An Introduction to Crime and Criminology
An Introduction to Crime and Criminology, 3rd edition, continues to bring together some of Australia's most widely respected authorities on criminology. The text explores popular knowledge and understanding about crime, contrasting it with what we know from official sources as well as from the victims. The authors present and analyse the various ways that crime is defined and measured, the many and varied dimensions of crime, the broad range of theories offered to explain crime, as well as some of the main ways governments and other agencies respond to and attempt to prevent crime.

About the authors

Hennessey Hayes is a senior lecturer in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University. He teaches introductory criminology and research methodology to first-year university students. He is also engaged in a program of research on restorative justice and re-offending.

Tim Prenzler is a professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University where he teaches in the areas of criminal justice accountability, crime prevention and security management. He is also the manager of the Integrity Systems research project at the Griffith node of the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security.
An Introduction to
Crime and Criminology

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About the authors vii
Acknowledgments x
Introduction xi

**Part One: Facts and Fallacies**

Chapter 1: Media and Crime
Lyn Hinds 3

Chapter 2: Defining Crime
Janet Ransley and Tim Prenzler 16

Chapter 3: Measuring Crime
Hennessey Hayes and Toni Makkai 32

Chapter 4: The Nature and Prevalence of Crime
Toni Makkai and Tim Prenzler 52

**Part Two: Dimensions of Crime**

Chapter 5: Victim and Offender Characteristics
Hennessey Hayes and Tim Prenzler 71

Chapter 6: Violence
Jenny Cartwright 73

Chapter 6: Violence
Jenny Cartwright 90
Chapter 7: Street Crimes  
*Lorraine Mazerolle*  
110

Chapter 8: White-collar Crime  
*Janet Ransley and Tim Prenzler*  
125

Chapter 9: Crimes Against Morality  
*Belinda Carpenter and Sharon Hayes*  
141

Chapter 10: Internet and International Crimes  
*Majid Yar and Tim Prenzler*  
155

**Part Three: Explaining Crime**  
175

Chapter 11: The Role of Theory  
*Paul Mazerolle*  
177

Chapter 12: Psychological Explanations  
*Stephen Smallbone*  
191

Chapter 13: Social Explanations  
*Melissa Bull*  
206

Chapter 14: Interactionist Explanations  
*Hennessey Hayes*  
224

**Part Four: Responding to Crime**  
241

Chapter 15: The Criminal Justice System  
*Tim Prenzler and Rick Sarre*  
243

Chapter 16: The Police  
*Tim Prenzler and Rick Sarre*  
258

Chapter 17: The Criminal Courts  
*Rick Sarre and Michael O'Connell*  
275

Chapter 18: Corrections  
*Catrin Smith*  
290

Chapter 19: Victims, Criminal Justice and Restorative Justice  
*Michael O'Connell and Hennessey Hayes*  
303

Chapter 20: Crime Prevention  
*Ross Homel*  
320

**Index**  
335
Hennessey Hayes is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University. He teaches introductory criminology and research methodology to first-year university students. He is also engaged in a program of research on restorative justice and reoffending.

Tim Prenzler is a Professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University where he teaches in the areas of criminal justice accountability, and crime prevention and security management. He is also the manager of the Integrity Systems research project at the Griffith node of the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security.

Melissa Bull is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University. She teaches courses on criminological theory and punishment. Her research interests include social theory, drug control and crime prevention, with recent work specifically focused on therapeutic jurisprudence in drug courts, the workings of international drug control treaties and preventing terrorism.

Belinda Carpenter is an Associate Professor in the School of Justice, Faculty of Law, at Queensland University of Technology. She teaches introductory sociology and criminology and supervises research students in law, health, sociology and
criminology. She has published widely on the issues of prostitution and domestic violence and her current research focuses on coronial decision making and death investigation.

**Jenny Cartwright (née Mouzos)** is Coordinator of Crime Prevention, High Tech Crime Operations, Australian Federal Police in Canberra. Prior to joining the AFP, Jenny was a senior research analyst and Manager of the Crime Monitoring Program at the Australian Institute of Criminology in Canberra. She has specific interests in homicide, trends and patterns of victimisation, and technology enabled crime.

**Sharon Hayes** is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Justice at Queensland University of Technology. She teaches social ethics and justice and human rights and has published in the areas of ethics, and gender and sexuality. She is co-author with Belinda Carpenter of a forthcoming monograph, *Sex, Crime and Morality* (Routledge 2011).

**Lyn Hinds** is a researcher in the Department of Immigration and Citizenship based in Canberra. She previously worked at the Australian National University on an ARC-funded project with the Australian Federal Police that explored ways to mobilise local capacity and knowledge to enhance public safety and security, and has lectured in criminology and criminal justice at the University of Queensland and Griffith University.

**Ross Homel AO** is Foundation Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University. He is interested in the theoretical analysis of crime, violence and related social problems, and the prevention of these problems through the application of the scientific method to problem analysis and the development, implementation and evaluation of interventions.

**Toni Makkai** is currently the Dean and Director of the College of Arts and Social Sciences at Australian National University and Chair of the College Executive. Prior to joining the ANU in 2008 she was Director of the Australian Institute of Criminology from 2003 to 2008. She has a strong focus on policy relevant research including drugs and crime, crime statistics, drug courts, and regulation and compliance. She has published widely in these fields with over 50 peer reviewed journal articles, numerous chapters in books and government reports and monographs. Her most recent monograph is *Regulating Aged Care: Ritualism and the New Pyramid* (with John and Val Braithwaite), which was the culmination of a 25-year study of regulation and compliance in the aged care sector in Australia, the UK and the USA.

