

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

# **MAKING WESTERN AUSTRALIA SAFER -**

***... HAVE YOUR SAY***

**A Discussion Paper**

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# **MAKING WESTERN AUSTRALIA SAFER**

## **HAVE YOUR SAY**

**A DISCUSSION PAPER PREPARED BY THE SELECT  
COMMITTEE ON CRIME PREVENTION**

Presented by:

**Hon. R K Nicholls, MLA**

Laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly  
on 26 November 1998



## **Terms of Reference**

The Legislative Assembly established a Select Committee on 15 October 1997 to enquire into crime prevention. The terms of reference for the Committee are set out below -

- (1) That this House appoints a Select Committee to inquire into and report on programs, practices and community action which have proven effective in -
  - (a) reducing or preventing crime and anti-social behaviour at the community level;
  - (b) addressing community and social factors which contribute to crime and anti-social behaviour in the community; and
  - (c) addressing community and anti-social behaviour after it has occurred.
- (2) That the Committee also report on methods by which such information may best be accessed by the community.
- (3) That the Committee have the power to send for persons and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, to move from place to place, to report from time to time, and to confer with any committee of the Legislative Assembly as it thinks appropriate.
- (4) That the Committee finally report on 30 April 1999.



## Committee Membership

The membership of the Committee is -

**Hon. Roger K. Nicholls, MLA** (*Chairman*)  
Member for Mandurah

**Mr Dan F. Barron-Sullivan, MLA**  
Member for Mitchell

**Mr Eric S. Ripper, MLA**  
Member for Belmont

**Mrs Michelle H. Roberts, MLA**  
Member for Midland

**Mrs June D. van de Klashorst, MLA**  
Member for Swan Hills

The Committee is assisted by its staff -

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**Mrs Patricia Roach**, Stenographer/Secretary

The Committee was also greatly assisted in the production of this discussion paper by **Ms Kathy Csaba**, Ministry of Justice.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Crime is an issue of concern to many people in Western Australia. Even if most people never experience crime personally, many people are aware of incidents that have occurred to family members and friends or have seen crime reports in the media. The incidents may involve a criminal offence or other anti-social behaviour such as rude or aggressive behaviour.

The subject of preventing crime is also of great importance to many people and this discussion paper seeks to stimulate discussion on this subject. Many people have different suggestions about how we can prevent crime. Possibly the easiest way to explain the various methods for preventing crime is through a simple model. The model summarises all crime prevention activities into three major areas: primary, secondary and tertiary and is displayed in Table 1.0.1<sup>1</sup>.

<b>Table 1.0.1 How we can prevent crime</b>		
<b>At what level can we prevent crime</b>	<b>What happens at that level of crime prevention</b>	<b>Examples of crime prevention efforts at that level</b>
<b>Primary</b>	focus on broad physical and social aspects of society that may prevent crime	(a) encourage everyone to improve home security (b) offer all parents advice on being better parents (c) offer all children after school care
<b>Secondary</b>	focus on individuals who may be potential offenders and their potential victims	(a) encourage repeat victims of crime to improve their personal and property security (b) provide a mentor for at-risk children (c) sport and recreation programs for at-risk children
<b>Tertiary</b>	focus on individuals who have already become offenders	(a) imprisonment (b) adult prison literacy program (c) community supervision orders

For many people tertiary prevention is the most well known. The most common example of tertiary prevention involves catching, prosecuting and imprisoning offenders. This fulfills two functions. Firstly it punishes the offender and grants the victim and general public a feeling that justice has been done. Secondly it acts as a deterrent to others who may consider committing an offence, thereby preventing crime. This method has been the traditional response to crime in Western Australia and many other western countries. Other examples of tertiary prevention revolve around rehabilitating offenders to ensure they do not offend again. The Committee believes tertiary prevention has an important role in crime prevention. However, as there is wide spread community understanding of tertiary prevention options, this discussion paper will concentrate on primary and secondary prevention.

Primary and secondary prevention both seek to reduce the influence of any factors that may increase the risk of people becoming offenders. The essential difference between the operation

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from Indermaur (1995) 199 and Brantingham and Faust (1976)

of these two levels is that primary prevention operates at a broader social level while secondary prevention applies to specific individuals or groups who have been identified as being at increased risk of becoming an offender.

This discussion paper seeks to raise the level of understanding concerning crime prevention as a whole, particularly the areas of primary and secondary prevention. Section two of the Discussion Paper gives a brief background to research on the primary and secondary prevention factors that can increase the risk of a person becoming an offender.

Identifying the factors that may increase the risk of offending is not an exercise in finding excuses for the behaviour of offenders. The Committee acknowledges that an individual is ultimately responsible for their decision to commit a crime. Identifying the risk factors can allow interventions in a person's life that may reduce the potential of them committing a crime. The exercise represents a starting point in finding genuine solutions to offending behaviour.

Section three of the discussion paper presents a picture of crime in Western Australia and a profile of the offenders in the criminal justice system. Section four looks at the traditional response to crime in Western Australia and finally section five presents some questions concerning crime prevention for everyone to consider.

## 2.0 FACTORS AFFECTING CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

Researchers have examined the childhood experiences of persistent and serious offenders and identified several risk factors which may lead children to later criminal activity. The risk factors which can increase an individual's chance of committing a crime are grouped under the following headings -

- family;
- schools;
- socioeconomic;
- age;
- gender;
- child behavioural problems;
- delinquent peers and leisure time;
- television and the media;
- alcohol and other drugs;
- race;
- environment; and
- situational factors.

**In the Discussion Paper each of these factors is presented individually but it should be remembered that each factor alone will not guarantee a criminal career. Exposure to multiple risk factors will increase a person's risk of becoming involved in crime.**

Children who are exposed to multiple risk factors but do not become delinquents or criminals often exhibit resiliency, which is an ability to cope with exposure to the risk factors.

Traits associated with "resiliency" include -

- above average intelligence;
- sociability and good temperament;
- skill based competence;
- high self esteem; and
- from families with strong religious or moral beliefs.<sup>2</sup>

Children who possess these traits tend to cope with disruption and upheaval more readily or learn to adapt to risks in a constructive way.

An understanding of the risk factors can assist in determining what are the most effective strategies for preventing crime and at what stage of a person's life they should be implemented in order to have the greatest impact. Throughout their social development people must pass through a number of thresholds and key transition points. These specific stages in a person's life are the most appropriate and critical times at which to intervene in order to reduce the influence

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<sup>2</sup>See NCPC (1996), 6; Home Office (1997), 13

of any negative factors on children and families at risk and therefore have the best chance of preventing offending. The stages of intervention are displayed in Table 2.0.1

<b>Table 2.0.1 Optimum stages of intervention<sup>3</sup></b>	
<b>Stage of life</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Pre-natal	to promote healthy babies
Birth	to facilitate family cohesion and prevent child abuse
Toddlers	increase family cohesion and improve parenting skills
Pre-school	encourage cognitive/social development and reduce aggressive behaviours
Primary school to age 8 years	to improve academic and social outcomes and reinforce pro-social behaviours
Transition to high school	to promote self esteem and positive peer relations through developing social skills and academic achievement
Transition from school to work	acquisition of life skills and assumption of greater responsibility

The risk factors discussed in the following section of the discussion paper are those which primary and secondary prevention efforts are designed to tackle.

## 2.1 Family

A fundamental role of families is to help children develop and grow into responsible citizens. The Report of the Taskforce on Families in Western Australia acknowledged the importance of the health and well being of the family unit and stated that what matters in family life is not so much the form the family takes, but the extent to which there is love, intimacy, belonging and support.<sup>4</sup>

As an institution, the family has changed considerably in the post war period and it is therefore important that consideration is given to how the modern family functions and copes with pressures.<sup>5</sup> Significant changes to government welfare, the labour market, the status of women, and family mobility have influenced and altered the task of parenting and increased the demands on parents.

There is now a large body of evidence to support the importance of the family in influencing outcomes for both serious crime and general delinquency.<sup>6</sup> Family risk factors therefore have a

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted from "Model for the Prevention of Delinquency" Steinhauer, (1995)

<sup>4</sup>WA Govt (1995)

<sup>5</sup>NACRO (1995), 36

<sup>6</sup>Some of the most recent and important research is found in Hirschi (1995); Tremblay and Craig (1995); Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber (1986); Samson & Laub (1993); Henry, Moffitt, Robins, Earls & Silva (1993); Loeber, Farrington, *et al* (1991); Hawkins & Catalano (1995)



major effect on crime.<sup>7</sup> If a child is born into an environment where there are major factors impacting on the physical and emotional well being of the family, that child will be at increased risk of turning to crime later in life.

Sherman stresses the importance of the implementation of early intervention programs as an effective strategy to prevent family dysfunction and support families in need.<sup>8</sup> By addressing multiple risk factors, and starting as early as possible in life, Sherman suggests that it is possible to significantly reduce crime in the medium to long term.

### **2.1.1 Parenting skills**

Various studies<sup>9</sup> on parenting styles have found that poor parental supervision and erratic or harsh discipline increases the risk of juvenile involvement in crime.

A lack of formal supervision, such as limits on a child's behaviour and informal supervision, such as parent participation in children's activities, is closely related to offending behaviour. Many offenders grow up with no limits on their behaviour and this can explain their apparent lack of respect for others' property and for other people.

There are other factors that can disrupt the parenting process and influence the behaviour of the child. These include -

- poverty and associated family economic stress;
- lack of attachment between a mother or father and the child;
- overcrowded or inadequate housing;
- conflict in the marriage or relationship, family violence and breakdown;
- large families, where individual attention is not practical;
- lack of a partner or other family supports;
- alcohol and drug abuse;
- residential mobility (families that move home often);
- infant illness or disability; and
- lack of social networks and supports.

The levels of a parent's own maturity, their family circumstances, emotional problems including depression, intellectual ability, education level and a history of substance abuse can all influence a parent's ability to be effective.

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<sup>7</sup>Sherman (1997)

<sup>8</sup>Sherman (1997)

<sup>9</sup>Riley and Shaw (1985) Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber (1986); Wells and Rankin (1988); Widom (1989); Messner and Krohn (1990); Martens (1992); Mak (1994); Smith and Thornberry (1995); Seydlitz and Jenkins (1998), 59

Many families struggle with problems which can disrupt the parenting process in ways that encourage child neglect and/or abuse<sup>10</sup> and can later result in delinquency and criminality.

The more warmth, affection, adequate supervision and consistent discipline that parents can show their children, the less likely the children will become involved in delinquency. Often a caring adult ( friend, teacher, mentor) can fill the gap created by the absence of an effective parent figure and provide the necessary support and role modelling to modify any increase in risk.<sup>11</sup>

### **2.1.2 Family structure and size**

Family structure and size are factors that can impact on family functioning and therefore later criminal behaviour. The effects of family size on delinquency seem to be related to the greater levels of social stress and poverty experienced by larger families and the effects of that stress on a parents' ability to supervise and control their children compared to parents of smaller families.<sup>12</sup> For single parent families the increased risk is often associated with reduced family and community support, lower levels of supervision and greater economic deprivation. For step families the increased risk is more to do with child-step parent relationships, weak attachment to one or both parents and the additional strains, particularly for children, of establishing new relationships within step and 'blended' families.

Some submissions sent to the Committee raised concerns about the growing divorce rate and its parallel effects on the crime rate. Research suggests that structurally 'non-traditional' families are not in themselves at a higher risk of producing delinquent children. The risk is related more to the relationships within the family<sup>13</sup> and the amount of love, support and guidance provided to a child.

Increased pressures and stresses on large and single parent families are often linked to other related factors such as inadequate or overcrowded housing, limited financial means, lack of family or partner supports and difficulties in supervising and disciplining their children.<sup>14</sup> Marital conflict, maternal depression, family violence and breakdown and alcohol and drug abuse are also obvious sources of additional strain on families.

Some research has pointed to the impact of sole parent families without a father figure and the possible effect on sons and later delinquent behaviour.<sup>15</sup> These studies assert that the absence of a paternal authority and role model explains the higher rates of aggression and violence among males, as well as other criminality, in these families. James identified that maternal depression is

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<sup>10</sup>Weatherburn and Lind (1998); Salmelainen (1996)

<sup>11</sup>NCPC (1996), 10; Weatherburn and Lind (1997); Utting, et al (1993); Graham and Bowling (1995a)

<sup>12</sup>Graham and Bowling (1995a), 36 See also Graham (1989); Utting et al, (1993)

<sup>13</sup>Graham and Bowling (1995a), 35; Kumpher (1993), 4

<sup>14</sup>Weatherburn and Lind (1998); McLloyd and Wilson (1990)

<sup>15</sup>Reported in James (1995) 50-54

highly correlated with childhood aggression and later adult violence.<sup>16</sup> In these circumstances maternal depression was generally associated with social stresses such as separation from a partner, its adverse effect on the family income and the withdrawal of paternal support to the family.

### 2.1.3 Marital conflict

It has become apparent that the amount of conflict in a relationship is a stronger influence on the risk of delinquency than the structure of the family. A review of approximately 40 studies examining family structure and delinquency concluded that marital discord was a stronger indicator of delinquency than family structure.<sup>17</sup> Excessive family conflict and marital discord with verbal, physical and sexual abuse have all been found to be correlates of delinquency.<sup>18</sup> Good marital relationships reduce the likelihood of delinquency.<sup>19</sup> Children in abusive family situations are less likely to become delinquent if they have additional social supports from a close relationship with a sibling, friend or other.<sup>20</sup> Other research has shown that abusive or conflict-ridden two parent homes are considered more harmful to children than non-stressed, non-traditional families.<sup>21</sup>

In divorce and marriage breakdown children are the obvious victims. Factors such as pre or post-separation violence and hostility, conflict over custody arrangements and the amount of support and counselling provided to couples in conflict, will have a greater impact on children than the actual divorce or separation. If the remaining family situation is stable, supportive and well managed, children who have lost a parent to divorce or separation do not appear to be at any greater risk of delinquency.<sup>22</sup> Family relationships are therefore a very important factor in contributing to a child's emotional happiness and well being.

### 2.1.4 Other family characteristics

Links between generations of families are an important factor. The high incidence of repeat offending through generations of families suggests that children of offenders often become repeat offenders like their parents. Research confirms that if a child's parents were offenders there is a higher than average risk they will also become an offender<sup>23</sup>. It is not clear if the actual skills required for committing an offence are passed onto children but studies have demonstrated that other risk factors such as anti-social behaviour can be learned from parents as a child and will then manifest themselves when the child reaches adolescence<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup>James (1995), 49

<sup>17</sup>Loeber and Loeber-Stouthamer (1986)

<sup>18</sup>Loeber and Loeber-Stouthamer (1986); Kumpher (1987)

<sup>19</sup>Rutter and Quinton, (1984)

<sup>20</sup>Kumpher (1993), 7-8

<sup>21</sup>See Hetherington et al (1989); Kumpher (1993), 4

<sup>22</sup>Mednick, Baker, & Carothers, (1990)

<sup>23</sup>West 1982, Salmelainen (1995), Craig and Glick (1968); West and Farrington (1973)

<sup>24</sup>Tremblay and Craig (1995), 152.

Beresford and Omaji reported in their survey of Aboriginal youth that 98% of those interviewed whilst in detention had a close family member in prison.<sup>25</sup> Although many Aboriginal youth do not commit crime and become involved in the criminal justice system, Beresford and Omaji contend that for Aboriginal youth, a term of imprisonment can be seen as a “rite of passage” from childhood to becoming an adult.<sup>26</sup>

## **2.2 Schools**

Apart from the home environment school is where children spend most of their time during their developmental years. Schools and the education system therefore play an important role in socialising young people and preparing them for adulthood. Research has revealed that a majority of eventual chronic offenders were recognized in their primary school years through their conduct problems such as aggression, stealing, truancy, lying and drug use.<sup>27</sup>

There is evidence to show that problems at school, particularly learning problems, even at a young age, may be a contributing factor to a young person engaging in offending behaviour. Academic performance; weak attachment to school; low attendance; and behaviour problems such as bullying, an inability to relate to peers and teachers and disobeying school rules are all factors associated with later delinquency.<sup>28</sup>

If children are not performing at school and are having difficulty forming friendships or positive relationships with their teachers, their attachment to school will be weak. A dislike of and weak attachment to school may be displayed in low self esteem, bullying, and eventually truancy and exclusion which are two of the strongest indicators of delinquency in an educational setting.<sup>29</sup>

Case histories have demonstrated that young people may first become suspended or expelled from school before engaging in further anti-social or criminal behaviour. Combined with the influence of peer groups, truancy and exclusions can lead to petty and low order offences such as vandalism, graffiti and petty theft, and eventually to more serious crime, such as car theft and home burglary.

The school environment can exacerbate or improve the problems children may have at school. The school environment can include such factors as the ethos, culture, leadership, pastoral support, involvement of parents and enforcement of school rules, relationships between pupils and staff, teacher-pupil ratios, teacher commitment and the ability of teachers to motivate pupils. These factors can all help children stay out of trouble. In a school environment which lacks these characteristics a potential offender can become isolated and associate with like-minded children.

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<sup>25</sup>Beresford and Omaji (1996)

<sup>26</sup>Beresford and Omaji (1996)

<sup>27</sup>Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber (1987) 370-371.

<sup>28</sup>Graham, (1988)

<sup>29</sup>Graham and Bowling (1995a), 45-46

### 2.3 Socio-Economic Factors

Inequality, relative deprivation and marginalisation are all associated with crime. Poverty, which is an over arching cause of many family and community problems, can provide a fertile base for delinquency.

Offenders sentenced by the court are generally from lower socio-economic backgrounds although 'self reported' offending is more evenly distributed across the population. Self reported offending involves surveying individuals to determine if they have committed an offence in a given period of time. A recent study disputes the importance of socio-economic effects once other family factors are taken into account.<sup>30</sup>

Other evidence supports the theory that unemployment<sup>31</sup>, particularly youth unemployment, lack of income and limited financial independence, together with feelings of low self esteem, hopelessness and resentment, in certain circumstances does lead to offending.<sup>32</sup> For example, work with homeless youth indicates that once a young person drops out of school, leaves home, begins hanging around on the street and becomes homeless, crime is a natural progression in order to meet their immediate and material needs.<sup>33</sup>

The relationship between unemployment, poverty and crime is not simple. However, it must be recognised that economic hardship often hits people who are already in high risk categories, for example families with children, particularly single parent families, young people in transition to adulthood and other disadvantaged groups such as Aboriginal people. For example, a study by the Department for Community Services in 1991 of 93 repeat car thieves found that 62 were Aboriginal who came from lower socio-economic backgrounds.<sup>34</sup> A study of Aboriginal offenders in Western Australia highlighted the impact of poverty in reducing self-esteem and contributing to the potential for delinquency and reported -

The overwhelming majority of the Aboriginal youths interviewed ... themselves identified the lack of money in families as a principal cause of their involvement in crime.<sup>35</sup>

Poverty can also compound the risk of offending even further for individuals within families who exhibit other risk factors such as alcohol or other substance abuse. These people may find their addiction can make their economic circumstances worse and possibly lead to them to commit crime.

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<sup>30</sup>Graham and Bowling (1995a), 33.

<sup>31</sup>Downes (1997), 3

<sup>32</sup>McDonald and Brown (1997), 21-22

<sup>33</sup>HREOC (1993)

<sup>34</sup>Beresford and Omaji (1996), 128

<sup>35</sup>Beresford and Omaji, (1996), 129.

Recent Australian research has confirmed findings in America and Britain<sup>36</sup> which contended that high levels of economic stress on a family have a strong link with high rates of child neglect in the family.<sup>37</sup> It has already been noted how child neglect in the family situation can impact on later offending behaviour.

Families at all income levels can experience inconsistent parenting but New South Wales research indicates that economic stress such as unemployment and low levels of household income, can increase the risk of family members engaging in delinquent and criminal behaviour by disrupting the parenting process.<sup>38</sup> Weatherburn and Lind note additional research which has indicated that some low income parents are less likely to be supportive and closely supervise their children and more likely to exercise harsh, erratic and inconsistent discipline. These effects appear to be exacerbated when low income families are exposed to other social stresses and weakened when families enjoy strong social supports.<sup>39</sup>

## **2.4 Age**

The Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development,<sup>40</sup> found a high correlation between age and crime and confirmed offending increases to a peak during adolescence and then declines. The study found that those convicted at the earliest ages (10-13) tended to become the most persistent offenders. The peak age of increase in the prevalence of offending was 14 and the peak age of decrease was at 23. The age distribution of persons arrested in Western Australia in 1996 is reflected in Figure 2.4.1<sup>41</sup> and indicates a similar trend.

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<sup>36</sup>Indermaur quoted in *West Australian* 17 July 1998

<sup>37</sup>Weatherburn and Lind (1998) 3

<sup>38</sup>Weatherburn and Lind (1998) 2-6

<sup>39</sup>Weatherburn and Lind (1998), 2

<sup>40</sup>Farrington (1994)

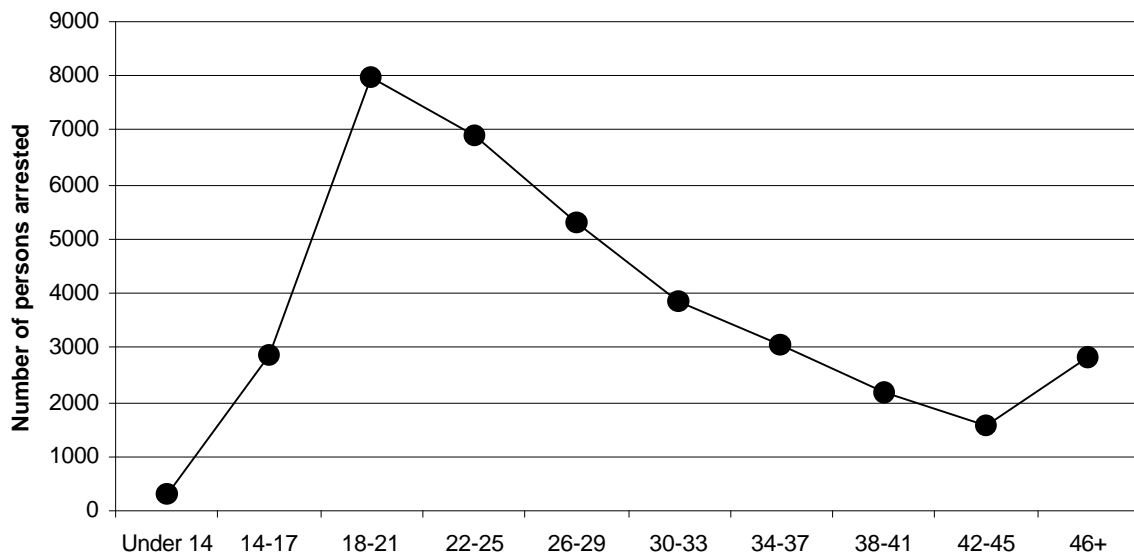
<sup>41</sup>Ferrante, Loh and Maller (1998b)

The age profiles for different crimes also vary. For example, known burglary offenders are mostly young and their numbers drop off after a certain age. Fraud and drink driving offences tend to start more slowly and peak at a later age. Generally the frequency and seriousness of crime decreases for both males and females by their mid-twenties.<sup>42</sup> In Western Australia people aged between 18 and 40 accounted for almost 80% of all offenders arrested in 1997. At the same time persons aged between 18 and 40 years made up approximately 36% of Western Australia's population.

