

**Submission  
No 57**

## **COMMUNITY SAFETY IN REGIONAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES**

**Organisation:** Gunnedah Shire Council

**Date Received:** 23 May 2024



# SUBMISSION

**Submission to Parliamentary Inquiry into Community Safety in Regional and Rural Communities**

**Endorsed by Council at the Ordinary Meeting  
Held on 15 May 2024**

**Lodged on behalf of [Gunnedah Shire Council](#)**

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**<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/lodge-a-submission.aspx?pk=3042>**

**Submissions close 31 May 2024**

## The Gunnedah Shire

The Gunnedah Shire is in the North West Slopes Region of north-west New South Wales, about 450 kilometres north of the Sydney CBD, and about 650 kilometres south of the Brisbane CBD.

Gunnedah Shire Council administers a large rural local government area (LGA) of 4,992 sq km and in 2023 recorded an estimated resident population of 13,280. 4,267 (33%) of the population are under 24 years. 15.6% of the population identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Gunnedah Shire Council is one of the largest employers in the Shire as well as the Mining, Agriculture, and Health Care & Social Assistance sectors.



Gunnedah LGA falls within the Oxley Police District, administered from Tamworth some 75kms to the east. The Shire includes single unit police stations at Curlewis and Tambar Springs, with Somerton lying within the Tamworth Regional Council LGA but working in the Gunnedah sector. The three full time equivalent positions at those police stations are included in the operational resources to deliver policing services from Gunnedah Police Station. Gunnedah Police Station does not deliver a 24-hour policing service i.e., the police station is **not** staffed and **not** operational 24/7.

### **Regional NSW Crime Statistics and Trends (Extract – Refer Attachment A - BB169 Report – Crime in Regional and Rural NSW)**

(Gunnedah is in the New England North West Region)

During the COVID pandemic (2020 and 2021) and due to associated lock down provisions, crime fell across most offence categories in Regional NSW (and in Sydney). In Regional NSW in 2023 most major offences remained lower than in 2019 (prior to the pandemic). This is true of: break and enter dwelling, break and enter non-dwelling, steal from motor vehicle, steal from dwelling, steal from person, other theft, sexual touching, and robbery.

Across regional NSW (New South Wales) between 2019 to 2023 four reportable crime categories have however seen incredible increases:

- Motor vehicle theft (up 20% or 1239 additional incidents)
- Non-domestic assault (up 14% or 1825 additional incidents)
- Sexual assault (up 47% of 155 additional incidents)
- Domestic violence related assault (up 24% or 3284 additional incidents)

Legal actions against young people for motor vehicle theft increased by 188% in that same period and police data shows an increase in motor vehicle theft linked to aggravated break and enter (dwelling) and theft of keys.

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.

Percentage change in the number of major offences from 2019 to 2023 (excluding those where change was between -10% and +10%)

Region	DV assault	Non DV assault	Sexual assault	Sexual touching etc.	Robbery	Break and enter dwelling	Break and enter non-dwelling	Motor vehicle theft	Steal from motor vehicle	Steal from retail store	Other stealing offences	Malicious damage
Regional NSW	24.0%	14.4%	46.8%			-14.4%		20.1%	-13.0%		-26.5%	
Capital Region	52.8%	19.0%	42.6%	-13.6%		-34.8%	-17.2%		-32.1%		-22.0%	
Central West	13.3%		22.8%		-16.7%	-18.2%	-11.4%	14.7%			-26.7%	
Coffs Harbour - Grafton	80.7%	23.5%	81.2%	27.8%		-24.3%		36.0%		-19.5%	-31.5%	
Far West And Orana	16.4%	17.4%	17.4%		17.1%		40.8%	38.1%	-25.7%	14.6%	-17.4%	
Hunter Valley Exc Newcastle	46.2%	28.0%	45.8%	10.9%	14.0%	-24.0%	-15.6%				-28.8%	
Illawarra		11.6%	39.8%		-20.5%	-26.8%	-28.5%	-9.9%			-21.3%	-18.3%
Mid North Coast	44.2%	20.3%	41.3%				-20.7%	46.9%	-14.1%		-26.7%	
Murray	31.0%	18.9%	59.0%	-11.1%	-27.6%	-35.9%	-16.6%		-15.5%	-13.3%	-26.4%	
New England And North West	23.2%	17.9%	38.6%		50.0%	13.0%		91.9%	-15.4%		-18.0%	
Newcastle And Lake Macquarie			57.3%	-15.7%		-12.7%	-17.9%	10.1%			-33.6%	-15.2%
Richmond - Tweed			66.0%				35.7%	56.4%		33.2%	-26.0%	
Riverina			75.4%	-12.3%	-20.0%	-26.0%	-33.5%	-10.4%	-41.1%	-20.6%	-32.0%	-15.5%
Southern Highlands And Shoalhaven	19.8%	33.7%	44.9%		-32.3%	-20.4%			-16.8%	21.5%	-25.1%	19.6%
Greater Sydney			42.6%		-33.4%	-29.2%	-18.5%		-31.9%		-21.4%	-20.6%
NSW	15.1%		46.9%		-24.8%	-21.7%	-13.2%		-24.0%		-23.6%	-13.8%

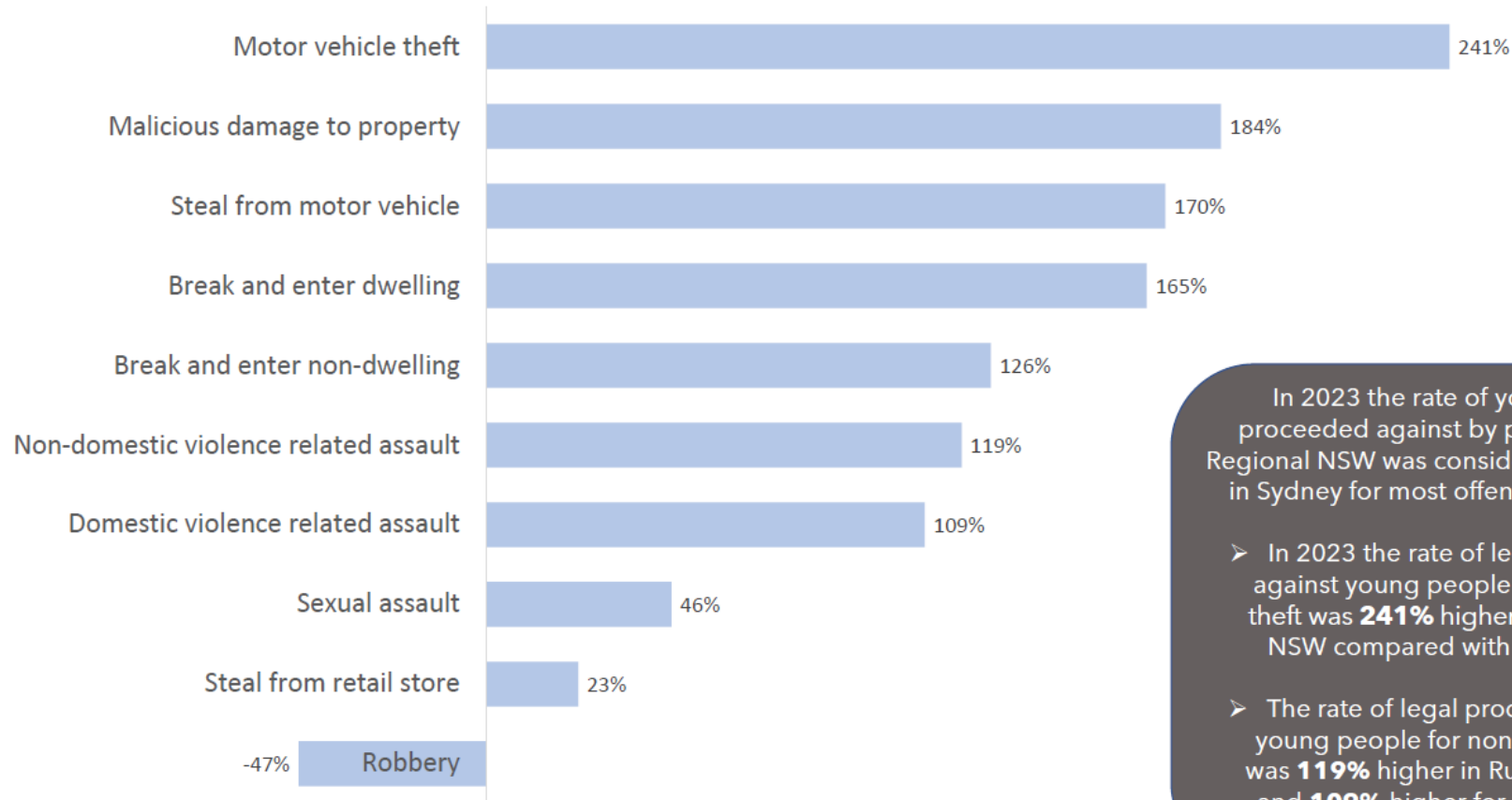
increase of more than 20%	increase between 10% and 20%	Decrease exceeds 20%	Decrease of between 10% and 20%
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(Source: BOCSAR)

## 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



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.

