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Australian Institute of Criminology

AIC reports

Statistical Report

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**The costs of serious and organised
crime in Australia, 2023–24**

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ISSN 2206-7930 (Online)
ISBN 978 1 922878 11 3 (Online)
<https://doi.org/10.52922/78113>

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Published by the Australian Institute of Criminology
GPO Box 1936 Canberra ACT 2601
Tel: (02) 6268 7166
Email: front.desk@aic.gov.au
Website: www.aic.gov.au

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General editor: Dr Rick Brown, Deputy Director, Australian Institute of Criminology

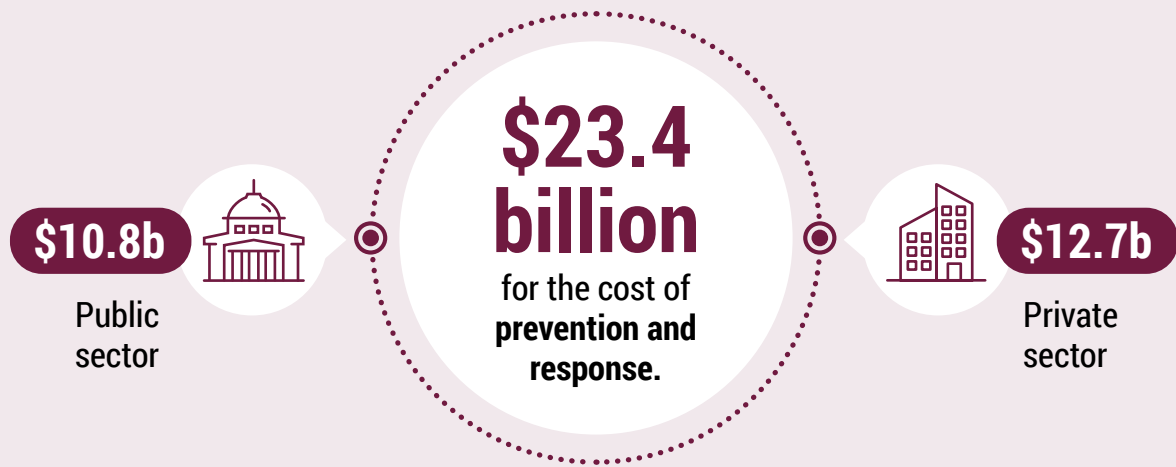
Edited and typeset by the Australian Institute of Criminology

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Serious and organised crime cost Australia up to

\$82.3 billion

 in 2023–24

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Acknowledgements

This is the fifth iteration in a series of reports that estimate the costs of serious and organised crime in Australia. The estimate for 2023–24 builds upon the methodological approach developed by Dr Russell G Smith, former Principal Criminologist at the Australian Institute of Criminology, who led the Institute’s work on the costs of crime for many years. We acknowledge his significant contribution to the development of this work and this report.

Acronyms and abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACC	Australian Crime Commission
ACIC	Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission
AFP	Australian Federal Police
AIC	Australian Institute of Criminology
ASD	Australian Signals Directorate
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
AUSTRAC	Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre
EUIPO	European Union Intellectual Property Office
GDP	gross domestic product
MDMA	3,4-methylenedioxymethylamphetamine
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers
RBA	Reserve Bank of Australia

Abstract

Serious and organised crime was estimated to cost Australia between \$35.5b and \$82.3b in 2023–24. This estimate captures the direct and consequential costs of serious and organised crime in Australia (up to \$58.9b), as well as the indirect costs of preventing and responding to serious and organised crime incurred by government entities, businesses and individuals (up to \$23.4b). Of the total direct costs attributable to serious and organised crime (\$47.9b), illicit drugs were the most costly crime type, accounting for 39.5 percent of these direct costs (\$19.0b), followed by organised financial crime (\$13.2b) and other illicit commodities (\$8.6b), which accounted for 27.6 percent and 18.0 percent of direct costs, respectively. The most costly illicit commodity after drugs was illicit tobacco, which cost Australia \$4.0b in 2023–24, a significant increase on previous years.

This report is the fifth iteration in a series of attempts to calculate the costs of serious and organised crime to Australia. The upper estimate for 2023–24 (\$82.3b), representing 3.2 percent of Australia's gross domestic product, is up from \$68.7b in 2022–23. This increase in the estimated costs of serious and organised crime is due, in large part, to methodological improvements. Nevertheless, these figures represent the substantial and pervasive economic impact of serious and organised crime on Australia.

Executive summary

Serious and organised crime involves multiple offenders engaging in calculated, sophisticated and often financially motivated offending that typically involves a series of criminal acts committed over time (Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) 2017a). In this report we estimate the costs of serious and organised crime in Australia for the financial year 2023–24. We quantify the direct and consequential costs of serious and organised crime affecting the Australian economy, as well as the indirect costs to government entities, businesses and households associated with preventing and responding to serious and organised crime. The total cost for 2023–24 is estimated to be between \$35.5b (low), \$54.2b (medium) and \$82.3b (high).

Direct costs

Direct serious and organised crimes were estimated to cost up to \$47.9b in 2023–24. These are crimes that have a clear and direct link with serious and organised crime. Similar to previous years, illicit drugs accounted for 39.5 percent (\$19.0b) of the direct costs attributable to serious and organised crime. Organised financial crime (\$13.2b), trafficking illicit commodities (\$8.6b) and pure cybercrime (\$4.5b) accounted for 27.6 percent, 18.0 percent and 9.4 percent of direct costs, respectively. Illicit tobacco was the second most economically damaging commodity in the illicit market (after illicit drugs), costing Australia approximately \$4.0b in 2023–24. The estimated cost of illicit tobacco has increased fourfold in the past three years (from \$1.0b in 2020–21).

Consequential costs

Consequential serious and organised crimes were estimated to cost up to \$10.9b in 2023–24. These included conventional offences committed:

- by organised crime groups;
- to facilitate serious and organised criminal activities;
- to generate funds to use for criminal activities (eg drug use) related to serious and organised crime; or
- as a result of being involved in criminal activities related to serious and organised crime (eg violence by drug-affected offenders).

Indirect costs

Indirect costs were estimated to be up to \$23.4b in 2023–24. These include costs incurred by law enforcement, criminal justice agencies and other public sector agencies to prevent and respond to crime (\$10.8b). Prevention and response costs are also incurred by the private sector (\$12.7b), including businesses and individuals in the community.

Total costs of serious and organised crime

The upper estimate for the total costs of serious and organised crime in 2023–24 was \$82.3b, up from \$68.7b in the previous financial year. This increase is due, in large part, to methodological changes and the use of more accurate and recent datasets in several sections, including for our estimates of consequential crime, cybercrime and cybersecurity expenditure. Other increases in the cost of crime may also be attributable to societal influences on criminal activity and changes in how government, business and individuals respond to the problem. It remains a conservative underestimate of the true losses to the Australian economy.

Conclusion

This report reveals the substantial and pervasive impacts that serious and organised crime has on the Australian economy, including the enduring harms associated with illicit drug use, organised financial crime and cybercrime. The billions of dollars spent by the public and private sectors alone in preventing and responding to serious and organised crime are funds that cannot be directed towards health care, education, infrastructure and other community resources.

Introduction

Serious and organised crime involves multiple offenders engaging in calculated, sophisticated and often financially motivated offending that typically involves a series of criminal acts committed over time (ACIC 2017a). This type of crime not only threatens the safety and security of everyday Australians, but has direct and indirect consequences that are extremely costly to the Australian economy. In this report, we estimate the costs of serious and organised crime in Australia for the financial year 2023–24.

To quantify the total costs of serious and organised crime, we estimated the costs incurred directly by serious and organised crimes. Direct serious and organised crimes are often the primary activities undertaken by an organised crime group to generate profits, such as illicit drug trafficking, cybercrime, human trafficking and organised financial crime. Direct costs also include the enablers of serious and organised crime, which are secondary activities undertaken to protect the offenders and their profits, such as money laundering, corruption, violence and identity crime (Morgan & Dowling 2023).

The second major category of crime included in our estimate captures the costs associated with consequential serious and organised crimes, which are conventional crimes—violent offences, robberies, burglaries, theft, arson and fraud—committed as a consequence of serious and organised crimes (Smith 2024). This includes criminal activity undertaken to facilitate serious and organised crime (eg using violence to intimidate rival groups), as well as crime that generates funds used to support serious and organised criminal activities (eg acquisitive crimes committed to finance drug purchases). Consequential crimes also include offences that occur as a result of serious and organised crime related activities (eg violence committed by those using illicit drugs).

In addition to the costs of criminal activity, the total cost of serious and organised crime also captures the indirect costs that the public and private sectors spend to prevent and respond to crime (Smith 2024). Public sector costs include those associated with investigation by law enforcement, prosecution within the criminal justice system, and mitigation and remediation measures taken by government agencies, among other costs. Businesses and individuals also incur indirect costs in implementing protective measures (such as physical security and cybersecurity) and in responding to criminal activity that has occurred (such as insurance administration and support services for victims).

A comprehensive disaggregation of each cost included in the total cost of serious and organised crime for 2023–24 is presented in Table 25 on page 47.

Method

This report draws heavily on the work originally developed in 2013–14 and refined in subsequent reports (see Smith 2024 for the most recent version, and Australian Crime Commission 2015b for a technical report describing the original methodology). This latest report represents the most robust and reliable estimate of the costs of serious and organised crime since this research commenced.

The approach we used to estimate the costs of serious and organised crime followed four basic steps:

1. Define the scope of the analysis, including the definition of serious and organised crime, timeframe for analysis, and type of costs included.
2. Identify the range of possible consequences associated with serious and organised crime, including the relevance and significance of these to the Australian context, and who is responsible for preventing and responding to the problem.
3. Quantify the size of these consequences and the extent to which they can be attributed to serious and organised crime, and quantify the proportion of total resources used by different agencies to prevent and respond to the problem.
4. Estimate the value of the consequences and agency resources once they have been quantified.

Costs are estimated for the 2023–24 financial year. We have attempted to use the most up-to-date data available at the time of finalising this report (September 2025). Where data were not available for 2023–24, estimates were uprated using the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) inflation calculator (RBA 2025) to reflect changes in the cost of living. Data for 2024 were used when calculations related to a calendar year rather than a financial year. Monetary values are expressed in Australian dollars, typically as billions or millions, unless stated otherwise. Totals in summary tables may differ from more precise estimates due to rounding. Where reference is made to costs reported in earlier years, these relate to the year in question without uprating or adjustment, unless otherwise indicated.

In terms of geographical and jurisdictional reach, crimes that have an impact on Australia are included even if they were committed by individuals who were not resident in Australia at the time of offending. Similarly, crimes committed by individuals in Australia are included even if the proceeds were moved outside Australia. Where offending took place offshore, or where proceeds of crime have moved offshore, the effect on the Australian economy is considered, if it is quantifiable. In some instances where evidence from Australia is unavailable, we relied on research from other countries, and converted overseas currencies to Australian dollars using the purchasing power parity calculator of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2025).

To indicate the range of likely costs, three estimates are provided—low, medium and high—which reflect the estimated degree of involvement of serious and organised crime group members in the crime type examined or, in the case of prevention and response costs, the proportion of agency resources associated with serious and organised crime. These proportions were estimated by the Australian Crime Commission (ACC) in 2013–14 (ACC 2015a, 2015b), in consultation with federal, state and territory law enforcement officers experienced in investigating consequential serious and organised crime, as well as criminologists, statisticians and regulatory, policy and subject matter experts.

In this iteration of the costs of serious and organised crime series, we made several changes to our estimates to incorporate better data and more accurate methodologies:

- **Consequential crime:** Now draws upon recent data (Voce at el. forthcoming) on the proportion of specific types of criminal offending attributable to drugs or alcohol, allowing for more accurate estimates of the level of ‘indirect’ consequential crime related to the use of illicit drugs that are sourced from serious and organised criminal markets.
- **Cybercrime:** Now incorporates more recent and representative data on the prevalence and costs of cybercrime impacting Australian businesses from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2023b) and the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD, 2024).
- **Cybersecurity expenditure:** Now estimates expenditure based on recently published industry data on the average proportion of operating expenditure that entities spend on cybersecurity each year (Avasant 2024; IANS Research 2022).

Other changes are noted throughout the report where applicable.

Limitations

The level of information available to quantify each of these components is variable. Each year new research becomes available and new data are published, and these are incorporated where possible, but the information is not always in precisely the format required to quantify the costs of crime. Where appropriate, subjective indications of the level of confidence attached to the estimates are given (Table 25). For some offence categories, confidence in the estimates is quite low, given the paucity of statistical and economic data. Crime categories that have incomplete data are firearms trafficking, migration and visa fraud, investment of financial resources by serious and organised crime, maritime people smuggling, and corruption. Where the incidence or cost of criminality is unknown, estimates are not provided. As such, the figures in this report should be treated as conservative estimates.

Direct serious and organised crime costs

Crimes that have a clear and direct link with serious and organised criminals include illicit drug activity, organised financial crime, some violent crimes committed against individuals, human trafficking, other crimes involving illicit commodities, and pure cybercrime.

Various crime enablers are also directly linked to serious and organised crime. These enablers include money laundering, violence, corruption, the misuse of identity and technology, and professional facilitators such as lawyers, accountants and real estate agents.

Illicit drug activity

The involvement of serious and organised crime in illicit drug markets has a number of potential effects on the Australian economy. Three direct cost elements included in current estimates are:

- medical costs—including costs of injuries, treatment for drug dependency, and drug-related deaths of people who use illicit substances;
- lost output—lost productivity of drug users while in treatment or due to illness or death; and
- expenditure on illicit drugs—money lost to the economy through payments for illicit drugs (Mayhew 2003a).

The costs of conventional crimes committed by people who use illicit drugs are included elsewhere (consequential costs), as are the costs incurred by law enforcement and other government agencies associated with controlling the illicit drug market (prevention and response costs).



Illicit drug activity involving serious and organised crime cost the Australian economy up to \$19.0b in 2023–24

Medical and lost output costs

To estimate the medical costs and lost output costs associated with illicit drug use, we relied on our previous estimate for 2022–23 (Smith 2024), which was based on the latest data on the number of drug-related deaths (ABS 2023a) and drug-related injuries in Australia (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024). Inflating these costs to 2023–24 values (RBA 2025), medical costs increased from \$1,118.4m in 2022–23 to \$1,165.4m in 2023–24, and lost output increased from \$4,629.8m in 2022–23 to \$4,824.5m in 2023–24. We further adjusted these medical and lost output costs for changes in drug consumption, based on Report 24 of the National Wastewater Drug Monitoring Program (ACIC 2025b). Between 2022–23 and 2023–24, estimated consumption of the four main illicit drug classes (methamphetamine, cocaine, MDMA and heroin) increased by 34 percent. Applying this increase to re-estimate medical costs (\$1,561.6m) and lost output costs (\$6,464.8m) for 2023–24 resulted in an updated total cost of \$8,026.5m.

