

## **Information Paper**

# **National Information Development Plan for Crime and Justice Statistics**

**2005**



New  
Issue

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# **National Information Development Plan for Crime and Justice Statistics**

**2005**

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AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS

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**PREFACE** .....

The National Information Development Plan (the Plan) for crime and justice has been developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) National Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics (NCCJS) in collaboration with key stakeholders.

The Plan is endorsed by the governing bodies of the NCCJS. The three Boards of Management that oversee the statistical units of the NCCJS (the National Crime Statistics Unit, the National Criminal Courts Statistics Unit and the National Corrective Services Statistics Unit) have committed to progressing development activities described in the Plan.

In developing the Plan, extensive consultation has taken place with a large range of Australian, state and territory agencies, as well as with various non-government bodies. Each of these afforded the ABS generous access to staff knowledge and experience at all levels of the organisation. Their contribution to this work is gratefully acknowledged.

This Plan outlines a work program for the next three years. It also indicates the agreed lead agency for progressing each activity. A Steering Committee will be set up to monitor overall progress on the work program, and to review and update the Plan before 2008.

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# CHAPTER 1

## WHAT DOES THE PLAN PROVIDE .....

### OVERVIEW

The Plan provides an agreed understanding of Australia's statistical priorities as they relate to the field of crime and justice, and establishes a shared responsibility between the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and major users and data custodians for collaborative work to meet these priorities.

The Plan for crime and justice recognises the diversity of arrangements for the collection and dissemination of crime and justice statistics, including the work of crime and justice agencies, the ABS, Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC), Australian Centre for Policing Research (ACPR), Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and various committees and state and territory research agencies.

Reliable information on crime and justice is important both to governments and the community. There are currently gaps, deficiencies and overlaps between the information needed by stakeholders and the data available to them. The Plan seeks to maximise the use, and ensure the quality of current data and to minimise the need for additional collection of information.

The Plan for crime and justice aims to promote improved understanding of trends and patterns of crime in Australia and the operation of the criminal justice system.

Specifically, it aims to:

- lead to an increased knowledge about and use of currently available data
- lead to improved data availability in the future
- assist in establishing a framework for future development in the area.

Together, these will contribute to policy development, informing research, and facilitating program development.

The Plan lists 12 priority areas for improving the quality, coverage and use of crime and justice information across Australia and provides a map of the work planned or underway.

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

Consultation occurred over an eighteen month period with a range of Australian Government, state and territory agencies, as well as various non-government bodies. Key information needs were identified for policy issues, research questions and decision-making in the area of crime and justice. Consultation consisted of meetings with senior staff, administrators and policy advisers of key agencies. In addition, state and territory workshops were held, with a broad range of stakeholders participating.

Consultations were informed by a conceptual framework. The framework was built on four broad purposes for collecting crime and justice statistics. These are:

- to evaluate the effectiveness of the criminal justice system
- to estimate the risk of becoming a victim

DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
PLAN *continued*

- to measure the wellbeing of society
- to support criminological research.

## OPERATION AND REVIEW

The National Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics (NCCJS) includes several statistical units, three of which (relating to police, corrections and courts) are governed by separate Boards of Management. These Boards comprise representatives from the Australian Government, state and territory governments and the ABS. The NCCJS also has a broad co-ordinating role that extends across statistics in the crime and justice field and facilitates links with related statistics in other fields.

Ongoing monitoring of progress in the development of crime and justice statistics is central to the co-ordination role of the NCCJS. To support this role, a Steering Committee will be established to assist in implementing the Plan. The roles of the Steering Committee will be to:

- facilitate implementation of the Plan
- monitor and evaluate progress against each priority area of the Plan
- report progress to the lead agencies and Boards of Management on an annual basis
- offer guidance and support to those undertaking activities covered by the Plan.

The Steering Committee will comprise:

- a nominee of the ABS who will chair the committee
- the Director of the NCCJS
- the Chairpersons of each of the NCCJS Statistical Advisory Groups
- a nominee of each of the Police and Court Practitioners Groups
- a nominee of the AIC
- a nominee of the AIHW
- a nominee of the Australian Government Attorney-General's Department
- a nominee of the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR)
- a nominee of the ACPR
- a nominee of the Queensland Office of Economic and Statistical Research (OESR)
- a nominee of the SCRGSP
- other co-opted representatives as determined by the Steering Committee.

The NCCJS will provide secretariat support to the Steering Committee.

The NCCJS will arrange for the Plan to be reviewed and updated every three years for consideration by the Steering Committee.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 2 provides a social and economic context for crime and justice statistics.

Chapter 3 summarises core national sources for crime and justice data.

Chapter 4 presents priority development needs or data gaps in the context of the outcome that is sought by key data users.

Chapter 5 of the Plan structures the development needs into a series of activities and attaches responsibility for progress to particular lead agencies.

## CHAPTER 2

## CRIME AND JUSTICE IN AUSTRALIA .....

### INTRODUCTION

The levels and effects of criminal activity, as well as people's perceptions of their safety, are issues that impact directly or indirectly on the quality of people's lives. Crime and justice statistical information is one component of the wider social and economic context. This information is critical to decision making, research, policy development and implementation in the criminal justice system, as well as the community as a whole.

### POLICY BACKGROUND

Criminal justice is society's formal response to crime. While it often has the effect of balancing or redressing the negative effects of crime, in its full range of operations, criminal justice also functions to prevent crime and promote personal and community safety, including community confidence in law and order.

In Australia, the Australian and state and territory governments undertake policy research and analysis in relation to crime and justice issues. The states and territories are primarily responsible for direct service provision, such as the planning of crime prevention programs and dealing with offenders via the criminal justice system including the administration of state and territory laws and correctional services. The federal criminal justice system administers offences committed against Australian Government laws. The Australian Government also has a national focus that facilitates linkages and information-sharing among states and territories. The Australian Government also sponsors data collection and research. The effective and efficient operation of the criminal justice system is an integral role of all governments.

There are two nationally consistent policy drivers that underpin the key information needs in crime and justice. These are community safety, including community confidence in law and order, and the effective and efficient administration of justice.

#### *Community safety*

Community safety policy is an area where there is interest across the whole of government. Community safety policy directs policing activities to include areas peripheral to crime, such as emergency management and reducing road trauma. These important aspects of policing are not considered within this Plan. In contrast, policies in fields, such as health, that are directed towards improving community safety, are in scope when victims and offenders come in contact with the criminal justice system. The Plan considers community safety in the context of victims, offenders and incidents of crime.

Community safety refers not only to actual levels of safety but also to community perceptions of safety including community confidence in law and order. Policy developers and other users seek to understand the real risk of crime victimisation as well as the perceived risk. Both actual and perceived risks of crime are indicators of community wellbeing and inform community safety policy development.

*Community safety  
continued*

Policy developers, researchers and service delivery personnel consider questions such as:

- How can community safety and wellbeing be improved?
- How much crime is unreported and why?
- What is the relationship between fear of crime and actual levels of crime?
- What is the relationship between fear and personal, household and neighbourhood characteristics?
- What are the causes of crime in Australia and how can they be better understood?
- How can incidents be prevented or reduced?
- How has the level of crime changed over time?
- How have perceptions of safety changed over time?

Policy developers and other users need information to assess and estimate victimisation for specific sub-groups of the population to enable appropriate initiatives to be developed and implemented. Information is also required to understand the factors that influence incidents of crime, such as characteristics of offenders and circumstances surrounding incidents. This information can inform prevention strategies and program planning.

Associated with the identification of risk factors for criminal victimisation is the measurement of fear of crime in the community. Surveys have established that factors other than one's experiences of crime are related to fear of crime. Surveys that measure respondents' experiences of, and fear of, crime, are valuable sources of information that can help form policy initiatives to reduce threats to safety.

*Effective and efficient  
administration of justice*

For effective administration of justice, planners and providers of services need to understand successful ways of responding to crime (including crime prevention and safety programs). The availability of comparable data across jurisdictions is a critical factor in developing appropriate responses. It assists in determining best practice, which is one way to improve access and equity in the criminal justice system, and which drives much of the policy regarding the administration of justice. Governments seek answers to questions such as:

- How effective is the criminal justice system as a whole in reducing crime?
- How do people end up back in the system? Who are they? Why do they return?
- How efficient are the operations of the criminal justice system?
- What is the impact of policy and legislation changes on the rest of the system?
- How satisfied is the public with the criminal justice system? Is there equality of access and equity of treatment in the system?

Quality information is needed about the costs of the criminal justice system, the flows through the system, and public perceptions and experiences of the system.

Nationally comparable data are used to make comparisons across and within jurisdictions and across sectors to analyse relative effectiveness and efficiencies of systems. Decision makers need to understand whether different responses are required for different population groups. There is an expressed need to be able to model and benchmark the administration of justice across Australia in order to strive for best practice. Information is needed to determine the costs associated with operating respective components of the system.

## STRATEGIC STATISTICAL INFORMATION NEEDS

There are numerous uses of crime and justice statistical information by policy developers, researchers, program planners, service providers and the community as a whole. Three examples are provided of how these statistics can be used as an evidence base to inform national policy questions and public debate.

### *Administrative use*

All agencies measure their own performance against goals and objectives and/or desired outcomes. Administrators within the criminal justice system use data to assist in policy making, planning, resource allocations and evaluation. Agencies also use statistical information to make comparisons with other national, state and territory and international agencies to compare their measures relative to the policy drivers of community safety, efficiency and effectiveness.

Crime and justice information is also of interest to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and the public to enable assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of the services provided by the criminal justice system. Data are used by a variety of other Australian Government and state and territory agencies such as the Commonwealth Grants Commission (CGC) to assist in determining the allocation of funds.

### *System modelling*

Policy developers and other users in the crime and justice field develop and apply models to the criminal justice system. They need to be able to examine the system in parts or as a whole to understand those elements that are particularly successful and those that are not. System models aid planning and help to determine the effects of changes in policy, law or procedure. Strategies are then developed in light of these effects. System models can be used to:

- create evidence-based policies and programs based on long-term evaluations providing an understanding of best practice
- understand the costs involved in the provision of services in particular sectors in order to improve efficiency and to allocate money to programs that maximise the effectiveness of activity.

### *Social indicators*

There is an increasing emphasis on the development of social indicators that support the measurement of progress and wellbeing. Policy research and analysis are generally based on the view that crime is relational; that to understand crime, the link between changes in crime and changes in the social conditions that generate, maintain, decrease or increase its rate and shape and form must also be understood. Criminal justice statistics provide only a partial picture of crime and its context. It is also important to be able to situate crime within the context of other social and economic conditions.

Social indicators are of key interest to those within the criminal justice system, academics, criminologists, social researchers, public policy advisers, the media, and the public as they help increase understanding of the perpetrators, targets, causes and effects of crime. These statistics also assist in designing and implementing crime prevention and treatment programs and provide a better understanding of population groups that are disadvantaged, have special needs, or are over-represented in the criminal justice system.

## SUMMARY

Typically, crime and justice statistics are required to provide an evidence base for:

- monitoring trends in crime
- characterising victims and offenders and offending behaviours
- establishing priorities for investment in interventions or prevention aimed at reducing crime
- estimating the risk of becoming a victim
- facilitating the development and testing of criminological theory
- measuring the wellbeing of society.

The broad unmet statistical needs are for improvements to comparability of data and more detailed information about offenders, victims and criminal incidents.

With agreement and commitment across a range of agencies, this Plan will result in:

- increased relevance, comparability and quality of statistics
- more comprehensive data about the characteristics of offenders, victims and incidents
- a better understanding of the relationship between crime and justice and other social and economic issues
- improved use of the available data.

The next chapter describes statistical information currently available.

## CHAPTER 3

### OUTLINE OF THE MAIN SOURCES OF NATIONAL CRIME AND JUSTICE INFORMATION .....

#### OVERVIEW

There are a number of core data sources that focus specifically on crime and justice that are designed to provide a national overview of the field.

