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Statistical Report

45

Homicide in Australia 2021–22

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Celebrating
50 years

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Contents

vi Acknowledgements	16 Victims of homicide
vii Abstract	16 Victimisation rate
1 Introduction	17 Sex and place of birth
1 Data collection	18 Child and adult victims
1 Definition of homicide	19 Victim relationship with primary offender
2 Homicide classification	21 Indigenous victims
2 Calculation of rates	22 Sex and age
3 Data amendments and revision	23 Relationship with primary offender
3 2021–22 data amendments	24 Non-Indigenous victims
3 Historical data revisions	24 Sex and age
3 Reference period	25 Relationship with primary offender
4 Homicide incidents	27 Missing persons
6 Incident clearance rates	28 Cause of death
6 Most serious charge	29 Homicide offenders
7 Single and multiple victim/offender homicides	29 Sex and age
7 Homicide classification	31 Type of homicide perpetrated
9 Intimate partner and other domestic homicide	32 Indigenous offenders
10 Location of homicide incidents	32 Offending rates
11 Circumstances and preceding events	32 Primary offender relationship with primary victim
13 Weapon use	33 Non-Indigenous offenders
14 Alcohol- and drug-related homicides	34 Offending rates
	34 Primary offender relationship with primary victim
	35 Criminal history
	37 Offender disability and mental health
	38 References

Figures

- 4 Figure 1: Incidents of homicide, 1989–90 to 2021–22
- 9 Figure 2: Incidents of homicide by classification, 1989–90 to 2021–22
- 10 Figure 3: Incidents of intimate partner homicide by victim sex, 1989–90 to 2021–22
- 17 Figure 4: Victims of homicide by sex, 1989–90 to 2021–22
- 30 Figure 5: Homicide offenders by sex, 1989–90 to 2021–22

Tables

- 5 Table 1: Homicide incidents, victims and offenders, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022
- 6 Table 2: Incidents of homicide by most serious charge and jurisdiction, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022
- 7 Table 3: Single- and multiple-victim incidents of homicide by number of offenders and jurisdiction, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022
- 8 Table 4: Incidents of homicide by classification and jurisdiction, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (*n*)
- 8 Table 5: Incidents of homicide by classification and jurisdiction, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (Rate)
- 11 Table 6: Incidents of homicide by location and jurisdiction, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022
- 12 Table 7: Incidents of homicide by motive, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022
- 13 Table 8: Incidents of homicide committed in the course of another crime by jurisdiction, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022
- 14 Table 9: Incidents of homicide by weapon type and jurisdiction, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022
- 15 Table 10: Incidents of homicide by primary victim and offender alcohol and drug use, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022
- 18 Table 11: Victims of homicide by sex of primary offender, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022
- 19 Table 12: Victims of homicide by age group and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022
- 20 Table 13: Victims of homicide by relationship with primary offender and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>21 Table 14: Victims of homicide by relationship with and sex of primary offender, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022</p> <p>22 Table 15: Victims of homicide by sex and Indigenous status, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022</p> <p>22 Table 16: Indigenous victims by sex of primary offender, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022</p> <p>23 Table 17: Indigenous victims of homicide by relationship with primary offender and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022</p> <p>24 Table 18: Indigenous victims of homicide by relationship with and sex of primary offender, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022</p> <p>25 Table 19: Non-Indigenous victims by sex of primary offender, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022</p> <p>26 Table 20: Non-Indigenous victims of homicide by relationship with primary offender and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022</p> <p>27 Table 21: Non-Indigenous victims of homicide by relationship with and sex of primary offender, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022</p> <p>28 Table 22: Victims of homicide by cause of death and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022</p> <p>31 Table 23: Homicide offenders by age group and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022</p> <p>31 Table 24: Primary offenders by homicide classification and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022</p> <p>32 Table 25: Homicide offenders by sex and Indigenous status, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022</p> | <p>33 Table 26: Indigenous primary homicide offenders by Indigenous status and sex of victim, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022</p> <p>33 Table 27: Indigenous homicide offenders by homicide classification and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022</p> <p>34 Table 28: Non-Indigenous primary homicide offenders by Indigenous status and sex of victim, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022</p> <p>35 Table 29: Non-Indigenous primary homicide offenders by homicide classification and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022</p> <p>36 Table 30: Homicide offender criminal history by sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022</p> <p>36 Table 31: Primary homicide offenders by criminal history, sex and homicide classification, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022</p> <p>37 Table 32: Primary homicide offenders by history of domestic and family violence, Indigenous status and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022</p> |
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Abstract

The National Homicide Monitoring Program is Australia's only national data collection on homicide incidents, victims and offenders. This report describes the 218 homicide incidents recorded by Australian state and territory police between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022. During this 12-month period there were 234 victims of homicide and 279 identified offenders.

Introduction

The National Homicide Monitoring Program (NHMP) commenced at the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) in 1990 following a recommendation from the National Committee on Violence for the establishment of a national data collection on homicide. The NHMP is Australia's only national data collection on homicide incidents, victims and offenders.

Data collection

The NHMP holds data on all homicide incidents, victims and offenders recorded by state and territory police since 1989–90. The program draws on two key sources of data:

- offence records obtained from each Australian state and territory police service; and
- state and territory coronial records drawn from the National Coronial Information System (NCIS).

Data from offence records are cross-referenced with coronial records from the NCIS. The AIC has access to open cases (those for which the coronial investigation has not been finalised) and closed cases (those for which the coronial investigation has been completed and a finding has been made available) from all states and territories. NHMP data are supplemented with material from court documents where available.

Definition of homicide

In this report, *homicide* refers to the unlawful killing of a person. The NHMP collects data on:

- all cases resulting in a person or persons being charged with murder or manslaughter;
- all murder–suicides classed as murder by police;
- all driving causing death offences where the offender was charged with murder, manslaughter or equivalent offences; and
- all other deaths classed as homicides by police, including infanticides, whether or not an offender was apprehended.

It excludes attempts to unlawfully kill and conspiracy to kill.

A *homicide victim* refers to persons unlawfully killed by another person as defined above.

It excludes persons who are injured but not killed in a homicide event and victims of attempted murder or conspiracy to murder.

A *homicide offender* refers to a person who is charged with a homicide offence as defined above or a person who would have been charged with a homicide offence as defined above but were deceased (by suspected suicide or other cause) prior to arrest or where the homicide incident was cleared otherwise. It excludes persons of interest or suspects who have not been charged.

A *homicide incident* is defined as cleared when one or more offenders have been charged with a homicide offence as defined above, an offender who would have been charged with a homicide offence as defined above died prior to arrest or the incident was cleared by other means (eg legal intervention). Information on homicide offenders is only collected for offenders from cleared homicide incidents. Findings in this report are presented for either all homicide incidents or cleared homicide incidents.

Homicide classification

Homicide incidents are classified as domestic, acquaintance or stranger homicides. Domestic homicide includes intimate partner and family homicide. Most homicide incidents in Australia involve a single victim and a single offender, in which case classification is simple. Where a homicide incident involves multiple victims and/or offenders, the classification is based on the closest relationship between the victim and the primary offender. For example, if two victims of a single homicide offender are the intimate partner and neighbour of the offender, the incident is classified as a domestic homicide as the closest relationship is between the intimate partner victim and offender. Similarly, if the victim of a multiple-offender homicide is the work colleague of one offender and a stranger to the second offender, the homicide is classified as an acquaintance homicide.

Calculation of rates

Rates are calculated using population data (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2023) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population estimates and projections (ABS 2019). Except where stated otherwise, the total population is used in calculating rates. The denominator used for intimate partner homicide rates is the population aged 18 years and over. Offender rates are calculated using the population aged 10 years and over, to reflect the legal age of criminal responsibility in all jurisdictions in 2021–22.

Data amendments and revision

2021–22 data amendments

Western Australia has revised the data supplied to the NHMP to limit identifying information about homicide incidents, victims and offenders. These revisions limit our ability to cross-reference Western Australian homicide data with NCIS records as undertaken for other state and territory homicide data. Consequently, some of the data presented in this report exclude Western Australia where the information was not available or included a high number of ‘not stated/unknown’ responses.

Indigenous status data for NSW homicide offenders is based on a new methodology introduced by the New South Wales Police Force in 2021. An offender is recorded as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander if they ever identified as such during an interaction with the police force. The previous methodology recorded an offender as Indigenous if they identified as such in 80 percent or more interactions with police. This has created an increase in the number and rate of Indigenous homicide offenders compared with previous years. Changes in Indigenous homicide offending rates between 2021–22 and previous years should be treated with caution.

Historical data revisions

The NHMP undergoes historical data review to update or complete information that may have been unavailable at the time of reporting and to revise the status of previously uncleared homicide incidents. Data published in previous reports may differ to trend data published in this report and online data tables.

