

5. LAW ENFORCEMENT

5.1 LAW ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS

5.1.1 CHARGES

Over the 10 year period 1985 to 1994 a total of 90,550 drug charges were laid by the WA police (Table 5.1). Between 90 and 95% of all charges laid each year over this period were cannabis-related (Table 5.2; Table 5.3).

It should be noted that charges by the Federal Police (only available for the period 1992-1994) tended to be concerned with cannabis resin, a more potent form of cannabis (Table 5.4).

Overall three types of drugs accounted for the majority of charges -

- 83,959 (92.7%) charges were related to cannabis;
- 3,266 (3.6%) charges were related to amphetamines; and
- 1,663 charges (1.8%) were related to heroin.

Table 5.1 Total number of drug charges dealt with by State police 1985-1994

Drug type	N	%
Heroin	1,663	1.8
Cannabis		
(plants)	12,445	13.7
(leaf)	46,149	51.0
(resin)	925	1.0
(implements/utensils)	24,440	27.0
All cannabis	83,959	92.7
Cocaine	96	0.1
Amphetamines	3,266	3.6
Hallucinogens	623	0.7
Other drugs/plants	426	0.5
Deleterious substances	245	0.3
Scripts & miscellaneous	181	0.2
Steroids	91	0.1
Total	90,550	100.0

**Table 5.2 Number of drug charges dealt with by State police
1985-1989**

Drug type	1985		1986		1987		1988		1989	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Heroin	204	4.2	265	4.2	227	3.0	168	2.2	135	1.9
Cannabis										
(plants)	612	12.6	677	10.8	1,010	13.4	1,055	14.0	1,034	14.2
(leaf)	2,661	54.6	3,495	55.8	3,816	50.7	3,868	51.4	3,651	50.3
(resin)	108	2.2	119	1.9	120	1.6	110	1.5	78	1.1
(implements/utensils)	1,179	24.2	1,583	25.3	2,205	29.3	2,130	28.3	2,061	28.4
All cannabis	4,560	93.6	5,874	93.8	7,151	95.0	7,163	95.2	6,824	94.1
Cocaine	2	-	-	-	-	-	8	0.1	7	0.1
Amphetamines	-	-	12	0.2	38	0.5	76	1.0	171	2.4
Hallucinogens	9	0.2	20	0.3	22	0.3	19	0.2	35	0.5
Other drugs/plants	57	1.2	24	0.4	8	0.1	21	0.3	9	0.1
Deleterious substances	-	-	32	0.5	73	1.0	65	0.9	66	0.9
Scripts & miscellaneous	38	0.8	35	0.6	5	0.1	4	0.1	7	0.1
Steroids										
Total	4,870	100.0	6,262	100.0	7,524	100.0	7,524	100.0	7,254	100.0

Source: Western Australian Police Department, Annual Reports.
Note: NC= No longer collected.

Table 5.3 Number of drug charges dealt with by State police 1990-1994

Drug type	1990		1991		1992		1993		1994	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Heroin	116	1.3	121	1.0	192	1.4	141	1.1	94	1.0
Cannabis										
(plants)	1,142	12.8	1,735	13.7	1,954	14.7	1,772	14.2	1,454	14.7
(leaf)	4,565	51.2	6,292	49.8	6,746	50.8	6,295	50.5	4,760	48.4
(resin)	98	1.1	50	0.4	98	0.7	96	0.8	48	0.5
(implements/utensils)	2,646	29.7	3,661	29	3,425	25.8	3,127	25.1	2,423	24.7
All cannabis	8,451	94.8	11,738	92.9	12,223	92.1	11,290	90.6	8,685	88.3
Cocaine	12	0.1	52	0.4	8	-	5	-	2	-
Amphetamines	236	2.6	552	4.4	645	4.9	709	5.7	816	8.3
Hallucinogens	30	0.3	52	0.4	111	0.8	194	1.6	131	1.3
Other drugs/plants	45	0.5	100	0.8	43	0.3	66	0.5	64	0.7
Deleterious substances	7	0.1	2	-	NC		NC		NC	
Scripts & miscellaneous	20	0.2	20	0.2	12	0.1	31	0.3	9	0.1
Steroids					32	0.2	29	0.2	30	0.3
Total	8,917	100.0	12,637	100.0	13,266	100.0	12,465	100.0	9,831	100.0

Source: Western Australian Police Department, Annual Reports.
 Note: NC= No longer collected.

Table 5.4 Number of drug charges dealt with by Federal police 1992-1994

Drug type	1992		1993		1994	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Heroin	9	25.0	12	23.5	8	24.2
Cannabis plant	15	41.7	14	27.5	9	27.3
Cannabis seed	1	2.8	6	11.8	4	12.1
Cannabis resin	1	2.8	15	29.4	10	30.3
Cocaine	-	-	-	-	1	3.0
Amphetamines	3	8.3	2	3.9	-	-
LSD	1	2.8	-	-	-	-
MDMA (Ecstasy)	-	-	1	2.0	-	-
Hash oil	4	11.1	1	2.0	-	-
Prescribed drug	2	5.6	-	-	-	-
No prohibited substance detected	-	-	-	-	1	3.0
Total	36	100.0	51	100.0	33	100.0

Source: Australian Federal Police.

