

Homicidal Encounters
A Study of Homicide in Australia
1989–1999

Homicidal Encounters

A Study of Homicide in Australia

1989–1999

Jenny Mouzos



Australian Institute of Criminology
Research and Public Policy Series
No. 28

© Australian Institute of Criminology 2000

ISSN 1326–6004

Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cwlth), no part of this publication may in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, microcopying, photocopying, recording or otherwise), be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted without prior written permission. Inquiries should be addressed to the publisher.

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

Mouzos, Jenny

Homicidal encounters: a study of homicide in Australia 1989–1999

Bibliography.

ISBN 0 642 24165 1.

1. Homicide—Australia—Statistics. I. Australian Institute of Criminology.
- II. Title. (Series: Research and public policy series; no. 28).

364.1520994

Published by the Australian Institute of Criminology
GPO Box 2944
Canberra ACT 2601
Tel: (02) 6260 9221
Fax: (02) 6260 9201
Email: aicpress@aic.gov.au
<http://www.aic.gov.au>

Reports in the Research and Public Policy series are refereed.

Artwork by Brown & Co, Canberra
Printed by Elect Printing, Canberra

Foreword

Through its National Homicide Monitoring Program, the Australian Institute of Criminology has collected data on every homicide in Australia since 1989, including incident, victim, offender, and victim–offender characteristics. This unique data set makes it possible for the Institute to conduct in-depth analyses of various aspects of homicide.

This report focuses on an extensive examination of a decade of homicide in Australia. It provides a statistical overview of the four essential components of homicide—incident, victim, offender, and victim–offender relationships, and it examines the occurrence of homicide in the course of other crime, as well as mass and serial murder. The report then proceeds to examine in depth some of the homicidal encounters experienced in Australia. This includes homicide between intimate partners, women and children who kill, and children and the elderly as victims of homicide. Throughout the substantive chapters, case narratives are included which further assist our understanding of the different subsets of homicide in Australia.

The rate of homicide victimisation has remained relatively stable during the ten years under review. Males accounted for over 60 per cent of victims and over 80 per cent of offenders. On the other hand, females were more likely to be become victims of homicide (37% of victims) than actually perpetrate lethal violence (13% of offenders). The rate of firearm-related homicide has also exhibited a declining trend in recent years.

This report is a significant contribution to the literature on homicide, and compares favourably with such works as the Canadian study of homicide “Deadly Deeds” by Silverman and Kennedy (1993) and the analysis undertaken by Wallace (1986) “Homicide: The Social Reality” in dealing with homicide in New South Wales.

Adam Graycar

June 2000

Director, Australian Institute of Criminology

Acknowledgments

The Australian Institute of Criminology gratefully acknowledges the cooperation and continuing support for the data collection process provided by the Australasian Police Ministers' Council and police and coronial services in all jurisdictions. The viability of the National Homicide Monitoring Program has been ensured through the continued assistance of all police and coronial services, especially the individual officers and coronial staff who have assisted in compiling this data.

The author would also like to acknowledge the valuable input and insightful comments received on earlier drafts from a number of research staff at the Australian Institute of Criminology: foremost, Dr Peter Grabosky, Research Director, Dr Satyanshu Mukherjee, Principal Criminologist, and Carlos Carcach, Senior Research Analyst.

The positive and inspiring comments provided by the anonymous referee were also greatly appreciated. Last but certainly not least, a special thanks to the staff at the J.V. Barry Library at the Australian Institute of Criminology for their unrelenting assistance in locating resource material.