

## Homicide in Australia 1989-96

**Australian Institute of Criminology  
Research and Public Policy Series**

No. 1

*The Promise of Crime Prevention: Leading crime prevention programs*  
edited by Peter Grabosky and Marianne James, 1995

No. 2

*Money Laundering in the 21st Century: Risks and countermeasures*  
edited by Adam Graycar and Peter Grabosky, 1996

No. 3

*Violence Prevention in Practice: Australian award-winning programs*  
compiled by Jane Mugford and Diana Nelson, 1996

No. 4

*Violent Death and Firearms in Australia: Data and trends*  
by Satyanshu Mukherjee and Carlos Carcach, 1996

No. 5

*Protecting Superannuation against Criminal Exploitation*  
edited by Adam Graycar, 1996

No. 6

*Violence against Women in Australia: Key Research and Data Issues*  
by Judy Putt and Karl Higgins, 1997

No. 7

*A Statistical Profile of Crime in Australia*  
by Satyanshu Mukherjee, Carlos Carcach & Karl Higgins, 1997

No. 8

*Indicators of Aggressive Behaviour*  
prepared by David McDonald and Melanie Brown, 1997

No. 9

*National Police Custody Survey August 1995*  
by Carlos Carcach & David McDonald, 1997

No. 10

*Australian Deaths in Custody and Custody-related Police Operations 1996*  
by Vicki Dalton, 1997

No. 11

*Juvenile Crime and Justice: Australia 1997*  
Satyanshu Mukherjee, Carlos Carcach & Karl Higgins, 1997

No. 12

*Paedophilia: Policy and Prevention*  
edited by Marianne James, 1997

No.13

*Homicide in Australia 1989-96*  
Marianne James and Carlos Carcach, 1997

# Homicide in Australia 1989-96

*Marianne James and Carlos Carcach*



AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY

© Australian Institute of Criminology 1997

Published by the Australian Institute of Criminology  
74 Leichhardt Street  
Griffith ACT 2603

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

Homicide in Australia 1989-96  
ISSN 1326-6004  
ISBN 0 642 24050 7

Printed by Elect Printing

Australian Institute of Criminology Tel: 02 6260 9200 Fax: 02 6260 9201 email: <a href="mailto:Front.Desk@aic.gov.au">Front.Desk@aic.gov.au</a> <a href="http://www.aic.gov.au">http://www.aic.gov.au</a>
---

---

## Acknowledgments

The Australian Institute of Criminology gratefully acknowledges the cooperation and support offered by police in all jurisdictions in the data collection process. Although every effort is made to minimise the impact of the process on police, the National Homicide Monitoring Program could not proceed without the continuing assistance of all police services, and especially the individual officers who have helped compile this data.

The authors would like to acknowledge the valuable input of Dr Peter Grabosky and Dr Satyanshu Mukherjee, particularly their comments on early drafts. Also, thanks go to Kathy Mildren, Daphne Ralston and Liz Raffaele for their help with the data input.

Special thanks are due to Angela Grant, Editor at the Australian Institute of Criminology, for her work in the production of this publication.

The authors are also most grateful to Professor Ken Polk from the Department of Criminology at the University of Melbourne for his valuable comments.

---

## Caveat

The Australian Institute of Criminology, like other Commonwealth agencies, is bound by the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988*, which places restrictions on the disclosure of personal information from the dataset which could result in the identification of individuals.



# Contents

Homicide: Key Factors	xiii
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
Background	1
Definition	2
Homicide Trends in Australia	2
International Perspective	3
<b>CHAPTER 2: INCIDENT CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>5</b>
Background	5
Trends	5
Homicide in the Jurisdictions	6
Unsolved Incidents	6
Location	7
Geographical Distribution	7
Temporal Setting	7
Number of Persons Involved	8
Murder/Suicide	9
Illicit Drug Involvement	9
The Context of Homicide	9
Weapon/Method Used	11
Firearm-Related Homicides	11
The Typical Homicide Incident	13
<b>CHAPTER 3: VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>14</b>
Gender and Age	15
Marital Status	18
Employment	20
Racial Appearance	21
Aboriginality	21
Use of Alcohol and Illicit Drugs by the Victim	23
Criminal History	24
Use of Violence by Victims of Homicide	24
Summary	24
The Typical Male Victim	25
The Typical Female Victim	25
<b>CHAPTER 4: OFFENDER PROFILE</b>	<b>26</b>
Gender and Age	27
Marital Status	29
Employment	29
Racial Appearance	29
Aboriginality	29
Use of Alcohol and Illicit Drugs by the Offender	32
Criminal History	32
The Typical Offender	33

CHAPTER 5: SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VICTIM AND THE OFFENDER	34
Relationship Categories	35
Trends	35
Jurisdictional Comparisons	36
Contextual Setting	36
Victim-Offender Relationship and Gender	39
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION	41
Policy Issues	43
References	45



# List of Figures and Tables

## FIGURES

<b>Figure 1:</b> AUSTRALIA, Trends in Homicide 1915-96: Rate per 100 000 population	2
<b>Figure 2:</b> AUSTRALIA, Causes of Death 1915-96: Rate per 100 000 population	2
<b>Figure 3:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Number of incidents, number of victims and number of offenders	5
<b>Figure 4A:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Distribution of incidents, by jurisdiction	6
<b>Figure 4B:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Rate of incidents per 100 000 population, by jurisdiction	6
<b>Figure 5:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of homicide incidents not solved, by jurisdiction	7
<b>Figure 6:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents according to location	7
<b>Figure 7:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents in urban and rural localities	8
<b>Figure 8:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents according to time of the day of occurrence	8
<b>Figure 9:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents according to day of the week of occurrence	8
<b>Figure 10:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents according to month of occurrence	8
<b>Figure 11:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents according to the number of victims and offenders involved	9
<b>Figure 12:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents resulting from an altercation according to victim-offender relationship	10
<b>Figure 13:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents resulting from sexual assault according to victim-offender relationship	10
<b>Figure 14:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents resulting from robbery or arson according to victim-offender relationship	10
<b>Figure 15:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents resulting from revenge or retaliation according to victim-offender relationship	11
<b>Figure 16:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents resulting from child abuse according to victim-offender relationship	11
<b>Figure 17:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents according to primary weapon/method	11
<b>Figure 18:</b> AUSTRALIA, Firearm-Related Homicides 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of all homicide incidents by jurisdiction	12
<b>Figure 19:</b> AUSTRALIA, Firearm-Related Homicides, 1 July 1992-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents according to type of firearm	12
<b>Figure 20:</b> AUSTRALIA, Firearm-Related Homicides, 1 July 1992-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents according to type of firearm and year	12

<b>Figure 21:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Victimisation rates per 100 000 population, by gender</i>	14
<b>Figure 22:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Victimisation rates per 100 000 population by jurisdiction</i>	14
<b>Figure 23:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Distribution of victims according to gender</i>	15
<b>Figure 24:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Rate per 100 000 relevant population gender and age group</i>	15
<b>Figure 25:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Distribution of male victims according to gender of offenders</i>	16
<b>Figure 26:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Distribution of female victims according to gender of offenders</i>	16
<b>Figure 27:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Distribution of victims according to their relationship to offenders</i>	17
<b>Figure 28:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Percentage of offenders by whether they were in the same, older or younger age group than male victims</i>	18
<b>Figure 29:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Percentage of offenders by whether they were in the same, older or younger age group than female victims</i>	18
<b>Figure 30:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Distribution of victims according to gender and marital status, rate per 100 000 population</i>	19
<b>Figure 31:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Victims aged 15 years and over according to marital status, distribution by context of incident</i>	19
<b>Figure 32:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Victims aged 15 years and over according to marital status, distribution by relationship to offender</i>	19
<b>Figure 33:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Percentage of victims according to employment status and gender</i>	20
<b>Figure 34:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Distribution of victims by racial appearance</i>	20
<b>Figure 35:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Victim by racial appearance, percentage with the same racial appearance as the offender</i>	20
<b>Figure 36:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Victimisation rates per 100 000 relevant population, by Aboriginality</i>	21
<b>Figure 37:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Victimisation rates per 100 000 relevant population by jurisdiction and Aboriginality</i>	21
<b>Figure 38:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Distribution of victims according to Aboriginality and whether they were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident</i>	22
<b>Figure 39:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Percentage of victims who were under the influence of alcohol by Aboriginality and jurisdiction</i>	22
<b>Figure 40:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Percentage of victims according to alcohol and other drug usage and gender</i>	23
<b>Figure 41:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Percentage of victims by whether they had previous criminal record</i>	24
<b>Figure 42:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Offender rates per 100 000 population, by gender</i>	26

<b>Figure 43:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Offender rates per 100 000 population by jurisdiction</i>	26
<b>Figure 44:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Distribution of offenders according to gender</i>	27
<b>Figure 45:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Rate per 100 000 relevant population, by gender and age group</i>	27
<b>Figure 46:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Distribution of offenders according to gender and marital status, rate per 100 000 population</i>	28
<b>Figure 47:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Percentage of offenders according to employment status and gender</i>	28
<b>Figure 48:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Distribution of offender by racial appearance</i>	29
<b>Figure 49:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Offending rates per 100 000 relevant population Aboriginality</i>	30
<b>Figure 50:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Offending rates per 100 000 relevant population, by jurisdiction and Aboriginality</i>	30
<b>Figure 51:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Distribution of offenders according to Aboriginality and whether they were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident</i>	31
<b>Figure 52:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Percentage of offenders who were under the influence of alcohol, by Aboriginality and jurisdiction</i>	31
<b>Figure 53:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Percentage of offenders according to alcohol and other drug usage and gender</i>	32
<b>Figure 54:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Percentage of offenders by whether they had a previous criminal record and gender</i>	32
<b>Figure 55:</b> AUSTRALIA: Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Relationship between the victim and the offender</i>	34
<b>Figure 56:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Incidents which occurred in the context of family relationships</i>	34
<b>Figure 57:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Trends in victim-offender relationships</i>	35
<b>Figure 58:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Proportion of homicides involving relationships between intimate partners</i>	37
<b>Figure 59:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Proportion of homicides involving relationships between other family members</i>	37
<b>Figure 60:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Proportion of homicides involving relationships between friends/acquaintances</i>	37
<b>Figure 61:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Proportion of homicides involving strangers</i>	37
<b>Figure 62:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Incidents resulting from an altercation, victim-offender relationship, by location</i>	38
<b>Figure 63:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Incidents resulting from sexual assault, victim-offender relationship, by location</i>	38
<b>Figure 64:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Incidents resulting from robbery/arson, victim-offender relationship, by location</i>	39
<b>Figure 65:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Incidents resulting from revenge/retaliation, victim-offender relationship, by location</i>	39
<b>Figure 66:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: <i>Incidents resulting from child abuse, victim-offender relationship, by location</i>	39

<b>Figure 67:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Victim-offender relationship, male to male	40
<b>Figure 68:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Victim-offender relationship, male to female	40
<b>Figure 69:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Victim-offender relationship, female to male	40
<b>Figure 70:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Victim-offender relationship, female to female	40

## TABLES

<b>Table 1:</b> International Homicide Comparisons, 1993	3
<b>Table 2:</b> AUSTRALIA, Victims of Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Rates per 100 000 population, by gender	15
<b>Table 3:</b> AUSTRALIA, Victims of homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Rate per 100 000 relevant population, by gender and age group	16
<b>Table 4:</b> AUSTRALIA, Offenders of homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Rates per 100 000 population, by gender	27
<b>Table 5:</b> AUSTRALIA, Offenders of homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Rates per 100 000 relevant population, by gender and age group	28
<b>Table 6:</b> AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Victim-offender relationship types, by jurisdiction	36

## **HOMICIDE: KEY FACTORS**

Homicide in Australia during the period 1 July 1989 to 30 June 1996 was characterised by the following salient features:

- The proportion of male victims to female victims is 3:2.
- The proportion of male offenders to female offenders is 9:1.
- The main offenders are males aged between 18 and 26.
- Homicides are more likely to occur in residential premises than in other locations.
- Homicides are more likely to occur during the night than during the day.
- Homicides are equally likely to occur on any day of the week.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are over-represented amongst both homicide victims and offenders. For victims, the rate is seven times, while for offenders the rate is nine times that for Australia as a whole.
- Homicide in Australia is overwhelmingly intra-racial in character.
- Homicide is most likely to be committed with a knife attack or by an assault.
- Firearms account for just under one-quarter of all homicide deaths.
- One in three of all homicides is the result of an incident between friends and acquaintances.
- One in five of all homicides is the result of an incident between intimate partners.
- One in six of all homicides is the result of an incident which occurs between family members, other than intimate partners.
- Strangers are responsible for one in six of all homicide incidents.

# 1



## Introduction

### *Background*

The National Homicide Monitoring Program has been operating within the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) since 1990. Establishment of the Program was recommended by the National Committee on Violence in its 1990 report *Violence: Directions for Australia* (Recommendation No. 103). The data collection framework, which is a co-operative activity between the AIC and all eight State and Territory police services, was endorsed by the Australasian Police Ministers' Council at its March 1990 meeting.

The aim of the National Homicide Monitoring Program is to identify as precisely as possible the characteristics of individuals which place them at risk of homicide victimisation and offending, and the circumstances which contribute to the likelihood of a homicide occurring. This, in turn, provides a basis for the rational development of public policy on the prevention and control of violence. It is also now possible to give a reasonably accurate picture of homicide trends and patterns in Australia.

The basic data source for the National Homicide Monitoring Program is police records, supplemented by information provided by individual investigating officers. The data used in this publication therefore reflects the detail of the records which were made available to the AIC by the police in each jurisdiction at the time of data collection. While the shortcomings of using police records alone for the database are acknowledged, the decision has been made to limit the data to this source because of

resource constraints and the need for timeliness of information. Even though a clearer picture of the homicide incident can be obtained both through coronial inquiries and the trial process, these can take many years to complete.

As well as the National Homicide Monitoring Program, there are two other sources of recorded incidents of homicide in Australia. These are the *National Crime Statistics* and *Causes of Death*, both provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The National Homicide Monitoring Program and the National Crime Statistics use police records as their data source. And, while the *National Crime Statistics* follow police practice of recording homicides in the year the incident is detected, the National Homicide Monitoring Program records the incident, where possible, in the year it actually occurred. The *Causes of Death* statistics, on the other hand, rely on Coroners' reports for their data. The inconsistencies which may result from these different practices do not affect the validity of the analysis and interpretation of data from the National Homicide Monitoring Program.

The current data set of the National Homicide Monitoring Program covers the period from 1 July 1989 to 30 June 1996. This report therefore presents an analysis of all homicides which occurred in Australia during this time. Specific types of homicides, which include intimate-partner homicides, child abuse homicides, juvenile homicides, Aboriginal homicides, homicides between friends and acquaintances and homicides

committed by and against older people will be the subject of various publications in the AIC's Trends and Issues series.

**Definition**

For the purposes of the Homicide Monitoring Program, the definition of homicide is the operational definition used by the police throughout Australia. As such, the following kinds of incidents are included:

- all cases resulting in a person or persons being charged with murder or manslaughter (including the charge of "dangerous act causing death" which applies in the Northern Territory). This excludes other driving-related fatalities except where these immediately follow a criminal event such as an armed robbery or motor vehicle theft;
- all murder-suicides classed as murder by the police;
- all other deaths classed by the police as homicides, even though no suspect has been apprehended.

Attempted murder is excluded, as are violent deaths such as industrial accidents involving criminal negligence (unless a charge of manslaughter is laid). Lawful homicide, including incidents involving police in the course of their duties, is also excluded.

For purposes of the analysis which follows, the data have been aggregated in three related data sets: the incident file, which describes the case and its circumstances; the victim file, which contains information relating to victims; and the offender file, which relates to perpetrators or suspects, where one has been identified. Because homicide incidents can involve more than one victim and/or offender, and because not all data are available from every case, the sizes of these files will differ. The following three chapters will describe each of these data files in order.

**Homicide Trends in Australia**

While crime rates in Australia have undoubtedly increased over the past 10 years, this has been predominantly in the area of prop-

erty crime and assault (see for example Mukherjee, Carcach & Higgins 1997).

Figure 1 shows that the present rates of homicide are similar to those prevailing from 1915 to 1925. Other studies (for example, Lancaster 1964; Grabosky 1977) suggest an even higher rate throughout most of the 19th century. Figure 1 also shows that the homicide rate in Australia fell during the period from 1930 to 1950, but then increased substantially to a plateau of about 1.5 per 100 000 of the population in the 1960s and early 1970s. The upward trend then once

Figure 1: AUSTRALIA, Trends in homicide 1915-96: Rate per 100 000 population

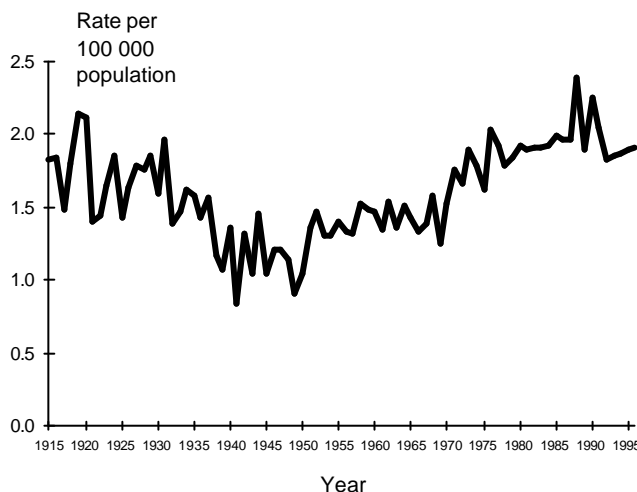
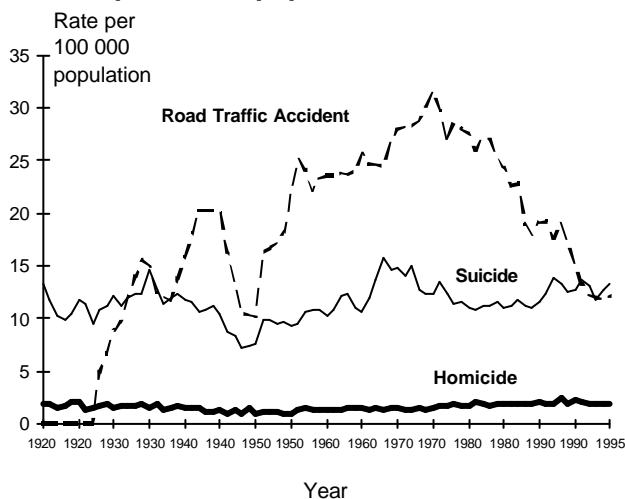


Figure 2: AUSTRALIA, Causes of death 1915-96: Rate per 100 000 population



again became apparent, reaching a level of around 2.0 per 100 000 of the population in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The rise in homicide rates during the period from 1950 to the late 1980s has been the subject of numerous studies. The long-term behaviour of crime rates has been linked to the patterns of various social, demographic and economic indicators. Among the corresponding factors which have been analysed are: gross domestic product, labour force status, alcohol consumption, demographic change, seasonal variation, major social and economic

movements, police resources and clear-up rates (see for instance Rambaldi et al. 1995; Masih & Masih 1996; Indermaur 1996).