Statistics are often sourced from:

- administrative by-product data
- surveys.

#### *Administrative by-product data*

National crime and justice information can be obtained through interactions of criminal behaviour and criminal justice administration, and also through the provision of services to victims and offenders by agencies outside the crime and justice field.

In the course of providing services to their client groups, agencies keep administrative records about their clients and the nature of their transactions with them. Information may be extracted from these records and compiled for the purposes of internal workload monitoring, reporting and management, and for external reporting. Most administrative by-product data in the crime and justice field is collected by state and territory agencies.

Not all reports to a service agency are formally recorded and the quality of recorded data varies according to the systems and instructions applied by the agency.

#### *Surveys*

Surveys collect information about characteristics of interest from members of a population (e.g. persons or organisations) using various concepts, methods and procedures.

Person based crime victimisation surveys are conducted by the ABS, the AIC, the ACPR and by some state and territory governments. One of the main reasons for conducting victimisation surveys is to measure the size of crime victimisation that is not reported to the police, where victims are not counted in administrative collections. Data obtained from such surveys provide a more comprehensive picture of the 'real' level of crime affecting the community. However different data sources often use varying survey methods and provide diverse sets of crime victimisation indicators.

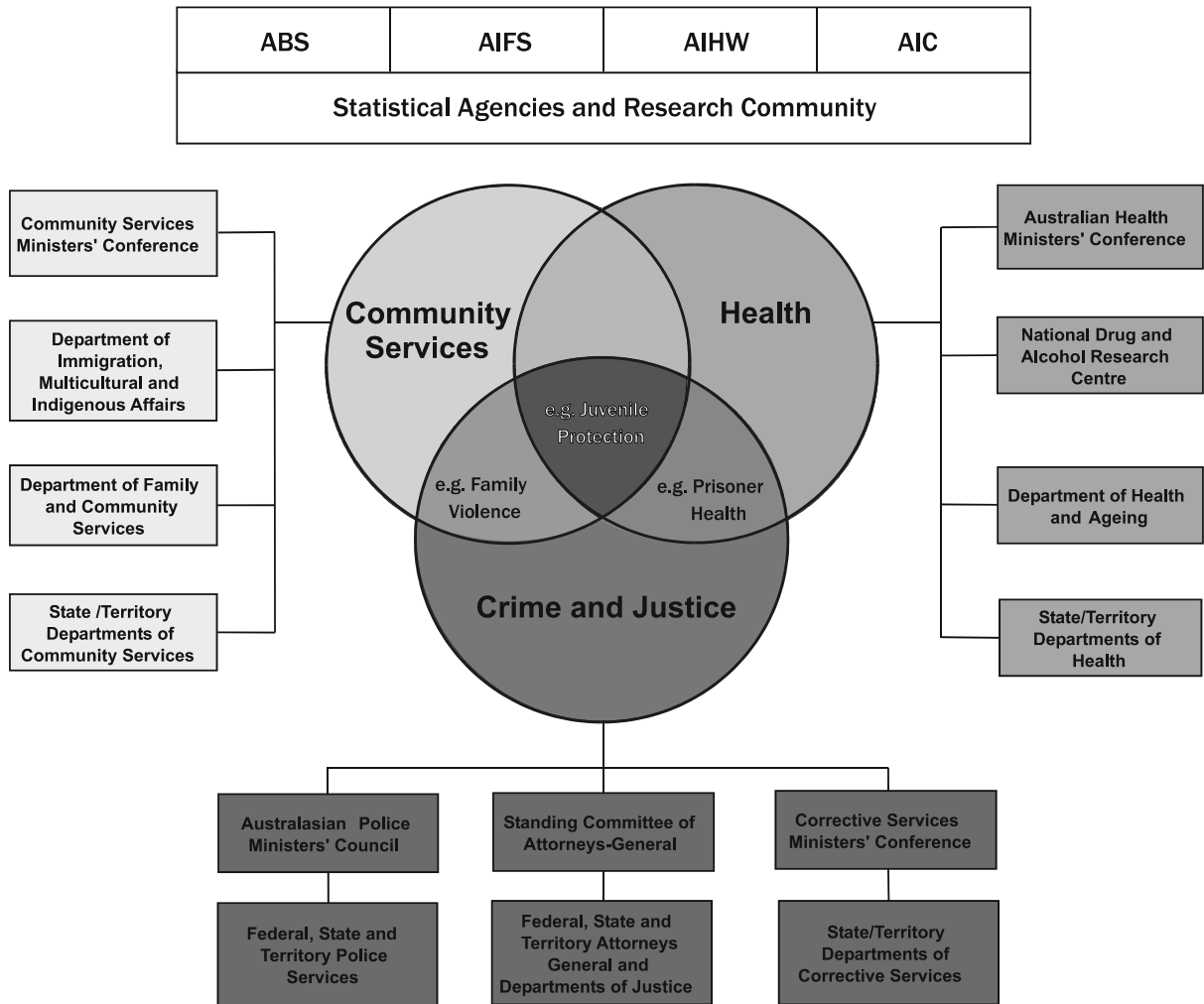
National and state and territory surveys on crime and justice tend to fall into the following: those that describe specific sectors of the criminal justice system; those that describe specific types of crime; those that describe specific populations; and those that adopt a more general approach by describing various aspects of wellbeing.

These data may be used at the national level to inform crime prevention and other policy needs, and at a local level to inform the policy drivers of community safety and the effective and efficient administration of justice within a given state or territory. They may also be used by other jurisdictions when comparing policies and programs to help determine best practice.

A WIDER CONTEXT FOR  
CRIME AND JUSTICE  
INFORMATION

A variety of agencies at federal, state and territory level have a significant interest in issues relating to crime and justice. Figure 1 presents examples of overlaps between the fields of Community Services, Health and Crime and Justice. Agencies in the Community Services and Health fields collect national data of interest to the crime and justice field. There is a common interest in a variety of victim and offender characteristics, such as juveniles, substance use, mental disorder or impairment, cultural diversity and family violence. Projects to improve the information base in these overlapping areas are included within the scope of this Plan.

*Fig. 1 Examples of overlaps between fields with a common interest in Crime and Justice information*



NATIONAL CRIME AND  
JUSTICE DATA  
COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

Figure 2 presents an overview of the responsibilities for major national data collection activities within the crime and justice field in Australia. Collections are grouped by sectors: community safety and crime prevention; investigation and charging; adjudication and sentencing; and corrective services.

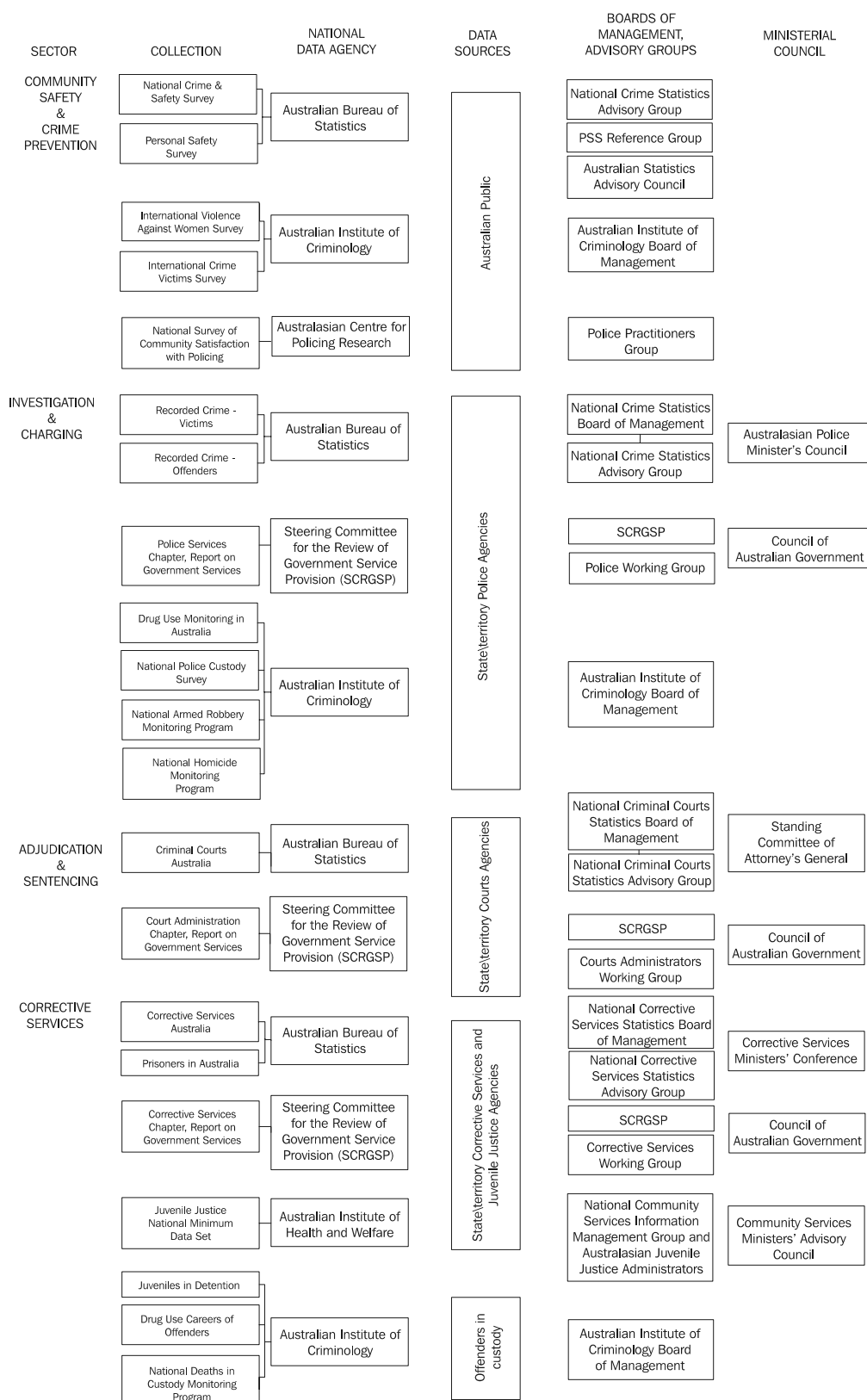
The diagram does not list all collections but provides a summary of the major national collections.



NATIONAL CRIME AND  
JUSTICE DATA  
COLLECTION ACTIVITIES  
*continued*

*Fig. 2 Overview of major national data collection activities within the crime and justice field*

Figure 2 identifies five national data agencies. Collaboration and interaction between these agencies is important to delivering the outcomes sought from the Plan.



## ABS

*Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)* is Australia's official statistical organisation. The ABS is an independent statutory authority which assists and encourages informed decision making, research and discussion within governments and the community, by providing a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service.

In crime and justice, the Australian Government Attorney-General, states and territories and the ABS operate a NCCJS. As indicated in Chapter 1, Boards of Management oversee three of the statistical units of the NCCJS (the National Crime Statistics Unit (NCSU), the National Criminal Courts Statistics Unit (NCCSU) and the National Corrective Services Statistics Unit (NCSSU)). The ABS also produces national statistics and analytic reports from surveys conducted outside the NCCJS.

## AIC

*Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC)* is Australia's pre-eminent national crime and criminal justice research agency. A statutory authority, the AIC operates under the general direction of its Board and receives core funding from the Australian Government. The functions of the AIC include conducting criminological research, communicating the results of research, conducting or arranging conferences and seminars and publishing material arising out of the AIC's work.

## ACPR

*Australasian Centre for Policing Research (ACPR)* contributes to a safer and more secure community through the co-ordination and provision of quality research services to Australasian policing. It is managed by a Board of Control which is made up of the nine Australian and New Zealand Police Commissioners. The Board ultimately reports to the Australasian Police Ministers' Council (APMC). The Centre undertakes a wide range of research and has increasingly become involved in policy development and assisting with the implementation of key initiatives.

