YEARNLY FIGURES CONFIRM MORE DROPS IN DARWIN CRIME

Both property crime and offences against the person in Darwin recorded decreased in the latest crime statistics released today on the year-to-year comparisons.

The Quarterly Crime and Justice Statistics compiled by the Office of Crime Prevention are based on recorded offences.

There were 2043 less recorded property offences (19 per cent drop) in the year April 04-March 05 compared to the previous twelve months.

However, the March 05 quarter figures, released by Justice Minister Dr Peter Toyne, show some types of property crime increased in the March quarter compared to the previous quarter. Offences against the person also recorded a 19 per cent drop or 250 less offences in the year to year terms and the quarterly reduction of 14% was equally pleasing.

“We acknowledge an increase in property crime for the March quarter compared to previous quarter,” Dr Toyne said.

“Even though there is not sufficient data to identify a seasonal trend, when you look across the historical data you will see a spike in these types of offences at around the same time each year.

“Anecdotal accounts from police and others support the belief the Wet Season, combined with school holidays, equals increased property crime. Therefore, we will be looking at strategies to attack any seasonal spikes, for example activities for youth during holidays and enhanced policing.”

“The overall year-on year figures for Darwin remain positive and show we have come a long way in the past couple of years,” Dr Toyne added.

“But we recognise there is still more to do and there’s no doubt we face challenges in our attempts to keep crime heading in the right direction.”

Year to Year comparisons:
This data compares figures from one 12 month period to the next. Among the other key findings comparing the total number of offences in the 12 months to March 05 to the total number of offences in the 12 months to March 04:

- assaults decreased by 20% (214 less offences)
- sexual assaults decreased by 26% (36 less offences)
- house break-ins decreased by 16% (183 less offences)
- commercial break-ins decreased by 28% (185 less offences)
- motor vehicle theft and related offences decreased by 34% (443 less offences)
- property damage offences decreased by 24% (982 less offences)

**Quarter to Quarter comparisons:**
Quarterly comparisons are the figures from the December 04 quarter (Oct/Nov/Dec) compared to the figures from the March 05 quarter (Jan/Feb/Mar). Care should be taken when interpreting these figures as small changes can produce large percentage figures, these concerns can be compounded by increased property crime during the latter part of the wet season. Characteristically an increase in the March quarter property crime is followed by a reduction in the June quarter. Key findings include:
- total number of offences against the person were down by 14% (40 less offences)
- robberies decreased 69% (9 less offences)
- assaults decreased 8% (19 less offences)
- sexual assaults decreased 35% (11 less offences)
- total number of property offences were up 25% (522 more offences)
- house break-ins increased 19% (44 more offences)
- commercial break-ins increased 34% (35 more offences)
- motor vehicle theft and related offences increased 22% (42 more offences)
- property damage offences increased 54% (350 more offences)

**Trends:**
Trends are detected when there is a statistically significant upward or downward movement in recorded crime levels of the last 12 months’ data. There were no trends identified for offences in Darwin.

March Quarter 2005 Crime and Justice Statistics and Regional Fact Sheets are available online at www.crimeprevention.nt.gov.au

**NOTE:**
- The preceding statistics are a measure of recorded crime across the Territory.
- The data is collected from the Police Real-time On-line Management Information System.
- Nationally it is recognised that there are varying levels of un-reported crime in our community but that recorded crime is the best available measure of changes in the level of crime in a community.
- Statistics in the Territory can be highly volatile, with large swings from one period or another. This is particularly the case for regional centres where small populations and changes in operational or administrative procedures may heavily influence statistics.

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