

# Crime statistics and police numbers

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## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

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To

The Honourable the President of the Legislative Council

and

The Honourable the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Pursuant to section 25 of the *Ombudsman Act 1973*, I present to the Parliament the report on my investigation into crime statistics and police numbers.

G E Brouwer

**OMBUDSMAN** 

# **CONTENTS**

| ABBREVIATIONS   | 6  |
|---|----|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY   | 7  |
| THE COMPLAINT   | 15 |
| INVESTIGATION   | 16 |
| Scope   | 16 |
| Methodology   | 16 |
| BACKGROUND  | 17 |
| How crime statistics are produced                                     | 19 |
| What crime statistics are available in Victoria?                      | 22 |
| What do the crime statistics show for Victoria?                       | 24 |
| How crime statistics are used   | 25 |
| How many police are there in Victoria?                                | 26 |
| Where are the police in Victoria?                                     | 29 |
| CRIME STATISTICS  | 30 |
| Recording of crime  | 30 |
| (i) Comparing Victoria Police crime data with calls for service data  | 34 |
| (ii) Comparing Victoria Police crime data with Victim of Crime        |    |
| Assistance Tribunal data  | 43 |
| (iii) Comparing Victoria Police crime data with crime victim surveys. | 45 |
| Compliance with rules for recording crime                             | 50 |
| Comparison with other Australian jurisdictions                        | 58 |
| (i) Development of the National Crime Recording Standard              | 60 |
| (ii) Victoria Police's implementation of Rule 2                       | 61 |
| Manual forms for recording crime                                      | 64 |
| Victoria Police Compstat and performance management                   | 72 |
| Deficiencies in police training                                       | 76 |
| Inadequacies of the LEAP database                                     | 77 |
| Enhancing quality assurance practices                                 | 80 |
| Organisational arrangements   | 83 |
| Reporting of crime statistics   | 86 |

| POLICE NUMBERS   | 90   |
|--|------|
| Understanding police numbers   | 90   |
| Identifying police duties  | 92   |
| Using police resources to respond flexibly to demand                   | 94   |
| Changes in policing  | 102  |
| The People Allocation Model (PAM) and its limitations                  |      |
| The Police Association's Model for staff allocation                    | 108  |
| Other developments   | 109  |
| Police rosters   | 111  |
| SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS   | 118  |
| ATTACHMENT 1 - List of 27 Victoria Police offence categories           | 122  |
| ATTACHMENT 2 - Maps of Victoria Police geographical regions            | 123  |
| ATTACHMENT 3 - CAD outcome categories and LEAP record matchin          | ıg   |
|  | 124  |
| ATTACHMENT 4 - Victoria Police communication regarding the policy      | 7    |
| change to crime recording  | 125  |
| ATTACHMENT 5 - Sample copies of LEAP forms                             | 126  |
| ATTACHMENT 6 – Key Current Applications Architecture Overview          |      |
| (Version 1.6) showing complexity of IT systems                         | 127  |
| ATTACHMENT 7 - Activity Return and Enforcement Analysis (AREA)         | ļ    |
| Form   | 128  |
| ATTACHMENT 8 - Sample copy of Patrol Duty Return                       | 129  |
| ATTACHMENT 9 - Safe Streets Taskforce mapping of CAD data for          |      |
| weekend 15-17 February 2008  | 130  |
| ATTACHMENT 10 - CAD data relating to Victoria Police events for        |      |
| dispatch and frequency of 'Attempt to Dispatch' code by priority level | from |
| November 2007 to June 2008   | 131  |



### **ABBREVIATIONS**

ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics

AIC Australian Institute of Criminology APMC Australasian Police Ministers' Council

AREA Form Activity Return and Enforcement Analysis Form

BOCSAR Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

CAD Computer Aided Dispatch
CBD Central Business District
CDEB Central Data Entry Bureau
CIU Crime Investigation Unit
Compstat COMParison of STATistics
CSU Corporate Statistics Unit

DMSC Data Management Steering Committee

DOJ Department of Justice

DiRCS Differences in Recorded Crime Statistics
ESTA Emergency Services Telecommunications

Authority

FTE Full Time Equivalent HR Human Resources

ICT Information Technology Strategy
LEAP Law Enforcement Assistance Program

LEDR LEAP Electronic Data Recorder

LGA Local Government Area
MAS Members Activity Statement

NCRS National Crime Recording Standard

NCSU National Crime Statistics Unit

OPI Office of Police Integrity
PAM People Allocation Model

PSA Police Service Area
SST Safe Streets Taskforce
T & C Tasking and Coordination
SBT Scenario Based Testing

VOCAT Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal VPIM Victoria Police Intelligence Model

VPM Victoria Police Manual

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In April 2008 I received a complaint from Mr Ted Baillieu MLA, Leader of the Opposition, regarding whether crime statistics and/or police numbers have been subject to manipulation. Upon receiving the complaint it was my view that uncertainty regarding the validity of crime statistics and police numbers needed to be resolved. Ongoing debate about the integrity and accuracy of this data could undermine public confidence in Victoria Police and have a deleterious effect on the quality of public debate regarding law and order issues.

My investigation was concerned with two key issues. Firstly, do Victoria Police crime statistics accurately reflect the community's experience of crime as it is reported to police? Secondly, can the public have confidence that the information about the number and availability of police in Victoria is accurately reported?

My investigators interviewed many police officers, sought advice from experts, and undertook statistical analysis. They also reviewed internal reports, scrutinised police practices and compared Victorian arrangements with those in other jurisdictions.

While my investigation did not find corroborated evidence that crime statistics were subject to falsification (but see my concerns about clearance rate practices below), it did identify poor administrative systems and historical Victoria Police practices which have led to some crime being under reported, such as assaults and less serious offences. Victoria Police has stated that 'there is no connection between crime being under reported and poor administrative systems'. I disagree. Clearly there is a link.

Given the important role that crime statistics play for Victoria Police and for public understanding of the crime problem, the issues I have identified during my investigation, in particular in relation to the accurate and consistent recording of crime by police, are of concern.

A number of factors are identified in this report to explain how underreporting of crime occurs.

### Antiquated recording practices

Foremost amongst the issues identified by my investigation are the antiquated, time-consuming administrative practices for recording crime that are followed by 'frontline' police and the outdated information technologies that are unsuited to a twenty-first century approach to policing. I am concerned that Victoria Police continues to miss opportunities to modernise its practices in these areas. For example, large numbers of handwritten forms must be completed by police and then faxed to civilian support staff for data entry for the majority of reported crime to be captured on the Law Enforcement Assistance Program (LEAP) database.

Victoria Police agrees that there are good opportunities to leverage technology and improve recording practices. However, at this stage, the new IT initiatives currently being pursued by Victoria Police will not eliminate the fragmented, ad hoc administrative practices involved in recording crime data. The Victoria Police LEAP database has attracted criticism in the past, including in a report by the Office of Police Integrity in 2005. The list of weaknesses of Victoria Police's information technology systems includes:

- incompatible systems
- impeded information sharing
- uncoordinated management information
- variation in user interfaces
- lack of common data standards
- inability to link business intelligence with factual information about incidents.

These deficiencies raise serious concerns regarding the functionality and 'value for money' aspects of the information technology environment within Victoria Police. My investigation has also highlighted the need for significant modernising of Victoria Police's information technology to achieve efficiencies and improve the capture and analysis of data for measuring demands on the organisation's resources.

#### Victoria Police stated:

The administrative burden on police for data capture is significant. The Data Management Steering Committee (DMSC) with the LINK Project Team are exploring whether any data captured is not relevant, with a view to reducing the data capture burden on operational police.

### Limited data capture

I am also concerned by the limited range of data that Victoria Police captures to measure its objectives. In my view the data excludes many incidents of a public order nature to which police are called to assist through the 000 calls for service (CAD) system. Not fully using this information undermines Victoria Police's commitment to a reform agenda that emphasises performance management, evidence-based and intelligence-led policing and resource allocation which is flexible to respond to public demands.

Until 30 June 2008 when a policy change occurred in the way that crime is to be recorded, police in Victoria needed to be satisfied that there was evidence that a crime has occurred (the evidentiary approach), whereas most other States and Territories have been using a *prima facie* model, that is, where police take the details of an alleged crime at face value and record its details. I believe that the Victorian evidentiary approach has contributed to Victoria Police crime statistics being lower than might be expected. The recent policy change to move crime recording to a more *prima facie* approach was found to be poorly implemented and inadequately understood by police. The deficiencies in police training for accurate crime recording have also been highlighted in my investigation.

#### Statistics and community experience

The gap between police statistics and the everyday experience of the community was borne out by an examination of calls to 000 seeking police assistance. I found that in many instances these requests for assistance, despite alleging sometimes serious offences, did not lead to reported crime being recorded on LEAP. My investigation found significant differences between the calls for service or Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) data and what was recorded on LEAP. During my investigation I was also advised that a data matching exercise between CAD data and LEAP had been conducted by an internal audit in Victoria Police some years ago. The results found significant differences between the CAD data and what was recorded on LEAP. It identified under recording of crime by police - particularly in relation to assaults - and delays in recording crime on to the LEAP forms to be of concern. I consider that closer examination is required to determine why many crime events identified in the CAD system have no record on LEAP, even though an offender may have been apprehended and an offence reported.

#### Victoria Police has said:

While delays may occur in recording of crime by police, this does not have any correlation with the subject of the inquiry – whether the crime statistics have been manipulated. Delays in recording do not affect the recording of crime statistics.

I disagree. Clearly delays in recording data affect the reliability of decisions made on out-of-date information.

#### Victoria Police further stated:

CAD (ESTA) and LEAP were created for different purposes. They were not designed to be linked, nor has the information in them been structured to facilitate linking. The CAD records calls for assistance under a broad range of categories determined by the call taker actioning on information from a member of the public. LEAP records crime under categories determined by legislation. These categories often do not match: a person calling 000 to report a robbery, for example, will not know that technically what they are reporting is 'theft from motor vehicle', differences that cause difficulties when matching data...Where other states link this type of data they do so through an event number, rather than matching the classification in the CAD and crime recording systems. Victoria Police has identified that linked systems would be beneficial, however the resources to do this, and to expand the CAD to a state-wide system are not currently available.

Similarly, I examined crime details recorded on LEAP for a sample of applications from victims of crime for assistance pursuant to the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1996*. This also revealed a number of instances where victims had reported crime, but where the LEAP database appeared to contain no record of these and therefore would not be counted in Victoria Police crime statistics.

### **Recording clearance rates**

I also identified that some police misuse the procedures for recording cleared crime to make it appear that more crime has been successfully solved than is actually the case. The way this is done is that when an offender has been apprehended and processed for certain offences, unrelated offences for which no offender has yet been apprehended or interviewed are added on to the file for the apprehended offender (without their knowledge) in order to 'clear up' more crime. Victoria Police responded that 'it would be disappointing if it was found that this is a widespread practice'. I am referring this matter to the Office of Police Integrity for investigation.

### Inadequate auditing and data quality

I found that the audit procedures in Victoria Police for crime data are focussed on the management of reported crime once it is entered on LEAP, with no attention to the process for recording crime to ensure that officers at police stations have made the appropriate decisions regarding whether a crime incident requires a LEAP report. I consider that the current audit processes are inadequate as they fail to measure compliance with crime recording policies, which impacts on the accuracy of crime statistics. There is evidence that crime recording practices are not compliant with the policies. I found inconsistent practices in recording crime across Victoria, reflecting inadequate training and a lack of commitment to ensuring quality data at the point of recording crime. The current quality assurance processes are applied after the data-recording phase, which is too late. Overall, there appears to be a fragmented, disconnected approach to ensuring high quality crime statistics.

The issue is that at the critical point where crime is recorded by police, the quality assurance processes are lacking. At this point the cumbersome manual forms and the LEAP database, the deficiencies of which have been demonstrated, present significant obstacles to the effective recording of crime. I therefore consider that the main focus for improvement must be on the initial crime recording stage. Non compliance, for whatever reason, with the policies for recording crime should be identified and addressed.

Generally, there appears to be a lack of clear vision and effective management in addressing coordination issues in relation to data and information technology in Victoria Police, resulting in fragmented data systems, and more broadly, in knowledge management. I note in this regard that according to Victoria Police in May 2008:

The Corporate Committee endorsed the Data Management Strategy. The work of the Data Management Steering Committee falls within the three key priorities of that strategy:

- Apply consistent data quality standards across all Victoria Police systems
- Reduce complexity and duplication in data collection
- Maximise accessibility to data to meet user needs.

However, I consider that the effectiveness to date of this strategy has not been demonstrated.

Inevitably, performance of a large organisation requires robust measures which allow achievement of benchmarks and targets to be assessed. Crime data is an essential part of this measurement. I believe it is critical that there is a commitment to ensuring that the data collected and used is of a high quality and that a commitment to quality forms part of the performance management system.

### Enhancing public confidence

Public confidence in the integrity of crime statistics requires independent scrutiny and attention to the quality and integrity of the whole process - from crime recording to the production of the statistics. The public debate in Victoria regarding crime statistics is indicative that what Victoria Police produces may not be understood or indeed trusted to reveal the nature and extent of crime as the public experiences it and reports it to police.

I consider that the way in which crime statistics are reported by Victoria Police to the public can be significantly improved. A number of issues were identified which can lead to distortion and misrepresentation in the way Victoria Police produce and present information on crime statistics. Unlike some other Australian jurisdictions (NSW, SA, and WA), in Victoria there is no agency external to Victoria Police which independently compiles, analyses and publishes crime statistics. I am of the view that public confidence in crime statistics is important enough to recommend to the Victorian Government that it give consideration to establishing a unit, independent of Victoria Police, responsible for the analysis and reporting of crime statistics.

#### Improving current practices

I have also made a number of recommendations in respect of crime statistics, including that Victoria Police:

- Better utilises the 000 emergency calls for service CAD data by linking this information to the LEAP system
- Reviews training in crime recording and provide specialist and refresher training for police on the recording and use of crime data
- Eliminates the use of manual forms for recording crime data by progressing the LINK project, a new records management system designed to replace the LEAP database
- Reviews its organisational and management arrangements in relation to the roles, responsibilities and resourcing of the collection, recording and production of crime data and statistics.

#### Victoria Police stated that:

The strategic view of IT reform within Victoria Police aims to create effective interfaces between systems such as CAD (ESTA) and LEAP/LINK. LINK will replace LEAP in 2009-2010, creating a more effective platform upon which to build these interfaces, however the resources to do this, and to expand CAD to a state-wide system, are not currently available.

In relation to police numbers, again, while I did not find evidence of manipulation of police numbers, I found archaic information technology and confusing administrative practices in relation to police availability, which can impact on the under-recording of crime. I identified that Victoria Police closely monitors the number of police to ensure it meets the government's commitment. It also has developed an administrative system (the People Allocation Model) which enables allocation of police to the Police Service Areas for operational deployment in a more transparent way. However, there are a number of limitations to the model and I note that it excludes non-operational police and civilian staff.

#### Victoria Police advised:

It is aware the Human Resources Management system used to administer human resources requires replacement and it is misleading to indicate that Victoria Police is using 'archaic information technology' without acknowledging the work done over the past two years to address this.

In 2006 approval was given to set aside \$28 million of internal funding to build a new system. The findings in the supporting business case were the result of extensive process audits conducted by Financial Services Division, Corporate Management Review Division, the Auditor-General's office and recent reviews of current issues and business processes.

This project went to tender in late 2007 and the successful company to deliver the new solution has been appointed. Work on building the new solution commenced in 2008 and with Victoria Police have recently completed the blueprint and are in the build stage. The solution is due to be implemented by August 2009.

### Measuring workload

I found the workload of operational police to be poorly measured. This has implications for the effective management of the demand for police services. It suggests that when allocating police, timely, accurate data on which to base decisions may be absent. The calls for service CAD data reveals how frequently police are called to events which are not necessarily crime related. Better use should be made of this data – including measuring demand for service and also for validating crime recording.

#### Victoria Police stated:

These issues have been previously identified by Victoria Police. A replacement for the AREA form – a Member Activity Statement (MAS) - has been trialed. It is in the process of being refined and will be implemented from 1 July 2009. It will take a broader approach to measuring operational police workload. This work has been an initiative of the Data Management Steering Committee over 2008.

The changes towards more proactive policing and the Victoria Police Intelligence Management approach require deployment of police in a flexible way. However, there may at times be an imbalance in staffing because of changing priorities and emerging issues. As a result, core general duties at a number of police stations would appear to have been relegated, in my view, to a lower priority; with fewer staff available to perform these tasks.

The administrative systems for filling police positions appear to be complex and slow. This has an impact on the number of unfilled positions or vacancies, which can create a shortage of staff. Improvements to the roster system, greater consistency and improved terminology would assist understanding of how police are appropriately allocated to where and when they are needed in Victoria.

### THE COMPLAINT

In April 2008, I received a complaint from Mr Ted Baillieu MLA, requesting that I:

...initiate an investigation into whether crime statistics and/or police numbers have been subject to manipulation...

In particular, the issues raised by Mr Baillieu and further described by Mr Andrew McIntosh MP were that crime statistics and police numbers are being distorted and misrepresented by Victoria Police. While no specific allegations were made of misconduct or fraudulent actions by individuals, there was concern that administrative practices in relation to crime statistics and police numbers are subject to manipulation and that this has major policy implications and is of significant public interest.

A further concern expressed was that senior police may influence the way crime is recorded so that police performance and crime reduction targets are achieved. It was further alleged by the complainant's representatives that there is a link between crime statistics and police numbers. For

As a matter of public interest, I consider that uncertainty about the accuracy of crime statistics and of police numbers must be resolved. It has the potential to undermine the high degree of confidence Victorians have in their police. example, because of police staffing shortages, there is less time to record crime that is brought to the attention of police – hence not all crime known to police is recorded, making crime statistics under-estimate the true

extent of crime. It was also alleged that insufficient staff means fewer police available at the 'front line' to detect crime and to respond to calls from the public, contributing to under-reporting of actual crime.

As a matter of public interest, I consider that uncertainty about the accuracy of crime statistics and of police numbers must be resolved. It has the potential to undermine the high degree of confidence Victorians have in their police, as demonstrated by surveys<sup>1</sup> showing a majority of Victorians were generally satisfied with their police and their effectiveness.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Report on Government Services, Productivity Commission, Melbourne 2008.

### INVESTIGATION

### Scope

A number of administrative systems are involved in both the recording and production of Victoria Police crime statistics and in determining and managing Victoria Police staffing numbers. My investigation included an examination of these systems to assess whether they are adequate to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the reported information. It also included considering relevant policies and procedures and compliance with these.

My investigation specifically sought to determine whether there was any evidence of tampering, deliberate distortion or misrepresentation of crime statistics and police numbers.

### Methodology

For the purpose of the investigation I reviewed relevant information including:

- annual Victoria Police crime statistics, including statistical information accessible from the Victoria Police website and other crime statistics produced internally for Victoria Police use
- Recorded Crime Victims, Australia statistics and Crime and Safety, Australia surveys and related documents produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)
- Victoria Police policies and procedures relating to crime statistics and the numbers of police officers, including allocation and rostering practices
- other relevant documents relating to crime statistics and police numbers.

My investigators conducted interviews with:

- police and civilian officers working at Victoria Police headquarters who manage or whose responsibility includes the recording and production of crime statistics and associated data systems and reporting functions
- more than 60 police officers from a cross-section of metropolitan Melbourne and regional police stations, including 'frontline' police, police managers and supervisors
- senior executives of Victoria Police, including the Chief Commissioner
- senior executives of The Police Association

- external persons with expertise in police statistics and crime data, including the Manager of the National Crime Statistics Unit, ABS, the Director of the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) and the author of the review of Victoria Police crime statistics by the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC)
- other relevant persons, including senior managers of the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA), and police officers and police statisticians in other Australian jurisdictions.

In addition, my investigators conducted:

- visits to observe and examine crime recording practices and police rosters at a number of police stations across Victoria
- visits to the Central Data Entry Bureau (CDEB) where data is entered on to the Law Enforcement Assistance Program (LEAP) database at the Victoria Police Centre
- visits to the ESTA call dispatch centre
- analysis of Victoria Police crime database records and their comparison with other sources of information, such as police running sheets/diaries, calls for service data and victim data
- examination of Victoria Police policies and procedures in relation to the recording of crime data, including definitions and counting rules and those required for the production and release of crime statistics and for the national *Recorded Crime –Victims* ABS statistical collection.

### BACKGROUND

Crime statistics and police numbers go to the heart of long-standing, perennial debates about law and order and are central to the crime conscious society we live in. The importance of these issues for the Victorian public is highlighted by the recent media interest<sup>2</sup> in violence in the Melbourne Central Business District (CBD) and actions taken by police.

According to official statistics produced by Victoria Police, the overall crime rate in Victoria has fallen consistently since 2001. However, there are indications that the public does not believe or accept that the crime problem is decreasing. Surveys show that there is a high level of concern; and that there has been an increase in the number of Victorians who agree that:

 $<sup>^2</sup>$  Herald Sun, 20 July 2008; Herald Sun, 1 September 2008; Herald Sun, 8 September 2008; Herald Sun, 14 September 2008; The Age, 14 September 2008.

...crime is rising and that [they] personally feel at risk...and that violent crime is getting worse (70 per cent).

#### And that:

...78 per cent [of Victorians] are concerned/very concerned about alcohol-related violence in Melbourne at night<sup>3</sup>.

Fear of crime, associated with perceptions about the increasing incidence of crime, has been identified as a widespread social problem, in spite of a reduction in official crime rates.

Fear of crime, associated with perceptions about the increasing incidence of crime, has been identified as a widespread social problem, in spite of a

reduction in official crime rates. Such fear can influence individual health and wellbeing and, at a broader level, diminish the quality of life in local communities by restricting interaction and trust among people, and influencing people's willingness to undertake various activities, such as visiting the inner city after hours. When official statistics do not appear to reflect public perceptions or the direct experience of individuals, or when official categories and definitions used do not agree with the public's interpretation, cynicism or indeed confusion and misunderstanding can occur about what the official crime statistics show.

When official statistics do not appear to reflect public perceptions or the direct experience of individuals, or when official categories and definitions used do not agree with the public's interpretation, cynicism or indeed confusion and misunderstanding can occur about what the official crime statistics show.

Concerns about police numbers also feature prominently in public debate about law and order and are of significant public interest. It is argued that more police will lead to less crime; that more police on the streets will deter potential offenders; and that their visible

presence will reassure the public that they are safe and secure to go about their daily lives, although the evidence is far from clear-cut.

Information relating to crime statistics and to police numbers should be as accurate, consistent and as timely as possible. This is critical, not only to police and to the public they serve, but also to others, such as local and state

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> AustraliaSCAN, Perceptions of Crime and Safety Survey 2005-08; The Age/Nielsen Poll, 24 November 2008.

governments who rely on crime statistics to develop crime reduction strategies and to assess their effectiveness.

### How crime statistics are produced

Crime statistics produced by Victoria Police are arrived at from initial reports by the public or by police detecting crime themselves. The main ways in which the public can report crime in Victoria are:

- by telephoning a police station<sup>4</sup>
- by going to a police station
- by calling Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000
- by calling 000.

For many crimes where no victim is involved, such as for drug crime, crime recording is more dependent on police priorities and deployment of resources. Police can also become aware of crime during their policing activities, for example, through patrols, proactive policing initiatives, or by a suspect admitting to a crime.

Crime statistics have long been recognised as understating the true extent of crime and beset with significant limitations due in particular to non-reporting by the public and non-detection by police<sup>5</sup>. Some crimes such as family violence and sexual assault are less likely to be reported or become known to police, as victims are reluctant to come forward. For other types of crime, it may be too trivial or inconvenient for victims to report the incident to police. The extent of unreported crime is therefore not known; it has been referred to by criminologists and statisticians as the 'dark figure' of crime.

Crime statistics are further limited by whether crime is recorded or not by police. Not all crime incidents that police become aware of will be recorded. Until recently in Victoria, police needed to be satisfied that there is evidence that a crime has occurred. Police also need to determine whether the incident meets standard definitions and classifications for one of the more than 4,000 crimes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Many police stations have a recorded telephone message advising the caller that if the matter is urgent, they should hang up and call 000.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Morris, N. and Hawkins, G. *The Honest Politician's Guide to Crime Control*, University of Chicago Press, 1979; Victoria Parliamentary Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee *Inquiry into Crime Trends*, 2002; Coleman, C. and Moynihan, J. *Understanding crime data: haunted by the dark figure*, Open University Press, 1996; Van Dijk, J. *The World of Crime*, Sage Publications, 2008.

In deciding whether an incident should be recorded, a police officer is required to follow operational procedures outlined in the Victoria Police Manual (VPM). Up until 30 June 2008, the instruction (VPM 108-3) stated that:

Any police officer receiving a report of an incident must make sufficient initial inquiries to satisfy themselves that a crime has been committed or not. [emphasis added] Where the facts indicate that a crime has been committed, complete and submit all relevant LEAP reports, containing the best quality information available at the time.

The instruction was recently amended by Victoria Police, following a Memorandum of Understanding between the Australian police commissioners and the ABS to adopt ten rules for the consistent recording of crime across all jurisdictions. Of these rules Rule 2 is significant as it shifts the balance in the discretion excercised by police in recording crime - from recording an incident when satisfied about the evidence that a crime has occurred, to now recording an incident <u>unless</u> there is evidence that a crime has not occurred.

### Since 1 July 2008, the instruction reads:

All criminal incidents reported to police must be recorded as offences unless there is credible evidence available at the time of reporting to suggest that a crime has not occurred. [emphasis added] The reporting officer is required to complete and submit all relevant LEAP/LEDR reports, containing the best quality information available at the time. A comprehensive record of the investigation must be kept on LEAP.

When the reported or detected incident is recorded and entered on to the LEAP database, it can then be counted for statistical purposes. To record a crime, police write the details of the incident manually on to paper forms, which are checked by a station supervisor and sent by fax to the Central Data Entry Bureau (CDEB) for data entry into the LEAP database. Exceptions to this practice occur for some property crimes in many, but not all, police stations where police officers are able to enter the information electronically into LEDR (LEAP Electronic Data Recorder) instead of filling in the manual forms. The data from LEDR is electronically added to the LEAP system at a later time after checking by the Crime Desk supervisor.

Once data relating to the crime has been entered on to the LEAP database at CDEB, there are a number of quality control measures which are applied to

ensure the completeness and integrity of the data. Following the various data audits, extracts are taken from LEAP and categorised, according to statistical rules and offence classifications, for use within Victoria Police, as well as for the publication of annual official crime statistics which are available to the public. A data extract is also sent to the ABS for the national crime statistics collection.

