Australian Government
Australian Institute of Criminology

Homicide in Australia: 2005–06 National Homicide Monitoring Program annual report

Megan Davies
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Research and Public Policy Series

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Director's introduction

The Australian Institute of Criminology, through the National Homicide Monitoring Program (NHMP), has been monitoring the trends and patterns of homicide across Australian jurisdictions for 17 years. This report presents findings of the 17th year of homicide data collection (2005–06) and provides an overview of key characteristics. The data are the most comprehensive collection on homicide in Australia with details on victims, offenders and the circumstances of the incident. This is made possible only through the strong support and commitment to the program provided by all state and territory homicide squads.

During 2005–06, there were 283 incidents of homicide, resulting in 301 victims and committed by 336 offenders. Since 2001–02, there has been a downward trend in the incidence of homicide. During the current year, the incidence of homicide increased by 14 percent compared to 2004–05, this represents an increase of 34 homicide incidents. There was also an increase in the number of victims killed (301 victims up from 267 the previous year). However, analysis of the time series over the 17 years found that this recent increase was not statistically significant.

The following factors appear to have driven the slight increase in homicide rates. The rate of victimisation of females increased from 0.9 per 100,000 females in 2004–05 (n=87) to 1.1 per 100,000 females (n=113) in 2005–06. This is a return to the rate in 2003–04. The percentage of females killed by strangers has also increased – just over one in 10 female victims were killed by a stranger in 2005–06 compared with two percent in the previous year, and seven percent in 2003–04. Overall, stranger homicide increased from 19 percent in 2004–05 to 26 percent in the current year, and 23 percent in 2003–04. This change is mostly due to an increase in the number of incidents of 15–19 year old males committing homicide, over half of which involved strangers. While yearly fluctuations in the patterns of homicide are quite common, these trends are worth continued monitoring.

Despite these changes, the weapons and methods used in homicide have remained relatively the same compared with previous years, with a knife or sharp instrument accounting for a third of all homicide victims. The use of firearms has again declined, with 14 percent of homicides committed with a firearm (n=42).

The resource investment in monitoring programs bears fruit by identifying changes over time, and just as importantly, placing short term changes in a longer time frame. It also enables us to identify changes in risk markers associated with incidents, victims and offenders. Such information allows policy makers and law enforcement to target intervention/prevention policies in the areas likely to have the most impact.

Throughout the year, the AIC has released a number of publications using NHMP data 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
Director
Australian Institute of Criminology

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A special thank you is also extended to the numerous individual police officers, analysts and statistical support staff within each state and territory police service for their assistance in compiling the data. Their efforts to ensure the provision of data is accurate and complete are greatly appreciated.

Fellow AIC staff and external agencies are also gratefully acknowledged for their constructive comments on an earlier draft.

Disclaimer

This research paper does not necessarily reflect the policy position of the Australian Government.

List of abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIC	Australian Institute of Criminology
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
NCIS	National Coroners Information System
NHMP	National Homicide Monitoring Program
OPP/DPP	Office of Public Prosecutions/Director of Public Prosecutions
POA	Postal Area
RA	Remoteness Area

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NHMP: 2005–06 summary

Despite homicide being the most serious criminal offence, the circumstances and characteristics which lead to the occurrence of the crime have for the most part remained remarkably unchanged for more than 15 years. Without collections such as the NHMP, it would not be possible to make this statement. With over 17 years of data on incidents, victims and offenders of homicide in Australia, and numerous research reports on the various facets of homicide, NHMP has increased understanding of this most serious crime. Nowadays law enforcement agencies, policy makers and the general public are better informed about the occurrence of homicide than prior to the establishment of the NHMP. This is primarily achieved through the compilation and dissemination of annual and other research reports. The current report provides a snapshot of homicide in Australia for the period 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006.

Long term trends

Over the 17-year period, the rate of homicide has fluctuated by 0.7 per 100,000 persons, ranging from a low of 1.3 to a high of 2.0. During the review year, Australia experienced a homicide victimisation rate of 1.5 per 100,000 population. Since 2001–02, there has been a declining trend in the incidence of homicide in Australia, but this downward trend has not continued for the current year. During 2005–06 there were 283 recorded homicide incidents, representing a 14 percent increase from 2004–05. The number of victims also increased, from 267 victims in 2004–05 to 301 victims in 2005–06. Most jurisdictions, with the exception of Tasmania, recorded an increase in homicide victimisation. While the overall number of homicides in the Australian Capital Territory is quite small, the number of victims increased from two victims in 2004–05 to five victims in 2005–06. Tasmania recorded the only decline in homicide in 2005–06, with a total of three victims, down from 11 victims in 2004–05.

Many factors, including the type of weapon used to commit homicide, have remained stable for the current and previous years. Knives and sharp instruments predominate as the most common weapon (33%), followed by the use of hands and/or feet (18%). In the previous year, a firearm was the third most common weapon (15%), whereas in the current year, a firearm was equal third with a blunt instrument and some other weapon, each accounting for 14 percent of victims.

Over the years, homicide committed with firearms has decreased from 26 percent recorded in 1989–90, to 14 percent in 2005–06. During 2005–06, handguns accounted for 47 percent of firearm homicides, compared with 42 percent in 2004–05. While the use of firearms to commit homicide has decreased over time, the use of handguns as a percentage of all firearm homicide has increased. In 1992–93, 17 percent of firearm homicides were committed with a handgun, compared with 47 percent in the current year. Another

consistent finding over the years is that the majority of firearms used in homicide were not registered, and the offenders who used them were not licensed. During the current year, 13 percent of offenders who used a firearm were licensed to own the firearm and 10 percent of the firearms used were registered to the offender. Earlier research found that in 1997–98 and 1998–99, nine percent of offenders were licensed to own the firearm and nine percent of the firearms used were registered to the offender (Mouzos 2000b).

Most homicides occurred in residential premises, a pattern which has remained consistent over the years. Over a third of the homicide incidents occurred on weekends, usually during the hours people were out socialising or at entertainment venues or facilities. Few homicide incidents occurred during the day, particularly weekdays. Mondays continued to incur the lowest risk of homicide, with just over one in 10 homicide incidents occurring on a Monday.

Over the years a number of factors have been identified as consistent predictors of an elevated risk of involvement in homicide as victim or offender, or in some cases both. The most common reason or motive associated with the occurrence of homicide is a dispute or argument. In the heat of the moment, with tempers flaring, it seems disputes escalate to the point where one party pulls out a weapon they have bought to the scene, grabs a weapon close by or uses their fists and/or feet to inflict lethal violence. In some cases it is not clear who will become the victim and who the offender until the very end.

Australians are most likely to be killed by someone they know. Male intimate partners pose the greatest risk to females, whereas males are more likely to meet their death at the hands of a friend or acquaintance. However, in the past year, there was an increase in the involvement of strangers in homicide, with just over a quarter of the homicides during 2005–06 committed by strangers (26%), compared with 19 percent in the previous year.

Changes since the previous year

A number of other notable changes have been observed in the current year compared with the previous year. For example, there has been:

- an increase in the victimisation of females. In the current year, females accounted for 38 percent of victims compared with 33 percent in the previous year.
- a shift in both age of victimisation and offending:
  - persons aged between 25 and 29 years experienced the highest rate of victimisation (rate of 2.5) in 2005–06 compared with 2004–05, where persons aged between 35 and 39 years had the highest rate (rate of 2.6)
  - the rate of offending for persons aged between 15 and 19 years increased from 1.8 in 2004–05 to 4.5 in 2005–06

  - the mean age of offenders decreased from 34 years in 2004–05 to 30 years in 2005–06
- an increase in male victims who had consumed alcohol prior to the incident (35% up from 21% in the previous year)
- a decrease in the percentage of homicide incidents occurring during another crime (19% down from 24% the previous year)
- a decrease in homicides committed by mentally disordered offenders (13% down from 24% the previous year)
- an increase in the percentage of incidents occurring between noon and 6pm (22% up from 13% the previous year).

Purpose of the NHMP

Documenting changes in homicide trends is extremely important. Many characterise homicide as a fairly reliable barometer of all violent crime, and no other crime in Australia is measured as accurately and precisely. As a data source, the NHMP is recognised both nationally and internationally as one of the pre-eminent homicide data collection programs. It is essential that NHMP data are accessible to, and utilised by, all stakeholders, particularly those 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 policy development directions
- identify key knowledge gaps to help direct future research.

Realistically, homicide can never be entirely prevented, but it is the goal of public policy makers, researchers and practitioners to develop strategies that continue to suppress it. As with the 2004–05 annual report, this year's report includes an overview of the types of homicidal encounters in Australia: intimate partner violence, child homicide, homicide between persons known to each other, and stranger-related murders.

Methodology

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 between states and territories in terms of degree, culpability, and intent. 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), but excluding 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
- 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.

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
- **coronial records** such as toxicology and post-mortem reports, as the law in each state and territory requires that all violent and unnatural deaths be reported to the Coroner. Since 1 July 2001, the National Coroners Information System (NCIS) has enabled toxicology reports to be accessible online.

The data is further supplemented by **press clippings**, which are sorted according to incident and filed with the offence report. Newspaper media nationwide is canvassed on a daily basis by staff at the Australian Institute of Criminology. These clippings are then provided to the NHMP.

Information for the NHMP is collected annually on all homicides known to police throughout Australia. There are 77 variables in the NHMP dataset, 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 late August and September. Following this, all relevant information relating to the 77 variables is extracted for each

homicide incident and entered into a database. In previous years, the data were entered into a SAS database. As of 1 July 2005, all data received by the AIC are analysed in STATA.

Details from the relevant data sources are first entered into an Access database using an automated data entry program. Data are then transferred to STATA and arranged into three datasets:

- **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)
- **victim file**, which contains sociodemographic information relating to the victim/s, details relating to the cause of death, and type of weapon used, alcohol and illicit/prescription drug use
- **offender file**, which relates to persons who have been charged and includes data on the sociodemographic characteristics of the offender, his/her previous criminal history, alcohol/illicit drug use, mental health status, and relationship to the victim.

A merged incident, victim and offender file is also created, combining details from all three datasets.

At all times, the term offender refers to alleged offenders only, and not necessarily to convicted persons, unless otherwise stated. It is important to note that not all information collected by the NHMP is available in police offence reports. In many instances, staff within homicide squads or major crime units track down the missing information through other information sources (usually contacting the investigating officer, or accessing other information reports) and supply it to the NHMP. Without this information, there would be many gaps, and questions left unanswered. Ultimately, this demonstrates that the collection of annual homicide data in Australia is a team effort, made possible by the ongoing support of all state and territory police services.

The NHMP has been collecting data since 1989 and is currently in the 17th year of data collection, covering the period from 1 July 1989 to 30 June 2006. Included in the dataset are:

- 5, 226 homicide incidents
- 5, 617 victims
- 5,743 homicide offenders.

The data in this publication may differ slightly from previously published figures because of updates to the data files. 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 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, firearms registries), 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 death may not be recorded in the NHMP as a homicide in cases where there is uncertainty as to whether it is a murder or manslaughter and it has been referred for opinion to the relevant Office of Public Prosecutions (OPP)/Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). If there is still no decision at the time of data collection, based on advice from the investigating officer, the incident will be excluded.

A report detailing the NHMP quality control process (Mouzos 2002a), provides a comprehensive examination of this process and gives 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 as they 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). This report highlights the quality control mechanisms employed in the data collection, entry and analysis processes, that were developed to ensure that the information provided to key stakeholders and the general public is an accurate portrayal of this most serious criminal offence.

In addition to the possibility of discrepancies between the various data sources used in the NHMP, there are also some discrepancies between NHMP data and other homicide data produced by other agencies, such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). For a discussion on the results from a comparative analysis of the various data sources, see Mouzos (2003a).

Homicide in Australia: results 2005–06

Since 2001–02, there has been a declining trend in homicide in Australia. However, for the most current year, there has been a change in this trend, with a 14 percent increase over the previous year. Given the small number of homicide incidents, yearly fluctuations are common. Over the 17-year period, the number of homicide incidents peaked in 2001–02 with 354 incidents, and then declined until 2004–05, which recorded the lowest number of incidents, victims and offenders. In the current year, the number of homicide incidents rose to 283 incidents, similar to 2003–04 levels. The overall trend in the incidence of homicide remained stable over the 17-year period. Attention will be paid in this report to identifying changing factors in homicide in Australia.

Homicide incidents

During the 2005–06 reporting period, 283 homicide incidents occurred in Australia, including five incidents that did not occur during the 2005–06 reporting period, but were recorded by police during this time. This is 34 more homicide incidents occurring in Australia than in the previous reporting period, an increase of approximately 14 percent. In the Australian Capital Territory, the number of homicide incidents increased from two in 2004–05 to five in 2005–06. The Northern Territory experienced a 33 percent increase in the number of homicide incidents in 2005–06, compared with the previous year (from 12 to 16). Victoria experienced a 29 percent increase (from 52 to 67), while New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, and South Australia also experienced increases. In contrast, Tasmania recorded a decrease with a total of three incidents in 2005–06, down from 10 incidents in 2004–05.

At the time of data collection, the majority of homicide incidents in Australia resulted from an act classified as murder (90%), followed by offences deemed as manslaughter (9%), or infanticide (less than 1%). This distinction between the various types of homicide can and does change once an offender has been charged and the matter proceeds to court. As in previous years, an offender was identified in the majority of homicide incidents recorded, with an offender yet to be identified in only eight percent (n=23) of the 283 incidents. The percentage of unsolved incidents remained relatively stable: in 2004–05, six percent were unsolved at the time of data collection.

Through the monitoring of homicide over the years, it is remarkable to find that many characteristics of the homicide incident have remained unchanged. Similar to previous years, most solved homicide incidents (n=260) involved one-on-one interactions between a victim and an offender (78%), 16 percent involved a single victim and multiple offenders,

while six percent of incidents involved multiple victims (of which only two of the 16 incidents involved multiple offenders). Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory did not record any incidents with multiple victims. Only Victoria and Queensland recorded homicide incidents involving more than two victims (one triple homicide in each jurisdiction). Victoria and New South Wales each recorded four incidents of double homicide. Western Australia recorded three incidents of double homicide, while Queensland recorded two incidents of double homicide and South Australia, one.