**Lorraine Mazerolle** is a Professor of Criminology in the Institute for Social Science Research at the University of Queensland. She is an Australian Research Council (ARC) Laureate Fellow and a Chief Investigator in the ARC Centre of Excellence in
Policing and Security (CEPS). Professor Mazerolle is an experimental criminologist with research interests in drug law enforcement, crime control, community regulation and third-party policing.

**Paul Mazerolle** is Professor and Pro Vice Chancellor of the Arts, Education and Law group at Griffith University. His research examines the processes that shape criminal offending across the life course, the consequences of violent victimisation for criminal offending, and various aspects of intimate partner violence.

**Michael O'Connell**, Commissioner for Victims' Rights in South Australia, also teaches victimology locally and internationally. He is a life-member and a Vice-President of the World Society of Victimology. In 1995 he was awarded the Australian Police Medal for his victimological work; in 2003 was a finalist in Australian of the Year 2004 (South Australia); and in 2010 Victim Support Australasia presented him with its national award for advancing victimology and promoting victims' rights.

**Janet Ransley** is an Associate Professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University. She teaches and researches in the areas of legal frameworks for law enforcement, the governance of the justice system, and the development of criminal justice policy. Her recent work has focused on illicit drug regulation, and mandatory detention policies.

**Rick Sarre** is a Professor of Law and Criminal Justice jointly with the School of Commerce and School of Law, University of South Australia. His current research interests include the law of private security, the history of restorative justice and identity fraud. He has been an Associate of the Australian Institute of Criminology since 1996.

**Stephen Smallbone** is a Professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University. His teaching areas include corrections, offender rehabilitation and forensic psychology, and he is the Director of the Griffith Youth Forensic Service.

**Catrin (Kate) Smith** is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University. She joined Griffith University in 2009, having previously been Reader in Criminology at the University of Chester, UK. Prior to that, she was a lecturer in criminology and criminal justice and a member of the Centre for Comparative Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Wales, Bangor (now Bangor University). She has been grant holder and principal investigator on a number of research projects, with funding from the Scottish Office, the High Security Psychiatric Services Commissioning Board and the British Academy. She has completed research on health issues for incarcerated women (UK and USA),
aspects of care and control at a High Security (Special) Psychiatric Hospital and on the cultural aspects of female injecting drug use (Texas and North Wales).

**Majid Yar** is Professor of Sociology at the University of Hull, UK. His research interests include cybercrime, intellectual property, criminological and social theory, and crime in popular culture. He is the author of *Cybercrime and Society* (Sage 2006), co-author of *Criminology: The Key Concepts* (Routledge 2008) and co-editor of the *Handbook on Internet Crime* (Willan 2009).

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What is crime? How much crime is there in our community? Why do people offend? How do we prevent crime? *Introduction to Crime and Criminology* is an updated edited collection of chapters written by leading Australian criminologists with the purpose of answering these questions. This book introduces university students and others interested in crime to the fields of criminology and criminal justice. Each chapter is written by one or more of Australia’s most widely respected authorities on criminology, lending this collection legitimacy and currency.

While this book is particularly suited to first-year students enrolled in criminology and criminal justice courses in Australian universities, researchers, practitioners, policy-makers and general readers alike will find the book’s content timely and relevant. The contributors to this volume guide readers through contemporary research on crime and criminality from Australia and overseas. The large majority of chapters do not simply summarise current knowledge but include data from the authors’ original research, as well as offer distinctive insights and policy recommendations. Below, we summarise how the book is organised, as well as what each chapter contains.

The book is divided into four parts: facts and fallacies, dimensions of crime, explaining crime, and responding to crime. In Part 1, readers first consider
how we imagine crime and how it is portrayed in popular media (e.g. crime drama, as well as television and print news). Readers then consider how crime is conceptualised, defined and measured before turning to an examination of the extent of 'the crime problem' in Australia. Part 2 reviews various dimensions of crime. These include offender characteristics (such as age, gender and ethnicity), violent offending, crimes 'in the streets', crimes 'in the suites' (i.e. white-collar and corporate offending), crimes that cross national borders, Internet crimes, as well as crimes against morality (e.g. prostitution and homosexuality). In Part 3 we consider how crime is explained. Some of these explanations (or theories) locate the causes of crime squarely within the individual, some within society and some within a complex of both individual and social factors. Finally in Part 4, we review various ways of responding to crime. This section includes an overall review of the Australian criminal justice system, followed by chapters focusing on the three 'arms' of criminal justice: police, courts and corrections. Other chapters in this section examine how victims of crime feature in the system, the growth of alternative responses to crime, such as restorative justice, and various ways of preventing crime. The final chapter (only available online) was written to answer students' questions about working in criminal justice related fields. Below we summarise what each chapter accomplishes.

CONTENTS

Crime myths are largely influenced by how crime and criminals are portrayed in media. Popular news shows and print media present stories about crime in dramatic and sensational ways. In Chapter 1 Lyn Hinds considers how crime and criminals feature in print and television media. Drawing on key contemporary empirical literature, she shows how media portrayals of crime relate to citizens' fear of crime and quality of life. She also considers what it is about crime that is so seductive (i.e. why crime and crime-related stories capture the public's attention and imagination).

'Crime', as a concept, is very complex and incorporates a large range of behaviours (e.g. from petty shop theft, to violent assault, to large-scale corporate crimes, to murder). Crime is also a social construction, and behaviours defined as criminal vary across time and place. In Chapter 2 Janet Ransley and Tim Prenzler explore the ways that 'crime' is conceptualised and understood in Australia and other Western societies. A key aim is to show how our current understanding, tolerance and categorisation of some forms of behaviour (e.g. child abuse and neglect, rape and sexual assault, homosexuality, drug use) have changed over time.

