

Crime Statistics for calendar year ending 31 December 2011

Frequently Asked Questions



April 2012

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### Crime Statistics for calendar year ending 31 December 2011

#### What is the summary of statistics and how does it compare with previous years?

Latest crime statistics show recorded crime continued to drop in the 2011 calendar year, down 4.8 percent from the same period in 2010.

There were 406,056 offences recorded in 2011, 20,289 fewer offences than during the previous calendar year.

After taking into account the 0.8 percent rise in New Zealand's resident population over the same period, the fall in the crime rate for 2011 is 5.6 percent.

This result represents the lowest number of recorded offences for New Zealand for fifteen years.

#### Where are the decreases in crime compared to previous years?

The following offence divisions decreased in recorded offences in the 2011 calendar year from the previous year.

Offence division	Variance
Homicide and Related Offences	-14.4%
Fraud, Deception and Related Offences	-17.6%
Illicit Drug Offences	-9.8%
Weapons and Explosives Offences	-10.1%
Robbery, Extortion and Related Offences	-7.3%
Property Damage and Environmental Pollution	-11.1%
Offences against Justice procedures etc	-8.8%
Public Order offences	-6.8%
Abduction, Harassment and other related offences against a person	-8.5%
Acts intended to cause injury	-5.0%
Theft and related offences	-1.1%

#### What is the main proportion of recorded crime by offence divisions?

The offence divisions which make up the most crime, by proportion, are:

Offence division	Recorded 2010/11	Proportion recorded
Theft and related offences	135,442	33.36%
Unlawful entry with intent/Burglary/Break and enter	59,518	14.66%
Property Damage and Environmental Pollution	51,984	12.80%
Public Order Offences	42,969	10.58%
Acts intended to cause injury	42,278	10.41%
Illicit drug offences	20,739	5.11%

Of the six divisions of offending that proportionally account for most of crime in New Zealand, five showed decreases this year:

- Theft and related offences fell by 1.1%
- Property damage and environmental pollution fell by 11.1%
- Public order offences fell by 6.8%
- Acts intended to cause injury fell by 5.0%
- Illicit drug offences fell by 9.8%

The only increase was seen in unlawful entry with intent / burglary / break and enter offences, which rose slightly by 0.3%.

#### **What are the statistics by Police District?**

The following table gives a breakdown of total recorded offences by District:

<b>District</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Variance / 10,000 population</b>
Northland	16,994	15,211	-10.5%	-10.9%
Waitemata	36,392	36,214	-0.5%	-2.1%
Auckland City	50,991	55,220	8.3%	6.8%
Counties Manukau	51,664	50,228	-2.8%	-4.6%
Waikato	34,764	35,355	1.7%	0.7%
Bay of Plenty	38,701	36,534	-5.6%	-6.2%
Eastern	25,566	25,058	-2.0%	-2.2%
Central	31,084	29,593	-4.8%	-5.2%
Wellington	44,321	42,444	-4.2%	-5.1%
Tasman	17,318	16,695	-3.6%	-4.8%
Canterbury	52,119	40,540	-22.2%	-21.5%
Southern	26,431	22,964	-13.1%	-14.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>426,345</b>	<b>406,056</b>	<b>-4.8%</b>	<b>-5.6%</b>

#### **Canterbury District had a big drop in recorded offences in this period - is that related to the earthquakes?**

Recorded crime in Canterbury had been trending down but there was a significant drop after the earthquake in February 2011. There was a sudden large decrease in Theft and Property Damage, with offences at the less serious end of the spectrum reducing the most. Although small by value, these offences are typically large by volume.

This change may be influenced by a number of factors such as: good citizenship where people across Christchurch and the district rallied to help one another in the aftermath of the earthquake, the fact that much of the CBD remained within the closed Red Zone and the higher visibility of police and security.

#### **What about the other districts?**

There were decreases in all but two of the 12 Districts: Auckland City (up 8.3%) and Waikato (up 1.7%).

The next largest drop in offending after Christchurch was Southern District, with a decrease of 13.1%, followed by Northland, with a decrease of 10.5%.

Northland's decrease in theft and related offences may be attributed to the number of community initiatives with partner agencies targeting Vehicle Crime in high risk areas.

### **Why did Auckland City offending rates increase?**

Much of the rise in Auckland City can generally be attributed to more public order offences and thefts from cars. Public order offences increased by 15.3%, due largely to liquor ban breaches, where nearly 1000 more offences were detected in 2011 than in 2010.

Half of this increase was observed over the Rugby World Cup months of September/October, when there were more Police in the city. Disorderly and offensive conduct offences actually dropped by 5.5% and 43% respectively.

Other significant crime types declined markedly. Homicide and related offences were down by 36.4 percent with murders down from 8 in 2010 to 5 in 2011.

### **Why was less crime resolved nationally than in the previous year?**

The national resolution rate dropped by around half a percent to 47% in 2011.

Only a small proportion of the change was related to success rates in resolving offences. Most was caused by a change in the mix of offences, with the greatest reductions in offence volumes occurring in offences that have high resolution rates. This has the effect of reducing the overall average resolution rate, even when resolution rates for individual offences are not changing.

### **What does the resolution rate show?**

Recorded offences are counted as resolved when Police apprehend an offender and decide how to deal with him or her – e.g. by warning or prosecution.

The resolution rate is the percentage of recorded offences that are resolved within 14 days of the end of the year being reported on. If an offence is resolved 15 days or more after the end of the year then it will not appear in official crime statistics for that or any other year.

The resolution rate therefore undercounts the number of cases that police has resolved. This phenomenon has a more marked impact for some types of offences than others, where lengthy investigations are required.

### **Is the homicide rate lower in 2011?**

Yes. Homicides and related offences dropped by 14 offences (-14.4%) in 2011.

