Homicide in Australia

2002–2003 National Homicide Monitoring Program (NHMP) Annual Report

Jenny Mouzos
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From the Director of the AIC

The 2002–2003 period marks the 14th year of data collection for the AICs National Homicide Monitoring Program (NHMP). The program provides timely and accurate information on the circumstances and characteristics of homicide in Australia, and is recognised both nationally and internationally as one of the foremost homicide data collections programs.

The continued commitment of all state and territory police services is fundamental to the ongoing success of the NHMP. The cooperation and assistance provided by each police service in Australia exemplifies the important outcomes that can be achieved through interagency collaboration in the quest for a greater understanding of lethal violence in our society.

This report presents tabulated information on the circumstances and characteristics of homicide in Australia for the fiscal year 2002/03 in addition to jurisdictional breakdowns for comparative purposes and some long-term trend data across the fourteen year NHMP data collection period. For this reporting year, homicide victimisation decreased by 16 per cent and occurred at the lowest rate recorded in the NHMP (1.6 per 100,000 Australians, a rate that was also recorded in 2000/01). By placing this finding within the wider context of long-term homicide victimisation trends the level of victimisation in Australia has remained relatively stable, despite yearly fluctuations.

Over its 14 year period of operation NHMP data has been accessed and utilised by a broad range of stakeholders in a wide variety of contexts. The NHMP is committed to furthering the use and application of data in local, national and international contexts. A number of publications using NHMP data have been released by the AIC and these are available on the internet. A full reference list of NHMP publications can be located at: http://www.aic.gov.au/research/projects/0001-docs.html.

Toni Makkai
Acting Director
Australian Institute of Criminology

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Thanks must also be extended to the numerous individual police officers and statistical support staff in all jurisdictions across Australia for their assistance in compiling the data. Their efforts to ensure that the provision of data is accurate and timely are greatly appreciated.

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NHMP: 2002–2003 summary

The NHMP has been collecting Australian homicide data for 14 years and in that time a unique comprehensive longitudinal data source has been developed. The availability of such data is crucial in the accurate identification of both long and short-term patterns and significant shifts over time. Longitudinal data is particularly valuable in homicide research, given the relative rarity of this type of crime compared with other more frequently occurring crimes such as assault. It is imperative that yearly fluctuations and the frequency of rare events are not misconstrued, but are examined in the wider context of long-term homicide patterns. It is through the systematic long-term monitoring of homicide in Australia that it is possible to make the observation that, while the number of homicides varies from year to year, both the occurrence and the dynamics of homicide in Australia have remained relatively stable over the past 14 years.

Homicide is a complex phenomenon and the recognition of the need for a comprehensive data collection system was a significant factor in the development of the NHMP. Data from a number of key sources forms the basis of information captured about each incident, victim and offender that is recorded in the NHMP database. This information is then subjected to a rigorous quality control process to ensure the most accurate information is collated. The detail of the data gathered in the NHMP enables the identification of certain groups at higher risk of involvement in homicide offences (either as offenders or victims). While it has been noted that the majority of homicides are spontaneous acts of violence with unpremeditated fatal outcomes, perpetrated against one or more victims known to the offender, the identification of key risk factors and high-risk groups is crucial to guiding the development and targeting of prevention efforts (Mouzos 2000).

The International Homicide Research Working Group (HRWG) recently identified a number of key items on the agenda for future homicide research. They emphasised the need for:

- comprehensive data collection relating to victims and offenders, the situational characteristics of homicide and other key factors such as victim precipitation; and
- international collaboration to produce cross-cultural research (Smith 2000).

International comparisons of homicide data advance the identification of patterns in offending that are both unique to specific regions and those that are consistent across a number of regions. Comparing Australian data with data from countries where homicide occurs at a similar rate, such as France and Canada, enables an

exploration of both the similarities and differences in the circumstances and characteristics of homicide events. It can also provide important information with regard to the effective implementation of various strategies towards the reduction of lethal violence. Similarly, comparing patterns in Australian data with countries that experience homicide at a much greater or lesser rate (for example the USA and Russia experience much higher rates of homicide than Australia) can further inform understanding of homicide and wider policy issues relating to this area (Savoie 2002).

The future of homicide research is a key focus for the NHMP, which is committed to the continued refinement of the data collection process and to the utilisation and application of the data in local, national and international contexts. Data from the NHMP has recently begun to be utilised in cross-national research, indicative of its potential to contribute to the expansion and advancement of the international homicide knowledge base.[1]

It has been well documented that there is a lack of congruence between fear of crime and objective characteristics of crime such as the incidence of crime (Cordner 1986). Multiple factors influence fear of crime, including representations of crime in the media (Grabosky 1995). Media representations of homicide can sensationalise some incidents (both in news and entertainment media) while selective reporting practices can misrepresent the rate of the occurrence of homicide compared to other crimes.[2] There is a tendency for the media to focus on the use of firearms in violent offences, yet the reality is that knives and other sharp instruments are the most commonly used weapons in homicide offences in Australia (Mouzos 2000). These misrepresentations may lead to misconceptions about the realities of homicide in Australia. NHMP data provides timely, accurate information for both key stakeholders and the general public regarding the incidence of homicide in Australia.

The recognition of the NHMP as a key data source has gained currency in recent years, as exemplified by the increasing number of requests for data from a wide range of stakeholders. These have included police services (including state and territory homicide squads and police investigative and statistical units), policy makers (at the state, territory and national level) and researchers. It is essential that NHMP data is accessible to, and utilised by, all stakeholders, particularly those

1 Most recently, fatal violence by male and female offenders against their intimate partners has been the subject of international studies, see Shackelford & Mouzos (forthcoming) 'A comparative, cross-national analysis of woman killing by men in cohabiting and marital relationships in Australia and the US' *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, and Mouzos & Shackelford (forthcoming) 'A comparative, cross-national analysis of partner killing by women in co-habiting relationships and marital relationships in Australia and the United States' *Aggressive behaviour.*

2 For example Australian Bureau of Statistics figures indicated that there were 963 victims of homicide related offences (includes attempted murder and driving causing death) compared to 159,548 assault victims for the 2002 calendar year (ABS 2003b).

who play a key role in the provision of the data, given its central role in identifying homicide patterns and trends. The purpose of this report is to provide accurate and timely data that can:

- inform resource allocations;
- guide key strategic, tactical and operational directions (particularly for the police and other related agencies);
- provide the foundation for the development of future policy directions; and
- identify key knowledge gaps to direct research priorities.

While the complete elimination of homicide is not a realistic aim, the development of policy approaches to address specific victimisation and offending risk factors may go some way to reducing the use of violence more generally and thus reducing the rate of homicide in Australia. Given that over half of all homicides in Australia are committed in private dwellings, involve the perpetration of violence against a known victim and most commonly use knives or sharp instruments, the development of policy to combat the use of violence is a complex and multifarious task. Trends over the 14 year period of the NHMP provide rich data that can be utilised by all stakeholders to guide and inform future directions to work towards the shared goal of the reduction of lethal violence in Australia.

Methodology

There are two key sources of data for the NHMP:

- Offence records derived from each Australian state and territory police service, supplemented where necessary with information provided directly by investigating police officers, and/or associated staff; and
- State coronial[3] records such as toxicology and post-mortem reports.[4] From 1 July 2001 the National Coroners Information System (NCIS) enabled toxicology reports to be accessible on-line.[5]

The data is further supplemented by press clippings, which are sorted according to incident and filed with the offence report. Newspaper media nation-wide is

[3] The law in each state and territory requires that all violent and unnatural deaths be reported to the Coroner.
[4] From 1 July 1996, additional information relating to whether the victim had consumed alcohol, or was under the influence of illicit/prescription drugs at the time of the incident, was also collected from coronial files from each state and territory.
[5] The NHMP submitted an ethics application to the Monash University National Centre for Coronial Information (MUNCCI) in order to obtain access to the NCIS. Access was granted on a fee for service basis.

canvassed by Media Monitors who supply clippings relating to homicide in Australia to the NHMP on a daily basis.

Information for the NHMP is collected annually on all homicides coming to the attention of police services throughout Australia. There are 77 variables in the NHMP data set that are divided into three key areas: incident data, victim-related data and offender-related data (outlined below). The first stage of the data collection process involves obtaining hard copies of police offence reports. These are forwarded directly to the AIC. This process occurs during the months of August and September. Following this process, all relevant information relating to the 77 variables is extracted for each homicide incident and entered into the NHMP database. Data are arranged into three hierarchical Statistical Analysis System (SAS) data sets:

1. Incident file, which describes the case and its circumstances (for instance, location, date and time of the incident, status of investigation whether the incident occurred during the course of another crime);

2. Victim file, which contains socio-demographic information relating to the victim/s, details relating to the cause of death, type of weapon used, alcohol and illicit/prescription drug use; and

3. Offender[6] file, which relates to persons who have been charged and includes data on the socio-demographic characteristics of the offender, his/her previous criminal history, alcohol/illicit drug use, mental health status, and the offender's relationship to the victim.

The NHMP has been collecting data since 1989 and is currently in the 14th year of data collection, covering the period from 1 July 1989 to 30 June 2003. Included in the data set are[7]:

- 4409 homicide incidents;
- 4745 victims; and
- 4813 homicide offenders.

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6 At all times, the term 'offender' refers to suspected offenders only, and not to convicted persons, unless otherwise stated.

7 It should be noted that the size of the files for each homicide incident differs in some instances due to data limitations, and the fact that some cases involve more than one victim and/or offender.

Quality control of data

As the most extreme offence committed against an individual, it is essential that homicide figures provided by the NHMP are a true reflection of lethal violence in Australia. In order to ensure the accuracy of the data from which homicide in Australia is analysed and quantified, a rigorous quality control process is undertaken.

The NHMP quality control process involves crosschecking information contained in each police offence report of murder and manslaughter with information from the additional data sources. As outlined earlier, these supplementary sources include post-mortem reports, information provided by other agencies within the police service (statistical services, homicide squads/major crime units), and press clippings. If a discrepancy arises between information provided in the police offence report and one of the additional sources, then the original source is queried. Depending upon the accuracy of the additional source, and the information provided in response to the NHMP query, the data relating to the homicide incident in the NHMP will be updated accordingly.

A recent report detailing the NHMP quality control process, entitled *Quality control in the national homicide monitoring program* (Mouzos 2002b), provides a comprehensive examination of this process and cites examples of identified inconsistencies in the various data sources. The data discrepancies that arise vary from conflicting data, such as employment status or age, to the identification of cases that have remained on file that were originally recorded and investigated as homicides but have subsequently been unsubstantiated or found to involve no suspicious circumstances or third party involvement (for example, where an individual may have died from natural causes). That report highlights the quality control mechanisms employed in the NHMP data collection, entry and analysis processes, developed to ensure that the information provided to key stakeholders and the general public is an accurate portrayal of this most serious criminal offence.