In Chapter 3 Hennessey Hayes and Toni Makkai review the ways that criminologists and other criminal justice professionals attempt to observe and measure crime. Once researchers have settled on how crime should be defined,
how do they go about observing this complex social phenomenon? Various sources of crime data are reviewed, along with summaries of associated advantages and known limitations. Sources include crime data from official agencies (e.g. police, courts, and correctional institutions), known offenders (self-reported criminality) and victims of crime. The authors also review various methodological approaches to the study of crime. These range from the use of large-scale, quantitative surveys of crime victims in the community to smaller, qualitative analyses of specific criminological phenomena (e.g. heroin addiction, target choice among active property offenders, the social process of criminality).

Is crime in Australia on the rise? In Chapter 4 Toni Makkai and Tim Prenzler dispel popular crime myths by reviewing what we currently know about the nature and prevalence of crime in Australia. Drawing on published reports from various agencies, such as the Australian Institute of Criminology, they present a time-series analysis of crime to show how various forms of crime have risen and/or fallen over the past several decades. In addition, they review in detail the estimated financial and social costs of various forms of crime (e.g. monetary costs associated with policing and preventing crime, as well as social costs to victims of crime, families of offenders, and communities). Their key aim is to show how several forms of violence (e.g. murder and assault) have either remained stable, have risen only slightly or have decreased slightly during the past several years. The authors conclude by showing that most crimes in Australia are neither violent nor interesting.

In Chapter 5 the focus shifts to offenders. Hennessey Hayes and Tim Prenzler summarise the complex multiple demographics of offenders and their victims. This includes key variables such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, social status and place. They pay particular attention to the ‘age curve’ in crime – with onset of offending in adolescence, persistence and desistance. Another major focus is the predominance of offending by men. These aspects are compared with those of victims, with particular attention to shifting dimensions of victimisation, such as the way males make up the majority of crime victims but females make up the majority of victims of sexual offences. Some implications for theoretical explanations of crime and for crime prevention are discussed.

The focus of Chapter 6 is on the traditional category of ‘crime against the person’. Jenny Cartwright looks mainly at statistical aspects of crimes such as murder, assault, sexual assault and abduction, as well as stalking and dangerous driving causing bodily harm. Who commits these crimes and who are the victims is examined in more detail following the framework set out in the previous chapter. Some exemplar case studies are made of domestic violence and child abuse, and attention is given to traditional and innovative strategies in reducing the incidence of these crimes.

Lorraine Mazerolle covers the category ‘street crime’ in Chapter 7, which deals with crimes such as public intoxication, vandalism, graffiti, common assaults and
street robberies (like bag snatches). Offender and victim characteristics are again studied in depth, along with estimates of the costs of these crimes to the community and to government. Other dimensions examined include long-term trends in the volume of these crimes, spatial-temporal dimensions, and current prevention strategies.

In Chapter 8 Janet Ransley and Tim Prenzler shift our focus from street crimes to ‘crimes in the suites’. Their focus is on the major areas of fraud and associated ‘white-collar’ crimes such as corruption, professional malpractice, pollution, safety violations and many other offences. The authors summarise the history of growing concern about these types of crime and different ways of defining and researching white-collar crime. Attention is also given to the different types of harm caused by these crimes and the rise of specialist regulatory agencies designed to combat them.

In Chapter 9 Belinda Carpenter and Sharon Hayes examine ‘crimes against morality’. This is a traditional area of criminal law concerned with behaviours sometimes labelled ‘victimless crime’. These include prostitution, deviant sexual practices, drug taking and pornography. Attention is given to the way in which behaviours deemed ‘immoral’ become crimes and are policed, and how many societies have moved from prohibition of these behaviours to legalisation or regulation. Case studies are made of prostitution, pornography and homosexuality.

Majid Yar and Tim Prenzler explore the rapid growth of Internet and international crimes in Chapter 10. They focus their analysis on crimes facilitated by or perpetrated on the Internet (e.g. cyber-fraud, ‘phishing’, identity theft, cyber-stalking and hacking), as well as various human rights abuses associated with terrorism, war and ethnic conflict. The authors also consider other international crimes such as smuggling, money laundering and environmental crime. The chapter concludes with an examination of various opportunity structures, the immense effects of these crimes, as well as various prevention strategies.

The preceding chapters review various dimensions of crime (i.e. what offenders and victims do and what they look like). In Chapter 11 Paul Mazerolle discusses the role of theory in the criminological enterprise. He first reviews what a theory is and how theory relates to research in criminology and criminal justice. Next, he highlights the ways that crime theories inform empirical criminological research and how theories help to guide our expectations (i.e. predictions) about criminal phenomena. The author concludes by demonstrating how various criminological theories have assisted in the development of effective crime prevention strategies (e.g. the link between routine activities theory and situational crime prevention approaches).

Are criminals ‘genetic throwbacks’ or biologically flawed in some way? Are all criminals psychopaths? In Chapter 12 Stephen Smallbone reviews some of the ways that criminal behaviour is explained from a biological or psychological
perspective. Biological and psychological theories locate the causes of crime within the individual (e.g. chromosomes, body types, IQ, heredity) and attempt to show how some people (e.g. who possess certain genetic or psychological characteristics) may be predisposed to criminal activity. The author demonstrates that individual-level theories can uncover certain individual traits that are associated with criminality and includes a series of case studies or ‘criminal profiles’ to highlight theoretical links between individual-level characteristics and criminal behaviour.

