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Firearm theft in Australia 2008–09

Samantha Bricknell

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Foreword

Theft represents one of most likely sources of firearms for the illicit market. Between 2004–05 and 2008–09, an average of 1,545 firearms were reported as stolen to Australian state and territory police, yet firearms from just 12 percent of reported incidents were eventually recovered by police. This proportion of firearms that were not recovered represents a considerable stream of firearms into the illicit pool.

The National Firearm Theft Monitoring Program (NFTMP), which covered the period 2004–05 to 2008–09, was established at the Australian Institute of Criminology to compile more detailed information on the nature and characteristics of reported firearm theft events. This information was to assist the Firearm and Weapons Policy Working Group, who played an important role in the establishment of the NFTMP, in developing initiatives to reduce the incidence of firearm theft and to assess whether currently prescribed firearm storage arrangements are being observed and are sufficient in preventing theft.

Patterns in firearm theft have shown considerable consistency over this time period. An average of one to two firearms have generally been reported stolen in each theft incident, the majority of which have been taken from private residential premises. Less restricted types of firearms (ie air rifles, rimfire rifles and single or double-barrelled shotguns) have comprised the bulk of firearms reported stolen, reflecting the prevalence of these firearms among the Australian firearm-owning community. Handgun theft has made up less than 10 percent of all reported firearms in any given year and restricted Category C and D firearms (such as pump action shotguns and semi-automatic rifles) have rarely featured in firearm theft reports. Very few stolen firearms are known to have been used to commit a subsequent criminal event (or found in the possession of persons charged with other serious offences eg supply of a prohibited drug) but the fate of the rest has been largely unknown.

The number of firearms reported stolen each year during the monitoring period, which ranged from 1,445 firearms in 2005–06 to 1,712 firearms in 2007–08, was less than half the estimated average of 4,195 reported stolen each year in the previous decade. This reduction in theft numbers may in part be a consequence of stricter provisions around the safekeeping of firearms, which were introduced with the firearm law reforms that began with the National Firearms Agreement 1996. Nonetheless, compliance with firearm safekeeping laws was estimated at only 50–60 percent of owners who reported the theft of a firearm in the years covered by the monitoring program. Non-compliance rates were particularly high among owners who had firearms stolen from vehicles (58%). Further, around 25 percent of owners who had firearms stolen from a private dwelling (where the safekeeping of firearms should, in theory, be easier to comply with) were also found not to have taken all reasonable precautions to safeguard the unattended firearm. Overall, firearms not stored appropriately at the time of theft made up 18 percent or 1,133 of all reported stolen firearms.

State and territory police, firearm interest groups and other relevant stakeholders have played an important role in educating the firearm-owning community regarding their responsibilities around firearm ownership, including the safekeeping of firearms. Modifying current provisions around firearm storage may be one avenue that could further reduce offenders' ability to penetrate otherwise secure storage arrangements. Further, an investment in situational crime prevention strategies would be equally useful, although work is required to identify

and hone the types of techniques that could be employed effectively. These might include strengthening formal surveillance (eg burglar alarms and surveillance cameras), better concealment of targets (eg location of firearm safes), use of property identifiers (eg use of indelible markers on registered firearms) and strategies to assist compliance (eg dissemination of findings from firearm theft research to educate firearm owning community about potential and actual storage vulnerabilities). Further research into the nature and operations of the stolen firearms market in conjunction with policing agencies might also go some way to better determining the operation of the market and provide insights to further reduce the incidence of stolen firearms in Australia.

The NFTMP will conclude with this report. Overall, the program has provided a comprehensive record of the methods and facilitators of firearm theft, the categories of firearms more likely to enter the illicit market and the approaches taken by firearm owners to minimise risk. Equally importantly, the findings from the NFTMP have been used by various stakeholders (eg firearm owners and law enforcement) to reduce the incidence of firearm theft and to impede the flow of firearms into the illicit market and potentially into the hands of criminal elements.

Adam Tomison
Director

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Executive summary

The National Firearm Theft Monitoring Program (NFTMP) has collected information on all incidents of firearm theft reported to Australian state and territory police for the years 2004–05 to 2008–09. This report represents the fifth and final report in the NFTMP series and describes the nature and characteristics of firearm theft that was reported to police in the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009. The findings described here refer to incidents of firearm theft reported in all Australian states and territories excluding Western Australia and Northern Territory; however, information on the number and type of firearms reported stolen does include data from the Northern Territory.

The number and type of stolen firearms

- A total of 1,570 firearms were stolen in 620 reported incidents of firearm theft in 2008–09 from all Australian states and territories excluding Western Australia.
- The number of firearms reported stolen in Australia (excluding Western Australia) has risen by six percent each year since 2004–05.
- Fifty-five percent of all reported incidents involved the theft of multiple firearms. The number of firearms stolen in multiple-firearm thefts ranged from two to 19. The modal (most common) theft involved two firearms.
- Rifles accounted for the majority (60%) of all reported stolen firearms, with bolt-action rifles the most often recorded as stolen. One-quarter (24%) of stolen firearms were shotguns, mostly single barrel or double barrel. Handguns constituted six percent of firearms that were reported stolen; just over half (53%) of these were revolvers and 46 percent were semiautomatic pistols.
- Six in 10 stolen firearms were classified as a Category A firearm and one-quarter as a Category B firearm. Restricted firearms made up less than 10 percent of all firearms reported stolen in 2008–09—six percent were Category H firearms (ie handguns), one percent or fewer were Category C or D firearms.
- Ninety-one percent of firearms reported stolen were registered at the time of the theft.
- Firearms were recovered from 14 percent of thefts and were returned to owners in 45 percent of these cases.

Firearm owners reporting stolen firearms

- Eighty-eight percent of firearm owners who reported a firearm theft in 2008–09 held a valid firearm licence for the firearms they reported stolen.
- Firearm owners held an average of 1.6 firearm licences; 90 percent of the total licences were for Category A and B firearms.
- Seventy-eight percent of firearm thefts were reported by the owner of the stolen firearms.

Location and other characteristics of the theft

- The majority of firearm thefts (89%) followed an unlawful entry of a residential or business premises, or a vehicle.
- Six percent of theft locations were identified as the site of a repeat victimisation, although firearms were stolen in less than half (40%) of the previous theft events.
- Private residential premises were the primary target for firearm theft (77% of all thefts), as was the case in the previous four years of monitoring. More than 80 percent (n=1,273) of the total firearms reported stolen were taken from this location, the majority of which (55%) had been stored within the house.
- Theft from business premises accounted for six percent of all reported firearm thefts. Thefts from vehicles accounted for nine percent of all reported firearm thefts; the vehicles were mostly parked in public or unsecured sites such as public roads and car parks or in private driveways.

- A substantial number of firearms thefts were aided by the premises or vehicle not being secured at the time of the theft. In almost a fifth (18%) of thefts from private residential and businesses premises and a third of vehicle thefts, offenders entered the premises or vehicle through an unlocked window or door.
- Ammunition was stolen with firearms in 27 percent of incidents of firearm theft.
- Other non firearm-related goods were stolen with firearms in 55 percent of incidents of firearm theft. Items commonly stolen with firearms were cash, tools, jewellery and watches, and personal electronic items such as mobile phones and iPods.

Firearm storage compliance

- Firearms stolen in 63 percent of incidents had been stored in a firearm safe or otherwise secure receptacle. Firearms were described as being unsecured or left in the open for 10 percent of theft incidents in 2008–09.
- Firearm storage compliance rates have fluctuated between 52 and 60 percent of affected firearm owners over the five year monitoring program. In 2008–09, 60 percent of firearms owners reporting a firearm theft were found to be storage compliant and 24 percent were found to be storage non-compliant.
- Owners were considered non-compliant if receptacles were unlocked or unapproved (eg firearm stored in a wardrobe), the key to the receptacle had not been concealed, the firearm had been left in a vehicle, or no apparent attempt had been made to safeguard the firearm.
- Firearms stored in residential garages or sheds were more likely to have been secured correctly compared with firearms stored within the home (80% of theft incidents *cf* 58%).
- Vehicles were much more vulnerable to incidents of firearm theft than private residential or business premises because they were significantly more likely to be unlocked at the time the theft occurred and were significantly less likely to have been secured within the vehicle.
- Eighteen percent of firearms (n=1,133) stolen between 2005–06 and 2008–09 were not stored appropriately at the time of the theft.

Breaches of firearm laws

- Since 2004–05, around 20–25 percent of firearm owners who reported a firearm theft were found or suspected to be in breach of one or more firearm laws. In 2008–09, 22 percent of affected firearms owners were found in breach by police.
- Sixty-two percent of owners found in breach of firearm laws were subsequently charged and/or disciplined.
- The majority of charges brought against firearm owners were again related to the offence of failing to secure or safeguard a firearm (57%). Eight percent of charges related to the unlawful or unlicensed possession of a firearm and a further eight percent to the possession of an unregistered firearm.
- Where formal proceedings had begun, just nine percent of firearm owners had received disciplinary action or such action was pending.

Proceeding against offenders and use of stolen firearms in crime

- Police apprehended and initiated proceedings against offenders involved in 13 percent of reported firearm thefts in 2008–09. Higher apprehension rates were recorded in Victoria and Queensland.
- Offenders were charged with offences related to breaches of firearm laws, break and enter, theft and possession, receipt and/or disposal of stolen property.

Firearms stolen in three percent of theft incidents were later involved in the commission of an offence or found in the possession of an individual charged with a serious criminal offence. These included one incident of manslaughter, two incidents in which the offender had displayed dangerous conduct with the stolen firearm, two incidents in which the firearm was found in the possession of persons involved in prohibited drug cultivation or supply and one incident in which the firearm was found in possession of a member of an outlawed motorcycle gang.

Introduction

Australian firearm laws have undergone major amendments since 1996 to incorporate changes recommended in the National Firearms Agreement 1996, the National Handgun Control Agreement 2002 and the National Firearms Trafficking Policy Agreement 2002. The purpose of these changes to firearm laws was to:

- restrict certain types of firearms;
- establish new licensing, registration, storage and training requirements for firearms; and
- introduce new penalties for the trafficking of firearms.

One potential outcome from these amendments, specifically those relating to stricter provisions around the securing of firearms, was a reduction in incidents of firearm theft. Between 1994 and 2000, an estimated average 4,000 firearms were reported stolen each year in Australia (Mouzos 2002), although this rate dropped considerably in the next decade (Borzycki & Mouzos 2007; Bricknell 2010, 2008; Bricknell & Mouzos 2007; Mouzos & Sakurai 2006). Firearm theft represents one very credible avenue through which firearms may be transferred into the illicit firearm market. An understanding, therefore, of the general methods used to steal firearms in Australia and specific vulnerabilities associated with current forms of firearm storage provide law enforcement agencies and lawful firearm owners alike with information that can assist in reducing the firearm theft rate even further.

About the National Firearms Theft Monitoring Program

The NFTMP was established at the Australian Institute of Criminology following a recommendation from the then Firearms Policy Working Group to the then Australasian Police Ministers Council that there be longer term monitoring of reported firearms thefts in Australia. The NFTMP was funded by the Australian Government under the *Proceeds of Crime Act 2002* (POCA), for a period of four years.

The NFTMP compiles financial year data provided by Australian state and territory police services on:

- characteristics of reported stolen firearms (serial number, registration status, firearm type and category, and make, model, calibre and action type);
- storage arrangements for firearms at the time of theft;
- method by which the firearms were stolen;
- recovery rate of stolen firearms;
- apprehension and prosecution of offenders; and
- known use of stolen firearms to commit subsequent crimes.

Findings from the NFTMP are used to assist the Firearm and Weapons Policy Working Group in developing initiatives to reduce the incidence of

firearms theft and to present information on the status of, and any observed changes in, firearm storage arrangements and compliance. The latter is to be used to construct measures to both improve storage compliance and develop a minimum standard of firearm storage for application to all sectors of the firearm-owning community.

This is the final report in the POCA-funded series and covers all thefts of firearms reported to state and territory police between 1 July 2008 and 30 June 2009. For previous reports in this series and earlier work on firearm theft see Borzycki & Mouzos 2007; Bricknell 2010, 2008; Bricknell & Mouzos 2007; Mouzos & Sakurai 2006.