## SCRGSP

*Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP)* is conducted under the auspices of the COAG. The SCRGSP produces the *Report on Government Services*. The report includes a justice section comprising a justice preface and separate chapters on services provided by police, court administration and adult corrective services. The Productivity Commission (PC) provides the Chair and Secretariat to the SCRGSP.

## AIHW

*Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)* is Australia's national agency for health and welfare statistics and information. Established under an Act of Parliament to report to the nation on the state of its health and welfare, the independent statutory agency is governed by a Board that is accountable to Parliament. The AIHW inform community discussion and decision making through national leadership in developing and providing health and welfare statistics and information. The AIHW holds national administrative data and conducts national surveys related to health and welfare.

Other agencies, including various state and territory research agencies and agencies operating outside the crime and justice field, contribute to the national pool of information. Reference is made to these data sources in Chapter 4 by relevant theme.

A brief description of each agency's main collections follows. These collections have been grouped in terms of the four sectors of the crime and justice field shown in Figure 2.

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND  
CRIME PREVENTION

In a crime and justice context, community safety and crime prevention data are reflected in victimisation surveys and through collections that target aspects of safety with specific populations.

## ABS

The ABS conducts the National Crime and Safety Survey (NCSS). The survey asks respondents about perceptions of safety, their experiences across a range of crime types, and victimisation that does and does not come to the attention of the police. The survey is conducted on a regular basis (currently 3 yearly) that allows for an examination of trends in actual and perceived risks of victimisation. NCSS results are published in *Crime and Safety, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 4509.0; latest issue April 2002). The next survey was conducted in April 2005 with results expected to be published in May 2006.

A separate survey, the ABS Personal Safety Survey (PSS), being conducted in 2005, will provide updated national information on the extent of physical and sexual violence against women for comparison to the 1996 Women's Safety Survey (WSS). It will collect data on respondent's experience of violence from male and female respondents. Results are expected to be published in July 2006 in ABS cat. no. 4906.0.

## AIC

The AIC conducted the Australian Component of the 2004 International Crime Victims Survey (ICVS). The first survey was conducted in 1989 and since then has been run in 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2004. Australia did not participate in the 1996 ICVS. The ICVS uses a standardised instrument to collect information for monitoring crime and perceptions of crime and criminal justice systems across many countries. In 2000, over 60 countries participated. The survey enables comparison of data on the patterns and effects of victimisation in both developed countries and the rest of the world. The 2004 survey included an enhanced community sample, an oversample of selected migrant communities, and new content on fraud and cyber crime and demographic characteristics of the sample. The 2004 ICVS results for Australia are expected to be available in 2005.

The AIC conducted the Australian Component of the 2003 International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS). This was the first IVAWS and was conducted in conjunction with the United Nations Inter-regional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI). It produced internationally comparable data on women's experiences of violence, both physical and sexual. Results were published by the AIC in 2004.

## ACPR

The National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing (NSCSP) is conducted under the auspices of the ACPR on behalf of all Australian police jurisdictions. Commencing in 2001, the NSCSP collects information on a continuous basis on community perceptions of police in terms of services provided and personal experiences of contact with the police. It also collects information on public perceptions of personal safety, and problems in the community and neighbourhood. Data from this survey are used and presented in a variety of ways, including publication in police agency *Annual Reports* and Business Plans; in reporting agency performance to government; in local area performance assessments in a number of jurisdictions; and in the annual *Report on Government Services* by the SCRGSP.

AIHW	<p>The AIHW is developing a Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set (JJ NMDS) on behalf of the Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators (AJJA). The national collection will provide information on the broad characteristics of juvenile justice clients and the way in which they move through the juvenile justice system. AIHW will be data custodian for the collection and the first report on the data is due to be released in 2005/06.</p>
INVESTIGATION AND CHARGING	<p>Data describing criminal events and incidents can cover a range of characteristics, for example, demographic data about the offender and victim, the type of crime, use of weapon, the relationship of the offender to victim and the location of the incident. Data can be sourced from administrative by-product collections from police agencies and from crime victimisation surveys that collect information direct from persons.</p>
ABS	<p>The ABS NCSS collects information about incidents of certain crimes, regardless of whether they had been reported to police. The survey focuses on those categories of more serious crime that affect the largest number of people: household break-in, motor vehicle theft, assault and robbery. It measures the extent of crime in the Australian community, including the number of persons and households victimised and the number of crimes reported to police. It also provides information on the socioeconomic profile of victims and non-victims, and the characteristics of offences. Results are published in <i>Crime and Safety, Australia</i> (ABS cat. no. 4509.0).</p> <p>The ABS compiles uniform national crime statistics relating to a selected range of offences. These include offences that have become known to and recorded by police on a victim basis, and measure the number of victims for each offence category. Results are published annually in <i>Recorded Crime - Victims, Australia</i> (ABS cat. no. 4510.0). These statistics provide indicators of the level and nature of recorded crime and characteristics of victims in Australia and provide a basis for measuring change over time.</p> <p>The ABS (NCSU) is also developing an annual national Recorded Crime - Offenders collection, which will produce demographic and offence-related data for people who come to the attention of police.</p>
AIC	<p>The AIC compiles national data relating to the specific areas of homicide and armed robbery, producing the annual <i>National Armed Robbery Monitoring Program</i>, <i>National Homicide Monitoring Program</i>, <i>National Police Custody Survey</i>, and <i>National Firearms Monitoring Program</i> publications, and the quarterly <i>Drug Use Monitoring in Australia</i> (DUMA). Established in 1999, the DUMA program collects information from police detainees in seven locations across Australia on a quarterly basis. Information is collected and analysed based on urine samples which are tested for six different classes of drugs, and questionnaires that cover basic demographic data, drug use history, drug market information, treatment and prior contact with the criminal justice system. Results have been published annually on the AIC web site since 1999.</p>
SCRGSP	<p>The SCRGSP publishes selected data from the ABS NCSS and other data sources in the annual <i>Report on Government Services</i>.</p> <p>There is also an extensive range of state and territory based criminal incident data available from police agencies and other state government agencies and research organisations.</p>

ADJUDICATION AND  
SENTENCING

Adjudication and sentencing involves processes and outcomes in the courts that determine the guilt or innocence of defendants. Information about adjudication and sentencing is obtained from administrative collections sourced from the state and territory courts agencies. These agencies disseminate their own data via their annual reports and provide it to the ABS and the SCRGSP for collation into national data sets.

## ABS

The ABS conducts the national Criminal Courts collection for the criminal jurisdiction of the Higher Courts (Supreme and Intermediate Courts) and Magistrates' Courts in each state and territory. The aim of the Criminal Courts collection is to provide comparable statistics for the states and territories and for Australia on the characteristics of defendants dealt with by the Criminal Courts. This includes information on the offences and sentences associated with those defendants, as well as some general information on the management of court workloads. The statistics are compiled according to national standards and classifications and published annually in *Criminal Courts, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 4513.0).

## SCRGSP

The SCRGSP conduct the Court Administration collection to provide state and territory statistics about the performance of court administration. Data are published in the annual *Report on Government Services*.

## CORRECTIVE SERVICES

Corrective services information is compiled from administrative collections held by correctional services agencies. Data can also be collected from surveys of offenders under corrective services supervision or in custody. There are two broad categories of corrective services activity involving offenders:

*Custodial* - Custodial corrective services involves the incarceration of offenders serving a prison sentence and/or awaiting trial (remandees).

*Non-custodial* - Non-custodial corrective services involves offenders serving corrective services orders not involving incarceration (mostly probation and community service orders) and offenders serving post-prison orders, including parole and licence orders. The legislative basis for non-custodial orders differs among states and territories, but all have some form of probation, parole and community service.

Measures of offenders within the corrective services system include:

- legal data items (e.g. legal status, security level, offence, sentence conditions)
- biometric data items (e.g. height, distinguishing tattoos or marks, health conditions)
- sociodemographic data items (e.g. country of birth, Indigenous Status, educational status).

A number of these measures, in addition to operational information, are collected and published both on a state and national basis. The key national data sources are presented below.

## ABS

The ABS collects statistics derived from administrative information provided by corrective service agencies in each state and territory, and by the Australian Government Attorney-General's Department. Statistics are published in *Corrective Services, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 4512.0) and *Prisoners in Australia* (ABS cat. no. 4517.0).

<i>AIC</i>	<p>The national deaths in custody program monitors on an ongoing basis the circumstances of all deaths in prison and police custody (and custody-related police operations) and deaths in juvenile detention in Australia. It provides information and examines long-term trends and changes in deaths in custody in Australia.</p> <p>The Juveniles in Detention in Australia collection monitors the number of juveniles in detention in each state and territory (via quarterly census). Data available include age, gender, Indigenous Status and remanded/sentenced status.</p>
<i>AIHW</i>	<p>The JJ NMDS collection gathers unit record data on juveniles who are under the supervision of juvenile justice services. Data are collected on clients, including age, information about gender and Indigenous Status, and on episodes of JJ contact. Reports will be published annually from 2005/06.</p>
<i>SCRGSP</i>	<p>The SCRGSP collects corrective services data from state and territory agencies about the performance of corrective services. Data are published in the annual <i>Report on Government Services</i>.</p>

## CHAPTER 4

## AGREED PRIORITIES .....

### OVERVIEW

This section of the Plan summarises the 12 agreed thematic priorities for statistical information development in the crime and justice field. These priorities reflect cross-sectoral needs, gaps, deficiencies and overlaps with existing data and the need for improved relevance, coverage, comparability and quality of crime and justice statistics. There is also an emerging need for data across the sectors to be presented and analysed in a holistic manner to provide an improved evidence base for important sub-populations. The order in which each priority is presented does not imply any ranking by importance.

For each of the 12 themes, *Outcomes sought* describes the intended result of implementing the Plan, generally with the focus on where we want to be in three years time. In practice some activities will be completed in less than three years, while the complex nature of others may require a longer time frame. *User context* summarises the statistical needs (demand side) that emerged through consultation. *Key data sources and tools* lists the current supply of statistics (supply side) and statistical tools. *Key issues* lists the gaps and deficiencies in currently available statistics.

Chapter 5 outlines the proposed strategies and current activities required to deliver the outcomes sought.

### PRIORITY 1: IMPROVE DATA COMPARABILITY ACROSS ADMINISTRATIVE COLLECTIONS

#### OUTCOMES SOUGHT

Significant improvements in data comparability across administrative data collections in the crime and justice field, facilitating comparison of state and territory trends in crime and justice, supporting mutual learning and aiding agencies operating in the sectors to be more publicly accountable and supporting comparison of statistics internationally.

#### USER CONTEXT

Data users and data administrators have highlighted the need to improve the comparability of data across jurisdictions and across portfolios. Policy developers, system modellers and researchers need an evidence base that is relevant, accurate, timely, coherent, accessible and interpretable. Administrative data collected by agencies in the course of providing services to their client groups are a major source of information for national collections such as recorded crime, criminal courts and corrective services.

Policy developers and other users require comparable information about expenditure, programs and outcomes to inform both local and national budget decisions and review processes. The allocation of funds both within a jurisdiction and across states and territories is tied to the ability to prove value for money and accountability for the expenditure of public monies. Data that can be compared across jurisdictions are critical to the development of policies and programs and to associated budget and review processes.

**PRIORITY 1: IMPROVE  
DATA COMPARABILITY  
ACROSS ADMINISTRATIVE  
COLLECTIONS *continued***

**USER CONTEXT *continued***

Policy developers also want improved data comparability for benchmarking and comparing relative performance of systems across jurisdictions and internationally.

Researchers want improvements to the level of detail available in national crime statistics with respect to offence types and location. Providing the capacity to analyse offence types with location at a detailed level will inform the planning of crime prevention programs.

