The Crime Research Centre’ has released its report  Crimes Reported to Police, Western Australia 2006 (Annual Statistical Report Series No. 1 2008) describing trends and patterns in crimes reported to police.

According to the Centre’s Director, Dr Frank Morgan, the report reveals increases in both personal and property crime rates in 2006.

“In 2006 overall increases occurred in rates of reported crimes against the person (13.6%) and crimes against property (5.9%). Ten-year rate trends show that offences against the person rose by 31.8 percent while property offences decreased by 18.3 percent. More detailed offence analysis reveals that robbery increased by 11.2 percent in 2006 (10-year decline of 25.1%); household burglary increased by 3.0 percent (10-year decline of 25.1%); and motor vehicle theft increased by 2.9 percent (ten-year decline of 57.7%).”

“Theft and related offences comprised 40.3 percent of the total of 301,160 offences reported to police in 2006, while property damage and environmental pollution offences (18.8%) and household and other burglary (13.3%) were also high-volume offence categories.

“The report displays regional offence rates in Western Australia. Metropolitan Perth recorded 73.7 percent of all reported offences, however, for offences against the person the proportion was 64.3 percent and for offences against property the figure was 76.1 percent. Outside of Perth the highest rates of both offences against the person and property offences were recorded in the Kimberley.”

“Overall, for offences against the person there were more male than female victims, however, sexual assault was an exception to this pattern. When women were victims they were more likely to be victimised in a dwelling than in any other location, while males were more likely to be victimised outside the home. Indigenous people were far more likely to be victims of offences against the person than non-indigenous Western Australians, and two thirds of indigenous victims were women.”

National comparisons are also included in the report.

“In the homicide category Western Australia recorded lower rates for murder, attempted murder and manslaughter, but higher rates for driving causing death. Rates for robbery and blackmail/extortion were higher than the Australian average, while the State remained in highest position for unlawful entry and other theft offences,” Dr Morgan said.
Commenting on the increases, Dr Morgan said:

“Within the general category of offences against the person, rates of homicide have not increased over the past 10 years. Nor have robberies or reported rates of sexual assault. However, reported assault rates have increased and these have been influenced by changes to family and domestic violence legislation and by improved recording capabilities and strategies within WA Police to encourage reporting of these offences.”

“Crime surveys are not subject to these legislative and organisational changes and the most recent of these showed small but non-significant increases in the prevalence of assault in Western Australia between 1998 and 2005, in contrast to the reported crime trends. However, survey evidence indicates that police recorded increases in assaults may reflect increased frequency of victimisation among those who become victims, rather than an increase in the number of victims.”

The statistical report, Crimes Reported to Police, Western Australia, 2006, contains detailed information on these and other crime trends, and can be downloaded from the Crime Research Centre’s website [http://www.crc.law.uwa.edu.au]