(Source: BOCSAR)

## Percentage change in legal actions against young people from 2019 to 2023

(excluding those where change was between -10% and +10%)

Region	Murder *	DV assault	Non DV assault	Sexual assault	Sexual touching etc.	Robbery	Break and enter dwelling	Break and enter non-dwelling	Motor vehicle theft	Steal from motor vehicle	Steal from retail store	Other stealing offences	Malicious damage
<b>Regional NSW</b>	300.0%	51.2%	36.9%	-31.1%	-10.2%	60.9%	36.3%	13.5%	188.2%	27.9%	-13.9%	-27.2%	
Capital Region		135.3%	94.2%	-60.0%	-50.0%	700.0%	31.6%	-55.4%	-22.7%	-66.7%		-60.0%	28.6%
Central West		11.6%		600.0%	-83.3%	42.9%	97.1%	69.8%	272.7%	366.7%	25.5%	-45.0%	-33.3%
Coffs Harbour - Grafton		141.7%	84.7%	400.0%	-20.0%	100.0%	-18.2%	-48.5%		-27.3%	-60.0%	-28.0%	-28.1%
Far West And Orana		86.7%	52.3%	-44.4%	-12.5%	25.0%		152.5%	362.5%	-40.7%	-60.5%	-43.5%	
Hunter Valley Exc Newcastle		107.5%	24.5%	-40.0%	-33.3%	30.0%	90.0%	32.0%	555.6%	28.6%	-15.9%	12.9%	
Illawarra			66.7%	-100.0%	-50.0%	200.0%		-67.6%	115.4%	72.7%		-17.4%	
Mid North Coast		116.7%	74.4%	25.0%	260.0%	-37.5%	123.9%	-17.7%	96.7%	20.7%	28.8%	14.7%	64.4%
Murray		-27.8%	25.0%	-33.3%	-75.0%		-23.1%	63.2%	-31.3%	33.3%	-35.4%	-52.0%	10.5%
New England And North West		-13.2%	56.1%	-42.9%	80.0%	242.9%	-36.8%	126.1%	391.2%		-52.1%	-14.6%	-26.1%
Newcastle And Lake Macquarie		97.1%	-19.9%	-33.3%	-75.0%	41.7%	186.5%	-67.3%	330.3%	288.9%	28.9%	-36.0%	-20.8%
Richmond - Tweed				-42.9%	-66.7%	-33.3%	89.7%	220.8%	320.0%	-30.8%	-48.4%		-20.5%
Riverina		29.0%	37.5%	-50.0%	-50.0%		31.3%	-62.9%	-60.0%	37.5%		-51.6%	
Southern Highlands And Shoalhaven		40.0%	97.3%	-100.0%		500.0%	-33.3%	187.5%	100.0%	-54.5%	-26.9%	-31.6%	20.0%
<b>NSW</b>	50.0%	33.1%	30.8%	-18.7%	-24.0%		53.0%	49.8%	126.4%		-21.5%	-25.2%	

Decrease exceeds 20%

Decrease of between 10% and 20%

Increase of between 10% and 20%

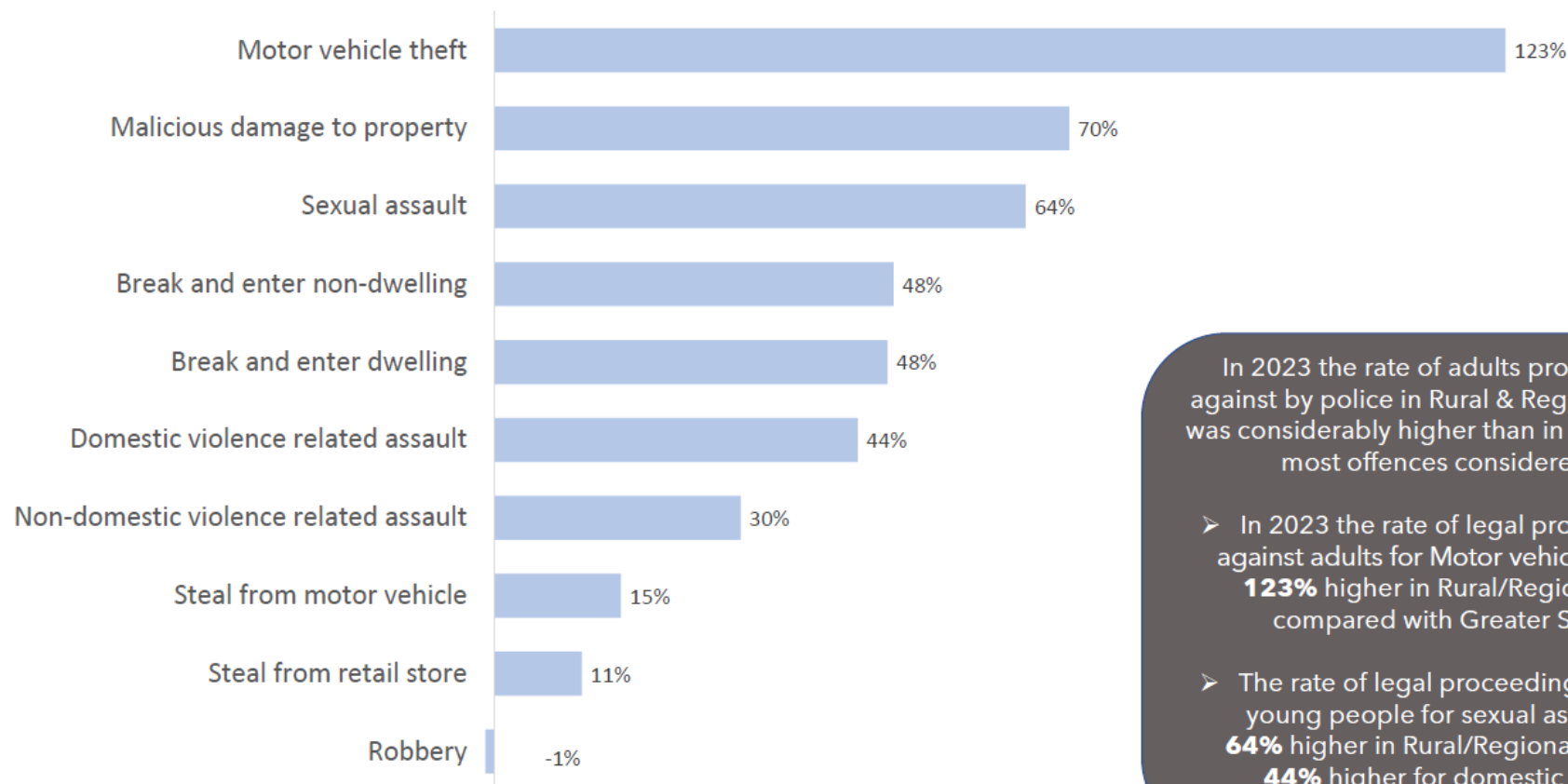
Increase exceeds 20%

(Source: BOCSAR)

## 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



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.