As shown in Figure 2, homicide remains a rare event relative to other forms of violent death in Australia, such as suicide and road traffic accidents.

### *International Perspective*

It is useful to situate Australian levels of homicide within an international perspective (see Table 1). It must be noted that there are differences in definitions between countries

Table 1: *International homicide comparisons, 1993*

Prevalence of Homicide	Countries	Victimisation Rates	
		<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
Very High	Russian Federation	49.5	13.5
	Mexico	32.2	3.4
	United States (1992)	15.9	4.1
	Northern Ireland	9.9	1.3
	Croatia	7.3	2.4
High	Finland	4.7	2.0
	Poland	4.0	1.4
	Italy (1992)	3.9	0.6
	China (urban areas)	3.7	1.3
	Israel	3.5	1.1
	China (selected rural areas)	3.3	1.0
	Singapore	3.3	0.4
Moderate	Scotland	2.7	0.7
	Canada	2.5	1.2
	Australia	2.4	1.3
	New Zealand	1.9	1.1
	Switzerland	1.9	1.3
	Netherlands	1.8	0.7
	Sweden	1.8	0.8
Low	Denmark	1.5	0.9
	Germany	1.4	1.0
	France	1.4	0.8
	Hong Kong	1.3	1.1
	England and Wales	1.3	0.8
Very low	Norway	1.1	0.9
	Ireland (1992)	1.1	0.2
	Japan	0.8	0.5

Source: World Health Statistics Annual (using *Causes of Death* statistics) 1994, 1995.



and comparisons can be problematic. Nevertheless, there is enough overall consistency for these comparisons to be of benefit. Table 1 shows the recorded homicide victimisation rates per 100 000 of the population in 1993 in a cross-section of countries. For the purpose of comparison, the countries have been classified into broad groups, ranging from very high rates to very low rates.

As would be expected, countries going through periods of transition towards new political and economic regimes, such as the Russian Federation and Croatia, as well as countries experiencing high levels of internal conflict such as Northern Ireland, all have levels of homicide in the highest category. In addition, countries in this category such as the United States and the Russian Federation are highly heterogeneous in terms of racial and ethnic groups, while Mexico experiences extremely high levels of poverty and illicit drug dealing. It is also interesting to note that countries such as China and Singapore which both have extremely harsh criminal penalties also have a reasonably high homicide rate for males. Australia together with Canada, New Zealand, Switzerland,

Scotland, The Netherlands and Sweden are all in the moderate range. England and Wales together with Denmark, Germany, Hong Kong and France have marginally higher rates than Japan, the Republic of Ireland and Norway, which have the lowest levels of homicide of all industrialised countries. Countries with high levels of private firearm ownership (United States, Mexico, Finland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Switzerland) are represented in all categories except the two lowest.

The National Homicide Monitoring Program, with seven years of information on the database, is now in a unique position to provide a national profile of all homicides in Australia as well as distinct characteristics of sub-categories such as homicides between intimate partners, homicides between friends and acquaintances, and stranger homicides. Risk factors for homicide can also be analysed for different social groups in Australia, particularly through an analysis of age, gender, ethnicity, precipitating factors and the relationship between the victim and the accused. The following chapters in this publication will discuss all of these issues.

# 2



## Incident Characteristics

### Background

The popular perception of homicide is the one presented through the media. This commonly involves an unprovoked attack on an individual or the portrayal of a crazed gunman randomly shooting strangers. And, indeed, the tragic events at Hoddle Street and Queen Street in Victoria, Strathfield in Sydney and most recently at Port Arthur in Tasmania have consolidated this view. The reality, however, is quite different. In line with Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) who hypothesise that crime is often a function of spontaneous action occurring between two people who know each other, in locations that they frequent most often, homicide can best be described as an opportunity crime rather than one that is carefully and rationally planned (Silverman & Kennedy 1993). The cold and calculated killer is not the typical perpetrator. Rather, homicide tends to be the unplanned consequence of events that escalate out of control. Individuals who have limited skills at controlling their anger, jealousy or frustration are the people who are most likely to be responsible (Silverman & Kennedy 1993). Homicide tends to be distinguished from other violence in terms of outcomes rather than methods (Harries 1990). In many cases, the homicide is not the intended consequence of the perpetrator's actions (Silverman & Kennedy 1993).

Homicide is therefore not one type of crime, and indeed it is not a random event. In a similar manner to other forms of violent crime, it is the product of situational factors. Where the victim and the perpetrator are

known to each other, these factors occur in the context of an historical social relationship. Where they are not known to each other, the situational factors themselves are the trigger. Different categories of homicide are therefore determined by the interaction between the victim and the perpetrator and the circumstances of the event.

### Trends

In Australia, during the period from 1 July 1989 to 30 June 1996 there were 2226 homicide incidents. These included 2415 victims and 2650 offenders. Analysis of this time series reveals that the number of offenders has consistently exceeded the number of

Figure 3: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Number of incidents, number of victims and number of offenders

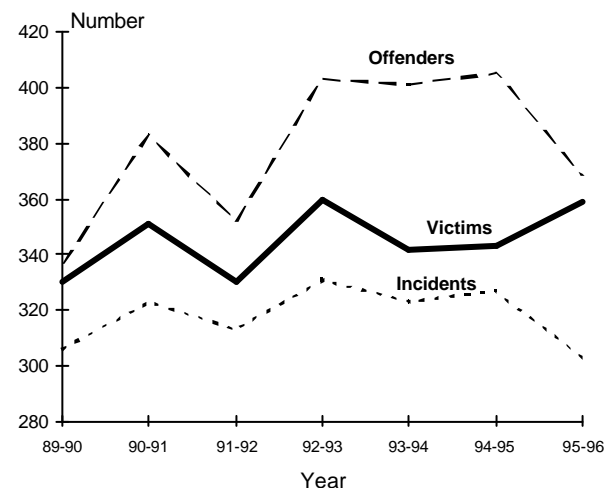


Figure 4A: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Distribution of incidents by jurisdiction (n=2224\*)

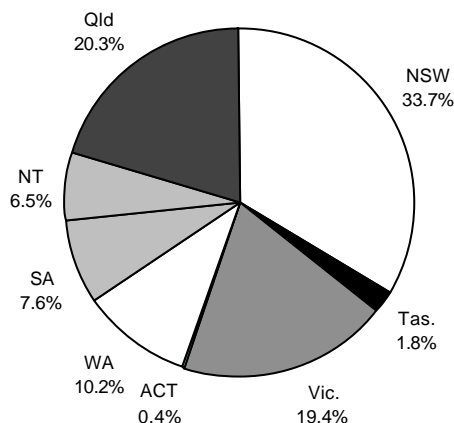
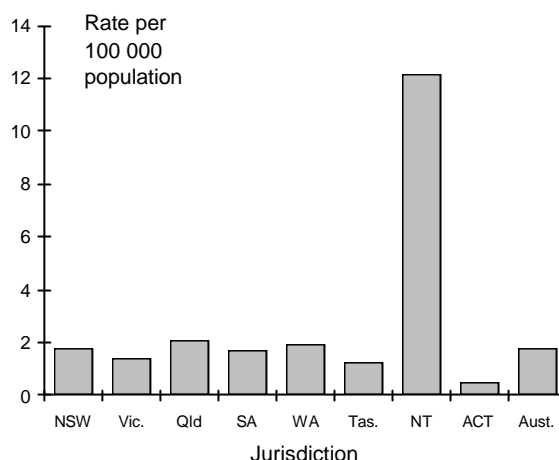


Figure 4B: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Rate of incidents per 100 000 population by jurisdiction (n=2224\*)



\*The number of incidents here excludes two cases where the jurisdiction was not recorded.

victims (see Figure 3). Both series follow similar temporal patterns; the only exception being the victim series for 1995-96 where the effect of Port Arthur is apparent.

### Homicide in the Jurisdictions

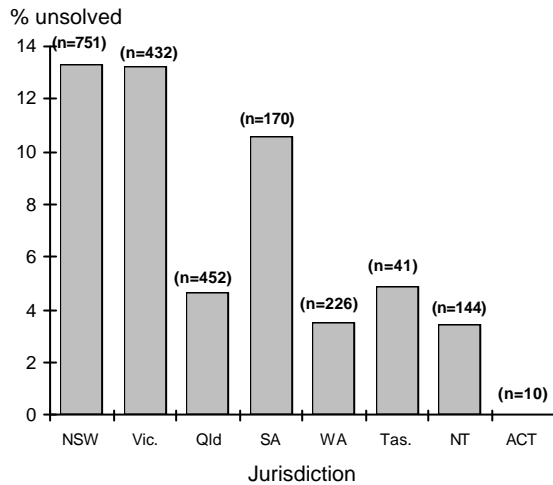
Figures 4A and 4B show total homicide incidents according to jurisdiction for the period 1 July 1989 to 30 June 1996. The percentages shown reflect the population distribution with two exceptions: the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. While the population of the Northern Territory comprises only 1 per cent of the total Australian population, the number of homicide incidents in the Northern Territory comprise 6.5 per cent of the total number of homicides. The Australian Capital Territory, on the other hand, comprises 1.7 per cent of the total Australian population and the number of homicide incidents is only 0.4 per cent of the total. Jurisdictional patterns for the percentage and rate of victims and offenders are similar to those shown in Figures 4A and 4B.

### Unsolved Incidents

The term "unsolved" applies to homicide incidents where the police did not identify an offender at all. In these cases, some data relating to the victim and circumstances surrounding the incident are usually available. "Unsolved" does not apply to those cases where the offender was arrested and then did not face trial through lack of evidence or was exonerated through the trial process.

Figure 5 shows the percentage of homicide incidents in each jurisdiction which were not solved. However, some caution should be exercised here with those jurisdictions where percentages based on a small number of cases may be an unstable predictor of patterns.

Figure 5: **AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of homicide incidents not solved, by jurisdiction (Total homicide n=2226; unsolved n = 211)**



Note: The total number of homicide incidents in each jurisdiction, solved and unsolved, is shown in brackets.

### Location

Most homicides occur indoors. Figure 6 shows that during the period from 1989 to 1996, just under two-thirds of all incidents were committed within residential premises. Another quarter took place on the street or other open areas such as parkland, bushland or the beach. Places of entertainment (pubs, clubs or discos and so on) accounted for just under 6 per cent of all homicide incidents, while only 1.5 per cent occurred in public transport or related places such as railway stations and taxis.

### Geographical Distribution

In Australia, a little over 85 per cent of the population live in urban areas (*Year Book of Australia 1995*; urban areas are defined as those with populations of more than 1000 people). Figure 7 shows that the urban/rural population distribution closely resembles the urban/rural homicide distribution, with 86 per cent of all homicide incidents between 1989 and 1996 occurring in urban areas and 14 per cent occurring in rural areas. In urban areas, two-thirds of the homicides occurred

Figure 6: **AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents according to location (n=2226)**



\*Other includes shops, shopping malls, commercial premises, police/prison custody, banks, hospitals and doctors' surgeries.

in the suburbs of the major cities, and 4 per cent in the inner-city areas.

### Temporal Setting

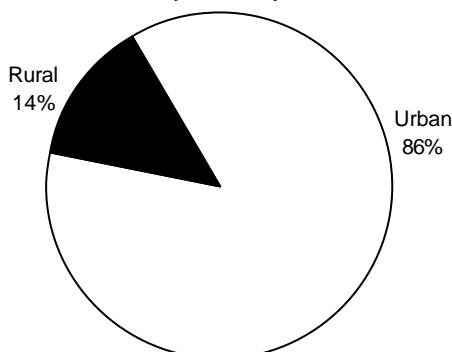
#### Time of the day the incident occurred

Homicide not only occurs predominantly indoors, it also occurs predominantly at night. Figure 8 shows that over two-thirds of the homicide incidents for the period 1989 to 1996 occurred between 6 o'clock at night and 6 o'clock in the morning. The remaining one-third were committed in the daylight hours with twice as many in the afternoon as in the morning.

#### Day of the week the incident occurred

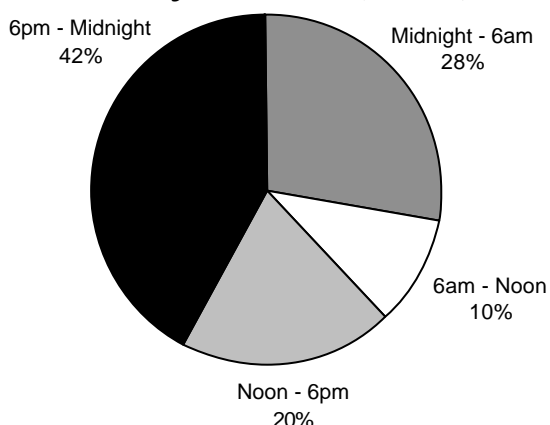
Homicide is distributed evenly on all the days of the week; however, nearly half of all homicide incidents occurred on Friday, Saturday or Sunday, with the majority of Sunday's committed in the early hours of the morning. The remaining four days of the week were remarkably similar with slightly fewer homicides committed on the first three days of the week (see Figure 9).

Figure 7: **AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents in urban and rural localities (n=2200\*)**



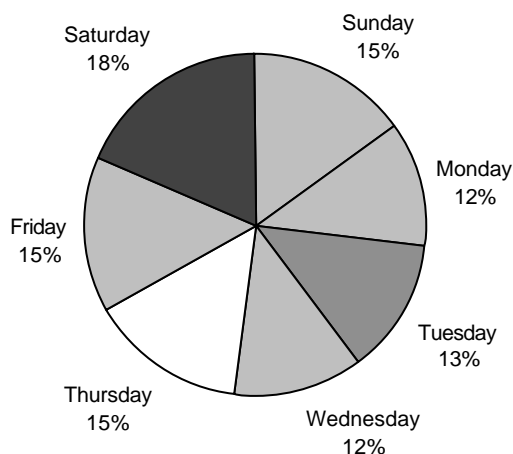
\*Excludes 26 incidents where the geographical distribution was unknown or not stated.

Figure 8: **AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents according to time of the day of occurrence (n=1998\*)**



\*Excludes 228 incidents where the time of day was unknown or not stated.

Figure 9: **AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents according to day of the week of occurrence (n=2191\*)**



\*Excludes 35 incidents where the day of the week was unknown or not stated.

*Month of the year the incident occurred*

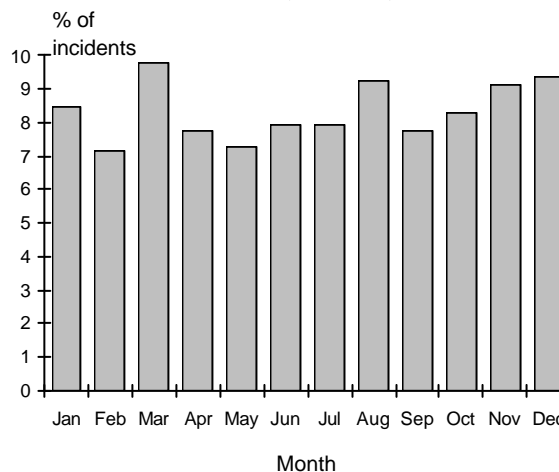
Analysis of the distribution of homicide by the month of occurrence over the period from 1 July 1989 to 30 June 1996 suggests no definite seasonal patterns (see Figure 10).

*Number of Persons Involved*

The distribution of homicide incidents according to the number of persons involved is shown in Figure 11. This only includes incidents where the offender was known (n=2034). In 80 per cent of these incidents, there was one victim and one offender. In 5 per cent of the incidents, there was more than one victim and only one offender, while in 14 per cent of the incidents there was more than one offender and only one victim. Only 1 per cent of the incidents involved multiple victims and multiple offenders.

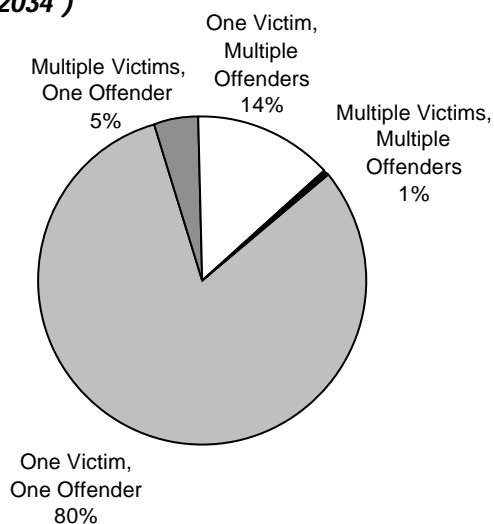
Homicides involving more than one victim are called multiple homicides. There are two different types of multiple homicides. The first, includes incidents where two or more persons have been killed at the one point in time. (In Australia, there have been 122 recorded multiple killings during the period 1 July 1989-30 June 1996 resulting in 279 deaths). The second involves separate incidents where the serial killing of

Figure 10: **AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents according to month of occurrence (n=2202\*)**



\*Excludes 24 incidents where the month of occurrence was unknown or not stated.

Figure 11: *AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents according to the number of victims and offenders involved (n=2034\*)*



\*Excludes 192 incidents where there were an unknown number of offenders

two or more people by one offender has occurred over a period of time. Serial killers usually target one victim at a time. However, in some cases more than one victim is involved in each incident. The victims are not usually known to the offender. (Data from the National Homicide Monitoring Program identify fewer than four offenders who could be classified as serial killers). Serial killings are classified as separate incidents for purposes of this analysis.