Temporal characteristics

Homicide incidents are least likely to occur on Mondays (11%). Homicides are most likely to occur on weekends and the days leading up to the weekend (Thursdays and Fridays). In 2005–06, similar to the previous year, homicide incidents commonly occurred on a Saturday (18%) or Sunday (17%), with a further 16 percent on a Thursday and 13 percent on a Friday, with midweek homicide incidents much less common. Over the years, these days particularly Saturdays have been consistent risk markers for homicide. There are a number of possible explanations for this pattern. In terms of leisure activities, most people tend to socialise on a Friday or Saturday evening.

Across the jurisdictions, a higher proportion of homicide incidents occurred on a Saturday or Sunday than all other days in New South Wales, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. In South Australia, homicide was most often committed on a Friday, while in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania, homicide incidents were more evenly distributed across the week. However, in each jurisdiction, less than 40 percent of all homicides occurred on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday.

The same explanation regarding the day of the week on which most homicide incidents occur also applies to the time of day that most homicide incidents occur. Homicide in Australia usually occurs during the 12-hour period of 6pm to 6am (63%). Similar to 2004–05, in the current year approximately 15 percent of incidents occurred in the morning between 6am and noon. In 2004–05, just over one in 10 homicide incidents occurred during the hours of noon and 6pm (13%). During the current year, this increased to 22 percent.

As reported elsewhere (Mouzos 2005), there are contradictory findings on the link between homicide and seasonality (Anderson 1987; Cheatwood 1995, 1988; Land, McCall & Cohen 1990; Tennenbaum & Fink 1994). A seasonal analysis of the homicide incident data for 2005–06 indicates that a higher proportion of homicide incidents occurred during summer (27%) or spring (27%) than during autumn (25%) or winter (22%).

Location/setting

The location of homicide incidents is another consistent pattern revealed by the homicide data. Over the years, the majority of homicide incidents have occurred in a residential premise. In 2005–06, almost two-thirds of the homicide incidents occurred in a residential location (63%), 25 percent occurred in a street or open area, while a further 12 percent occurred in some other location. This pattern was consistent for the majority of jurisdictions, with a higher proportion of homicide incidents in Queensland (71%), South Australia (71%), Victoria (67%) and Tasmania (67%) and New South Wales (62%) occurring in a residential location. In Western Australia, 43 percent of homicide incidents occurred in a residential location and 37 percent occurred in a street/open area. The Northern Territory reported an equal number of incidents occurring in a residential premise (50%) and on a street/open area (50%). Similarly, in the Australian Capital Territory, 40 percent of homicide incidents reported occurred in a residential location and 40 percent occurred in some other location, although one in five incidents occurred in a street or open area (20%).

For the first time in 2005–06, the NHMP included analysis of homicide incidents by remoteness area. The ABS has developed a postal area to remoteness area (POA-RA) concordance that allows the conversion of population data from postal areas (POAs) to remoteness areas (RAs). Each POA is an approximation of the Australia Post postcode with the same number, using 2001 census data. The following remoteness areas were used to classify the location of 2005–06 homicide incidents, based on the recorded incident location postcode:

- major cities
- inner regional
- outer regional
- remote
- very remote
- migratory.

While the remoteness variable is only an estimation of the geographic area in which the incident occurred, it can be useful for allowing quantitative comparisons between 'city' and 'country' Australia (ABS 2003).

The majority of homicide incidents in 2005–06 occurred in major cities (63%), followed by inner (17%) and outer (10%) regional areas. Approximately 11 percent of homicide incidents occurred in remote (6%) or very remote (5%) areas, with most of these occurring in the Northern Territory (n=14), Western Australia (n=9) or Queensland (n=5). In major cities and regional areas, the majority of homicide victims were Caucasian (81% and 82%, respectively). However, in remote and very remote areas, 77 percent of victims were Indigenous (n=24).

Homicide in the course of other crime

In some homicide cases, the death of the victim is the unintended consequence of another crime. For example, homicide committed during a break and enter or a robbery, also referred to as instrumental homicide. During 2005–06, 53 incidents (19%) occurred in conjunction with another crime, a decrease from 57 incidents in the previous year (24%). Thirty-four percent of the homicide incidents which were committed in the course of another crime involved the robbery (n=18), while 13 percent involved break and enter (n=7) and six percent involved theft of property (n=3). Over one in five instrumental homicides co-occurred with arson (23%; n=12) and 11 percent involved drug offences (n=6). Only incidents occurring during the course of sexual assault or arson involved multiple victims. There were two incidents of homicide occurring in the course of 'other' offences, namely driving-related offences.

Compared with the previous year, an increase in homicides during robbery offences is also evident, up from 14 percent (n=8) to 34 percent (n=18). In such cases, the amount sought by the offender is not necessarily substantial, as in the case where a victim was attacked for his mobile phone and wallet (case no. 180/06). In another incident, the offender was charged with murdering and stealing cash and a vehicle from his own grandmother (case no. 189/06).

The current period also shows an increase in homicides during sexual offences, with 11 percent of instrumental homicides (n=5) occurring during a sexual assault. For example, one victim was raped prior to being manually strangled (case no. 093/06). Another case involved the victim being raped by three offenders who found her unconscious on the side of the road (case no. 267/06).

It is important to note that while a number of incidents have been identified as occurring in conjunction with another crime, it is difficult to determine whether the 'other crime' precipitated the homicide or whether the homicide was committed due to unexpected situational factors, for example, to cover up the other crime, or whether the homicide was the primary intention with another crime being committed immediately preceding or following it. In one incident the victim was stabbed when he confronted an intruder in his home (case no. 056/06). In another case, the victim was bashed with a fire extinguisher following a break and enter, although nothing was apparently stolen (case no. 179/06). One incident of road rage escalated into a violent altercation, resulting in the death of the victim (case no. 237/06).

Arson is another good example, with fire being used to cover up the act of murder. However, in such incidents both the absence of soot in the airway, and toxicological analysis of blood taken from the victim can reveal the absence of products of combustion (that is, the cocktail of chemicals usually present in smoke; Moore 2004). This indicates that the victim was not alive at the time of the fire, and that there is a high possibility the fire was started to cover up

the victim's murder (case no. 103/06 and 147/06). The issue of arson-associated homicide has been explored in a forthcoming paper (Davies & Mouzos forthcoming).

Homicide victims

As noted, compared with the previous year, the number of homicide victims in Australia increased by 13 percent, from 267 to 301 victims. Homicide victimisation in 2005–06 occurred at a rate of 1.5 per 100,000 Australians, an increase from 1.3 per 100,000 in 2004–05. Over the 17-year period, the rate of homicide has fluctuated by 0.7 per 100,000 persons, ranging from a low of 1.3 to a high of 2.0 per 100,000 of the Australian population. A jurisdictional comparison showed that New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania recorded a lower rate than the national average. All jurisdictions, apart from Tasmania, recorded an increased victimisation rate than in the previous year. The greatest increases occurred in the Australian Capital Territory (1.5 per 100,000 compared with 0.6 in 2004–05), Victoria (1.4 per 100,000 compared with 1.1 in 2004–05) and the Northern Territory (7.8 per 100,000 compared with 6.0 in 2004–05). Tasmania was the only jurisdiction to experience a decline in victimisation rates with a homicide rate of 0.6 per 100,000, a decrease from 2.3 in the previous year.

Demographics

The risk of homicide victimisation is not the same for all Australians. The existence of national databases such as the NHMP allows for the identification of risk markers, and to determine whether they are static, fluid or dynamic.

A phenomenon that is consistently supported by the annual NHMP data and by international homicide victimisation research is the gendered nature of homicide, such that men are most commonly the victims of homicide (see for example Brookman 2005; Flowers 2002; Miethe & Regoeczi 2004; Mouzos 2003b; 2002b; 2000a; Mouzos & Segrave 2004; Polk 1994). During 2005–06, males accounted for 63 percent of homicide victims (n=188), at a rate of 1.8 per 100,000 of the male population. This was the same rate as in 2004–05. However, compared with the previous year, in 2005–06 the rate of female homicide victimisation increased from 0.9 to 1.1 per 100,000 of the Australian female population. The increase was largely driven by the increase in female victims. In Queensland for example, there was a 69 percent increase in the number of female victims, from 16 in 2004–05 to 27 in 2005–06. Overall, compared with 2004–05, in the current year there was a 30 percent increase in the number of female victims and a five percent increase in the number of male victims of homicide in Australia.

Homicide victimisation at the jurisdictional level tends to vary somewhat from the national overview of victimisation. Compared with the national average, a greater proportion of

females were the victims in Queensland (n=27; 45%), Western Australia (n=14; 42%), South Australia (n=11; 50%) and the Australian Capital Territory (n=3; 60%) whereas males accounted for a higher proportion of victims in New South Wales (n=61; 69%), Victoria (n=48; 66%), Tasmania (n=3; 100%) and the Northern Territory (n=11; 69%).

Similar to gender, age is a variable that has remained relatively consistent over the 17-year period. The mean age of homicide victims during 2005–06 was 34 years; two years younger than in the previous year. There was little gender differentiation in the mean age. Male victims were slightly older (mean age of 35 years) than female victims (mean age of 34 years). With the exception of the smaller jurisdictions that recorded very few homicides, the mean age of victims was fairly consistent across jurisdictions. Female victims in Victoria were older than their counterparts in other states (mean age of 40 years).

It was noted in the 2004–05 annual report (Mouzos & Houliaras 2006), that the risk of homicide victimisation is shifting more towards older persons, with those aged between 35 and 39 years most at risk (rate of 2.6). For the year 2005–06 however, victimisation has moved back to younger persons, with those aged between 25 and 29 years most at risk (rate 2.5). Males aged between 25 and 29 years had the highest risk of victimisation (rate of 3.5), whereas females aged between 20 and 24 years were most at risk (rate of 2.1). As observed in a number of previous years (see Mouzos 2003b), those who are most vulnerable, such as the very young and elderly, also tend to experience a high rate of victimisation. In 2005–06, persons aged less than five years recorded a victimisation rate of 1.9 per 100,000. However, persons aged 80 years and older experienced a decline in victimisation from 1.0 per 100,000 persons last year to 0.4 per 100,000 in 2005–06. In the current year 11 infants (aged less than one year) were killed, down from 14 in the previous year. One of these incidents involved an assault on a pregnant woman which caused the premature birth of a baby (case no. 166/06). The infant subsequently died as a direct result of the initial assault by the offender, who was charged with murder.

In addition to gender, race is considered to be one of the best known correlates of violent crime (Haynie & Armstrong 2006). However, only Victoria and Western Australia publish data on racial appearance and/or country of birth. This is mainly to avoid an undue focus on ethnicity in the absence of other factors. The NHMP collects information on the racial appearance of both victims and offenders. These data are derived from police records and are only indicative of racial appearance and in most cases based on a subjective assessment by police. As a result caution should be exercised in the interpretation of data about racial appearance. The majority of homicide victims in Australia during 2005–06 were of Caucasian appearance (77% males; 73% females), a finding that is consistent across the 17 years. Overall, 76 percent of victims were Caucasian, Indigenous persons accounted for 14 percent, followed by victims of Asian appearance at eight percent (up from six percent the previous year). The Northern Territory, with the highest proportion of Indigenous inhabitants, also recorded the highest proportion of Indigenous homicide victims. Over

90 percent of male homicide victims and all the female homicide victims in the Northern Territory were Indigenous.

Recent data from the National Mortality Database demonstrated that the average annual death rate due to assault was considerably higher for Indigenous Australians than non-Indigenous Australians. In fact, across Australia, Indigenous females were nearly 11 times more likely to die due to assault than non-Indigenous females, and Indigenous males were nine times more likely to die due to assault than non-Indigenous males (Al-Yaman, Van Doeland & Wallis 2006: 71).

Given the gendered nature of homicide, differences have also been noted in the sociodemographic characteristics of male and female victims and offenders (see Brookman 2005; Mouzos 2003b; Polk 1994; Miethe & Regoeczi 2004; Flowers 2002). The following gender differences were noted in homicide victimisation during 2005–06. Compared with female homicide victims, male homicide victims were more likely to be:

- single at the time of the incident (48%)
- employed (40%)
- involved in prior criminal activities (51%).

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

- more likely to be married or in a de facto relationship (55%)
- less likely to be employed (38%)
- less likely to be involved in prior criminal activities (20%).

Note that employed does not include those victims whose employment status was recorded as domestic duties which accounted for eight percent (n=8) of all female victims and less than one percent of male victims (n=1). In general, the data show that while the number of homicide victims may fluctuate from year to year, the groups within the population most at risk of victimisation have changed very little.

Precipitating factors

There is some debate as to whether the consumption of alcohol and/or illicit drugs prior to the homicide incident can be considered a precipitating factor. With the use of toxicology results, it can be determined whether the victim had consumed alcohol and/or illicit drugs, but this information cannot indicate how the person was affected physiologically (unless the amount consumed was at a relatively high level) or whether their alcohol or drug taking directly precipitated the homicide. A prime example is cannabis. Toxicology reports may indicate the presence of cannabis (THC – 11nor9carboxydelta9tetrahydrocannabinol) in

blood or urine, but this can be detected in urine from several to 30 days on average post use (see Makkai 2000). While for some incidents there may be information indicating the offender committed the offence under a drug induced psychosis (for example case nos 135/06 and 188/06), it is nevertheless problematic in assuming a cause and effect relationship between alcohol/illicit drug use and lethal violence.

Of the 276 homicide victims for whom data were available from toxicology reports and additional records for 2005–06, there were some differences in the gender of the victim. A higher proportion of female than male victims did not use any substance at the time of the incident (65% versus 42%). A higher proportion of male than female victims were under the influence of alcohol alone at the time of the incident (35% compared with 13%). While last year a higher proportion of female than male victims tested positive to illicit/prescription drugs following the homicide, in the current year there were no gender differences for illicit/prescription drug use (13% for both male and female victims). Alcohol was the most frequently used substance for males (35%) and for females it was either alcohol (13%) or illicit/prescription drugs (13%).

