COMMUNITY SAFETY IN REGIONAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

Organisation: Country Mayors Association of NSW

Date Received: 20 May 2024

SUBMISSION
COMMUNITY SAFETY IN REGIONAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

Presented By
Country Mayors Association of NSW

20 MAY 2024

Contents

Terms of Reference

This inquiry was self-referred on 20 March 2024.

That the Committee on Law and Safety inquire into and report on:

(a) the drivers of youth crime across regional and rural NSW, particularly since the COVID pandemic;

(b) how a whole of government approach can reduce the drivers and root causes of youth crime in regional and rural NSW;

(c) the wraparound and diversionary services available for youth and families in the regions and rural areas and how they can be better matched to individuals, measured, improved and integrated into a coordinated approach to divert youth from crime, having regard to the NSW Government's commitment to working in partnership with Aboriginal people;

(d) staffing levels and workforce issues, including police staffing, in regional and rural areas and how services can be improved to reduce youth crime in these areas;

(e) recidivism rates in regional and rural areas, and related impacts on the community, services and law enforcement;

(f) the range of functions being performed by NSW police officers, including mental health assistance and youth welfare, on behalf of other agencies in regional and rural areas, and the supports required to assist police; and

(g) any other related matter.

The inquiry will report back in February 2025.

The Country Mayors Association of NSW Introduction

As Chairman of the NSW Country Mayors Association (CMA), I offer this submission seeking support to effect positive change for Regional, Rural and Remote NSW communities.

CMA conducts an Annual Survey of our members to ensure that we advocate for change in areas that are most of need in our communities. The results from last year's survey can be found on the CMA website https://nswcountrymayors.com.au/members-annual-survey/. Crime Law and Order has for the first time now been identified in the top 10 issues impacting our communities.

This submission is a comprehensive factual representation of policing numbers, funds spent, distribution of workforce and statistical data on crime categories over a six-year period comparing Metropolitan to Regional, Rural and Remote Local Government areas in NSW. The source of data used for this report is a combination of, NSW Annual Police Reports and the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR).

According to the NSW Annual Police Report, In 2022/23 year, there were 17,062 police officers which equates to a ratio of residents to police officer (1:489). For that same period of time Queensland had a ratio of (1:326), the South Australian ratio was (1:301), and Victoria's ratio was (1:319). These ratio's highlight the increased workload of police officers in NSW when compared to other Eastern seaboard states of Australia.

The rates of crime in the majority of reportable categories in NSW are substantially higher in Regional, Rural and Remote Local Government areas, then the Metropolitan LGA's. We believe this is a strong lead indicator that there are inadequate policing resources to ensure equality of the reportable rates of crime in the Regional, Rural and Remote regions into the future. It is not unreasonable that the residents of Regional, Rural and Remote NSW communities should expect to have rates of reportable crime no greater than Metropolitan residents, to achieve that change is required.

The graphs in each reportable category show the incident counts and incident rates; as a percentage in the highest majority of these reportable areas both the incident rates and counts are higher then in the Metropolitan LGA's. These results are extremely alarming considering only an estimated one third of the population of NSW resides in Regional, Rural and Remote areas.

Country Mayors Association (CMA) supported by CWA, NSW Farmers and NSW Police Association launched our Crime, Law and Order Report in October 2023. The first recommendation within our report was for an inquiry to be held into the rate of crime in all categories reported on the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) in regional, rural and remote NSW. On behalf of the Executive and Membership of CMA, I would like to thank the committee members for accepting our call and encourage the committee to give serious consideration for all recommendations within this submission when compiling the final report and considering the location and amount of hearings that will be available throughout rural, regional and remote NSW.
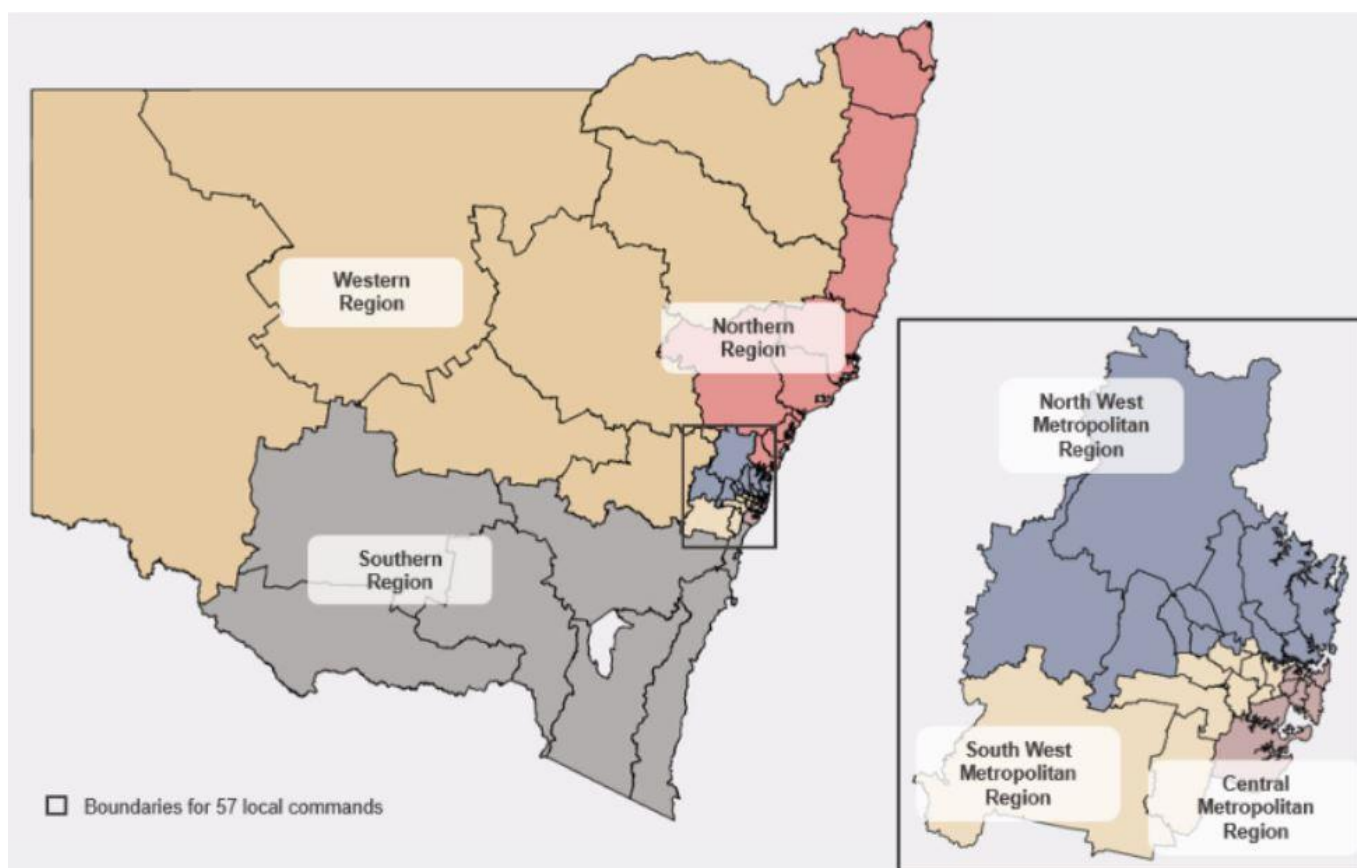
Policing Regions

There are 17,659 sworn police officers operating across 57 police area commands and police districts (local commands) and six police regions in New South Wales.

As the image below shows there are three Metropolitan regions with the rest of NSW broken into three Regional, Rural and Remote regions.

The Metropolitan regions service 10,434 square kilometres or 1% of NSW land mass of NSW and the Regional and Rural regions service 789,940 Square kilometres or 99% of the land mass of NSW.

Source of information

NSW POLICE ANNUAL REPORTS

COMPARISON
POLICING RESOURCES DISTRIBUTION BETWEEN
METROPOLITAN – REGIONAL & RURAL REGIONS 2022-23 YEAR

STATE	POLICE COUNT	POPULATION	RATIO - POLICE OFFICER PER PERSON	OPERATIONAL EXPENSES	$ SPENT PER PERSON
NEW SOUTH WALES	17,062	8,339,300	489	5,176,279,000	621
QUEENSLAND	16,723	5,459,400	326	3,125,485,000	572
VICTORIA	21,326	6,812,500	319	4,162,768,000	611
SOUTH AUSTRALIA	6,142	1,851,700	301	1,065,660,000	576
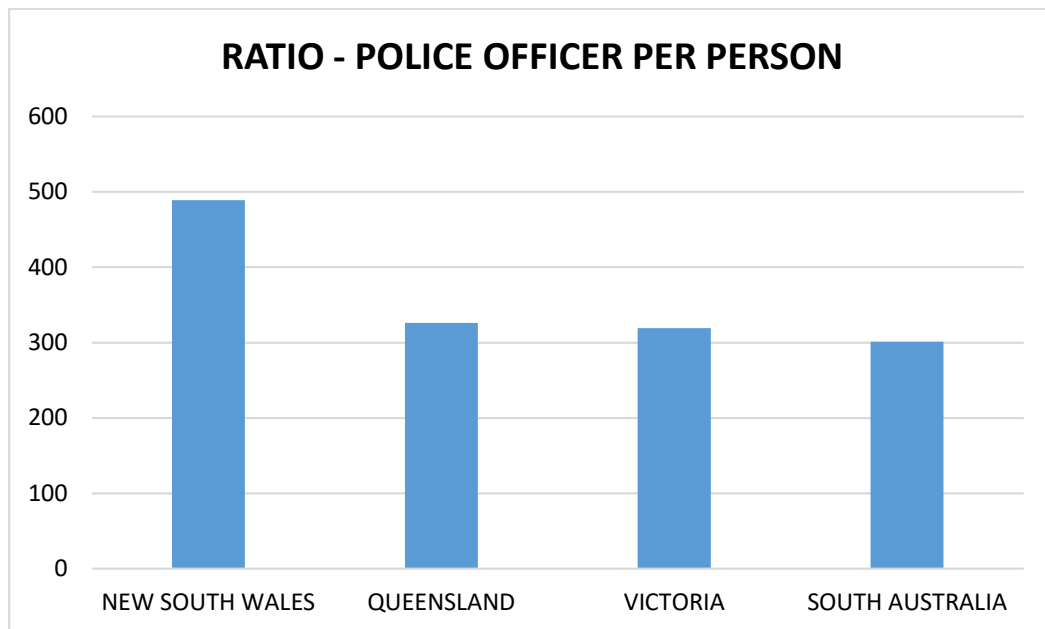
New South Wales Police Officer Counts

| YEAR	POLICE COUNT	POPULATION	RATIO-POLICE OFFICER PER PERSON
2015	16,693	7.62 million	1-456
2016	16,627	7.70 million	1-463
2017	16,649	7.81 million	1-469
2018	16,788	7.89 million	1-469
2019	17,111	7.992 million	1-467
2020	17,348	8.072 million	1-465
2021	17,727	8.163 million	1-460
2022	17,659	8.24 million	1-466
2023	17,062	8.33 million	1-489

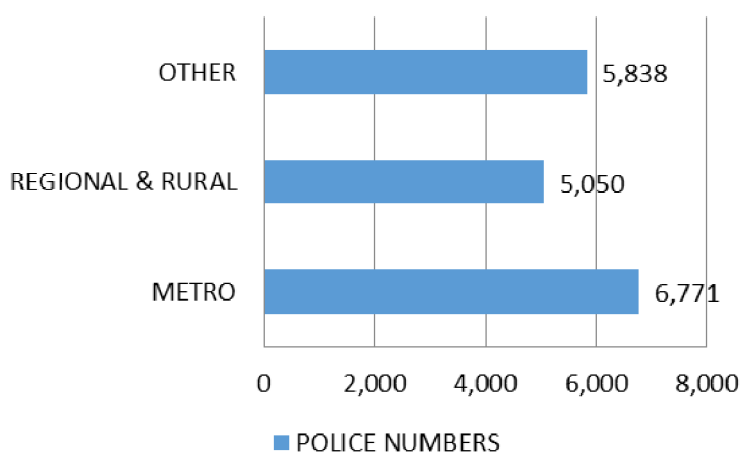![THE COUNTRY MAYORS ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC - "What we want is nothing more than equity"]

COMPARISON
POLICING RESOURCES DISTRIBUTION BETWEEN
METROPOLITAN – REGIONAL & RURAL REGIONS 2022-23 YEAR

POLICE NUMBERS

5,838
6,771
5,050
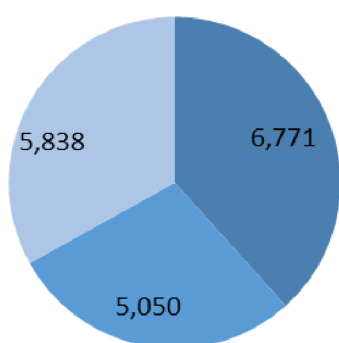
■ METRO ■ REGIONAL & RURAL ■ OTHER

POLICE NUMBERS

	DISTRIBUTION%
NEW SOUTH WALES	**100%**
METRO	**38%**
REGIONAL & RURAL	**29%**
OTHER	**33%**

* Region population estimates have been derived by taking each region's share of the NSW population. The figures above do not include staff (police and administrative) who are centrally managed but deployed throughout the regions in specialist and corporate roles to provide investigative support, radio communications, call centres, forensic services, complaints and employee management, air and sea policing, specialist surveillance, canine and mounted support, media and public relations, counter terrorism and major crime investigation, police prosecutions, technology support, occupational health and safety, injury management, education and training, human resource support and asset management. The figures above represent actual police strength as at 30 June 2023. These figures will vary from month to month and year to year. Actual strength across the NSW Police Force has decreased from 17,659 in 2021-22 to 17,062 in 2022-23.