Methods and data quality

Firearm theft data for the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 was supplied by all but two state and territory police services, using a purpose-designed template. The Northern Territory provided data on the number, type and category of firearms reported stolen, the number of theft incidents and postcode of theft but were unable to provide data for all other variables. Western Australia was not able to provide any firearm theft data for the 2008–09 report.

The original dataset comprised 655 cases of theft for a total of 1,591 reported stolen firearms for all Australian states and territories except Western Australia. One case was removed as the police eventually concluded the victim had contrived the theft to conceal the illegal sale of the firearm. Another 34 cases were removed as they described incidents of theft in which the firearms reported stolen were not classified as firearms for the purposes of the report. These cases referred to the theft of 20 firearms that were classified as either:

- replica or imitations firearms, or starter pistols (and where the firearm owner was not found in breach of firearms legislation); or
- deactivated or inoperable.

The final dataset comprises valid records for 620 incidents of theft, from which 1,570 firearms were reported stolen. Each record represents a single incident of theft, 55 percent of which resulted in the theft of more than one firearm.

Prior to analysis, state and territory data were cleaned and interrogated using logic checks to denote inconsistencies. Missing data again tended to be a relatively minor problem but the proportion of unknown responses remained substantial for some variables. Factors potentially contributing to a higher incidence of unknown returns included:

- the inability or reluctance of the person reporting the theft to relay specifics about the event or the firearms stolen;
- delayed reporting; and
- incomplete incident reports.

Care must be taken when interpreting data presented in this report, specifically that relating to the smaller jurisdictions of Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. These jurisdictions experience only a small number of firearms thefts each year and correspondingly, small changes in numbers can produce apparently significant, but not necessarily real, differences between years. Where numbers are particularly small, these will be removed from Figures and Tables and any accompanying text.

In this report, comparisons are made of data collected on recorded firearm thefts for the period 1 July 2005–30 June 2008 (ie the previous 3 years) or from 1 July 2004–30 June 2008 (ie the previous 4 years), depending on data comparability. In essence, the 2004–05 data described in Borzycki and Mouzos (2007) is generally comparable with data collected for all subsequent monitoring years, but there is a small group of variables for which data were recorded differently or were not collected at all.

Data limitations

The data presented in this report represents only those incidents of firearm theft reported to police. Not every victim of crime reports the incident to police and hence, not every incident of firearm theft that occurred within the 2008–09 period is necessarily captured in the dataset. Those owners who illegally own firearms, either because they are unlicensed, their firearms were not registered at the time of the theft or the firearm is prohibited under Australian law, are least likely to report a theft because of the risk of being 'discovered' and consequently prosecuted for firearms offences.

Owners who were knowingly negligent regarding the securing of their firearms may also be less inclined to report a theft, again because of risk of sanction. Finally, owners might not feel compelled to report the theft if their firearm was old, inoperable or of negligible value.

Further, this report does not include information on theft incidents in which firearms were stored at the theft site but were not stolen. Police record information about cases of attempted theft, for example where there is evidence a firearm safe was tampered with but the firearms stored within were not retrieved, but this information may not be documented systematically and hence was not included in the dataset. Finally, police do not record items that were not stolen, irrespective of whether other items were stolen in the reported incident, if there was no evidence of an attempt to take the items. Hence, it was not possible to compare the rates or characteristics of theft incidents in which a firearm was stored on site but not stolen with those in which they were.

Report outline

The report is comprised of four sections describing:

- the characteristics of stolen firearms and theft incidents, including type of firearms stolen;
- the nature of theft incidents, such as location, methods by which offenders gained access to firearms and the kinds of other items stolen with firearms;
- compliance with firearm laws and regulations, including storage, registration and licensing obligations; and
- recovery rates, the prosecution of offenders and use of stolen firearms in crime.

Trend data is presented alongside 2008–09 data for selected items. The final section incorporates a review of the findings from the NFTMP, examines some of the specific vulnerabilities around current storage arrangements made by firearm owners and suggests future research that would improve knowledge of firearm theft.

Characteristics of stolen firearms

Incidence of firearm theft

A total of 1,570 firearms from 620 separate theft incidents were reported stolen to state and territory police (except Western Australia) between 1 July 2008 and 30 June 2009 (see Table 1). The median number of firearms reported stolen for each incident was two. The largest number of firearms stolen in any one incident was 19.

The proportional distribution of stolen firearms across jurisdictions was generally associated with proportional differences in registration numbers, that is, a greater proportion of thefts and stolen firearms were reported in the larger jurisdictions of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland where there are a greater number of registered firearms. In 2008–09, however, the proportion of firearms stolen in New South Wales (38%) was around 10–12 percentage points higher than that reported in the previous four years, accounting for around a quarter of all stolen firearms.

With the absence of Western Australian data, it is not possible to comment on the overall trend in stolen firearms since 2004–05, other than to note that firearm theft appeared to be on the increase (see Table 2). When considering data for all jurisdictions but Western Australia, the number of firearms reported stolen has increased an average

Table 1 Firearm theft incidents and number of stolen firearms

	Incidents		Number of stolen firearms		Mean number of firearms	Median number of firearms
	n	%	n	%		
NSW	220	35	592	38	2.7	2
Vic	134	22	302	19	2.3	1
Qld	132	21	319	20	2.4	2
SA	67	11	211	13	3.1	2
Tas	37	6	99	6	2.7	2
ACT	11	2	22	1	2.0	1
NT	19	3	25	2	1.3	1
Australia (ex WA)	620		1,570		2.5	2

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia)

six percent each year since 2004–05. These numbers, though, are still less than half the average number of firearms reported stolen in the previous decade (ie between 1994 and 2000; see Table 2).

While the national trend is for an increase in firearm theft, state and territory trends have varied (see Figure 1), particularly in Victoria where there was between a nine and 30 percentage point difference

Table 2 Trend in stolen firearms 1994–2000 to 2007–08 (number stolen per year)

	1994–2000[a]	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09
NSW	1,048	371	401	432	410	592
Vic	538	302	211	276	332	302
Qld	750	329	302	320	352	319
WA	602	207	191	232	297	n/a
SA	823	150	198	204	193	211
Tas	306	83	114	52	107	99
ACT	36	8	9	n/a	9	22
NT	92	20	19	10	12	25
Australia	4,195	1,470	1,445	1,526[b]	1,712	–
Australia (ex WA)	3,593	1,263	1,254	1,294	1,415	1,570

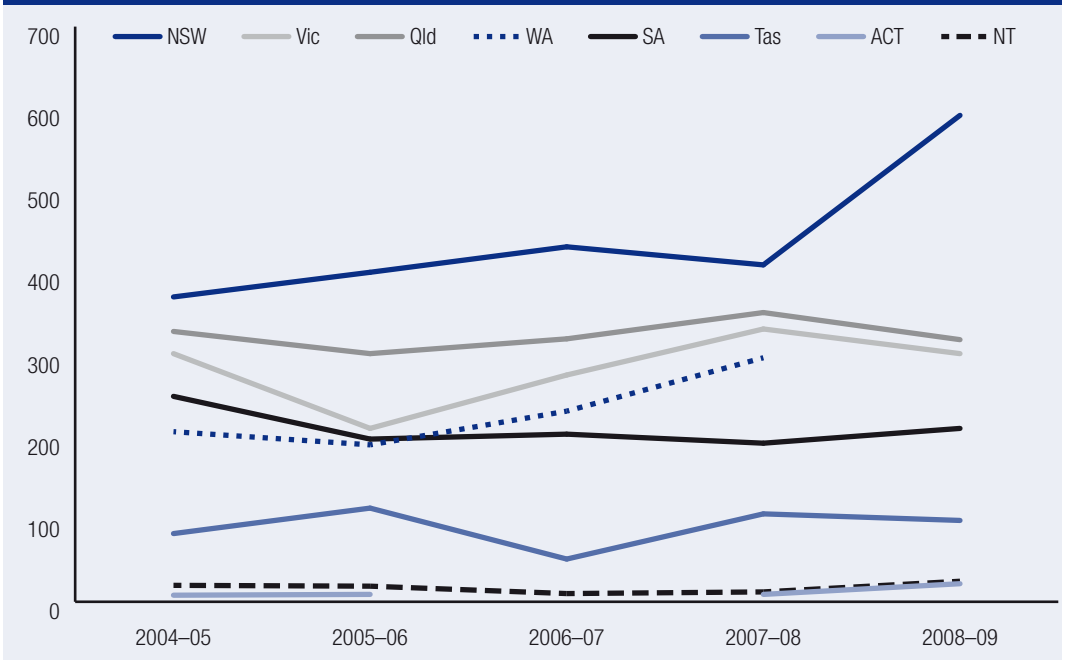
a: The figures in this column represent the average number of firearm stolen during this period

b: Excludes Australian Capital Territory. Because the number of firearms reported stolen in the Australian Capital Territory each year is small, the exclusion of ACT data does not overly underestimate the Australian total

Note: Care must be taken when interpreting data from the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory due to small theft numbers

Sources: Mouzos 2002; AIC NFTMP 2004–09 [computer file]

Figure 1 Trend in stolen firearms, 2004–05 to 2008–09, by jurisdiction (n)



Note: Data were not available for the Australian Capital Territory for 2006–07 and Western Australia for 2008–09. Care must be taken when interpreting data from the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory due to small theft numbers

Source: NFTMP 2004–09 [computer file]

in firearm theft numbers between years. Nonetheless, the general pattern for New South Wales and Western Australia was an increase in the number of firearms reported stolen and an overall decrease for South Australia. There was little difference in theft numbers reported in Queensland over the four year period.

The prevalence of single versus multiple firearm thefts has varied since 2004–05, with multiple firearm thefts accounting for slightly more than half of all reported thefts in the most recent two years. Multiple firearm thefts were again more common in 2008–09, comprising 55 percent of all reported thefts (see Table 3). With the exception of Victoria, multiple firearm thefts predominated in the larger jurisdictions, in particular in South Australia, where 67 percent of reported incidents involved the theft of two or more firearms.

Describing stolen firearms

Type of firearms stolen

Rifles made up more than half of all reported stolen firearms (60%) in 2008–09 and shotguns accounted for almost a quarter (see Table 4). Handguns represented six percent of all stolen firearms. At least one rifle was stolen in three-quarters (74%) of all reported thefts in 2008–09, shotguns in 43 percent, air rifles in 16 percent of all thefts and handguns in seven percent. This general pattern has not changed over the five year reference period (see Borzycki & Mouzos 2007; Bricknell 2010, 2008; Bricknell & Mouzos 2007).