### **What about the number of murders?**

There were 39 murders in 2011 compared with 46 in 2010. This is the lowest number of murders in a calendar year since 1995.

### **Why do the official statistics no longer distinguish between family violence and non-family violence-related offending?**

Family violence-related offences are no longer specifically identified in the official statistics for recorded offences because changes in recording practices and systems over time have affected whether or not a recorded offence is flagged as family violence-related.

In order to produce meaningful statistical information, data must be recorded in a consistent way. Therefore, comparisons over time in Police family violence statistics are ambiguous and not meaningful for official purposes.

### **Then how does Police know what's going on with family violence-related offending?**

Police continues to record all offences, whether or not they involve family violence. This data is used to help better understand and address the causes and risks associated with crime. This includes targeting Police resources where they can be most effective in preventing and reducing offending, such as working more closely with victims and alongside community and other government agencies.

In terms of family violence 'flags', Police use these to monitor the number and types of family violence investigations being undertaken. One reason this is useful is because family violence investigations involve additional activities not relevant to other types of offending.

For example, Police prioritise investigations through the Family Violence Inter-Agency Response System, which helps Police target resources where they're most needed and better understand how to prevent this type of offending.

### **Why did sexual assault and related offences go up by 14.9%?**

It is well-understood that there has been significant under-reporting of these types of offences in the past. Police have been working with communities and other agencies to increase the focus on this type of offending in recent years; increased awareness and support may result in more people reporting these offences to Police.

The fact that the levels of recorded offences has risen may reflect an increase in the number of offences being reported rather than an increase in the number of offences.

Sexual assaults are unacceptable wherever and whenever they happen. We continue to urge victims of this type of offending to report these crimes to police, and to seek support from the range of agencies available.

### **What impact has recent police practices had on the crime statistics?**

Police has continued its move to a prevention-first focus; that is, stopping crime and crashes before they happen. Work is well underway to put in place a new operating model aimed at giving Police the tools, training, technology and support they need to focus on priority work.

This includes introducing new mobile technology to enable Police to spend more time on the streets, a Crime Reporting Line to give people a separate Police channel to report of historical and non-emergency crime, and Neighbourhood Policing Teams being set up around the country to actively work with priority communities.

The increasing focus on prevention-first initiatives and Police's commitment to working more closely with communities is targeted at bringing crime rates down, and the results are in line with that.

### **Robbery, Burglary and Theft offences all decreased?**

There was a 7.3% drop in robberies and related offences nationally. The largest decrease was in Waitematā with 83 fewer offences recorded in the 2011 calendar year; the largest increase was in Northland, which recorded 28 more offences.

Burglary offences increased by 0.3% in 2011, with Dwelling Burglary increasing by 2.2%.

Theft and Related Offences make up around one-third of all recorded offences. The 2011 calendar year saw a 1.1% reduction in Theft offences (down 1,490 offences). Much of this is due to a particularly large reduction in minor thefts in Canterbury following February's earthquake. Both of the other South Island Districts also recorded significantly fewer offences

in this division: Southern reduced by 909 offences (-12.5%), and Tasman reduced by 430 offences (-9.2%).

Northland District saw a decrease in theft and related offences of 10.7%, attributed to a number of community initiatives with partner agencies targeting Vehicle Crime in high risk areas.

### **Recorded thefts increased in Auckland City District. What are Police doing about it?**

The increase of burglaries and thefts of scrap metal continue to increase in the upper North Island in particular; the three Auckland Districts are working together to target scrap and second-hand dealers to make it more difficult for offenders to dispose of stolen scrap metal.

### **Can you explain the decrease in public order offences?**

Public order offences decreased by 6.8% in 2011, the largest contributor of which was a decrease in disorderly conduct offences, which dropped by 6.7%.

Nine of the 12 districts recorded decrease, with Canterbury recording the largest fall of 21.3%. Bay of Plenty was next (-17.1%), Counties-Manukau (-11.5%) and Southern (-10.5%). There is a variety of reasons for these reductions in these Districts, including increasing prevention-focused initiatives such as targeted patrols.

### **What about 'Acts intended to cause injury'?**

Acts Intended to Cause Injury, which consist almost entirely of Assault offences, dropped by 5.0% (down 2,237 offences). Reductions in this division were recorded in nine of the twelve Districts, and ranged from -0.8% (Tasman) to -16.2% (Canterbury). The largest increase was in Auckland City, up 6.3% (209 offences).

### **Why are illicit drug offences continuing to decrease?**

Recorded Illicit drugs offences reduced by 9.8% in 2010-11, from 22,995 to 20,739 offences.

The largest reductions were in Cannabis (-11.6%) and New Drugs, dominated by methamphetamine (-10.8%). Reductions were recorded in all subdivisions, except Deal or Traffic in Illicit Drugs offences, which saw an increase of 2.5%.

The number of methamphetamine seizure incidents stayed relatively stable, increasing by only three.

Reducing illicit drugs and drug related harm, particularly methamphetamine is a priority for police and our partner agencies. We are running a long term methamphetamine control strategy to disrupt the supply of meth.

Targeted and preventive measures such as going after the high end dealers, cooks and suppliers will ultimately disrupt the supply chain and cause a ripple through effect on the whole illicit drug market.

Police and OFCANZ continue to target gangs who deal in methamphetamine, disrupting their activities and seizing their cash and other proceeds of crime. During the 2011 calendar year reporting period:

- 34.2kg of methamphetamine was seized, which is 11% higher than that seized in 2010 (30.9 kg) and the number of seizure incidents increased by 18%.
- Meth seized at the border increased from nearly 20 kg in 2010 to 27 kg in 2011.
- 109 clan labs were dismantled