(Source: BOCSAR)



## Percentage change in legal actions against adults from 2019 to 2023

(excluding those where change was between -10% and +10%)

Region	Murder *	DV assault	Non DV assault	Sexual assault	Sexual touching etc.	Robbery	Break and enter dwelling	Break and enter non-dwelling	Motor vehicle theft	Steal from motor vehicle	Steal from retail store	Other stealing offences	Malicious damage
<b>Regional NSW</b>	17.0%			23.0%		-15.2%			15.3%	17.4%		-14.2%	
Capital Region	33.4%	25.8%	14.8%	26.5%	-33.3%	-15.6%	-46.0%	-21.4%	-38.5%				56.0%
Central West	11.1%			47.1%	-33.3%	30.9%	65.2%	40.4%	47.6%	50.3%	-34.7%		
Coffs Harbour - Grafton	71.8%		125.0%	37.9%	-19.2%	-14.8%	-38.2%	86.4%	133.3%	-27.2%	-27.9%	14.3%	
Far West And Orana			52.9%	19.0%	18.8%	-19.8%		66.7%	20.0%	11.5%	-10.8%	-13.9%	
Hunter Valley Exc Newcastle	26.3%			26.2%		-29.2%		21.7%	61.5%	-32.2%	-42.0%		
Illawarra	14.6%	26.7%					17.3%	-35.0%	130.0%	18.8%	18.3%		
Mid North Coast	53.4%					-47.6%		-19.7%	40.0%	-18.5%		-24.8%	
Murray	20.0%	21.3%	333.3%			-46.7%	-33.8%	-48.5%		-21.1%			25.0%
New England And North West		22.3%	20.0%			19.0%	38.5%		85.4%	111.1%	17.5%	17.0%	-14.0%
Newcastle And Lake Macquarie			-15.9%	11.3%		-14.3%	-33.7%		-13.0%			-27.5%	-16.6%
Richmond - Tweed	-11.9%		10.7%	-11.5%	-32.1%	-26.9%	54.3%	21.0%	-38.5%			-25.7%	-19.4%
Riverina	12.4%		100.0%		33.3%			-26.9%	-22.2%	-10.9%			
Southern Highlands And Shoalhaven	12.1%	39.2%	112.5%	-43.2%	-30.8%	10.0%	24.4%	42.3%	-10.0%	11.5%			26.9%
<b>Greater Sydney</b>	14.4%				-30.8%				38.9%				
<b>NSW</b>	15.5%		11.7%		-24.4%				29.9%				

Decrease exceeds 20%

Decrease of between 10% and 20%

Increase of between 10% and 20%

Increase exceeds 20%

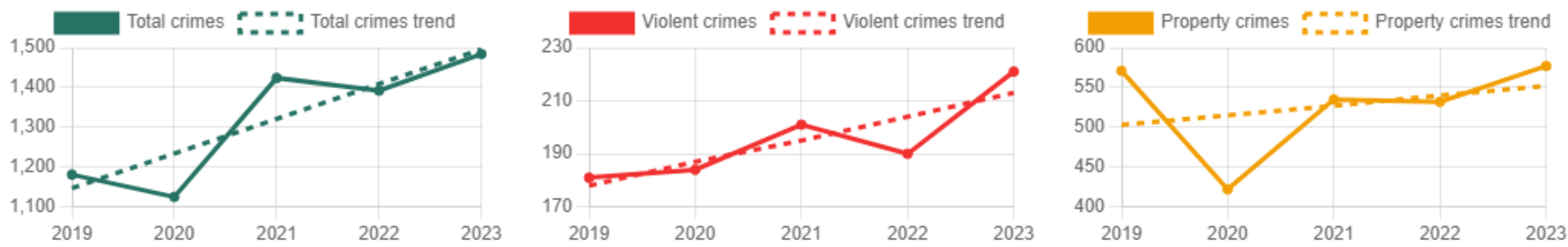
(Source: BOCSAR)

## 2023 Gunnedah Crime Statistics and Trends

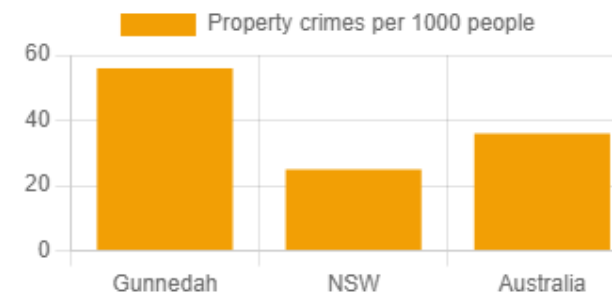
Gunnedah like many rural and regional areas has seen a significant increase in the reportable crime category of Motor Vehicle Theft, and these offences have included unlawful entry or aggravated breaking and entering of residences and threatened and actual violence to victims and witnesses. Aggravated Break, Enter and Steal offences in Gunnedah have been done in company, done whilst armed, and have resulted in physical and mental trauma to victims including vulnerable victims. These are serious offences carrying a penalty of 20 years imprisonment.

The data below is based on annual 2023 data from the NSW Police Force department and population data from the 2021 ABS Census. Rank is calculated for crimes weighted by severity and proportionate to population)

- Crime in Gunnedah has **increased by 6.61%** from 2022 to 2023.
- Total number of all crimes in Gunnedah in 2023 – 1484
- Total number of violent crimes in Gunnedah in 2023 – 221
- Total number of Property crimes in Gunnedah in 2023 – 577
- In 2023 in Gunnedah there were 195 cases of Justice procedures offences.
- In 2023 in Gunnedah there were 250 cases of Theft.
- In 2023 in Gunnedah there were 176 cases of Assault and related offences.
- In 2023 in Gunnedah there were 116 reported incidents of domestic violent related assault
- In 2023 in Gunnedah there were 163 cases of Property damage.
- In 2023 in Gunnedah there were 126 cases of Burglary/Break and enter.
- 9 cases of Weapons and explosives offences.
- In 2023 in Gunnedah there were 38 cases of Arson.



- Forecasted chances of becoming a victim of a Violent crime  
Gunnedah 1 in 47                  NSW 1 in 87                  Australia 1 in 95
- Forecasted chances of becoming a victim of Property Crime  
Gunnedah 1 in 18                  NSW 1 in 41                  Australia 1 in 28



## 2024 Gunnedah Crime Statistics

On 18 March 2024, NSW Police Western Region Commander Assistant Commissioner Rod Smith disclosed in a media interview that within the Western Police region, 150 persons had been charged in the preceding 6 months as part of Operation Regional Mongoose. **109** of those were juveniles and **67%** of those charged were already on bail. The over representation of juveniles in those statistics may be linked to the “post and boast” phenomenon where the crime is recorded by the young offenders and the resulting pursuit and destruction of property is posted to social media.

The Gunnedah experience reflects the statistics quoted by A/C Smith. Offenders whether initially granted conditional bail or are refused bail, are inevitably granted strict conditional bail (*Bail Act 2013*) by Courts, only to continue to offend or commence re-offending upon release whether on remand or at the completion of a short sentence. There is no question that we cannot reduce youth crime by arrest. Arrest is the consequence of a crime. Arrest comes after the physical, mental, and financial trauma suffered by victims and witnesses.

Calls for policing service outside the operating hours of the Gunnedah Police Station are delivered from Tamworth or by recalling locally residing police to duty. Either way, there is a significantly delayed policing response in comparison to a police station that is staffed and operating 24/7. This is well known and undoubtedly a gap that is taken advantage of by criminals. The absence of 24/7 operational policing is compounded by some police being stationed in Gunnedah but electing not to reside in the community, meaning they are unavailable for duty at short or no notice.

Additionally, Gunnedah is not immune from the well-known staffing shortages experienced across the wider NSW Police Force. Using the NSW Police Force 2020/21 Annual Report as reference, theoretically there is one police officer for every 748 people in the Gunnedah LGA. This ratio is at odds with the statewide ratio of one officer per 457 people. The reality could not be starker.