The impact of age on the start, length and end of criminal behaviour is influenced by the fact that significant life changes or transitions can have a dramatic effect on criminal behaviour.<sup>43</sup> For example, significant "life events", the maturing process and an associated assumption of additional responsibilities such as marriage, children, entering the workforce or leaving the parental home have been identified as events that can reduce the likelihood of a person becoming involved in offending. A recent study of violent property offenders in Western Australia found "the most common thought offenders had regarding what would need to happen to stop offending involved either getting a job and/or a relationship".<sup>44</sup> Offenders who do not experience these events often continue on to more serious and regular crime.

This is confirmed by a recent survey in the United Kingdom which examined the notion that most young offenders tend to "grow out" of crime. The survey tested the hypothesis that choosing not

**Figure 2.4.1 Age distribution of persons arrested in Western Australia 1997**



<sup>42</sup>Graham and Bowling (1995a), 23-30

<sup>43</sup>See Samson and Laub (1995)

<sup>44</sup>Indermaur (1995), 155

to offend is related to personal and social development.<sup>45</sup> The survey revealed that many young people, particularly men, even by their mid twenties, have still not completed the transition to a fully independent adult life. For example, employment has traditionally been the mechanism by which adolescents make the transition to adulthood. However, high youth unemployment can deny young people the ability to make this transition, creating a generation of young people at risk of drifting into a kind of perpetual adolescence.<sup>46</sup>

### 2.4.1 Juvenile Crime

Juvenile crime is an important part of the debate on age as an influencing factor on offending. Research indicates that the main aspects consistently associated with juvenile crime are -

- a high proportion of young men and women<sup>47</sup> either admit to committing a crime or coming in contact with the law at some time during their adolescence, however only a very small minority of these will go on to commit further offences;<sup>48</sup>
- a small number of young people are responsible for a disproportionate amount of the juvenile crime committed;<sup>49</sup> and
- those who start committing offences at an earlier age, and in particular committing serious offences at an earlier age, are more likely to become persistent and serious repeat offenders.

Harding argues that much juvenile crime can be explained by the developmental processes of adolescence where, from the ages of 12 through to 18, adolescents become more independent, develop self confidence and seek to establish their own identity<sup>50</sup>. They often seek excitement in an unstructured way which sometimes finds expression in anti-social behaviour and crime.<sup>51</sup> However, this is something that most children “grow out of”. A recent study found most juvenile criminal careers last approximately eight months.<sup>52</sup>

Therefore, contrary to popular opinion, the vast majority of young offenders brought to court usually have only one “brush with the law”.<sup>53</sup> Self reporting surveys<sup>54</sup> both in Canada and the United Kingdom indicate that the majority of children commit at least one offence in their youth.

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<sup>45</sup>Graham and Bowling (1995b)

<sup>46</sup>Wallace (1987); Graham and Bowling(1995b); Killeen (1992)

47 See United Kingdom study in Graham and Bowling (1995b); also Canadian study in Smith et al (1995)

<sup>48</sup>Broadhurst and Loh (1993) 62; Morgan and Gardner 1992; Cain (1998), 13

<sup>49</sup>Potas, Vining and Wilson (1990), 51

<sup>50</sup>Harding (1993)

<sup>51</sup>Harding (1993), 138

<sup>52</sup>Coumarelos (1994) 8

<sup>53</sup>Weatherburn, D in Coumarelos (1994), iii

<sup>54</sup>Although officially collected data on youth involvement in criminal activity can provide useful information, these data tend to under-estimate levels of youth crime. More accurate estimates can be obtained by using self-reporting surveys in which youth are asked about the extent of their involvement in delinquent and criminal behaviour.



A United Kingdom study<sup>55</sup> of young people aged 14 to 25 found that whilst one in two males and one in three females admitted committing an offence<sup>56</sup> at some time, the majority (two-thirds) said they would not do so again in the future. In Canada, a sample of youth from Grades 7 to 12 found that almost three quarters (72%) of the students indicated that they had engaged in at least one of 12 different types of delinquency.<sup>57</sup>

In Western Australia approximately 1.5% of all youths aged 10-17 were arrested in 1996.<sup>58</sup> In the same age group a further 3.7% were issued with cautions by the Police Service<sup>59</sup>. These figures do not include youths who may have had contact with police due to antisocial behaviour or other incidents but were not charged or cautioned. A United Kingdom study of young people also found that about 3% of offenders accounted for approximately 25% of all offences.<sup>60</sup>

The problems for society arise when juveniles repeatedly break the law. Repeat offending (recidivism) is strongly correlated with the early onset of offending. Research supports the findings that the duration of a criminal career is inversely related to the age of first conviction.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, the earlier a criminal career begins the longer it will last and the greater its intensity<sup>62</sup>. The later the offending starts, the shorter and less serious the criminal career is likely to be.<sup>63</sup>

This has been demonstrated in studies of Aboriginal juvenile offending. Recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody highlighted the problem of early involvement in crime, recognising that youth contact with the juvenile justice system is critical in setting a pattern for a long term association and over representation in the criminal justice system<sup>64</sup>. The over representation is illustrated in Figure 2.4.1.1<sup>65</sup> which compares Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal arrest rates in Western Australia by age. The arrest rate gives an indication of how much of each population group has contact with the police and does not detail the number of arrests for each group<sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>55</sup>Graham and Bowling (1995b)

<sup>56</sup>Most of these 'offences' were of a low order nature – petty theft, stealing, graffiti or vandalism

<sup>57</sup>Smith et al (1995)

<sup>58</sup>Ferrante, Loh and Maller (1998a)

<sup>59</sup>Ferrante, Loh and Maller (1998a), 60

<sup>60</sup>Graham and Bowling (1995b), 2

<sup>61</sup>Blumstein et al (1986); Farrington (1992); Rutter and Giller (1983)

<sup>62</sup>Harding (1997), 132

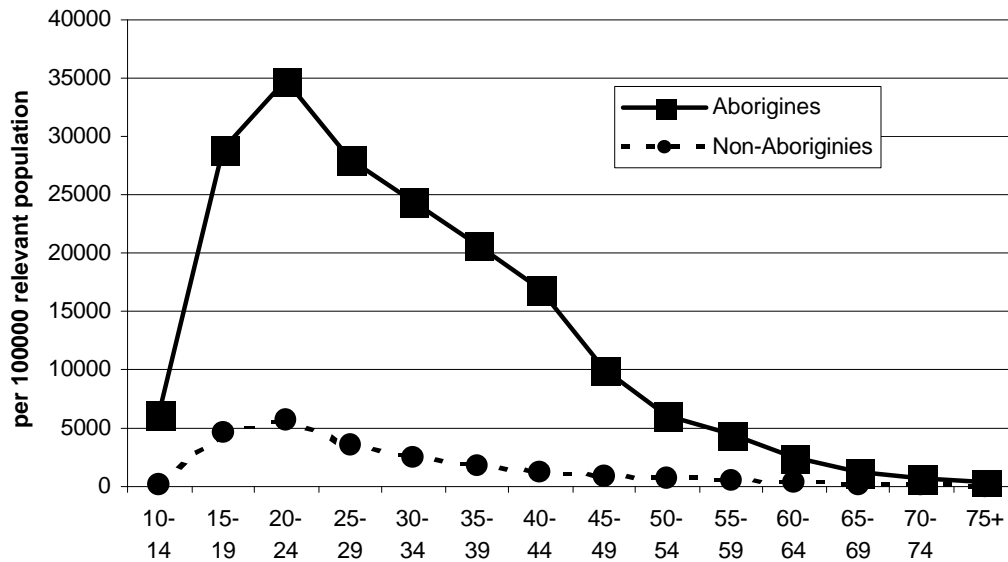
<sup>63</sup>Harding (1997), 132

<sup>64</sup>Recommendations 234-245

<sup>65</sup>CRC (1997), 8

<sup>66</sup>CRC and AAD, (1995), 46

**Figure 2.4.1.1 Arrest rate by age group, per 100 000 relevant population for Aborigines and non-Aborigines 1996**



Although the age of criminal responsibility is 10, juveniles can become involved in criminal or anti-social activities as young as seven and one study revealed if Aboriginal juvenile offenders are arrested before they turn 15 it is likely they will be arrested a further 20 times by the age 22.<sup>67</sup> A study of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal violent property offenders in Western Australia revealed almost half of the offenders interviewed reported being charged with their first criminal offence by the age of 12 years.<sup>68</sup> New South Wales research reported that 65% of ten year olds go on to commit further offences whereas only 32% of juveniles whose first offence is committed at age 16 years will commit further offences.<sup>69</sup>

Other research indicates that policing practices may account for the disproportionately high number of contacts of Aboriginal children with the criminal justice system. Their high social visibility and street presence makes Aboriginal youth vulnerable to police attention and formal and informal contact.<sup>70</sup> This can result in a situation which “draws in, retains and recycles young Aborigines through the justice system”.<sup>71</sup>

The culture and lifestyles of Aboriginal families using “family groups” as the basis for social (and anti-social) activities can result in young children often moving around with older relatives<sup>72</sup>. The young children can be introduced into situations where the chances for contact with the police are

<sup>67</sup>Research by Harding and Maller quoted in Harding (1997), 132

<sup>68</sup>Indermaur, (1995), 155

<sup>69</sup>Cain (1996)

<sup>70</sup>White (1997), 167; White (1998); Sarre (1996)

<sup>71</sup>Beresford and Omaji (1996) 107

<sup>72</sup>Cunneen (1998)

increased, even though they may not be involved in criminal activity themselves. This increased contact with the police means they become aware of crime and can become associated or even enmeshed in the criminal justice system at an early age.

Research shows that the early onset of delinquent and criminal behaviour is the single best predictor of prolonged involvement in the criminal justice system. A better understanding of youth crime and the risk factors associated with youth crime will assist in the development of strategies to reduce the occurrence and/or delay the onset of delinquent behaviour.

## 2.5 Gender

As most crime is committed by males, gender appears to be one of the strongest variables associated with criminality.

Traditionally, explanations for the low numbers of women in the ranks of offenders tended to focus on a woman's individual pathology, deviance, social and moral position in society. New and more plausible explanations for the lack of women and girls in criminal justice statistics are related primarily to the psycho-social aspects of gender.

For example, one such explanation suggests that women tend to be placed under more pressure to conform to the social norms and to informal sanctions such as parental, family and community disapproval which discourages women and girls from straying far from 'accepted' behaviour. A range of other commitments, particularly family and children occupy women significantly more than men and this assists in the conforming and control process.<sup>73</sup>

This is supported by surveys and self reporting studies of ex-offenders that have shown that, for females, forming partnerships, getting married and having children are all strong predictors of desistance from offending.<sup>74</sup>

*" I think the silliness had to stop...the ultimate thing that the parent dreads is their daughter getting pregnant, and I did that. And once I'd done that I couldn't really rebel because how can you rebel with a kid? I still don't think I was grown up during the pregnancy. I think it was after the baby was born .... .being on my own, away from (my ex-partner), parents and whatever else. I'm here, if anything gets done it is because I do it. I think it is lack of time as well. If you don't have the time you can hardly get into trouble."*<sup>75</sup>

Life history interviews with offenders and ex-offenders, such as the above, demonstrate that life events and experiences such as getting married and having children can help to precipitate positive changes that influence a person's maturity and sense of responsibility. This can protect them from participating in delinquent activity, with young men up to their mid-twenties less likely to undergo these changes than young women.<sup>76</sup> Evidence from Western Australian jails supports the theory that many young

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<sup>73</sup>Heidensohn (1985); Hirschi (1969); Hagan et al (1979)

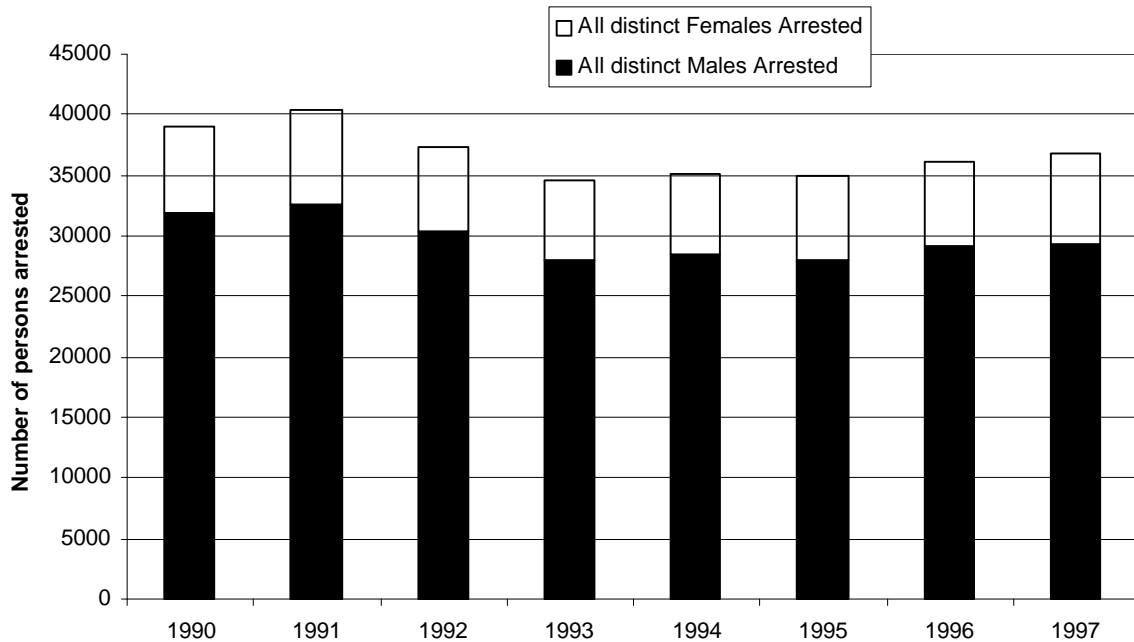
<sup>74</sup>Graham and Bowling (1995a), 72

<sup>75</sup>Graham and Bowling (1995a), 81-82

<sup>76</sup>Graham and Bowling (1995a), xii;82

men fail to break their cycle of offending. Less than 30% of prisoners were married or in defacto relationships.

**Figure 2.5.1 Breakdown of distinct persons arrested by sex 1990-1997**



Male dominance of crime is apparent in Western Australia. The balance of females and males in the general population is almost 50% in each group yet males are responsible for most crimes. In 1997 almost 80% of persons arrested in Western Australia were male. The balance of known male/female offenders in Western Australia for the past eight years is demonstrated in Figure 2.5.1.<sup>77</sup> Table 2.5.1 demonstrates that the distribution has been constant for the past eight years.

<b>Table 2.5.1: Number and percentage of total known offenders who are male in Western Australia</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of known male offenders</b>	<b>Percentage of total known offenders who are male</b>
1990	31878	81.8
1991	32635	80.9
1992	30379	81.3
1993	28038	81.1

<sup>77</sup>Ferrante, Loh and Maller (1998b)

<b>Table 2.5.1: Number and percentage of total known offenders who are male in Western Australia</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of known male offenders</b>	<b>Percentage of total known offenders who are male</b>
1994	28536	81.2
1995	27952	80.2
1996	29144	80.8
1997	29353	79.8

Source: Ferrante, Loh and Maller 1998a 38 and Ferrante, Loh and Maller 1998b

When age is added to gender the dominance of young males in crime is reinforced. Males aged between 18 and 40 years of age made up approximately 18% of the total Western Australian population at the 1996 census, yet that age and gender group account for approximately 63% of the persons arrested in 1997.

## **2.6 Child Behavioural Problems**

Offending is one element of a larger syndrome of anti-social behaviour that arises in childhood, and if not addressed at an early age, can persist into adulthood.<sup>78</sup> It is commonly found that about 50% of anti-social teenagers go on to become anti-social adults.<sup>79</sup>

In children and adolescents, anti-social behaviour describes remarkably broad and diverse patterns of functioning such as bullying, stealing, lying, running away from home, heavy drinking and smoking, aggression and violence, sexual promiscuity and drug abuse. Many studies have found that behaviours which characterise children with conduct problems are powerful predictors of subsequent mental health problems, academic failure, joblessness, poor interpersonal and social skills, delinquency and criminal behaviour<sup>80</sup>

In Western Australia, as in other parts of the world, child behavioural problems are common. It is estimated that up to 15 per cent of preschool children have moderate to severe behaviour problems and it is known that behaviour problems in preschool children interfere with child development and are indicators of more long-term difficulties.<sup>81</sup> The Western Australian Child Health Survey conducted in 1994<sup>82</sup> found that almost 1 in 6 (18 per cent) school children aged 4 to 16 across the state had significant mental health problems. Almost 1 in 10 (9.5 per cent) school children displayed delinquent behaviour, the most common problem reported, whilst 6 per cent had attention problems and 4 per cent had aggressive behaviour problems.

<sup>78</sup>Marshall and Watt (1998), 27

<sup>79</sup>Farrington, (1994); West and Farrington, (1977); Robins, 1978.

<sup>80</sup>Marshall and Watt (1998)

<sup>81</sup>Marshall and Watt, (1998)

<sup>82</sup>Zubrick et al (1995)

Disorders such as conduct disorder and oppositional defiant disorder are characterised by severe and persistent anti-social behaviour including hostility, provocative and destructive behaviour, stealing, running away from home, lying, bullying, truancy, arson and vandalism, robbery, forced sex, other aggressive acts and cruelty to animals.<sup>83</sup>

In the school environment, children with behaviour problems are described as disruptive, bullies or truants and they often experience academic failure and underachievement. Research shows that bullying is a component of a more general antisocial and rule-breaking conduct disordered behaviour pattern.<sup>84</sup> Children who bully are clearly at risk of criminality<sup>85</sup>.

Although most anti-social behaviour in children is not classified as criminal, research indicates that the risk factors for child anti-social behaviour and later offending strongly overlap, with both biological and environmental factors critical. Longitudinal studies have shown that inappropriate or inadequate parenting, such as coercive parenting, inconsistent discipline and poor supervision, are strong predictors of later behaviour problems. Other risk factors influencing behavioural problems include poor family functioning, which may arise from -

- marital conflict;
- parent psychiatric illness;
- family substance abuse;
- child abuse or neglect;
- and high family stress from a multitude of causes.

Once children enter the school setting, negative school and social experiences further exacerbate the adjustment difficulties of children with behaviour problems. It is recognised that interaction of these, and other risk factors in the first few years of life mean many children's disorders are entrenched and resistant to treatment by the middle years of primary school, with long-lasting outcomes.<sup>86</sup>

Early treatment of conduct disorders is important, with the best results occurring prior to the age of seven. For example, early childhood education can be viewed as an innovative mental health strategy<sup>87</sup> where child-initiated learning, such as that promoted by the famous High Scope Perry Pre-School Program, which is successfully operating in the United States, Britain, Mexico, Finland, Singapore and the Netherlands, can channel children towards positive social behaviours that can prevent misconduct patterns developing in early childhood. When children participate

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<sup>83</sup>Refer DSMIV - The criteria for diagnosis of these disorders involve repetitive and persistent patterns of behaviour in which the basic rights of others or major age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated.

<sup>84</sup>Olweus (1994a,b)

<sup>85</sup>Olweus, (1994a,b); Loeber and Dishion (1983); Magnusson, Ståtin and Duner, (1983), McDonald and Brown (1997)

<sup>86</sup>Marshall and Watt (1998)

<sup>87</sup>WAGISOF (1998)

in an active learning environment, they acquire and develop the skills of self-control, self discipline and the ability to think before they act. A sense of control promotes personal satisfaction and motivates children to be productive – a primary factor for success at school and later life.

## 2.7 Delinquent Peers and Use of Leisure Time

If adolescents are not doing well at school and are experiencing problems at home they may gravitate to individuals who share similar values, interests or problems. Recent research in the United Kingdom found that the odds of offending were three times greater among those juveniles with delinquent peers.<sup>88</sup>

Association with delinquent peers and inappropriate use of leisure time are strongly linked with an absence or poor performance of parental supervision and can influence whether a young person starts to offend.<sup>89</sup> Those who spend their leisure time in unstructured and unsupervised activity, primarily on the streets and at other public venues, are at increased risk of offending.

Young people want exciting and interesting things to do and if not engaged in legitimate activities will find other ways to amuse themselves. Boredom and a need to socialise with peers can lead to a range of risky behaviours such as experimentation with drugs and alcohol and engaging in a range of anti-social and criminal activities like vandalism, graffiti and car theft.<sup>90</sup>

Young people's involvement in constructive and positive activities such as sport, cultural and other recreational activities can keep children out of trouble, build self esteem, and self worth, promote a sense of pride and teach self discipline and team skills.<sup>91</sup> Involvement in these activities can reduce the chances of delinquent behaviour.

## 2.8 Television and the Media

A recent review of research into the effects of television violence on children noted that "there are diverse opinions about the influence of television content upon young viewers"<sup>92</sup>.

Some research suggests that it is the frequency of viewing violent television that indicates aggressive behaviour and may lead to criminal behaviour while others contend the viewing habits of parents have more impact on a child becoming aggressive than the child's own television viewing habits. One study of the links between violence and viewing television found that it is a two way factor, that is, violence viewing can lead to aggression and aggression can lead to violence viewing.<sup>93</sup>

McDonald and Brown contend "most laboratory and field studies have shown that there is some sort of relationship or association"<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>88</sup>Graham and Bowling (1995a), 44

<sup>89</sup>Seydlitz and Jenkins (1998), 64

<sup>90</sup>See also Harding (1993), 138

<sup>91</sup>Home Office (1997), 13

<sup>92</sup>Durkin and Low (1998), 108

<sup>93</sup>NCOV (1990), 81.

