the trend in total homicides and homicide by firearm from 1915 to 1996.

Figure 10  
Homicides from 1915 to 1996  
Rate per 100000 population



- The average total homicide rate per year for the period was 1.6 per 100000 total population, with the average rate for homicide by firearm being 0.5 per 100000 total population.
- The trendline indicates a slightly increasing rate of total homicide over this 82-year period.
- The lowest homicide rate this century was recorded in 1941.

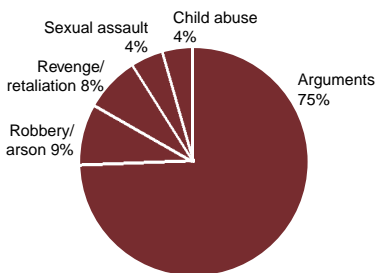
Source: Reference 3

## Homicide Monitoring Program, Australian Institute of Criminology

Research at the Australian Institute of Criminology, based on its National Homicide Monitoring Program, throws some light on the dynamics of homicide incidents. Detailed information gathered on each incident of homicide between 1 July 1989 and 30 June 1996 reveals the following:

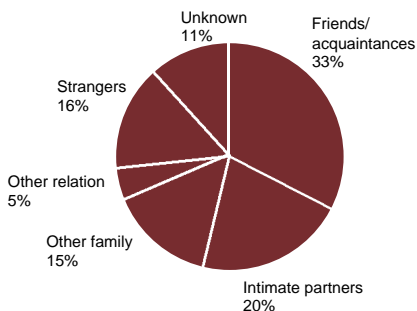
- Of those homicide incidents for which there was information available on the surrounding circumstances, 75% were found to have occurred in the context of arguments.
- Robbery or arson accounted for only 9% of the incidents (see Figure 11).

Figure 11  
Main circumstances surrounding homicide incidents, 1989–1996



- Nine out of ten offenders were males, whereas only a little over six out of ten victims were males.
- Persons in the age group 21–26 years were at the highest risk of becoming an offender as well as a victim.
- 17% of the offenders and 13% of the victims were Aboriginal persons.
- One in three victims was killed by friends or acquaintances, and one in five by intimate partners (see Figure 12).

Figure 12  
Relationship between victims of homicide and offenders, 1989–1996



Source: Reference 4

## Assault (excluding sexual assault)

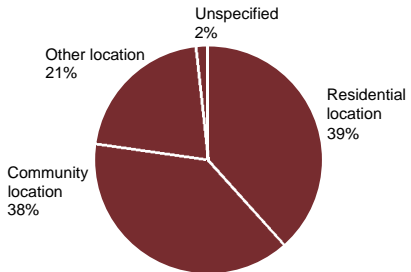
The ABS defines 'assault' as the direct infliction of force, injury or violence upon a person, including attempts or threats.

- In 1997, there were 123940 incidents of assault in Australia recorded by the police: 669 victims per 100000 population.
- Recorded assaults averaged about fourteen per hour across Australia.

### Location of assaults

Figure 13 shows the percentage of assaults that occurred in various locations in 1997.

Figure 13  
**Assault, by location where incident occurred, 1997**



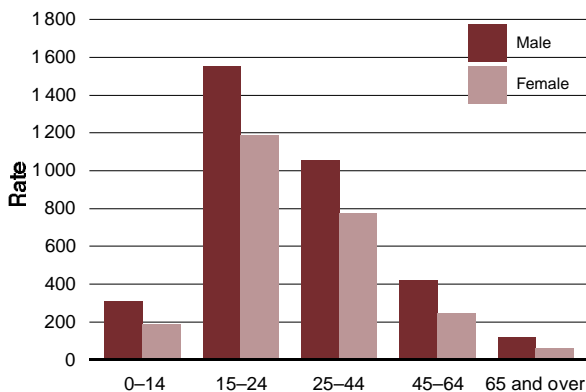
- Assaults most commonly occurred in a residential location (39%).
- 38% of assaults occurred in community locations, with assaults on street/footpaths accounting for 23% of all recorded assaults.
- 21% of recorded assaults took place in other locations, including recreational facilities (10%).

Source: Reference 1

### Victims of assault

Figure 14 shows the number of male and female victims of assault per 100000 persons, by discrete age categories.