**KEY DATA SOURCES AND TOOLS**

Data comparability is enhanced when standard collection, classification, processing and dissemination practices are used. Standardised procedures, sound methodology and rigorous quality assessments are important to producing high quality statistical data which can be compared across collections and over time.

Agencies in the crime and justice field currently have access to existing national standards as well as local data standards. National data standards and classifications have been developed which provide a framework for classifying data for statistical purposes and ensuring that data are compiled on a consistent basis across states and territories. Some examples of information sources and tools to support the achievement of data comparability are:

- Practitioner manuals for the ABS crime, courts and corrective services collections and COAG collections which include information on data items, their definitions, collection methodology and quality assurance strategies.
- ABS Classifications such as the *Australian Standard Offence Classification* (ASOC) (ABS cat. no. 1234.0), and the *Australian Standard Geographical Classification* (ASGC) (ABS cat. no. 1216.0).
- ABS standards in the area of crime and justice such as the National Offence Index (NOI), Method of Finalisation, Sentence Type, and Relationship of Offender to Victim (ROV).
- ABS Standard Question on Indigenous Status.
- ABS Data Quality Framework.

**KEY ISSUES**

Improving data comparability across administrative collections is an ongoing activity of state and territory data custodian agencies. A key issue in achieving comparability is understanding different recording practices and procedures applied in jurisdictions and developing strategies to address these differences. As an example, a project evaluating differences in recorded crime statistics for the national recorded crime collection will provide recommendations to Police Commissioners for jurisdictions to improve data comparability. A report with recommendations will be provided to Police Commissioners in 2005.



**PRIORITY 1: IMPROVE  
DATA COMPARABILITY  
ACROSS ADMINISTRATIVE  
COLLECTIONS *continued***

**KEY ISSUES *continued***

Standardised procedures, common definitions, use of standard classifications and quality assessments enhance data comparability across the criminal justice system. Work needs to be done to extend the range of tools available to improve data comparability. In particular:

- improve classifications such as ASOC
- develop data dictionaries
- further develop and publish the National Criminal Justice Statistical Framework
- implement a common data quality framework.

Further development of national standards should also take account of international standards where they exist and will assist in the development of international standards to support comparison internationally.

Improvements to the level of detail available for offence types, victims, and offenders are required to inform targeted prevention strategies and support analysis of the changing nature of crime targets.

**PRIORITY 2: IMPROVE  
QUALITY AND  
INTEGRATION OF  
NATIONAL CRIME AND  
SAFETY SURVEY DATA**

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**

More reliable, more up-to-date and better integrated national data on crime victimisation and safety, facilitated through improved coordination of national person based survey activity.

More internationally comparable data through harmonisation of methodology and improved co-ordination of international survey activity.

**USER CONTEXT**

Statistics from crime and safety surveys contribute to the understanding of the overall picture of community safety and levels of unreported crime. Victimisation surveys enable analysis of the relationships between the characteristics of crime and the victims of crime, including their perceptions of safety and crime. Such surveys present a more broadly based picture of the 'real' size of crime and also help to validate crime statistics from administrative sources.

There are a number of different national surveys that produce national data using different methodologies. Investment in the conduct of such surveys is substantial and the burden on individual respondents is significant. There is considerable potential to harmonise methodology and content across existing surveys, and ensure that required measures are collected in the most effective ways.

**KEY DATA SOURCES AND TOOLS**

The data collections listed below are outlined in Chapter 3.

- NCSS
- PSS, to be conducted in 2005, updating the 1996 WSS
- The Australian Component of the 2000 ICVS
- NSCSP
- The Australian Component of the IVAWS.

**PRIORITY 2: IMPROVE  
QUALITY AND  
INTEGRATION OF  
NATIONAL CRIME AND  
SAFETY SURVEY DATA**  
*continued*

**KEY ISSUES**

There is inadequate coordination across ABS and non-ABS survey activity in the crime and justice field. The data are often inconsistent or readily reconcilable, and comparisons across time and geographic areas can be problematic.

There is also an issue regarding the quality of estimates for smaller states and territories, such as Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory.

Current national surveys need to be reviewed to assess overlaps, gaps and deficiencies. Re-assessment of the drivers for different collections, survey methodologies and the outputs required, will ensure more reliable, more coherent and better integrated crime and safety data.

**PRIORITY 3: IMPROVE  
DATA TO BETTER  
UNDERSTAND THE  
IMPACTS OF CRIME AND  
JUSTICE IN RELATION TO  
MEASURES OF PROGRESS  
AND WELLBEING**

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**

An information base that supports a better understanding of the social, economic, geographic and demographic impacts of crime in the context of progress and wellbeing.

**USER CONTEXT**

There is growing public interest in the interrelationships between social, economic and environmental aspects of life, including an emerging interest in progress as it relates to areas of social concern such as health, education and crime. There is interest as well in developing a broader set of economic statistics that quantifies and incorporates areas outside the traditional economic system. The ABS publication *Measures of Australia's Progress* (MAP) (ABS cat. no. 1370.0) defines progress to be synonymous with life getting better. MAP characterises progress in the domains of environmental, economic and social progress and recognises the interrelationships that exist between aspects of progress.

Crime takes many forms and can have a major impact on the wellbeing of victims, their families and friends, and the wider community. Those most directly affected may suffer financially, physically, psychologically and emotionally, while the fear of crime itself can affect people and restrict their lives in many ways. There are other costs as well, including the provision of law enforcement services and corrective services. Although government agencies take on the major responsibility for law enforcement, many businesses and householders also bear costs through implementing preventative measures, or dealing with the consequences of crime.

Taken at a broader level, the emphasis on wellbeing and progress draws attention to the relationship between criminal justice and social justice and the extent to which the scarce resources of criminal justice are used to deal with social problems. The costs of criminal justice can therefore be assessed in relation to the costs of alternative responses to social problems and the extent to which alternatives attract public support.

High quality information is needed on the distribution of criminal victimisation and the distribution of criminal justice to illuminate the distribution of crime and justice resources, with respect to ethnicity, socioeconomic conditions, demography and geography.

Researchers and policy developers require access to integrated data to develop a statistical evidence base about the relationship between different areas of progress.

**PRIORITY 3: IMPROVE  
DATA TO BETTER  
UNDERSTAND THE  
IMPACTS OF CRIME AND  
JUSTICE IN RELATION TO  
MEASURES OF PROGRESS  
AND WELLBEING**  
*continued*

**KEY DATA SOURCES AND TOOLS**

In terms of the outcomes of the criminal justice system the key data sources presented in Chapter 3 are relevant.

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001) *Measuring Wellbeing: Frameworks for Australian Social Statistics* (cat. no. 4160.0), Canberra: Australian Government.
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (2004) *Social Justice Report (2003)*. Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.
- Mayhew, P. (2003) *Technical and Background Paper No. 4: Counting the costs of crime in Australia, 2003*, Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.
- Access Economics (2004) *The Cost of Domestic Violence to the Australian Economy: Part I*, Canberra: Australian Government.
- Collins, D. J and Lapsley, H. M. (2002) *Counting the cost: estimates of the social costs of drug abuse in Australia 1998-99*, National Drug Strategy Monograph Series, no. 49, Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.

**KEY ISSUES**

Australia lacks a well established and comprehensive means of estimating the full cost of crime, nor are there comprehensive data sources. Although information about government expenditures on crime-related services provides some idea of the financial costs of crime to the community, the full costs to victims, or the subsequent costs to the wider community, are difficult to fully quantify. There is also a need to extend any economic model of crime to include the qualitative social aspects of the effects of crime. The distribution of crime and justice resources can in some cases be illuminated by existing data, for example by calculating over-representation rates of Indigenous people in prison populations as in existing ABS prison publications. In other cases the data will require further work to develop satisfactory measures.

Integration of data from a range of sources will require substantial co-ordination across fields and across jurisdictions.

Crime and justice data should be considered alongside social, economic, geographic and demographic data to highlight issues. This is exemplified in the Social Justice Reports of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

**PRIORITY 4: IMPROVE  
CRIME AND JUSTICE  
STATISTICS ABOUT  
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES  
STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE**

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**

An improved evidence base to inform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) policy development and research in crime and justice.

**USER CONTEXT**

More accurate and reliable data on the Indigenous status of victims and offenders are required to better understand the interactions between Indigenous people and the crime and justice system.

Policy developers and other users also need more detailed information about:

- the actual and perceived safety of Indigenous people in order to formulate appropriate prevention and intervention strategies
- victimisation and offending by Indigenous people to implement programs to reduce over-representation of Indigenous people throughout the system.

PRIORITY 4: IMPROVE  
CRIME AND JUSTICE  
STATISTICS ABOUT  
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES  
STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE  
*continued*

USER CONTEXT *continued*

Information is needed on the nature and extent of Indigenous involvement in the courts system; how the system responds to them, in terms of processing options, sentences, and access to bail; and the extent to which outcomes for Indigenous defendants differ from non-Indigenous defendants, and why.

Implementation of the Indigenous identification strategy, which aims to improve the identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in police, courts and corrective services records, is the first step in ensuring comparable cross-sectoral statistics are produced on this sub-group of the population. Although a national standard exists for Indigenous identification, it has not yet been fully implemented throughout all parts of the criminal justice system.

The National Advisory Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Information and Data (NAGATSIHID) was established following a decision taken at the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council (AHMAC) meeting in October 2000. The advisory group's purpose is to provide broad strategic advice to the National Health Information Group (NHIG) on the improvement of the quality and availability of data and information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and health service delivery, and to draw together the range of existing activities already underway, into a co-ordinated and strategic process. There are numerous cross-cutting activities between the fields of health and justice that require collaboration to deliver improved data about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons. Areas such as prisoner health and substance misuse are examples of overlaps between health and justice jurisdictions. Violence-related morbidity and mortality data are also examples.

KEY DATA SOURCES AND TOOLS

The ABS conducted the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) in 2002. NATSISS collected information from 9,400 Indigenous Australians aged 15 years or over across all states and territories of Australia, including people living in remote areas. The survey included topics as diverse as family and culture, health, education, work, income and housing, law and justice (victimisation, arrest and incarceration data) and transport. Results were published in the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2002* (ABS cat. no. 4714.0) and released in June 2004. A list of the output data items available from the 2002 NATSISS is available from the ABS website.

The ABS presents annual national statistics on prisoners who were in custody at 30 June of each year in *Prisoners in Australia* (ABS cat. no. 4517.0). These statistics provide indicators on the characteristics of prisoners and their Indigenous status. Aggregate data are available on a quarterly basis and include numbers of Indigenous prisoners and selected characteristics. These are presented in *Corrective Services, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 4512.0).

The AIC publications, *National Police Custody Survey*, *National Deaths in Custody* and *Juveniles in Detention* are also sources of information about Indigenous persons within the criminal justice system.

**PRIORITY 4: IMPROVE  
CRIME AND JUSTICE  
STATISTICS ABOUT  
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES  
STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE**  
*continued*

**KEY ISSUES**

An improved evidence base to inform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy development and research is required.

Data are sought about the personal safety of Indigenous people. The potential to collect information about Indigenous people in crime and safety surveys will be considered in conjunction with Priority 2.

Implementation of the Indigenous identification strategy, which aims to improve the identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in police, courts and corrective services records, will lead to improved statistics on this sub-group of the population. This strategy includes further work to improve implementation of the ABS standard question for the self-identification of Indigenous people in police processes and systems through an assessment of the quality of data collected.

A study is being conducted to determine the feasibility of transferring Indigenous Status information to the courts sector for statistical purposes.

**PRIORITY 5: DEVELOP  
MEASURES OF  
RECIDIVISM**

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**

An agreed measure or measures of recidivism and an evidence base that will inform policy research in the development of effective strategies.

**USER CONTEXT**

In the crime and justice field, recidivism is used interchangeably with a variety of terms to describe re-offending, re-entry to the system and re-institutionalisation. Standard definitions and measures of recidivism are required in order to develop programs that reduce crime and enhance community safety.

