

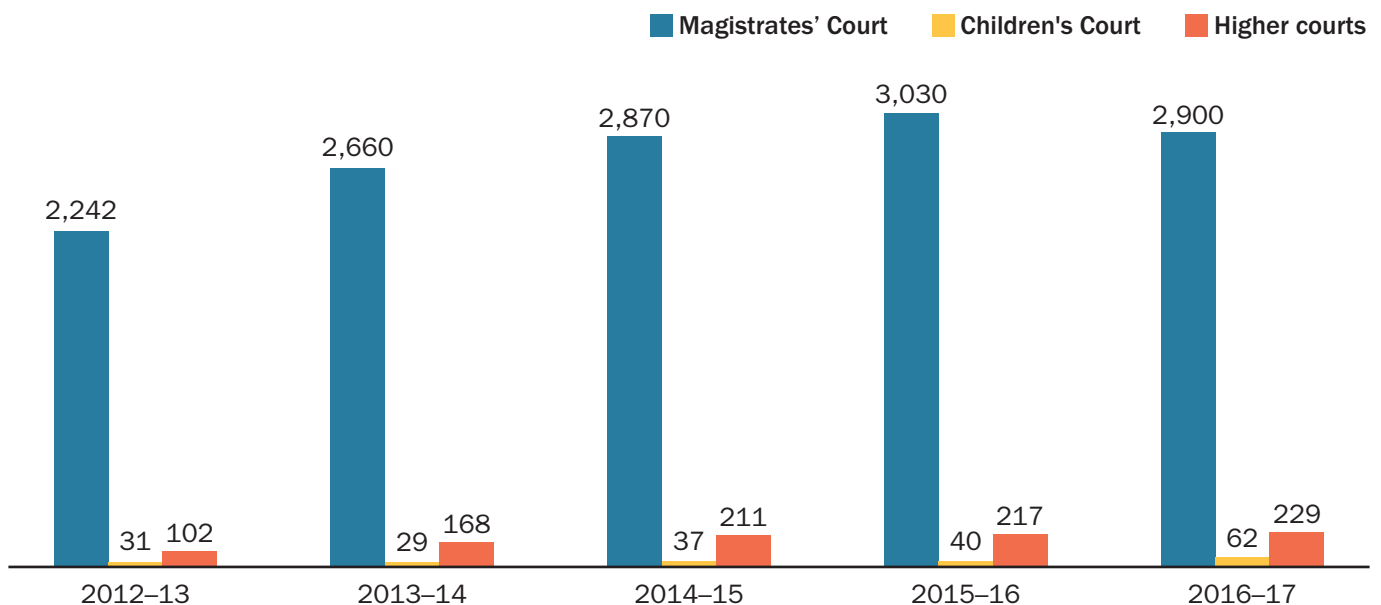
# Firearms Offences

## Current Sentencing Practices

The Sentencing Advisory Council has released a report examining trends in the prevalence and sentencing of 132 firearms offences in Victorian courts in the five years from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2017 (the reference period). This factsheet provides an overview of some of the key findings of that report.

### How many firearms offences were sentenced?

Over the reference period, 14,828 charges of firearms offences were sentenced in Victorian courts. The number of sentenced charges of firearms offences increased by 34% (from 2,375 to 3,191 sentenced charges annually).



### What kinds of firearms offences were sentenced?

Of the 132 unique firearms offences examined for this report, 44 (33%) are categorised as offences relating to the possession, carriage or use of firearms (possess/carry/use offences). Almost half of all sentenced charges fell into this category (46% across all courts).

Number of firearms offence charges sentenced, by category of offence, 2012-13 to 2016-17

#### Possess/carry/use

6,820

#### Ammunition

4,106

#### Storage

2,444

#### Other

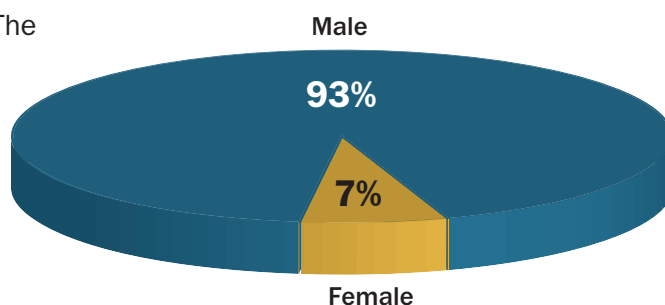
1,458

## What were the characteristics of firearms offenders?

The majority of firearms offenders were male (93%). The average age of adult offenders was 34 years.

The Sentencing Advisory Council examined all available sentencing remarks for firearms offence cases sentenced in the higher courts during the reference period (438 (89%) of 490 firearms offence cases). Of these offenders:

- 83% had a prior history of offending
- over one-third (34%) were on an order, such as bail or a community correction order, at the time of the offence
- 81% had substance abuse issues
- 65% were identified as methylamphetamine users.



The most common co-sentenced offences in the Magistrates' Court and higher courts were:

1. possess a drug of dependence
2. possess a prohibited/controlled weapon
3. theft.

In the Children's Court, the most common co-sentenced offences were theft and intentionally damage property.

## Co-sentenced offences

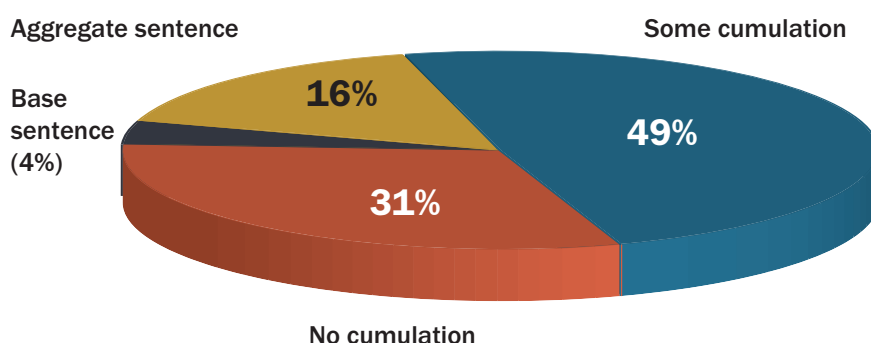
Most firearms cases (68%) had at least two charges of other offences sentenced in the case.

## Sentencing outcomes

Firearms offences carried maximum penalties ranging from 10 penalty units to 17 years' imprisonment. In each court, the Sentencing Advisory Council examined the outcomes for charges that carried a maximum penalty of imprisonment.

The percentage of sentenced charges receiving imprisonment or detention (where imprisonment was available) was:

- 24% of the 9,694 sentenced charges in the Magistrates' Court
- 19% of the 132 sentenced charges in the Children's Court
- 84% of the 703 charges sentenced in the Higher Courts.



## Comments or questions?



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