<sup>94</sup>McDonald and Brown (1997), 23



A recent United Nations review of the subject remarked that “no consensus has been established as to the broader and more precise influence of media violence [and]... research findings have so far been contradictory”<sup>95</sup> The influence of media related violence remains unclear and the growth of on-line access for children and others is a new and unexplored area in terms of possible impact on offending behaviour. The most recent review of Australian research into the influence of television violence concluded that more work in the field is necessary in order to gain a better understanding.<sup>96</sup>

## 2.9 Alcohol and Other Drugs

There has long been a strong association, in the case of alcohol consumption, with hooliganism, vandalism, assaults and other anti-social behaviour<sup>97</sup>; and in the case of drug abuse with burglary, armed robbery and other acquisitive crime.<sup>98</sup> It is widely accepted, therefore, by both the experts and the wider community that there is a link between crime and alcohol/drug abuse.

However, this link is extremely complex because although drug and alcohol consumption and other associated addictive behaviours are associated with criminality, there are conflicting views about what is cause and what is effect. This is particularly the case for drug use where researchers continually contest whether drug taking leads to criminality or whether criminal associations lead to drug use.

Substantial research into the relationship between drug abuse and crime has confirmed that a high proportion of drug abusers come into contact with the criminal justice system.<sup>99</sup> Other studies have observed a similar relationship with alcohol abusers.<sup>100</sup>

In the case of illicit drugs, some studies provide evidence that a high proportion of users are already involved in delinquent or criminal behaviour before they start using heroin or other addictive drugs. It is argued that involvement with particular social groups, criminal sub-cultures and risk taking lifestyles, increases a person’s exposure to illicit drugs and the chances of becoming a drug user.<sup>101</sup> The increased need for instant cash to satisfy an expensive drug habit is therefore more likely to be associated with an escalation in drug use rather than the beginning of a drug habit and a life of crime.

There is also strong evidence to support the theory that drug use, particularly heroin use, causes crime. Some crimes seem to have a clear relationship with drug use – for example, pharmacy

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<sup>95</sup>Hammarberg (1998), 21

<sup>96</sup>Durkin and Low (1998), 121

<sup>97</sup>Makkai (1997); McDonald and Brown (1997), 20

<sup>98</sup>Evidence provided to the Committee by the Western Australia Police Service

<sup>99</sup>Jarvis and Parker (1989); Dembo (1993); South (1994); Bennett (1998)

<sup>100</sup>Papandreou N; Brooksbank J and McLaughlin K (1985); Indermaur (1986); Roffman and Froland (1976)

<sup>101</sup>Burr (1987); Pearson (1987 b); Auld et al (1986); Hobbs (1988) Mott and Taylor (1974)

thefts and armed hold ups – confirming the idea that addiction leads to crime in order to obtain drugs or cash for the addiction.<sup>102</sup>

Supporting this, South<sup>103</sup> observes that the prominent place occupied by heroin in the popular and official perceptions of the drug-crime link can be traced, in part, to the belief (even by users themselves) that they need a certain amount of heroin to support the habit and avoid withdrawal. South linked this argument to the high cost and short supplies of heroin in the developed world.

The argument becomes difficult to sustain in the Western Australia-context given the “ample quantities of low cost heroin”<sup>104</sup> presently available. The current cost and supply of heroin only further complicates the debate over the drug-crime link.

Relying on evidence from offenders as to the influence of alcohol and illicit drugs on their offending is also unreliable. A study of violent property offenders in Western Australia found that many offenders “perceived that drugs and/or alcohol were the central problem mediating their involvement in crime”<sup>105</sup> although many offenders also failed to make a connection between their use and sometimes abuse of alcohol and drugs and their tendencies toward aggressive behaviour.<sup>106</sup> This finding was confirmed by McDonald and Brown who commented that the “evidence is equivocal because individuals who become involved in these [violent] acts often have histories of violence that precede their use of these drugs”.<sup>107</sup>

There is little doubt, however, that the lowering of inhibitions through alcohol consumption and drug use can lead to risky and inappropriate behaviours including crime, and in particular violent crime.

It is possible that offenders get drunk, “high” or “stoned” to complete the crime or overcome their fear. Whether offenders just happen to be intoxicated (or “loaded up”) when they do the crime, the result is the same: their judgements and actions will be formed within the context of their behaviour of their altered state of consciousness.<sup>108</sup>

A number of studies have considered the role of alcohol as a factor in impairing judgement about acceptable versus risk taking behaviour, and the relationship between alcohol and violence.<sup>109</sup> For example, strong correlations have been found between violent offences and recent alcohol consumption; and the location and timing of violent or disorderly conduct offences - occurring, in many cases, in or near licensed premises and close to, or at the end, of licensing hours on Friday and Saturday nights.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>Jarvis and Parker (1989)

<sup>103</sup>South (1994)

<sup>104</sup>SCMUDA (1997), 1

<sup>105</sup>Indermaur (1995), 155

<sup>106</sup>Indermaur (1995) 153

<sup>107</sup>McDonald and Brown (1997), 21

<sup>108</sup>Indermaur (1995), 54

<sup>109</sup>Indermaur (1995); Evans (1980); Evans (1986); Gottfredsom (1984) Mott; (1990)

<sup>110</sup>Mott (1990), 26

The social problems which can be associated with alcohol consumption such as increased risk taking activities, progression from licit to illicit drugs, family breakdown, and associated anti-social behaviour all increase the risk of a person becoming involved in crime.

For example, many offenders come from families with high levels of drug and alcohol consumption which can affect the functioning of the family unit. Children of alcohol or drug dependant parents are themselves at greater risk of becoming alcohol or drug dependant later in life, thus continuing the cycle of family problems and subsequent involvement in crime.

Research on alcohol consumption has revealed three quarters of Australians consume alcohol.<sup>111</sup> Despite this high figure a recent study indicated that 82 % of those consuming alcohol committed no offence or anti-social behaviour. Only 8% were characterised as chronic or repeat multiple offenders with the remainder being casual offenders.

It is important to remember the extent of alcohol's impact on crime and anti-social behaviour which was demonstrated in information which revealed that in a twelve month period almost a quarter of people aged 14-40 said they had been physically abused by someone affected by alcohol. The same number had property damaged and almost 50% were put in fear by someone affected by alcohol.<sup>112</sup> It is this anti-social behaviour that contributes to many people feeling a lack of safety and a fear of crime in the community.

One theory explaining a link between alcohol and crime suggests an individual learns to behave in a certain way, often criminal, when they are intoxicated and they are not reprimanded or condemned. This situation can develop in the home or with peers<sup>113</sup>. Their behaviour then becomes acceptable to them.

One study of alcohol related offenders identified repeat multiple and chronic offenders as largely-

- aged 14-29;
- single males;
- unemployed; and
- evenly distributed between capital cities and non-capital cities.<sup>114</sup>

The same characteristics were dominant in chronic and repeat multiple victims of alcohol related offences, suggesting offenders target people sharing the same lifestyles.<sup>115</sup>

## **2.10 Race**

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<sup>111</sup>Reported in Makkai (1997)

<sup>112</sup>Makkai (1997), 2 (referring to National Drug Survey data collected in (1993) and (1995)

<sup>113</sup>Makkai (1997).

<sup>114</sup>Makkai, (1998), 5

<sup>115</sup>Makkai, (1998), 6

The links between race, ethnicity and crime are generally associated with the socio-economic position occupied by minority sectors of society. For example, statistics show that compared with the general population indigenous people -

- are three times more likely to be unemployed;
- have a life expectancy between 15 and 17 years less than the overall population;
- are significantly at greater risk of infant and perinatal mortality;
- are twice as likely to be members of single parent families; and
- drop out of school at a younger age.<sup>116</sup>

In addition to those risk factors common across the whole population various reports<sup>117</sup> have highlighted a second set of risk factors which specifically influence the high levels of involvement of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system. These are -

- past institutionalisation;
- cultural dislocation;
- inter-generational offending and imprisonment; and
- racism.

A Western Australian study of juvenile Aboriginal offenders confirmed many of these difficulties were common to the families interviewed. The study also identified a lack or absence of parental supervision and guidance<sup>118</sup> as a significant influence on offending rates. In evidence to the Committee, one of the study's authors, Dr Quentin Beresford, asserted that this parental failing can largely be attributed to the practice of forced removal of Aboriginal children from their parents.<sup>119</sup> The practice broke the traditional family bonds within and between Aboriginal families and left many children with little or no understanding of what a family unit comprised. For the Aborigines removed from their parents as children the "childhood experiences of removal and institutionalisation have had crippling effects on their ability to parent effectively"<sup>120</sup>

In a recent publication Beresford and Omaji revealed estimates of the impact of removal policies on later involvement in the criminal justice system. The estimates suggested half of those Aboriginals aged 30 years and older in prison were removed from their families. Almost the same proportion of prisoners aged below 30 years had parents who were removed.<sup>121</sup>

Beresford and Omaji suggest that much Aboriginal crime also arises from a lack of belonging and being a part of something. The lack of identity manifests itself in defeatism and pessimism which in turn is linked to delinquency.<sup>122</sup> Beresford and Omaji also make the point that for many

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<sup>116</sup>JCC (1997), 8-10

<sup>117</sup>RCIADC (1991); HREOC (1997)

<sup>118</sup>Beresford and Omaji (1996)

<sup>119</sup>See also HREOC, (1997), 222 - 225

<sup>120</sup>Beresford and Omaji (1998), 213

<sup>121</sup>Beresford and Omaji (1998) 206-207

<sup>122</sup>Beresford and Omaji (1996), 127.

Aboriginal repeat offenders crime becomes a source of pride within their own subcultural group and a way to rebel against authority.<sup>123</sup>

In addition to the factors outlined the indigenous population faces further difficulty as the risk factors are exacerbated by racism which takes various forms including racist violence, harassment, discrimination and exclusion, and institutional racism.<sup>124</sup>

Racism forms barriers to social integration and access to mainstream society and services. It renders its victims vulnerable to low self esteem, feelings of hopelessness, powerlessness and encourages the development of aggressive and anti-social behaviours<sup>125</sup>

Sarre contends that high rates of Aboriginal representation in the criminal justice system lead some to suggest that colour and criminality are related. He dismisses this suggestion and argues instead that political and social factors and the effect upon Aboriginal criminality of the criminal justice system explains historically high over representation of Aborigines in criminal justice statistics.<sup>126</sup>

## **2.11 Environment**

A disproportionate number of offenders tend to come from neighbourhoods or communities characterised by economic hardship and other inequalities associated with unemployment, poverty, poor housing and high residential mobility where community supports and controls have broken down.<sup>127</sup>

High levels of crime and disorder in such communities are closely linked with unstable, demoralized and isolated communities with weak neighbourhood ties, few supports for families and social isolation of parents (mainly mothers).<sup>128</sup>

Apart from high crime rates, these communities are often characterised by -

- high concentrations of public housing;
- high residential mobility;
- lack of community support services and facilities, particularly for families with children;
- lack of organised recreational and social activities/facilities for young people;
- high concentration of youth unemployment, particularly young males;
- a number of the poorest performing schools; and

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<sup>123</sup>Beresford and Omaji, (1998), 224

<sup>124</sup>HREOC (1991)

<sup>125</sup>JCC (1997), 39

<sup>126</sup>Sarre (1996)

<sup>127</sup>Weatherburn and Lind (1997)

<sup>128</sup>NACRO (1995), 51-58

- possible problems arising from teenage gangs<sup>129</sup>.

The features of these communities can lead to the “broken window” syndrome where communities begin to experience a downward spiral of neglect, decay and despair.<sup>130</sup> A downward spiral can also include increasing fear of crime leading residents to abandon any area that they feel they cannot control.

The Western Australian Child Health Survey identified a connection between many residents of high crime neighbourhoods and child neglect. In areas defined as crime prone 51.0% of children who were allowed out at night on a regular basis were involved in crime. In less crime prone areas the figure was only 33.8%.<sup>131</sup>

Therefore, communities which encourage social controls, and exhibit high levels of organisation and cooperation with neighbours, Parents and Citizens, after school care centres, churches and youth clubs are better placed to help and support families and channel youth towards positive outcomes that will reduce crime. Recent examples of this reversal in community spirit have taken place in Lockridge and Kwinana in metropolitan Perth where housing and suburban renewal has created greater community spirit.

## 2.12 Situational Factors

Situational factors concern the physical characteristics of an offence which may influence the behaviour of an offender. A key assumption behind situational theory is that the offender has already made a choice to commit a crime<sup>132</sup>. The physical or situational characteristics of a particular target will then contribute to the offender’s decision to choose that target or another.

Often the social and psychological factors like those already outlined in this paper may expose an individual to a greater risk of becoming an offender. The final decision to commit a crime, mostly concerned with how, where and what type of crime will be committed, is determined by situational factors such as whether the offender may be observed committing the crime or how easily the reward of the crime can be obtained.<sup>133</sup> For example snatching the bag of a shopper in a car park involves less risk, less planning and fewer resources for the offender than conducting an armed robbery on a bank or an armoured vehicle.

Eckblom identified four major approaches to situational crime prevention including -

- target hardening;
- controlling access to crime targets;
- surveillance; and

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<sup>129</sup>NACRO (1995)

<sup>130</sup>Kelling and Coles (1996)

<sup>131</sup>Quoted in Weatherburn and Lind (1998)

<sup>132</sup>Bennett, (1986) 43

<sup>133</sup>Bennett (1986)

- target removal.<sup>134</sup>

Situational factors are extremely varied and often described according to offences. For example the security of a house, the visibility of the house's entry points from the road and the absence of a homeowner will impact on a burglar's decision to select a particular target. The situational factors influencing a prospective assault offender may include the location of the offence and the possibility of witnesses, in addition to the ready availability of a weapon of assault.

Situational factors are often connected to the idea of environmental design. Proponents of environmental design contend that with careful planning of buildings and other infrastructure the attractiveness of a particular target can be reduced to potential offenders<sup>135</sup>. This can be as simple as providing lighting in a dark car park where assaults have been known to occur or installing security shields between customers and tellers at banks to reduce armed robberies. On a larger scale environmental design can include entire housing estates or blocks of flats designed to provide open visible areas with entry only to residents, thus reducing the opportunities for potential offenders.

In a recent Western Australian study of violent property offenders Indermaur noted "with vehicle theft, target selection [by offenders] was dominated by the ease of entry into the vehicle or whether or not the vehicle was a preferred model"<sup>136</sup>. Indermaur also noted that offenders reported using predetermined lists of preferred targets both in motor vehicle thefts and houses.<sup>137</sup> The findings suggest situational factors are an important consideration in the commission of an offence.

An awareness of the potential attractiveness of a particular person or piece of property to an offender can improve the chances of avoiding crime. Securing the property or making it more dangerous for the offender, that is, increasing the risk of the offender being caught reduces the chances of becoming a victim of crime.

Conversely, leaving property unsecured or taking unnecessary risks with your personal safety can increase the chances of becoming a victim of crime.

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<sup>134</sup>Ekblom (1998)

<sup>135</sup>Jacobs (1961), Wood (1961), Angel (1968) and Newman (1972)

<sup>136</sup>Indermaur (1995),153

<sup>137</sup>Indermaur (1995), 153-154





### 3.0 CRIME IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Crime is most commonly measured by the number of offences reported to police but we can also utilise other sources. Experts agree that victimisation reports are a valuable additional measure. The Australian Bureau of Statistics produced victimisation survey data for Western Australia most recently in 1995. Victimisation reports are useful because they give an indication of the level of reporting of crime. Some crimes are often never reported to Police for a variety of reasons<sup>136</sup> and therefore do not appear in police statistics or in those statistics which rely on police data. The most recent figures on reporting levels for a selection of offences are presented in Table 3.0.1.

<b>Offence</b>	<b>Number of victims who informed police of offence</b>	<b>Number of victims who did not inform police of offence</b>	<b>Estimate of the percentage of offences actually reported to Police</b>
Break and Enter	45700	11200	80.3
Motor Vehicle Theft	17900	1200	93.7
Robbery	14600	9500	60.5
Assault	14000	20300	40.9

Source: ABS 1996, 6

There is additional data that can be used to build a more accurate picture of crime in Western Australia. The public hospital system produces statistics related to accidental and non-accidental injuries treated in hospitals which can supplement police data. This data is useful to supplement particular offence studies. For example a study into domestic violence in Western Australia identified some of the injuries received from criminal acts that are reported in hospital admissions, giving a clearer picture of assault offences in a domestic context.<sup>137</sup>

Using a wide variety of crime statistics and victimisation reports one can determine the prevalence and incidence of a particular crime. Prevalence refers to statistics which explain who is committing the crimes and generally gives an idea of the proportion of the population involved. The incidence of a particular crime refers to the number of offences reported. It is important to study both of these types of statistics to create a complete picture of crime in Western Australia.

References to offenders in the following section of the paper refers to known offenders. The information we have about offenders is taken only from those offenders who are caught. In offences with low clearance rates such as burglary and motor vehicle theft it is difficult to compile a comprehensive offender profile based on those arrested for the offence. In those offence categories the majority of offenders remain a mystery to the criminal justice system.

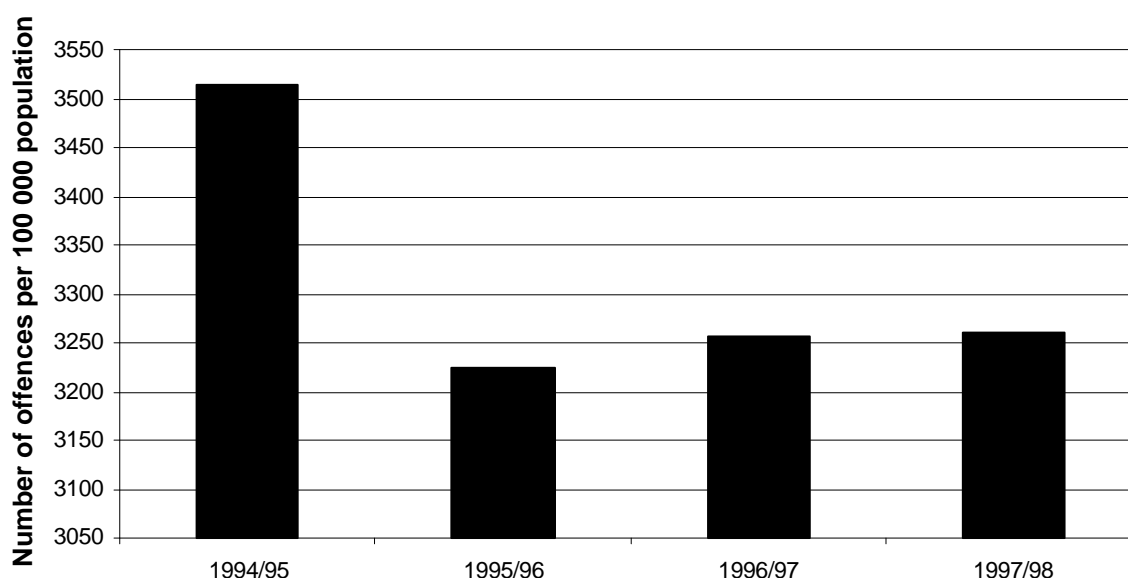
136 For an explanation of reasons for non-reporting of crime see Carcach (1997)

137 Ferrante et al (1996) 90

### 3.1 Burglary

Western Australia has consistently had high rates of burglary offences. Burglary represented almost one-quarter (23%) of all offences reported to police in Western Australia in 1997/98.

**Figure 3.1.1 Reported offences of burglary in Western Australia 1994/95 to 1997/1998 per 100 000 population**



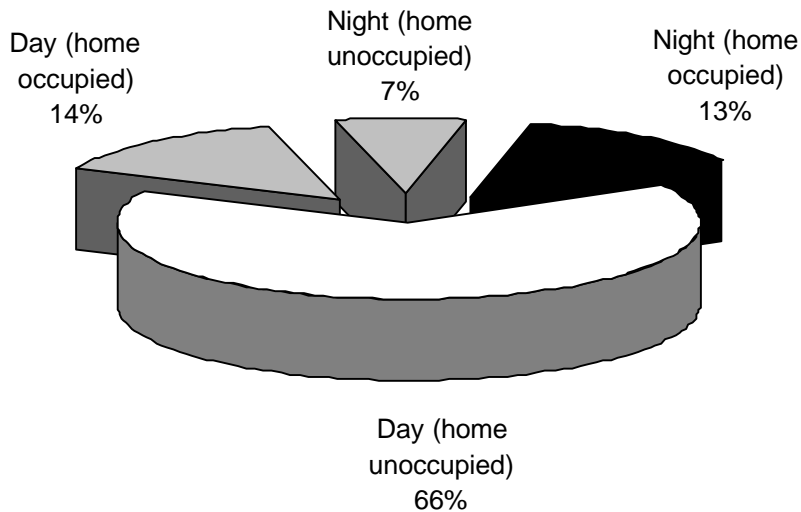
After the variety of stealing offences, burglary was the next most reported crime in Western Australia. Trends in reported offences of burglary in Western Australia for recent years are presented in Figure 3.1.1<sup>138</sup>.

Almost three quarters (70%) of burglary offences in Western Australia in 1996 were committed on residential homes (non-commercial dwellings) with the remainder committed on business premises and other dwellings. Information from the Police Service concerning reported offences of burglary on commercial and residential properties indicates more than 70% of reported offences between July 1996 and June 1997 occurred in a dwelling that was not occupied. Almost two-thirds of reported offences occurred in unoccupied dwellings during daylight hours. Only 20% of reported burglaries occurred at night and 13% of all offences were committed at night in unoccupied dwellings. A breakdown of the conditions of most home burglaries is provided in Figure 3.1.2<sup>139</sup>.

Of the 1757 distinct persons charged with burglary in 1997, 634 (36.1%) were under the age of 18. 929 (52.9%) offenders charged with burglary offences were between 18 and 29 years of age.

138 Western Australia Police Service Crime Statistics  
139 WAPS Annual Crime Statistics Report 1996/97

**Figure 3.1.2 Home burglary in Western Australia 1996 A breakdown by status of dwelling**



Thus 89% of known burglary offenders are under thirty years of age.

The majority of known offenders are male. Aboriginal over representation in burglary offence is noticeable when it is recalled that Aborigines comprise only 3% of the state population. Of the total number of persons charged with burglary (35%) were Aboriginal.<sup>140</sup> Again we must be careful to consider that the profile of burglary offenders is distorted by the age and gender of those caught. The majority of burglary offenders are not arrested and their identity remains unknown to the Police Service. A profile of known offenders by age, gender and ethnicity is presented in Figure 3.1.3<sup>141</sup>.