Definition of homicide

The term *homicide* refers to a person killed, while a homicide *incident* is an event in which one or more persons are killed at the same place and time. Homicide is defined by the criminal law of each Australian state and territory. The specific wording of the definition varies somewhat between states and territories in terms of degree and culpability. For the purposes of the NHMP, the definition of

homicide is the operational definition used by police throughout Australia. As such the NHMP collects data on the following incidents:

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

Homicide in Australia

The incidence of homicide in Australia decreased during 2002/03 compared with the previous year. While the fall in homicide incidents represents a 16 per cent decrease, it is important to emphasise that the incidence of homicide is marked by yearly fluctuations and there is a great deal of volatility in the trends over time due to the small numbers. During the 14 year period, the number of homicide incidents has ranged from a low of 297 incidents in 1997/98 and 2002/03 to a high of 354 incidents in 2001/02. In addition, for the 2002/03 reporting period there was a 15 per cent decrease in the number of victims and a 17 per cent decrease in the number of offenders. Attention will be paid to identifying specific factors that have contributed to the decline in homicide in Australia.

Homicide incidents

During the 2002/03 reporting period, 297 homicide incidents occurred in Australia, of which 89 per cent were recorded as murder offences and 11 per cent as manslaughter offences.[8] This is indicative of 57 fewer homicide incidents occurring in Australia compared with the preceding reporting period, a decline of approximately 16 per cent. At the time of data collection, an offender had yet to be identified in 14 per cent (n=42) of the 297 incidents and thus were categorised as

[8] This includes two incidents that did not occur during the 2002/03 reporting period (1997, 2000), but were recorded by police during this time.

unsolved. Consistent with findings in recent years, the majority of solved homicide incidents (n=255) involved one-on-one interactions between a victim and an offender (83%), 10 per cent involved a single victim and multiple offenders, while seven per cent of incidents involved multiple victims (of which only 3 of 19 cases involved multiple offenders).

A jurisdictional comparison revealed that Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory did not record any incidents with multiple victims, while the proportion of incidents with multiple victims decreased in New South Wales from nine per cent of all incidents in 2001/02 to five per cent in 2002/03. However, a number of states experienced an increase in multiple victim incidents[9], the most notable increase was in Victoria (from 5% in 2001/02 to 16% in 2002/03) where there were six double homicide incidents and three triple homicide incidents. Of these nine incidents, two involved female offenders (both of whom killed their spouse and child/ren) while three involved male offenders killing acquaintances and one case involved a mentally ill offender killing his grandparents. During 2002/03 the Northern Territory recorded its first double homicide since 1989/90. Homicide incidents that involve multiple victims vary greatly in their nature, while some may be cases of premeditated violence against a known group such as the shootings that occurred at Monash University in late 2002 (Case no. 046/03), many are incidents that involve multiple victims from the one family (Case no. 134/03; Case no. 193/03). The diverse nature of the situational contexts in which homicide events occur is highlighted through the detailed analysis of the data, which the NHMP data makes possible.

Temporal characteristics

There has been some shift in the temporal characteristics of homicide incidents recorded for the 2002/03 period. The data indicated that homicide incidents most commonly occurred on a Friday (17%), Monday (16%) or Wednesday (15%), compared to previous findings that Friday, Saturday and Sunday were the days most homicide incidents occurred (Mouzos 2003b). Across the jurisdictions there was further variation in the data. Homicide incidents in South Australia, for example, were most likely to occur on a Monday or a Thursday (24% each) while in New South Wales the highest proportion of incidents occurred on a Sunday (20%) and in Victoria the most likely day for a homicide to occur was a Tuesday (23%).

Homicide incidents have been found to consistently occur during the same time period

[9] Specifically Victoria, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

of day, reflecting the general routine activities of the majority of the population; the patterns for 2002/03 were no exception (Mouzos 2000). The majority of homicide incidents for 2002/03 occurred in the evening (69%), with 38 per cent during the early to late evening (between 6pm and 12am) and 31 per cent occurred late at night to early morning (between 12am and 6am). The patterns of homicide incidents can be further explored in terms of the distribution of incidents over the reporting year. During 2002/03, December 2002 recorded the highest proportion of incidents (14%), followed by October (11%) then February and March (both 9%). Across the reporting year, however, the number of offences per month remained reasonably consistent.

Data regarding the locational characteristics of homicide incidents indicate that the majority of offences occurred in a residential premise (58%), the same proportion that occurred at this type of location in 2001/02, while a further 21 per cent occurred in a street or open area (a slight decrease from the previous year). This pattern was consistent for the majority of jurisdictions, with the exception that a far greater proportion of incidents in Victoria occurred in a residential location (73%) while the majority of homicide incidents in the Northern Territory occurred in a street or open area (56%). Homicide incidents do however, occur in less common places such as one incident that occurred on board a boat (officially within the Queensland jurisdiction as the boat was 39 nautical miles east of Maroochydore) where both the male victim and offender were employed on the boat (Case no. 221/03). Data collected relating to the victim's place of death indicated that of the 324 victims, 74 per cent (n=241) died at the scene of the incident. A further 23 per cent died in hospital or other medical facility, while two per cent died en route in an ambulance or other vehicle from the scene to a medical facility.

Due to the multifaceted nature of homicide, some incidents may be committed during the course of another offence. Of the 297 recorded incidents in 2002/03, 23 (8%) occurred during the course of another crime (5% less than in 2001/2002). The majority of these incidents (74%) occurred during either a robbery (57%) or a break and enter (17%), while four per cent of incidents occurred following a sexual assault and a further 13 per cent occurred in the course of drug offences. Just under a quarter of the homicide incidents that occurred during the course of another crime were unsolved at the time of data collection (22%; n = 5).[10]

In identifying such instances of homicide occurring in the course of another crime, it

[10] See Copes et al. 2002 for a discussion of 'crime-precipitated' homicides, whereby victims are killed while participating in illegal activities.

is difficult to determine the exact course of events. That is, whether the 'other crime' was the primary motive and a homicide was committed due to unexpected situational factors that arose, or to cover up the other crime, or whether in fact the homicide was the primary intention with another crime being committed immediately preceding or following the homicide. Presenting such data provides an indication of the context of the homicide event, however it must be kept in mind that the situational factors that contribute to a homicide occurring can vary greatly (Mouzos 2003c).

Homicide victims

Homicide victimisation in 2002/03 occurred at a rate of 1.6 per 100,000 Australians and was the lowest recorded rate since the inception of the NHMP in 1990 (this is equal to the recorded rate for 2000/01). Compared with the previous year, the number of homicide victims in Australia decreased by 15 per cent, from 381 victims in 2001/02 to 324 victims of homicide in 2002/03. The rate of homicide victimisation in 2001/02 was close to the highest rate recorded, indicating that the patterns in homicide victimisation from year to year are subject to fluctuations for which it is difficult to identify any single causal factor. On the whole however, the rate of homicide in Australia has remained relatively stable between 1.6 and 2.0 per 100,000 of the Australian population (Mouzos 2000). A jurisdictional comparison revealed that four Australian states, specifically Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, and the Australian Capital Territory, recorded a homicide victimisation rate lower than the national average. The rate of homicide victimisation in the Northern Territory has consistently been greater than the national average (Mouzos 2000), despite the relatively small number of victims (there were 17 victims of homicide in the Northern Territory in 2002/03 compared with 105 in New South Wales). During the 2002/03 period, the rate of homicide in the Northern Territory decreased from 11.5 in 2001/02 to 8.6 in 2002/03, which is approximately five times the national homicide victimisation rate.[11]

Demographics

An important aspect in identifying risks of homicide victimisation involves the identification of variations in patterns and trends in the demographic characteristics of homicide victims, such as gender, age, racial appearance, employment status and marital status. Identifying victimisation prevalence

[11] While the NHMP data does not allow for an exploration of possible reasons why the rate of homicide victimisation may be consistently higher in the Northern Territory, it has been suggested that the ready availability of post-assaultive medical assistance (and the speed with which it is accessed) may be limited (see Mouzos 2000).

according to such factors provides some insight into those in the general population who are most at risk of homicide victimisation.

A phenomenon that is consistently supported by the annual NHMP data and by both national and international homicide victimisation research is the gendered nature of homicide, such that men are most commonly the victims of homicide (see for example Polk 1994; Mouzos 2000; 2002a; 2003b; Silverman & Kennedy 1993). During 2002/03, males accounted for 67 per cent of homicide victims, at a rate of 2.2 per 100,000 of the male population, twice the rate of female homicide victimisation (1.1 per 100,000 of the Australian female population). Compared withthe previous year, the number of males who were victims of homicide decreased by 10 per cent while there was a 23 per cent decrease in the number of female victims. However, it is important to note that patterns of homicide victimisation at the jurisdictional level vary somewhat from the national overview of victimisation. Specifically, a greater proportion of females were the victims of homicide in South Australia (n=10; 45%), Tasmania (n=4; 67%), the Australian Capital Territory (n=2; 67%) and in the Northern Territory (n=10; 59%).

Similar to gender, age is a variable that has remained relatively consistent over the 14 years that demographic data has been collected in relation to homicide victimisation predictors. The mean age of homicide victims during 2002/03 was 35 years, the same as for the previous year. There was little gender differentiation in terms of the mean age (male victims: 36 years, female victims: 35 years). However there was some variation at the jurisdictional level; the mean age of male victims in South Australia was nine years older than the national average (43 years) while male victims in the Northern Territory were on average, only 23 years of age, that is nine years younger than the national average age for male victims.

During 2002/03 the risk of homicide victimisation according to age group shifted, such that persons aged 25 to 29 years were the most at risk age group, with a rate of 3.0 per 100,000 of the Australian population. The risk of victimisation for females was highest for those aged between 20–24 years with a rate of 2.1 per 100,000 of the Australian female population, while for males the age group most at risk was the same as for the Australian population in general (that is 25–29 years). However, the risk of victimisation for males aged 25–29 years was much higher with a rate of 4.4 per 100,000 Australian males. Unlike previous years, it was both men and women in the 40–44 year age group that also had an elevated risk of homicide victimisation. In fact, the highest number of victims across Australia was in this age group that accounted for 14 per cent of homicide victims (n=44), reflecting an increase of approximately six per cent. Males in this age category experienced victimisation at a rate of 3.9 per 100,000 while females in this age group experienced homicide victimisation at a rate of 2.0 per 100,000. Trends noted in

previous years, specifically in relation to the high incidence of victimisation in the youngest age category (below five years) and the upward shift in the victimisation rate for elderly males, were not sustained during the 2002/03 period (Mouzos 2003b).

Racial appearance is an important demographic variable for consideration in identifying the risk of victimisation. Police records are the key source of ethnicity data for the NHMP however, these are only indicative of the racial appearance of the victim and in most cases this is based on a subjective assessment by police. Caution should therefore be exercised in the interpretation of data in relation to racial appearance. The majority of homicide victims in Australia during 2002/03 were of Caucasian appearance (75% males; 72% females), a finding that is consistent across the 14 years. The Northern Territory recorded the highest proportion of both male and female Indigenous victims (86% and 70% respectively).