Policing in the Gunnedah LGA is consistently under resourced through unfilled vacancies, long term sick leave, and other routine commitments. In 2022 the Gunnedah branch of the NSW Police Association called for two additional general duties constables, a general duties Sergeant, a full-time general administration support officer, and a minimum of three constables in the Proactive Crime Team at Gunnedah. This was strongly supported by Gunnedah Shire Council who have consistently lobbied the Government for additional policing resources to deliver a 24/7 service.

The NSW Police response was to announce that an additional detective, two rural crime investigators, and a part time administration officer would be based at Gunnedah Police Station. What actually happened however, was that the long-standing vacant investigator position was filled. The two rural crime investigators were not an increase to the authorised strength of Gunnedah, nor did they report directly to the Officer in Charge or Inspector. Their focus or charter also remained on rural crime.

The approach was simply to temporarily move the office for the two rural crime investigators from Tamworth to Gunnedah. It is important to note that for at least the past 20 years, there were two criminal investigators permanently attached to Gunnedah and with the passage of time, this number has reduced to zero. That police staffing shortage has also impacted on the PCYC NSW Gunnedah branch which has not had the benefit of community police officers for an extended period.

Council notes that PCYC NSW work to prevent and reduce crime by and against young people by providing a range of free and subsidised activities. Police officers within the Police and Youth Crime Prevention Command case manage young offenders and work closely with youth at risk. Case management and youth crime prevention strategies simply cannot be, and have not been, delivered if the policing positions at the PCYC NSW Gunnedah branch are not filled. PCYC's across regional areas cannot deliver harm minimisation, diversionary, or early intervention programs and case management if there are insufficient police resources to do so, and if Centre staff lack the formal case management training and qualifications. The provision of free activities while commendable, fails to address the root causes of juvenile crime and the long-term impacts on young people entering the justice system.

Prevention is paramount, however, prevention and early intervention must start whilst youth at risk are young, and it must continue well into the impressionable teenage and early adult years. We cannot arrest our way out of youth crime. In the 12 months to December 2023, 50.5% of young people (under 18) in the New England and North-West reoffended after a court appearance. This strongly suggests that arrest, detention, remand, and sentencing are not deterrents to re-offending.

The absence of government led programs to prevent youth related crimes or to divert youth at risk away from becoming criminals has also been identified. The recent abolition of 100 NSW government positions within the Department of Regional NSW will have significant impacts on crime in our communities. This Department was formed in 2020 as a central agency for regional issues and is responsible for building resilient regional economies and communities, delivering positive outcomes for local communities. The Department's portfolio included the appointment of a Minister for Regional Youth and the creation of an Office of Regional Youth (ORY) made good on a 2019 election commitment to make regional youth a priority for the NSW Government. The ORY is responsible for delivering whole-of-government priorities and initiatives as outlined in the NSW Regional Youth Framework and its associated Youth Action Plan (YAP). The slashing of 100 positions undermines that commitment and compromises the effective execution of the YAP actions.

Efforts must be made to maintain and expand, not reduce, the Department's youth portfolios and its programs, including Regional Youth Community Coordinators, Regional Community Coordinators and Regional Youth Resilience Community Coordinators. These three programs alone focus on establishing strong connections and strategic partnerships with and between key stakeholders, including schools, employment providers, not-for-profits, government, Councils, and businesses, to improve outcomes for youth. The Government cannot make good on its NSW Youth Action Plan when several of the very programs and grant initiatives articulated as key strategies, have been abolished.

In addition, the government focus on the provision of reward-based incentives is not supported by service providers, community groups and front-line case workers. There is sufficient body of evidence to indicate these approaches are not diversionary in nature and contribute little to addressing youth crime and reducing recidivism. In fact, these approaches incentivise young people to reoffend. The recent Moree approach to providing local youth with free trips to meet football heroes in Sydney is one example and service providers are sceptical of any meaningful long-term community safety outcomes. Similar strategies have been applied unsuccessfully in Queensland for over two decades, with juvenile crime rates and the rates of recidivism soaring at an unprecedented level. Townsville is one significant example.

It is noted that only 6 Youth Justice Centres are available in NSW including Western Sydney (males only), Orana in Dubbo (males only), Gosford (males only), Wagga Wagga (males only) and South Grafton (males only). Campbelltown is the only Youth Justice Centre able to accommodate girls as well as boys (up to 55), and this is an obvious gap in the justice system. Families from the Gunnedah and New England region with family members in Youth Justice Centres need to have reasonable access to local Centres. Ongoing contact with families is an integral part in positioning young people to succeed once their sentence is complete.

## **Recommendations**

- i. The identification of areas including Gunnedah, where the presence of a 24/7 police response is what 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 at Gunnedah Police Station are retained and that any vacancies are managed to maintain 24/7 police services or business as usual.
- ii. 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.
- iii. 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.
- iv. The allocation of additional resources to more adequately supervise offenders and their adherence to bail conditions.
- v. Tougher penalties for breach of bail conditions.
- vi. Recently announced legislative reform package including amendments to the Bail Act and the creation of a new offence for 'posting and boasting' are delivered.

- viii. 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
- ix. 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.
- x. The reinstatement of the NSW Community Safety Fund, with a focus on youth, CCTV, and domestic and family violence initiatives.
- xi. That consideration be given for the expansion of Youth Justice Centres in the North West and New England areas that are able to accommodate girls closer to their families.
- xii. The retention of 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.

In closing, Gunnedah Shire Council reinforces the view, that a cookie cutter and silo approach to resolving youth related crime, and domestic and family violence does not work, and that it must be a whole of community approach. Particularly as there is a significant body of evidence identifying intergenerational cycles of violence, drug abuse, bullying, unstable family situations, poor education, neglect, socio-economic disadvantage, unemployment, marginalisation, gender, racism, homophobia, and the media, as critical and interrelated factors in the determinants of anti-social and violent behaviour in young people. In many instances these factors can be the best predictor of aggression in later life.

Policing now is understandably and necessarily reactive, however there is a strong commitment and resolve by our Council to work with and support local police and community stakeholders to identify collaborative and pro-active solutions to enhancing community safety. Council also echoes previously voiced sentiments that a bi-partisan roundtable conversation with key stakeholders including the Country Mayors Association, needs to occur to identify approaches that provide regional areas with the flexibility to determine what works for them.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