A recent study revealed almost one third of burglary victims in Western Australia experienced more than one incident in twelve months.<sup>142</sup> This suggests that situational factors may be an important indicator of burglary offences. International evidence has suggested a previously burgled victim was four times more likely to become a repeat burglary victim as someone becoming a first time victim.<sup>143</sup>

Australia wide data revealed other high risk situational factors such as rented houses and homes occupied by single parents with children. Homes with regular occupant turnover were 1.6 times more likely to be burgled than long term occupancy homes.<sup>144</sup> Homes where occupants were regularly out at night and had been previously burgled were twice as likely to be burgled again as homes where someone was home at night.<sup>145</sup>

140 Ferrante, Loh and Maller (1998b)

141 Offences cleared sourced from Western Australia Police Service Crime Statistics. Age, gender and ethnicity details taken from Ferrante, Loh and Maller (1998b)

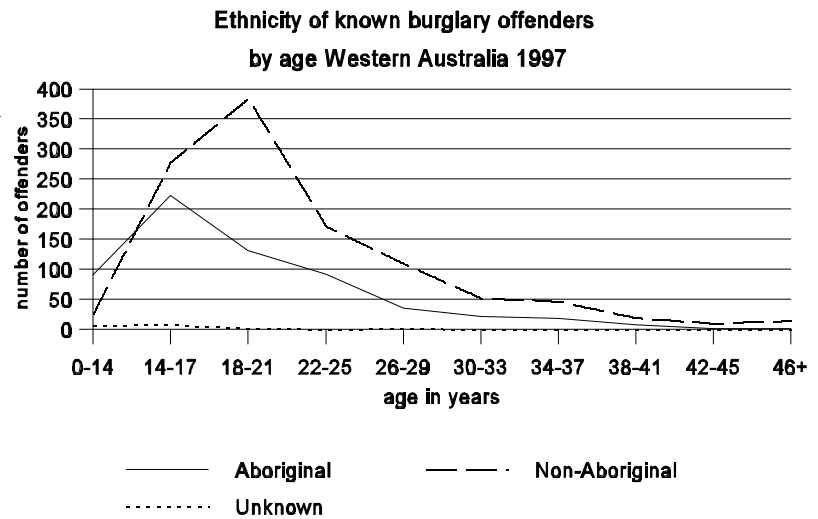
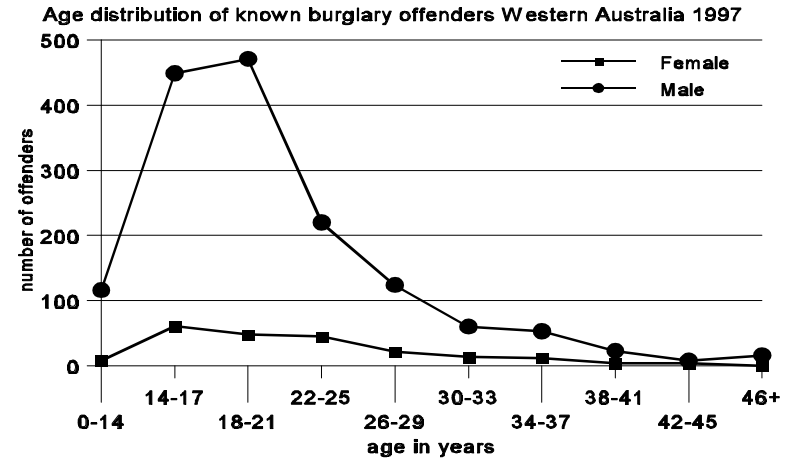
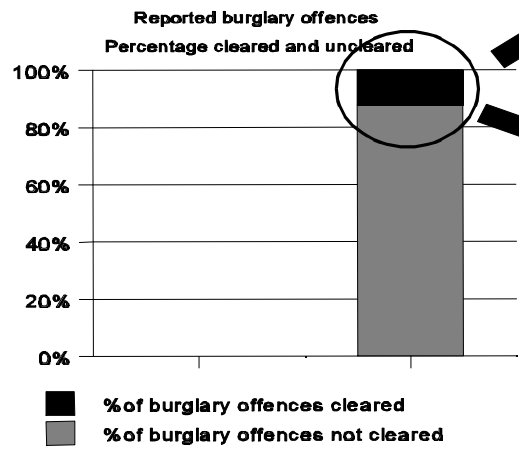
142 Mukherjee and Carcach (1998), 4 Note figure includes break and enter and attempted break and enter offences

143 Grabosky and James (1995), 10, see also Bridgeman and Hobbs (1998)

144 Mukherjee and Carcach (1998), 14

145 Mukherjee and Carcach (1998), 14

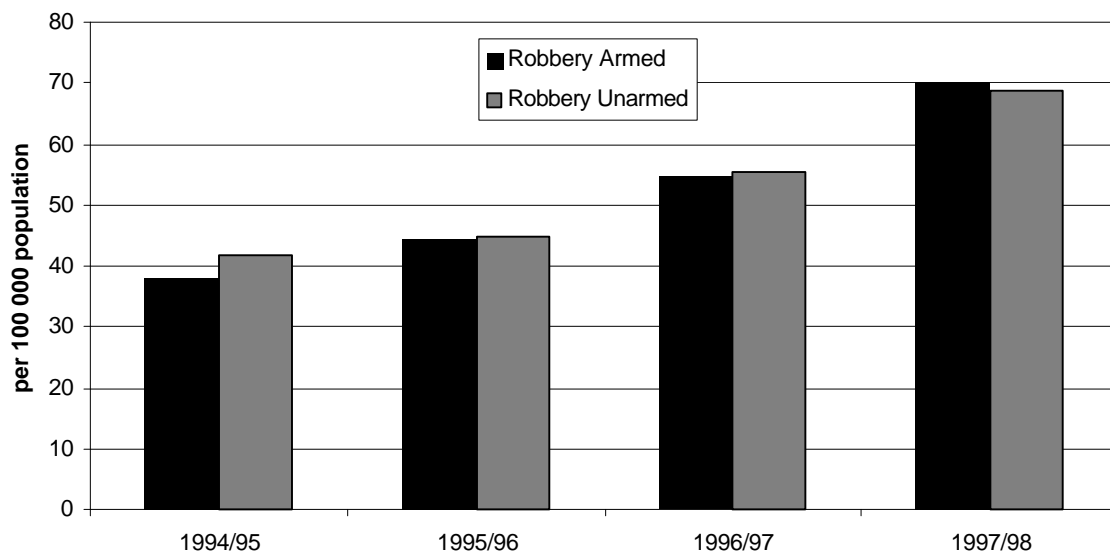
Figure 3.1.3: Characteristics of known burglary offenders in Western Australia 1997



### 3.2 Robbery

Robbery is an offence which is increasing in Western Australia. This is demonstrated in Figure 3.2.1<sup>146</sup>. Evidence provided to the Committee by the Police Service indicates that some of the recent increase in robbery offences and particularly armed robbery is linked to the offender's need to obtain money to fund a drug habit<sup>147</sup>.

**Figure 3.2.1 Reported offences of robbery (unarmed and armed) in Western Australia 1994/95 to 1997/98 per 100 000 population**

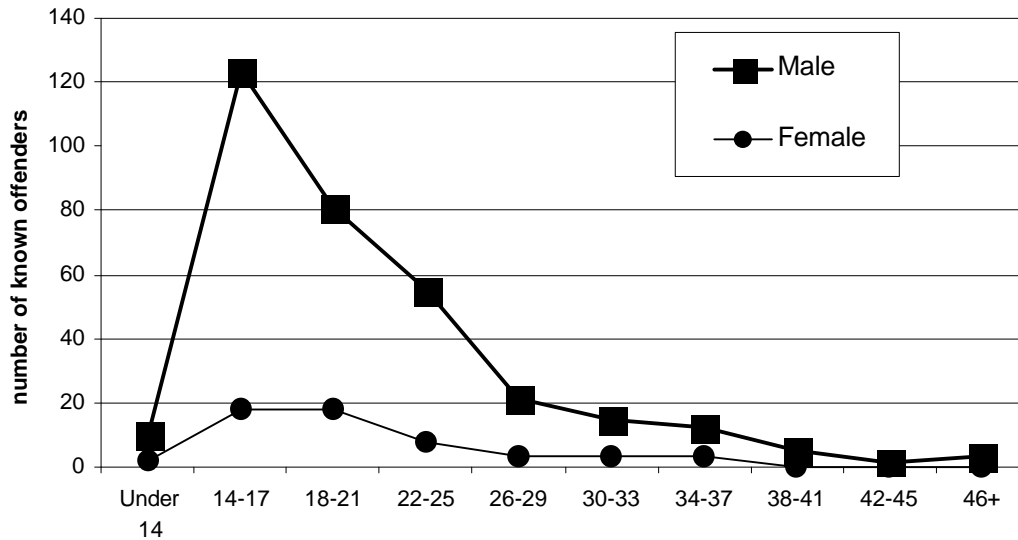


In Western Australia as with burglary offences, robbery arrests were dominated by young males. This is demonstrated in Figure 3.2.2<sup>148</sup>. Offending seems to peak between 18 and 21 years. Interestingly female offending peaks at a much earlier age 14 to 17 years. This may reinforce the earlier comments that females mature at an earlier age and experience significant life events such as employment, marriage or pregnancy at an earlier age.

The importance of repeat incidents of robbery must be remembered. Evidence from a recent publication using 1995 data indicated more than one quarter of robbery victims in Western Australia suffered more than two attacks in the previous 12 month period suggesting offenders often choose the same victim for further attacks<sup>149</sup>

146 Western Australia Police Service Crime Statistics  
147 Evidence provided to Committee by Western Australia Police Service  
148 Ferrante, Loh and Maller (1998b)  
149 Mukherjee and Carcach (1998), 4

**Figure 3.2.2 Known robbery offenders in Western Australia 1997 by age group and gender**



### 3.3 Motor Vehicle Theft

Australia remains second only to the United Kingdom in rates of theft of motor vehicles.<sup>150</sup> Western Australia remains only second to New South Wales in similar statistics for Australia. Motor vehicle theft rates for Western Australia in recent years are displayed in Figure 3.3.1<sup>151</sup>.

In 1997 a total of 403 persons were arrested for motor vehicle theft.<sup>152</sup> Given the low clearance rate for motor vehicle theft it is difficult to build an offender profile. It is possible to describe the age, gender and ethnicity profile of those offenders caught but it must be remembered only 17% of motor vehicle offences are cleared. The available information is illustrated in Figure 3.3.2<sup>153</sup>

Figure 3.3.2 demonstrates the majority of offenders were male. As with burglary Aboriginal representation is high (38%) in proportion to their total share of the population. Male offending peaks between 14 and 17 years while female offending is almost negligible suggesting that vehicle theft may be connected to issues of masculinity and self esteem and part of the period of development identified in adolescence.

The National Motor Vehicle Theft Taskforce Report noted that the “typical profile of the majority of young motor vehicle theft offenders is one or two court appearances in the mid-teens and then no further involvement in the criminal justice system”.<sup>154</sup> This reinforces comments made earlier

150 Hill (1998), 2

151 Western Australia Police Service Crime Statistics

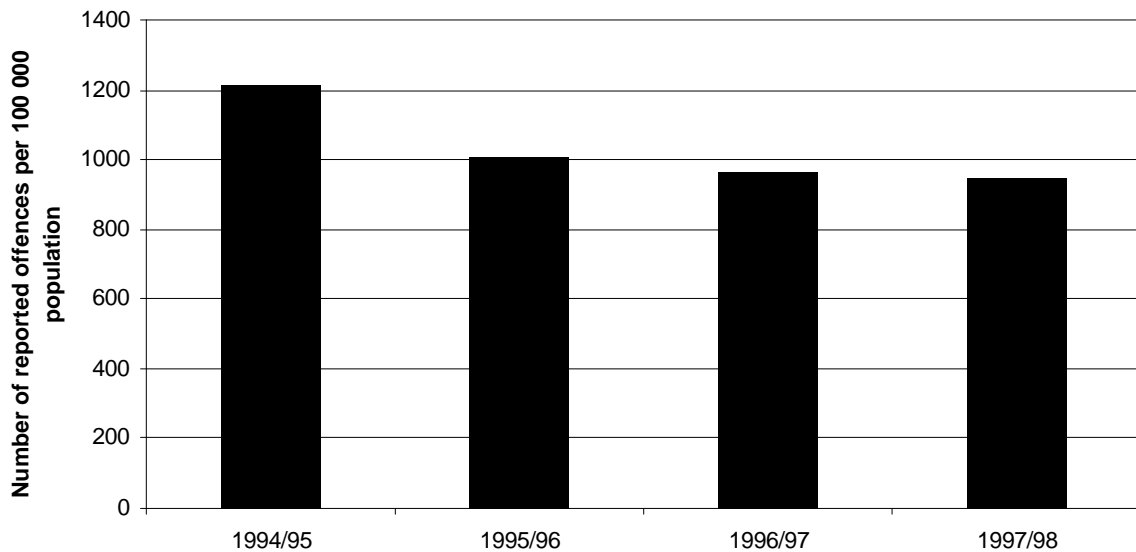
152 Ferrante, Loh and Maller (1998b)

153 Offences cleared sourced from Western Australia Police Service Crime Statistics. Age, gender and ethnicity details taken from Ferrante, Loh and Maller 1998b

154 NMVTT (1997), 37.

on juvenile crime concerning the short term nature of offending and its relationship to a need to find thrills and boost self esteem by driving powerful motor vehicles. The short term nature is reinforced by research which identified 75% of all car theft was opportunistic in nature and mainly involved joy riding <sup>155</sup>. The remainder of offences are explained by professional theft for spare parts and owner fraud, that is, the process of falsifying a theft for insurance purposes.<sup>156</sup>

**Figure 3.3.1 Reported offences of motor vehicle theft in Western Australia 1994/95 to 1997/98 per 100 000 population**



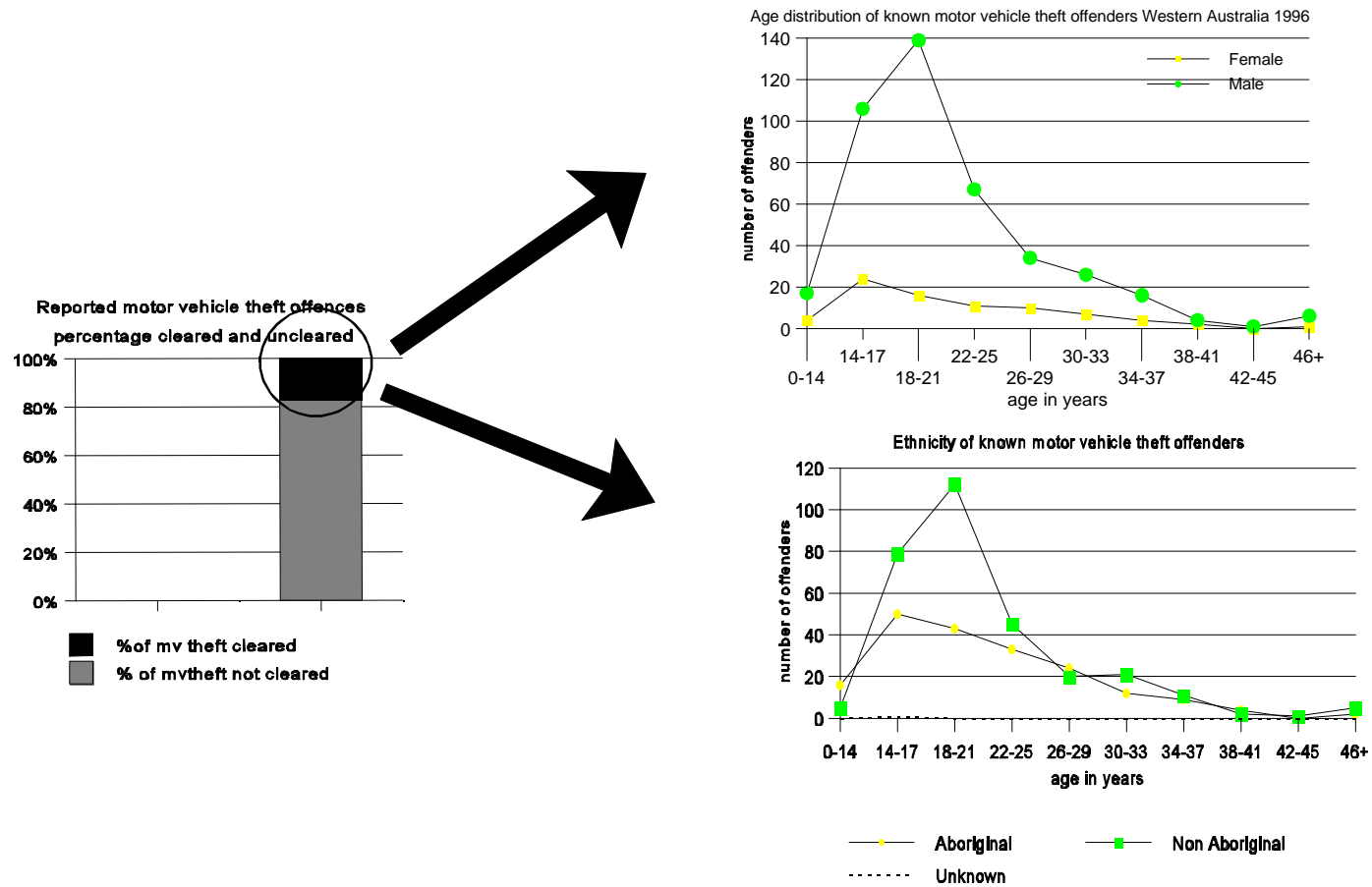
Other research has confirmed earlier theories on juvenile crime that a small number of recidivist offenders become responsible for most car thefts. In a New South Wales study of young car thieves it was revealed that 88% of car thefts were committed by 20% of young offenders.<sup>157</sup>

In a 1995 study<sup>158</sup> of theft offenders in detention in NSW it was discovered that the top two explanations given by car thieves for taking a vehicle were a need for transport and the desire for excitement and thrills. In a study of repeat offenders who were supplying cars for re-birthing (a process of changing identification numbers to legitimise stolen vehicles) or parts supply, the second explanation was not so popular.<sup>159</sup> This group were often undertaking car theft to gain money for drugs or personal goods. Significantly drug use was a secondary factor with the need for excitement and thrills being the primary factor which brought the offender into the stolen car trade originally.

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155 NMVTT (1997), 41  
156 Higgins (1997)  
157 Salmelainen (1995), 28  
158 Salmelainen (1995)  
159 Salmelainen (1995)

Figure 3.3.2 Characteristics of known motor vehicle offenders Western Australia 1997





Cars are most commonly taken from the street or footpath first, secondly from residences and finally from car parks<sup>160</sup>.

A 1996 Report highlighted vehicles built between 1975 and 1985 as being the most common models stolen.<sup>161</sup> This is borne out in information concerning the age of cars stolen in Western Australia in 1997/98 and presented in Table 3.3.1

Year of Manufacture	Number stolen	% of total number stolen*
<b>Before 1970</b>	205	1.2
1970-74	651	3.8
1975-79	2600	15.2
1980-84	4932	28.8
1985-89	5302	31
1990-94	1962	11.4
1995-98	1090	6.4
Unknown	403	2.4

Source: Western Australia Police Service Statistics \*approximate figures due to rounding

In Western Australia in 1996 6.7% (950) of motor vehicle thefts involved the keys to the vehicle being left in the car.<sup>162</sup> Unlike other property offences with high repeat victimisation rates the rates for motor vehicle theft are relatively low. Only 12.6% of victims suffered a second or more offence in the twelve month period studied.<sup>163</sup> This may be explained by people taking simple security precautions after the first offence, which may be more affordable than the security improvements required in other property offences such as securing a previously burgled home.

### 3.4 Drugs

In 1997/98 the Police Service received approximately 14466 reported offences concerning drugs.<sup>164</sup> The trends in reported drug offences in Western Australia per 100 000 population are contained in Figure 3.4.1<sup>165</sup>.

Recent arrest data in Western Australia reveals the majority of known offenders were male and aged between 18 and 24 years.<sup>166</sup> Cannabis accounted for the majority of charges and most

160 NMVTT (1997), 39

161 reported in NMVTT (1997) 40.

162 Ferrante, Loh and Maller (1998), 15

163 Mukherjee and Carcach (1998), 4

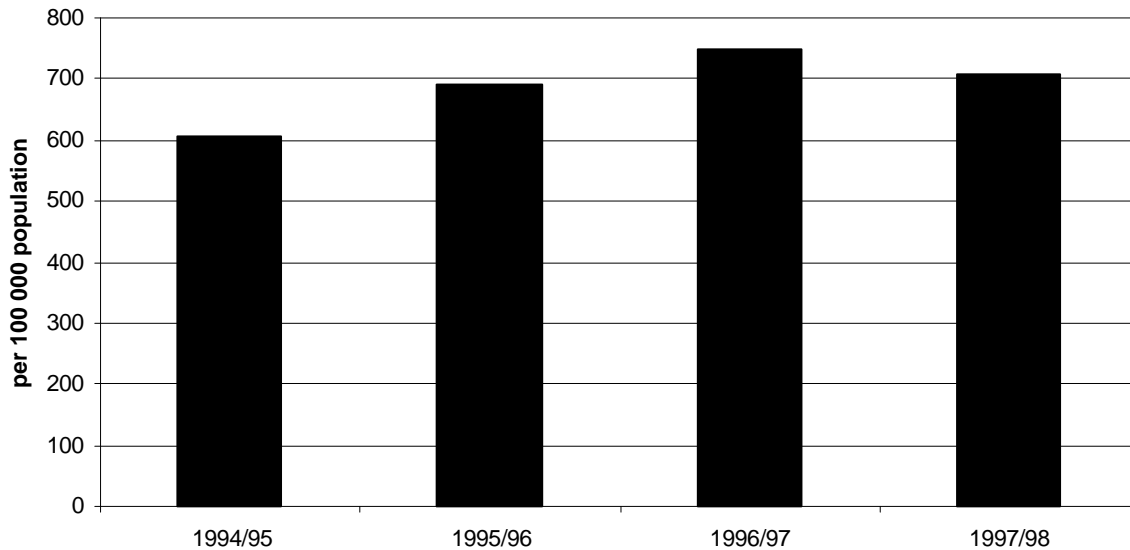
164 Western Australia Police Service crime statistics

165 Western Australia Police Service crime statistics

166 SCMUDDA (1997), 126

charges were for the offence of possession or use of drugs and not other more serious trafficking offences.