Poly substance use was also observed in a number of cases, as was a high level of alcohol consumption. Toxicology reports indicated that seven victims used illicit drugs in combination with prescription drugs. Other victims had consumed:

- alcohol (0.266g/100ml) (case no. 015/06)
- alcohol (0.137g/100ml) and cannabis (case no. 259/06; see also case no. 017/06)
- cannabis and psilocin (main psychoactive compound in magic mushrooms) (case no. 238/06)
- cannabis and methadone (case no. 026/06)
- alcohol, cannabis, MDMA (ecstasy) and amphetamine (case no. 157/06)
- methadone (3.95mg/L) and morphine (1.05mg/L) (case no. 139/06)
- amphetamine (<0.02mg/L), methylamphetamine (0.1mg/L) and cannabis (delta-9-THC acid 0.012mg/L) (case no. 048/06; see also case nos 004/06, 096/06, 111/06 and 131/06)
- amphetamine (0.03mg/L), methylamphetamine (0.03mg/L), MDEA (0.2mg/L), MDA (0.02mg/L) and MDMA (ecstasy) (0.03mg/L) (case no. 140/06)
- alcohol (0.022g/100ml), amphetamine (0.08mg/L), methylamphetamine (0.08mg/L), codeine (0.26mg/L), and paracetamol (case no. 258/06)
- multiple benzodiazepines, including flunitrazepam (Rohypnol) (0.02mg/L), diazepam (0.27mg/L), temazepam (0.56mg/L), oxazepam (0.06mg/L) (case no. 100/06)

- alcohol (0.81g/100ml), amitriptyline (antidepressant and mood elevator) (0.4mg/L), nortriptyline (antidepressant and mood elevator) (0.4mg/L), and methylamphetamine (<0.1mg/L) (case no. 013/06) – levels of amitriptyline and nortriptyline were above the recommended therapeutic level, indicating drug abuse.

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 contained in police offence reports, which may or may not be based on an official medical diagnosis. Where information was known (n=266), a total of 35 victims were killed by a mentally disordered offender (13%). This is a decrease since 2004–05, where 24 percent of victims were killed by a mentally disordered offender (n=51). In one incident the offender suffered from a psychiatric disorder and randomly attacked his victim on a train (case no. 110/06). In another incident, a mentally ill offender was an inpatient of a psychiatric ward at the time of arrest (case no. 006/06). Several victims were found to have been murdered by family members with a mental illness (case nos 049/06, 067/06 and 187/06).

Human behaviour is complex and is surrounded by a great deal of uncertainty. It is difficult to ascribe a single motive to a homicide when the reasons or lack thereof may be varied and complicated. Some argue that homicide is the result of a series of events (Block & Christakos 1995). Previous research on women as offenders of homicide found that the reasons women may kill depend largely upon whom the victim is and the situational context. Similarly, women and men who kill their husbands/wives or de facto partners as a result of a 'domestic altercation' do not always kill under similar circumstances. For example, in one incident the male victim had a long history of inflicting domestic violence on the female offender, who resorted to lethal violence and killed him (case no. 159/06). In another incident, an argument over a property settlement between a recently separated couple ended in homicide (case no. 71/06). Another case involved the female victim wanting to end the relationship as she had been having an affair. According to the alleged offender, this made his 'blood boil', so he murdered her (case no. 178/06). While there may be masked differences underlying the category 'domestic altercation', the point is that, for classification purposes, the main theme is that an argument of a domestic nature precipitated the homicide, and/or there is a general deterioration of the relationship.

The most commonly identified motive (the alleged causal factor that proceeds 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 some type of argument or altercation involving alcohol, drugs or money or other reason (51%). In these types of homicides, the death of the victim was an outcome of an argument between two or more persons which rapidly escalated to violence. This homicide type typically involves young men in public settings who use violence as a form of social control (see Polk 1994; Innes 2003).

Arguments over money or to acquire money can occur in many situations. In one case, a woman, with the help of her son, murdered her husband of three days to gain access to his substantial estate (case no. 151/06). In another case, two victims were killed because of a running dispute over a debt owed by the offenders (case no. 085/06).

In more than one-quarter of homicides involving a male victim, the motive was unclear (26%), while revenge for a perceived wrongdoing accounted for seven percent. In comparison, the events leading to female victimisation differed greatly. During 2005–06, the majority of female victims (58%) were killed as a result of a domestic altercation (which includes arguments based on jealousy, separation or termination of a relationship, infidelity, children and custody issues, alcohol fuelled domestic altercations and other issues between intimate or past-intimate partners). Many of these homicides are not committed in cold blood, but are rather hot-blooded episodes occurring in emotionally charged circumstances (Innes 2003: 4).

A further 26 percent of female victims died in circumstances where there was no apparent motive, while eight percent died as a result of an argument fuelled by alcohol or over money or drugs or other argument. Five percent of female victims were killed for some other motive, including sexual gratification and envy. Only three percent of female victims were killed as a result of revenge.

Weapons/methods

The weapons/methods used in the commission of homicide have remained relatively unchanged over the years. The most common types of weapons used in homicide in Australia are weapons of opportunity, such as hands and/or feet, and knives. Apart from a couple of years in the early 1990s where assaultive force (hands and/or feet) was the predominant method used, a knife or sharp instrument is the most common type of weapon used to kill in Australia, accounting for 33 percent of homicide victims in 2005–06, a similar proportion to 2004–05. The use of hands/feet (assaultive force) is the second most common method, with 18 percent of victims beaten to death. Persons killed with a firearm in 2005–06 accounted for 14 percent of victims, similar to the percentage killed by a blunt instrument (14%) or some other method (14%). The method was unknown or undetermined in seven percent of homicides.

These patterns tend to differ based on the gender of the victim (Mouzos 2002a; 2003b). It was reported in 2004–05 that the proportion of males killed with a firearm had declined, with a firearm the third most common weapon used, accounting for 18 percent of male victims. In 2005–06, the proportion of males killed with a firearm declined again, with only 15 percent killed by firearm. In the current year, firearms were the fourth most common method of male homicide, following knives or sharp instruments (37%), hands/feet (18%), and blunt instruments (16%).

Similar to the previous year, in 2005–06 females were more likely to be killed with a knife or sharp instrument (33%), followed by being beaten or strangled to death with hands and/or feet (22%). However, in the current year 15 percent of female victims were killed with a firearm, compared with nine percent in 2004–05.

In 2004–05, a total of 40 (15%) victims were killed with a firearm. In 2005–06, 42 (14%) victims were killed with a firearm. Another consistent pattern is that the firearms used are unlawfully held. That is, they were not registered to either the victim or the offender, nor was the victim or offender licensed to own the firearm. The licensing and registration details of two cases in the current year were not available. Nine firearm homicide incidents were unsolved at the time of data collection. During 2005–06, 39 identified offenders used a firearm to commit homicide. Of these, four used a registered firearm (10%), and five were licensed to own a firearm (13%), reflecting a decrease from the proportion of offenders licensed and registered in 2004–05 (21 percent licensed and 17 percent registered). In 2005–06, only one victim was killed with a firearm that was licensed and registered to them. In contrast, in the previous year, nine victims were killed with a firearm licensed to them and two were killed with a firearm that was registered to them.

Since 2000–01, over half of all firearm homicides were committed with handguns. During 2005–06, handguns accounted for 47 percent of firearm homicides (excludes eight homicides where details of the type of firearm used was unavailable), compared with 42 percent in 2004–05. Of the 16 handguns used in 2005–06 (where details were known), none were registered to the victim and two were registered to the offender. The same two offenders were licensed to own the handguns. Three offenders used a handgun to commit murder-suicide. Six handgun homicides were unsolved at the time of data collection.

It is important to note that modified longarms, such as sawn-off rifles, are classified as Category H (restricted) firearms in some jurisdictions. While for the most part Category H firearms refer to handguns, any firearm under a specified length is classified as a concealable firearm and hence is a restricted weapon. For example, in Victoria, shotguns or rifles with a length less than 75 centimetres are classified as Category E longarms (see s 3 *Firearms Act 1996* (Vic)). The legislation acknowledges that offenders often shorten firearms, including rifles and shotguns to carry out armed robberies. When apprehended, these offenders face higher penalties for possession of a concealable firearm than the standard penalties for possession of a longarm. In 2005–06, two victims of a double murder-suicide were killed by a shortened bolt action rifle, classified as a Category H weapon (case no. 197/06).

In several cases either the victim or the offender had a security firearm licence (but was not working at the time of the incident) or an expired firearm licence, neither of which allowed them to legally possess firearms at the time of the incident. It was also noted that several victims and offenders of firearm homicide had previously applied for a firearm licence, but

their applications had been refused. At least two firearms used in homicide were suspected to be stolen (case nos 32/06 and 29/06). In one case, the offender (who was not licensed) purchased an unregistered firearm from someone in licensed premises prior to the murder (case no. 74/06).

A further examination of firearm homicides suggests that they are quite different from homicide in general. Of the 39 firearm homicide incidents in 2005–06, three involved the murder of more than one victim (8%). Almost two-thirds of the firearm homicide incidents occurred in a residential location (64%), and almost one-quarter took place on street or open area (23%). Over half of the solved firearm homicides involved a male victim and offender (n=17, 52%) and only one firearm homicide occurred between a male victim and a female offender. In 2005–06 there were no firearm homicides with a female victim and offender.

Over one-third of the solved firearm homicides occurred between friends and acquaintances (35%), and a further 26 percent between intimate partners. Family members were responsible for 15 percent of firearm homicides, while less than seven percent involved strangers. Not surprisingly given the low level of legal ownership of firearms among those involved in homicide, 61 percent of offenders had a prior criminal history, compared with 45 percent of victims.

In 2005–06 there were 19 homicides where the weapon used was a vehicle. Thirteen of these resulted in manslaughter charges against the offender, with six involving murder charges. While driving-related fatalities are excluded from the NHMP (except where these immediately follow a criminal event such as armed robbery or motor vehicle theft) these cases involved a sufficient degree of gross negligence or recklessness to warrant a charge of manslaughter (excluding driving). For example, in one case the offender deliberately swerved to hit 'something' on the side of the road, which was in fact a young girl (case no. 279/06). In another incident, the offender caused a head-on collision which killed an elderly victim. The offender was found to be intoxicated with methylamphetamine, amphetamine, MDMA and MDA while driving and was 'incapable of safely controlling the vehicle under normal driving conditions' (case no. 192/06).

Three manslaughter incidents involved stolen cars which were being pursued by police at the time of the incident. For example, one case involved a stolen vehicle which hit and killed a pedestrian during a high speed police pursuit (case no. 255/06).

Other murder charges related to the use of a vehicle as the murder weapon. For example, one offender drove his car at the deceased at approximately 60km per hour after an argument outside licensed premises (case no. 127/06). In another incident, the offender drove his vehicle repeatedly at the victim's vehicle, causing a fatal collision (case no. 138/06).

Homicide offenders

There were 336 offenders identified for 2005–06, involved in 260 homicide incidents. Of the 283 homicide incidents that occurred during 2005–06, 23 were unsolved, meaning that no offender had been identified at the time of data collection. The majority of offenders were male (88%; n=294), who offended at a rate of 2.9 per 100,000, which is about 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 17 years and with international homicide research (Mouzos 2003b; 2002a; 2000a; Mouzos & Segrave 2004; Miethe & Regoeczi 2004; Brookman 2005; Flowers 2002). Compared with 2004–05, the male homicide offending rate increased in 2005–06, up from 2.4 per 100,000 and representing a 21 percent increase. In contrast, female offending decreased by 20 percent, down from 0.5 per 100,000 in 2004–05.

Demographics

During 2005–06, homicide offenders were slightly younger than their victims, with the mean age of offenders at 30 years compared with a mean age of 34 years for homicide victims. The mean age of female offenders was 32 years, compared with the mean age of 30 years for male offenders. The youngest offenders recorded in 2005–06 were aged 14 years (n=6) and the oldest offender was 79 years. In terms of the age range of offenders, males have a longer offending career – they are likely to begin offending earlier than females (although in contrast to previous years, in the current year the youngest male and female offenders were both aged 14 years) and to cease offending later than female offenders (this year the oldest male was 79 years and the oldest female 68 years).

The peak offending rate has remained unchanged, with persons aged in their early to mid 20s (i.e. 20 to 24 year olds) offending at a rate higher than all other age groups. There have, however, been notable increases in the rates of offending for males. In 2004–05, there were 22 male offenders aged between 15 and 19 years, offending at a rate of 3.1 per 100,000 males in that age group. In contrast, during 2005–06, the number of male offenders in that age group increased to 57, and the rate of offending increased to 8 per 100,000 relevant population.

For female offenders the patterns are quite different. The highest rate of offending was females aged 25 to 29 years (1.2 per 100,000 Australian females in that age group), followed by 20 to 24 year old females (0.9 per 100,000) and 35 to 39 year old females (0.9 per 100,000). In the previous year, females aged between 30 and 34 years (rate of 1.3) had the highest rate of offending, followed by females aged between 40 and 44 years (rate of 1.2). During the current year, there has been a shift towards a younger cohort of female offenders.

The social context of most homicides suggests that they are usually likely to occur between persons who are generally from similar backgrounds and socioeconomic groups (Polk 1994; Chamlin & Cochran 2005). The majority of homicide offenders were of Caucasian appearance (67%). More male than female offenders were of Caucasian appearance (68% and 61% respectively). Over the past few years, the level of Indigenous offending has remained stable at the national level (about 19%), although in 2005–06 this increased to 21 percent. The majority of Indigenous offenders were recorded in the Northern Territory (n=27) followed by Queensland (n=13), Western Australia (n=12) and New South Wales (n=12). All offenders in the Northern Territory (n= 27; excluding one offender whose racial appearance was not stated), and almost half of the offenders in Western Australia (13 out of 29 offenders; 45%) were Indigenous. 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 greater proportion of Indigenous female than male offenders were Indigenous (27% compared with 21%) a finding that is consistent with previous years. While there were 56 Indigenous male offenders and 11 female Indigenous offenders, the proportion of female Indigenous offenders represents just over one-quarter of the total female offending population, while Indigenous women only account for approximately two percent of the total female population in Australia (ABS 2002).

Just over half of the homicide offenders in 2005–06 were single at the time of the incident (55%), 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 (60%), female offenders were much more likely to be married or in a de facto relationship at the time the offence occurred (68%). Less than a quarter of the female offenders were single at the time of the homicide incident (24%). This represents a continued decrease in the proportion of single women and an increase in the proportion of women in relationships engaging in homicide.