The focus shifts from the individual to society in Chapter 13. Melissa Bull reviews theories of crime that locate the causes of crime outside the individual. Social explanations of crime examine the ways that various social structures (e.g. education, employment, economy, marriage and family, age, gender) bear on criminality. Social theorists assert, among other things, that criminals are not inherently bad, but that society constructs criminality such that certain members are more likely to be categorised in criminal ways. These theorists also attempt to show how criminal opportunities and pressures are unequally distributed such that some members of society are more likely to engage in crime.

In the final chapter of Part 3 (Chapter 14), Hennessey Hayes reviews criminological theories that locate the causes of crime neither within the individual nor in larger social structures. Interactionist theories examine how the process of social interaction affects the development and maintenance of criminal behaviour. These theories attempt to show how criminal attitudes and definitions develop through participation in intimate social groups (e.g. peer friendship groups) and how criminal behaviours endure and dissipate throughout the life course. Interactionists also examine the ways that contact with criminal justice agencies (e.g. arrest, adjudication, incarceration) affect conceptions of the self and others. Some theories suggest that the ‘criminal self’ develops out of recurring negative interactions with criminal justice system professionals. This chapter concludes with an examination of several integrated theoretical models to explain the development and maintenance of criminal behaviour.

The final chapters of this book deal with the various ways we respond to crime (Part 4). In Chapter 15 Tim Prenzler and Rick Sarre first examine our criminal justice system. All countries have a set of institutions consisting primarily of police, courts and corrections that are intended to work independently but interactively to deter and punish crime. This embodies the primary official government response to the crime problem and it is generally extremely expensive and cumbersome. In this chapter the authors describe the main functions of the criminal justice system elements and evaluate their effectiveness in crime prevention and in bringing offenders to justice. They explain the theory of the separation of functions, and review theories of punishment, models of sentencing, rehabilitation programs, and contrast adversarial and inquisitorial systems. The authors lay the foundation for the more detailed presentations of the roles and functions of police, courts and corrections that follow.
Chapters 16–18 consider the history and development of the three arms of the criminal justice system in Australia: police, courts and corrections. In Chapter 16 Tim Prenzler and Rick Sarre describe the functions of policing agencies, as well as the growth and development of several innovations such as ‘community policing’, ‘problem-oriented policing’ and ‘intelligence-led policing’. Rick Sarre and Michael O’Connell examine the role of the criminal courts in Australia in Chapter 17. They also explain the adversarial process and review developments in specialist courts and diversionary practices. Finally, in Chapter 18, Catrin Smith reviews the development of the Australian correctional system. This includes a description of community corrections and the growth of the private prison industry.

In Chapter 19 Michael O’Connell and Hennessey Hayes describe how victims of crime feature in the criminal justice system. The traditional criminal justice system has tended to relegate victims of crime to the role of witnesses. In this chapter the authors focus on a ‘return’ to pre-modern justice systems that emphasise victim reparation and reconciling offenders and victims. They begin by elaborating the destructive personal effects of crime, the further negative effects on victims of many traditional practices of crime investigations and court processes, and the need for a more holistic response to healing the victim. The authors conclude by examining the growth of restorative justice interventions in Australia and their impact on offenders and victims.

Several chapters in this book emphasise the enormous scale of crime in modern societies, its diverse harmful effects, and the limited penetration of crime by the standard criminal justice system. The diverse causes of crime mean that there are a variety of ways in which crime reduction can be achieved. The focus of the penultimate chapter of this book therefore, is on the need for diverse methods of crime prevention, and also on ‘what works’ in terms of demonstrated successful strategies. In Chapter 20 Ross Homel focuses on: 1) targeting ‘dispositional’ factors that address the motivations of offenders — through behaviour modification programs, training and employment schemes, or similar initiatives — and 2) ‘situational’ aspects aimed at reducing opportunities for crime in the physical environment.

An additional chapter is available to download from the Pearson catalogue page <www.pearson.com.au/9781442545243> to help students answer perhaps one of the most difficult questions they face as university graduates: ‘What do I do now?’ In Chapter 21 Merelyn Bates and Tim Prenzler review the broad range of careers and occupations in criminology and criminal justice. They also include several strategies to assist students in preparing for employment, such as searching for jobs in criminal justice and related fields, preparing applications and gaining generic skills. A key aim of the chapter is to help students successfully make the transition from student to criminal justice professional.

*Introduction to Crime and Criminology* is one of only a very small number of university texts that bring together some of Australia’s leading criminologists to describe and explain the exciting and growing fields of criminology and criminal
justice. University students and other interested readers will find the information contained in this collection interesting and timely. As such, this text demystifies the nature of crime and criminality in a readily accessible way, and students reading this text will come away with a sound foundation in basic criminological concepts and principles to support further study. This updated edition has a Test Bank of questions ideal for instructors to create exams in just minutes.
Chapter 1 of this book looked at the way the media often exaggerates the incidence and gravity of crime. The chapter contrasted various ‘myths’ about crime with a number of ‘facts’: for example, the fact that violent crime is much less common than property crime. The current chapter picks up on these points and provides a more developed ‘big picture’ account of ‘conventional’ crime in Australia and internationally. A key point is that there have been large increases in crimes reported to police in many countries, including Australia, in the 1970s and 1980s, with more stable or falling rates from the 1990s. Some forms of crime in Australia, however, remain at relatively high rates.
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND UP TO THE 1960s

Crime fluctuates. It varies across time and place. One way of gaining perspective on the contemporary crime problem is to see how it has varied over time. Australia is an offshoot of 18th and 19th century British society (the 1700s and 1800s). This was the period of transition from the remnants of a feudal economy to capitalism and then industrial capitalism. Crime was at epidemic levels in many parts of Britain; due largely to the enormous gap between the rich and poor, and the creation of a large ‘surplus’ population of unemployed and underpaid people concentrated in slums and desperate just to survive. The crisis in criminal justice was greatly exacerbated by the ineffective application of extremely harsh penalties for what we would now consider very minor offences, such as theft of food or clothing (Emsley 1996).