**Figure 3.4.1 Reported offences of drugs in Western Australia 1994/95 to 1997/98 per 100 000 population**



It is interesting to note that males and females aged between 18 and 24 make up approximately 12% of the population, however, they account for almost 40% of the drug charges in Western Australia. Those aged 25-34 account for a further one third of drug charges in Western Australia.<sup>167</sup> The occurrence of drug offences in young age groups is partly explained by the accepted understanding that young people generally engage in more riskier behaviour than other age groups.

The Committee sought to ascertain from the Police Service the number of offenders under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol at the time of offending, however, this information is not readily available in an accurate format. Police data in this area relies on victim assessments of whether an offender was intoxicated or under the influence of drugs which can be unreliable and in many cases no details can be ascertained. Similar information from the United States revealed almost two-thirds of all convicted jail inmates used drugs and/or alcohol at the time of committing the offence.<sup>168</sup>

Other evidence suggests the perception that drugs are a phenomenon restricted to the metropolitan area is incorrect. Data indicates higher arrests rates for drug offences in country areas of Western Australia and is presented in Table 3.4.1.

167 SCMUDA (1997), 126

168 DOJ (1998), 9

<b>Table 3.4.1. Numbers of arrests for drug offences and rate per 1000 population Western Australia 1996</b>		
<b>Region</b>	<b>Number of Drug Offences</b>	<b>Rate per 1000 population</b>
Perth	6364	5.2
Gascoyne	91	6.2
Goldfields- Esperance	641	11.2
Great Southern	289	6.0
Kimberley	242	7.3
Mid West	410	8.0
Peel	213	3.5
Pilbara	388	8.7
South West	841	7.8
Wheatbelt	690	10.0

Source: Crime Research Centre and DCAT, 1998

Higher levels of reported offences in country areas may be related to a greater police presence and drug targeted policing strategies operating in those areas.

Western Australian research also indicates that new offenders, that is, those people not previously apprehended by police and charged for any offence make up between a quarter and a third of drug charges. As is the case with most offences the majority of drug charges are incurred by recidivist or repeat offenders. Those with previous convictions are 76% more likely to receive another conviction whereas first time offenders face a 53% chance of reoffending.<sup>169</sup>

### **3.5 Assault**

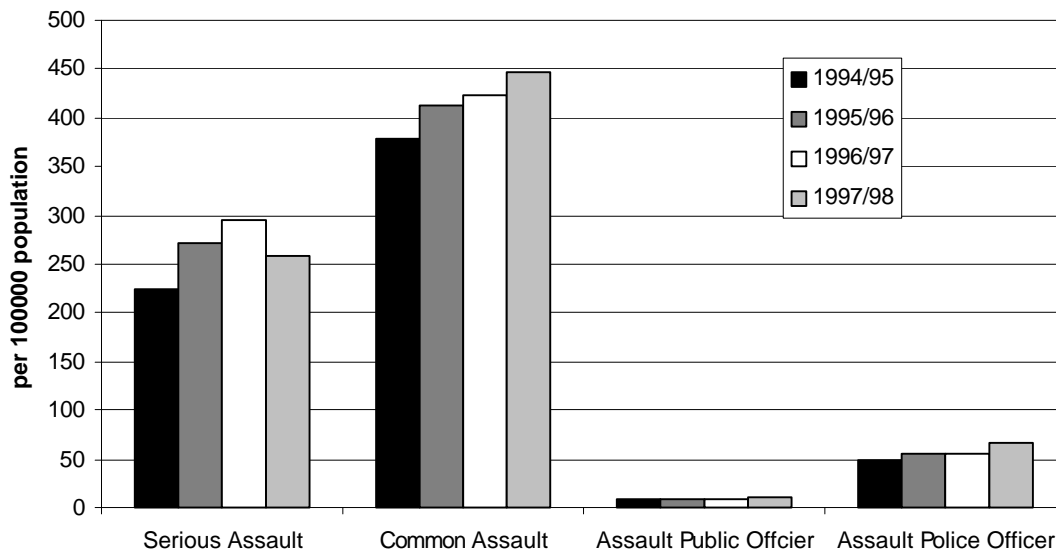
Reported offences of assault are often presented comprising four separate offences. The Police Service statistics count assault as including the offences of common and serious assault, assault on a public officer and assault on a police officer. Figures for selected assault offences in Western Australia for the years 1994/95 to 1996/97 are presented in Figure 3.5.1<sup>170</sup>.

Of the 4452 distinct persons arrested in 1997 for assault only 12.5% were under 18 years of age. The majority were men and women aged between 18 and 29 (50.8%).

169 SCMUDA (1997) 131.

170 Western Australia Police Service crime statistics

**Figure 3.5.1 Reported offences of assault in Western Australia 1994/95 to 1997/98 per 100 000 population**



In 1995 almost one third of assault victims in Western Australia suffered more than one assault.<sup>171</sup> This can be explained by suggesting victims do not alter their behaviour to reduce the risk of a subsequent attack or offenders select the same target again. These figures may be distorted by domestic violence offences where the offender and victim live in close proximity and offences occur with great regularity.

Domestic violence is a key component of assault. It is also a vastly under-reported crime making it difficult to identify accurate numbers of offenders and victims. Depending on the method used to estimate incidents of domestic violence the actual level of offences can be much higher. Surveys of victims demonstrated a rate of domestic violence 5.5 times as high as the number of offences reported to police and 7.8 times as high as the estimates created from hospital admissions for domestic violence related injuries.<sup>172</sup>

A Western Australian study found that factors such as the status of the relationship, that is whether it is starting, ending or stable and the type of relationship whether married, separated or defacto can affect the level of domestic violence. In terms of victim characteristics there was “strong support for the proposition that women from lower socio-economic groups are more likely to be victims of domestic violence”.<sup>173</sup> This may result from stronger support mechanisms or fear of loss of monetary support in higher socio economic victims producing a lower reporting rate. With no social support many lower socio-economic victims will turn to police for assistance, creating more reported offences.<sup>174</sup>

171 Mukherjee and Carcach (1998), 4

172 Ferrante et al (1996), 96.

173 Ferrante at al (1996) 106.

174 Ferrante et al (1996), 106-107

In addition to domestic violence, alcohol is an important factor in assault statistics in Western Australia. Research conducted by Curtin University revealed alcohol plays an important part in accounting for many of the assaults in Western Australia.<sup>175</sup> A 1995 study reviewed assault statistics for the period from July 1991 to June 1992 and discovered that a majority occurred in the metropolitan area with over 75% of offences occurring between 2pm and 6am, the normal opening and closing hours for drinking and entertainment establishments. The largest number of offences examined in the study occurred in private dwellings followed by public spaces such as car parks, laneways and footpaths.

A 1997 study which examined the impact of extended trading hours at certain establishments indicated that the number of assaults increased with the length of time the licensed premise was open. The study identified over 2300 incidents of assault occurring in or around licensed premises. The figures do not suggest that all offences were the direct result of intoxication or the effects of alcohol however the police did identify only less than one percent of the 2300 offences were related to illicit drugs.<sup>176</sup>

A recent study by the Australian Institute of Criminology has identified several risk factors which are equally applicable to assault offenders in Western Australia and can assist in our understanding of assault offences. The following factors increased the likelihood of violent or aggressive behaviour -

- a previous history of violent behaviour either personally or in their family;
- being male;
- being young, that is between 15 and 30;
- having experienced childhood difficulties such as improper or poor parenting; low level of school achievement, conflict within the family;
- substance abuse;
- mental illness (where symptoms are not properly identified or treated); and
- situational factors, that is, being in a place conducive to violent behaviour.

Other studies have identified further indicators of aggressive behaviour which include -

- physical abuse or neglect of a child;
- harsh discipline; and
- behavioural problems.

Each one of the factors is not singularly responsible for violent or aggressive behaviour but when combined in any mix they all increase the potential for an individual to become aggressive and commit offences such as assault.

Repeat victimisation data suggests that victims of assault and offenders committing assault share many similar features. The profiles of victims and offenders often share the same lifestyles.<sup>177</sup> For example young men are often the victims of assault and it is usually inflicted by other young men who find themselves in the same pub or sporting match. Another common assault scenario is in

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175 MAPP Consortium (1995); Chikritzhs, Stockwell and Masters (1997)

176 Chikritzhs, Stockwell and Masters (1997), 18.

177 McDonald and Brown (1997), ABS (1997) 42-43.

the home between family members or between spouses. Their lifestyles are closely interlinked and may often cause friction or tension that leads to violence.

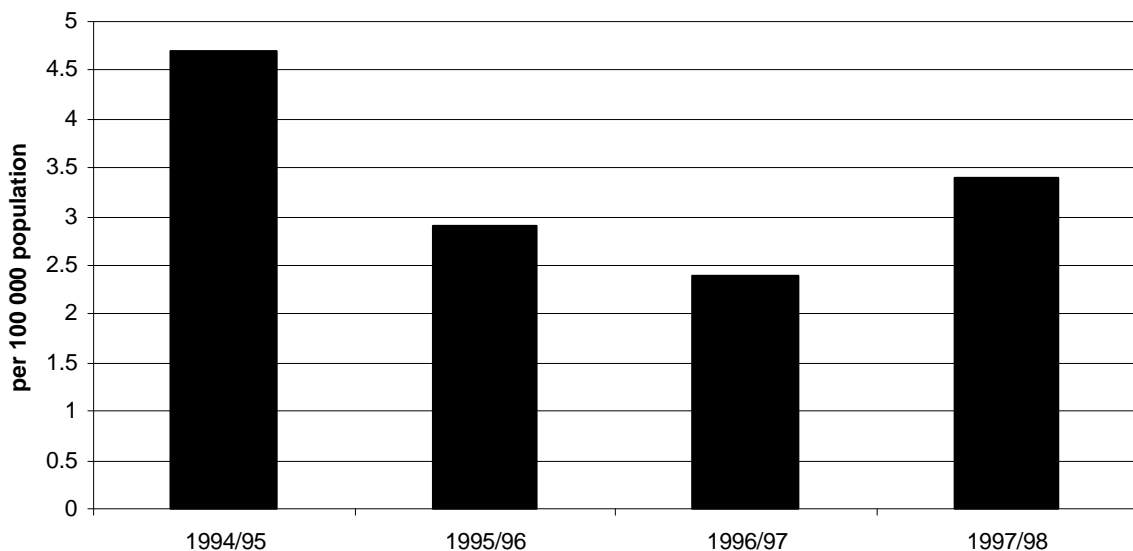
### 3.6 Other Crime

There are many other crimes recorded in Western Australia but within this limited paper it is only possible to concentrate on the major crimes identified by police and others of significant community concern.

#### 3.6.1 Homicide

Homicide is a serious offence often used as an indicator of trends in violent crime. Western Australia ranks behind the Northern Territory, Queensland and New South Wales in offences per head of population. Recent trends in reported offences of homicide in Western Australia per

**Figure 3.6.1 Reported offences of homicide in Western Australia  
1994/95 to 1997/98 per 100 000 population**



100 000 population are detailed in Figure 3.6.1.<sup>178</sup>

Research into homicide in Australia suggests victims and offenders are overwhelmingly male and young<sup>179</sup>. The research also revealed that a majority of incidents occurred in residential premises while one half of homicides occurred between friends, acquaintances or family members.<sup>180</sup> Western Australian data suggests almost half of the male homicide victims were killed by strangers. The Western Australian data reports over two-thirds of female homicide victims were killed by their spouse, a family member or a friend.<sup>181</sup>

178 Western Australia Police Service crime statistics

179 See James and Carcach (1997)

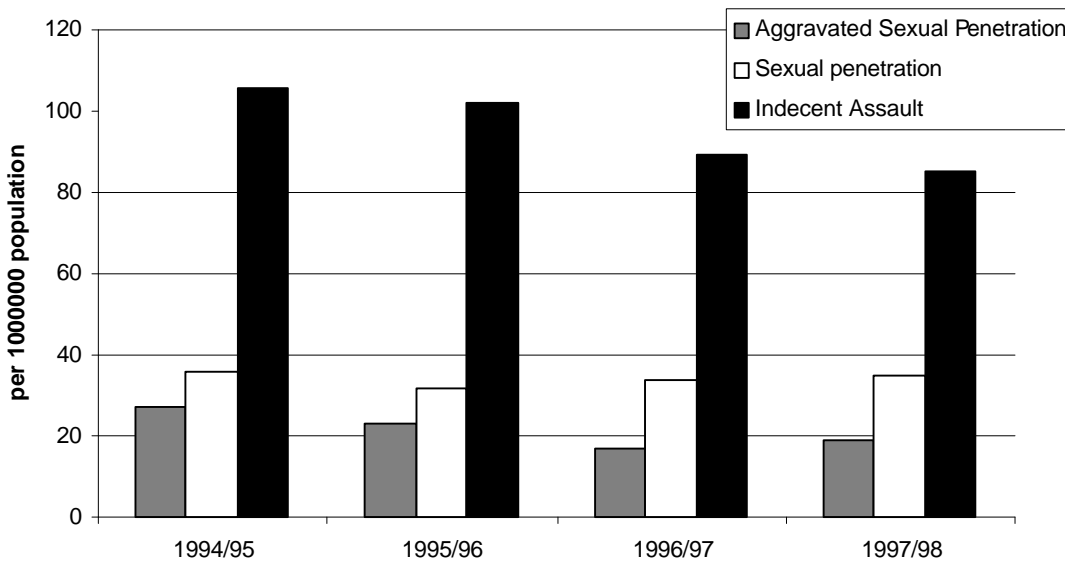
180 James and Carcach (1997)

181 Ferrante, Loh and Maller (1998a), 10-11

### 3.6.2 Sexual Offences

Western Australia maintained the third highest rate in Australia per 100 000 of the population in 1997 for sexual offences.<sup>182</sup> Levels of reported sexual offences per 100 000 population are demonstrated in Figure 3.6.2.1<sup>183</sup>

**Figure 3.6.2.1 Reported sexual offences Western Australia 1994/95 to 1997/98 per 100 000 population**



Data collected in other States indicates in the majority of cases the offender is commonly known to the victim and not usually a family member.<sup>184</sup> The majority of offences (60%) occur in private dwellings with the only other significant locations being the street/footpath and parks. In 1996 98% of known offenders were males and the most significant age group (23%) for offenders was those aged 46 years or more.<sup>185</sup> The Police Service has maintained a high clearance rate on sexual offences in the last four years with between 90 and 95% of offences cleared.<sup>186</sup> It is not clear, however, what the accurate number of total offences might be as not all crimes are reported.

182 ABS, (1997), 52

183 Western Australia Police Service crime statistics

184 ABS, (1997), 52

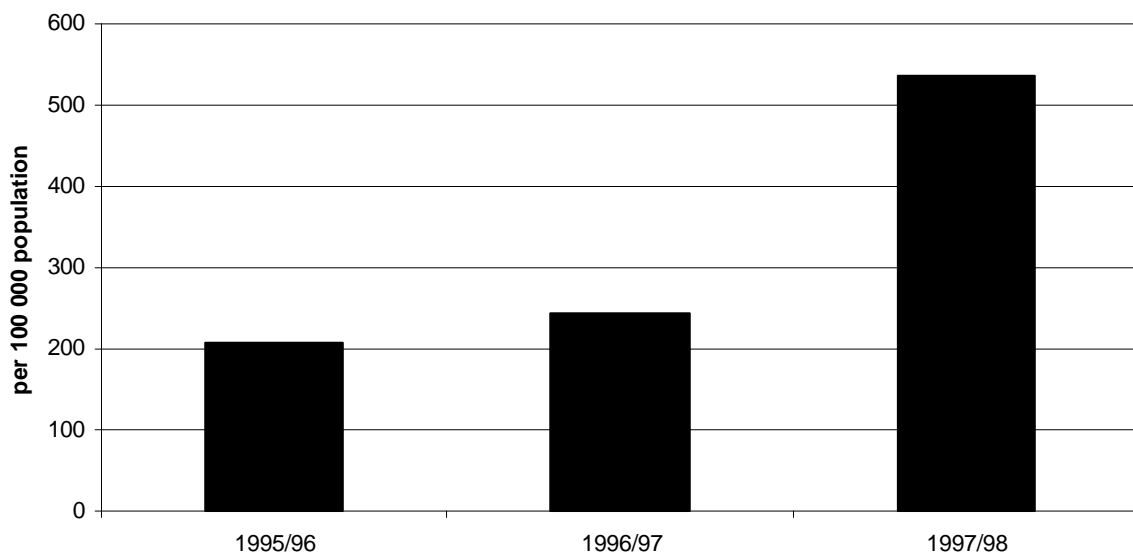
185 Ferrante, Loh and Maller (1998a), 53-54

186 Western Australia Police Service Annual Crime Statistics Report 1996/97, 5

### 3.6.3 Graffiti

Police Service data on reported offences of graffiti are illustrated in Figure 3.6.3.1<sup>187</sup> and demonstrate a rapid rise in recent years. Some of this may be explained by concerted State and local government efforts to encourage reporting of graffiti in the last twelve months. Consequently the high number of offences reported in 1997/98 may actually be an accurate picture of what was also occurring in 1995/96 and 1996/97.

**Figure 3.6.3.1 Reported offences of graffiti in Western Australia 1995/96 to 1997/98 per 100 000 population**



Many consider graffiti a lower order offence but it attracts significant concern from the community. Some argue that graffiti and other anti-social behaviour in our communities is the first indicator of a more serious lack of community cohesion and informal social controls<sup>188</sup> and consequently it should be dealt with promptly and efficiently.

As with burglary offences it is difficult to develop a profile of graffiti offenders as very few are apprehended. Within those arrested for graffiti offences in 1996 approximately 60% were 25 years of age or under<sup>189</sup>. Of those arrested in that age group almost 90% were males<sup>190</sup>. Graffiti offences were not restricted to the metropolitan area with many country centres reporting significant numbers of offences.

187 Western Australia Police Service crime statistics Note - Figures are not available for 1994/95 as graffiti was not reported as a separate offence from property damage

188 Earls and Visher, (1997)

189 Ferrante, Loh and Maller (1998a), 53-54

190 Ferrante, Loh and Maller (1998a), 53-54



### 3.7 Fear of Crime

In any debate on the extent of crime in society it is important to consider the issue of fear of crime. Fear of crime can be as important a factor in the debate on law and order as actual crime statistics because fear of crime can distort the size of the crime problem in a community. Fear of crime is also an important issue for the adverse effects it can have on people's lifestyles. Research has identified a great difference between the actual risk of becoming a victim of a crime and the perceived risk of becoming a victim of crime.

The general consensus is that much like the factors contributing to criminal behaviour a mix of societal and individual factors contribute to fear of crime. At a very simple level fear of crime is manifested by peoples' belief that crime is more frequent than official statistics suggest. It is further identified in the perception by certain groups of people such as seniors that they are at much greater risk of being a victim of particular crimes than other people.

An Australian study into fear of crime recently identified that fear is closely linked to the individual and the context of the situation.<sup>191</sup> An individual's level of fear is linked to their personal confidence in avoiding crime and the relative risks involved in particular situations. This finding makes it difficult to generalise about fear of crime for all parts of society but several trends became apparent in recent research.<sup>192</sup>

Gender is one of the strongest indicators of fear of crime. It has been identified that in their own home and walking alone at night women are more afraid than men. The difference between men and women's fear of particular offences is minimal with the one exception of sexual assault where women's fear is much greater.<sup>193</sup>

Age is a second clear indicator. Fear of crime is distributed across age groups but focused on particular offences. Older persons tend to fear crime such as home burglary, dangerous driving and property damage or graffiti<sup>194</sup>. Younger people fear personal assault and middle aged people fear property crimes such as burglary or motor vehicle theft.

When researching individual fear of crime it became apparent that the time and place of a particular event were important in determining the level of fear expressed by people. Divorced women and single women with children suffer a greater rate of fear of crime due to the regular harassment and abuse they receive, often from ex-partners.<sup>195</sup> Young people particularly feared assault by other young people on public transport and in public spaces often because their lifestyles take them into those areas more than other age groups. Evidence from the United Kingdom supports the fears of younger people about assault, demonstrating men aged 16-30 were ten times as likely to be victims of some form of street crime than men aged 60 years or older.<sup>196</sup>

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191 NCAVAC (1998a), 7

192 NCAVAC (1998b); see also Mukherjee and Carcach (1998), 26

193 O'Malley (1991); QCJC (1994).

194 NCAVAC, (1998a), 20

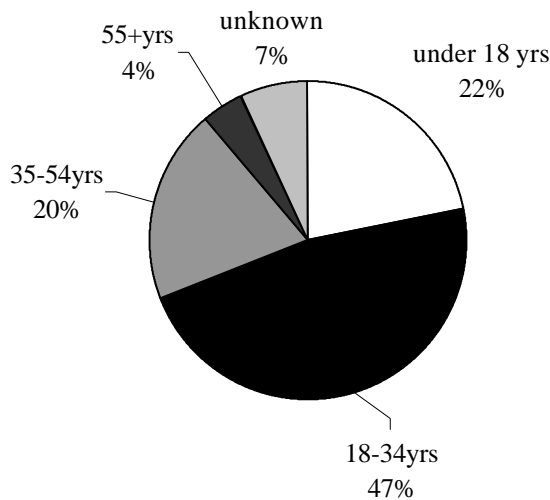
195 Tseloni, Osborn and Pease, (1994)

196 Clarke et al (1985)

The official evidence suggests the numbers of victims of offences against the person in Western Australia is higher for younger people than for other age groups. This is demonstrated in Figure 3.7.1<sup>197</sup> which displays the breakdown of victims of personal crime in Western Australia in 1996.

There are other significant influences on levels of fear of crime. In some cases the place of residence can contribute to a perception of the risk of becoming a victim. For example the occupants of public housing and other multiple dwellings such as flats often have a greater fear of crime because of building designs which create areas where tenants will not go because of a lack of lighting or other visible security features.

**Figure 3.7.1 Victims of offences against the person by age Western Australia 1996**



Other factors such as ethnicity, education and income may also affect levels of fear of crime. It has been suggested fear of crime is higher among the poor, ethnic minorities and the less educated.<sup>198</sup>

The question of the influence of the media on the extent of fear of crime is identified in research.<sup>199</sup> It is difficult to prove whether the media drive certain crime issues or simply pick up on existing tensions. Some researchers have identified the concept of outrage as being intimately associated with fear of crime and outrage often becomes the focus of the media.<sup>200</sup> Outrage is characterised by subjects on which the community places high priority. The community react with strong emotions and mobilise for action through protests and marches.

197 Ferrante, Loh and Maller (1998a), 29

198 NCAVAC (1998a), 20

199 Gunter (1987) and Sparks (1992)

200 NCAVAC (1998a), 14.

A recent report identified an American study which concluded that newspapers can play an important role in the way a city sees itself as crime ridden or safe.<sup>201</sup> Despite this there is little direct evidence supporting the common suggestion that the media “beat up” crime as an issue.

