

Number 2, April 2016
Melanie Millsted

How many repeat family violence perpetrators were there in Victoria over the past 10 years?

Victoria Police note that since the introduction of their Code of Practice for the Investigation of Family Violence, launched in 2004 and revised in 2010, there has been a consistent increase in the number of family violence incidents recorded by police in Victoria¹. As part of research commissioned by the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence², the Crime Statistics Agency (CSA) examined not only the number of incidents recorded, but also the number of unique alleged family violence perpetrators recorded by police and their level of repeat family violence perpetration over the ten-year period from July 2005 to June 2014. This paper presents the results of an updated set of analyses based on the ten-year period from January 2006 to December 2015. A family violence incident is defined as an incident recorded by police on an L17 form. 'Perpetrators' refers to alleged perpetrators, or those individuals recorded by police as the 'Other Party' (OTH) on the L17 form.

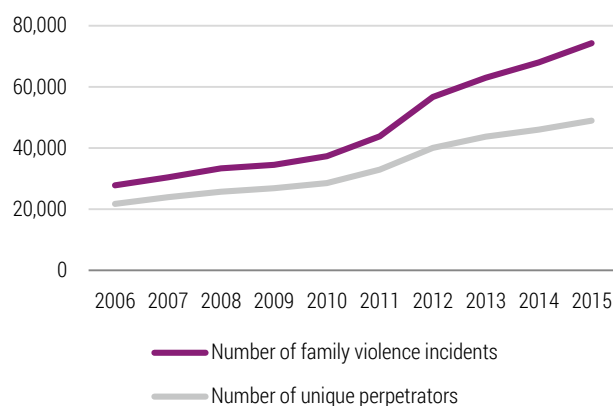
Between 2006 and 2015, 217,995 individual alleged family violence perpetrators had a total of 470,645 family violence incidents recorded by police.

A total of 470,645 alleged family incidents were recorded by police over the past ten years, involving 217,995 unique alleged perpetrators. A perpetrator was not identified by police in 1,437 incidents. Figure 1 shows the total number of incidents and unique perpetrators recorded each year.

Over the past ten years, the largest increase in the annual number of unique alleged family violence perpetrators occurred from 2011 to 2012.

Over the ten-year period, the number of unique perpetrators recorded by police increased by an average of 9.6% per year. The largest increases occurred from 2010 to 2011 (15.4% increase) and from 2011 to 2012 (21.9% increase). The third largest increase of 10.1% occurred from 2006 and 2007.

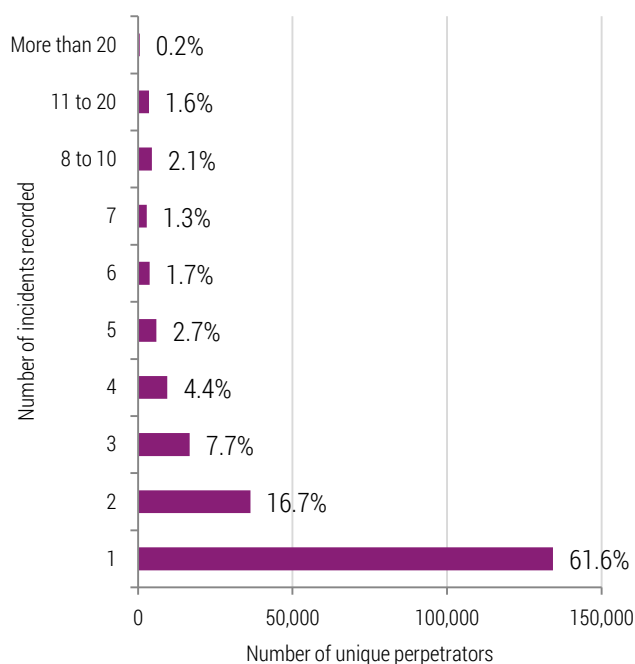
Figure 1: Annual number of recorded family violence incidents and unique perpetrators



38.4% of alleged family violence perpetrators had more than one family violence incident recorded over the ten-year period.

Figure 2 shows the number of incidents recorded per individual perpetrator over the ten-year period. Though the majority of perpetrators (61.6% or 134,290 perpetrators) had just one incident recorded, 38.4% (n=83,705) had more than one incident recorded, and 520 perpetrators had more than 20 incidents recorded.

