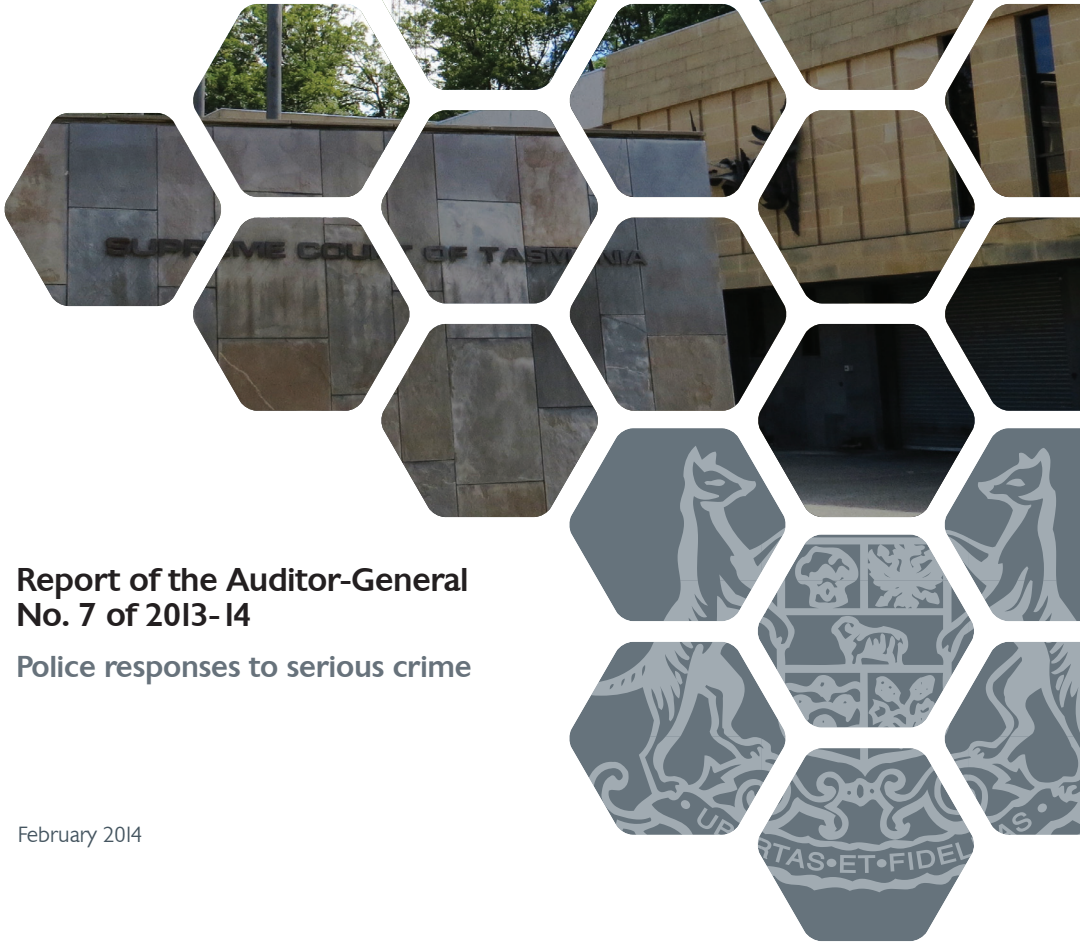




Tasmanian
Audit Office



**Report of the Auditor-General
No. 7 of 2013-14**

Police responses to serious crime

February 2014

INTRODUCTION

As Tasmania's law enforcement organisation, Tasmania Police aims to reduce crime through its investigations. A subset of criminal investigations is investigations into serious crime, which is a priority activity for Tasmania Police. There are 37 serious crime offences defined by Tasmania Police, which include a range of offences against the person, and a smaller number of offences involving property over the value of \$50 000. The offences include assault, robbery, rape, murder, stealing, burglary and shoplifting.

The number of serious crimes has remained fairly steady from 2008–09 to 2012–13, with a low of 447 offences in 2011–12, and a high of 529 offences in 2010–11.

Tasmania Police is also involved in crime prevention, which includes a range of programs and activities designed to reduce the incidence of serious crime.

With a focus on serious crime, we examined three main areas of police work — investigations, the preparation of prosecution briefs, and preventative activities. Accordingly, the objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of police work in relation to these three areas.

DETAILED AUDIT CONCLUSIONS

The audit conclusions are based on criteria that we developed to support the audit's objective and are aligned to the chapter structure of the Report.

Police investigations

Tasmania has a relatively high clearance rate of serious crimes compared to other jurisdictions and we found sound investigations were undertaken for cleared and uncleared cases. Tasmania Police also, in general, consistently and accurately measured the number of serious crimes, and followed its own internal procedures. Overall, we concluded that Tasmania Police was effective at investigating serious crime.

Preparation of prosecution briefs

We analysed a selection of prosecution briefs and found them to be suitable for their purpose and prepared in a timely manner. Nevertheless, checks undertaken by senior police before a file goes to the Director for Public Prosecutions (DPP) should be recorded in correspondence, to satisfy the public and the DPP that Tasmania Police has met its own standard, as outlined in the Tasmania Police Manual. We concluded that Tasmania Police was effective and efficient at preparing prosecution briefs.

Crime prevention activities

We asked whether crime prevention activities were based on prior research or evidence; were effective; and had raised community awareness of their respective issue. Two of the three programs we analysed were based on prior research or evidence, and two out of three had some evidence to show they could reduce the likelihood of serious crimes occurring in the future.

One of the three programs we analysed was not designed to raise community awareness about serious crime issues, and one did not appear to have had an impact on community awareness of arson issues. However, there was one program which had considerable success in raising community awareness and obtaining community action.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Report contains the following recommendations.

REC	SECTION	WE RECOMMEND THAT ...
1	2.4	... all relevant correspondence for indictable files, from Tasmania Police to the DPP, be reviewed to ensure the quality of the file is of sufficient standard and all investigative options have been pursued. Furthermore, correspondence should include comment on the quality of files and the checks undertaken.
2	3.4.3	... Tasmania Police develops with relevant stakeholders, measures of success (where applicable) for crime prevention programs that involve substantial resources.

For the full report go to:

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