There are different counting rules for different types of crime as part of the process of compiling statistics. The main ones are:

- For crime against the person and most property crime, the counting unit is the number of principal victims for each separate occurrence of the crime if 3 alleged offenders assault 2 victims, the count is 2
- For crimes against statutes (usually where there is no individual victim) the number of alleged offenders is the counting unit for 3 alleged offenders found in possession of cannabis, the count is 3
- For some other crimes, the incident itself is the count.

In addition, only the most serious offence which best describes a distinct course of criminal conduct (called a sub-incident in LEAP) is counted, even though there may be multiple charges laid against the alleged offender for that course of action. The example given in the annual Victoria Police *Crime Statistics* states:

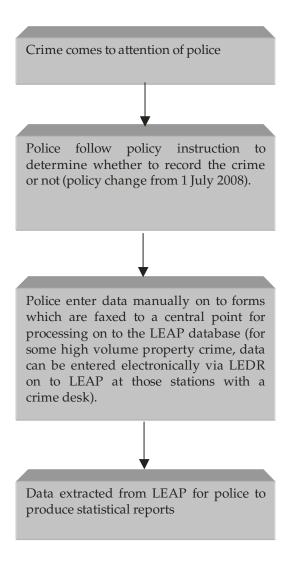
...an offender carrying a firearm commits an armed robbery – only the offence of armed robbery is recorded although the offender would be charged with armed robbery and possession of a firearm.

In relation to a 'distinct course of criminal conduct', the following example is given:

...if an offender presents three valueless cheques to a [bank] teller only one offence would be recorded but if the three cheques were presented at different times or at different branches then three offences would be recorded.

The crime statistics derived from the database relate to the month and year when the information was recorded by police, not when the crime actually occurred. The complexity of the counting rules and the classification of crimes into categories as well as the impact of this on accuracy are further discussed below.

The steps in producing crime statistics by police are broadly summarised in the following diagram:



### What crime statistics are available in Victoria?

Victoria Police crime statistics are made available to the public following the end of the financial year. They are derived from a July extract of the LEAP database. This is the principal source of reporting crime statistics to the public in Victoria and includes a comprehensive range of information. It shows types of recorded crimes by 27 categories (Attachment 1), divided into four broad groups:

- offences against the person crimes agai st roperty
- r g crime
- other crime.

These annual statistics also include characteristics such as age, sex, and racial appearance of victims and alleged offenders, and the location of the offence. Comparisons with the previous two years are also presented, as well as crime rate per 100,000 population of recorded offences and clearance rates.

Victoria Police provides some electronic access to crime statistics to the public through downloadable reports in PDF format and an online selection tool to obtain fixed one-page reports for police Regions, Divisions, Police Service Areas (PSA), Local Government Areas (LGA) and postcodes. The online selection tool allows an online user to select one police region, division, PSA or LGA and receive a one-page report for the selected area. Victoria Police is also able to respond to requests for crime statistics by external users at a cost.

For internal use Victoria Police produces a number of statistical reports from LEAP, such as the *Monthly Crime Management Report* for senior management.

A second source of crime statistics available is data from the ABS national *Recorded Crime – Victims* statistics collection. These statistics are compiled to national standards and classifications developed by the ABS in conjunction with jurisdictions. They are produced on a calendar year basis and are usually released in May/June. In Victoria they are derived from the same database (LEAP) as the Victoria Police crime statistics.

Victoria Police provides the ABS with data on the number of offences in the categories of the national crime statistics collection, with rules being applied to map the Victoria Police codes to the ABS codes. The ABS conducts regular quality checks on the data provided by jurisdictions. However, there are a number of differences in the two sets of crime statistics—the national crime statistics use different counting rules and classifications from Victoria Police statistics and are designed to ensure comparability across the jurisdictions. A notable difference from Victoria Police crime statistics is that the ABS national statistics include fewer categories of crime (covering approximately 70 per cent of total recorded crime by Victoria Police). Also for the ABS statistics the count of crime is victim based – only the number of victims for each offence is counted<sup>6</sup> - whereas for Victoria Police statistics, there are counts for victims as

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The ABS advises that the counting rules are complex - ...a person reporting a crime with multiple offences in the same incident may either be counted multiple times, or may be counted only once depending on the types of offences committed during the incident. If multiple offences within the same incident fall within the same Australian Standard Offence Classification then the victim will be counted only once.

well as alleged offenders and incidents. As discussed further below, due to concerns about a lack of comparability for assault and sexual assault offences, the ABS no longer provides figures for these offences, although for the other offences the level of comparability is satisfactory.

A less frequent but significant source of crime statistics is crime victim surveys. The surveys have been conducted by the ABS<sup>7</sup> and other survey organisations on representative samples of adults who are directly asked if they have been a victim of selected serious criminal incidents during the previous 12 months. The surveys provide information about incidents of crime experienced by victims, regardless of whether the incident is reported to police. Survey results are unaffected by changes in public reporting to police or police recording practices. Although they have known limitations, they are able to shed some light on the 'dark figure' of unreported crime.

Each source of crime statistics provides only a partial picture of crime; each has limitations and care needs to be taken when interpreting figures and trends from these three sources.

### What do the crime statistics show for Victoria?

Crime in Victoria, as measured by Victoria Police crime statistics, has shown significant reductions – 17.0 per cent in total crime and 24.5 per cent in the rate per 100,000 population since 2000-01, although the downward trend has slowed recently. In 2007-08 the number of offences recorded declined by 0.4 per cent compared with the previous year. Total *Crime against the person* increased by 1.4 per cent; decreases occurred for *Homicide* and *Sex offences* but increases were recorded for *Robbery* (up by 15.7 per cent), *Assault* (up by 0.7 per cent) of which around a quarter are attributed to family violence. In relation to total *Property offences*, these decreased by 0.4 per cent, although *Thefts from motor vehicles* increased by 12.3 per cent. Total *Drug offences* recorded a decrease of 2.5 per cent compared with the previous year.

I note at the national level, the comparative results of the ABS *Recorded Crime - Victims* statistics presented in the *Report on Government Services* show Victoria to have lower levels of crime in most crime categories over a number of years, compared to other Australian jurisdictions. Also in terms of crime

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> The most recent ABS *Crime and Safety* survey was released in 2005; results from the 2008-2009 survey will be released in 2010. The ABS has commenced running the survey from July 2008 with a 'rolling' collection throughout the year, subject to ongoing review.

victimisation rates, as measured by the ABS *Crime and Safety* surveys, Victoria had lower rates for household and personal crime, which is significant as the surveys are not affected by public reporting to police or by police detection

My investigation found evidence of underreporting of some crime over a long period, as a result of poor crime recording practices and deficient administrative processes. and recording practices. In this context, Victoria is also lower on a range of criminal justice measures (court cases, prison population and young people in

detention) both in numerical terms and per capita, compared to other Australian jurisdictions<sup>8</sup>.

Crime levels in Victoria, compared to other Australian jurisdictions, are shown to be lower and may be attributable to a range of socio-demographic factors such as age and education. Notwithstanding this, my investigation found evidence as presented below, of under-reporting of some crime over a long period, as a result of poor crime recording practices and deficient administrative processes.

### How crime statistics are used

Crime statistics serve the following main purposes:

- They provide key measures of criminal activity for police intelligence purposes, enabling police to identify priorities and emerging crime issues and to develop crime control strategies.
- They assist in the allocation of police resources for various reactive and proactive activities.
- They are extensively used to assess the performance of police and provide accountability to government in relation to agreed targets, such as those published in the Victoria Police Annual Report and Business Plan.
- They keep the public informed about the nature, level and extent of crime in the community.
- They represent a form of accountability for government spending on police.
- Use is made of them by the media to communicate information about crime to the public.
- Specific groups such as victims of crime may require more information about crime trends.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> The Victorian Parliamentary Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee in its *Inquiry into Crime Trends* 2002 provided a historical analysis of Victorian and Australian crime trends.

Crime statistics are central to Victoria Police for setting performance targets, measuring their achievement, and for identifying priorities for police action. They are also used for planning, managing and allocating police resources across Victoria. Victoria Police analysts use crime statistics extensively to identify crime trends and to produce assessments of crime problems on a regular basis to enable management to direct resources to priority areas. For instance, an analyst from the Safe Streets Taskforce based in Region 1 (see Case Study p96) will use crime data from the previous weekend, in association with other relevant information, to assist management in making appropriate staffing decisions for the forthcoming weekend. Victoria Police's Corporate Performance Unit also relies heavily on crime statistics for the Compstat forums held at executive, divisional and regional levels to evaluate police performance against targets.

There are many other users of crime statistics. These can range from government departments to assist policy development and implementation to local governments with an interest in community safety. Individuals such as applicants (and opponents) for a liquor licence in a local neighbourhood, may use crime statistics to support their case. Insurance premiums for car theft and burglary are also determined with reference to crime levels in specific localities.

# How many police are there in Victoria?

In the discussion of police numbers, it is useful to clarify some key terms. While the term Victoria Police is not defined or used in the *Police Regulation Act 1958*, it is generally understood to refer to a statutory body. The *Public Administration Act 2004 (Vic)* defines Victoria Police as a 'special body'. Another term commonly used to denote Victoria Police is 'the force', again a term not defined in the *Police Regulation Act*.

The Chief Commissioner is empowered by the *Police Regulation Act* and the *Public Administration Act* 2004 to employ staff. Victoria Police employees make up three groups. 'Sworn' police officers have the power of arrest, have taken the oath of constable and can exercise police powers including the use of force in the course of their duty. 'Sworn' police are appointed by the Chief Commissioner in accordance with the *Police Regulation Act*. A second group of employees of Victoria Police are also appointed under the *Police Regulation Act* and consists of police recruits, considered as employees on probation until they complete training, as well as protective service officers and reservists.

'Unsworn' civilian officers are the third group. They are public servants

Crime statistics are central to Victoria Police for setting performance targets, measuring their achievement, and for identifying priorities for police action. They are also used for planning, managing and allocating police resources across Victoria.

the employed by Chief Commissioner under the Public Administration Act. They are not force' 'officers of the accordance with the Police Regulation Act. They generally undertake support functions, such as intelligence and data

analysis, financial and human resource management, forensic science and information technology.

It is the Victorian government that determines the number of police officers or any increases to the number. The number of civilian officers working in operational areas is determined by Victoria Police.

The information in Table 1 was provided to me by Victoria Police as at 3 November 2008. It shows that there were a total of 11,090 police officers, including 167 recruits, 8,168.63 operational police officers (Full Time Equivalent (FTE)) located in the five police regions (75 per cent), 2,277 operational police in specialist areas (21 per cent); and 477.36 (FTE) police in support areas (4 per cent). In addition, there were 2,512.7 civilian staff (FTE) employed by Victoria Police on that date.

Table 1: Victoria Police numbers as at 3 November 2008

| REGION ONE TOTAL POLICE RESOURCES          | 1517.52   |
|--|-----------|
| REGION TWO TOTAL POLICE RESOURCES          | 1742.23   |
| REGION THREE TOTAL POLICE RESOURCES        | 1671.06   |
| REGION FOUR TOTAL POLICE RESOURCES         | 1771.18   |
| REGION FIVE TOTAL POLICE RESOURCES         | 1466.64   |
| Subtotal - 8168.63                         |           |
| OTHER OPERATIONAL POLICE                   |           |
| Counter Terrorism and Emergency Management | 45.00     |
| Covert and Intel                           | 311.61    |
| Crime                                      | 545.92    |
| Ethical Standards                          | 151.37    |
| Forensic                                   | 82.89     |
| Legal Services                             | 205.80    |
| Operations Co-ordination                   | 61.89     |
| Probationary Constables                    | 81.00     |
| Specialist Support                         | 435.45    |
| Traffic and Transport                      | 356.07    |
| Subtotal – 2277                            |           |
| SUPPORT POLICE                             |           |
| Airlie Leadership                          | 8.00      |
| Business Information Technology            | 30.58     |
| Business Management Dept                   | 53.58     |
| Corporate Communications                   | 72.38     |
| Corporate Management Review                | 15.00     |
| Corporate Strategy and Performance         | 36.16     |
| Education Dept                             | 189.90    |
| Human Resource                             | 47.26     |
| Licensing Services                         | 11.50     |
| Office of Chief Commissioner               | 13.00     |
| Recruits                                   | 167.00    |
| Total                                      | 11,090.00 |

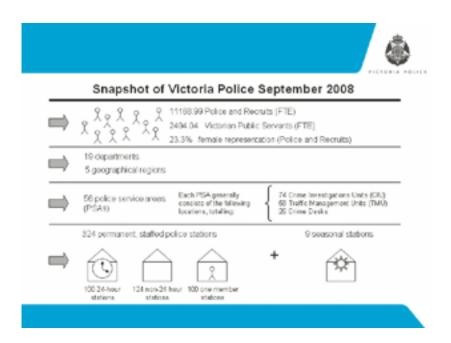
Source: Victoria Police

### Where are the police in Victoria?

The number of police officers in operational positions and where they are located is a relevant issue for my investigation. Operational police are described as:

- police who are 'first responders' to the community and work within the five geographical police regions in Victoria (Attachment 2)
- police who attend and provide operational support to 'first responders'
- specialist police who provide support to operational police in achieving their objectives, for example, legal and forensic services.

Victoria Police provides a 24 hour seven days a week response to the Victorian community through a network of 'first responders' who work within the five regions. The regional policing services are provided through operational police based at police stations, traffic management units, Crime Desks and crime investigation units, and are grouped into 56 Police Service Areas (PSA), generally aligned with Local Government Areas within each of the regions. Each PSA is headed by a manager of Inspector rank. The diagram below summarises where Victoria Police staff are located as at September 2008.



Source: Victoria Police

While the Victorian government determines the number of police officers, it is Victoria Police that determines their allocation across the state and how they are to be used operationally.

The majority of police officers are assigned to the five police regions. Within each region most police work in the general duties uniform section at police stations or in investigation teams, such as Crime Investigation Units (CIU) and the Crime Desks. A number of police officers work in regional offices. Victoria Police also has nine specialist operational departments, including the Crime Department. A smaller number of police are distributed among non-operational departments, including the Human Resource Department, the Office of the Chief Commissioner and the Corporate Strategy & Performance Department.

My investigation is specifically concerned with the allocation of police officers to the regions and, in particular, those working as uniform officers in police stations. These officers as 'first responders' are at the direct interface between Victoria Police and the public and are generally the first to become aware of crime and other incidents. They are often the first point of contact for people requiring police services. One of their key responsibilities is to record incidents and information about crime for entry on to the LEAP database, so that data can be extracted to enable crime statistics to be produced.

### CRIME STATISTICS

### Recording of crime

My investigation found a number of concerns about the recording and collection of crime data, which could impact on the accuracy of the statistics.

In this regard, my investigation identified a number of concerns about the quality of the data and the administrative systems used to produce crime

My investigation found a number of concerns about the recording and collection of crime data, which could impact on the accuracy of the statistics.

statistics. Issues were identified which could lead to distortion and misrepresentation in the way information about crime statistics is produced and presented, and

also in relation to police numbers. While there was no corroborated evidence that these instances involved manipulation to the extent that they could be considered to constitute systematic falsification of statistics, they were of concern.

Police officers and civilian staff of Victoria Police were given opportunities to provide me with any information relevant to the investigation. I was provided with examples of what was believed to be manipulation of crime data. However, in none of the examples examined was it possible to draw firm conclusions. The following examples are indicative of those received:

### One Senior Sergeant stated that:

...we have been told that they have too many burglaries and we've got Compstat coming up in 3 or 4 months, if it's clear someone broken a screen door and tried to break the front door, the normal category of offence is 'attempted burglary'; but you don't make it an 'attempted burglary' if you can't catch the crook; so you make it a 'wilful damage'. There was one particular division where 'attempted burglary' went down by 11 per cent and 'wilful' damage went up by about 12 per cent.

Another police officer described an incident involving fraud where several persons had been charged with more than 1,000 offences over a four-year period.

...I charged A with [...] counts and B with [...] counts... [and] ...forms were sent to LEAP data entry for recording. Naturally all these offences have been cleared. I have eagerly been awaiting for the stats to appear on the monthly statistics. This hasn't happened.

When the officer contacted LEAP data entry to establish why they had not been recorded he was informed that:

...the incidents and sub-incidents have all been recorded as one incident/sub-incident as they are all committed by the same offenders and on the same victim. I expressed my concern as to why this would be, as it appears that the figures produced by LEAP are false and misleading. The person I spoke to at LEAP was in agreement and said that they are false. They also informed me that their computers are not capable of recording crimes in excess of 999. Of course my total offences are [more than 1,000]. What disturbed me also is that my team has put in months of work on this file, to be rewarded with the clean up of one crime. This is not fair on me or this office.

### Victoria Police advised in respect of the above example:

It appears the concern shown by this police officer relates to the fact that many hours may have been spent investigating this offence, only to be given credit for solving one incident rather than the 1000+ offences committed. Hence, the offences are of course recorded, but there is an issue with the police officer's understanding of the sub-incident count.

Many examples confirmed the central role that crime statistics play. They are used to identify 'spikes' when there may be a sudden increase in some crimes, which may need explanation and require strategies to address them. The statistics also enable comparisons of trends across the PSAs to assess how well they are performing and to assist in staff allocations.

However, in a review of Compstat prepared by the Corporate Management Review Division (February 2006), inaccurate crime data was identified as a significant issue. The report stated:

...Examples were given where inconsistent interpretation of data entry fields had led to inaccuracies in the data presented to Compstat, and on occasion resulting in unnecessary resources being utilised to cleanse the data.

The review team noted that some of the concerns about crime statistics...are symptomatic of uncoordinated legacy data systems...which do little, if anything to address the deeper issue of rectifying our data integrity issues... Police interviewed as part of the review ...expressed frustration with data integrity, with the resultant need for data cleansing...others interviewed pointed the blame at sergeant level regarding quality assurance of data that is entered at the front line.

### The review further queried:

...to what extent any deficiencies which are embedded in our data collection systems contribute to this issue [of data integrity]...to do this one should look at the design of our data collection systems in a holistic manner; the context of their usability, their ability to minimise the risk of data entry error, their capacity to be integrated, interrogated and developed to meet the changing needs... [of Victoria Police].

### Also:

...Given that a key element of the Compstat process is 'data driven analysis' which are made available to identify and analyse problems and to track and assess police responses; ...to reduce crime, police need to know about crime...specifically police need to know: what crime is happening, where crime is happening, when crime is happening and why crime is happening...good fast crime analysis is vital to crime reduction.

I recognise the difficulties faced in attempting to validate the crime recording process – as one officer put it....'if it isn't there, it can't be audited...' When my investigators sought information about any internal validation reviews or audits of the recording of crime practices, particularly at the station level, no details were able to be provided. Despite the lack of auditing information about crime recording, I examined how the validity of LEAP crime statistics could be tested, in view of the concerns expressed about the quality of crime data.

#### Victoria Police advised

Validating crime statistics can also be performed by comparing recorded crime with activity on member running sheets. This methodology was used by the Australian Institute of Criminology *Review of Victoria Police Crime Statistics* 2002 when it was found that the crime statistics published by Victoria Police accurately reflect the counting rules and crime classifications on LEAP. Furthermore, part of the standard duties of a section sergeant has always been to review running sheets and ensure that there is a corresponding crime report with any entry that indicates that one would be required as well as checking all LEAP reports for accuracy and completeness.

In my view, comparing running sheets with LEAP records does not validate whether a LEAP record should have been required, as there is no check on whether the running sheets are accurate.

However, on running sheets, crime can often be categorised by police as NOD – no offence detected; NPH – no person home; GOA – gone on arrival; no complaint; or victim did not wish police

involvement. These instances would not be recorded on LEAP. In my view, comparing running sheets with LEAP records does not validate whether a LEAP record should have been required, as there is no check on whether the running sheets are accurate.

I conducted the following exercises to illustrate aspects of the Victoria Police crime recording processes about which I have most concern. I compared:

- 1. recorded crime data on LEAP with calls for service (CAD) data provided by ESTA
- 2. recorded crime data on LEAP with data on victims' applications to the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VOCAT)
- 3. Victoria Police annual recorded crime statistics with estimates of crime derived from crime victim surveys.

The results of these are dealt with in the following sections.

### (i) Comparing Victoria Police crime data with calls for service data

One way to identify any gap between crime that police are made aware of and crime that is recorded on the LEAP database is to examine data on emergency calls made by dialling 000. The Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA) manages the triple zero call service and dispatches emergency services across the Melbourne metropolitan area and Geelong – for Victoria Police, the Country Fire Authority, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Ambulance Victoria and the State Emergency Service. The calls are received and assessed by call centre staff who then dispatch the calls to the relevant emergency service through the CAD system via Telstra. As part of the process, CAD data is collected by ESTA for reporting and performance requirements.

Calls for police via the CAD system have been increasing by around 5 per cent per year and in 2008 represented about 55 per cent of all emergency calls received. While Victoria Police receives regular CAD data from ESTA and can request data checks, there is no direct interface between the CAD data and the LEAP database<sup>9</sup>. I understand that the other emergency services have a broader interconnection with CAD, which assists them in resource management and allocation and in event location and response notification.

During my investigation I was advised that a data matching exercise between CAD data and LEAP had been conducted by an internal audit in Victoria Police some years ago. The results found significant differences between the CAD data and what was recorded on LEAP; it identified under recording of crime by police and delays in recording the crime on to the LEAP forms to be of concern. I understand that an internal audit report at that time showed that crime statistics were understated, particularly in relation to assaults.

During my investigation, I obtained CAD data from ESTA for events which had been assigned to 12 metropolitan police stations in the five regions for a randomly selected day in November 2007 and a day in April 2008. A sample of 572 events from the CAD system was taken for further analysis. The events were broadly classified by ESTA into the crime and public disturbance categories used by the CAD dispatch operators. Crime events included

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> The exception is a link that provides CAD event information to the Victoria Police Media Unit to ensure that timely and accurate information is communicated to the general media.

personal crime categories, such as assault, and property crime categories included burglary, wilful damage and theft of motor vehicle were examined. I would expect to find LEAP records for these events in many instances. LEAP records would be unlikely for public disturbance events, which included pub brawls, people causing trouble, noise complaints and drunken behaviour. With the assistance of staff at the CDEB, each of the 572 CAD events was examined to determine whether a LEAP record existed. Figures 1-3 show the results obtained in relation to days of the week, the types of event category and by police station.

Figure 1: Percentage of CAD crime and public disturbance events by days of the week and whether a LEAP record was identified

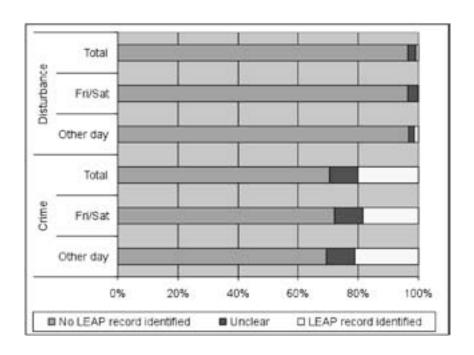


Figure 1 shows whether there was a matching LEAP record for CAD crime or public disturbance events relating to each day of the week. The analysis identified that there was no difference in the matching of LEAP records for different days of the week. Crime events were more likely to have a LEAP

Overall, the majority of CAD events had no LEAP record.

record – around 20 per cent, compared to almost none for public disturbance events. For

about 10 per cent of CAD crime events it was not clear whether a LEAP record existed. Although I would not necessarily expect there to be a direct correlation between CAD events and LEAP, it was nevertheless surprising to

find such a low level of relationship between the CAD crime events and LEAP. Overall, the majority of CAD events had no LEAP record. Victoria Police advised:

CAD (ESTA) and LEAP were created for different purposes. They were not designed to be linked, nor has the information in them been structured to facilitate linking...Victoria Police has identified that linked systems would be beneficial, however the resources to do this, and to expand the CAD to a state-wide system are not currently available.

Figure 2: Percentage of CAD crime events by type and whether a LEAP record was identified

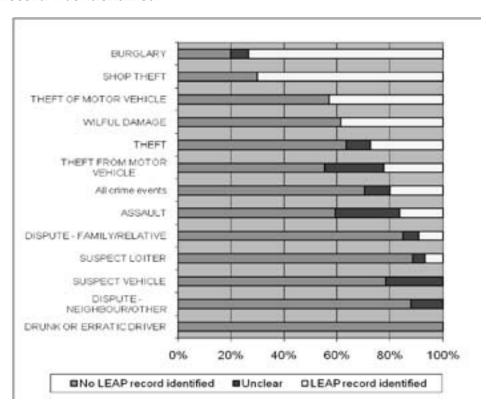
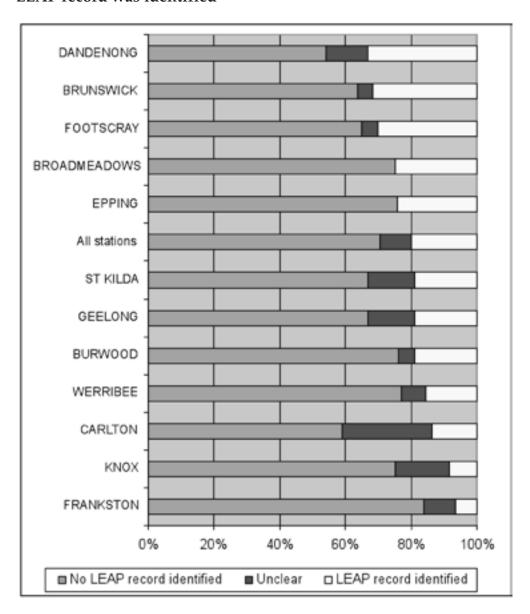


Figure 2 shows the crime events from the CAD data by the type of crime (as categorised by the ESTA call taker) and whether a matching LEAP record was found. The results<sup>10</sup> show that for most burglary and shop theft events, there was a LEAP record (73 and 70 per cent respectively). However, only about 40 per cent of motor vehicle theft and wilful damage events were found to have a corresponding LEAP record. For crime events categorised as family disputes and suspected loitering, slightly less than 10 per cent had LEAP records.