The first type of multiple homicide can itself be disaggregated into two categories according to the social proximity between the victim and the offender. When a multiple homicide involves four or more people, it is termed a mass killing. A mass killing can occur in the one location with the offender staying in the one place, for example on the top of a building and shooting at people below, or it can refer to when the offender goes from location to location killing individuals in each place. In mass killings, the offender is more likely to kill strangers.

Multiple homicides can also occur in the family. Depending on the relationship between the victim and the offender, they are usually classified as intimate or other family homicides. From an analytical point of view,

these two types of multiple homicides should be grouped together.

### *Murder/Suicide*

The suicide or attempted suicide of the offender following a murder is a fairly rare event in Australia. This happened with only just under 6 per cent of offenders (n=157) between 1989 and 1996. In all of these incidents, the offenders were male and none were Aboriginal. In two-thirds of these cases, the victim and the offender were currently or had previously been in a spousal relationship. In almost all the remaining instances, the victim and the offender were closely related to each other.

### *Illicit Drug Involvement*

The National Homicide Monitoring Program collects data on several items relating to the involvement of illicit drugs in the homicide incident. This category includes disputes which arise from drug dealing, robberies which have been committed with the purpose of getting money for drugs, or acquiring drugs for personal use. It might also include drugs as an instrument of homicide, that is when drugs have been used as a means of deliberate killing. However, no cases in this latter category were identified in the period covered by this report.

The data show that illicit drugs were known to be involved in 10 per cent of incidents for the period from 1 July 1989 to 30 June 1996. However, the question of the extent of illicit drug involvement is problematic. It is possible that the data are incomplete. Anecdotal evidence from police suggests that illicit drugs are connected with many more homicides than these, especially those resulting from robberies, but no firm information is available.

### *The Context of Homicide*

The importance of information on the particular circumstances surrounding a homicide is especially relevant, as this provides the basis for the identification of risk factors and the development of preventive measures. Homicides do not occur in a vacuum.

They are the result of the interaction between individuals. To obtain a more complete picture of the factors leading to a homicide, it is also necessary to take into account the relationship between the victim and the offender. An analysis of the contextual settings of homicide in conjunction with the victim-offender relationship enables a better understanding of the intricacies of homicide.

Figure 12 shows the percentage of homicide incidents which occurred in the context of an altercation according to the relationship between victim and offender. Here, a little more than one-third of the altercations involved intimate partners, while a further one-third involved friends and acquaintances. Fifteen per cent of the incidents were the result of an altercation between strangers and 13 per cent were the result of an altercation between family members other than intimate partners.

Figure 13 shows that when a homicide occurred within the context of a sexual assault, just under two-thirds of these incidents were between friends and acquaintances, while just under one-third occurred between strangers and the remaining 7 per cent were a combination of intimate and other family homicides.

Figure 14 shows that when homicides are committed in the context of other offences such as robbery or arson, three out of five of these involved strangers. The remaining incidents mainly involved friends and acquaintances. Only 4 per cent of this type of incident occurred between intimate partners or other family members.

Figure 15 shows that where revenge or retaliation was the contextual factor, more than one-half of these occurred between friends and acquaintances. Strangers and other family members were each responsible for a further one in five of these incidents, while intimate partners were the offenders in 5 per cent of the incidents.

Figure 16 shows that child abuse homicides were invariably committed by other family members, usually a custodial parent or a de facto parent. The assessment of a child homicide as fatal child abuse is based upon the character of the event. That is, the assault upon the child was sudden

Figure 12: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents resulting from an ALTERCATION according to victim-offender relationship (n=1281)

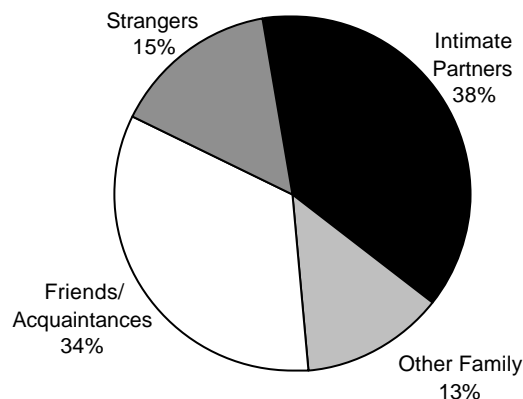


Figure 13: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents resulting from SEXUAL ASSAULT according to victim-offender relationship (n=73)

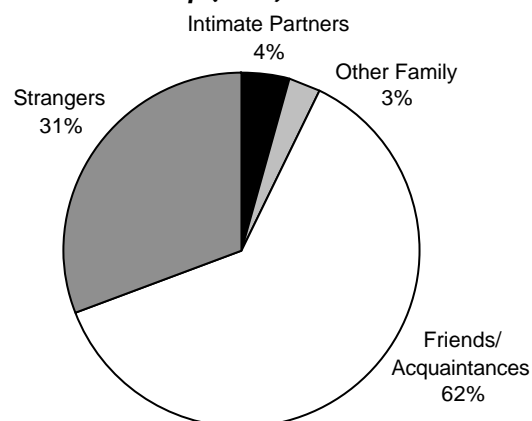


Figure 14: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents resulting from ROBBERY OR ARSON according to victim-offender relationship (n=159)

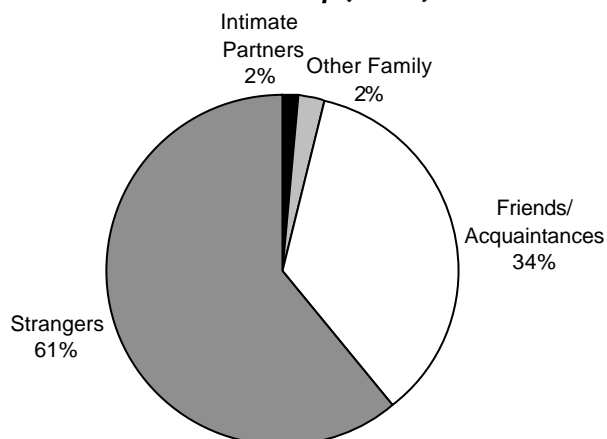


Figure 15: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents resulting from REVENGE OR RETALIATION according to victim-offender relationship (n=133)

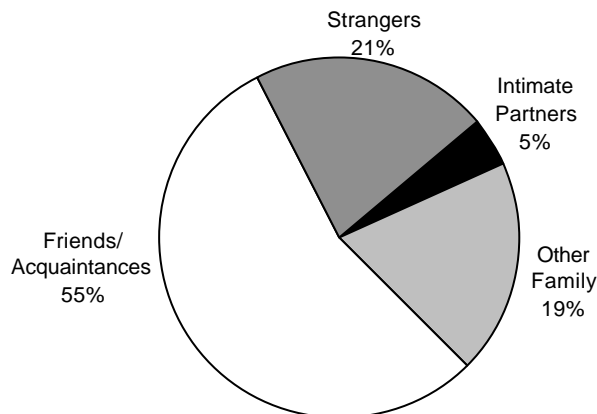


Figure 16: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents resulting from CHILD ABUSE according to victim-offender relationship (n=70)

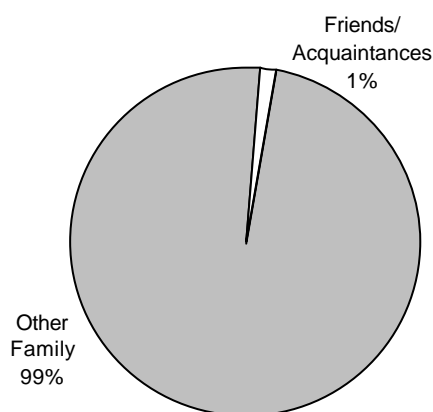
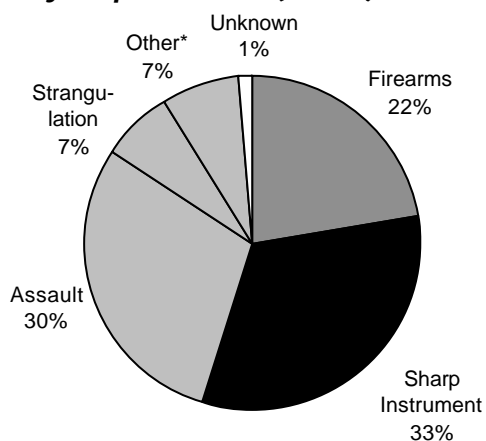


Figure 17: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents according to primary weapon/method (n=2226)



\*Other includes: explosion, poison, fire and drowning

and impulsive, the offender was the caregiver at the time of the incident and the offender appeared to be expressing his or her rage or frustration through the imposition of "punishment" or "discipline" upon the child (d'Orban 1979). This differs from other child homicides which include: family disputes, usually relating to the termination of the parent's relationship; psychiatric illness of the offender; fatal sexual assault; and abandoned neonates (Strang 1996).

### Weapon/Method Used

Figure 17 shows the primary weapon/method used in homicide incidents for the period 1 July 1989 to 30 June 1996. The most common weapon/method used was a sharp instrument, primarily a knife, which accounted for one-third of all cases. This was closely followed by assault with fists, feet or a blunt instrument. Firearms were responsible for just under one-quarter, while strangulation was the method used in 7 per cent of homicide incidents.

### Firearm-Related Homicides

Firearm-related homicides accounted for a little more than 22 per cent of the total number of homicide incidents in Australia between 1 July 1989 and 30 June 1996. Figure 18 shows the percentage of firearm homicides that occurred in each jurisdiction.

Following the Port Arthur massacre, a new firearm classification was approved by the Australasian Police Ministers' Council in May 1996. Data for the period 1993-96 were collected during the second half of 1996 which made it possible to record the type of firearm according to the new classification. A further category has been added to the homicide database to include weapons which are known to be illegal (that is those which were not registered at the time of the



homicide) those which were stolen, those fitted with silencers and those which had been sawn off.

Figure 19 shows that, according to the new classification, a little more than half of the firearms used in homicides between 1993 and 1996 were legal weapons. The remaining 44 per cent were basically illegal or restricted except for occupational or official purposes, with handguns being responsible for almost one-fifth of all firearm-related homicides.

Figure 20 shows the breakdown by year of the four categories of firearms. The pattern has stayed reasonably consistent over the four-year period.

Figure 19: **AUSTRALIA, Firearm-related homicides, 1 July 1992 to 30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents according to type of firearm (n=283)**

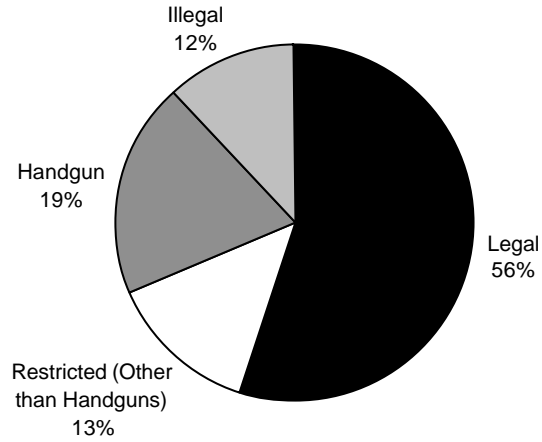
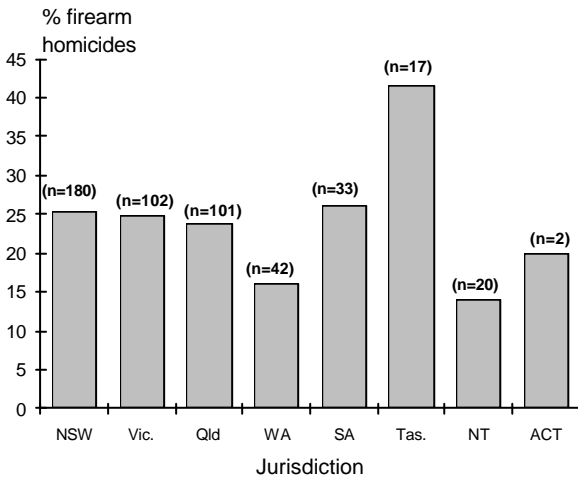


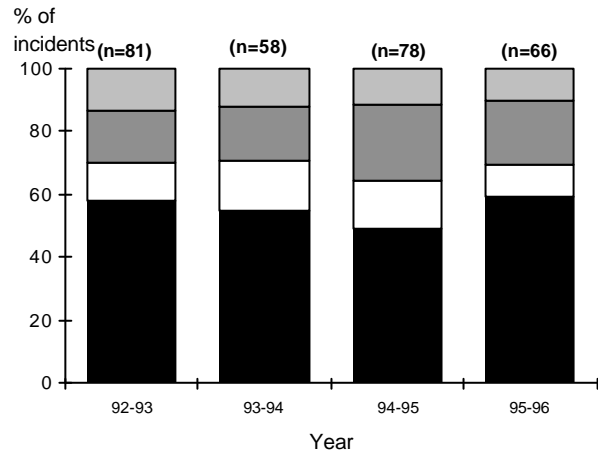
Figure 18: **AUSTRALIA, Firearm-related homicides, 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of all homicide incidents by jurisdiction**



Notes:

1. The total number of firearm-related homicides for each jurisdiction is shown in brackets.
2. Caution must be exercised when interpreting this graph, particularly with smaller jurisdictions, as the relatively low incidence of cases may be unstable predictors of general patterns. It must also be emphasised that this distribution is not distorted by the mass shooting at Port Arthur in 1996, as this particular graph is incident-based.

Figure 20: **AUSTRALIA, Firearm-related homicides, 1 July 1992-30 June 1996: Percentage of incidents according to type of firearm and year**



Legend: ■ Legal □ Restricted (Other than Handguns) ▒ Handgun ▒ Illegal

Note: The total number of firearm-related homicides for each year is shown in brackets

**THE TYPICAL HOMICIDE INCIDENT**

- █ One offender and one victim who are usually known to each other.
- █ Equally likely to occur to residents of both urban and rural areas.
- █ More likely to occur in residential premises than other locations.
- █ More likely to occur during the night than the day.
- █ Equally likely to occur on any day of the week.
- █ More likely to be committed by either an assault or a knife attack.

# 3



## Victim Characteristics

Not everyone is at the same risk of becoming a victim of homicide. No single variable can explain the complex interaction of events and life circumstances which lead to victimisation. Any explanation requires examination of the demographic, cultural and psychological risk factors associated with homicide victimisation.

This chapter therefore addresses the following questions:

- What are the victim's characteristics?
- What is the context surrounding the homicide?
- Who is the offender and what is his/her relationship to the victim?

Homicide in Australia is a rare event. Rates of victimisation over the seven-year

period from 1 July 1989 to 30 June 1996, according to the year of the occurrence of the incident, remained quite stable, fluctuating between 1.9 and 2.0 per 100 000 population. As expected, males showed higher victimisation rates than females, with a ratio of three males being killed for every two females (see Figure 21, Table 2).

Figure 22 shows that victimisation rates vary across jurisdictions, with the Northern Territory consistently having the highest rate. The effect of the Port Arthur massacre can be observed in Tasmania for the period from 1 July 1995 to 30 June 1996 when there was a dramatic rise in the victimisation rate in that State.

Figure 21: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Victimization rates per 100 000 population, by gender

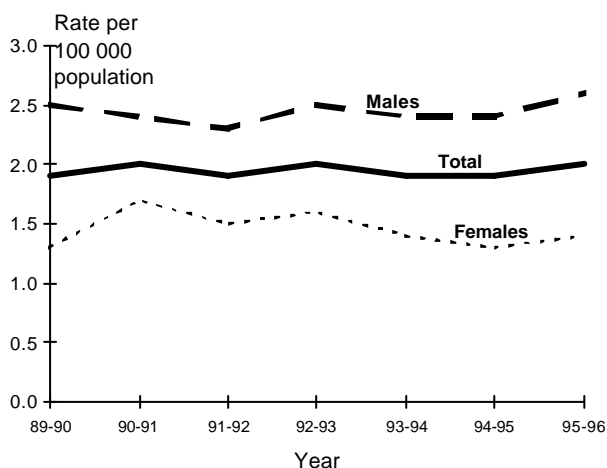
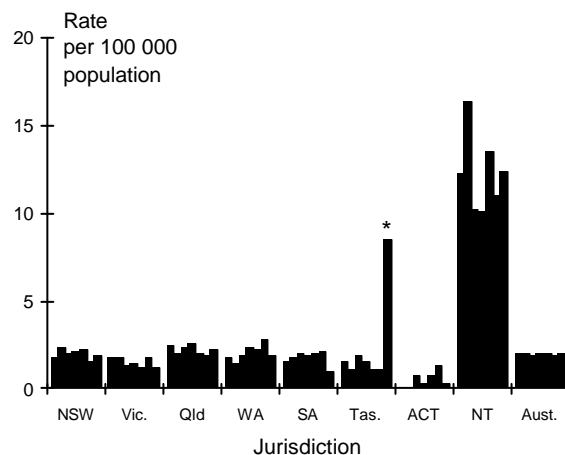


Figure 22: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Victimization rates per 100 000 population, by jurisdiction



\* This includes the 35 victims of the Port Arthur massacre

Table 2: **AUSTRALIA, Victims of homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996:**  
Rates per 100 000 population, by gender

	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	Average
Males	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.4
Females	1.3	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.5
Total	1.9	2.0	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.9	2.0	1.9

### Gender and Age

Empirical evidence consistently shows that young males are at increased risk of violent criminal victimisation generally (see for example ABS 1996). Manifest age patterns with respect to both victims and offenders are also evident in homicide studies.

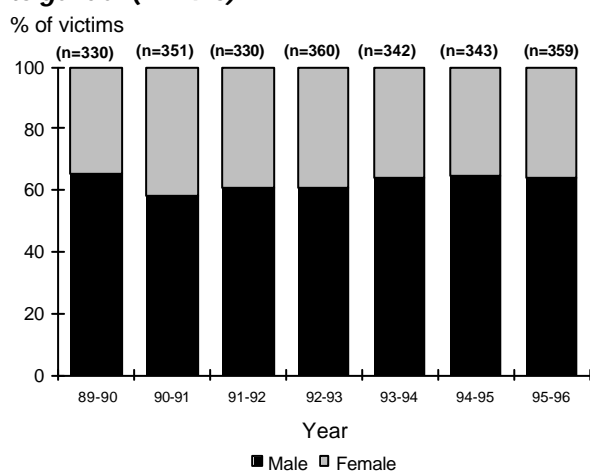
Analysis of the National Homicide Monitoring Program database shows that of all the victims recorded during the period from 1 July 1989 to 30 June 1996, there were 1506 males and 901 females. (There were 8 victims of whom the gender was not known or not stated). That is, just under two-thirds of the victims were men and just over one-third were women. This proportion of male victims and female victims has remained relatively constant over the seven-year period under review (see Table 2, Figure 23).