Figure 14  
**Age and gender of assault victims, 1997**  
 Rate per 100 000 relevant population



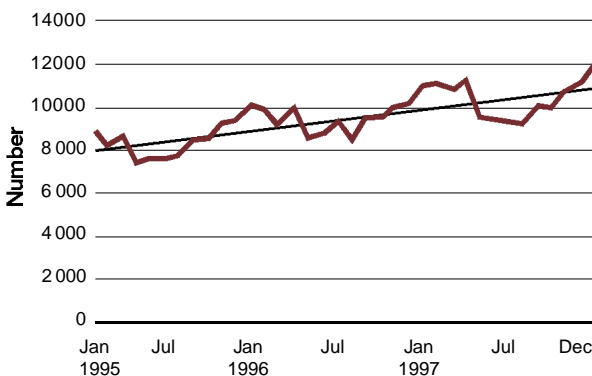
- Males exhibited higher victimisation rates than females for all age categories.
- Both males and females were most at risk of being a victim of assault while aged between 15 and 24.

Sources: References 1 and 2

## Trend in assaults

The trend in the number of recorded assaults for each month over the years 1995 to 1997 is illustrated in Figure 15.

Figure 15  
**Monthly numbers of assault victims, 1995-97**



- The number of victims of assault was 8845 in January 1995, reaching a high of 11982 in December 1997.
- The data suggest that the number of recorded assault victims increased in the summer months.
- There appears to be an underlying upward trend in the number of assaults.

## Sexual assault

The ABS definition of 'sexual assault' is a physical assault of a sexual nature, directed toward another person where that person:

- does not give consent; or
- gives consent as a result of intimidation or fraud; or
- is legally deemed incapable of giving consent because of youth or temporary/permanent incapacity.

This offence includes rape, sexual assault, sodomy, buggery, oral sex, incest, carnal knowledge, unlawful sexual intercourse, indecent assault, and assault with intent to rape.

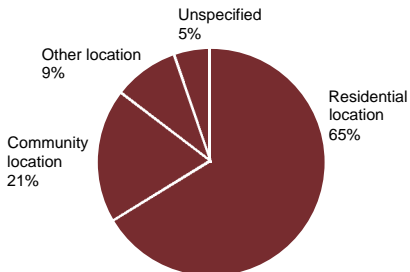
- There were 14138 incidents of sexual assault recorded by the police in Australia in 1997: 76 victims per 100000 population.
- This figure amounts to approximately 1.6 recorded sexual assaults per hour across Australia.

Source: Reference 1

## Location of sexual assaults

Figure 16 shows the percentage of sexual assaults occurring in various locations in 1997.

Figure 16  
**Sexual assault,  
by location  
where incident  
occurred,  
1997**

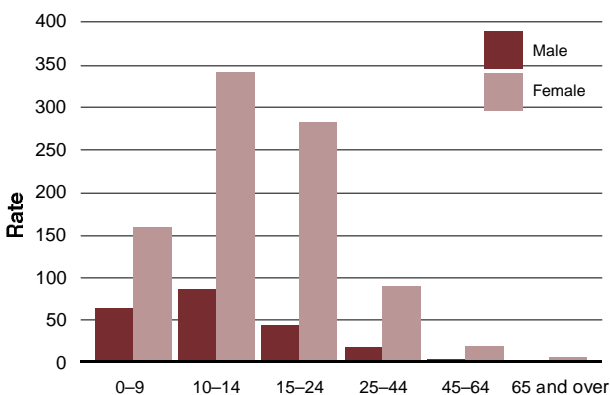


- Of all recorded sexual assaults in Australia in 1997, 65% occurred in residential locations, with most of these being in private dwellings.
- 21% of sexual assaults occurred in community locations. Sexual assaults on street/footpaths accounted for 8% of all recorded sexual assaults.
- Only 9% of recorded sexual assaults took place in other locations, including recreational facilities (5%).

## Victims of sexual assault

Figure 17 shows the number of male and female victims of sexual assault per 100000 persons, by discrete age categories.

Figure 17  
Age and gender of sexual assault victims, 1997  
Rate per 100000 relevant population



- For all age categories, females were more likely to be victims of sexual assault than males.
- Both males and females in the 10-14 age range were most at risk of being victims of sexual assault.
- The ABS Women's Safety Survey revealed that only 15% of women who had experienced sexual violence in the last twelve months reported the

incident to police. This indicates that the information in Figure 17 may reflect gross under-reporting of sexual assault incidents.