Expenditure on illicit drugs

To calculate the money lost to the economy through expenditure on illicit drugs, estimates of the total annual consumption and street value of drugs consumed by Australians were taken from Report 24 of the National Wastewater Drug Monitoring Program (ACIC 2025b). There were, as noted above, significant increases in the consumption of illicit drugs compared with the previous year, with the highest increases in cocaine use (+69%), MDMA use (+49%) and methamphetamine use (+21%). However, there was also a significant decrease in the price of these drugs, consistent with a large body of evidence which links lower prices with increased drug use (Payne et al. 2020).

In 2023–24, the total estimated cost of consumption was reported for methamphetamine (\$8,970m), cocaine (\$2,220m), MDMA (\$147.9m), and heroin (\$284.2m; ACIC 2025b). The total value of cannabis consumption was not reported for 2023–24; however, the report noted that cannabis consumption was the same in August 2023 and August 2024. Therefore, the total value of cannabis consumption for 2022–23 (\$341m) was inflated to 2023–24 values (RBA 2025), totalling \$355m. Taken together, the estimated street value of drugs consumed by Australians for these five drugs (cocaine, methamphetamine, MDMA, heroin and cannabis) totalled \$11,977.4m in 2023–24.

Serious and organised crime involvement

Estimates of the extent of serious and organised crime involvement in each of five major illicit drug markets were based on stakeholder consultation undertaken in 2015 (ACC 2015a, 2015b). Consistent with previous iterations of this report (Smith 2024), we have used the high estimates of serious and organised crime involvement in these Australian drug markets in calculating costs. Applying these estimates to the expenditure on each drug produces a total combined cost of \$10,930.9, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Calculations of estimated costs attributable to serious and organised crime involvement in the consumption of five major illicit drug types, 2023–24

	Meth.	Cocaine	MDMA	Heroin	Cannabis	All
Estimated street value (\$m)	8,970.0	2,220.0	147.9	284.2	355.3	11,977.4
Proportion of serious and organised crime involvement in each drug market—high estimate (%)	90	100	95	100	60	
Costs attributable to serious and organised crime (\$m)	8,073.0	2,220.0	140.5	284.2	213.2	10,930.9

Unlike other human costs (ie medical and lost output costs), not all expenditure on illicit drugs is lost to the Australian economy. Thus, the current illicit drug expenditure estimates have been adjusted to indicate low (20%), medium (50%) and high (100%) proportions of the actual losses suffered by the Australian economy due to this form of crime. These proportions were derived from the stakeholder consultations undertaken in 2015 (ACC 2015a, 2015b). The final totals for drug expenditure, along with medical and lost output costs, are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Total illicit drug cost estimates, 2023–24

	Low	Medium	High
Proportion lost to the economy (%)	20	50	100
Drug costs lost to the economy (\$m)	2,186.2	5,465.4	10,930.9
Medical (not adjusted)	1,561.6	1,561.6	1,561.6
Lost output (not adjusted)	6,464.8	6,464.8	6,464.8
Total (\$m)	10,212.6	13,491.9	18,957.4

Serious and organised financial crime

Serious and organised criminals target Australia’s banking, investment and superannuation sectors, as well as individuals, businesses and government entities. They carry out complex financial frauds that result in direct losses and indirect damage to institutional reputations and personal financial security (ACIC 2017b).



Organised financial crimes involving serious and organised crime cost the Australian economy up to \$13.2b in 2023–24

Tax and revenue crime

Serious and organised crime offenders have been identified as being involved in a number of types of taxation and revenue crime in Australia (Australian Taxation Office (ATO) 2024b). These include dishonest activities that target taxation revenue streams administered by the ATO, offshore tax evasion, misuse of trusts to conceal income, and illegal phoenix activities (in which new companies are created to continue the business of companies that have been deliberately liquidated to avoid paying their debts). Taxation and revenue crimes are also relevant to a number of other crime types examined in this report, including superannuation fraud, illicit tobacco, cybercrime, identity crime and money laundering. Efforts have been made in the current analysis to avoid double-counting of costs across categories.

In 2014, the ATO estimated the costs of four types of fraud, against excise, the goods and services tax, income tax and other forms of taxation. These estimates were incorporated into the costs of serious and organised crime calculated for 2013–14 (ACC 2015a, 2015b), which estimated the total costs of tax fraud attributed to serious and organised crime to range between \$1,345m (low, 25%), \$2,025m (medium, 50%) and \$3,950m (high, 75%; ACC 2015a, 2015b). In the absence of more recent data, these estimates were inflated (RBA 2025) to 2023–24 values, with an updated range from \$1,801m (low), \$2,711m (medium) to \$5,289m (high).

The costs of serious and organised crime involvement in illegal phoenix activity are based on a report by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC, 2018). The modelling in the PwC report, which is still used by the ATO (2024a), calculated the direct cost to business from unpaid trade creditors, to employees through unpaid entitlements, and to government from unpaid taxes and compliance costs. The total cost was between \$2,853m and \$5,129m for 2015–16 (PwC 2018: 15). We used the median direct cost of \$3,991m, inflated to 2024–25 values (RBA 2025), to estimate the current costs of illegal phoenix activity to the Australian economy (\$5,045m). Applying the ACC's assessment of the level of serious and organised crime involvement (ACC 2015a, 2015b), we estimate that the economic costs to business and government of phoenix activity for 2023–24 is between \$1,261.3m (low, 25%), \$2,522.5m (medium, 50%) and \$3,783.8m (high, 75%).

In total, we estimated the combined costs of criminal phoenix activity and other types of taxation and revenue crime associated with serious and organised crime to range between \$3,062.3m (low, 25%), \$5,233.5m (medium, 50%) and \$9,072.8m (high, 75%).

Superannuation fraud

Superannuation funds continue to be attractive targets for serious and organised crime because of the substantial value of financial resources being managed each year. The Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (2024) reported the total superannuation industry assets to be \$3.9 trillion as at 30 June 2024. In 2013–14, it was estimated that superannuation fraud could amount to 0.14 percent of superannuation assets under management (ACC 2015a, 2015b). Applying this rate to all superannuation assets in 2024, losses could amount to \$5,460.0m. Using the original estimate of 0.14 percent, and assuming the involvement of serious and organised crime in conventional superannuation non-compliance at the rates estimated by the ACC (2015a, 2015b) to range between 10 percent (low), 30 percent (medium) and 50 percent (high), we estimate the total costs associated with superannuation fraud involving serious and organised crime to range between \$546.0m (low), \$1,638.0m (medium) and \$2,730.0m (high).

Payment fraud

Australia's financial institutions and the Australian Payments Network (2025) publish data on payment fraud perpetrated on Australian-issued cheques and cards and fraud perpetrated in Australia on cards issued overseas. During 2023–24, there were 15.5b transactions undertaken using Australian-issued cards and cheques, worth \$1,347b. Of these, 6.3m transactions, worth \$871.3m, were fraudulent. If cards issued overseas are added (\$86.1m), the total value of fraudulent transactions in Australia was \$957.3m in 2023–24. This is a 23.2 percent increase in payment fraud from the previous year (\$777.2m in 2022–23). Estimates by the ACC (2015a, 2015b) indicated that organised crime involvement in payment fraud ranged from 20 percent (low), to 40 percent (medium), to 60 percent (high). Applying these percentages of serious and organised crime involvement to the estimated value for 2023–24 of \$957.3m gives an estimated range of \$191.5m (low), to \$382.9m (medium), to \$574.4m (high).

Other financial transaction fraud

In addition to payment fraud relating to credit, debit and charge cards, proprietary debit cards, cheques and overseas-issued payment cards used in Australia, fraud can involve financial transactions such as interception or alteration of electronic funds transfers, online banking, share market transactions and direct payment instructions. In 2022–23, organised crime involvement in these forms of financial transaction fraud was estimated to range from 50 percent (low), to 75 percent (medium), to 95 percent (high), resulting in a total cost of between \$622.8m (low), \$662.1m (medium) and \$702.0m (high). Between 2022–23 and 2023–24, payment transaction fraud in Australia increased by 23.2 percent (Australian Payments Network 2025). In the absence of better data on other transaction fraud, we applied this same rate of increase to estimate other types of transaction fraud for 2023–24. Applying percentages of serious and organised crime involvement to our estimate of other financial transaction fraud costs, we estimate the total costs range between \$767.2m (low, 50%), \$815.6m (medium, 75%) and \$864.7m (high, 95%) in 2023–24.

Summary: Serious and organised financial crime

Table 3 provides a summary of the various components of serious and organised financial crime for 2023–24. The total costs for all forms of serious and organised financial crime ranged from \$4.6b (low) to \$8.1b (medium) to \$13.2b (high).

Table 3: Summary of serious and organised financial crime, 2023–24			
	Involving serious and organised crime		
	Low	Medium	High
Tax and revenue crime (\$m)	3,062.3	5,233.5	9,072.8
Superannuation fraud (\$m)	546.0	1,638.0	2,730.0
Payment fraud (\$m)	191.5	382.9	574.4
Other financial transaction fraud (\$m)	767.2	815.6	864.7
Total financial crime (\$m)	4,567.0	8,070.0	13,241.9

Crimes against the person

The costs associated with crimes against the person in 2023–24 were estimated for human trafficking and child sexual abuse. Other violent crimes committed to facilitate or enable serious and organised crime are counted elsewhere (see *Violence as an enabler*). The estimated costs of serious and organised crime involvement in the two crime types examined ranged from \$487.3m (low), to \$713.6m (medium) to \$1,131.7m (high).



Crimes against the person involving serious and organised crime cost the Australian economy up to \$1.1b in 2023–24

Human trafficking and modern slavery

Serious and organised crime groups are closely involved in the commission of human trafficking and slavery-like practices, particularly in moving victims across domestic or international borders for the purposes of exploitation (Australian Federal Police (AFP) 2023). Although forced marriage is included in the generally accepted definition of modern slavery, there is little evidence of organised crime involvement and, accordingly, forced marriage is not included in the current cost estimation.

The potential costs to the Australian economy associated with human trafficking include the funds paid to organised crime members to facilitate the recruitment, harbouring and movement of victims. The various costs paid by victims of trafficking to organised crime, if paid outside Australia by foreign citizens, would not involve a cost to the Australian economy and are not included. Where travel and associated costs are initially paid by recruiters and recovered from victims during their servitude in Australia, these are counted as a direct cost of trafficking and slavery.

Additional costs relate to the personal, health and social costs experienced by individual victims once in Australia. These victim costs have not been measured within Australia; however, the UK Home Office (Reed et al. 2018) has conducted a comprehensive analysis of these costs. We have applied these costs to the Australian context, as the circumstances of victimisation and the harms experienced are likely to be similar. Some additional costs associated with debt bondage, loss of earnings during forced employment and living expenses during servitude have not yet been assessed, and calculating these costs requires future research.

Prevalence

During 2023–24, the AFP received 291 reports of human trafficking, sexual exploitation and modern slavery, excluding 91 reports of forced marriage (AFP 2024). Reports included sexual exploitation ($n=59$), forced labour ($n=69$), human trafficking ($n=109$), debt bondage ($n=10$), domestic servitude ($n=21$), slavery ($n=4$), deceptive recruiting ($n=16$), organ trafficking ($n=1$) and harbouring ($n=2$). Although exit trafficking (trafficking of persons out of Australia) has been included in the current calculations for this report, some of these matters were associated with forced marriage, although further research is needed to determine precisely how many. Not all matters reported to the AFP progressed to an investigation due to a range of factors (Lyneham 2021). Data on the number of reports that progressed to investigation were not available for 2023–24 and, as such, we based our estimates on data for 2022–23 collected by the Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery National Minimum Dataset (McDonald & Bricknell forthcoming). This study indicated that the AFP received 281 reports of alleged modern slavery between July 2022 and June 2023, with 205 (74%) progressing to an investigation. Among investigated reports that were not later withdrawn ($n=102$), these cases related to 155 victim-survivors (averaging 1.52 victim-survivors per case). Applying these data to human trafficking and modern slavery offences in 2023–24 (AFP 2024), we estimate that 215 out of 291 cases (74%) proceeded to investigation, and that these investigations related to 327 victim-survivors (accounting for 1.52 victim-survivors per investigation).

To account for cases not detected or reported to police, a multiplier of 3.9 was used, based on the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) estimate of a 26 percent detection rate (see Lyneham, Dowling & Bricknell 2019). This resulted in an estimate of 1,277 victim-survivors for 2023–24.

Costs

The current costings rely on the UK Home Office's estimate of the economic and social costs of modern slavery (Reed et al. 2018), which reported a mean unit cost for physical and emotional harm (£271,190) and lost output (£47,040) in 2016–17 values. These unit costs equal \$435,975 when converted to Australian currency (OECD 2025), including \$371,530 for physical and emotional harm and \$64,445 for lost output. We then uprated total mean unit cost to 2023–24 values (RBA 2025), which generated a combined estimate of \$541,852.

Each type of trafficking has the potential for serious and organised crime involvement, but an assessment has not yet been undertaken of the extent of such involvement for each separate category. Thus, we used previously workshopped estimates (ACC 2015a, 2015b) for serious and organised crime involvement in all forms of trafficking cases, calculating that the cost of human trafficking by serious and organised crime groups is between \$172.9m (low, 25%), \$242.1m (medium, 35%) and \$345.8m (high, 50%) for 2023–24 (Table 4).

AFP referrals accepted 2023–24 (<i>n</i>)	291		
Estimated number investigated (<i>n</i>)	215		
Multiplier to account for multiple victims per case	1.52		
Estimated total victims (<i>n</i>)	327		
Multiplier to account for unreported victims	3.9		
Total reported and unreported victims (<i>n</i>)	1,277		
Level of organised crime involvement	Low (25%)	Medium (35%)	High (50%)
Organised crime victims (<i>n</i>)	319	447	638
Unit cost 2023–24 (\$)	541,852	541,852	541,852
Costs attributable to serious and organised crime (\$m)	172.9	242.1	345.8

Organised child sexual abuse

Organised child sexual abuse generally refers to abuse that involves two or more offenders acting together against multiple child victims aged 0–17 years where it does not occur in a single household and only involve familial victims (Salter & Richters 2012). There is evidence that some organised crime groups are involved in the organised production and sale of child sexual abuse material, and in the abuse of children arising from human trafficking and institutional abuse of children. The cost of these crimes to the Australian economy is difficult to quantify, as official crime statistics do not identify organised offenders who commit these crimes and little research has investigated the prevalence of organised crime involvement in child sexual abuse, particularly for the child sexual abuse material market (Salter & Richters 2012).

