Increased Reporting Affects NT Crime Stats

Police strategies that target repeat offenders have underpinned a rise in the levels of reported violent offences across the Territory as reported in the latest crime statistics, the Justice Minister Peter Toyne said today.

The Crime and Justice statistics for the March 2006 quarter are based on offences recorded in the Territory police reporting system PROMIS.

The year-on-year comparisons across the Territory show overall offences against the person rose 786 to 4974, while assaults increased to 4475 from 3675.

Dr Toyne said the March quarter was traditionally a busy one and the police force's Violent Crime Reduction Strategy had resulted in increased reporting of violent crimes.

"It's not unreasonable to see a campaign targeting certain crimes result in a rise in reported offences. The increase reflects concerted efforts not only by police but the community to stamp out criminal activity.

"I am pleased to see a continued fall in sexual assaults with 52 fewer offences in the 12 months to the end of March 2006, compared with the previous 12 month period

Dr Toyne said there were mixed results for property offences in the yearly comparisons. Overall property offences were up 3% or 576 offences to 19,298; house break-ins fell 38 to 1952; commercial break-ins rose 35 to 1365, while motor vehicle theft dropped to 1528 from 1616.

"From those Territory-wide statistics, we found the year-on-year comparisons in remote and rural areas show 83 more overall offences against the person; 95 more assaults and 217 fewer overall property offences. House break-ins were down 73 to 268; there was a drop of 70 in commercial break-ins and 19 fewer motor vehicle theft and related offences.

"There were also 23 fewer sex assaults in rural and remote areas in the 12 months to the end of March 2006, compared with the previous 12 month period

Dr Toyne said alcohol plays a role in more than half the Territory's reported assault offences.

"So along with targeted police campaigns the Government has promoted legislative changes to tackle crime," he said.

"Measures such as anti-social behaviour legislation, alcohol courts and volatile substance abuse laws will go towards breaking the cycle of violence and reducing the incidence of crime."

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