

# Violent crime at high

VIOLENT crime is at an all-time high in Victoria with assaults, robbery and aggravated burglaries soaring in the past year, leaked police statistics show.

The provisional annual crime statistics, obtained by the Opposition, show violent crime at a new record with 42,949 cases in the past year — a rise of 1.4 per cent.

Opposition Leader Ted Baillieu said at least one violent assault occurred every 17 minutes in Victoria.

"The Brumby Government has failed to protect Victorians from violent crime and has not put enough police on the streets," Mr Baillieu said.

"The Premier has a huge Budget surplus but still spends

## Geraldine Mitchell and Nick Higginbottom

the least per head of population of any state on policing, leading to record levels of violence, growing levels of property crime and plummeting crime clearance rates."

The rise in violence has led to an increase in 15 of 27 categories identified by police.

Robberies rose by 15.6 per cent, abduction and kidnap up 7.3 per cent, aggravated burglary up 4.3 per cent, weapons offences up 3.2 per cent and theft from motor vehicles rose 12.2 per cent.

The latest rise in the number of assaults has surpassed the previous Victorian record, reaching a new high of 31,301, up 0.8 per cent.

## Danger on our streets

Crimes against the person	Number of offences	Change %	Clearances %
Homicide	169	-14.2	89.9
Rape	1,561	-8.2	79.4
Sex (non rape)	6,253	0.8	76.9
Robbery	3,328	15.6	45.5
Assault	31,301	10.8	80.0
Abduction-Kidnap	337	7.3	78.3
<b>Total crimes</b>	<b>42,949</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>76.9</b>

Herald Sun 29/7/08

Police will investigate the leak but Mr Baillieu defended it as in the public interest.

"It's information that's not crime-related, not related to any specific investigation, and



these are the statistics that are normally made public and, in that respect, this is in the public interest," he said.

Police deputy commissioner Kieran Walshe said he was disappointed with the leak.

"We've always had an open and transparent process for releasing crime statistics," Mr Walshe said.

"I don't know what the motives are of the individual that leaked this document but I can say we in Victoria Police are extremely disappointed."

Premier John Brumby blamed alcohol for the increase in violent crime.

"We have got an issue with alcohol-fuelled violence and it's an issue we need to get on top of, and it's an issue I believe we are getting on top of," Mr Brumby said.

But he refused to commit to more police on the beat.

"There's been a significant increase in investment in some of the new IT systems for police, so they're getting as much support from the Government as we can provide," he said.

But Police Association secretary Paul Mullett said 1000 more officers were needed to tackle the wave of violence.

"The statistics are disturbing because our members can't provide the core policing service of proactive presence," Sen-Sgt Mullett said.

"About 1000 police positions have dropped off police station rosters and frontline work unit rosters, so we need to locate those 1000 positions and put them back where they should be, in frontline work areas."

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