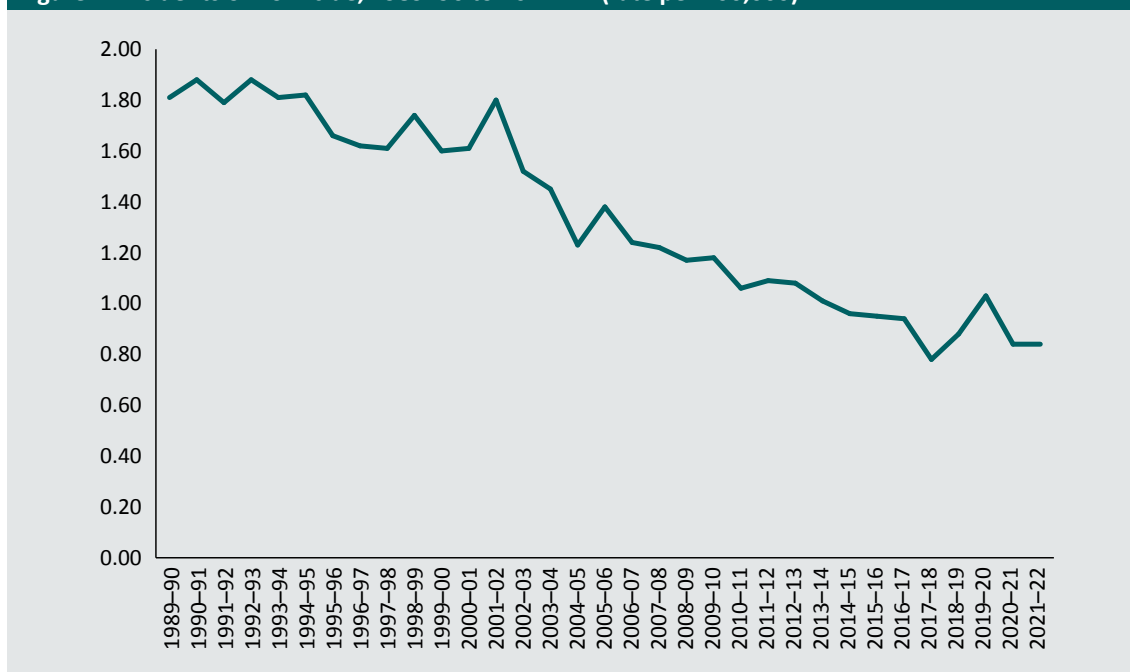
Reference period

This report describes homicide incidents, victims and offenders recorded by Australian state and territory police between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022. Time series data are published in supplementary data tables ([Tables A1–A9](#), [B1–B6](#) and [C1–C4](#)).

Homicide incidents

Between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022, there were 218 homicide incidents recorded by Australian state and territory police (see Table 1). This is one more than the number of homicide incidents in 2020–21 (see Table A1). The homicide incident rate in 2021–22 was 0.84 per 100,000, the same incident rate recorded in 2020–21 (see Tables 1 and A2). The homicide incident rate has decreased overall by 54 percent since 1989–90 (see Figure 1 and Table A2).

Figure 1: Incidents of homicide, 1989–90 to 2021–22 (rate per 100,000)



Source: AIC NHMP 1989–90 to 2021–22 [computer file]; see Table A2

New South Wales recorded the largest number of homicide incidents ($n=72$), followed by Victoria ($n=49$), Queensland ($n=42$) and Western Australia ($n=24$). Nine incidents were recorded in South Australia, eight in Tasmania, and seven each in the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory (see Table 1). The highest recorded homicide incident rate across the states and territories was in the Northern Territory (2.80 per 100,000), followed by the Australian Capital Territory (1.53 per 100,000). South Australia recorded the lowest homicide incident rate in 2021–22 (0.49 per 100,000; see Table 1).

The largest change in the number of homicide incidents between 2020–21 and 2021–22 was in New South Wales, which recorded an increase of 11 incidents. Victoria and Western Australia recorded a decrease of six and five homicide incidents respectively. The number of homicide incidents increased in Tasmania (+2) and the Australian Capital Territory (+1), and decreased in South Australia (–2). The incident number remained the same in both Queensland and the Northern Territory (see Table A1).

Table 1: Homicide incidents, victims and offenders, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022									
	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Incidents									
Number	72	49	42	24	9	8	7	7	218
Rate	0.88	0.74	0.79	0.86	0.49	1.40	1.53	2.80	0.84
Victims									
<i>Male</i>									
Number	65	41	31	17	6	7	4	4	175
Rate	1.60	1.25	1.18	1.22	0.67	2.47	1.77	3.15	1.36
<i>Female</i>									
Number	12	15	12	10	3	1	3	3	59
Rate	0.29	0.45	0.45	0.72	0.33	0.35	1.30	2.43	0.45
<i>Total</i>									
Number	77	56	43	27	9	8	7	7	234
Rate	0.94	0.84	0.81	0.97	0.49	1.40	1.53	2.80	0.90
Offenders									
<i>Male</i>									
Number	86	44	62	16	8	9	7	7	239
Rate	2.42	1.53	2.69	1.31	1.00	3.58	3.55	6.43	2.11
<i>Female</i>									
Number	10	5	16	6	1	2	0	0	40
Rate	0.28	0.17	0.67	0.49	0.12	0.77	0.00	0.00	0.35
<i>Total</i>									
Number	96	49	78	22	9	11	7	7	279
Rate	1.34	0.84	1.67	0.90	0.56	2.16	1.74	3.26	1.22

Note: Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Incident clearance rates

In 2021–22, 89 percent ($n=195$) of homicide incidents were cleared by police. This follows the pattern since 1989–90 where the majority of homicide incidents are cleared by police (91%, $n=8,252$; see Table A3). Homicide incidents which are not cleared include those where an offender is yet to be identified, where a suspect has been identified but not charged with a homicide offence, and long-term missing person cases where police determine the victim has met with foul play.

Of the 195 homicides cleared in 2021–22, at least one offender had been charged in 95 percent ($n=186$) of incidents. The offender died prior to arrest in four percent of cleared incidents ($n=8$), and the homicide was cleared by other means in one incident ($<1\%$; see Table A3). In 2021–22, there were 23 homicide incidents (10%) which remained uncleared at the time of reporting.

Where the primary victim was male, 89 percent ($n=145$) of homicide incidents in 2021–22 were cleared. This was similar to the 91 percent clearance rate for homicide incidents where the primary victim was female ($n=51$). The clearance rate was the same for incidents where the primary victim was Indigenous or non-Indigenous (90%, $n=36$ vs 90%, $n=158$ respectively).

Most serious charge

The most serious charge for most homicide incidents in 2021–22 was murder. In 81 percent of incidents ($n=176$), either the offender was charged with murder or, in the case of uncleared homicide incidents, the police determined that murder would be the most serious charge (see Table 2). Manslaughter was the most serious charge in 14 percent of homicide incidents ($n=30$), followed by infanticide (2%, $n=4$). Since 1989–90, the most serious charge was murder for 88 percent ($n=8,001$) of homicide incidents and manslaughter for 11 percent ($n=970$) of incidents (see Table A4).

Table 2: Incidents of homicide by most serious charge and jurisdiction, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Murder	58	34	42	19	7	7	3	6	176
Manslaughter	13	4	0	5	2	1	4	1	30
Infanticide	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Not stated/unknown	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Total	72	49	42	24	9	8	7	7	218

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Single and multiple victim/offender homicides

Most homicide incidents in Australia involve a single victim. In 2021–22, 94 percent ($n=205$) were single-victim incidents (see Table 3). Sixty-eight percent ($n=149$) of homicides were single victim/single offender incidents, 16 percent ($n=34$) of homicides were single victim/multiple offender incidents and 10 percent ($n=22$) were single-victim incidents where no offender had been identified or charged (ie not cleared). The remaining 13 homicides were multiple-victim incidents, of which 12 (6% of all incidents) were committed by a single offender.

Table 3: Single- and multiple-victim incidents of homicide by number of offenders and jurisdiction, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Single victim									
Single victim, single offender	45	30	27	17	9	7	7	7	149
Single victim, multiple offenders	15	4	13	1	0	1	0	0	34
Single victim, no offender identified ^a	8	10	1	3	0	0	0	0	22
<i>Total single-victim incidents</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>205</i>
Multiple victims									
Multiple victims, single offender	4	4	1	3	0	0	0	0	12
Multiple victims, multiple offenders	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Multiple victims, no offender identified ^a	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<i>Total multiple-victim incidents</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>13</i>
Total	72	49	42	24	9	8	7	7	218

a: Includes incidents not cleared at time of reporting

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Homicide classification

Homicide classification is based on the relationship between the primary victim and the primary offender. A homicide incident is classed as:

- a domestic homicide, where the victim was the intimate partner or relative (including kinship groups) of the primary offender;
- an acquaintance homicide, where the victim was the friend or acquaintance of the primary offender or was otherwise known to the primary offender (eg housemate, neighbour, work colleague, relationship rival, fellow gang member); or
- a stranger homicide, where the victim had no known relationship with the primary offender.

Information on victim and offender relationship is collected in the NHMP for cleared incidents only. In 2021–22, there were 61 incidents of domestic homicide (28%), 79 acquaintance homicides (36%) and 31 stranger homicides (14%; see Table 4). The victim–offender relationship was not recorded for 24 homicide incidents (11%). In the 33 years since 1989–90, 40 percent ($n=3,579$) of all homicide incidents were domestic homicides and 36 percent ($n=3,271$) were acquaintance homicides (see Table A5). Stranger homicides are less common in Australia, comprising 12 percent ($n=1,103$) of all homicide incidents since 1989–90.