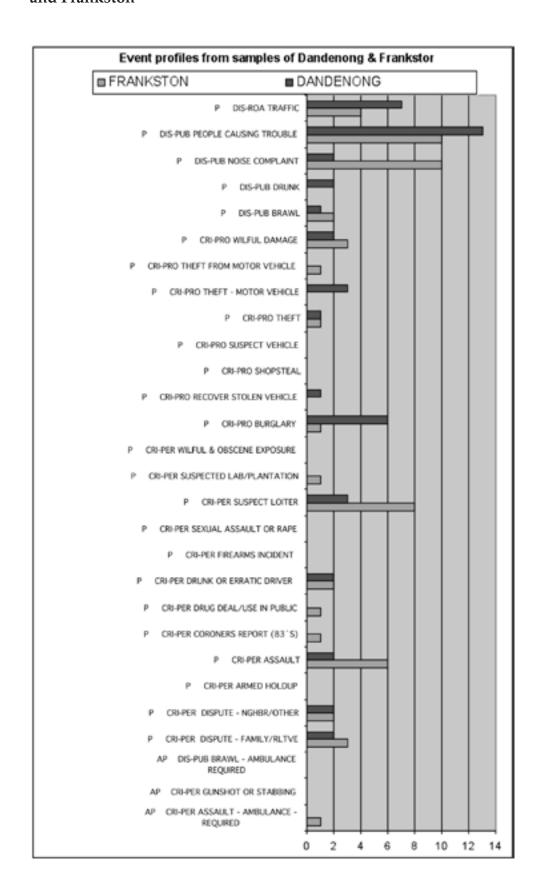
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> For 16 per cent of crime events, police recorded the outcome as 'cancelled' or 'duplicate'.

Figure 3: Percentage of CAD crime events by police station and whether a LEAP record was identified



When the results for CAD crime events assigned to the 12 selected police stations were examined (Figure 3), they showed marked differences in the frequency of matching LEAP records. The smallest percentage of matching LEAP records occurred in Frankston (7 per cent) and the highest percentage in Dandenong (33 per cent). I examined more closely the CAD data for Dandenong and Frankston by type of event which showed differences in the nature and frequency of some of the crime events (Figure 4). It is unclear whether these could account fully for the marked difference in the proportions of LEAP records found between these two stations.

Figure 4: CAD crime and public disturbance events by type for Dandenong and Frankston



Part of the explanation for not finding greater matching between CAD crime event data and LEAP records is that in terms of outcomes, that is, when police arrive, over 50 per cent were categorised as either 'All apparently correct' or 'Gone on arrival'. Due to the previous Victoria Police policy to only record on to LEAP where there was sufficient evidence that a crime has occurred (the evidentiary approach), no LEAP entry would be expected and thus would not be counted in crime statistics.

Further analysis of the outcomes was conducted to attempt to clarify the lack of LEAP records for so many CAD crime events by comparing LEAP record matches with Victoria Police CAD outcome categories. The results (Attachment 3) showed that where an 'offence was detected' or an 'offender apprehended', 23 out of 31 crime events (74 per cent) had a LEAP record. Where 'enquiries were pending', there were 30 out of 55 events (55 per cent) with a LEAP record. For other outcomes however, including 'no offence detected', 'gone on arrival', 'cancelled event/duplicate', and 'all apparently correct', the number of LEAP record matches for CAD crime events dropped to 4 out of 191 events (2 per cent).

These results are significant in that they show for CAD crime events where there was a tangible outcome for police – an 'offender apprehended' or an 'offence detected' - a quarter were not recorded on LEAP; and where the

These results are significant in that they show for CAD crime events where there was a tangible outcome for police – an 'offender apprehended' or an 'offence detected' - a quarter were not recorded on LEAP; and where the outcome was 'enquiries pending', around half did not have a LEAP record.

outcome was 'enquiries pending', around half did not have a LEAP record. Out of a total of 285 CAD crime events examined, only 11 per cent had an outcome of 'offender apprehended' or an 'offence detected' and 19 per cent were

categorised as 'enquiries pending'. For a majority of CAD crime events (70 per cent), the police outcome was noted as 'unable to locate, duplicate or cancelled event, no offence detected, gone on arrival or all apparently correct'.

Table 2 shows a summary of the results for the CAD crime and public disturbance events and the extent of LEAP database matches. Overall, it was found that for all CAD events which had been assigned to police only 10 per cent had a matching LEAP record - 57 crime events and 2 public disturbance events.

Table 2: CAD crime and public disturbance events and whether a LEAP record was identified

| Matching LEAP record identified |             |              |            |                  |  |
|---------------------------------|-------------|--------------|------------|------------------|--|
| CAD event type                  | Yes         | No           | Unclear    | Total CAD events |  |
| Crime                           | 57 (20%)    | 201 (70 %)   | 27 (10%)   | 285<br>(100%)    |  |
| Public disturbance              | 2 (<1%)     | 277<br>(97%) | 8 (3%)     | 287<br>(100%)    |  |
| Total                           | 59<br>(10%) | 478<br>(84%) | 35<br>(6%) | 572<br>(100%)    |  |

I consider that closer examination is required in this area to determine factors influencing the recording of crime events on LEAP and in particular, why many CAD crime events have no record on LEAP and thus are not counted in

The lack of correlation between the classification of events and outcome descriptions used by ESTA and by Victoria Police is problematic and needs to be reviewed.

crime statistics. Further examination is also required to clarify why so many CAD public disturbance-related events, which may touch on crime and public safety matters, are not recorded on LEAP. The lack of

correlation between the classification of events and outcome descriptions used by ESTA and by Victoria Police is problematic and needs to be reviewed.

In a larger exercise of this kind conducted by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research in 2000, similar comparisons were made using crime data and data from the computerised incident dispatch system for two offences - Break and Enter and Motor Vehicle Theft - for each of the NSW Local Area Commands<sup>11</sup>. A comparison between NSW and Victoria is possible by using the Victorian burglary and motor vehicle theft calls for service data

Chilvers, M. & Doak, P. Validation of NSW Police Crime Statistics: A Regional Analysis, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. General Report Series. Sydney, 2000. Validation of NSW police crime statistics: a regional analysis, BOCSAR, Attorney-General's Department, 2000. Last accessed October 2008 at <a href="http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll-bocsar.nsf/vwFiles/r48.pdf">http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll-bocsar.nsf/vwFiles/r48.pdf</a>

which resulted in a LEAP record for the selected stations in Victoria in 2007 and 2008. Although the comparison is limited by the 7-year difference in time, which may include variations in recording practices, improved use of technology, as well as the 'prima facie' approach used by police in NSW to record crime, the results show a lower level of matching for Victoria than for NSW.

For Victoria 73 per cent of calls for service relating to burglary events had clearly identifiable matching LEAP records (for another 7 per cent of burglary events it was unclear whether a LEAP record existed). In the NSW study the average match across all Local Area Commands was 87 per cent in 1997 and 1998, and 94 per cent in 1999 for burglary. For motor vehicle theft, the Victorian calls for service data show that only 40 per cent of calls for service had a matching LEAP record. This is much lower than would be expected given the requirement of insurance agencies for a victim to report the theft to police. By comparison, the NSW study found the ratio of the relationship between recorded crime to calls for service in relation to motor vehicle theft ranged between 62 per cent and 75 per cent.

I note the difficulties encountered in the matching exercise where it was unclear for many CAD events whether a LEAP record had been created or not. Greater harmonisation of event classification and outcome disposition categories between the CAD system and LEAP to accurately describe events reported and the circumstances found on arrival would be of benefit.

When asked about discrepancies between CAD events and LEAP records, operational police said that much crime 'is written off' and not recorded on

Mapping analysis for a region where CAD data had been overlaid with LEAP offences, showed that LEAP records only revealed a fraction of what was occurring in terms of public safety and crime incidents to which police are called out via the CAD system.

LEAP even though it appears on the CAD system. This is particularly the case for public order incidents, categorised in CAD data as 'public disturbance' such as brawls and young people causing trouble. I was informed that for a mapping analysis for a

region where CAD data had been overlaid with LEAP offences, the results

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> The term 'written off' was used, not in the sense of finalised, but to indicate it was dismissed and not reported for one of the following reasons: No offence detected; No Person Home; Gone on Arrival; No Complaint; Did Not Want Police Involvement.

showed that LEAP records only revealed a fraction of what was occurring in terms of public safety and crime incidents to which police are called out via the CAD system.

Many of the matters that police attend in response to 000 calls are not categorised as crime events and, as noted, these would not be expected to lead to the creation of a LEAP report. Such events however do provide valuable information about the broad nature and extent of demand for police services. I understand that Ambulance Victoria uses a computer application (*Siren Live*)

I consider that the differences found between the LEAP records and CAD data require further investigation as to the level of compliance by police with policies for recording crime. on CAD historical data to recommend where ambulances should be moved to so patients are treated as quickly as possible. It takes into account the expected caseload distribution, travel speeds and the likely time for

ambulances to complete their cases, and plots where and when calls for service are likely to be required to assist Ambulance Victoria in its demand and resource management. CAD data is clearly valuable for workforce planning and resource deployment in Victoria Police and also provides information for police intelligence gathering.

I consider that the differences found between the LEAP records and CAD data require further investigation as to the level of compliance by police with policies for recording crime. It was not possible to investigate the reasons why no LEAP record existed for crime events as recorded by the CAD system within the scope of my investigation. While exact matching between CAD and LEAP data is not possible, the CAD data nevertheless provides a good auditing framework for checking the data on to LEAP. Such auditing would be facilitated if the CAD event number is entered on the police running sheets.

#### Victoria Police advised:

ESTA is a separate entity, a multi agency approach would be required to link a LEAP incident number with an ESTA Event ID (EID); which is the matching process used in other states.

#### Recommendation 1

I recommend that Victoria Police conduct regular audits where LEAP records are audited against data from the CAD system for validation. The validation should form part of permanent data quality and data integrity processes for crime recording.

# Victoria Police response:

As part of the implementation and quality assurance program of the ABS National Crime Recording Standards, Victoria Police in November 2008 agreed with other jurisdictions to explore comparisons between CAD data and criminal record data. Such comparisons may have difficulties, as, in Victoria, not all CAD data is state wide, however, Victoria Police has committed to doing this work.

While Victoria Police advised that the CAD system for Victoria Police calls only covers metropolitan Melbourne, I understand that ESTA coverage already includes Geelong, Victoria's second largest city. I note that there is also an Estimates Review Committee submission led by the Department of Justice (DOJ) under consideration by the Department of Treasury and Finance which includes extension of the CAD system to regional and rural Victoria.

# (ii) Comparing Victoria Police crime data with Victim of Crime Assistance Tribunal data

My investigation also examined data provided by the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VOCAT) to determine whether a corresponding LEAP record existed for a sample of victims' applications. The Tribunal, established under the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1996* came into operation on 1 July 1997, provides assistance to victims of crime by paying them for expenses incurred as symbolic expression by the state of the community's sympathy for the suffering caused or where compensation for injury cannot be obtained from the offender or other sources, as a direct result of the crime.

My investigators considered data from applications of victims of crime received by VOCAT between November 2007 and April 2008. It could be expected, given the likely serious nature of the crime experienced by these victims, that a high percentage of applications would have a corresponding LEAP record. It is also a requirement by VOCAT that the victims have reported the crime to the police. A random sample of 166 applications was

examined by my investigators for matching LEAP records at the CDEB, representing 21 per cent of the total applications for that period.

As shown in Table 3, out of the sample of 166 applications, 130 were found to have LEAP records (78 per cent). Of those with LEAP records, the majority were found to be related to assaults (59 per cent), followed by sex offences (22 per cent).

Table 3: Comparing VOCAT applications with LEAP records

| VOCAT applications by crime type as recorded on LEAP | Number of<br>LEAP record<br>matches | Per cent |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Assault  | 76                                  | 59       |
| Sex offences   | 28                                  | 22       |
| Burglary   | 7                                   | 5        |
| Robbery  | 8                                   | 6        |
| Other  | 11                                  | 8        |
| Sub total  | 130                                 | 100      |
| Unable to determine                                  | 36                                  |          |
| Total examined                                       | 166                                 |          |

With respect to the 36 applications which CDEB staff were not able to locate

For some serious crimes there is no LEAP record or a record cannot be found which may indicate under-recording of crime by Victoria Police. I would have expected that for most crime where victims apply to the VOCAT, a LEAP record should exist.

and match to any LEAP record, further investigation by VOCAT found that in terms of alleged crime involved these consisted of Assaults (13), Sexual assaults (7), Culpable driving causing death (5), Threats (5) and Others (6). In

terms of outcomes for these 36 applications, 7 were struck out, 5 were awarded while 24 were still pending.

The analysis demonstrates that for some serious crimes there is no LEAP record or a record cannot be found which may indicate under-recording of crime by Victoria Police. I would have expected that for most crime where

victims apply to the VOCAT (and allowing for old crimes only recently reported, for example, a sexual assault), a LEAP record should exist. I believe further investigation is required to determine why no record could be located for the 36 cases (22 per cent) identified in this exercise. I also consider that as part of auditing the recording of crime by police, use should be made of VOCAT data for validation.

## (iii) Comparing Victoria Police crime data with crime victim surveys

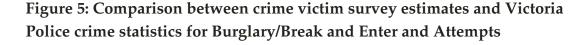
Another way of examining crime statistics produced by Victoria Police is to compare them with crime victim surveys. Such comparisons have been conducted elsewhere, in NSW and internationally<sup>13</sup>, and are able to show the extent of under-reporting of crime by the public and under recording of crime by police themselves.

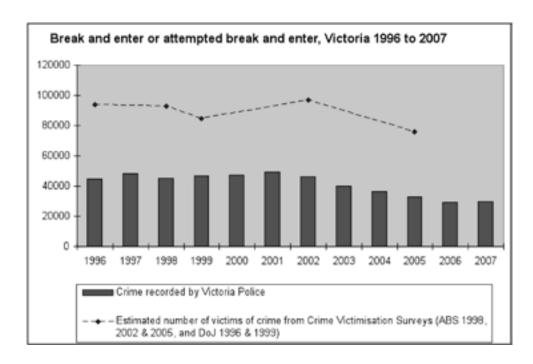
My investigation was able to conduct such a comparison using estimates of crime victimisation from the available Victorian survey data with figures from Victoria Police's annual crime statistics on five types of crime.

ABS Crime and Safety and DoJ survey data on three household offences (Break and Enter, Attempted Break and Enter/Burglary, Motor Vehicle Theft) and three personal offences (Assault, Sexual Assault, Robbery) from 1996 to 2007 were analysed alongside Victoria Police statistics for these offences. It should be noted that because of small numbers, the survey estimates relate to the frequency of the victimisation incidents only, not to the proportion of these incidents reported to police. The proportion of victims reporting the incident to police varied depending on the type of crime. In its 2005 survey, the ABS found that 74 per cent of Burglaries/Break and Enter offences were reported (31 per cent of Attempts), 90 per cent of Motor Vehicle Thefts, 38 per cent of Robberies and 31 per cent of Assaults.

In Figure 5, for the offences of *Break and Enter/Attempted Break and Enter*, the downward trend in survey data is consistent with the trend in the number of offences reported by Victoria Police. However, survey estimates of incidents reported by victims in the sample appear considerably higher than police figures and could be attributable to varying degrees to non-reporting by the public and non-recording by police of these incidents.

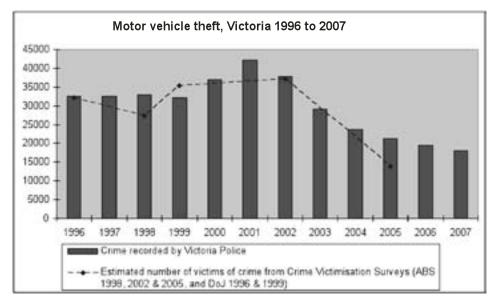
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Van Dijk, J. *The World of Crime.* Sage Publications, 2008; Coleman, C. and Moynihan, J. *Understanding crime data: haunted by the dark figure*, Open University Press, 1996.





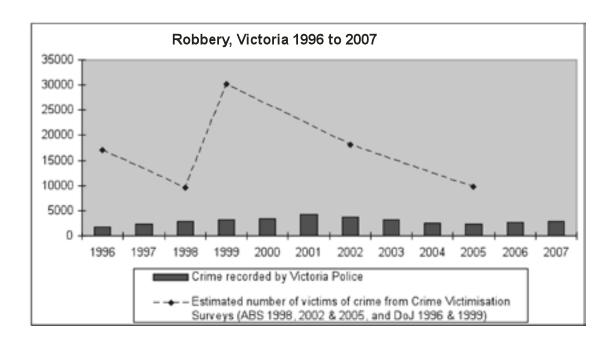
For *Motor Vehicle Theft*, shown in Figure 6, the survey estimates and the numbers from Victoria Police correspond closely. It is likely that insurance requirements encourage the majority of victims to report this offence to police.

Figure 6: Comparison between crime victim survey estimates and Victoria Police crime statistics for Motor Vehicle Theft

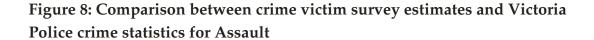


For *Robbery*, the trend for police statistics shown in Figure 7 appears flatter compared to the number of victims estimated by the surveys. This can be partially attributed to small numbers of victims and sampling errors in the surveys and the variability in reporting rates.

Figure 7: Comparison between crime victim survey estimates and Victoria Police crime statistics for Robbery



Trends for *Assaults* (Figure 8), as estimated from the victim surveys, would suggest a reduction in recent years. In contrast, the number of crimes recorded by police has gradually increased. This could be due in part to improved recording by police of *Assaults* which occur in the context of family violence, where a code of practice for police introduced in 2004 had a significant impact on both victim reporting and police recording of these incidents. The difference in levels between the survey estimates and Victoria Police figures relates partly to the reluctance of some victims to report such incidents to police, as well as to police practices regarding the recording of *Assaults*.



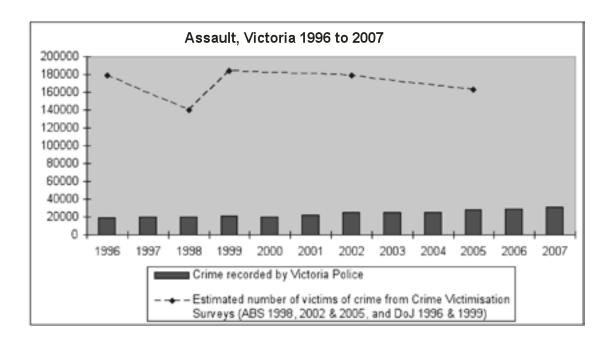
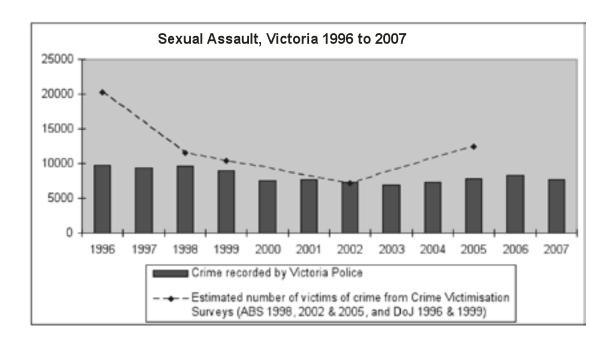


Figure 9 shows *Sexual Assault* as reported in the crime victim surveys to be a decreasing trend to 2002 before rising again in 2005, although small numbers make the data less reliable. Recorded crime numbers were at their lowest level in 2003 increasing to 2006, although remaining below survey estimates. For *Sexual Assault* victims, barriers to reporting these incidents to police may again impact on police figures as well as police recording practices<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> A further difficulty in comparing this data is that crime recorded by police is counted in the year in which it was reported to police, whereas the surveys relate to victimisation in the previous 12 months. There can be delays, often of more than 10 years, in reporting sexual assaults to police.

Figure 9: Comparison between crime victim survey estimates and Victoria Police crime statistics for Sexual Assault



The results from the comparisons between the crime victim survey data and the Victoria Police official crime figures for the five types of crime show that

The results from the comparisons between the crime victim survey data and the Victoria Police official crime figures for the five types of crime show that with the exception of Motor Vehicle Theft, there are wide differences between victim survey estimates and what is reported to and recorded by Victoria Police. with the exception of *Motor* Vehicle Theft, there are wide differences between victim survey estimates and what is reported to and recorded by Victoria Police. While the nonreporting of crime to police by the public is factor explaining the gap, police recording practices are

relevant. As Victoria Police has been using an evidentiary approach to recording crime up to 30 June 2008, non-recording of crime could occur if police were not satisfied that there was sufficient evidence for the crime.

#### Recommendation 2

I recommend that Victoria Police use VOCAT records and crime victim surveys to enable recorded crime statistics to be compared and validated.

## Victoria Police response:

The Australian Bureau of Statistics runs an annual household crime and safety survey, which collects information about individual and household experiences of selected crime and other relevant topics such as feelings of safety or problems in the neighbourhood. Interviews are conducted by telephone with respondents as part of an omnibus multi purpose household survey run from the ABS labour force sample frame. The survey is being run annually from 2008-09, with rolling collection throughout the year.

However, this response does not address the issue of VOCAT records.

# Compliance with rules for recording crime

The rules for recording crime should be clear and easy to follow. They should be regularly reviewed in the light of legislative and practice changes and they should be effectively communicated to police to enable compliance. I found a number of deficiencies in this regard.

In Victoria, police must determine if an event or incident that they become aware of should be recorded on to the LEAP database as a crime. The decision whether to record is influenced by a number of factors, which impact on the gap between the number of crimes police became aware of and the number of crimes actually recorded on LEAP.

## *Defining 'crime' on the LEAP database*

Police are required to determine firstly whether an incident brought to their attention meets the definition of a crime as referenced by legislation. For the purpose of producing crime statistics, crime is categorised into 27 categories as shown in Attachment 1.

Over time the definition of what is and is not a crime will vary<sup>15</sup> and, depending on police understanding and awareness of these changes, will impact on recording practices. In addition, some crimes do not require LEAP records. Subsection 4.2 of VPM 108-3 states that offences not requiring LEAP reports are:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> What is defined as a crime will also vary between police jurisdictions. Although the crime categories used in the ABS national statistics are considered comparable, except for assault and sexual assault.

- drunkenness and drunk and disorderly offences committed by adults where these are the only offences alleged
- traffic offences, except for child cautioning incident
- any offence where an Infringement Notice has been issued and this is the only action taken.

Although the public may report these incidents to police or police may become aware of them in other ways, they will not be recorded as a crime on LEAP unless they are associated with other offences. For instance, between 1 July 2007 and 30 June 2008, police officers in Division 1 of Region 1 made approximately 2,700 arrests for drunkenness, which is still a criminal offence in Victoria. While a record of these incidents is kept and trends monitored for 'tasking' reasons, they are not included in Victoria Police crime statistics.

The notion of 'crime' for statistical purposes can also depend on which agency has responsibility for enforcement. Thus crime which falls within one of the Victoria Police 27 crime categories (Attachment 1) and occurs on public transport represents only 2.5 per cent of the total recorded in the Victoria Police crime statistics (Victoria Police Crime Statistics – Official release 2007-08 October 2008, p14). However, the majority of offences relating to public transport and many of which touch on public safety issues are dealt with by infringement notices issued by the Department of Transport. That Department also deals with more serious non-infringeable offences on public transport, such as Assault or Resist Authorised Officer, Fraud in relation to Concession Ticket. The Victoria Police Crime Statistics publication shows crime on public transport that police deal with to be relatively small. It should be noted that other government agencies, such as WorkSafe, the Environment Protection Authority and the Department of Primary Industry, can also detect and prosecute criminal offences under their respective legislation. Crime dealt with by agencies other than Victoria Police and not brought to their notice are not included in Victorian crime statistics. This issue is further discussed below.

Changes to legislation also impact on what is a 'crime' and how it is classified and recorded. One example is the *Infringements and Other Acts Amendment Act* 2008. The purpose of the Act is to expand the infringement system by allowing some criminal offences to be dealt with by way of an official warning or penalty notice. Some of the offences included are *Shop Theft (under \$600), Wilful Damage (under \$500), Indecent/Obscene language and Offensive* 

*Behaviour*. Some police officers interviewed were of the understanding that since these offences are dealt with by infringement notices, they will not be recorded as 'crime' on LEAP. The impact of this change could be a decrease in these minor but high volume offence categories, which contribute to the total recorded crime figure used to determine whether crime has increased from year to year.

## Victoria Police stated:

It acknowledged the inconsistency of the issue surrounding Infringement Notices and subsequent LEAP reports, as per VPM 108-3, and have passed this on to the Corporate Policy team to make the appropriate amendments.

Another example relates to *Aggravated Burglary*, where a change in legislation in 1997 broadened the definition, leading to an increase in *Aggravated Burglary* statistics and a decrease in *Burglary*.

Evidentiary vs prima facie practices of recording crime

Whether police record an incident as crime on to the crime data recording system can be based broadly on:

- 1. The *prima facie* approach whereby police take the details of alleged crime at face value and record the crime, prior to any further investigation now implemented in Victoria since 1 July 2008.
- 2. The **evidentiary** approach requires police to have sufficient evidence to support an allegation of crime before it is recorded used in Victoria up to 30 June 2008.

While police must exercise discretion about whether to record an incident under both models, the evidentiary model gives police officers a greater level of discretion. The more closely police adhere to the evidentiary model, the

The more closely police adhere to the evidentiary model, the greater the potential for inconsistencies and the wider the gap between what is reported to police and what is recorded as crime.

greater the potential for inconsistencies and the wider the gap between what is reported to police and what is recorded as crime. Other jurisdictions, such as the UK, have found that the use of the evidentiary recording

rules was a major source of inconsistency in crime statistics and have moved to *prima facie* rules, which also better measure demand for police service.

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) was commissioned by Victoria Police to conduct a review of its crime statistics in 2001<sup>16</sup> to assess data quality and the processes applied to counting crime, following concerns (*Herald-Sun* 22 November 1998; Victorian Parliamentary Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee) about the accuracy of Victorian crime statistics. The report found that there were inconsistencies in the way some crimes were recorded; in particular that when police attended a domestic dispute or an assault, they were less likely to lead to a LEAP record. However, it found that once crime was recorded on the LEAP database, the policies and procedures for quality assurance of the data were effective and the level of error in the records used to produce the crime statistics was negligible.

The review included a validation exercise in which running sheets, listing activities undertaken by police, were matched to LEAP records (the AIC was not given access to calls for service data). The review analysed 2,264 activities generated from a sample of 153 running sheets and found that 26 per cent of the activities resulted in the creation of a LEAP record. A similar study cited by the AIC and conducted in Queensland (1996)<sup>17</sup> found that about one third of all matters coming to the attention of police were recorded as crime. The AIC further found that activities listed on the running sheets and not recorded as crimes, but which might have been recorded as such, represented only 1.5 per cent of the total activities on the running sheets. The AIC report concluded that the amount of under-recording overall is low and that the crime statistics published by Victoria Police accurately reflect the counting rules and crime classifications applied to those incidents recorded on the LEAP database as crimes. However, some concerns have been expressed about the methodology used in the AIC study, including that the under recording may be much higher for specific offences, for example, assaults.