Gender differentials have been identified consistently in past findings from the NHMP data in relation to homicide victimisation risk factors. The most recent data for the 2002/03 period was no exception. Similar to previous years it was found that in comparison with female victims, male homicide victims were more likely to be:

- single at the time of the incident (51%);
- employed (45%); and
- involved in prior criminal activities (62%).

In contrast female homicide victims at the time of the offence were:

- more likely to be married or in a de facto relationship (54%);
- less likely to be employed (38%)[12]; and
- less likely to be involved in past criminal activities (35%).

In general the data indicate that while the proportion of homicide victims may fluctuate from year to year, the groups within the population most at risk of victimisation has changed very little.

[12] Employed does not include those victims whose employment status was recorded as domestic duties which accounted for 13 per cent of all female victims (there were no male victims whose employment status was recorded as 'domestic duties')

Precipitating factors

Of the 270 homicide victims for whom data was available from toxicology reports and additional records for 2002/03[13], there was a marked gender difference in terms of the proportion of victims who were under the influence of alcohol and/or illicit or prescription drugs at the time the incident occurred. Sixty-six per cent of female victims, and 31 per cent of male victims, were not under the influence of any substance at the time of the incident. Alcohol was the most frequently used substance for both males and females (26% of male victims; 17% of female victims) prior to their death.

The consumption of both alcohol and drugs (either illicit or prescription) has increased for male victims compared with the previous year (from 10% in 2001/02 to 21% in 2002/03) but remained stable for females (from 4% in 2001/02 to 5% in 2002/03). Examples of poly substance use by homicide victims include:

- alcohol, marijuana, valium, diazepam (Case no. 023/03)
- marijuana, amphetamines, morphine, codeine, citalopram, paracetamol (Case no. 033/03)
- alcohol, amphetamine, methamphetamine, nitrazepam, aminonitrazepam (Case no. 055/03)
- alcohol, heroin, cocaine, citalopram, morphine (Case no. 112/03)
- alcohol, marijuana, amphetamines, morphine (Case no. 056/03)
- marijuana, morphine, codeine, methadone (Case no. 162/03)

Information regarding the mental status of the offender and the identification of the offender as suffering from a mental disorder immediately before or at the time of the incident, is maintained in police offence reports, which may or may not be based on an official medical diagnosis. During 2002/03, eight per cent of victims (n=26) were killed by an offender who was identified as mentally ill.

[13] Information on alcohol/illicit drug use was not yet available for a higher proportion of victims this current year than the previous year.

Identifying a 'motive' for a homicidal incident can be problematic given that the notion of a 'motive' tends to be associated with some degree of premeditation, yet the act of homicide is often spontaneous (Daly & Wilson 1988). There are also instances where a single motive is difficult to identify, especially when the reason for the homicide is a culmination of many factors. Nonetheless, motive-related information provides a valuable and unique insight into the reasons someone engages in lethal violence in Australia. It is important to note that the most common motive for the actions that result in the death of a victim differ significantly according to the gender of the victim, a finding that has been well-documented in Australia and abroad (Mouzos 2000). Such information can inform the direction of future research and the implementation of policies to target populations that are most at risk.

The most commonly identified motive (the alleged causal factor that precedes and often leads to the events in which the final outcome is the death of the victim or victims) ascribed to male homicide victims was an argument or altercation (22%). For 19 per cent of homicides involving a male victim, the motive was unclear, while alcohol-related arguments (17%) and domestic altercations (17%) were the two most common motives that resulted in the death of 73 males. In comparison, the events leading to female victimisation differed greatly. During 2002/03, the majority of female victims (51%) were killed as a result of a domestic altercation (which includes arguments that arise based on jealousy, separation or termination of a relationship, and other domestic arguments that may relate to infidelity, children and custody issues, alcohol fuelled domestic altercations and other issues between intimate or past-intimate partners). A further 22 per cent of female victims died in circumstances where there was no apparent motive, while 10 per cent died as a result of some other argument or altercation.

While it may be presumed that the best interests of the victim are inconsequential to the offender, especially at the time of the offence, in some cases offenders have taken it upon themselves to kill another person on 'compassionate grounds'. This is particularly in homicide cases where the motive is euthanasia, a subject of much controversy and public debate. There were a number of cases related to euthanasia during 2002/03. One such case (Case no. 297/03) involved the death of an elderly female who had suffered from an incurable disease for many years and whose condition had deteriorated rapidly in the few months preceding her death. On the night she died her husband had given her a lethal dose of morphine at her request, however the cause of death was originally thought to be a result of her illness. It was not until her husband came forward a few weeks after her death to reveal the true nature of the circumstances of her death, and to campaign for the right to choose in cases where individuals are terminally ill, that the death was treated as a murder.

While victim precipitation is a complex concept, it is important to consider the victim's role in the incident that resulted in their death in addition to the history of the nature of the relationship between the victim and the offender where such information is available (Mouzos 2003d). Of the 324 homicide victims, information relating to whether the victim used violence against the offender prior to or during the incident was available for 301 victims. Of those 301 victims, 14 per cent (n=41) used violence against the offender. In addition, information regarding whether the violence was initiated by the victim or whether the victim reacted to violence used by the offender was available for 21 victims. The data revealed that 17 of these 21 victims initiated violence against the offender during the incident that ultimately led to their death.

Weapons/methods

The patterns of weapon use in 2002/03 differed slightly from the findings in previous years. The number of knives (and sharp instruments) used in homicide decreased from 36 per cent in 2001/02 to 29 per cent during 2002/03. However, despite this decrease both males and females were most likely to be killed by a knife or other sharp instrument (33% and 26% respectively).[14] This is unlike previous years where the most common weapon used in homicide has differed between males and females (Mouzos 2002a; 2003b). The second most common weapon used in homicide was assaultive force (hands or feet; 21%). However, while for males assaultive force was the second most commonly used method (23%), for females the second most common weapon was 'other' weapons (22%). Weapons in the 'other' category include fire, poison, drugs and vehicles as weapons used against victims that result in their death.

During 2002/03 the number of firearm homicides has stabilised at 16 per cent of homicides in Australia (n=53). A consistent pattern in homicide research is that the firearms used to commit homicide are not legally held, that is, they are not registered to either the victim or the offender, nor is the victim or offender licensed to own the firearm. During 2002/03, 44 identified offenders[15] used a firearm to commit homicide. Of these, six used a registered firearm (14%) while seven were licensed to own a firearm (16%), reflecting a slight increase from the proportion of offenders licensed and registered in 2001/02 from ten per cent licensed and eight per cent registered. One victim was killed with a firearm that was licensed and registered to them.

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[14] Similar findings have been reported in countries such as the UK, where 27 per cent of homicides in 2002/2003 involved the use of a sharp instrument (Cotton 2004).

[15] During 2002/03, 10 firearm homicides remain unsolved, thus details with regard to whether offenders were licensed or used a registered firearm were unavailable.

Handguns accounted for over half (55%) of all firearms used to commit homicide (n=29) and the proportion of firearm homicides that involved handguns is similar to the previous year. Of the 23 offenders who used a handgun, five were licensed to own a handgun (22%) and the same number had the handgun registered to them.

Both the cause of death and type of weapon are important factors for homicide research that should be closely monitored over time to identify emerging trends and to capture data about how weapons are being used. For example, a weapon such as assaultive force (i.e. using hands or feet) can inflict a variety of injuries that may result in death. For all homicide victims in Australia in 2002/03, the most common cause of death was stab wounds (n=95; 29%) and beatings (n=92; 28%).[16] While for males the most common cause of death reflected the trend for the whole population (i.e. stab wound in 32% of cases; beating in 30% of cases) for females the order was reversed, such that a beating was the most common cause of death (27%) followed by a stab wound (26%). 'Other' causes accounted for 16 per cent and 15 per cent of male and female deaths respectively. This includes drug overdoses, drownings, neglect, smoke inhalation, shaking and burns.

In some homicides the identification of the specific cause of death is far from straightforward. One such case that occurred during 2002/03 involved the death of a female victim who had been killed by her male partner and was found a number of days after her death. The pathologist who conducted the post-mortem examination concluded that there were in fact three possible scenarios to explain the woman's death (a combination of the head injuries and the strangulation, the head injury prior to the strangulation, or the strangulation inflicted at about the same time as the head injuries), from which none could be identified as the definitive cause (Case no.182/03).

Such a case illustrates that there are various scenarios from which a death may result. For example, while drowning or submersion as a cause of death may appear self-explanatory it can actually involve a wide range of situations. During 2002/03 deaths as a result of drowning or submersion included a manslaughter case where two boats collided and a victim was caught beneath them and drowned (Case no. 238/03), another manslaughter case where the victim was advised by a tour guide that it was safe to swim in a billabong that was actually home to eight saltwater crocodiles (Case no. 245/03), a case where a young boy was given a cocktail of drugs by his father taken for a swim and left to drown as he lost consciousness (Case no. 117/03) and a case where two victims jumped into a river to escape their attackers but could not swim and drowned (Case no. 029/03).

[16] This finding is comparative with the trends in other countries such as Canada, where stabbing was the identified cause of death for 31 per cent of homicides in 2002 (Savoie 2002).

Homicide offenders

In total there were 311 offenders identified in Australia for 2002/03, who were involved in 255 homicide incidents.[17] The majority of offenders were male (87%, n=272), who offended at a rate of 2.8 per 100,000, which is seven times that of females who offended at a rate of 0.4 per 100,000. Such gender disparities are consistent with the findings from the NHMP over the past 14 years and with national and international homicide research (Mouzos 2000; 2002a; 2003b; Polk 1994; Silverman & Kennedy 1993; Flowers 2002).

Demographics

During 2002/03, homicide offenders were slightly younger than their victims, with the mean age of offenders being 34 years compared with a mean age of 35 years for homicide victims. The difference in age between victims and offenders was much smaller than it has been in previous years, with an increase in the mean age of offenders for 2002/03. Comparing the age demographics of offenders based on gender revealed a number of disparities. In terms of the age range of offenders, the youngest male was 14 years and the youngest female was 16 years; and the eldest male was 78 years and the eldest female was 57 years. The highest rate of offending for males was early to mid twenties, with 20–24 year old males offending at a rate of 6.2 per 100,000 males. In previous years, a peak in offending for the older age groups has been observed, however the results for 2002/03 indicate that the rate of offending declined as the age of male offenders increased. For female offenders the patterns are quite different. The highest rate of homicide offending for females was for those aged 25–34 years (1.3 per 100,000 Australian females). The rate of female offending peaked between the age of 25 and 34 years then declined steadily thereafter. Similar to findings in previous years, the highest rate of female offending peaked at a slightly older age than for males, although female offending is distributed across a less widespread range of age groups.