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
<i>Intimate partner</i>	5	8	7	5	2	2	3	3	35
<i>Filicide</i>	3	3	4	0	2	0	0	0	12
<i>Parricide</i>	2	3	0	1	1	1	0	0	8
<i>Siblicide</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<i>Other family</i>	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	5
Domestic	11	15	13	6	5	3	3	5	61
Acquaintance	35	14	20	0	3	4	2	1	79
Stranger	13	6	6	1	1	1	2	1	31
Not stated/unknown	5	3	2	14	0	0	0	0	24
Incident not cleared	8	11	1	3	0	0	0	0	23
Total	71	49	42	24	9	8	7	7	218

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

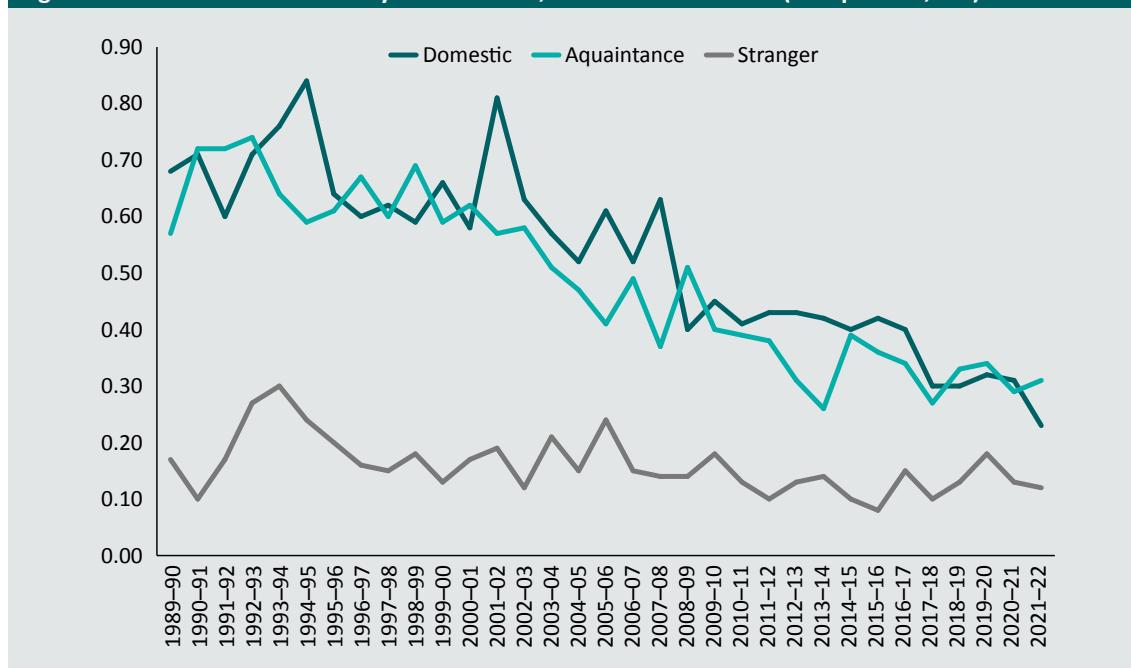
The rate of domestic homicide in 2021–22 was 0.23 per 100,000, lower than the acquaintance homicide rate of 0.31 per 100,000 (see Table 5). The stranger homicide rate was 0.12 per 100,000. The domestic homicide rate in 2021–22 is the lowest rate recorded for domestic homicide in Australia since 1989–90 (see Table A6). The rate of domestic homicide has decreased overall by two-thirds since 1989–90 (66%; see Figure 2 and Table A6). Acquaintance homicide rates declined by 46 percent over the same period, while stranger homicide rates have remained relatively stable.

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA ^a	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Domestic	0.13	0.23	0.24	na	0.27	0.53	0.66	2.00	0.23
Acquaintance	0.43	0.21	0.38	na	0.16	0.70	0.44	0.40	0.31
Stranger	0.16	0.09	0.11	na	0.05	0.18	0.44	0.40	0.12

a: Rates are not calculated for Western Australia due to the high number of not stated/unknown responses for victim–offender relationship. Western Australia is included in the total rate calculation

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Figure 2: Incidents of homicide by classification, 1989–90 to 2021–22 (rate per 100,000)



Source: AIC NHMP 1989–90 to 2021–22 [computer file]; see Table A6

Intimate partner and other domestic homicide

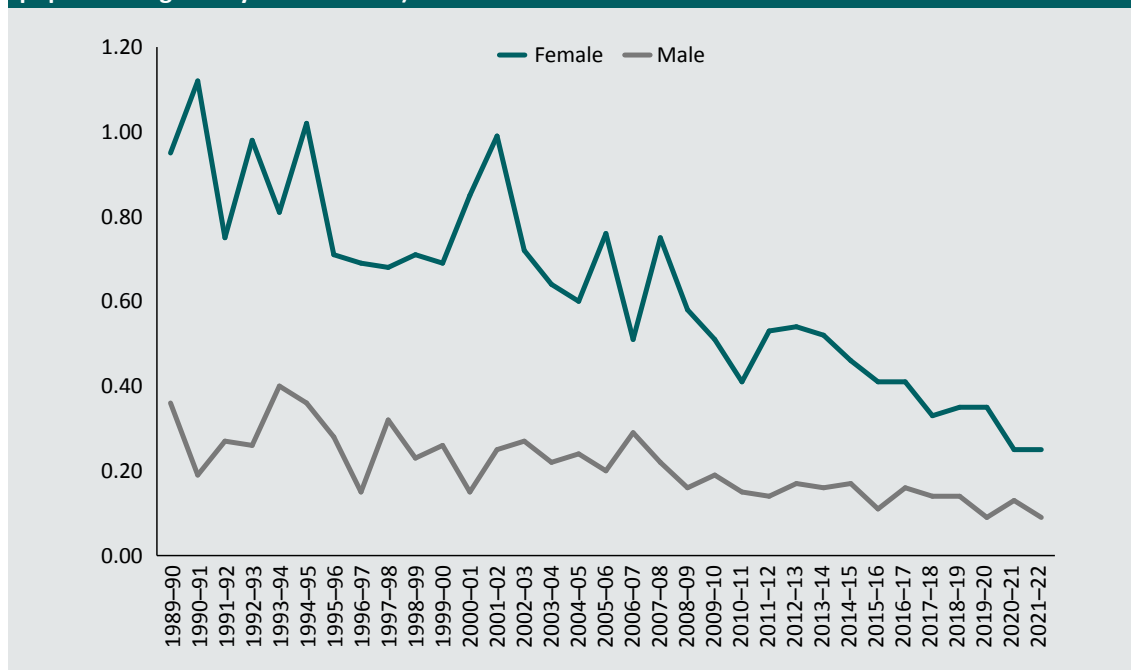
Sixteen percent ($n=35$) of homicide incidents in 2021–22 were intimate partner homicides. This is slightly lower than the proportion of intimate partner homicides recorded in 2020–21 (18%, $n=40$). On average, 24 percent ($n=2,152$) of homicide incidents in Australia between 1989–90 and 2021–22 were intimate partner homicides.

Three-quarters (74%, $n=26$) of intimate partner homicide incidents in 2021–22 were perpetrated against a female, and one-quarter were perpetrated against a male (26%, $n=9$). Similarly, three-quarters (76%, $n=1,633$) of intimate partner homicide incidents in Australia since 1989–90 involved female victims (see Table A7). On average, 18 percent of all homicide incidents in Australia each year between 1989–90 and 2021–22 were intimate partner homicides perpetrated against a female.

The rate of female intimate partner homicide in 2021–22 was 0.25 per 100,000, the same as in 2020–21 (see Table A7). This is the equal lowest rate of female intimate partner homicide since 1989–90. The rate of female intimate partner homicide decreased overall by 74 percent in the 33 years since 1989–90 (see Figure 3 and Table A7).

Of the other domestic homicide incidents in 2021–22, 12 (6% of all homicide incidents) were filicides (where a parent killed their child) and eight (4%) were parricides (where a parent was killed by their child). One incident (<1%) involved the homicide of a sibling (or siblicide) and five (2%) of another family member or kin (see Tables 4 and A8).

Figure 3: Incidents of intimate partner homicide by victim sex, 1989–90 to 2021–22 (rate per 100,000 population aged 18 years and over)



Source: AIC NHMP 1989–90 to 2021–22 [computer file]; see Table A7

Location of homicide incidents

Over half of homicide incidents in 2021–22 occurred in a residential setting (56%, $n=122$; see Table 6). A quarter took place in a community location (28%, $n=60$) and 12 percent ($n=26$) in another location. The location was not stated or unknown for five percent ($n=10$) of homicide incidents in 2021–22.

Further detail on the location of homicide incidents was available for all states and territories except Western Australia ($n=194$ homicide incidents). Forty-two percent ($n=82$) of these incidents occurred at the victim's home, nine percent ($n=17$) occurred at the offender's home, while eight percent ($n=15$) took place at another person's home (see Table 6). One-fifth of homicide incidents occurred on a street, footpath or roadway (20%, $n=39$), while four percent ($n=7$) occurred in an open area or waterway. An equal number of incidents occurred in a recreation or food venue or while the victim was in their private motor vehicle (3%, $n=6$).