5.1.2 SEIZURES

The scale of cannabis-related police work can be gauged by the substantial quantities of cannabis being seized (Table 5.5). For instance, in the period 1985 to 1994 WA police seized -

- nearly half a million cannabis plants;
- 4.4 tonnes of cannabis as leaf; and
- just over 200 kgs of cannabis as resin.

Table 5.5 Total quantities of drugs seized by State police, 1985-1994

Drug type	1985-1994
Heroin	35.349 kgs
Homebake morphine	2932 mls
Cannabis	
(plants)	482,897
(leaf)	4,373.529 kgs
(resin)	201.886 kgs
Cocaine	907.31 gms
Amphetamines	49.850 kgs
LSD	27,303 doses
MDMA (Ecstasy)	113.6 gms
	336 capsules
	3,228 tablets

Trends in annual seizures of a number of the illicit drugs in Table 5.6 and Table 5.7 require further elaboration. It should not be assumed there will necessarily be a relationship between aggregate seizures of types of drugs and prevalence. It should be emphasised that police effectiveness cannot be measured solely by reference to either seizures or charges, as a key aspect of overall drug squad activities is deterrence.

5.1.2.1 Heroin

There has been an overall reduction in total heroin seizures in this State from 1985 to 1994. Over the 1985 to 1990 period the aggregate quantity of heroin seized fluctuated between 1 and 4 kgs per year (except for 1989, when an unusually large seizure was made), compared to the 1991 to 1994 period, when a smaller aggregate quantity of heroin was seized each year (in the range of 0.25 kg to 0.5 kg), except for 1993.

5.1.2.2 Homebake morphine

In the period 1985 to 1989 there were no seizures of homebake morphine. Seizures of this drug, which is largely synthesised in small-scale laboratories from pharmaceutical preparations containing codeine, peaked in the 1991 to 1992 period.⁸⁹

In late 1992 over-the-counter sales of codeine preparations were restricted in this State.⁹⁰ This seems to have been very successful, in combination with police activity, as by 1994 no seizures of this drug were recorded.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Bedford KR, Nolan SL, Onrust R, Siegers JD. "The illicit preparation of morphine and heroin from pharmaceutical products containing codeine 'homebake' laboratories in New Zealand." (1987) 34 *Forensic Science International* 197.

⁹⁰ Ilett K. "Is Panadeine Forte being overprescribed?" (1992) 156 *Medical Journal of Australia* 583.

5.1.2.3 Cocaine

While there has been a degree of fluctuation in cocaine seizures over the period 1985 to 1994, the aggregate quantity being seized has increased slightly, especially in the period 1991 to 1994. In 1985 less than a gram of cocaine was seized, in 1994 WA police seized just over 80 gms.

5.1.2.4 LSD

There has been an increase in the quantity of this drug seized in more recent years, with seizures of large quantities of LSD doses each year between 1990 and 1994.

5.1.2.5 Amphetamines

Over the period 1985-1994 a total of 49.850 kilograms of amphetamines were seized by State police (Table 5.5).

There has been a consistent and substantial increase in the quantity of seizures of amphetamines each year from 1985 to the present. WA police have undertaken significant interdiction activities which have resulted in the seizure of substantial quantities; for instance, about 14 kgs were seized in 1993 and 15 kgs were seized in 1994.

The inclusion of seizure data from operations in this State by the Federal Police, based on data for the period 1992 to 1994 (Table 5.8), confirms the increased prevalence of amphetamine that has occurred from 1985 to 1994 (Figure 5.1).

Table 5.6 Quantities of drugs seized by State police, 1985-1989

Drug type	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Heroin	1.339 kgs	1.018 kgs	4.454 kgs	2.193 kgs	22.782 kgs
Homebake Morphine	na	na	na	na	na
Cannabis					
(plants)	33297	37704	63353	44843	40498
(leaf)	362.829 kgs	300.924 kgs	234.392 kgs	270.25 kgs	271.171 kgs
(resin)	188.498 kgs	3.648 kgs	3.964 kgs	0.664 kgs	2.565 kgs
Cocaine	0.65 gms	32.86 gms	4.37 gms	12.7 gms	104.47 gms
Amphetamines	43.0 gms	97.4 gms	267.0 gms	1220.1 gms	2713.31 gms
LSD	143 doses	513 doses	1518 doses	710 doses	169 doses
MDMA (Ecstasy)	na	na	na	4.6 gms	10 gms
				132 capsules	42 capsules
				698 tablets	1,825 tablets

Source: Western Australian Police Department, Annual Reports.

Note: na = not available.

⁹¹ There was also a peak over this period in positive confirmations in urine scans of clients participating in the WA methadone program of Swensen G, Ilett K, Dusci L, Hackett LP. "Patterns of drug use by participants in the WA methadone program, 1984-1991." (1993) 159 Medical Journal of Australia 373.