Rifles were the most common firearm stolen in each of the jurisdictions where data were available (see Figure 2; Table 36), reflecting the prevalence of this firearm type among the Australian firearm-owning community. There was, as in previous years,

Table 3 Single versus multiple firearm thefts

	Single firearm theft (n)	Multiple firearm theft (n)	Single firearm theft (%)	Multiple firearm theft (%)
NSW	90	130	41	59
Vic	68	66	51	49
Qld	60	72	45	55
SA	22	45	33	67
Tas	16	21	43	57
ACT	7	4	64	36
NT	16	3	84	26
Australia (ex WA)	279	341	45	55

Note: Care must be taken when interpreting data from the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory due to small theft numbers

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia)

Table 4 Type of firearm stolen

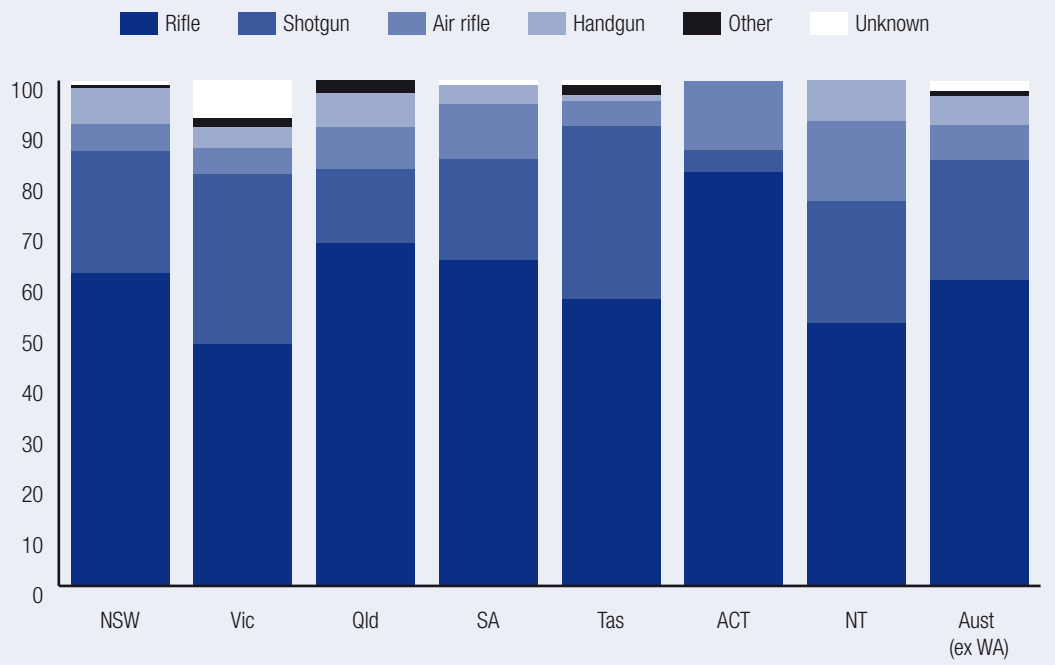
	n	%
Rifle	949	60
Shotgun	376	24
Air rifle	108	7
Handgun	88	6
Other	18	1
Unknown	31	2
Total	1,570	100

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia)

variability among jurisdictions in the predominance of rifles in the pool of stolen firearms. In 2008–09, rifles comprised 47 percent of all firearms reported stolen in Victoria and up to 82 percent in the Australian Capital Territory.

Similarly, there was variation among jurisdictions in the proportion of shotguns stolen. Victoria again reported a higher rate of shotgun theft compared with most other Australian states and territories, at around a third of all reported stolen firearms; shotguns also comprised a third of all stolen firearms in Tasmania. By contrast, handguns represented less than 10 percent of stolen firearms in New South Wales, Queensland and the Northern Territory, and less than five percent of stolen firearms in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. The Australian Capital Territory did not report any handgun thefts in 2008–09.

Figure 2 Type of firearm stolen, by jurisdiction (%)



Note: Care must be taken when interpreting data from the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory due to small theft numbers

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia); Table 35

Table 5 Action type of stolen rifles

	n	%
Bolt action rifle	688	78
Lever action rifle	117	13
Pump action rifle	35	4
Single shot rifle	11	1
Semi-automatic rifle	2	<1
Other	25	3
Total	878	

Note: Excludes rifles in which action type was unknown (n=71). Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia)

Table 6 Action type of stolen shotguns

	n	%
Single barrel shotgun	61	36
Double barrel shotgun	38	22
Over and under shotgun	28	16
Pump action shotgun	6	4
Bolt action shotguns	5	3
Semi-automatic shotgun	2	1
Lever action shotgun	1	1
Other	30	18
Total	171	

Note: Excludes shotguns in which action type was unknown (n=205). Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia)

Table 7 Action type of stolen handguns

	n	%
Semi-automatic pistols	37	46
Revolvers	43	53
Other	1	1
Total	81	100

Note: Excludes handguns in which action type was unknown (n=6) or recorded as a replica (n=1). Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia)

Almost eight out of 10 rifles (78%) stolen were bolt action rifles, with lever action rifles the next most frequently stolen rifle type (13%; see Table 5). Single barrel and double barrel shotguns made up just over a third (36%) and a fifth (22%) respectively of all stolen shotguns (see Table 6). The stolen handguns were mostly revolvers (53%) or semi-automatic pistols (46%; see Table 7).

Category of stolen firearms

For registration and licensing purposes, firearms in Australia are categorised according to a classification system based on firing action, calibre and other criteria. Each jurisdiction recognises five primary categories—A, B, C, D and H—although some have created additional categories for specific firearms (eg paintball markers; see Appendix B for description of generic firearm categories).

Category A and B firearms are the most commonly registered firearms in Australia and may be owned for a range of sporting, recreational (primarily hunting) and occupational purposes. Accordingly, these firearms made up the majority of all reported stolen firearms. In 2008–09, 61 percent of all stolen firearms were Category A firearms and 26 percent were Category B (see Table 8), similar to proportions reported in previous years.

Category C and D firearms are restricted firearms and are only used for a limited range of sporting (eg clay target shooting: Category C), occupational (eg animal control) and official purposes. Just one percent of all reported stolen firearms in 2008–09 were Category C firearms and less than one percent were Category D firearms. Category H firearms are exclusively handguns and are also restricted; they may be acquired for specific sporting and occupational purposes. Category H firearms made up six percent of all reported stolen firearms in 2008–09.

Among the larger jurisdictions, Category A firearms comprised around six in 10 of all reported stolen firearms, except in South Australia where Category A

firearms comprised 68 percent of all stolen firearms (see Figure 3; Table 36). Queensland recorded a Category B firearm theft rate greater than the national proportion (35% compared with 26%) and Victoria recorded a lower theft rate (19%). Handgun theft rates for all jurisdictions were generally similar to the national proportion.

Registration status of stolen firearms

As found in the previous four years, the great majority of firearms reported stolen in 2008–09 had been registered by a private owner or a dealer with the relevant state/territory police service (90%; see Tables 9 and 10). Only four percent of firearms

Table 8 Category of stolen firearms

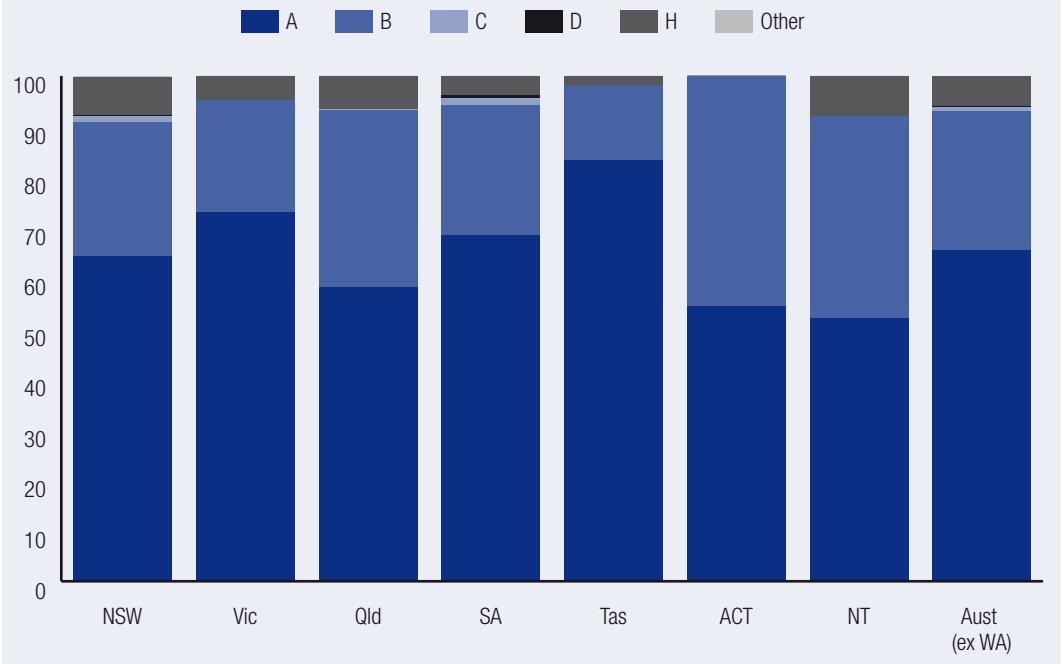
	n	%
A	958	61
B	402	26
C	10	1
D	2	<1
H	91	6
Other	2	<1
Unknown[a]	102	7
Total	1,567	

a: Includes firearms from which insufficient information was available to ascertain category

Note: Excludes firearms in which category was recorded as not applicable (n=3). Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia)

Figure 3 Category of stolen firearms, by jurisdiction (%)



Note: Excludes 107 firearms about which insufficient information was available to ascertain category or the category was recorded as other or not applicable. Care must be taken when interpreting data from the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory due to small theft numbers

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia); Table 36

overall, and no more than five percent in any one jurisdiction, were unregistered at the time the theft occurred. However, it is probable that this figure is an underestimate since owners of unregistered firearms would be less inclined to report the theft to police in order to avoid being charged for offences related to the possession of an unregistered firearm.

Firearm licence holders

The majority of firearm owners (88%) who reported the theft of firearms in 2008–09 held the appropriate licence(s) for the firearms they reported stolen (see Tables 11 and 12). Nine percent of all owners were not licensed, a higher proportion than the average

Table 9 Registration status of stolen firearms

	n	%
Registered[a]	1,410	90
Dealer stock[b]	12	1
Not registered	61	4
Unknown	77	5
Total	1,560	100

a: Registered to private owner

b: Registered to dealer

Note: Excludes 10 firearms in which registration status was recorded as not applicable

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia)

Table 10 Registration status of stolen firearms, by jurisdiction[a]

	Registered[b]		Not registered	
	n	%	n	%
NSW	525	89	31	5
Vic	256	85	10	3
Qld	285	89	16	5
SA	202	96	2	1
Tas	96	97	1	1
ACT	21	96	1	1
NT	25	100	0	0

a: Percentages are of all firearms reported stolen in that jurisdiction (ie including stolen firearms registered to dealers or whose registration was unknown or not applicable). Percentages in table rows will therefore not total 100

b: Registered to private owner

Note: Care must be taken when interpreting data from the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory due to small theft numbers

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia)

Table 11 Firearm licence holders

	n	%
Licensed	530	88
Not licensed	55	9
Unknown	10	2
Not applicable	6	1
Total	601	100

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

six percent recorded in previous years. New South Wales and Victoria had the highest proportion of unlicensed owners reporting a firearm theft in 2008–09 (13% and 12% respectively).

A total of 991 firearm licences were held by the 601 owners who reported a firearm theft in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory (see Table 13). Ninety percent of the total licences were for Category A and B firearms, corresponding with the predominance of these firearm categories among the firearm owning community. Eighty-three percent of owners held a Category A licence and 66 percent held a Category B licence.

Table 12 Licence holders by jurisdiction

	Licensed		Unlicensed			
	n	%	n	%	Total (n)	% of all firearm owners
NSW	182	87	28	13	210	95
Vic	115	88	16	12	131	98
Qld	124	96	5	4	129	98
SA	63	94	4	6	67	100
Tas	36	97	1	3	37	100
ACT	10	91	1	9	11	100

Note: Excludes 16 theft incidents in which the licence status of the firearm owner was unknown or not applicable. Care must be taken when interpreting data from the Australian Capital Territory due to small theft numbers

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Table 13 Type of firearm licence held

	n	% of firearm owners	% of licenses held
A	497	83	50
B	396	66	40
C	28	5	3
D	7	1	1
H	47	8	5
Other	16	3	2
Total	991		100

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

The nature of firearm theft incidents

Reporting firearm thefts

Owners of registered firearms are required to notify police of lost or stolen firearms within a prescribed timeframe. The period of notification varies between jurisdictions, from 24 hours in Victoria to a maximum of 14 days (in writing) in South Australia. In 2008–09, 56 percent of firearm thefts were reported on the day the theft occurred (or was discovered) or the following day (see Table 14). A fifth of thefts were not reported until more than two weeks after the theft occurred. Compliance with mandatory stolen firearm reporting laws was high across all jurisdictions (excluding Western Australia). The lowest compliance rate was in New South Wales where 75 percent of owners reported the theft within the mandatory reporting period (in this case, within 7 days of the theft) compared with 91 percent compliance in the Australian Capital Territory (where a theft must be reported within 48 hours of its event).

The majority of thefts reported in 2008–09 (94%) were committed within this 12 month period. Of the 37 thefts that occurred before the 1 July 2008, 73% (n=27) were reported two or more years after the date on which the theft was known or thought to have occurred. One theft incident was reported 14 years after it took place.