Sources: References 1, 2 and 5

## Relationship between victim of sexual assault and offender

Table 2 shows the relationship between the victims of sexual assault and the offenders.

Table 2  
Victims of sexual assault, by sex and victim-offender relationship, 1997

	Male	Female	Total
	Number		
Family member	397	1 969	2 366
Known: non-family member	811	3 292	4 103
Stranger	377	1 928	2 305
Not stated	1 008	3 968	4 976
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 593</b>	<b>11 157</b>	<b>13 750*</b>
	Percentage		
Family member	15.3	17.6	17.2
Known: non-family member	31.3	29.5	29.8
Stranger	14.5	17.3	16.8
Not stated	38.9	35.6	36.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

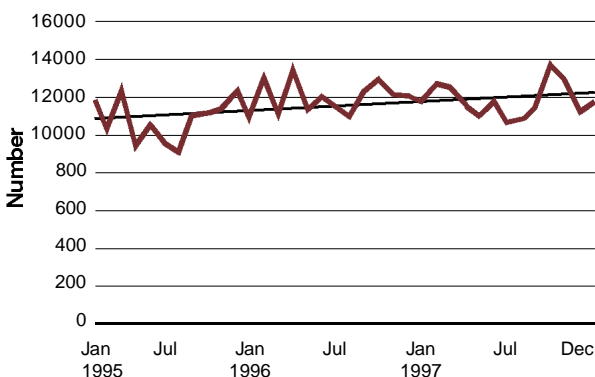
\* Excludes 388 cases where sex of victim was unknown.

- In more than one-third of the incidents, the relationship between the victim and offender was either not stated or inadequately described.
- The victim-offender relationship was similar for males and females. Almost half the victims, both males and females, were sexually assaulted by offenders known to them. Where known, the offender was most likely to be a non-family member.

## Trend in sexual assault

Figure 18 shows the trend in recorded sexual assaults for each month for the years 1995 to 1997.

Figure 18  
Monthly numbers of sexual assault victims, 1995–97



- It appears there has been a slight increase in the underlying trend of monthly incidents over the time period.
- The average number of sexual assault victims per month for the period was approximately 1150.

Source: Reference 1

## Robbery

'Robbery', as defined by the ABS, is the unlawful taking of property without consent, accompanied by force or threat of force. Robbery victims may be persons or organisations.

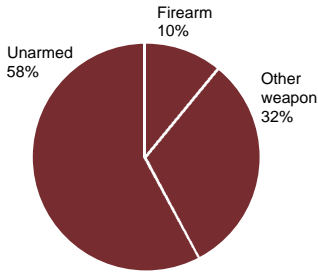
### Types of robbery

Robbery is divided into the following two categories of offences:

- *Armed robbery* : This is robbery conducted with the use of a weapon. (A weapon is any object used to cause fear or injury. It also includes imitation weapons and implied weapons: e.g. where a weapon is not seen by the victim but the offender claims to possess one.)
- *Unarmed robbery* : This is robbery conducted without the use of a weapon.

The percentages of armed and unarmed robberies in 1997 are given in Figure 19.

Figure 19  
Types of robbery, 1997

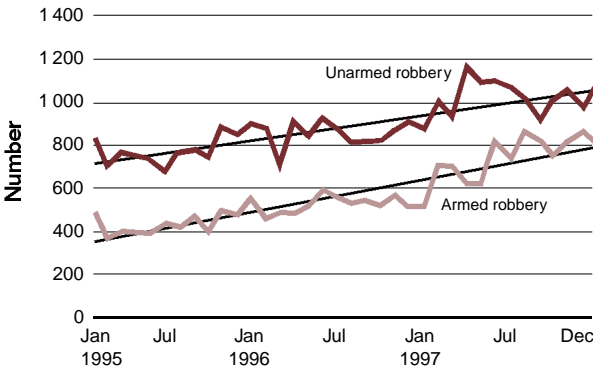


- There were 21261 robbery incidents in Australia recorded by the police in 1997, with 115 victims per 100000 population. Of these incidents, 58% were unarmed robberies, 32% were committed with a weapon other than a firearm, and 10% were committed with a firearm.
- In 4% of robberies the type of weapon was not further defined, and these cases were therefore included in the category 'other weapon'. However it is possible that the weapons used in some of these robberies were firearms.
- The average rate of total recorded robberies was about 2.5 per hour across Australia.