Victimisation rates vary according to gender and age groups. Table 3 and Figure 24 show that both males and females under the age of one year are at a similar high risk of homicide victimisation. This risk then

drops quite markedly to the age of 14, to dramatically rise between the ages of 15 and 23 for females and 15 and 26 for males. After these ages, victimisation risks decline, but then peak again between the ages of 33 and 35 for males, with another slight rise for females between 30 and 32. It is interesting to note that after 35 years of age, victimisation rates for males seem to decrease more rapidly than for females. This is probably the result of an increased number of intimate partner homicides for persons within this age group.

Figure 24 also shows multiple peaks in the distribution of victimisation risk according to age. These peaks are reached at different ages for males and females, which reflects their differential levels of exposure to violence during their life cycles. This is, in turn, a function of the type and intensity of social relationships experienced by individuals as they move from adolescence through to adulthood. The median age of male homicide victims is 33, and for females, 31.

Figure 23: **AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Distribution of victims according to gender (n=2415)**



Note: The number of victims each year is shown in brackets.

Figure 24: **AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Rate per 100 000 relevant population, gender and age group**

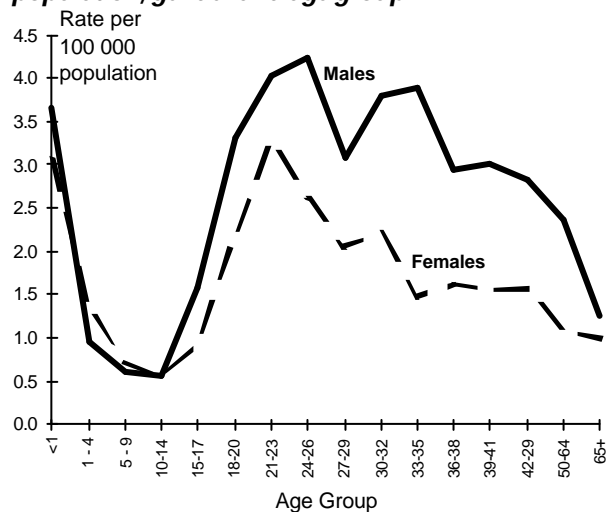


Table 3: **AUSTRALIA, Victims of Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996:**  
**Rates per 100 000 relevant population, by gender and age group**

Age (Years)	Male	Female	Persons
Less than 1	3.66	3.06	3.37
1 to 4	0.95	1.34	1.14
5 to 9	0.61	0.72	0.67
10 to 14	0.56	0.54	0.55
15 to 17	1.59	0.95	1.28
18 to 20	3.30	2.18	2.56
21 to 23	4.04	3.27	3.66
24 to 26	4.24	2.61	3.43
27 to 29	3.09	2.04	2.57
30 to 32	3.81	2.21	3.01
33 to 35	3.89	1.48	2.68
36 to 38	2.93	1.62	2.28
39 to 41	3.01	1.56	2.29
42 to 49	2.82	1.56	2.20
50 to 64	2.37	1.09	1.73
65+	1.26	0.98	1.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.40</b>	<b>1.49</b>	<b>1.94</b>
Median Age	33.00	31.00	32.00

Figure 25: **AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Distribution of male victims according to gender of offenders (n=1506)**

**Male Victims**

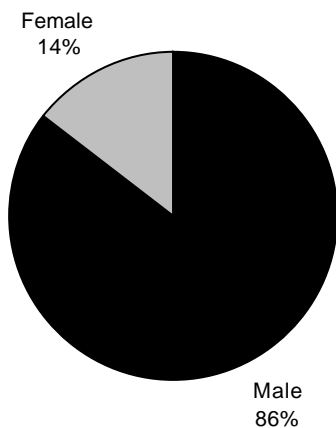


Figure 26: **AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Distribution of female victims according to gender of offenders (n=906)**

**Female Victims**

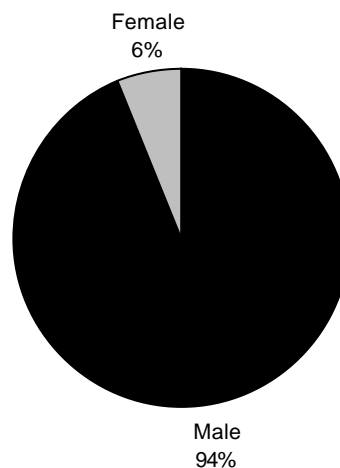
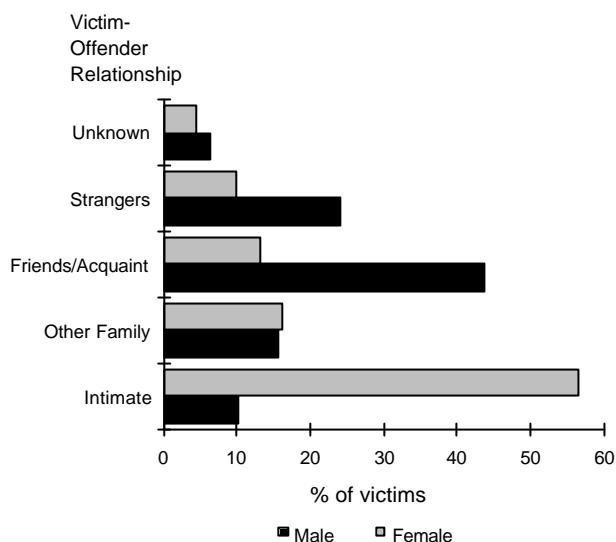


Figure 27: **AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Distribution of victims according to their relationship to offenders**



The data show that just over half of all incidents are male-to-male homicides. This is consistent with other research findings (see for instance Polk 1994; Wallace 1986). As can be seen in the following chapters, homicides committed by a female offender are rare, accounting for only 1 in 10 of all incidents. This trend has remained constant over the period of data collection. Furthermore, over 8 out of 10 male victims and 9 out of 10 female victims of homicide were killed by a male (see Figures 25 and 26).

Homicide is often classified according to the relationship between the victim and the offender. For intimate partner homicides, almost 6 out of 10 victims are females. On the other hand, the victims of homicides involving friends or acquaintances, and of those involving strangers, are predominantly males. Males and females show the same frequency of victimisation in homicides involving family members other than intimate partners (see Figure 27).

Figure 28 shows the percentage of offenders by the age-group of male victims. Victims up to the 18-20 year age-group are

younger than the offenders. However, as the age of the victim increases, the percentage killed by offenders in the same or a younger age group also increases. This pattern is similar for female victims (see Figure 29) except in the 50 years and over age-group, when they are killed more frequently by offenders in the same age-group.

The above results therefore indicate the following:

- Males are not only more likely to be the victims, but are also overwhelmingly the perpetrators of homicide.
- Two-thirds of homicide victims are male, but 9 out of 10 offenders are male.
- Victimisation risk varies with age, but peaks at different stages of the life-cycle of males and females.
- Young victims of homicide tend to be younger than their assailants, while victims in the middle age groups or above tend to be either of the same age or older than their assailants.

Figure 28: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of offenders by whether they were in the same, older or younger age group than male victims

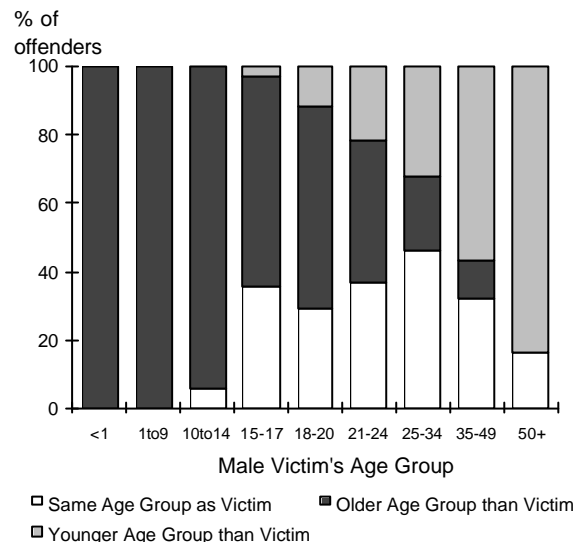
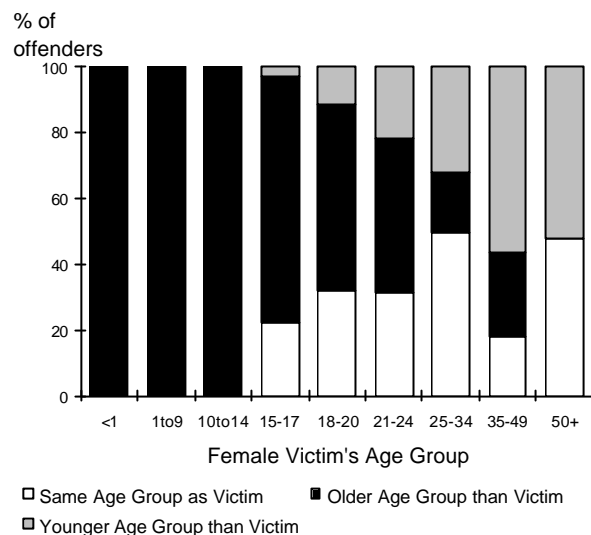


Figure 29: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of offenders by whether they were in the same, older or younger age group than female victims



### Marital Status

Males and females showed differential victimisation patterns according to marital status (see Figure 30). For males, those who had never been married were at the highest risk, while those who were in a married or de facto relationship were at the lowest risk. Females, on the other hand, were at the highest risk when they were either separated or divorced. This is an indication of the high level of homicide risk for women when they leave a relationship. Males also showed high-risk rates in the separated and divorced category.

The previous sections discuss the different victimisation patterns according to the age of the victims. In a sense, marital status conveys the same sort of information. As can be seen from Figure 30, the highest risk among males was observed in the never-married group. As a high proportion of these "never-married" persons were in the younger age-groups, this explains their relatively high victimisation rates.

Information on marital status becomes very relevant when analysed in conjunction with the circumstances surrounding the

incident and the relationship between the victim and the offender. For instance, an altercation, usually of a trivial nature and associated with drunkenness, was the contributing factor for more than half of all homicides where the victims were aged 15 years and over and had never been married. And in three-quarters of incidents where the victim was in a married or de facto relationship or separated or divorced, the homicide was the result of domestic altercations, including arguments over sexual jealousy and the termination of the relationship. The high victimisation rates of males in the separated or divorced category could also be the result of returning to a lifestyle similar to those who had never been married (see Figure 31).

More than half of never married victims were killed by a friend or acquaintance, while a further one-quarter were killed by a stranger. Figure 32 also shows that one-half of all homicide victims who were married, in a de facto relationship, separated or divorced were killed by an intimate partner.

These results stress the importance of viewing homicide in the context of a social

Figure 30: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Distribution of victims according to gender and marital status, rate per 100 000 population

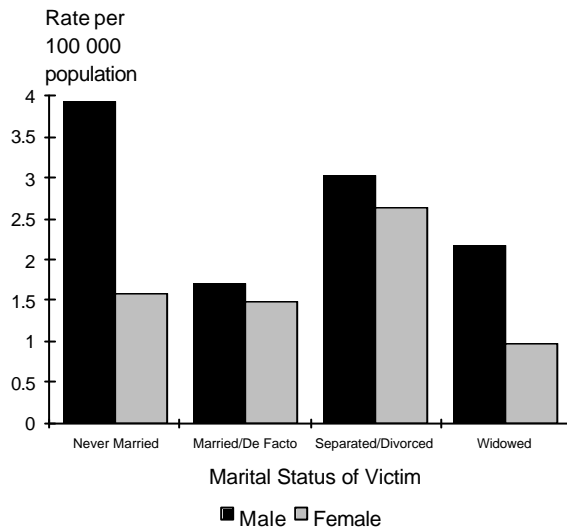
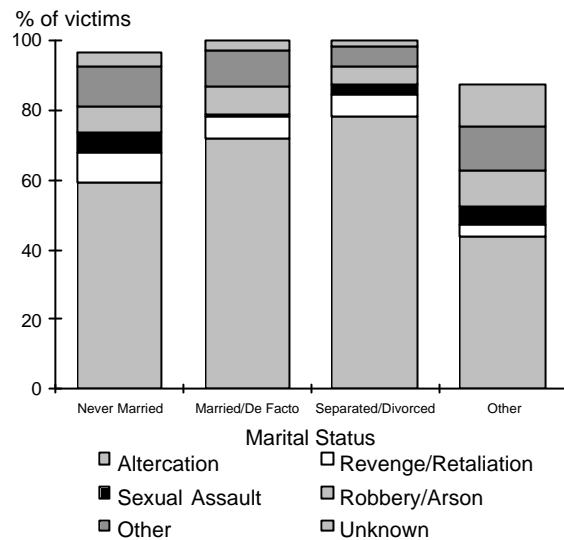


Figure 31: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Victims aged 15 years and over according to marital status, distribution by context of incident



relationship, a point reiterated by researchers such as Silverman and Kennedy (1993). The continuum between intimate homicides and stranger homicides embraces social relationships of differential intensities. The above results suggest that younger people, who most likely have never been married, are more often the victims of homicides involving a low degree of sentimental attachment to the offender, while those who are, or who have been, in a married or de facto relationship tend to be the victims of homicides associated with the day-to-day dynamics of intimate and other family relationships. This could explain the fact that older female victims are killed by persons in the same age-group. The majority of incidents involving people over the age of 50 years are of an intimate or family nature. These results are consistent with the notion that the social distance between the victim and the offender reduces with increasing age.

Figure 32: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Victims aged 15 years and over according to marital status, distribution by relationship to offender

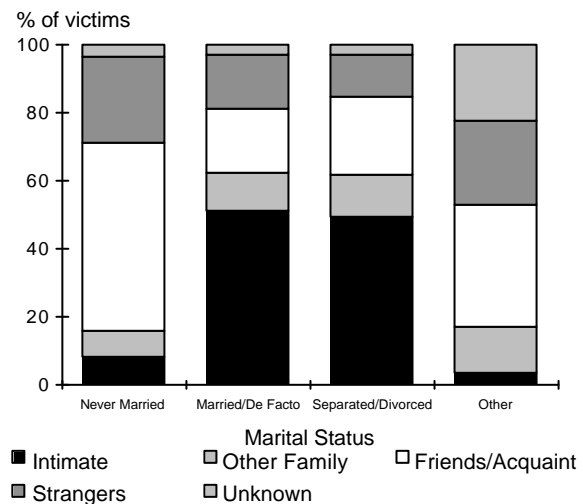
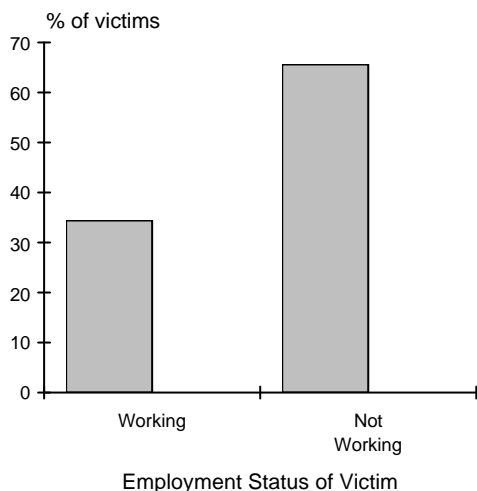




Figure 33: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of victims according to employment status and gender (n=1769\*)



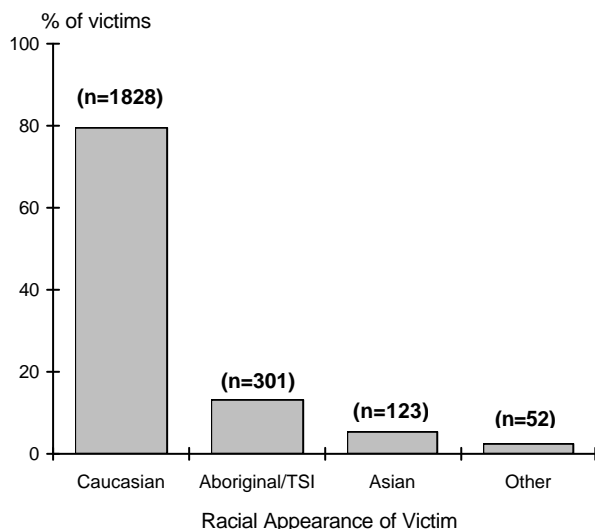
\*Excludes 881 victims where the employment status of the victims was unknown or not stated.

### Employment

Labour force status is an important aspect of any social science analysis. It is, however, difficult to obtain a totally accurate picture of this particular victim characteristic from police records. Obviously, this is not an aspect which unduly concerns the police in their pursuit of an arrest and a conviction. This analysis uses the categories "working" and "not working". The former includes those in either full-time or part-time employment, while the latter aims at including those who are either unemployed or not in the labour force.

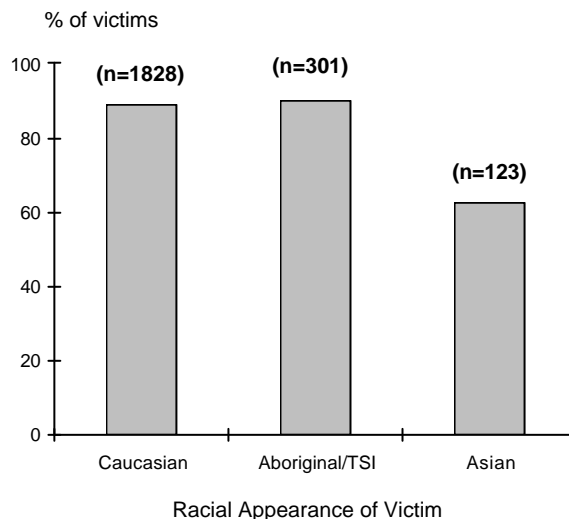
Figure 33 shows that, where the information has been recorded, two-thirds of homicide victims tend to be *not* working. Since most homicides occur in residential locations (refer to Figure 6 in Chapter 2) it might be argued that those who spend most time at home are at increased risk of

Figure 34: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Distribution of victims by racial appearance (n=2304\*)



Note: The number of victims is shown in brackets.  
\*Excludes 111 victims where racial appearance was unknown or not stated.