One of the recommendations made in the AIC report was that Victoria Police should move from an evidentiary model to a *prima facie* model of crime recording, as the latter is considered best practice for improving consistency in crime recording. This recommendation was only implemented in July 2008, under the impetus of ABS developments discussed below, and demonstrates a general slowness by Victoria Police to move towards best practice in crime

<sup>16</sup> Carcach, C. and Makkai, T. *Review of Victoria Police Crime Statistics*, Australian Institute of Criminology Research and Public Policy Series, No. 45, 2002.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Criminal Justice Commission, *The nature of general police work*. Research Paper series, vol.3, no. 2, Brisbane, 1996.

recording. On 1 July 2008 Victoria Police revised its crime recording policy (VPM 108-3) to a *prima facie* model. All police were advised on 27 June 2008 that:

Under the new policy, all criminal incidents reported to police must be recorded as one or more offences unless there is credible evidence available at the time of reporting to suggest that a crime has not occurred.

My investigation of the way this change in policy was implemented is further discussed below.

Inconsistencies in crime recording practices

During my investigation, I identified inconsistencies in crime recording practices and a lack of systematic auditing at the station level to address such inconsistencies.

The following example illustrates how some allegations of crime made by the public are handled by police. My investigators were advised that at ski resorts, theft of ski/board equipment is frequently reported to police by the public:

.... the figures go through the roof... the Senior Sergeant says wait a week before recording them as theft and completing the LEAP forms.

The reason for deferring the decision to record the crime reports is to see if the equipment is found. It may have been misplaced or taken by mistake and returned. While this practice may have been compliant with the evidentiary approach used up to 30 June 2008, police were uncertain how these matters should now be recorded under the new *prima facie* policy commencing 1 July 2008.

Another example relates to petrol 'drive-off' where a customer fills their car up with petrol and leaves without paying. Should the theft of petrol be

I identified inconsistencies in crime recording practices and a lack of systematic auditing at the station level to address such inconsistencies. recorded on LEAP if the alleged offender says it was a genuine mistake and was coming back to pay? It depends, according to some police at what point police

speak to the person; yes or perhaps not, according to others. Similar examples were cited for car theft and other thefts.

The example of family violence incidents was cited by a number of police to illustrate how crime recording practices can be improved and made more consistent and compliant with policy. It also demonstrated how large increases in assault statistics can occur because of changes in police practices. A Victoria Police code of practice and related strategies were implemented on 31 August 2004 to improve the police response to family violence incidents and encourage public confidence in reporting these offences to police. Since these initiatives, there has been a significant rise in the number of assaults recorded which are family violence related. A year prior to the implementation of the code only 15 per cent of assaults in the annual crime statistics were family violence related; this proportion had risen to around 25 per cent in the years since 2005-06. During my investigation, police pointed out that any family violence related offences 'must now be recorded'; whereas prior to the code's implementation, recording on LEAP was reported to be less likely. The recent policy implementation of Rule 2 in principle should bring other forms of crime more in line now with improved recording of family violence matters.

### Recommendation 3

I recommend that Victoria Police conduct regular independent audits of police practices for recording crime on LEAP to ensure compliance with its policies and procedures.

## Victoria Police response:

It will refer this Recommendation to its Corporate Management Review Division for consideration.

#### Clearance rates

In the Victoria Police *Crime Statistics* annual publication Table 2.2, the figures

Information that police are required to record on LEAP regarding a crime relates not only to the incident and sub incidents, time and location, details of the victim and/or alleged offender, it also includes actions taken by police managing the investigation.

show that clearance rates (within the 12-month period) vary markedly depending on the offence category. Drug crimes have very high clearance rates (98 per cent) while property crime is much lower (*Residential Burglary* 13 per cent; *Theft of Motor Car* 21 per cent; *Theft from Motor Vehicle* 

9 per cent). As the cleared crime indicates that it has been resolved for one of

several reasons listed below, including that the crime has been attributed to an alleged offender, this can show police success in solving crime.

Information that police are required to record on LEAP regarding a crime relates not only to the incident and sub incidents, time and location, details of the victim and/or alleged offender, it also includes actions taken by police managing the investigation (these are often detectives in CIUs) to show progress/status in relation to the incident. Of particular interest is where the investigation has been completed or finalised and each sub-incident has been cleared by one of the following methods (see VPM 108-4):

- all offenders have been processed (charged)
- all offenders processed (intent to summons)
- brief submitted with intent to summons, but summons not authorized
- no offence has been disclosed
- complaint withdrawn
- other (e.g. offender deceased).

It should be noted that only the first two clearance methods involve a formal processing of an offender - all offenders have been processed (charged) and all offenders processed (intent to summons).

It was brought to my attention that some police misuse the recording procedures on cleared crime to make it appear that more crime has been successfully solved than is actually the case. The way this is done, it was explained to me, is when an offender has been apprehended and processed for certain offences, unrelated offences for which no offender has yet been apprehended or interviewed, are added on to the file for the apprehended offender (without their knowledge) in order to 'clear up' more crime. While

It was brought to my attention that some police misuse the recording procedures on cleared crime to make it appear that more crime has been successfully solved than is actually the case.

an 'intent to summons' form is completed and faxed through to LEAP for data entry and for counting as crime, the commencement of actual proceeding against the alleged

offender is not authorised by the supervisor for reasons which include insufficient evidence. The practice has been reported to me on a number of occasions. My investigation identified one specific example which may well have involved falsification of official police records. Further investigation is required to determine whether this is a widespread practice.

Other jurisdictions have found that the use of clearance rates has a number of limitations as measures of police performance. In the UK, changes were introduced in 2007 to significantly limit the use of clearances when there is no formal processing of an offender. My concern about the misuse of clearance rates in Victoria Police is that it undermines the credibility of police. It also contributes to concerns about the accuracy of the Victoria Police crime statistics.

## Recommendation 4

I recommend that Victoria Police review the methodology for clearance rates and finalising a crime report.

## Victoria Police response:

[It] is of the view that the current arrangements for finalising a crime report are adequate, and that a review is not required.

#### Recommendation 5

I recommend that the Office of Police Integrity investigate falsification of police records associated with Victoria Police practices in relation to clearance rates and finalising crime reports as identified in this investigation.

# Instructions for recording crime

While I am satisfied that police in Victoria have been using the same general approach to recording crime since the establishment of LEAP in 1993, my investigation identified that there are many inconsistencies between police stations and between police officers in the recording of crime, and indeed confusion over how some crime should be classified and recorded. This is particularly the case for high volume and relatively less serious offences, such as multiple instances of damage to property or fraud.

One example demonstrates this concern. The crime of deception often involves a large number of incidents, such as an offender writing numerous fraudulent cheques to different victims and at different times. Many police officers were not clear on how many sub-incident forms should be completed and how many counts of crime should be recorded.

Simplification of the rules and clear guidance for the recording of crime is essential and will assist in achieving compliance with recording standards and improve data quality, especially for some more challenging crime categories. It is stated that the aim of the training manual produced by the LEAP Management Unit in 2003 is to ensure that:

LEAP Incidents and Sub-Incidents must be correctly recorded to ensure the accurate recording of crime and events for operational, analytical purposes. This document has been designed to provide an understanding of crime recording, and the relationship between incident, sub-incidents and charges.

While the manual provides definitions for terms such as 'incidents', 'sub-incidents' and 'charges', the relationships between these terms appear confusing and difficult to understand. Examples of training manuals were provided to me by other police jurisdictions which provided better detail than those used by Victoria Police. My view is that the LEAP manual requires an extensive review, which should incorporate good practice from other jurisdictions to facilitate high quality recording of crime by police in Victoria.

#### Recommendation 6

I recommend that Victoria Police review the LEAP manual for recording crime and incorporate, where appropriate, the National Crime Recording Standard requirements.

## Victoria Police response:

[Its] Data Management Steering Committee has this as a program of work under priority 1: Apply consistent data quality standards across all Victoria Police systems.

# Comparison with other Australian jurisdictions

For the purpose of my investigation I sought information about crime statistics, in particular how they are recorded, collected and produced, from other Australian jurisdictions. I have identified a number of differences between jurisdictions and have referred to some of these within this report.

Of particular interest are the differences in the way police across Australian jurisdictions record crime. In the context of the national *Recorded Crime – Victims* statistics, concerns had been expressed about these differences to the ABS over a number of years by several jurisdictions. A comparison of ABS

assault statistics is relevant in this regard. In the 1998 ABS *Recorded Crime-Victim* publication (police statistics), the recorded assault rate in NSW was nearly two and a half times that of Victoria; yet the ABS *Crime and Safety* survey in 1998 indicated that the annual estimate of assaults between the two jurisdictions was almost the same (3.9 per cent in NSW compared with 3.8 per cent in Victoria). The discrepancy in the police statistics, it was suggested in ABS forums, was likely to be due to a difference in how these jurisdictions recorded assaults, with NSW using a *prima facie* approach, whereas in Victoria, up to 30 June 2008, recording was evidentiary-based.

To address issues of national comparability, the Board of Management of the National Crime Statistics Unit (NCSU) initiated the Differences in Recorded Crime Statistics (DiRCS) project to identify factors that impact on the national comparability of crime statistics produced by the ABS. The project investigated whether the underlying differences between the Australian police jurisdictions in its *Recorded Crime-Victim* statistics was due in part to police recording practices. The final DiRCS report prepared by NCSU was presented to its Board of Management and to the Australasian Police Ministers' Council (APMC) in April 2005.

One clear conclusion of the DiRCS project relevant to my investigation is that there were differences in the way crime data is entered and recorded at the front end by police. The NCSU conducted a Scenario Based Testing (SBT) study as a part of the project, comprising 30 scenarios of various crime incidents in the form of a questionnaire for police. The results showed robbery is almost always recorded in all jurisdictions when intentional force is used against the victim and goods were stolen. Differences were found however, within and between jurisdictions, in the recording of assaults, in particular for scenarios involving domestic violence and assault on public premises. The DiRCS report concluded:

- Recorded Crime Victim data for assault and sexual assault were not currently comparable across all Australian jurisdictions because of the different practices at the initial processing stage by which these offences are recorded by police.
- Some jurisdictions almost always record a reported criminal activity on their crime recording system; whereas other jurisdictions apply a form of threshold test prior to a record being made.
- Variation in the decision to record a crime is significant for assault, including sexual assault, and domestic violence incidents.

 Once a crime has been recorded in a crime recording system, there are no material differences in the way police jurisdictions manage the information.

The ABS was sufficiently concerned about these differences between jurisdictions (without naming any jurisdiction) to decide to exclude interjurisdictional comparisons for the offences of *Assault* and *Sexual Assault* in its annual *Recorded Crime-Victims* statistics report.

#### Victoria Police stated that:

...changes in practices in Victoria Police since the DiRCS assessment in 2002 have already had a significant impact. DiRCS indicated... that there might be a large increase in Victoria for assault offences as result of the implementation of Rule 2... Since the DiRCS findings, there is greater alignment with Rule 2 recording practices due to the introduction of the Code of Practice for the investigation of Family Violence in August 2004...

## (i) Development of the National Crime Recording Standard

A lack of consistent implementation of ABS standards and classifications by jurisdictions contributes to discrepancies in crime reporting. Following the findings of the DiRCS project, the NCSU Board of Management endorsed a recommendation to develop a strategy for a National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), incorporating principles, definitions and counting rules jointly developed by state and territory police representatives and the NCSU between November 2005 and March 2006. These rules were subsequently endorsed in principle by the NCSU Board of Management in May 2006 thereby requiring all jurisdictions to record crime consistently in accordance with the agreed definitions and principles. Applying the NCRS is intended to ensure that all police agencies will record crime for statistical purposes in a comparable manner. All jurisdictions, including Victoria, were expected to have implemented the NCRS by July 2008, although according to the ABS, the process for implementation differs for each jurisdiction.

# The ABS had advised:

Each jurisdiction is different due to the way they conduct police business which is often dictated by the systems that are available. For most jurisdictions Rule 2 will have the biggest impact. The other principles were developed to provide more clarity to the already established [Recorded Crime Victim Statistics] rules and most jurisdictions already meet/comply with

these rules. Each jurisdiction will implement what it needs to according to whether they meet the current rules. Some will require systems changes while others will not.

As police crime statistics are a by-product of the administrative processes of law enforcement, the ABS has advised that it is not feasible to quantify the impact of the NCRS on crime recording. The ABS is unlikely to be able to determine what observed changes in national rates are likely to be due to the introduction of the NCRS rather than to other factors, such as changes in legislation and policing practice.

The NCSU Board of Management has also endorsed in principle the development of quality assurance strategies as part of the implementation of the NCRS. The ABS has indicated that the reinstatement of national offence data for *Assault* and *Sexual Assault* will not occur until all jurisdictions have implemented the standard and it is satisfied with the comparability of the data.

#### Recommendation 7

I recommend that Victoria Police strengthen its commitment and support for the implementation of the National Crime Recording Standard and the associated quality assurance strategy.

## Victoria Police response:

[It] continues to be committed to the implementation of the National Crime Recording Standards and the associated quality assurance strategy.

## (ii) Victoria Police's implementation of Rule 2

According to the ABS, the biggest impact for police jurisdictions in the implementation of the NCRS is Rule 2. Rule 2 states:

An incident will be recorded as one or more offences if *prima facie* (on the face of it) on the balance of probability (more probable than not):

- The circumstances as reported or detected amount to a crime defined by law and fall within the jurisdiction of the police agency; and
- There isn't credible evidence to the contrary.

This rule provides a common basis for recording an incident with one or more offences according to the judgement of the police officer (as distinct from evidentiary or prosecutorial reasons).

## Victoria Police advised that:

Rule 2 was expected to have the main impact on Victoria Police [compared to other jurisdictions]. However, changes in practices in Victoria Police since the DiRCS assessment in 2002 have already had a significant impact...

[Victoria Police] estimated that under ...[the new rule]...the recording of assault, sexual assault and theft offences would increase. It is projected that assault offences may increase by as much as 12.5 per cent and sexual assault offences by around 4.1 per cent.

Victoria Police officially changed its crime recording policy (VPM 108-3) in line with the ABS Rule 2 requirement effective from 1 July 2008. However, most police officers interviewed by my investigators during July and August 2008, including senior sergeants, inspectors, staff trainers, constables and senior constables, indicated that they were not aware of the change in crime recording policy. Although all police were sent a global e-mail message on 27 June 2008 alerting them to the change, which was also reported in the Police Gazette, 21 July 2008 (Attachment 4) (which is the established procedure for implementing VPM changes), a large number of police stated they had not read the communication or did not know about it.

In preparation for the implementation of the ABS Rule 2, a small survey of 126 operational police ranging in rank from senior constable to sergeant was conducted in 2007 by Victoria Police's Corporate Strategy & Performance Department to assess the impact of the change in policy using a number of scenarios. Victoria Police said that 'the number of people [used in the survey] exactly coincides with the number of people surveyed by the ABS when exploring DiRCS'.

On the basis of the survey results, the report concluded that the change will 'only lead to a small increase in reported crime within some crime categories'. Yet the evidence I have received from staff interviewed showed that there were concerns about the survey method and that the results obtained were in fact inconclusive. When the policy change was explained to officers interviewed by my investigators, they did not expect it to lead to any major difference in the way that they would record crime; and thus was unlikely to have an impact on crime statistics produced by Victoria Police. It is unclear whether the expected lack of impact is due to poor understanding of the change in policy, or related more to current practices and procedures,

including the inefficient manual LEAP forms, which are significant obstacles to efficient recording of crime.

I am of the view that the implementation of the ABS Rule 2 by Victoria Police was inadequate. It was not accompanied by detailed explanation and scenarios to assist police to understand how this change would impact on

I am of the view that the implementation of the ABS Rule 2 by Victoria Police was inadequate. recording practices. It appears that the implementation was rushed and there was no training of frontline police or of station

supervisors. Many officers were either unaware or did not have an adequate understanding of the practical impact of the change. Police were told if they had any queries to direct these to the manager of Corporate Statistics. Other police have attempted to contact the LEAP Management Unit for clarification. Responses from this Unit show an attempt to provide useful scenarios to assist police, although the Unit advised that:

...you are at liberty to apply your own interpretation, but if you are unnecessarily increasing your workload, then you do so by your own design...

I consider that this ad hoc approach leaves considerable scope for inconsistent interpretation by police, which will impact on data quality. There does not appear to be a strong culture or commitment to ensuring quality crime data

While Victoria Police met the implementation deadline of the National Crime Recording Standard by simply promulgating the policy change, it did so without providing training to make the change effective at the 'frontline' where crime recording occurs.

recording by police at the 'frontline'. There is evidence from my investigation that police are not sufficiently trained to accurately record crime. The evidence strongly suggests that police officers will continue to make their decisions based on previous practice. This practice

includes a reluctance to take crime reports from victims over the telephone. According to a number of police, these could be false reports and without further enquiries makes it difficult to establish whether a crime has occurred. This can lead to delaying the decision whether to record a crime and completion of the LEAP forms. According to CDEB the time between the crime event and its recording by police on to LEAP forms and faxing them to CDEB can be as long as weeks or several months.

It is my view that, while Victoria Police met the implementation deadline of the NCRS by simply promulgating the policy change, it did so without providing training to make the change effective at the 'frontline' where crime recording occurs. I believe this is inadequate and demonstrates insufficient corporate commitment to the implementation of the revised policy and to the NCRS requirements.

## Victoria Police stated:

Training operational police in any discipline is resource intensive – in terms of accessing over 11,000 people, and in making an assessment that doing so is a better use of their valuable time than operational policing. There are significant demands on training of police – each year requests are made to train all police in relation to use of operational equipment, safety, new legislation, policy and practices, new technology, OHS, equity and diversity issues and career development. A decision was made that training on Rule 2 would be delayed to be included with training on the implementation of LINK; training that will give close consideration to data quality issues. Given the impact of recent policy changes that already give effect to Rule 2, this was preferred as a more effective use of police time, than training all operational police twice in two years on data quality issues.

#### Recommendation 8

I recommend that Victoria Police review and audit the implementation of the National Crime Recording Standard and develop and implement recruit and refresher training of police for the recording of crime under the new policy.

#### Victoria Police response:

[It] continues to be committed to the implementation of the National Crime Recording Standard and the associated quality assurance strategy.

# Manual forms for recording crime

Since the introduction of LEAP in 1993, police have been manually recording

There is evidence from my investigation that police are not sufficiently trained to accurately record crime.

crime on to a series of LEAP paper forms. These are checked by the station supervisor and then faxed for data entry on to

the LEAP database by the CDEB at the Victoria Police Centre. There, a

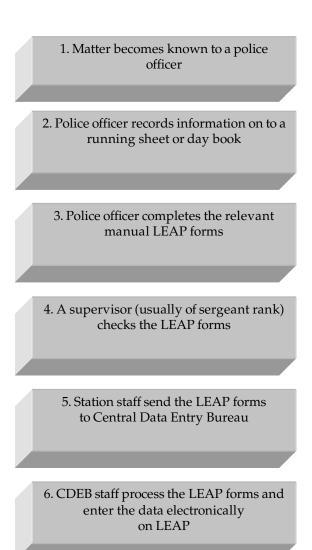
dedicated team of 70 data entry staff receive the faxed forms from across Victoria on the 10 fax machines, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (as shown in the photos).





Pictured above: Central Data Entry Bureau at the Victoria Police Centre.

For most crime categories the process for recording crime follows the steps in the diagram below.



Police at the station can receive a report of a crime by telephone or over the front counter. They are then required to record the information on the various manual paper forms.



Pictured above: LEAP forms behind the front counter (Carlton Police Station)

On patrol police have access to the mobile data network in their vehicles (approximately one third of police vehicles are equipped with terminals).

On patrol police have access to the mobile data network in their vehicles. However, these are not capable of recording crime data or other information on to the LEAP database.

However, these are not capable of recording crime data or other information on to the LEAP database, although they do have a capacity to query the database. While on patrol in vehicles,

police can manually complete their running sheet and/or diaries, which are paper-based contemporaneous notes accounting for their actions. From these, the information is manually written on to the LEAP forms when police return to the station. Sometimes if time permits they may complete the forms while on patrol. It was reported that as police on patrol often have jobs waiting to be dealt with, only some of which are crime related, crime recording is less well done compared to the recording of crime which is reported by the public at a police station.

The inability to enter data on to LEAP via the mobile data terminals in police vehicles highlights the shortcomings of the current technologies used to record crime data. At police stations there is no capacity to record crime data directly on to the LEAP database<sup>18</sup>. My investigators found outdated 'green screens' on the computers to access the LEAP database. Only queries could be made or existing records updated; there is no direct data entry, unlike the NSW Police Service.

It is not just one LEAP form that needs to be completed by police for a crime report. There are many multiple forms (Attachment 5) to be completed by

The inability to enter data on to LEAP via the mobile data terminals in police vehicles highlights the shortcomings of the current technologies used to record crime data. hand to record different aspects of a crime incident. This may involve many sub-incidents (each is a crime count), victims (separate forms), alleged

offenders (separate forms) or property stolen (separate form). The time required to complete the forms varies depending on the crime as well as the experience of the officers. Sometimes they can be completed in 15 minutes; others can 'take hours' to complete.

Officers commented on these manual forms:

... they have not changed since 1993; ...have no idea what happens to them when they are faxed to CDEB...they waste a lot of time; duplicating information...there are a lot of forms to fill out...they are too complex...take too long to fill, so short cuts are taken...

Work pressures, staffing shortages and less than diligent police can significantly impact on how well and when the manual paper recording

Work pressures, staffing shortages and less than diligent police can significantly impact on how well and when the manual paper recording process is carried out. process is carried out. The forms may be completed within 24 hours after the incident, but it also may be sometimes days, weeks or longer if enquiries have to be made. This impacts on the

timeliness of the data in LEAP and on the quality of intelligence information.

Many police reported that completing the forms depends on 'how busy we are', or it gets done 'at the end of the shift' or if it 'is serious', and on whether police are 'lazy'. Yet as some police pointed out, if the paper forms are not completed for each report of a crime, then 'a lot of hard work is not captured'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> The recent development of LEDR for electronic entry of some high volume property crime is discussed further below.

and not acknowledged. It should be noted that a small proportion of crimes are telephoned through to CDEB; it is requirement to do so for *Theft of Motor Car* (forms are faxed through at a later time).

Alternatives to manual crime recording exist elsewhere. In NSW a computerised system enables police to directly enter data, while centralised call centres are used in Queensland and in the UK.

#### Victoria Police has said:

The Central Data Entry Bureau (CDEB) who inputs manual, faxed forms, operates 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, enables police who have filled in forms on patrol, to continue on to another job, rather than sit at a computer and enter information. CDEB also provides a further quality check on the information provided, and chases up stations for corrections.

My investigators were informed that CDEB sends on average 600 messages (called 'chasers') per month to officers in charge of stations to chase up missing or inaccurate data. Reasons are mainly because LEAP does not have

These problems reflect on the inefficient administrative crime recording procedures, on the training police receive in recording crime data and on the audit processes.

the authorised charges recorded; it cannot match the incident to the court outcome; or information is missing. Errors in recording the names of alleged

offenders, witnesses and victims are not uncommon. Errors in the location of where the crime occurs can be frequent; details of an incident in a high rise building can be wrong or imprecise, impacting on the effectiveness of the police response and intelligence gathering. Misclassification of crime also occurs. Several examples were brought to the attention of my investigators. A senior officer stated that an armed robbery at a petrol station is a crime against the person but on LEAP was found to be misclassified as a crime against property (instead of a crime against the person). He also informed my investigators that theft of car number plates could be classified as *Theft of Motor Car* or as *Theft from Motor Car*. Victoria Police responded that it 'does not agree with the statement relating to classification of theft of number plates as either theft of or theft from motor vehicle'.

These problems reflect on the inefficient administrative crime recording procedures, on the training police receive in recording crime data and on the audit processes.

I am concerned at the level of errors that are being detected at the CDEB in the LEAP forms they receive and that there is not more emphasis on a 'right first time' approach, incorporating quality crime recording at the station level. One example cited to me was of a young woman who had been denied employment due to a criminal record (located on the LEAP database); it was discovered later that the record was for another person, a male with the same name. I understand that a data quality report is being prepared for Assistant Commissioners and will include information on 'chasers'.

While some types of high volume property crime has been recorded electronically since 2005 through the LEDR initiative – Victoria Police state that 39 per cent of all recorded crime is electronically entered through LEDR on to the LEAP database – Victoria Police continues to have an out-dated

Clearly, this manual recording process, which lies at the centre of the production of Victorian crime statistics, does not reflect 21<sup>st</sup> century information technology environment.

approach to the recording of most crime, including all crime against the person. Since 1993 technology has markedly evolved and the nature of crime too has changed. Yet the manual

recording of crime remains essentially unchanged in Victoria Police, which, compared to other Australian law enforcement jurisdictions has less direct electronic data entry for recording of crime data. Clearly, this manual recording process, which lies at the centre of the production of Victorian crime statistics, does not reflect 21<sup>st</sup> century information technology environment. It also represents a poor use of valuable police resources. I do not consider that it serves a modern professional police organisation well.

A recent development which came out of Operation Clarendon, which provided forensic skills to some high volume property crimes<sup>19</sup>, was the establishment of an electronic database called LEDR. This allows officers at stations who receive crime reports, often over the telephone, for those categories of offences attended to by the Crime Desk, to enter the data electronically into LEDR, instead of manually filling out the paper based LEAP forms (although when police are on patrol, notes are taken on the running sheets and upon return to the station entered into the database). The LEDR reports are then sent electronically to the relevant Crime Desk. Once a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Crime included are Burglary, Attempted Burglary, Theft, Attempted Theft, Theft of Bicycle, Attempt Theft of Bicycle, Theft of Motor Car, Attempted Theft of Motor Car, Attempted Theft from Motor Car, Criminal Damage, Attempted Criminal Damage and Wilful Damage.

Crime Desk supervisor is satisfied with the LEDR report, the Crime Desk creates a LEAP report through the electronic submission of the LEDR report.

