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MEDIA RELEASE

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Attrition of sexual offence incidents across the Victorian criminal justice system

The Crime Statistics Agency (CSA) has today released a research paper titled *Attrition of sexual offence incidents across the Victorian criminal justice system*.

Sexual offences historically have had higher attrition rates than many other offences, meaning fewer of the recorded offences result in cases which progress through to a conviction in the criminal justice system. This new research examines how many sexual offences progress through the criminal justice system, from first being recorded by police through to being heard in court. The study builds on previous work in this area by linking information about sexual offending incidents recorded by police directly to cases heard in court.

The research found that a third of the sexual offence incidents recorded by Victoria Police throughout 2009 and 2010 progressed to prosecution by police (33.7%). Of those that were progressed, just over two thirds (69%) were matched to a court case, indicating that the offences went on to be heard in court.

The CSA's Chief Statistician Fiona Dowsley said that the findings from this study were broadly consistent with previous research:

"The police investigation stage is where the largest proportion of sexual offences do not progress through the criminal justice system. In line with prior research, we found that around two thirds of cases recorded by police do not progress to prosecution, and around a third of those that progress to prosecution do not go on to be heard in court."

The study also looked at which offenders, victim and case characteristics were statistically related to whether a case progressed. These included the type of offence, with indecent assault cases more likely to progress than rape cases. Where the length of the police investigation was more than two weeks, cases were also less likely to progress through the system.

Further information can be found on the CSA website:

<https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/research-and-evaluation/publications/attrition-of-sexual-offence-incident-across-the-victorian>

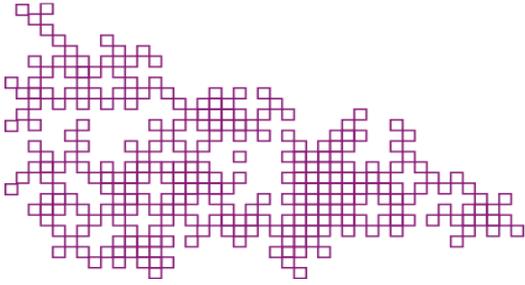
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KEY FINDINGS: ATTRITION OF SEXUAL OFFENCE INCIDENTS ACROSS THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

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Proportion of cases that progressed through the justice system

- Of all sexual offence incidents recorded by Victoria Police in 2009 and 2010, 33.7% were recorded as having either an 'arrest' or 'summons' outcome by police indicating that they would progress to prosecution.
- Of those incidents that progressed to prosecution, 69.0% were matched to a court case, indicating that the offences went on to be heard in court.

Characteristics related to progression from police to prosecution

The following offender, victim and incident characteristics were associated with an *increased* likelihood the case would progress:

- male offender
- offender aged between 18 to 34 or 50 to 69
- offending incident involved multiple alleged offences or other offence types such as violent offences
- the most serious sexual offence involved in the offending incident was indecent assault
- offender had six or more alleged sexual offences previously recorded by police
- the incident involved at least one victim aged between 10 and 17
- the offending involved in the incident occurred over a period of more than six months.

The following characteristics were associated with a *decreased* likelihood the case would progress:

- the offender knew the victim (i.e., where the relationship between the offender and victim was current or former partner, family member or acquaintance, as opposed to stranger)
- the time between the offence occurring and the offence being recorded by police was more than two weeks
- the time taken for the police investigation was more than two weeks.

Characteristics related to progression to a court hearing

The following characteristics were associated with an *increased* likelihood a case would go on to be heard in court:

- the most serious sexual offence involved in the offending incident was indecent assault
- the offending involved in the incident occurred over a period of less than six months.

The following characteristics were associated with a *decreased* likelihood a case would go on to be heard in court:

- offender aged 18 or older
- the time between the offence occurring and the offence being recorded by police was more than two weeks
- the time taken for the police investigation was more than two weeks.