Table 6: Incidents of homicide by location and jurisdiction, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)									
	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA ^a	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Victim's home	26	28	16	na	4	6	2	0	82
Offender's home	6	3	5	na	1	0	0	2	17
Other home	3	2	6	na	0	1	0	3	15
<i>Residential</i>	35	33	27	8	5	7	2	5	122
Street/footpath	17	4	7	na	4	1	5	1	39
Open area/waterway	4	2	0	na	0	0	0	1	7
Sporting oval/facility	1	0	0	na	0	0	0	0	1
Public transport/facility	0	2	0	na	0	0	0	0	2
Public carpark	0	1	1	na	0	0	0	0	2
<i>Community</i>	22	9	8	9	4	1	5	2	60
Correctional facility	1	0	0	na	0	0	0	0	1
Healthcare facility	0	0	0	na	0	0	0	0	0
Workplace/school	0	0	1	na	0	0	0	0	1
Retail	0	1	1	na	0	0	0	0	2
Recreation/food venue	4	2	0	na	0	0	0	0	6
Private motor vehicle	4	1	1	na	0	0	0	0	6
Other not specified	0	2	3	na	0	0	0	0	5
<i>Other</i>	9	6	6	5	0	0	0	0	26
Not stated/unknown	6	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	10
Total	72	49	42	24	9	8	7	7	218

a: Further detail on incident location was not available for Western Australia
Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Circumstances and preceding events

The NHMP collects information on motive or the apparent precursor to the homicide event. Motive reported by the NHMP is based on police records. The circumstances preceding a homicide may be more nuanced than the originally recorded motive indicates and are generally confirmed where the matter proceeds through the criminal justice system or following a coronial inquest. Information regarding the circumstances of homicide incidents in Western Australia is excluded due to limited data.

There were 163 cleared homicide incidents in 2021–22 (excluding Western Australia) where motive was applicable. Thirty-seven percent ($n=61$) of these incidents followed an argument (see Table 7). Twenty-four incidents (15%) were preceded by a domestic argument, 12 (7%) by an alcohol-related argument and 25 (15%) by an other, unspecified disagreement. Six percent ($n=9$) of homicide incidents were related to a dispute over money or drugs. There were four incidents (2%) where the offender was experiencing a psychotic episode or other mental health event at the time of the homicide. The circumstances of just over one-quarter of incidents were not stated or unknown at the time of reporting (27%, $n=44$), while motive was not apparent in a further seven percent ($n=11$) of incidents.

Table 7: Incidents of homicide by motive, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)

	<i>n</i>
Revenge	1
Jealousy	6
Desertion/termination	1
Argument of a domestic nature	24
Alcohol-related argument	12
Other argument	25
Dispute over money	3
Dispute over drugs	6
Racial vilification	0
Sexual vilification	1
Sexual gratification	0
Gang-related	8
Mercy killing/suicide	1
Other	16
Mistaken identity	0
Victim intervened	0
Apparently delusional	4
No apparent motive	11
Not stated/unknown	44
Total	163

Note: Excludes Western Australia ($n=24$ incidents). Excludes non-WA incidents that were not cleared at the time of reporting ($n=20$). Excludes non-WA incidents where motive is not applicable ie most driving causing death offences ($n=11$)

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

In 2021–22, one-quarter (26%, $n=50$) of homicide incidents (excluding Western Australia) were preceded by another crime (see Table 8). Forty-four percent of these crimes were violent offences ($n=22$). Sixteen incidents (8% of all incidents excluding Western Australia) were recorded by police as being preceded by a physical assault and six (3%) occurred during an armed robbery or home invasion. Arson preceded three homicide incidents (2%).

Table 8: Incidents of homicide committed in the course of another crime by jurisdiction, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Preceding crime	19	10	14	2	1	2	2	50
No preceding crime	22	28	18	6	6	5	5	90
Not stated/unknown	31	11	10	1	1	0	0	54
Total	72	49	42	9	8	7	7	194

Note: Excludes Western Australia ($n=24$ incidents)

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Weapon use

The majority of homicide incidents in 2021–22 involved the use of at least one weapon (81%, $n=176$; see Table 9). Knives and other sharp instruments were used in 36 percent ($n=78$) of homicide incidents. Each year since 1989–90, knives and other sharp instruments have been the most commonly used homicide weapon in Australia, with just over one-third of homicide incidents committed using this weapon type (35%, $n=3,145$; see Table A9).

Firearms were the second most common weapon in 2021–22 (15%, $n=32$), followed by hands and feet (12%, $n=27$). Since 1989–90, firearms have been used in average 17 percent ($n=1,530$) of all homicide incidents and hands and feet in 21 percent ($n=1,922$) of incidents (see Table A9). A blunt instrument was used in six percent ($n=13$) of homicide incidents in 2021–22 and 10 percent ($n=929$) of all incidents since 1989–90.

Fire was used as a weapon in three percent ($n=6$) of homicide incidents in 2021–22. A vehicle was intentionally used in two percent of homicide incidents ($n=5$).

Table 9: Incidents of homicide by weapon type and jurisdiction, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)									
	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Firearm	12	8	6	3	0	2	0	1	32
Knife or other sharp instrument	24	20	16	9	4	4	1	0	78
Blunt instrument	2	2	2	3	0	1	0	3	13
Hands and feet	9	5	8	0	3	0	1	1	27
Fire	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	6
Drugs	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Vehicle	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	5
Other	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	1	6
Multiple weapons	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Weapon not stated	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
<i>Weapon used</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>176</i>
Weapon not used	11	3	1	2	0	1	3	0	21
Not stated/unknown	6	3	5	6	1	0	0	0	21
Total	72	49	42	24	9	8	7	7	218

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Alcohol- and drug-related homicides

Toxicology results for homicide incidents in 2021–22 (excluding Western Australia; $n=194$) indicated that the primary homicide victim in 22 percent ($n=42$) of incidents had consumed alcohol at the time of the homicide (see Table 10). The victim had taken illicit drugs and/or a prescription drug at non-therapeutic levels in 27 percent of incidents ($n=52$; see Table 10). Both alcohol and drugs had been consumed by the primary victim in 12 percent of incidents ($n=24$).

Information on the primary homicide offender's consumption of alcohol and drugs is available for cleared homicide incidents (excluding Western Australia; $n=174$). The primary offender had used alcohol in 20 percent ($n=35$) of these incidents and illicit drugs and/or prescription drugs at non-therapeutic levels in 12 percent ($n=21$) of incidents (see Table 10). Data provided to the NHMP are not based on toxicology results and may underestimate alcohol and drug use prior to the homicide incident. The proportion of not stated/unknown responses was 57 percent ($n=100$) for offender alcohol use and 65 percent ($n=113$) for offender drug use in 2021–22.

Table 10: Incidents of homicide by primary victim and offender alcohol and drug use, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)

	Victim	Offender ^a
Alcohol use		
Used alcohol	42	35
Did not use alcohol	97	39
Not stated/unknown	55	100
Total	194	174
Drug use		
Used drugs	52	21
Did not use drugs	81	40
Not stated/unknown	61	113
Total	194	174

a: Includes offenders from cleared homicide incidents only

Note: Excludes Western Australia (n=24 incidents)

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Victims of homicide

There were 234 victims of homicide in 2021–22 (see Table 1), an increase of six victims from the previous year (see Table B1). Of these, 188 were victims of murder (80%), 31 were victims of manslaughter (13%) and four were victims of infanticide (2%). The most serious offence was not stated or unknown for 11 victims (5%).

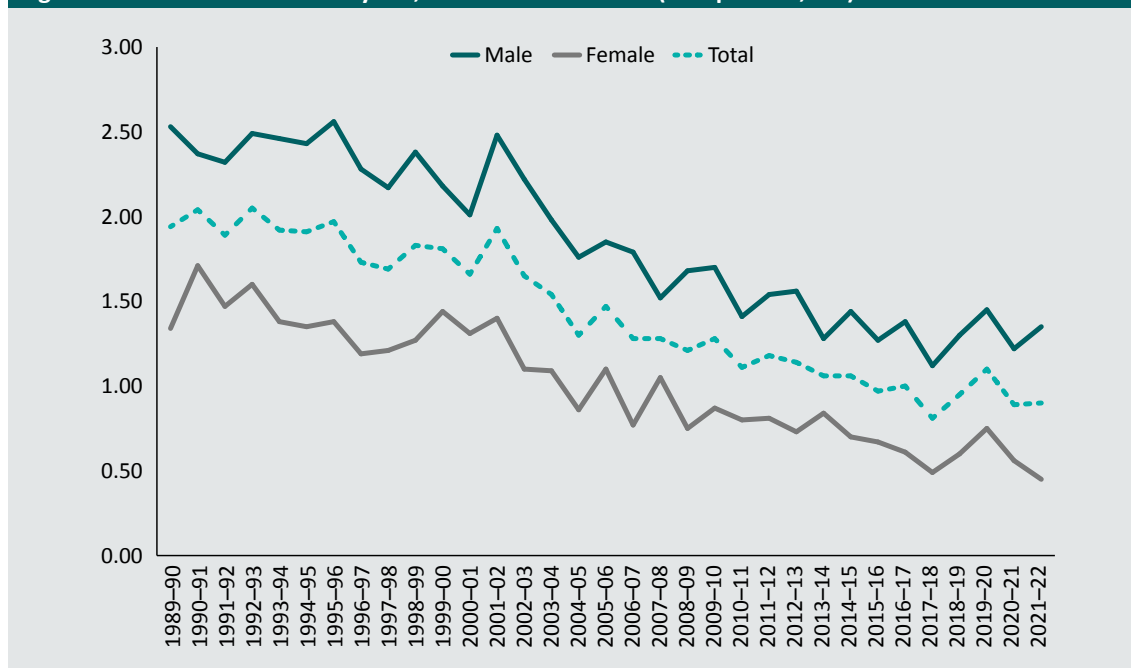
The number of homicide victims ranged from 77 in New South Wales to seven each in the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory. An increase in homicide victims between 2020–21 and 2021–22 was recorded in New South Wales (+14), Tasmania (+2) and the Australian Capital Territory (+1). The number of homicide victims decreased in Victoria (–3), Queensland (–2), Western Australia (–3) and South Australia (–3). The same number of homicide victims was recorded in the Northern Territory in 2020–21 and 2021–22.