Figure 35: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Victims by racial appearance, percentage with the same racial appearance as the offender



Note: the number of victims is shown in brackets.

victimisation, a result which is consistent with a "routine activities" approach to homicide victimisation as suggested in Messner and Tardiff (1985). This is confirmed when the labour force status of the offender is also examined. The data shows that in three-quarters of all homicide incidents, both the victim and the offender were not working, a result that holds across locations and the various categories of homicides defined by the victim-offender relationship.

### Racial Appearance

Records do not show accurately the ethnicity of the victim, but rather point to racial appearance. This is frequently no more than a subjective assessment by police, and errors and inconsistencies in this sensitive area do occur. It is therefore important to emphasise that racial appearance is not a perfect measure of ethnicity or even race.

For the purposes of the National Homicide Monitoring Program, the categories used for racial appearance are Caucasian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Asian and Other. Figure 34 shows the distribution of victims according to racial appearance where it was known. These percentages show that, while victimisation risk for Caucasian and Asian people is evenly distributed across the population, this is not the case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This group is just under 2 per cent of the total Australian population, but accounts for 14 per cent of all homicide victims. This seven-fold over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is consistent year after year.

Analysis of the distribution of the racial appearance of victims in relation to the racial appearance of offenders throws light onto the complex dynamics underlying the social interactions leading to homicide. Figure 35 shows that Australian homicides are of an intra-racial nature. Almost 9 out of 10 of the incidents involving Caucasian victims also involved Caucasian offenders. This was a similar pattern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims and offenders, while the number of intra-racial homicides among Asians was less than two-thirds. The majority of homicides involving Asian

victims are perpetrated by Asian offenders, but it should be noted that 1 in 4 of the Asian victims are killed by Caucasians.

### Aboriginality

As mentioned in the previous section, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are, on average, seven-times more likely to be homicide victims than the rest of the Australian population (see Figure 36). This is a pattern which has been observed in varying

Figure 36: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Victimization rates per 100 000 relevant population, by Aboriginality

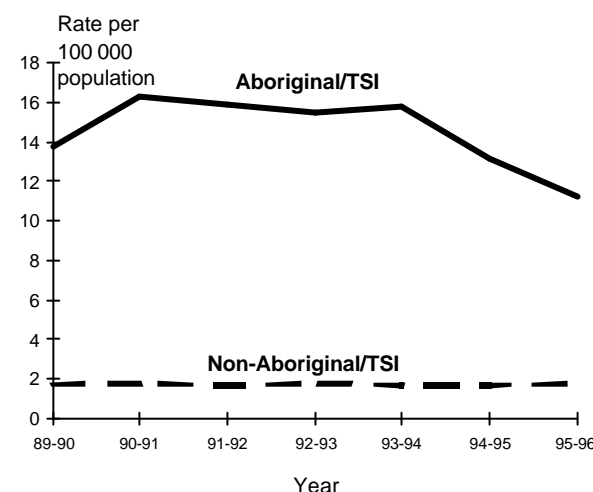


Figure 37: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Victimization rates per 100 000 relevant population, by jurisdiction and Aboriginality

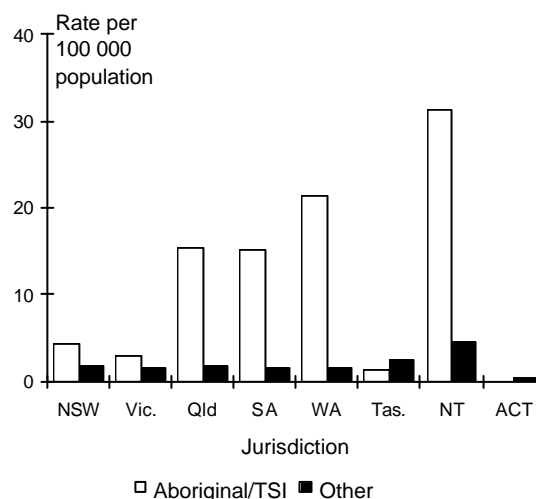


Figure 38: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Distribution of victims according to Aboriginality and whether they were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident (n=2415)

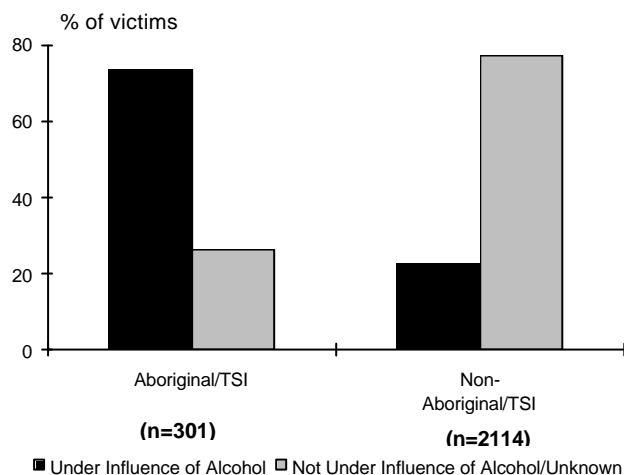
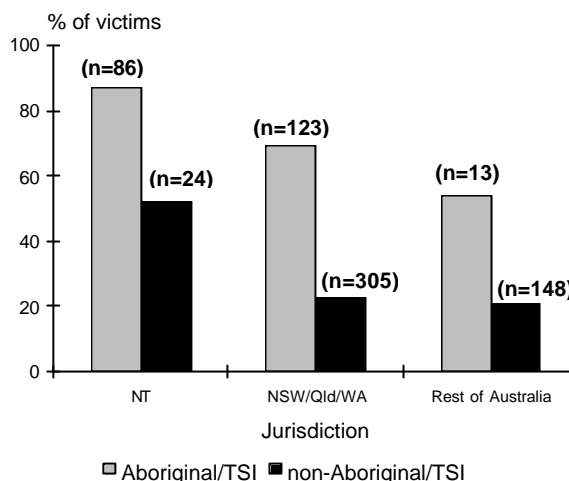


Figure 39: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of victims who were under the influence of alcohol, by Aboriginality and jurisdiction (n=699)



Note: The number of victims is shown in brackets.

degrees over the years by a number of researchers (see for example Wallace 1986; Wilson 1982; South Australian Office of Crime Statistics 1981).

As noted in Figure 22, the Northern Territory has by far the highest rate per 100 000 of homicide victimisation in Australia. There are a number of factors which could contribute to this high rate. For instance, it might be argued that this is the result of the large numbers of Aboriginal homicides in this jurisdiction. Figure 37 compares the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homicide rates with the rest of the population in all States and Territories. It can be observed that in all cases except for Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are over-represented in homicide victimisation. The Northern Territory has the highest rate, followed by Western Australia, Queensland and South Australia, which all have relatively large Aboriginal populations. If jurisdictional disparities in victimisation rates were associated with large numbers of Aboriginal victims, it would be expected that non-Aboriginal victimisation rates would not show any differences across jurisdictions.

Figure 37 indicates that this is the case in all jurisdictions, except for Tasmania and the Northern Territory which have higher non-Aboriginal victimisation rates than the rest of Australia. These results suggest that the high rates observed for the Northern Territory are due to factors other than its large Aboriginal population. The higher victimisation rates in Tasmania can be explained by the killing of 35 people in one incident at Port Arthur in April 1996.

Because Aboriginality does not entirely explain the high homicide victimisation rates in the Northern Territory, it is also necessary to examine other contributing factors. When controls are made for both the racial appearance of the victim and whether he/she was under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident, it can be seen that three-quarters of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homicide victims were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident (see Figure 38). This is almost the mirror-image of the level of alcohol involvement in homicide victimisation for the rest of the Australian population.

The distribution of victims who were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident according to racial appearance

and jurisdiction is shown in Figure 39. Jurisdictions were divided into three groups according to the absolute and relative sizes of their Aboriginal population. Firstly, the Northern Territory as the jurisdiction with the largest proportion of Aboriginal people in the total population; secondly, New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia as the jurisdictions with the largest numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and thirdly, the remaining jurisdictions.

Figure 39 shows a high incidence of alcohol consumption among victims of homicide in the Northern Territory. Although highest among Aboriginal victims (9 in 10 Aboriginal victims were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident), over half of the non-Aboriginal victims were recorded as being under the influence of alcohol.

There are also high levels of alcohol involvement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homicides in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia, where nearly three-quarters of the victims were affected by alcohol, and also for the rest of Australia where half of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were affected by alcohol. The level of alcohol involvement in homicide victims other than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is much lower in areas outside the Northern Territory, where only one in five were under the influence of alcohol.

It must be acknowledged here that there could be some homicide incidents outside the Northern Territory where alcohol was involved, but not recorded. This, however, does not detract from the basic observations which have been made in this section.

The fact that the Northern Territory had the largest percentage of victims who were under the influence of alcohol suggests that rather than the number of Aboriginal homicides, the high level of alcohol involvement is the primary factor underlying the high victimisation rates.

These results do, however, confirm previous findings about the role of alcohol in Aboriginal victimisation, irrespective of the jurisdiction. According to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey

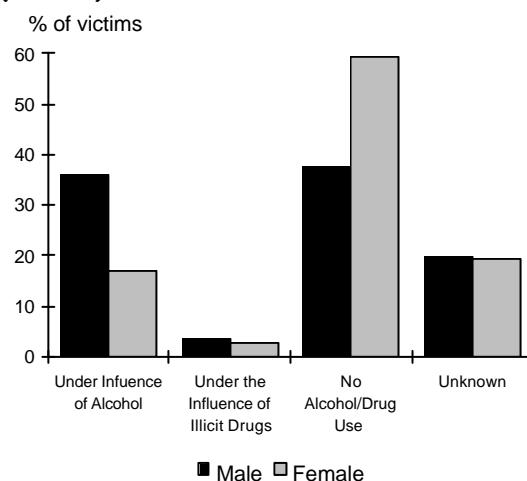
1994 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1995) use of alcohol was perceived as a problem by 76 per cent of respondents.

Homicides involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are overwhelmingly intra-racial. It is also worth mentioning that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homicides committed in the context of child abuse, with a firearm or where the relationship was that of a stranger are rare events. It is therefore obvious that homicides involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders require special analysis. This particular area will be the subject of a separate study to be published in the near future.

### *Use of Alcohol and Illicit Drugs by the Victim*

While alcohol is present in a significant number of homicide incidents in Australia, it must be emphasised that alcohol alone is not the cause of the homicide. Alcohol can, indeed, be a contributing factor. The extent of alcohol usage must be examined in conjunction with several other variables. For instance, Figure 40 shows that male victims in almost 2 out of 5 incidents were under the influence of alcohol, while almost 1 in 5 female victims had been drinking at the time of death. In half of these incidents, the victim was in the 18-35 year age-group.

Figure 40: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of victims according to alcohol and other drug usage and gender (n=2415)



The ingestion of illicit drugs is not a significant factor in Australian homicide, with only 4 per cent of both males and females known to have been under the influence of drugs such as cannabis, amphetamines or heroin at the time of the incident. However, as mentioned previously, this is a variable which is not always accurately recorded by the police, so some caution should be exercised here.

### Criminal History

To obtain accurate data on the criminal history of the victim is problematic, as there are privacy considerations surrounding the release of information on deceased persons. Where this information could be obtained, just over 20 per cent of all male homicide victims and just over 7 per cent of all female homicide victims had a criminal record. Of this number 1 in 3 males and 1 in 5 females had a record which included violent crimes such as a previous homicide, grievous bodily harm or sexual assault. The remaining victims had been charged or convicted of other criminal matters such as stealing, car theft and drug offences.

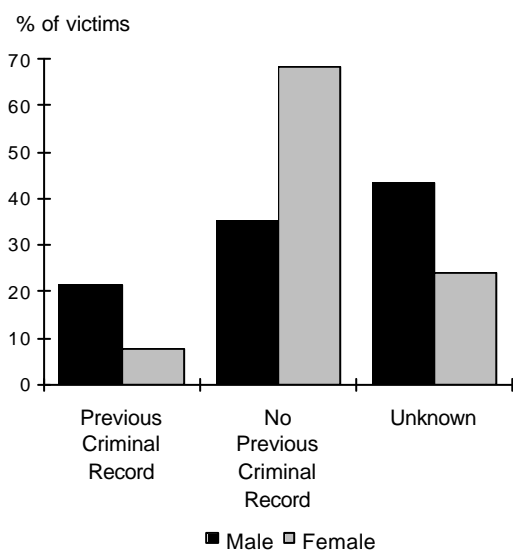
### Use of Violence by Victims of Homicide

It has been argued that a number of homicides are precipitated by violent actions on the part of the victims (see for instance: Wolfgang 1958; Polk 1997). The data from the Homicide Monitoring Program show that 18 per cent of the victims used some form of violence against their killers. Eighty-five per cent of these victims, in turn, were male, over half of whom were aged between 18 and 34 years. In one-third of these incidents, the victim initiated the violence, while the remaining victims reacted to the offender's aggression.

### Summary

The analysis outlined in this chapter shows that male and female homicide victimisation are qualitatively different. Therefore, when outlining the most common characteristics of a typical homicide victim, it is necessary to separate males from females.

Figure 41: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of victims by whether they had previous criminal record



### THE TYPICAL MALE VICTIM

- Aged between 18 and 35.
- Never married.
- Not working.
- Killed by a male friend or an acquaintance.
- Tend to be killed by person from the same racial group.

### THE TYPICAL FEMALE VICTIM

- Aged between 18 and 26.
- Married/de facto.
- Not working.
- Killed by an intimate partner.

# 4

## Offender Profile

This chapter presents a profile of offenders in terms of their demographic and social characteristics. The information presented here follows a similar layout as the previous chapter. This facilitates comparisons between the victim and the offender populations. The data relate to suspects, charged persons and convicted persons. It must be emphasised, however, that a proportion of these never face trial because of lack of evidence. Others are exonerated in the trial process.

Between 1 July 1989 and 30 June 1996, there were 2650 homicide offenders. The rates of offending over the seven-year period have stayed relatively constant at around 2.2 per 100 000 of the population. This is similar to the victimisation rates referred to in the previous chapter, which suggests that the homicides in Australia usually involve one offender and one victim (Figure 42, Table 4). Also, as expected, males show much higher rates of offending than females.

Comparison with Figure 21 shows that, while male offending rates are higher than their victimisation rates, female offending rates are considerably lower than their victimisation rates.

Figure 43 shows that rates of offending vary across jurisdictions in a similar manner as victimisation rates. Once again, the Northern Territory has a rate which is 10 times higher than the Australian average. The Australian Capital Territory, on the other hand, has a much lower rate.

Figure 42: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Offender rates per 100 000 population, by gender

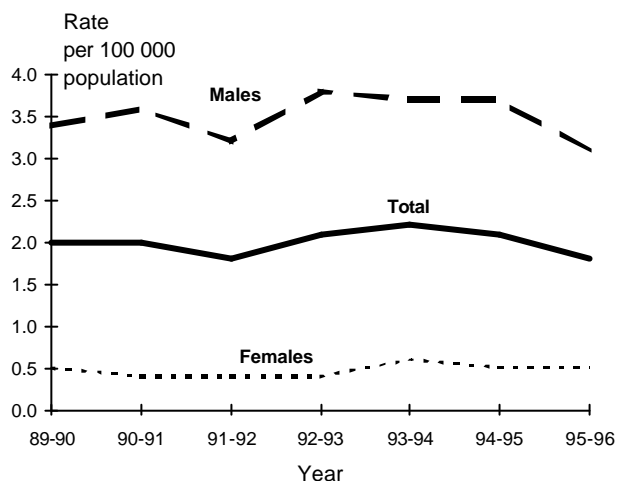


Figure 43: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Offender rates per 100 000 population, by jurisdiction

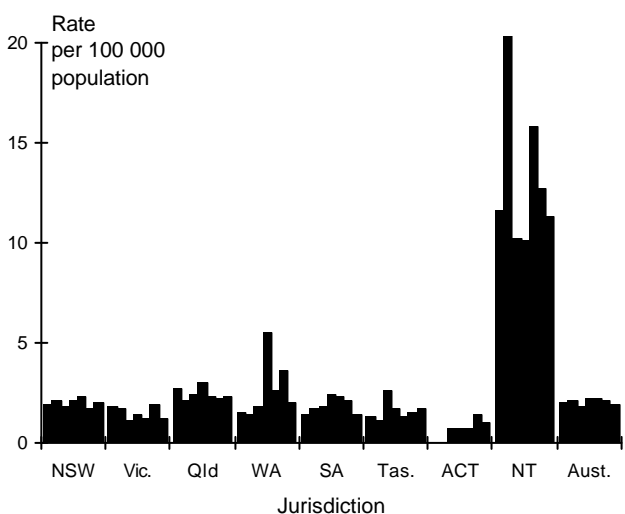


Table 4: **AUSTRALIA, Offenders of Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996:**  
Rates per 100 000 population, by gender

	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	Average
Males	3.4	3.6	3.2	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.1	3.5
Females	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5
Total	2.0	2.0	1.8	2.1	2.2	2.1	1.8	2.0

### Gender and Age

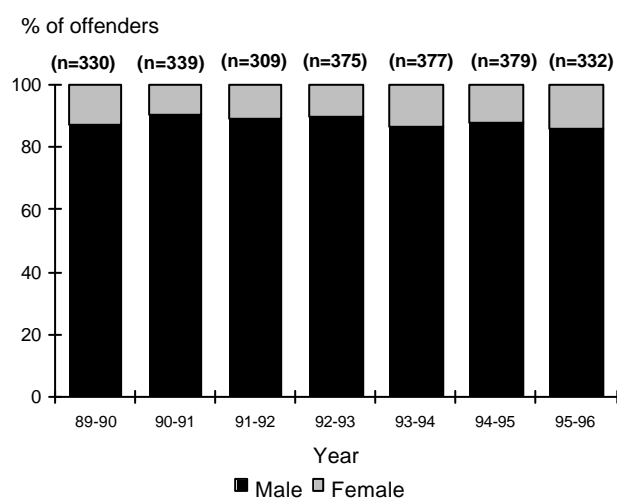
A predominance of male offending in homicide incidents has been well documented in most industrialised countries over a period of time. In Wolfgang's (1958) early study in Philadelphia, it was reported that 82 per cent of all offenders were male, while the Bureau of Justice Statistics (1992) reported more recently that 90 per cent of all those arrested for homicide in the whole United States were male. Similar statistics have been reported from Canada (Daly & Wilson 1988; Silverman & Kennedy 1993). Australia has been no exception to this pattern. In Wallace's (1986) study, it was revealed that 85 per cent of those charged with homicide offences were male. This figure has been confirmed more recently by Polk (1994) and Strang (1991, 1992, 1993).