In Victoria Police's Official Release Crime Statistics 2006/2007 it is stated that: An integral part of Crime Desk operation is the LEAP Electronic Data Recorder (LEDR) application. LEDR is becoming the primary tool for reporting crime and managing crime investigation responses throughout Victoria. It serves as a user-friendly and intuitive mechanism for entering crime reports, notifying the Crime Desk and allows for the electronic submission of crime reports directly to LEAP.

There was generally positive reaction by police to the use of LEDR to record crime, although some senior sergeants noted that the process can by-pass checking by supervisors. While I understand that there can be delays in access to making entries on to the system, I consider that this promising approach is more convenient than the current LEAP system, and should be considered for the recording of other crime categories.

#### Victoria Police stated:

In 2004 it introduced Project Clarendon, establishing Crime Desks around the state. An integral part of the Crime Desk operation is the LEAP Electronic Data Recorder (LEDR) direct data entry application. The tool is used by police to take reports of property crimes over the telephone; 75 per cent of all recorded crime is property crimes and LEDR is used for 39 per cent of all crime records. This type of reporting is more in line with what is expected from Rule 2. With the taking of a phone report, the decision to record is based on the information received over that call only, and a decision to record is made then and there. The first three Crime Desks were launched during March and April 2004 and the rest have been introduced periodically since.

I consider that the current manual recording arrangement is unsatisfactory and, with the LEDR add-on, provides a fragmented, ad hoc approach to crime recording processes, which impact on data quality.

The current manual recording arrangement is unsatisfactory and, with the LEDR addon, provides a fragmented, ad hoc approach to crime recording processes, which impact on data quality.

I note that in 2006, the LINK project commenced the establishment of a new records management system to replace the LEAP system. It aims to deliver a 'proven police system

that is easier to use and provide access to secure quality information'. The project followed a critical report by the Office of Police Integrity (OPI) identifying serious weaknesses in the security of LEAP<sup>20</sup>. Implementation of LINK is over a five-year period; the first phase is expected to be rolled out in

Leaving the manual form process in place represents, in my view, a lost opportunity to modernise crime recording within Victoria Police. the second half of 2009. However, my investigators were told by project staff that there will be no substantial change to the functions of the crime

recording system. It does not, for example, include the elimination of the manual form process. Leaving the manual form process in place represents, in my view, a lost opportunity to modernise crime recording within Victoria Police.

Victoria Police stated that it and the Victorian Government:

...are aware of the need to update information technology used by Victoria Police, and funding has been provided to replace LEAP with LINK, to create a new human resource management system, and for continual upgrades to other systems.

# Victoria Police Compstat and performance management

Efforts to improve the quality of crime recording and crime data could be supported through the performance management processes established in Victoria Police in recent years. Victoria Police has developed a number of performance management frameworks to measure achievement of targets and manage performance against its corporate and regional/PSA targets. Two important components are the Tasking & Coordination Meetings and the Compstat process.

## **Tasking and Coordination Meeting**

Each Police Service Area (PSA) manager conducts a Tasking and Coordination (T&C) meeting with the management team from the PSA on a monthly basis. During a typical T&C meeting, the team will discuss crime trends and other issues with a view to develop the appropriate 'control strategies' and 'task' its officers accordingly. Intelligence officers within the region will generally prepare a tactical assessment report for the meeting, which includes analysis of crime data and other relevant information.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Investigation into Victoria Police's Management of the Law Enforcement Assistance Program (LEAP), Office of Police Integrity, March 2005.

## Victoria Police agreed that:

the Compstat process can be used to improve the quality of crime reporting and crime data is valid. Whilst the Compstat process lacks the potential to explore such issues on a compliance basis, for example through the use of random site visits and examination audits on primary data sources, the Compstat process can elevate such issues to prominence in the minds of local managers... The use of CAD data has been under consideration for use within the Compstat process for just the purposes discussed: in particular in the examination of reporting levels of domestic violence. Some impediments recognised have been a lack of direct correlation between CAD and LEAP data, requiring some significant assumptions to be made that result in conclusions that are only indirectly supportable by the data; and the fact that the CAD data is only available for metropolitan divisions, thereby introducing a non universal applicable measure to the Compstat discussion... Victoria Police has identified that linked systems would be beneficial, however the resources to do this, and to expand the CAD to a state-wide system are currently not available.

#### Victoria Police also advised:

Compstat documents are prepared by trained and senior analysts supported by statisticians from the Corporate Statistics Unit. Great care and consideration is put into the preparation of these documents and the selection and presentation of the datasets used. Every effort is made to ensure that measures are developed and reported on with due regard to their source, context, and reliability and counting rules... Crime figures in a policing environment will always be a measure of effectiveness. The Compstat process provides an external examination of these figures. Accurate and complete reporting of crime is often the focus of forum discussions. Rising or falling crime *per se* is not a measure of Compstat success or failure: failing to appropriately manage rising or falling crime is.

Compstat forums are held at Divisional level and focus on strategies to meet performance targets within police resource allocation. The use of statistics is central at the Compstat forums and T&C meetings; it is demonstrated by the extensive statistical information provided to participants. Much emphasis at the meetings is placed on 'spikes' in the data, showing a sharp increase in a particular crime. Management is required to explain the spikes and to develop a 'control' strategy to bring the 'spike' down to an acceptable level. As was reported:

...if all incidents of graffiti were recorded [as criminal or wilful damage], the figures would go through the roof...

In discussion of the statistics at the meetings, there can be invalid use of percentages:

...Rape might have gone up by 100 per cent which showed a spike but it could be because there was no rape in the last reporting period...

## Victoria Police advised:

At Compstat forums, performance is discussed in relation to rates and actual offence counts as the previous 12 months of data are explored. Anomalies such as provided in this example are well understood. The focus is on trends and police responses not on single instances.

#### The Victoria Police Compstat Model

One of the key performance tools utilised by Victoria Police is by the process of Compstat (COMParison of STATistics). The Compstat process was originally developed by a former police commissioner of the New York Police Department (NYPD) and has since been adapted by many policing agencies and other organisations around the world. The four (4) key principles that underpin the Compstat process are:

- accurate and timely intelligence
- effective tactics
- rapid deployment of personnel and resources
- relentless follow up and assessment.

Victoria Police officially implemented the Compstat process across the organisation in February 2004. A separate unit within Victoria Police's Corporate Strategy & Performance Department was set up to administer its Compstat model by undertaking corporate planning, research, project governance, policy and statistics. The Victoria Police Compstat model was devised primarily as a forum at executive level to facilitate:

- performance evaluation
- enhanced communication
- sharing of knowledge and information
- targeted resource use
- accountability for performance.

There are also different types of Compstat forums being conducted:

- divisional forums across the five regions
- departmental forums for the non-operational departments
- people forums on HR-related data
- theme-based forums such as Youth and Indigenous Issues.

Typically, a report will be prepared and forwarded to the unit or area under review, as well as to the Compstat panel officers, approximately one week before the forum. The report will include crime, traffic, people and financial analysis, as well as progress and new issues. At the forum, representatives from the group under review will be required to address the issues raised in its Compstat report to the Compstat panel (comprised of the Corporate Committee and usually chaired by the Chief Commissioner or a Deputy Commissioner).

It is important that participants at these meetings have a basic understanding of crime and other statistics, and that analysts who prepare the statistical reports have some statistical training. In order to support a stronger culture for achieving accuracy in statistics which underpin performance measurement, setting benchmarks for data quality could form an integral part of the Compstat performance management processes. The proper use of statistics requires understanding of how they are arrived at, what the counting rules are, as well as an appreciation of their accuracy and the context behind the numbers.

My investigation noted that police presenting at Compstat forums want to be able to use statistics to show themselves in a favourable light. I have been advised that the focus on performance comparisons as measured by crime statistics can lead to alteration of the data. One instance reported to me involved a crime which had more than 2,000 multiple sub-incidents, each would be a count of crime for LEAP statistics. The senior officer 'went ballistic'; the next time the data was checked the number of sub incidents for this crime was less than 1,000, thus showing a reduction in the crime count for that PSA. While it is unknown how widespread this practice is, it pertains not only to non compliance with the crime recording policies, it may constitute falsification of police records.

### Recommendation 9

I recommend that Victoria Police ensure that for Compstat forums and related meetings, attendees are provided with a basic understanding of statistics and analysts are provided with statistical training.

#### *Victoria Police response:*

Each analyst is required as part of their position description, to complete the Intelligence Practitioners Course. This can be undertaken at one or all three levels: Basic, Tactical Intelligence Office and, Strategic. Additional courses are available for training in SAS and VicOps, statistical analysis tools used by all analysts.

#### Recommendation 10

I recommend that Victoria Police consider making data quality benchmarks and improvement action plans an integral part of performance management processes.

## Victoria Police response:

Accurate and complete reporting of crime is often the focus of forum discussions and recognized as a measure of management performance. Benchmarks as suggested here have not however been set, and we will explore information that could be used for this purpose.

## Deficiencies in police training

Police involved in crime recording must have appropriate knowledge and skills if high quality crime recording is to occur. Appropriate training enables police to comply with crime recording policies. It is conducive to a 'right first time' approach and reduces the need for detailed checking by station supervisors and for the follow up 'chasers' by the CDEB. As most crime recording is done by junior police, I examined their training for this task.

As part of their initial training at the Police Academy, police recruits learn about the recording of crime processes. However, Police Academy staff advised my investigators that this aspect of police training is not given priority; it is considered an administrative process and the current curriculum allocates little time to training in the use of LEAP and LEDR procedures for the recording of crime.

Discussions with new police graduates at stations confirm that they received minimal training at the Police Academy on how to record crime. They primarily learn how to record a crime on the job at the station. Knowing for example, at what point should a LEAP report be completed; what form to use and how many counts of crime or sub-incidents should there be, is based largely on the hands-on training the officer receives at the police station. Such

Discussions with new police graduates at stations confirm that they received minimal training at the Police Academy on how to record crime.

reliance on on-the-job training for the recording of crime has the potential to exacerbate inconsistent or indeed incorrect recording practices, unless there

are appropriate and regular audits conducted at the station level by head office staff or external auditors. Junior police reported that when they ask more experienced staff 'do I have to record that?', they can be told 'what value is there for the police to know that' and ' the stats would go through the roof if all were to be recorded'.

The Police Academy staff were unable to advise my investigators if supervisors, who nominally check completed LEAP forms prior to faxing them to the CDEB, receive any training on how to ensure that crime recording is conducted in accordance with Victoria Police's policies and practices.

It is of concern that there was limited knowledge and understanding about the crime recording processes and why it mattered among recent recruits and also among some more experienced staff.

#### Victoria Police advised:

Training operational police in any discipline is resource intensive – in terms of accessing over 11,000 people, and in making an assessment that doing so is a better use of their valuable time than operational policing. The implementation of LINK will require training of all operational police over 2009-10. This will focus on the application itself, the importance of data quality and cultural change. It was determined that training of all operational police for the implementation of a simple VPM change was resource intensive, when a training regime was to start the following year.

#### **Recommendation 11**

I recommend that Victoria Police review the training in crime recording and provide specialist and refresher training for police on the recording and use of crime statistics.

### Victoria Police response:

Training on the implementation of LINK will give close consideration to data quality issues, and will be delivered to all operational police in 2009-10.

# Inadequacies of the LEAP database

Victoria Police has a complex inter-related system of computer database applications. The 'architecture overview' revealed over 200 separate databases, a number of which are relevant to the recording and production of crime statistics (Attachment 6). The main database for crime recording is LEAP from which other databases derive extracts or

It is of concern that there was limited knowledge and understanding about the crime recording processes and why they mattered among recent recruits and also among some more experienced staff. 'downloads'. Analysing crime data also occurs using other databases, such as SAS, a statistical tool using downloads from LEAP, and VicOps, a 'one

stop shop' database for management. Their use, when they are unable to communicate with each other, can produce inconsistencies and inevitably raise issues about data integrity and accuracy. The issue of timeliness was also raised in relation to VicOps '...it is great in theory, but is always one month behind, not good for tasking...' with many LEAP forms waiting to be completed by officers or checked by supervisors.

There are clearly missed opportunities in Victoria Police for more efficient data management. This also impacts on the availability of intelligence and on crime statistics. I am concerned by the lack of a governance framework across Victoria Police databases and applications.

The LEAP system remains the primary mainframe corporate application and information system used by Victoria Police on which crime and related information is recorded and from which crime statistics are produced. However, it performs many other functions. It provides an online interface so that searches can be conducted for names, vehicles and places from computers at various police locations, including in vehicles through the mobile data network. LEAP is also used for intelligence analysis and provides a critical tool for operational policing and from which management information is derived. There are more than 500,000 transactions on LEAP daily and it is linked to over 5,000 terminals 24 hours a day.

Whether LEAP is fit for its current purpose and whether the information technology effectively supports quality crime recording and statistics is an issue previously raised in 2002 as part of the Parliamentary Drugs and Crime

There are clearly missed opportunities in Victoria Police for more efficient data management. This also impacts on the availability of intelligence and on crime statistics. I am concerned by the lack of a governance framework across Victoria Police databases and applications.

Prevention Committee hearings for its *Inquiry into Crime Trends*: *Fifth Report*. The Chief Commissioner said when she appeared before the Committee that LEAP was a system put in place '...not necessarily to be able to produce accurate statistics or data...'. Deficiencies

in the LEAP database, the source of crime data from which crime statistics are produced, have also been highlighted in the Office of Police Integrity report entitled *Investigation into Victoria Police's management of the Law Enforcement* 

Assistance Program (LEAP) of March 2005. Earlier, the Auditor-General in his review of LEAP in 1996 had already found a number of critical problems associated with the implementation and use of the database.

These problems have been confirmed by internal reviews, which identified concerns relating to training, user friendliness, access to computer terminals, data integrity and inefficient data entry practices. Further deficiencies were identified in the strategic planning and management of the LEAP system, allowing it to develop without clear directions and proper management control. The weaknesses of Victoria Police information technology systems (IT&T Strategic Plan 2003/04-2007/08 August 2003) included:

- incompatible systems
- impeded information sharing
- uncoordinated management information
- variation in user interfaces
- lack of common data standards
- inability to link business intelligence with factual information about incidents.

As noted in the Office of Police Integrity report, these deficiencies raise serious concerns regarding the functionality and value-for-money aspects of the information technology environment within Victoria Police.

My investigators were advised by intelligence officers that there was no geographical coding of locations built into the LEAP database, which leads to major inefficiencies and errors in terms of identifying addresses and locations of incidents or where persons live.

The weaknesses of Victoria Police information technology systems include; incompatible systems, impeded information sharing, uncoordinated management information, variation in user interfaces, lack of common data standards and an inability to link business intelligence with factual information about incidents.

Victoria Police responded:

The lack of geocoding capability does not lead to 'major inefficiencies' in recording. Some locations, such as a park or an intersection, are difficult to record as a precise location. Geocoding is a desirable enhancement to a recording system, which as well

as improving intelligence holdings and tasking and coordination, would address these difficulties. It is being explored as part of a holistic ICT Strategy.

My investigators also observed interruptions in access to the LEAP database during visits to the CDEB. These were reported to be frequent occurrences. The system was also reported to be very slow especially around 11am and 2pm. There appears to be a lack of clear vision and effective management in addressing coordination issues in relation to data and information technology, resulting in fragmented data systems, and more broadly in knowledge management.

#### Victoria Police advised:

It agrees that there are good opportunities to leverage technology and improve recording practice. These issues have been identified by Victoria Police and work is being done to address these through the:

- Information Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy
- Data Management Steering Committee formed in December 2007 and the Data management Strategy (March 2008)
- Performance and Business Intelligence division (arising from the Planning, performance and reporting division, with a focus on data management)
- Impact of Project Clarendon and Crime Desks
- Use of LEDR
- Replacement of LEAP with LINK.

These initiatives have been brought to my attention and are acknowledged.

#### Recommendation 12

I recommend that Victoria Police ensure effective progress on the LINK project and that it incorporate the elimination of manual forms for the recording of crime data.

#### Victoria Police response:

There are good opportunities to leverage technology and improve recording practices. The strategic focus for Victoria Police is to build a platform upon which all options can be explored, and if found to be effective, funding applied for and built. Improvements including mobile computing to reduce manual reporting are being explored as part of a holistic ICT Strategy; not just in terms of the LEAP replacement with LINK.

# Enhancing quality assurance practices

Quality assurance and audit processes can drive improvements in data quality. Without these it is not possible to know if crime is recorded accurately or not. Victoria Police has these arrangements in place when the data, once it is faxed through, is entered on to the LEAP database. Once the data is entered, according to the AIC (2002) review:

...the policies and procedures for the quality assurance of the data recorded in the LEAP database are effective and the level of error in the records used to produce the crime statistics is negligible...

However, it is at the critical point of the station level where the police

It is at the critical point of the station level where the police determine if an incident should have a LEAP report or not, where sound audit and quality assurance processes are essential but lacking. determine if an incident should have a LEAP report or not, where sound audit and quality assurance processes are essential but lacking. These will determine whether officers at the 'frontline'

make the appropriate decisions in relation to crime recording. The AIC review did not examine data quality at this critical point.

During my investigation I found that at the station level, a LEAP report is initially filled out usually by a uniformed police officer. These are then checked by a supervisor, usually of a sergeant rank, before being faxed to CDEB. Rule 5 of VPM 108-3 Responsibilities for completing LEAP reports states:

### 5.1.2 Supervisor

- Check the report
- Ensure an investigator has been assigned if appropriate
- Ensure case progress narrative and crime screening have been correctly assessed and marked
- Sign the reports as correct
- Ensure reports are faxed to CDEB as soon as possible
- Ensure hard copies are filed according to local instructions.

Typically a supervisor checks the forms placed in his or her in-tray for completeness and accuracy; checking against the running sheets/day books may also occur. The supervisor may return the forms for amendment before signing and faxing them to the CDEB. There are currently no audits undertaken to determine the extent of correlation between the running sheets and LEAP records.

While checking that the forms are complete, supervisors are not able to match LEAP forms to other sources of information for validation, such as calls for service data. In my opinion Victoria Police lacks the appropriate quality assurance procedures at the station level to ensure compliance with crime recording policies. The checks by station supervisors can be superficial, and given their many other duties, not necessarily a good use of their time. For example, such checking cannot determine whether there is over or underrecording of crime by police or whether an incident has been correctly treated as a crime or not or properly classified. I was told that the quality of checking by supervisors varied considerably.

#### Victoria Police stated:

It is incorrect to state that *supervisors are not able to match LEAP forms to other sources of information for validation*. As acknowledged, validation is done by supervisors against running sheets. Checks against calls for service data would only be possible for metropolitan divisions, as CAD data is only available for those areas. It would also be difficult and time consuming due to the lack of correlation between the CAD and the LEAP datasets.

Other jurisdictions, such as the UK (Audit Commission Reports on Crime Recording), have demonstrated the value of independent audits of the crime recording by 'frontline' police and how these audits can drive improvements in practice.

Once a LEAP report has been received by CDEB, and the data entered on the LEAP database, a number of audits are performed. Thus CDEB conducts a

Victoria Police lacks the appropriate quality assurance procedures at the station level to ensure compliance with crime recording policies.

monthly review of 5 per cent of LEAP entries as a part of its quality assurance process. Supervisors at CDEB will select a random sample of the work of at

least one data entry staff officer. I have been advised that there is no written policy that describes the audit process at CDEB.

In the event that CDEB requires further information regarding a LEAP report from a uniform station, its staff may generate a 'chaser' report to the PSA manager for follow up. This report is from a stand-alone database and is administered only by CDEB. CDEB would generally contact the station by phone to obtain that information before a 'chaser' report is generated.

The Corporate Statistics Unit (CSU) also conducts audits of LEAP data entries on a regular basis and produces a weekly report to CDEB for further follow up. As CSU does not have access to the LEAP database directly, all amendments must be made by CDEB staff.

There is no quality assurance process to ensure that the uniform officers at police stations have made the appropriate decisions regarding whether a

There appears to be a fragmented, disconnected approach to quality assurance for crime recording and crime statistics.

crime incident requires a LEAP report. I consider that the quality assurance processes in relation to crime recording within Victoria Police are inadequate as they fail

to measure compliance with crime recording policies. The existing quality assurance processes are applied after the data is recorded, which is too late. Overall, there appears to be a fragmented, disconnected approach to quality assurance for crime recording and crime statistics.

#### Recommendation 13

I recommend that Victoria Police review its current quality assurance practices and develop and implement independent crime recording audits at the station level.

## Victoria Police response:

[It] agrees that implementing this recommendation would be helpful to improve data quality.

# Organisational arrangements

Sound organisational and management arrangements are fundamental to producing quality crime data and statistics. They provide the means by which a strong focus can be given to the processes from the point of recording crime to the production and reporting on crime statistics.

I found that the responsibilities for the management of crime data and the analysis and production of crime statistics are spread across various non-operational units within Victoria Police. In particular, the following three units within the Performance & Business Intelligence Division of the Corporate Strategy & Performance Department have key responsibilities:

- 1. Corporate Statistics Unit
- 2. Corporate Performance Unit
- 3. LEAP Management Unit.

The Corporate Statistics Unit (CSU) is responsible for the production of the annual official release of crime statistics and other publicly available crime statistical information. It also produces regular reports for senior management, as well as ad hoc reports for other internal and public users. The CSU liaises with the ABS and provides it with annual crime data, derived from the LEAP database, according to the ABS definitions and counting rules. It also plays a significant role in the introduction of the NSCR in Victoria, although it is less clear where responsibility for the actual implementation lies in Victoria Police.

Discussions with CSU staff indicate that most of the daily tasks of the CSU involved data management rather than statistical analysis. The Unit has an

I consider that Victoria Police needs a consistent focus on crime data quality at all levels, supported by strong leadership and appropriate organisational and management arrangements.

audit role in relation to crime data in LEAP, but this role does not extend to examining crime recording practices at police stations. It has not conducted any cross-referencing exercises to verify the validity of the

crime data at the point of recording. I note that in relation to staffing, at the time of my investigation there were a number of vacancies in the Unit. I understand that suitably qualified staff are difficult to attract. Compared to similar statistical units in other Australian jurisdictions, such as NSW, South Australia and WA, the CSU appears to be poorly resourced and not able to serve the growing need for high quality statistics and analysis within Victoria Police's performance management framework and its intelligence led policing approach.

The Corporate Performance Unit is responsible for coordinating the Compstat initiative. It produces evaluations and statistical reports for the regular Compstat forums as well as forums on specific themes. It also monitors statewide trends in crime. It has staff with statistical expertise.

The LEAP Management Unit has a general role for the maintenance of the LEAP database. It has expertise in the counting rules, classifications and definitions for recording crime. Police officers told my investigators they often contact the unit for clarification about how a crime should be counted or recorded on the LEAP forms; the role of the CSU in statistical clarification appears to be less prominent.

Another important unit relevant to crime data and statistics is the CDEB. Its task is to enter all data on to the LEAP database. This unit is, however, separately located in the Business Services Division.

Given the importance of statistical information for Victoria Police; its increasing use in identifying crime problems and emerging trends; its role in measuring police performance, as well as providing information for responding flexibly to changing demands for police service, I consider that

Compared to similar statistical units in other Australian jurisdictions, such as NSW, South Australia and WA, the Corporate Statistics Unit appears to be poorly resourced and not able to serve the growing need for high quality statistics and analysis within Victoria Police's performance management framework and its intelligence led policing approach.

Victoria Police needs a consistent focus on crime data quality at all levels, supported by strong leadership and appropriate organisational and management arrangements. This include appropriate resourcing with trained staff and modern information technology. While I understand that a high level data

management committee exists in Victoria Police, it is unclear whether it provides the leadership and strategic guidance for the areas described above. I have been advised that a review is to be conducted of these areas; this should provide an opportunity to address strategic management aspects of the collection and production of crime data and crime statistics.

In this context, the Victoria Police review of Compstat noted in 2006 that:

...there is no coordinated overarching reviews of our data collection systems...and that [it is] an approach of providing 'patches' rather than a full renovation ...

#### Recommendation 14

I recommend that Victoria Police review the organisational and management arrangements in relation to the roles, responsibilities and resourcing for the recording and production of crime data and statistics.

### Victoria Police response:

Structural reform in Victoria Police's data management area was considered in early 2008 to be critical to ensure clear business of management data and information. The Data Management Steering Committee, led by Deputy Commissioner Kieran Walshe, has been working towards improved data governance practices. [The Committee] has

identified the need for more coordinated data management. One step to achieving this has been to consolidate those units whose work that [sic] impacts on data management, and to bring them within the Performance and Business Intelligence division of the Corporate Strategy and Performance department. In May 2008, Corporate Committee endorsed the Data Management Strategy. The work of the Data Management Steering Committee falls within the three key priorities of that strategy:

- Apply consistent data quality standards across all Victoria Police systems
- Reduce complexity and duplication in data collection
- Maximise accessibility to data to meet user needs.

## Reporting of crime statistics

The presentation and analysis of crime statistics are important in providing to government and the public a comprehensive picture of the crime problem. In Victoria such information is provided once a year by Victoria Police, not by an independent body. Other jurisdictions provide the public with more frequent reports on crime, such as at quarterly or six-monthly intervals, at state-wide as well as at local government levels.

As there are a variety of user requirements for crime statistics, both internal and external to Victoria Police, the statistics need to meet the different needs of different users. It is therefore important that they are not confusing or contradictory, but are relevant, comprehensive, as accurate as possible, and, with modern technology, allowing user-friendly access via the internet<sup>21</sup>.

Several examples were brought to my attention that demonstrate that the way crime statistics are reported by Victoria Police is out of step with public concerns or needs. For example, statistics about crime associated with modern technology, such as the internet<sup>22</sup>, are not available (it is embedded into the crime categories of *Deception* or *Theft*); nor is there coverage of graffiti (generally included in the category of *Criminal* or *Wilful Damage*); nor of environmental crime. As noted above, many criminal offences are recorded by agencies other than Victoria Police, such as WorkSafe, the Environment Protection Agency and the Department of Primary Industries.

Crime which occurs on public transport is also hard to find in the Victoria Police Crime Statistics yet is of considerable public interest. Of total recorded crime (within the 27 categories used by Victoria Police), 2.5 per cent occurs on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> UK Statistics Commission, Report No. 30 *Crime Statistics: User Perspectives*, September 2006 <sup>22</sup> Child pornography using the internet (an offence against federal legislation) would be recorded as 'other crime' in Victoria Police statistics.

public transport. Offences specifically relating to public transport are found in the Victoria Police annual *Crime Statistics* under the category behaviour in Public and Other (pp 156-160). I note that the numbers of offences recorded are insignificant; for the offence of *Behave in a Disorderly Manner – on rail premises* the count is 5; for other public transport offences no counts are recorded. I have been advised that these are offences ancillary to crime within one of the 27 crime categories. Much crime on public transport is dealt with by the Department of Transport (DOT), which issues infringement notices. More serious crime which is non-infringeable is also dealt with by the prosecution branch of the DOT. Better reporting by Victoria Police, in conjunction with the DOT in this area would be desirable. Some acknowledgement that crime encompasses more than what is recorded and reported on by Victoria Police would assist the public's understanding of the extent of the crime problem on public transport.