In terms of the employment status of offenders, the majority of offenders were unemployed at the time of the offence (69%). One-third of the male offenders were employed at the time of the incident (34%), compared with 14 percent of female offenders (although employment status of 19% of women was recorded as domestic duties at the time of the offence).

Precipitating factors

Just under half of those homicide offenders arrested and charged for incidents committed during 2005–06 had consumed alcohol (35%), illicit or prescription drugs (7%) or both (7%) at the time of the incident. Similar to 2004–05, in 2005–06, a greater proportion of female than male offenders had consumed alcohol only prior to the homicide (39% versus 34%). A higher percentage of female than male offenders had consumed illicit/prescription drugs only

(10% versus 6%). The opposite pattern occurred in 2004–05, where more male than female offenders had consumed drugs. A higher percentage of females had consumed both alcohol and illicit/prescription drugs than males (10% versus 6%). These findings are similar to those reported for victims, although a greater percentage of female offenders than female victims were likely to be using alcohol (38% versus 21%). Male offenders were more likely than male victims to not be using alcohol or drugs at the time of the incident (54% versus 42%), although female offenders were less likely than female victims to be drug/alcohol-free when the homicide occurred (42% versus 65%).

These findings accord with research on drug use by police detainees (Mouzos et al. 2007) showing that adult males detained for a violent offence during 2006 tested positive to a range of drugs, including methylamphetamine (18%), cannabis (55%), heroin (5%), or benzodiazepines (19%). Two-thirds of these detainees tested positive to any drug (66%).

Unlike the Drug Use Monitoring in Australia data, which rely on urinalysis as an indication of a detainee's drug use, NHMP data are based on information contained in police offence reports. It is important to keep in mind that this data are indicative only of whether the offender had consumed alcohol and/or illicit/prescription drugs prior to the incident. It is not necessarily indicative of the offender's state of mind, nor can it be identified as a causal factor in the homicide incident, particularly as there is no accurate measure of the amount of any substance that had been consumed by the offender (unless the offender suicided after the homicide, for obvious reasons toxicology reports are not available for the offender).

Of the 336 known offenders in 2005–06, 20 (18 males and 2 females) committed suicide prior to or following arrest (6%). There is a distinct gender difference in criminal history, with 65 percent of male and 50 percent of female offenders with prior criminal history, a higher proportion than male and female victims. In some cases, it was found that the offenders had a prior criminal history for offences similar to the current homicide. For example:

- an offender who had a previous conviction for rape committed a sexual assault and double homicide of two victims (case no. 094/06)
- a male offender with a criminal history of assaults of a sexual nature committed a suspected sexual homicide (case no. 253/06)
- an offender with a previous homicide conviction (case no. 119/06)
- another offender had been previously charged with homicide 31 years ago but had been acquitted, allegedly due to a technicality in relation to evidence (case no. 24/06).

In both cases of previous homicide, the earlier homicide involved a similar *modus operandi* as the current homicide.

Similar to 2004–05 results, 13 percent of homicides involved either the victim or the offender with a prior history of domestic violence. There were 10 homicides that involved a legal intervention order (current or expired).

Relationship between the victim and offender

Homicide does not occur in a vacuum. Research on homicide has identified the relationship between the victim and offender as being one of the most important factors in understanding the contextual dynamics of the homicide event and how the offender and the victim are linked to the social context within which the homicide occurs. Understanding incident patterns and the various risk markers for homicide victimisation and offending facilitates the development of targeted prevention policies and initiatives.

Previous NHMP research showed that the percentage of homicides involving friends or acquaintances increased during the late 1990s. In 2001–02, the percentage of homicides between friends and acquaintances began to decline and continued to decline in 2002–03, stabilising in 2004–05 at 31 percent. In 2005–06, it remained stable at 30 percent. Intimate partner homicides accounted for a further 21 percent, followed by 19 percent for family homicides. About one in four homicides in Australia in 2005–06 were committed by strangers (26%), an increase from 19 percent in the previous year.

A comparison of the larger jurisdictions revealed some variation. Compared with the national average of 26 percent, a higher proportion of stranger homicides occurred in Victoria (31%), with most offenders being male (21 out of 22 offenders). In Queensland, 29 percent of victim–offender relationships were recorded as intimate partners, compared with the national average of 21 percent. Family relationships were recorded in 38 percent of homicides in South Australia, double the national average of 19 percent. Friends and acquaintances were responsible for 39 percent of homicides in Western Australia, compared with the national average of 30 percent.

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. In 2005–06, male offenders were most likely to kill a friend or acquaintance (31%), and male victims were most likely to be killed by a friend or acquaintance (37%) or a stranger (33%). In comparison, women were most likely to kill those closest to them (66%), with an equal proportion of female offenders killing intimates and family members (33% each). Compared with previous years, a higher proportion of women killed a friend/acquaintance in 2005–06 than in 2004–05 (28% versus 22%; see Mouzos & Houliaras 2006). Likewise, women were most likely to be killed by an intimate partner (48%) or a family member (23%). Men were far more likely to kill (29%) or be killed

(33%) by a person unknown to them than female offenders or victims – three females killed a stranger (7%), while 11 percent of female victims were killed by a stranger (n=14).

Homicidal encounters

The following section examines in greater detail the circumstances and characteristics of some of the homicidal encounters that occurred in 2005–06. Of note are the differences in situations which led to a homicide. The situations combined with the circumstances vary based on the characteristics of the victim and offender and the interplay between all three.

Intimate partner homicide

There is some debate about the definition of intimate partners and whether boy/girlfriends should be included in the overall counts for intimate partner homicide. For the purposes of the NHMP, intimate partners include: spouse, separated spouse, divorced spouse, de facto, ex-de facto, extra-marital lover/former lover, boyfriend, girlfriend, homosexual relationship, and former homosexual relationship.

During 2005–06, a total of 74 intimate partner homicides occurred, up from 66 in 2004–05. Four out of five intimate partner homicides involved a male offender killing his female partner (n=59, 80%). Previous research has identified that both men and women living in de facto relationships are at a greater risk of intimate partner homicide than married couples (see Mouzos & Shackelford 2004; Shackelford & Mouzos 2005). Forty-three percent of the intimate partner homicides in 2005–06 occurred between current or separated de facto partners, compared with just over half in 2004–05.

Given the private nature of intimate partner homicides, it is not surprising that more than three-quarters occurred in residential locations (n=58; 78%). Twelve occurred in a street or open area/waterway (16%) and only four incidents occurred in some other location, such as a car park, motor vehicle or sporting facility. This finding illustrates the particular difficulty facing policy makers and law enforcement agencies trying to devise strategies to address violence within the home.

Data show that the majority of intimate partner homicides committed by a male offender involved the killing of a partner who was younger than the offender (n=42; 71%). When females killed their partners, they were more likely to kill a partner older than them (n=10; 67%). Twenty-six percent of intimate partner homicides involved a victim and an offender in the same age group (n=19), compared with over half such homicides in 2004–05. Out of the 74 intimate partner homicides, 24 percent involved an Indigenous victim or offender (n=18), while 16 percent involved both an Indigenous victim and offender (n=12). The Indigenous status of the victim or the offender was unknown in five percent of cases (n=4). Most of the

Indigenous intimate partner homicides also involved either the victim or the offender or both under the influence of alcohol (n=11; 92%), whereas only 39 percent of non-Indigenous intimate partner homicides involved the consumption of alcohol (n=22). Overall, 28 percent of intimate partner homicides involved both the victim and the offender having consumed alcohol just prior to the incident (n=21). Just over one in 10 intimate partner homicides involved both parties having consumed illicit/prescription drugs just prior to the incident (n=8, 11%).

Much previous research has observed that a history of domestic violence is common in intimate partner homicides, and that in some cases, the homicide incident is the end result of a culmination of numerous prior incidents of domestic violence (Goetting 1995; Jurik & Winn 1990; Mouzos 2003c; Browne 1997; Arias & Pape 1999). A prior history of domestic violence was recorded in 39 of the 74 intimate partner homicides (53%) that occurred during 2005–06, down from 58 percent recorded during 2004–05 (n=38). Only 15 intimate partner homicides had no history of domestic violence between the victim and the offender (20%), while the domestic violence history was unknown in 15 percent of cases (n=11).

In 2005–06 there were nine intimate partner homicides where a current or expired legal intervention order was recorded (12%), compared with six in 2004–05 (9%). An example was the case where the victim had an AVO in place against her de facto partner, which restricted the offender from approaching the victim within 12 hours of drinking alcohol (case no. 001/06). Another incident involved a long history of domestic violence in a 15 year de facto relationship (case no. 019/06). The male offender was on conditional bail for breaching an AVO two months prior to the incident. In another incident, the male offender had breached an AVO two months prior to the incident and had been charged with assault and stalking. However, he had been released on a good behaviour bond and shot the victim and then himself in front of her two children (case no. 078/06). The majority of intimate partner homicides were associated with some form of domestic violence, indicated by the presence of legal intervention orders or a recorded history of domestic violence (n=48; 65%).

Given the physical strength differences between men and women, it is not surprising to find that not one female killed an intimate partner by beating him to death with her hands and/or feet, whereas 22 percent of men did (n=13). Female victims were more likely to be killed by a knife/sharp instrument (27%), hands/feet (22%) or firearm (19%) by their male partners. Male victims were more likely to be killed with a knife or sharp instrument (80%) by their female partners. In one incident the female, motivated by jealousy over the victim's relationship with another woman, stabbed her partner in a drunken rage (case no. 152/06). In another case the intimate partners were involved in a domestic argument concerning money, which ended with the female murdering her de facto partner with a carving knife, (case no. 084/06). Not surprisingly, the apparent motive for the majority of intimate partner homicides related to an argument of a domestic nature (58%), jealousy (14%) or desertion/termination of the intimate relationship (14%).

Child homicide

There is probably no other crime that attracts more public condemnation and media attention than the murder of a child. As outlined earlier in this report, 35 children under the age of 15 years were killed. Eleven of these homicides involved the death of infants aged less than 12 months (including the death of a prematurely born baby). There was slight variation in the gender distribution of the victims, with 20 of the 35 children killed being male and the remaining 15 victims being female. Two of the children killed were Indigenous; a decline from three in the previous year and eight in 2003–04.

The overwhelming majority of child homicides were committed by a family member (92%), usually a parent (32 out of 34 recorded family relationships). Thirteen homicides involved the mother killing her child and 21 were committed by male family members. In one case the offender was an uncle of the victim (case no. 186/06) and in another case the offender was an adopted brother of the victim (case no. 243/06). While all of the female offenders were custodial parents of the child victim(s) (n=13), six male offenders were custodial parents, four were non-custodial parents and nine were step-parents of the child victim(s). In nine of the child homicides, depression, an intellectual disability or mental illness in the offender was indicated.

In 2005–06 there was one unsolved child homicide, and three children were killed during murder-suicides. While in 2004–05 no children were killed by persons not known to them, in the current year two children were killed by strangers. In one case the child victim was sexually assaulted and murdered in a public location by a person not known to them (case no. 276/06). In the other case, the child victim was hit by a vehicle and the offender charged with manslaughter (case no. 279/06).

Eighty percent of the child homicides occurred in a residential location (n=28), with three children killed in an open area/waterway (9%). There was only one child killed with a knife or sharp instrument, similar to 2004–05. Six children were killed by drowning/submersion, for which no weapon was recorded. For example, in one case the offender drove a car containing his three children into a dam (case no. 092/06). In another incident, the child drowned after the mother left it unattended in a bath (case no. 201/06). Nearly a third of the children were beaten to death (31%; n=11), and there were three incidents of shaken baby syndrome (case nos 005/06, 053/06 and 148/06). Four children were killed by fire, with cause of death due to burns or smoke inhalation. No children were killed with a firearm during 2005–06, compared with three children in 2004–05. Two children were given lethal dosages of illicit drugs. In one case, the offender claimed to have mistakenly administered a lethal dose of methadone instead of cough medicine (case no. 009/05). In another case, the child victim died from toxicity due to methadone and morphine (case no. 026/06).

Homicide between persons known to each other

Most homicides in Australia occur between persons known to each other. One-third of homicides in 2005–06 involved the falling out between friends or acquaintances or persons in other relationships, such as business associates, neighbours or employees/employers (n=118). The majority of these homicides involve male-on-male confrontations (78%; n=92). There were eight homicides between females who were known to each other. A further 13 homicides involved males killing their female friends or acquaintances. More than half of these homicides involved an offender killing someone older than them (59%), with a further 32 percent involving an offender killing someone younger than them. Less than 10 percent of offenders killed someone within their own age group.

The majority of these homicides occurred at a residential location (64%), with a further 29 percent occurring in a street or open area/waterway. In contrast, during 2004–05 almost three quarters of the homicides between known persons occurred at a residential setting and only 16 percent in a street/open area/waterway.

During 2005–06 a total of 28 homicides in this category occurred during the course of another crime. Twenty-one originated in property offences (such as break & enter, robbery or arson). Only one originated in drug offences, compared with nine in the previous year.

Arguments and altercations for a variety of reasons (54%) including money or drugs (15%) or seeking revenge for a perceived wrongdoing (6%) were some of the common motives for homicides between known persons. Alcohol-fuelled arguments accounted for 14 percent of homicides between friends and acquaintances. Half of these also involved the victim, the offender or both under the influence of alcohol prior to the incident (50%). Illicit/prescription drug use by the victim, the offender or both was noted in approximately 30 percent of these homicides. Gang involvement was indicated in a total of nine homicides, compared with only three during 2004–05.

Many of these confrontational or conflict resolution homicides between known persons involved the use of a knife or sharp instrument (37%), or a firearm (23%). A further 14 percent involved the use of a blunt instrument and 12 percent involved assaultive force (hands and/or feet).

Examples of homicides between persons known to each other included incidents between neighbours (case nos 023/06 and 074/06) and close friends (case no. 055/06). One case involved the death of a teenager by two school friends (case no. 217/06). In other cases the victim was killed by a colleague/co-worker (case nos 076/06 and 137/06), while others involved a dispute between flatmates over rent money (case nos 088/06 and 142/06).

