

## 4.3 CRC analysis<sup>92</sup>

### 4.3.1 Introduction and background

The following information is extracted from data bases available to the CRC. There are essentially two forms of data available. The first concerns offences recorded by the police while the second relates to charges laid by the police. In this particular area of criminal proceedings, there is a very close correspondence between the *offence data base* (ODB) and the *charges data base* (CDB). This is because in almost all cases where an offence is discovered by the police, a charge is laid. For this reason the information derived from one data base is also revealed by the other.

For various administrative and operational reasons, there are slightly different types and amounts of information collected in the two data bases. Most importantly the CDB extends from 1990 to 1996 (inclusive), while there are only two years (1994 and 1995) available on the ODB. For this

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*use and crime. An examination of drug users and associated persons and their influence on crime patterns in Australia.* Canberra, Australian Institute of Criminology, 1978.

<sup>90</sup> Moore cited in Wardlaw G. *Drug use and crime. An examination of drug users and associated persons and their influence on crime patterns in Australia.* Canberra, Australian Institute of Criminology, 1978, 76.

<sup>91</sup> Bernard G. "An economic analysis of the illicit drug market." (1983) 18 *International Journal of Addictions* 681-700.

<sup>92</sup> The text of the summary report provided by the Crime Research Centre has been reproduced in this section, with minor modification.

reason, the CDB is used in this analysis. In regard to the type of drug offence or drug charge, there are essentially two types concerning:

- use and possession; and
- manufacture, importation and selling.

All offences are classified by the CRC according to the Australian National Classification of Offences (ANCO). In this analysis two major types of offence groups have been combined into a single “use” category.<sup>93</sup> The offences in this category are:

- possess/use drugs (ANCO 613-619); and
- possess smoking implement (main offence in ANCO 699).

The offences that comprise the “traffic” category are slightly more diverse, They include:

- sell/supply drugs;
- cultivate drugs;
- manufacture drugs; and
- importation.

The other major drug related variable is the *type* of drug which will be drawn out throughout the analysis. The analysis of drug type is only available in relation to drug charges not drug offences. In regard to drug type, a considerable proportion (22% in 1996) of possession charges have no information about the type of drug. This “unknown” category will be excluded from analyses involving drug type, so that where statistics involving drug type are presented it can be assumed that that “drug type” means “drug type where known”.<sup>94</sup> The general principle followed is to present data from the most recent year unless the distribution of the variable being considered has changed significantly over the years.

Most of the present summary of WA police drug statistics will concern a descriptive analysis of the offences and charges and descriptions of offenders using the ODB and the CDB. In section four, we will also touch briefly on what can be learned from the *arrest data base* (ARD), a separate data base formed on the basis of police apprehensions concerning the recidivism of drug offenders. This will supplement some statistics obtained from the “charge” data base concerning the prior records of drug offenders, to gain a brief (and first) glimpse of the extent and nature of the criminal records of drug offenders in Western Australia.

Other works produced by staff at the Crime Research Centre, such as the work on the Court Diversion Service,<sup>95</sup> drug use patterns of prisoners<sup>96</sup> and the work on minor cannabis offenders,<sup>97</sup> are the subject of separate publications.

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<sup>93</sup> In the ANCO system there are two categories that essentially pertain to the use of drugs. The first of these is titled “Possession and use” (ANCO 613-619). The other relevant category is headed “Other” (ANCO 699) but almost all of these offences concern possession of an implement for the use of a drug or being on the premises where drugs are being consumed so that they fit much more within the “using” category than the “supply” category.

<sup>94</sup> The ANCO classification system classifies prohibited drug types into three major categories: “cannabis” (ANCO 617); “heroin” (ANCO 613) and “stimulants”(mainly ANCO 618). The last category, “stimulants”, is loosely labelled as the ANCO category (618) which combines amphetamines, LSD and MDMA (ecstasy). This category is labelled “stimulants” because it mainly comprises drugs such as amphetamines and ecstasy, although LSD is probably misplaced. Although ANCO allows categorisation of cocaine (ANCO 614) and narcotics (ANCO 616), the numbers involved are quite low in WA and to include them in all presentations would distract from the major features of the data which involve the three categories described above. Those interested in some of these trends may wish to refer to the number of reports prepared by the National Centre for Research into the Prevention of Drug Abuse.

<sup>95</sup> Rigg J, Indermaur D. “Issues in drug diversion: a review of the Court Diversion Service in Western Australia”. (1996) 29 *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology* 247-264.

<sup>96</sup> Indermaur D, Upton K. “Alcohol and drug use patterns of prisoners in Perth”. (1988) 21 *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology* 144-167.

### 4.3.2 Offences committed

Figures on the number of drug offences committed (and reported to police) in WA are available for 1994 and 1995. Information on earlier years is not available, as the police did not record these offences in the Offence Information System (OIS) prior to 1994. Table 4.1 provides an overview of types of drug offences by year.

**Table 4.1: Overview of types of drug offences by year, 1994 - 1995**

Type of drug offence	1994		1995		% change from 1994 to 1995
	n	rate	n	rate	
Possess/use drugs	7,936	466.3	8,032	463.8	-0.5
Sell/supply drugs	527	31.0	523	30.2	-2.5
Make/grow	1,666	97.9	1,622	93.7	-4.3
Drug offence - unspecified	694	40.8	545	31.5	-22.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,823</b>	<b>635.9</b>	<b>10,724</b>	<b>619.2</b>	<b>-2.6</b>

Note: Rates are per 100,000 estimated resident population.

As previously mentioned, details about the type and quantity of drug involved in these offences are not available.

Table 4.2 provides details of drug offence type by sex of the offender (where recorded by the police). The figures for the most recent year available (1995) are presented, as this does not appear to differ from the figures of the previous year.

**Table 4.2: Drug offence type by sex of the offender, 1995**

Type of drug offence	Male (%)
Possess/use	85.0
Sell/supply	79.9
Make/grow	84.9
Other	77.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>84.5</b>

Table 4.3 provides details of the age of the offender for each offence<sup>98</sup> (where recorded by the police).

**Table 4.3: Proportion of drug offenders in each age group by type of offence, 1995**

Type of drug offence	Age in years					Total
	<18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45+	
Possess/use	24.5	41.4	23.5	8.9	1.7	100.0
Sell/supply	14.0	32.7	32.0	15.5	5.8	100.0
Make/grow	8.6	31.8	34.0	19.4	6.1	100.0
Other	24.2	35.6	28.4	9.9	1.9	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>39.7</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: Figures are percentages of total for each type of drug offence

<sup>97</sup> Lenton S, Ferrante A, Loh N. "Dope busts in the West: minor cannabis offences in the Western Australian criminal justice system". (1996) 15 *Drug & Alcohol Review* 335-341.

<sup>98</sup> Because the same offender can commit more than one offence it is possible that one individual will be counted more than once. In 1996 there were 10,175 drug charges in Western Australia and 6,369 "distinct persons" (separate individuals) charged, producing an average number of charges per person of 1.60. This ratio has not changed substantially over the past few years and reflects the degree to which offenders are involved in multiple offences.

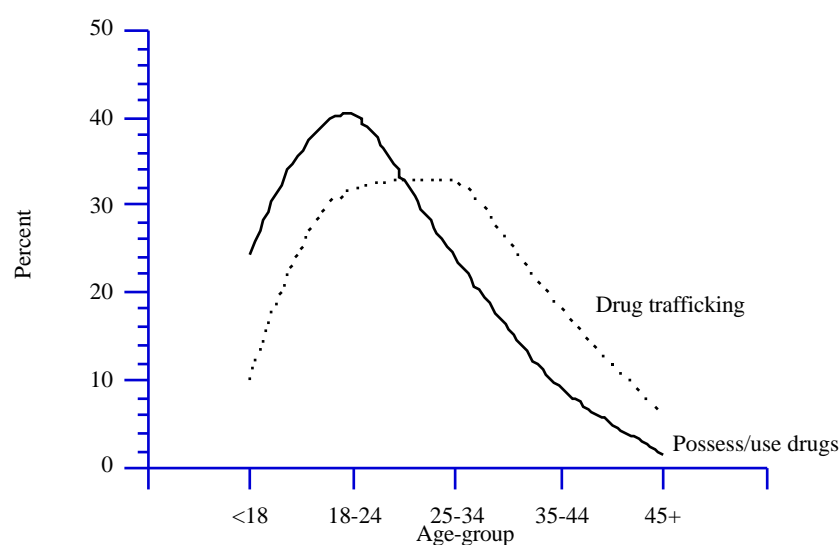
Figure 4.1 displays the information contained in Table 4.3 graphically to display two essential features of the table, namely the peak in the young adult age group for use type offences and the slightly less pronounced and later peak in the trafficking offences. Perhaps given the qualitatively distinct nature of the offences, it is the similarities, rather than the differences, that are more striking (see also Section 3.2).