Seventy-eight percent of firearm theft incidents were reported by the firearm owner—71 percent by the owner of a registered firearm and six percent by the owner of an unregistered firearm (see Table 15). Nine owners (1%) reported the theft of both registered and unregistered firearms, four of whom (44%) were found in breach of firearm regulations. Of the 35 theft incidents in which only unregistered firearms were

Table 14 Period between incident date and report date

	n	%
0 (the day of the incident)	215	36
1 day	122	20
2 to 7 days	113	19
8 to 14 days	30	5
More than 14 days	121	20
Total	601	100

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

stolen, two-thirds of the owners who reported the incident to police were found to be in breach of firearm regulations and just over a third (37%) of these were subsequently charged.

Circumstances of the theft

As found in previous years, around nine in 10 (89%) firearm theft incidents that were reported in 2008–09 followed from an unlawful entry into a building or vehicle (see Table 16). Just two percent of reported theft incidents occurred as a result of an armed robbery, mostly of armed security guards. Another two percent were associated with firearms being stolen while in transit (ie being transferred between locations by a commercial courier service).

Location of theft

The majority of firearms stolen in recent years in Australia were taken from private residential premises (Borzycki & Mouzos 2007; Bricknell 2010, 2008; Bricknell & Mouzos 2007). In 2008–09, private residential premises comprised 77 percent of all firearm theft locations (see Table 17). A total of 1,273 firearms, or 82 percent of all firearms, were stolen from this location. The majority of firearms stolen

Table 15 Persons who reported firearm theft to police

	n	%
Owner of firearm(s)	469	78
Owner of registered firearm(s)	425	71
Owner of unregistered firearm(s)	35	6
Owner of registered and unregistered firearm(s)	9	1
Owner of premises	14	2
Occupier of premises	28	5
Another licensed person	18	3
Police initiated inquiry	20	3
Other	46	8
Unknown	5	1
Total	600	100

Note: Excludes 1 incident where the identity of the person who reported the firearm theft was recorded as not applicable

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Table 16 Circumstances of theft

	n	%
Theft, following unlawful entry	533	89
Theft, following robbery	12	2
Misplaced, presumed stolen	24	4
Presumed stolen in transit	10	2
Not returned to owner	2	<1
Other	11	2
Unknown	9	2
Total	601	

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Table 17 Location of theft

	Incidents		Firearms	
	n	%	n	%
Private residential premises	464	77	1,273	82
Business premises	38	6	88	6
Vehicle	56	9	83	5
In transit	10	2	28	2
Other accommodation	3	1	9	1
Other	25	4	43	3
Unknown	4	1	20	1
Total	600	100	1,544	100

Note: Excludes 1 incident where the location of theft was recorded as not applicable

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

from private residences were taken from a room in the house (55% of theft incidents) or from the garage or shed (38%; see Table 18).

Business premises have tended to make up around 10 percent or less of theft locations; in 2008–09, six percent of all thefts targeted such locations, with the theft of 88 firearms (see Table 17). Firearms stolen from business premises were more likely to be stored in sites external to the head office or retail outlet, for example in a shed (24% of relevant theft incidents) or warehouse (18%). Thefts from vehicles also fluctuated, but remained at around 10 percent of all firearm theft locations. Eighty-three firearms were stolen from vehicles in 2008–09, most of which were parked on public roads or car parks (38% of theft incidents) or in private driveways (34%). A much smaller percentage of vehicle-related firearm thefts (9%) occurred with the vehicle being parked in a garage or shed. This difference possibly relates to the additional security the garage provided in thwarting theft attempts. It may also reflect the circumstances in which firearms are more likely to be left in vehicles ie firearms are more likely to be left in cars when the vehicle will be temporarily unattended (eg when parked in public locations).

Repeat victimisation

Since 2005–06, less than 10 percent of firearm theft locations each year have experienced repeat victimisation. Repeat victimisation is considered to have occurred if some form of theft event took place, irrespective of whether firearms were stolen in the earlier theft incident. In 2008–09, six percent of known theft locations (n=35) had been broken into or otherwise targeted at least once before; 69 percent of these (n=24) were private residential premises. Sixty percent of repeat victimisations (n=21) had occurred in the 12 month period prior to the recorded theft. A break-and-entry characterised nine of these 21 theft incidents and in five incidents a robbery was committed.

Not all repeat theft locations were the site of a previous firearm theft. Firearms (and in 1 incident, ammunition as well) were stolen from less than half (40%, n=14) of repeat theft locations. Some form of detail regarding the type of firearm stolen was provided in the majority of these cases, with a total of 17 rifles, 10 shotguns, two handguns and one air rifle taken from these sites.

How offenders gained access to theft locations

As described earlier, nine in 10 firearm theft events were as a result of a building (or some other structure) or vehicle being broken into. In almost a fifth (18%) of incidents where private residential or business premises were broken into, the theft was aided by the premises being unsecured at the time of the burglary (see Figure 4; Table 37). This proportion was greater for firearm theft from vehicles—a third of firearms were taken from an unlocked car or truck. It might be expected that in

Table 18 Specific location of incidents of firearm theft from private residential premises, business premises and vehicles

	Incidents		Firearms	
	n	%	n	%
Private residential premises				
Room in dwelling	255	55	696	55
Garage or shed	177	38	505	40
Other[a]	11	2	23	2
Unknown	21	5	49	4
Total	464		1,273	
Business premises				
Garage or shed	9	24	27	31
Warehouse	7	18	16	18
Administrative office	5	13	7	8
Retail	5	13	9	10
Other[b]	10	26	20	23
Unknown	2	5	9	10
Total	38		88	
Vehicle				
Public road or carpark	21	38	26	31
Private driveway	19	34	35	42
Garage or shed	5	9	6	7
Other[c]	9	16	14	17
Unknown	2	4	2	2
Total	56		83	

a: Includes ceiling cavities, external laundry, cellar, shipping container and workshop

b: Includes public road outside business premises, non-office space in premises, club facilities, piggery and yard area

c: Includes bushland or rural setting, camp site, parked outside a government office or club or rear yard

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

these cases the unsecured vehicles were temporarily parked (eg in public carparks) or in areas where the risk of theft would be considered comparatively low (eg rural locations), however, 44 percent of thefts from unlocked vehicles took place when the vehicle was parked in a private driveway, invariably outside the home.

In a small number of cases (6% or less), the theft was committed using a stolen key. In an equally small number of cases (included in the 'Other' category in Figure 4), the firearm was believed to have been stolen by persons (eg family members, employees) who would have had legitimate access to the premises or vehicle, or was surrendered by the owner following a threat from the offender.

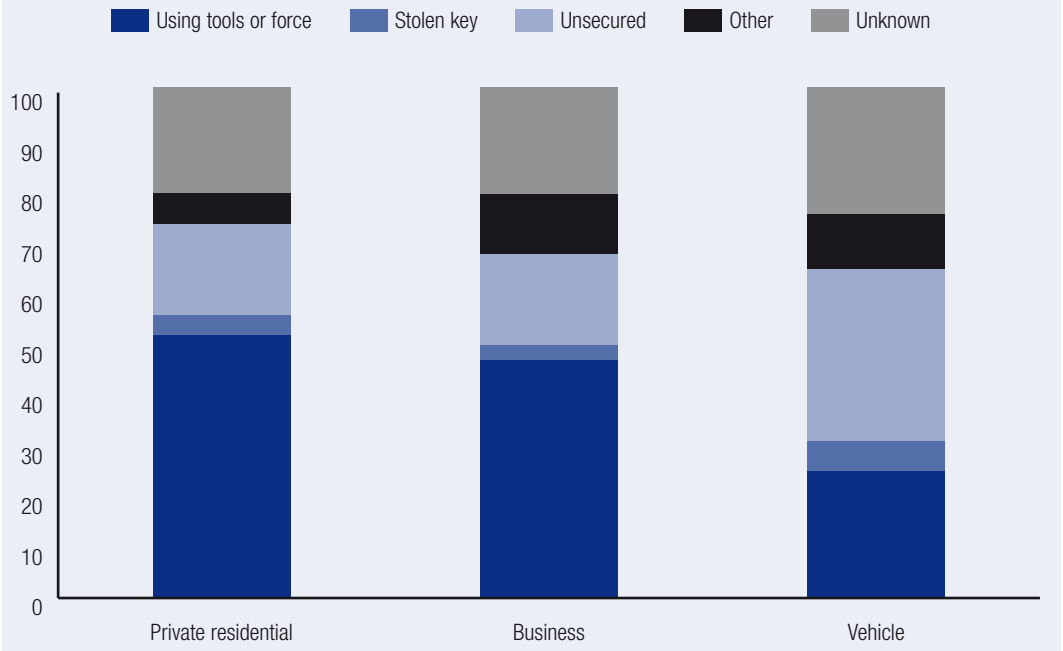
Storage arrangements and access to firearms

Firearms from 63 percent of all reported theft incidents were stored in a firearm safe or other apparently secure receptacle at the time of the theft (see Table 19). The prevalence of safe storage

arrangements has remained consistent since 2004–05, as has the percentage of firearms that were not secured in any way (10%) or were left in vehicles (security arrangements unknown; 9%). As was found in previous years, a very small group of owners (6%) experiencing firearms theft stored their firearms in superficially secure storage arrangements, such as wardrobes and cupboards.

Data on storage arrangements for ammunition have been less detailed and consistent compared with data provided on firearm storage arrangements. Of the 137 incidents of ammunition theft where

Figure 4 Method of access to premises or vehicle (%)



a: Includes using threat, legitimate access and for firearms stolen from vehicles, vehicle stolen or forms of entry that did not involve the use of force or tools

Note: Excludes 11 incidents in which method of access was recorded as not applicable and 43 incidents in which the location was recorded as unknown or another location category

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and Northern Territory)

Table 19 Primary firearm storage arrangements

	n	%
Safe/other secure receptacle	378	63
In vehicle	55	9
Carried on person	10	2
Strong room or vault	7	1
On display	4	1
Unsecured/in the open	59	10
Unknown	49	8
Other	34	6
Total	596	100

Note: Excludes 5 incidents where the storage arrangement for firearms at time of theft was recorded as not applicable

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

sufficient information on storage arrangements was provided, just under half (49%) were characterised by the ammunition being removed from an approved safe or receptacle (see Table 20). In all but two incidents, the safe was locked at the time of the theft.

Method of accessing firearms

Describing the method offenders used to access firearms provides additional detail regarding how secure the firearms actually were at the time of the theft incident. The application of force or use of tools was required in 38 percent of incidents of firearm theft in 2008–09 (see Table 21). In 10 percent of incidents, the key was located or the offenders managed to break the combination to the place of storage; in eight percent of thefts, the offenders chose to steal the receptacle in which the firearms were stored, presumably because they were unable, or did not have the time, to break in to the receptacle while on site. This suggests that in at least 56 percent of cases in 2008–09, the firearm had been secured in some way prior to the theft.

In another 16 percent of incidents, the firearm was easily retrieved by offenders because it was not secured properly or had been left in the open. This group of incidents includes thefts from vehicles in which the firearm was not stored appropriately (eg left under the seat, in the glove box). Since most firearms stored in vehicles were not further secured within the vehicle, offenders were able to easily retrieve the firearm once the vehicle had been broken into, if the vehicle was indeed locked.