Table 5.7 Quantities of drugs seized by State police, 1990-1994

Drug type	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Heroin	1.17 kgs	0.255 kgs	0.488 kgs	1.265 kgs	0.385 kgs
Homebake Morphine	611 mls	1018 mls	954 mls	349 mls	-
Cannabis					
(plants)	36155	60675	53213	74656	38503
(leaf)	376.500 kgs	603.3 kgs	490.39 kgs	658.303 kgs	805.47 kgs
(resin)	0.804 kgs	0.067 kgs	0.647 kgs	0.671 kgs	0.358 kgs
Cocaine	14.22 gms	501.29 gms	98.5 gms	56 gms	82.25 gms
Amphetamines	3210.69 gms	5,020.38 gms	8943.21 gms	13615.16 gms	14720.39 gms
LSD	6069 doses	6,185 doses	1555 doses	6076 doses	4365 doses
MDMA (Ecstasy)	1.8 gms	2.2 gms	95 gms	-	-
	7 capsules	-	20 capsules	128 capsules	7 capsules
	13 tablets	261 tablets	187 tablets	103 tablets	141 tablets

Source: Western Australian Police Department, Annual Reports.

Figure 5.1 Seizures of amphetamines 1985 - 1994 (grams per year)

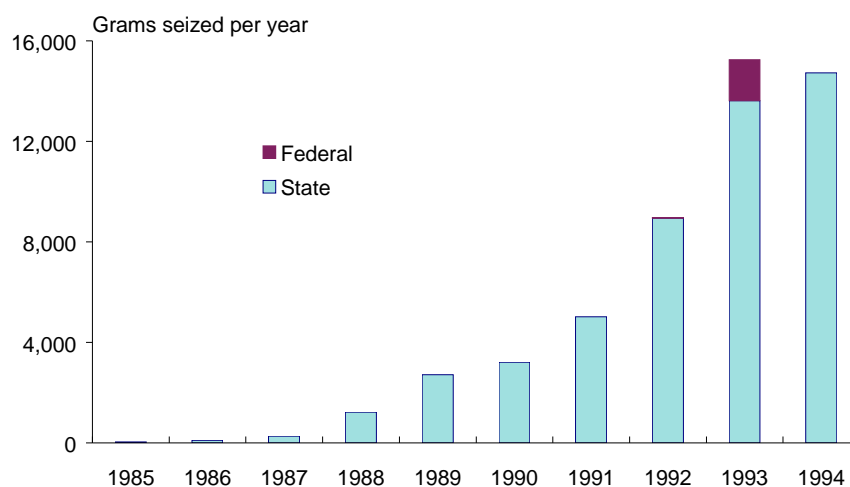


Table 5.8 Quantities of drugs seized by Federal police, 1992-1994

Drug type	1992	1993	1994
Heroin	6,360 gms	14,991 gms	12,312 gms
Cannabis			
(plants)	1,437 gms	4,562 gms	3,254,441 gms
(seed)	1,308 gms	1,865 gms	347 gms
(resin)	2,460 gms	3,006,986 gms	2,849 gms
Cocaine	133 gms	-	5 gms
Anabolic steroid	-	-	121 gms
Diazepam	-	25 gms	27 gms
Barbiturates	-	10 gms	20 gms
Amphetamines	27 gms	1,627 gms	2 gms
LSD	1 gms	4 gms	6 gms
MDMA (Ecstasy)	-	2 gms	-
Hash oil	7 gms	2 gms	-
Opium			
(seeds)	994 gms	399 gms	10 gms
(straw)	5,558 gms	15 gms	5 gms
Prescribed drug	78 gms	14 gms	-
Psilocybin	26 gms	-	-
No prohibited substance detected	3,825 gms	805 gms	3,643 gms

Source: Australian Federal Police.

The Task Force was not able to obtain information about changes in purity or street prices of illicit drugs based on offender reports to police at the time of arrest, except for the year 1993/94 (Table 5.9). As relative changes in purity and prices of illicit drugs are important indicators of supply, it has not been possible to examine the effect of police activity on the overall level of availability of drugs.

Table 5.9 Street prices of drugs, 1993/94

Type of drug	Street price (WA Feb 1995)
Amphetamines	\$70-\$100 per gram ⁹² \$25,000-30,000 per kg
Cannabis	leaf (foil) \$20-25 per gram leaf (1 lb) \$2,000-3,000 per lb
Cocaine	\$500-1,000 per gram
MDMA (ecstasy)	\$30-70 per tablet
LSD	\$20-25 per dose (tablet or square) \$8 per dose (bulk purchase)
Heroin	sachet \$100 (0.1 gm) gram \$500-1,000
Homebake morphine	\$100 per 1 ml syringe

Source: Western Australian Police.