People can form a fear of crime from their physical environment. Problems in a neighbourhood such as graffiti, litter and broken public facilities are termed incivilities. These factors lead many people to feel that their neighbourhood is out of control and nobody can do anything to control crime. Respondents to a recent fear of crime survey felt that Australian society was becoming less civil as “people lose interest in others and community spirit disappears”.<sup>202</sup> In many affected communities people move away or those remaining become tolerant of crime or commit crime themselves. Groups that perceive themselves as less socially powerful and living in underprivileged areas are often those with high levels of fear of crime.<sup>203</sup>

It is also suggested that some fear of crime is generated by people’s personal experiences of crime whether direct or indirect (that is heard from someone else). The suggestion is that indirect experiences usually result in identification with the victim and an increase in fear. This is opposed to the reaction of the person experiencing the crime who often develops ways to cope with the event rather than only developing additional fear.<sup>204</sup>

Various issues in the community can contribute to a fear of crime. A survey conducted in 1995 in Western Australia identified a variety of issues as problems in the community. These are displayed in Table 3.7.1.

<b>Table 3.7.1 Perceptions of crime or public nuisance in neighbourhood Western Australia</b>	
<b>Issue perceived to be the main problem</b>	<b>Proportion of respondents(%)</b>
Other assault	0.1
Sexual Assault	0.2
Other	0.6
Other theft	1.0
Prowlers/Loiterers	1.2
Problems with neighbours	1.2
Illegal drugs	3.0
Motor vehicle theft	3.1
Louts/Youth gangs	3.9
Vandalism/Graffiti	4.6
Dangerous/Noisy driving	6.5

201 NCAVAC (1998a)

202 NCAVAC (1998a), 7

203 NCAVAC (1998b)

204 NCAVAC (1998a), 21.

<b>Table 3.7.1 Perceptions of crime or public nuisance in neighbourhood Western Australia</b>	
<b>Issue perceived to be the main problem</b>	<b>Proportion of respondents(%)</b>
Burglary	32.0
No perceived problems	42.6

Source: ABS Crime and Safety Western Australia, October 1995.

Fear of crime must be carefully considered as part of the total study of crime in Western Australia. A reduction in people's fear of crime and restoring community confidence may contribute to reducing the actual incidence of crime as people reclaim aspects of their lifestyle which fear of crime caused them to abandon.

## **4.0 THE CURRENT RESPONSE TO CRIME**

### **4.1 The Costs of Crime**

The impact of crime is not only restricted to the physical and psychological suffering of victims. Crime can also represent a significant financial cost to the community. A 1996 estimate put the cost of fighting crime in Australia at over \$18 billion.<sup>205</sup>

In Western Australia the State Government spends a significant amount on police and corrections. The estimated combined budgets of these two sectors is \$713 million and they employ over 9000 people. An accurate amount of how much is spent preventing crime is difficult to obtain as many agencies do not see programs and funding as contributing to reducing or preventing crime. State Government agencies themselves spent almost \$40 million in 1997/98 dealing with the consequences of criminal acts within government agencies and protecting government assets. This figure does not include information from all government agencies.

One example of the costs of crime to individual departments and agencies is the Western Australian Education Department who spent almost \$2.1 million on securing and protecting its buildings. The Department spends a further \$8 million dollars repairing damage and property loss from crime. In 1996/97 the Western Australian public housing agency, Homeswest, spent almost one million dollars providing security services and another one million dollars repairing damage and property loss caused by crime.

### **4.2 Western Australia Police Service**

The Police Service have traditionally been seen as the central agency for controlling and reducing crime. This situation is beginning to change with efforts to involve other government agencies and the wider community in reducing crime. As the central authority it is worthwhile to study how much it costs the State to combat crime using the Police Service.

The Police Service expended an estimated \$413 million in 1997/98<sup>206</sup>. It is estimated each investigation of an offence against the person incurred a cost of \$1286 in 1997/98. The same figure for an investigation of a property offence was \$549.<sup>207</sup> It should be noted however that it is estimated Police investigated 95% of reported offences against the person and 41% of reported property offences.<sup>208</sup>

In 1996/97 the number of full time employees employed by the Police Service was 5, 927, of which 4, 809 were sworn police officers<sup>209</sup>. Western Australia maintains one of the highest ratio of police officers per head of population in Australia. The distribution of police resources in Western Australia is demonstrated in Table 4.2.1. Maps corresponding to the districts named in Table 4.2.1 are contained in Appendix One.

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205 Walker (1997), 6

206 1998-99 Budget Statements Vol. 2

207 1998-99 Budget Statements Vol. 2, 912

208 1998-99 Budget Statements Vol. 2, 911

209 Western Australia Police Service Annual Report 1997

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<b>TABLE 4.2.1 Distribution of police resources in Western Australia - June 1998</b>					
<b>District</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Pol. to Pop. Ratio</b>	<b>No. of FTE Police Officers</b>	<b>No. of FTE unsworn Staff</b>	<b>No. of Pol. Stations</b>
<b>WESTERN AUSTRALIA</b>	1,726,095	1:358	4,815	1,175	163
<b>PERTH</b>	113,077	1:224	506*	35*	8
<b>BROOME</b>	33,028	1:250	132*	9	7
<b>MEEKATHARRA</b>	9,061	1:259	35	4*	6
<b>KARRATHA</b>	48,635	1:278	175	13*	14
<b>KALGOORLIE</b>	56,952	1:280	204*	14*	10
<b>NORTHAM</b>	44,974	1:288	156	21*	23
<b>NARROGIN</b>	23,166	1:309	75	7*	14
<b>GERALDTON</b>	54,830	1:321	171	13*	14
<b>ALBANY</b>	49,403	1:435	114*	10*	11
<b>BUNBURY</b>	158,698	1:612	260	27*	20
<b>MIDLAND</b>	138,687	1:680	204	14*	5
<b>FREMANTLE</b>	283,595	1:808	351	32*	9
<b>CANNINGTON</b>	261590	1:905	289	23*	7
<b>MIRRABOOKA</b>	213,025	1:979	218	16*	9
<b>JOONDALUP</b>	234,346	1:1019	230	18*	6

\*figure has been rounded due to part time employees being counted as a proportion of a full time person and therefore creating fractions

Table 4.2.1<sup>210</sup> shows concentrations of police officers in country areas with small populations which produce the best ratio of officers to residents. The Perth Police District, has one officer per 224 residents. The highest ratio of officers to population is in the metropolitan area with the Joondalup District having one officer per 1019 residents. It should be noted these figures do not include sworn and unsworn personnel in the crime operations and the traffic and operations support areas who are not allocated to particular districts but provide services to all districts in the state.

The clearance rate is one indicator used to demonstrate police effectiveness in controlling crime. A crime is considered to be cleared by the Police Service “when a charge or complaint is laid or occasionally when other action has taken place that makes it not feasible to proceed”<sup>211</sup> Approximately 30% of the crimes reported to police in 1997/98 were cleared. Official clearance rates for selected offences are listed in Table 4.2.3.

<b>Table 4.2.2: Official Police clearance rates for reported crimes during 1997/98</b>		
<b>Offence</b>	<b>Number of reported offences cleared</b>	<b>Percentage of total offences cleared by Police Service (%)</b>
Burglary	7755	13.1
Assault		
-serious	4099	87.4
-common	6898	85.3
-public officer	204	100.5*
-police officer	1191	99.8
Robbery -unarmed	451	36.2
-firearm	127	47.7
-other weapon	382	38.1
Motor Vehicle Theft	3011	17.6
Sexual Offences		
-agg. sex. penetration	301	87
- sex. penetration	560	89.2
-indecent assault	1346	87.5
Drugs	13022	90.0
Murder	31	106.9*
Graffiti	1790	18.4
Damage	7357	19.8
Source: Western Australia Police Service Crime Statistics 1997/98		
* Police Service count crimes cleared in the current year which may have been reported in a previous year thus explaining a clearance rate of greater than 100%.		

210 Population figures are taken from the 1996 census. FTE - full time equivalent employees

211 Western Australia Police Service Annual Report 1997, 63

### 4.3 The Ministry of Justice

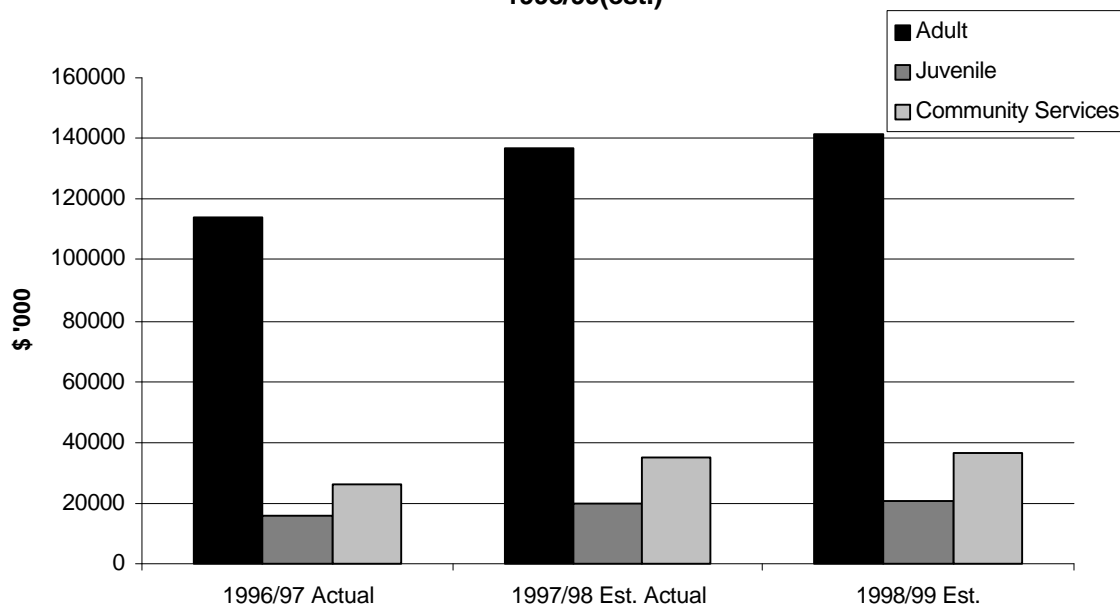
During 1997/98 the Ministry of Justice's estimated expenditure was \$318 million<sup>212</sup>. The number of full time employees was close to 3500. Just under one half of this budget is allocated to offender management, or the process of keeping offenders in prison or serving community and other court imposed sentences. Almost 45% of the Ministry's staff were employed in prisons.

The Ministry of Justice estimates that on average it has approximately 2200 persons in jail and a further 5000 serving other orders.<sup>213</sup> The estimated costs of keeping a prisoner in jail or a juvenile in detention and the costs of sentencing using community supervision are detailed in Table 4.3.1.

<b>Table 4.3.1 Estimated costs of custodial and community sentences in Western Australia 1997/98</b>		
	<b>Estimated cost per day</b>	<b>Annual estimated cost</b>
Juvenile - Detention	\$481	\$175565
Adult - Custody	\$172	\$62780
Juvenile Community Supervision	\$13.69	\$4996.85
Adult Community Supervision	\$10.89	\$3974.85

Source: Budget Statements, Vol I 1997/98 and Vol I 1998/99

**Figure 4.3.1: Expenditure on sentencing in Western Australia 1996/97 to 1998/99(est.)**



212 Western Australian Budget Statements 1998-99 Vol. 2,

213 Ministry of Justice Annual Report 1996/97



The cost of maintaining the offender management division of the Ministry of Justice is increasing. This is demonstrated in Figure 4.3.1 <sup>214</sup>.

Of the prisoners sent to prison in WA in 1996 on remand or sentenced, the three most common offences were burglary, offences against the person and offences against good order (public drunkenness, vagrancy and offences not involving harm to other persons or property). It is well established that Aboriginals are grossly over represented in the WA prison system in proportion to their share of the total population. Western Australia has the highest rate of indigenous imprisonment in Australia. At the 1996 prison census one third of offenders were Aboriginals while Aboriginals comprised only 3% of the State's population. In 1996 an Aboriginal was 23.7 times more likely to be held in prison than a non-Aboriginal.<sup>215</sup>

#### 4.4 Prison as a Deterrent

As in most western countries Western Australia has traditionally relied on the police and prisons to control and reduce crime. The deterrent effect of prison is a subject of contention and there is evidence supporting both sides of the argument.

Traditionally it has been considered that the threat of the removal of a person's freedom through imprisonment would convince people not to commit crime. In line with this theory a recent study in the United States determined that incarceration of offenders who continue to commit offences at a high rate is an effective means of reducing crime.<sup>216</sup> This is simply because the offender does not have the opportunity to commit the crimes while detained. There are suggestions that tougher sentencing options such as "three strikes" legislation will reduce crime both by removing recidivist offenders and deterring others. This must be balanced with the economic cost of housing increased numbers of offenders. For example it is suggested three strikes legislation in California may reduce crime by up to 28%, however, the cost of the program in additional funding will be \$US5.5 billion<sup>217</sup> which may lead to cutbacks in other areas of government spending.

Some have argued that prison may even contribute to re-offending instead of preventing it. The tough conditions require offenders to rely on violence to survive. Not only do prisoners use their existing violent skills, they improve their skills and learn "tricks of the trade" from other offenders. Ultimately they may find it difficult to re-enter society, once released, relying on crime to survive and consequently re-offending.<sup>218</sup>

The success of imprisonment as a deterrent to crime is often measured using reconviction or rearrest rates. There is some debate as to the merit of using reconviction rates to determine the success of prison sentences as a deterrent but the measure is generally accepted. The United Kingdom Home Office reported recently that reconviction rates for offenders rearrested within two years of their initial release were constant at approximately 53%.<sup>219</sup> The reconviction figure for those prisoners serving community based sentences was almost the same.<sup>220</sup> The reconviction

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214 Western Australian Budget Statements Volume I 1997/98 and Volume I 1998/99

215 Ferrante, Loh and Maller, (1998a), 111.

216 Sherman (1997) 457.

217 Sherman (1997) 457.

218 Byron (1997)

219 Goldblatt and Lewis(1998), 90.

220 Goldblatt and Lewis(1998), 90.

rate for Western Australian jails is 50.8%, the highest in Australia.<sup>221</sup> What this means is that approximately half of all prisoners released from jail reoffend within two years of release. The estimated rate of re-offending for juveniles in detention is very similar at 48%.<sup>222</sup>

A United Kingdom Home Office study concluded “there is no clear relationship between sentence length and propensity to reoffend”.<sup>223</sup> The consensus on reconviction appears to be that reoffending by those released from prison depends more on the age and previous criminal history of the offender than the length or severity of sentence. Recidivism can also be influenced by the level of support offered by a prisoner’s family during incarceration and after release in addition to other post release support services.<sup>224</sup>

Finally if prison is expected to act as a deterrent to crime then one would expect crime rates to fall when prison rates were increasing. A study of steadily rising crime rates in both the United Kingdom and the Netherlands indicated different imprisonment rates at the same time. While crime was rising in the Netherlands their imprisonment rate was falling however in the United Kingdom both crime and imprisonment continued to rise.<sup>225</sup>

Despite arguments against prison as a deterrent concerning cost and effectiveness of reducing reoffending it is important to remember that the use of prison remains a useful and necessary tool to combat crime. In addition to a deterrent value prison performs a useful role in punishing offenders. Punishment is a necessary part of the criminal justice system not only for the offender but more importantly for the victim.

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221 SCRCSSP (1998), 253

222 Budget Statements 1998/99, 609

223 Goldblatt and Lewis (1998), 93.

224 Cobean and Power (1978); Elkland-Olson et al (1983); Fishman and Alissi (1979); Koller (1980); Conti et al (1993); Broadhurst and Maller (1990); Jorgensen et al (1986); NACRO (1993)

225 Quoted in Harding (1997)

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This discussion paper has set out a very basic model for preventing crime in Western Australia. Attempts to prevent and reduce crime can operate at three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary. Traditionally responses have concentrated on tertiary prevention, involving the police and prisons to reduce existing, and prevent future, crime. The introduction of primary and secondary prevention initiatives to combat the range of factors influencing criminal behaviour represents an opportunity to prevent crime before the commission of an offence, before the creation of a victim and before the creation of physical, mental and financial costs to individuals and society.

The paper has identified the risk factors which research shows may increase the possibility of offending and the areas at which primary and secondary level prevention efforts can be targeted. Not everyone exposed to any of those factors automatically becomes a criminal but research demonstrates often when an individual is exposed to many of the factors they inevitably end up committing a crime or creating a career of crime. The most common characteristics although not a complete list include:

- Family - offenders may have been abused by their parents, experienced poor and/or inconsistent discipline, not been taught simple social skills, have come from a large family with many problems where individual attention is not common and they may have experienced conflict between their parents. Additionally their parents may have criminal records.
- School performance - of offenders is poor with truancy and poor relations with other students and teachers.
- Socioeconomic - offenders will largely come from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Behaviour - offenders will have behavioural problems such as aggression, impulsiveness
- Gender - offenders are overwhelmingly male.
- Age - offenders are aged 18-29 although offending can occur from 12 years or younger.
- Peers - offenders will hang around with others sharing these problems and share their leisure time and pursuits with other potential offenders
- Environment - offenders will often live in communities marked by crime and demoralised residents
- Situational - offenders will pick an easier target for an offence according to the risk of being identified or disturbed

There is a very basic pattern developing in the profile of those involved in crime in Western Australia. The risk factors associated with age and gender come through strongly in known offender profiles. Unfortunately as most offenders in the most numerous offences such as

burglary and car theft are never caught it is not possible to identify the complete range of factors influencing their criminal behaviour.

The review of crime in Western Australia and the current response to crime revealed a traditional reliance on police and prisons. Imprisonment is a necessary and effective means of punishing offenders although the deterrent effect of prison is a subject of contention. As prisons are costly institutions to build and operate, attempts to strengthen their deterrent value may impose very high costs on taxpayers at the possible expense of funding for other services. In future investigations the Committee will be examining term of reference (1) (c) concerning programs and actions which address crime and anti-social behaviour once it has occurred. This will involve a closer examination of the issue of tertiary crime prevention.

The Committee believes the identification of risk factors that can increase the likelihood of offending is a useful exercise in creating alternative crime prevention strategies. The adoption of primary and secondary crime prevention efforts will help in reducing the next generation of offenders and consequently those who will be the victims of their criminal acts. The Committee's purpose in producing this document is to encourage public comment on this suggestion for a three level attack on crime. To this end the Committee has produced a set of focus questions to generate discussion.

*Thank you for reading the Select Committee's discussion paper on crime prevention in Western Australia. The Committee is very interested in hearing your comments and views on any aspect of this discussion paper. To assist you the Committee have created some focus questions which you may like to answer.*

### **FOCUS QUESTIONS ON CRIME PREVENTION**

- 1. What comments do you have on any of the risk factors identified in this paper that influence an individual's potential to commit crime?**
- 2. What are the risk factors that you believe exist in your local community?**
- 3. What crime prevention programs can you identify in your local community?**
- 4. How could these programs be improved or made more effective?**
- 5. What particular crimes or examples of anti-social behaviour in Western Australia do you believe deserve special attention?**
- 6. What areas of crime prevention do you believe should be given greater emphasis? Please list them according to the most important area first.**

All written submissions will be accepted up to Friday, 26 February 1999 and should be forwarded to -

**Select Committee on Crime Prevention  
Parliament House  
Perth WA 6000**



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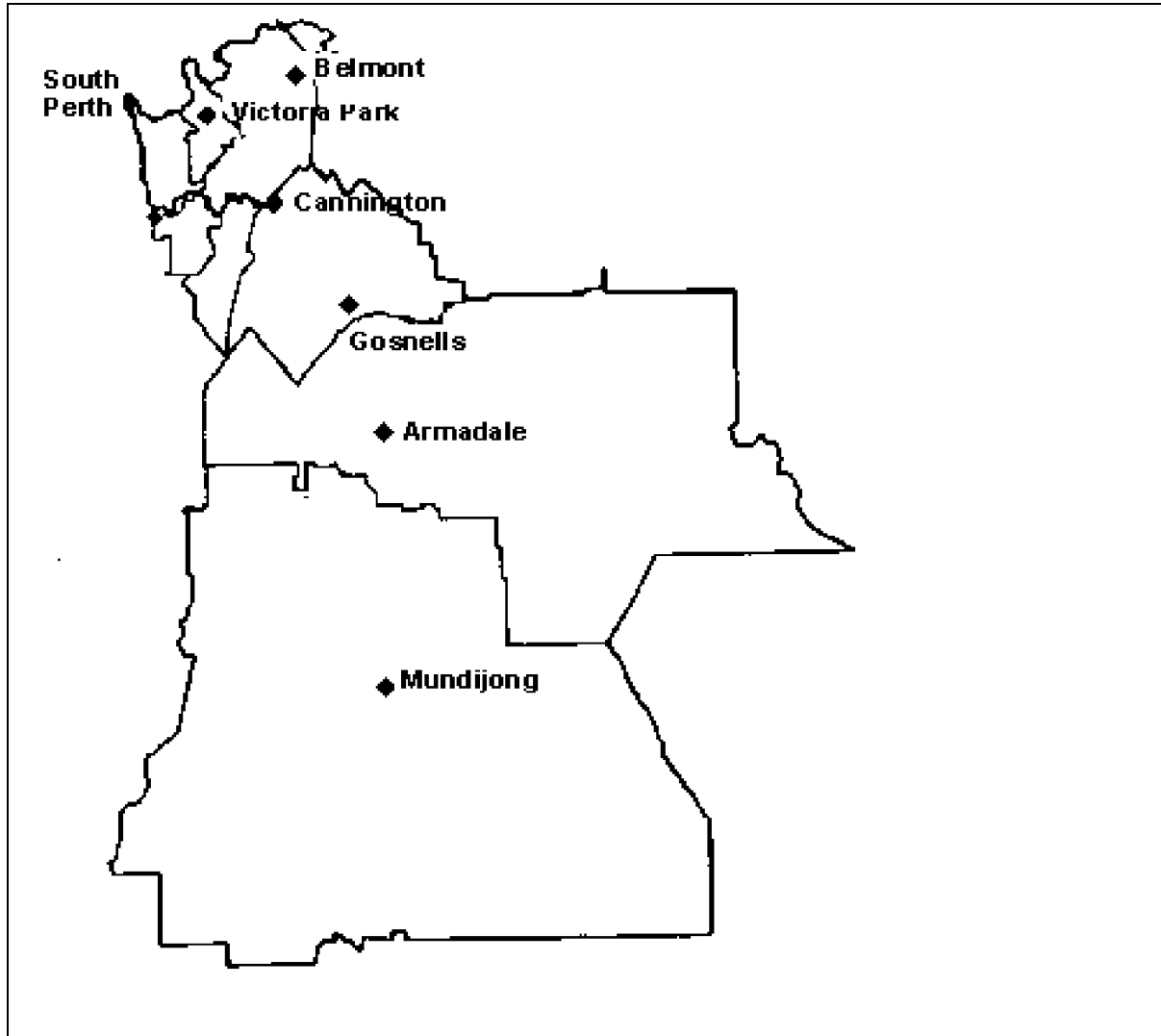
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# **METROPOLITAN POLICE REGIONS**