Theft from storage-compliant receptacles

While it was not feasible to collect specific information in the NFTMP dataset on storage arrangements (eg material the receptacle was made out of), other than the general form it took,

Table 20 Ammunition storage

	n	%
Safe or secure receptacle	67	49
Unsecured/in the open	9	7
In vehicle	3	2
Other	13	9
Unknown	45	33
Total	137	100

Note: Excludes 25 incidents where insufficient information was recorded on storage arrangement for ammunition

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Table 21 Method of accessing firearms

	n	%
Using tools or force	225	38
Key located or broke combination	61	10
Entire receptacle stolen	49	8
Receptacle not locked	19	4
Using threat	12	2
Other	12	2
Unsecured/in the open	96	16
Unknown	121	20
Total	595	100

Note: Excludes six incidents where the method of accessing firearms was recorded as not applicable

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

an examination of the method by which firearms were removed from apparently compliant safes or similar receptacles provides some evidence for how secure these firearms really were at the time of the theft. Force or the use of tools was used to breach safes or other secure receptacles in 56 percent of incidents in which the firearm(s) were stored, indicating that effort was required on the offender's part to penetrate the safe. In 12 percent of incidents, the offender(s) stole the receptacle the firearms were stored in (see Figure 5) but because of insufficient data as to whether receptacles were fixed to walls or floors, it was unclear whether these receptacles could just be carried away or the offenders had to lever them off before stealing them. In another 15 percent of incidents, the offender(s) located the key to the safe or they were able to break the combination, although it cannot be discerned what proportion of these incidents were aided by the key being located and in what proportion the offenders had to break the combination. These results parallel previous years findings regarding how offenders remove firearms from safes (see Borzycki & Mouzos 2007; Bricknell 2010, 2008; Bricknell & Mouzos 2007).

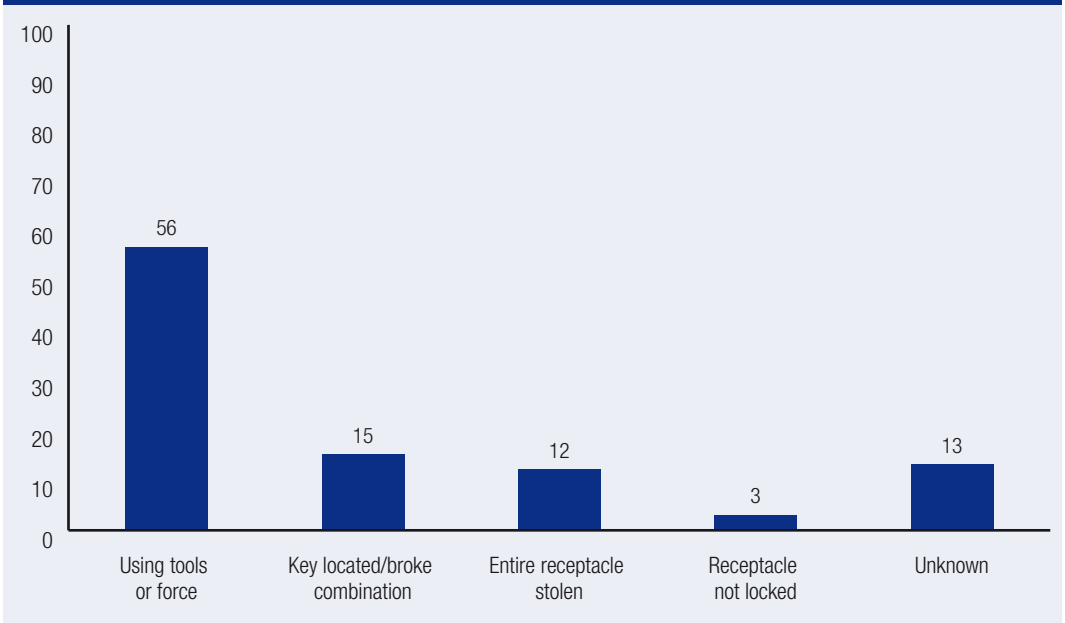
Items stolen

Firearms and ammunition

Multiple firearm theft was reported in slightly more than half (55%) of reported theft incidents in 2008–09. Twenty-two percent of all firearm theft incidents involved the theft of two firearms, 10 percent of three firearms and nine percent of four firearms (see Table 22). The largest number of firearms stolen in a single theft incident in 2008–09 was 19. Multiple firearm thefts were more common in private residential premises (61%) than they were from vehicles (23%; see Figure 6).

The theft of ammunition has consistently been reported in around a quarter of all firearm theft incidents; in 2008–09 ammunition was stolen together with firearms in 27 percent of reported thefts (see Table 23). It was known that stolen ammunition had been secured in an approved receptacle in at least 40 percent of reported theft incidents but the inconsistent quality of additional data on ammunition storage precluded further analysis.

Figure 5 Method of accessing firearms stored in safes or other secure receptacles (%)



Note: Refers to those incidents in which firearms were stored in a safe or otherwise secure receptacle (n=378). Excludes 1 incident in which the method of access was the use of threat. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Other non-firearm goods

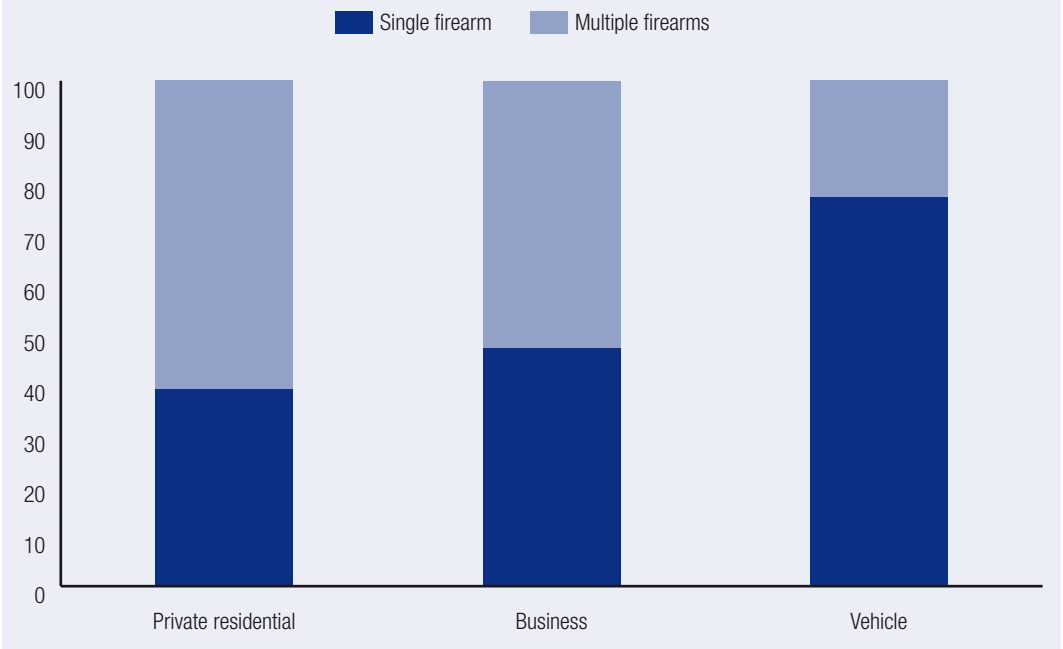
Other goods were stolen with firearms in 55 percent of all reported theft incidents (see Table 24). Firearm thefts in which non-firearm goods were also stolen were classified by Mouzos and Sakurai (2006) as general burglaries, while thefts in which only firearms (and ammunition) were stolen were taken as possibly indicative of a targeted firearm theft. General burglaries have comprised around 55 to 60 percent of theft incidents since 2004–05. Items commonly stolen with firearms included cash (36% of all general burglaries), tools (31%), jewellery and watches (26%), and personal electronic items such

Table 22 Firearms stolen per theft

Firearms (n)	Incidents (n)	Incidents (%)
One	279	45
Two	139	22
Three	64	10
Four	53	9
Five	26	4
Six	18	3
Seven	13	2
Eight	12	2
Nine or more	16	3
Total	620	100

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia)

Figure 6 Single versus multiple firearm theft, by location



Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and Northern Territory)

as mobile phones and iPods (24%; see Table 25). In some years, general burglaries have been more commonly associated with multiple firearm theft than incidents of targeted theft, which suggested that these thefts were characterised by a degree of opportunism in which as many goods were taken as possible. However, this association was not always found to be significant and in 2008–09 this was also the case (see Figure 7).

Table 23 Theft of ammunition

	n	%
Ammunition stolen	162	27
Ammunition not stolen	396	66
Unknown	42	7
Total	600	100

Note: Excludes 1 incident where the theft of ammunition was recorded as not applicable

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

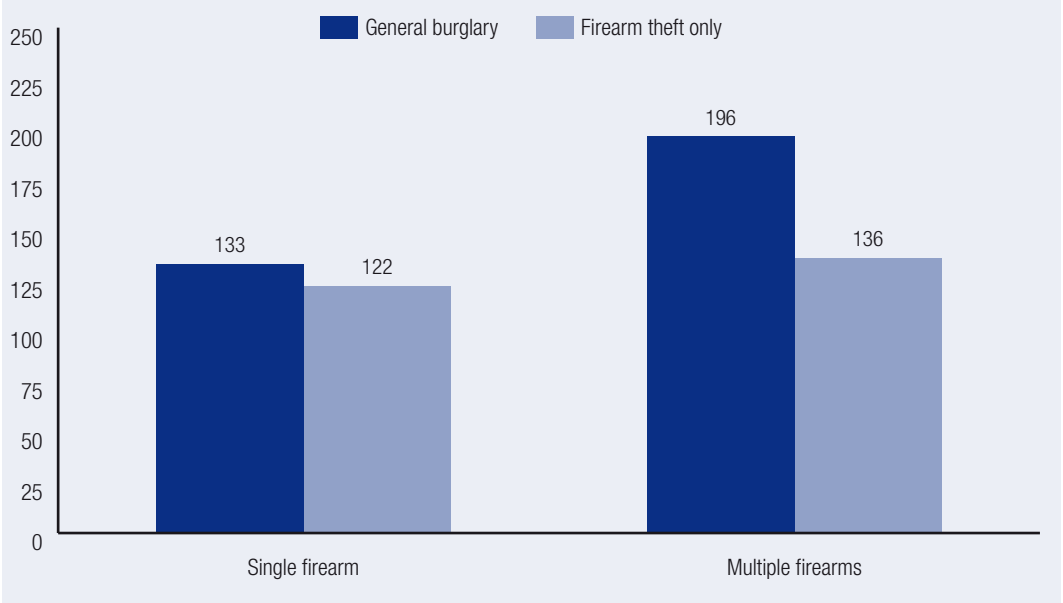
Table 24 Theft of other goods

	n	%
Other goods stolen	329	55
Other goods not stolen	258	43
Unknown	11	2
Total	598	100

Note: Excludes 3 incidents where the theft of other goods was recorded as not applicable

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Figure 7 Firearms stolen, by type of theft (n)



Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Table 25 Types of other goods stolen		
	General burglaries (n)	General burglaries (%)
Cash	95	36
Tools	84	31
Jewellery/watches	69	26
Personal electronic items	65	24
Luggage and other storage items	55	21
Home entertainment	48	18
Firearm accessories	41	15
Weapons	36	13
Personal items	30	11
Recreational items	29	11
PCs and accessories	28	10
Alcohol and other drugs	26	10
Vehicles	25	9
Other household items	22	8
Vehicle accessories	18	7
Agricultural items	15	6
ID and negotiable documents	14	5
Keys	11	4
Collectible items	9	3
DVDs, CDs, videos, games etc	8	3
Household electrical appliances	5	2
Other items	31	12

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Compliance with firearm laws

Storage compliance

The means to ensure the safe keeping of firearms when they are not being carried or in use are prescribed in state and territory firearm laws. In summary, these provisions describe the construction, anchoring and locking arrangements for receptacles used to store specific categories of firearm and ammunition. Sixty percent of owners who reported a firearm theft in 2008–09 were determined to have complied with firearm storage laws (see Table 26). The compliance rate in 2004–05 was also 60 percent, dropping to just over half (52%) in the following two years before increasing again to 57 percent in 2007–08.

Overall improvement in storage compliance was observed in just one of the larger jurisdictions (ie South Australia), although Western Australia also showed an increase in storage compliance for the years that data were available (see Figure 8). With the exception of 2007–08, South Australia has shown a consistently higher rate of storage compliance than other Australian jurisdictions, with at least two-thirds of owners recorded as storage compliant each year. New South Wales has also recorded a two-thirds or greater compliance rate, while Queensland's rate has tended to sit below 60 percent. Victoria's storage compliance rate was relatively even up until 2008–09 when it decreased 15 percent to 53 percent.