The current estimate includes the health and economic costs experienced by child sexual abuse victims. This section does not include costs incurred by law enforcement and victim support services in preventing and responding to organised child sexual abuse offending, as these costs are presented elsewhere. To estimate the cost of child sexual abuse involving organised crime, we have estimated the number of reports to police, used a multiplier to account for unreported cases, and applied unit costs for health and economic losses. We used the latest official recorded crime statistics for victims of sexual assault in Australia pertaining to 2024 (ABS 2025c) for which the ABS reported 22,358 victims of sexual assault under the age of 18 years at the date of the incident.

A multiplier of 5.1 was used to account for cases of abuse not reported to police or a representative of the criminal justice system. This multiplier is based on a reporting rate of 19.7 percent identified among victim-survivors of child sexual abuse who gave evidence to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017: 37). As such, we estimated a total of 114,026 reported and unreported cases of child sexual abuse for 2024.

Unit costs for harms experienced by child victims of sexual abuse were derived from the Deloitte Access Economics (2018) report on the economic cost of violence against children and young people in 2016–17. Referring to the annual costs across Australia related to sexual abuse against those under 18 years of age—which quantified health system costs, lost productivity, disability adjusted life years and premature death—a unit cost per person of \$22,182 was derived. Inflated to 2023–24 values, this was estimated to be \$27,569. This unit cost was multiplied by the 114,026 cases to total \$3,143.6m in 2023–24 prices.

Using the workshopped estimates of organised crime involvement in child sexual abuse (ACC 2015a, 2015b) of 10 percent (low), 15 percent (medium) and 25 percent (high), the estimated losses range from \$314.4m (low), \$471.5m (medium) to \$785.9m (high; Table 5).

Table 5: Estimated costs of serious and organised crime involvement in child sexual abuse, 2023–24			
Estimated number victims of sexual assault aged under 18 (<i>n</i>)	22,358		
Multiplier	5.1		
Total reported and unreported victims (<i>n</i>)	114,026		
Unit cost 2023–24 (\$)	27,569		
Total estimated cost (\$m)	3,143.6		
Level of serious and organised crime involvement	Low (10%)	Medium (15%)	High (25%)
Costs attributable to serious and organised crime (\$m)	314.4	471.5	785.9

Illicit commodities

The serious and organised crime costs associated with illicit commodities other than illicit drugs include those relating to illicit tobacco, intellectual property crime, environmental crime, firearms trafficking and pure cybercrime.



Illicit commodities involving serious and organised crime cost the Australian economy up to \$8.6b in 2023–24

Illicit tobacco

In Australia, the tobacco market includes both legal and illicit tobacco. Illicit tobacco comprises loose-leaf tobacco or pre-rolled cigarettes that are either grown domestically or smuggled into Australia and sold without the payment of tax. Vapes and e-cigarettes, including those containing nicotine, were limited to those with a prescription in Australia in July 2024 (Therapeutic Goods Administration 2024). The current report does not include the costs associated with vaping products due to a lack of data on serious and organised criminal involvement in this market.

Illicit market size and loss of revenue

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement's (2020) inquiry into illicit tobacco reviewed various estimates of the size and value of the illicit tobacco market in Australia. The committee identified the ATO's tax gap estimate as likely to be the most independent and verifiable estimate of the undetected illicit tobacco being sold in Australia. The tobacco tax gap is the difference between the estimated value of excise or customs duty raised from tobacco according to the law and the value actually paid in any financial year. As such, we rely on the ATO's net tax gap estimate for our costing calculations.

The most recent report by the ATO (2024c) applies to 2022–23 and found that the net tobacco tax gap equated to approximately \$2.69b in lost excise revenue during that year (ATO 2024c). Over the past three financial years, the estimated tax gap increased from 10.4 percent (2020–21) to 13.1 percent (2021–22) and up to 14.3 percent (2022–23), representing an average increase of 17.6 percent annually. To estimate the net tobacco tax gap for 2023–24, the most recent estimate (\$2.69b in 2022–23) was inflated to 2023–24 values (\$2.80b), then increased to account for the average annual increase of 17.6 percent. As such, an estimated \$3,290m in potential revenue was lost in 2023–24 due to undetected illicit tobacco.

Health and social costs

In addition to loss of revenue, the illicit tobacco market has significant social costs, with tobacco use being the leading risk factor contributing to disease burden and deaths in Australia. To estimate these health and social costs, we first estimated the extent of current tobacco use among Australians, by referring to data collected through the National Drug Strategy Household Survey (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2024). The most recent survey was conducted in 2022–23, which found that 35 percent of people in Australia aged over 14 years had smoked in their lifetime, and 1.8 million (approximately 11.3 percent of the population) smoked daily. Unbranded (illicit) tobacco use was measured among respondents who had ever smoked, with 23 percent having smoked unbranded tobacco in their lifetime. Based on these findings, we estimated that 2.6 percent of the adult population in 2022–23 were daily smokers who have smoked unbranded tobacco in their lifetime (Smith 2024).

In the absence of more current data, we applied this estimate of the percentage of daily smokers who have used illicit tobacco to 2023–24. There is strong evidence that a growing proportion of smokers are using illicit tobacco (Cho, Bayly & Scollo 2025), and as such we applied the average annual increase in the net tobacco tax gap (17.6%) to the percentage of daily smokers who have used illicit tobacco (adjusted to 3.1%). Applying this percentage (3.1%) to the population of Australians aged over 14 years in June 2024 (estimated to be 22.4m people; ABS 2024b), we approximate that 684,918 daily smokers used unbranded tobacco in 2024.

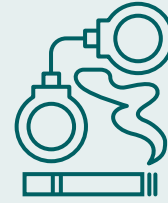
The most recent comprehensive estimate of the cost of smoking to Australia was produced by Whetton and colleagues (2019). They found that smoking cost the Australian economy more than \$136b annually in treatment and lost productivity costs in 2015–16 (equivalent to \$798 per smoker each year). We inflated this estimate to 2023–24 prices (RBA 2025), and multiplied the annual cost per smoker (\$1,009) to the approximately 684,918 Australians who used illicit tobacco in 2024. As such, we estimated that illicit tobacco cost the Australian economy \$690.9m in treatment and lost productivity costs during 2023–24.

Serious and organised crime involvement

Applying the low (57%), medium (78%) and high (100%) estimates of serious and organised crime involvement in the illicit tobacco market (ACC 2015a, 2015b) to the loss of tax revenue (\$3,290.0m) and the health and social costs (\$690.9m), we estimated that the total costs of illicit tobacco attributable to serious and organised crime ranged from \$2,269.1m (low), \$3,105.1m (medium) to \$3,980.9m (high) for 2023–24. A more detailed analysis of the costs of illicit tobacco is presented in Box 1.

Box 1: The direct costs of illicit tobacco

Illicit tobacco linked to serious and organised crime cost the Australian economy an estimated **\$4.0b** in 2023–24. These costs relate to the significant **healthcare costs and reduced productivity (\$0.7b** in 2023–24) among smokers, and the **lost tax revenue (\$3.3b** in 2023–24) to the government that cannot be spent on other services that benefit the Australian community.



Our data show that the costs of illicit tobacco linked to serious and organised crime have **risen substantially** in recent years, **increasing fourfold** since 2020–21 (\$1.0b). In 2023–24, illicit tobacco accounted for 5.1 percent of the total costs of serious and organised crime to the Australian economy, up from 1.7 percent in 2020–21. Illicit tobacco is second only to illicit drugs, as **the most costly illicit commodity** trafficked by serious and organised crime groups.

Importantly, our costings are almost certainly **an underestimate** as they exclude the market for illicit vapes and e-cigarettes. Since vaping products were restricted in July 2024, evidence suggests that there is a substantial and rapidly expanding market for these products. Federal authorities have reportedly **seized over 10 million vaping products** in Australia since the ban was introduced (Landau 2025), and one estimate valued the illicit vape market in Victoria alone to be **worth up to \$545.8m** (Public Accounts and Estimates Committee 2024).

Intellectual property crime

In the present context, intellectual property crime refers to three types of crime markets: counterfeit goods, digital piracy and the theft of trade secrets. Those involved in intellectual property crime range from members of the public to professionally organised networks, and the degree of serious and organised crime involvement varies considerably depending on the commodity in question. The theft of trade secrets is more likely to involve state-sponsored actors, who often target strategically valuable intellectual property developed in Australia. During 2023–24, trade secret theft involving state or state-sponsored actors was estimated to have cost billions for Australian businesses (\$1.9b); and for governments, universities and the not-for-profit sector (\$628m; Morgan & Voce 2025). Beyond this, much intellectual property crime in Australia comprises cross-border importation of counterfeit products such as clothing, footwear and luxury goods, and the domestic manufacture of goods that infringe copyright such as films, music, games and software. Moreover, many Australians who access pirated goods do so using digital platforms (such as peer-to-peer torrenting services) that can be coordinated by organised crime groups (Interpol 2025).

Counterfeit goods

To calculate the cost of counterfeit goods to the Australian economy, we first estimated the value of Australia's copyright industries by referring to a report by PwC (2017). Using a methodology developed by the World Intellectual Property Organization, which defined copyright industries as those which rely on copyright protection, the PwC report estimated Australia's copyright industries to be worth \$122.8b in 2015–16, equivalent to \$155.2b in 2023–24 values (RBA 2025). The report also found that the value of these industries increased by 5.3 percent between 2012 and 2016 (averaging 1.33% per year). Assuming the same rate of increase since 2015–16, we estimated that the value of Australia's copyright industries in 2023–24 was \$171.7b.

Research published by the OECD and the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) estimated the value of counterfeit goods as a proportion of world trade for the years 2013, 2016 and 2019 (OECD & EUIPO 2016, 2019, 2021), with estimates fluctuating between 2.5 percent (2013 and 2019) and 3.3 percent (2016) between these points in time. It is reasonable to assume that the median rate of 2.9 percent of world trade would likely apply to 2023–24. Applying the estimated world counterfeit trade rate of 2.9 percent to the value of Australia's copyright trade in 2023–24, we calculated the value of counterfeit and pirated goods in Australia to be \$4,979.7m.

Digital piracy

Research into the economic impact of piracy on the Australian economy was undertaken by Sphere Analysis for the Australian Content Industry Group (2011), with projections to 2016. It was estimated that the projected loss to retail content industries (music, film, publishing, games and software development) would be \$5,200m, and the projected revenue loss to the Commonwealth would be \$1,100m, totalling \$6,300m in 2016. This took account of growth in the population and the number of internet users, but assumed that all pirated online goods resulted in a loss of retail sales, which cannot be assumed for all products counterfeited. Inflating this projected loss (\$6,300m) to 2024 values (RBA 2025) results in an estimated loss for 2023–24 of \$8,011.0m.

Serious and organised crime involvement

Adding the estimated value of counterfeit goods in the Australian market in 2023–24 of \$4,979.7m to the value of digital piracy of online content of \$8,011.0m gives a total estimate of the value of relevant intellectual property infringement for 2023–24 of \$12,990.7m.

As not all intellectual property infringement would involve serious and organised crime, we applied low (5%), medium (15%) and high (25%) estimates (ACC 2015a, 2015b). The estimated costs of infringement committed by serious and organised crime in Australia for 2023–24 were between \$649.5m (low), \$1,948.6m (medium) and \$3,247.7m (high).

Environmental crime

Estimating the costs of environmental crime is difficult due to a lack of Australian data; however, the ACIC (2017a) has identified trade in illegal wildlife and illegal fishing practices as the primary forms of environmental crime in Australia. Native vegetation clearance and water theft have also been recognised as environmental crime types occurring in Australia (Bricknell 2010).

In the absence of more authoritative data on environmental crime in Australia, we adapted global evidence reported by Interpol, the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, and the Norwegian Center for Global Analyses (Nellemann et al. 2018). Nellemann et al.'s (2018) report found that environmental crime is the fourth most costly transnational organised crime category in the world, after drug trafficking, counterfeit crimes and human trafficking. It was estimated that environmental crime contributed a mean US\$195.5b to the cost of global illicit markets involving transnational organised crime in 2018 (Nellemann et al. 2018), representing a 14 percent increase from the previous estimate in 2016 (or 7% per year; Nellemann et al. 2016).

To calculate the costs for specific sectors impacted by environmental crime in Australia, we referred to the most recent report that estimated the global costs of individual sectors by Nellemann and colleagues (2016). As shown in Table 6, we adjusted the 2016 cost estimates for individual crime types by applying the overall annual rate of increase in the prevalence of global environmental crimes (7% per year) to calculate cost estimates for 2023–24. We then converted these estimates from US dollars into a percentage of world gross domestic product (GDP). To translate these estimates to the Australian context, we applied these percentages (of global GDP) to Australian GDP for 2023–24. The dollar amounts were then inflated from 2016 to 2024 values (RBA 2025). Finally, we applied the estimated range of serious and organised crime involvement (ACC 2015a, 2015b), from low (5%), medium (10%), and high (15%), acknowledging that the true extent of serious and organised crime involvement in each category of environmental crime in Australia requires further investigation.

Based on these calculations, we estimate that the costs of serious and organised environmental crime in Australia in 2023–24 was between \$456.2m (low), \$912.5m (medium) and \$1,368.7m (high).

Table 6: Costs of serious and organised crime involvement in environmental crime, 2023–24

	2016 estimates (mean)	Annual increase to 2024	Proportion of world GDP	Apply to Australia GDP	Inflate (2016 to 2024)	Cost involving serious and organised crime (A\$m)		
	US\$b	US\$b	%	A\$m	A\$m	5%	10%	15%
Forestry	102	159.1	0.145	3,937.6	4,723.0	236.2	472.3	708.5
Fisheries	18	28.1	0.026	695.4	834.1	41.7	83.4	125.1
Mining	30	46.8	0.043	1,158.1	1,389.2	69.5	138.9	208.4
Oil theft	21	32.8	0.030	811.7	973.6	48.7	97.4	146.0
Waste	11	17.2	0.016	425.6	510.6	25.5	51.1	76.6
Wildlife	15	23.4	0.021	579.1	694.6	34.7	69.5	104.2
Total				7,607.4	9,124.8	456.2	912.5	1,368.7

Note: World GDP (US\$110,060b) is reported for 2024 (International Monetary Fund 2025). Australian GDP (A\$2,567.51b) is reported for 2023–24 (ABS 2025a)

Firearms trafficking

The ACIC (2025a) has identified the involvement of serious and organised crime groups in the trafficking of firearms in Australia. These groups use illicit firearms to undertake criminal activities and protect their interests through intimidation and physical violence. The ACIC (2025a) conservatively estimated there to be 200,000 firearms in the domestic illicit market during June 2023, including 190,000 rifles (ie long arms) and 10,000 handguns. This estimate is based on a range of intelligence sources, including historical and updated firearm importation figures, seizure trends, and the number of firearms surrendered during Commonwealth, state and territory amnesties.