The crime problem in Britain during this period challenges any temptation to romanticise the past. Readers have probably heard people talk of a time when they would go out and leave the house unlocked. This certainly may have been true at particular times or places, but ‘the past’ could also be extremely dangerous. Case study 4.1 provides a partial account of this problem. It derives from an attempt to obtain an objective picture of crime at a time before properly constructed victim surveys or consistent measures of reported crime.

The overflow of prisons, and the desire to relocate the worst elements of the ‘criminal classes’, led to the establishment of the penal colony at Sydney in 1788. From that date, through much of the 19th century, Australia had what is often considered to have been high levels of crime (Mukherjee, Walker & Jacobsen 1986). Many convicts committed fresh offences – including rape, assault, theft and murder – because of inadequate supervision. Policing was inadequate and was initially carried out by militia, who frequently resorted to crime themselves. Policing was also difficult to supply to the new settlements as colonists spread out from Sydney across an enormous frontier. Many would argue today that the taking of Aboriginal land was itself a form of theft, and conflict between settlers and Aborigines resulted in many murders. The gold rushes created opportunities for theft, robbery and bushranging; and in this male-dominated and harsh environment drunkenness was an enormous problem, including associated problems of fights, public disorder and neglect of families. The 19th century was a period of high levels of conventional crimes such as theft and assault, as well as what we would now call ‘human rights violations’ – such as summary shootings of Indigenous people, the virtual enslavement of Pacific Islander people as agricultural workers, and attacks on ethnic minority groups such as Chinese miners. Many practices which are now prohibited were then commonplace, such as discrimination against women in education and employment, as well as pollution and unsafe working conditions. It is also safe to assume that crimes such as domestic violence, child abuse and sexual assault were widespread and largely ignored by the authorities (Allen 1990).
First report of the constabulary commissioners, 1839

The Royal Commission, 'for the purpose of inquiring as to the best means of establishing an efficient constabulary force in the counties of England and Wales', spent nearly three years on its task. It amassed much colourful evidence about the state of crime, the careers of habitual delinquents, the nature of their depredations, the degree of insecurity of travellers on the roads, and the increasing risks opened up in rural areas by the conveyance of valuable cargoes by canal and railway. A commercial traveller with interests throughout the south of England said that it was only on very rare occasions that he dared to travel after dark. 'Occasionally on a moonlight night I may; but it would be contrary to prudence for any person who travels about the country with much money in his pocket to be out after dusk.' This was the almost universal habit amongst travellers. A straw-hat manufacturer agreed, and said that he himself had been shot at near Harpenden, while on his way to Luton market to buy straw, and a third traveller testified that farmers in northern towns commonly waited for hours to make up parties for their return home after dark from the markets, rather than risk the journey alone...

The Commission ... interrogated many convicted prisoners, and in an account 'Confessions of Delinquents' they painted a rogues’ gallery of Fagins and Sykeses [characters from a Dickens' novel]. One ... put an extensive knowledge of criminal practices at the disposal of the Commission: robbery in the streets with violence was often carried out by hitting the victim on the head with a stone in a stocking, but a more refined method was to 'take fast hold of the nose, and pushing it quite flat towards the mouth, so as to almost break the gristle of the nose, this will take away a man’s senses nearly.' ...

From elsewhere the Commission heard of barbarous practices. Whole villages were alleged to consist very largely of men ‘calling themselves fishermen, but who in fact, live by plundering wrecks ... a most determined set of villains; it matters not what comes in their way, they will have it.’ A few years earlier a ship had been wrecked off the Cheshire coast. Her captain’s body was washed ashore, where the wreckers were massed like vultures. They stripped it naked, and while the corpse lay waiting to be carried off for the inquest someone cut off a finger to secure a ring. A woman bit the ears of a female body to secure the earrings. From all around the coasts the story of plunder was the same. Coastguards were powerless against the determined villagers, often drunk from the liquor they seized. (Critchley 1967, pp. 69–70)

The 20th century presents a different picture. By the latter part of the 19th century reported crime was already declining, with the end of convict transportation and the influx of pioneer families. This trend continued through to the middle part of the 20th century. From around 1950 there were slight increases followed by a period of relative stability until about 1970. (The following section takes over from this point.) Figure 4.1 shows the basic downward and upward trend in homicide offences per 100 000 people (with a levelling out and decline toward the end of the century). Overall, one general analysis concluded that:
Australia was a less violent society at the end of the twentieth century than it was at the end of the 19th or 18th centuries, though today’s rates of property crime appear significantly higher (Graycar & Grabosky 2002, p. 7).