**A - BB169 Report – Crime in Regional and Rural NSW**

**B – Regional youth and adult offending - December 2023 (BOCSAR)**

**C - LGA Rate/100,000 pop. for incidents Regional NSW vs Greater Sydney 2023**

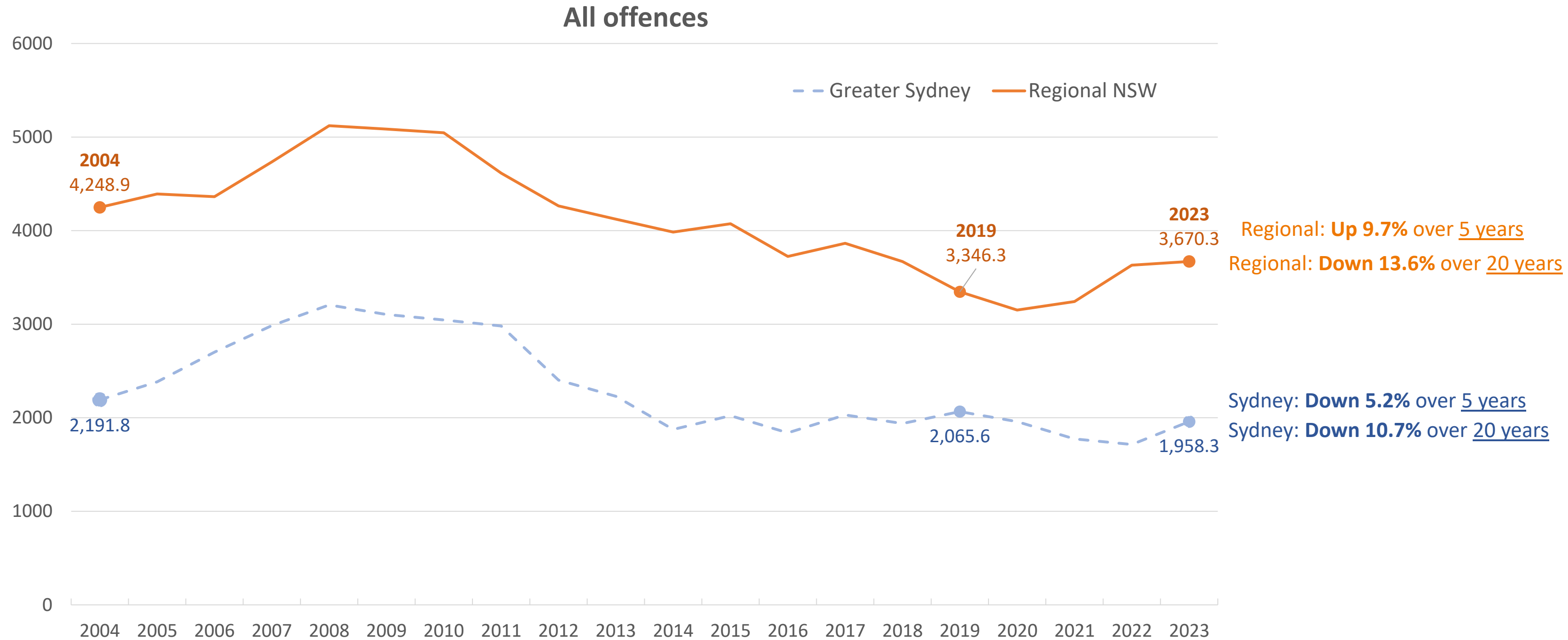
**Attachment A** – BB169-Report-Crime-in-Regional-and-Rural-NSW-2023 - <https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Publications/BB/BB169-Report-Crime-in-Regional-and-Rural-NSW-2023.pdf>



# YOUTH OFFENDING

# LONG-TERM TRENDS IN YOUTH OFFENDING

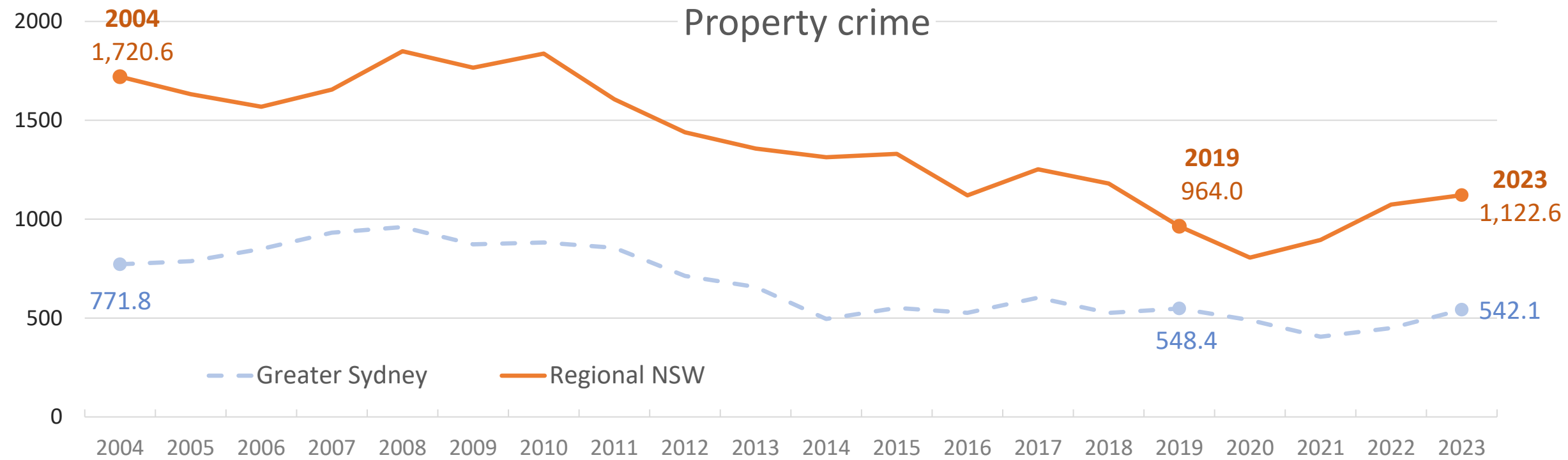
Police proceedings\* against young people (10 to 17 years), per 100,000 population



\*Police proceeded against includes proceeded to court, Youth Justice Conference, or a caution under the *Young Offenders Act*.

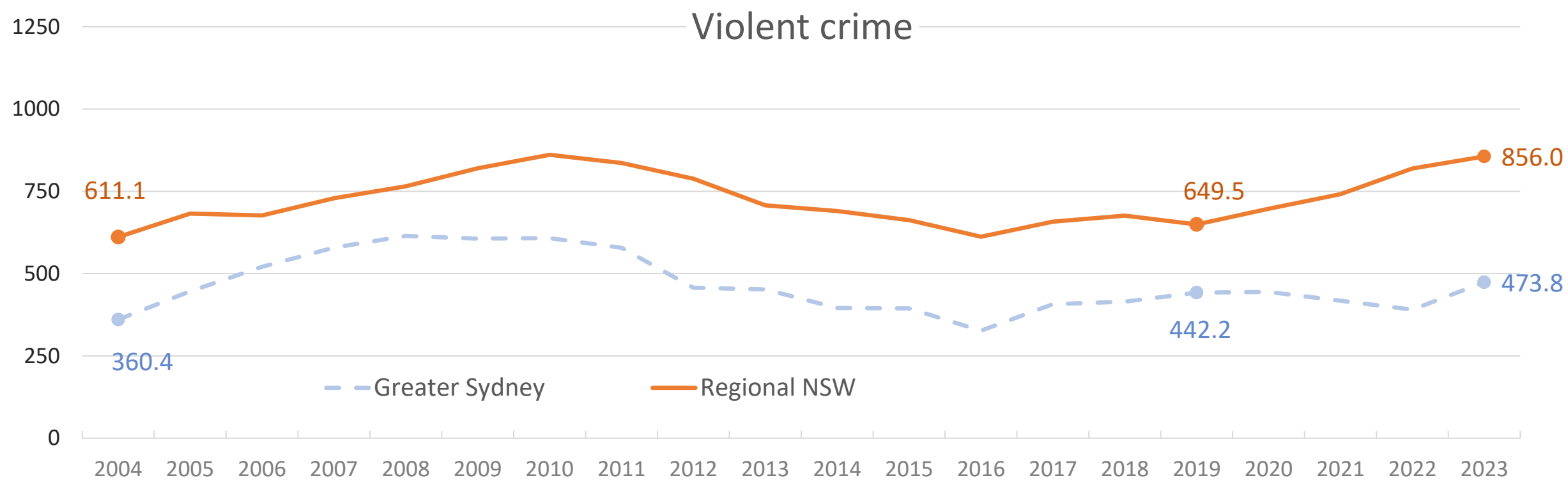
# LONG-TERM TRENDS IN YOUTH OFFENDING

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



Regional: **Up 16.3%** over 5 years  
 Regional: **Down 34.8%** over 20 years

Sydney: **Down 1.1%** over 5 years  
 Sydney: **Down 29.8%** over 20 years



Regional: **Up 31.8%** over 5 years  
 Regional: **Up 40.1%** over 20 years

Sydney: **Up 7.2%** over 5 years  
 Sydney: **Up 31.5%** over 20 years

# Percentage change in legal actions against young people from 2019 to 2023

(excluding those where change was between -10% and +10%)