Males are 9 times more likely than females to commit a homicide (see Figure 44). Women offend in only 1 out of 10

incidents, and when they do offend their victims are usually their intimate partners, or to a much lesser extent their children. When males offend, just under half of their victims are women and children. More than half of all homicide incidents involve a male offender and a male victim. The pattern of male and female offending has been relatively consistent over the seven-year period.

Figure 45 and Table 5 show that the gap between male and female rates of offending reduces with increasing age. The distance between male and female rates is widest for those aged between 18 and 26, where the ratio is 9 to 1. After 26 years of age, male rates drop more rapidly than female rates until the age of 36-38 years, when male rates increase again to the age of 41 years. By contrast, female rates of offending decrease during the same period. After the age of 65, female offending is almost non-existent.

Figure 44: **AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Distribution of offenders according to gender (n=2441\*)**



\*This excludes 209 offenders where the gender was not known or not stated.

Figure 45: **AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Rate per 100 000 relevant population, by gender and age group**

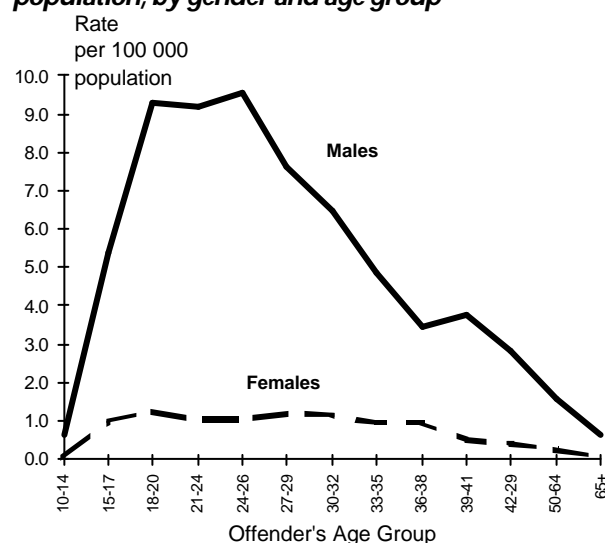




Table 5: **AUSTRALIA, Offenders of Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Rates per 100 000 relevant population, by gender and age group**

Age (Years)	Male	Female	Persons
10 to 14	0.64	0.05	0.35
15 to 17	5.40	1.00	3.26
18 to 20	9.29	1.23	2.56
21 to 23	9.21	1.01	5.17
24 to 26	9.55	1.05	5.33
27 to 29	7.60	1.19	4.40
30 to 32	6.47	1.14	3.80
33 to 35	4.86	0.93	2.90
36 to 38	3.46	0.93	2.19
39 to 41	3.77	0.50	2.14
42 to 49	2.83	0.40	1.63
50 to 64	1.56	0.24	0.91
65+	0.64	0.04	0.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>2.00</b>
Median Age	30.00	31.00	30.00

Figure 46: **AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Distribution of offenders according to gender and marital status, rate per 100 000 population**

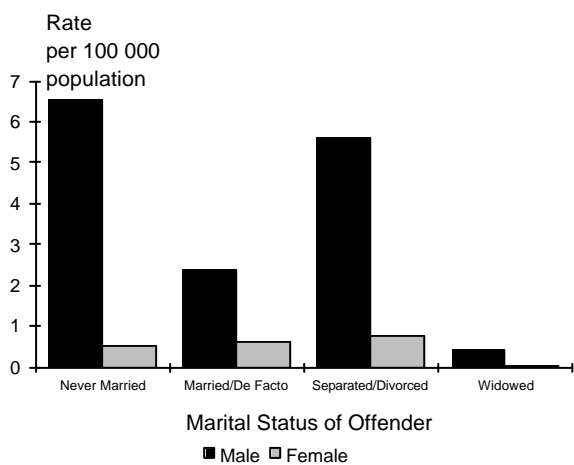
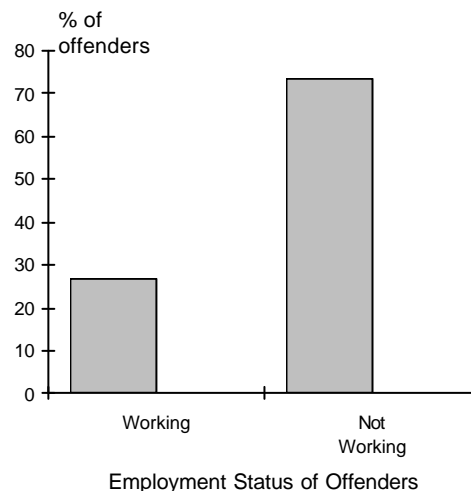


Figure 47: **AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of offenders according to employment status and gender (n=1957\*)**



\*Excludes 693 offenders where the employment status of the offender was unknown or unstated.

### Marital Status

Figure 46 shows that the majority of male offenders had never been married. As the majority of the male "never-marrieds" are in the 18-26 year age-group, this further ties in with the fact that more than half of all homicide incidents occur between young men. However, there are also high rates of male offending in the separated and divorced category, which is an indication of the level of homicides perpetrated by males against their previous intimate partners.

Figure 46 also shows that the largest group of female offenders are either in a married or a de facto relationship or have been separated or divorced. This is directly related to the fact that when women are perpetrators of homicide, their victims are, in the vast majority of cases, their present or former intimate partners.

### Employment

Once again, it is difficult to obtain a totally accurate picture of this particular offender characteristic from police records. As with the victim data, the categories "working" and "not working" are used. The former includes those in either full-time or part-time employment, while the latter includes those

who are either unemployed or not in the labour force. Figure 47 shows that during the period from 1 July 1989 and 30 June 1996, almost 8 out of 10 offenders were not working at the time of the homicide incident

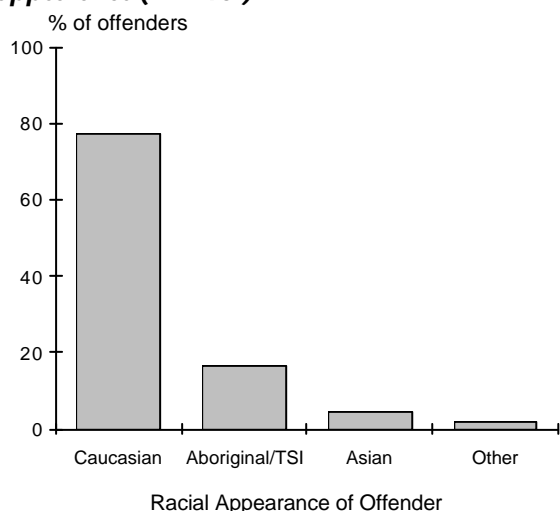
### Racial Appearance

For this section it should be reiterated that records do not show accurately the ethnicity of the offender, but rather point to racial appearance. This is frequently no more than a subjective assessment by police, and errors and inconsistencies in this sensitive area do occur. It is therefore important to emphasise that racial appearance is not a perfect measure of ethnicity or even race. In the National Homicide Monitoring Program, the categories used for racial appearance are Caucasian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Asian and Other.

Figure 48 shows the distribution of offenders according to racial appearance where it was known. These percentages are indicative of the vast over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, who number just under 2 per cent of the total Australian population, but who account for nearly 17 per cent of homicide offenders.

Figure 48 also shows that Caucasian offenders are responsible for 77 per cent of homicide incidents. This compares with the fact that 80 per cent of homicide victims are of Caucasian appearance. Asian people, who number just over 4 per cent of the total Australian population, account for 4 per cent of offenders. This compares with an Asian victimisation rate of 5 per cent.

Figure 48: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Distribution of offenders by racial appearance (n=2295\*)



\*Excludes 355 offenders where racial appearance was unknown or unstated.

### Aboriginality

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are on average almost nine times more likely than the rest of the Australian population to be homicide offenders as shown by their offending rates per 100 000 population (see Figure 49). The majority of incidents involving an Aboriginal offender are related to intra-familial disputes, both intimate and non-intimate, and to disputes between friends and acquaintances. The fact that most of these incidents occur, not in the victim's or the offender's home, but in nearby commu-

Figure 49: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Offending rates per 100 000 relevant population, by Aboriginality

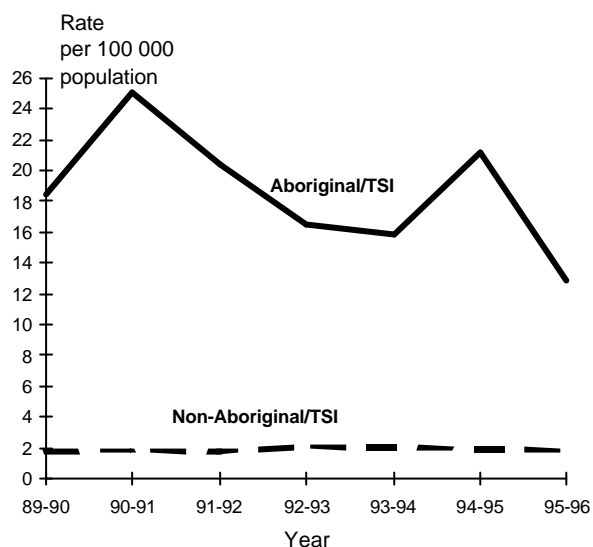
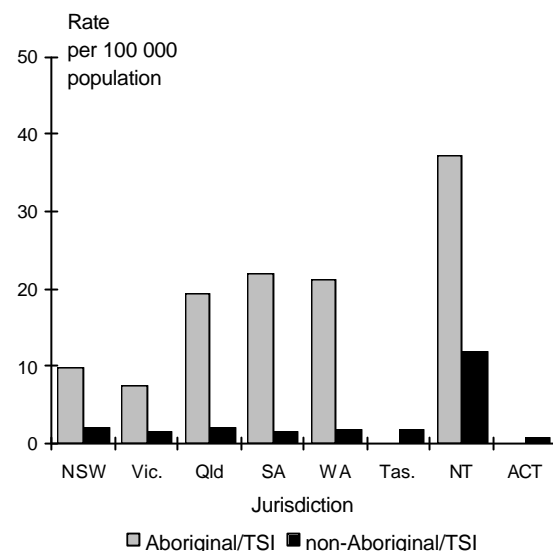


Figure 50: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Offending rates per 100 000 relevant population, by jurisdiction and Aboriginality



nal areas is supportive of the routine activities theory referred to earlier in this publication. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly in the more remote areas of the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Queensland, tend to participate in a lifestyle which involves social gatherings in public places. Unlike many non-Aboriginal Australians, they do not spend the majority of their time in the isolation of their homes.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offending rates in New South Wales and Victoria are higher than their victimisation rates, while Queensland and South Australian show lower levels. Western Australia has fairly equal proportions of both. In the Northern Territory, however, the offending rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are lower than their victimisation rates. This contrasts quite markedly with the offending rates of the rest of the population in the Northern Territory, which are three times higher than the corresponding victimisation rates. It should also be noted that the offending rate for the non-Aboriginal population in the Northern Territory is six times the Australian rate of

offending. This further confirms that Aboriginality alone is not responsible for the high homicide rate in the Northern Territory and suggests that a proportion of Aboriginal victims here are killed by non-Aboriginal offenders (see Figure 50).

It should also be noted that non-Aboriginal offending rates for all jurisdictions in Australia other than the Northern Territory are similar and significantly lower, except for the Australian Capital Territory which, as mentioned previously, has a rate which is even lower still.

As in the previous chapter which discussed the fact that Aboriginality does not entirely explain high homicide victimisation rates, a similar method has been employed here to examine other contributing factors. When controls are made for both racial appearance of the offender and whether he/she was under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident, it can be seen that a little over three-quarters of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders are under the influence of alcohol at the time of the homicide. Once again, this is the mirror-image of the level of alcohol involve-

Figure 51: **AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Distribution of offenders according to Aboriginality and whether they were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident (n=2650)**

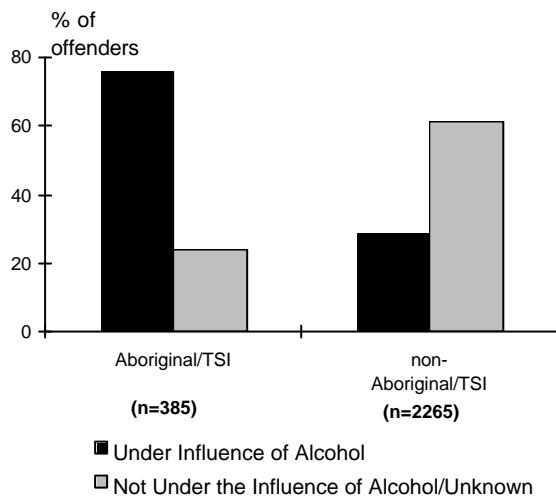
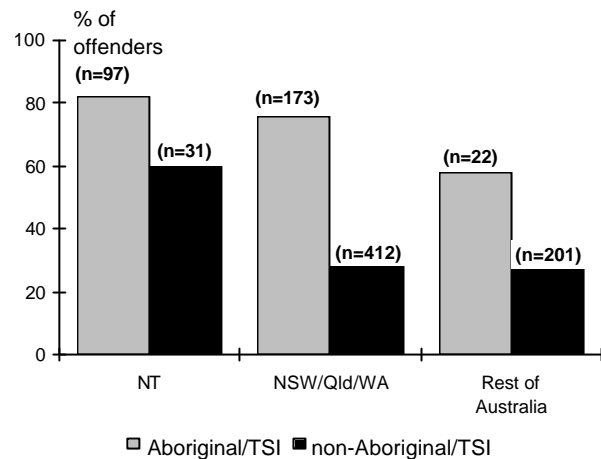


Figure 52: **AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of offenders who were under the influence of alcohol, by Aboriginality and jurisdiction (n=936)**



ment in homicide offending for the rest of the Australian population (see Figure 51).

The distribution of offenders who were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident according to racial appearance and jurisdiction is shown in Figure 52. Jurisdictions are divided into three groups according to the absolute and relative sizes of their Aboriginal population (see Chapter 3). Here it can be seen that there is a high incidence of alcohol consumption among homicide offenders in the Northern Territory. Although highest among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders (just under 9 in 10 were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident), almost 6 in 10 of the non-Aboriginal offenders were recorded as being under the influence of alcohol. The Northern Territory was the jurisdiction recording the largest proportion of offenders under the influence of alcohol, both among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

There are also high levels of alcohol involvement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homicide offending in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia where more than three-quarters of the

offenders were alcohol-affected and also for the rest of Australia where 60 per cent of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were affected by alcohol. The level of alcohol involvement in homicide offending with perpetrators other than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is much lower in areas outside the Northern Territory where only a little over 1 in 5 were affected by alcohol.

While the level of alcohol consumption is a contributing factor in homicide incidents involving the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, it is not necessarily a cause. It is as much a symptom of underlying historical and structural aspects which have resulted in the social dislocation of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The fact that, almost without exception, both Aboriginal victims and offenders of homicide are not working has ensured that they remain part of an under-class in Australian society.

**Use of Alcohol and Illicit Drugs by the Offender**

Findings relating to alcohol usage by male offenders are similar to those described for male victims (see Figure 53). Female offenders, however, show a higher incidence of alcohol involvement than do female victims.

**Criminal History**

As shown in Figure 54, in Australia, during the period 1 July 1989 and 30 June 1996, where the information was recorded, male homicide offenders were twice as likely as female homicide offenders to have had a previous criminal record (males n=1506, females n=901). Of those offenders with a criminal record, 93 per cent were males and 7 per cent were females. This included violent crimes such as a previous homicide, grievous bodily harm or sexual assault. The remaining offenders with a criminal record had been charged or convicted of other criminal matters such as stealing, car theft and drug offences.

Figure 53: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of offenders according to alcohol and other drug usage and gender (n=2650)

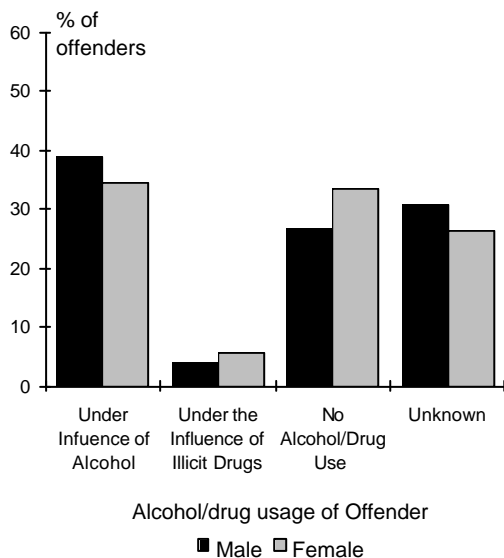
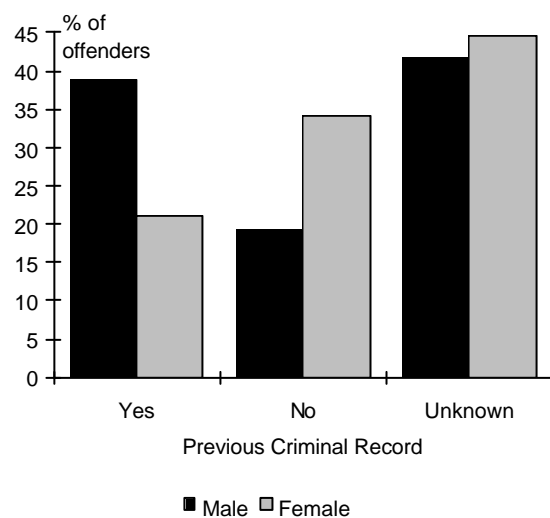


Figure 54: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of offenders by whether they had a previous criminal record and gender (n=1506 males and 901 females)



### THE TYPICAL OFFENDER

- Male.
- Aged between 18 and 26.
- Never married.
- Not working.
- Caucasian.