**Figure 4.1** Homicide in Australia, 1915–98, per 100,000

![Homicide in Australia, 1915–98, per 100,000](source)

**Source:** Mezzas (2000) p. 9. Reproduced with permission from Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC).

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**The Crisis in Recorded Crime: 1970s and 1980s**

Chapter 3 on measuring crime noted that proper national crime statistics have only been collated and reported since 1993, with the establishment of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) ‘recorded crime’ collection. Prior to this, national figures were taken from the annual statistical reports by the state and territory police forces, which were often highly inconsistent (Mukherjee 2000). However, these are all we have, and they do at least provide a somewhat consistent picture across time. What they show is a marked upward trend in the recorded rates for both property and violent crime in the 1970s and 1980s. This appears in a dramatic form in Figure 4.2 for serious assault, which increased by 448%, and robbery, which increased by 192%. The exception to this trend has been homicide, which remained stable with no increase (‘homicide’ includes manslaughter but not driving causing death). Figure 4.3 shows that the rates of property crimes reported and recorded by police also rose rapidly (more from the late 1970s) to the early 1990s. Note, however, the relative differences between the two graphs. Figure 4.2 for violent crime is on a scale of tens per 100,000 persons, but Figure 4.3 for property crime is in hundreds.
THE DIP IN RECORDED CRIME: 1990s–2000s

As noted, more consistent national figures for reported and recorded crime became available from 1993. As a result, the classifications used in Figures 4.4 and 4.5 do not necessarily match those in Figures 4.2 and 4.3. But despite these variations there is a fairly consistent story. Figures 4.2 and 4.3 show that at the start of the 1990s crime rates appeared to start to level out or even go down. Figures 4.4 and 4.5 take up the story from 1996, and show property crimes began to decline, followed a few years later by other theft and robbery. However, the assault rate has trended upwards over the period.
Note that in Figure 4.4 the assault rate and sexual assault rate are calculated differently to previous years. In 2004 the ABS did not report nationally on assault or sexual assault data after finding that there were inconsistencies in police recording practices. However, the ABS does publish a state and territory breakdown of assault...
and sexual assault rates. In some jurisdictions the police recorded assault data only if they had evidence that a crime had been committed; while in other jurisdictions the assault was recorded based on what the alleged victim reported, regardless of the evidence (see Carcach & Makkai 2002). This meant that if you compared two states you might not be comparing the same thing. However, as the statistics are reliable within jurisdictions we can assume that the overall trend in crime rates is a reflection of the underlying trend in assaults (Australian Institute of Criminology 2005). (See Chapter 3 on sexual assault figures.)

Was this trend unique to Australia? We need to be cautious in comparing recorded crime rates between countries because of variations in categorising and recording crimes reported to police. Nonetheless, the available figures show a similar process in the United States of America, Canada and England/Wales - although the declines occurred much earlier (see Figures 4.6 and 4.7). One exception is the violent crime rate in England and Wales from the late 1990s. Is this the result of a crime wave? Probably not. In 1999 and 2002 there were major changes across all 43 English and Welsh police services with a move towards a system of consistent recording of alleged offences, as well as evidence-based ones. The Home Office estimated that increases in violence against the person were inflated by about 23% in 2002/3 alone as a result of the change in recording practices (Home Office 2006). We also know that police in Canada record every violent crime that is reported to them while the US publishes an index of the most serious violent crimes. In actual fact when comparable serious violent crimes are compared Canada is lower than the United States (Gannon 2001).

This chapter is focused on changes in crime rates over time - crime trends - rather than reasons for changes. The chapters in Part 3 of this book ('Explaining crime') look more closely at explanations for crime. However, we should note that overseas there has been considerable controversy over the drop in crime rates; especially in the United States, where police departments were often quick to claim responsibility. The recency of the changes in Australia has meant that there has been no analysis at the national level. However, three studies, one in New South Wales of armed robbery and property crime trends, one in the Australian Capital Territory on property crime rates, and one in Queensland on police performance management have suggested a number of factors may have contributed to the declines (Moffat, Weatherburn & Donnelly 2005; Makkai et al. 2004; Mazeroille, Rombouts & McBroom 2006). These factors have also been identified in overseas studies. Explanations that have been associated with the crime drop include:

- intelligence-led policing operations and increased police on the street
- incarceration effects
- increasing prosperity and lowering unemployment rates
- changes in local drug markets such as the drop in availability of heroin (and the reduction in violence associated with crack cocaine markets in the US)
changing demographics (especially fewer young males in the population)
- decreases in alcohol consumption and drunk driving
- changes in 'collective values', particularly towards violence
- enlarged gun control.
COMPARING TYPES OF CRIMES

Another way to analyse reported crime data is to compare types of crimes against each other in the same period. Comparing crime by type or category allows us to identify important differences – between property and violent crime for example, or between subgroupings such as murder and manslaughter.

Major types of crimes are included in Table 4.1, showing crimes reported to police in Australia in 2009 in terms of numbers and percentages. Note that the ABS does not include fraud in this grouping (see ‘costs of crime’). Important differences within these figures can be seen that are common for crime in most locations. Perhaps the most obvious one is that property crime made up a much larger percentage of crimes – approximately 80% – than violent crime – approximately 20%. Murder – arguably the worst crime – accounted for only 0.03% of offences compared with much less harmful ‘volume crimes’ such as ‘other theft’ (including shoplifting) at 49.25%. How one interprets these figures is, nonetheless, important. Sexual assault, for example, accounted for only 1.93% of the total, but in reality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OFFENCE</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>PER CENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homicide and related offences</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted murder</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manslaughter</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault *</td>
<td>175,277</td>
<td>18.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault *</td>
<td>18,807</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapping/abduction</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>15,238</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed robbery</td>
<td>6,510</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unarmed robbery</td>
<td>8,728</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackmail/ extortion</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlawful entry with intent</td>
<td>222,664</td>
<td>22.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property theft</td>
<td>156,319</td>
<td>16.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>66,345</td>
<td>6.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor vehicle theft</td>
<td>59,649</td>
<td>6.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other theft</td>
<td>478,807</td>
<td>49.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>972,180</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures are compiled of state (NSW, VIC, QLD, SA, WA, TAS) and territory (NT, ACT) totals due to the ABS not producing national estimates from 2003 onwards.
this is 18,807 traumatic incidents that were reported in a category where there is substantial under-reporting.