## Trend in robbery

Figure 20 displays the trend in armed and unarmed robberies for each month over the years 1995 to 1997.

Figure 20  
Monthly numbers of robbery victims, 1995–97

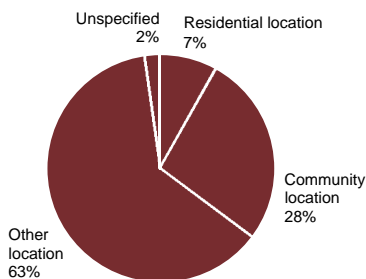


- The trendlines appear to exhibit a constant upward trend over the three years.
- The number of armed robberies was consistently lower than the number of unarmed robberies.
- The number of armed robberies was 493 in January 1995 and 801 in December 1997, while the number of unarmed robberies was 832 in January 1995 and 1053 in December 1997.

## Armed robbery

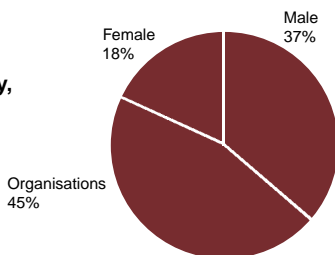
Figure 21 shows the percentage of armed robberies occurring in various locations in 1997, while Figure 22 shows the categories of victims (whether male, female or an organisation).

Figure 21  
**Armed robbery, by location where incident occurred, 1997**



- There were 9015 armed robberies in Australia in 1997, of which 63% occurred in 'other locations' including retail premises (49%).
- 28% of armed robberies took place in community locations, a large proportion being committed on street/footpaths (19%).

Figure 22  
**Victims of armed robbery, 1997**

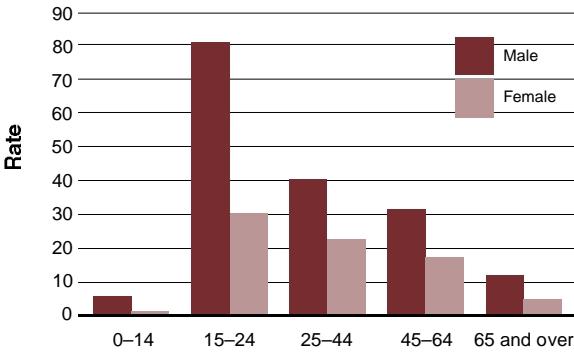


- **45% of armed robberies were directed against organisations.**
- **Of the persons who were victims, the majority were male.**

Source: Reference 1

The numbers of male and female victims of armed robbery per 100000 population are given in Figure 23, grouped into discrete age categories.

Figure 23  
**Age and gender of armed robbery victims, 1997**  
 Rate per 100 000 relevant population



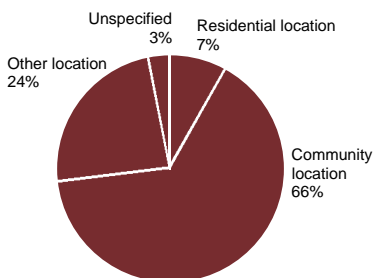
- **In all age categories, males were more at risk of being a victim of armed robbery than were females.**
- **Males aged between 15 and 24 were at least twice as likely to become a victim of armed robbery than persons in any other age category.**

Sources: References 1 and 2

## Unarmed robbery

Figure 24 shows the percentage of unarmed robberies that occurred in various locations in 1997.

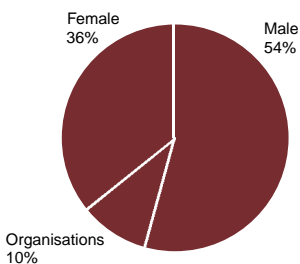
Figure 24  
**Unarmed robbery, by location where incident occurred, 1997**



- There were 12246 incidents of unarmed robbery in Australia in 1997. Two-thirds of these occurred in community locations, including 46% on street/footpaths.
- 24% of unarmed robberies were committed in other locations, such as retail premises (15%).

Figure 25 groups the victims of unarmed robbery into the categories of male, female, and organisations.