Stranger homicide

The last category of homicides to be examined were those that involved persons with little or no prior knowledge of each other. There were a total of 91 victims of stranger homicides in Australia in 2005–06, up from 57 in the previous year. All except one incident involved single victims and only four incidents were unsolved. Male on male violence accounted for eight out of 10 stranger homicides. There were three female offenders involved in the killing of persons not known to them. Strangers are more likely to kill a person who is older than them. Nearly 80 percent of stranger homicides were committed by an offender who was younger than the victim (n=72; 79%). Over a third of the stranger homicide offenders were aged between 15 and 19 years (n=31, 34%). In the discussion of rates of offending in this report, it was reported that there had been an increase in both the number and the offending rate for males aged 15 to 19 years. Of the 57 male offenders in this age group, over half committed a stranger homicide (n=31, 54%). This may account for the increase in offending for persons in this age group and the subsequent increase in stranger homicides. This change in patterns of offending is worth monitoring over time to determine whether it is sustained or a one-off occurrence for this specific year.

There were six stranger homicides that involved an Indigenous victim and offender. The majority of stranger homicides were intraracial (n=59; 65%). Compared with the previously discussed types of homicidal encounters, where the majority of homicides occurred in a residential location, only 23 percent of stranger homicides occurred here. More than half of stranger homicides took place on the street or an open area/waterway (54%). A further 10 percent of stranger homicides occurred at a recreational venue, such as a pub, bar or nightclub. This would explain why 26 percent of the stranger homicides involved both the victim and offender drinking alcohol prior to the homicide incident (19 out of 74, where information on alcohol use was available).

In terms of motive, one-third of stranger homicides were attributed to an alcohol related (17%) or other argument (16%). Twenty-two percent of deaths resulted from an argument or altercation about money or drugs, including acquiring money for drugs. A further 13 percent occurred as a result of the offender seeking revenge for some perceived wrongdoing.

Almost two out of five stranger homicides (n=35; 38%) occurred during the course of another crime, usually a robbery (n=17) or some other property offence, including theft, break & enter or arson (n=7). Seven stranger homicides occurred during the course of a sexual assault; all involving female victims (n=8). One of these cases involved a real estate agent who was lured by the offender to a vacant house (case no. 093/06). In another case, the female victim died after a serious assault in bushes on the side of the road (case no. 256/06).

The use of assaultive force (hands and/or feet) was the most common weapon employed by strangers (36%). In 2004–05, a knife or sharp instrument was one of the least-used

weapons in stranger homicide, accounting for only 14 percent. This year, a stab wound was the second most common cause of death in stranger homicides (36%), after beating (40%). In one incident of stranger lethal violence, the victim was assaulted in his own backyard in a random attack with a hammer (case no. 242/06). In another case the offender attended a doctor's surgery and stabbed the victim in an unprovoked attack with no apparent motive (case no. 120/06).

Conclusions

In sum, the results from the analysis of the 2005–06 data show the multifaceted nature of homicide and the need to conceptualise homicide as more than simply a violent act that results in the (often unintentional) unlawful death of one or more persons, but as a series of events or triggers that lead to this tragic outcome. This report has highlighted the circumstances and characteristics of homicides that occurred during 2005–06, with the aim of identifying the patterns that have changed over time.

The data presented in the report facilitate comparisons across jurisdictions as they have been collected using a consistent methodology. This allows for comparisons across time, and most importantly, to track trends and respond in a timely manner to issues as they arise. It also allows for the evaluation of programs designed to address some of the underlying risk markers in homicide victimisation and offending.

The results in this report also highlight areas on which intervention and prevention strategies can focus. There has been much attention on reducing non-lethal violence, especially domestic violence. This includes the introduction of a number of police initiatives, for example, the Violent Crime Reduction Strategy (VCRS) in the Northern Territory which focuses primarily on enhancing the response by police to domestic incidents and providing support to adult and child victims. The VCRS targets the incidence of domestic and personal violence on a strategic level by identifying causal factors and utilising a proactive, coordinated and targeted approach to recidivist offenders and repeat victims. Police are supported to take formal action at each domestic incident they attend, through either civil (e.g. restraining order) or criminal (e.g. charges) action. Training for police officers has been implemented to ensure a consistent response to violent situations across the Territory.

Since the launch of the VCRS, the Northern Territory has seen dramatic increases in the number of Domestic Violence Orders initiated by police, in the number of apprehensions for breaches of those orders, and in the reporting of aggravated assaults from domestic situations (Northern Territory Police 2006). The VCRS also received recognition as a meritorious police project in the 2006 Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards.

Other recent police initiatives addressing similar domestic violence issues include Project SAFER in Queensland, which aims to improve police responses to domestic violence by

drawing on international policing experiences from the United States and Canada (AIC 2006). Another example is the Tasmanian whole-of-government initiative, Safe at Home, which was developed in response to family violence. This involves a range of services working together to protect and support victims of family violence, including young people and children, while making offenders responsible for their behaviour (see http://www.safeathome.tas.gov.au/ for more information). Other strategies, such as the Addressing Family Violence Programs in Victoria, endeavour to raise awareness about the lasting and damaging impact of family violence on children through community projects, committees and educational products (AIC 2006).

Other government initiatives have been specifically developed to address issues of family violence and child abuse in Indigenous families. For example, the Indigenous Family Violence Programmes, including the Family Violence Partnership Programme and the Family Violence Regional Activities Programme. Under these programmes, $37.3 million in funding over four years (2005–08) is provided by the Australian Government through the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to support projects and initiatives that aim to bring about a sustainable reduction in, and prevention of, Indigenous family violence and child abuse through the enhancement of existing, or the establishment of new, services/initiatives in partnership with states and territories throughout Australia (FaCSIA 2006).

Research into the link between alcohol use and violence has identified a strong association between alcohol, violence and crime (Boles & Miotto 2003; Chermack & Giancola 1997; Mason & Wilson 1989). While the causal pathways in alcohol-related violence are not fully understood, it is clear that alcohol use is associated with increased likelihood of various forms of violence, including homicide (Shaw et al. 2006). Recent Canadian research indicates that Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), the worldwide support group which assists its members to stop drinking, may also help reduce the number of homicides in a community (Mann et al. 2006). This research found that AA membership and treatment for the misuse of alcohol can exert a beneficial effect on homicide mortality rates, observable at the population level.

Other strategies to reduce alcohol-related violence include the voluntary implementation by licensed premises of measures aimed at reducing binge-drinking by patrons, for example, alcohol service guidelines, barring intoxicated persons from entering licensed premises and lock-out policies. These measures can assist in reducing the problem around pubs and nightclubs of alcohol-related assaults and street offences, which may escalate to homicide. Strategies aimed at reducing the lethality of assaults (and thus homicide reduction) include the introduction of toughened (or non-glass) glassware, which has been identified as an important factor in reducing the seriousness of injuries from assaults in licensed premises (Brookman & Maguire 2003).

In 2005–06, 12 homicide victims were reported as missing persons to police. While the majority of missing persons are located within a short period of time (about 85% within a week and 95% within a month; see Henderson & Henderson 1998), in a few cases, persons reported missing have actually met with foul play as victims of homicide. Delays in referring a missing person case to homicide investigators can result in the potential loss of evidence critical to the investigation. Enabling appropriate communication within police services and improving access to accurate information can assist police in assessing missing person cases and lead to better decision-making.

From 1 July 2006, the Australian Federal Police received Australian Government funding of $3.9 million over four years to establish the National Missing Persons Coordination Centre (NMPCC). The funding will enable the NMPCC to facilitate a national approach to missing persons in Australia, with state and territory police services providing input into a missing persons database. The development of CrimTrac's Police Reference System will enable integration of missing persons information, increasing operational police confidence through improved knowledge management and better access to information (CrimTrac 2006). This initiative has the potential to increase the rate of location of missing persons, including those who are suspected victims of homicide.

Other initiatives to reduce the number of weapons available in the community may also affect homicide rates. A recent example is a pilot knife exchange program operating in Melbourne. People, in particular young people, were encouraged to hand in their knives in return for incentives such as free movie, football or basketball tickets donated by community groups and businesses. The two-day program was successful in removing 54 weapons, including meat cleavers, machetes, swords and kitchen knives from the community (Metlikovec 2006). The results of such programs are encouraging given that, as with previous years, one third of homicides in 2005–06 were committed using knives or other sharp instruments.

The purpose of examining the details of homicides is to learn about each death. Such information will assist in identifying how law enforcement, agencies and professionals can work together to safeguard victims, and to improve on current practices (Great Britain. Home Office 2006). It is important to understand and acknowledge that the dynamics of homicide and therefore the indicators are different for different people.

Further reducing the number of homicide incidents in Australia is a possibility; but it requires a concerted effort and commitment to understanding and identifying where resources could be employed and the areas that could be targeted.

Data usage

Homicide data can be used for a variety of purposes. Aggregated data at the state level provide, 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 offender trends, or changes in the patterns of the circumstances and characteristics of homicide incidents, such as this year's increase in offending by 15–19 year old males.

Data from the NHMP provide important guidance in the development of policy and strategic directions in diverse fields such as community services, policing, mental health, courts and correctional institutions. NHMP data have been used to provide investigative direction in terms of whether specific homicide incidents fit established patterns, and the commonality of specific *modus operandi*.

A key function of the NHMP is the communication of the most current data and recent results to key stakeholders, namely state and territory police services, governments at the local, state and federal level, nongovernment 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 program, the National Deaths in Custody Monitoring Program, the National Armed Robbery Monitoring Program, and more recently, the National Firearms Theft Monitoring Program (see Borzycki & Mouzos 2007).

Requests for NHMP data since its inception have steadily increased and it has become an essential resource, drawn upon by a wide range of stakeholders. An indication of the ever-expanding audience to whom NHMP data has been communicated to through publications and presentations, is given through the examples of the data usage for this reporting year outlined below.

Examples of agencies and organisations that have requested data

- Homicide squads and major crime units in all Australian states and territories
- Other police units in all Australian states and territories
- Australian Government Attorney-General's Department
- Productivity Commission
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)
- Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC)
- Sex Discrimination Unit, Human Rights Commission
- Victorian Sentencing Advisory Council

- Victorian Law Reform Commission
- ACT Victims of Crime Coordinator
- 2007 Small Arms Survey Yearbook
- Domestic Violence Prevention Centre
- Australian Family and Domestic Violence Clearinghouse
- Qld Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research (CDFVR)
- Review of the Qld Mental Health Act 2000
- Community Forensic Services, Qld Health
- Queen Sofia Center for the Study of Violence, Spain
- The King's Fund, London
- The Sunday Times
- The Australian
- Channel Nine

Published material: 2005–06

(see http://www.aic.gov.au/research/projects/0001-docs.html)

Mouzos J & Houliaras T 2006. *Homicide in Australia: 2004–05 National Homicide Monitoring Program (NHMP) annual report*. Research and public policy series no. 72. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/rpp/72/rpp72.pdf

Venditto J & Mouzos J 2006. The murder of overseas visitors in Australia. *Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice* no. 316. http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi2/tandi316.html

Homicides in Australia 2004–05: weapon type. *Crime facts info* no. 141 http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/cfi/cfi141.html

Presentations

Applying homicide research to policing: thinking outside the square. Jenny Mouzos. Australian Police Summit, Melbourne, October 2005

An overview of homicide in New South Wales and in Australia: results from the 2003–04 NHMP annual report. Jenny Mouzos. NSW Homicide Squad Advisory Council Meeting, Sydney, November 2005

An examination of serial murder in Australia: research in progress, Jenny Mouzos and David West. Homicide Research Working Group Meeting, Richmond VA, June 2006

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 financial year 2005–06, that is, the estimated resident population for states and territories as at December 2005 (ABS 2005. *Australian demographic statistics*, December quarter 2005. ABS cat. no. 3101.0. Canberra: ABS

Similarly, rates for age and gender (victimisation and offending) have been calculated using the following:

Estimated resident population by sex and age, states & territories of Australia, at 30 June 2005. ABS 2005. *Australian demographic statistics*, December quarter 2005. ABS cat. no. 3101.0. Canberra: ABS).

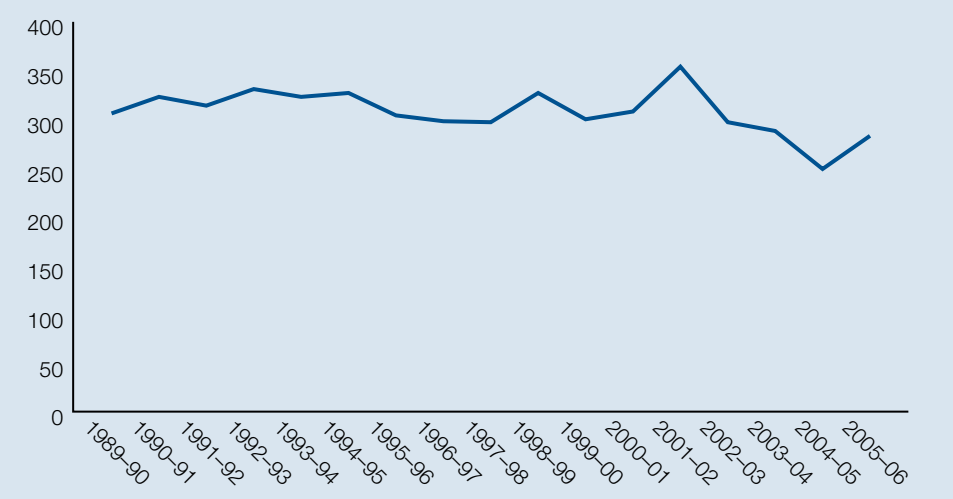
The ABS Postal Area to Remoteness Area 2001 Concordance (ABS cat. no. 9921.0) was used to convert homicide incident location post codes to remoteness areas (see ABS 2003 for definitions and further information on ASGC remoteness classification).