# 5

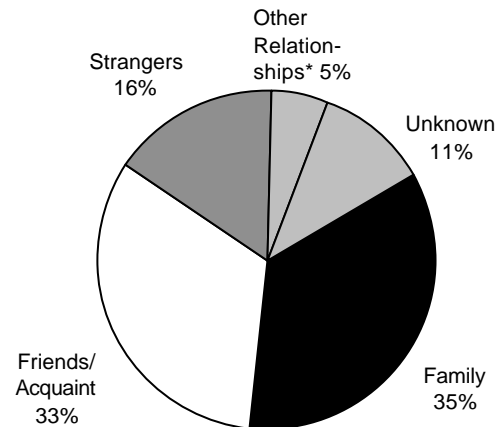


## Social Relationship between the Victim and the Offender

While characteristics of both the offender and the victim have been examined in detail in separate chapters, detailed analyses of their social relationship is necessary so that the dynamics of the interaction which led to the homicide can be better understood. Social relationship is one of the most important factors influencing the nature of conflict between people. Furthermore, the social relationship defines the social distance which exists between the victim and the offender. This "distance" and the types of conflicts and corresponding social controls operating obviously differ between incidents, depending on the relationship in question. For instance, a homicide between intimate partners involves entirely different social dynamics from a child-abuse homicide. Both of these, in turn, differ quite markedly from the types of social interactions which lead to a homicide between friends and acquaintances. And, homicides committed between strangers have their own particular set of circumstances.

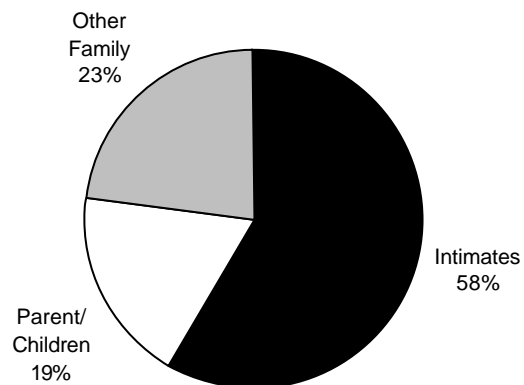
However, it has been suggested (see for example Silverman & Kennedy 1993; Polk 1994) that stranger homicides also involve an element of social interaction. People do not kill each other just because they are strangers. As with other types of homicide, strangers do not kill each other in a vacuum. Often the circumstances leading to the incident have involved the commission of another crime, such as a sexual assault or robbery. Even a contract killing has some elements of relational proximity. There is a link, albeit an indirect one, between the

Figure 55: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Relationship between the victim and the offender (n=2757)



\* Other relationships include: sex rivals, business relationships, prostitute-client, gang members, citizen-police.

Figure 56: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Incidents which occurred in the context of family relationships (n=963)



person who commissioned the crime, the immediate perpetrator and the victim. In addition, a confrontation between males who are strangers may have similar motivations as those homicides classified by the relationship between friends and acquaintances. Polk (1994) refers to these types of incidents as a "masculine honour confrontation".

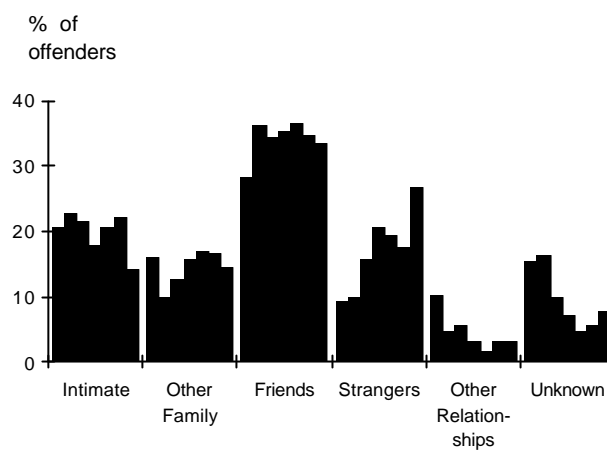
The only homicides which involve no social interaction are mass murders. Here, the motive of the perpetrator is difficult, if not impossible, to predict. Fortunately, these types of incidents are very rare. This is similar for serial killers, although they do sometimes forge a social relationship, albeit a brief one, with their victims.

### Relationship Categories

In Australia, during the period 1 July 1989 to 30 June 1996, just over one-third of all homicides took place within the family. A further one-third occurred between friends and acquaintances and in 16 per cent of incidents, strangers were responsible (see Figure 55). It is therefore much more likely that people are killed by someone they know either in an intimate or other family relationship or as a friend or acquaintance. In 2 out of 10 of the incidents, the victim and the offender were in an intimate relationship. Here, an intimate relationship is defined as one where the victim and the offender are either married, divorced, de facto, ex-de facto, girlfriend-boyfriend, ex-girlfriend/boyfriend or in a same-sex relationship. In over 8 out of 10 cases where the relationship was recorded, the victim and the offender knew each other.

Of the homicide incidents which took place within the family, almost 3 out of 5 were between intimate partners, slightly less than 1 out of 5 were committed by a parent on a younger child and in just over a further 1 in 5 of the incidents, other family members were involved (see Figure 56). Other family refers to grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings etc.

Figure 57: **AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Trends in victim-offender relationships (n=2757)**



### Trends

Figure 57 shows the relationship between the victim and the offender for the seven-year period from 1 July 1989 to 30 June 1996. The proportion of incidents involving intimate-partner and other family members has remained stable during this period. On the other hand, homicides between strangers is seen to have increased over time at the expense of those incidents where the relationship between the victim and the offender was unknown. However, rather than a real increase in stranger homicides, this reflects an improvement in the National Homicide Monitoring Program's data collection procedures. This same phenomenon appears to have occurred with homicides involving friends and acquaintances as well as homicides involving "other" relationships.

It should be noted that the marked increase in stranger homicides in 1995-96 is directly attributable to the Port Arthur massacre in Tasmania where 35 people were killed in the one incident, 33 of whom were strangers to the offender.



Table 6: *AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage victim-offender relationship types, by jurisdiction*

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	ACT*	NT
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Intimate Partners	18.1	19.8	18.5	25.4	25.7	13.3	23.1	29.3
Other Family	15.6	13.2	13.8	9.4	15.6	14.5	15.4	6.0
Friends /Acquaintances	27.9	30.9	42.6	34.3	36.1	25.3	15.4	20.4
Other Relationships	4.5	6.4	6.8	4.2	3.3	2.4	23.1	6.6
Strangers	16.9	16.2	13.8	15.5	15.2	42.2	23.1	4.2
Unknown	17.0	13.4	4.4	11.3	4.1	2.4	0.0	33.5
Total Number of Victim-Offender Relationships Recorded								
	940	530	542	213	269	83	13	167

\*Caution must be exercised when interpreting figures for the ACT due to the very small number of homicides.

### *Jurisdictional Comparisons*

Table 6 shows the distribution of victim-offender relationships within each of the jurisdictions. In all States except Tasmania, homicide between friends and acquaintances is the most common. This is followed by intimate partner relationships. The Northern Territory shows a very small percentage of stranger homicides. In Tasmania, the high percentage of stranger homicides is not a regular feature of incidents in that State, but rather the result of the Port Arthur incident. While the Australian Capital Territory shows a higher percentage of stranger homicides than the national average, caution should be exercised here because the overall number of incidents is very small.

The total number of recorded victim-offender relationships varies between jurisdictions (see the last row of Table 6). Any inter-jurisdictional comparisons need to take this variability into account. Figures 58 to 61 compare the jurisdictions in terms of the percentage of homicides between intimate partners, other family members, friends/acquaintances and strangers by using 99 per cent confidence intervals (see technical note on p. 37). The percentage of homicides of a given type may be regarded as the same if the confidence intervals for two or more jurisdictions overlap; otherwise there are significant differences between them.

Figure 58 shows that the jurisdictions are not significantly different in terms of their percentage of intimate partner homicides; this suggests that the risk of this type of homicide tends to be uniform across Australia.

The Northern Territory recorded a lower proportion of homicides occurring within family relationships other than intimate partners than did New South Wales. No significant differences were detected between the other jurisdictions (see Figure 59).

Queensland recorded a larger percentage of victim-offender relationships in the friend/acquaintance category than did New South Wales, Victoria and the Northern Territory, but not significantly different from the percentages for South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania (see Figure 60).

Finally, homicides involving strangers were less common in the Northern Territory than in the other jurisdictions (see Figure 61). Tasmania, on the other hand, as a consequence of the Port Arthur massacre, recorded a larger percentage of stranger relationships than the rest of Australia.

### *Contextual Setting*

It is clear from the analysis included in this report that homicide is, in the main, the result of a social interaction between

Figure 58: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of homicides involving relationships between intimate partners by jurisdiction (99% confidence intervals)

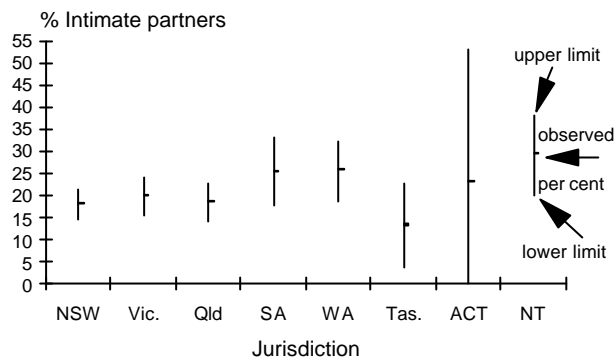


Figure 59: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of homicides involving relationships between other family members by jurisdiction (99% confidence intervals)



Figure 60: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of homicides involving relationships between friends/acquaintances by jurisdiction (99% confidence intervals)

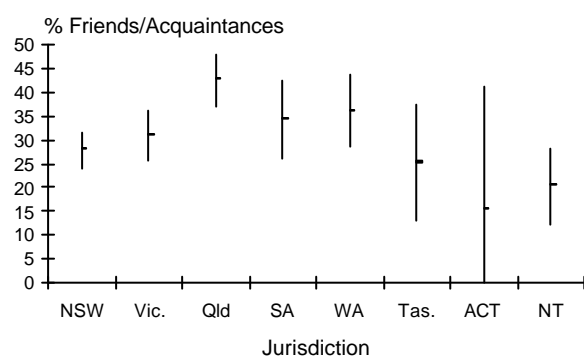
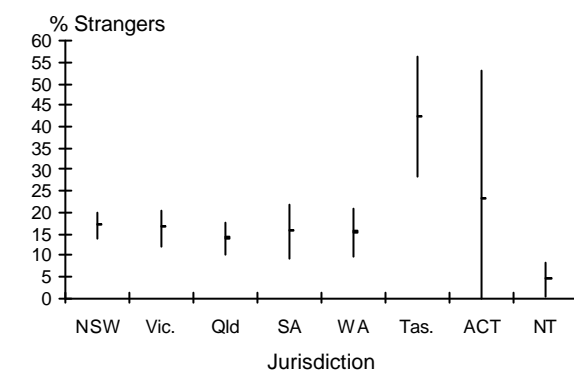


Figure 61: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Percentage of homicides involving strangers by jurisdiction (99% confidence intervals)

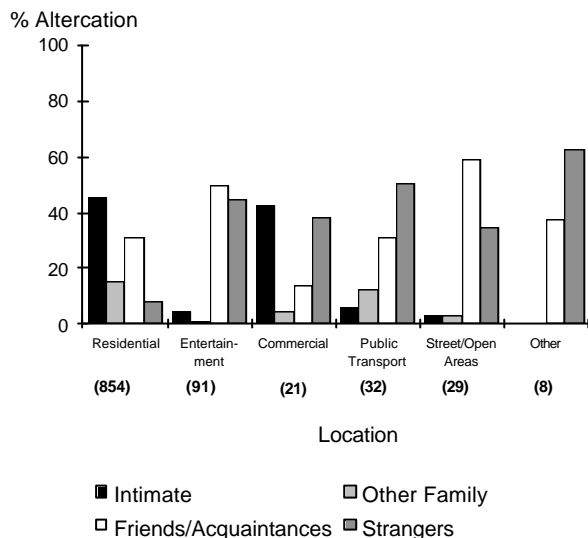


TECHNICAL NOTE

Confidence intervals are (probabilistic) statements regarding the value of a characteristic. We are interested in the percentage of homicides where the relationship between victim and offender is of a specific type (e.g. intimate partners or strangers). We also want to determine whether the observed percentage for a specific type of relationship within one jurisdiction is different to other jurisdiction(s); or not. In order to perform such a comparison, we need to account for the fact that the numbers in which these percentages are based vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction (see last row of Table 6). Confidence intervals are a convenient tool to compare two or more jurisdictions, and are obtained by adding and subtracting a given number of standard deviations to the observed percentage for a specific type of relationship, depending on the level of confidence selected.

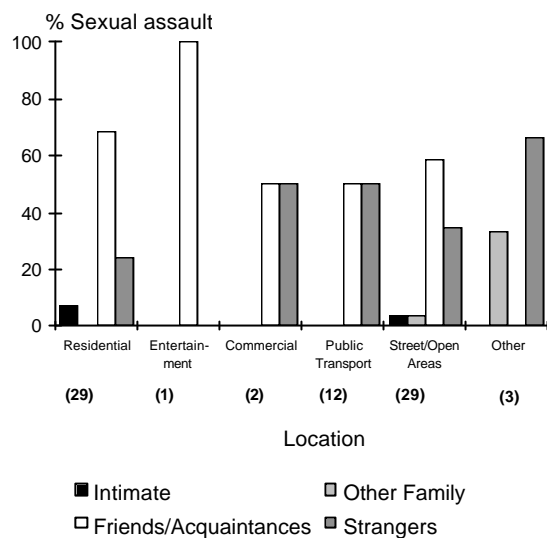
For example, for New South Wales, 18.1 per cent of all the 940 observed victim-offender relationships were intimate partner (standard deviation of 1.26). In Western Australia, 25.4 per cent of the 269 relationships were intimate partner (standard deviation of 2.66). The lower limit of a 99 per cent confidence interval for the percentage of intimate-partner relationships in New South Wales is given by 14.9 per cent ( $18.1 - 2.57 \times 1.26$ ), and the upper limit is 21.3 per cent ( $18.1 + 2.57 \times 1.26$ ). For Western Australia, the confidence limits are 18.3 per cent and 31.9 per cent. Note that as these confidence intervals *do overlap*, there is no evidence of a significant difference between NSW and WA with respect to the incidence of intimate partner homicide. As another example, the percentage of family relationships was 15.6 in New South Wales and 6 in the Northern Territory. Standard deviations were 1.18 and 1.83 respectively: 99 per cent confidence intervals are from 12.6 to 18.6 for New South Wales, and from 1.4 to 10.6 for the Northern Territory. As these confidence intervals *do not overlap*, we conclude that there is a significant difference in the incidence of homicides involving family members recorded in NSW and those recorded in the NT.

Figure 62: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Incidents resulting from an altercation (n=1035), victim-offender relationship, by location



Note: The number of homicide incidents is shown in brackets.

Figure 63: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Incidents resulting from sexual assault (n=76), victim-offender relationship, by location



Note: The number of homicide incidents is shown in brackets.

victim(s) and offender(s) occurring under a specific set of circumstances. The location of the incident and the motives leading to a homicide are among the elements of this contextual setting. Examination of the distribution of victim-offender relationships according to these elements will therefore help to better understand the complex dynamics of homicide.

It is only by providing this complete picture of separate categories such as intimate-partner homicides, homicides between friends and acquaintances, child homicides, homicides between older people and Aboriginal homicides that the processes behind the crime may be fully understood and relevant policy and preventive measures devised.

Figure 62 confirms that the majority of homicides which resulted from altercations in the home occurred between intimate partners, and friends and acquaintances, followed by other family members. On the other hand, both friends and acquaintances and strangers were primarily responsible for homicide incidents which occurred in places

of entertainment. Similarly, this was the case on public transport and in the street or other open areas such as the bush or a beach.

Figure 63 shows that not only strangers, but also friends and acquaintances, are responsible for the majority of homicides which occurred in the context of a sexual assault. These happened in all locations. A small proportion of homicides following a sexual assault were committed by intimate-partners. These occurred both in residential premises and in open areas.

Figure 64 shows that homicides which result from instrumental crimes such as robbery and arson occurred across all locations. In the majority of cases, these were committed by strangers, and to a lesser extent by friends and acquaintances.

Homicides resulting from revenge or retaliation occurred mainly in residential premises or the street and other open areas. In nearly all of the locations, friends and acquaintances were responsible for the majority, followed closely by strangers. The only exception is homicide incidents which occurred on public transport. Strangers were

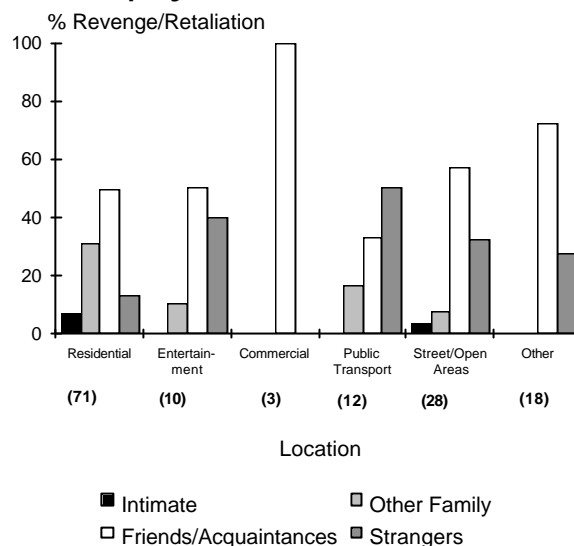
responsible for the majority of these (see Figure 65).

Figure 66 shows that all child abuse homicides occur in the home. The overwhelming majority of these are committed by other family members, such as a parent or de facto parent.