Figure 25  
**Victims of unarmed robbery, 1997**

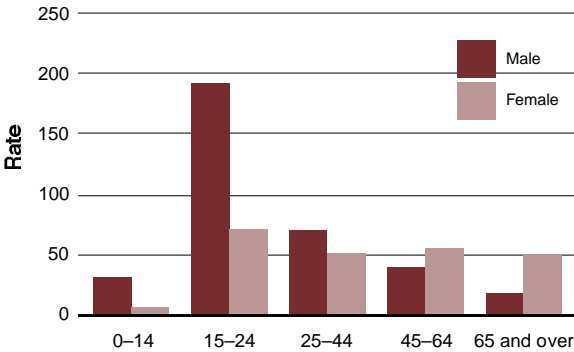


- 90% of the victims of unarmed robbery were individuals, compared to 55% for armed robbery incidents.
- The majority of the victims of unarmed robbery were male (54%).

Source: Reference 1

Figure 26 shows the number of male and female victims of unarmed robbery per 100000 persons for discrete age categories.

Figure 26  
**Age and gender of unarmed robbery victims, 1997**  
 Rate per 100000 relevant population



- People in the 15–24 age group were most likely to be victims of unarmed robbery.
- In the younger age groups (44 and under), males were more at risk of becoming victims of unarmed robbery than females. However, females in the older age groups (45 and over) were more at risk than males.

Sources: References 1 and 2

## Unlawful entry with intent (UEWI)

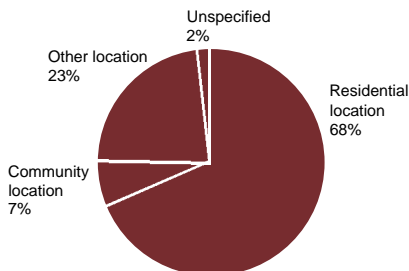
‘Unlawful entry with intent’ is defined by the ABS as the unlawful entry of a structure with the intent to commit an offence. UEWI offences include burglary, break and enter, and some stealing.

- In 1997 there were 417845 incidents of UEWI recorded by the police in Australia, with 2 255 victims per 100 000 population.
- The average rate of occurrence of a UEWI was 48 per hour across Australia.

## Location of unlawful entry with intent

Figure 27 shows the percentage of UEWIs occurring in various locations in 1997.

Figure 27  
Unlawful entry with intent, by location where incident occurred, 1997

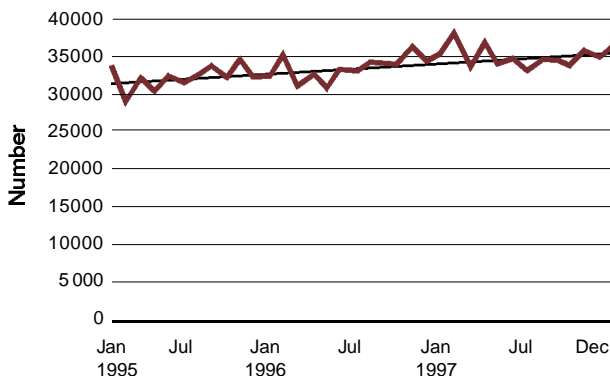


- 68% of UEWIs occurred in residential locations, a large majority of which were private dwellings.
- 23% of UEWI offences were committed in other locations, including retail premises (13%).
- 7% of recorded UEWIs took place in community locations, including educational facilities (5%).

## Trend in unlawful entry with intent

Figure 28 shows the trend in recorded UEWIs for each month over the years 1995 to 1997.

Figure 28  
Monthly numbers of unlawful entry with intent offences, 1995–97



- The trendline appears to exhibit a slight rise over the three-year period.
- The average number of incidents per month was 33449.

Source: Reference 1

## Motor vehicle theft

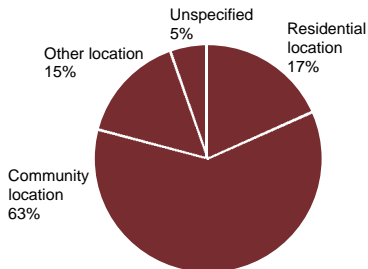
The ABS definition of motor vehicle theft is the taking of a motor vehicle unlawfully or without permission, but it excludes damaging and tampering or interfering with motor vehicles. Under this category are motor vehicles such as cars, motor cycles, campervans and trucks.

- In 1997, there were 130406 motor vehicles recorded by the police as stolen, with 704 victims per 100000 population.
- Recorded motor vehicle thefts averaged one every four minutes across Australia in 1997.
- For every 86 registered motor vehicles in Australia in 1997, one was stolen.