Region	Murder *	DV assault	Non DV assault	Sexual assault	Sexual touching etc.	Robbery	Break and enter dwelling	Break and enter non-dwelling	Motor vehicle theft	Steal from motor vehicle	Steal from retail store	Other stealing offences	Malicious damage
Regional NSW	300.0%	51.2%	36.9%	-31.1%	-10.2%	60.9%	36.3%	13.5%	188.2%	27.9%	-13.9%	-27.2%	
Capital Region		135.3%	94.2%	-60.0%	-50.0%	700.0%	31.6%	-55.4%	-22.7%	-66.7%		-60.0%	28.6%
Central West		11.6%		600.0%	-83.3%	42.9%	97.1%	69.8%	272.7%	366.7%	25.5%	-45.0%	-33.3%
Coffs Harbour - Grafton		141.7%	84.7%	400.0%	-20.0%	100.0%	-18.2%	-48.5%		-27.3%	-60.0%	-28.0%	-28.1%
Far West And Orana		86.7%	52.3%	-44.4%	-12.5%	25.0%		152.5%	362.5%	-40.7%	-60.5%	-43.5%	
Hunter Valley Exc Newcastle		107.5%	24.5%	-40.0%	-33.3%	30.0%	90.0%	32.0%	555.6%	28.6%	-15.9%	12.9%	
Illawarra			66.7%	-100.0%	-50.0%	200.0%		-67.6%	115.4%	72.7%		-17.4%	
Mid North Coast		116.7%	74.4%	25.0%	260.0%	-37.5%	123.9%	-17.7%	96.7%	20.7%	28.8%	14.7%	64.4%
Murray		-27.8%	25.0%	-33.3%	-75.0%		-23.1%	63.2%	-31.3%	33.3%	-35.4%	-52.0%	10.5%
New England And North West		-13.2%	56.1%	-42.9%	80.0%	242.9%	-36.8%	126.1%	391.2%		-52.1%	-14.6%	-26.1%
Newcastle And Lake Macquarie		97.1%	-19.9%	-33.3%	-75.0%	41.7%	186.5%	-67.3%	330.3%	288.9%	28.9%	-36.0%	-20.8%
Richmond - Tweed				-42.9%	-66.7%	-33.3%	89.7%	220.8%	320.0%	-30.8%	-48.4%		-20.5%
Riverina		29.0%	37.5%	-50.0%	-50.0%		31.3%	-62.9%	-60.0%	37.5%		-51.6%	
Southern Highlands And Shoalhaven		40.0%	97.3%	-100.0%		500.0%	-33.3%	187.5%	100.0%	-54.5%	-26.9%	-31.6%	20.0%
NSW	50.0%	33.1%	30.8%	-18.7%	-24.0%		53.0%	49.8%	126.4%		-21.5%	-25.2%	

Decrease exceeds 20%

Decrease of between 10% and 20%

Increase of between 10% and 20%

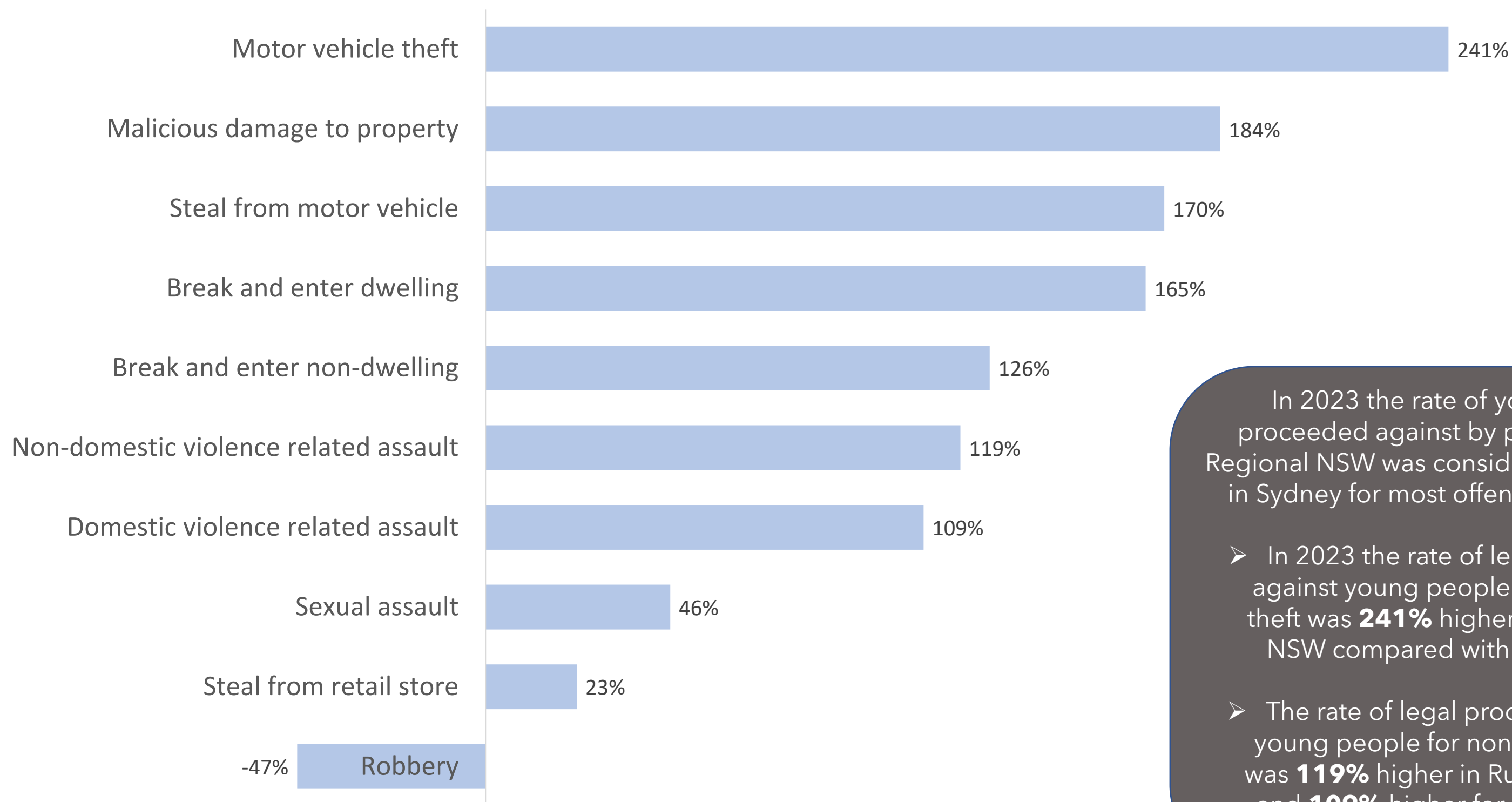
Increase exceeds 20%

## 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



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.