Research has indicated that homicide victims and offenders generally are from similar backgrounds and socio-economic groups (Polk 1994). It is therefore not entirely unexpected that the comparison of demographic and other key factors between homicide victims and offenders reveals that there is little disparity between

[17] Of the 297 homicide incidents that occurred during 2002/03, 42 were unsolved meaning that no offender had been identified at the time of data collection.

the two groups. In terms of racial appearance[18], the majority of homicide offenders were of Caucasian appearance (68%), a consistent pattern noted in the NHMP (Mouzos 2000; 2002a; 2003b). However, a higher proportion of male offenders than female offenders were of Caucasian appearance (69% and 56% respectively). Overall, the proportion of Indigenous offenders has remained stable at the national level over the past few years (18%). The majority of Indigenous offenders were recorded in New South Wales and Western Australia (n=14 in both states) followed by the Northern Territory (n=13) and Queensland (n=12). As a proportion of offenders within each jurisdiction however, offenders of Indigenous appearance account for the greatest proportion of offenders in the Northern Territory (81% of all offenders). While the distribution of offenders according to racial appearance is similar to the distribution of victims, there are some important shifts to note particularly when considering racial appearance by the gender of the offender. A far greater proportion of Indigenous women committed homicide compared with men (36% and 15% respectively) a finding that is consistent with previous years, though the disparity is much greater for 2002/03. While there were only 14 female Indigenous offenders, compared with 42 male Indigenous offenders, the proportion of female Indigenous offenders represents one third of the total female offending population, while Indigenous women account for approximately two percent of the total female population in Australia.[19]

The majority of homicide offenders during 2002/03 were single at the time of the incident (51%), however the distribution of homicide offenders according to marital status differed according to the gender of the offender, reflecting the distribution of victims according to marital status. While the majority of male offenders were unmarried (55%), the majority of females were married or in a de facto relationship at the time the offence occurred (64%). Such findings have been repeatedly reported in homicide literature at both a national and international level (Mouzos 2000; Polk 1994).

In terms of the employment status of offenders, the majority of offenders were unemployed at the time of the offence (55%). Male offenders are almost twice as likely as female offenders to be employed at the time of the offence, with 31 per cent of males being employed compared to 16 per cent of females (although it is

[18] It is important to note that as with the racial appearance of homicide victims, the data does not accurately reflect the ethnicity of the offenders rather it is an indication of racial appearance based on the subjective interpretation of police and thus interpretations from any findings must be made with caution.

[19] Based on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001 Census of population & housing: Indigenous profile (ABS 2002).

also worth noting that the employment status of 19 per cent of women was recorded as domestic duties at the time of the offence). These patterns have remained stable over the past two years of data collection, with a slight increase in levels of employment (Mouzos 2002a; 2003b).

Precipitating factors

Patterns in the use of alcohol and/or illicit or prescription drugs by offenders suggest a shift for the year 2002/03. More than half of all offenders (57%) were under the influence of either alcohol (35%), illicit or prescription drugs (7%) or both (15%). However, a gender comparison revealed that 60 per cent of males had consumed one or more of these substances prior to or during the incident, compared with 37 per cent of females. For both male and female offenders who consumed any of these substances, they were most likely to have consumed alcohol only (36% and 31% respectively).

Of the 311 known offenders during 2002/03, 30 offenders injured themselves during or immediately following the incident (10%). In total 16 of the 22 male offenders (73% or 6% of all male offenders) who injured themselves, successfully committed suicide either prior to or following arrest, while three of the eight female offenders died as a result of self-inflicted injuries (38% or 8% of all female offenders). Two of the three females were married at the time, while the other female was divorced. All three killed their children prior to committing suicide. More than half of the 16 male offenders (n=9) were married at the time, while three were separated or divorced. Of these 16 offenders, seven killed their current or former partner, four killed their children and two killed both their current spouse and their children.[20]

[20] A publication released in 2003, *Family homicide in Australia* (Mouzos & Rushforth), provides an in-depth analysis of family homicide.

Relationship between the victim and offender

A key factor towards better understanding the contextual dynamics of the homicide event is the identification of the relational distance between the offender and the victim. The relationship between the victim and the offender provides salient information regarding the social dynamics that link the offender and the victim and the social context within which the homicide occurs. It also contributes important knowledge about incident patterns and potential risk factors for homicide in Australia and can guide the development of targeted prevention policies and initiatives.

Previous NHMP research has indicated that the proportion of homicides involving friends or acquaintances of the offender has increased during the late 1990s. However, the proportion of homicides between friends and acquaintances began to decline in 2001/02 and continued to decline in 2002/03, accounting for 31 per cent of homicides. Further, the proportion of family and intimate homicides was 21 per cent for both, indicating a decline compared with 2001/02. A jurisdictional comparison revealed that while in many states the patterns reflect the findings at the national level, there was some variation. Specifically, in Queensland almost one third of offenders killed a family member (32%) whilst in the Northern Territory the most likely victim of homicide was an intimate partner of the offender (41%).

Analysing victim-offender relationships based on the gender of the offender reveals the disparate circumstances in which males and females are most likely to be offenders or victims of homicide. During 2002/03, male offenders were most likely to kill a friend or acquaintance (34%). In comparison, women were most likely to kill those closest to them (87%), with 38 per cent of female offenders killing intimates and 49 per cent killing family members. This is indicative of a 22 per cent increase from 2001/02, continuing an upward trend in the number of females killing family members noted in recent NHMP findings (Mouzos 2003b). Men were far more likely to kill a person unknown to them (21%), compared with female offenders, of whom four per cent killed a stranger.

Further analysing the victim-offender relationship by considering the relationship according to the age of the victim provides valuable information regarding the circumstances in which homicides occur. Family members were responsible for the death of all child victims[21] (n= 29) in 2002/03. This finding is not entirely unexpected given the (generally) limited social circles and routine

[21] That is, those aged under 15 years.

activities of children (Lord et al. 2002). Child victims are most at risk of being harmed by a female family member, 37 per cent of female offenders killed a child under the age of 15 compared to four per cent of male offenders. It is interesting to note the shift in the risk of homicide victimisation as the age of the victim increases. Persons aged between 18–24 are most at risk of being killed by strangers (38%), while those aged between 25–49 years are most likely to be killed by friends or acquaintances. Routine activities might become more limited or more habitual for people aged 65 and over, in a way that bears similarity to children, and this group, like those aged under 15 years, are most at risk of being killed by a family member (73%).

The results from the analysis of the 2002/03 data is indicative of the multifaceted nature of homicide and the need to conceptualise homicide as more than simply a violent act that results in the (often unpremeditated) unlawful death of one or more persons, but as a series of events or triggers that lead to this tragic outcome. Further, this reaffirms the need for a comprehensive, accurate monitoring of these incidents in order to establish long-term data sets that allow trends to be identified. Such data is essential to furthering our understanding of the diverse situations that result in the most serious outcome possible from violent situations: the death of one or more persons. It is through a better understanding of the factors that contribute to these outcomes, accurately identifying those most at risk, and identifying precipitating and contributing factors that we can begin to prioritise what needs to be addressed to work towards the prevention of homicide.

Violence in all its forms, as it occurs both in the private and social spheres, cannot be addressed through one pathway. There are a number of key groups that are most at risk of offending and at risk of victimisation. Through identifying why they are most vulnerable and how we can address their vulnerabilities (through strategies that focus both on offenders and victims) that their position may be improved as the rate of fatal outcomes decrease. That male and female offenders commit homicide against different groups of victims, in quite distinct circumstances is an important finding that can inform multifaceted approaches to addressing violence in all its forms in contemporary Australian society. Homicide research has come a long way in the past 14 years and it is through data sets such as the NHMP that the most informed policy can be developed for the long-term goal of reducing the occurrence of homicide in Australia.

Data usage

Some argue that homicide statistics are one of the most accurate indicators of the level of serious violence in our society as unlike more common offences such as assault, homicide is not affected significantly by the 'dark figure' of crime (Mouzos 2002b; for an alternative view see Weatherburn 2002). The high quality of the NHMP data is assured through the rigorous methods undertaken to ensure the accuracy of the data. Thus stakeholders utilising the data can be confident in its comparability, validity and reliability (see Mouzos 2003a). NHMP data is considered an invaluable resource and is drawn upon by a wide range of individuals and organisations for a variety of purposes.

Aggregated data at the state level provides, for example, police and policy makers with an indication of the level of lethal violence in their jurisdiction, and access to longitudinal patterns in lethal violence. Specifically, the data may be utilised to identify shifts in victimisation or offending trends or changes in the patterns of the circumstances and characteristics of homicide incidents (such as an increase in offences occurring during the course of another crime).

At the Australian Government level, NHMP data can be used to monitor the effect of legislative reforms, such as the National Firearms Agreement and subsequent changes over time in the use of firearms as well as in the types of firearms used to commit homicide. Data from the NHMP provides important guidance in the development of policy and strategic directions in diverse fields of governance such as community services, policing, mental health, courts and correctional institutions.

A key function of the NHMP is the communication of the most current data and recent findings to key stakeholders, governments at the local, state and federal level, non-government organisations, research agencies and the general public. Within the AIC a number of other ongoing monitoring programs perform similar roles, including the Drug Use Monitoring in Australia (DUMA) project and the National Deaths in Custody Program.

Requests for NHMP data have steadily increased since its inception and it has become an essential resource drawn upon by a wide range of stakeholders including homicide squads throughout Australia. An indication of the ever-expanding audience to whom NHMP data has been communicated, through publications and presentations, is given in the outline of data usage for this reporting year (see following pages).

Published material: 2002, 2003

(see http://www.aic.gov.au/research/hmonitor/docs.html)

Australian gun control: assessing a massive buy-back of low risk gun groups in P Cook & J Ludwig (eds) *Evaluating gun policy: effects on crime and violence.* Washington: The Brookings Institute 2003: 121–142 Peter Reuter and Jenny Mouzos

Australian homicide rates: a comparison of three data sources. *Trends and issues in crime and criminal justice* no 261 Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology July 2003 Jenny Mouzos

Family homicide in Australia. *Trends and issues in crime and criminal justice* no 255 Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology June 2003 Jenny Mouzos and Catherine Rushforth

Homicide in Australia: 2001–2002 national homicide monitoring program (NHMP) annual report. *Research and public policy series* no 46 Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology 2003 Jenny Mouzos

Homicide in the course of other crime. *Trends and issues in crime and criminal justice* no 252 Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology May 2003 Jenny Mouzos

Homicide in the course of other crime in Australia. *The relationship between non-lethal and lethal violence: proceedings of the 2002 meeting of the homicide research working group* Chicago 2003 Jenny Mouzos

Women homicide offenders in Australia: research in progress, in MD Smith, PH Blackman & JP Jarvis (eds) *New directions in homicide research: proceedings from the 2001 annual meeting of the homicide research working group.* Washington DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation 2002 Jenny Mouzos

Presentations

Family homicide in Australia. 8th Annual Australian Institute of Family Studies conference Melbourne 12–14 February 2003 Catherine Rushforth and Jenny Mouzos

Australian homicide rates: a comparison of three data sources. Evaluation in crime and justice conference ABS House Canberra 24–25 March 2003 Jenny Mouzos