Table 4.4 provides details of the Aboriginality of the offender (where recorded by the police).

**Table 4.4: Proportion of drug offenders who are Aboriginal by drug offence, 1995**

Type of drug offence	Aboriginal (%)
Possess/use	7.9
Sell/supply	9.4
Make/grow	3.5
Other	6.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.4</b>

**Figure 4.1: Proportion of drug offenders in each age group by type of drug offence, 1995**



The offence data base contains detail of the specific location or premises where the offence occurred (these are shown in Table 4.5). As can be seen from the table, dwellings are the most common site for drug offences.

**Table 4.5: Proportion of drug offences occurring in different premises by offence type, 1995**

Type of drug offence	Dwelling	Shop	Non residential	Other	Total
Possess/use	51.1	3.4	11.6	33.8	100.0
Sell/supply	60.8	2.5	14.7	22.0	100.0
Make/grow	83.0	0.0	0.5	16.4	100.0
Other	43.1	16.5	12.5	27.9	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>56.0</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>30.3</b>	<b>100.0</b>

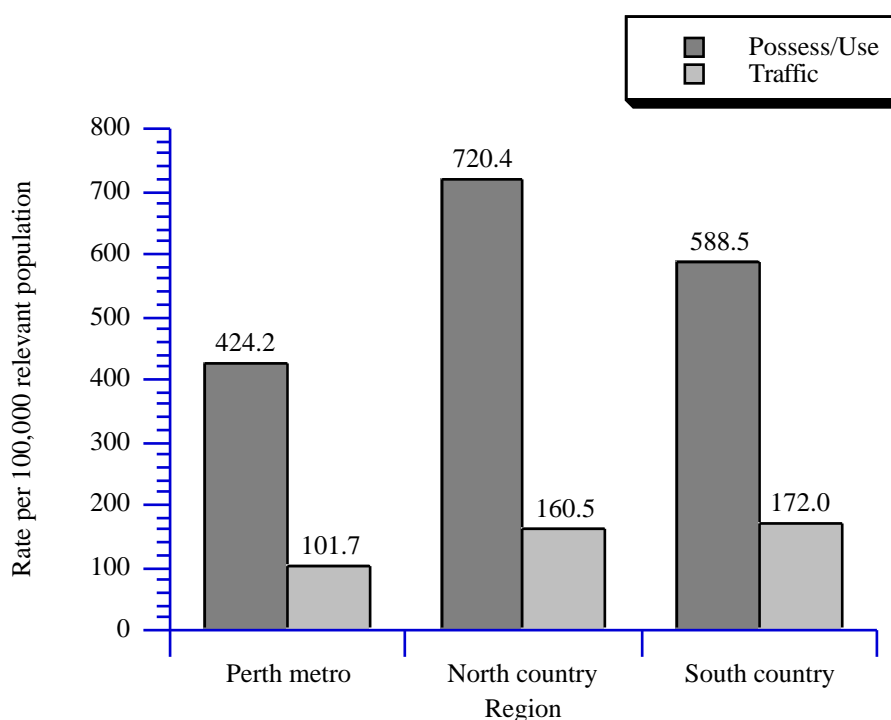
Note: Figures are percentages of row totals

Table 4.6 gives indications of the different types of drug offence across general locations (regions) in Western Australia. The most striking feature of this table concern the rates (per 100,000 residents) which show (perhaps surprisingly) that overall it is the “North country” areas comprising the Pilbara, Central, Midlands and the Kimberley that overall has the highest rates of drug offending. However, “South country” comprising the remaining non metropolitan areas of the State (South West, Great Southern) is not significantly lower and together the country areas display much higher rates than observed in the metropolitan area.

**Table 4.6: Proportion of drug offences occurring in the Perth metropolitan area & other regions by offence type, 1995**

Type of drug offence	Perth metro	North country	South country	Total
<b>Number</b>				
Possess/use	5,279	1,396	1,677	8,352
Traffic	1,265	311	490	2,066
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,544</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>2,167</b>	<b>10,418</b>
<b>Rate per 100,000 residents</b>				
Possess/use	424.2	720.4	588.5	483.9
Traffic	101.7	160.5	172.0	119.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>525.9</b>	<b>880.8</b>	<b>760.5</b>	<b>603.6</b>

**Figure 4.2: Rate of drug offences in the Perth metropolitan & other regions, 1995**



To summarise, the general trend of the findings from the offence data base is that drug offences (that are known to and recorded by the police) are disproportionately committed by male persons from 18 to 30 years of age in country areas of the state. This picture is confirmed and extended by the analysis in the following section, which is based on drug charges.

### 4.3.3 Charges

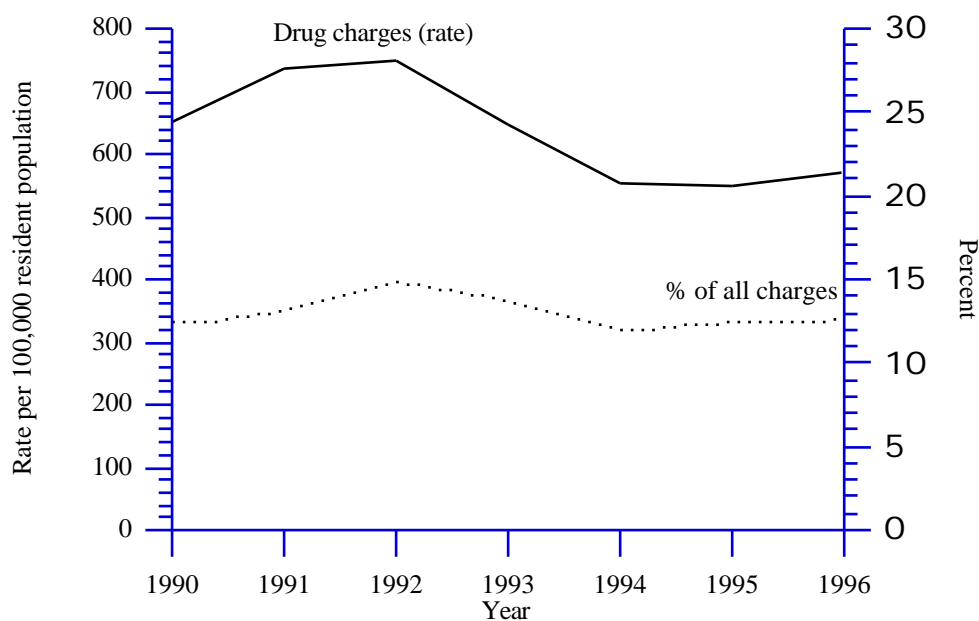
#### 4.3.3.1 Drug charges

The data base of statistics related to drug abuse charges is available for the period 1990-1996. Figure 4.3 shows the trend in the rate of drug charges for the State over these years. As a proportion of all charges, drug offences comprised 12.7% in 1996. This proportion has not varied significantly since 1990. The proportion reached 14.8% in 1992 and in 1994 was the lowest (at 12.0%).

Taken together, these trends suggest that the peak in 1992 in the rates of drug charges is explained partly by a slight escalation in the rate of drug charges over and above the generally higher rate in recorded charges for all criminal offences in 1992<sup>99</sup>.

As shown in Figure 4.4, possession/use type offences have made up about 80% of all charges since 1990 with little variation from year to year and the 1992 peak is observed for both possession and trafficking charges.

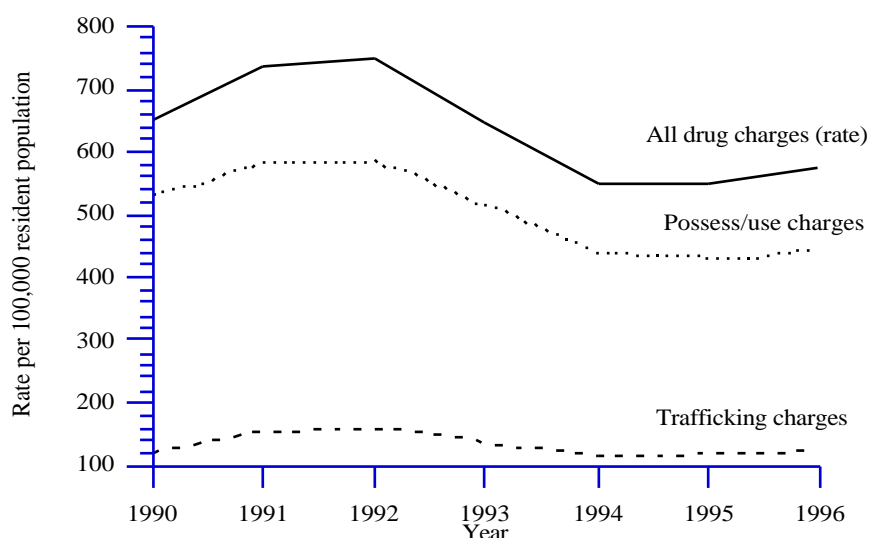
**Figure 4.3: Trends in drug charges, as rates<sup>100</sup> & as percentages of all charges laid, 1990 - 1996**



<sup>99</sup> For a general discussion of the peak in offending in 1992, see Ferrante and Loh (1996).