Victimisation rate

The homicide victimisation rate was 0.90 per 100,000 in 2021–22, similar to the rate of 0.89 per 100,000 recorded in 2020–21. The homicide victimisation rate declined 54 percent between 1989–90 and 2021–22 (see Figure 4).

The homicide victimisation rate in 2021–22 was highest in the Northern Territory with 2.80 per 100,000 (see Table 1 and Table B2). This was followed by the Australian Capital Territory at 1.53 per 100,000. The lowest homicide victimisation rate was recorded in South Australia at 0.49 per 100,000. This is the lowest rate of homicide victimisation recorded in South Australia since 1989–90 (see Table B2). The largest reduction in homicide victimisation occurred in Queensland, with an overall 67 percent decrease since 1989–90 (2.45 per 100,000 in 1989–90 vs 0.81 per 100,000 in 2021–22).

Figure 4: Victims of homicide by sex, 1989–90 to 2021–22 (rate per 100,000)



Source: AIC NHMP 1989–90 to 2021–22 [computer file]; see Tables B2 and B3

Sex and place of birth

Historically, males are over-represented as victims of homicide in Australia, comprising around two-thirds (65%, $n=6,233$) of homicide victims and females one-third (35%, $n=3,413$; see Table B4). In 2021–22, 75 percent ($n=175$) of victims were male and 25 percent ($n=59$) were female (see Table 1). The male homicide victimisation rate in 2021–22 was 1.36 per 100,000. The female victimisation rate was 0.45 per 100,000, the lowest victimisation rate recorded for females since 1989–90 (see Table B3). Among females, the overall decrease in victimisation was 66 percent (1.34 per 100,000 in 1989–90 vs 0.45 per 100,000 in 2021–22) and among males it was 46 percent (2.53 per 100,000 in 1989–90 vs 1.36 per 100,000 in 2021–22).

Most male victims of cleared homicide incidents were killed by a male primary offender (89%, $n=137$; see Table 11) as were most female homicide victims (83%, $n=45$). Eleven percent ($n=17$) of male victims and 17 percent ($n=9$) of female victims were killed by a female primary offender.

Table 11: Victims of homicide by sex of primary offender, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)			
	Male victim	Female victim	Total
Male offender	137	45	182
Female offender	17	9	26
Total^a	154	54	208
Offender not identified ^b	21	5	26
Total	175	59	234

a: Includes victims of cleared homicide incidents only

b: Includes victims of homicide incidents not cleared at time of reporting

Note: Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Sixty percent ($n=141$) of homicide victims were born in Australia and nine percent ($n=21$) were born overseas. The place of birth was not stated or unknown for 31 percent of homicide victims ($n=72$). Female homicide victims were more likely to have been born overseas (14%, $n=8$) than male homicide victims (7%, $n=13$).

Child and adult victims

Eighty-four percent ($n=197$) of homicide victims in 2021–22 were adults (aged 18 years or over) and 16 percent ($n=37$) were children aged 0–17 years (see Table 12). Six of the child victims (3% of all victims) were less than one year in age. The most common age group of homicide victims was 25–34 years (18%, $n=41$) followed by victims aged 35–44 years (16%, $n=38$).

Adult male victims comprised 62 percent ($n=146$) of all homicide victims in 2021–22, and adult female victims comprised 22 percent ($n=51$). The largest proportion of adult male victims was aged 25–34 years (21%, $n=30$) followed by those aged 45–54 years (18%, $n=27$). The largest proportion of adult female victims was aged 35–44 (24%, $n=12$), followed by those aged 25–34 years (22%, $n=11$).

Boys comprised 12 percent ($n=29$) of all homicide victims, and girls comprised three percent ($n=8$). Fourteen percent ($n=8$) of all female homicide victims were girls under the age of 18, of which five (63% of girls) were aged 1–9 years. Seventeen percent ($n=29$) of all male homicide victims were boys under the age of 18, with most (62%) aged 10–17 ($n=18$).

Table 12: Victims of homicide by age group and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)

	Male	Female	Total
Less than 1	4	2	6
1–9	7	5	12
10–17	18	1	19
<i>Children</i>	29	8	37
18–24	20	4	24
25–34	30	11	41
35–44	26	12	38
45–54	27	9	36
55–64	23	6	29
65 and over	20	9	29
<i>Adults</i>	146	51	197
Total	175	59	234

Note: Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Victim relationship with primary offender

In 2021–22 there were 208 homicide victims from the 195 cleared incidents (89% of all victims). The remaining 26 victims (11%) were killed in incidents that had not been cleared at the time of reporting (see Table 11).

Of the 208 victims of cleared incidents, almost three-quarters (72%, $n=149$) knew the primary offender and less than a fifth (16%, $n=34$) were killed by a stranger (see Table 13). The nature of the relationship between the victim and the primary offender was not known or not stated for 12 percent ($n=25$) of victims from cleared homicide incidents. Female homicide victims in 2021–22 were more likely to know the primary offender (89%, $n=48$) compared with male homicide victims (66%, $n=101$).

Half (51%, $n=78$) of male victims from cleared homicide incidents were killed by a friend, acquaintance or some other known person who was not a family member (see Table 13). Nine percent ($n=14$) of male victims were killed by a family member other than an intimate partner, of which seven victims (5%) were the child of the offender and five were the parent (3%). Six percent of male victims ($n=9$) were killed by an intimate partner. A fifth (19%, $n=29$) of male victims did not know the offender.

Almost half of female victims (48%, $n=26$) were killed by an intimate partner (see Table 13). Females were also more likely than males to be killed by other family members (31%, $n=17$ vs 9%, $n=14$ respectively). Fifteen percent ($n=8$) of female victims were the child of the offender, and nine percent ($n=5$) were the parent of the offender. Females were much less likely than males to be killed by a friend, acquaintance or other non-family associate (9%, $n=5$ vs 51%, $n=78$ respectively), or by a stranger (9%, $n=5$ vs 19%, $n=29$ respectively).

Table 13: Victims of homicide by relationship with primary offender and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)

	Male victim	Female victim	Total
Intimate partner	9	26	35
Child	7	8	15
Parent	5	5	10
Sibling	0	1	1
Other relative	2	3	5
Friend	4	1	5
Acquaintance	38	0	38
Neighbour/housemate/work colleague	21	3	24
Relationship rival	5	0	5
Gang member	5	0	5
Other	1	1	2
Acquaintance less than 24 hours	4	0	4
<i>Knew primary offender</i>	<i>101</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>149</i>
Stranger	29	5	34
Relationship not stated	24	1	25
Total	154	54	208

Note: Includes victims from cleared homicide incidents only. Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

A quarter of male victims of male offenders were killed by an acquaintance (26%, $n=35$), a fifth were killed by a stranger (20%, $n=28$) and 15 percent ($n=21$) by a housemate, neighbour or colleague (see Table 14). Eight percent of male victims of male offenders ($n=13$) were the family member ($n=11$) or intimate partner ($n=2$) of the offender. Male victims of female homicide offenders were most often killed by an intimate partner (41%, $n=7$).

Among female victims of male offenders, more than half were killed by an intimate partner (56%, $n=25$; see Table 14). Twenty-two percent of female victims of male offenders were killed by a family member other than an intimate partner ($n=10$). Three-quarters of female victims of female homicide offenders (78%, $n=7$) were killed by a family member other than an intimate partner. All but one of these victims was the child of the female offender ($n=6$), while one victim was the parent of the offender. There was one female intimate partner victim of a female offender.

Table 14: Victims of homicide by relationship with and sex of primary offender, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)

	Male victim, male offender	Female victim, male offender	Male victim, female offender	Female victim, female offender	Total
Intimate partner	2	25	7	1	35
Child	4	2	3	6	15
Parent	5	4	0	1	10
Sibling	0	1	0	0	1
Other relative	2	3	0	0	5
Friend	4	1	0	0	5
Acquaintance	35	0	3	0	38
Neighbour/housemate/work colleague	21	3	0	0	24
Relationship rival	5	0	0	0	5
Gang member	5	0	0	0	5
Other	1	1	0	0	2
Acquaintance less than 24 hours	4	0	0	0	4
Stranger	28	4	1	1	34
Relationship not stated	21	1	3	0	25
Total	137	45	17	9	208

Note: Includes victims from cleared homicide incidents only. Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Indigenous victims

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accounted for 18 percent ($n=41$) of homicide victims in 2021–22. This is higher than the average Indigenous homicide victimisation between 1989–90 and 2021–22, in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 14 percent ($n=1,315$) of homicide victims (see Table B4). The homicide victimisation rate for Indigenous Australians in 2021–22 was 4.57 per 100,000 (see Table 15), double the rate of 2.24 per 100,000 recorded in 2020–21.