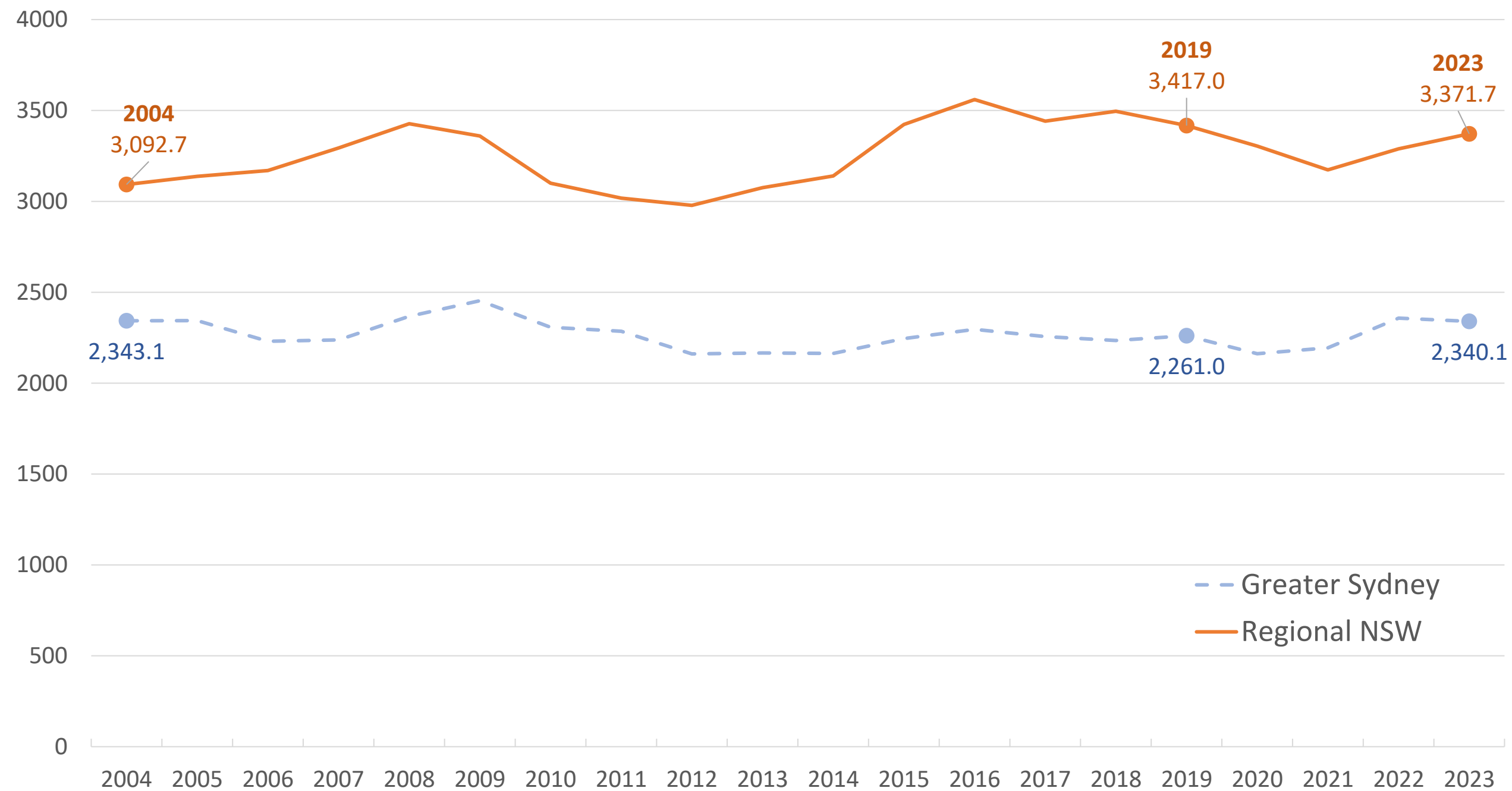
- In 2023 the rate of legal proceedings against young people for Motor vehicle theft was **241%** higher in Rural/Regional NSW compared with Greater Sydney.
- The rate of legal proceedings against young people for non-domestic assault was **119%** higher in Rural/Regional NSW and **109%** higher for domestic assault.

# ADULT OFFENDING

# LONG-TERM TRENDS IN ADULT OFFENDING

Police proceedings\* against adults, per 100,000 population

## All offences



Regional: **Down 1.3%** over 5 years

Regional: **Up 9.0%** over 20 years

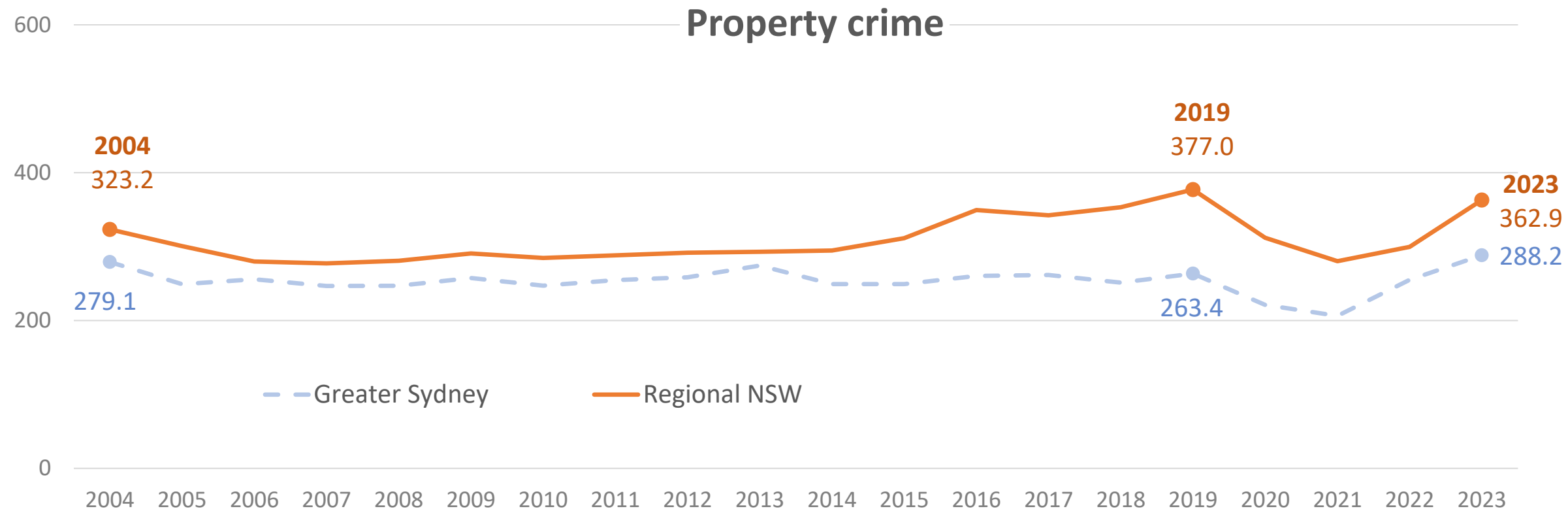
Sydney: **Up 3.5%** over 5 years

Sydney: **Down 0.1%** over 20 years

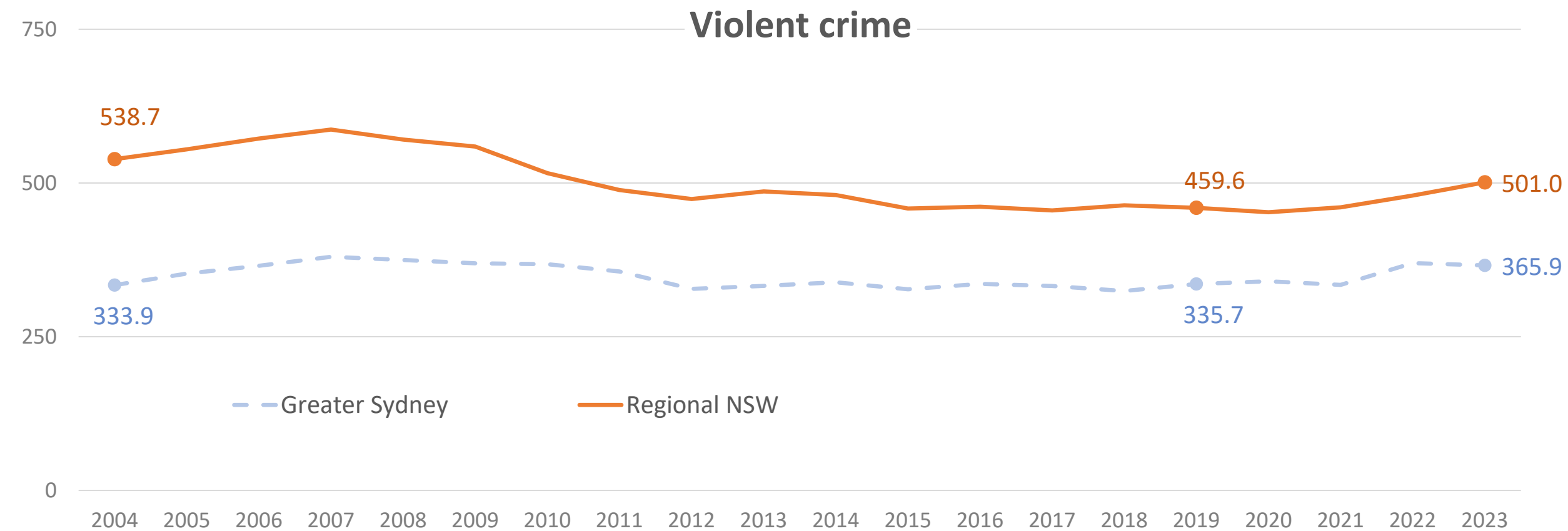
\*Police proceeded against includes proceeded to court, Criminal Infringement Notice, or cannabis caution.