<sup>100</sup> Rate per 100,000 population.

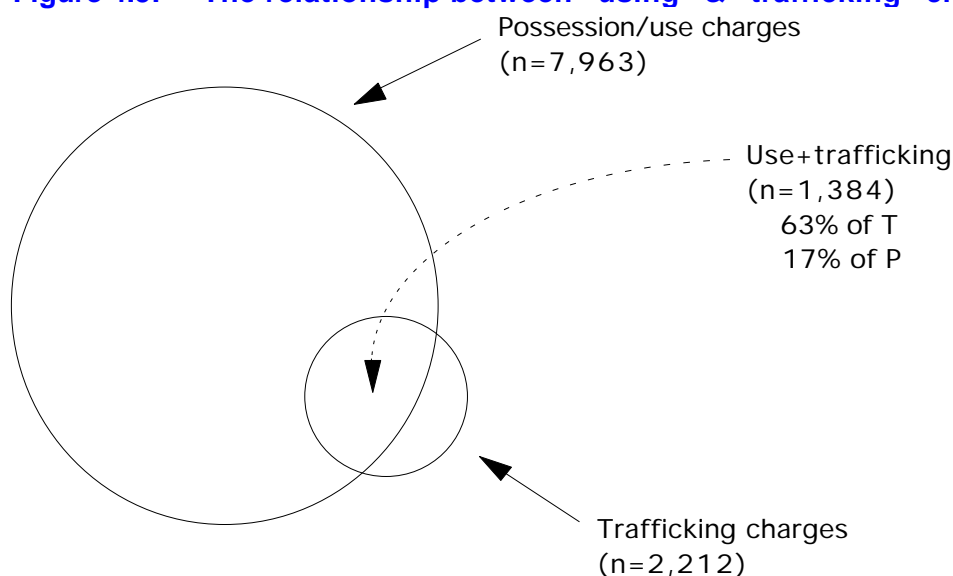
Figure 4.4: Trends in drug charges by broad offence category, 1990 - 1996



#### 4.3.3.2 The relationship between drug users and drug traffickers

Our examination of 1996 drug charges revealed that of the 2,212 trafficking charges and 7,963 possession/use charges, there were 1,384 instances in which trafficking charges were laid against an individual *at the same time as* other possession/use charges (Figure 4.5). In other words, of the trafficking charges in 1996, 62.6% (more than three in every five) were laid in conjunction with possession/use offences against the same offender.

Figure 4.5: The relationship between “using” & “trafficking” charges, 1996



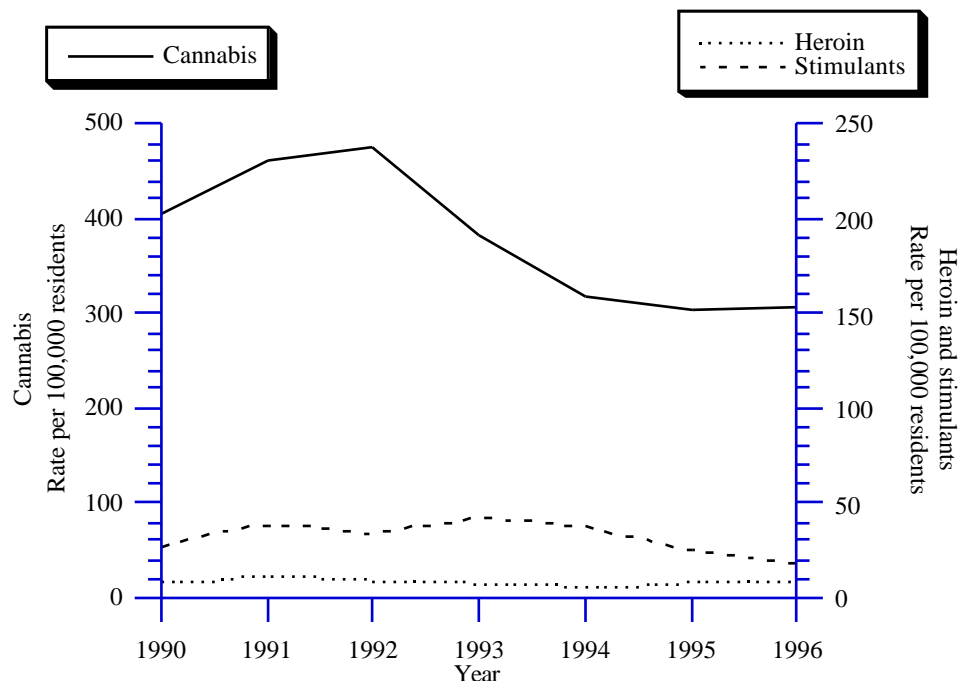
While the figures indicate that many traffickers are also classified as “users”, few “users” were charged with trafficking at the same time (17.4%).

#### 4.3.3.3 Drug type

Figure 4.6 shows the trend in drug charges by drug type (where known). Amongst other things, this graph suggests that the 1992 peak in the rate of drug charges was almost entirely accounted for by the elevated rate of cannabis charges, which reached its zenith in that year. In 1992,

cannabis related charges accounted for 91.9% of all charges accounted for by the three major categories of drug type. This proportion was almost reached again in 1996, when cannabis accounted for 91.5% of all charges where drug type was specified.

Figure 4.6: Trend in drug charges by drug type, 1990 - 1996



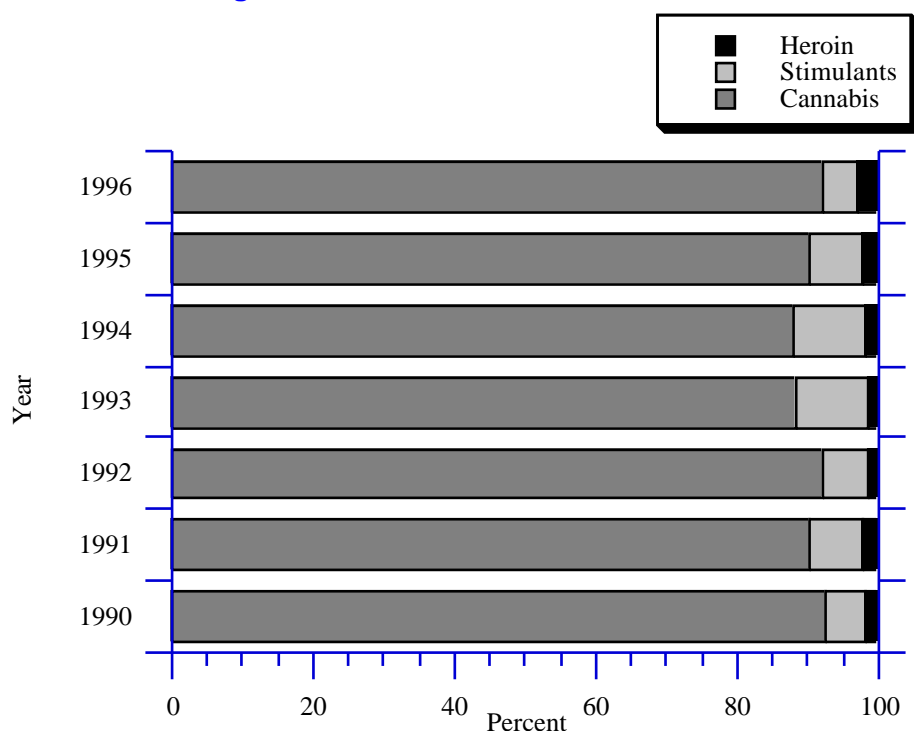
There has not been much of a change in the proportion of drug charges accounted for by the various drug types over the seven years (1990 through 1996) for which data are available (Figure 4.7). Cannabis has not varied by more than about 3% from its average of 90% of all possession and trafficking charges. Heroin has crept up from accounting for 1.3% of all possession type charges in 1990 to make up 2.9% of all such charges in 1996, although the proportion of trafficking charges involving heroin seems to have fallen slightly over the same period.

The proportion of “use” type offences involving stimulants (a rough group, as noted earlier, comprising LSD, amphetamines and ecstasy) seems to have peaked at 10.3% in 1994 and fell to the lowest point in the series (4.6%) in 1996. Roughly the same pattern is observed in the proportion of trafficking offences accounted for by this drug group.