Users of Victoria Police crime statistics could well be confused by crime categorised as 'no offence detected'. Up to 30 June 2008 the Victoria Police policy for recording crime required police only to record an incident as crime, if satisfied that a crime had been committed. This policy appears to be contradicted in the Victoria Police 2006-07 annual crime statistics publication. Table 2.2 of the publication shows 'offences recorded by degree and cleared by status of investigation'. In the column 'no offence detected', there are 3,213 offences recorded. These offences are deemed not to have occurred in practice, yet are still counted in the total recorded crime figure. This shows that for some crime, when a complaint or some notification to police has been made by the public to warrant an inquiry or investigation and at the conclusion of which no offence is detected, they are still recorded on to LEAP and added to the crime statistics. This is misleading and without explanation appears contradictory to the evidentiary approach used to record crime in Victoria Police up 30 June 2008. The 'no offence detected' counts of crime in 2006-07 covered the following categories: 11 per cent for assaults, 21 per cent for theft of motor vehicle, 8 per cent for residential burglary and 27 per cent for other theft.

## Victoria Police response:

This is a valid and often confused point. When LEAP denotes a crime with a 'no offence detected' result, it is because at the point of the crime being recorded, there is no evidence to the contrary that the crime has not been committed. (A person reports

their car as stolen, only to find days afterwards that their son had borrowed it without asking). In short, this is still a reported crime.

The evidentiary approach applied to recording the crime, not the crime itself. So the evidence at the time a report was made would have suggested a crime had been committed and so a record was made. Where later investigation found there was no crime, a recording of 'no offence detected' was appropriately made.

After having examined crime statistics available to the public in other jurisdictions and those of the Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council (see <a href="www.carsafe.com.au">www.carsafe.com.au</a> and <a href="mailto:ncars@ncars.on.net">ncars@ncars.on.net</a>), I consider that the presentation of official crime statistics in Victoria could be significantly enhanced in a number of ways by:

- reviewing the use of 'Total recorded crime', from which change with the previous year is calculated. It combines serious crime with less serious crime in a not very meaningful way
- better communicating crime definitions and classifications, as well as the recording rules used in compiling crime statistics. This assists understanding the processes of reporting and recording crime
- increasing the use of 21<sup>st</sup> century technologies to analyse and disseminate statistics to ensure higher levels of public availability at low or no cost
- releasing crime statistics more frequently monthly, quarterly or six monthly, including regional or local government area reports
- expanding the availability of time series data, including longer time series showing any breaks in series caused by legislative or procedural changes
- providing comparison of police crime statistics with estimates from crime victim surveys where these are available
- provide mapping products which show areas with higher than expected rates of offences, offenders or victims, based on age-sex standardisation techniques
- provide more user-friendly online data selection and access tools to allow more defined, cost effective and prompt access to crime data. This should include selection criteria such as suburbs and date ranges
- improving the timeliness when the statistics become available for release.

Unlike some other Australian jurisdictions (NSW, SA, and WA), Victoria has no agency external to Victoria Police which independently compiles, analyses and publishes crime statistics. Past attempts to establish such an independent agency in Victoria have not been successful. I note the recommendations of

Public confidence in the integrity of crime statistics requires independent scrutiny and attention to the quality and integrity of the whole process, from crime recording to the production of the statistics. the Parliamentary Legal and Constitutional Committee *Report* upon a Bureau of Crime Statistics for Victoria of September 1991, and those of the Parliamentary Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee's *Inquiry into Crime* 

*Trends* of October 2002 for the establishment of such an agency. I also note the short-lived Victorian Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research in 1992-3 and the Criminal Justice Statistics and Research Unit within the DOJ from 1995 to 2001. The DOJ has advised that while it utilises crime data provided by Victoria Police, it 'does not have any role in the collection of the statistics, or in verifying any of the statistics'.

Public confidence in the integrity of crime statistics requires independent scrutiny and attention to the quality and integrity of the whole process, from crime recording to the production of the statistics. The public debate in Victoria regarding crime statistics is indicative that what Victoria Police produces may not be understood or indeed trusted to reveal the nature and

The public debate in Victoria regarding crime statistics is indicative that what Victoria Police produces may not be understood or indeed trusted to reveal the nature and extent of crime as the public experiences it.

extent of crime as the public experiences it. Given that crime statistics play a central role in assessing Victoria Police's performance and in its allocation of resources, police may have competing interests in reporting on crime data and crime trends.

I am concerned that there is potential for a perception of self-interest, which will impact on the confidence the public has in Victoria Police statistics.

#### Recommendation 15

I recommend that Victoria Police review its approach to the reporting of crime statistics, with a view to better meeting the needs of the Victorian public, such as by providing more timely data, with a range of access tools.

## Victoria Police response:

The Victoria Police Organisational Development Standing Committee agreed in December 2008 to release official crime and road safety statistics on quarterly basis. It is expected that there will be a six weeks delay in release of those statistics to ensure validation. These releases will be publicly available on the internet and for display in stations.

### Recommendation 16

I recommend that the Victorian Government give consideration to establishing a unit external to and independent of Victoria Police to develop and maintain statistical databases on crime; to monitor trends in crime and publish regular reports on crime trends; and with a capacity to audit crime statistics and crime recording practices.

## Victoria Police response:

This is a decision for government upon which it is not appropriate for Victoria Police to comment.

## **POLICE NUMBERS**

## Understanding police numbers

A key factor in understanding police numbers in Victoria is that they are not determined by Victoria Police but rather by the government of the day. The Victorian Government commitments in 1999 were to increase police by 800 positions; in 2001 to increase police by a further 600 FTE officers and 100 recruits in training; and in 2006 to increase recruits by 350 to boost sworn police numbers to 11,250. It is Victoria Police which allocates where they go.

Policing in Victoria has undergone significant changes over recent years. To meet these demands, Victoria Police needs robust planning processes and administrative systems. These should support decisions regarding staffing requirements across the state; how best to allocate staff and ensure that they have the right mix of skills and experience. The administrative arrangements should be supported by robust data systems, which consistently measure demand for police services and which also monitor where the different categories of staff are located.

In recent times, police have publicly complained about the shortfall of police officers to meet the demand for services. One of the most common concerns

that many police officers have expressed during my investigation is in relation to the actual number of police officers on duty and their current workload.

In considering the issue of police numbers, I note that they are monitored on a daily basis and a weekly report is provided to the Minister of Police and Emergency Services stating the number of police in designated positions. The report for the Minister was examined and shows the total number of police (headcount on 30 June each year), as well as recruits, with monthly changes in numbers. In February 2007 Victoria Police conducted an analysis to identify the exact number of FTE police recruits employed and their regional location on 27 November 1999 and 29 January 2007. I note that the analysis of police numbers was confirmed in a review by an independent firm of chartered accountants and by a separate internal validation carried out by the Corporate Management Review Division. The analysis produced by Victoria Police showed that it had achieved the government's commitment for police and recruit numbers.

My investigation sought clarification about the processes by which Victoria Police maintains the government's commitment on police numbers. They were explained to me in the following way by a senior manager at Victoria Police headquarters:

...as we are required to maintain a specific number of police, including recruits – 11,100 at 30 June 2008 – this requires recruiting [every year] to replace police who leave...with attrition at around 3 per cent ...we lose in the vicinity of 300-350 people each year; almost all are of higher rank...this means... merit-based selection ....their positions must be advertised in the government gazette and we go through a lengthy selection process, this then continues on [down the line] for the [now] vacant position for the person who was successful.

It was further explained in relation to police positions and vacancies that:

...every police employee must own and occupy a position in Victoria Police, so that when a recruit graduates, they start work at a police station...these positions are for them to be appointed to...the problem is the expectation that all positions at the stations are owned by each area and should be filled...this is incorrect as the recruit was employed to replace a officer who had left the organisation...we have to maintain the government commitment of police numbers.

This process has been called the 'churn' factor and was explained with an example:

...A superintendent leaves a job and we start the process to replace that person with a recruit to maintain our numbers. The recruit cannot go straight in to the Superintendent's job, so we go through the process of filling the Superintendent's job with an Inspector, the replacement Constable still can't take up the Inspector's job, so they remain at a station, the Inspector job is filled by a Senior Sergeant, the Constable still can't go into the Senior Sergeant job so they stay at a station, the Senior sergeant job is filled by a Sergeant and so on until we get back to a Constable vacancy.

I am concerned that there is a perception within some elements of Victoria Police, and by the public, that there is a shortage in police numbers based on what appear to be many vacancies at stations, when this, according to the senior manager, may simply be a by-product of the administrative processes involved in the recruitment and filling of positions. Can these administrative processes be misleading by the use made of the term 'vacancies', thus creating the impression of police shortages? I considered this matter further by examining police station rosters.

Nevertheless, police managers are able to flexibly move staff according to need within PSAs according to prescribed parameters. As an experienced public servant in Victoria Police noted:

...complaints about lack of staff are sometimes self inflicted as it is up to management to determine who to put on a Taskforce and approve leave.

# Identifying police duties

A key element for clarifying concerns about police numbers is understanding how many police it takes to perform various duties. In principle, to increase staff at a police station, the workload should be analysed and staff allocated proportionally, according to relevant standards. These requirements are imposed on any police station simply by having it open to the public for the approved period of operation and having one or more vehicles available for mobile patrol and response tasks. As stations vary according to whether they are open 24 hours, whether they have 'A' category Police cells or an adjacent court, different numbers of officers will be required to meet minimum service delivery standards, depending on the type of station. For example, a 24-hour police station with 'A' category cells will require two officers in the Watch House 24 hours per day, two officers in the van 24 hours a day and two

officers in a vehicle 24 hours per day. This would equate to a minimum of 36 'confirmed' police officers available at that station.

A related issue involves how many police are required to perform particular tasks. As it was explained:

...Victoria Police work on the basis of an officer is available 181 days per year with leave deducted...

It was explained to my investigators that this formula has remained relatively constant for a number of years. It means, for example, that to run one patrol van on the road with two officers in it 24 hours a day, seven days a week for one year, 12 police officers are required.

I note that a previous ministerial administrative review of Victoria Police in 2001 (known as the Johnson Report) was critical of its workforce planning, noting that the organisation did not understand or predict patterns of turnover, and had no robust basis for deploying staff to areas of high need; the separation of police and civilian staff also reduced flexibility in the allocation of staff. Work by the then Police Board between 1992-1995 had already examined issues about the operational strength of Victoria Police and how specific workload could be measured. In particular it found that there was no data available to enable regular monitoring of operational strength.

The Auditor-General has been critical of the service delivery standards approach in Victoria Police as it is<sup>23</sup>:

...a narrow approach to determining staffing capacity...the standards do not allow for extra staff to replace police officers on unplanned leave or on temporary assignment to other positions... [nor] take into account the needs of particular areas where population and the demand for police services are growing...

Some of the concerns identified by the Auditor-General are being addressed by the People Allocation Model (PAM), which is a statistical tool for the allocation of police resources at the PSA level, and is discussed further below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Auditor-General Victoria, Planning for a capable Victoria Police workforce, May 2006

## Using police resources to respond flexibly to demand

What became clear during my investigation is that the recent changes in Victoria Police, as outlined in *The Way Ahead 2008-2013*, which are designed for police to respond more flexibly to where there are rapid shifts in demand for service, are not being matched by improvements in administrative systems.

Up-to-date data is critical to managing the Victoria Police workforce if it is to use its resources flexibly and to the fullest extent to effectively respond to need for its services. As noted in the Auditor-General's report, better workforce planning requires both quantitative and qualitative data.

The recent changes in Victoria Police, which are designed for police to respond more flexibly to where there are rapid shifts in demand for service, are not being matched by improvements in administrative systems. However, the Auditor-General's report found Victoria Police was unable to efficiently record, maintain and access data on the qualifications, experience and competencies of its police officers. It was also difficult to

produce reports on staff training, their work locations, positions held, assignments, secondments and achievements of individuals. The data was not easily extracted. It required manual handling of information and collation of reports, which is time consuming, and the information was not always available when needed.

I observed similar difficulties when data in relation to police activities and demand for police services was requested. Police are required to manually fill in many paper-based forms, including what they have spent their time on during a shift:

... we need to manually complete entries on to the running sheet, our day book, fill in field contact reports, LEAP forms...lots and lots of forms....

One form that was singled out for criticism was the Activity Return and Enforcement Analysis (AREA) Form (Attachment 7), or known more colloquially as the 'Tattslotto' form, which was described as 'mind numbing', 'totally ridiculous' and can be 'easily fudged' – and evidence was presented to me that they are indeed frequently fudged. There was a lack of consistency in practice as to who was required to complete the Activity Forms; in some places it does not apply to watch house staff; at others it is only for officers on patrol.

Supervisors are relied on for checking them at the station level prior to faxing them for data entry. It was also apparent that what is done with the data and how it may affect staff allocations was not generally known or understood by

What is clear is that police activity is not well captured and that the current system should not be relied on as an indicator of workload or demand for service.

uniform police at stations. What is clear is that police activity is not well captured and that the current system should not be relied on as an indicator of workload or demand for service.

Completion of the form has a low priority for police and hence is unlikely to provide accurate or timely data. I consider that any data taken from these forms is not a reliable or valid measure of police workload or activity. I note that a new paper form (Member Activity Sheet) is being developed by Victoria Police.

Other manual means for recording what police do with their time are the Patrol Duty Returns, usually referred to as the running sheets (see Attachment 8), and their 'day book'. Both are contemporaneous notes whereby police account for their actions. My investigation identified inconsistencies in how and how well these manual records are completed between stations and even within stations. For some officers, the running sheets are used for patrols only, otherwise the day book is used. A common complaint was that officers are too busy to fill them in. There does not appear to be any systematic audits conducted on the accuracy or completeness of these documents.

## Recommendation 17

I recommend that Victoria Police review the administrative processes associated with the recruitment and filling of positions to ensure that they are transparent and provide clear procedures.

#### *Victoria Police response:*

[The recommendation] would be actioned by [Victoria Police] human resources department.

## Recommendation 18

I recommend that Victoria Police in piloting of the new Member Activity Sheet also consider alternative ways of measuring police workloads.

## Victoria Police response:

This recommendation is already being taken care of by the project to replace the AREA form with the Member Activity Sheet (MAS). MAS will enable Victoria Police to comprehensively record what operational police are doing, how long this takes and what is the outcome of their activities. It covers a range of work, including operational policing, traffic management and watch house duties. MAS records a greater range of activities than AREA, providing more information about police workloads. This includes time spent traveling to and from jobs, time spent doing correspondence and broad range non operational duties, public contacts, overtime and updated police activity codes which reflect current policing requests.

The following case study illustrates a number of issues identified by my investigation. It is an example of Victoria Police using their resources to flexibly respond to a public order and safety problem within Melbourne's CBD at weekends. It demonstrates how operational police are deployed and from where they are drawn. It shows how CAD data contributes by mapping incidents where a police response is required. It also demonstrates how crime statistics are derived from some of these incidents.

## Case Study: The Safe Streets Taskforce<sup>24</sup>

The Safe Streets Taskforce (the Taskforce) is a high profile proactive Victoria Police initiative to deal with violence and public disturbances in the Melbourne business precinct. The area covered by the Taskforce includes inner city streets such as King Street, Queens Street, Lonsdale Street Swanston Street, and as well as Docklands Southbank/Crown casino areas where entertainment/licensed premises activities have significantly grown over recent years, particularly over weekends.

My investigators examined the operation of the Taskforce which enabled both consideration of crime statistics and police numbers. It also represents a high profile and proactive initiative by Victoria Police and about which there is a high level of public interest.

<sup>24</sup> In an attempt to extend and improve the Region 1 response to public order issues, Victoria Police established the Safe Streets Taskforce in October 2007. Its main aims are to reduce incidents of assault, robbery and property damage and to provide a safe environment for all persons visiting late night entertainment venues and precincts within Region 1 during the

weekend

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My investigators randomly selected the weekend of 15 to 17 February 2008 for this case study. Relevant data and information was collected from ESTA and Victoria Police for that weekend in relation to crime statistics and police numbers. Police officers from Region 1 were also interviewed to gain a better understanding of the nature of public order incidents and the demand for police services in the area covered by the Taskforce.

For this case study, CAD data was received from ESTA for calls to police for events that occurred within the Division 1, Region 1 between 10pm to 5am on Friday and Saturday night of the selected weekend. Victoria Police also provided CAD data that they received from ESTA for the same geographical areas during the period when the Taskforce was in operation between 6pm and 6am on that weekend.

## Demand for police service

For the selected weekend in February 2008, CAD data from ESTA shows that 256 calls were made requesting police to attend incidents within Division 1, Region 1. Information from the Taskforce showed that Victoria Police received a total of 228 calls for Division 1, Region 1 (of these 90 calls were for the Melbourne CBD). Two maps received from Victoria Police show the geographical locations of the incidents from the CAD data (see attachment 9). Of the calls to ESTA, the most frequent demands for police services for the selected weekend were:

|   | CAD data from ESTA                 | CAD data obtained from Victoria Police |                             |
|---|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
|   | District 1, Region 1               | District 1, Region 1                   | Melbourne CBD               |
| 1 | Assaults (35)                      | Assault (28)                           | Assault (15)                |
| 2 | Brawl (21)                         | Brawl (20)                             | Brawl (11)                  |
| 3 | Dispute – Neighbour/<br>Other (19) | Dispute – Neighbour/<br>Other (18)     | People causing trouble (12) |
| 4 | People causing trouble             | People causing trouble                 | Dispute – Neighbour/        |
|   | (16)                               | (16)                                   | Other (9)                   |
| 5 | Noise Complaint (11)               | Drunk (14)                             | Drunk (7)                   |

#### Crime statistics

Based on the CAD data, 256 calls were made requesting police attendance; 161 of the calls were categorized either as a crime or public

disturbance<sup>25</sup>. My investigators sought to determine whether any of the 161 calls led to LEAP records. Of the 161 calls (13 of which were found to be duplicates and removed), only 13 LEAP records were found. The 13 calls that resulted in LEAP records included 7 for assault related incidents and 3 wilful damage incidents. There was no LEAP report for any of the public disturbance incidents<sup>26</sup>.

When the information provided by the Taskforce was examined (numbers were lower than for the ESTA data) against the LEAP database, it was found that there were 27 LEAP records for Region 1 Division 1, 20 of which were from Melbourne CBD. While the Taskforce only collects LEAP information in relation to three crime categories - *Assault, Robbery* and *Property Damage*, – it also recorded that 47 drunks were arrested on that weekend. Arrests of drunks are not counted in Victoria Police's crime statistics.

Overall, only a small proportion of calls to 000 resulted in a crime record being made in LEAP.

In spite of media reporting of violence in the city, police advised my investigators that the crime trend for assault, robbery and property damage combined in the area covered has decreased by more than 10 per cent since the introduction of the Taskforce 12 months ago. While acknowledging that assaults in the city on weekends remain an issue, police are confident that the Taskforce strategies will reduce the assault rates in the long term. It appears that when surveyed, the public's perception of crime and violence in the city area appears to be closer to events recorded by the CAD system than that recorded on LEAP (*The Age/Nielsen Poll*, 24 November 2008).

#### Police resource allocation

The role of the Taskforce is to coordinate the police response to emergency calls on Friday and Saturday nights. On each night, in addition to the usual number of officers rostered at the various stations within Region 1 Division 1 for patrolling duties, additional officers are

<sup>26</sup> While there were some differences in the timing of the data sets, I consider this issue warrants further exploration.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> The crime and public disturbance categories allocated by ESTA to an emergency call may not necessarily fall within one of the crime categories used by Victoria Police.

also rostered on foot and mobile patrol. CAD data provided by ESTA indicates that more units are deployed for public disturbance events than for the crime events (assaults, property damage, robbery), although they are less frequently recorded on the LEAP database. At the time of my investigation, the Taskforce was operating between 7pm and 6am Friday and Saturday. It is centrally controlled; resources are deployed depending on the analysis of the crime data; the data is updated weekly so that planning occurs for the following weekend.

While not able to provide details of the number of officers on duty on the selected weekend, the Taskforce coordinator estimated that there were on average 55-65 officers as part of the Taskforce during February/March 2008. I understand that at the time of my investigation, the extra resources allocated to the Taskforce ranged from between 50-55 on Friday nights and 75-80 on Saturday nights. The majority of the officers were from the Police Service Areas (PSA) within Region 1 Division 1, with smaller numbers drawn from other regions and departments. It should be noted that the PAM model used to allocate officers to PSAs does not have any role in the allocation of staff to the Taskforce.

Staffing principally comes from stations in Division 1 and 2; however, the Taskforce can also rely on general areas such as the transit Division and the Mounted Branch. In addition, the Taskforce is supplemented by police from outside Region 1, with the number varying depending on how high the risk is for the coming weekend. During September 2008, as well as staff available from Region 1, there was an increase of police officers from other regions from 45 to 55 for Friday nights and from 60 to around 80 for the Saturday night; with backup units also available where possible'. The area covered has been called…'a fluid environment' ...where the Taskforce has been able to ...'pull resources together for both divisions [in Region 1]...whereas before this was not possible. The result was that, as an officer of the Taskforce stated:

...this change improves mobility and flexibility, allows Vicpol to move resources quicker....in dealing with public order, assaults, traffic and liquor license issues... ...they are all interrelated ...

The analysis of crime data allows the Taskforce to identify trends and trouble spots, and then to determine resourcing needs and police action. The data includes mapping and 'hot spots' information, running sheets of incidents/observations, licensed premises reports, CAD data, as well as LEAP crime data – covering jobs attended, licensed premises visited, enforcement data (on the spot fines issued, arrests, drunks locked up). As one officer on the Taskforce noted:

...it is not just a matter of numbers but also how officers are 'tasked' to locations and to additional duties. The analysis of data is carried out on Mondays – this requires rapid recording of incidents and their entry on to the LEAP database, to provide user access...

In relation to being able to assess the impact of the Taskforce in terms of statistics, there are varying opinions ranging from those who believe that they show an impact and that the Taskforce has led to a decline of serious crime, to others who are less certain. In this context the data completeness, integrity and timeliness is paramount. Yet as has been discussed above, I have a number of concerns about police data recording practices and the administrative systems which lie behind them.

In the context of the issue of police numbers, I examined CAD crime and public disturbance events further to determine how the resource availability of Victoria Police operates in response to emergency 000 calls.

Upon receiving a 000 call from the public, CAD operators endeavour to assign an event to a Victoria Police response unit in the relevant area, if they are available. The unit will be contacted by radio to advise of the event or pending job and upon acknowledgement, the job will be assigned to that unit. When that unit is unavailable, the operator will then broadcast a message to all police units on the relevant operational channel seeking a unit to accept the job. On receipt of a unit accepting the job, the event will be dispatched and assigned to the unit to attend. Where no response is received for an event, the operator will enter the comment 'attempt to dispatch', meaning that they did not have an available police unit to which they could assign the job within the response time set by the ESTA dispatch time benchmarks.

The monthly CAD data relating to Victoria Police calls from November 2007 to June 2008 shows (earlier data showed no change in trends), by ESTA priority level, the number of times the CAD operator entered an 'Attempt to Dispatch' code (Attachment 10). Over the eight-month period, for 34 per cent of events categorised as priority 1<sup>27</sup> (where the dispatch time benchmark is set at 160 seconds), no police unit was available within the set time. For priority 2 (dispatch benchmark is 300 seconds) it was 28 per cent, while for priority 3 events (dispatch benchmark is 900 seconds), the unavailability of a police unit was recorded for 6 percent. It is important to note that use of the 'Attempt to Dispatch' code does not mean that police did not attend the event at a later When there is no unit available within the set time, the point in time. dispatcher will seek assistance from the police field supervisor for an appropriate direction and this is recorded on the CAD system with the 'closing disposition as advised by the field unit'. It is understood that 'tasks or job stacking' occurs frequently for police response units and this may limit the immediate availability of a unit for dispatch via the CAD system. Further analysis of this data is required to determine when police units attended these calls; the situation found on arrival; and how the event was coded in terms of 'disposition', that is, what action was taken by police.

What is clear, however, is that while Victoria Police vehicles are fitted with mobile data terminals, which have automatic vehicle location capability, the display of vehicle location information for the ESTA dispatcher is only available in two limited circumstances. These are (i) where there is a vehicle pursuit and (ii) a 'duress' situation. Unlike ambulances, where the CAD system can track actual location on a regular basis, enabling the dispatcher to recommend the most appropriate unit to respond to an incident, dispatchers attempting to deal with a police event are presented with a 'pending event in a defined geographic response area' (the PSA), which predetermines the response unit, if it is available. While the status of the police units is regularly updated either via radio or mobile data terminal, if the primary response unit is not available because of a number of jobs with a mix of priorities that the unit has to attend to, the dispatcher will request 'any unit clear' to be available to respond. This may limit the effective and flexible deployment of police units to emergency situations, in particular those categorised as Priority 1.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Priority 1 includes events where persons are seriously injured, in danger, trapped; offenders held and violent.

#### Recommendation 19

I recommend that Victoria Police in conjunction with the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority review the way in which the CAD dispatch system locates and seeks Victoria Police response units real time availability to emergency situations.

## Victoria Police response:

Victoria Police and Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority have existing systems in place to ensure that jobs are dispatched within designated time benchmarks. Priority one jobs are dispatched to Mobile Data Terminals and followed up via radio to ensure members in the field are aware of the circumstances of the job and can respond accordingly. Police units can be 'tasked and tied up' for a wide range of reasons, and direction is occasionally sought from supervisors, (Sergeants or Senior Sergeants) so that appropriate and timely responses can be provided. A failure to respond to tasks within time benchmarks does not correlate with a poor police response, nor does it impact on crime statistics. Police units tasked with priority two and three tasks regularly assess and re-assess tasks and reprioritise according to nature and urgency. Priority one tasks are attended to with greater urgency and generally by more than one police unit. ESTA having knowledge of which police unit is close by will simply assist in dispatching tasks to the closest unit, that alone does not facilitate the most appropriate response and devalues the considered judgements of members in the field.