Merging research and practice: an examination of completed and attempted contract killings in Australia, Australian and New Zealand. Society of Criminology 17th annual conference Sydney 1–3 October 2003 Jenny Mouzos and John Venditto

Risk patterns in homicide victimisation and offending: can we reduce the risk? Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology 17th annual conference Sydney 1–3 October 2003 Jenny Mouzos

Contract killings in Australia. Presentation to NSW Police Senior Detectives course Goulburn Police Academy 20 November 2003 Jenny Mouzos and John Venditto

Examples of agencies and organisations that have requested data

Homicide squads/major crime units in all Australian States and Territories
Australian Government, Attorney-General's Department
Australian Crime Commission (ACC)
Australian Customs Service (ACS)
Australian Bureau of Statistics
New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
New South Wales Attorney-General's Department
Queensland Crime and Misconduct Commission
Department of the Parliamentary Library, Parliament House
Productivity Commission
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC)
Northern Territory Office of Crime Prevention
Judiciary from Western Australian Courts
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Department of Justice, Victoria
New South Wales Department of Health
Department of Health and Human Services, Tasmania
Northern Territory Alcohol Framework Project
deLissa Institute of Early Childhood & Family Studies,
University of South Australia
Members of the House of Representatives
Gosford Hospital, New South Wales
Department of Criminology, The University of Melbourne
University of New South Wales
Emergency Clean-Up Unit (ECU)
Walsh & Associates, Research & Evaluation Consultancy
Uniserve Pty Ltd
Sunday Telegraph
Courier-Mail
The Bulletin
Herald-Sun
The Age
marie claire (Australia)
National Institute of Health, USA
University of Guelph, Ontario
Simon Fraser University, Canada
The University of Auckland
Queen Sofia Center for the Study of Violence, Spain
International University Services, Denmark

NHMP 2002–2003 findings

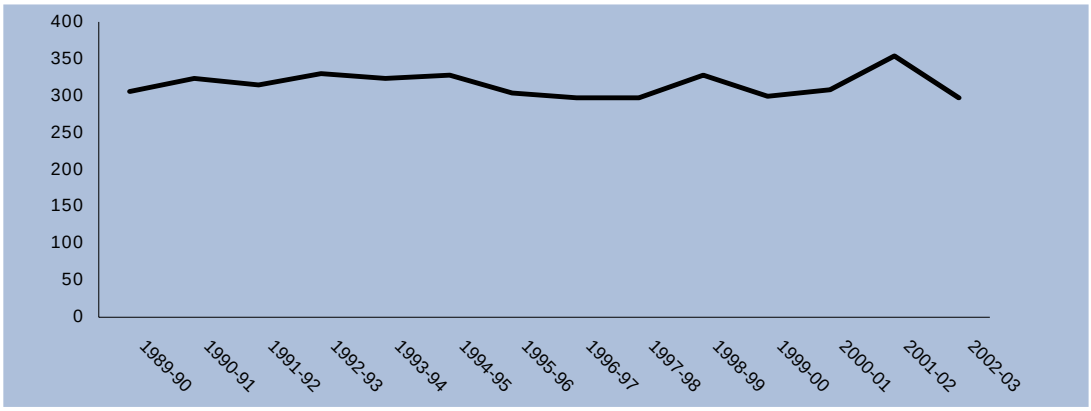
Methodological note

Where rates are presented in the tables that follow (victimisation and offending rates), they have been calculated using the mid-year population for the fiscal year 2002/2003. That is, the *estimated resident population* for states and territories as at December 2002 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2003a). Similarly, rates for age and gender (victimisation and offending) have been calculated using the following denominators: *Estimated resident population* by sex and age, for states and territories of Australia, June 2002 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2003a).

Some column percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Incident Characteristics

Trends in number of homicide incidents



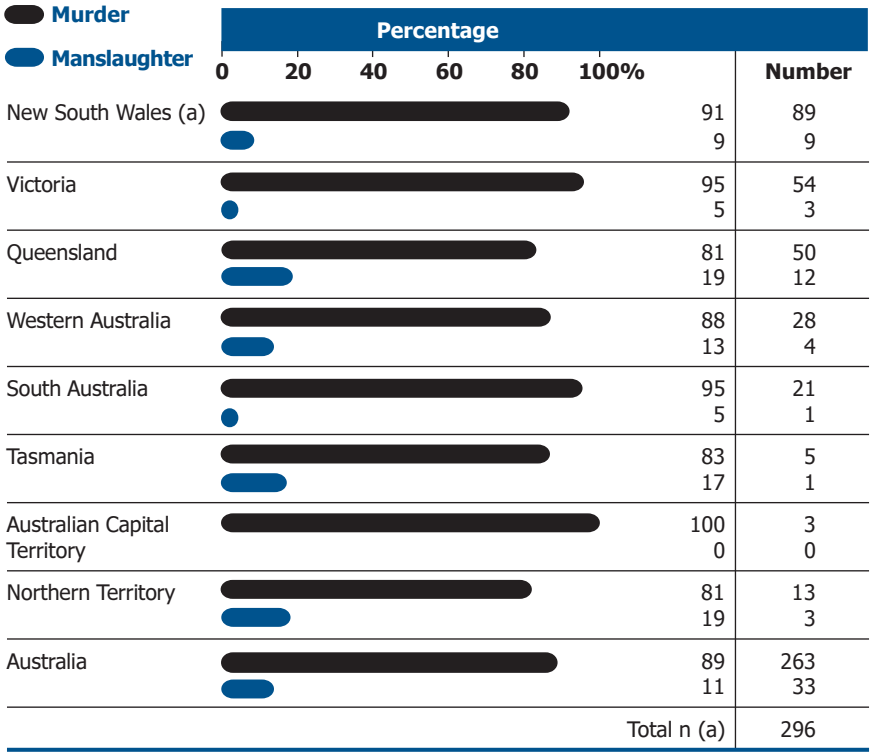
Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 1989/90–2002/03 [computer file]

Incidence of homicide

	Percentage (0 20 40 60 80 100%)	Number
New South Wales	33	99
Victoria	19	57
Queensland	21	62
Western Australia	11	32
South Australia	7	22
Tasmania	2	6
Australian Capital Territory	1	3
Northern Territory	5	16
Australia	100	297

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Most serious offence (murder or manslaughter)



	Percentage	Number
New South Wales (a)	91	89
	9	9
Victoria	95	54
	5	3
Queensland	81	50
	19	12
Western Australia	88	28
	13	4
South Australia	95	21
	5	1
Tasmania	83	5
	17	1
Australian Capital Territory	100	3
	0	0
Northern Territory	81	13
	19	3
Australia	89	263
	11	33
	Total n (a)	296

(a) Excludes one incident (NSW) where it was still undetermined at the time of data collection whether the incident was a manslaughter or a murder

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Incidents with single versus multiple victims/offenders

	Percentage	Number
One victim, one offender	83	211
One victim, multiple offenders	10	25
Multiple victims, one offender	6	16
Multiple victims, multiple offenders	1	3
Total incidents n (a)	100	255

(a) Where an offender has been identified

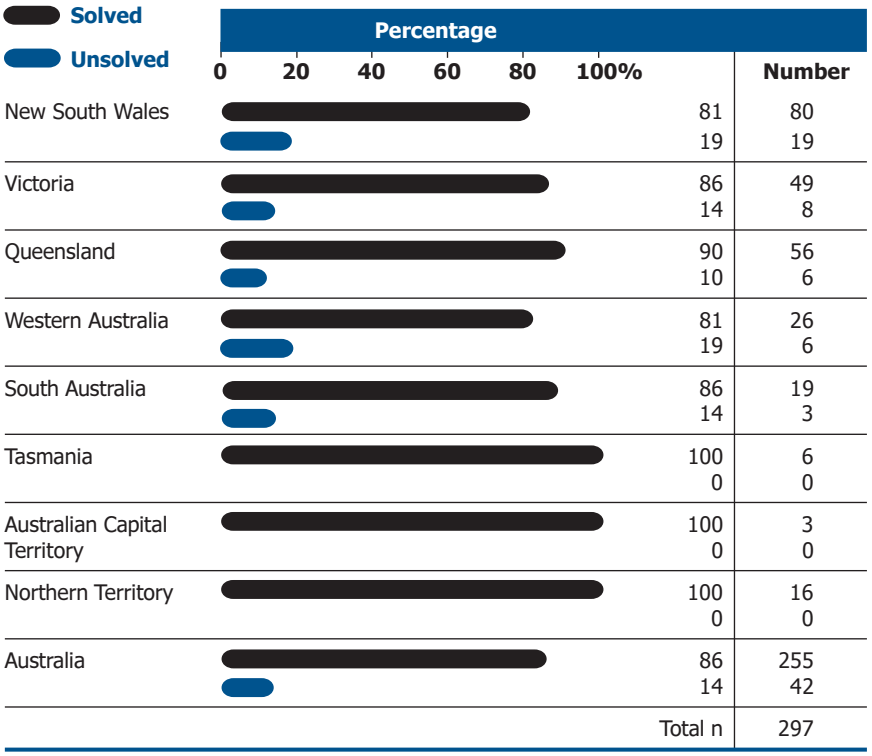
Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Percentage of incidents by number of victims

	Total n	One victim	Two victims	Three victims
New South Wales	99	95	4	1
Victoria	57	84	11	5
Queensland	62	89	10	2
Western Australia	32	100	0	0
South Australia	22	100	0	0
Tasmania	6	100	0	0
Australian Capital Territory	3	100	0	0
Northern Territory	16	94	6	0
Australia	297	93	6	2

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Incidents solved*



* Solved incidents include those where an offender has been identified and charged, and incidents where the offender has suicided

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Percentage of incidents by number of offenders*

	Total n	One offender	Two offenders	Three offenders	Four or more offenders
New South Wales	80	88	9	3	1
Victoria	49	92	4	2	2
Queensland	56	86	5	2	7
Western Australia	26	85	4	0	12
South Australia	19	95	0	5	0
Tasmania	6	83	17	0	0
Australian Capital Territory	3	100	0	0	0
Northern Territory	16	100	0	0	0
Australia	255	89	5	2	4

* Refers to incidents where an offender has been identified

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Percentage of homicide incidents by time of day

	Total n	Midnight to 6am	6am to noon	Noon to 6pm	6pm to midnight
New South Wales	93	30	8	24	39
Victoria	55	31	15	20	35
Queensland	57	32	18	9	42
Western Australia	27	30	26	19	26
South Australia	19	26	16	16	42
Tasmania	6	50	17	17	17
Australian Capital Territory	3	0	0	0	100
Northern Territory	16	44	0	6	50
Australia (a)	276	31	13	17	38

(a) Excludes 21 cases where the exact time of the day the incident occurred was unknown

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Percentage of homicide incidents by day of week