In terms of the distribution of drug charges, an analysis of the type of charge for all years combined shows that approximately eight in ten charges relate to the possession or use of drugs rather than trafficking. In terms of trafficking, about 10% of charges relate to importation and about the same proportion to the production (manufacture or growing) of drugs. The remaining 80% of trafficking charges relate to sell and supply offences.



Figure 4.7: Relative proportion of drug charges accounted for by 3 major types of drug, 1990 - 1996



#### 4.3.3.4 Gender and drug offenders

The first and probably most important demographic descriptor of offenders concerns gender. Where gender has been recorded by the police (almost all cases), males comprise the vast majority of offenders. Table 4.7 gives the proportion for 1996.

The percentages for three years (1990, 1993 and 1996) are illustrated in Figures 4.14 to 4.18, which summarise some of the vital statistics concerning drug offenders. As can be seen from these figures, there has not been much change in the proportion of drug offences accounted for by males. Consistently, about 85% of both “user” and “traffic” offenders are male.

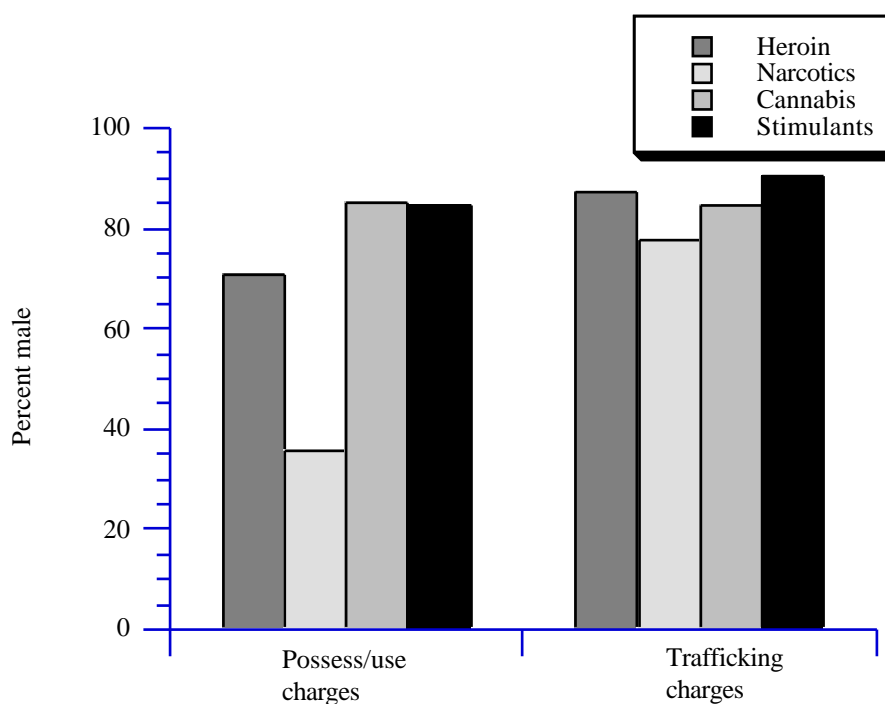
Figure 4.8, however, shows the percentage of offenders related to various drug charges (by type of drug), which does show some interesting variation. In summary, overall males make up the vast majority (about 85%) of both users and traffickers. However, females are not quite as under represented in regard to heroin and narcotic use.<sup>101</sup>

Table 4.7: Proportion of drug charges accounted for by males, 1996

Type of drug offence	Male (%)
Possess/use	84.3
Traffic	85.2

<sup>101</sup> However, it needs to be noted that the number of narcotics charges in 1996 (31) is quite low and this makes any conclusions regarding narcotics offenders more tentative than those in relation to other categories where a much larger number of offenders is involved.

Figure 4.8: Gender of drug offender by type of offence & type of drug, 1996



#### 4.3.3.5 Age and drug charges

The second most important demographic variable concerns age. The age group 18 to 24 years accounts for 12.4% of the (arrestable) population but approximately two-fifths (43.4%) of all drug charges. The 25 to 34 year old age group accounts for another third of all charges.

Perhaps because of the introduction of cautioning in August 1991, the percentage of drug charges accounted for by juveniles (persons under the age of 18) has fallen since 1991. Supporting this hypothesis is the observation that the drop is more apparent with the possession/use charges where the percentage fell from 13.6% in 1991 to 8.4% in 1996. In the trafficking offences, the percentage accounted for by juveniles fell from 8.2% in 1991 to 5.6% in 1996 (Figure 4.9). However, whether these falls can be completely accounted for by the introduction of police cautioning can only be confirmed by a more thorough analysis of the cases.<sup>102</sup>

Perhaps countering the suggestion that the fall in the juvenile figures is due to cautioning, a similar fall is observable with the biggest single category of drug offenders - young adults (18 to 25 years of age) for whom cautioning is not applicable. In regard to this group, the percentages fell from 56% to 52% (users) and 43% to 35% (traffickers). It is possible that both users and traffickers of drugs are becoming older.

In terms of type of drug charge, the age distribution for trafficking charges is slightly older than the possession use type charges (Figure 4.10, Table 4.8), the median age of “users” is 24 years compared to 28 years for “traffickers”. Overall, adults make up over 90% of all drug charges.

<sup>102</sup> Interestingly, the introduction of cautioning gave police the discretion to caution, rather than charge, a juvenile found in possession of a small amount of cannabis and thus a juvenile apprehended previously for this offence and cautioned would not (when charged for a subsequent offence) be classified as a recidivist. The discretion to caution rather than charge for minor possession of cannabis does not exist for adults.

Figure 4.9: Decline in the proportion of drug charges accounted for by juveniles & young adults, 1990, 1993 and 1996

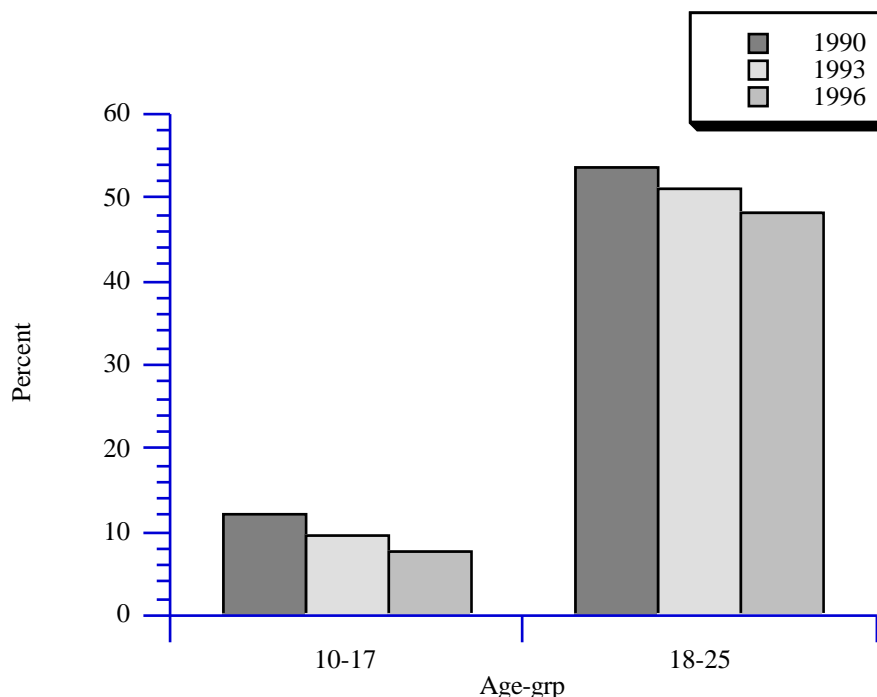


Table 4.8: Age specific rates of drug charges,<sup>103</sup> 1996

Age group	Type of drug offence	
	Possess/use	Traffic
10-17	320.0	58.9
18-24	2,045.2	370.7
25-34	944.1	308.7
35-44	309.6	144.2
45+	27.6	33.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>541.0</b>	<b>150.3</b>

#### 4.3.3.6 Ethnicity and drug offenders

As with most WA crime statistics, the ethnicity distinction of most interest is that concerning Aboriginality. Unlike most other forms of crime, Aborigines are not as over-represented amongst drug offenders (Aboriginal people make up approximately 3% of the Western Australian population and about 7% of drug offenders overall). Table 4.9 details the percentage of offenders who are Aboriginal for 1996. The proportion of Aboriginal offenders in the “possess/use” category has increased from 4% in 1990 to 6.6% in 1996. The peak figure in this series actually occurred in 1995, where the proportion was 7.6%.