Table 15: Victims of homicide by sex and Indigenous status, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022					
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Total
	<i>n</i>	Rate per 100,000	<i>n</i>	Rate per 100,000	
Male	28	6.25	145	1.16	173
Female	13	2.90	45	0.36	58
Total	41	4.57	190	0.75	231

Note: Excludes three victims whose Indigenous status was not stated or unknown. Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Sex and age

Sixty-eight percent ($n=28$) of Indigenous victims of homicide in 2021–22 were male and 32 percent ($n=13$) were female. Among Indigenous homicide victims since 1989–90, 60 percent were male ($n=789$) and 40 percent ($n=525$) were female (see Table B4). The victimisation rate for Indigenous males in 2021–22 was 6.25 per 100,000 relevant population and for Indigenous females it was 2.90 per 100,000 relevant population (see Table 15). The victimisation rates for both Indigenous males and Indigenous females increased from the previous year (3.24 per 100,000 relevant population for males and 1.22 per 100,000 relevant population for females in 2020–21).

Twelve percent of Indigenous victims were children under the age of 18 years ($n=5$) and 88 percent ($n=36$) were adults (see Table B5). The same proportion of Indigenous male victims were aged 25–34 years (25%, $n=7$) and 45–54 years (25%, $n=7$). Almost half of Indigenous female victims (46%, $n=6$) were aged 45–54 years.

An offender was identified or charged in the homicide of 37 of the 41 Indigenous homicide victims in 2021–22 (90%; see Table 16). Among Indigenous male victims ($n=23$) and Indigenous female victims ($n=11$), 92 percent were killed by a male primary offender.

Table 16: Indigenous victims by sex of primary offender, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (<i>n</i>)			
	Indigenous male victim	Indigenous female victim	Total
Male offender	23	11	34
Female offender	2	1	3
Total	25	12	37

Note: Includes victims of cleared homicide incidents only. Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Relationship with primary offender

Eighty-one percent of Indigenous victims from cleared homicide incidents knew the offender ($n=30$; see Table 17). The majority of male Indigenous victims knew the offender (76%, $n=19$), with most victims an acquaintance of the offender (60%, $n=15$). Sixteen percent ($n=4$) of Indigenous male victims were killed by either an intimate partner ($n=1$) or another family member ($n=3$). Two-thirds (67%, $n=8$) of female Indigenous victims of homicide were killed by an intimate partner.

Table 17: Indigenous victims of homicide by relationship with primary offender and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)

	Male victim	Female victim	Total
Intimate partner	1	8	9
Child	1	0	1
Parent	0	1	1
Sibling	0	1	1
Other relative	2	0	2
Acquaintance	15	1	16
<i>Knew the offender</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>30</i>
Stranger	2	1	3
Relationship not stated	4	0	4
Total	25	12	37

Note: Includes victims of cleared homicide incidents only. Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Sixty-one percent ($n=14$) of male-on-male homicide incidents involving an Indigenous victim were perpetrated by an acquaintance of the victim (see Table 18). Thirteen percent ($n=3$) were perpetrated by a family member other than an intimate partner. Almost three-quarters (73%, $n=8$) of Indigenous female victims of a male offender were killed by their intimate partner.

Table 18: Indigenous victims of homicide by relationship with and sex of primary offender, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)

	Male victim, male offender	Female victim, male offender	Male victim, female offender	Female victim, female offender	Total
Intimate partner	0	8	1	0	9
Other family	3	1	0	1	5
Acquaintance	14	1	1	0	16
Stranger	2	1	0	0	3
Relationship not stated	4	0	0	0	4
Total	23	11	2	1	37

Note: Includes victims of cleared homicide incidents only. Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Non-Indigenous victims

There were 190 non-Indigenous victims of homicide (81%) in 2021–22 (see Table 15). The homicide victimisation rate for non-Indigenous Australians was 0.76 per 100,000. Eighty-five percent ($n=8,217$) of all homicide victims in Australia since 1989–90 were non-Indigenous (see Table B4).

Sex and age

Three-quarters of non-Indigenous homicide victims in 2021–22 were male (76%, $n=145$) and a quarter were female (24%, $n=45$; see Table 15). The homicide rate was 1.16 per 100,000 for non-Indigenous male victims and 0.36 per 100,000 for non-Indigenous female victims. The homicide victimisation rate for males in 2021–22 was similar to the rate in 2020–21 (1.11 per 100,000 relevant population) but decreased for females (0.51 per 100,000 relevant population).

Seventeen percent ($n=32$) of non-Indigenous homicide victims were children; 24 (13%) were boys and eight (4%) were girls. Children comprised 12 percent ($n=1,011$) of non-Indigenous homicide victims between 1989–90 and 2021–22 (see Table B6), of whom 563 were boys (7% of all non-Indigenous homicide victims) and 448 were girls (5% of all non-Indigenous homicide victims).

Sixty-four percent of non-Indigenous victims of homicide in 2021–22 were men ($n=121$) and 19 percent ($n=37$) were women. Men made up 58 percent ($n=4,758$) of all non-Indigenous victims of homicide between 1989–90 and 2021–22 (see Table B6) and women comprised 29 percent of all non-Indigenous victims ($n=2,377$).

One or more offenders were identified or charged in the homicide of 169 of the 190 (89%) non-Indigenous victims. Eighty-eight percent of non-Indigenous male ($n=112$) and 81 percent of female ($n=34$) victims were killed by a male primary offender (see Table 19).

Table 19: Non-Indigenous victims by sex of primary offender, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)			
	Non-Indigenous male victim	Non-Indigenous female victim	Total
Male offender	112	34	146
Female offender	15	8	23
Total	127	42	169

Note: Includes victims of cleared homicide incidents only. Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Relationship with primary offender

Seventy percent of non-Indigenous victims ($n=118$) knew the primary offender and 18 percent ($n=30$) were killed by a stranger (see Table 20). The relationship with the primary offender was not stated or unknown for 12 percent ($n=21$) of non-Indigenous victims.

Non-Indigenous females were most likely to be the victim of an intimate partner, with 43 percent ($n=18$) of non-Indigenous female victims killed by a current or former partner in 2021–22 (see Table 20). Thirty-six percent ($n=15$) of non-Indigenous females were the victim of a family member other than an intimate partner. Eight (19%) were the child of the primary offender.

Almost half (49%, $n=62$) of non-Indigenous male victims were killed by a friend, acquaintance or other non-familial associate (see Table 20). A fifth (20%, $n=26$) did not know the primary offender. Where non-Indigenous males had a domestic relationship with the primary offender, they were similarly likely to be the intimate partner (6%, $n=8$), child (5%, $n=6$) or parent (4%, $n=5$) of the primary offender.

Table 20: Non-Indigenous victims of homicide by relationship with primary offender and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)

	Male victim	Female victim	Total
Intimate partner	8	18	26
Child	6	8	14
Parent	5	4	9
Sibling	0	0	0
Other relative	0	3	3
Acquaintance	62	4	66
<i>Knew the offender</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>118</i>
Stranger	26	4	30
Relationship not stated	20	1	21
Total	127	42	169

Note: Includes victims of cleared homicide incidents only. Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Among non-Indigenous male victims killed by a male primary offender, the offender was most commonly an acquaintance (25%, $n=25$) or a stranger (25%, $n=25$; see Table 21). Seventeen percent ($n=19$) were the victim of a neighbour, housemate or work colleague and five percent ($n=5$) of a relationship rival. Half (50%, $n=17$) of non-Indigenous female victims of male primary offenders were the current or former intimate partner of the offender.

Non-Indigenous male victims of female offenders were primarily the current or former intimate partner (40%, $n=6$). Six of the eight non-Indigenous female victims of female perpetrated homicide were the child of the offender and one was an intimate partner.

Table 21: Non-Indigenous victims of homicide by relationship with and sex of primary offender, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)

	Male victim, male offender	Female victim, male offender	Male victim, female offender	Female victim, female offender	Total
Intimate partner	2	17	6	1	26
Child	3	2	3	6	14
Parent	5	4	0	0	9
Sibling	0	0	0	0	0
Other relative	0	3	0	0	3
Friend	2	1	0	0	3
Acquaintance	25	0	2	0	27
Neighbour/housemate/ work colleague	19	3	0	0	22
Relationship rival	5	0	0	0	5
Gang member	5	0	0	0	5
Other	1	0	0	0	1
Acquaintance less than 24 hours	3	0	0	0	3
Stranger	25	3	1	1	30
Relationship not stated	17	1	3	0	21
Total	112	34	15	8	169

Note: Includes victims of cleared homicide incidents only. Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Missing persons

Eight adult and one child homicide victim in 2021–22 had been reported missing at the time of the homicide. Four of these victims were male and five were female. All but one of these nine victims were non-Indigenous with the Indigenous status of the ninth victim not stated or unknown.

Cause of death

The most common cause of death for victims in 2021–22 was a stab wound from a knife or other sharp instrument (37%, $n=86$; see Table 22). This was the leading cause of death for both male victims (39%, $n=68$) and female victims (31%, $n=18$). Fifteen percent ($n=34$) of victims died from blunt force trauma or a beating, 15 percent ($n=34$) from gunshot wounds and seven percent ($n=17$) from multiple injuries. Male victims were more likely than female victims to have died from gunshot wounds (19%, $n=33$ vs 2%, $n=1$ respectively) or stab wounds (39%, $n=68$ vs 31%, $n=18$ respectively). Twelve victims (5%) died as a result of injuries sustained following the use of a vehicle. Nine victims (4%) in 2021–22 died from smoke inhalation or burns and five (2%) from strangulation or suffocation. The cause of death was not available for nine percent ($n=21$) of victims in 2021–22. The cause of death of two victims was not able to be determined at autopsy (1%; see Table 22).