Figure 9 compares the compliance status recorded for key firearm storage variables; that is, stored in a receptacle (locked and unlocked), left in a vehicle or generally unsecured. Not unexpectedly, firearm owners who had secured their firearms(s) in a locked receptacle before the theft incident were mostly

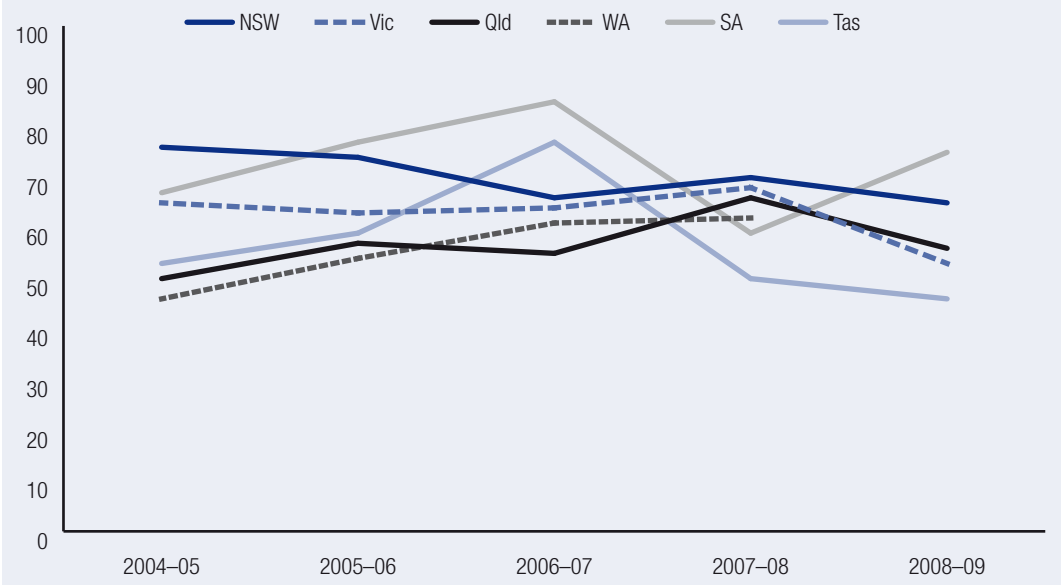
Table 26 Status of compliance with firearm storage laws

	n	%
Complied	351	60
Not complied	138	24
Unknown	97	17
Total	586	

Note: Excludes 15 incidents in which method of firearm storage was recorded as not applicable and hence not subject to storage laws. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

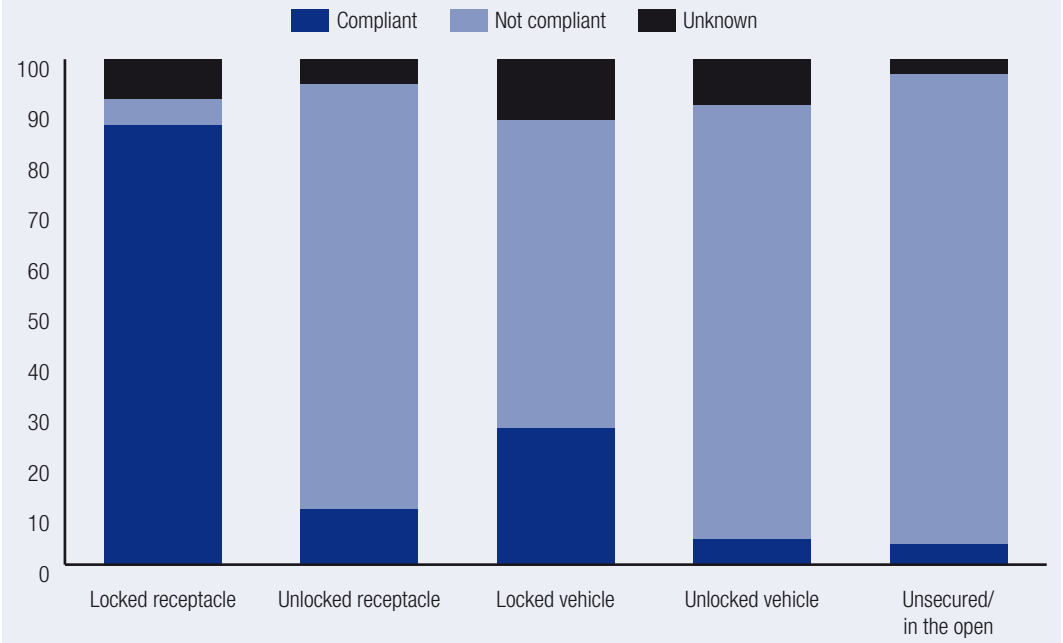
Figure 8 Trend in storage compliance, by selected jurisdictions (%)



Note: Excludes Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory due to the small number of firearm theft incidents reported in each territory each year. 2008–09 data for Western Australia not provided. Percentages are calculated from incidents in which the status of storage compliance was known (ie compliant or not compliant)

Source: AIC NFTMP 2004–09 [computer file]

Figure 9 Type of firearm storage and status of compliance (%)



Note: Excludes 6 incidents in which compliance status was recorded as not applicable

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

described as storage compliant (87%), while those who had left the receptacle unlocked were mostly described as non-compliant (84%; see also Table 38). The majority of firearm owners who had left their firearms in vehicles were also considered to have not stored their firearms in compliance with storage laws. Non-compliance was recorded for 61 percent of owners who had their firearm(s) stolen from a locked car and 86 percent for owners where the vehicle was unlocked at the time of theft. There have been a number of incidents in each of the monitoring years where the storage arrangements described did not correlate with the recorded storage compliance status and this was the case again in 2008–09. However, these incidents have been too small in number to warrant investigating whether additional factors may have determined the seemingly contradictory compliance status applied.

As discussed earlier, the majority of firearm thefts occurred in private residential premises and in these locations firearms were mostly stored somewhere within the house or in the garage or shed. Owners who had firearms stolen from the latter location had a higher storage compliance rate than owners whose firearms were stolen from within the house (80% *cf* 58%). This was also the case when considering compliance rates for the combined 2005–09 period (71% *cf* 56%). Firearm owners who stored their firearms in a garage or shed may be more inclined to secure their firearms because they perceive a greater theft risk to firearms stored away from the confines of the immediate domestic residence. Conversely, some owners who store their firearms within the home may feel the domestic residence affords better protection and hence are less vigilant with respect to the storage of their firearms. Firearms stolen from 17 percent of thefts in 2008–09 where the firearm was stored within a room of the house were described as unsecured or left in the open compared with six percent of incidents in which firearms were stolen from a private garage.

Storage compliance was also considerably greater for owners who reported multiple firearm thefts (74% of all firearm owners who reported such a theft in 2008–09) than those who reported single firearm thefts (42%; see Table 27). While the data did not indicate if firearm owners who reported single firearm thefts actually owned other firearms, the finding, which replicates results from previous years, suggests that owners of multiple firearms were more inclined to secure their firearms, for reasons that may be related to cost of replacement or greater responsibility that comes with multiple firearm ownership. However, some of the pattern may be influenced by the different circumstances in which single or multiple firearms were stolen. Firearm thefts from vehicles, for example, were usually associated with non-compliant storage arrangements; they also usually involved the taking of a single firearm, possibly because firearm owners are more inclined to transport firearms one at a time.

Rates of storage compliance among owners who reported the theft of firearms remained at 60 percent or less during the four year monitoring period. Some of this non-compliance was certainly attributable to incidents of firearm theft from vehicles, where an average 58 percent of owners (who reported a theft between 1 July 2005 and 30 June 2009) were deemed not to have taken all reasonable precautions to ensure the safe keeping of their firearms. However, on average, 25 percent of owners who had firearms stolen from a private dwelling (the principal location for firearm theft in Australia) similarly did not secure their firearms in accordance with firearm laws. Theft incidents characterised by the absence of appropriate firearm storage arrangements were associated with the theft of 59 percent and 17 percent respectively of all firearms reported stolen from these two locations

Table 27 Storage compliance, by number of firearms stolen

	Single firearm theft		Multiple firearm theft	
	n	%	n	%
Complied	105	42	246	74
Not complied	89	35	49	15
Unknown	59	23	38	11
Total	253	100	333	100

Note: Excludes 15 incidents in which method of firearm storage was recorded as not applicable and hence not subject to storage laws

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

between 1 July 2005 and 30 June 2009. Overall, firearms not stored appropriately at the time of the theft comprised almost a fifth (18%) of all reported stolen firearms during this period (see Table 28).

Breaches of firearm laws

Since 2004–05, around 20–25 percent of firearm owners who reported the theft of their firearms were found, or were suspected, to be in breach of one or more firearm laws. In 2008–09, the proportion was the same again with just over a fifth of firearm owners (22%) reporting the theft of a firearm subsequently found in breach (see Table 29). The highest breaching rate in 2008–09 occurred in Queensland (28%) and the lowest in South Australia and Tasmania (12% and 11% respectively; see Figure 10).

The overall proportion of firearm owners found in breach and subsequently charged and/or disciplined was similar to that recorded in 2007–08 (62%; see Table 30). This rate varied between the four largest jurisdictions included in the 2008–09 dataset, from 45 percent in Victoria to 75 percent in New South Wales (see Figure 11). Consistently higher rates of initiating proceedings against firearm owners have been recorded in New South Wales and South Australia since 2005–06, while rates have fluctuated considerably in Victoria and Queensland (see Figure 12). The absence of narrative in the data precludes reliable interpretation of this pattern.

Where formal proceedings had begun, only 11 firearm owners (or 9% of all owners proceeded against) had received disciplinary action or such action was pending. The remainder were known to have been charged (or charges were pending) but there was no indication if further action was to be taken (see Table 30).

The proportion of firearm owners found in breach of firearm laws and not proceeded against increased from 22 percent in 2005–06 to 36 percent in 2008–09. From earlier data it was apparent that owners were not charged due to:

- reasons related to the expiry of the statute of limitations, the pursuit of charges not being seen in the public interest or the owner being infirm or deceased; or
- a warning or caution being issued instead.

Where information was available as to the grounds on which police chose not to proceed with charges (n=48), 21 percent of owners were not charged as it

Table 28 Firearms stolen from non-compliant storage arrangements

	Firearms stolen from non-compliant storage arrangements (n)	Total firearms stolen (n)	Firearms stolen from non-compliant storage arrangements (%)
Private residential premises	847	5,111	17
Business premises	59	543	11
Vehicles	188	319	59
Other locations	39	218	18
Total[a]	1,133	6,191	18

a: Excludes firearms stolen from locations recorded as not applicable or unknown

Note: Excludes 2004–05 data due to some data variable comparability issues

Source: AIC NFTMP 2005–09 [computer file]

Table 29 Firearm owners found in breach of firearm laws

	n	%
In breach	132	22
Not in breach	404	67
Unknown	58	1
Not applicable	7	10
Total	601	100

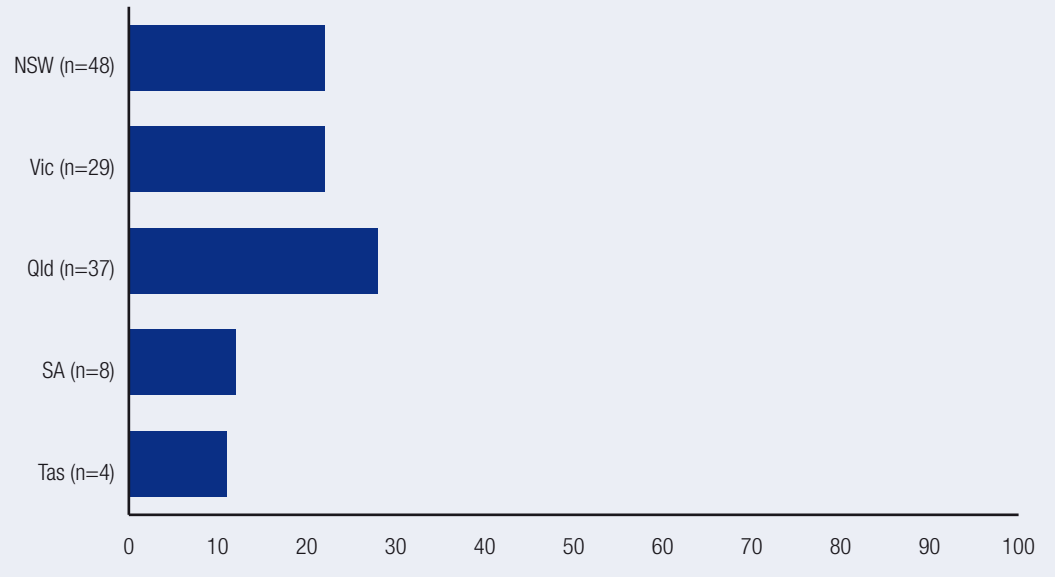
Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

was deemed not in the public interest to do so; another 19 percent were not charged because the statute of limitations had expired. A further 19 percent were not charged due to other reasons, including that there was insufficient evidence, the owner was elderly or had dementia, or the police believed the owner had made a genuine mistake.