WHERE ARE THE CRIME RATES

AND CRIME COUNTS

THE HIGHEST
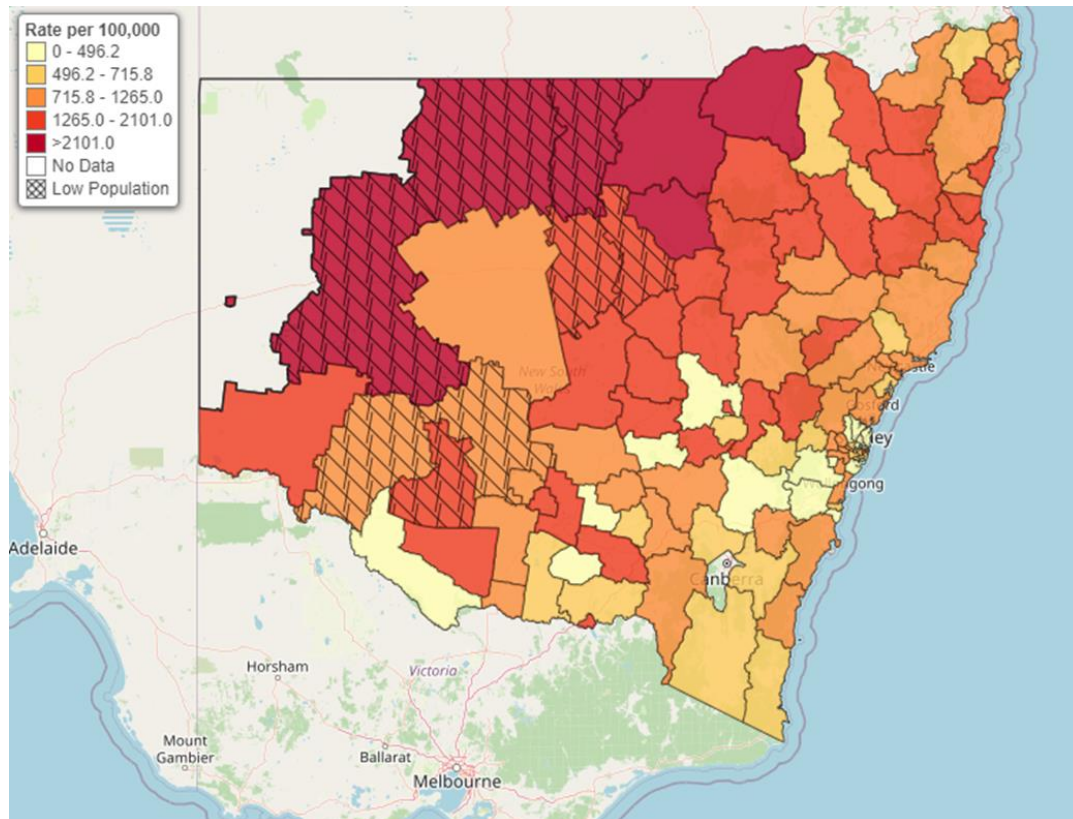
About:

The Bureau is a statistical and research agency within the Department of Communities and Justice. It was established in 1969.

Their aims are to:
- identify factors that affect the distribution and frequency of crime;
- identify factors that affect the effectiveness, efficiency or equity of the NSW criminal justice system;
- Ensure that information on these factors and on crime and justice trends is available and accessible to our clients.

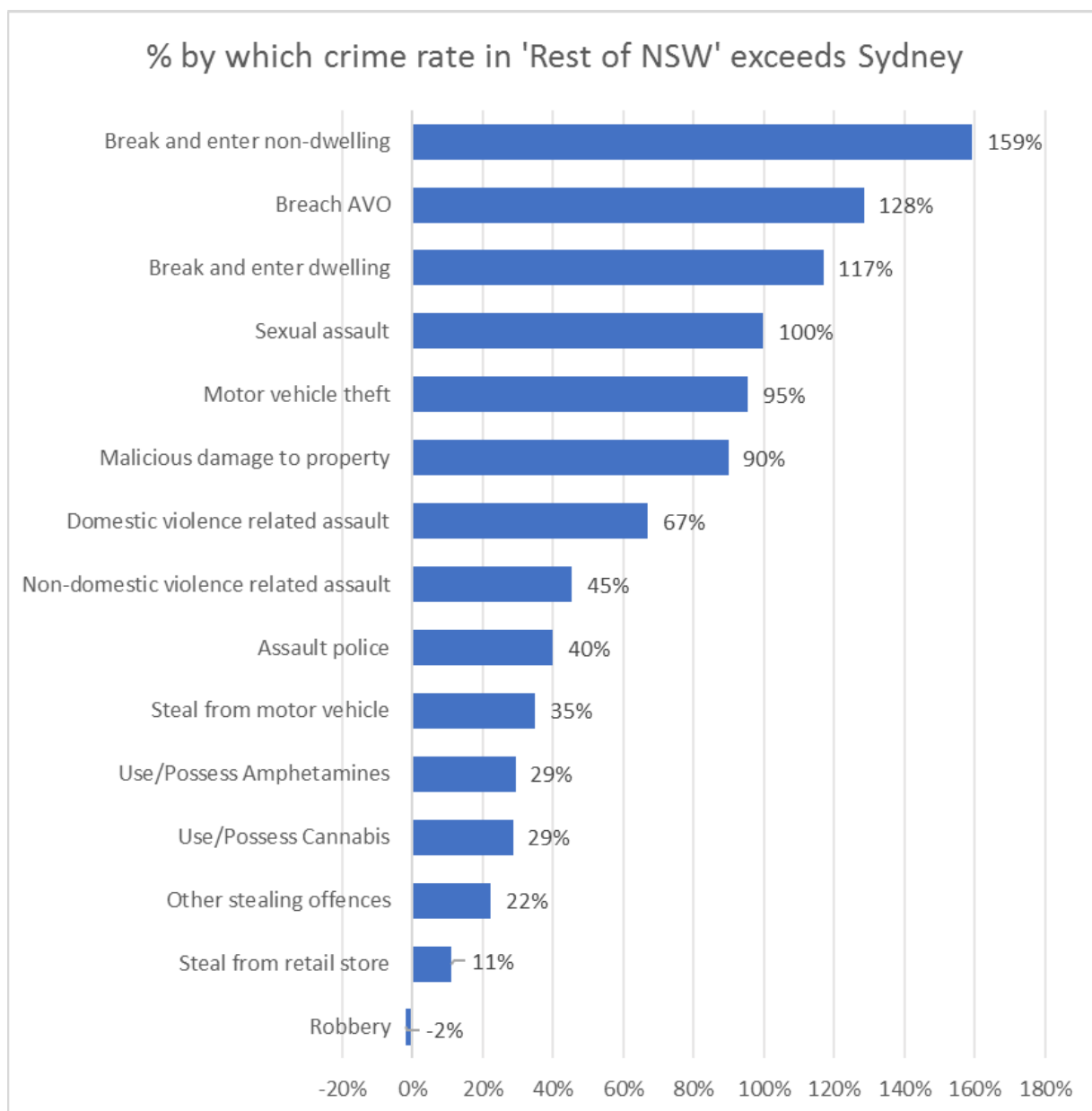**Their four main areas of activity are:**
- developing and maintaining statistical databases on crime and criminal justice in NSW;
- conducting research on crime and criminal justice issues and problems;
- monitoring trends in crime and criminal justice;
- providing information and advice on crime and criminal justice in NSW.

This chart compares the rate of recorded crime in Rural and Regional NSW with the rate of recorded crime in Greater Sydney. Crime rates are calculated by considering the number of criminal incidents recorded by Police relative to the residential population. The chart shows that the average rate of recorded crime across Rural and Regional NSW is considerably higher than in Sydney for most offences considered. For instance, in 2022/23 the rate of break and enter-dwelling was 115% higher in Rural and Regional NSW compared with Greater Sydney. In 2022/23 the rate of motor vehicle theft in Rural and Regional NSW was double the rate in Greater Sydney. Violent crimes were also much more prevalent in Rural and Regional NSW; in 2022/23 the recorded rate of sexual assault in Rural and Regional NSW exceeded Sydney levels by 88% and domestic violence related assault in Rural and Regional NSW exceeded Sydney levels by 68%.

% by which crime rate in 'Rest of NSW' exceeds Sydney

Offence	%
Break and enter non-dwelling	159%
Breach AVO	128%
Break and enter dwelling	117%
Sexual assault	100%
Motor vehicle theft	95%
Malicious damage to property	90%
Domestic violence related assault	67%
Non-domestic violence related assault	45%
Assault police	40%
Steal from motor vehicle	35%
Use/Possess Amphetamines	29%
Use/Possess Cannabis	29%
Other stealing offences	22%
Steal from retail store	11%
Robbery	-2%

MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT

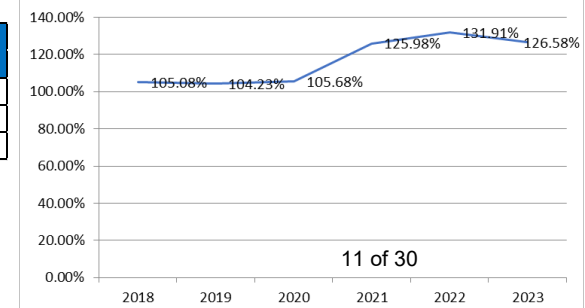LGA rate per 100,000 pop. for incidents of Motor Vehicle Theft by whether in Regional NSW or Greater Sydney: 2023

- Greater Sydney LGA
- Regional NSW LGAs
- NSW
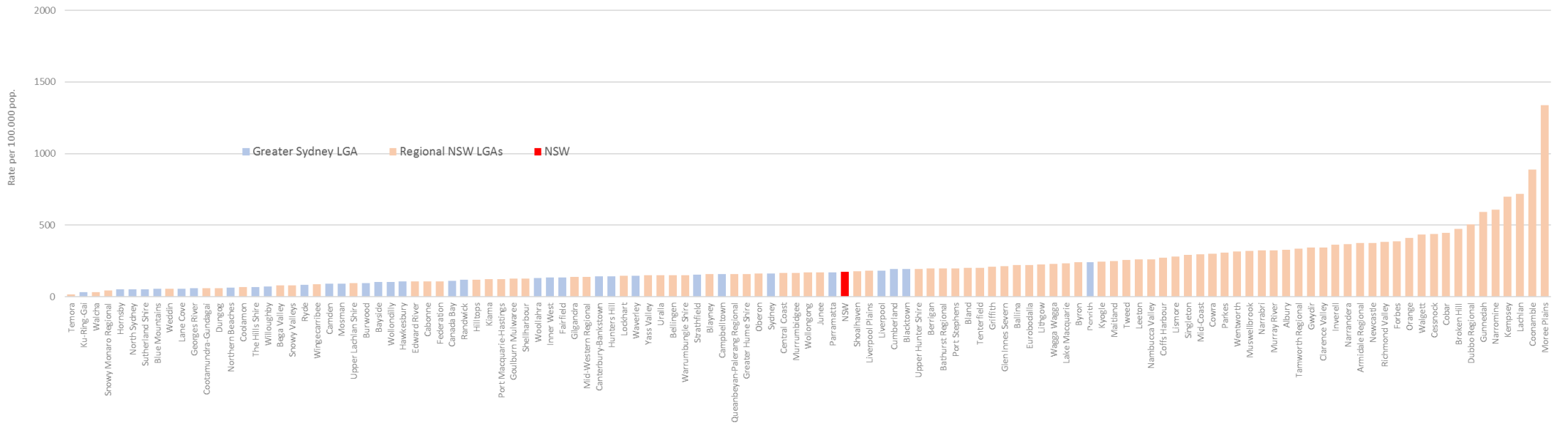
Motor Vehicle Theft - Incident counts as %