5.1.3 CONVICTIONS BY SEX AND AGE

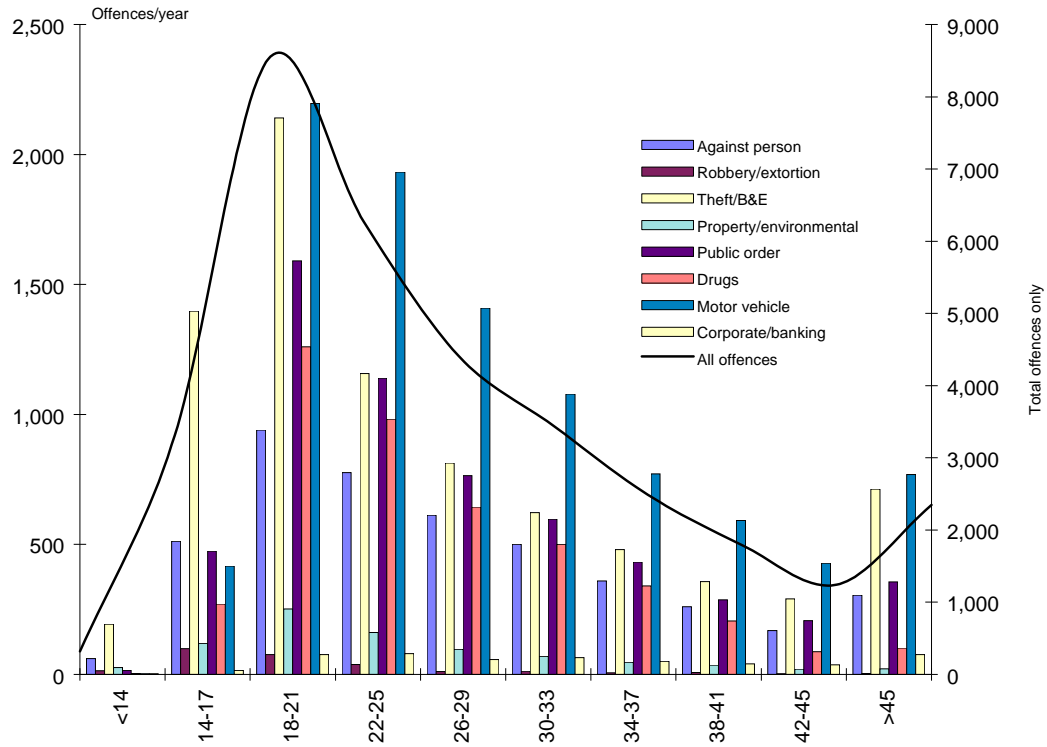
Western Australian crime data for 1993, published in the Crime Research Centre's most recent report, *Crime and justice statistics for Western Australia 1993*, indicates a consistent relationship between age and drug-related crime and all types of crime.⁹³ For all types of offending a sharp increase occurs throughout the late teens, with the greatest number of charges being laid in the 18-21 age group (Figure 5.2).

Age specific arrest data, to account for variations in age structure of the population, also substantiates that most of the crime involves males rather than females. For instance, in the 19-24 age group, the male age specific rate of arrest is about 5 times higher than the female rate of arrest (Figure 5.3).

⁹² Refers to street gram, which usually has net weight of 0.7 gm.

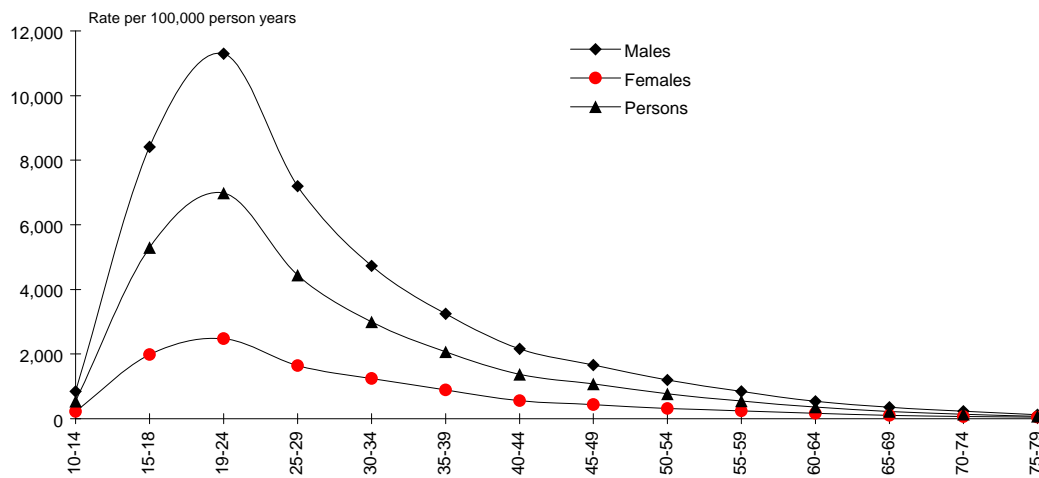
⁹³ Ferrante AM, Loh NSN, Broadhurst RG. *Crime and justice statistics for Western Australia 1993*. Perth, Crime Research Centre, University of WA, 1994.

Figure 5.2 Number of persons charged with offences by type of offence and age group, 1992/93