It should also be emphasised that these figures disguise considerable complexity. The ABS also reports these figures by state and territory, and there are some long-term differences here. Most notably, Victoria has had low crime rates and the Northern Territory has had very high crime rates. More importantly, however, crime can vary enormously by neighbourhood (see Chapter 5).

**DRUG ARRESTS**

Trade in illicit drugs and their use are difficult crimes to measure because ‘victims’ do not usually report to the police; and drug offences, as reported crimes, are not included in the ABS collection. Drug abuse therefore provides a challenge when attempting to obtain a big-picture view of crime. Drug arrests usually result from specific drug law enforcement activity or coincidently through an investigation into another matter, often related to property offences. The Australian Crime Commission (ACC) collates drug arrest statistics and classifies offenders involved in drug arrests into two categories (Australian Crime Commission 2005, p. 73):

1. **Consumers**: persons charged with user-type offences (e.g. possessing or administering drugs for own personal use).
2. **Providers**: persons charged with supply-type offences (e.g. importation, trafficking, selling, cultivation and manufacture).

There have been noticeable changes in the trends in drug arrests that mirror the crime rates shown in Figures 4.6 and 4.7. Since 1995–6 there has been an overall decline of 24% in the number of arrests for drug offences. However, the drug market is comprised of a number of submarkets (see Figure 4.8), and trends for individual drugs have reflected different aspects of drug law enforcement strategies and changes in demand/use. It is difficult to attribute cause and effect, but the following systematic changes have occurred. First, the number of cannabis arrests has declined. It is difficult to determine whether the decline is associated with availability or demand; however, seizure data also show declines as do figures from usage surveys of the general population. Second, arrests for heroin have declined at the same time as there was reduction in the availability of heroin – which some have attributed to law enforcement activity (Moffat et al. 2005). Third, amphetamine arrests nationally have increased significantly over the past 15 years. The largest number of arrests was in Queensland where there has been a significant law enforcement focus on the detection of clandestine laboratories.
FIGURE 4.8  Number of drug arrests by type of drug, 1995/6–2008/09

*"Other" includes hallucinogens, benzodiazepine and other drugs not defined elsewhere.

VICTIMISATION SURVEYS

The previous chapter explained some of the limits of recorded crime, especially in terms of the fact that victims may not report crimes. Victim surveys therefore provide another important source of data on levels of crime, although they also have limitations. These can include the sample size, the method used to collect the information, and whether a standard question asked in different cultural settings will elicit the same response. In this section we draw on data from the International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS), which has been conducted in Australia four times: in 1989, 1992, 2000 and 2004 (van Dijk, van Kesteren & Smit 2008). Figures 4.9 and 4.10 examine the rates for violent and property crimes in the past year asked about in the survey. They basically confirm the overall trends that we saw from the ‘administrative’ data (crimes reported to, and recorded by, police). Except for armed robbery, there does seem to have been some reduction in the rate of reported victimisation, especially between the 2000 and 2004 surveys. The overall number of respondents who reported being a victim of 10 specific crimes in the past year declined from 25.2% in 1999 to 16.3% in 2004.

The ICVS puts Australia in a group of 17 ‘industrialised countries’. Australia has often been amongst those countries with the highest rates, but was only slightly above average in the 2004 survey. Table 4.2 provides the overall reported victimisation rates and includes percentages for some specific crimes. Note that this is a ‘prevalence rate’, showing the number of individual victims, including repeat victims, not an ‘incidence rate’, showing the total number of offences.
FEAR OF CRIME

Studies of the fear of crime have found that most people are afraid of 'unpredictable strangers' rather than their own family members (Grant, David & Cook 2002). This is another example of where community perceptions of fears and the evidence base can be quite divergent. For example, studies of homicide and assault find the
### TABLE 4.2 Crime victimisation, international comparisons, 2004–5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>OVERALL</th>
<th>THEFT OF CARS (% OF OWNERS)</th>
<th>BURGLARY</th>
<th>ASSAULTS AND THREATS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England and Wales</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from van Dijk et al. (2008b, p. 237, Table 1).

Note: Sampling errors mean percentages can be in error up to two percentage points in some cases.

Risk of victimisation is greatest within the home or residential setting rather than 'on the street'.

Crime victim surveys ask people about their perceptions of personal safety and risk of victimisation. In 2004 the majority of Australians surveyed felt either very safe or fairly safe in their neighbourhoods after dark (see Figure 4.11). However, there were significant differences in the way in which men and women perceived safety. Males were more likely to feel very safe (44%) or fairly safe (42%) walking alone after dark than females (21% and 38% respectively). Women (39%) were much more likely to feel unsafe walking alone after dark than men (13%).

There are also age differences in perceptions of safety (see Figure 4.12). Those aged 60 and over were more likely to report feeling very unsafe when walking alone after dark in their local area than those in other age groups. Yet the risk of victimisation amongst this group is lower than for other age groups (James & Graycar 2002). Younger and older Australians are the two groups most likely to feel unsafe,
while those aged between 25 and 59 were more likely to perceive walking alone after dark in local neighbourhoods as either very safe or fairly safe.