Policy developers and other users require a better understanding of the levels and nature of recidivism to assist in evaluating the performance of the criminal justice system, for sub-populations and as a whole. There are some measures currently in use that target recidivism in a specific sector (such as return to prison within two years of release), but there are only limited data available on people who have repeated contact with police, courts or other agencies. Better data are needed to measure the level of crime and to inform the development of intervention strategies.

Assessments of both community safety and the effective and efficient administration of justice can be more firmly made using measures of recidivism. Understanding the levels of recidivism is essential, as elements of the criminal justice system cite responsibility for reducing recidivism as a key goal. This understanding may also provide insights into effective crime prevention and reduction measures which could inform evidence-based intervention policies. Understanding recidivism is a critical information need for policy developers and other data users across the criminal justice system.

**KEY DATA SOURCES AND TOOLS**

It is difficult to identify data sources because different parts of the crime and justice system use different definitions for recidivism.

**PRIORITY 5: DEVELOP  
MEASURES OF  
RECIDIVISM *continued***

**KEY DATA SOURCES AND TOOLS *continued***

Some sectors, such as corrective services, collect data on people re-entering the system, but this is generally limited to re-entry within a jurisdiction. Traditionally recidivism has been viewed as re-entry into the prison system, although the concept of recidivism can be viewed in a much broader sense, i.e. re-entry into any part of the criminal justice system.

The AIC has completed a number of recidivism projects. Reports are accessible via the AIC website <[www.aic.gov.au](http://www.aic.gov.au)>. Examples are:

- Cain, M. (1998) *Research and Public Policy Series, No.14: An analysis of juvenile recidivism, 1999*, Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.
- Carcach, C. and Leverett, S. (1999) *Research and Public Policy Series, No. 17: Recidivism among juvenile offenders: an analysis of times to reappearance in court, 1999*, Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.
- Lievore, D. (2004) *Crime Facts Info No. 72: Recidivism of sexual assault offenders: rates, risk factors and treatment efficacy, 2004*, Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.
- Makkai, T., Ratcliffe, J., Veraar, K. and Collins, L. (2004) *Research and public policy series, No. 54: ACT recidivist offenders, 1999*, Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.

**KEY ISSUES**

National agreement on definitions of recidivism and populations of interest is essential to enable the development of national indicators and assist in addressing measurement issues.

An evaluation of the availability and quality of existing data sources also needs to be made.

**PRIORITY 6: DEVELOP  
STATISTICS ON JUVENILE  
CONTACT WITH THE CRIME  
AND JUSTICE SYSTEM**

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**

An evidence base to assist policy development to reduce the level of youth involvement in the criminal justice system and re-entry into that system.

An increased understanding of the use and impact of diversion programs on juvenile crimes.

**USER CONTEXT**

Policy developers and other users are particularly interested in understanding how to prevent juveniles from entering the formal criminal justice system (e.g. through the use of diversion rather than detention) and how to prevent juvenile offenders from becoming adult offenders. While there is currently some information available about juvenile offenders (e.g. data on juveniles in detention), policy developers and other users require more detailed, high quality information about the characteristics of juveniles at all points in the criminal justice system, and about the nature and circumstances of their offending. This may also include access to data from sectors outside the crime and justice field, such as those in education and health. Such data would inform the development and evaluation of targeted programs and would facilitate a better understanding of the effectiveness and efficiency of the juvenile justice system.

**PRIORITY 6: DEVELOP  
STATISTICS ON JUVENILE  
CONTACT WITH THE CRIME  
AND JUSTICE SYSTEM  
*continued***

**USER CONTEXT *continued***

To help meet these objectives, users are seeking:

- better information on the characteristics of juvenile offenders and those juveniles diverted from the formal criminal justice system, and the circumstances leading to their offending behaviour
- improved understanding of the environmental and individual risk factors that contribute to offending behaviour in juveniles
- sharing of information across sectors, both in the crime and justice field and other fields such as health, education and community services to identify circumstances leading to offending behaviour
- evaluation of existing diversionary programs across jurisdictions
- statistical information available about police diversions and different sentencing options applied across jurisdictions, proportion of juveniles directed to court, and characteristics of juveniles processed by courts, diversionary processes and juvenile corrective services programs.

**KEY DATA SOURCES AND TOOLS**

Most criminal justice administrative data collections include an age component, but there is no agreed standard age grouping for juveniles across jurisdictions.

Survey data are limited by the exclusion of specific age groups, for example the NCSS collects data from persons aged 15 and over.

The AIHW, in collaboration with the AJJA, is developing a national collection (JJ NMDS) covering juveniles under the supervision of juvenile justice services but not those in contact with police or courts. The first report on data from the collection, outlined in Chapter 3, is expected to be released in 2005/06.

**KEY ISSUES**

Juvenile justice statistics are sourced from a variety of agencies. There is a need for improved co-ordination across agencies about work on juvenile justice statistics.

Comprehensive national data on juveniles who come in contact with the criminal justice system need to be developed. Ideally an integrated juvenile collection, incorporating juvenile apprehensions, police-run diversionary options, courts and correctional services needs to be developed taking into account the scope of JJ NMDS.

The courts sector needs to build an evidence base that will assist in reducing the level of youth involvement in the criminal justice system and re-entry into that system.

Development work is underway to provide nationally comparable, comprehensive statistics on the nature and extent of young people's involvement with the Children's criminal court system, enabling a view across all of the criminal courts (Children's, Magistrates' and Higher courts).

**PRIORITY 7: DEVELOP  
STATISTICS ON FAMILY  
VIOLENCE**

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**

An evidence base that will:

- assist the criminal justice system to respond more effectively to victims and offenders involved in domestic/family violence

**PRIORITY 7: DEVELOP  
STATISTICS ON FAMILY  
VIOLENCE *continued***

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT *continued***

- inform intervention strategies to decrease the incidence and prevalence of family violence.

**USER CONTEXT**

Policy developers and other users have expressed a need for more information on the incidence and prevalence of family violence, particularly information on the characteristics of the incident, the offender and the victim. High quality information on these characteristics is required to gain a better understanding of how best to target prevention and intervention strategies.

Consultation also revealed a need to clarify the concepts and definitions relating to family violence. Information is also required about defendants who opt to represent themselves in court, especially in the area of domestic violence.

**KEY DATA SOURCES AND TOOLS**

The ABS Recorded Crime collection produces relationship of offender to victim data by offence type. The collection obtains administrative data from state and territory police records. A general view, informed to some extent by analysis of existing data, is that family violence tends to be grossly under-recorded by authorities, with official police statistics only capturing part of the problem.

Administrative data can potentially identify family violence cases through court processing, sentencing, use of court orders, treatment orders and remand. National data are not currently published.

One way of capturing a more complete view of this type of violence is through the use of crime victimisation surveys. The 2005 PSS (updating data collected in the 1996 WSS) will provide physical and sexual assault data by relationship. The NCSS and the IVAWS are also relevant data sources. While some information is available about change over time, current data sources have limitations for ongoing monitoring of family and domestic violence.

**KEY ISSUES**

The concepts and definitions relating to family violence need to be more clearly established and measurement issues need to be investigated and resolved. Statistical requirements and data sources also need to be better understood.

Research into these issues is needed to provide a source of information for development of future crime victimisation surveys and to support the development of strategies to respond more effectively to victims and offenders in domestic/family violence incidents.

**PRIORITY 8: IMPROVE  
FRAUD AND ELECTRONIC  
CRIME DATA**

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**

Improved statistical information about fraud and electronic crime (e-crime) including:

- data to assist measurement of the size of the problem
- offender information
- victim information, including economic impacts.



**PRIORITY 8: IMPROVE  
FRAUD AND ELECTRONIC  
CRIME DATA** *continued*

**USER CONTEXT**

The emergence of new transnational crimes, including traditional crimes that utilise new technologies, as well as new technology-oriented crimes, is impacting on how Australia's crime and justice agencies operate. New and amended legislation in jurisdictions has evolved, expanding activities across existing areas such as fraud, and into emergent areas such as child pornography, people trafficking and other technologically enhanced and enabled crimes. In response there is a need for improved data to inform the development of national and international measures.

A primary information requirement is to estimate the size of fraud and e-crime in terms of economic impact (including security costs and lost time), number of incidents, number of victims and jurisdiction of origin. This information, relative to other crime statistics, will influence future decisions about the development of statistical collections and inform the strategic direction and resourcing of detection agencies.

A secondary information requirement is to be able to describe the characteristics of incidents including characteristics of offenders and victims. This will inform preventive strategies for e-crime. New and emerging fraud and e-crime technologies have also highlighted deficiencies in existing fraud data and classifications.

These issues have been considered by bodies such as the APMC which recently endorsed relevant recommendations of the Victorian Parliamentary Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee Report of its Inquiry into Fraud and Electronic Commerce.

**KEY DATA SOURCES AND TOOLS**

Current ABS offender based collections (Criminal Courts and Corrections) provide information on the offender population.

The ABS ASOC (ABS cat. no. 1234.0) provides guidelines for coding traditional aspects of fraud and other deception offences at a broad level.

A draft framework and a set of definitions for e-crime statistics has been completed by the ABS in collaboration with the Australian High Tech Crime Centre (AHTCC).

The AIC ICVS (results to be released in 2005) contains a module on fraud and e-crime, and is a first attempt to provide estimates of the extent of e-crime experienced by households.

**KEY ISSUES**

Improvements are required to the collection of fraud and e-crime statistics, in particular information on victimisation. Standardised collection of fraud and e-crime data by law enforcement agencies, courts and corrective services is required. Consideration of the potential to include fraud and e-crime offences in victimisation surveys is sought.

**PRIORITY 9: DEVELOP AN  
INFORMATION BASE ON  
SUBSTANCE USE AS IT  
RELATES TO CRIME AND  
JUSTICE**

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**

An evidence base to inform prevention strategies and provide nationally comparable statistics on the nature and extent of substance use and its relationship to crime.

**PRIORITY 9: DEVELOP AN  
INFORMATION BASE ON  
SUBSTANCE USE AS IT  
RELATES TO CRIME AND  
JUSTICE** *continued*

**USER CONTEXT**

Policy developers and other users require a better understanding of the role of substance use in criminal behaviour. There is a considerable amount of information available about the levels of illicit drug use among offenders in police and prison custody (e.g. collections such as the AIC's DUMA and the surveys conducted for the *Drug Use Careers of Offenders project*, (DUCO)). The *National Drug Strategy Household Survey* (NDSHS) is a source of information on the prevalence and nature of illicit drug use in the general community.

A major concern to policy developers and other users is the limited amount of data available on the prevalence and nature of alcohol-related crime. Policy developers and other users are particularly interested in the prevalence, nature and impact of alcohol-related assaults, for which little data exist.

Policy developers and other users need to have better information about the size of the substance use problem, to inform development of strategies to reduce its incidence and effects. The development of standard definitions and measures would facilitate the development of policies that target substance use and provide information to help deliver optimal services for offenders with substance dependencies. Data to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of specialist courts, such as Drug Courts, relative to mainstream courts, are also sought.

**KEY DATA SOURCES AND TOOLS**

Data collections previously outlined that produce information about the involvement of alcohol and drugs include the ABS PSS, and the AIC's DUMA.

The Australian Crime Commission (ACC) collects information on illicit drugs in Australia including descriptive commentary on specific drug types and statistics on consumer and provider arrests, seizures, purity and prices. Results are published annually from 1991–92 in the *Australian Illicit Drug Report*, and from 2002–03 in the *Illicit Drug Data Report*.

The AIHW conducted the NDSHS in 2004. Initial results from the 2004 survey were released in April 2005 (*2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey: First Results*), with detailed findings to be released later in 2005. This was the seventh survey in the series (starting in 1985) with 27,000 Australian respondents aged 14 years and over surveyed about knowledge and attitudes toward drugs, consumption history and related behaviours. State and territory supplementary statistics are also available (*2001 National Drug Strategy Household Survey: State and Territory supplement*).