# Changes in policing

Many changes have been made within Victoria Police over recent years - often characterised as a shift from reactive to more proactive policing. The impetus has been a changing environment, including changes in the nature of crime and increased public expectations and accountability requirements. A number of these touch on issues of police numbers.

The changing directions for Victoria Police are described in the document *The Way Ahead 2008-2013* and reiterated in the Business Plan 2007-2008 *Delivering a Safer Victoria*<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Other recent developments in Victoria Police include the Roster reform project (commenced 2007), the ICT Strategy (written 2008), the Data Management Strategy (written and adopted 2008), the Data Management Steering Committee (established 2006), the LINK project and replacement of LEAP (commenced 2006), the HRM replacement (commenced 2006) and LEDR (commenced 2004).

#### The focus is on:

...providing intelligent and confident policing, intelligence led and evidence based... working proactively in partnership with the community and other agencies...

It includes strategic assessments (providing detailed environment scans of major crime and safety concerns) to help identify priorities, such as road accidents, violent and high volume crime, property damage and public order and other emerging trends. One of the goals is to reduce the overall crime rate by 12 per cent.

There is a major shift in emphasis described in Victoria Police's *The Way Ahead* towards 'a more adaptive and responsive organisation' to the rapidly changing environment, emphasising more problem oriented and more proactive policing in responding to emerging community crime and safety problems.

In 2006, the Auditor-General<sup>29</sup> examined whether Victoria Police had adequate planning for a workforce capable of achieving the outcomes for the new directions in policing. He identified a number of concerns, including that it is no longer possible to treat police and civilian officers' workforces separately, as it makes planning difficult and lacks the flexibility to determine the numbers and mix of both police and civilian officers.

One aspect of the recent developments in policing in Victoria is the Service Delivery Principles, which devolve resource and service delivery accountability to the PSA. The principles aim to:

... increase police capability of existing resources to deliver services; create opportunity for innovation, creativity and flexibility in operational delivery.

Tied to these principles is the setting of performance target measures against which managers are held accountable. Reliable and accurate data on crime and on police numbers are critical for these initiatives. Part of this process is the Compstat forums, which enable reviews of performance to be conducted. Several other developments were noted because of their extensive use of data about crime. One of these is the Major Crime Management Model undertaken by the Crime Department, which has led to the establishment of 23 Crime Desks in the larger stations to provide a picture of crime, identify emerging

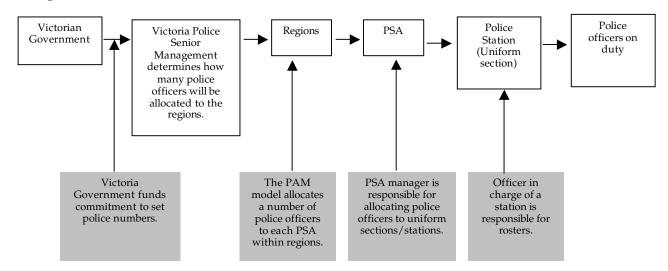
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Auditor General Victoria *Planning for a capable Victoria Police workforce*, May 2006.

themes and analyse patterns of crime. Another development has been the Investigation and Intelligence Management System, driven by a focus on Intelligence Led Policing, Major Crime Management and Counter Terrorism. My investigators found during visits to police stations that there was generally a positive attitude to these new developments.

## The People Allocation Model (PAM) and its limitations

While the decision about how many police officers should be allocated to the regions is determined by Victoria Police's Corporate Committee, it is the PAM model which calculates how many police officers should be allocated to each PSA within the regions.

A diagram showing the process relating to police numbers in Victoria is presented below:



The Human Resource Division of Victoria Police has developed and refined the People Allocation Model (PAM) using a series of statistical techniques to determine the optimal staffing levels, based on a range of socio-demographic variables that appear to drive the demand for policing services. It shows where PSA staff are down or where more staff are needed on the basis of the socio-demographic 'drivers'.

Each PSA manager determines within the PSA how many police officers are to be allocated to the uniform section of individual police stations. PSA managers make their decisions based on a number of factors, including local and force-wide priorities, policing strategies and other service delivery principles. PSA managers will determine the staffing ratios in the various

units in the PSA, including the uniform stations, Crime Desks, crime investigation units and traffic policing. While PSA managers can adopt flexible strategies to move officers around within their area, local stations can put up a case to the regional superintendent for more staffing.

The views of officers about the PAM initiative ranged from positive to negative, with many officers not clear about what it actually did. The model has been described as providing a transparent mechanism for the equitable distribution of police officers to the Police Service Areas (PSAs) who are 'first responders' or street level police (approximately 80 per cent of operational staff). It is intended to align with Service Delivery Principles and the Major Crime Management Model and covers only crime and road trauma policing.

Despite many presentations conducted throughout Victoria Police on the People Allocation Model (PAM), there are still misunderstandings over what the model attempts to achieve. One criticism is that it does not build in the workload of staff, with various tasks weighted by how long they take. For example dealing with a theft from motor vehicle might take 3 hours, while youth public disturbance might take 10 minutes. A concern raised is that even when PSAs have positions allocated to them by the Model, they are not filled or are hard to fill.

## Victoria Police stated:

[It] has an agreed process out of the Enterprise Agreement where police are balloted to hard to fill locations. This takes time as we have to firstly identify that the location is hard to fill by not receiving any applicants for the position. The other aspect is that the current police recruits in training will eventually own a position at a police station when they graduate. Due to the funding model and counting of police numbers, these recruits relate to a vacancy at a police station somewhere and cannot be speeded up under the current processes and counting rules.

The rationale underpinning the model is that demand for police service is determined by a range of geographic, socio-economic and demographic characteristics. Recorded crime data is not used in the model; instead it uses proxy measures because, according to the Victoria Police document (January 2008:3):

...due to the limitations of current Victoria Police data systems...relevant and meaningful comparisons are difficult...

As a result, it is noted that it would be 'unfair' not to be able to compare 'like with like'. In addition, in the description of the model it is clearly stated at the outset that the rationale for choosing to use non crime data in the model, instead of crime data is because:

...we know...that both reporting rates and recording rates [for crime] vary from PSA to PSA, and such a basis for staff allocation would be subject to reporting/recording bias, or even **manipulation** [emphasis added]...we do not want to reward a PSA that has successfully reduced its crime or road trauma rates by taking staff away on the grounds that they no longer need them.

To estimate the level of crime against the person in a PSA, the variables used are: total persons, size of minorities, persons aged 15-30; number employed in retail and family violence reports. To estimate crime against property, the variables used are the number of restaurant licences, employees in retail and the number of households. Road trauma is estimated using the variables: total persons, employees in retail and the number of 'black spot' intersections.

The model also identified some special issues that affect demand for police. These include the servicing of major events that occur in Melbourne; the need to maintain staff in areas with dispersed populations; and custody requirements. The model is reviewed annually with new data used and the potential to change the variables in the model as drivers change.

The instructions on how to use the model advise:

...not to use the numbers blindly; if there are reallocations of staff to be made at the PSA level, these should be phased in to minimise disruption. Similarly, care should be taken that those PSAs that are performing well in reducing crime should not be penalised by losing staff.

No data is used in the model for measuring total demand for police services, including demand for policing which is not crime related and often involves public disturbance incidents as shown by the CAD data. In addition, the model currently only uses indirect or proxy measures for crime recorded by police because of stated concerns about accuracy of the crime data.

No data is used in the model for measuring total demand for police services, including demand for policing which is not crime related and often involves public disturbance incidents as shown by the CAD data. In addition, the model currently only uses indirect or proxy measures for crime recorded by

police because of stated concerns about accuracy of the crime data.

Another gap in the model is that there is no measure to identify what activities constitute a 'reasonable' police workload. Therefore, the current PSA staffing levels appear to be a proxy for the needed staff levels. This means that the modeling has an implicit assumption that, on average, PSAs have about the right staffing levels for the demand.

The model also does not incorporate non-operational police and other staff categories, such as management and specialist units, which form an important

Notwithstanding its limitations the People Allocation Model provides a reasonable basis for a 'first pass' equitable allocation of available front line officers to Police complement to station based policing (and often draw staff from stations). Whilst several projects have looked at modeling these, the results have been

inconclusive as the determinants of such positions are policy-driven as much as demand-driven.

Notwithstanding the data and model limitations, the People Allocation Model provides a reasonable basis for a 'first pass' equitable allocation of available front line officers to Police Service Areas, based on the variations in drivers of demand across the 56 PSAs. It is important to point out that PAM does not, nor does it claim to, estimate the total demand for 'first response' officers.

I acknowledge the value of the PAM tool to provide a transparent basis for allocating police numbers to PSAs and further development would increase its usefulness to Victoria Police.

#### Recommendation 20

I recommend that Victoria Police review the People Allocation Model with a view to improving its usefulness by the inclusion of other data, such as CAD data relating to demand for non crime related services provided by police.

## Victoria Police response:

There is no understanding that CAD only relates to the metropolitan area of Melbourne and to include CAD data into a whole of Victoria model would not work for rural Victoria. Demand for services relates to rostering of resources. The PAM allocates total numbers of police to a PSA, it does not determine how many will perform what functions, work or what shifts at what locations. PSA managers and station or unit managers decide how many people to roster on each shift as a result of

their calls for assistance. CAD and AREA data is constantly analysed and used by managers for rostering. It is also monitored for the PAM and there is a direct correlation between calls for assistance and actual crime and road trauma recorded.

However, it is not clear in the light of this response how Victoria Police intends to deal with Recommendation 20.

### The Police Association's Model for staff allocation

The Police Association commissioned the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) to update a resource model (The Police Association model) for police numbers. It should be noted that the focus is different from that of the PAM model, in that it takes a 'green field' approach. It aims to identify the number of officers needed at the district level in the five regions. The PAM model aims to identify how best to share the numbers given. As one officer described PAM ...'it cuts a given size cake; the Police Association's model determines how big the cake should be...'

The Police Association model uses a 'burden of crime' approach, where each offence is weighted by the percentage of offences receiving custodial sentences awarded to persons found guilty. These weights are used to calculate a general 'burden of crime' for each region. Each region then has an index, which equals the share of weighted reported crime divided by the share of the resident population. The index is then used in a regression equation as the dependent variable against a number of regional differences.

Based on their analysis, NIEIR has calculated that the current district-level unfilled vacancies and secondments amount to approximately 20 percent of regional staffing available. This level is compared with a 'normal' level of 5 per cent. Overall, NIEIR's calculation produced a shortfall of approximately 1,300 officers, 'with an estimated 6,300 officers providing service at district level rather than the gazetted total of approximately 7,600 officers'.

The methodology used by NIEIR is distinct from that of PAM, as the former standardises variables to remove potential spurious correlation. However, more workload analysis is required to understand what and how much police activity are performed, to determine appropriate levels of staffing and to link these to other regularly reported statistics.

The Police association has recently said that...' the PAM model is a method of allocating resources, but it is a 'reductionalist' model that assists in spreading resource shortages evenly and does not allocate resources where they are most required. PAM cannot identify what is needed and where it is needed most. The CBD issues are a prime example of the shortfalls in PAM.'

### Other developments

One of the developments identified during the investigation was the 2007 Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. According to Victoria Police, the Agreement introduced a number of new features which aim to increase workload flexibility. These features include the ability to employ previous

One of the difficulties identified in my investigation and which complicates reporting on police numbers, is an inadequate human resource management system.

Victoria Police officers on fixedterm contracts to backfill police officers on long-term absences or for projects; the option of police officers to 'sell' their accrued time off; changes to part-time

employment, which allows better alignment of resources to service demands and lets part-time employees work additional hours without incurring overtime; and supplementary duties, where employees on leave without pay can work occasional shifts. The Victoria Police is also exploring the options of removing certain traditional roles for police officers by employing civilian personnel to perform these roles. Also built into the new Agreement are productivity measures, which include a target of reducing the crime rate by 10 per cent by 2011.

One of the difficulties identified in my investigation and which complicates reporting on police numbers, is an inadequate human resource management system. One officer said that:

...It is old, does not service Victoria Police well and leads to the creation of a vacancy, which is simply an unoccupied position. ...you need to create a vacancy in order to be on the payroll but it looks as if they are short staffed. ...there should be on average a vacancy rate of 6 per cent.

### Victoria Police advised:

It is aware that the HRM system used to administer human resources requires replacement...In 2006 approval was given to set aside \$28 million of internal funding to build a new system. The findings in the supporting business case were the result of extensive process audits conducted by Financial Services

Division, Corporate Management Review Division, the Auditor-General's office and recent reviews of current issues and business processes.

The project was tendered in late 2007 and the successful company to deliver the new solution appointed. They came on board in 2008 and with Victoria Police have recently completed the blueprint and are in the build stage. The solution is due to be implemented by August 2009.

The confusion about the term 'vacancy', which indeed may not mean that there is an actual vacancy, is expected to be addressed by a new system which describes people and positions in a better way. It is expected to be implemented by July 2009.

The demands on operational police extend well beyond responding to crime incidents. I examined the CAD data obtained from ESTA regarding calls for

For Victoria Police to efficiently distribute its officers at the operational level across the five regions, it must in my view first be able to accurately measure the demands for service in each PSA. police to emergency incidents. It showed a large proportion of incidents which are non crime but require police attendance. For Victoria Police to efficiently distribute its officers at the

operational level across the five regions, it must in my view first be able to accurately measure the demands for service in each PSA.

One way to measure the demand for services of each police station in the metropolitan area is to analyse the call for service data (CAD) from ESTA. My investigators found that for a large proportion of incidents at which police attended, the outcomes of the incident are recorded as 'gone on arrival'. Not only do many of these incidents not result in a LEAP report, and therefore are not recorded into statistical data, they also do not appear to be captured by any workload measure.

Victoria Police does not appear to use the CAD data to analyse work demands

Victoria Police does not appear to use the CAD data to analyse work demands on its operational force, even though daily 'upload' of the CAD data is received from ESTA.

on its operational force, even though daily 'upload' of the CAD data is received from ESTA. My investigators were advised that while some stations have requested CAD data for the

purpose of tasking and organising their rosters, the data is not systematically

used to manage demands for police service. In my view Victoria Police should utilise the CAD data more effectively to measure workload at the station level. More generally, the potential is significant for the CAD system to be used more effectively in Victoria Police for resource allocation and management, as well as for intelligence use.

Victoria Police advised that 'demand for service relates to rostering of resources'. The PAM allocates total numbers of police to a PSA; it does not determine how many will perform what functions, work or what shifts at what locations. PSA managers and station or unit managers decide how many people to roster on each shift as a result of their calls for assistance.

### Recommendation 21

I recommend that Victoria Police use CAD data as a source of information on demand for police service, resource management and allocation, and for intelligence purposes.

### Victoria Police response:

CAD and AREA data is constantly analysed and used by managers for rostering. It is also monitored for the PAM and there is a direct correlation between calls for assistance and actual crime and road trauma recorded. CAD data is only available for the metropolitan area of Melbourne and to include CAD data into a whole of Victoria police allocation model would not work for rural Victoria. The development of a rural CAD communications centre has been proposed, however a resourcing commitment has not been made.

### Police rosters

The officer in charge at the uniform station, usually of a senior sergeant rank, will manage the movements of police officers allocated to the station. It is the responsibility of that officer to ensure that on each shift, the minimal number of officers is rostered on to attend to the station's core duties, such as patrol and watch house duties. However, while positions allocated to a police station by the PSA manager are available in principle, in practice this is often not the case.

As part of my investigation, I examined staff rosters from a number of police stations. I note that a significant number of uniform positions allocated to police stations did not have an officer available for active duty.

The reasons for the unavailability of the designated officer included:

- secondment to taskforces
- training
- · sickness and other leave, and
- unfilled positions to which no officer had been appointed.

The Auditor-General's report (2006) identified WorkSafe related sick leave as an issue of concern for Victoria Police. WorkSafe indicators now form a part of the regional management team's performance measures and is a matter that receives attention at Compstat meetings.

Unfilled vacancies may also be the result of newly allocated resources or transfers. These are positions that have been allocated to a station to meet its work demands but are yet to be filled by police officers. At some stations visited there have been reported difficulties in attracting officers because of location, thus delaying the recruitment process further.

A police officer may also be assigned to other stations or areas and their position at the assigned station may not be filled. For instance, the management team of a PSA may determine that, based on the intelligence reports that they have received, one officer from each station within the PSA be 'tasked' to address a particular issue for a certain period of time. This practice is in line with the force's intelligence model. While this movement of staff may be recorded on the roster as 'secondment' or 'vacancy', it is strictly no longer an unfilled position on the basis that the management team has made a decision to move that position to a different area within the PSA.

The question of police vacancies was very frequently raised at stations visited by my investigators. I note that issues of staffing were also regularly brought up at the Tasking and Coordination meetings and some staff alleged it was affecting morale.

With the increase in proactive policing activity, there is a likelihood of officers being seconded from their station to other locations or to help out where there are serious shortages at stations. When this occurs, it is reported that there:

...is no backfill by the region...the station does not get a say in whether to give staff away...

The heavy reliance on police trainees was highlighted across a number of metropolitan stations as a way of filling station shortages – while they remain on a 2-year probation period after their initial 23 weeks of full-time training. They appear to be in high demand in stations where positions are hard to fill. However, concerns have been expressed to my investigators regarding their use and their need for adequate supervision and training.

At the five police stations examined, each station duty roster is for a two-week period and contains certain information, such as name and rank of officers, their duties for the two weeks and the reason for their absence (e.g. secondment, transfer, leave). There is no standard format for rosters and they vary from station to station. Difficulty was experienced in analysing these rosters in order to determine gazetted positions and actual numbers of staff present at the time of the visits. A summary of the five police station rosters is presented below.

### Police Station A

|                             | Rostered<br>positions by<br>rank | On Leave (e.g. LSL, maternity, suspension) <sup>30</sup> | Elsewhere (e.g.<br>Secondment,<br>transfer,<br>resignation) | On duty at station<br>(including those<br>acting in these<br>roles) | Rostered positions not filled |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|---|-------------------------------|
| Senior Sergeant             | 4                                | 1  | 2   | 2   | 2                             |
| Sergeant                    | 10                               | 5  | 2   | 5   | 5                             |
| Leading Senior<br>Constable | 14                               | 3  | 4   | 7   | 7                             |
| Senior Constable            | 16                               | 3  | 6   | 7   | 9                             |
| Constable                   | 26                               | 4.5  |   | 21.5  | 4.5                           |
| Probationary                |                                  |  |   |   |                               |
| Other                       | 1                                | 1  |   |   | 1                             |

### Police Station B

|                             | Rostered<br>positions by<br>rank | On Leave (e.g.<br>LSL, maternity,<br>suspension) | Elsewhere (e.g.<br>Secondment,<br>transfer,<br>resignation) | On duty at station<br>(including those<br>acting in these<br>roles) | Rostered positions not filled |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|---|-------------------------------|
| Senior Sergeant             | 3                                |  | reorginations   | 3   |                               |
| Sergeant                    | 8                                |  | 2   | 8   |                               |
| Leading Senior<br>Constable | 6                                |  |   | 6   |                               |
| Senior Constable            | 8                                |  | 5   | 3   | 5                             |
| Constable                   | 16                               | 2  | 7   | 7   | 9                             |
| Probationary                | 12                               | 0.5  |   |   | 0.5                           |

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Rostered day off not included

### Police Station C

|                                | Rostered<br>positions by<br>rank | On Leave (e.g.<br>LSL, maternity,<br>suspension) | Elsewhere (e.g.<br>Secondment,<br>transfer,<br>resignation) | On duty at station<br>(including those<br>acting in these<br>roles) | Rostered positions not filled |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|---|-------------------------------|
| Senior Sergeant                | 1                                |  |   | 1   |                               |
| Sergeant                       | 4                                | 0.5  | 1   | 2.5   | 1.5                           |
| Leading Senior<br>Constable    | 4                                |  | 1   | 3   | 1                             |
| Senior Constable/<br>Constable | 14                               | 3.5  | 3   | 7.5   | 6.5                           |

### Police Station D

|                             | Rostered<br>positions by<br>rank | On Leave (e.g.<br>LSL, maternity,<br>suspension) | Elsewhere (e.g.<br>Secondment,<br>transfer,<br>resignation) | On duty at station<br>(including those<br>acting in these<br>roles) | Rostered positions not filled |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|---|-------------------------------|
| Senior Sergeant             | 2                                |  | 1   | 2   |                               |
| Sergeant                    | 7                                | 2.5  | 2   | 4.5   | 2.5                           |
| Leading Senior<br>Constable | 4                                |  | 1   | 3   | 1                             |
| Senior Constable            | 10                               | 1  |   | 9   | 1                             |
| Constable                   | 12.5                             | 2.5  | 5.5   | 4.5   | 8                             |
| Probationary                | 8                                | 3  |   | 5   | 3                             |

### **Police Station E**

|                             | Rostered<br>positions by<br>rank | On Leave (e.g.<br>LSL, maternity,<br>suspension) | Elsewhere (e.g.<br>Secondment,<br>transfer,<br>resignation) | On duty at station<br>(including those<br>acting in these<br>roles) | Rostered positions not filled |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|---|-------------------------------|
| Senior Sergeant             | 2                                |  |   | 2   |                               |
| Sergeant                    | 11                               | 1.5  | 3   | 9.5   | 2.5                           |
| Leading Senior<br>Constable | 20                               | 2  | 5   | 13  | 7                             |
| Senior Constable            | 41                               | 4.5  | 10  | 25.5  | 15.5                          |
| Constable                   | 13                               | 1  |   | 12  | 1                             |
| Probationary                | 5                                |  |   |   |                               |

My investigation found that stations may have the required numbers on paper but during the visits to the stations, it was found, as shown above, that

My investigation found that stations may have the required numbers on paper but during the visits to the stations, it was found that many police were not physically available. many police were not physically available. Secondments and various types of leave for police in station positions can have flow-on effects and is a drain on the station resources increasing pressure on staff. A rostered

position is one which could be identified as being part of the 'strength' of the police station and normally should be filled by an officer. An unfilled rostered

position is created when an officer goes on leave (unplanned leave is of particular concern), or has moved elsewhere, or has been transferred or resigned, and that vacant position has not been filled by another officer.

The above rosters show that the majority of unfilled rostered positions in the five police stations are for lower ranks - leading senior constable, senior constable and constable. While some of the vacancies for senior sergeants and sergeants appeared to be temporarily filled by other officers acting in those roles, the unfilled positions for the lower ranks were generally not filled by officers in an acting capacity. It has been reported that staffing levels can be addressed by the use of trainee police to fill the rosters (in Sunshine they increased from 6 to 30 in a short period of time). There can be an issue regarding their supervision and training capacity, in particular if there is a lack of experienced staff.

The inability to quickly fill positions that are vacant may impact adversely on the service delivered, such as availability for patrols for which the lower ranked officers are generally responsible. This in turn may impact on perception of safety by the Victorian public and on police performance in crime reduction. On the other hand, as the case study of the Safe Street Task Force has demonstrated, there is greater flexibility in drawing on additional resources to address a serious public order and safety issue.

The continual reliance on the 'strength' of a police station as the base number of staff allocated to the station has created the impression of staff shortage as a result of factors mentioned earlier. This perception of staff shortages or 'vacancies', however, appears to contradict the weekly reports to the Minister, indicating that the number of police on a force-wide level is meeting the government commitment. I also consider the rigid application of 'strength' as unproductive, given the Victoria Police's move towards a more flexible allocation of resources according to demands.

### Victoria Police stated:

It has recognized the issues around rostering and has created a rostering project that is involved in roster reform.

I am concerned that in the context of police numbers the simplistic presentation of figures can give misleading information to the public on what are inherently complex matters. A recent example shows a graph of comparisons (*The Age*, 8 December 2008) between Australian jurisdictions of the number of police per 100,000 population<sup>31</sup> and violent crime, without clarifying whether it refers to sworn or operational police, without citing the sources for the figures, nor defining violent crime. This is a further reason why I consider that the improvements to capturing and recording crime data by police are so important.

### Recommendation 22

I recommend that Victoria Police progress the implementation of the new human resource management system.

### Victoria Police response:

In 2006 approval was given to set aside \$28 million of internal funding to build a new system. The findings in the supporting business case were the result of extensive process audits conducted by Financial Services Division, Corporate Management Review Division, the Auditor General's office and recent reviews of current issues and business processes. This project went to tender in late 2007 and the successful company to deliver the new solution has been appointed. Work on building the new solution commenced in 2008 and with Victoria Police have recently completed the blueprint and are in the build stage. The solution is due to be implemented by August 2009.

### Recommendation 23

I recommend that Victoria Police develop a standard format for station rosters.

### *Victoria Police response:*

The Victoria Police Rostering Policy VPM (302-3) was finalized in October 2007, and brings together existent rostering practice and standards. The policy requires each work area to establish a local roster working group comprising a cross section of employees and workplace managers. The policy was developed in consultation with unions, management and staff.

Victoria Police is progressing the acquisition of an automated rostering solution and has recently appointed a project manager to progress the tendering process to a rostering solution.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> The AIC in its *Facts and Figures* 2007 shows that Victoria at 30 June 2006 had the highest number of sworn police officers (47) per 1,000 sq km, more than NSW (18) and any other jurisdiction.

I recommend that Victoria Police review the impact of any vacant positions in the lower ranks at the operational level on the quality of its service delivery.

### Victoria Police response:

[the recommendation] would be actioned by the [Victoria Police] human resources department.

### Recommendation 25

I recommend that Victoria Police clarify key terms such as 'vacancy', 'unfilled positions' and 'strength' to ensure consistent use and understanding of these terms by all members of Victoria Police.

### Victoria Police response:

[the recommendation] would be actioned by the [Victoria Police] human resources department.

### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

### Recommendation 1

I recommend that Victoria Police conduct regular audits where LEAP records are audited against data from the CAD system for validation. The validation should form part of permanent data quality and data integrity processes for crime recording.

### Recommendation 2

I recommend that Victoria Police use VOCAT records and crime victim surveys to enable recorded crime statistics to be compared and validated.

### **Recommendation 3**

I recommend that Victoria Police conduct regular independent audits of police practices for recording crime into LEAP to ensure compliance with its policies and procedures.

### **Recommendation 4**

I recommend that Victoria Police review the methodology for clearance rates and finalising a crime report.

### Recommendation 5

I recommend that the Office of Police Integrity investigate falsification of police records associated with Victoria Police practices in relation to clearance rates and finalising crime reports as identified in this investigation.