The same pattern of growth can be observed with “trafficking” charges. From a low of 2.9% and 2.8% in 1990 and 1991 respectively, the proportion has doubled to 6% in 1995 and 1996. It should be noted, however, that the actual numbers of drug offenders in these years who were Aboriginal were small and therefore caution needs to be adopted in interpreting these results.

<sup>103</sup> Rate 100,000 population.

Figure 4.10: Drug charges expressed as age-specific rates, 1996

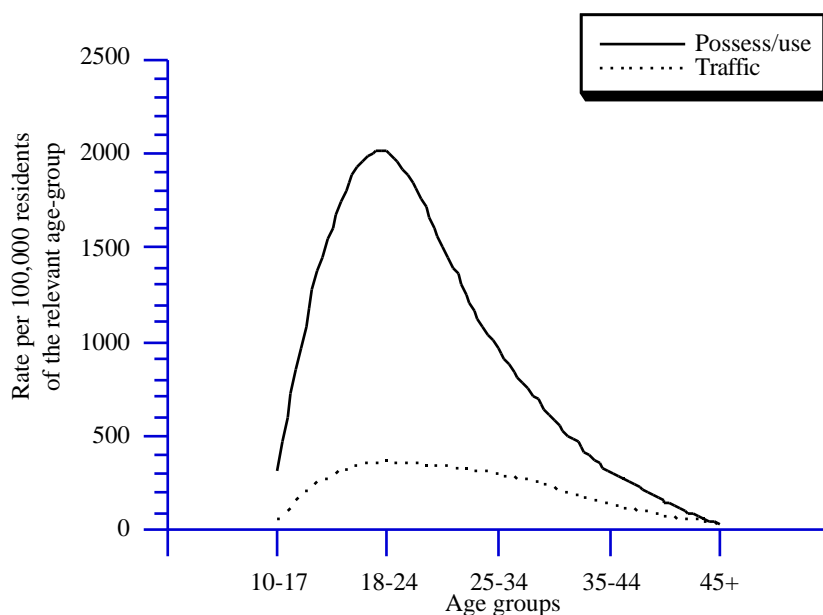


Table 4.9: Proportion of drug charges accounted for by Aborigines, 1990 - 1996

Type of drug offence	Aboriginal (%)						
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Possess/use	4.0	4.9	5.0	5.7	5.9	7.6	6.6
Traffic	2.9	2.8	3.1	4.3	3.7	6.0	6.0

### 4.3.4 Other information on drug charges

#### 4.3.4.1 Type of apprehension

The charge data base also records information about the actions taken by police in relation to the processing of offenders. Table 4.10 shows the proportion of charges in 1996 that were proceeded with by way of summons or arrest. Offenders arrested by police were subsequently either bailed or placed in custody.<sup>104</sup>

Table 4.10: Apprehension actions taken in relation to different types of drug charges in 1996

Type of drug offence	Action taken		
	Arrest/Bailed (%)	Arrest/Custody (%)	Summons (%)
Possess/use	36.0	12.2	51.7
Traffic	49.8	13.9	36.3

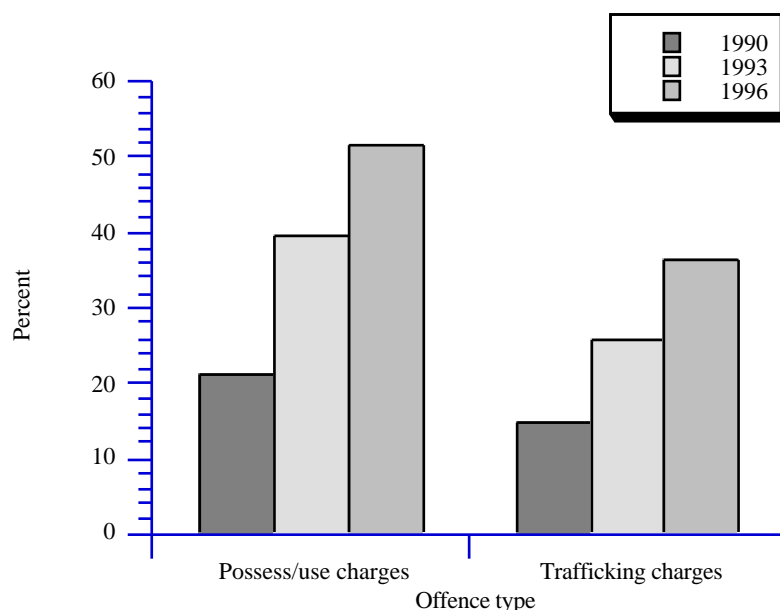
Note: Data represent actions taken as a proportion of 3 possible apprehension actions

As Table 4.10 shows, the police are more likely to proceed by way of summons with drug users but more likely to arrest (and then bail) traffickers.

<sup>104</sup> In a small number of cases (76 out of 10,175 or 0.7%) the type of apprehension action was not recorded by the police. These cases have been removed from the calculation presented in Table 4.10.

In terms of trends in the processing of drug offenders since 1990, the police appear more willing to proceed by way of summons rather than by way of arrest for both users and traffickers. As seen in Figure 4.11, the percentage of drug charges proceeded with by way of summons (rather than arrest) has increased from 21% to 52% for users and 15% to 36% for traffickers between 1990 and 1996.

Figure 4.11: Changes (%) in the use of summons by offence type 1990, 1993 & 1996<sup>105</sup>



#### 4.3.4.2 “New” offenders or offenders with a prior record

The other statistic that is of interest in regard to drug charges concerns prior criminal history of the offender. This information can be derived from the data base on arrests. Although more extensive analysis is possible, an initial consideration of this database in relation to drugs charges looks at the proportion of persons charged with various types of drug charges that are “new” offenders. We define “new” offenders here as offenders not previously apprehended (arrest or summons) and charged by the police for any offence.

The two most common criminal charges laid by the police are driving under the influence of alcohol and minor drug charges - particularly the possession of cannabis. A prior charge of driving under the influence of alcohol or being in possession of a small amount of cannabis would result in the offender being classified as an offender with a prior record.

“New” offenders appear to have consistently accounted for about one quarter to one third of both users and traffickers (see Figure 4.12). Although it might be thought that traffickers are much more likely to have a criminal record than users, this is not borne out by this indicator. However, it may be that the 70% of traffickers with a criminal record have a more serious and/or a more extensive criminal record than the 70% of users that have a criminal record. Such questions can only be answered by a closer look at the records of offenders in these groups.

The percentage of drug charges involving different drug types that are accounted for by “new” offenders is shown in Figure 4.12 (period 1990 to 1995), Figure 4.13 (year 1996) and Table 4.11

<sup>105</sup> Data is % of all actions taken that are summons.

(period 1990 to 1995) and suggests that recidivist offenders may be more likely to be involved with “heroin” or “stimulant” use and/or trafficking.

**Figure 4.12: Percentage of various types of drug offences accounted for by “new” offenders (ie offender without prior records) 1990, 1993 and 1995**