Another way of looking at fear of crime is to assess whether people think they are likely to become a victim of crime. For example, just over half of the Australians surveyed in the ICSVS (58%) did not think it was likely that their house would be burgled within the next year (Figure 4.13). However, a substantial number did think it was likely or very likely (36%). This was in contrast to their actual experience. Only 2.5% reported that they had been burgled in the previous twelve months (van Dijk et al. 2008).
FINANCIAL COSTS OF CRIME

This chapter so far has focused on the measurement of crime in terms of numbers of offences and numbers of victims. Another dimension of crime can be seen through attempts to measure financial impacts. Chapter 3 noted a number of problems with this approach, including the need to make estimates in many cases. Nonetheless, a detailed study of the **financial costs of crime** is important for informing crime management policies in terms, for example, of which crimes cause the most harm.

The most recent, and the most thorough, study in Australia was the ‘Counting the Costs of Crime in Australia’ study, conducted by the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC), for the year 2005 (Rollings 2008). Some examples of types of costs incorporated into the Institute’s study included:

- medical
- victim support services, including the value of volunteering
- insurance
- drug therapies, including methadone maintenance
- criminal injury compensation
- security products
- time lost in routine precautions, such as locking the house
- lost productivity due to sick leave and incapacitation, including the reduced productivity of prisoners.

Table 4.3 sums up the results of this study, with a total figure of $35.8 billion. The cost of responding to crime was calculated at $14.5 billion or 40% of the total cost. Figure 4.14 puts the direct costs ($21 billion) into a pie chart to illustrate the costs of different types of crime. It is notable that the largest contributor by far was fraud, at 40%. The cost of drug misuse was also quite high at 9%. This includes the impact of death from overdose and treatment costs, but does not include effects
such as property crime and enforcement (counted elsewhere). Some examples of the average direct cost per individual offence include the following (Rollings 2008):

- robbery $2300
- theft of motor vehicle $7000
- non-residential burglary $4100
- residential burglary $2700
- shoplifting $125
- assault $1695
- sexual assault $7500.

One useful exercise conducted as part of the AIC study was to compare the incidence of crime with the costs (see Figure 4.15). This made for some interesting contrasts. Shoplifting, for example, accounted for 61% of incidents but only 9% of direct costs.

### TABLE 4.3 Overall costs of crime in Australia, 2005, $ millions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COST TYPE</th>
<th>ESTIMATED COST IN 2005 ($ MILLIONS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct costs (property loss, medical, lost output, etc.)</td>
<td>$21,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with crime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal justice</td>
<td>$9,808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>$2,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim assistance</td>
<td>$1,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance administration</td>
<td>$580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$35,802</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Rollings (2008), p. ix. Table 1. Reproduced with permission of Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC).

### FIGURE 4.14 Direct costs of crime in Australia by percentage, 2005

- Fraud 40%
- Burglary 10%
- Drug offences 9%
- Arson 8%
- Criminal damage 7%
- Assault 7%
- Shop theft 4%
- Homicide 4%
- Sexual assault 3%
- Thefts of vehicles 3%
- Thefts from vehicles 2%
- Robbery 1%
- Other theft 1%

Source: Rollings (2008), p. ix. Figure 1. Reproduced with permission of Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC).
(excluding arson, fraud and drugs). Homicide, assault and sexual assault were estimated at 8% of incidents but 33% of total costs (Rollings 2008). This further illustrates the multi-dimensionality of crime.

Overall, the evidence shows that crime is an enormous financial burden on Australian society. The total figure of $35.8 billion for 2005 was about half the $83.8 billion spent on health across the public and private sectors, and slightly more than half the $61.1 billion spent by governments on education (in 2004/05, Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision 2007).

**CONCLUSION**

This chapter has sketched some key dimensions of conventional crime across time, across types of offences, between countries and in terms of financial costs. An important point to note is that violent crime makes up a much smaller proportion of overall crime than property crime. Another key point is that crime rates fluctuate. The period in British history preceding and overlapping with the colonisation of Australia can be considered to be one where social conditions produced high crime rates. Rates were lower for much of the 20th century but leapt up again in the 1970s and 1980s, especially in terms of crimes reported to police, and this was part of a worldwide trend. Many industrialised countries, including Australia, appear to be in a period of declining crime rates, from peaks around the 1990s or the turn of the century. Nonetheless, various measures of crime suggest that the volume and effects of crime remain extensive. Australia could still be said to be a ‘high crime society’.
CHAPTER 4 THE NATURE AND PREVALENCE OF CRIME

QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree that Australia is a high crime society?
2. What ‘crimes’ have been left out of this chapter?
3. In light of the figures reported in this chapter, how would you evaluate media reportage of crime?
4. Look at Table 4.2 showing some findings from the ICVS. Would you like to speculate about some of the differences from what you know of different countries? Were you surprised by any of the figures?
5. Re-read the ‘Fear of crime’ section. How would you account for the differences between people’s perceptions in terms of gender and age?
6. Explain the difference between incidence rates for crime and the financial costs of crime?
7. In light of the figures reported in the ‘Counting the Costs of Crime in Australia’ study, where would you prioritise crime prevention resources?
8. Imagine you are the director of a crime research and policy centre. The federal government asks you for a comprehensive report on crime in Australia. What sources would you use? How would you categorise the data? What caveats would you apply? And what would you say in a one-paragraph executive summary?

RECOMMENDED READINGS

The annual series Australian Crime: Facts and Figures is an AIIC publication of about 100 pages in booklet form packed with vital statistics about crime and criminal justice. It is also available at: <www.aiic.gov.au/publications/facts/>.

WEBSITES

The ‘statistics’ section of the Australian Institute of Criminology website has a variety of crime data in different formats for different jurisdictions and aggregations, both current and historical, at <www.aiic.gov.au/statistics/>.

The International Crime Victims Survey results and information can be accessed at: <http://rechten.uvt.nl/icvs/>.

REFERENCES