Estimates of the price for illicit firearms are diverse and relatively outdated. In 2015, the ACC estimated that black market prices for rifles were between \$3,000 and \$25,000, and prices for handguns were between \$1,500 and \$3,000, depending on the model, age and condition of the weapon. Higher prices for semi-automatic handguns (up to \$15,000) were cited by senior law enforcement officials in 2014 (Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee 2014: 51). More recently, Broadhurst and colleagues (2021) undertook research into the availability and cost of firearms sold on various online cryptomarkets during 2019. The mean price of a handgun was A\$1,234 (maximum of A\$13,088) and the mean price of a rifle was A\$1,817 (maximum of \$10,966). As these prices are based on international cryptomarkets during 2019, further research is needed to survey the current Australian market for illicit firearms, both online and offline.

We used the mean prices reported by Broadhurst et al. (2021) to calculate a conservative estimate of the cost of illicit firearms in Australia. After adjusting prices from 2019 to 2024 values (RBA 2025), we applied the mean price of a handgun (\$1,486) and rifle (\$2,189) to the 10,000 handguns and 190,000 rifles estimated to currently be in the illicit Australian market (ACIC 2025a). The total value of the illicit firearm market was estimated to be \$430.8m in 2023–24, including \$14.9m for handguns and \$415.9m for rifles. According to the ACC (2015a), the cost of firearms trafficking is equivalent to the value of illegal firearms that, had the funds not been used to purchase illicit firearms, would have been available to the community. However, there is no current reliable estimate of the money spent manufacturing or buying illicit firearms that have been diverted from the legal economy. Although some illicit firearms are purchased by serious and organised crime groups using the proceeds of other crime, it is arguable that the loss to the economy would amount to the loss of the investment value of these funds. Assuming a net return on investment of 2.5 percent per annum, the estimated minimum investment value lost in 2023–24 for handguns (\$0.4m) and rifles (\$10.4m) combined would be \$10.8m.

Workshopped estimates of serious and organised crime involvement in firearms trafficking (ACC 2015a, 2015b) of 75 percent (low), 90 percent (medium) and 100 percent (high) were applied to calculate a total loss to the economy of between \$8.1m (low), \$9.7m (medium) and \$10.8m (high; Table 7).

	Handguns	Rifles	All
Illicit market weapons, 2024 (<i>n</i>)	10,000	190,000	200,000
Price per firearm, 2019 (\$)	1,234	1,817	
Price per firearm inflated to 2024 (\$)	1,486	2,189	
Total value of firearm market, 2024 (\$m)	14.9	415.9	430.8
Investment loss 2.5% (\$m)	0.4	10.4	10.8
Cost involving serious and organised crime (\$m)			
Low (75%)			8.1
Medium (90%)			9.7
High (100%)			10.8

Pure cybercrime

Information and communications technology systems are used widely by government, businesses and consumers. There is considerable overlap between forms of cybercrime and related crime types, particularly financial crimes such as fraud. To avoid double-counting, this estimate is limited to 'pure' cybercrimes, which are criminal activities that can only be committed on computers, devices or other digital networks. Examples of pure cybercrimes include unauthorised access to networks (hacking), spreading viruses or malicious software (malware), modification of data, denial-of-service attacks, and impairment of systems. The current estimate does not include cybersecurity prevention and response costs, as these are counted elsewhere (see prevention and response costs section, page 38).



Pure cybercrime involving serious and organised cybercrime cost the Australian economy up to \$4.5b in 2023–24

Cybercrime affecting individuals

In 2024, the AIC surveyed a large non-probability sample of 10,335 online Australians regarding victimisation from various forms of cybercrime (Voce & Morgan 2025), with 19 percent of respondents who were not a business owner or operator reporting that they had been a victim of malware in the past 12 months. This rate of malware victimisation was used as a conservative estimate of the pure cybercrime victimisation rate. To estimate the costs associated with pure cybercrime incidents, we relied on an AIC bulletin on the cost of pure cybercrime (Teunissen, Voce & Smith 2021). This bulletin indicated that, during 2019, 14 percent of Australian adults had been a victim of pure cybercrime—specifically, device access, disruption and malfunction crimes—in the past 12 months, losing a median of \$267. The total economic impact of pure cybercrime amounted to \$3,499m, including money directly lost by victims (\$1,914m), money spent dealing with the consequences of victimisation (\$597.4m), and money spent on prevention costs (\$1,376m). Victims recovered \$388.7m. The net loss after recoveries (excluding prevention costs) was \$2,123.0m (Teunissen, Voce & Smith 2021). This was inflated from 2019 to 2024 values (RBA 2025), and then adjusted for the increase in the prevalence of pure cybercrime victimisation from 14 percent (Teunissen, Voce & Smith 2021) to 19 percent (Voce & Morgan 2025). The total estimated cost of pure cybercrime against individuals in Australia was \$2,692.8m in 2023–24.

Cybercrime affecting business

The most recent, robust and representative survey of cybercrime impacting businesses of all sizes comes from the ABS (2023b) *Characteristics of Australian Business* survey. The survey reported the prevalence of several types of cybersecurity incidents in the past 12 months, including fraud or scams (16.4%), unauthorised access to devices or networks (2.8%), improper use of devices or networks (1.2%), malware (5.2%), denial-of-service attacks (0.4%), disruption or defacing of online presence (1.4%), and impersonation of the business or its employees online or by email (4.9%). Overall, 22.1 percent of businesses reported having experienced at least one such cybersecurity incident, although this rate varied by business size. As frauds and scams are not considered pure cybercrime, these were excluded from our estimate of the proportion of businesses experiencing pure cybercrime (adjusted rate: 5.7%). Of these victim businesses, over half (55.5%) experienced a negative impact, such as direct financial losses, damaged hardware or software, loss of time or staff productivity, or downtime in service delivery. These impacts were more common among larger businesses (64.9%) compared to micro (55.8%), small (53.8%) and medium (57.6%) businesses.

The ABS (2023b) survey does not indicate the frequency of cybercrime incidents impacting businesses, and it is well recognised that large entities can experience multiple damaging incidents within a given year (IBM Corporation 2024). To account for the frequency of incidents, we relied on data from a survey of 2,000 businesses in the United Kingdom reported by the Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2024 (UK Home Office 2024). Half of the businesses surveyed had experienced a cybersecurity incident in the last 12 months, and among these victim businesses, over half (53%) reported such incidents happening at least once a month, and one-third (32%) reported incidents happening at least weekly. We used these data to estimate the proportion of Australian businesses that experienced one incident (15%), two incidents (26%) or three incidents (16%) of pure cybercrime during 2023–24. These proportions were then applied to the number of businesses operating in Australia in June 2024 reported by the ABS (2024a), including the number of micro (1–4 employees), small (5–19 employees), medium (20–199 employees) and large (200 or more employees) businesses (Table 8).

To estimate the cost to businesses of such incidents, we referred to the ASD's (2024) *Annual cyber threat report 2023–24*, which provides the average cost to businesses who report a cybercrime incident to the Australian Cyber Security hotline. The cost for micro-businesses (1–4 employees) was not reported, so we used the average cost to individuals who report to the hotline. Sole traders were not included in this analysis to avoid double-counting of cybercrime that impacts individuals, costed in the section above. This average cost per business was multiplied by the total estimated number of businesses that experienced a negative impact from pure cybercrime in the past 12 months. The total estimated cost of pure cybercrime incidents to Australian businesses in 2023–24 was \$2,797.0m.

Table 8: Prevalence and costs of pure cybercrime to Australian businesses in 2023–24

	Number of businesses (n) ^a	Pure cybercrime victim (%) ^b	Number of incidents ^c	Experienced negative impact (%) ^b	Average loss ^d	Estimated total cost (\$m)
Micro	693,558	4.7	70,736	55.8	\$30,700	1,211.7
Small	232,200	6.6	33,256	53.8	\$49,600	887.7
Medium	68,214	11.4	16,875	57.6	\$62,800	611.1
Large	5,189	18.6	2,094	64.9	\$63,602	86.5

a: Based on business size statistics in ABS (2024a). Sole traders with no employees ($n=1,663,837$) are not included

b: Based on ABS (2023b) *Characteristics of Australian Business* survey

c: Calculated by multiplying the estimated number of victim businesses by the average frequency of victimisation (based on UK Home Office 2024)

d: Based on average losses in the *Annual cyber threat report 2023–2024* (ASD 2024)

Cybercrime impacting government

To estimate the cost of pure cybercrime to government, we relied on data from ASD’s (2024) *Annual cyber threat report 2023–2024*, which reported that ASD were notified of 1,129 cyber incidents in 2023–24. Almost half of these incidents were reported by federal (37%) or state or local government (12%) agencies, equating to approximately 553 incidents. Although not all cybersecurity incidents are routinely reported to ASD (ASD 2024), unreported incidents are likely to reflect low-level or unsuccessful compromises with costs that are absorbed into cybersecurity expenditure accounted for elsewhere (see prevention and response costs section, page 38). Cybercrime incidents impacting government mostly constituted pure cybercrime involving compromised accounts (30%) or other assets (20%) or malware infection (20%). Therefore, we can assume that 70 percent of the 553 incidents ($n=387$) impacting government are related to pure cybercrime, equating to 387 incidents.

In the absence of data on the cost to governments of cybercrime incidents, we used recently published data from IBM Corporation (2024) on the cost of data breaches to large entities worldwide ($n=604$). These estimates included the cost of detection, investigation and escalation; notification of stakeholders and regulators; redress activities; regulatory fines; reputational damage; service interruption during system downtime; among other costs. The average cost per incident for entities in Australia during 2024 was US\$2.78m, or A\$4.33m (OECD 2025). The cost of a data breach varied substantially by sector, with the lowest average cost reported for the public sector (43% lower than the overall average across all sectors), including federal, state and local government agencies and non-governmental organisations. Therefore, we reduced the average cost per incident for entities in Australia (A\$4.33m) by 43 percent, to estimate that the average cost per incident to the Australian governments to be A\$2.27m. When the number of pure cybercrime incidents impacting government ($n=387$) was multiplied by the cost per incident (\$2.27m), we estimated that these pure cybercrime incidents cost government approximately \$955.1m in 2023–24.

Serious and organised crime involvement

Previous estimates of the involvement of serious and organised crime in pure cybercrime (Smith 2024) were adjusted to range between 19 percent (low), 47 percent (medium) and 70 percent (high), based on updated estimates of the proportion of cyber attacks involving state-sponsored actors (Morgan & Voce 2025). Future research should revise these percentages to take account of the changing involvement of serious and organised crime in pure cybercrime in recent years and the varying levels of involvement across different types of cybercrime (ASD 2024). Nonetheless, when applying these percentages, the costs of serious and organised crime involvement in pure cybercrime in 2023–24 were estimated to be between \$1,224.5m (low), \$3,029.1m (medium) and \$4,511.5m (high; Table 9).

Table 9: Estimated costs of serious and organised crime involvement in pure cybercrime, 2023–24 (\$m)

Victim type	Net loss	Cost involving serious and organised crime		
		Low (19%)	Medium (47%)	High (70%)
Individuals	2,692.8	511.6	1,265.6	1,885.0
Micro business	1,211.7	230.2	569.5	848.2
Small business	887.7	168.7	417.2	621.4
Medium business	611.1	116.1	287.2	427.8
Large business	86.5	16.4	40.6	60.5
Government	955.2	181.5	448.9	668.6
Total	6,445.0	1,224.5	3,029.1	4,511.5

Serious and organised crime enabling costs

Enablers of serious and organised crime are secondary activities undertaken by serious and organised criminals to protect their illicit profits and their group members (Morgan & Dowling 2023). The costs of enabling activities include the costs of identity crime, corruption of public officials, violence used to intimidate and extort funds from victims, and commissions paid for laundering the proceeds of crime. Due to a lack of data on the value of assets held by serious and organised crime offenders in Australia, the current enabling costs do not include the income that could have been generated by investing such assets or the amount lost to the economy through lost taxation revenue.



Enabling activities of serious and organised crime cost the Australian economy up to \$1.5b in 2023–24

Identity crime

To estimate the total direct costs related to criminal misuse of personal information, also known as identity crime, we calculated separate measurements for identity crime against Commonwealth entities, identity crime against individuals, serious cases of identity crime, and identity crime recorded in official police crime statistics. Adjustments were made to guard against double-counting across these categories. To make these separate estimates, we relied on previous methodologies developed by the AIC to quantify the extent of identity crime (McAlister et al. 2023), the cost of identity crime (Smith & Franks 2020), the cost of fraud against the Commonwealth (McAlister & Bricknell 2025) and the costs of serious and organised crime (Smith 2024). The costs in this section do not include the consequential costs of serious and organised fraud (included in consequential crime), or the indirect costs of preventing and responding to identity crime (included in indirect costs).

Identity crime affecting Commonwealth entities

For Commonwealth entities, the estimate was based on data reported in the AIC's Fraud Against the Commonwealth census for 2023–24 (McAlister & Bricknell 2025), during which 288,808 allegations of fraud were received or detected by Australian Government entities.

In 2023–24, 3,957 fraud investigations were finalised, meaning that investigation of the allegations had concluded, the allegations had been referred to a law enforcement or prosecution entity, debts or liabilities arising from the investigation had been written off as unrecoverable, or the individual who was the subject of allegations had died. Approximately 3,025 finalised investigations were substantiated in full or in part (based on the proportions reported). The total losses reported by entities were worth \$106.9m (McAlister & Bricknell 2025), equating to approximately \$35,344 per finalised substantiated allegation. A multiplier of 1.15 was then applied (Smith et al. 2014) to account for frauds that were undetected or not included in the annual census. This inflated the total number of finalised substantiated allegations to 3,479, with an estimated total value of \$122.9m.