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

NHMP: 2005–06 findings

Incident characteristics

Trends in homicide incidents (number)



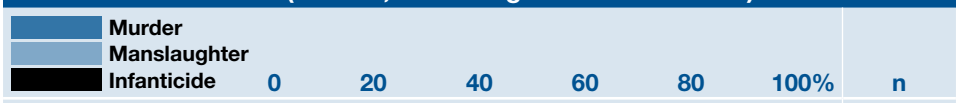
Source: AIC, NHMP 1989–90 to 2004–05 [computer file]

Incidence of homicide

	0 20 40 60 80 100%	n
New South Wales	30	85
Victoria	24	67
Queensland	20	56
Western Australia	11	30
South Australia	7	21
Tasmania	1	3
Australian Capital Territory	2	5
Northern Territory	6	16
Australia	100	283

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

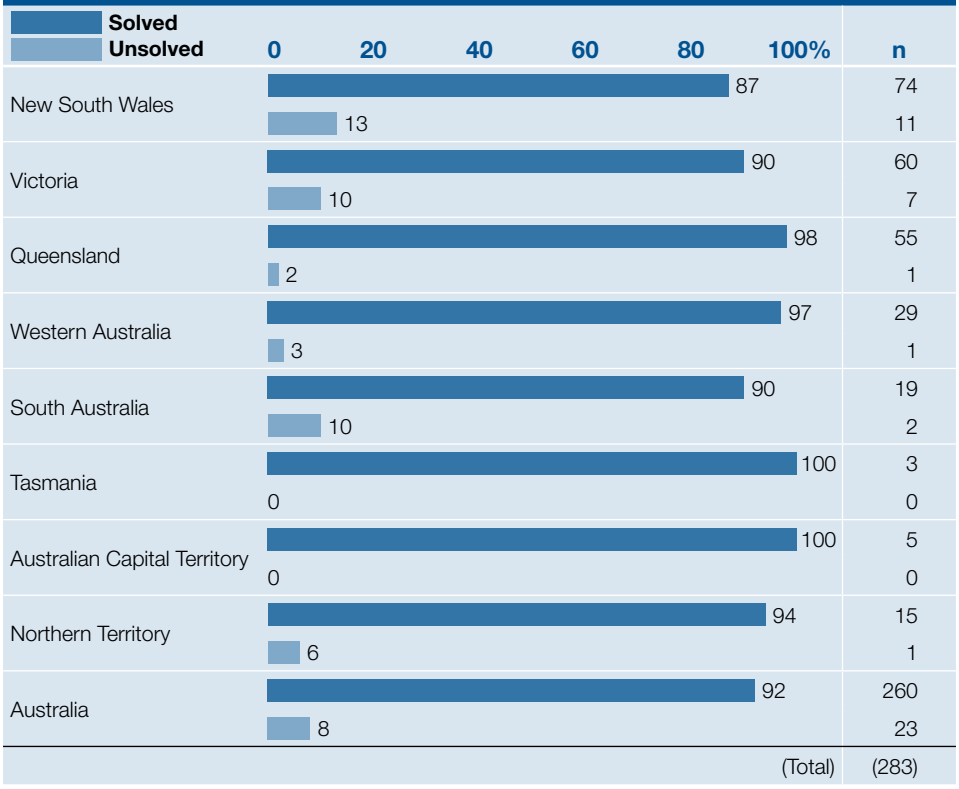
Most serious offence (murder, manslaughter or infanticide)



		n
New South Wales	98	83
	2	2
	0	0
Victoria	97	65
	3	2
	0	0
Queensland	89	50
	11	6
	0	0
Western Australia	70	21
	30	9
	0	0
South Australia	100	21
	0	0
	0	0
Tasmania	67	2
	33	1
	0	0
Australian Capital Territory	40	2
	40	2
	20	1
Northern Territory	75	12
	25	4
	0	0
Australia	90	256
	9	26
	<1	1
	(Total)	(283)

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Incidents solved[a]



a: solved incidents include those where an offender has been identified and charged, incidents where the offender has suicided and incidents otherwise cleared

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Incidents with single versus multiple victims/offenders	0 20 40 60 80 100%	n
One victim, one offender	78	203
One victim, multiple offenders	16	41
Multiple victims, one offender	5	14
Multiple victims, multiple Offenders	1	2
(Total)[a]	100	(260)

a: where an offender has been identified: excludes 23 cases where an offender has not been identified or formally charged

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Incidents by number of victims (percent)	n	1 victim	2 victims	3 victims	4+ victims
New South Wales	85	95	5	0	0
Victoria	67	93	6	1	0
Queensland	56	95	4	2	0
Western Australia	30	90	10	0	0
South Australia	21	95	5	0	0
Tasmania	3	100	0	0	0
Australian Capital Territory	5	100	0	0	0
Northern Territory	16	100	0	0	0
Australia	283	94	5	1	0

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Incidents by number of offenders (percent)[a]					
	n	1 offender	2 offenders	3 offenders	4+ offenders
New South Wales	74	77	8	7	8
Victoria	60	87	10	3	0
Queensland	55	89	9	2	0
Western Australia	29	90	10	0	0
South Australia	19	84	11	5	0
Tasmania	3	100	0	0	0
Australian Capital Territory	5	80	0	20	0
Northern Territory	15	67	20	0	13
Australia	260	83	10	4	3

a: refers to incidents where an offender has been identified

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Incidents by time of the day (percent)					
	n	Midnight–6am	6am–noon	Noon–6pm	6pm–midnight
New South Wales	82	27	9	26	39
Victoria	64	22	19	25	34
Queensland	55	36	13	13	38
Western Australia	29	24	21	28	28
South Australia	17	18	35	12	35
Tasmania	3	33	0	67	0
Australian Capital Territory	5	40	20	40	0
Northern Territory	15	33	7	7	53
Australia[a]	270	27	15	22	36

a: excludes 13 cases where the exact time of the day the incident occurred was unknown or not stated

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Incidents by day of the week (percent)

	n	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
New South Wales	85	20	11	13	13	14	11	19
Victoria	67	18	10	18	7	19	7	19
Queensland	56	14	11	9	18	21	13	14
Western Australia	30	20	20	13	7	10	20	10
South Australia	21	14	0	14	14	14	29	14
Tasmania	3	33	0	0	33	0	0	33
Australian Capital Territory	5	20	20	0	20	0	0	40
Northern Territory	16	6	6	25	0	13	19	31
Australia	283	17	11	14	12	16	13	18

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Incidents by month

	0 20 40 60 80 100%	n
January	12	34
February	6	18
March	12	33
April	5	15
May	8	22
June	10	29
July	8	22
August	4	12
September	8	24
October	7	20
November	11	31
December	8	23
(Total)	100	(283)

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Incidents by location (percent)

	n	Residential premise	Street/ open area	Other location[a]
New South Wales	85	62	25	13
Victoria	67	67	21	12
Queensland	56	71	20	9
Western Australia	30	43	37	20
South Australia	21	71	24	5
Tasmania	3	67	33	0
Australian Capital Territory	5	40	20	40
Northern Territory	16	50	50	0
Australia	283	63	25	12

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

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Incidents by remoteness area (percent)

	n	Major cities	Inner regional	Outer regional	Remote	Very remote
New South Wales	85	72	22	6	0	0
Victoria	67	79	18	3	0	0
Queensland	56	50	18	23	4	5
Western Australia	30	47	13	10	13	17
South Australia	21	76	5	10	5	5
Tasmania	3	0	33	67	0	0
Australian Capital Territory	5	100	0	0	0	0
Northern Territory	16	0	0	13	56	31
Australia	283	63	17	10	6	5

See methodological note for definitions of remoteness areas

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Incidents occurring during the course of another crime

	0 20 40 60 80 100%	n
New South Wales	19	15
Victoria	17	11
Queensland	18	10
Western Australia	20	6
South Australia	29	6
Tasmania	0	0
Australian Capital Territory	20	1
Northern Territory	25	4
Australia[a]	19	53

a: there were a further five incidents where it was not known if they occurred during the course of another crime

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Incidents occurring during the course of another crime, by type of crime

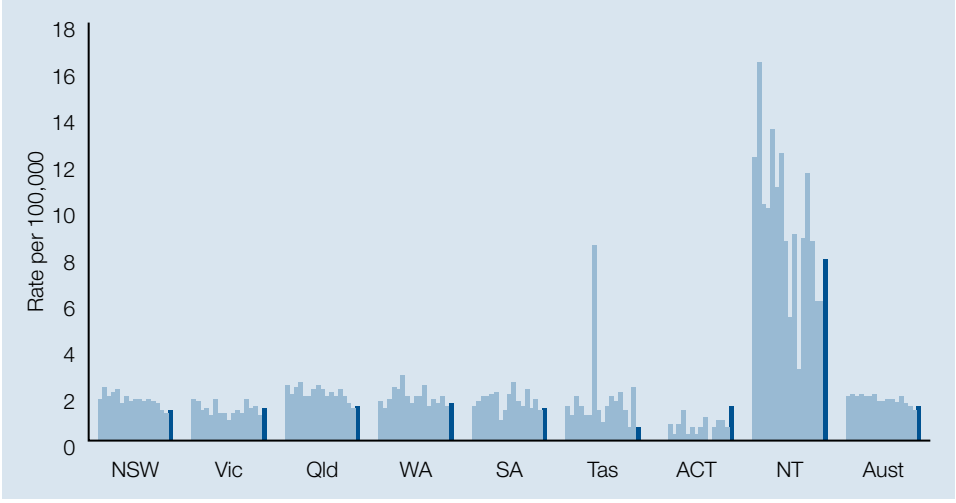
	0 20 40 60 80 100%	n
Sexual assault[a]	9	5
Robbery[a]	34	18
Arson[a]	23	12
Break & enter	13	7
Theft	6	3
Drug offences	11	6
Other	4	2
(Total)	100	(53)

a: includes more than one victim

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Victim characteristics

Trends in homicide victimisation, 1989–90 to 2005–06 (rate)[a]



a: includes one murder victim in Norfolk Island for the year 2001–02 and one for the year 2004–05

Source: AIC, NHMP 1989–90 to 2005–06 [computer file]

Gender of victims

	Males	Females	Persons	n	Rate[a]
New South Wales	69	32		61	1.8
				28	0.8
Victoria	66	34		48	1.9
				25	1.0
Queensland	55	45		33	1.6
				27	1.3
Western Australia	58	42		19	1.9
				14	1.4
South Australia	50	50		11	1.4
				11	1.4
Tasmania	100	0		3	1.2
				0	0.0
Australian Capital Territory	40	60		2	1.2
				3	1.8
Northern Territory	69	31		11	10.2
				5	5.2
Australia	63	38	100	188	1.8
				113	1.1
				301	1.5

a: rate per 100,000 population

Note: totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding

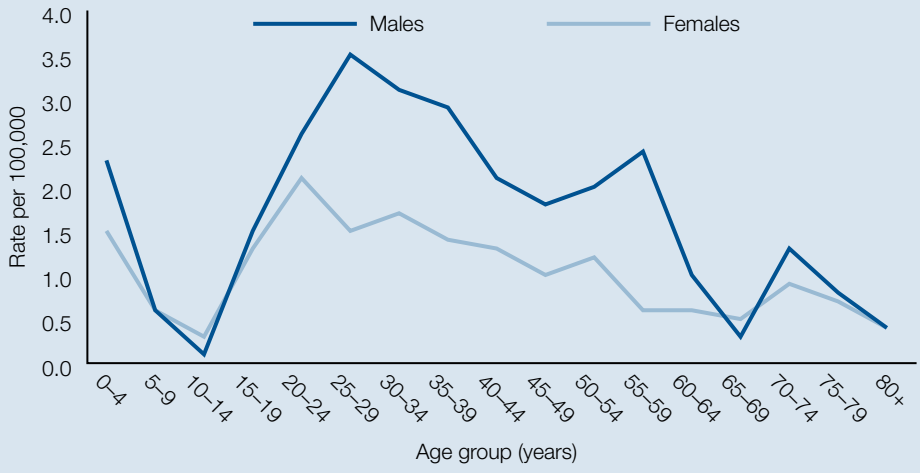
Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Age of victims

	Males		Females		Persons	
	n	Mean age	n	Mean age	n	Mean age
New South Wales	61	33	28	32	89	33
Victoria	48	35	25	40	73	37
Queensland	33	38	27	37	60	38
Western Australia	19	39	14	29	33	35
South Australia	11	30	11	31	22	31
Tasmania	3	23	0	. .	3	23
Australian Capital Territory	2	12	3	25	5	20
Northern Territory	11	34	5	26	16	32
Australia	188	35	113	34	303	34

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Victimisation by age and gender (rate)



Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Victimisation by age and gender

	Males		Females		Persons	
	n	Rate[a]	n	Rate[a]	n	Rate[a]
0–4	15	2.3	9	1.5	24	1.9
5–9	4	0.6	4	0.6	8	0.6
10–14	1	0.1	2	0.3	3	0.2
15–19	11	1.5	9	1.3	20	1.4
20–24	19	2.6	15	2.1	34	2.4
25–29	24	3.5	10	1.5	34	2.5
30–34	23	3.1	13	1.7	36	2.4
35–39	21	2.9	10	1.4	31	2.1
40–44	16	2.1	10	1.3	26	1.7
45–49	13	1.8	7	1.0	20	1.4
50–54	13	2.0	8	1.2	21	1.6
55–59	15	2.4	4	0.6	19	1.5
60–64	5	1.0	3	0.6	8	0.8
65–69	1	0.3	2	0.5	3	0.4
70–74	4	1.3	3	0.9	7	1.1
75–79	2	0.8	2	0.7	4	0.7
80+	1	0.4	2	0.4	3	0.4

a: rate per 100,000 population

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Racial appearance of victims