Charges laid

A total of 101 charges were laid (or pending) against 82 owners who reported stolen firearms in 2008–09 (see Table 31). Thirteen firearm owners (16%) had multiple charges against them. The failure to secure or correctly store firearms was once again the most common offence firearm owners were charged with, making up 57 percent of all charges laid. The possession of an unregistered firearm accounted for eight percent of charges, as did the failure to possess the appropriate licence for the firearm stolen.

Figure 10 Firearm owners found in breach of firearm laws, by selected jurisdictions (%)



Note: Excludes the Australian Capital Territory due to the small number of firearm theft incidents reported in the Territory each year

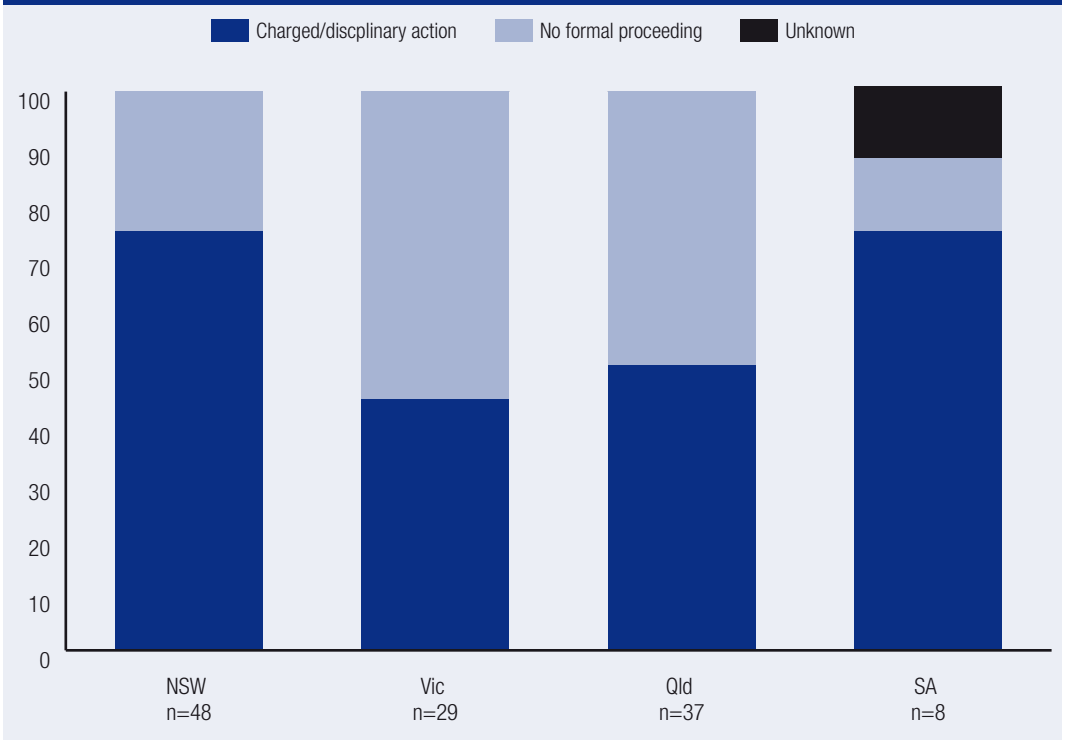
Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Table 30 Proceeding against firearm owners found in breach of firearm laws

	n	%
Proceeded against	82	62
Charged	63	48
Charges pending	8	6
Disciplinary action	9	7
Disciplinary action pending	2	2
No formal action	48	36
Unknown	2	2
Total	132	100

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Figure 11 Proceedings against firearm owners found in breach of firearm laws, by selected jurisdictions (%)



Note: Excludes Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory due to small theft numbers. Note: Care must be taken when interpreting data from South Australia due to small number of incidents in which firearm owners were found in breach of firearm laws

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Table 31 Type of offences firearm owners charged with

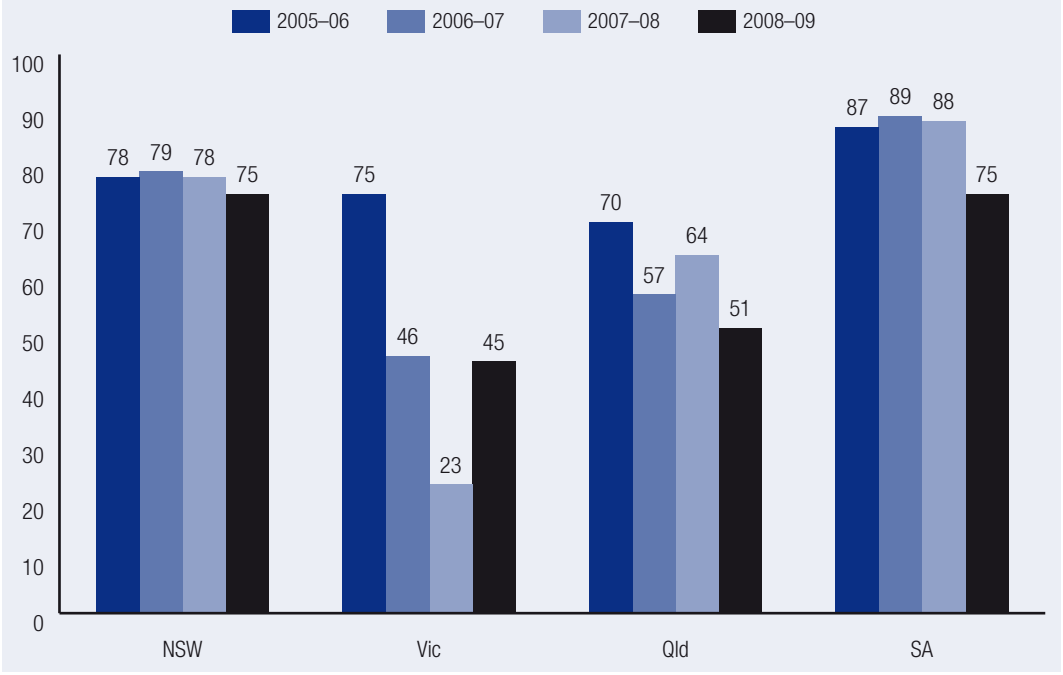
	n	%
Failure to secure or correctly store firearms	59	57
Unlawful or unlicensed possession of a firearm	8	8
Possession of an unregistered firearm	8	8
Breach of licence conditions	7	7
Failure to secure or correctly store ammunition	2	2
Other[a]	11	12
Unknown	6	6
Total	101	100

a: Includes offence of not prevent theft or loss of a firearm (n=4), failure to notify change of address where firearm is stored (n=2), unlawful possession of ammunition (n=1), use of a firearm in a national park (n=1) and not further defined (n=3)

Note: Multiple charges were laid against owners in 13 incidents. The total number of charges therefore exceeds the total number of firearm owners proceeded against (n=82)

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Figure 12 Formal proceeding rates, by selected jurisdictions, 2005–06 to 2008–09 (%)



Note: Excludes Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory due to small theft numbers; excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory due to absence of 2008–09 data

Source: AIC NFTMP 2005–09 [computer file]

Other findings

Recovery of stolen firearms

Stolen firearms were recovered by police from 14 percent of reported firearm theft incidents (see Table 32), consistent with recovery rates of 12–13 percent from previous years. Firearms were not recovered from 77 percent of incidents, while the recovery status was not known for nine percent of incidents. Recovery rates varied considerably between the larger states, from just five percent in South Australia to 24 percent in Queensland. Since 2005–06, Queensland and New South Wales have reported a consistently higher rate of stolen firearm recovery compared with Victoria and particularly South Australia (see Table 33).

Recovered firearms were known to have been returned to owners in 45 percent of cases (n=38; see Table 32) but no explanation was provided as to why firearms were not given back to owners in the 39 other cases where return status was known. Previous data showed that firearms were not returned if the firearm had been tampered with or altered in any way, the original owner illegally possessed the firearm, or the firearm was still retained in police possession as exhibit property at the time of data collation.

Table 32 Stolen firearm recovery and return rate

	n	%
Recovered	84	14
Not recovered	460	77
Unknown	57	9
Total	601	
Recovered firearms returned	38	45
Recovered firearms not returned	39	46
Unknown	7	8
Total	84	

Note: Recovery and return rate refers to incident numbers. Data on recovery rates refer only to those events in which the firearm was reclaimed in the jurisdiction in which the theft occurred. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Firearms were more likely to be recovered if the theft was reported as part of a general burglary (χ^2=19.5, p<0.05) and if the offender was eventually apprehended χ^2=249.7, p<0.001). Little information, however, was provided on the circumstances of the recovery event and it was not clear whether the firearm was found in possession of the original offender or a subsequent recipient. Firearms stolen as part of a multiple firearm theft were not usually recovered together and often only a subset of the original theft haul was located by the police.

Proceeding against offenders

Offenders responsible for, or found in possession of firearms associated with, 13 percent of reported incidents of firearm theft in 2008–09 were subsequently apprehended and dealt with (see Table 34). Apprehension rates were significantly greater for offenders if the theft was classified as a general burglary (76%; χ^2=21.7, p< 0.01). No apprehensions were recorded from 76 percent of incidents classified as firearms theft only and it was not known whether an offender had been apprehended from 11 percent of incidents. Of the larger jurisdictions, Victoria and Queensland again recorded higher offender apprehension rates among the larger jurisdictions and South Australia recorded the lowest (3%). No offenders responsible for reported firearm thefts in Tasmania in 2008–09 were proceeded against.

The type of offences with which offenders were charged and dealt with was provided by jurisdictions for 70 of the 78 applicable incidents and these are listed in Table 35. Data refer to the number of incidents in which a charge for a specific offence category (eg disposing of stolen property) was laid, regardless of whether one or multiple offenders were involved for that offence per incident. This has been done due to some ambiguity in the data as to the number of charges laid and offenders dealt with.

Table 33 Recovery rate of firearms, by jurisdiction

	n	%
NSW	26	12
Vic	18	13
Qld	31	24
SA	3	5
Tas	4	11
ACT	2	18
Total	84	14

Note: Recovery and return rate refers to incident numbers. Data on recovery rates refer only to those events in which the firearm was reclaimed in the jurisdiction in which the theft occurred

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Table 34 Offenders proceeded against, by jurisdiction

	n	% of theft incidents
NSW	26	12
Vic	25	19
Qld	23	17
SA	2	3
Tas	0	0
Total	76	13

Note: Excludes the Australian Capital Territory due to small theft numbers

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

At least 82 offenders were known to have been proceeded against 191 separate charges (see Table 35). Offenders were charged with illegal entry offences (64%) and theft of the firearm (and other items) in 60 percent of incidents. Seven in 10 incidents in which an offender was proceeded against related to firearm offences (such as unauthorised possession of a firearm or ammunition).

Linking stolen firearms to crime

Information on whether firearms reported stolen in 2008–09 were used in subsequent criminal activity, or found in possession of persons charged with serious offences, was available for 65 percent of theft incidents (n=392). Of these, firearms stolen in 10 incidents (or 3%) were recorded as being used in subsequent criminal activity, or in the possession of a person charged with serious offences. Firearms stolen from two additional incidents were used or believed to have been used in two sudden death events.