Stab wounds were the cause of death for 37 percent ($n=15$) of Indigenous homicide victims, followed by blunt force trauma or beating (20%, $n=8$) and gunshot wounds (15%, $n=6$). Causes of death for non-Indigenous victims followed a similar pattern. The leading cause of death among non-Indigenous homicide victims was stab wounds (37%, $n=71$), followed by gunshot wounds (15%, $n=28$) and blunt force trauma or beating (13%, $n=24$).

Table 22: Victims of homicide by cause of death and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022

	Male	Female	Total
Gunshot wound	33	1	34
Stab wound	68	18	86
Blunt force trauma/beating	26	8	34
Drug overdose	1	1	2
Drowning/submersion	2	0	2
Criminal neglect	0	2	2
Pushed from a high place	0	0	0
Strangulation/suffocation	3	2	5
Smoke inhalation/burns	5	4	9
Shaking	1	0	1
Other	5	2	7
Hit by car/car accident	11	1	12
Multiple	10	7	17
Cause of death not ascertained	1	1	2
Cause of death not available	9	12	21
Total	175	59	234

Note: Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Homicide offenders

In 2021–22 there were 279 identified homicide offenders (see Table 1 on page 5). This is an increase of 12 from the previous year (see Table C1). The rate of offending also increased between 2020–21 and 2021–22, from 1.18 to 1.22 per 100,000 population aged 10 years and over (see Table C2).

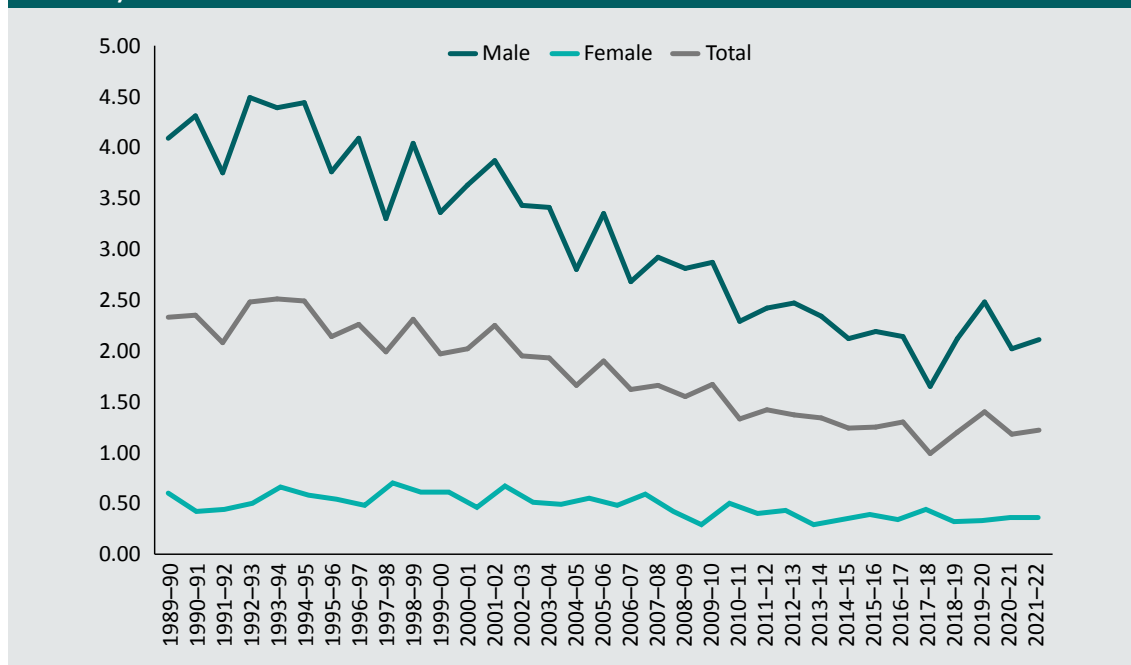
New South Wales recorded the largest number of homicide offenders ($n=96$; see Table 1), an increase of 33 from 2020–21 (see Table C1). This was followed by Queensland ($n=78$), Victoria ($n=49$) and Western Australia ($n=22$). There were 11 offenders identified in Tasmania, nine in South Australia, and seven in both the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory (see Table 1). Police have identified an average of 314 homicide offenders each year since 1989–90 (see Table C1).

In 2021–22, most homicide offenders were charged (97%, $n=270$). Eight offenders died prior to arrest (3%), while one was cleared otherwise (<1%). Fifty-eight percent of offenders perpetrated the homicide alone ($n=161$), while 42 percent ($n=118$) committed the homicide with at least one other co-offender. Where multiple offenders were involved in homicide incidents in 2021–22, the number of co-offenders ranged from two to 14.

Sex and age

The majority of homicide offenders in 2021–22 were male (86%, $n=239$; see Table 1). Male offenders made up 86 percent ($n=8,967$) of all homicide offenders since 1989–90 (see Table C3). The rate of male homicide offending in 2021–22 was 2.11 per 100,000 population aged 10 years and over, an increase from 2.02 per 100,000 in 2020–21 (see Table C3). The overall rate of homicide offending has almost halved (declining by 48%) since 1989–90, with this decrease driven by the reduction in male offending (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Homicide offenders by sex, 1989–90 to 2021–22 (rate per 100,000 population aged 10 years and over)



Source: AIC NHMP 1989–90 to 2021–22 [computer file]; see Tables C2 and C3

Fourteen percent ($n=40$) of homicide offenders in 2021–22 were female, similar to the overall proportion (13%, $n=1,393$) since 1989–90 (see Table C3). The rate of female homicide offending in 2021–22 was 0.35 per 100,000 aged 10 years and over.

One-quarter (26%, $n=72$) of homicide offenders in 2021–22 were aged 25–34 years (see Table 23). A fifth each were aged 35–44 years (20%, $n=57$) and 18–24 years (20%, $n=55$). Among male homicide offenders, 26 percent ($n=61$) were aged 25–34 years, followed by 20 percent ($n=47$) aged 18–24 years and 19 percent ($n=44$) aged 35–44 years. One-third of female homicide offenders were aged 35–44 years (33%, $n=13$), while just over one-quarter were aged 25–34 (28%, $n=11$; see Table 23).

There were 30 homicide offenders aged between 10 and 17 years (11%) in 2021–22 (see Table 23), double the number of offenders in this age group in 2020–21. The majority of offenders aged 10–17 years were male (93%, $n=28$).

Table 23: Homicide offenders by age group and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)

	Male	Female	Total
10–17	28	2	30
18–24	47	8	55
25–34	61	11	72
35–44	44	13	57
45–54	26	5	31
55–64	18	0	18
65 and over	6	1	7
Not stated/unknown	9	0	9
Total	239	40	279

Note: Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Type of homicide perpetrated

The primary offender was male in 88 percent ($n=172$) of cleared homicide incidents (see Table 24). Of these offenders, 45 percent ($n=77$) committed an acquaintance homicide, 26 percent ($n=45$) committed a domestic homicide and 17 percent ($n=30$) committed a stranger homicide. Sixteen percent ($n=27$) of male primary offenders committed an intimate partner homicide.

Seventy percent ($n=16$) of female primary offenders committed a domestic homicide—35 percent ($n=8$) an intimate partner homicide, 30 percent ($n=7$) a filicide and four percent ($n=1$) a parricide (see Table 24).

Table 24: Primary offenders by homicide classification and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)

	Male	Female	Total
<i>Intimate partner</i>	27	8	35
<i>Filicide</i>	5	7	12
<i>Parricide</i>	7	1	8
<i>Siblicide</i>	1	0	1
<i>Other family</i>	5	0	5
Domestic	45	16	61
Acquaintance	77	3	80
Stranger	30	1	31
Relationship not stated	20	3	23
Total	172	23	195

Note: Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Indigenous offenders

Indigenous status was recorded for 274 of the 279 homicide offenders in 2021–22. One-quarter (24%, $n=66$) of all homicide offenders identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (see Table 25). The majority of Indigenous offenders were male (86%, $n=57$), while 14 percent ($n=9$) were female. Indigenous male offenders comprised 13 percent ($n=1,350$) and Indigenous female offenders accounted for three percent ($n=331$) of homicide offenders between 1989–90 and 2021–22 (see Table C4).

Offending rates

The homicide offending rate among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2021–22 was 9.40 per 100,000 population aged 10 years and over (see Table 25). The Indigenous male offending rate was 16.36 per 100,000 population aged 10 years and over, while the Indigenous female homicide offending rate was 2.55 per 100,000 population aged 10 years and over.

The proportion and rate of Indigenous homicide offending increased from 2020–21 to 2021–22. This is attributable in part to a change in data supplied by the New South Wales Police Force where the Indigenous status of the offender is now based on whether the individual had ‘ever’ identified as Indigenous (see *Introduction*). Differences between 2021–22 and previous years in Indigenous homicide offending rates should be interpreted with caution.

