



DR. DON WEATHERBURN
DIRECTOR

Release date: 27 October 2005

In reply please quote:

MEDIA RELEASE

Trends and Patterns in Domestic Violence

Embargo: Thursday 27 October 2005, 10.30AM

A new report on domestic violence released by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) has found that, between 1997 and 2004, the recorded rate of domestic assault in New South Wales (NSW) increased by about 40 per cent in the Sydney Statistical Division and more than 50 per cent in the rest of NSW.

The top three Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the number of domestic violence incidents per head of population in 2004 were Bourke, Walgett and Coonamble. These areas all had rates of domestic violence that were at least 3.9 times the average for the State as a whole. The top three LGAs in the Sydney statistical division were Campbelltown, Blacktown and Sydney.

Police record more domestic assaults in the period between October and March than at other times of the year but the rate of domestic violence peaks on the first of January, with the number of domestic violence incidents being 150 per cent higher on this day than the average daily number reported throughout the year (70/day).

Thirty-six per cent of all domestic assaults recorded by police are alcohol-related. On the first of January, however, more than half the domestic violence incidents recorded by police are alcohol-related.

A surprising number of the domestic violence incidents recorded by police involve male victims. Where the victim is under 15 years of age, or more than 39 years of age, male victims outnumber female victims (in the former case by more than two to one).

Female victims are more likely to be abused by a current or former intimate partner and male victims are more likely to be abused by other family persons and other persons. Almost half of all victims under 15 are abused by a parent or guardian.

The prevalence of domestic violence is higher in areas that have: a higher percentage of Indigenous residents, a higher percentage of sole parents under 25 years of age, a higher percentage of public housing, a higher male unemployment rate and higher rates of residential instability (i.e. population turnover).

Commenting on the findings, the Director of the Bureau, Dr Don Weatherburn, said domestic violence is one of a small group of offences that had bucked the general trend toward lower rates of crime. We need a comprehensive strategy for tackling this offence, he said.

Further enquiries: Dr Don Weatherburn: 02 9231 9190 (work), 0419 494 408 (mobile)