Adapted from Crime & Justice Statistics, WA, 1993

Figure 5.3 Age specific rates of arrest all offences, WA, 1993

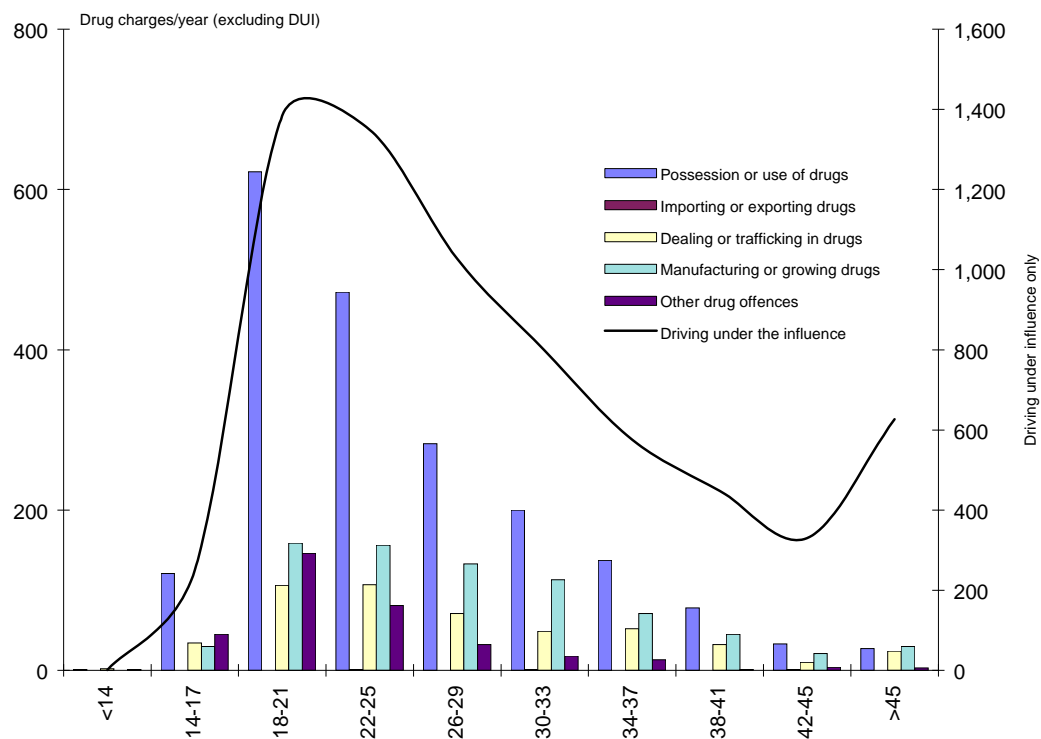


Adapted from Crime & Justice Statistics, WA, 1993

In relation to drug offences, the greatest number of charges for males in 1993 across all age groups involved the possession or use of drugs. This data suggests that charges concerned with dealing or trafficking, and manufacturing or growing drugs involved an older age group, whereas for the possession or use of drugs group the number of charges peaked in the 18-21 age group (Figure 5.4).

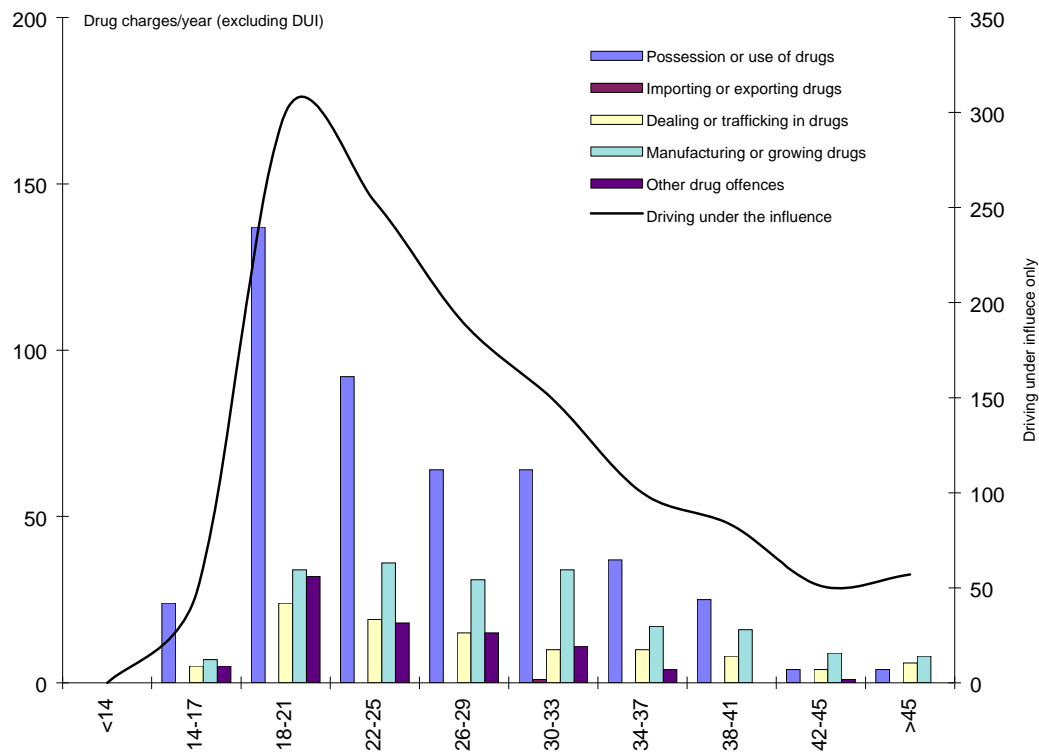
The greatest number of drug charges for females in 1993 across all age groups, like males, involved the possession or use of drugs. The peak in charges for possession or use of drugs, like males, also occurred in the 18-21 age group. Charges involving females for dealing or trafficking, and for manufacturing or growing drugs involved a slightly older age group, compared to the possession or use offence group, with a peak in the 22-25 age group (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.4 Number of males charged with drug offences by age group, 1992/93



Adapted from Crime & Justice Statistics, WA, 1993

Figure 5.5 Number of females charged with drug offences by age group, 1992/93



Adapted from Crime & Justice Statistics, WA, 1993

5.1.4 CONVICTIONS BY TYPE OF DRUG AND AGE

5.1.4.1 Cannabis (minor charges)

Based on conviction data for 1992/93, there is a pattern of young adults being convicted for cannabis-related offences, especially the less serious range of offence concerned with possession or use. About 55% of all convictions which involved people aged 24 years or younger were related to possession and/or use (Table 5.10).

