

**Submission
No 169**

COMMUNITY SAFETY IN REGIONAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

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Submission to the Community Safety in Regional and Rural Communities Inquiry

My submission will primarily focus on the Dubbo Regional Council LGA where I am a Councillor.

Most people in the Dubbo LGA are sick and tired of putting up with persistently high crime rates when compared to other LGAs in NSW for decade after decade. This problem hasn't just appeared in the last 12 months – it's decades old.

There is no decent explanation of why the Dubbo LGA is not receiving the resourcing required to reduce the rates of crime to something like the state average. It looks as if a succession of governments have simply decided to abandon rural and regional areas to high crime rates.

The table below shows the Dubbo LGA and the 2023 LGA Rank for the 13 major offence categories (see orange column):

NSW Recorded Crime Statistics 2019-2023							
Number of recorded incidents and rate per 100,000 population, 24-month and 60-month trend and Local Government Areas rankings 2023							
Dubbo Regional Local Government Area							
		<i>Jan-Dec 2023</i>					
<i>Offence group</i>	<i>Offence type</i>	2023 LGA Rank	<i>Number of incidents</i>	<i>Rate per 100,000 population</i>	<i>24-month trend^{^^}</i>	<i>60-month trend^{^^}</i>	2023 LGA Rank
The major offences	Murder [^]		1	1.8	nc**	nc**	
	Domestic violence related assault	7	659	1,179.0	Stable	Stable	7
	Non-domestic violence related assault	3	594	1,062.7	34.7%	9.2%	3
	Sexual assault	20	107	191.4	Stable	10.8%	20
	Sexual touching, sexual act and other sexual		108	193.2	Stable	Stable	
	Robbery	5	30	53.7	Stable	nc**	5
	Break and enter dwelling	9	501	896.3	Stable	Stable	9
	Break and enter non-dwelling	7	260	465.2	Stable	11.4%	7
	Motor vehicle theft	7	282	504.5	Stable	4.4%	7
	Steal from motor vehicle	7	506	905.3	Stable	Stable	7
	Steal from retail store	3	417	746.1	Stable	Stable	3
	Other stealing offences	13	486	869.5	Stable	-4.4%	13
	Malicious damage to property	4	1,094	1,957.3	30.4%	Stable	4

We clearly need more resources provided by both the NSW and Commonwealth governments to reduce crime rates through extra policing resources and through programs to break the cycle of crime.

The victims of crime are continually forgotten by the system. Recidivist offenders need to be dealt with more effectively, which may include greater policing resources to catch them, greater access to drug rehab along with health, housing and employment opportunities, bail hostels etc, and if people won't stop offending then stop putting them back into the community.

A quick analysis of the 2023 BOCSAR figures for the two major population centres in the Dubbo LGA (Dubbo and Wellington) [see table below] shows that ever crime category is significantly above the state average. Where are the extra police? Where are the extra wrap around and diversionary resources that we need here?

Dubbo can't even get it's AOD Rehab Centre built in a decent timeframe.

Year to December 2023		per 100,000 ppl		per 100,000 ppl	per 100,000 ppl
		Dubbo 2830	Dubbo X State ave	Wellington 2820	State average
Assault		2510.5	2.82 X	2078.6	889.2
	Domestic Assault	1224.4	2.75 X	1279.1	445.7
	Non-domestic assault	1173.8	2.78 X	746.2	422
Robbery		52.9	2.23 X	79.9	23.7
	without a weapon	26.4	1.93 X	40	13.7
	with weapon not firearm	24.2	2.78 X	40	8.7
Theft		5956.8	2.51 X	4250.5	2375.7
	B&E dwelling	907.3	3.68 X	1105.9	246.8
	B&E non dwelling	493.3	4.64 X	426.4	106.4
	motor vehicle theft	530.7	3 X	453	176.5
	steal from motor vehicle	1046	2.92 X	359.8	358.7
	steal from retail store	885.3	2.63 X	186.5	336.6
	steal from dwelling	345.7	1.76 X	413.1	196.4
	steal from person	88.1	3.32 X	53.3	26.5
	fraud	984.4	1.7 X	799.5	578.4
Malicious damage to property		2094.3	3.44 X	1825.4	609.1
Against justice procedures		3424.4	3.22 X	1878.7	1063.6
	breach AVO	839	2.79 X	919.4	301
	resist hinder officer	253.2	3.87 X	93.3	65.4
	breach bail	2182.3	3.33 X	839.4	655.7
Disorderly conduct		1037.2	4.34 X	386.4	239
	trespass	645.2	4.27 X	266.5	151
	criminal intent	284.1	8.23 X	119.9	34.5
Sexual offenses		385.4	1.79 X	466.4	214.8

	sexual assault	193.8	1.66 X	226.5	116.8
	sexual touching etc	191.6	1.96 X	239.8	98
More offences					
	blackmail & extortion	41.8	1.83 X	13.3	22.9
Drug offenses		920.5	1.78 X	879.4	516.3

Wellington needs 24 hour policing. Dubbo simply needs more police. What we don't need is a highway patrol cop booking people around town doing 5km over the limit, we need more police catching the people committing the crimes that fill up the table above.

More resources are needed to stop children entering the criminal justice system. That doesn't mean that when they commit crimes they simply are let go – there has to be consequences and a pathway out of going the way they are going. Police and services know the families that are contributing to the crime stats – more needs to be done to ensure that these people get off the drugs and alcohol, get into some form of paid employment, stop neglecting their kids and get them to school, and try to break the cycle of generational crime. That will require a huge investment into youth refuges, social workers, electronic monitoring of repeat offenders, bail hostels and the like.

The crime rates in the Dubbo LGA are consistently appalling, and much more resourcing needs to be allocated. What has been done for the last 15 years obviously hasn't been working.

Metropolitan areas wouldn't put up with such high crime rates, so why should we have to?