Motor Vehicle Theft - Incident Count - Rural & Regional as a % of City
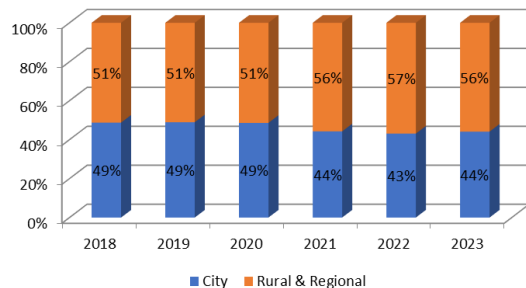
Motor Vehicle Theft - Incident Count						
Location	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
City	6,383	6,575	5,702	4,642	5,303	6,302
Rural and Regional	6,707	6,853	6,026	5,848	6,995	7,977
Total	13,090	13,428	11,728	10,490	12,298	14,279

STEAL FROM MOTOR VEHICLE

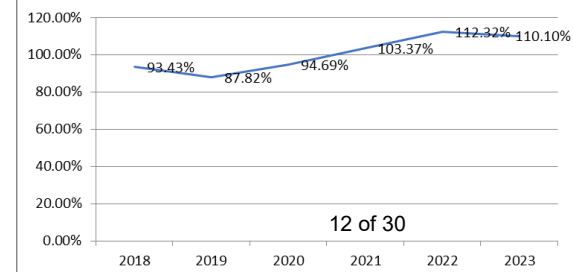LGA rate per 100,000 pop. for incidents of Steal from Motor Vehicle by whether in Regional NSW or Greater Sydney: 2023
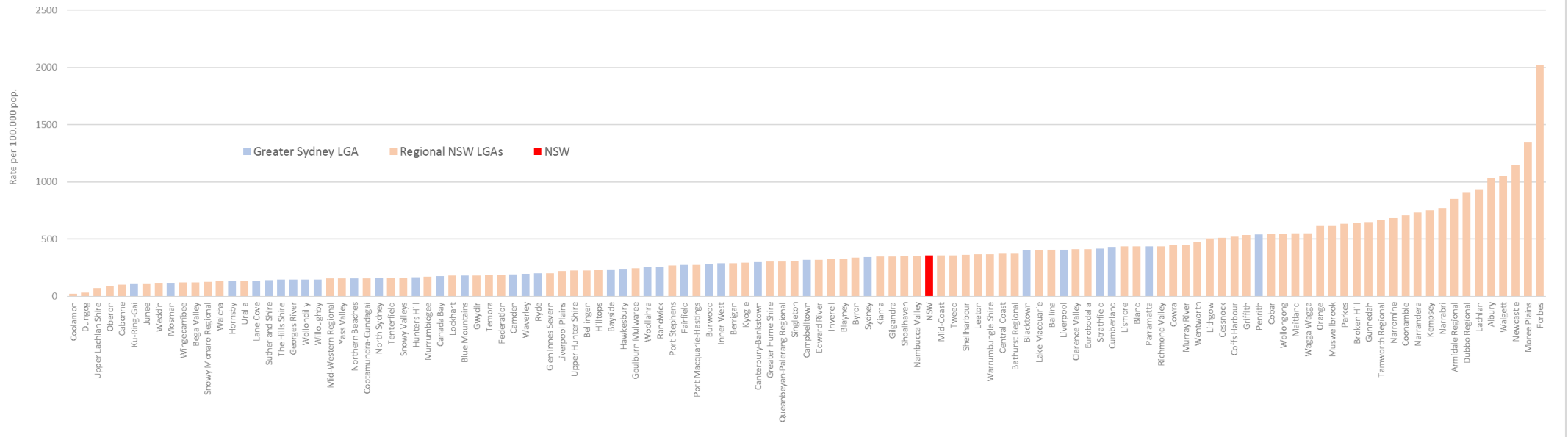
Steal from Motor Vehicle - Incident counts as %
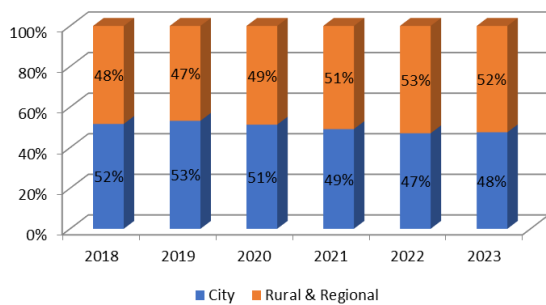
Steal from Motor Vehicle - Incident Count						
Location	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
City	19,702	20,331	14,554	13,633	12,796	13,807
Rural and Regional	18,407	17,855	13,781	14,093	14,372	15,202
Total	38,109	38,186	28,335	27,726	27,168	29,009

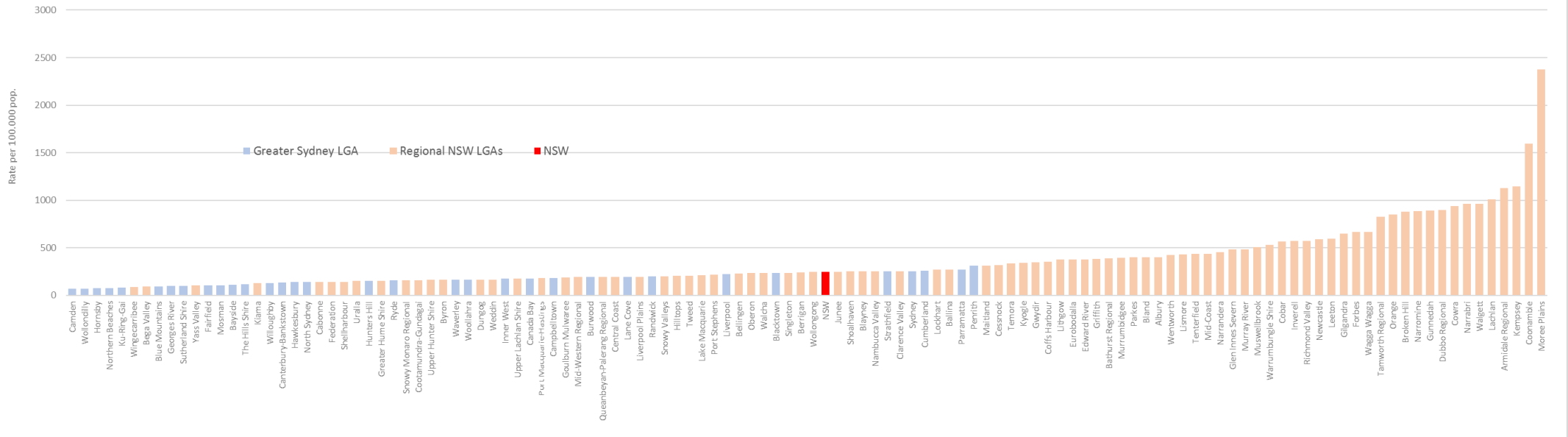**Steal from Motor Vehicle - Incident Count - Rural & Regional as a % of City**

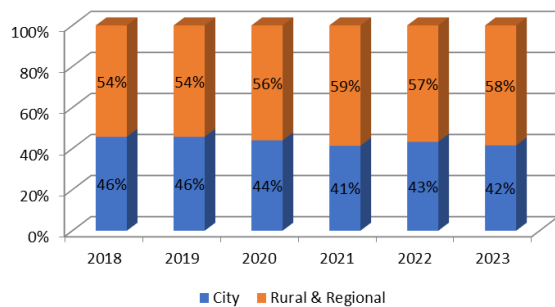12 of 30

![The Country Mayors Association of NSW Inc logo]

BREAK & ENTER DWELLING

LGA rate per 100,000 pop. for incidents of Break and Enter Dwelling by whether in Regional NSW or Greater Sydney: 2023

Break & Enter Dwelling - Incident counts as %

Break & Enter Dwelling - Incident Count						
Location	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
City	12,151	11,676	8,670	7,394	8,122	8,299
Rural and Regional	14,398	13,834	11,029	10,480	10,649	11,672
Total	26,549	25,510	19,699	17,874	18,771	19,971

Break & Enter Dwelling - Incident Count - Rural & Regional as a % of City

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BREAK & ENTER NON-DWELLING

LGA rate per 100,000 pop. for incidents of Break and Enter Non-Dwelling by whether in Regional NSW or Greater Sydney: 2023
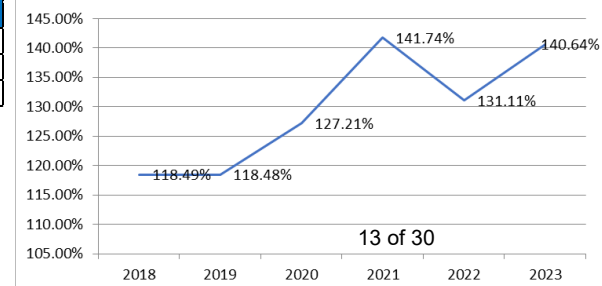
Legend: Greater Sydney LGA, Regional NSW LGAs, NSW

Break & Enter Non-Dwelling - Incident counts as %

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Rural & Regional	62%	60%	62%	67%	66%	63%
City	38%	40%	38%	33%	34%	37%

Break & Enter Non-Dwelling - Incident Count						
Location	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
City	3,919	3,966	2,783	2,354	2,556	3,213
Rural and Regional	6,303	5,951	4,595	4,803	4,861	5,398
Total	10,222	9,917	7,378	7,157	7,417	8,611