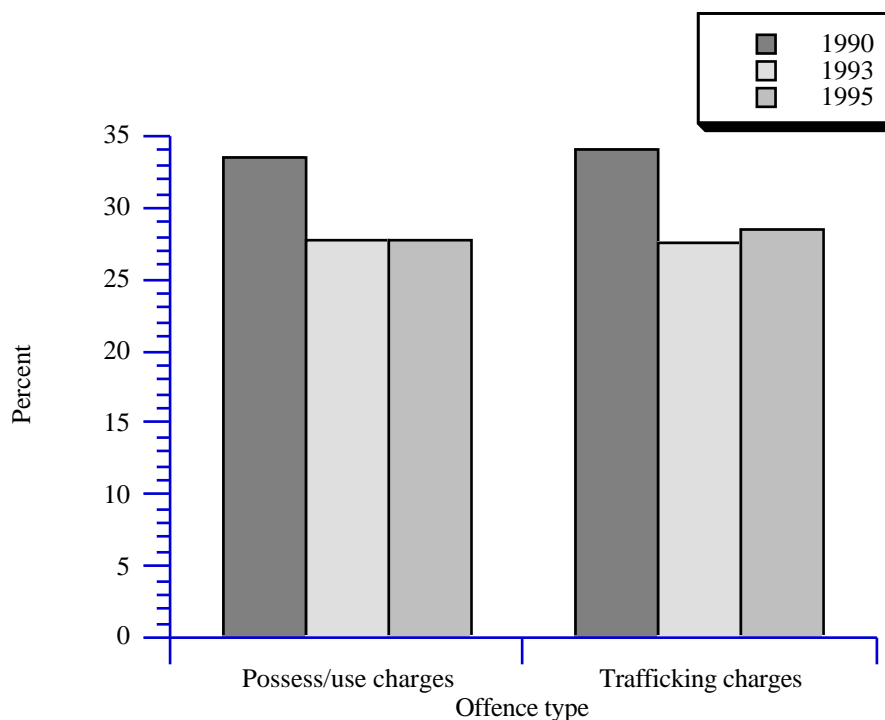


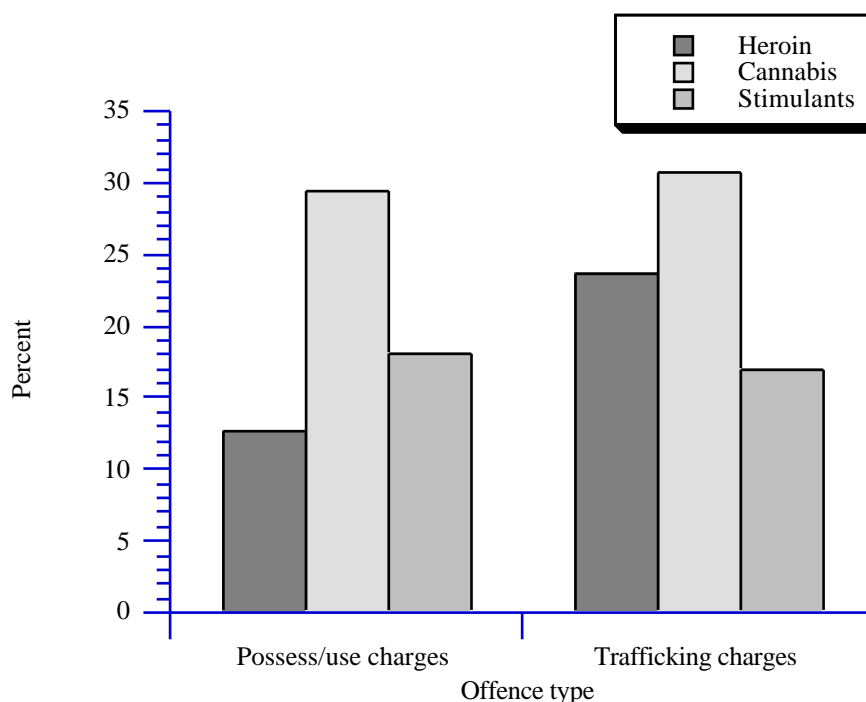
Table 4.11 shows the number of “new” offenders involved in these categories of drug offences and the percentage they contribute to overall drug charges for the period 1990 to 1995.

**Table 4.11: Proportion of “new” offenders<sup>106</sup> by offence type & drug type, 1990-1995**

Type of drug offence	“New” offenders (no previous arrest)	
	n	%
All drug offences	18,997	29.3
Possession/use offences	15,051	29.2
Trafficking offences	3,944	29.4
Heroin possess/use	60	12.7
Cannabis possess/use	8,195	29.5
Stimulant possess/use	415	18.1
Heroin trafficking	74	23.7
Cannabis trafficking	3,478	30.8
Stimulant trafficking	187	17.0

<sup>106</sup> New offenders defined as offenders without a prior record of conviction.

Figure 4.13: Proportion of drug charges accounted for by “new” offenders by drug type, 1996



#### 4.3.4.3 Re-offending

The Select Committee has used the data from the arrest database (arrests in WA from 1984 to 1995) and a statistical method known as failure or survival rate analysis to estimate the likelihood or probability of re-arrest for ‘drug offenders’. This is used as a surrogate measure of re-offending.

These techniques enable certain questions such as “What is the chance of someone arrested for a drug offence being arrested again?” or “What is the chance of someone arrested for a certain drug offence being arrested for another drug offence again?” to be given a statistical answer.

Our analysis specifically looked at offenders who had been arrested of a drug offence and we estimated (i) the ultimate (or life-time) probability of being arrested *for any offence*, and (ii) the ultimate (or life-time) probability of being arrested *for another drug offence*. We also estimated these probabilities for the single largest sub-group of drug offenders - the “users”.

Table 4.12 shows the results of the analysis by offender-type and prior record. Overall, the probability of being re-arrested *for any offence* was 0.53 (53% or one in two) for drug offenders with no prior record of arrest and 0.76 (76% or three in four) for offenders with a previous history of arrest. That is, about one-half of all offenders **without** prior arrests are likely to be re-arrested *for any offence* during their lifetime, while about three-quarters of drug offenders **with** priors are likely to be re-arrested for any offence.

**Table 4.12: Probabilities of re-arrest by offender type & prior record**

Type of offender	P	CI	I	n	n-fail
<b>All drug offenders (users &amp; traffickers)</b>					
Re-arrest for any offence					
No priors	0.53	(0.52,0.54)	0.0343	22,874	9,249
Priors	0.76	(0.75,0.77)	0.0689	15,566	9,997
Re-arrest for another drug offence					
No priors	0.30	(0.29,0.31)	0.0232	22,874	4,808
Priors	0.50	(0.49,0.52)	0.0232	15,566	5,022
<b>"Users" only</b>					
Re-arrest for any offence					
No priors	0.51	(0.49,0.52)	0.0342	19,390	7,547
Priors	0.75	(0.74,0.75)	0.0692	15,473	9,704
Re-arrest for another drug offence					
No priors	0.26	(0.25,0.27)	0.0239	19,390	3,549
Priors	0.46	(0.44,0.48)	0.0239	15,473	4,555

Note: P = probability, CI = confidence interval, I = rate of failure, n = numbers of cases, n-fail = expected number of cases that will fail (re-offend).

Our analysis also found that drug offenders without prior records generally take longer to be re-arrested (*for any offence*) than offenders with priors.

Naturally, the probabilities of being re-arrested *for another drug offence* were found to be lower than those *for any offence*. For drug offenders **without** a prior record, the probability of re-arrest for another drug offence was 0.3. Therefore, about 30% of drug offenders are likely to be re-arrested for another drug offence during their life-time. For drug offenders **with** a prior record, the likelihood of being re-arrested for another drug offence was much higher (50%).

Overall, “users” were found to have slightly lower probabilities of re-arrest than other drug offenders.



**Table 4.13: Trends in drug charges, 1990 - 1993**

Type of offence	1990		1991		1992		1993	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Population	1633.8		1636.1		1657.4		1676.4	
Drug charges	10,668		12,042		12,388		10,871	
<b>Type of drug offence</b>								
Possess/use	5,430	50.9	6,234	51.8	6,562	53.0	5,694	52.4
Sell/supply	769	7.2	1,026	8.5	1,097	8.9	976	9.0
Make/grow	1,184	11.1	1,468	12.2	1,532	12.4	1,307	12.0
Other (implements, premises)	3,266	30.6	3,314	27.5	3,197	25.8	2,894	26.6
<b>Type of drug offence</b>								
Possess/use	8,696	81.5	9,531	79.1	9,748	78.7	8,584	79.0
Traffic	1,972	18.5	2,511	20.9	2,640	21.3	2,287	21.0
<b>Possess/use by drug type *</b>								
Heroin	67	1.3	92	1.6	78	1.3	76	1.5
Cannabis	4,891	93.4	5,404	91.3	5,593	92.6	4,545	89.2
Stimulants	281	5.4	421	7.1	369	6.1	474	9.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,239</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>5,917</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6,040</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>5,095</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Trafficking by drug type *</b>								
Heroin	61	3.2	88	3.6	56	2.2	37	1.7
Cannabis	1,696	89.3	2,138	87.9	2,300	90.6	1,860	86.6
Stimulants	143	7.5	207	8.5	183	7.2	251	11.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,900</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,433</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,539</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,148</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>All charges rate per 100,000 pop*</b>								
Heroin	7.8	1.8	11.0	2.2	8.1	1.6	6.7	1.6
Cannabis	403.2	92.3	461.0	90.3	476.2	92.0	382.1	88.4
Stimulants	26.0	5.9	38.4	7.5	33.3	6.4	43.2	10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>437.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>510.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>517.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>432.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* (excludes unknown drug types)

**Table 4.14: Trends in drug charges, 1994 - 1996**

Type of offence	1994		1995		1996	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Population	1701.9		1731.7		1765.7	
Drug charges	9,394		9,538		10,175	
<b>Type of drug offence</b>						
Possess/Use	4,900	52.2	4,845	50.8	5,165	50.8
Sell/supply	809	8.6	892	9.4	1,023	10.1
Make/grow	1,121	11.9	1,162	12.2	1,186	11.7
Other (implements, premises)	2,564	27.3	2,639	27.7	2,801	27.5
<b>Type of drug offence</b>						
Possess/use	7,460	79.4	7,475	78.4	7,963	78.3
Traffic	1,934	20.6	2,063	21.6	2,212	21.7
<b>Possess/use by drug type*</b>						
Heroin	66	1.5	95	2.4	117	2.9
Cannabis	3,790	88.2	3,527	89.9	3,675	92.5
Stimulants	442	10.3	303	7.7	182	4.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,298</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,925</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,974</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Trafficking by drug type*</b>						
Heroin	35	1.9	35	1.8	56	2.8
Cannabis	1,584	88.0	1,726	91.2	1,797	91.5
Stimulants	182	10.1	132	7.0	112	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,801</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,893</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,965</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>All charges rate per 100,000 pop*</b>						
Heroin	5.9	1.7	7.5	2.2	9.8	2.9
Cannabis	315.8	88.1	303.3	90.3	309.9	92.1
Stimulants	36.7	10.2	25.1	7.5	16.7	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>358.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>336.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>336.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* (excludes unknown drug types)