### Victim-Offender Relationship and Gender

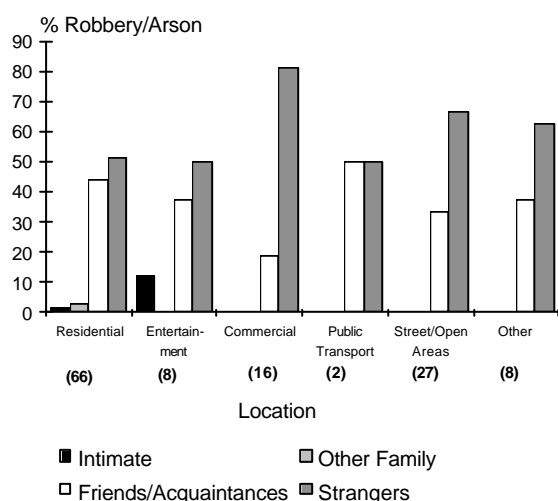
Figures 67 to 70 show significant patterns of homicide according to victim-offender relationship and the gender of those involved in the incident. Note that percentages are based on the number of incidents of each type according to the relationship between victim and offender. Each record in the incident file was augmented with information relevant to each victim and offender involved, as well as the relationship between them. New variables were defined to record the frequency of each relationship and the type of homicide according to gender of participants.

Figure 65: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Incidents resulting from revenge/retaliation (n=142), victim-offender relationship, by location



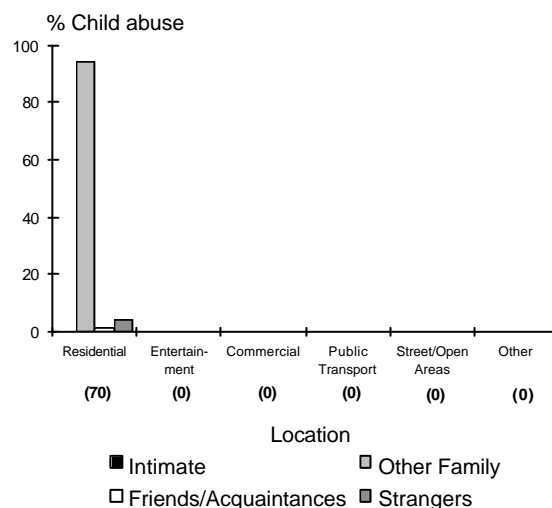
Note: Number of homicide incidents is shown in brackets.

Figure 64: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Incidents resulting from robbery/arsen (n=127), victim-offender relationship, by location



Note: Number of homicide incidents is shown in brackets.

Figure 66: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Incidents resulting from child abuse (n=70), victim-offender relationship, by location



Note: Number of homicide incidents is shown in brackets.

Of all homicide incidents in which the gender of victim and offender are recorded, male-on-male cases comprise 55 per cent of the total. Male-on-female cases comprise 33 per cent, female-on-male 9 per cent and female-on-female 2 per cent. Percentages total 99 per cent because of rounding.

As the figures reveal, most male-on-male homicides occur between acquaintances. Female-on-female homicides, while relatively rare, tend to occur within the family, usually in the parent-child relationship. Inter-gender homicides, by contrast, tend to occur between intimate (or formerly intimate) partners. Nearly two-thirds of male-on-female incidents and female-on-male cases are classified as intimate partner homicides.

Figure 69: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Victim-offender relationship Female to Male (n=174)

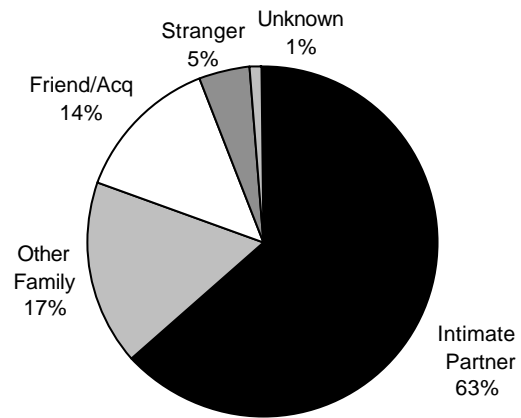


Figure 67: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Victim-offender relationship Male to Male (n=1086)

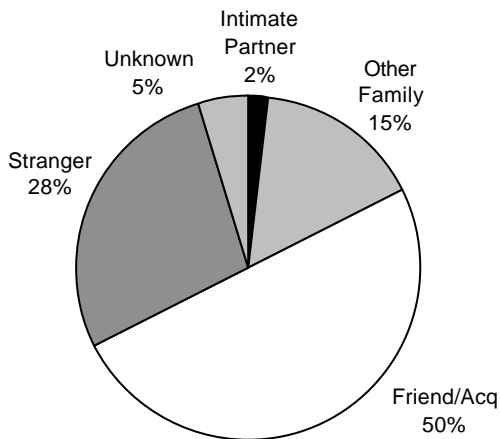


Figure 70: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Victim-offender relationship Female to Female (n=43)

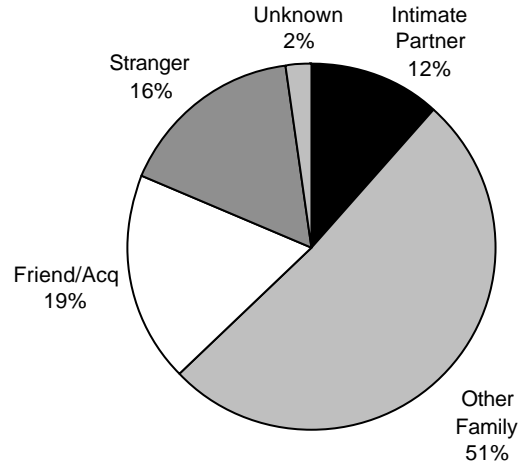
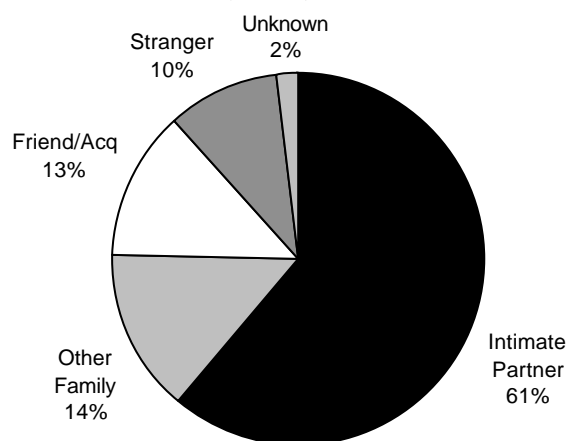


Figure 68: AUSTRALIA, Homicide 1 July 1989-30 June 1996: Victim-offender relationship Male to Female (n=656)



# 6



## Conclusion

This publication has given a general overview of homicide in Australia for the period 1989 to 1996. In so doing, it has also given a brief summary of the characteristics of a typical homicide incident as well as a victim and offender profile. It was acknowledged earlier that homicide is not one type of crime, and that there are several subsets of homicide which need to be examined in detail so that risk factors may be determined and corresponding preventive measures put into place. These categories include: intimate-partner homicides, child abuse homicides, juvenile homicides, Aboriginal homicides, homicides between friends and acquaintances and homicides committed by and against older people. It was not possible to examine these categories in detail here, but they will all be the subject of several smaller publications to be released by the Australian Institute of Criminology in the near future. The summaries therefore of the typical incident, typical victim and typical offender are limited in their application and obviously apply to the two categories which dominate the database, namely homicides between friends and acquaintances and intimate partner homicides. Despite the limitations, it is felt that the typical scenarios provided are of very real use if for no other reason than to discount some of the misconceptions which arise whenever a particularly horrific incident occurs. Mass killings, and stranger killings without apparent motive tend to dominate the public perception of homicide and generate the most fear. It is therefore important that it be continually

reiterated that these are very rare crimes. And, indeed that homicide generally is a very rare crime.

Homicide, more than any other crime, is principally the result of a dynamic social relationship between the individuals concerned (Wolfgang 1958). It is usually the unintended outcome of a trivial matter which escalates out of control. Homicide is, in the main, a crime which is socially, historically and culturally determined (Wallace 1986). Different categories of homicide are therefore determined by the circumstances of the event and the interaction between the victim and the accused. For instance, when considering family violence, there are a number of distinguishing features. The close interaction between the victims and the offenders increases the opportunities for violence. It is possible that prior to the homicide the victim has been assaulted repeatedly by the offender, or in some cases that the offender has been assaulted repeatedly by the victim. Homicides in which a history of family violence is evident can be analysed on three levels: sexual intimates; non-intimate family members such as siblings, parents and grandparents; and child abuse. Homicides between friends and acquaintances can also arise from situational factors such as the overuse of alcohol and drugs which leads to an altercation with unintended consequences. Stranger homicides are more difficult to monitor. Instrumental homicides, which are one aspect of this category and which arise from incidents such as robbery

and sexual assaults, can often be the unintended result of a crime that "went wrong". It is difficult, if not impossible, to predict or deter the events which lead to serial killings and mass murders. Fortunately, these account for only a very small proportion of all homicides.

Homicides between Indigenous people and between non-English speaking background people, although they can contain similarities with "mainstream" homicides, have their own unique components. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are seven times more likely than the rest of the Australian population to be victims of homicide. They are also the most disadvantaged social and economic group in Australian society. In Australia, Indigenous people are over-represented in all areas of the criminal justice system. Their social disadvantage, unemployment rates and other forms of social disorder, give rise to many of the tensions that are precursors to interpersonal conflict.

The question of social disadvantage in terms of homicide victimisation is not confined to Indigenous people. Almost 85 per cent of victims and a little over 90 per cent of offenders belong to what can be described as an under-class in Australian society. This suggests a strong inverse relationship between socio-economic status and the risk of becoming the victim (or the perpetrator) of homicide. In other words, it is not just a question of race, but also of class. However, Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967) argue that the issue is possibly not poverty, but the culture which exists among people in this section of society. This subculture promotes a number of social conditions under which violence is likely to be expected or required. Violence can become a part of a lifestyle; it can become the basis for the resolution of difficult problems or situations.

Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) hypothesise that because homicide is often the unintended consequences of a crime that went wrong, it is committed by poorly socialised individuals who lack self-control. To this must be added the contribution of drugs and alcohol, conflict-ridden situations, opportunity, and other forms of social

dysfunction. Social relationship, proximity, and availability of weapons interact with low self-control in volatile situations. Individuals in these situations often lack conflict resolution skills, but find themselves in "risky situations" (Silverman & Kennedy 1993).

Other theories based on social control, socialisation and development, as well as those dealing directly with aggression and violence, help to clarify behaviours that result in a homicide. Means of dealing with conflict and the ability to deal with conflict are central themes of the social control concepts. Conflict styles are influenced by socialisation. Violence in some situations or in some subcultures may be considered a legitimate way of dealing with conflict (Silverman & Kennedy 1993; Polk 1994). Again, social relationship and proximity are correlated with violent outcomes. The family is the place where violence is first learned (Strauss 1987) and it is likely to mould future ideas about conflict resolution.

The social and economic environments in which people live are also consistent with the routines followed by individuals. These routines are often good predictors of violent confrontations. For instance, young males who spend long periods of time outside the home and live "risky" lifestyles can find themselves in situations where a homicide could occur (Sacco & Johnson 1990). On the other hand, women who live in violent relationships could find themselves more at risk inside the home. Equally, young children can be vulnerable in a home situation which is abusive. The fact that the majority of homicide victims and offenders are not working also supports the routine activities theory.

Because homicide is not one type of crime, the identification of risk factors involved in different categories of homicide can suggest appropriate interventions and preventive strategies for violent crime generally. For instance, the high vulnerability of children under the age of one could perhaps be alleviated by more consistent and thorough parent support programs, particularly for socially disadvantaged groups. Health and welfare agencies can better coordinate the identification of

children who have been subjected to periodic or consistent physical abuse. In a similar manner, but with the added cooperation of criminal justice agencies, women in domestic violence situations could be better protected through the development of facilities and safeguards for the termination of unsustainable relationships. Apprehended Violence Orders need to be more closely monitored.

Circumstances surrounding homicides between males also need to be better understood. In particular, the contribution of alcohol needs to be examined in association with the socialisation process of males in Australian society. As Polk (1994) has identified, middle or upper-class males rarely become involved in confrontations that become lethal; nor are they likely to be engaged in forms of street crime which result in loss of life, nor do they commonly employ violence as a form of conflict resolution. When examining strategies to prevent homicide, therefore, the fact that the most common perpetrators are males in the 15-26 year age-group, who are not working, cannot be overlooked.

Even though there are social and individual circumstances which result in homicide, it is important to look at the total picture. While it is necessary to address the structural issues of society, realistically there is little that can be done in the short term to improve the situation of those who constitute an under-class. What can be done, however, is to examine the indirect means which could be implemented to better support vulnerable groups and complement these with institutional plans for adequately allocating resources.

The National Homicide Monitoring Program shows fairly consistent results for each year of the seven-year collection. It can therefore be stated with reasonable confidence that the database is a worthwhile predictor of lethal violence, and is now a rich source for research to develop strategies to prevent all types of violent crime. Ideally, the measures taken to prevent violence will have wider beneficial effects in the areas of health, education and economic circumstances leading to a healthier, more cohesive and productive society.

### *Policy Issues*

The specific policy issues which need to be looked at have been well documented. The Australian Institute of Criminology has produced two comprehensive publications with recommendations for the prevention and control of violence. These are: *Violence: Directions for Australia* by the National Committee on Violence published in 1990 and *Indicators of Aggressive Behaviour* by David McDonald and Melanie Brown published in 1996. Below, is a list of those recommendations which are particularly relevant to homicide reduction.

- Children can acquire negative, aggressive and violent strategies of social interaction and relationship management through exposure learning and modelling. They can, by the same means, also acquire more constructive, non-violent strategies for behaving in social situations.
- Parenting training, social support, pre-school followed by intellectual enrichment programs, skills training, and (in later childhood) cognitive-behavioural work with children, can all have an impact on reducing the likelihood that aggressive children will develop into aggressive adults.
- Research into the risk of later aggression for those who have suffered head injury needs to be undertaken. This is particularly relevant for children who have been physically abused over a period of time.
- The Alcohol Strategic Plan that is being developed by the Commonwealth as part of the National Drug Strategy should specifically address the relationship between alcohol and violence.
- Consideration should be given to ways of reducing the availability of cheap forms of high alcohol content beverages in settings that encourage intoxication. This should include increasing the price of alcoholic beverages and calibrating their price to alcohol content.
- Add to the existing firearm regulations by limiting the access to firearms of persons who are known to have an alcohol use disorder and especially if they have a history of violent behaviour,



and enable police to remove firearms from persons who develop or are discovered to be suffering from such disorders.

- Firearms should be removed from persons against whom a Domestic Violence Order has been issued.
- Adequate support for individuals and families who are unemployed, suffering economic hardship or living in inadequate housing provides a basis of healthy childhood development and a basis for meeting the special needs of at-risk populations. This applies both to at-risk adults (who are particularly at risk of committing violent acts) and to families generally. The goal is to increase people's life chances through having a more stable lifestyle and a greater stake in society.
- Examination of issues which could improve both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and their socio-economic circumstances.

## References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics 1995, *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey*, Canberra.
- 1996, *Recorded Crime, Australia*, Cat. No. 4520.0, Canberra
- 1996, *Year Book of Australia 1995*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.
- Bureau of Justice Statistics 1992, *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics - 1991*, United States Printing Office, Washington, DC.
- Daly, M. & Wilson, M. 1988, *Homicide*, Aldine de Gruyter, New York.
- d'Orban, P.T. 1979, "Women who kill their children", *British Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 134, pp. 560-71.
- Gottfredson, M.R. & Hirschi, T. 1990, *A General Theory of Crime*, Stanford University Press, California.
- Grabosky, P. 1977, *Sydney in Ferment: Crime, Dissent and Official Reaction, 1788-1973*, Australian National University Press, Canberra.
- Harries, K.D. 1990, *Serious Violence*, Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, Illinois.
- Indermaur, D. 1996, *Violent Crime in Australia: Interpreting the Trends*, Trends and Issues no. 61, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.
- Lancaster, H.O. 1964, "The mortality of violence in Australia 1863-1960", *Medical Journal of Australia*, vol. 1.
- Masih, A.M.M. & Masih, R. 1996, "Temporal causality and the dynamics of different categories of crime and their socioeconomic determinants: Evidence from Australia", *Applied Economics*, vol. 28, pp. 1093-104.
- McDonald, D. & Brown, M. 1997, *Indicators of Aggressive Behaviour*, Research and Public Policy Series no. 8, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.
- Messner, S. & Tardiff, K. 1985, "The social ecology of urban homicide: An application of the 'routine activities' approach", *Criminology*, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 241-67.
- Mukherjee, S., Carcach, C. & Higgins, K. 1997, *A Statistical Profile of Crime in Australia*, Research and Public Policy Series no. 7, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.
- National Committee on Violence 1990, *Violence: Directions for Australia*, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.
- Polk, K. 1994, *When Men Kill*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- 1997, "A reexamination of victim-precipitated homicide", *Homicide Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2.
- Polk, K. & Ranson, D. 1991a, "Patterns of homicide in Victoria", in *Australian Violence: Contemporary Perspectives*, eds. D. Chappell, P. Grabosky & H. Strang, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, pp. 53-118.
- Rambaldi, A., Auld, T. & Bauldry, J. 1995, *Unemployment and GDP and the Crime Rate: The Short and Long-Run Relationship*, Australian Working Papers in Econometrics and Applied Statistics No 82, University of New England, Department of Econometrics, Armidale.
- Sacco, V. & Johnson, H. 1990, *Patterns of Criminal Victimization in Canada*, General Social Survey Analysis Series, Minister of Supply and Services, Ottawa.
- Silverman, R. & Kennedy, L. 1993, *Deadly Deeds*, Nelson, Canada.
- South Australian Office of Crime Statistics 1981, *Homicide in South Australia—Rates and Trends in Comparative Perspective*, Series II(1), South Australian Office of Crime Statistics, Adelaide.
- Strang, H. 1991, *Homicides in Australia 1989-90*, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.
- 1992, *Homicides in Australia 1990-91*, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.
- 1993, *Homicides in Australia 1991-92*, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.
- 1996, *Children as Victims of Homicide*, Trends and Issues no. 53, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.
- Strauss, M. 1987, "Primary group characteristics and intra-family homicide", paper presented at the Third National Family Violence Research Conference, Durham, University of New Hampshire, July.
- Wallace, A. 1986, *Homicide: The Social Reality*, New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Sydney.
- Wilson, P. 1982, *Black Death, White Hands*, George, Allen and Unwin, Sydney.
- Wolfgang, M.E. 1958, *Patterns in Criminal Homicide*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.
- Wolfgang, M.E. & Ferracuti, F. 1967, *The Subculture of Violence*, Social Science Paperbacks, London.
- World Health Organisation 1992, *World Health Statistics Annual*, WHO, Geneva.