Break & Enter Non-Dwelling - Incident Count - Rural & Regional as a % of City

160.83%, 150.05%, 165.11%, 204.04%, 190.18%, 168.00%
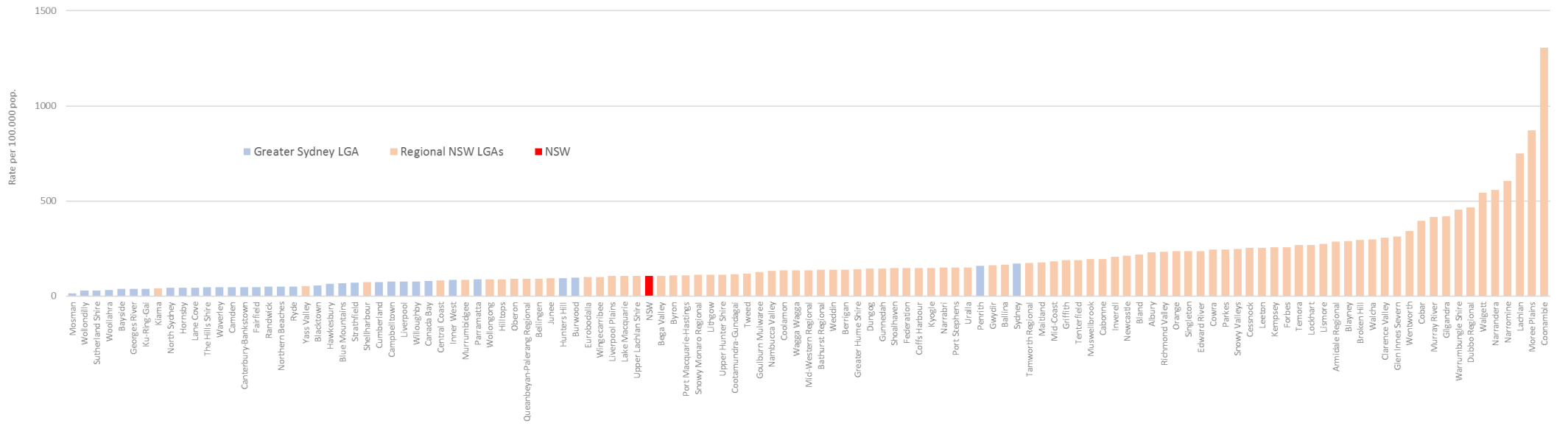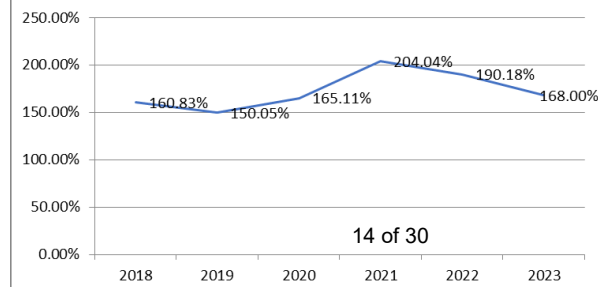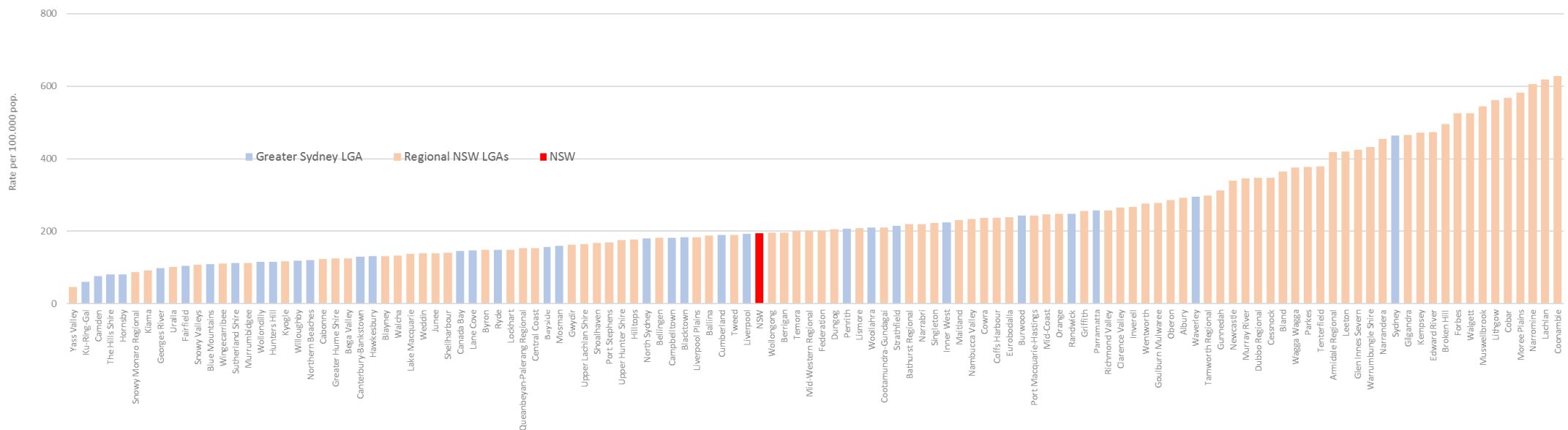
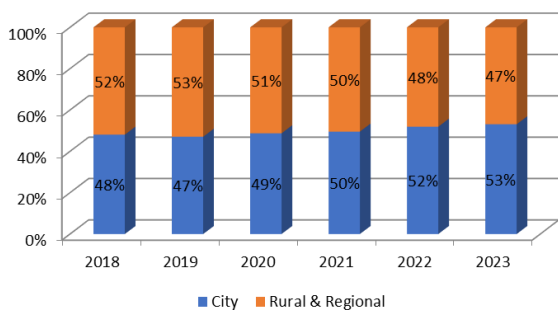# THE **COUNTRY MAYORS ASSOCIATION** OF NSW INC

"What we want is nothing more than equity"

STEAL FROM DWELLING

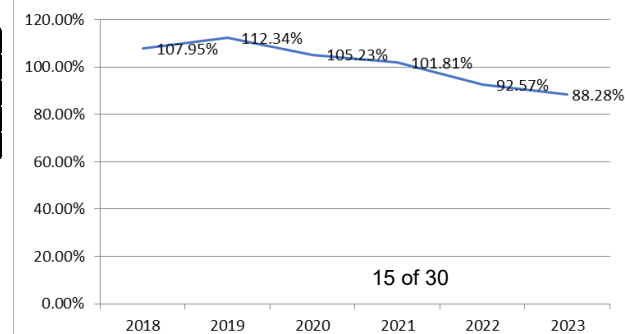LGA rate per 100,000 pop. for incidents of Steal from Dwelling by whether in Regional NSW or Greater Sydney: 2023

Steal from Dwelling - Incident counts as %

Steal from Dwelling - Incident Count						
Location	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
City	9,249	8,847	8,184	8,143	7,882	8,439
Rural and Regional	9,984	9,939	8,612	8,290	7,296	7,450
Total	19,233	18,786	16,796	16,433	15,178	15,889

Steal from Dwelling - Incident Count - Rural & Regional as a % of City

107.95% 112.34% 105.23% 101.81% 92.57% 88.28%

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SEXUAL ASSAULT

LGA rate per 100,000 pop. for incidents of Sexual Assault by whether in Regional NSW or Greater Sydney: 2023

Legend: Greater Sydney LGA | Regional NSW LGAs | NSW

Sexual Assault - Incident counts as %

Sexual Assault - Incident Count						
Location	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
City	2,754	2,844	3,128	3,418	3,902	4,013
Rural and Regional	3,108	3,505	3,884	4,644	4,713	5,189
Total	5,862	6,349	7,012	8,062	8,615	9,202

Sexual Assault - Incident Count - Rural & Regional as a % of City
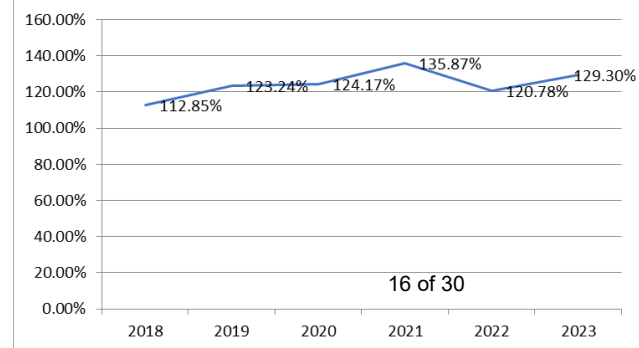
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MALICIOUS DAMAGE PROPERTY

LGA rate per 100,000 pop. for incidents of Malicious Damage to Property by whether in Regional NSW or Greater Sydney: 2023
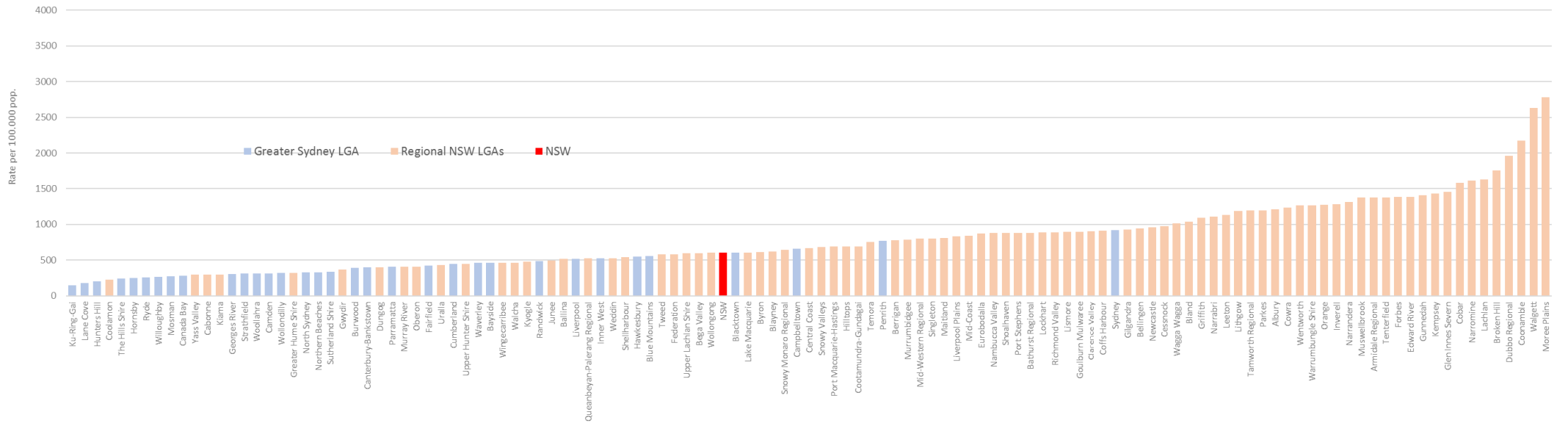
Malicious Damage Property - Incident counts as %

Malicious Damage Property - Incident Count						
Location	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
City	28,004	28,001	25,030	21,869	21,836	22,075
Rural and Regional	30,487	29,077	28,235	27,344	26,619	27,165
Total	58,491	57,078	53,265	49,213	48,455	49,240

Malicious Damage Property - Incident Count - Rural & Regional as a % of City
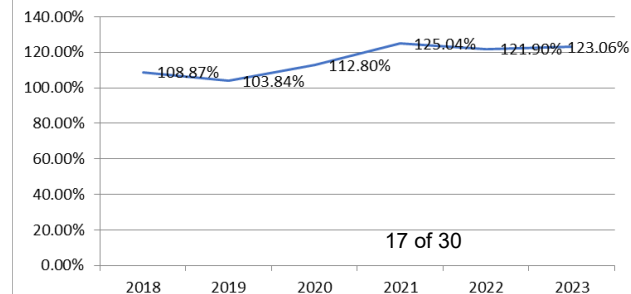
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USE-POSSESS CANNABIS

LGA rate per 100,000 pop. for incidents of Use/Possess Cannabis by whether in Regional NSW or Greater Sydney: 2023
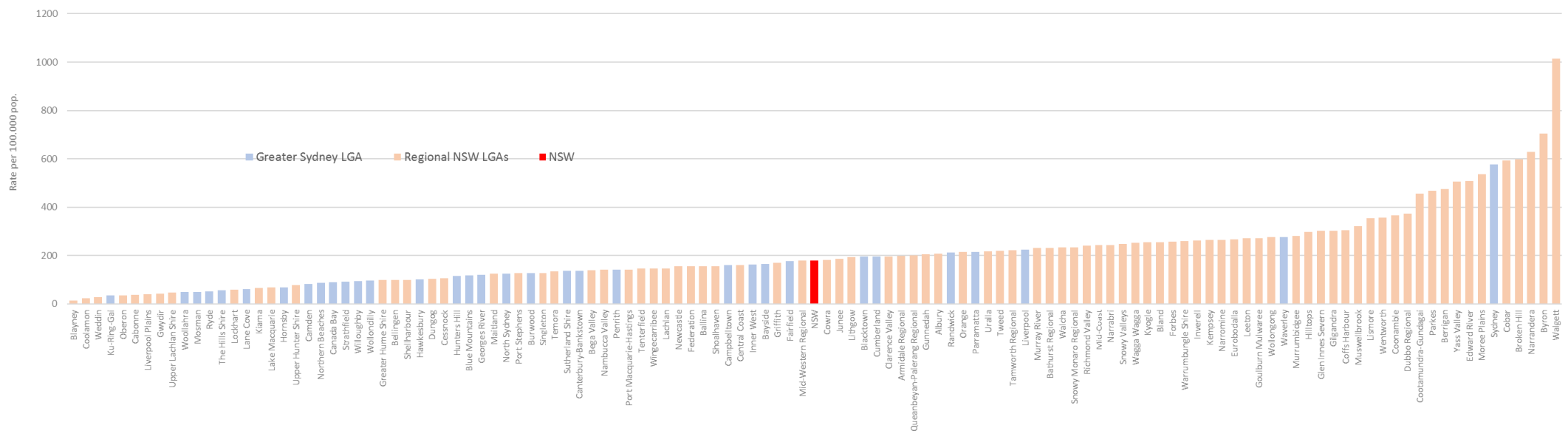
Use/Possess Cannabis - Incident counts as %
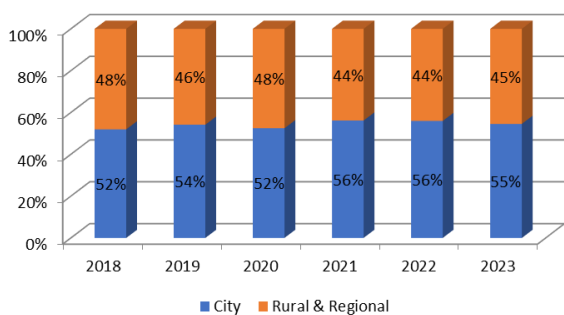
Location	Use/Possess Cannabis - Incident Count					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
City	8,901	9,536	9,509	9,066	8,723	7,931
Rural and Regional	8,237	8,066	8,611	7,073	6,866	6,608
Total	17,138	17,602	18,120	16,139	15,589	14,539