**Table 4.15: Summary of characteristics of drug offenders & charges by offence type, 1990 - 1996**

Type of offence	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1990-1996
<b>Possess/use charges</b>								
% male	85.4	85.2	84.6	84.1	84.6	83.8	84.3	
% Aboriginal	4.0	4.9	5.0	5.7	5.9	7.6	6.6	
% juvenile	13.4	13.6	10.0	10.5	9.8	8.8	8.4	
% 18-25 yrs	55.9	53.4	54.9	53.3	51.8	52.7	51.9	
% summonsed	21.1	32.2	34.3	39.7	41.3	46.8	51.7	
%first-timers	33.5	30.4	27.9	27.8	27.7	27.7	na	<b>29.2</b>
% metro area	57.9	na	na	60.2	58.1	56.6	61.8	
drug-type:								
% cannabis	93.4	91.3	92.6	89.2	88.2	89.9	92.5	<b>91.1</b>
% heroin	1.3	1.6	1.3	1.5	1.5	2.4	2.9	<b>1.7</b>
%stimulants	5.4	7.1	6.1	9.3	10.3	7.7	4.6	<b>7.2</b>
<b>Traffic charges</b>								
% male	85.2	85.6	85.2	83.3	83.6	83.1	85.2	
% Aboriginal	2.9	2.8	3.1	4.3	3.7	6.0	6.0	
% juvenile	6.8	8.2	6.0	6.5	6.0	6.6	5.6	
% 18-25 yrs	43.4	39.8	41.5	42.1	37.5	38.2	35.3	
% summonsed	14.8	21.3	23.7	26.0	29.1	32.7	36.3	
%first-timers	34.0	30.3	29.7	27.6	26.4	28.4	na	<b>29.4</b>
% metro area	68.0	na	na	70.9	66.5	63.9	65.6	
drug-type:								
% cannabis	89.3	87.9	90.6	86.6	88.0	91.2	91.5	<b>89.2</b>
% heroin	3.2	3.6	2.2	1.7	1.9	1.8	2.8	<b>2.5</b>
%stimulants	7.5	8.5	7.2	11.7	10.1	7.0	5.7	<b>8.2</b>

**Figure 4.14: Characteristics of offenders charged with possession/use offences in WA 1990 - 1996**

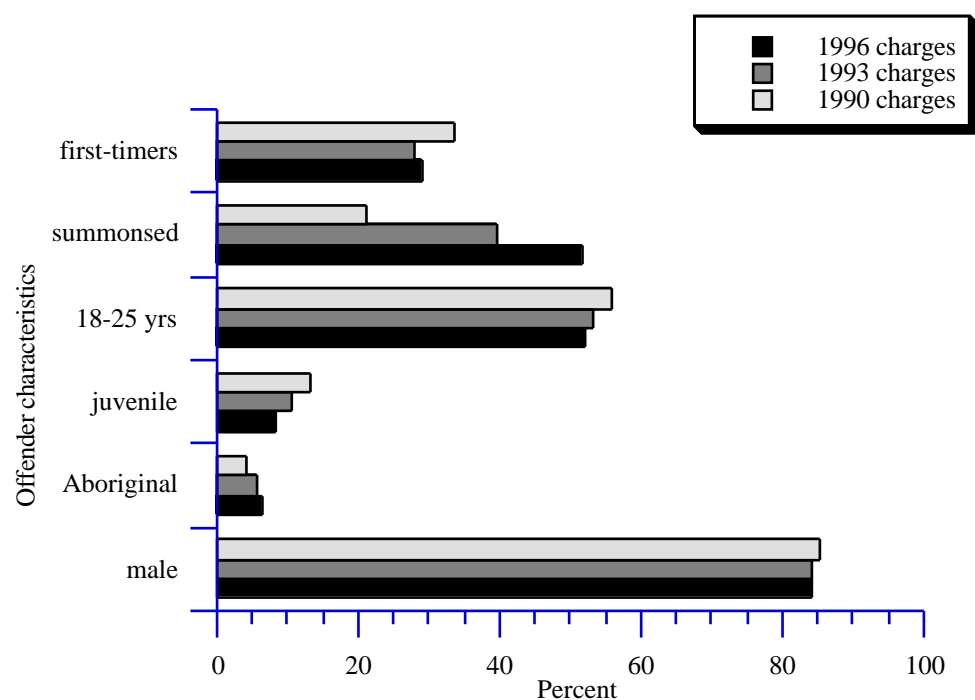


Figure 4.15: Characteristics of offenders charged with trafficking offences<sup>107</sup>, 1990 - 1996

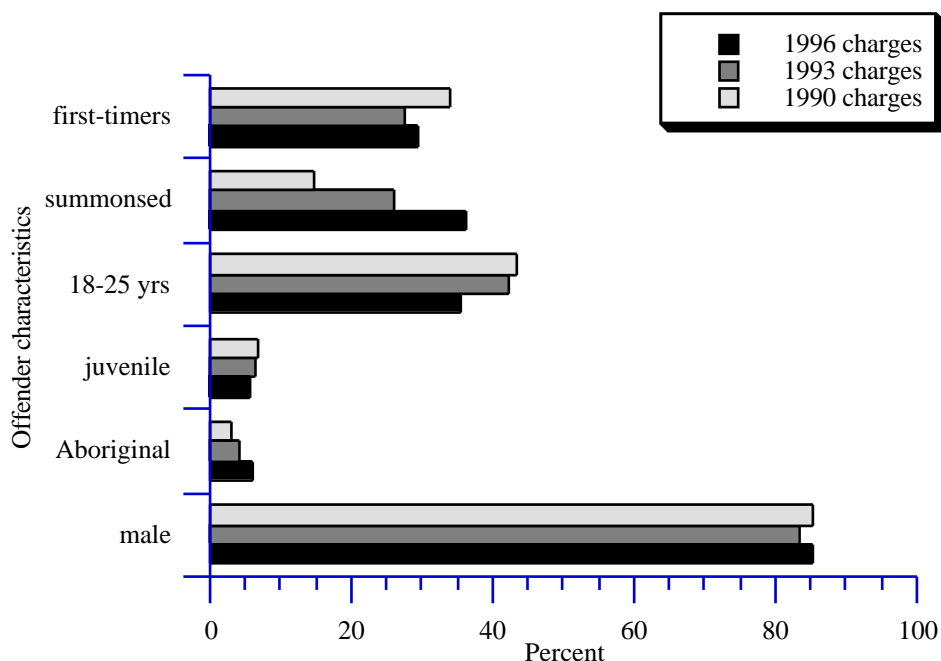
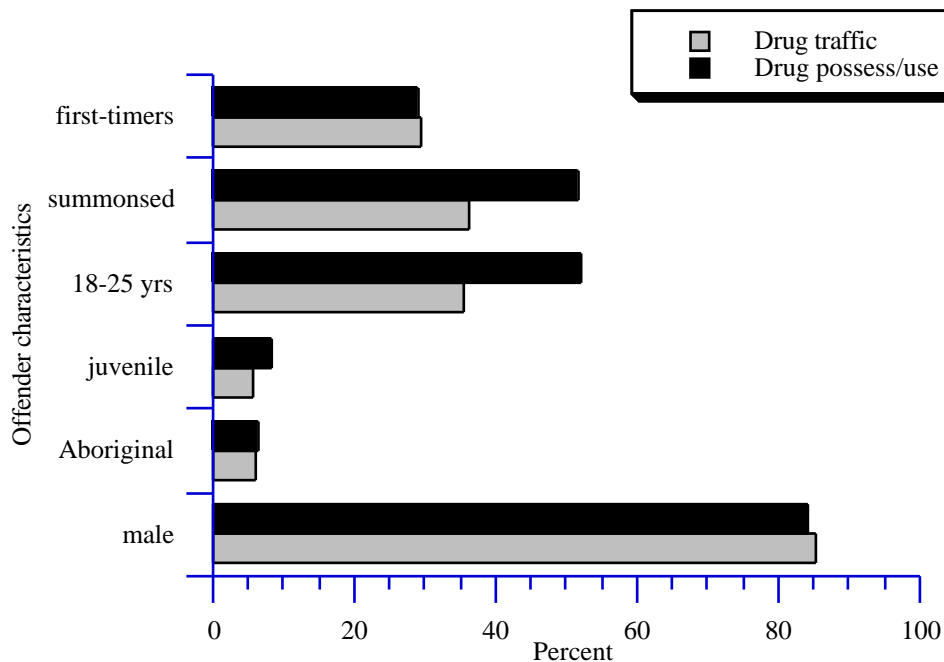


Figure 4.16: Comparison of user/trafficker characteristics of drug offenders charged in 1996



<sup>107</sup> Trafficking offences defined as selling, supplying, manufacturing or growing illicit drugs.