## Location of motor vehicle theft

Figure 29 shows the percentage of motor vehicle thefts that took place in various locations in 1997.

Figure 29  
**Motor vehicle theft, by location where incident occurred, 1997**



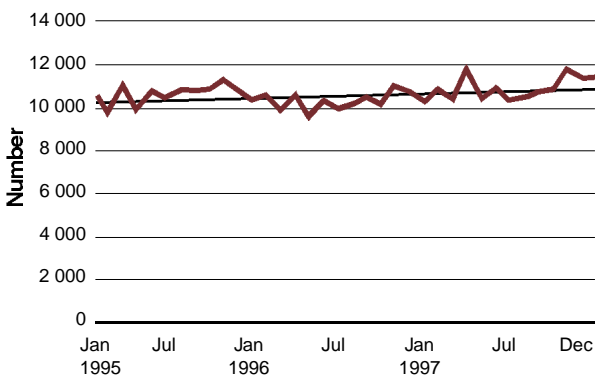
- Of all recorded motor vehicle thefts in Australia in 1997, 63% occurred in community locations; 41% of these were from a street/footpath and 13% from a car park.
- 17% of motor vehicle thefts were committed in residential locations.

- 15% of motor vehicle thefts took place in other locations, such as retail premises (11%).

## Trend in motor vehicle theft

Figure 30 displays the trend in motor vehicle theft for each month over the period 1995 to 1997.

Figure 30  
Monthly numbers of motor vehicle thefts, 1995–97



- The number of motor vehicle thefts appears to be relatively stable, at a little over 10 000 per month for the years 1995 to 1997.
- Motor vehicle theft was at its lowest point in April 1996.

Source: Reference 1

## Other theft

The ABS defines 'other theft' (stealing) as the taking of another person's property with the intention of permanently depriving the owner of the property illegally and without permission, but without force, threat of force, use of coercive measures, deceit or having gained unlawful entry to any structure even if the intent was to commit theft.

This offence includes such crimes as pickpocketing, bagsnatching, stealing, theft from a motor vehicle, theft of motor vehicle parts/accessories/petrol, stealing of

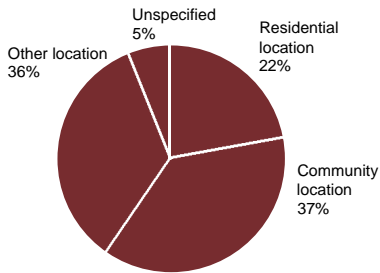
stock/domestic animals, and theft of non-motorised vehicles/boats/aircraft/bicycles. It is the largest category of all crime.

- **A total of 529345 victims of other theft was recorded by the police in 1997, with 2856 victims per 100000 population in Australia.**
- **A little over one other theft occurred every minute across Australia in 1997.**

## Location of other theft

The percentages of other thefts that occurred in various locations in 1997 are depicted in Figure 31.

Figure 31  
**Other theft, by location where incident occurred, 1997**

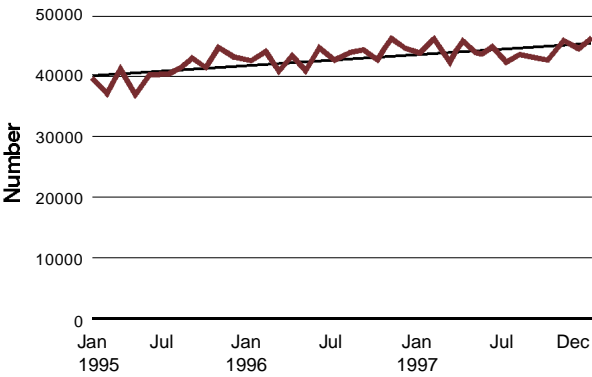


- **Stealing was fairly common in both community and 'other' locations.**
- **Of all recorded incidents of stealing, 37% took place in community locations. Of these, 17% were from a street/footpath and 12% from a transport location.**
- **36% of stealing incidents took place in other locations, such as retail premises (24%).**
- **In 22% of cases, other theft occurred in residential locations.**

## Trend in other theft

The trend in other theft for each month over the three years 1995 to 1997 is illustrated in Figure 32.

Figure 32  
Monthly numbers of other theft, 1995–97



- The trendline shows that there has been a slight rise over the period.
- The average number of stealing incidents recorded each month for the three-year period was 42784.

Source: Reference 1