	Total n	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
New South Wales	97	20	16	11	14	11	18	9
Victoria	56	9	20	23	14	7	13	14
Queensland	61	16	13	11	15	10	28	7
Western Australia	29	17	10	7	21	17	7	21
South Australia	21	5	24	14	10	24	14	10
Tasmania	6	0	33	17	17	0	0	33
Australian Capital Territory	3	0	33	0	0	33	0	33
Northern Territory	16	6	0	25	25	19	19	6
Australia (a)	289	14	16	14	15	12	17	11

(a) Excludes eight incidents where the exact day that the incident occurred was unknown

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Homicide incidents by month of the year

	Percentage	Number
January	8	23
February	9	27
March	9	28
April	7	22
May	6	17
June	8	23
July	7	20
August	7	22
September	7	22
October	11	32
November	6	18
December	14	41
Total (a)		295

(a) Excludes two incidents where the exact date of the incident was unknown

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Percentage of homicide incidents by location

	Total n	Residential premise	Street/ open area	Other location (a)
New South Wales	99	56	32	12
Victoria	56	73	16	11
Queensland	60	52	28	20
Western Australia	32	53	28	19
South Australia	22	64	23	14
Tasmania	6	67	33	0
Australian Capital Territory	3	67	0	33
Northern Territory	16	44	56	0
Australia (b)	294	58	21	21

(a) Includes shops, shopping malls, banks/credit unions/post offices, car parks/public garages/service stations, workplaces, other commercial premises, public transport and related facilities, places of entertainment, and corrective/health institutions

(b) Excludes three incidents where location details were unknown

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Incidents that occurred during the course of another crime

	Percentage	Number
New South Wales	13	13
Victoria	2	1
Queensland	6	4
Western Australia	7	2
South Australia	14	3
Tasmania	0	0
Australian Capital Territory	0	0
Northern Territory	0	0
Australia (a)	8	23

(a) There were six further incidents where it is not known if they occurred during the course of another crime

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

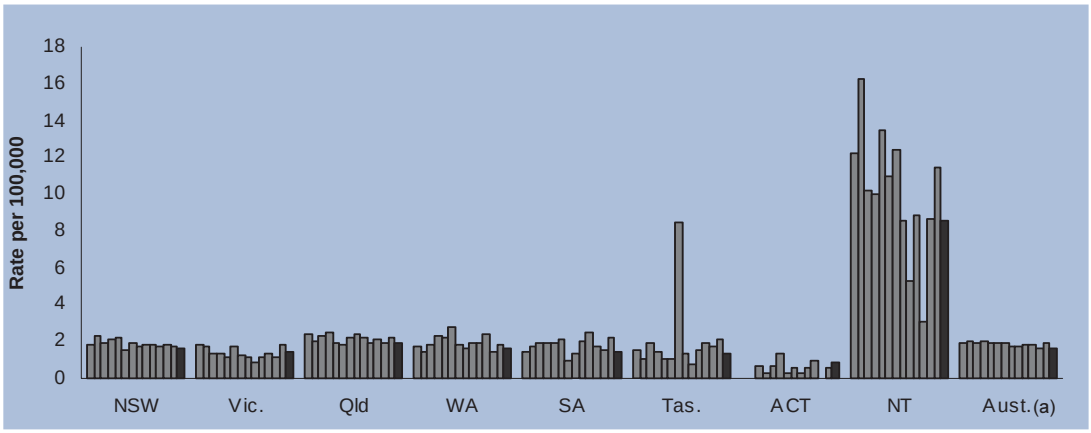
Incidents that occured in the course of another crime by type of crime

	Percentage	Number
Sexual assault	4	1
Robbery	57	13
Other violent crime	4	1
Break and enter	17	4
Theft	4	1
Drug offences	13	3
Total	100	23

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Victim Characteristics

Trends in homicide victimisation, 1989–2003



(a) Includes one homicide in Norfolk Island in 2001/02

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 1989/90–2002/03 [computer file]

Age of victims

	Males		Females		Persons	
	Total n	Mean age	Total n	Mean age	Total n	Mean age
New South Wales	78	38	27	39	105	39
Victoria	46	33	22	34	68	34
Queensland	49	32	21	32	70	32
Western Australia	21	37	11	34	32	36
South Australia	12	43	10	38	22	41
Tasmania	2	41	4	34	6	36
Australian Capital Territory	1	30	2	50	3	43
Northern Territory	7	23	10	31	17	28
Australia (a)	216	36	107	35	323	35

(a) Excludes one victim (Vic.) where age was not stated

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

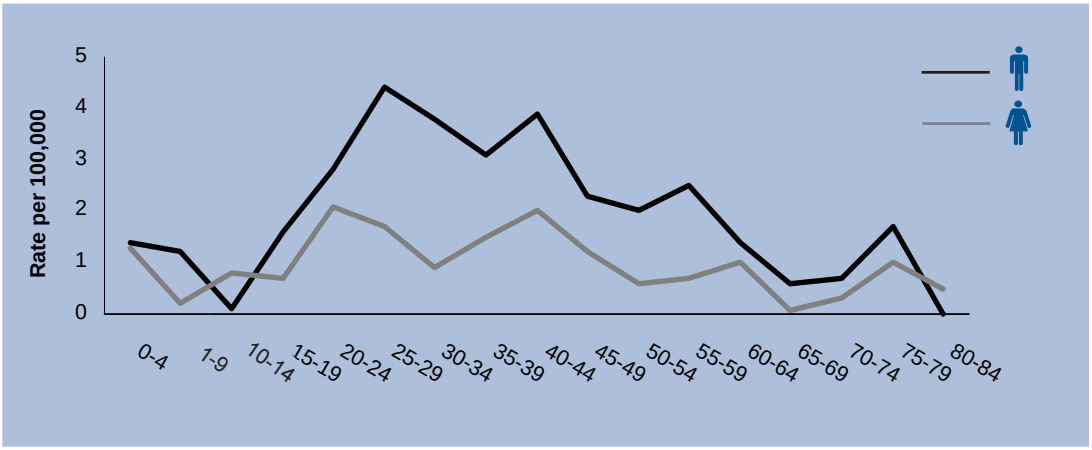
Gender of victims

	Percentage (0 20 40 60 80 100%)		Number	Rate (a)
New South Wales		74	78	2.4
		26	27	0.8
Victoria		68	47	2.0
		32	22	0.9
Queensland		70	49	2.6
		30	21	1.1
Western Australia		66	21	2.2
		34	11	1.1
South Australia		55	12	1.6
		45	10	1.3
Tasmania		33	2	0.9
		67	4	1.7
Australian Capital Territory		33	1	0.6
		67	2	1.2
Northern Territory		41	7	6.8
		59	10	10.6
Australia		67	217	2.2
		33	107	1.1

(a) Rate per 100,000 population

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Homicide victimisation, by age (a) and gender



(a) Excludes one victim (Vic.) where age was not stated

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Homicide victimisation, by age and gender

	Males (a)		Females		Persons	
	Number	Rate (b)	Number	Rate (b)	Number	Rate (b)
0 to 4	9	1.4	8	1.3	17	1.3
5 to 9	8	1.2	1	0.2	9	0.7
10 to 14	1	0.1	5	0.8	6	0.4
15 to 19	11	1.6	5	0.7	16	1.2
20 to 24	19	2.8	14	2.1	33	2.5
25 to 29	30	4.4	12	1.7	42	3.0
30 to 34	28	3.8	7	0.9	35	2.3
35 to 39	23	3.1	11	1.5	34	2.3
40 to 44	29	3.9	15	2.0	44	2.9
45 to 49	16	2.3	8	1.2	24	1.7
50 to 54	13	2.0	4	0.6	17	1.3
55 to 59	14	2.5	4	0.7	18	1.7
60 to 64	6	1.4	4	1.0	10	1.2
65 to 69	2	0.6	2	0.6	4	0.6
70 to 74	2	0.7	1	0.3	3	0.5
75 to 79	4	1.7	3	1.0	7	1.3
80 to 84	0	0	1	0.5	1	0.3
85 to 89	1	1.6	2	1.6	3	1.6

(a) Excludes one victim (Vic.) where age was not stated

(b) Rate per 100,000

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

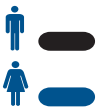
Percentage of victims by marital status

	Never married		Married/ de facto		Separated/ divorced		Widowed	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
New South Wales	48	27	33	42	19	19	0	12
Victoria	64	24	21	65	13	6	3	6
Queensland	59	14	38	64	3	14	0	7
Western Australia	50	20	35	60	5	20	10	0
South Australia	27	22	55	67	18	11	0	0
Tasmania	0	50	50	0	50	25	0	25
Australian Capital Territory	0	0	0	0	100	100	0	0
Northern Territory	33	11	50	67	17	22	0	0
Australia (a)	51	22	34	54	14	18	2	7

(a) Excludes 33 victims aged less than 15 years and 15 victims for whom marital status information was unavailable

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Victims by racial appearance



	Percentage (0 20 40 60 80 100%)	Total n	Caucasian	Indigenous	Asian	Other (a)
New South Wales	74	78	81	5	9	5
	26	27	78	7	11	4
Victoria	68	47	81	0	19	0
	32	22	86	0	14	0
Queensland	70	49	71	22	6	0
	30	21	71	14	10	5
Western Australia	66	21	62	29	5	5
	34	11	55	36	0	9
South Australia	55	12	75	17	0	8
	45	10	90	0	10	0
Tasmania	33	2	100	0	0	0
	67	4	100	0	0	0
Australian Capital Territory	33	1	100	0	0	0
	67	2	100	0	0	0
Northern Territory	41	7	14	86	0	0
	59	10	10	70	20	0
Australia	67	217	75	13	9	3
	33	107	72	15	10	3

(a) Includes Maori/Pacific Islander and other

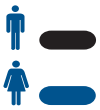
Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Victims with a prior criminal history

	Percentage	Number
Males	62	134
Females	35	37
Persons	53	171

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Victims who were employed* at the time of the incident



	Percentage (0 20 40 60 80 100%)		Number
New South Wales		55	40
		38	10
Victoria		37	15
		31	5
Queensland		36	13
		29	4
Western Australia		35	7
		50	5
South Australia		55	6
		70	7
Tasmania		50	1
		50	2
Australian Capital Territory		100	1
		50	1
Northern Territory		50	3
		11	1
Australia		45	85
		38	35
		Total males (a)	190
		Total females (b)	91

* Defined as full or part-time employment (one victim was working part-time)

(a) Excludes 18 victims aged less than 15 years, and eight victims where employment status information was not available

(b) Excludes 14 victims aged less than 15 years, and two victims where employment status information was not available

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Percentage of victims by alcohol and/or illicit/prescription drug use

	Alcohol only		Illicit/prescription drugs only		Alcohol and illicit/ prescription drugs		No alcohol/ drug use	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
New South Wales	27	18	30	9	22	5	22	68
Victoria	13	0	28	28	30	6	30	67
Queensland	33	6	20	18	18	0	30	77
Western Australia	29	40	5	0	5	0	62	60
South Australia	11	17	11	0	22	17	57	67
Tasmania	0	0	0	33	0	0	0	67
Australian Capital Territory	0	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
Northern Territory	71	56	0	0	14	11	14	33
Australia	26	17	22	13	21	5	31	66
Total n (a)	47	15	40	11	39	4	57	57