A total of 51 firearms were stolen from these 10 theft incidents (33 rifles, 10 shotguns, 7 air rifles and 1 handgun) but it was not specified which of these firearms were linked to specific criminal offences. Of the offences listed, firearms from two theft incidents were linked with an offender who had displayed dangerous conduct with the stolen firearm and there were two incidents in which the firearm was found in possession of an individual involved in the cultivation or supply of a prohibited drug. In another case the firearm was found in possession of a member of an outlawed motorcycle gang. Only one theft incident resulted in the use of a firearm to commit a violent crime, in this case manslaughter.

Table 35 Offence type

	n	% of incidents[a]
Firearm offences[b]	49	70
Break and enter/burglary	45	64
Theft/stealing/larceny	42	60
Possessing/receiving/disposing of stolen property	24	34
Drug related	6	9
Violent crime[c]	3	4
Other	22	31

a: Percentage is of incidents where an offender was charged and dealt with and where information was provided on the offence type(s) (n=70)

b: Includes possession of unauthorised firearm, possession of unauthorised prohibited firearm, possession of ammunition without holding a licence/permit/authority, use unauthorised firearm, failure to surrender firearm, shorten barrel of longarm, alter firearm ID

c: Includes armed robbery and manslaughter

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Conclusion

The nature and characteristics of firearm theft that occurred each year in Australia from 2004–05 to 2008–09 has shown considerable consistency. Firearms have been predominantly stolen from private residential premises, usually along with other items such as cash, tools and jewellery. An average of one to two firearms has been stolen in each theft incident, most of which have been registered at the time of the theft and in the possession of a licensed owner. Less restricted firearms (eg Category A and B firearms) comprised the majority of firearms stolen, most likely a reflection of the prevalence of these firearms among the Australian firearm-owning community rather than a necessary preference to steal such firearm models. Handgun theft remained consistently below 10 percent and restricted Category C and D firearms (such as pump action shotguns and semi-automatic rifles) rarely featured in firearm theft reports. The fate of stolen firearms has generally remained unknown. Firearms from an average three percent of incidents reported each year have been identified as having been used in a subsequent criminal act or found in the possession of individuals charged with other serious criminal offences. Yet the majority of stolen firearms (from an average 88% of theft incidents each year) have not been recorded as having been recovered by police.

Compared with the previous decade, the number of firearms reported stolen each year has halved. However, in the five years from the 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2009, there has been a steady increase in the number of firearms reported stolen, from 1,263 in 2004–05 to 1,570 in 2008–09 (in all Australian jurisdictions except Western Australia). Without access to data regarding changes in the number of firearms registered in Australia it is not possible to discern whether this increase in stolen firearms is influenced by a general increase in legally-owned firearms or rather, that it is a genuine indication that theft numbers are on the rise. The pattern observed across the states and territories is not uniform and in most jurisdictions the number of reported stolen firearms has tended to fluctuate rather than present a clear upward or downward trend.

A critical factor in the prevention of firearm theft is owner compliance with prescribed firearm storage standards. As mentioned previously, state and territory firearm legislation stipulates the type of safe keeping arrangements owners are obliged to observe when their firearms are not in use. Penalties apply (including custodial sentences in some jurisdictions) for cases of non-compliance. Nonetheless, rates of storage compliance among owners who reported the theft of firearms remained at 60 percent or less during the monitoring period. It was noted that in most incidents of theft of a firearm from a vehicle, the majority of owners (who reported a theft between 1 July 2005 and 30 June 2009) had

not taken reasonable precautions to ensure the safe keeping of their firearms. Similarly, a quarter of owners who reported the theft of a firearm from a private dwelling during the same period were also non-compliant. Firearms not stored appropriately at the time of the theft comprised almost a fifth (18%) of all reported stolen firearms during this period.

The nature of the data collected for the NFTMP does not allow a full assessment of risk since it only refers to situations in which a theft event was successful. It can be used, though, to gauge whether certain locations were more vulnerable to, or 'assisted' firearm theft due to the security arrangements (or lack thereof) practiced by firearm owners in these locations. In some theft incidents, private residential and business premises were unlocked and/or the firearms were unsecured at the time of theft but there was no significant association between the security arrangements for the location and the security arrangements taken for the firearm(s). Firearms stolen from private dwellings were mostly removed from rooms within the house or from the garage, with firearm owners appearing to make more effort to secure their firearms if they were stored in the garage than if kept in the home. However, the real vulnerability was found to lie with vehicles. Not only was there a more significant likelihood that vehicles, compared with private residential and business premises, would be unlocked at the time of the theft (χ^2=47.92, n=1,627, p<0.001) but that the firearms 'stored' in these vehicles had not been secured in any way (χ^2=434.66, n=1,933, p<0.001). While firearm thefts from vehicles made up a much smaller proportion of thefts compared with those that targeted private residential premises, they were similar in prevalence with theft rates from business premises and hence highlight the less vigilant approach firearm owners appear to take when transporting firearms by vehicle.

The twin purposes of the NFTMP were to assist state and territory police in identifying initiatives in reducing the incidence of firearm theft and developing a minimum standard for firearm storage common to all sectors of the firearm-owning community. The type of data provided on firearm storage arrangements was not descriptive enough to be able to comment on the adequacy of current storage specifications (as prescribed in state and territory firearm laws), except that it was evident that determined offenders were able to penetrate otherwise secure receptacles. It was apparent from incident narratives (where they were provided) that in some cases of firearm theft, offenders came well prepared with equipment (or sought out equipment within the theft location) to either remove the receptacle or break into it to retrieve the firearms stored inside. From other incidents it was less clear what preparation, other than the basic method applied (eg application of force or use of tools), had been taken by the offender to breach the firearms safe. Firearms stored in garages or shed were found, on the whole, to be better secured than firearms stored inside the home, but paradoxically may be more vulnerable to theft due to the greater likelihood of tools or other paraphernalia that can be used to breach the firearm safe being available to offenders in this location site.

Modifying current provisions around firearm storage may be one option that law enforcement agencies may adopt in seeking to further reduce the incidence of firearm theft. Other options, involving investment from state and territory police and/or the Australian firearm-owning community, might focus on situational crime prevention methods. Situational crime prevention is based upon the premise that crime is often opportunistic and aims to modify contextual factors to limit the opportunities for offenders to engage in criminal behaviour (Tonry & Farrington 1995). Under this approach, the situational or environmental factors associated with certain types of crime are identified, manipulated and controlled, with reference to assumptions regarding the nature of the offending and of the participating offenders (Cornish & Clarke 2003). With regard to firearms theft, a situational crime prevention approach would focus on increasing the effort required on the part of the offender to successfully steal a firearm (ie target hardening), or focus on increasing the risk to the offender (of committing the crime) and reducing the rewards (related to the theft of the item). Further work is required to identify and hone the types of crime prevention techniques that could be employed, but obvious methods include strengthening formal surveillance (eg burglar alarms and surveillance cameras), better concealment of targets (eg location on firearm safes), use of property identifiers (eg use of indelible markers on registered firearms) and strategies to assist compliance (eg dissemination of

findings from firearm theft research to educate the firearm-owning community about potential and actual storage vulnerabilities).

One area that would benefit from further exploration is the stolen firearms market, the networks that support this market and potential methods of market disruption. Little is known about the structure and typologies of the stolen firearms market, to what extent it is facilitated by the range of relevant agents (eg residential and commercial 'fences') and the characteristics of its consumers. It is assumed that different agents are involved depending on the nature of the theft and the 'knowledge' of the offender with respect to the disposal of less conventional goods such as firearms. Additional research could provide an:

- 'inventory' of 'at-risk' firearms;
- a description of preferred methods of disposal;
- the manner in which firearms are bought and sold in illegal markets; and
- a jurisdictional outline of differences in firearms stolen and bought.

Results from such research may be used to inform future intervention strategies to further safeguard firearms from theft and interrupt specific typologies of disposal.

The NFTMP, which concludes with this report, has provided a comprehensive record of the methods and facilitators of firearm theft, the categories of firearms more likely to have been entering the illicit market and the approaches taken by firearm owners to minimise risk. Although anywhere between 1,500 and 1,700 firearms were reported stolen each year of the monitoring period, there is no suggestion that the majority of firearm owners were not complying with laws around the safekeeping of firearms. That said, clearly some owners were not compliant and additional initiatives may now need to be considered to further reduce the incidence of firearm theft. The consistency in the findings from the NFTMP over the four year period, particularly with respect to theft locations and their associated vulnerabilities, provides a stable template from which these initiatives may be developed. Options for consideration would include recommending changes to legislation regarding minimum storage requirements, promoting additional auditing of safekeeping arrangements, enhancing educative programs for the firearm-owning community or encouraging additional investment in crime prevention strategies. Equally importantly, the findings from the NFTMP can be (and have been) used by the different groups of stakeholders (eg firearm owners and law enforcement) concerned with reducing the incidence of firearm theft to produce complementary approaches to disrupting future opportunities for theft and hence impede the flow of firearms into the illicit market and potentially into the hands of criminal elements.

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Appendixes

Appendix A: Additional tables

Table 36 Types of firearms stolen from jurisdictions

	Rifle		Shotgun		Air rifle		Handgun		Other		Unknown	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
NSW	366	62	144	24	31	5	43	7	3	1	5	1
Vic	144	48	102	34	15	5	13	4	5	2	23	8
Qld	216	68	47	15	27	9	21	7	8	3	0	0
SA	136	65	42	20	23	11	8	4	0	0	2	1
Tas	56	57	34	34	5	5	1	1	2	2	1	1
ACT	18	82	1	5	3	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
NT	13	52	6	24	4	16	2	8	0	0	0	0

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia)

Table 37 Category of firearm stolen, by jurisdiction

	A		B		C		D		H		Other	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
NSW	367	64	151	26	6	1	1	<1	43	8	2	<1
Vic	193	72	58	22	0	0	0	0	13	6	0	0
Qld	185	58	111	35	1	<1	0	0	21	7	0	0
SA	143	68	54	26	3	1	1	<1	8	3	0	0
Tas	45	83	8	15	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0
ACT	12	55	10	45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NT	13	52	10	40	0	0	0	0	2	8	0	0

Note: Excludes 108 firearms in which insufficient information was available to ascertain category of firearm

Source: AIC NFTMP 2008–09 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia)

Table 38 Method of access to premises or vehicle

	Private residential premises		Business premises		Vehicle	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Using tools or force	241	52	16	47	13	25
Using stolen key	17	4	1	3	3	6
Unsecured	81	18	6	18	18	34
Other	26	6	4	12	6	11
Unknown	95	21	7	21	13	25
Total	460		34		53	

Note: Excludes 11 incidents in which method of access was recorded as not applicable. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Source: AIC NFTMP 2007–08 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Table 39 Type of firearm storage and status of compliance

	Complied		Not complied		Unknown	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Locked receptacle	326	87	19	5	31	8
Unlocked receptacle	2	11	16	84	1	5
Locked vehicle	7	27	16	62	3	12
Unlocked vehicle	1	5	18	86	2	10
Unsecured/in the open	3	4	68	93	2	3

Note: Excludes 6 incidents in which storage compliance was recorded as not applicable

Source: AIC NFTMP 2007–08 [computer file] (excludes Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Appendix B: Firearms classifications, National Firearms Agreement 1996

Category A	• air rifles; • rimfire rifles (excluding self-loading); and • single and double barrelled shotguns
Category B	• muzzle-loading firearms; • single shot, double-barrelled and repeating action centre-fire rifles; and • break-action shotguns/rifle combinations
Category C	• prohibited except for occupational purposes; • self-loading rimfire rifles with a magazine capacity no greater than 10 rounds; • self-loading shotguns with a magazine capacity no greater than five rounds; and • pump-action shotguns with a magazine capacity no greater than five rounds
Category D	• prohibited except for official purposes; • self-loading centre-fire rifles; • self-loading shotguns and pump-action shotguns with a capacity of more than five rounds; and • self-loading rimfire rifles with a magazine capacity greater than 10 rounds
Category H	• all handguns, including air pistols

Note: Firearm categories very slightly between jurisdictions

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