Use/Possess Cannabis - Incident Count - Rural & Regional as a % of City
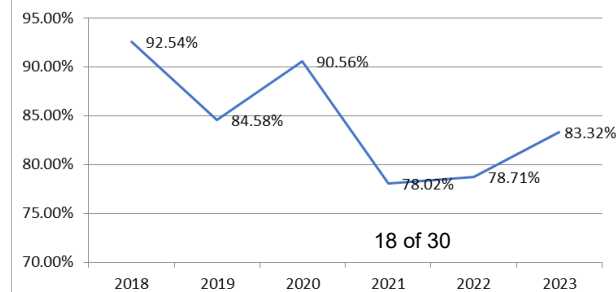
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USE-POSSESS AMPHETAMINES

LGA rate per 100,000 pop. for incidents of Use/Possess Amphetamines by whether in Regional NSW or Greater Sydney: 2023
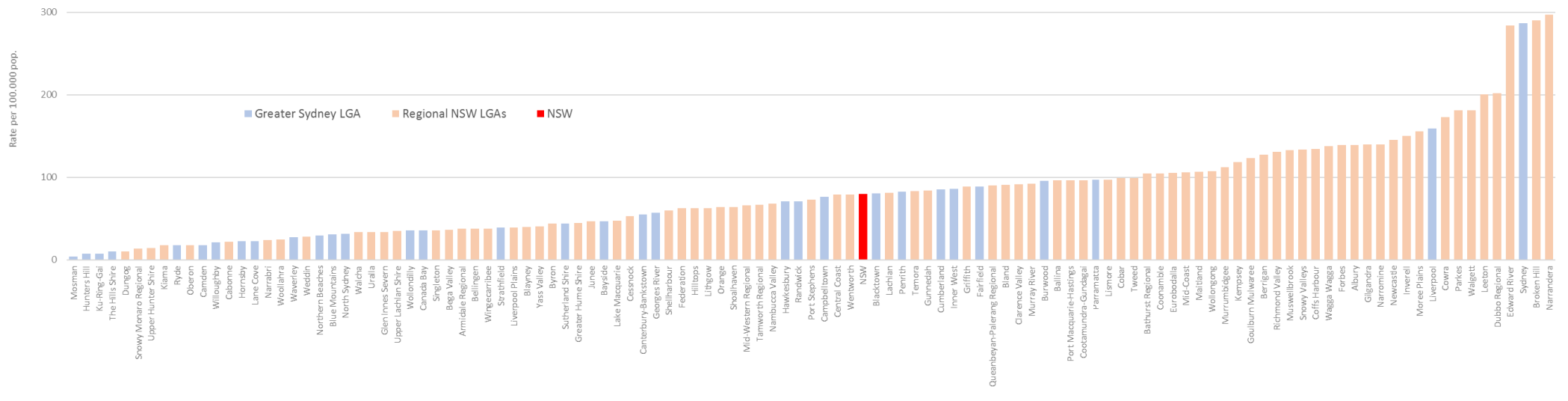
Use/Possess Amphetamines - Incident counts as %

Use/Possess Amphetamines - Incident Count						
Location	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
City	3,597	4,015	4,160	4,100	3,435	3,474
Rural and Regional	3,455	3,937	3,822	3,238	2,829	2,911
Total	7,052	7,952	7,982	7,338	6,264	6,385

Use/Possess Amphetamines - Incident Count - Rural & Regional as a % of City

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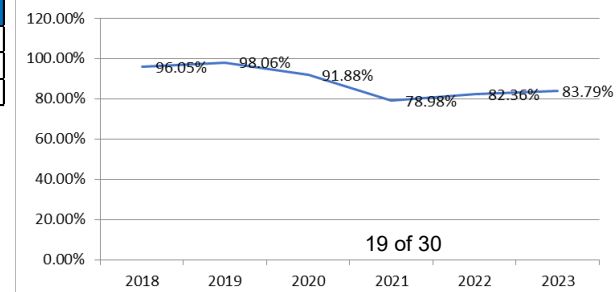
NON-DOMESTIC ASSAULT

LGA rate per 100,000 pop. for incidents of Non-Domestic Assault by whether in Regional NSW or Greater Sydney: 2023

Legend: ▪ Greater Sydney LGA ▪ Regional NSW LGAs ▪ NSW

Non-Domestic Assault - Incident counts as %

Year	City	Rural & Regional
2018	54%	46%
2019	54%	46%
2020	53%	47%
2021	49%	51%
2022	51%	49%
2023	52%	48%

Non-Domestic Assault - Incident Count

Location	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
City	16,345	16,879	14,946	13,410	15,251	16,972
Rural and Regional	14,152	14,138	13,517	14,126	14,840	15,979
Total	30,497	31,017	28,463	27,536	30,091	32,951

Non-Domestic Assault - Incident Count - Rural & Regional as a % of City

Year	%
2018	86.58%
2019	83.76%
2020	90.44%
2021	105.34%
2022	97.31%
2023	94.15%

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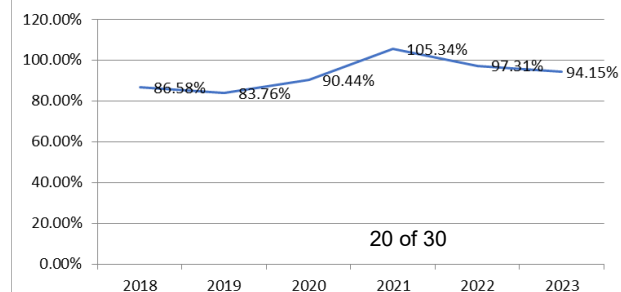
DOMESTIC ASSAULT

LGA rate per 100,000 pop. for incidents of Domestic Violence Assault by whether in Regional NSW or Greater Sydney: 2023

- Greater Sydney LGA
- Regional NSW LGAs
- NSW
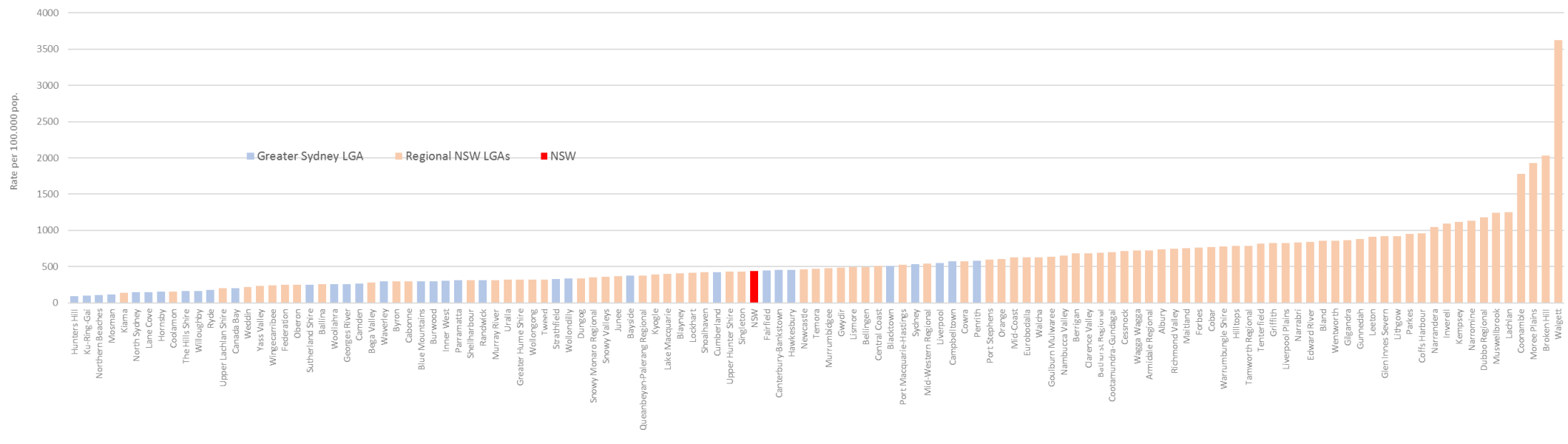
Domestic Assault - Incident counts as %
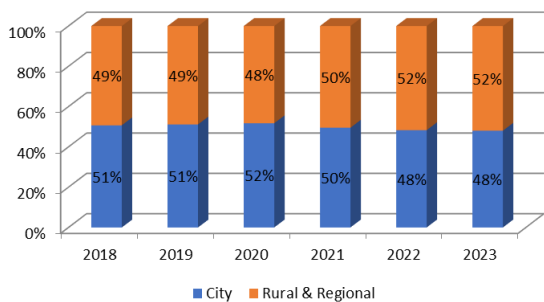
Domestic Assault - Incident Count						
Location	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
City	15,069	16,026	16,700	15,901	16,328	17,318
Rural and Regional	14,644	15,312	15,571	16,206	17,461	18,730
Total	29,713	31,338	32,271	32,107	33,789	36,048

Domestic Assault - Incident Count - Rural & Regional as a % of City

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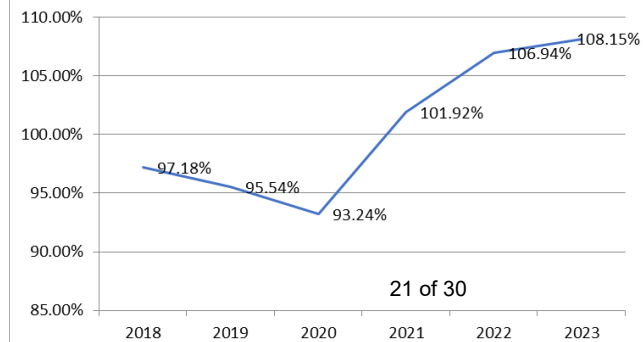
ASSAULT POLICE

LGA rate per 100,000 pop. for incidents of Assault Police by whether in Regional NSW or Greater Sydney: 2023