Of the amounts lost to fraud in 2023–24, entities recovered \$6.3m in reparation or repayment, although not all of the funds recovered related to losses incurred in the same year. It was not possible to determine if the amounts recovered included any incidents of identity fraud. Deducting the amount recovered from the total leaves a net total loss of \$116.6m. Consistent with previous iterations of this report (Smith 2024), the proportion of 40 percent attributable to identity crime was used, resulting in a total value of identity crime against Commonwealth entities of \$46.6m. Beyond the money directly lost or stolen by criminals, it was not possible to measure other direct or indirect costs to Commonwealth entities associated with incidents, such as administrative or legal costs. The total direct cost of identity crime affecting Commonwealth entities in 2023–24 was \$46.6m (Table 10).

Table 10: Estimated direct cost of identity crime affecting Commonwealth entities, 2023–24	
Finalised and substantiated allegations (<i>n</i>) ^a	3,025
Multiplier (for unreported or undetected fraud)	1.15
Allegations × multiplier (<i>n</i>)	3,479
Unit cost (\$)	35,344
Subtotal losses (\$m)	122.9
Recovered amounts (\$)	6,322,566
Total costs (\$m)	116.6
Proportion related to identity crime (%)	40
Total direct identity crime costs to Commonwealth entities (\$m)	46.6

a: In the 2023–24 Fraud Against the Commonwealth report, the number of substantiated allegations was reported for all investigations (not just finalised investigations). Therefore, the number of finalised investigations that related to substantiated allegations has been estimated here

Identity crime affecting individuals

The cost to individuals of identity crime is best estimated using crime victimisation surveys, as these avoid the need to employ multipliers to inflate the number of offences recorded by police to account for unreported crimes.

The most authoritative data source on the prevalence of identity crime for the 2023–24 year was the Personal Fraud survey conducted by the ABS (2025b). Among people aged 15 years and over, 1.2 percent had experienced identity theft in the previous 12 months, 3.1 percent experienced a scam, and 2.0 percent (*n*=433,000) experienced online impersonation. Each of these activities involve an element of identity crime. In the previous 12 months, 9.9 percent had experienced card fraud, although not all such incidents involve identity crime. To estimate the prevalence of identity crime impacting individual Australians, a rate of 5.6 percent was selected as the midway point between rates for identity theft (1.2%) and card fraud (9.9%). Applying this victimisation rate (5.6%) to population data (ABS 2025b), we estimated that approximately 1.25 million people aged 15 years or over were the victim of identity crime in 2023–24.

Based on McAlister et al. (2023), we estimated that 80 percent of the 1.25 million victims of identity crime experienced a direct financial loss, with a median loss of \$300, which was inflated to 2024 values (\$309). As such, we estimated direct losses for individual identity crime victims to total \$310.1m.

In addition to money stolen, the estimated cost to individual victims of identity crime includes various out-of-pocket losses, such as administrative, legal and bank fees and consultations for psychological or medical services. In the absence of relevant Australian research on these additional direct costs, we relied on survey data collected by the US Bureau of Justice Statistics in 2021 (Harrell & Thompson 2023), which found that 3.8 percent of identity theft victims reported incurring additional costs related to the incident (median of A\$65) in the ensuing 12 months. Based on these data, and assuming that 90 percent of these additional direct costs would have involved identity crime, these costs result in an estimate of an additional \$2.6m. The total direct cost of identity crime to individuals was estimated to be \$312.7m in 2023–24 (Table 11).

Table 11: Estimated direct cost of identity crime to individuals, 2023–24

Population estimate (15 years of age or over) (m)	22.4
Identity fraud victimisation rate (%)	5.6
Identity crime victims (m)	1.2
Victims suffering a direct financial loss (80%) (m)	1.0
Median out-of-pocket loss per victim (\$)	309
Total direct costs of identity crime to individuals (\$m)	310.1
Additional direct identity crime costs (\$m)	2.6
Total direct costs (\$m)	312.7

To avoid double-counting with police-recorded fraud offences (below), we calculated the proportion of identity crime victims who reported to police. Survey data collected from a large non-probability sample of 10,335 online Australians in 2024 (Voce & Morgan 2025) found that, among respondents who had been a victim of identity crime and misuse ($n=2,018$), 10.3 percent made a formal report to police. Thus, we estimated that 10.3 percent of the 1.25 million victims of identity crime made a formal report to police, equating to 128,750 incidents.

Serious identity crime

In addition to high-volume, low-value identity crimes targeting government entities and individuals, a separate estimate must be made for the proportion of identity crimes that involve sophisticated, complex and organised operations, as these often incur large economic losses for victims, particularly businesses (Smith 2018a).

In 2024, businesses made 4,933 scam reports to the National Anti-Scam Centre (Australian Competition and Consumer Commission 2025), worth a total of \$29.5m. Losses for medium or large businesses were not reported by the centre for 2024; however, the number of scam reports by small businesses were comparable between 2021 ($n=1,983$) and 2024 ($n=1,909$). As such, the current analysis uses the estimated number of serious identity fraud incidents ($n=455$) for 2022–23, with the same multiplier (2.17) used to represent 46 percent of cases being reported officially (Smith 2024).

The unit cost of \$1.7m was based on the latest industry research (Association of Certified Fraud Examiners 2024), but an allowance of 17 percent was deducted for recoveries, again based on the recoveries recorded in the Asia-Pacific region (Association of Certified Fraud Examiners 2024). In total, 40 percent of losses were attributable to identity crime, as in previous reports (Smith 2024). It was estimated that serious cases of identity crime cost a total of \$557.3m for 2023–24 (Table 12).

Table 12: Estimated direct costs of serious identity crime, 2023–24	
Incidents (<i>n</i>)	455
Multiplier	2.17
Incidents × multiplier (<i>n</i>)	987
Unit cost (\$m)	1.7
Unit cost × incidents (\$m)	1,678.5
Subtotal minus recovered funds 17% (\$m)	1,393.1
Related to identity crime (%)	40
Total costs related to identity crime (\$m)	557.3

Police recorded offences

Finally, we estimated losses attributable to police recorded fraud and deception offences for the year 2023–24, based on the number of offences recorded by state and territory police in 2023–24 (162,542 offences). To avoid double-counting, deductions were made for 3,957 finalised Commonwealth fraud cases (*n*=3,957), serious fraud matters (*n*=455), and individual victims of identity crime who made a formal report to police (*n*=128,750), all referenced above. The remaining 29,380 fraud offences were then used to estimate costs not captured in other sections. A multiplier of eight was applied to account for unrecorded matters, based on survey data collected from a large non-probability sample of 10,335 online Australians in 2024 (Voce & Morgan 2025), which found that 12.5 percent of respondents who had been a victim of fraud and scams (*n*=979) made a formal report to police. Applying this multiplier allowed us to calculate the total estimated number of recorded and unrecorded incidents (*n*=235,040).

Consistent with previous iterations of this report (Smith 2024), it was estimated that 68 percent of frauds entail misuse of personal information. As such, costs were based on 159,827 identity crime incidents, including recorded (*n*=19,978) and unrecorded (*n*=139,849) incidents.

We relied on prior cost estimates by Mayhew (2003b), inflated to 2023–24 values (RBA 2025), to estimate the specific costs incurred by recorded (\$18,397) and unrecorded (\$2,955) identity crime matters. Combining the cost of recorded (\$367.5m) and unrecorded (\$413.2m) matters, the total cost of all identity crime incidents was \$780.8m in 2023–24. When adjusting for findings by McAlister and colleagues (2023), who found that 52 percent of identity crime losses were reimbursed, the net loss for identity crime matters was \$374.8m in 2023–24.

Based on data from the US Bureau of Justice Statistics (Harrell & Thompson 2023), we estimated that additional costs were incurred by 3.8 percent of identity crime victims ($n=29,380$), at a median cost of A\$65 per victim in 2023–24 dollars (RBA 2025). We estimated that additional direct costs related to identity crime would total \$394,773. When combined with direct costs, we estimate that total direct costs incurred by police recorded identity crimes were \$375.2m in 2023–24 (Table 13).

Table 13: Estimated direct cost of police recorded identity crime, 2023–24

Net incidents (n)	29,380
Incidents \times multiplier of eight (n)	235,040
Incidents involving identity crime (68% of incidents) (n)	159,827
Recorded incidents (n)	19,978
Unrecorded incidents (n)	139,849
Unit cost for recorded fraud (\$)	\$18,397
Unit cost for unrecorded fraud (\$)	\$2,955
Loss subtotal (\$m)	780.8
Recovered funds 52% (\$m)	406.0
Subtotal (\$m)	374.8
Additional direct costs (\$)	394,773
Total direct costs (\$m)	375.2

Summary: Identity crime

Serious and organised crime is involved in acquiring and selling personal information as well as using stolen credentials to facilitate other types of crime. Information provided by the ACC (2015a, 2015b) was used to estimate serious and organised crime involvement to range from 20 percent (low), to 40 percent (medium), to 60 percent (high). Applying these proportions of serious and organised crime involvement to the latest estimate of direct identity crime costs for 2023–24 (Table 14) results in costs of between \$258.4m (20%), \$516.7m (40%) and \$775.1m (60%).

Table 14: Estimated direct costs of serious and organised identity crime, 2023–24 (\$m)

Category	Total costs	Involving serious and organised crime		
		Low (20%)	Medium (40%)	High (60%)
Commonwealth entities	46.6	9.3	18.6	28.0
Individuals	312.7	62.5	125.1	187.6
Serious fraud	557.3	111.5	222.9	334.4
Police recorded	375.2	75.0	150.1	225.1
Total	1,291.8	258.4	516.7	775.1

Corruption

The costs of serious and organised crime involvement in corrupt conduct were estimated using the same methodology as previous iterations (Smith 2024), which involved summing the number of allegations of corrupt conduct recorded by each of Australia’s eight principal anti-corruption agencies:

- the National Anti-Corruption Commission (2024);
- the Independent Commission Against Corruption (2024) in New South Wales;
- the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission (2024) in Victoria;
- the Crime and Corruption Commission (2024) in Queensland;
- the Corruption and Crime Commission (2024) in Western Australia;
- the Independent Commission Against Corruption (2024) in South Australia;
- the Integrity Commission (2024) in Tasmania; and
- the Independent Commission Against Corruption (2024) in the Northern Territory.

The National Anti-Corruption Commission replaced the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity in 2023, as an independent Australian Government agency that detects, investigates and reports on serious or systemic corrupt conduct in the Australian Government public sector.

In 2023–24, the eight agencies received at least 20,728 complaints, reports or notifications of alleged corrupt conduct that fell within their individual jurisdictions. It is important to acknowledge that definitions and jurisdictions over corrupt conduct vary by agency, and each agency differs in the way it reports, manages and resolves these matters. Nonetheless, annual reports for 2023–24 show that 298 matters were reviewed and assessed as potentially involving serious corrupt conduct, and criminal convictions were obtained in 18 cases.

Although some of the eight agencies’ annual reports provide information about the potential economic losses involved, the reports do not give precise indications of the actual costs to the economy incurred in these cases. Quantifying costs is also difficult in cases in which the corrupt conduct had no direct financial impact. Thus, potential costs are based on the median losses from a global sample of fraud cases reported in the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners’ (2024) *Occupational fraud 2024: A report to the nations*. The most recent report is based on survey data collected from 1,921 certified fraud examiners globally between July and September 2023. The survey found that 48 percent of occupational fraud cases involved some form of corruption and the median loss was US\$200,000 per case, equivalent to A\$309,368 in 2024 Australian dollars (OECD 2025; RBA 2025).

To account for unreported matters, a multiplier of 1.8 was applied to the 298 matters finalised by Australian anti-corruption agencies in 2023–24, based on a 57 percent referral rate for occupational fraud cases (Association of Certified Fraud Examiners 2024). The median unit cost of \$309,368 was then applied to the estimated 536 reported and unreported cases of corruption in 2023–24, equating to a total estimated cost of corruption of \$165.9m.

Applying the workshopped estimate of the involvement of serious and organised crime in cases of corruption (ACC 2015a, 2015b), we estimated that the costs range from \$16.6m (low, 10% involvement), \$66.4m (medium, 40%), up to \$124.4m (high, 75%).

Violence

Some crimes such as kidnapping, abduction, blackmail and extortion have a particular relevance to serious and organised crime and can be considered an enabler of serious and organised criminal activities where violence and threats of violence are used to protect the profits or members of a criminal enterprise.

To estimate the economic impact of these violent crimes, we referred to crime statistics published in *Recorded crime – victims* by the ABS (2025c). The most recent data available were for 2024 (ABS 2025c), during which there were 2,240 recorded victims of blackmail or extortion and 571 recorded victims of abduction or kidnapping. To account for unrecorded offences, a multiplier of three was applied to blackmail and extortion offences, while a multiplier of one was used for kidnapping and abduction offences, consistent with previous reports (Smith 2024).

To calculate the costs incurred by these violent offences, we applied previous estimates of the cost of assault to the Australian economy (Smith et al. 2014), which accounts for property loss, medical costs, lost output and intangible costs due to victimisation. These estimates were produced in 2011 (\$3,912), and when inflated to 2023–24 values (RBA 2025) the estimated cost was \$5,465 per incident. Using these calculations, we estimated cost of organised crime involvement in enabling violent crimes to be between \$0.4m (low, 1%), \$0.8m (medium, 2%) and \$2.0m (high, 5%) for 2023–24 (Table 15).

Table 15: Costs of violence as an enabler of serious and organised crime, 2023–24		
	Kidnapping/abduction	Blackmail/extortion
Estimated recorded victims	571	2,240
Multiplier	1	3
Total victims (n)	571	6,720
Unit cost 2023–24 (\$)	5,465	5,465
Total cost (\$m)	3.1	36.7
Costs attributable to serious and organised crime (\$)		
Low (1%)	31,205	367,248
Medium (2%)	62,410	734,496
High (5%)	156,026	1,836,240

Money laundering

Money laundering is the process of concealing the origins of illicit funds to reduce the risk of detection and confiscation by authorities. This report estimates the costs to the Australian economy due to the commissions paid to individuals who facilitate money laundering. Facilitators may enable money laundering by collecting the proceeds of crime, obtaining professional advice, transferring funds as advised, coordinating with other facilitators, or carrying out other processes to integrate proceeds of crime into legitimate income sources. The ACIC has estimated that the value of commissions charged in Australia for laundering the proceeds of crime could range between six and seven percent of proceeds available for laundering (Smith 2024). Proceeds of crime generated outside Australia but brought into Australia for laundering have not been counted due to a lack of data on the scale of this activity. Accordingly, the present estimate of money laundering commission payments is likely to be highly conservative.