### Recommendation 6

I recommend that Victoria Police review the LEAP manual for recording crime and incorporate, where appropriate, the National Crime Recording Standard requirements.

### Recommendation 7

I recommend that Victoria Police strengthen its commitment and support for the implementation of the National Crime Recording Standard and the associated quality assurance strategy.

I recommend that Victoria Police review and audit the implementation of the National Crime Recording Standard and develop and implement recruit and refresher training of police for the recording of crime under the new policy.

### **Recommendation 9**

I recommend that Victoria Police ensure that for Compstat forums and related meetings, attendees are provided with a basic understanding of statistics and analysts are provided with statistical training.

### **Recommendation 10**

I recommend that Victoria Police consider making data quality benchmarks and improvement action plans an integral part of performance management processes.

### **Recommendation 11**

I recommend that Victoria Police review the training in crime recording and provide specialist and refresher training for police on the recording and use of crime statistics.

### **Recommendation 12**

I recommend that Victoria Police ensure effective progress on the LINK project and that it incorporate the elimination of manual forms for the recording of crime data.

### **Recommendation 13**

I recommend that Victoria Police review its current quality assurance practices and develop and implement independent crime recording audits at the station level.

### **Recommendation 14**

I recommend that Victoria Police review the organisational and management arrangements in relation to the roles, responsibilities and resourcing for the recording and production of crime data and statistics.

### **Recommendation 15**

I recommend that Victoria Police review its approach to the reporting of crime statistics, with a view to better meeting the needs of the Victorian public, such as by providing more timely data, with a range of access tools.

I recommend that the Victorian Government give consideration to establishing a unit external to and independent of Victoria Police to develop and maintain statistical databases on crime; to monitor trends in crime and publish regular reports on crime trends; and with a capacity to audit crime statistics and crime recording practices.

### **Recommendation 17**

I recommend that Victoria Police review the administrative processes associated with the recruitment and filling of positions to ensure that they are transparent and provide clear procedures.

### **Recommendation 18**

I recommend that Victoria Police in piloting of the new Member Activity Sheet also consider alternative ways of measuring police workloads.

### **Recommendation 19**

I recommend that Victoria Police in conjunction with the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority review the way in which the CAD dispatch system locates and seeks Victoria Police response units real time availability to emergency situations.

### **Recommendation 20**

I recommend that Victoria Police review the People Allocation Model with a view to improving its usefulness by the inclusion of other data, such as CAD data relating to demand for non crime related services provided by police.

### **Recommendation 21**

I recommend that Victoria Police use CAD data as a source of information on demand for police service, resource management and allocation, and for intelligence purposes.

### **Recommendation 22**

I recommend that Victoria Police progress the implementation of the new human resource management system.

### **Recommendation 23**

I recommend that Victoria Police develop a standard format for station rosters.

I recommend that Victoria Police review the impact of any vacant positions in the lower ranks at the operational level on the quality of its service delivery.

### **Recommendation 25**

I recommend that Victoria Police clarify key terms such as 'vacancy', 'unfilled positions' and 'strength' to ensure consistent use and understanding of these terms by all members of Victoria Police.

G E Brouwer

OMBUDSMAN

### **ATTACHMENTS**

### ATTACHMENT 1 - List of 27 Victoria Police offence categories

### Crime Against the Person

- 1. Homicide
- 2. Rape
- 3. Sex (non-rape)
- 4. Robbery
- 5. Assault
- 6. Abduction/Kidnap

### Crime Against Property

- 7. Arson
- 8. Property Damage
- 9. Burglary (Aggravated)
- 10. Burglary (Residential)
- 11. Burglary (Other)
- 12. Deception
- 13. Handle Stolen Goods
- 14. Theft from Motor Vehicle
- 15. Theft (Shopsteal)
- 16. Theft of Motor Vehicle
- 17. Theft of Bicycle
- 18. Theft (Other)

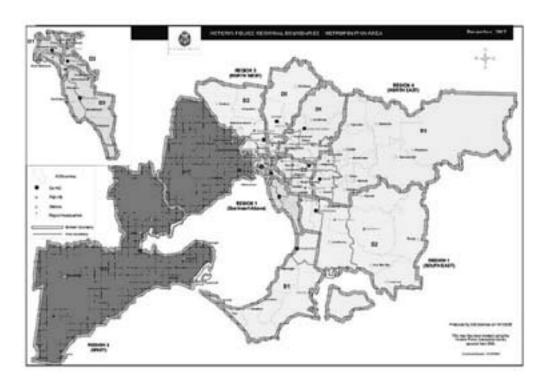
### **Drug Offences**

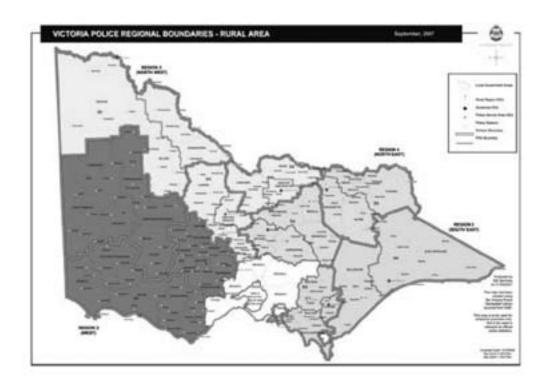
- 19. Drug (Cultivate, Manufacture, Traffick)
- 20. Drug (Possess, Use)

### Other Crime

- 21. Going Equipped to Steal
- 22. Justice Procedures
- 23. Regulated Public Order
- 24. Weapons/ Explosives
- 25. Harassment
- 26. Behaviour in public
- 27. Other

### **ATTACHMENT 2 - Maps of Victoria Police geographical regions**



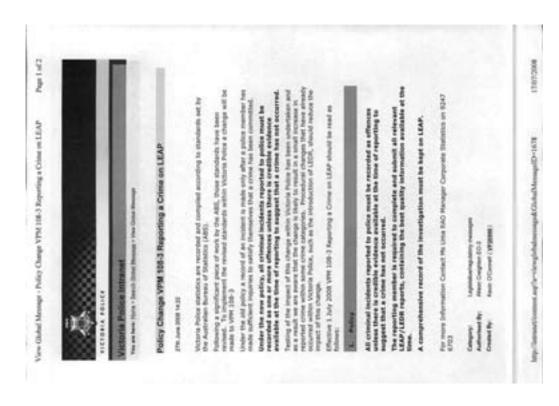


ATTACHMENT 3 - CAD outcome categories and LEAP record matching

|                            | ЭЩĆ,    | Offence det        | detected' | or    |          |                          |       |       |     |                         |     |       |       |         |     |       |
|----------------------------|---------|--------------------|-----------|-------|----------|--------------------------|-------|-------|-----|-------------------------|-----|-------|-------|---------|-----|-------|
|                            | offe,   | offender apprehend | nended'   |       | ,<br>End | <b>Enquiries pending</b> | ling' |       | Rem | Remainder <sup>32</sup> |     |       | Total |         |     |       |
| LEAP record matching found | Š       | Unclear            | Yes       | Total | οN       | Unclear                  | Yes   | Total | οN  | Unclear                 | Yes | Total | οN    | Unclear | Yes | Total |
| ASSAULT - AMBULANCE -      |         |                    |           |       |          |                          |       |       |     |                         |     |       |       |         |     |       |
| REQUIRED                   | 0       | 0                  | _         | _     | 0        | 0                        |       |       | က   | 0                       |     | က     |       |         |     | 4     |
| GUNSHOT OR STABBING        | 0       | _                  | 0         | _     | 0        | 0                        |       |       | 7   | 0                       |     | 2     |       |         |     | 8     |
| DISPUTE - FAMILY/RLTVE     | 0       | 0                  | 0         | 0     | 0        | 0                        |       |       | 28  | 2                       |     | 31    |       |         |     | 33    |
| DISPUTE - NGHBR/OTHER      | 0       | 2                  | 0         | 7     | 0        | _                        |       |       | 22  | 0                       |     | 22    |       |         |     | 25    |
| ARMED HOLDUP               | 0       | 0                  | 0         | 0     | 0        | 0                        |       |       | _   | 0                       |     | _     |       |         |     | _     |
| ASSAULT                    | 0       | 0                  | _         | _     | 0        | ∞                        |       |       | 22  | _                       |     | 23    |       |         |     | 37    |
| CORONERS REPORT (83'S)     | 0       | 0                  | 0         | 0     | 7        | 0                        |       |       | 0   | 0                       |     | 0     |       |         |     | 2     |
| DRUG DEAL/USE IN PUBLIC    | 0       | 0                  | 0         | 0     | 0        | 0                        |       |       | _   | 0                       |     | _     |       |         |     | _     |
| DRUNK OR ERRATIC DRIVER    | <u></u> | 0                  | 0         | _     | _        | 0                        |       |       | 30  | 0                       |     | 30    |       |         |     | 32    |
| FIREARMS INCIDENT          | 0       | 0                  | 0         | 0     | 0        | _                        |       |       | _   | 0                       |     | _     |       |         |     | 2     |
| SEXUAL ASSAULT OR RAPE     | 0       | _                  | 0         | _     | 0        | 0                        |       |       | 0   | 0                       |     | 0     |       |         |     | _     |
| SUSPECT LOITER             | 0       | 0                  | 7         | 2     | 0        | 2                        |       |       | 39  | 0                       |     | 39    |       |         |     | 44    |
| SUSPECTED LAB/PLANTATION   | 0       | 0                  | 0         | 0     | 0        | 0                        | _     | _     | 0   | 0                       | 0   | 0     | 0     | 0       | _   | _     |
| WILFUL & OBSCENE           |         |                    |           |       |          |                          |       |       |     |                         |     |       |       |         |     |       |
| EXPOSURE                   | 0       | 0                  | 0         | 0     | 0        | 0                        |       |       | _   | 0                       |     | _     |       |         |     | _     |
| BURGLARY                   | 0       | 7                  | 7         | 6     | _        | 0                        |       |       | 2   | 0                       |     | 9     |       |         |     | 30    |
| RECOVER STOLEN VEHICLE     | 0       | 0                  | _         | _     | 0        | 0                        |       |       | 3   | 0                       |     | 3     |       |         |     | 4     |
| SHOPSTEAL                  | 0       | 0                  | 2         | 2     | 0        | 0                        |       |       | က   | 0                       |     | 4     |       |         |     | 10    |
| SUSPECT VEHICLE            | 0       | 0                  | 0         | 0     | _        | 2                        |       |       | 10  | _                       |     | 7     |       |         |     | 4     |
| THEFT                      | _       | 0                  | က         | 4     | 0        | _                        |       |       | 9   | 0                       |     | 9     |       |         |     | 7     |
| MOTOR VEHICLE              | 0       | 0                  | _         | _     | 0        | 0                        |       |       | 4   | 0                       |     | 2     |       |         |     | 7     |
| THEFT FROM MOTOR VEHICLE   | 0       | 0                  | _         | _     | _        | 2                        |       |       | 4   | 0                       |     | 4     |       |         |     | တ     |
| WILFUL DAMAGE              | 0       | 0                  | _         | 1     | 2        | 0                        |       |       | 9   | 0                       |     | 9     |       |         |     | 13    |
| ALL CRIME EVENTS           | 7       | 9                  | 23        | 31    | 8        | 17                       | 30    |       | 191 | 4                       |     | 199   | 201   | 27      | .   | 285   |

 $^{32}$  Includes 'no offence detected', 'gone on arrival', 'cancelled event/duplicate', 'all apparently correct'.

# ATTACHMENT 4 - Victoria Police communication regarding the policy change to crime recording



### Reporting crime on LEAP

The Australian Bureau of Statistics less there is credible evidence evelations evelable (ABS) standards relating to how at the time of report to suggest a crime statistics are recorded and compiled has not occurred.

Navager of Corporate Statistics,
To implement the revised retional Uma Rao said tests have already been wither recording standards within Victo- undertaken to assess the impact of the crime recording standards within Victo-

Police Manual (VPM) 108-3. "We are aware the change is likely Under the old policy, a record of an to result in a small increase in reported ria Police, a change has been made to incident was only made after a police member had made sufficient inquiries Victoria Police Manual (VPM) 108-3.

crime within some crime categories,"

Ms Rao said.

to satisfy themselves that a crime had been committed. incidents reported to police must be recorded as one or more offences un-Under the new policy, all criminal

(I) MORE INFORMATION Contact Corporate Statistics manager Uma Rao on 9247 6703. reduce the impact of this change.



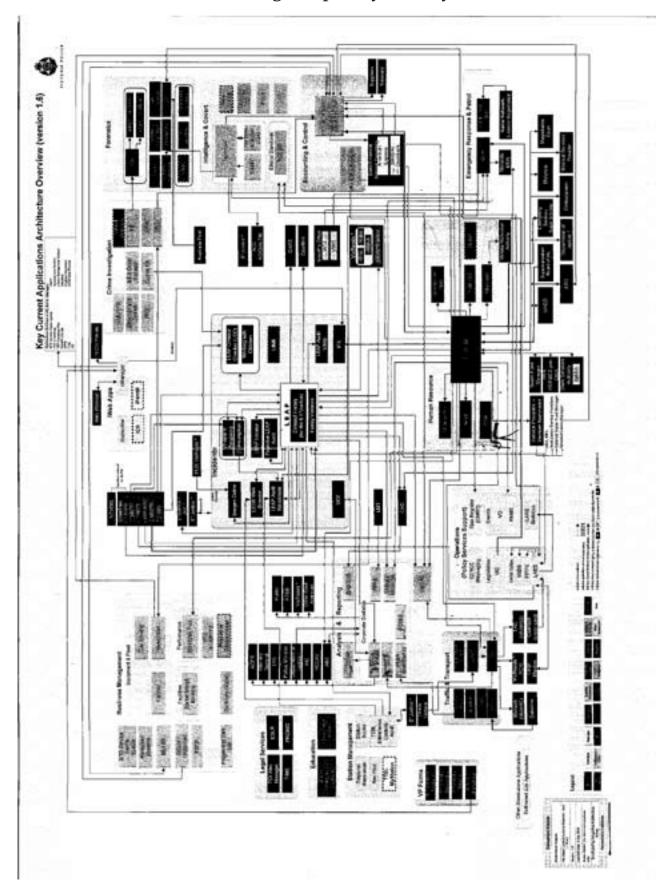
and transport details to be supplied upon expression of interest to attend. Payment to the lan Musgrove Retrement Fund Shed and Lodge, Nutrityville, on Wednesday, 6 August at 6pm. Cost is \$35 including burbecue, presentation "Procedural changes that have al-ready occurred within Victoria Police, such as the introduction of LEAP Elec-tronic Data Recorder (LEDR), should

125

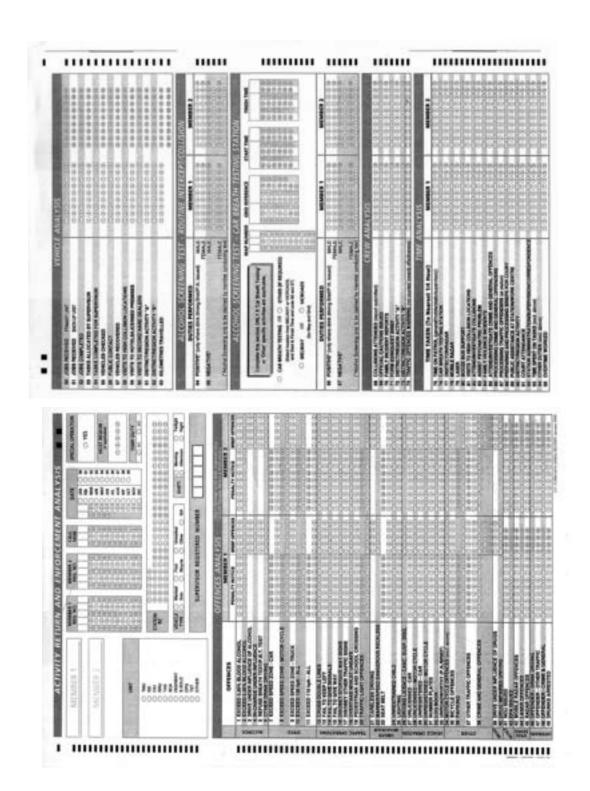
## ATTACHMENT 5 - Sample copies of LEAP forms

| REPORT DATE   | MEMBER<br>REG. NO.   | ME STA   | MEMBER                                | Cross T   | Cross This Box For  |         |
|---|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|---------|
| If sunniementing an er  |  |  |                                       | A I EINIE   | 7.18.5  | ]       |
| sub-incident, cross this box  | visting AND provide the is box SUB-INCIDENTNo.   | OR If this is a new Sub-incident, then provide the existing INCIDENT No. | ncident,then<br>ICIDENT No.           |   |   |         |
| SUB-INCIDENT Unsolved   |  | Offender Processed (Incl. Caution)                                       | Intent to Summons                     | ons   CPWD  | GON   | Officer |
| COMMITTED AT<br>OR BETWEEN  | nns on   |  | pue                                   | no su   |   |         |
| Sub-Inc.<br>Location  |  |  |                                       |   |   |         |
| Flat No.  | Street No.   | Street Name<br>& Type  |                                       |   | į   |         |
| TOWN/<br>SUBURB   |  |  |                                       | COM   | COMMITTED   |         |
| PRINCIPAL VICTIM  | CTIM MINING  |  | 1st Name                              |   | İ   |         |
| Cross if business har FAMILY NAME   | ]<br>  |  | 2nd Name                              |   |   |         |
| go <sub>0</sub>   | Age  | Sex: Male  | Female Appearance                     | J. J  |   |         |
| Address   |  |  |                                       |   |   |         |
| Flat No.  | Street No.   | Street Name  | •                                     |   |   |         |
| TOWN/<br>SUBURB   |  |  | St                                    | State   | Postcode  | _       |
| Home  |  | Bus.   |                                       | Other   |   |         |
| Is property attached  | is property attached to this sub-incident?   | Yes  | Are th                                | Are there other sub-incidents?  | rs?   | 2       |
|   |  |  | Are there other name                  | Are there other names for this sub-incident?                                      |   | ş       |
| MODUS OPERANDI TYPE OF PREMISES, Other Residents  Boetyard Frontyard Genage | IS OPERANDI TYPE OF PREMISSAREA WHERE INCIDENT OCCURRED T. Receionals) T. Design of the property of the proper | Street/anef-ootpaths Street/anef-ootpaths                                | POINT OF ENT Unknown Door Hood Window | POINT OF ENTRY TO VEHICLE Unknown Vent Window Door Boor Hood Sunroof Window Other | METHOD OF ENTRY TO VEHICLE Smashed Window Forced Look Nil Visible Force | Indow   |
| Indicate Type of Pr   | ndicate Type of Premises/Area Where Incident Occurred if other than provided above. [Use only Locations supplied on L2]  | Occurred if other than pro-  | vided above. [Use on                  | ly Locations supplied   | on L2]  |         |
| VEHICLE DET   | DETAILS  | S S S S S S S S S S S S S S S S S S S                                    |                                       |   | State   |         |
| VEHICLE   |  | Туре   |                                       | Model   |   |         |
| Body Type   |  | Year   | Colors                                |   |   |         |
| PROPERTY  |  |  |                                       |   |   |         |
| Brand/Make  |  |  |                                       |   |   |         |
| Model   |  |  |                                       |   |   |         |
| Serial No.  |  |  |                                       |   |   |         |
| Owner ID<br>JRB Ref.  |  |  |                                       | !   | İ   |         |
| Quantity  |  |  |                                       |   | •   |         |
| Unit  |  |  |                                       |   |   |         |
| Color   |  |  |                                       |   | İ   |         |
| Value \$  |  |  |                                       |   |   |         |
|   |  |  |                                       |   |   |         |

### ATTACHMENT 6 – Key Current Applications Architecture Overview (Version 1.6) showing complexity of IT systems



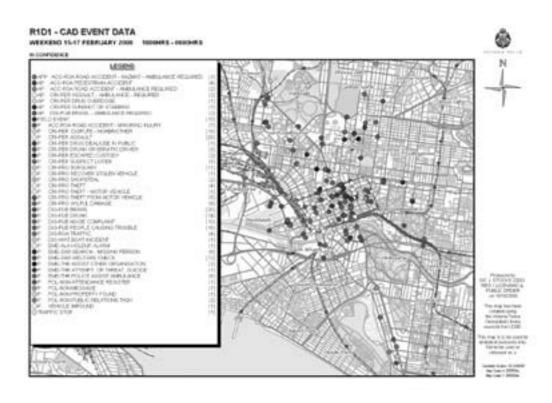
### ATTACHMENT 7 - Activity Return and Enforcement Analysis (AREA) Form

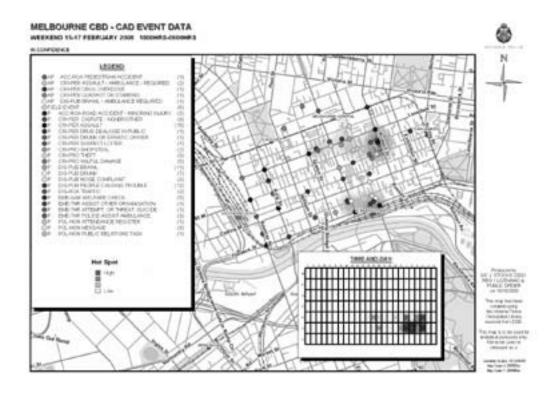


### **ATTACHMENT 8 - Sample copy of Patrol Duty Return**

| Form 54   |             | 7                |                 | _              | PATROL DUTY SHEET A1 NIL G/C Page 1    |
|-----------|-------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|--|
| Cell sign |             | Obs              | erver           | -              | 2 2 0 7 08                             |
| PBT star  | t           |                  | PBT en          | £              | Speeds start: 4851/5 Speeds end: 48613 |
| Time      | Task<br>No. | Time<br>Attended | Time<br>Cleared | Code<br>Status |  |
| 2700      |             |                  | 255             | 2              | ON DUTY- CHO COLIPMENT, LEAP,          |
|           | ¥_          |                  |                 |                | GOLAILS.                               |
|           |             |                  |                 | ٠,             | NIL CARRY OVER                         |
|           |             |                  | 1,16            | 1 1            | TASKED BY SOT                          |
|           |             |                  | u 1             | .7%            |  |
| -         |             |                  | - 4             |                | Po: Cours BRICE                        |
| 1 ,       |             |                  |                 |                | Re: READ. FILE                         |
| 28/5      | 1           | -                |                 | -/-            |  |
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| 855       | TI          | 0905             | 0909            |                | Re: ARREST                             |
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|           |             | 7                |                 | Ç 1            | S/L GAMES                              |
| Aos       |             | 6                |                 | 5              | PA: TI NPH                             |
| 909       | 1           |                  | . At            | : )            |  |
| 212       |             | 1, 1             |                 | . 2            |  |
|           | 1           |                  | 1 .             | ***            | Re: CALITION,                          |
| 9524      |             |                  | , 20 ,          |                | SBI 257 IN ATTEMPANCE                  |
|           |             |                  |                 | -              | 3/7:                                   |
|           | 1 1         |                  |                 |                | CAMPION ISSUED TO:                     |
|           | , "         | -                |                 | 7.7            | 2                                      |
| -         |             |                  |                 |                | DERESTED RE: CRIMINAL DAMACE           |
|           | -           |                  | 10, 50          |                |  |
| 0937      |             |                  |                 | - 1            | ed Premises Totals                     |

### ATTACHMENT 9 - Safe Streets Taskforce mapping of CAD data for weekend 15-17 February 2008





### ATTACHMENT 10 - CAD data relating to Victoria Police events for dispatch and frequency of 'Attempt to Dispatch' code by priority level from November 2007 to June 2008

| VICPOL | VICPOL Events |       |           |       |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--------|---------------|-------|-----------|-------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Month  | Priority      | Count | ATD Count | ATD%  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Nov-07 | 1             | 8139  | 2309      | 28.4% |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Nov-07 | 2             | 46244 | 11579     | 25.0% |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Nov-07 | 3             | 46337 | 2703      | 5.8%  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Dec-07 | 1             | 9363  | 3300      | 35.2% |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Dec-07 | 2             | 49618 | 14878     | 30.0% |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Dec-07 | 3             | 50884 | 3022      | 5.9%  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Jan-08 | 1             | 8737  | 2897      | 33.2% |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Jan-08 | 2             | 47734 | 12959     | 27.1% |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Jan-08 | 3             | 47746 | 2744      | 5.7%  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Feb-08 | 1             | 8021  | 2778      | 34.6% |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Feb-08 | 2             | 43567 | 13396     | 30.7% |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Feb-08 | 3             | 44259 | 2564      | 5.8%  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Mar-08 | 1             | 8916  | 3077      | 34.5% |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Mar-08 | 2             | 47717 | 13865     | 29.1% |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Mar-08 | 3             | 47427 | 2692      | 5.7%  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Apr-08 | 1             | 7727  | 2600      | 33.6% |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Apr-08 | 2             | 42882 | 12120     | 28.3% |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Apr-08 | 3             | 43898 | 2358      | 5.4%  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| May-08 | 1             | 7768  | 2714      | 34.9% |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| May-08 | 2             | 42331 | 11655     | 27.5% |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| May-08 | 3             | 41659 | 2380      | 5.7%  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Jun-08 | 1             | 7500  | 2694      | 35.9% |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Jun-08 | 2             | 41884 | 11808     | 28.2% |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Jun-08 | 3             | 40058 | 2376      | 5.9%  |  |  |  |  |  |  |



### Other reports

Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001 Report of an investigation into issues at Bayside Health October 2008

Probity controls in public hospitals for the procurement of non-clinical goods and services

August 2008

Investigation into contraband entering a prison and related issues *June* 2008

Conflict of interest in local government *March* 2008

Conflict of interest in the public sector *March* 2008

Investigation into VicRoads driver licensing arrangements December 2007

Investigation into the disclosure of electronic communications addressed to the Member for Evelyn and related matters *November* 2007

Investigation into the use of excessive force at the Melbourne Custody Centre *November* 2007

Investigation into the Office of Housing's tender process for the Cleaning and Gardening Maintenance Contract - CNG 2007

October 2007

Investigation into a disclosure about WorkSafe and Victoria Police handling of a bullying and harassment complaint *April* 2007

Own motion investigation into the policies and procedures of the planning department at the City of Greater Geelong February 2007

Conditions for persons in custody *July* 2006

Review of the Freedom of Information Act *June* 2006

Investigation into parking infringement notices issued by Melbourne City Council *April* 2006

Improving responses to allegations involving sexual assault *March* 2006

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