**KEY ISSUES**

There is a need for strategies to be developed to provide an evidence base on substance use as it relates to crime and justice, including the development of standard definitions. An assessment of current data sources and collection methodologies is required, as well as an evaluation of collection strategies used in local and international collections to determine their usefulness in providing data on drug and alcohol use as it relates to crime.

**PRIORITY 10: DEVELOP  
STATISTICS ON HEALTH,  
INCLUDING MENTAL  
HEALTH, AS IT RELATES  
TO CRIME AND JUSTICE**

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**

An improved evidence base to assist in development of strategies to respond more effectively to people with health issues, including mental disorders, and to enable an increased understanding of the interaction between health and offending.

Standardised key data items and a national approach to the collection of data on prisoner health, including mental health.

**USER CONTEXT**

The statistical needs around health, including mental health, vary from those that inform intervention policies to those that inform service provision. The strongest demand for information relates to the mental health of offenders and prisoner health issues.

Reliable national information is sought to facilitate the development of policies that ensure intervention activities are directed at early intervention for both victims and offenders. There is a cross-sectoral need to understand effective and equitable ways of servicing offenders with mental disorders. An example is consideration in the court sector of specialist Mental Impairment Courts and effective sentencing and treatment outcomes. Mental health information is also relevant to corrective services for use in risk assessment and service provision planning.

The availability of information on the mental health status of offenders varies considerably across states and territories and across sectors of the criminal justice system within a given jurisdiction.

**KEY DATA SOURCES AND TOOLS**

Data sources at the national level have not yet been developed. The following two initiatives will assist in determining what data development strategies are feasible:

- The Criminology Research Council (CRC) has sought Expressions of Interest to conduct Stage 2 of the identification of mental disorders in the criminal justice system project. Stage 1 identified a number of factors in the relationship between mental disorders and crime. The aim of Stage 2 is to discover how criminal justice system personnel in jurisdictions throughout Australia identify and respond to mental disorders amongst persons suspected of and convicted of the commission of crimes.
- An outcome of a workshop run by the AIHW on 3 September 2004 was agreement to form a Prisoner Health Information Group (PHIG) which would aim to draw together existing information on prisoner health into a publication for release in 2006. This would include mental health data where available. It is proposed that the AIHW will develop a National Minimum Data Set (NMDS) on prisoners' health.

**KEY ISSUES**

There is a need to determine the specific requirements of national policy developers and other users in the area of health, including mental health, as it relates to crime and justice. At a broad level, health, including mental health statistics, contribute to policy debate about how the available resources are used to deliver progress and wellbeing as described in Priority 3.

**PRIORITY 10: DEVELOP  
STATISTICS ON HEALTH,  
INCLUDING MENTAL  
HEALTH, AS IT RELATES  
TO CRIME AND JUSTICE  
*continued***

**KEY ISSUES *continued***

Other associated risk factors which were raised during consultation are:

- intellectual disability of offenders and victims
- prisoner physical health.

**PRIORITY 11: IMPROVE  
STATISTICS ON GENDER  
AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY  
AS THEY RELATE TO  
CRIME AND JUSTICE**

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**

An improved information base that supports a more developed understanding of the complexities of gender in crime and justice, and how this relates to patterns of offending, victimisation, and interactions with the criminal justice system.

Improved access to comparable statistics about cultural and language diversity among victims and offenders, and a stronger evidence base to build prevention and intervention strategies that enhance community safety.

**USER CONTEXT**

Gender is a variable of interest across the criminal justice system for policy developers, academics and practitioners. While most basic crime and justice data are available for both women and men, there is a range of information from overlapping or related fields that is required to build knowledge about the interaction of gender and criminal justice. Users require comprehensive information to explore these factors relating to gender and patterns of offending, victimisation, imprisonment rates, and criminal justice administration. This includes the need for gender to be considered in the context of issues such as social and community support, education and employment, health and mental health, substance use, carer responsibilities, family structures, and aspects of a person's cultural identity.

Policy developers and other users require better quality and consistent national measures of cultural identity such as language, ethnicity and birthplace. While some relevant data are currently available in parts of the criminal justice system, the collection of the data is not consistent and common standards and definitions are not in widespread use.

There is a wide variety of information needs related to cultural diversity. Some policy developers and other users are interested in information on the offender's language spoken at home (in order to provide interpreter services), while others are more concerned with cultural identity (either to understand the criminogenic factors associated with the group or to meet special cultural requirements). Thus there are varying needs for data on culture, language, ethnicity, religion or birthplace and there is substantial variation in the purpose to be served from measuring such characteristics. Other policy developers and users are interested in the integration of immigrants, their experiences of victimisation and perceptions of safety. This requires the inclusion of cultural diversity indicators in victimisation surveys.

**PRIORITY 11: IMPROVE  
STATISTICS ON GENDER  
AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY  
AS THEY RELATE TO  
CRIME AND JUSTICE  
*continued***

**USER CONTEXT *continued***

A related information need raised during consultation is the propensity for individuals to align or identify with groups. Of particular interest to crime prevention is understanding the motivation for group crime. What motivates groups to unite for the purposes of criminal behaviour is not well understood. One variable of interest to researchers is cultural identity.

**KEY DATA SOURCES AND TOOLS**

Cultural diversity, language and ethnicity identifiers as well as gender are frequently collected in administrative and survey collections in the crime and justice field, but the nature of the collections is disparate and serve different purposes. The ABS's NCSS and PSS collect gender, country of birth and period of arrival information from one respondent within a household.

The ABS PSS, to be conducted in 2005 and published in 2006, will provide updated national information on respondents' experience of violence from both female and male respondents.

The ABS has developed *Standards for Statistics on Cultural and Language Diversity* (ABS cat. no. 1289.0) in response to a widely recognised need for a nationally consistent framework for the collection and dissemination of data on cultural and language diversity.

The AIC's ICVS (2004) includes data on cultural and language diversity among victims of crime through its migrant supplement, enhanced demographic questions, and questions about racial attacks.

**KEY ISSUES**

The complexities of gender issues relating to both victims and offenders should be explored in order for the criminal justice system to be able to develop better practices, programs, and maximise the benefits of available justice resources.

A cross-sectoral map of cultural diversity and ethnicity variables currently collected, and their uses, is needed. Once this is complete, strategies for future development of cultural diversity information in crime and justice can be developed.

**PRIORITY 12: IMPROVE  
SPATIAL DATA ON CRIME  
AND JUSTICE**

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**

Improved access to comparable spatial data that meets the needs of national policy developers and researchers in the crime and justice sector.

**USER CONTEXT**

There is substantial variation in the specification of spatial statistical information required by policy developers and other users. Some policy developers and other users require small area crime and justice information, while others are more interested in information and differences at the broader regional level.

**PRIORITY 12: IMPROVE  
SPATIAL DATA ON CRIME  
AND JUSTICE *continued***

**USER CONTEXT *continued***

An important outcome of small area information that identifies the location of offences, offenders and victims, can be better understanding of community level factors contributing to crime that then impact on prevention strategies. Spatial information also assists in the planning and provision of services in the most appropriate locations. Such information may be particularly useful for researchers and policy developers when matched with other socioeconomic characteristics. The application of standards for measuring detailed geographic location is also required to maximise the usefulness of these types of statistics.

Users seek high quality geographic information on the distribution of criminal victimisation and the distribution of criminal justice. This information is needed to understand the extent to which crime, and also justice resources, are distributed unequally with respect to ethnicity, socio-economic conditions, demography and geography.

**KEY DATA SOURCES AND TOOLS**

Some state and territory crime and justice agencies publish a range of data at various geographic levels. Nationally, there are various geographical areas, or spatial units by which data can be classified. The following references are tools to improve the comparability and usefulness of statistics generally.

- The ASGC (ABS cat. no. 1216.0) is a tool that assists collecting and disseminating geographically classified statistics. The ASGC provides a common framework of statistical geography and thereby enables the production of statistics which are comparable and can be spatially integrated.
- The *ABS Information Paper: Mesh Blocks* (ABS cat. no. 1209.0) describes developments in geographically referenced or 'small area' statistics, including development by Public Sector Mapping Agencies (PSMA) Australia Ltd. of the Geocoded National Address File (G-NAF). G-NAF is a database of every known address in Australia along with its latitude and longitude and is essential to the design and construction of Mesh Blocks and can be used for the coding of address based data to Mesh Blocks. This will enable easier mapping to other statistical and administrative geographies.

**KEY ISSUES**

There is a need to clarify and co-ordinate the national information needs and policy goals associated with spatial analysis of crime and justice data and to develop strategies that maximise the use of available tools such as ABS geographic standards, geocoding and other statistical infrastructure developments.

Crime and justice data should be presented alongside social, economic, geographic and demographic data to highlight issues. With respect to the geographical distribution of crime and justice resources, it is not possible to arrive at a full understanding of state and territory differences in crime and justice without improved regional data.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the 12 agreed national priority areas in the crime and justice field, describing the outcomes sought and listing current and proposed activities which are aimed at addressing these outcomes. The current activities and their lead agency are listed first. This is followed by proposed activities which have assigned lead agencies who have agreed to be responsible for progressing the relevant activity.

Each activity has been given a status. The three status groups are:

*Underway:* Action is underway and progress is in line with objectives.

*Some development required:* Some work is occurring and agreement and commitment to the activity have been reached. There may be a need for greater input, redirection of effort, or increased resources.

*Significant work required:* Little or no work has commenced and/or the activity is not clearly defined.

Across the Plan as a whole the Steering Committee will monitor and evaluate progress against each priority area of the Plan, report progress to all lead agencies and Boards of Management and offer guidance and support to those undertaking activities covered by the Plan and the NCCJS in its coordination role.

**PRIORITY 1: Improve Data Comparability Across Administrative Collections****OUTCOMES – Where do we want to be in 3 years?**

To have made significant improvements in data comparability across administrative data collections in the crime and justice field, facilitating comparison of state and territory trends in crime and justice, supporting mutual learning and aiding agencies operating in the sectors to be more publicly accountable and supporting comparison of statistics internationally.

**1.1 Current Activities**

<i>Current Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
The main infrastructure developments to support improvements to data quality and comparability are:		
a. The National Statistical Service Handbook contains a data quality framework to guide data documentation (metadata). The National Criminal Courts Statistics Advisory Group are currently considering the suitability of the data quality framework for implementation in the courts sector.	Some development required	ABS
b. A project is underway to examine differences in recorded crime statistics across jurisdictions. An agreed set of recommendations to address the key issues from the project are being developed and their implementation should commence during 2005.	Some development required	ABS (NCSU)
c. The National Criminal Justice Statistical Framework is being further developed and is expected to be published in 2005.	Some development required	ABS (NCCJS)
d. Ongoing commitment from Police, Courts and Corrective Service agencies to work towards the implementation of data standards, including definitions, concepts and classifications. Data manuals have been developed to support this implementation. A data dictionary is currently under development for use in Criminal Court collections.	Underway	ABS (NCCJS)

**1.2 Proposed Activities**

<i>Proposed Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. A review of ASOC will be conducted by the ABS in 2005–06. Supporting work will be conducted by the National Crime Statistics Advisory Group.	Significant work required	ABS
b. Data dictionaries for Recorded Crime and Corrective Services collections are to be developed.	Significant work required	ABS (NCSU and NCSSU)
c. A Community Based Corrective Services Census collection is to be developed.	Significant work required	ABS (NCSSU)
d. The feasibility of the police and corrective services sectors adopting a common data quality framework, such as the ABS data quality framework, will be assessed. Subject to the study, an implementation plan will be developed.	Significant work required	Police Practitioners Group (PPG)



**PRIORITY 2: Improve Quality and Integration of National Crime and Safety Survey Data****OUTCOMES – Where do we want to be in 3 years?**

To have more reliable, more up-to-date and better integrated national data on crime victimisation and safety, facilitated through improved coordination of national person-based survey activity.