We estimated the proceeds of crime generated by each of the criminal activities included in this report. For direct serious and organised criminal activities, proceeds were based on the high estimates of serious and organised crime involvement in each crime type: financial crime (\$13,241.9m), intellectual property crime (\$3,247.7m), environmental crime (\$1,368.7m), firearms trafficking (\$10.8m), pure cybercrime (\$4,511.5m), identity crime (\$775.1m) and corruption (\$124.4m). The proceeds of crime for illicit drugs were based on the funds spent buying illicit drugs (\$10,930.9m) and the lost tax revenue for illicit tobacco (\$3,290.0m). Proceeds for direct consequential serious and organised offending, calculated in the next section, were estimated to be \$468.3m. The total proceeds for all serious and organised crime were \$37,969.3m in 2023–24. This represents the total pool of funds available for laundering in Australia.

Not all proceeds of crime are dealt with by organised crime in a way that requires a commission to be paid. It has been estimated that one-quarter (25%) of illicit funds require the assistance of professional launderers (Smith 2024), especially large-scale proceeds generated through drug trafficking and financial crime. Applying this estimate to the total estimated proceeds of crime for 2023–24 (\$9,492.3m), and assuming an average commission charged by money launderers of 6.5 percent, the total value of commissions paid to money launderers is estimated to be \$617.0m. However, not all money laundering is commissioned by serious and organised crime. Using the ACC's (2015a, 2015b) previously workshopped estimates, we estimate the total cost of commissions paid by serious and organised crime for money laundering during 2023–24 ranged between \$308.5m (low, 50%), \$462.8m (medium, 75%) and \$586.2m (high, 95%).

Consequential organised crime costs

Consequential organised crime costs relate to the costs of conventional crimes committed as a direct or indirect consequence of serious and organised criminal conduct. Direct consequential crimes include conventional offences committed by organised crime groups (eg organised shop theft) or committed to facilitate serious and organised criminal activities (eg arson used to intimidate businesses). Indirect consequential crimes include those undertaken to generate funds used to support involvement in serious and organised criminal activities or that result from being involved in serious and organised crime related activities. Indirect crime can include, for instance, drug users engaging in acquisitive crime to fund their drug purchases, or engaging in violent crime while intoxicated. In Box 2, we present a case study of the recent escalation in violence observed in some Australian cities occurring as a direct consequence of organised crime involvement in the Australian illicit tobacco market.



Consequential crimes attributable to serious and organised crime cost the Australian economy up to \$10.9b in 2023–24

Box 2: Escalating violence resulting from organised crime involvement in the Australian illicit tobacco market

An extremely lucrative market for illicit tobacco products (including vapes) in Australia has rapidly grown in recent years. With vast profits to be made, multiple serious and organised crime groups have become involved in the supply of illicit tobacco, resulting in a significant increase in violence (Martin & Jegasothy 2025).



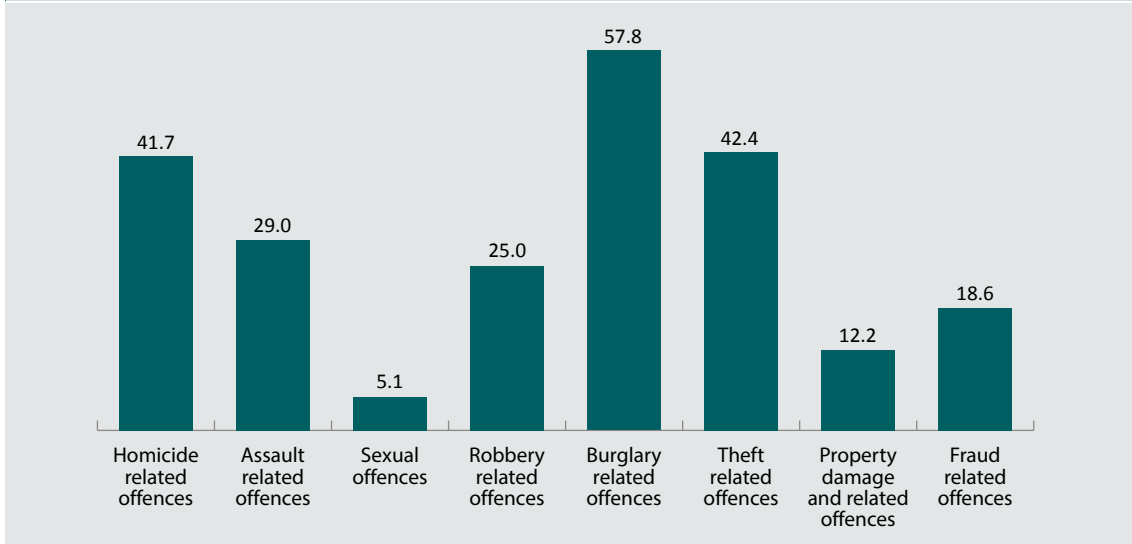
In the two years since January 2023, there have been over **200 targeted arson attacks** against premises selling illicit tobacco, as rival criminal groups compete to establish dominance in this emerging market. These territorial disputes have been linked to a number of **homicides, kidnappings, assaults, robberies, and instances of extortion** targeting illegal tobacconists, and also legitimate retailers who refuse to sell illicit products (Martin & Jegasothy 2025).

Ordinary bystanders with no known connection to these organised criminal activities have been embroiled in this intensifying violence. In January 2025, a Melbourne woman died in an arson attack on a residential house when organised criminals firebombed the wrong address (Darling & Juanola 2025).

Updated methodology for consequential crimes

The current methodology used to estimate the costs of indirect consequential crime has been improved upon from previous iterations of this report (Smith 2024). The primary improvement made involves integrating new data on the proportion of specific types of criminal offending that is attributable to drugs or alcohol, drawn from a large sample of police detainees in Australia (Voce et al. forthcoming). This study estimated the proportion of specific offences attributable to methamphetamine, heroin, cannabis and MDMA use (see Figure 1). Applying these ‘attributable fractions’ allowed us to calculate more precise and accurate estimates of the level of indirect consequential crime related to the use of illicit drugs that are sourced from serious and organised criminal markets. Offences related to kidnapping, abduction, blackmail and extortion have been excluded from these estimates to avoid double-counting with violence as an enabler of crime. For example, 162,542 fraud offences were recorded by police; however, 153,140 have already been counted above (in the section *Violence as an enabler*), in relation to Commonwealth fraud cases ($n=3,957$), serious fraud matters ($n=455$), individual victims of identity crime ($n=128,750$), and police recorded identity crime offences ($n=19,978$). Thus, to avoid double-counting with identity crime, costings for consequential crime were only calculated for the remaining 9,402 fraud offences.

Figure 1: Self-reported attributions of offences to illicit drug use among police detainees, by principal offence type (%)



Note: Illicit drug use includes use of methamphetamine, cannabis, heroin and/or MDMA. Methamphetamine was the most commonly attributed drug, reportedly contributing to large proportions of homicides (41.7%), assaults (21.6%), burglaries (48.3%), theft offences (36.8%), and fraud offences (18.6%). Homicide and related offences include manslaughter and driving causing death. Property damage includes arson

Source: Voce et al. forthcoming

To estimate costs of consequential serious and organised crime for 2023–24, we undertook several calculations. First, we calculated the proportion of consequential offences that were *indirectly* attributable to serious and organised crime, using the updated data on the proportion of specific offences attributed to specific illicit drugs (Voce et al. forthcoming; Figure 1).

We used the estimated proportion of each offence type attributable to the four major illicit drug types included in that study. However, not all illicit drug use is associated with serious and organised crime, as some drugs are grown or manufactured by individual users. We therefore applied the workshopped estimates of the proportion of each illicit drug market that involves serious and organised crime (ACC 2015a, 2015b). For example, the proportion of assaults related to cannabis use (9.8%) was adjusted based on low (20%), medium (40%) and high (60%) estimates of the involvement of serious and organised crime in the cannabis market, with revised attributable fractions ranging from 2.0 percent (low), 3.9 percent (medium) to 5.9 percent (high). The adjusted attributable fractions for the indirect consequential crimes are available in the *Appendix* (Table A1).

Second, we relied on workshopped estimates of the proportion of conventional crimes that were *directly* attributable to serious and organised crime (ACC 2015a, 2015b), also presented in the *Appendix* (Table A1). We then combined the two estimates for the proportions of conventional crimes that were indirectly and directly attributable to serious and organised crime. This allowed us to create combined estimates (low, medium and high) of the number of police recorded offences for each crime type that are attributable to serious and organised crime (Table 16).

Next, the number of police recorded offences for each crime type was calculated using official police statistics for 2023–24 for each state and territory (Table 16). Recorded offence categories differ across jurisdictions, and some jurisdictions provide only broad offence categories (eg homicide) while others disaggregate subtypes (eg murder, manslaughter and attempted murder). In these instances, we calculated the average proportion of subtypes that comprise the broad offence category (eg the proportion of homicide offences that are manslaughter) based on data from jurisdictions that do provide this detailed itemisation, and applied these averages to the jurisdictions that do not disaggregate offence types. A multiplier was applied to account for unreported or unrecorded offences (ACC 2015a, 2015b).

Table 16: Total estimated proportion of consequential crimes that are directly or indirectly attributable to serious and organised crime

Offence type	Total recorded and unrecorded offences (n)	Proportion directly or indirectly attributable to serious and organised crime (%)		
		Low	Medium	High
Homicide and manslaughter	474	22.9	29.0	45.4
Driving causing death	190	20.9	26.0	38.4
Attempted murder	105	25.9	35.0	55.4
Assault	2,349,029	14.2	18.6	27.6
Sexual offences	771,982	2.6	3.2	4.5
Robbery	71,497	13.5	20.7	31.4
Burglary	809,918	39.8	55.2	74.9
Stealing a motor vehicle	78,474	28.1	38.3	54.0
Stealing from a motor vehicle	311,917	23.1	28.3	39.1
Stealing from shop	2,859,184	23.4	29.3	41.0
Stealing other	1,114,243	23.3	29.1	40.0
Property damage	1,192,425	6.9	9.0	12.4
Arson	37,245	7.7	10.5	16.4
Fraud-related offences ^a	9,402	11.3	16.2	25.8

a: To avoid double-counting of identity crime offences, only 9,402 (out of 162,542) recorded fraud offences were included in these calculations

Note: Offence data were sourced from ACT Policing (2025); Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (2024) in New South Wales; Crime Statistics Agency (2024) in Victoria; Northern Territory Department of the Attorney-General and Justice (2024); Queensland Police Service (2024); South Australia Police (2024); Tasmanian Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (2024); and Western Australia Police Force (2024). Attribution estimates were calculated by combining the percentage of consequential offending directly and indirectly related to serious and organised crime, available in the *Appendix* (Table A1)

Finally, to calculate the costs incurred per criminal offence, we used detailed estimates of the cost of specific types of conventional crime, which accounted for property losses, medical costs, lost output, and intangible costs per incident of victimisation (Smith et al. 2014). These estimates (produced in 2011) were then inflated to 2023–24 values (RBA 2025). Crimes committed by serious and organised criminals often generate greater harms—and higher costs—than crimes committed by other criminals (ACC 2015a, 2015b). Therefore, we applied a multiplier (ACC 2015a, 2015b) to the costs incurred from conventional crimes that were directly attributable to serious and organised crime. Costs per incident are presented in the *Appendix* (Table A2). Finally, the cost per incident was multiplied by the number of consequential offences attributable to serious and organised crime. In total, we estimated that consequential serious and organised crime cost Australia between \$1,917.9m (low), \$3,750.9m (medium) and \$10,932.5m (high) in 2023–24 (Table 17).

These estimates are based on the updated methodology used to calculate the costs of consequential serious and organised crime. The previous methodology, as used in past iterations of this report (see Smith 2024) but applied to recorded crime statistics for 2023–24, would have produced different estimates of between \$2,602.3m (low), \$5,170.5m (medium), and \$9,975.8m (high) in 2023–24.

Offence type	Total costs of consequential crime attributable to serious and organised crime (\$m)		
	Low	Medium	High
Homicide and manslaughter	222.3	324.0	991.8
Driving causing death	75.4	111.0	361.2
Attempted murder	1.3	2.2	6.3
Assault	103.7	141.1	427.2
Sexual offences	55.9	73.0	208.2
Robbery	26.7	65.6	188.6
Burglary	744.3	1,710.5	4,385.6
Stealing a motor vehicle	151.4	450.9	1,328.8
Stealing from a motor vehicle	91.8	112.8	312.4
Stealing from shop	67.2	150.0	379.4
Stealing other	137.2	184.0	491.1
Property damage	115.3	208.3	815.5
Arson	113.9	190.5	957.3
Fraud-related offences	11.5	26.9	79.2
Total (\$m)	1,917.9	3,750.9	10,932.5

Proceeds of consequential crimes

In addition to the costs of consequential serious and organised crime to the Australian economy, we also estimated the proceeds of crime generated from each type of consequential crime. Proceeds were calculated for consequential acquisitive crimes, which are often undertaken principally to generate funds for the offender, that were committed by organised crime groups or committed to facilitate serious and organised criminal activities (direct consequential crimes). Not all crime types generate illicit funds, with most violent crimes having no direct economic benefit to the offender. As such, we did not calculate proceeds of crime associated with arson, criminal damage, violent or sexual offences, or indirect consequential crimes.

From the total costs of serious and organised consequential crime (high estimate, Table 17), we calculated the costs specifically related to direct consequential acquisitive crimes (Table 18). To calculate the proceeds of these crimes, we relied on estimates of the cost per incident for different types of offences produced by Smith et al. (2014), which specifies the value of stolen goods or funds. Using this information, we estimated the average value of stolen funds or property as a proportion of the average total cost per incident for each crime type. The value of stolen funds was not available for police recorded incidents of fraud in Smith et al. (2014), so we applied stakeholder estimates (ACC 2015a, 2015b) that 95 percent of fraud-related costs were proceeds of crime. Applying these proportions allowed us to estimate the value of stolen funds or property for each type of direct consequential crime. In total, we estimated the proceeds of crime generated from direct consequential serious and organised offending to be \$468.3m in 2023–24.