# LONG-TERM TRENDS IN ADULT OFFENDING

Police proceedings against adults, Rate per 100,000 population



Regional: **Down 3.7%** over 5 years  
Regional: **Up 12.3%** over 20 years  
Sydney: **Up 9.4%** over 5 years  
Sydney: **Up 3.3%** over 20 years



Regional: **Up 9.0%** over 5 years  
Regional: **Down 7.0%** over 20 years  
Sydney: **Up 9.0%** over 5 years  
Sydney: **Up 9.6%** over 20 years



# Percentage change in legal actions against adults from 2019 to 2023

(excluding those where change was between -10% and +10%)

Region	Murder *	DV assault	Non DV assault	Sexual assault	Sexual touching etc.	Robbery	Break and enter dwelling	Break and enter non-dwelling	Motor vehicle theft	Steal from motor vehicle	Steal from retail store	Other stealing offences	Malicious damage
Regional NSW		17.0%		23.0%		-15.2%			15.3%	17.4%		-14.2%	
Capital Region		33.4%	25.8%	14.8%	26.5%	-33.3%	-15.6%	-46.0%	-21.4%	-38.5%			56.0%
Central West		11.1%			47.1%	-33.3%	30.9%	65.2%	40.4%	47.6%	50.3%	-34.7%	
Coffs Harbour - Grafton		71.8%		125.0%	37.9%	-19.2%	-14.8%	-38.2%	86.4%	133.3%	-27.2%	-27.9%	14.3%
Far West And Orana				52.9%	19.0%	18.8%	-19.8%		66.7%	20.0%	11.5%	-10.8%	-13.9%
Hunter Valley Exc Newcastle		26.3%			26.2%		-29.2%		21.7%	61.5%	-32.2%	-42.0%	
Illawarra		14.6%	26.7%					17.3%	-35.0%	130.0%	18.8%	18.3%	
Mid North Coast		53.4%				-47.6%		-19.7%	40.0%	-18.5%		-24.8%	
Murray		20.0%	21.3%	333.3%		-46.7%	-33.8%	-48.5%		-21.1%			25.0%
New England And North West			22.3%	20.0%		19.0%	38.5%		85.4%	111.1%	17.5%	17.0%	-14.0%
Newcastle And Lake Macquarie				-15.9%	11.3%		-14.3%	-33.7%		-13.0%		-27.5%	-16.6%
Richmond - Tweed		-11.9%		10.7%	-11.5%	-32.1%	-26.9%	54.3%	21.0%	-38.5%		-25.7%	-19.4%
Riverina		12.4%		100.0%		33.3%			-26.9%	-22.2%	-10.9%		
Southern Highlands And Shoalhaven		12.1%	39.2%	112.5%	-43.2%	-30.8%	10.0%	24.4%	42.3%	-10.0%	11.5%		26.9%
Greater Sydney		14.4%				-30.8%				38.9%			
NSW		15.5%		11.7%		-24.4%				29.9%			

Decrease exceeds 20%

Decrease of between 10% and 20%

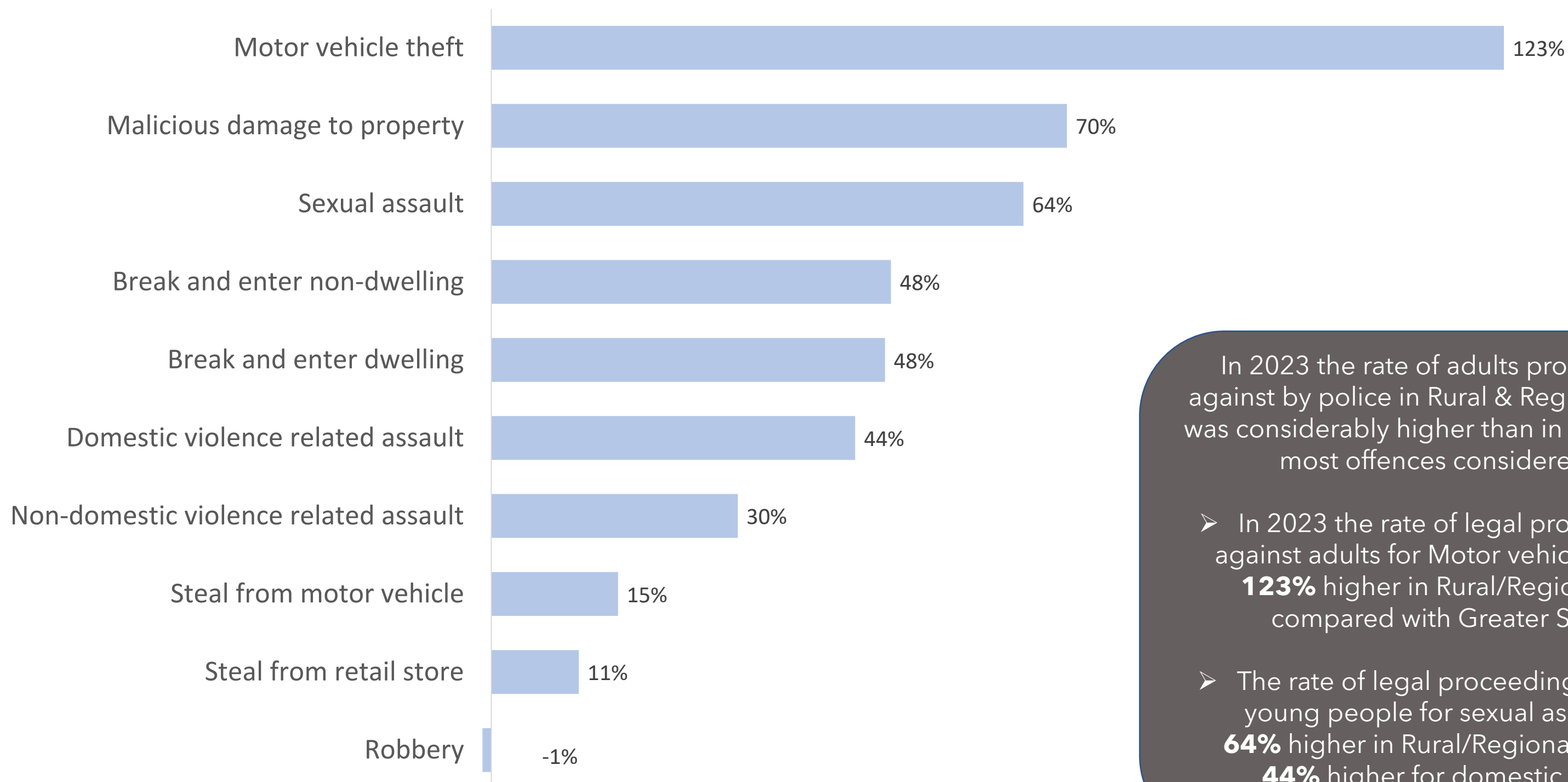
Increase of between 10% and 20%

Increase exceeds 20%

## 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



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.

Summary Table - Rate of crime per 100,000 population for Greater Sydney and the Rest of NSW for selected offences

	Rate of crime per 100,000 pop in Greater Sydney	Rate of crime per 100,000 pop in Rest of NSW	% by which recorded crime rate in 'Rest of NSW' exceeds 'Greater Sydney'
Robbery	23.6	23.2	-2%
Steal from retail store	319.5	355.5	11%
Other stealing offences	433.2	529.9	22%
Use/Possess Cannabis	160.1	205.9	29%
Use/Possess Amphetamines	70.1	90.7	29%
Steal from motor vehicle	351.5	473.9	35%
Assault police	27.0	37.7	40%
Non-domestic violence related assault	342.6	497.7	45%
Domestic violence related assault	349.6	583.5	67%
Malicious damage to property	445.6	845.9	90%
Motor vehicle theft	127.2	248.5	95%
Sexual assault	81.0	161.9	100%
Break and enter dwelling	167.5	363.4	117%
Breach AVO	194.7	444.7	128%
Break and enter non-dwelling	64.9	168.1	159%

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research  
Reference: st24-23354