To have more internationally comparable data through harmonisation of methodology and improved coordination of international survey activity.

**2.1 Current Activities**

<i>Current Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. The ABS will be conducting the National Crime and Safety Survey and the Personal Safety Survey in 2005, and the General Social Survey in 2006.	Underway	ABS
b. The Australian Institute of Criminology have released initial results from the 2003 Australian component of the International Violence Against Women Survey.	Underway	AIC
c. The 2004 Australian component of the International Crime Victims Survey results are to be released by the Australian Institute of Criminology in 2005.	Underway	AIC
d. The Australasian Centre for Policing Research commissions the National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing which is run on a continuous basis.	Underway	ACPR
e. Contribute to international efforts to improve the quality of crime measures through the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe/United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime conference.	Significant work required	NCCJS

**2.2 Proposed Activities**

<i>Proposed Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. The ABS in partnership with key agencies (e.g. Australian Institute of Criminology, Australasian Centre for Policing Research) will consider options to improve survey methods and adopt a more integrated approach to crime and safety surveys. Issues to be addressed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. the drivers for relevant collections and the outputs required including availability of estimates for regions and population groups;</li> <li>ii. investigation of concepts being measured, methods, response rates, coverage and costs;</li> <li>iii. consideration of frequency;</li> <li>iv. consideration of the relationship of surveys to administrative collections;</li> <li>v. assessment of the potential to collect information about Indigenous people in crime and safety surveys.</li> </ul>	Significant work required	ABS
b. Develop further questions for inclusion in crime and safety surveys about public attitudes to alternative ways of dealing with crime and offenders (Priority 2).	Some development required	ABS and NCSAG

### PRIORITY 3: Improve Data to Better Understand the Impacts of Crime and Justice in Relation to Measures of Progress and Wellbeing

#### OUTCOMES – Where do we want to be in 3 years?

To have an information base that supports a better understanding of the social, economic, geographic and demographic impacts of crime in the context of progress and wellbeing.

#### 3.1 Current Activities

<i>Current Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. A key role of the NCCJS is to work within a wider context of social and economic information, in order to show how criminal behaviour and criminal justice administration interact with other aspects of the social and economic environment.	Underway	ABS (NCCJS)
b. The National Statistical Service initiative seeks to improve the full suite of information produced by government. Government agencies across all levels are increasingly producing and/or using statistical information for developing policy, performance monitoring and program evaluation.	Underway	ABS
c. <i>Measures of Australia's Progress</i> (ABS cat. no. 1370.0) will be an annual web based publication from 2005.	Underway	ABS

#### 3.2 Proposed Activities

<i>Proposed Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. The ABS in collaboration with key agencies (such as Australian Institute of Criminology and Productivity Commission) and research groups, including the Crime Research Centre, University of Western Australia, will consider options to produce measures of progress and quantification of the costs of crime.	Significant work required	ABS
b. Examine, in collaboration with a wide range of agencies, existing and new collections (for example the developing offender-based data collection) to assess over-representation by Indigenous status, gender, age-group. Also examine the feasibility of developing measures of the patterns of victimisation, apprehension, court appearances, supervision and imprisonment.	Some development required	ABS and NCSAG
c. Ensure that the development work on the distribution of crime and justice is linked to the proposed activities relating to the specification of spatial data needs in crime and justice (Priority 12).	Some development required	ABS and NCSAG
d. Steps to develop and improve data quality within the crime and justice sector are outlined in Priority 1 and Priority 2.	Significant work required	ABS (NCCJS)

## PRIORITY 4: Improve Crime and Justice Statistics about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

### OUTCOMES – Where do we want to be in 3 years?

To have an improved evidence base to inform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) policy development and research in crime and justice.

#### 4.1 Current Activities

<i>Current Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
<p>a. Commitment has been made by police authorities to adopt the ABS Standard Indigenous Question. When implemented, evaluation of the quality of implementation will be undertaken by the relevant agencies. The following evaluations are in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Indigenous Status of offenders data item in the Recorded Crime - Offenders collection;</li> <li>ii. quality of the ABS Standard Indigenous Question implementation in Western Australia Police systems.</li> </ul>	Some development required	ABS (NCSU), all State Police Agencies
<p>b. A feasibility study is being conducted to determine the transferability of Indigenous Status information for individuals from Police to Courts.</p>	Some development required	ABS (NCSSU)

#### 4.2 Proposed Activities

<i>Proposed Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
<p>a. Undertake a project to evaluate the adequacy of existing data sources in meeting key user requirements for Indigenous crime and safety data. Elements of this project will be completed through the proposed Priority 2 consideration of options to improve crime and safety surveys.</p>	Significant work required	ABS (NCCJS), NCATSIS
<p>b. The ABS in collaboration with key agencies (e.g. Australian Institute of Criminology, Australasian Centre for Policing Research) will consider options to improve survey methods and adopt a more integrated approach to crime and safety surveys. Issues to be addressed include assessment of the potential to collect information about Indigenous people in crime and safety surveys.</p>	Significant work required	ABS
<p>c. The ABS plans to conduct the next National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey in 2008.</p>	Some development required	ABS

**PRIORITY 5: Develop Measures of Recidivism****OUTCOMES – Where do we want to be in 3 years?**

To have developed an agreed measure or measures of recidivism and an evidence base that will inform policy research in the development of effective strategies.

**5.1 Current Activities**

<i>Current Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. A Tasmanian recidivism project identified a means to analyse and report on patterns of re-offending in Tasmania, including a measure for reporting on the Tasmania Together benchmark 2.1.7: 'Proportion of first offenders convicted again within 2 years'.	Underway	Department of Justice (Tasmania), Tasmania Police and Department of Health and Human Services (Tasmania)
b. Prior imprisonment is currently published by the ABS and the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision via the <i>Report on Government Services</i> .	Underway	ABS (NCSSU) SCRGSP
c. The WA Crime Research Centre commenced development of the Integrated Numerical Offender Identification System project in 1989. The database associated with this project continues to be updated and expanded. It provides detailed statistical data, including the long-term study of 'criminal careers' and the evaluation of criminal justice programmes.	Underway	WA Crime Research Centre

**5.2 Proposed Activities**

<i>Proposed Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. The ABS under the auspices of the National Criminal Courts Statistics Unit Board of Management, will consider work in this field with an aim of creating a framework to support nationally comparable measures of recidivism (offenders and victims) and outcomes of rehabilitative services. The framework is intended to provide nationally agreed conventions to be adopted, along with a set of principles that need to be considered when developing measures. Consideration will be made of the distribution of crime with respect to individuals as well as areas, with a view to developing information about links between recidivist victims and recidivist offenders.	Significant work required and a significant challenge for resources	ABS (NCCJS)
b. The ABS will conduct an assessment of each jurisdiction's current capacity to track re-entries into the system.	Significant work required	ABS (NCCJS)
c. A Community Based Corrective Services Census collection is to be developed to complement the existing Prisoners Census and provide more detailed statistical information about persons under the supervision of corrective services agencies.	Significant work required	ABS (NCSSU)

**PRIORITY 6: Develop Statistics on Juvenile Contact with the Crime and Justice System****OUTCOMES – Where do we want to be in 3 years?**

To have developed an evidence base to assist policy development to reduce the level of youth involvement in the criminal justice system and re-entry into that system.

To have an increased understanding of the use and impact of diversions on juvenile crimes.

**6.1 Current Activities**

<i>Current Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. The Juvenile Justice Data Sub-Committee has reconvened under agreement between Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and reports through the National Community Services Information Management Group. The Juvenile Justice Data Sub-Committee will progress the implementation of the Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set. Summary results of field and pilot testing are reported in <i>AIHW Bulletin No. 19, October 2004</i> .	Underway	AIHW/AJJA
b. The National Crime Statistics Unit is developing offender based statistics that will include publication of data on juveniles who come to the attention of police.	Underway	ABS (NCSU)
c. The National Criminal Courts Statistics Unit is developing a framework to expand the national criminal courts collection to include Children's Courts.	Underway	ABS (NCCSU)
d. The ABS National Children and Youth Statistics Unit (NCYSU) has commenced consultation with stakeholders to prepare an information development plan for statistical information about children and youth. The information development plan will identify current significant statistical issues relating to children and youth data, including data needs and sources relevant to the key policy concerns.	Underway	NCYSU

**PRIORITY 7: Develop Statistics on Family Violence****OUTCOMES – Where do we want to be in 3 years?**

To have developed an evidence base that will assist the criminal justice system to respond more effectively to victims and offenders involved in domestic/family violence.

To inform intervention strategies to decrease the incidence and prevalence of family violence.

**7.1 Current Activities**

<i>Current Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. A feasibility study is being conducted to identify what indicators of domestic/family violence are currently collected by police and how these could be integrated throughout the crime and justice sectors.	Some development required	ABS (NCCSU)
b. The Police Statisticians Group in conjunction with the National Crime Statistics Unit and relevant other parties continue to improve data in relation to Family and Domestic Violence, including improvements to the quality of the Relationship of Offender to Victim indicator.	Some development required	ABS (NCSU)
c. The ABS will be conducting the Personal Safety Survey in 2005. The survey will provide national data on partner related violence.	Underway	ABS
d. The Australian Institute of Criminology have released initial results from the 2003 Australian component of the International Violence Against Women Survey.	Underway	AIC

**7.2 Proposed Activities**

<i>Proposed Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. A working group will be formed to consider issues and develop proposals concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. definitions relating to family and domestic violence;</li> <li>ii. scope of family violence statistical requirements;</li> <li>iii. measurement issues;</li> <li>iv. data sources.</li> </ul>	Significant work required	ABS

**PRIORITY 8: Improve Fraud and Electronic Crime Data****OUTCOMES – Where do we want to be in 3 years?**

To have improved statistical information about fraud and electronic crime (e-crime) including:

- data to assist measurement of the size of the problem
- offender information
- victim information, including economic impacts.

**8.1 Current Activities**

<i>Current Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. The National Crime Statistics Unit is developing offender-based statistics, which will include publication of data on fraud offenders who come to the attention of police.	Some development required	ABS (NCSU)
b. The Australian Consumer and Competition Commission (ACCC) has convened a roundtable with key agencies to develop an Integrated Fraud Prevention Strategy and determine data requirements. A research sub committee has been formed.	Significant work required	ACCC
Under the auspices of the Standing Committee of Consumer Affairs, the Australian Consumer and Competition Commission is participating in the development of Auzshare, a complaints database that will comprise certain complaints received by state and territory fair trading agencies as well as the Australian Consumer and Competition Commission. Statistical data from this database may provide an insight into misleading and deceptive conduct characterised as consumer fraud.		
c. The Australian Crime Commission are seeking to develop and improve fraud and electronic crime data through their intelligence probe into major fraud in the financial sector in Australia, and the work of the National Fraud Desk.	Underway	ACC
d. The Australian Institute of Criminology has included measures related to fraud and e-crime in the 2004 International Crime Victims Survey.	Underway	AIC

**8.2 Proposed Activities**

<i>Proposed Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. A review of ASOC will be conducted in 2005–06. A key element of this review will be to consider emerging crime issues including the classification of fraud and e-Crime offences. The review will also consider broader issues such as the classification of offence by context, for example organised crime.	Significant work required	ABS
b. Priority 2 proposes to consider options to adopt a more integrated approach to crime and safety surveys. E-crime, fraud and other deception offences will be considered within the scope of Priority 2.	Significant work required	ABS/AIC
c. The Australian High Tech Crime Centre in conjunction with the ABS are to consider a range of collection developments for e-crime statistics, including the enhancement of business and population based collections.	Significant work required	AHTCC/ABS

**PRIORITY 9: Develop an Information Base on Substance Use as it Relates to Crime and Justice****OUTCOMES – Where do we want to be in 3 years?**

To have an evidence base to inform prevention strategies and provide nationally comparable statistics on the nature and extent of substance use and its relationship to crime.