	Costs of direct consequential crime attributable to serious and organised crime (\$m) ^a	Lost goods/funds as a proportion of total crime costs (%) ^b	Total proceeds for 2023–24 (\$m)
Robbery	18.9	12.2	2.3
Burglary	657.8	49.6	326.2
Vehicle theft	199.3	61.9	123.4
Theft from vehicles	0.3	37.2	0.1
Shop theft	7.6	72.9	5.5
Other theft	4.9	66.5	3.3
Fraud	7.9	95.0	7.5
Total (\$m)	896.7		468.3

a: Calculated from the high estimate of total costs related to serious and organised crime (Table 17), and then applying the workshopped (high) estimates for the proportion of conventional crimes directly attributable to serious and organised crime (ACC 2015a, 2015b). These attributions are available in the *Appendix (Table A1)*

b: Average value of funds/property lost per incident as a proportion of the total cost per incident of that crime type, based on Smith et al. (2014)

Indirect costs of preventing and responding to serious and organised crime

In this section, we estimate the indirect costs to the public and private sectors of preventing and responding to serious and organised crime. We relied on the estimates of agency resources associated with serious and organised crime (ACC 2015b), with low, medium and high estimates for each cost.

Public sector costs

Public sector costs refer to the expenses of Commonwealth, state and territory government entities that relate to preventing and responding to serious and organised crime. Prevention costs include those associated with physical, personnel and digital security; awareness-raising campaigns; legislative and policy development by government; and other measures to guard against victimisation. Response costs include expenses incurred in dealing with the consequences of victimisation, such as repairing systems, reporting to official agencies, and liaising with police and regulatory agencies to assist with their investigations.



Public sector costs related to preventing and responding to serious and organised crime were up to \$10.8b in 2023–24

Not all government entities deal with crime-related matters, and so we estimated the proportion of relevant entities' annual recurrent expenditure that had a crime-related component. We considered all government agencies in the justice, law enforcement and crime and justice policy sectors across all jurisdictions. The total expenditure of each agency was sourced from its annual report for 2023–24 or from actual expenditure detailed in the *Report on government services 2025* (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision 2025).

After calculating each entity’s expenditure on crime-related functions, a deduction was made for any income received from enforcement action to recover proceeds of crime. For present purposes, the amount actually recovered as a result of confiscation and forfeiture action was used rather than funds restrained—that is a considerably higher amount than actual funds recovered. In the case of operational and regulatory agencies such as police, crime commissions and regulators, fines and penalties were not included. In the absence of more precise information, the value of funds actually recovered as a result of confiscation and forfeiture action and paid to Treasury during 2023–24 was deducted from the total expenditure of each relevant entity.

We then estimated the proportion of each entity’s net crime-related expenditure that related to serious and organised crime (ACC 2015a, 2015b). Percentage allocations for different types of government entities are available in the *Appendix* (Table A3). The results of the calculations of public sector costs relating to serious and organised crime are detailed in Table 19. In total, we estimated that indirect costs to the public sector attributable to preventing or responding to serious and organised crime ranged between \$6,313.5m (low), \$8,521.4m (medium) and \$10,765.3m (high) in 2023–24.

Table 19: Estimated public sector costs of preventing and responding to serious and organised crime, 2023–24 (\$m)

	Relevant agencies’ expenses	Crime-related expenses	Recovered proceeds of crime	Net crime expenses	Cost relating to serious and organised crime		
					Low	Medium	High
Cth	16,180.2	6,355.6	48.2	6,307.4	1,449.7	2,045.5	2,672.5
NSW	8,714.4	7,526.1	29.7	7,496.4	1,457.7	1,929.7	2,499.2
Vic	7,155.6	6,277.7	36.3	6,241.4	1,109.9	1,494.7	1,932.3
Qld	5,950.8	5,171.8	15.3	5,156.5	968.1	1,287.9	1,391.7
WA	3,367.5	2,943.1	19.6	2,923.4	648.2	845.1	1,083.4
SA	1,742.5	1,491.1	6.8	1,484.3	283.2	376.1	486.6
Tas	709.6	615.3	0.3	615.0	120.7	160.1	206.2
NT	1,064.7	949.3	0.6	948.7	187.0	246.9	317.0
ACT	766.3	677.7	2.6	675.1	88.8	135.5	176.3
Total	45,651.7	32,007.7	159.4	31,848.3	6,313.6	8,521.4	10,765.3

Note: Agencies’ actual recurrent expenditure is sourced from 2023–24 *Portfolio Budget Statements*, agencies’ annual reports or the *Report on government services* (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision 2025). In the case of states and territories, it was difficult to disaggregate the expenditure in some large departments such as Attorney-General and Justice. It was also important to avoid double-counting where global justice expenditure included, for example, policing and corrections costs. Where possible, the costs of police, courts and corrections were obtained from the *Report on government services* rather than annual reports, and only general ‘justice services’ costs were recorded from annual reports. In the case of prosecution and integrity agencies and regulators, expenditure was obtained from annual reports. Data on recovered proceeds of crime were sourced from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions in each state and territory, as well as the New South Wales Crime Commission (2024), Queensland Crime and Corruption Commission (2024) and Western Australia Corruption and Crime Commission (2024). Serious and organised crime proportions were based on previous research (ACC 2015a, 2015b). Totals may vary from those presented elsewhere in this report due to rounding

Private sector and other costs

Businesses, community organisations and individuals in the private sector also incur various costs related to preventing and responding to serious and organised crime. These include the cost of physical and cybersecurity measures in businesses and households to prevent victimisation, and expenses related to dealing with the repercussions of identity crime victimisation. Indirect costs also include those incurred by insurance service providers in response to crime-related claims and costs incurred by financial service providers in complying with anti-money laundering regulations. Finally, the costs of providing support services to victims of violent crimes related to serious and organised criminal activities are also relevant. In the following section, we provide an indication of these costs.

Investigation and security services

To prevent or deter serious and organised criminal activities, businesses and other entities acquire the services of private security, private investigators, and protection agencies. These services can include guards, patrols and other security staff, monitored security systems, locksmiths, secure document and computer data storage, among other security services (IBISWorld 2025). Services provided by police forces and government security agencies are not included in these costs.



Private sector costs related to preventing and responding to serious and organised crime cost up to \$12.7b in 2023–24

To estimate the costs of these private services to the economy, we relied on measures of the investigation and security industry value-add, which represents the market value of goods and services produced by the industry, minus the cost of goods and services used in production.

In 2024, the investigation and security services industry in Australia provided services worth \$13,300m, excluding excise and sales tax (IBISWorld 2025). In 2020–21, it was estimated that industry value-add of the investigation and security services industry represented 60.2 percent of the market size measured by revenue. Applying this same percentage to the 2024 market size of \$13,300m gives a value add of \$8,006.6m. Consistent with prior iterations of this report (Smith 2024), we estimated that approximately 70 percent of these costs (\$5,604.6m) would relate to preventing and deterring criminal activity, as opposed to other forms of activity. Applying the previous estimates of serious and organised crime involvement in such activities (ACC 2015a, 2015b), we estimated that security costs range between \$448.4m (low, 8%), \$560.5m (medium, 10%) and \$840.7m (high, 15%).

Household precautions

In addition to the other categories of security expenditure, some of which would be incurred by households and individuals, Mayhew (2003b) costed the time spent by the average person on precautionary behaviours, such as the time taken to lock and unlock various locks, which she estimated to be approximately four minutes per day. We relied on the ACC's (2015b) estimate of \$2,360m for the cost of such precautionary behaviours (calculated in 2013–14), and inflated this to 2023–24 values (RBA 2025), resulting in a total estimated cost of \$3,076.3m. Not all this time is attributable to risks arising from serious and organised criminal activity. Applying the workshopped proportions of serious and organised crime involvement (ACC 2015b) gives an estimated range of \$461.5m (low, 15%), \$615.3m (medium, 20%) and \$922.9m (high, 30%).

Cybersecurity

Cybercrime costs incurred by individuals, businesses and other private entities include the costs of implementing security measures either before or after victimisation to enhance cybersecurity. These prevention costs can be estimated based on cybersecurity spending each year. The estimates reported here exclude costs of responding to incidents once they are detected (included in the *Pure cybercrime* section), or the cybersecurity spending of government entities (included in *Public sector costs*).

Estimates of cybersecurity costs incurred by the general public were based on individuals' spending on cybersecurity each year. An AIC survey conducted in 2019 found that individuals had spent \$1,376.0m on prevention costs in the preceding 12 months (June 2018 to May 2019; Teunissen, Voce & Smith 2021). Inflating this by 3.6 percent each year to 2024 (RBA 2025) results in an estimate of \$1,657.5m for 2023–24.

We have modified and improved the methodology used to calculate cybersecurity expenditure by business, applying the same methodology developed by Morgan and Voce (2025). We used data on operating expenditure for businesses (ABS 2024a) and applied Avasant's (2024) estimate that companies across all sectors typically spend an average of 2.6 percent of operational budgets on information technology (IT). We then applied industry estimates by IANS Research (2022) of the proportion of company IT budgets specifically allocated to cybersecurity (median of 7 percent across all sectors). Data from the ABS (2023b) demonstrate that the likelihood of having cybersecurity measures in place varies according to the size of an organisation, with the prevalence of cybersecurity measures ranging from 70.4 percent for small entities, to 90.9 percent (medium) 98.8 percent (large). Thus, we adjusted estimates of cybersecurity expenditure based on the size of the entity, with large businesses spending a higher proportion of their IT budgets on cybersecurity measures.

As not all of this expenditure is attributable to serious and organised crime, we applied workshopped estimates of the involvement of serious and organised crime in cybercrime (ACC 2015a, 2015b). We estimated that cybersecurity expenditure related to serious and organised crime cost the private sector between \$5,526.7m (low, 50%), \$7,737.4m (medium, 70%) and \$9,948.1m (high, 90%) in 2023–24 (Table 20).

Table 20: Estimated cybersecurity expenditure of individuals and businesses, 2023–24 (\$m)	
Individuals	1,657.5
Business (total)	9,395.9
Small	1,489.8
Medium	2,029.8
Large	5,876.3
Total costs	11,053.4
Cost involving serious and organised crime (\$m)	
Low (50%)	5,526.7
Medium (70%)	7,737.4
High (90%)	9,948.1

Identity security

In addition to the direct costs of identity crime (included above), individuals and businesses who are victims of identity crime incur a range of costs in responding to the incident. These costs include but are not limited to the cost of reversing fraudulent transactions, reinstating systems following identity crime, replacing staff, investigating incidents and liaising with criminal justice personnel.

The most comprehensive estimate of the indirect prevention and response costs of identity crime to the private sector is an AIC study (Smith & Franks 2020), which estimated the costs to individuals (\$201.1m) and the private sector (\$20.4m) in 2018–19. Inflating these estimates to 2023–24 values (RBA 2025) results in costs to individuals of \$241.2m and to businesses of \$24.5m.

The estimated involvement of serious and organised crime in identity crime ranged from 20 percent (low), to 40 percent (medium) to 60 percent (high; ACC 2015a, 2015b). Applying these proportions to the costs to individuals (\$241.2m) and businesses (\$24.5m), we estimated the total indirect costs of serious and organised crime involvement in identity crime to the private sector to be between \$53.1m (low), \$106.3m (medium) and \$159.4m (high).

Financial services

Each year, the financial services sector incurs costs related to compliance with the Commonwealth *Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act 2006*. In 2014, the financial system inquiry (Treasury 2014: 259) received evidence that the estimated annual cost of compliance with the know-your-customer requirements of this legislation was between \$299m and \$435m, including personnel and infrastructure costs required to administer the system. When the midpoint of this annual cost (\$367m) is inflated to 2024 values (RBA 2025), the annual compliance costs are estimated to be \$479.8m.

Regulated entities are also required to pay an industry contribution levy to the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC) that includes an earnings component and a component for transaction reporting activities. The levy is an annual amount that some reporting entities must pay to cover AUSTRAC’s operating costs, including amortisation and the annual depreciation costs of the assets used to undertake regulatory and intelligence activities. The total value of the industry contribution levy paid by entities was \$98.6m in 2022–23 (AUSTRAC 2023). As the value of this levy was not reported for 2023–24 (AUSTAC 2024), we used the 2022–23 estimate, inflated to 2023–24 values (\$102.7m), for the current calculations.

Assuming that 70 percent of these regulatory costs relate to crime prevention, and applying workshopped estimates of the proportion of serious and organised crime involvement in financial crimes (ACC 2015a, 2015b), we estimated that the cost to financial services of preventing serious and organised crime ranged from \$81.6m (low, 20%), to \$163.1m (40%, medium) up to \$244.7m (high, 60%) during 2023–24 (Table 21).

Annual regulatory cost elements	Expenditure	Crime-related cost (70%)
Know-your-customer compliance	479.8	335.9
Industry contribution levy	102.8	72.0
Total	582.6	407.8
Cost involving serious and organised crime		
Low (20%)		81.6
Medium (40%)		163.1
High (60%)		244.7

Insurance administration

To estimate the insurance industry costs related to serious and organised crime offending, we relied on data from Insurance Statistics Australia, who estimated that the industry cost of administering theft claims across domestic and commercial property and private motor vehicles in Australia totalled \$670m in 2011–12 (ACC 2015b). This was based on a rate of four percent of the gross written premiums applicable to these sectors and was used in the ACC’s (2015b) report.

Consistent with previous reports (Smith 2024), we adjusted the estimated costs of insurance administration for theft claims based on the percentage change in the number of police recorded theft offences since 2011–12. Based on official state and territory police statistics for 2023–24 (see Table 17), there was a 43 percent total increase (or a 4.3% increase per year) in the number of offences recorded by police for motor vehicle theft, shop theft, burglary and other types of theft offences between 2013–14 and 2023–24. This average percentage increase in theft offences (4.3 per year) was applied over 12 years to the estimated costs for 2011–12 (\$670m), which increased the total cost to \$1,105.7m. When converted to 2023–24 values (RBA 2025), the total estimated cost to industry for these theft claims was \$1,390.8m in 2023–24.

Applying the estimated involvement of serious and organised crime in insurance administration losses of 10 percent (low), 20 percent (medium) and 25 percent (high; ACC 2015b) results in estimated losses of \$139.1m (low), \$278.2m (medium) and \$347.7m (high) for 2023–24 (Table 22).

Table 22: Estimated cost of insurance administration relating to serious and organised crime, 2023–24	
Insurance administration costs 2011–12 (\$m)	670.0
Estimated increase in theft offences from 2011–12 to 2023–24 (%)	51.6
Adjusted insurance administration costs 2011–12 (\$m)	1,015.7
Total after inflating to 2023–24 values (\$m)	1,390.8
Cost involving serious and organised crime (\$m)	
Low (10%)	139.1
Medium (20%)	278.2
High (25%)	347.7

Violent crime support services

Indirect costs relevant to serious and organised crime include those arising from violent crimes involving illicit drug markets, human trafficking and child sexual abuse, cybercrimes harming individuals and the cost of services for victims of kidnapping, abduction, blackmail and extortion. A number of these costs are included above in government budgets, while others form part of non-profit organisational budgets and the expenses incurred by other volunteer services. Considerable difficulties arise in disaggregating the cost of these services relating to serious and organised crime, and it is likely that the estimates provided here represent a general indication of expenses only.