Greater Sydney LGA Regional NSW LGAs NSW
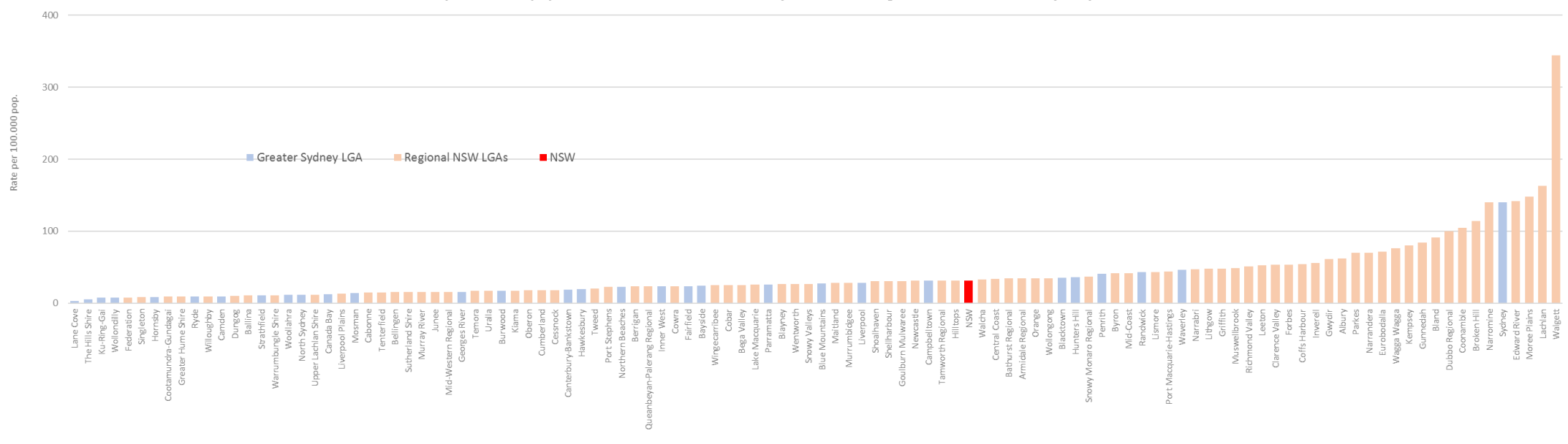
Assault Police - Incident counts as %
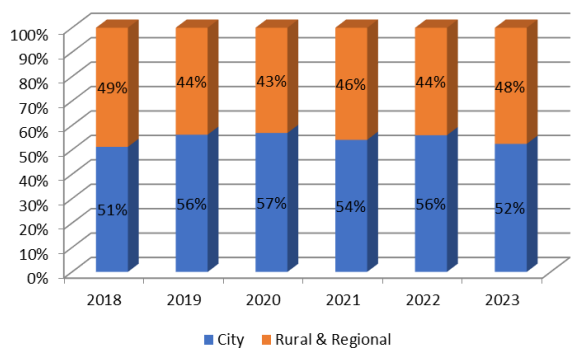
	Assault Police - Incident Count					
Location	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
City	1,261	1,396	1,433	1,402	1,536	1,335
Rural and Regional	1,201	1,089	1,085	1,190	1,207	1,211
Total	2,462	2,485	2,518	2,592	2,743	2,546

Assault Police - Incident Count - Rural & Regional as a % of City
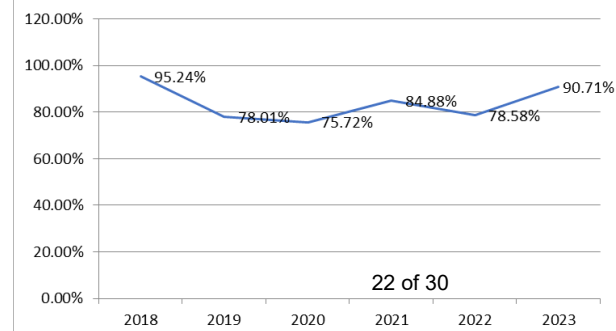
95.24% 78.01% 75.72% 84.88% 78.58% 90.71%

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BREACH AVO

LGA rate per 100,000 pop. for incidents of Breach AVO by whether in Regional NSW or Greater Sydney: 2023
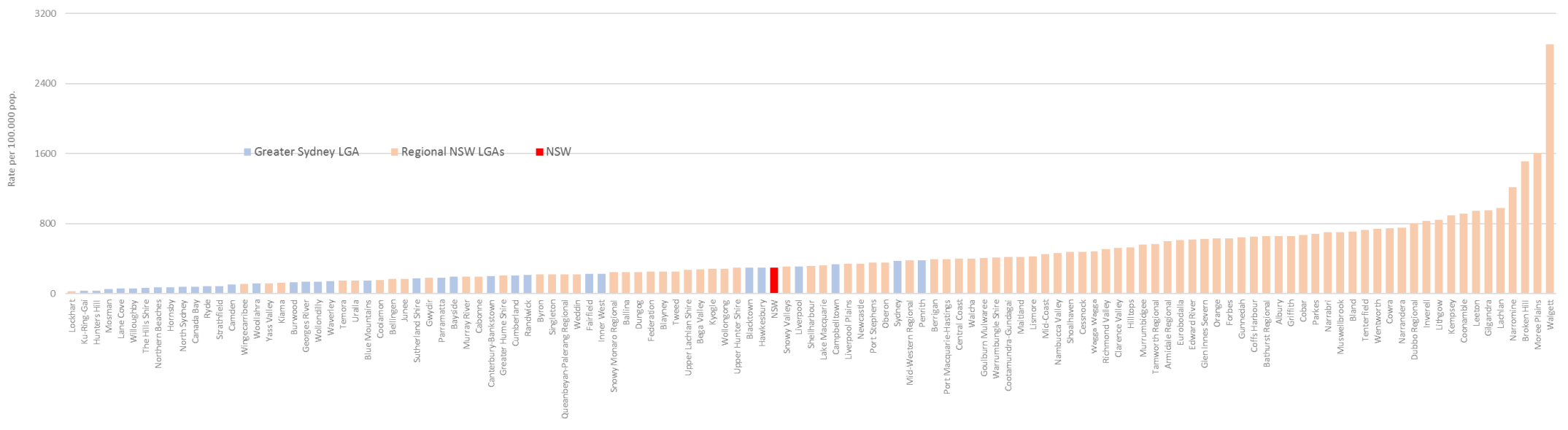
Greater Sydney LGA   Regional NSW LGAs   ▇ NSW

Breach AVO - Incident counts as %

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Rural & Regional	59%	58%	59%	59%	59%	60%
City	41%	42%	41%	41%	41%	40%

■ City ■ Rural & Regional
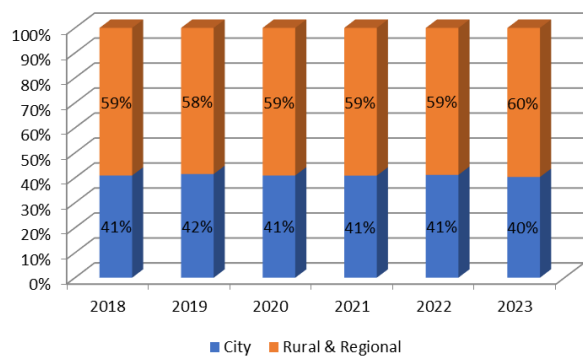
Breach AVO - Incident Count						
Location	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
City	6,450	7,277	8,031	8,489	9,081	9,644
Rural and Regional	9,320	10,249	11,594	12,288	12,982	14,278
Total	15,770	17,526	19,625	20,777	22,063	23,922

Breach AVO - Incident Count - Rural & Regional as a % of City
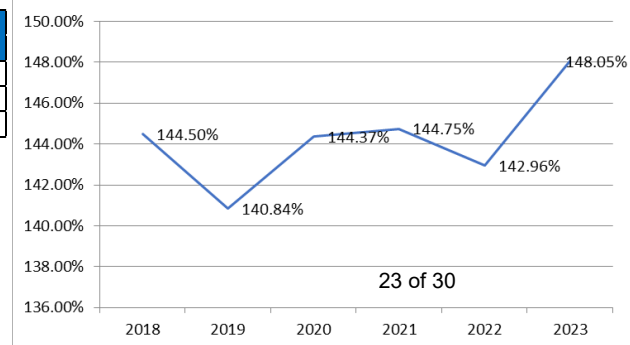
144.50%   140.84%   144.37%   144.75%   142.96%   148.05%

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BOCSAR Crime in Regional and Rural NSW in 2023: Trends and Patterns

Four major offences, however, significantly increased in Regional NSW over the five years from 2019 to 2023:

- o Motor vehicle theft (up 20% or 1,239 additional incidents)
- o Non-domestic assault (up 14% or 1,825 additional incidents)
- o Sexual assault (up 47% or 1,505 additional incidents)
- o Domestic violence related assault (up 24% or 3,284 additional incidents)

The 20% increase in motor vehicle theft from 2019 to 2023 in Regional NSW appears to be due to an increase in offending by young people; legal actions for this group increased by 188% from 2019 to 2023. Police data also shows an increase in vehicle theft incidents co-occurring with break-ins and an increase in keys being stolen in break-ins.