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Total
	<i>n</i>	Rate per 100,000 ^a	<i>n</i>	Rate per 100,000 ^a	
Male	57	16.36	177	1.62	234
Female	9	2.55	31	0.28	40
Total	66	9.40	208	0.94	274

a: Rate per 100,000 population aged 10 years and over

Note: Excludes five offenders whose Indigenous status was not stated or unknown. Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie ‘social and cultural identity, expression and experience’; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Primary offender relationship with primary victim

In 2021–22, Indigenous status was known for 191 of the 195 primary offenders. Twenty-three percent ($n=45$) of all primary offenders identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander—39 males and six females (20% and 3% of all primary offenders respectively; see Table 26).

Half (49%, $n=19$) of Indigenous male offenders in 2021–22 killed a non-Indigenous male, and a third (33%, $n=13$) killed an Indigenous male. The primary victim was an Indigenous female for 18 percent ($n=7$) of Indigenous male offenders. Half (50%, $n=3$) of the primary victims of Indigenous female offenders were Indigenous (two males and one female), and half (50%, $n=3$) were non-Indigenous (two males and one female).

Table 26: Indigenous primary homicide offenders by Indigenous status and sex of victim, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)

	Male offender	Female offender	Total
Indigenous male victim	13	2	15
Indigenous female victim	7	1	8
<i>Total Indigenous</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>23</i>
Non-Indigenous male victim	19	2	21
Non-Indigenous female victim	0	1	1
<i>Total non-Indigenous</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>22</i>
Total	39	6	45

Note: Excludes two primary victims whose Indigenous status was not stated or unknown. Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

One-fifth of Indigenous primary offenders killed a current or former intimate partner (20%, $n=9$), while nine percent ($n=4$) killed a family member other than an intimate partner (see Table 27). The largest proportion of Indigenous offenders killed an acquaintance (44%, $n=20$).

Table 27: Indigenous homicide offenders by homicide classification and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)

	Male offender	Female offender	Total
<i>Intimate partner</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Other domestic^a</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4</i>
Domestic	11	2	13
Acquaintance	17	3	20
Stranger	8	1	9
Relationship not stated	3	0	3
Total	39	6	45

a: Other domestic includes filicide, parricide, siblicide and homicide of other family members

Note: Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Non-Indigenous offenders

Three-quarters of all homicide offenders in 2021–22 were non-Indigenous (75%, $n=208$; see Table 25). The majority of non-Indigenous offenders were male (85%, $n=177$) while 15 percent ($n=31$) were female. Non-Indigenous male offenders comprised 72 percent ($n=7,412$) and non-Indigenous female offenders comprised 10 percent ($n=1,039$) of homicide offenders between 1989–90 and 2021–22 (see Table C4).

Offending rates

In 2021–22 the homicide offending rate for non-Indigenous Australians was 0.94 per 100,000 population aged 10 years and over (see Table 25). The offending rate for non-Indigenous males was 1.62 per 100,000 population aged 10 years and over, and the offending rate for non-Indigenous females was 0.28 per 100,000 population aged 10 years and over.

Primary offender relationship with primary victim

The primary offender in three-quarters (75%, $n=146$) of cleared homicide incidents was non-Indigenous. Of these offenders, 129 (88%) were male and 17 were female (12%). Two-thirds (66%) of all primary offenders were non-Indigenous males and nine percent were non-Indigenous females.

Almost all non-Indigenous primary offenders in 2021–22 killed another non-Indigenous person (92%, $n=133$). Two-thirds of non-Indigenous male homicide offenders killed another non-Indigenous male (65%, $n=83$; see Table 28). One-quarter (26%, $n=33$) killed a non-Indigenous female. An Indigenous person was the primary victim in nine percent ($n=11$) of homicide incidents perpetrated by a non-Indigenous male offender. The majority of these victims were male (64%, $n=7$).

All victims of non-Indigenous female offenders in 2021–22 were also non-Indigenous. Seventy-one percent ($n=12$) were a non-Indigenous male and 29 percent ($n=5$) were a non-Indigenous female.

Table 28: Non-Indigenous primary homicide offenders by Indigenous status and sex of victim, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)

	Male offender	Female offender	Total
Indigenous male victim	7	0	7
Indigenous female victim	4	0	4
<i>Total Indigenous</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>11</i>
Non-Indigenous male victim	83	12	95
Non-Indigenous female victim	33	5	38
<i>Total non-Indigenous</i>	<i>116</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>133</i>
Indigenous status not stated or unknown	2	0	2
Total	129	17	146

Note: Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

A friend or acquaintance was the primary victim in 46 percent ($n=59$) of homicide incidents perpetrated by a non-Indigenous male offender in 2021–22 (see Table 29), followed by a stranger in 16 percent ($n=21$) of incidents and an intimate partner in 15 percent ($n=19$) of incidents. Among non-Indigenous female primary offenders, 41 percent ($n=7$) each killed an intimate partner or their child.

Table 29: Non-Indigenous primary homicide offenders by homicide classification and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)

	Male offender	Female offender
<i>Intimate partner</i>	19	7
<i>Filicide</i>	4	7
<i>Parricide</i>	7	0
<i>Siblicide</i>	1	0
<i>Other family</i>	3	0
Domestic	34	14
Acquaintance	59	0
Stranger	21	0
Relationship not stated	15	3
Total	129	17

Note: Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Criminal history

Forty-five percent ($n=125$) of homicide offenders in 2021–22 had a criminal history—49 percent ($n=116$) of male offenders and 22 percent ($n=9$) of female homicide offenders (see Table 30). Further, four percent ($n=10$) of homicide offenders were on bail and three percent ($n=8$) on a protection order at the time of the homicide.

Among male primary offenders (excluding Western Australia due to data availability), domestic homicide offenders were more likely to have a recorded criminal history (56%, $n=23$) than acquaintance homicide offenders (46%, $n=35$) and stranger homicide offenders (47%, $n=14$; see Table 31). However, the criminal history status of almost a third (31%, $n=48$) of male primary offenders (excluding Western Australia) was not stated or unknown. Among female primary offenders ($n=17$), a fifth (21%, $n=3$) of domestic homicide offenders had a criminal history.

Table 30: Homicide offender criminal history by sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)			
	Male offender	Female offender	Total offender
Criminal history	116	9	125
No criminal history	43	21	64
Not stated/unknown	80	10	90
Total	239	40	279

Note: Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Table 31: Primary homicide offenders by criminal history, sex and homicide classification, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)						
	Male primary offender			Female primary offender		
	Domestic	Acquaintance	Stranger	Domestic	Acquaintance	Stranger
Criminal history	23	35	14	3	0	0
No criminal history	9	13	5	9	1	0
Not stated/unknown	9	28	11	2	2	0
Total	41	76	30	14	3	0

Note: Excludes Western Australia (n=21 primary offenders). Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS.

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Information was also available on whether homicide offenders had a known history of domestic and family violence as an offender, victim or both. In this case, history refers to the offender being known to police in relation to a domestic and family violence incident, not whether they had been charged with a relevant offence. Excluding Western Australia, a third of primary homicide offenders (32%, n=56) had a history of domestic and family violence—32 percent (n=51) of male primary offenders and 29 percent of female primary offenders (n=5). Eighty-six percent (n=44) of male primary offenders with a history of domestic and family violence had been the perpetrator of the violence. Of the five female primary offenders with a reported history of domestic and family violence, two were perpetrators, one was a victim and two had been the perpetrator and victim of the violence.

Excluding Western Australia, one-quarter (27%, n=10) of Indigenous male primary homicide offenders had a history of domestic and family violence. All were the perpetrator of the violence. Nineteen percent (n=7) did not have a known history. Thirty-five percent (n=41) of non-Indigenous male primary offenders had a history of domestic and family violence. The majority of these offenders were the perpetrators of the violence (83%, n=34; see Table 32).

Half of male offenders of intimate partner homicide in 2021–22 had a known history of domestic and family violence (56%, n=15)—13 (87%) as the perpetrator of the violence and two (13%) as a perpetrator and victim of the violence.

Table 32: Primary homicide offenders by history of domestic and family violence, Indigenous status and sex, 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 (n)

	Indigenous			Non-Indigenous		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Perpetrator	10	0	10	34	2	36
Victim	0	0	0	3	1	4
Perpetrator and victim	0	1	1	4	1	5
<i>History of domestic and family violence</i>	10	1	11	41	4	45
No known history	7	2	9	37	7	44
Not stated/unknown	20	2	22	39	1	40
Total	37	5	42	117	12	129

Note: Excludes Western Australia (n=21 primary offenders). Excludes three primary offenders where Indigenous status was not stated or unknown. Data presented refer to an individual's sex (ie sex characteristics) rather than gender (ie 'social and cultural identity, expression and experience'; ABS 2021). This reflects the definitions in the data provided by the source organisations and from the NCIS

Source: AIC NHMP 2021–22 [computer file]

Offender disability and mental health

In most cases whether the offender had a disability at the time of the offence was not stated or unknown (60%, n=155). Excluding Western Australia due to data availability, there were eight offenders (3%) in 2021–22 who were known to have a disability. All of these offenders were male and all were reported as having an intellectual disability.

Nine percent of homicide offenders were known to have a mental health condition at the time of the homicide (n=24). The majority of these offenders were male (79%, n=19), while five (21%) were female. Three-quarters of offenders who were known to have a mental health condition at the time of the homicide had a mental illness other than depression (75%, n=18). The offender had a known mental health condition in 16 percent (n=9) of domestic homicides and eight percent of acquaintance and stranger homicides (n=11 and n=4 respectively).

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URLs correct as at January 2024

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AIC reports

Statistical Report

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