Figure 4.17: Characteristics of possession/use offenders by drug type, 1996

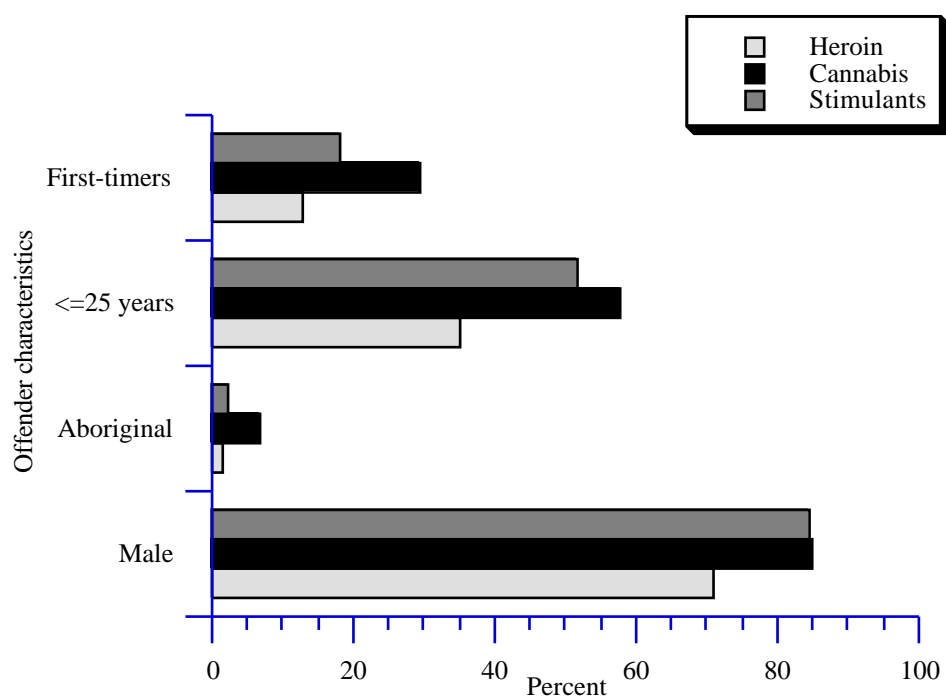
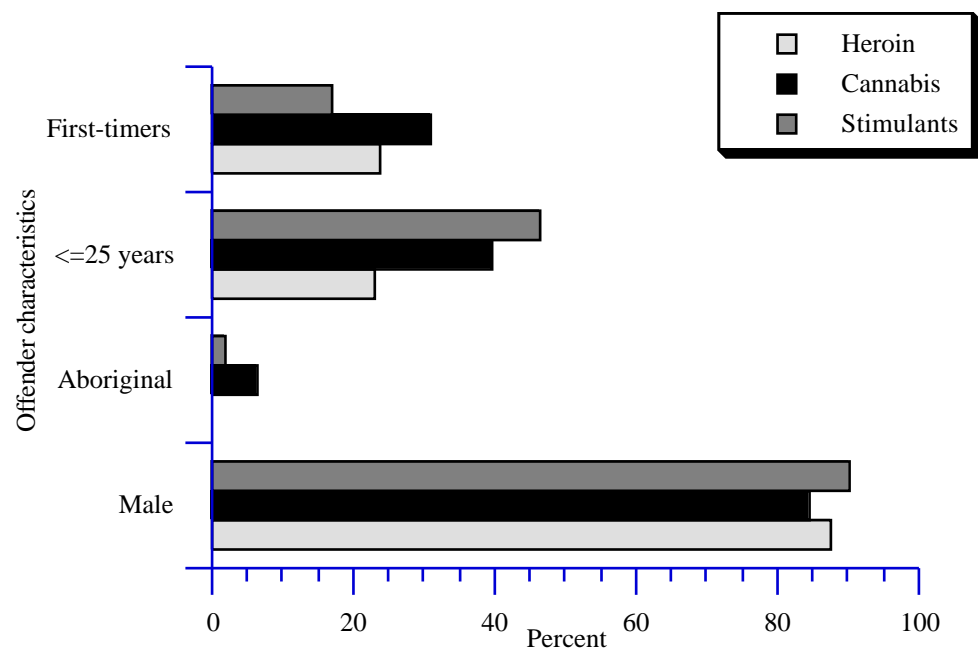


Figure 4.18: Characteristics of drug trafficking offenders by drug type, 1996



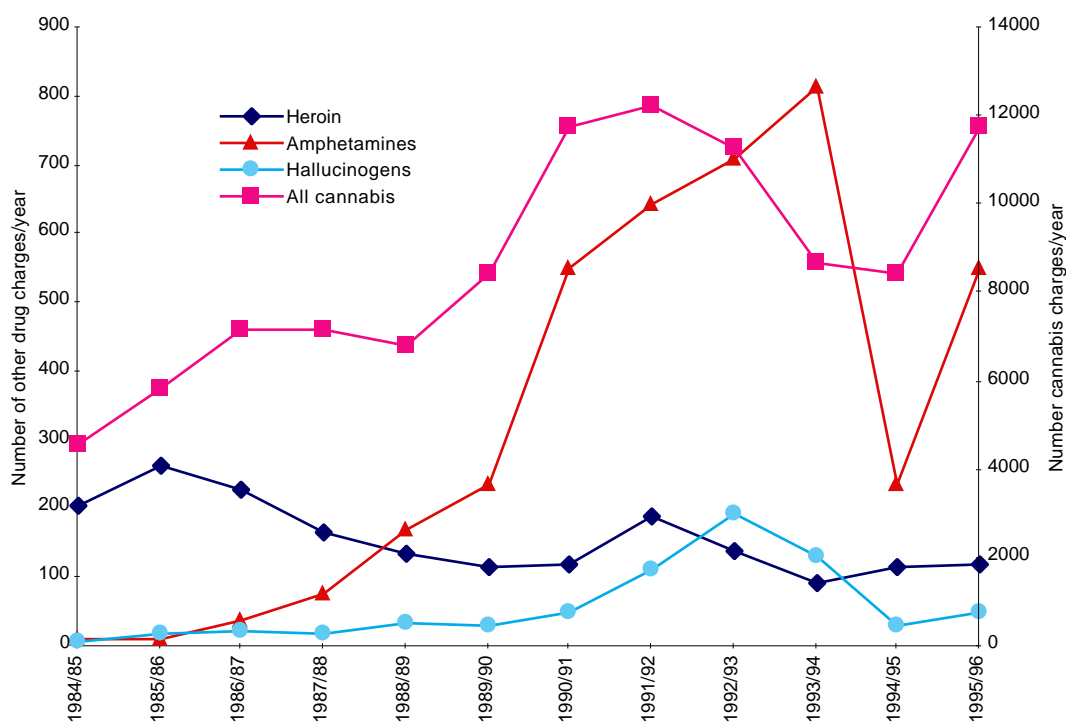
## 4.6 Charges

### 4.6.1 Charges by WA police

The research by the Crime Research Centre outlined earlier in this chapter provided a detailed analysis of recent trends in drug related charges in this State. Annual totals of charges in relation to heroin, amphetamines, hallucinogens and cannabis (combined number of charges concerned with plants, leaf material, resin and implements) for the period 1984/85 to 1995/96 provide a longer term perspective on changes in the types of drugs dealt with by the WA police (Figure 4.22).

Over this 12 year period, there has been a general upward trend in the number of cannabis charges, from a total of 4,560 charges in 1984/85 to a total of 11,738 charges in 1995/96. Of concern has been an overall decline in the number of heroin related charges. A total of 265 charges were laid in 1985/86 and since 1993/94 the number of charges has fluctuated between 90 and 120 per year. The sharp increase in amphetamine charges from the late 1980s to 1993/94 reflects the intensive police effort at dealing with this particular drug, which is now believed to be less available.

**Figure 4.22: Annual number of heroin, amphetamines, hallucinogens & all cannabis charges, 1984/85 - 1995/96**



Source: WA police service, annual reports