Figure 2: Number of incidents recorded per perpetrator, 2006 to 2015



Only 6.9% of alleged perpetrators had more than five family violence incidents recorded over the past ten years, but this group accounted for 30.7% of all family violence incidents.

Table 1 shows the number of perpetrators who had 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more than 5 incidents recorded over the ten year period, along with the total number of incidents each of these groups were recorded for. As shown, the 134,290 perpetrators who had just one family violence incident recorded between 2006 and 2015 accounted for 28.6% of all incidents. The group of perpetrators who had one offence recorded (61.6% of all perpetrators), and the group of perpetrators who had more than five incidents recorded (6.9% of all perpetrators), each accounted for around a third of all incidents.

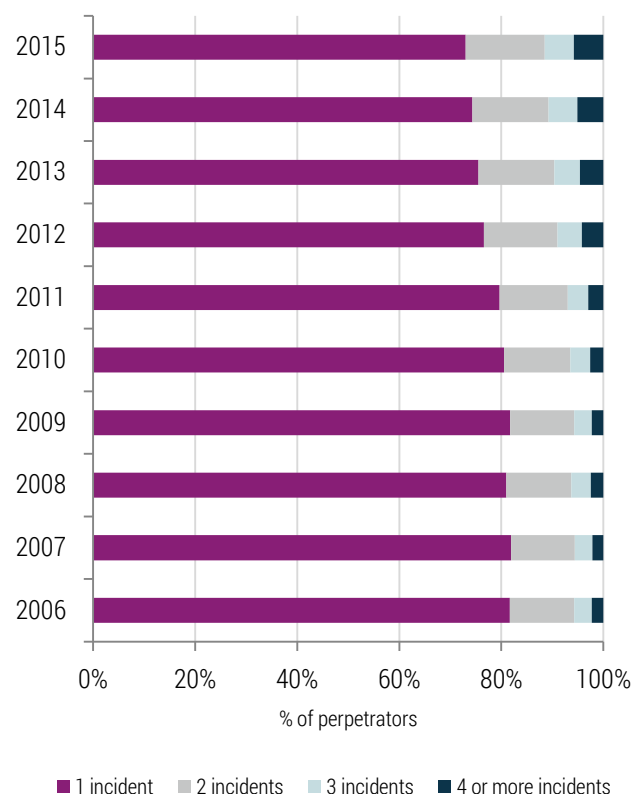
Table 1: Number and proportion of incidents recorded per perpetrator

Number of incidents recorded per perpetrator	Perpetrators		Incidents	
	n	%	n	%
1 incident	134,290	61.6	134,290	28.6
2 incidents	36,369	16.7	72,738	15.5
3 incidents	16,771	7.7	50,313	10.7
4 incidents	9,506	4.4	38,024	8.1
5 incidents	5,990	2.7	29,950	6.4
More than 5 incidents	15,069	6.9	143,893	30.7
Total	217,995	100.0	469,208	100.0

The proportion of alleged perpetrators who had more than one incident recorded annually has increased significantly over the past ten years.

Figure 3 shows the proportion of perpetrators that were recorded for 1, 2, 3, and 4 or more incidents per year. The proportion of perpetrators who had more than one incident recorded per year has increased significantly over the past ten years from 18.4% (n=3,984) in 2006 to 27.0% (n=13,204) in 2015³.

Figure 3: Proportion of perpetrators by number of incidents recorded per year



The analysis presented here shows that repeat family violence perpetrators account for a large minority of all perpetrators, and for the majority of recorded family violence incidents. The rate of police recorded recidivism has also increased over the past ten years. This highlights the need to better understand what drives and prevents recidivist family violence behaviour. Further CSA research will soon be published which details the perpetrator characteristics and family violence incident risk factors that are statistically related to recorded family violence recidivism.

¹Victoria Police (2014). *Crime Statistics 2013/14 Official Release*. Melbourne: Victoria Police.

²State of Victoria (2016). *Royal Commission into Family Violence: Report and recommendations*, Vol VII. Parliamentary Paper No. 132 (2014-16).

³ $\chi^2=2121.03$, $p<.0001$, $df=9$, Cramer's $V = 0.08$.