Figure 3. Rate of property crime in Regional NSW Statistical Areas and ratio to NSW
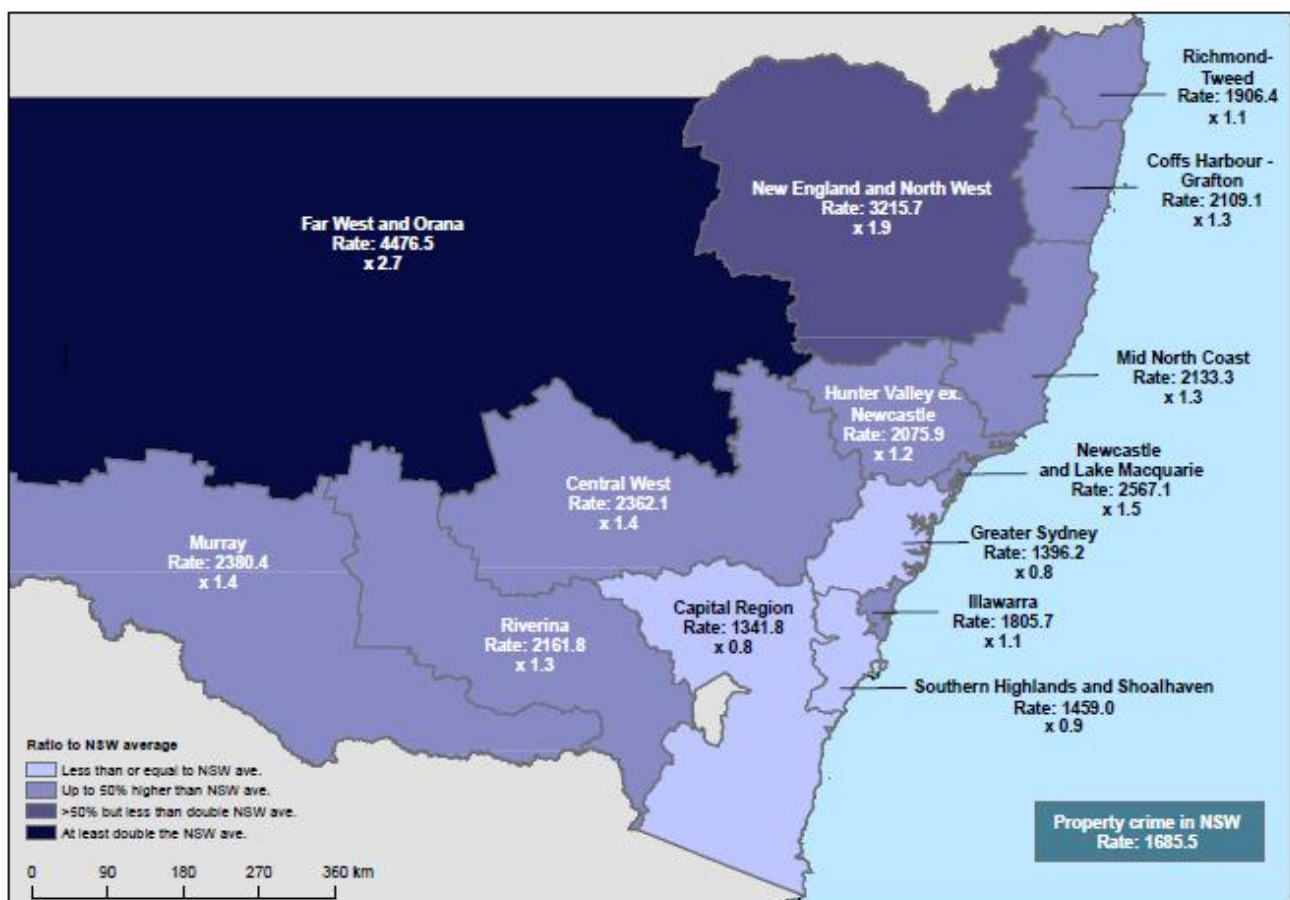
Figure 4. Rate of violent crime in Regional NSW Statistical Areas and ratio to NSW average: 2023
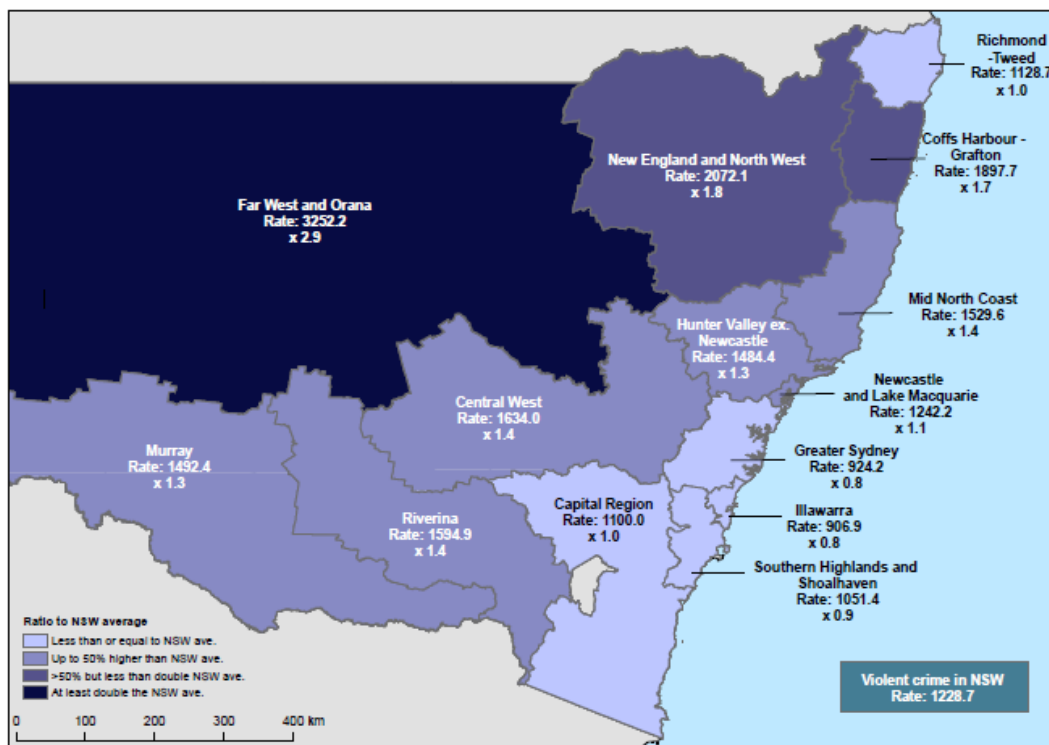
Figure 15. Five-year percentage change in number of motor vehicle theft incidents: 2019 to 2023
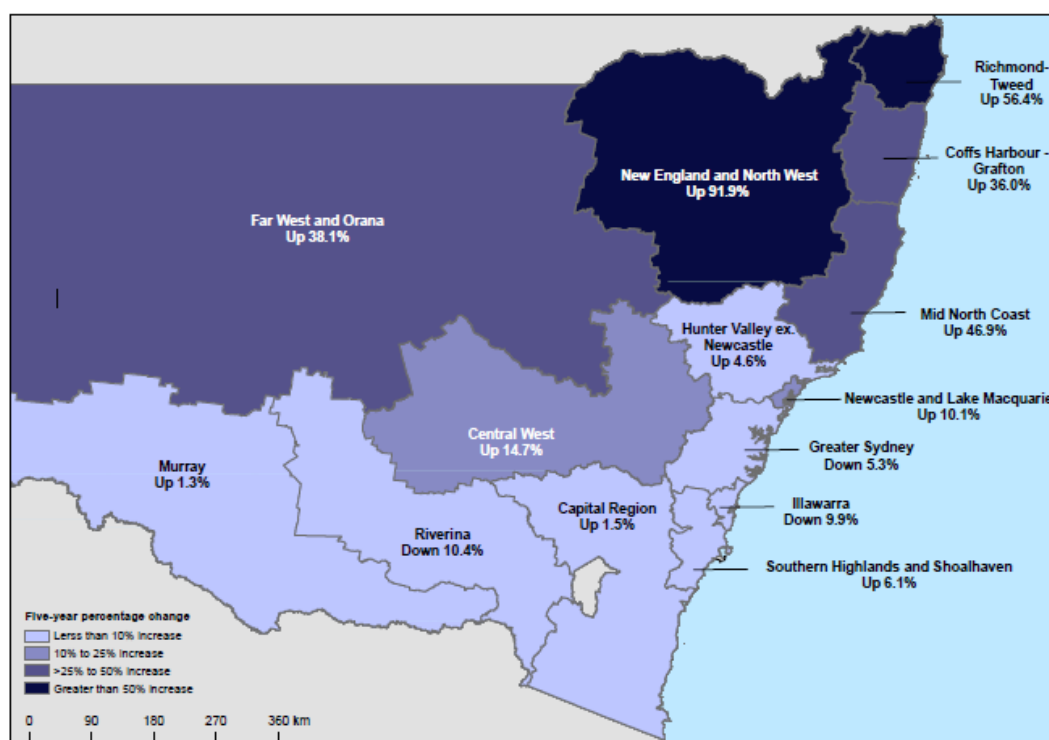
Table 2. Criminal events with a motor vehicle theft incident recorded by NSW Police by whether a co-occurring break and enter was also recorded: 2019 to 2023

Location of vehicle theft	Was a break and enter also recorded?	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total NSW	% with co-occurring break and enter	11.2%	11.4%	13.8%	17.1%	17.4%
	Total Motor Vehicle Thefts	13,210	11,503	10,278	12,045	14,020
Greater Sydney	% with co-occurring break and enter	9.2%	9.7%	12.0%	12.1%	12.3%
	Total Motor Vehicle Thefts	7,165	6,139	4,948	5,632	6,771
Regional NSW	% with co-occurring break and enter	13.5%	13.4%	15.6%	21.5%	22.1%
	Total Motor Vehicle Thefts	6,045	5,364	5,330	6,413	7,249

Youth Offending

Figure 1: Proportion of proven court appearances involving <u>young people (under 18)</u> where the defendant reoffended within 12 months to Dec-23
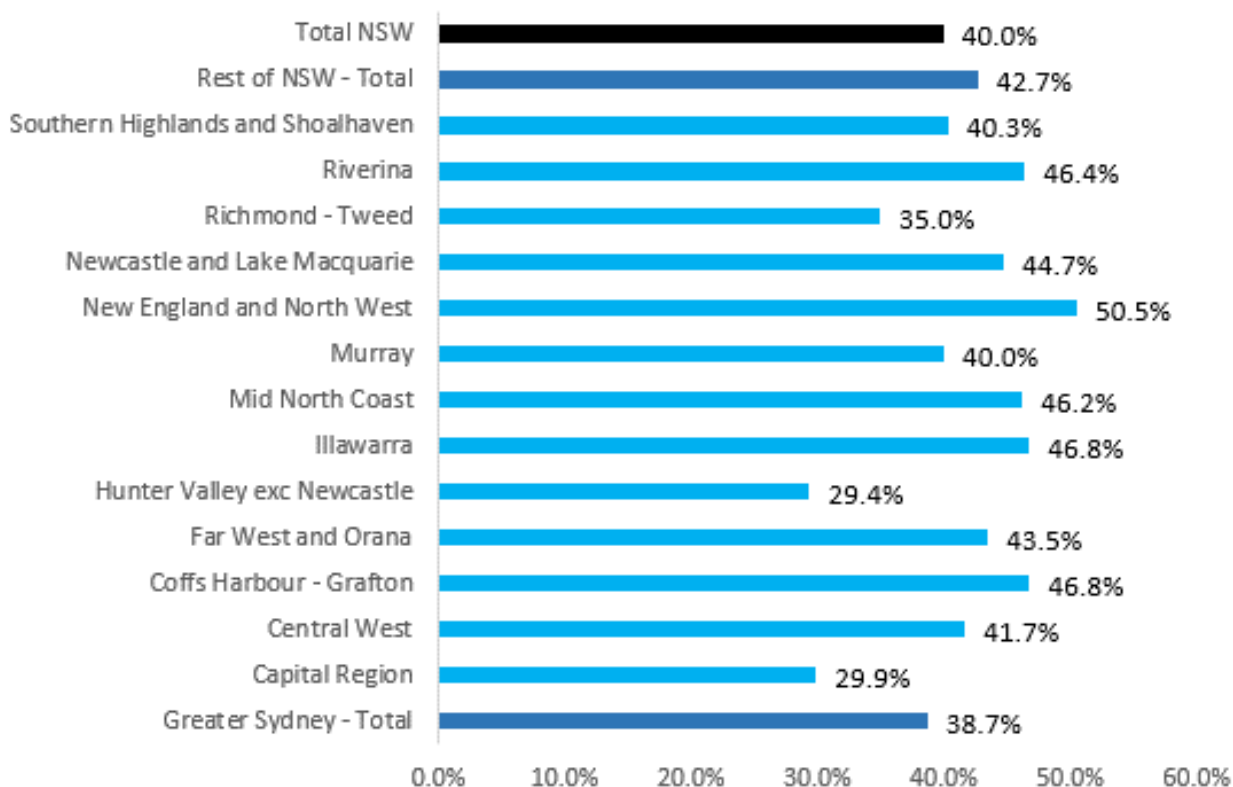
Region	%
Total NSW	40.0%
Rest of NSW - Total	42.7%
Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven	40.3%
Riverina	46.4%
Richmond - Tweed	35.0%
Newcastle and Lake Macquarie	44.7%
New England and North West	50.5%
Murray	40.0%
Mid North Coast	46.2%
Illawarra	46.8%
Hunter Valley exc Newcastle	29.4%
Far West and Orana	43.5%
Coffs Harbour - Grafton	46.8%
Central West	41.7%
Capital Region	29.9%
Greater Sydney - Total	38.7%

HOW DOES REGIONAL NSW COMPARE TO NSW ACROSS ALL CRIME TYPES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

Police proceedings against young people (10 to 17 years), per 100,000 population

% by which offending rate in 'Rest of NSW' exceeds Sydney
January to December 2023

Crime type	%
Motor vehicle theft	241%
Malicious damage to property	184%
Steal from motor vehicle	170%
Break and enter dwelling	165%
Break and enter non-dwelling	126%
Non-domestic violence related assault	119%
Domestic violence related assault	109%
Sexual assault	46%
Steal from retail store	23%
Robbery	-47%
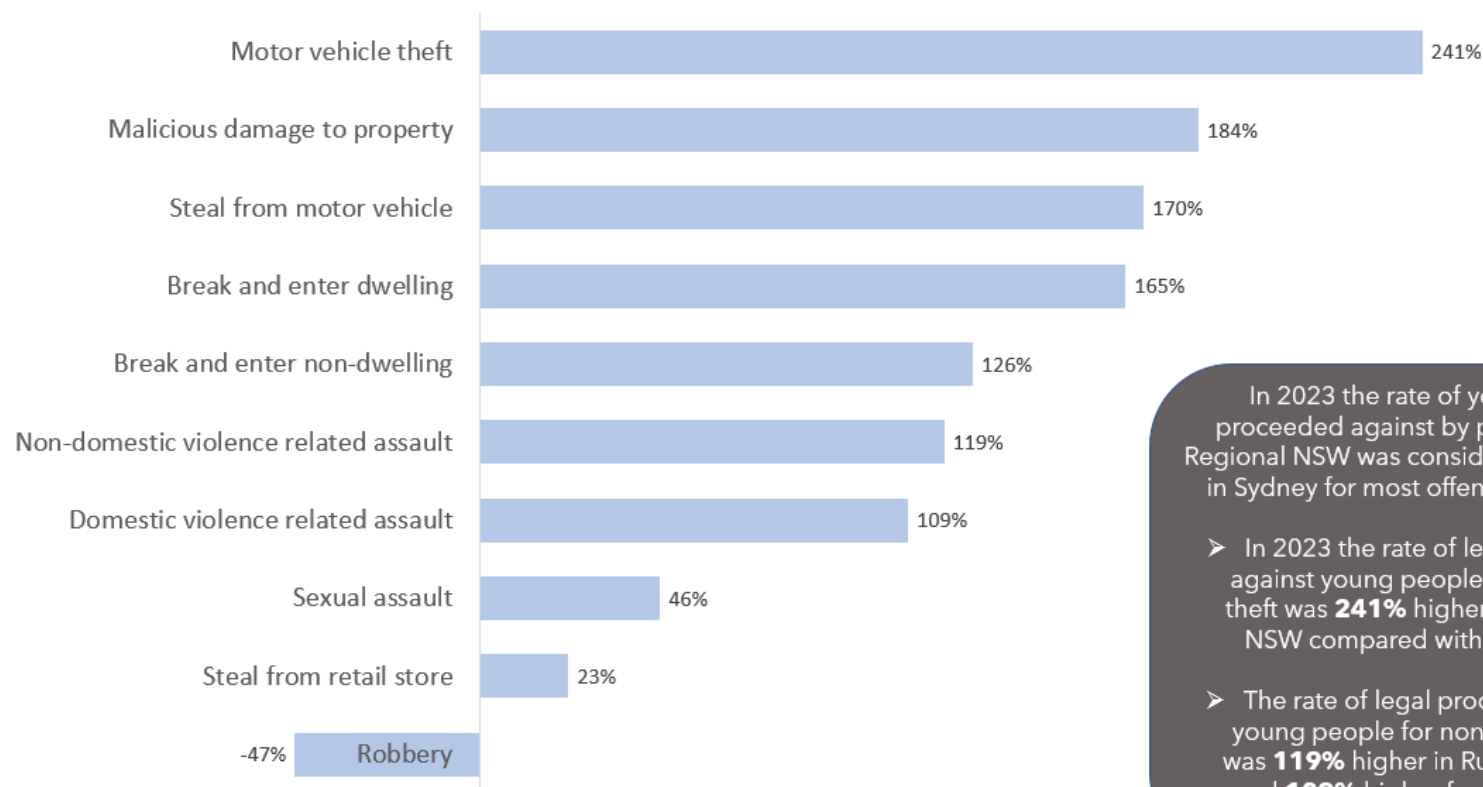
In 2023 the rate of young people proceeded against by police in Rural & Regional NSW was considerably higher than in Sydney for most offences considered.