(a) Excludes 54 victims (34 males; 20 females) where alcohol and/or illicit/prescription drug use is not yet available

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]; National Coronial Information System (NCIS)

Victims killed by a mentally disordered offender*

	Percentage	Number
Yes	8	26
No	92	298

* This refers to cases where there is evidence that the offender suffered from a mental disorder immediately before or at the time of the incident, where noted in police documents (which may not be comprehensive)

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Number of victims by cause of death

	Gun shot wound	Stab wound	Beating	Strangulation/ suffocation	Other (a)	Unknown
New South Wales	24	24	35	5	16	1
Victoria	9	20	18	9	13	0
Queensland	12	22	16	5	13	2
Western Australia	1	13	12	2	2	2
South Australia	6	7	3	4	2	0
Tasmania	1	1	2	1	1	0
Australian Capital Territory	0	1	0	1	1	0
Northern Territory	0	7	6	1	3	0
Australia (n)	53	95	92	28	51	5
Australia (%)	16	29	28	9	16	2

(a) Includes drug overdose, drowning/submersion, neglect, smoke inhalation/burns, shaking, and being pushed from a high place

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Percentage of victims by cause of death

	Gunshot wound		Stab wound		Beating		Strangulation/ suffocation		Other (a)	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
New South Wales	23	23	23	23	36	27	1	15	17	12
Victoria	19	0	30	27	26	27	6	27	19	18
Queensland	19	14	32	33	26	19	6	10	17	24
Western Australia	0	10	40	50	45	30	5	10	10	0
South Australia	25	30	50	10	17	10	0	40	8	10
Tasmania	0	25	50	0	50	25	0	25	0	25
Australian Capital Territory	0	0	0	50	0	0	0	50	100	0
Northern Territory	0	0	86	10	0	60	0	10	14	20
Australia	18	13	32	26	30	27	4	19	16	15
Total n (b)	39	14	68	27	64	28	8	20	35	16

(a) Includes drug overdose, drowning/submersion, neglect, smoke inhalation/burns, shaking, other

(b) Excludes three male victims and two female victims where cause of death was unknown

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Number of victims by type of weapon

	Firearm	Knife/sharp instrument	Blunt instrument	Hands/ feet	Other (a)	Unknown/no weapon (b)
New South Wales	24	24	10	29	15	3
Victoria	9	20	9	16	11	4
Queensland	12	22	6	16	9	5
Western Australia	1	13	10	2	4	2
South Australia	6	7	3	2	4	0
Tasmania	1	1	0	2	2	0
Australian Capital Territory	0	1	0	2	0	0
Northern Territory	0	7	6	0	2	2
Australia (n)	53	95	44	69	47	16
Australia (%)	16	29	14	21	15	5

(a) Includes explosives, fire, poison, drugs, vehicles, and other weapons

(b) Includes nine victims where no weapon was used (e.g. circumstances of neglect)

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Percentage of victims by type of weapon

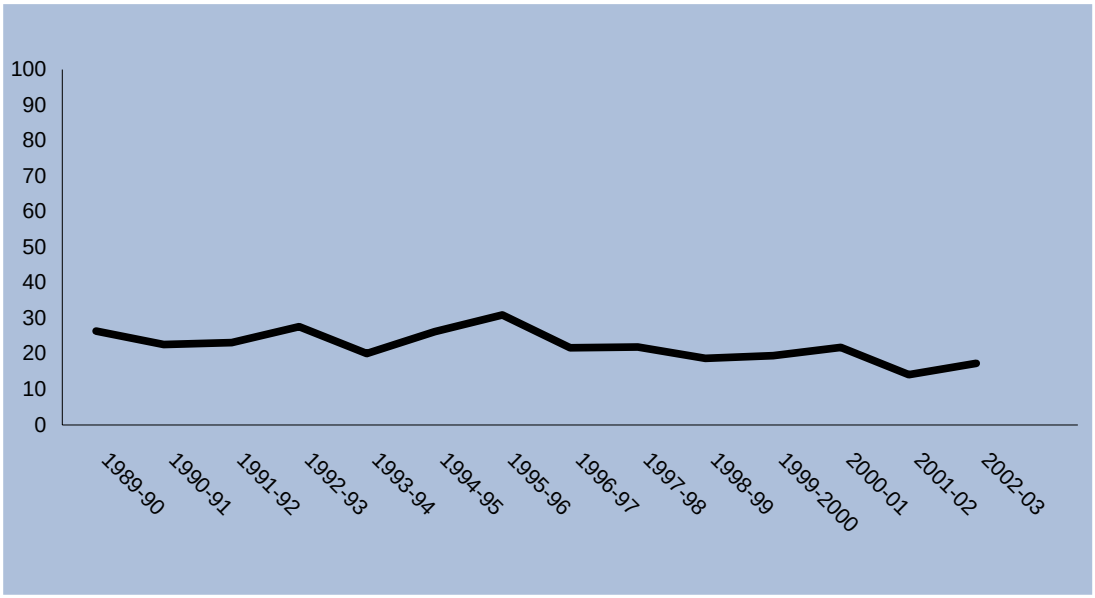
	Firearm		Knife/sharp instrument		Blunt instrument		Hands/ feet		Other (a)	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
New South Wales	24	23	24	23	8	15	34	12	11	27
Victoria	21	0	33	27	14	14	21	32	12	27
Queensland	20	14	34	33	11	5	20	33	14	14
Western Australia	0	10	40	50	40	20	5	10	15	10
South Australia	25	30	50	10	17	10	0	20	8	30
Tasmania	0	25	50	0	0	0	50	25	0	50
Australian Capital Territory	0	0	0	50	0	0	100	50	0	0
Northern Territory	0	0	86	13	0	75	0	0	14	13
Australia	19	14	33	26	13	17	23	21	12	22
Total n (b)	39	14	68	27	27	17	47	22	24	23

(a) Includes explosives, fire, poison, drugs, vehicles and other weapons

(b) Excludes eight male victims (NSW, Vic., WA, NT) and two female victims (NT) where type of weapon used was unknown, and five male (NSW, Vic., Qld, WA) and two female (NSW, WA) victims where no weapon was used

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Trends in firearm homicides, percentage



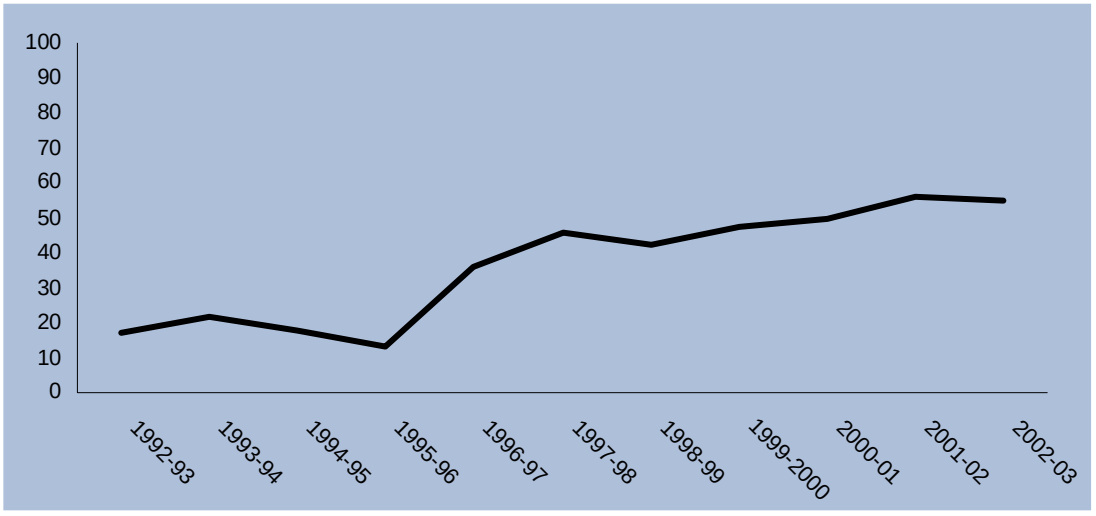
Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 1989/90–2002/03 [computer file]

Victims killed with a handgun or other firearm

	Handgun	Other firearm	Number (Handgun)	Number (Other firearm)
New South Wales	15	8	16	8
Victoria	9	4	6	3
Queensland	6	11	4	8
Western Australia	3	0	1	0
South Australia	9	18	2	4
Tasmania	0	17	0	1
Australian Capital Territory	0	0	0	0
Northern Territory	0	0	0	0
Australia	9	7	29	24

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Handgun homicides as a percentage of firearm homicides*



* Figures exclude cases where type of firearm has not yet been identified

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 1992/1993–2002/2003 [computer file]

Licence and registration status of firearms used in homicide

	Victims		Offenders			
	Licenced	Registered	Licenced	Registered	Unlicenced	Unregistered
New South Wales	1	1	3	3	15	15
Victoria	0	0	2	1	3	4
Queensland	0	0	1	1	11	11
Western Australia	0	0	0	0	1	1
South Australia	0	0	1	1	6	6
Tasmania	0	0	0	0	1	1
Australian Capital Territory	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Territory	0	0	0	0	0	0
Australia	1	1	7	6	37	38
Total n	53	53	44	44	44	44
Total %	2	2	16	14	84	86

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Percentage of victims by alleged motive

		Revenge	Domestic (a)	Money/ drugs	Alcohol-related argument	Other argument	Other motive (b)	No apparent motive (c)
New South Wales	Males	5	12	23	13	23	1	23
	Females	7	48	7	4	19	0	15
Victoria	Males	21	19	11	2	30	2	15
	Females	0	36	14	0	14	5	32
Queensland	Males	2	22	8	24	20	4	18
	Females	0	57	5	0	5	10	24
Western Australia	Males	14	24	10	24	10	0	19
	Females	0	73	9	0	0	9	9
South Australia	Males	17	25	17	0	33	0	8
	Females	10	30	0	0	20	10	30
Tasmania	Males	0	0	0	50	0	0	50
	Females	0	75	0	0	0	0	25
Australian Capital Territory	Males	0	0	0	100	0	0	0
	Females	0	50	0	0	0	0	50
Northern Territory	Males	0	0	0	86	0	0	14
	Females	0	70	0	20	0	0	10
Australia	Males	9	17	14	17	22	2	19
	Females	3	51	7	3	10	5	22
Total n	Males	20	37	31	36	48	4	41
	Females	3	55	7	3	11	5	23

(a) Domestic includes jealousy, desertion/termination of a relationship and other domestic altercation