**Cannington Police District  
Fremantle Police District  
Joondalup Police District  
Midland Police District  
Mirrabooka Police District  
Perth Police District**

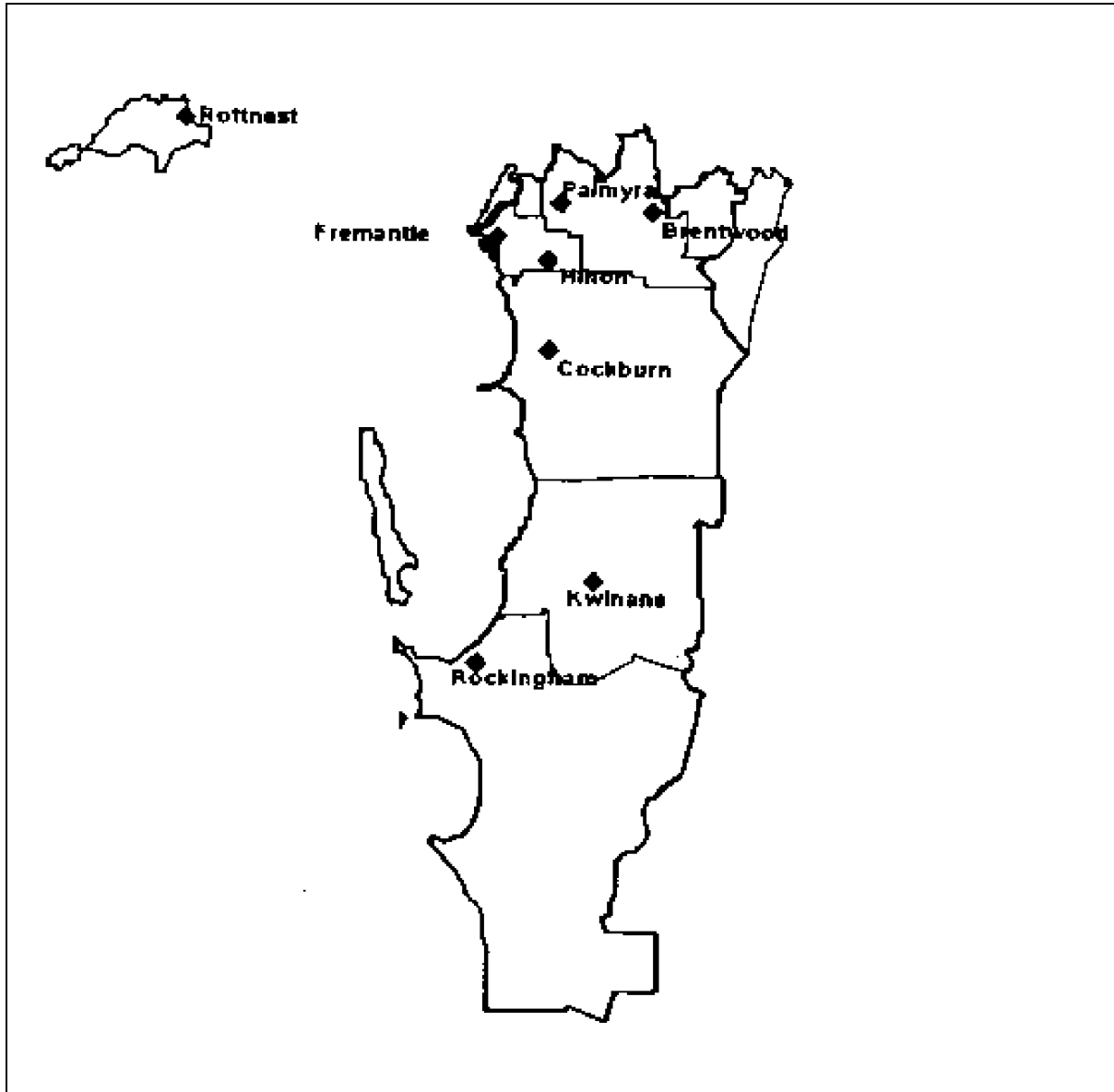
**All maps contain an outer boundary defining the police district boundary. Internal lines are local government boundaries. The named sites are the locations of police stations within that police district.**

## Cannington Police District



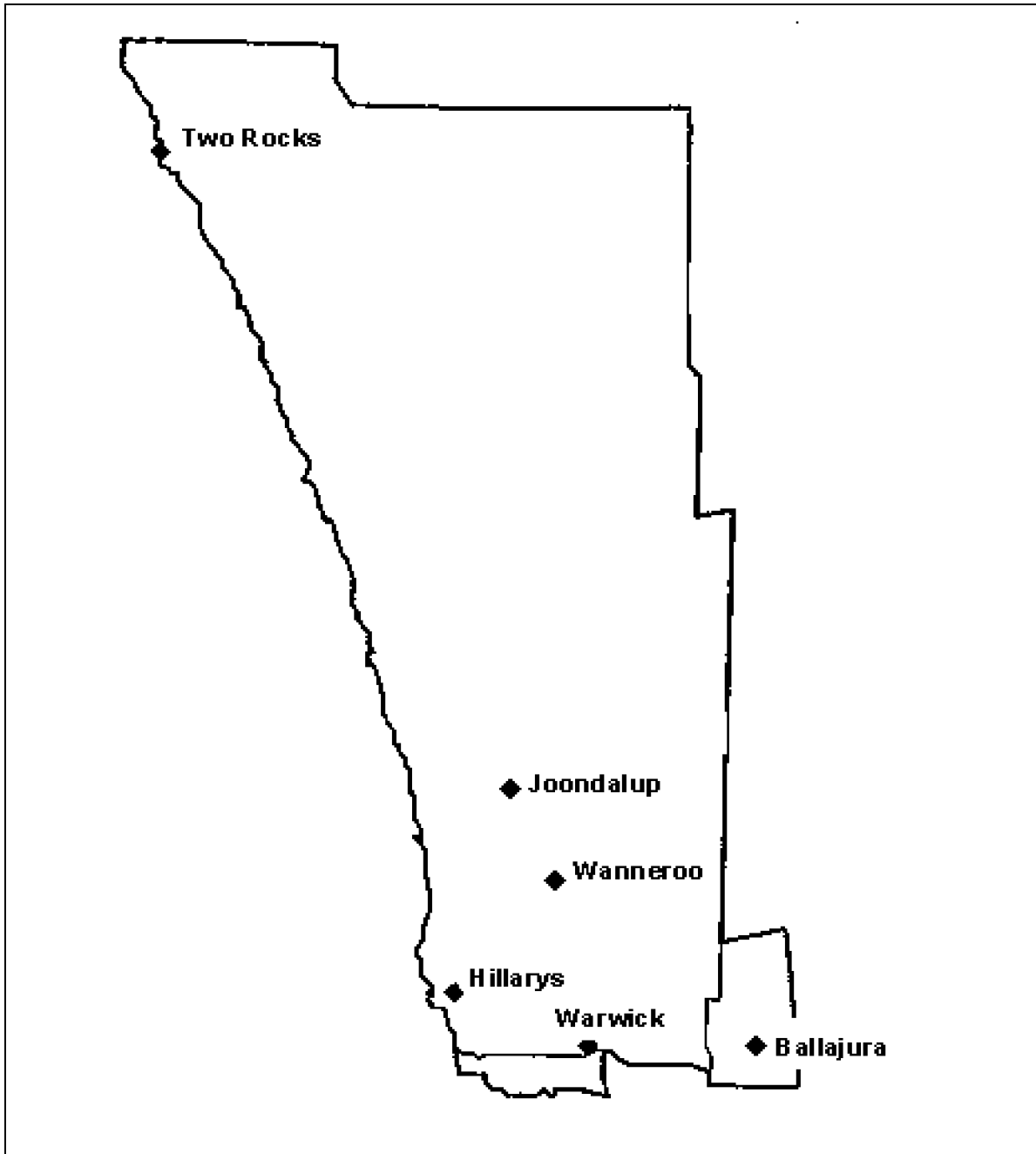
Source: WAPS Environmental Scan 1997

## Fremantle Police District



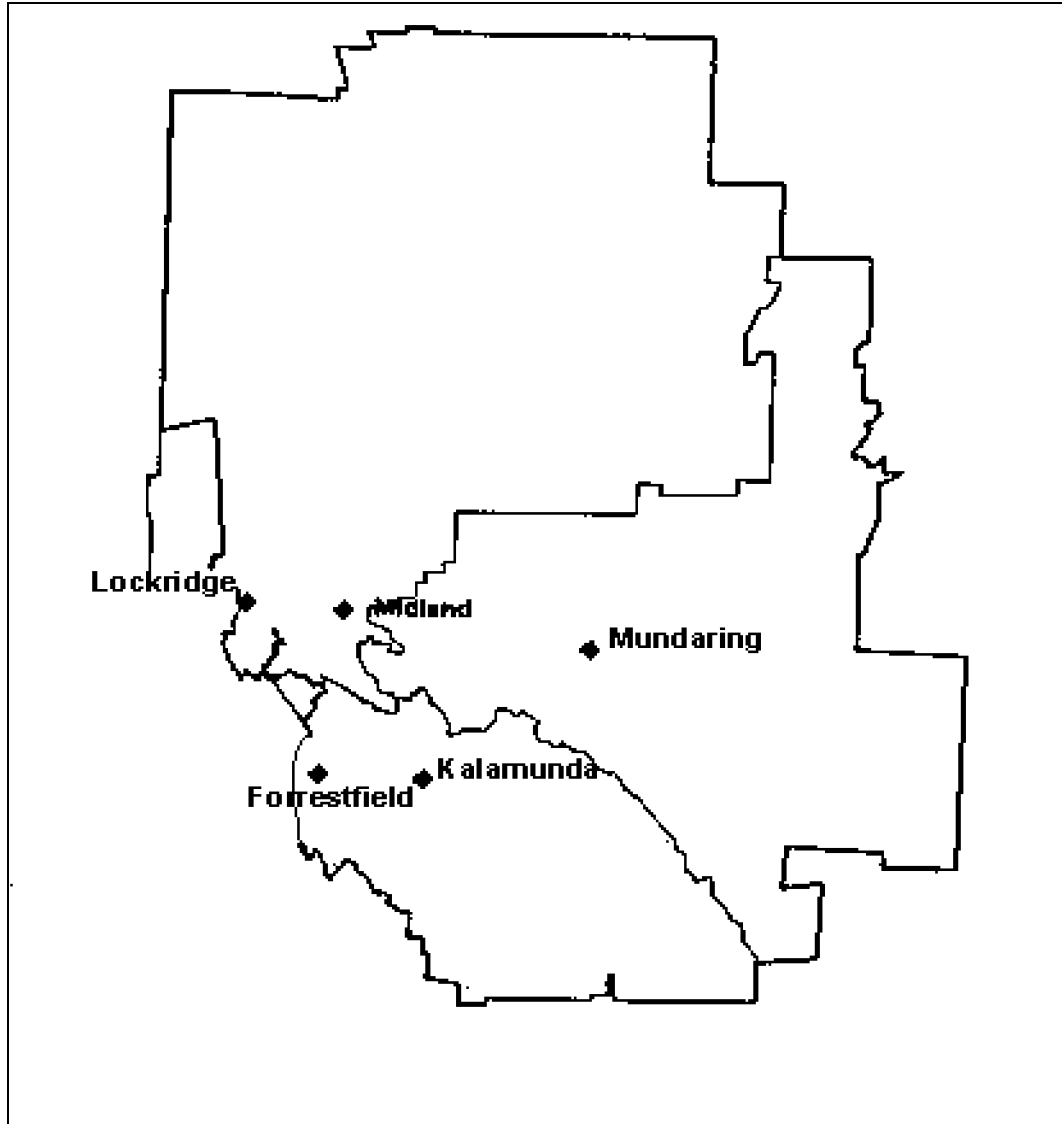
Source: WAPS Environmental Scan 1997

## Joondalup Police District



Source: WAPS Environmental Scan 1997

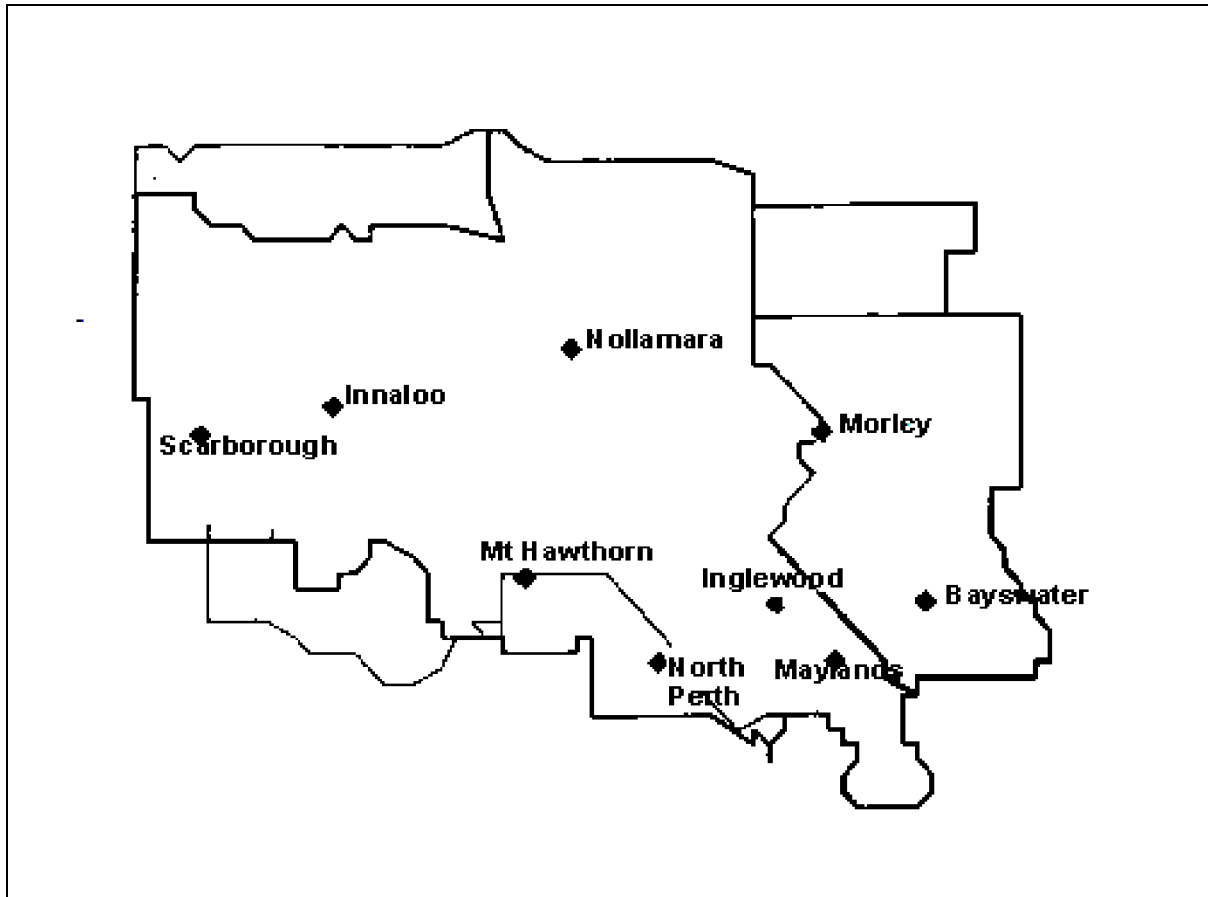
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Source: WAPS Environmental Scan 1997

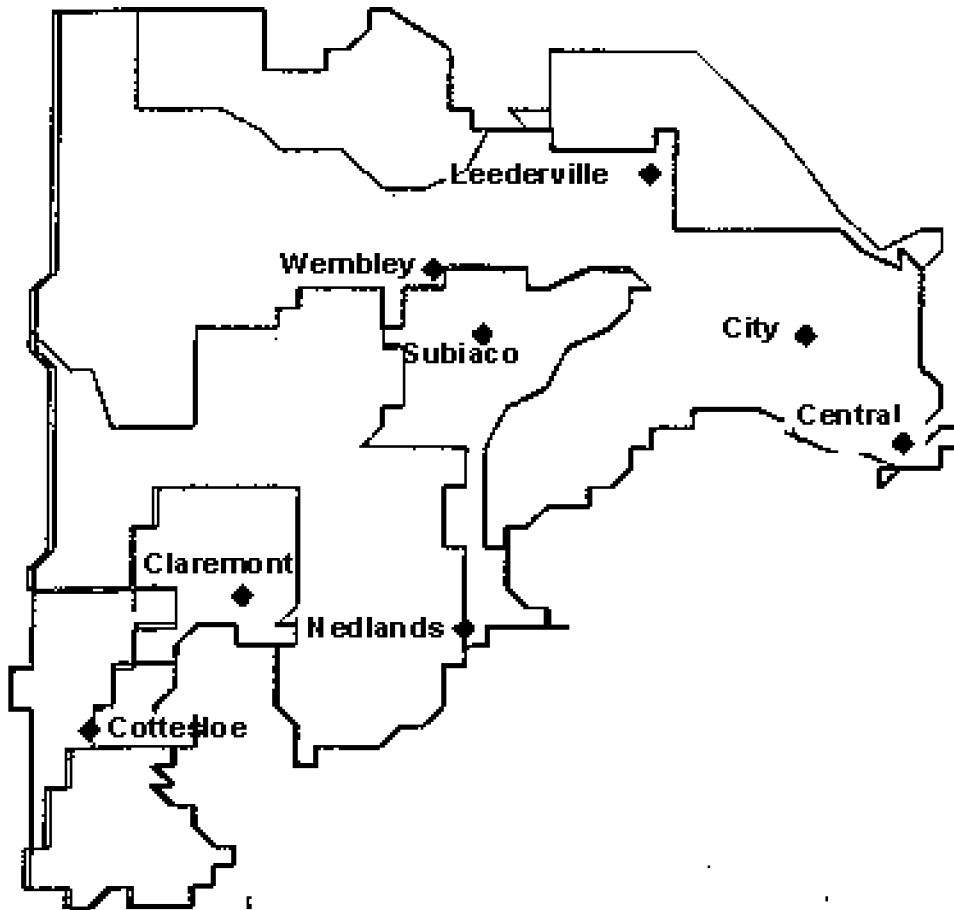


## Mirrabooka Police District



Source: WAPS Environmental Scan 1997

## Perth Police District



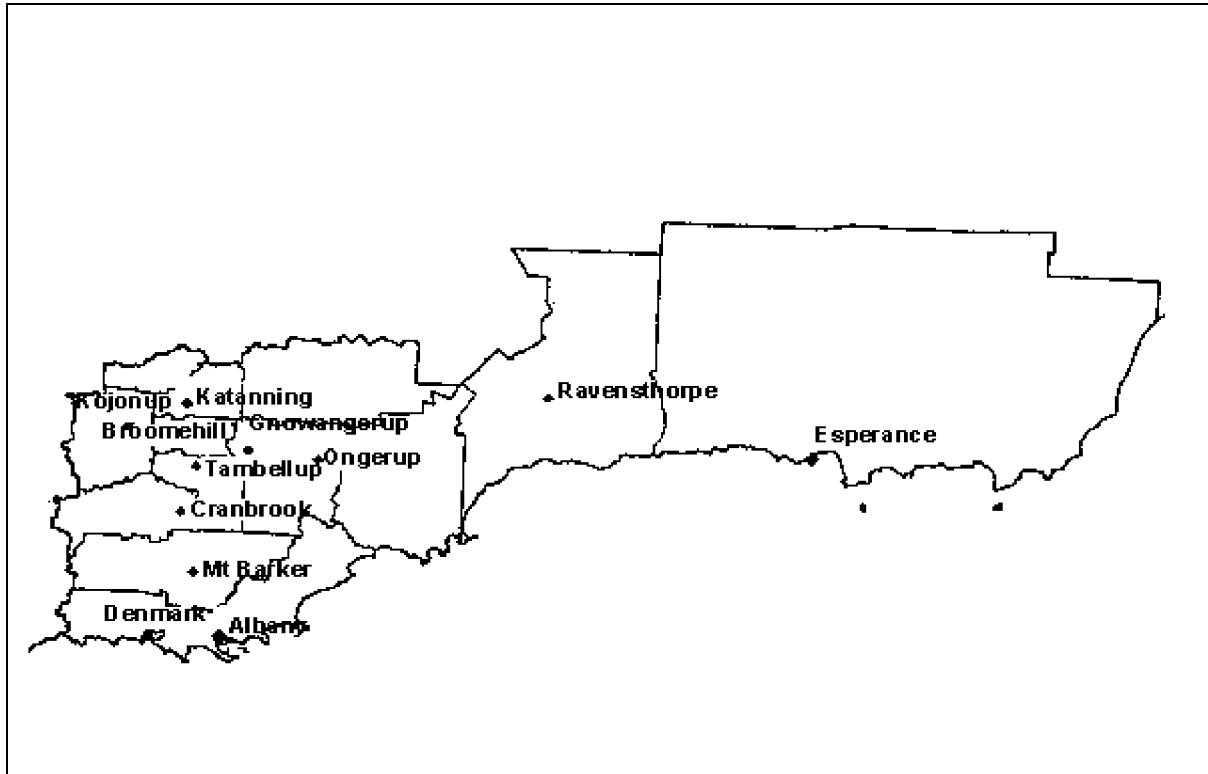
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# **SOUTHERN POLICE REGIONS**