	Males	Females	n	Caucasian	Indigenous	Asian	Other[a]
NSW	68	32	60	80	7	10	3
			28	93	0	4	4
Vic	64	36	45	87	4	7	2
			25	68	4	28	0
Qld	55	45	33	85	12	3	0
			27	74	11	7	7
WA	58	42	19	63	37	0	0
			14	50	43	7	0
SA	50	50	11	91	9	0	0
			11	91	0	9	0
Tas	100	0	3	100	0	0	0
			0	0	0	0	0
ACT	40	60	2	50	0	50	0
			3	100	0	0	0
NT	69	31	11	9	91	0	0
			5	0	100	0	0
Australia[b]	62	38	184	77	15	6	2
			113	73	13	11	3

a: other includes Maori/Pacific Islander and other

b: excludes four (male) victims whose racial appearance was not stated

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

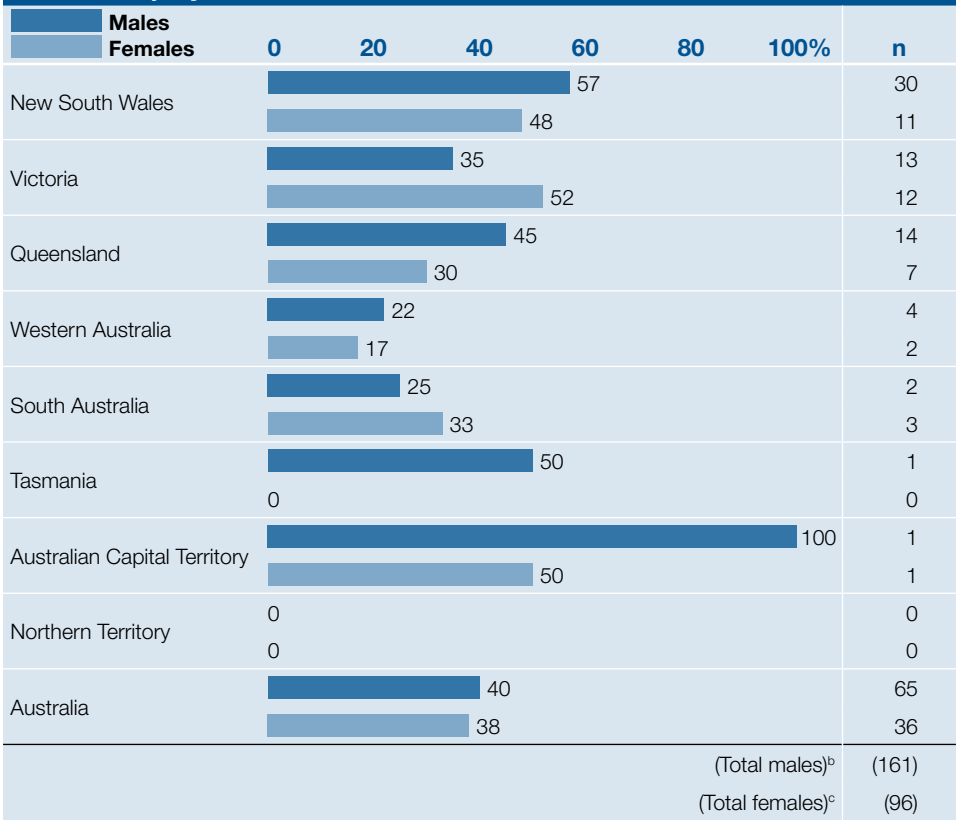
Marital status of victims (percent)

	Never married		Married/ de facto		Separated/ divorced		Widowed	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
New South Wales	58	17	31	61	10	22	0	0
Victoria	37	17	45	61	16	13	3	9
Queensland	48	17	30	61	19	13	4	9
Western Australia	44	50	50	25	6	25	0	0
South Australia	50	44	38	33	13	22	0	0
Tasmania	50	0	50	0	0	0	0	0
Australian Capital Territory	100	50	0	50	0	0	0	0
Northern Territory	40	20	50	80	10	0	0	0
Australia[a]	48	25	38	55	13	16	1	4

a: excludes 35 victims aged less than 15 years (20 male; 15 female) and 17 victims for whom marital status information was unavailable (16 male; one female)

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Victims employed[a] at the time of the incident



a: defined as full or part time employment

b: excludes 20 male victims aged less than 15 years, and seven male victims where employment status information was not available

c: excludes 15 female victims aged less than 15 years, and two female victims where employment status information was not available

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Victims with a prior criminal history

	0 20 40 60 80 100%	n
Males	51	83
Females	20	21
Persons[a]	39	104

a: excludes 33 victims (25 male; eight female) where prior criminal history was unknown

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Victims by alcohol and/or illicit/prescription drug use (percent)

	Alcohol only		Illicit/ prescription drugs only		Alcohol & illicit/ prescription drugs		No alcohol/ drug use	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
New South Wales	31	12	15	8	2	12	53	69
Victoria	28	9	23	23	14	5	35	64
Queensland	48	15	10	19	3	4	39	62
Western Australia	41	14	6	0	18	14	35	71
South Australia	30	11	10	0	0	0	60	89
Tasmania	33	0	0	0	33	0	33	0
Australian Capital Territory	0	33	0	0	50	0	50	67
Northern Territory	50	20	0	40	30	40	20	0
Australia	35	13	13	13	9	9	42	65
(Total n)[a]	(60)	(14)	(23)	(14)	(16)	(9)	(72)	(68)

a: excludes 25 victims (17 male; eight female) where alcohol and/or illicit prescription drug use information was not available

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file], National Coroners Information System (NCIS)

Victims killed by a mentally disordered offender[a b]							
	0	20	40	60	80	100%	n
Yes		13					35
No					87		231

a: this refers to cases where it was believed 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)

b: excludes 35 victims where information relating to the mental state of the offender was unknown (including victims of 23 unsolved homicide incidents)

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Victims by cause of death (number)						
	Gunshot	Stabbing	Beating	Strangulation/ suffocation	Other[a]	Unknown
New South Wales	21	28	21	5	11	3
Victoria	4	30	20	7	8	4
Queensland	9	20	16	5	8	2
Western Australia	6	7	8	2	10	0
South Australia	1	6	10	1	4	0
Tasmania	0	1	1	0	1	0
Australian Capital Territory	0	1	2	1	1	0
Northern Territory	1	8	7	0	0	0
Australia	42	101	85	21	43	9
(%)	(14)	(34)	(28)	(7)	(14)	(3)

a: other includes drug overdose, drowning/submersion, neglect, smoke inhalation/burns, shaking, pushed from a high place and other cause of death

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Victims by cause of death (percent)

	Gunshot		Stabbing		Beating		Strangulation/ suffocation		Other[a]	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
New South Wales	27	19	33	31	25	23	2	15	13	12
Victoria	9	0	46	39	24	39	4	22	17	0
Queensland	15	16	30	40	39	12	6	12	9	20
Western Australia	11	29	32	7	26	21	0	14	32	29
South Australia	0	9	27	27	55	36	0	9	18	18
Tasmania	0	0	33	0	33	0	0	0	33	0
Australian Capital Territory	0	0	0	33	50	33	50	0	0	33
Northern Territory	0	20	55	40	45	40	0	0	0	0
Australia	15	14	36	32	31	26	3	14	15	14
(Total n)[b]	(27)	(15)	(67)	(34)	(57)	(28)	(6)	(15)	(28)	(15)

a: other includes: drug overdose, drowning/submersion, neglect, smoke inhalation/burns, shaking, pushed from a high place, and other cause of death

b: excludes nine victims (three male; six female) where cause of death was unknown

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Victims by type of weapon (number)

	Firearm	Knife/sharp instrument	Blunt instrument	Hands/ feet	Other[a]	Unknown/ no weapon
New South Wales	21	27	10	16	9	6
Victoria	4	30	12	10	7	10
Queensland	9	20	6	14	8	3
Western Australia	6	7	2	7	11	0
South Australia	1	6	6	2	5	2
Tasmania	0	1	0	0	1	1
Australian Capital Territory	0	1	1	1	2	0
Northern Territory	1	8	4	3	0	0
Australia	42	100	41	53	43	22
(%)	(14)	(33)	(14)	(18)	(14)	(7)

a: other includes: explosives, fire, poison, drugs, vehicles, and other weapons

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Victims by type of weapon (percent)

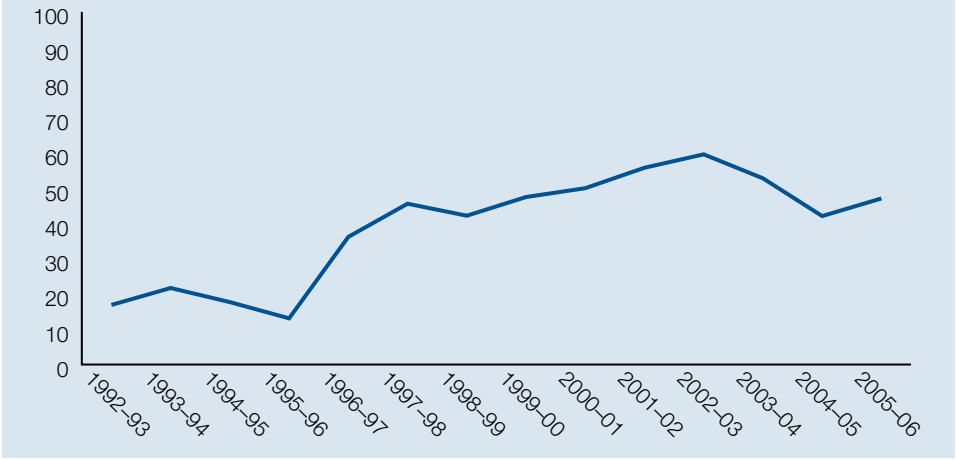
	Firearm		Knife/sharp instrument		Blunt instrument		Hands/feet		Other[a]	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
New South Wales	28	20	33	32	12	12	17	24	10	12
Victoria	10	0	50	43	19	19	10	29	12	10
Queensland	15	17	30	42	12	8	30	17	12	17
Western Australia	11	29	32	7	5	7	21	21	32	36
South Australia	0	10	30	30	40	20	10	10	20	30
Tasmania	0	0	50	0	0	0	0	0	50	0
Australian Capital Territory	0	25	0	25	0	25	50	0	50	25
Northern Territory	0	0	55	50	36	0	9	50	0	0
Australia	15	15	37	33	16	13	18	22	14	18
(Total n)[b]	(27)	(15)	(66)	(34)	(28)	(13)	(31)	(22)	(25)	(18)

a: other includes: explosives, fire, poison, drugs, vehicles, and other weapons

b: excludes 22 victims (11 male; 11 female) where type of weapon unknown or no weapon used

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

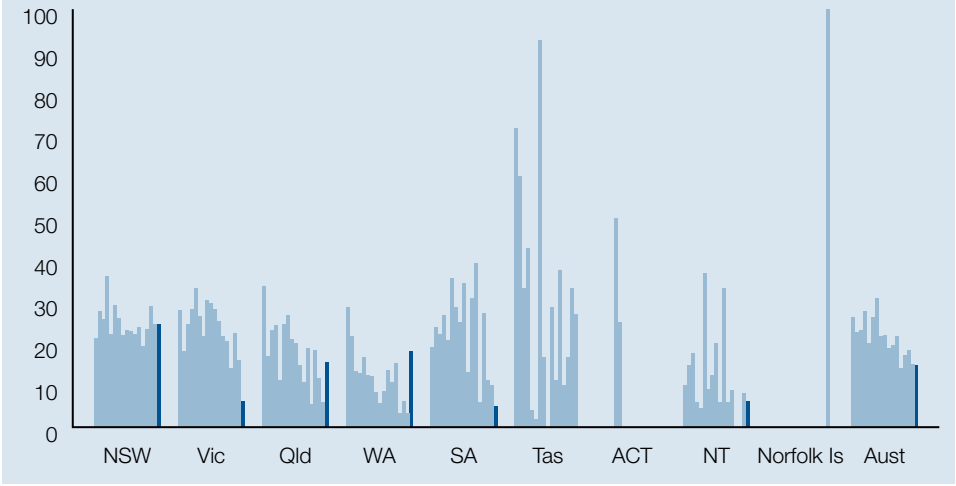
Handgun homicides as a percentage of firearms homicides (percent)[a]



a: excludes cases where the type of firearm has not yet been identified

Source: AIC, NHMP 1992–93 to 2005–06 [computer file]

Trends in firearm homicides, 1989–90 to 2005–06 (percent)[a]



a: excludes cases where weapon type was unknown

Source: AIC, NHMP 1989–90 to 2005–06 [computer file]

Victims killed with a handgun or other firearm[a]

Handguns / Other firearms	0 20 40 60 80 100%	n
New South Wales	9	8
	7	6
Victoria	3	2
	1	1
Queensland	7	4
	8	5
Western Australia	6	2
	12	4
South Australia	0	0
	5	1
Tasmania	0	0
	0	0
Australian Capital Territory	0	0
	0	0
Northern Territory	0	0
	6	1
Australia	5	16
	6	18

a: excludes eight victims where details of firearm were unavailable

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Licence and registration status of firearms used in homicide (number)

	Victims[a]		Offenders[b]			
	Licensed	Registered	Licensed	Registered	Unlicensed	Unregistered
New South Wales	0	0	3	2	19	20
Victoria	0	0	0	0	2	2
Queensland	1	1	2	2	7	7
Western Australia	0	0	0	0	4	4
South Australia	0	0	0	0	1	1
Tasmania	0	0	0	0	0	0
Australian Capital Territory	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Territory	0	0	0	0	1	1
Australia	1	1	5	4	34	35
(Total %)	(3)	(3)	(13)	(10)	(87)	(90)

a: excludes two victims whose licensing and registration details were not known

b: excludes two offenders whose licensing and registration details were not known

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file], victims n=40, offenders n=39

Victims by alleged motive (percent)

	Revenge		Domestic[a]		Money/ drugs		Alcohol related arg.		Other argument		Other motive[b]		No apparent motive[c]	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
NSW	7	4	10	61	20	7	21	0	15	0	0	0	28	29
Vic	10	8	17	64	15	8	6	0	23	0	0	12	29	8
Qld	9	0	18	63	12	7	24	0	21	0	3	0	12	30
WA	0	0	16	36	5	0	26	7	21	0	0	7	32	50
SA	9	0	9	64	9	0	18	0	18	0	0	9	36	27
Tas	0	0	67	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	0
ACT	50	0	0	67	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	33
NT	0	0	36	40	9	20	18	20	27	0	0	20	9	0
Australia	7	3	16	58	14	6	18	2	19	0	1	5	26	26
(Total n)	(14)	(3)	(30)	(66)	(26)	(7)	(33)	(2)	(36)	(0)	(1)	(6)	(48)	(29)

a: domestic includes jealousy, desertion/termination of a relationship and other domestic altercation