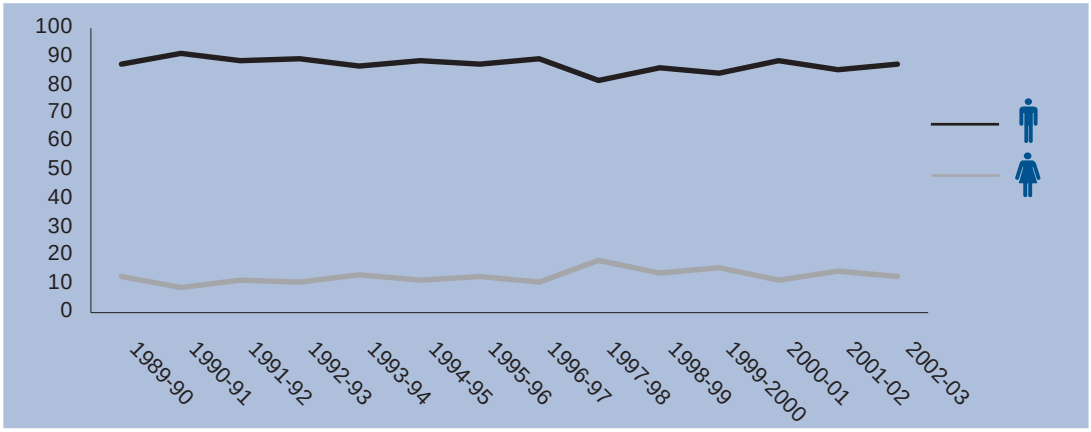
(b) Other motive includes racial/sexual vilification (hate crimes), sexual gratification, envy and other motives

(c) Where motive for the homicide is yet to be determined/is unknown

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Offender Characteristics

Trends in homicide offending, percentage



Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 1989/90–2002/03 [computer file]

Age of offenders

	Males		Females		Persons	
	Total n	Mean age	Total n	Mean age	Total n	Mean age
New South Wales	83	34	11	34	94	34
Victoria	50	35	7	33	57	35
Queensland	63	33	12	36	75	34
Western Australia	34	30	4	34	38	31
South Australia	18	37	3	31	21	36
Tasmania	7	30	0	0	7	30
Australian Capital Territory	3	31	0	0	3	31
Northern Territory	14	35	2	27	16	34
Australia	272	34	39	34	311	34

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

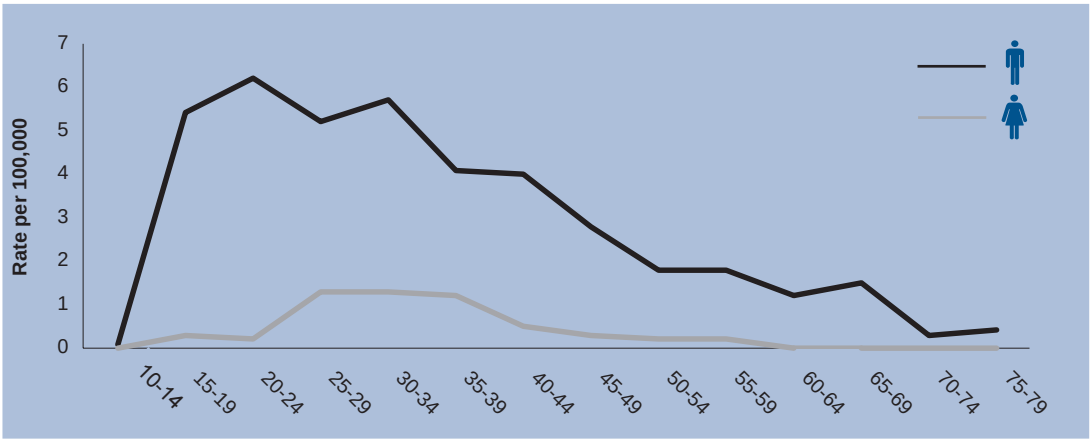
Gender of offenders

	Percentage		Number	Rate (a)
New South Wales		88	83	2.5
		12	11	0.3
Victoria		88	50	2.1
		12	7	0.3
Queensland		84	63	3.4
		16	12	0.6
Western Australia		89	34	3.5
		11	4	0.4
South Australia		86	18	2.4
		14	3	0.4
Tasmania		100	7	3.0
		0	0	0.0
Australian Capital Territory		100	3	1.9
		0	0	0.0
Northern Territory		88	14	13.5
		13	2	2.1
Australia		87	272	2.8
		13	39	0.4

(a) Rate per 100,000 population

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Homicide offending, by age and gender



Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Homicide offending, by age and gender

	Males		Females		Persons	
	Number	Rate (a)	Number	Rate (a)	Number	Rate (a)
10 to 14	1	0.1	0	0.0	1	0.1
15 to 19	38	5.4	2	0.3	40	2.9
20 to 24	42	6.2	1	0.2	43	3.2
25 to 29	36	5.2	9	1.3	45	3.3
30 to 34	42	5.7	10	1.3	52	3.5
35 to 39	30	4.1	9	1.2	39	2.6
40 to 44	30	4.0	4	0.5	34	2.3
45 to 49	19	2.8	2	0.3	21	1.5
50 to 54	12	1.8	1	0.2	13	1.0
55 to 59	10	1.8	1	0.2	11	1.0
60 to 64	5	1.2	0	0.0	5	0.6
65 to 69	5	1.5	0	0.0	5	0.7
70 to 74	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.2
75 to 79	1	0.4	0	0.0	1	0.2

(a) Rate per 100,000 population

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

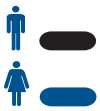
Percentage of offenders by marital status*

	Never married		Married/ de facto		Separated/ divorced	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
New South Wales	55	36	31	55	14	9
Victoria	57	14	37	71	6	14
Queensland	56	25	36	58	7	17
Western Australia	64	0	30	75	6	25
South Australia	29	33	65	67	6	0
Tasmania	86	0	0	0	14	0
Australian Capital Territory	67	0	0	0	33	0
Northern Territory	43	0	50	100	7	0
Australia	55	23	35	64	9	13

* Excludes one male offender aged less than 15 years (WA) and 13 male offenders for whom marital status information was unavailable

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Offenders by racial appearance

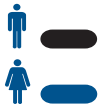


	Percentage	Total (n)	Caucasian	Indigenous	Asian	Other (a)
New South Wales	88	83	76	13	7	4
	12	11	64	27	9	0
Victoria	88	50	80	0	16	4
	12	7	71	0	29	0
Queensland	84	63	70	10	11	10
	16	12	50	50	0	0
Western Australia	89	34	41	35	18	6
	11	4	50	50	0	0
South Australia	86	18	83	11	6	0
	14	3	67	33	0	0
Tasmania	100	7	86	0	0	14
	0	0	0	0	0	0
Australian Capital Territory	100	3	100	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Territory	88	14	21	79	0	0
	13	2	0	100	0	0
Australia	87	272	69	15	10	6
	13	39	56	36	8	0

(a) Includes Maori/Pacific Islander and other

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Offenders who were employed at the time of the incident



	Percentage (0 20 40 60 80 100%)		Number
New South Wales		37	30
		18	2
Victoria		39	18
		40	2
Queensland		35	20
		0	0
Western Australia		18	6
		0	0
South Australia		11	2
		67	2
Tasmania		14	1
		0	0
Australian Capital Territory		0	0
		0	0
Northern Territory		14	2
		0	0
Australia		31	79
		16	6
		Total males (a)	259
		Total females (b)	37

(a) Excludes 12 offenders where employment status information was not available and one offender who was under 15 years of age

(b) Excludes two offenders where employment status was not available

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Offenders with a prior criminal history*

	Percentage	Number
Males	63	156
Females	56	20
Persons	62	176

* Excludes 29 cases (26 male; 3 female) where criminal history was unavailable

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Percentage of offenders by alcohol and/or illicit/prescription drug use

	Alcohol only		Illicit/prescription drugs only		Alcohol and illicit/ prescription drugs		No alcohol/ drug use	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
New South Wales	30	18	10	0	21	9	40	73
Victoria	26	0	3	20	13	0	58	80
Queensland	31	20	11	0	18	0	40	80
Western Australia	62	75	3	0	6	0	29	25
South Australia	10	67	22	0	22	0	56	33
Tasmania	25	0	0	0	50	0	25	0
Australian Capital Territory	0	0	0	0	67	0	33	0
Northern Territory	86	100	0	0	7	0	7	0
Australia	36	31	7	3	17	3	40	63
Total n (a)	83	11	17	1	39	1	91	22

(a) Excludes 42 male and four female offenders where alcohol and/or illicit/prescription drug use was not known

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Offenders who committed suicide prior to or following arrest

	Percentage	Number
Males	6	16
Females	8	3
Persons	6	19

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Offenders who had a prior history of domestic violence*

	Percentage	Number
Prior history	15	48
Legal intervention	2	7
No history	82	254
Not stated	1	2

* This refers to incidents where either the victim or offender had a prior history of domestic violence

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Relationship between victim and offender, percentage

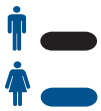
	Total n	Intimates	Family	Friends/ acquaintances	Strangers	Other (a)
New South Wales	97	22	8	40	21	9
Victoria	75	16	27	28	23	7
Queensland	81	17	32	23	22	5
Western Australia	38	24	13	29	16	18
South Australia	21	29	19	38	5	10
Tasmania	7	29	14	43	14	0
Australian Capital Territory	3	33	33	33	0	0
Northern Territory	17	41	35	18	0	6
Australia (b)	339	21	21	31	19	8

(a) Includes business associates, tour guide/tourists, employee/employer, boarding house manager/boarder and colleagues

(b) Excludes seven cases where the relationship between the offenders and the victim is unknown

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

Relationship between victim and offender, percentage by gender of offender



		Total n	Intimates	Family	Friend/ Acquaintance	Stranger	Other (a)
New South Wales	89	86	20	7	42	21	10
	11	11	36	18	27	18	0
Victoria	87	65	14	20	32	26	8
	13	10	30	70	0	0	0
Queensland	81	66	15	23	29	27	6
	19	15	27	73	0	0	0
Western Australia	89	34	21	9	32	18	21
	11	4	50	50	0	0	0
South Australia	86	18	22	22	39	6	11
	14	3	67	0	33	0	0
Tasmania	100	7	29	14	43	14	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Australian Capital Territory	100	3	33	33	33	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Territory	88	15	33	40	20	0	7
	12	2	100	0	0	0	0
Australia (b)	87	294	19	17	34	21	10
	13	45	38	49	9	4	0

(a) Includes business associates, tour guide/tourists, employee/employer, boarding house manager/boarder and colleagues

(b) Excludes seven cases where the relationship between the offenders and the victim is unknown

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NHMP 2002–2003 [computer file]

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This report presents tabulated information on the circumstances and characteristics of homicide in Australia for the fiscal year 2002/03 in addition to jurisdictional breakdowns for comparative purposes and some long-term trend data across the fourteen year NHMP data collection period. For this reporting year, homicide victimisation decreased by 16 per cent and occurred at the lowest rate recorded in the NHMP (1.6 per 100,000 Australians, a rate that was also recorded in 2000/01). When placed in the wider context of long-term homicide victimisation trends the level of victimisation in Australia has remained relatively stable.

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