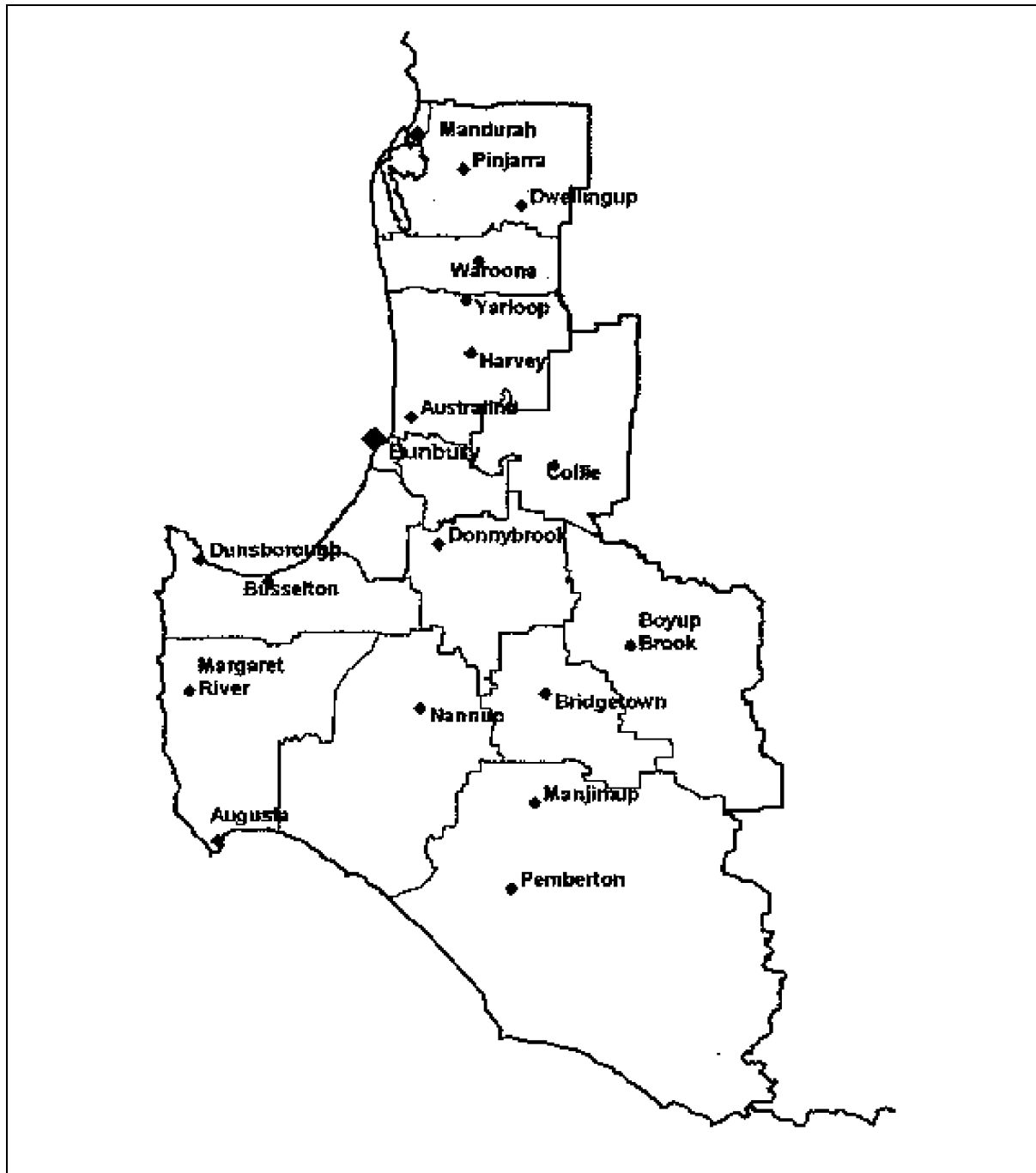
**Albany Police District  
Bunbury Police District  
Geraldton Police District  
Narrogin Police District**

## Albany Police District



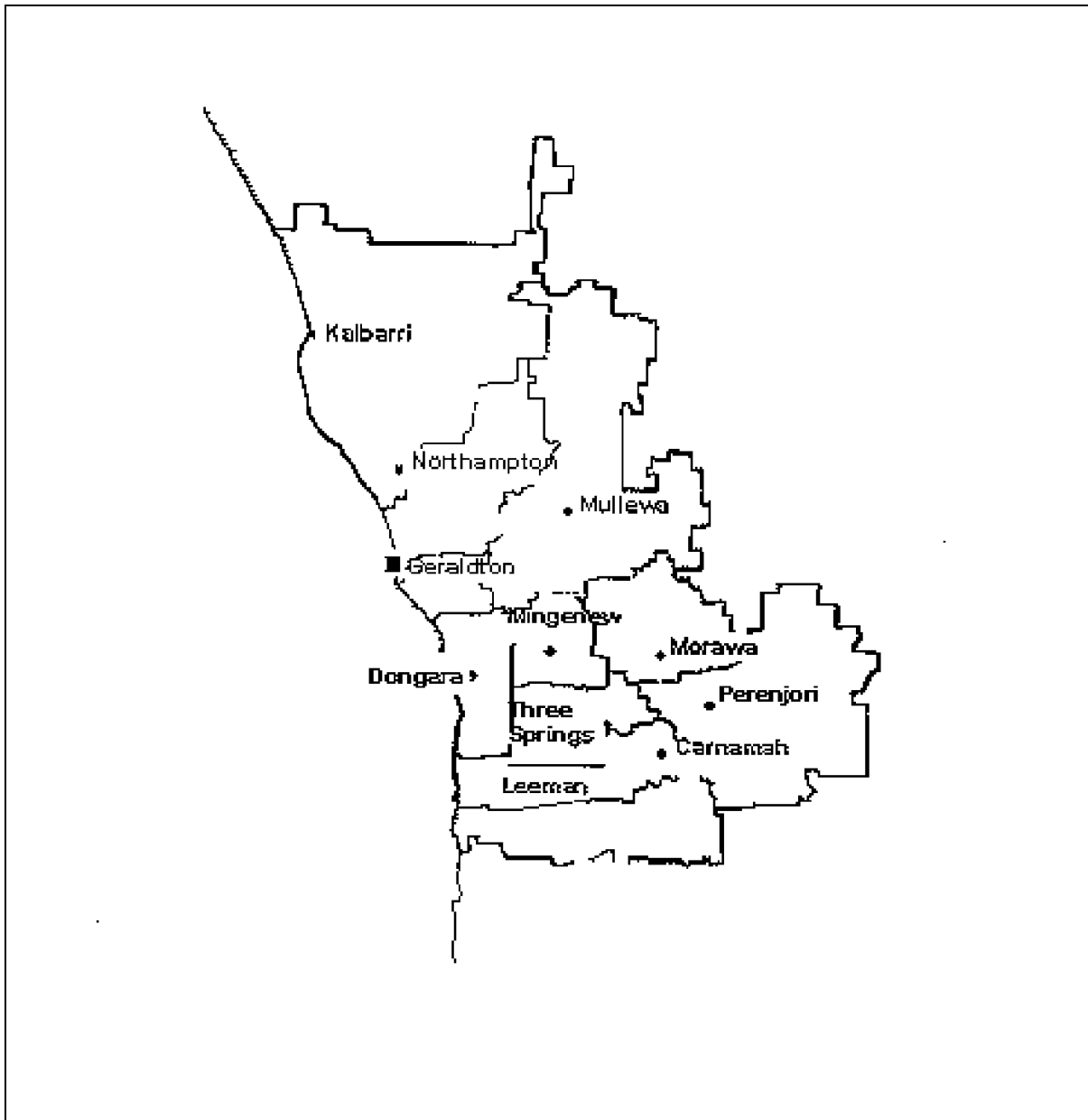
Source: WAPS Environmental Scan 1997

## Bunbury Police District



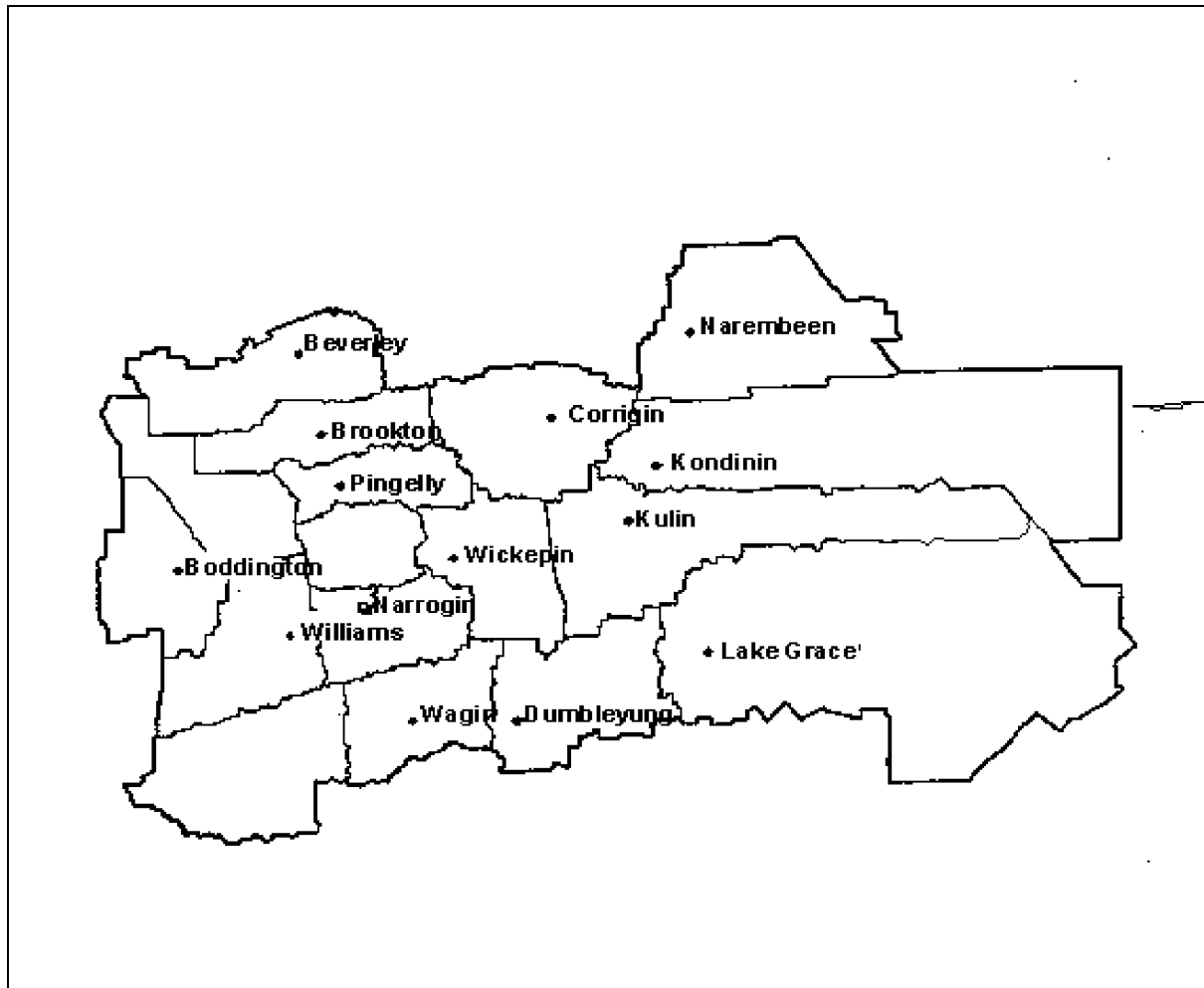
Source: WAPS Environmental Scan 1997

## Geraldton Police District



Source: WAPS Environmental Scan 1997

## Narrogin Police District



Source: WAPS Environmental Scan 1997

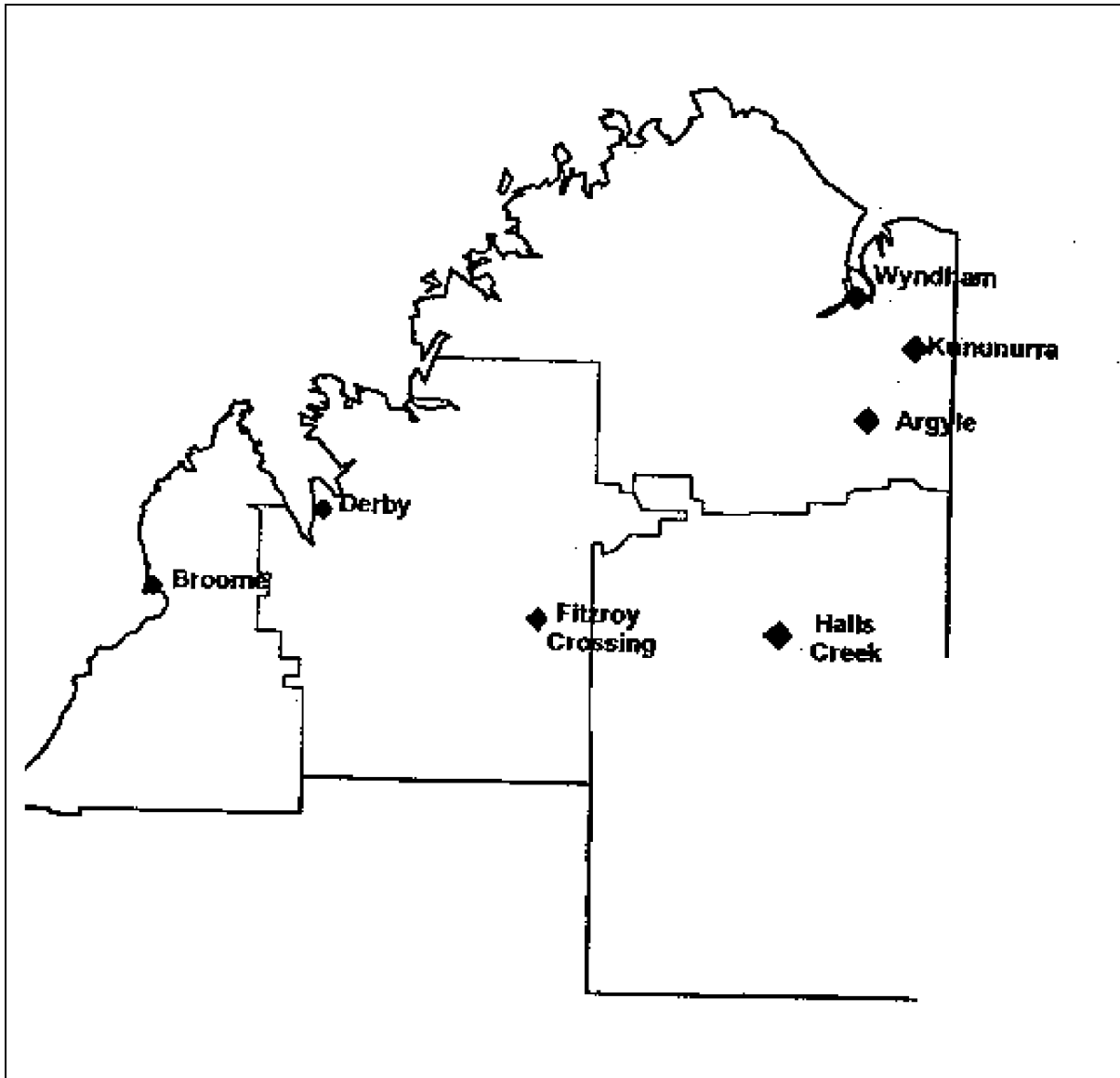




# **NORTHERN POLICE REGIONS**

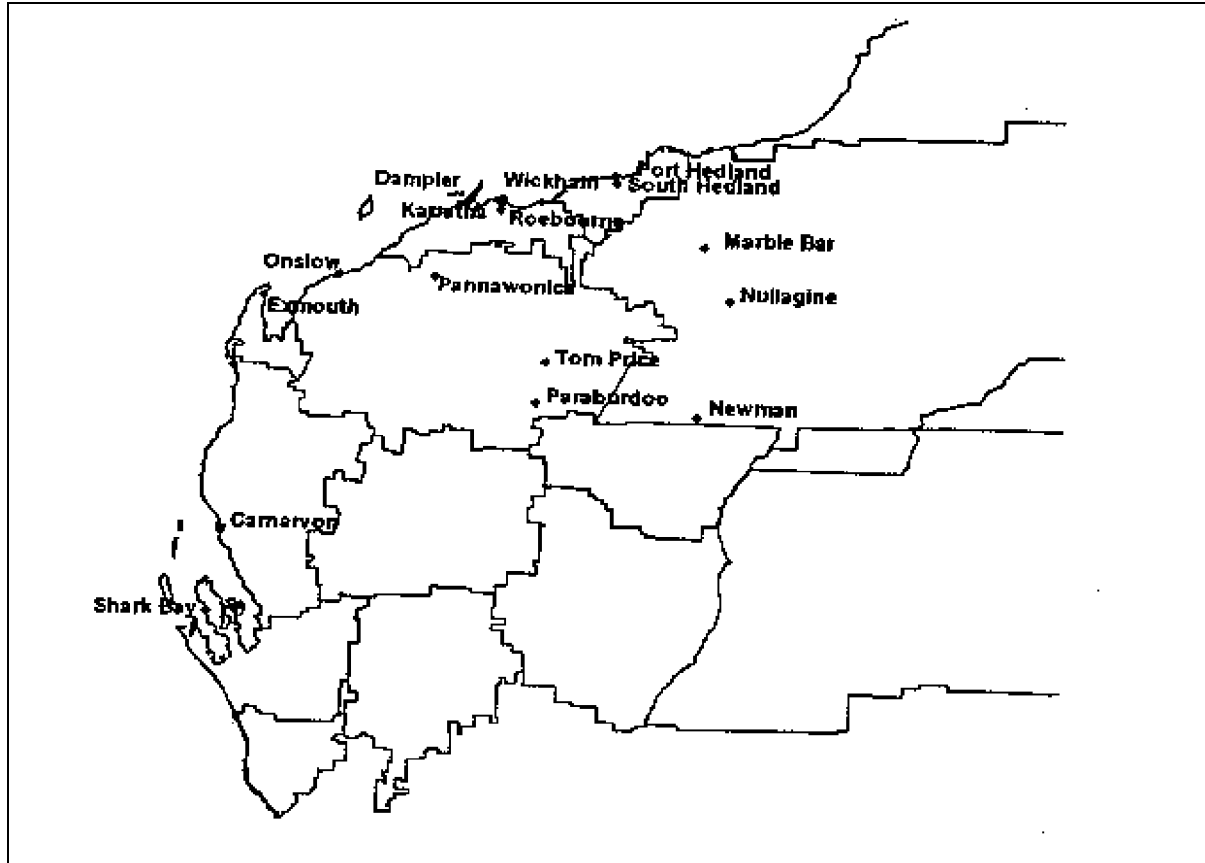
**Broome Police District  
Karratha Police District  
Meekatharra Police District**

### Broome Police District



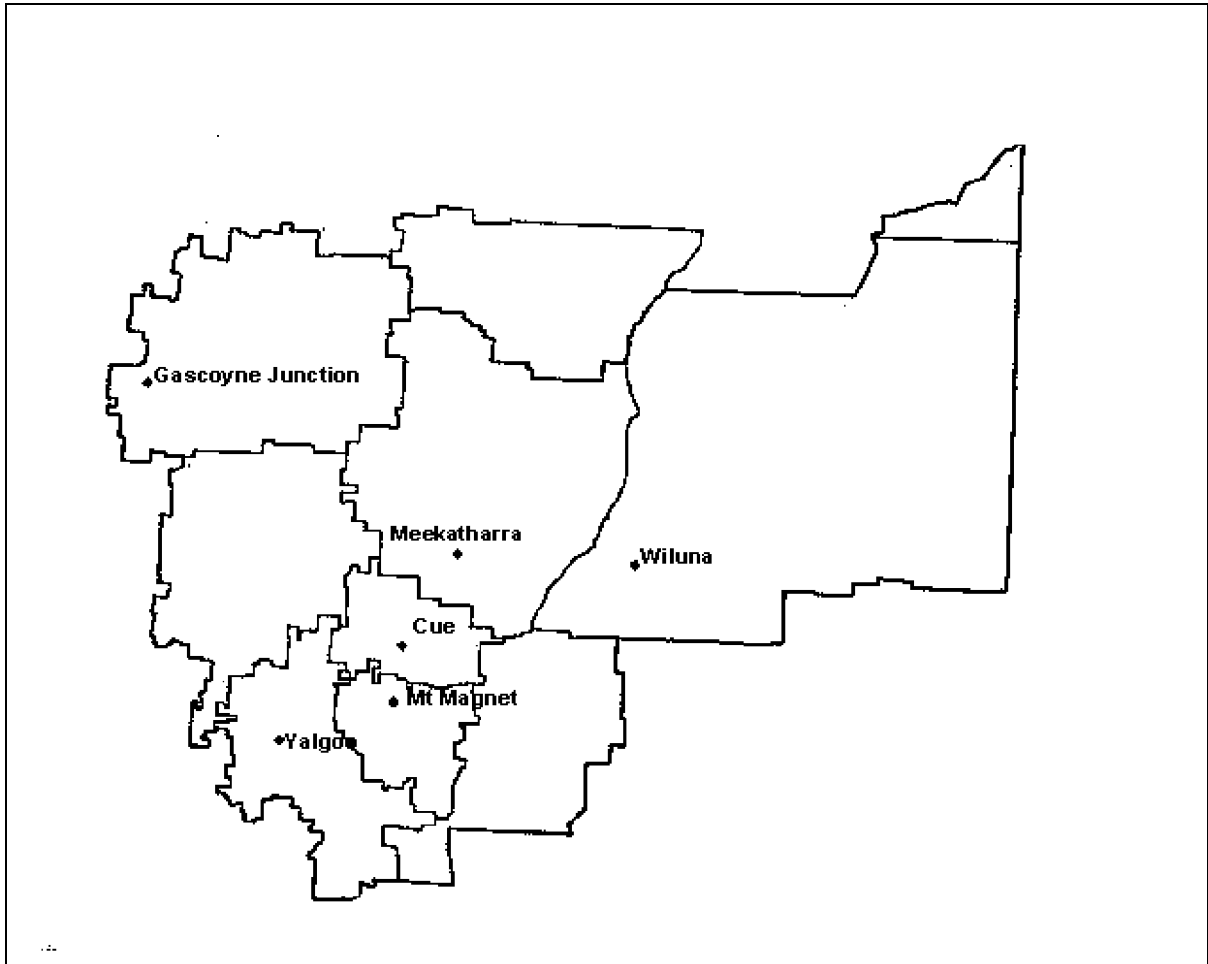
Source: WAPS Environmental Scan 1997

### Karratha Police District



Source: WAPS Environmental Scan 1997

## Meekatharra Police District



Source: WAPS Environmental Scan 1997