**9.1 Current Activities**

<i>Current Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. The ABS Personal Safety Survey to be conducted in 2005 will provide national data on the contribution of alcohol and other substances to sexual assault, physical assault and the threat of sexual assault and physical assault.	Underway	ABS
b. The Australian Crime Commission (ACC) publish annually the <i>Illicit Drug Data Report</i> .	Underway	ACC
c. AIC <i>Drug Use Monitoring in Australia</i> (DUMA) is published annually.	Underway	AIC
d. The AIC project Specialty courts in Australia will examine: the number and type of specialty courts (including drug courts) operating in Australia including the methods and procedures that characterise each court; the spatial distribution of specialty courts across the states and territories and whether specialty courts are equally accessible throughout metropolitan, regional and remote Australia; the variables associated with access and admission to specialty courts - including legal, case and demographic variables; the impact of specialty courts on the satisfaction of victims, offenders and justice practitioners; and the effectiveness of specialty courts in achieving key outcomes, including reducing recidivism and increasing rehabilitation among offenders.	Underway	AIC

**9.2 Proposed Activities**

<i>Proposed Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. A working group is to be established to clarify the national information needs as they relate to the policy goals associated with drugs, alcohol and crime, and to develop a strategy to meet these needs. The working group will consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. examination of information collection strategies in local and international agencies to determine their usefulness in providing information on drug and alcohol use as it relates to crime;</li> <li>ii. assessment of the current data sources and collection methodologies;</li> <li>iii. development of strategies to provide an evidence base on substance use as it relates to crime and justice;</li> <li>iv. collaboration with the National Drug Strategy Data Analysis to be conducted under the auspices of the Department of Health and Ageing.</li> </ul>	Significant work required	AIC
b. The Courts sector propose to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of specialist courts, such as Drug Courts, relative to mainstream courts. The sector will draw on existing work such as "The Perth Drug Court Pilot Project" conducted by the Crime Research Centre at the University of Western Australia, and the AIC's evaluation of selected Queensland Drug Courts.	Significant work required	Australian Courts Administrators Group (ACAG)



## PRIORITY 10: Develop Statistics on Health, Including Mental Health, as it Relates to Crime and Justice

### OUTCOMES – Where do we want to be in 3 years?

To have an improved evidence base to assist in the development of strategies to respond more effectively to people with mental disorders and to enable an increased understanding of the interaction between mental disorders and offending.

To have standardised key data items and a national approach to the collection of data on prisoner health, including mental health.

### 10.1 Current Activities

<i>Current Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. The Criminology Research Council are commissioning a project to examine the identification of mental disorders in the criminal justice system. The aim of the project is to discover how criminal justice system personnel in jurisdictions throughout Australia identify and respond to mental disorders amongst persons suspected of and convicted of the commission of crimes.	Significant work required	CRC
b. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has formed a Prisoner Health Information Group and provides secretariat support for that group. A key output for this group will be a collaborative project to develop a <i>Prisoners' Health Indicators Report</i> . This report is intended to use currently available data to provide an interim picture of prisoners' health pending the long term development by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare of a National Minimum Data Set on prisoners' health.	Significant work required	AIHW/PHIG
c. Some states and territories have working groups that exist to improve links across portfolios. The ABS will promote the identification of information needs associated with the health, including mental health, of offenders through state and territory based working groups.	Some development required and a significant challenge for resources	ABS (STSS)

### 10.2 Proposed Activities

<i>Proposed Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. The ABS in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Criminology and other agencies such as the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and under the auspices of National Criminal Courts Statistics Advisory Group, will consider national data needs in the area of health, including mental health, as it relates to crime and justice and then implement strategies for the development of indicators.	Significant work required	ABS
b. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare through the Prisoner Health Information Group propose to develop a National Minimum Data Set on prisoners' health, including mental health. In the National Minimum Data Set, information on many conditions such as infectious diseases, chronic diseases, disabilities, injury, and mental health, in addition to risk assessment, health promotion and interventions, will be collected.	Significant work required	AIHW/PHIG

**PRIORITY 11: Improve Statistics on Gender and Cultural Diversity as they relate to Crime and Justice****OUTCOMES – Where do we want to be in 3 years?**

To have an improved base that supports a more developed understanding of the complexities of gender in crime and justice, and how this relates to patterns of offending, victimisation, and interactions with the criminal justice system.

Improved access to comparable statistics about cultural and language diversity among victims and offenders, and a stronger evidence base to build prevention and intervention strategies that enhance community safety.

**11.1 Current Activities**

<i>Current Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. The Personal Safety Survey, to be conducted in 2005, with results scheduled to become available in 2006, will provide data about the experiences of female and male victims and their outcomes. It will also enable analysis of the relative changes in women's personal safety over time, through comparison to the 1996 Women's Safety Survey.	Underway	ABS
b. ABS standards relating to cultural diversity continue to be promoted in the crime and justice sector. These standards cover cultural and language diversity, cultural and ethnic groups, and classification of countries.	Significant work required	ABS (NCCJS)
c. A number of police agencies are piloting a range of cultural identifiers including birthplace (New South Wales) and language spoken (South Australia) in their administrative collections.	Significant work required	Police agencies
d. The Prisoner Census collection reports birthplace of prisoners in custody.	Underway	NCSSU
e. The Australian Institute of Criminology has made efforts to address important policy and research questions concerning the cultural diversity of victims of crime through the 2004 International Crime Victim Survey.	Underway	AIC

**11.2 Proposed Activities**

<i>Proposed Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. Under the auspices of the National Crime Statistics Advisory Group, convene a working group to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. research the policy and other data needs as they relate to gender and cultural diversity in crime and justice;</li> <li>ii. consider the need for comparable gender, cultural and language diversity indicators;</li> <li>iii. recommend development strategies as required;</li> <li>iv. develop a cross-sectoral map of cultural diversity and ethnicity variables currently collected and their uses.</li> </ul>	Significant work required	ABS (NCCJS)
b. The Western Australia Department of Justice is investigating with the Australian Institute of Criminology and the ABS the capacity to produce national datasets on women offenders, which will include issues such as health, mental health and carer responsibilities.	Significant work required	Western Australia DoJ

**PRIORITY 12: Improve Spatial Data on Crime and Justice****OUTCOMES – Where do we want to be in 3 years?**

To have improved access to comparable spatial data that meet the needs of national policy developers and researchers in the crime and justice sector.

**12.1 Current Activities**

<i>Current Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. Ongoing work by the ABS to encourage implementation of the Australian Standard Geographic Classification. Work to date has resulted in a number of agencies adopting this standard classification.	Underway	ABS
b. The ABS is developing coding services through the National Data Network. The National Data Network will provide access to services for coding data to consistent, standard classifications including geographical classifications. One such service will assign Mesh Block codes to addresses.	Some development required	ABS
c. Some Police agencies currently publish a range of data at a regional level via their statistical reports.	Underway	All police agencies

**12.2 Proposed Activities**

<i>Proposed Activities</i>	<i>Status of Activities</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
a. A working party will be established to consider the spatial information needs and policy goals of stakeholders in the crime and justice sector.	Significant work required	BOCSAR
The working party will consider:		
i. identification of the social, economic, demographic and geographic spatial information required to provide a full understanding of the distribution of criminal victimisation and criminal justice. The working party will consider specific sub populations within this work;		
ii. provision of advice to the National Crime Statistics Advisory Group, National Criminal Courts Statistics Advisory Group and National Corrective Services Statistics Advisory Group and ABS review of crime surveys about the key social, economic, demographic and geographic variables required from administrative by-product data to deliver nationally comparable, high value, small area data;		
iii. examination of the application or use of existing tools, such as ABS geographic standards, geocoding, Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas, with jurisdictional data.		

## ABBREVIATIONS .....

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACC	Australian Crime Commission
ACCC	Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
ACPR	Australasian Centre for Policing Research
AHMAC	Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council
AHTCC	Australian High Tech Crime Centre
AIC	Australian Institute of Criminology
AIFS	Australian Institute of Family Studies
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AJJA	Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators
APMC	Australasian Police Ministers' Council
ASGC	Australian Standard Geographical Classification
ASOC	Australian Standard Offence Classification
BOCSAR	NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
CGC	Commonwealth Grants Commission
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CRC	Criminology Research Council
DUCO	Drug Use Careers of Offenders
DUMA	Drug Use Monitoring in Australia
G-NAF	Geocoded National Address File
IVAWS	International Violence Against Women Survey
JJ NMDS	Juvenile Justice National Minimum Dataset
JJDSC	Juvenile Justice Data Sub-Committee
MAP	<i>Measures of Australia's Progress</i>
NAGATSIHID	National Advisory Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Information and Data
NATSISS	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey
NCATSIS	National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics
NCCJS	National Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics
NCCSU	National Criminal Courts Statistics Unit
NCSAG	National Crime Statistics Advisory Group
NCSIMG	National Community Services Information Management Group
NCSS	National Crime and Safety Survey
NCSSU	National Corrective Services Statistics Unit
NCSU	National Crime Statistics Unit
NCYSU	National Children and Youth Statistics Unit
NDSHS	National Drug Strategy Household Survey
NHIG	National Health Information Group
NMDS	National Minimum Data Set
NOI	National Offence Index
NSCSP	National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing

<b>OESR</b>	Office of Economic and Statistical Research
<b>PC</b>	Productivity Commission
<b>PHIG</b>	Prisoner Health Information Group
<b>PSMA</b>	Public Sector Mapping Agencies
<b>PSS</b>	Personal Safety Survey
<b>ROV</b>	relationship of offender to victims
<b>SCRGSP</b>	Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision
<b>STSS</b>	State and Territory Statistical Service
<b>UNICRI</b>	United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute

## APPENDIX

## AGENCIES CONSULTED .....

*Listed below are the Australian Government and state and territory agencies consulted as part of the preparation of the National Information Development Plan.*

### AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services  
Australian Crime Commission  
Australian Federal Police  
Australian Institute of Criminology  
Australian Institute of Family Studies  
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare  
Australian Institute of Police Management  
Australian Government Attorney-General's Department  
Commonwealth Grants Commission  
Family Court of Australia  
Federal Court of Australia  
Productivity Commission

### NATIONAL AGENCIES

Australasian Centre for Policing Research  
Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, University of New South Wales  
Australian High Tech Crime Centre  
Australian Institute of Judicial Administration  
National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, University of New South Wales  
National Institute of Forensic Science

### STATE AGENCIES *New South Wales*

Aboriginal Justice Advisory Council  
Attorney-General's Department  
Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research  
Department of Juvenile Justice  
Judicial Commission  
Legal Aid Commission  
Ministry for Police  
New South Wales Corrective Services  
New South Wales Police  
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions

### *Victoria*

Department of Justice  
Department of Justice - Court Services  
Corrections Victoria

<i>Victoria continued</i>	Victoria Police
<i>Queensland</i>	Department of Justice and Attorney-General Office of Economic and Statistical Research Department of Corrective Services Queensland Police Service
<i>South Australia</i>	Courts Administration Authority Department of Attorney-General and Justice South Australian Office of Crime Statistics & Research (OCSAR) South Australia Police Department of Correctional Services
<i>Western Australia</i>	Court of Petty Sessions Crime Research Centre, University of Western Australia Department of Justice Department of Premier and Cabinet Director of Public Prosecutions District Court National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University of Technology (Western Australia) Supreme Court Western Australia Police
<i>Tasmania</i>	Department of Health and Human Services Department of Justice Department of Police and Public Safety Magistrates' Court Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions Supreme Court
<i>Northern Territory</i>	Department of the Chief Minister Department of Employment, Education and Training Department of Health and Community Services Department of Justice Northern Territory Police Office of Crime Prevention
<i>Australian Capital Territory</i>	Australian Capital Territory Courts Australian Capital Territory Policing Department of Justice and Community Safety

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