5.1.4.2 Cannabis (serious charges)

With respect to the more serious types of cannabis offences, concerned with dealing and trafficking (Table 5.11) and manufacturing and/or growing (Table 5.12), the peak in convictions occurred in the 20-24 age group.

5.1.4.3 1.4.3 Other drugs

There is a greater proportion of convictions for other drugs in the under 20 age group in relation to both possession and more serious offences concerned with trafficking and dealing. It is likely that the growth in amphetamine charges partly explains why about two-thirds of all convictions concerned with the possession and/or use of other drugs (Table 5.13), and about 60% of convictions for dealing and/or trafficking (Table 5.14) involve the 24 years and under age group in the year 1993/94.

Table 5.10 Convictions for possession and/or use of cannabis by region and age group, 1992/93

Statistical Division	Under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Not stated	Total	%
Perth	550	882	500	360	212	120	16	3	-	2,643	58.6
South West	123	144	79	48	32	12	1	-	-	439	9.7
Lower Great Southern	50	78	44	17	15	7	-	-	-	211	4.7
Upper Great Southern	12	8	4	4	2	6	-	-	-	36	0.8
Midlands	44	80	31	29	21	10	-	-	-	215	4.8
South Eastern	49	140	93	67	22	13	-	-	-	384	8.5
Central	44	94	62	42	19	9	-	-	-	270	6.0
Pilbara	43	74	56	22	18	12	2	-	-	227	5.0
Kimberley	17	26	20	12	4	5	-	-	-	84	1.9
Total	932	1,526	889	601	345	194	19	3	-	4,509	100.0
%	20.7	33.8	19.7	13.3	7.7	4.3	0.4	0.1	-	100.0	

Source: Summary of Criminal Court Proceedings, Western Australia, 1992-93, Cat. No. 4504.5, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Table 5.11 Convictions for dealing and trafficking in cannabis by region and age group, 1992/93

Statistical Division	Under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Not stated	Total	%
Perth	35	104	77	69	37	35	5	1	-	363	68.5
South West	5	18	11	10	2	1	-	-	-	47	8.9
Lower Great Southern	3	4	1	2	3	-	2	-	-	15	2.8
Upper Great Southern	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.2
Midlands	-	1	2	3	-	1	-	-	-	7	1.3
South Eastern	2	9	6	2	1	3	-	-	-	23	4.3
Central	3	14	6	6	8	5	-	-	-	42	7.9
Pilbara	5	4	3	5	-	-	-	-	-	17	3.2
Kimberley	-	9	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	15	2.8
Total	54	163	108	99	52	46	7	1	-	530	100.0
%	10.2	30.8	20.4	18.7	9.8	8.7	1.3	0.2	-	100.0	

Source: Summary of Criminal Court Proceedings, Western Australia, 1992-93, Cat. No. 4504.5, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Table 5.12 Convictions for manufacturing/growing cannabis by region and age group, 1992/93

Statistical Division	Under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Not stated	Total	%
Perth	110	261	227	178	93	89	21	5	-	984	69.7
South West	26	47	36	20	13	9	1	-	-	152	10.8
Lower Great Southern	10	20	10	2	3	2	1	-	-	48	3.4
Upper Great Southern	2	3	6	3	1	1	-	-	-	16	1.1
Midlands	5	10	8	10	7	8	1	-	-	49	3.5
South Eastern	5	12	12	11	5	1	-	1	-	47	3.3
Central	11	13	15	8	5	4	2	-	-	58	4.1
Pilbara	6	12	6	5	2	1	1	-	-	33	2.3
Kimberley	1	1	5	9	3	4	1	-	-	24	1.7
Total	176	379	325	246	132	119	28	6	-	1,411	100.0
%	12.5	26.9	23.0	17.4	9.4	8.4	2.0	0.4	-	100.0	

Source: Summary of Criminal Court Proceedings, Western Australia, 1992-93, Cat. No. 4504.5, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Table 5.13 Convictions for possession and/or use of other drugs by region and age group, 1992/93

Statistical Division	Under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Not stated	Total	%
Perth	395	277	164	99	53	57	4	-	2	1,051	68.0
South West	48	32	7	7	3	4	-	-	1	102	6.6
Lower Great Southern	9	11	7	2	-	1	-	-	-	30	1.9
Upper Great Southern	4	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	7	0.5
Midlands	7	12	7	6	3	2	1	-	-	38	2.5
South Eastern	34	33	13	10	5	1	-	-	-	96	6.2
Central	74	93	13	8	2	1	-	-	-	191	12.4
Pilbara	5	6	4	4	5	-	1	-	-	25	1.6
Kimberley	1	1	1	-	2	1	-	-	-	6	0.4
Total	577	467	216	136	74	67	6	-	3	1,546	100.0
%	37.3	30.2	14.0	8.8	4.8	4.3	0.4	-	0.2	100.0	