➢ In 2023 the rate of legal proceedings against young people for Motor vehicle theft was **241%** higher in Rural/Regional NSW compared with Greater Sydney.

➢ The rate of legal proceedings against young people for non-domestic assault was **119%** higher in Rural/Regional NSW and **109%** higher for domestic assault.

HOW DOES REGIONAL NSW COMPARE TO NSW ACROSS ALL CRIME TYPES FOR ADULTS?

Police proceedings against adults, per 100,000 population

% by which offending rate in 'Rest of NSW' exceeds Sydney
January to December 2023

Crime type	%
Motor vehicle theft	123%
Malicious damage to property	70%
Sexual assault	64%
Break and enter non-dwelling	48%
Break and enter dwelling	48%
Domestic violence related assault	44%
Non-domestic violence related assault	30%
Steal from motor vehicle	15%
Steal from retail store	11%
Robbery	-1%

In 2023 the rate of adults proceeded against by police in Rural & Regional NSW was considerably higher than in Sydney for most offences considered.

➤ In 2023 the rate of legal proceedings against adults for Motor vehicle theft was **123%** higher in Rural/Regional NSW compared with Greater Sydney.

➤ The rate of legal proceedings against young people for sexual assault was **64%** higher in Rural/Regional NSW and **44%** higher for domestic assault.
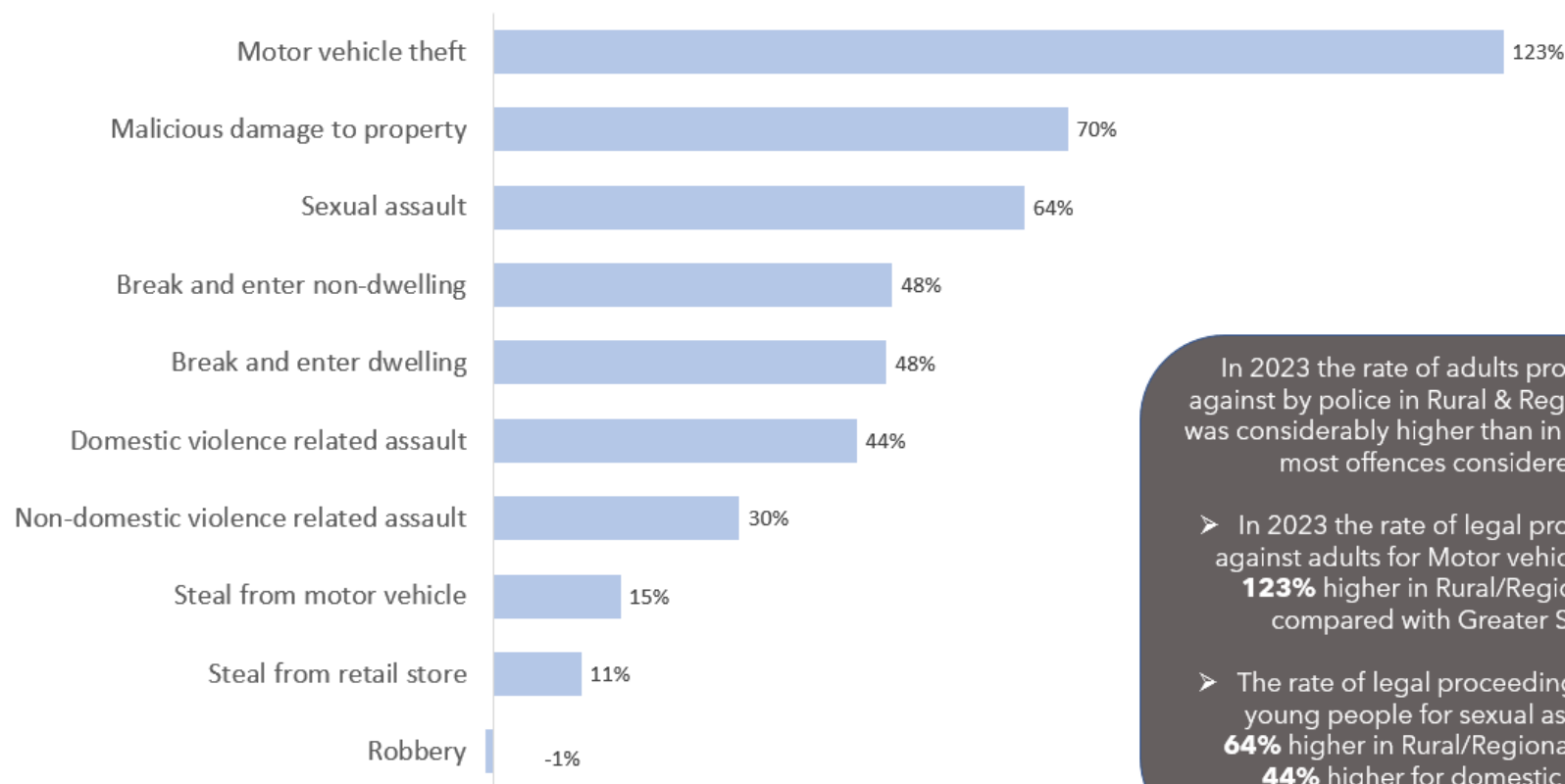
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Recommendations

1) That, the NSW Government commit to increase spending on the NSW police force to increase front line policing numbers in Regional, Rural and Remote regions most at need.

2) That, the NSW Government commit to the minimum staffing agreements (known in the NSW Police Force as First Response Agreements) for non 24-hour police stations all of which are located in Regional, Rural and Remote Local Government areas. This funding increase must be guided by an updated workforce plan endorsed by NSW police association and government.

3) That, the NSW Government review the current formula used to assess staffing levels including the universally agreed outdated current model for those Local Government areas that do have a First Response Agreement in place.

4) That, the NSW Government identify regional local government areas where the presence of a 24/7 police response is needed to curb escalating crime rates and the allocation of adequate resources to those areas. Additionally, there must be a strategy or mechanism implemented by the NSW Police Force to ensure that officers are retained and that any vacancies are managed to maintain 24/7 police services or business as usual.

5) That, the NSW Government commits to greater education within the NSW Police to strengthen and support officers' confidence in recommending to the courts that bail be refused in those instances where there is a high degree of confidence that the offender will reoffend. Or in those instances where the offender presents a threat (imminent or otherwise) to others, in particular women experiencing intimate partner threats, intimidation or violence from an intimate partner or ex- partner.

6) That, the NSW Government commits to greater education within the judicial system to encourage judicial officers to refuse bail under Section 22C of the NSW Bail Act 2013 where the authority has a high degree of confidence the young person will commit a serious indictable offence while on bail.

7) That, the NSW Government ensures the allocation of additional resources to more adequately supervise offenders and their adherence to bail conditions.

8) That, the NSW Government legislates tougher penalties for breach of bail conditions.

9) That, the NSW Government delivers on the recently announced legislative reform package including amendments to the Bail Act and the creation of a new offence for 'posting and boasting' are delivered.

10) That, consideration is given to relevant legislative authorities taking meaningful steps towards legislative reviews that impose tougher penalties and sanctions on social media platforms supporting 'posting and boasting' in the name of free speech. I.e., TikTok

11) That, the continuation of Stronger Country Communities Fund and the introduction of a new community safety project category to incentivise applications that focus on early intervention and diversionary strategies and capital works projects. The review should also consider reducing the mandatory minimum 50% co-contribution obligations for local government, which proves to be a cost prohibitive deterrent for smaller, rural, and regional Councils with a smaller rate base.

12) That, the NSW Government reinstate of the NSW Community Safety Fund, with a focus on youth divisionary programs, CCTV, and domestic and family violence initiatives.

13) That, the NSW Government give consideration for the expansion of Youth Justice Centres throughout regional NSW communities most at need and that are able to accommodate girls closer to their families.

14) That, the NSW Government retain the youth focussed roles within Regional NSW and increased funding for Youth Justice Caseworkers supporting young people after they have interactions with the police and justice system. With many providing outreach support covering massive areas, additional places are needed to address demand and reduce burnout rates.

15) That, the NSW Government fund and commit to open drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres throughout regional NSW within twelve months from endorsement of these recommendations.

16) That, the committee commit to hold hearings in the following regional communities according to their level of effect of incidents of crime.

Moree Plains Shire Council, Muswellbrook Shire Council, Coonamble Shire Council, Coffs Harbour City Council, Lachlan Shire Council, Kempsey Shire Council, Bourke Shire Council, Dubbo Regional Council, Gunnedah Shire Council, Broken Hill City Council, Cobar Shire Council, Walgett Shire Council, Richmond Valley Council, Tamworth Regional Council, Orange City Council, Albury City Council, Armidale Regional Council, Parkes Shire Council, Wagga Wagga City Council, Wentworth Shire Council, Inverell Shire Council.

17) That, the NSW Government review Doli Incapax, its application and its effectiveness in actually managing youth re-offending rates.

18) That, the NSW Government investigate the functions being preformed NSW police officers on behalf of other agencies such as prisoner transfer, mental health assistance and all other support functions that distract from front line policing and proactive policing and also impact on the response time to criminal activities in regional communities.

19) That, the NSW Government invest new funding of $10 million annually to establish Specialist Workers for Children and Young People in every frontline domestic and family violence service in NSW.

20) That, the NSW Government increase evidence-based men's support and behaviour change programs in regional areas to ensure accessibility, this program should be annual reviewed to track the success in reducing DV incidents.

21) That, the NSW Government match the Commonwealth Government's contribution of $610 million for social housing and ensure specific allocation for women and children experiencing DFV. Pending the passing legislation of the Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF), ensure 20% allocation of properties for women and children experiencing DFV.

22) That, the NSW Government ensure safe and affordable transitional housing for women and children exiting crisis refuges by assessing current availability throughout regional NSW and fund additional capacity particularly in regions where new core and cluster refuges will be built.

23) That, the NSW Government allocate ongoing funding to continue to build on existing research on DFV in regional areas, whilst also commissioning new research to ensure data and practice responses are timely, accurate and have a gendered lens.

24) Increase the amount of Temporary Accommodation (TA) from seven to 28 days, ensuring that there are a minimum number of dwellings for DFV victim survivors and invest in culturally safe crisis accommodation and accessible housing for First Nations women and their children, including any children under 18.

This submission was endorsed by the Executive of Country Mayors Association of NSW on 20 May 2024.