Making effective use of crime statistics
Introduction
Road map

- Key points about crime data
- Key long term trends in crime
- Key short term trends in crime
- Using our crime reports
- Locating crime and justice data
- Other resources
Three things to remember

- A lot of crime is not reported to police
- Some offences are discovered by police rather than reported to them
- The recorded rate of crime is affected by factors other than crime, such as:
  - Public willingness to report crime
  - Police crime recording practices
  - Policing policy/practice
  - Seasonal factors
  - Chance
Public willingness to report crime

Percentage of crimes reported to police by offence type

- Motor Vehicle Theft: 89.8%
- Break Enter Steal: 75.8%
- Robbery: 60.7%
- Steal from Motor Vehicle: 55.3%
- Assault: 50.5%
- Vandalism: 46.8%
- Sexual Assault: 36.6%
- Threat (Assault): 31.9%
Variations in crime recording

Trend in stealing from the person (Jan 1995 - Mar 2008)

Reclassification of general stealing offences into stealing from the person
Variations in policing policy/practice

Use/possess cannabis. Byron Bay: Oct 2006-Sep 2010

- Bangalow music festival
- Byron Bay Blues festival
- Billinudgel Frontier Festival
Variations in court practice

Breach bail conditions: Jan 1995-Sep 2010
Seasonal factors

Domestic assault: Oct 2003-Sep 2010
Chance variation

Home burglary in Blacktown: Aug 2008- Sep 2010
The golden rule

- We don’t observe a change in crime, we infer a change in crime
- We ask:
  - Whether the observed trend/pattern could have come about by chance
  - Whether anything has happened to encourage better recording/reporting
  - Whether the trend consistent with other relevant data (e.g. crime victim survey data, ED data)?
Some key long-term trends in crime
Murder in NSW:
1990-2009

Rate per 100,000 pop.
Non-fatal violent crime in NSW: 1995-2009

Rate per 100,000 pop.
Property crime in NSW:
1995-2009

Rate per 100,000 population
Some recent trends in crime
Assault:
Oct. 2008-Sep. 2010

Number of recorded offences

- Domestic violence related assault
- Non-domestic violence related assault

Oct 2008 - Sep 2010
Sexual Assault and Indecent Assault:  
Oct.2008-Sep.2010

Number of recorded offences

- Sexual assault
- Indecent assault
Robbery:
Oct. 2008-Sep. 2010

Number of recorded offences
Break and enter:
Oct. 2008-Sep. 2010

Break and enter dwelling
Break and enter non-dwelling
MVT and SFMV:
Oct. 2008-Sep. 2010

Number of recorded offences

- Motor vehicle theft
- Steal from motor vehicle
Malicious damage to property:
Oct.2008-Sep.2010

Number of recorded offences

Understanding the BOCSAR crime report
Comparing trends across areas

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<th>Statistical Division</th>
<th>Murder</th>
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## Comparing rates across areas

**TABLE 3.1B: RATIO TO NSW RATE\(^\text{a}\) OF RECORDED CRIMINAL INCIDENTS PER 100,000 POPULATION, MAJOR OFFENCES, NSW SDs, 2009**

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Comparing numbers across areas

TABLE 3.1C: NUMBER OF RECORDED CRIMINAL INCIDENTS FOR MAJOR OFFENCES, NSW SDs, 2009

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</table>
Other data in the crime report

- Trends and numbers for all other offences
- Trends, rates and numbers for every LGA
- Clear up rates
- Trends in criminal proceedings
Locating crime and justice data
BOCSAR’s website:
www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au
What’s NOT on our website?

- Victim data that identifies individuals
  - Requires ethics approval
- Unit record level data
  - Requires ethics approval
- National data
  - See websites on the next slides
- Very specific data
  - E.g. Male POIs, aged 15, living in postcode 2113 cautioned by police for graffiti
- Reoffending data sets
  - Requires ethics approval
Other key websites

- Australian Institute of Criminology
  - www.aic.gov.au
- Australian Bureau of Statistics
  - www.abs.gov.au
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
  - www.aihw.gov.au
- National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre
  - www.ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au
- Judicial Commission of NSW
  - www.judcom.nsw.gov.au
- The Campbell Collaboration
  - www.campbellcollaboration.org
- US Bureau of Justice Statistics
  - http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/
Key sources for crime info

- Trends in property and violent crime over time
  - BOCSAR Recorded Crime Statistics
  - ABS Recorded Crime-Victims (cat.no. 4510.0)
- Comparing crime rates across areas
  - BOCSAR Recorded Crime Statistics
- The prevalence of property and violent crime
  - ABS Crime Victimisation Australia (cat. 4530.0)
  - ABS Personal Safety Survey (cat. 4906.0)
- Willingness to report crime to police
  - ABS Crime Victimisation Australia (cat. 4530.0)
- The prevalence of illegal drug use
  - National Drug Strategy Household Survey (AIHW)
Can’t find what you want?

- Call us on 9231 9190
- Email us at bcsr@agd.nsw.gov.au

Costs?
- Quick requests = FREE (takes 2 working days)
- Complex requests = $176/hr (takes 10 working days)
Any questions?

Thank you

- Call us on 9231 9190
- Email us at bcsr@agd.nsw.gov.au