Source: Summary of Criminal Court Proceedings, Western Australia, 1992-93, Cat. No. 4504.5, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Table 5.14 Convictions for dealing and trafficking in other drugs by region and age group, 1992/93

Statistical Division	Under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Not stated	Total	%
Perth	58	82	36	29	16	17	7	-	-	245	81.7
South West	7	3	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	14	4.7
Lower Great Southern	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.3
Upper Great Southern	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Midlands	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Eastern	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	6	2.0
Central	10	7	-	2	-	3	-	-	-	22	7.3
Pilbara	-	4	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	8	2.7
Kimberley	-	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	1.3
Total	77	101	40	36	17	21	7	-	1	300	100.0
%	25.7	33.7	13.3	12.0	5.7	7.0	2.3	-	0.3	100.0	

Source: Summary of Criminal Court Proceedings, Western Australia, 1992-93, Cat. No. 4504.5, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

5.1.5 CONVICTIONS BY TYPE OF DRUG AND REGION

A comparison between regions of the State by the proportion of convictions for the major types of drug offences may be a proxy measure of regional patterns of prevalence. However, it should be noted that this approach does not take account of the age-related population structure in each region, for as pointed out earlier, drug-related crime largely involves younger males. For instance, this would mean that regions with greater proportions of young males will have higher rates of convictions compared to regions which have populations with a relatively older age structure.

The analysis of drug convictions by a regional basis in Table 5.15 indicates, contrary to expectation that generally the Perth metropolitan region is under represented in relation to almost all types of drug offences, with the exception of dealing or trafficking in other drugs.

A number of regions were identified which were over represented as a proportion of all convictions, compared to their proportion of the State population.

Use or possession of cannabis

- Lower Great Southern;
- Midlands;
- South Eastern;
- Central; and
- Pilbara.

Dealing or trafficking in cannabis

- South Eastern;
- Central; and
- Kimberley.

Manufacturing or growing of cannabis

- South West; and
- Central.

Use or possession of other drugs

- South Eastern; and
- Central.

Dealing or trafficking in other drugs

- Perth; and
- Central.

Table 5.15 Drug convictions (%) by type of offence by region, 1992/93

Statistical Division	Population 1992		Cannabis			Other drugs	
	N	%	Use or possession	Deal or trafficking	Manufacture or grow	Use or possession	Deal or trafficking
Perth	1,205,268	72.7	58.6	68.5	69.7	68.0	81.7
South West	148,416	9.0	9.7	8.9	10.8	6.6	4.7
Lower Great Southern	49,344	3.0	4.7	2.8	3.4	1.9	0.3
Upper Great Southern	22,158	1.3	0.8	0.2	1.1	0.5	-
Midlands	50,745	3.1	4.8	1.3	3.5	2.5	-
South Eastern	51,509	3.1	8.5	4.3	3.3	6.2	2.0
Central	59,667	3.6	6.0	7.9	4.1	12.4	7.3
Pilbara	46,343	2.8	5.0	3.2	2.3	1.6	2.7
Kimberley	23,631	1.4	1.9	2.8	1.7	0.4	1.3
Total	1,657,081	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

5.1.6 OFFENCES BY COURT OF CONVICTION

5.1.6.1 Children's Court

Over the period 1985 to 1993 the proportion of drug convictions of all Children's Court convictions has declined in this State, from 4.9% in 1985 to 3.8% in 1993.

About three quarters of drug offences involved 16 and 17 year olds over the period 1985 to 1989, however in 1993 this age group accounted for about two thirds of convictions deal with by the Children's Court (Table 5.16).

In the 1985 to 1989 period nearly 15% of convictions involved the 15 years and under age group; in 1993 nearly one quarter of convictions involved the youngest age group.

Table 5.16 Number of convictions by age group children's courts, 1985-93

Age group	1985		1987		1989		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Under 15	34	4.8	32	4.1	34	4.6	€
15 years	66	9.2	86	11.1	72	9.7	1€
16 years	211	29.6	212	27.4	205	27.6	2€
17 years	326	45.6	361	46.7	350	47.2	3€
18 years	29	4.1	42	4.7	35	4.7	€
Over 18	1	0.1	2	0.3	9	1.2	
Not known	47	6.6	38	4.9	37	5.0	
Total drug convictions	714	100.0	773	100.0	742	100.0	97
Total all convictions	14,429		17,025		16,916		25,7€
% Drug/all convictions	4.9%		4.5%		4.4%		3.8

Source: Court Statistics Children's Courts, Western Australia, Cat. No. 4503.5. Australian Bureau of Statistics (biennial series).

Note: Persons over 18 are cases who were under 18 years when charged and 18 years and over at date of finalisation. Data for 1991 not available.

5.1.6.2 Courts of Petty Sessions

As the Courts of Petty Sessions (CPS) deal with less serious criminal offences committed by adults, the majority of offences handled there are concerned with cannabis possession and/or use, as well as offending at the lower end of the scale of seriousness in relation to drug offences such as manufacturing, dealing, or trafficking (Table 5.17).

Over the period 1985 to 1989 the percentage of drug offences of all offences dealt with by the CPS remained constant, at around 4% per year. However, in 1993 the proportion of drug offences dealt with the CPS had increased to 13%.