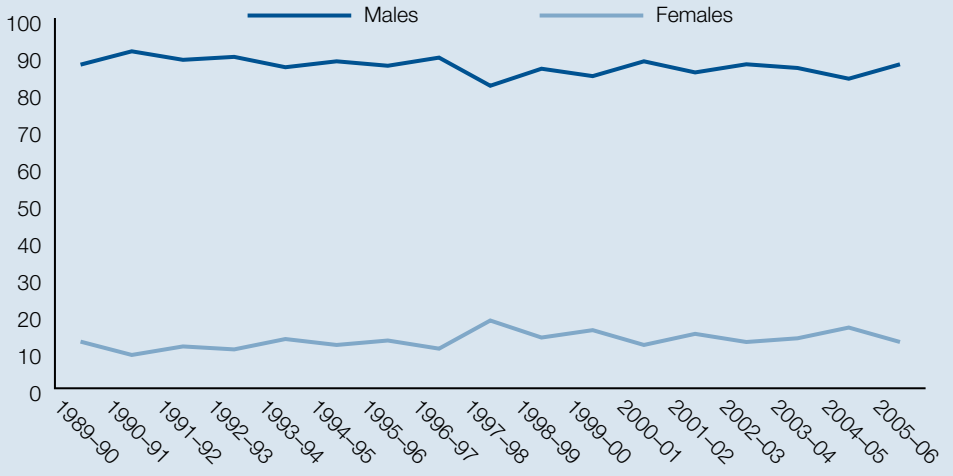
b: other motive includes political/sexual vilification (hate crimes), sexual gratification, envy, and other motives

c: also includes where the motive for the homicide has yet to be determined/is unknown

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

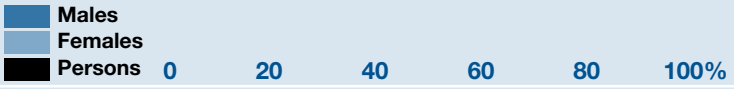
Offender characteristics

Trends in homicide offending (percent)



Source: AIC, NHMP 1989–90 to 2004–05 [computer file]

Gender of offenders



	Males	Females	Persons	n	Rate[a]
New South Wales	89	11		99	2.9
				12	0.4
Victoria	89	11		62	2.5
				8	0.3
Queensland	89	11		55	2.7
				7	0.3
Western Australia	84	16		27	2.7
				5	0.5
South Australia	87	13		20	2.6
				3	0.4
Tasmania	67	33		2	0.8
				1	0.4
Australian Capital Territory	86	14		6	3.7
				1	0.6
Northern Territory	82	18		23	21.3
				5	5.2
Australia	88	13	100	294	2.9
				42	0.4
				336	1.7

a: rate per 100,000

Note: totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

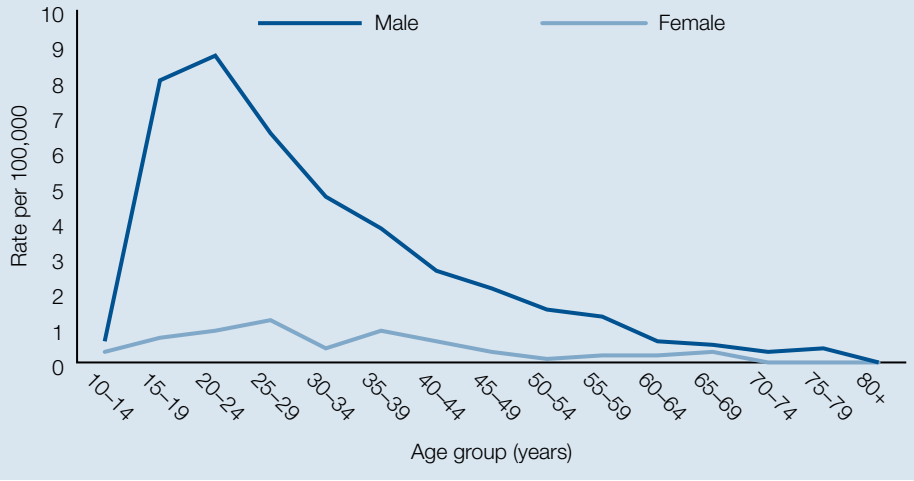
Age of offenders

	Males[a]		Females		Persons[a]	
	n	Mean age	n	Mean age	n	Mean age
New South Wales	99	30	12	29	111	30
Victoria	61	32	8	39	70	32
Queensland	55	32	7	38	62	33
Western Australia	27	32	5	28	32	31
South Australia	20	28	3	29	23	28
Tasmania	2	26	1	44	3	32
Australian Capital Territory	6	23	1	26	7	24
Northern Territory	23	21	5	27	28	22
Australia[a]	293	30	42	32	335	30

a: excludes one male offender whose age was unknown

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Homicide offending by gender and age[a]



a: excludes one male offender whose age was unknown

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Homicide offending, by age and gender

	Males[a]		Females		Persons[a]	
	n	Rate[b]	n	Rate[b]	n	Rate[b]
10–14	4	0.6	2	0.3	6	0.4
15–19	57	8.0	5	0.7	62	4.5
20–24	64	8.7	6	0.9	70	4.9
25–29	45	6.5	8	1.2	53	3.9
30–34	35	4.7	3	0.4	38	2.5
35–39	28	3.8	7	0.9	35	2.4
40–44	20	2.6	5	0.6	25	1.6
45–49	15	2.1	2	0.3	17	1.2
50–54	10	1.5	1	0.1	11	0.8
55–59	8	1.3	1	0.2	9	0.7
60–64	3	0.6	1	0.2	4	0.4
65–69	2	0.5	1	0.3	3	0.4
70–74	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.2
75–79	1	0.4	0	0.0	1	0.2
80+	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

a: excludes one male offender whose age was unknown

b: rate per 100,000 population

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Racial appearance of offenders

	Males	Females	n	Caucasian	Indigenous	Asian	Other[a]
NSW	89	11	99	72	10	9	9
			12	67	17	0	17
Vic	87	13	46	80	0	20	0
			7	100	0	0	0
Qld	89	11	55	76	18	2	4
			7	43	29	14	14
WA	83	17	24	54	46	0	0
			5	60	40	0	0
SA	87	13	20	85	10	5	0
			3	100	0	0	0
Tas	50	50	1	100	0	0	0
			1	100	0	0	0
ACT	86	14	6	67	17	17	0
			1	0	0	100	0
NT	81	19	22	0	100	0	0
			5	0	100	0	0
Australia[b]	87	13	273	68	21	8	4
			41	61	27	5	7

a: other includes Maori/Pacific Islander and other

b: excludes 22 offenders (21 male; one female) whose racial appearance was unknown/not stated

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

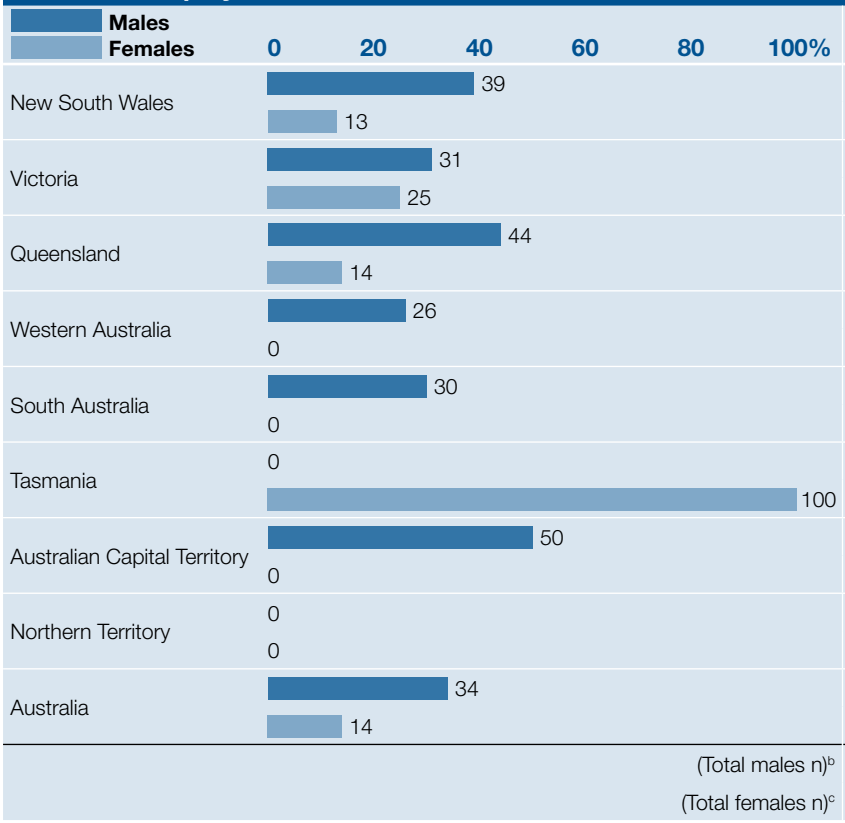
Marital status of offenders (percent)[a]

	Never married		Married/ de facto		Separated/ divorced		Widowed	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
New South Wales	55	0	36	100	9	0	0	0
Victoria	54	13	35	63	10	13	2	13
Queensland	59	14	31	71	9	14	0	0
Western Australia	67	60	21	40	8	0	4	0
South Australia	68	0	21	100	11	0	0	0
Tasmania	0	0	0	100	100	0	0	0
Australian Capital Territory	80	0	20	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Territory	75	60	25	40	0	0	0	0
Australia	60	24	30	68	9	6	1	3

a: excludes 66 offenders (60 male; six female) for whom marital status information was unavailable and six offenders aged less than 15 years (four male; two female)

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Offenders employed[a] at the time of the incident



	Males	Females	n
New South Wales	39	13	33 1
Victoria	31	25	16 2
Queensland	44	14	23 1
Western Australia	26	0	6 0
South Australia	30	0	6 0
Tasmania	0	100	0 1
Australian Capital Territory	50	0	2 0
Northern Territory	0	0	0 0
Australia	34	14	86 5
		(Total males n)[b]	(254)
		(Total females n)[c]	(36)

a: defined as full or part time employment

b: excludes four male offenders aged less than 15 years and 36 male offenders where employment status information was unavailable

c: excludes two female offenders aged less than 15 years and four female offenders where employment status information was unavailable

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Offenders with a criminal history	0	20	40	60	80	100%	n
Males				65			167
Females				50			19
Persons[a]				63			186

a: excludes 40 offenders (36 male; four female) where criminal history was unavailable

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Offenders by alcohol and/or illicit/prescription drug use (percent)

	Alcohol only		Illicit/ prescription drugs only		Alcohol & illicit/ prescription drugs		No alcohol/ drug Use	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
New South Wales	28	30	1	10	4	0	67	60
Victoria	17	25	20	50	7	0	57	25
Queensland	46	33	6	0	6	0	42	67
Western Australia	36	50	8	0	12	50	44	0
South Australia	27	0	18	0	9	0	45	100
Tasmania	50	0	0	0	0	100	50	0
Australian Capital Territory	75	0	0	0	0	0	25	100
Northern Territory	45	100	0	0	10	0	45	0
Australia	34	39	6	10	6	10	54	42
(Total n)[a]	(76)	(12)	(14)	(3)	(14)	(3)	(120)	(13)

a: excludes 81 offenders (70 male; 11 female) where alcohol and/or illicit/prescription drug use not known

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Offenders who committed suicide prior to or following arrest	0	20	40	60	80	100%	n
Males	6						18
Females	5						2
Persons	6						20

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Domestic violence history[a]	0 20 40 60 80 100%	n
Prior history	13	45
Legal intervention	3	10
No history	81	272
Not stated	3	9

a: incidents where either the victim or offender had a prior history of domestic violence

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

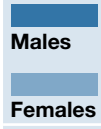
Relationship between victim and offender (percent)	n	Intimates	Family	Friends/ acquaintances	Strangers	Other[a]
New South Wales	117	15	17	35	26	7
Victoria	72	24	19	24	31	3
Queensland	66	29	23	21	24	3
Western Australia	33	24	12	39	24	0
South Australia	24	25	38	17	21	0
Tasmania	3	33	33	33	0	0
Australian Capital Territory	7	0	43	0	57	0
Northern Territory	28	18	4	57	21	0
Australia[b]	350	21	19	30	26	3

a: other includes work colleagues, employee/employer, former employee/employer, gang members and former gang members

b: excludes eight cases where the relationship between the offender and the victim is unknown

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

Relationship between victim and offender, by gender of offender



	0 20 40 60 80 100%	n	Intimates	Family	Friends/ acquaintances	Strangers	Other[a]
NSW	88	103	17	16	33	27	8
	12	14	7	29	50	14	0
Vic	88	63	19	19	25	33	3
	13	9	56	22	11	11	0
Qld	89	59	27	19	24	27	3
	11	7	43	57	0	0	0
WA	85	28	21	14	36	29	0
	15	5	40	0	60	0	0
SA	83	20	30	25	20	25	0
	17	4	0	100	0	0	0
Tas	67	2	0	50	50	0	0
	33	1	100	0	0	0	0
ACT	86	6	0	33	0	67	0
	14	1	0	100	0	0	0
NT	82	23	9	4	61	26	0
	18	5	60	0	40	0	0
Australia[b]	87	304	19	17	31	29	4
	13	46	33	33	28	7	0

a: other includes work colleagues, employee/employer, former employee/employer, gang members and former gang members

b: excludes eight cases where the relationship between the victim and the offender is unknown

Source: AIC, NHMP 2005–06 [computer file]

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Note: All URLs were correct in June 2007

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This report presents information on the circumstances and characteristics of homicide in Australia in 2005–06. In addition, the report contains jurisdictional breakdowns for comparative purposes and some long term trend data across the 17-year NHMP data collection period. In 2005–06, a total of 283 incidents of homicide were recorded. These were committed by 336 offenders and resulted in the deaths of 301 victims. During the current year, the incidence of homicide increased by 14 percent compared to 2004–05, this represents an increase of 34 homicide incidents. Analysis of the time series over the 17 years found that this recent increase was not statistically significant. The report examines the factors which appear to have driven the increase, which includes increases in the number of females killed (87 females killed in 2004–05 compared with 113 females killed in the current year). Stranger homicides also increased from 19 percent in 2004–05 to 26 percent in the current year. While there are noted increases in the current year, comparisons with previous years such as 2003–04 indicate the trends are quite similar.