Table 5.17 Number of convictions by ANCO drug offences courts of petty sessions, 1985-93

Code	ANCO drug offences Description	Total convictions			
		1985	1987	1989	1993
***	Possess/use of narcotics	33	103	-	-
613	Possess and/or use opium and its derivatives	-	-	58	66
614	Possess and/or use cocaine	-	-	2	3
615	Possess and/or use other narcotics specified	-	-	3	-
616	Possess and/or use narcotics unspecified	-	-	-	-
617	Possess and/or use cannabis, all forms	1,694	3,606	3,432	4,344
618	Possess and/or use other drugs specified	-	-	48	1,200
619	Possess and/or use drugs, unspecified	91	171	220	-
643	Import/export opium and its derivatives	-	-	3	-
645	Import/export other narcotics	-	-	-	1
646	Import/export narcotics unspecified	-	-	-	-
647	Import/export cannabis all forms	-	-	-	1
648	Import/export other drugs	-	-	-	7
649	Import/export drugs unspecified	-	-	11	-
653	Deal and traffic in opium and its derivatives	-	-	6	-
654	Deal and traffic in cocaine and its derivatives	-	-	1	-
655	Deal and traffic in other narcotics, specified	-	-	-	-
657	Deal and traffic in cannabis, all forms	-	-	149	372
***	Dealing and trafficking in drugs	91	214	-	-
658	Deal and traffic in other drugs, specified	-	-	8	97
659	Deal and traffic in drugs unspecified	-	-	39	-
663	Manufacture/grow opium and its derivatives	-	-	3	1
***	Manufacturing/growing drugs	306	801	-	-
667	Manufacture/grow cannabis, all forms	-	-	849	1,322
668	Manufacture/grow other drugs	-	-	-	73
669	Manufacture/grow drugs, unspecified	-	1	52	-
699	Other drug offences	909	2,055	2,034	2,556
Total drug offences		3,124	6,950	6,915	10,043
Total all offences		78,317	157,404	158,685	76,549
% Drug/all offences		4.0%	4.4%	4.4%	13.1%

Source: Court Statistics Courts of Petty Sessions, Western Australia, Cat. No. 4502.5. Australian Bureau of Statistics (biennial series).

Note: ** Draft ANCO code used in 1984-85 and 1986-87, not compatible with ANCO code. Data for 1991 not available.

5.1.6.3 Higher courts

The role of the higher criminal courts in dealing with the serious end of the scale of drug offences is reflected in the greater proportion of convictions for dealing and trafficking (Table 5.18).

Table 5.18 Number of convictions by ANCO drug offences higher criminal courts, 1985-93

Code	ANCO drug offences Description	Total convictions				
		1986	1987	1988	1989	1993
***	Possess/use of narcotics	4	7	-	-	-
613	Possess and/or use opium and its derivatives	-	-	-	3	-
617	Possess and/or use cannabis, all forms	7	3	2	5	4
618	Possess and/or use other drugs	-	-	-	-	3
619	Possess and/or use drugs, unspecified	-	-	1	2	-
643	Import/export opium and its derivatives	-	-	10	4	19
647	Import/export cannabis all forms	-	-	4	2	-
653	Deal and traffic in opium and its derivatives	-	-	99	58	38
654	Deal and traffic in cocaine and its derivatives	-	-	-	1	8
655	Deal and traffic in other narcotics, specified	-	-	12	13	8
657	Deal and traffic in cannabis, all forms	-	-	84	78	145
***	Dealing and trafficking in drugs	182	191	-	-	-
658	Deal and traffic in other drugs, specified	-	-	7	37	146
659	Deal and traffic in drugs unspecified	-	-	-	1	-
663	Manufacture/grow opium and its derivatives	-	-	-	3	17
***	Manufacturing/growing drugs	19	30	-	-	-
667	Manufacture/grow cannabis, all forms	-	-	5	34	65
668	Manufacture/grow other drugs	-	-	-	-	3
699	Other drug offences	-	1	-	1	-
Total drug offences		212	232	224	246	456
Total all offences		4,142	3,912	5,239	3,562	5,205
% Drug/all offences		5.1%	5.9%	4.3%	6.9%	8.8%

Source: Court Statistics Higher Criminal Courts, Western Australia, Cat. No. 4501.5. Australian Bureau of Statistics.
Note: ** Draft ANCO code used in 1985-86 and 1986-87, not compatible with ANCO code.
 Data for 1990-1992 not available.

5.1.7 IMPRISONMENT OF DRUG OFFENDERS

Imprisoned drug offenders are those who have either been convicted of the most serious offences, or are repeat offenders. It should be noted that the proportion of drug-related offenders in the prison population is under-represented in the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) National Prison Census data, as drug abusers may be jailed for property crime, for armed robbery, or other types of offences, such as forging and uttering prescriptions, which are not recorded as a drug offence, but according to the definition of being the most serious offence.

Over the period 1982-1984 male drug offenders made up 6% of the total male prison population. Since 1985 male drug offenders have constituted about 9% of the total prison population (Table 5.19).

In the female prison population drug offenders have tended to constitute between 10 to 12% of the total female prison population, except in 1986 and 1989, when they made up about one-fifth of the female prison population (Table 5.19).