We relied on previous estimates of the costs for child protection services, sexual violence services and other volunteer services for victims of crime (Table 23; ACC 2015b). Inflating these costs to 2023–24 values (RBA 2025), and applying estimates of the involvement of organised crime (ACC 2015b), we estimate that private sector support services for victims of violent crimes perpetrated by serious and organised crime cost between \$60.0m (low), \$100.4m (medium) and \$200.7m (high).

Table 23: Estimated expenditure by private sector support services for victims of violent crimes perpetrated by serious and organised crime, 2023–24 (\$m)

	Expenditure 2013–14	Expenditure 2023–24	Serious and organised crime involvement		
			Low	Medium	High
Child protection	1,500.0	1,955.3	58.7	97.8	195.5
Sexual violence services	124.0	161.6	0.8	1.6	3.2
Voluntary support	76.0	99.1	0.5	1.0	2.0
Total	1,700.0	2,216.0	60.0	100.4	200.7

Note: The proportion involving serious and organised crime was estimated to be: child protection (3% low, 5% medium, 10% high); sexual violence (0.5% low, 1% medium, 2% high); voluntary support (0.5% low, 1% medium, 2% high)

Summary of indirect prevention and response costs

Considering the various indirect costs of preventing and responding to serious and organised crime incurred in 2023–24 by government entities (including law enforcement, other criminal justice agencies and those in justice portfolios) and the costs incurred by private sector businesses, non-profit bodies, individuals and households, it can be seen from Table 24 that additional costs range from \$13,083.9m (low), to \$18,082.6m (medium) to \$23,429.5m (high).

Table 24: Estimated indirect serious and organised crime costs, 2023–24 (\$m)

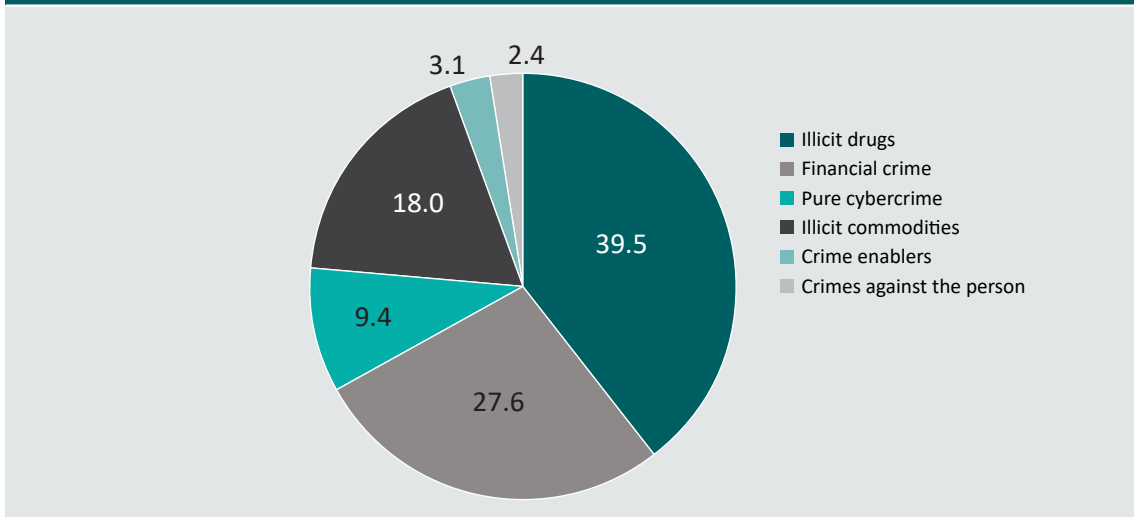
	Serious and organised crime involvement		
	Low	Medium	High
Public sector (total)	6,313.5	8,521.4	10,765.3
Commonwealth government entities	1,449.7	2,045.5	2,672.5
State and territory government entities	4,863.8	6,475.9	8,092.8
Private sector (total)	6,770.4	9,561.2	12,664.2
Investigation and security services	448.4	560.5	840.7
Household precautions	461.5	615.3	922.9
Cybersecurity	5,526.7	7,737.4	9,948.1
Identity security	53.1	106.3	159.4
Financial services	81.6	163.1	244.7
Insurance administration	139.1	278.2	347.7
Violent crime support services	60.0	100.4	200.7
Total indirect costs	13,083.9	18,082.6	23,429.5

Summary

In this report, we estimated the costs of serious and organised crime in Australia for 2023–24. Table 25 shows the final totals for each crime category examined, along with the lower, medium and upper estimated costs based on the level of organised crime involvement in each criminal activity.

We estimated that serious and organised crime cost the Australian economy between \$35.5b (low), \$54.2b (medium) and \$82.3b (high) in 2023–24. This includes the combined direct costs and consequential costs attributable to serious and organised crime, totalling up to \$58.9b, as well as the indirect costs of preventing or responding to serious and organised crime, totalling up to \$23.4b. Illicit drugs accounted for the largest proportion of the direct costs attributable to serious and organised crime (\$19.0b, 39.5%). This was followed by organised financial crimes (\$13.2b, 27.6%) and illicit commodities (\$8.6b, 18.0%; Figure 2). Importantly, the proceeds of these crimes will be reinvested in future serious and organised criminal activity in Australia, resulting in more harm and further social and economic costs (Morgan 2024).

Figure 2: Proportion of upper estimates of direct costs, by crime category, 2023–24 (%)

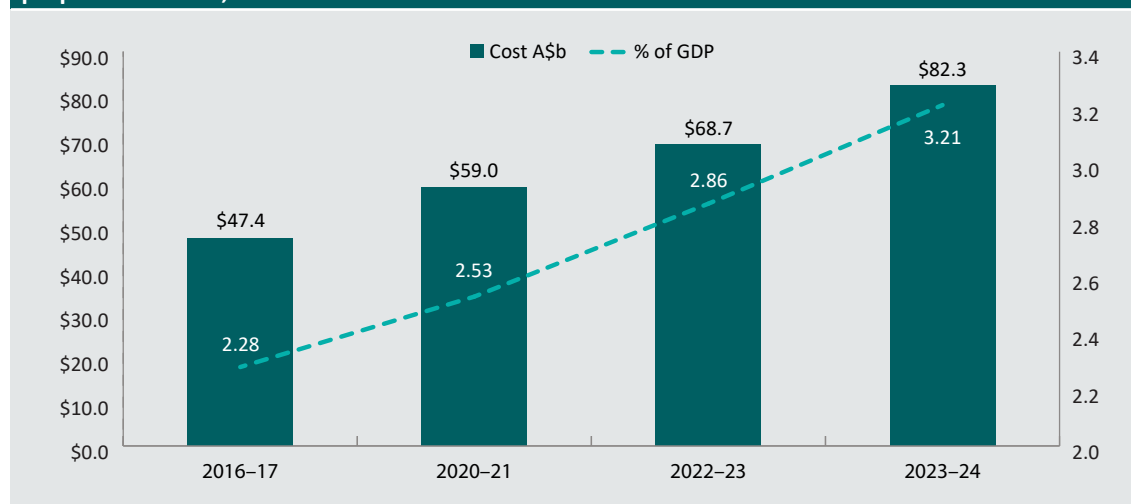


A confidence rating (based on authors' judgement) is provided for each crime type to indicate the degree of certainty associated with each estimate, based on the availability, coverage and accuracy of the baseline data, multipliers and unit cost estimates. More research is required to improve estimates with low or medium confidence ratings.

Table 25: Summary of serious and organised crime costs, 2023–24				
Crime category	Serious and organised crime involvement			Confidence rating
	Low	Medium	High	
Grand totals 2023–24 (\$m)	35,460.0	54,160.7	82,300.3	
Direct serious and organised crimes costs (\$m)				
Total direct costs	20,458.2	32,327.2	47,938.3	
Illicit drugs	10,212.6	13,491.9	18,957.4	Medium
Financial crime (total)	4,567.0	8,070.0	13,241.9	
Tax and revenue crime	3,062.3	5,233.5	9,072.8	Low
Superannuation fraud	546.0	1,638.0	2,730.0	Low
Payment fraud	191.5	382.9	574.4	High
Other transaction fraud	767.2	815.6	864.7	Medium
Crimes against the person (total)	487.3	713.6	1,131.7	
Human trafficking	172.9	242.1	345.8	Medium
Child sexual abuse	314.4	471.5	785.9	Medium
Illicit commodities (total)	3,382.9	5,975.9	8,608.1	
Illicit tobacco	2,269.1	3,105.1	3,980.9	Medium
Intellectual property crime	649.5	1,948.6	3,247.7	Medium
Environmental crime	456.2	912.5	1,368.7	Low
Firearms trafficking	8.1	9.7	10.8	Low
Pure cybercrime	1,224.5	3,029.1	4,511.5	Medium
Crime enablers (total)	583.9	1,046.7	1,487.7	
Identity crime	258.4	516.7	775.1	Medium
Corruption	16.6	66.4	124.4	Low
Violence	0.4	0.8	2.0	Low
Money laundering	308.5	462.8	586.2	Low
Consequential costs of serious and organised crime (\$m)				
Total consequential costs	1,917.9	3,750.9	10,932.5	Medium
Prevention and response (indirect) costs (\$m)				
Total indirect costs	13,083.9	18,082.6	23,429.5	
Public sector	6,313.5	8,521.4	10,765.3	Medium
Private sector	6,770.4	9,561.2	12,664.2	Low

The upper estimate for the total costs of serious and organised crime in 2023–24 (\$82.3b) is the highest cost reported, up from \$68.7b in 2022–23 (Smith 2024). Between 2016–17 and 2023–24, the estimated costs of serious and organised crime increased by 73.6 percent, an average annual increase of 10.5 percent. Figure 3 shows the estimated costs of serious and organised crime in billions of dollars and as a percentage of national GDP for the relevant year across the past iterations of this report. The increase in the costs of serious and organised crime in 2023–24, relative to 2022–23, is due in large part to methodological improvements and the use of more accurate and recent data, rather than necessarily reflecting increases in the incidence or harms of serious and organised crime activities. With these improvements, our estimate of the costs of serious and organised crime in Australia for 2023–24 is the most robust ever produced.

Figure 3: Upper estimates of total costs of serious and organised crime in dollars (billions) and as a proportion of GDP, 2016–17 to 2023–24



Source: Smith 2018b; Smith & Hickman 2022; Smith 2024; ABS 2025a

Conclusion

This report estimated that the costs of serious and organised crime in Australia in 2023–24 was up to \$82.3b, demonstrating the substantial and pervasive impacts that serious and organised crime has on the Australian economy. The public and private sectors alone spent an estimated \$23.4b preventing and responding to these criminal activities—funds that cannot be directed towards health care, education, infrastructure and other community resources.

While this report offers the most current and robust estimate of the economic impacts of serious and organised crime in Australia, it is highly likely that these costs are an underestimate of the true losses to the Australian economy. There were several important categories of crime that involve serious and organised criminal activity but that could not be quantified due to a lack of data.

Further work is still necessary to improve the data available for this and related research. More high-quality research and data are needed on the impact of serious and organised crime on government, business and individuals. Related to this is an urgent need to update estimates of the extent of serious and organised crime involvement in a range of crime types, based on data and expert assessments, to ensure these more accurately reflect the contemporary organised crime environment.

We have, nevertheless, made significant advances in how accurately we can estimate the costs of serious and organised crime. This remains an important measure of both the harm to our community from serious and organised crime and the efficacy of our whole-of-community response to the problem. In shifting to annual reporting, and taking steps to improve the accuracy of our estimate, we aim to provide timely and valuable data that can help inform the government response to one of the most pressing national security issues impacting Australia.

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Appendix

Table A1: Proportion of consequential crimes indirectly and directly attributable to serious and organised crime (%)

	Indirect consequential crime			Direct consequential crime		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
Homicide and manslaughter	20.85	25.02	35.44	2.00	4.00	10.00
Driving causing death	20.85	25.02	35.44	0.05	1.00	3.00
Attempted murder	20.85	25.02	35.44	5.00	10.00	20.00
Assault	13.95	18.14	25.57	0.20	0.50	2.00
Sexual offences	2.55	3.06	4.335	0.05	0.10	0.20
Robbery	12.53	15.74	21.36	1.00	5.00	10.00
Burglary	37.78	45.2	59.86	2.00	10.00	15.00
Stealing a motor vehicle	23.08	28.29	39.02	5.00	10.00	15.00
Stealing from motor vehicle	23.08	28.29	39.02	0.02	0.05	0.10
Stealing from shop	23.08	28.29	39.02	0.30	1.00	2.00
Stealing other	23.08	28.29	39.02	0.20	0.80	1.00
Property damage	6.67	8.5	11.42	0.20	0.50	1.00
Arson	6.67	8.5	11.42	1.00	2.00	5.00
Fraud	9.3	11.16	15.81	2.00	5.00	10.00

Note: Indirect consequential offending relates to crimes associated with the use of illicit drugs that are sourced from serious and organised criminal markets. Direct consequential offending relates to direct serious and organised criminal activity, based on workshopped estimates (ACC 2015a, 2015b)

Offence type	Average cost per incident ^a	Adjusted cost if directly linked to serious and organised crime ^b		
		Low	Medium	High
Homicide and manslaughter	3,770,172	3,770,172	5,278,241	7,540,344
Driving causing death	3,770,172	7,540,344	11,310,516	18,850,860
Attempted murder	79,622	79,622	111,471	159,244
Assault	615	615	861	1,230
Sexual offences	5,465	5,465	10,930	16,395
Robbery	5,135	5,135	10,270	15,405
Burglary	4,015	8,030	12,045	20,075
Stealing a motor vehicle	8,958	17,916	44,790	89,580
Stealing from a motor vehicle	2,547	2,547	2,547	7,641
Stealing from shop	134	2,680	3,350	4,020
Stealing other	1,049	1,049	2,098	3,147
Property damage	2,588	5,176	12,940	38,820
Arson	70,563	70,563	105,845	352,815
Fraud-related offences	18,397	18,397	36,794	55,191

a: Average costs per incident were based on estimates by Smith et al. (2014), inflated to 2023–24 values (RBA 2025). These values have not been adjusted with a multiplier

b: Average costs per incident after applying a multiplier (ACC 2015a, 2015b) to account for greater severity of crimes committed by serious and organised criminals

Table A3: Allocations for crime and serious and organised crime in public sector entities' annual recurrent expenditure

Agency	% crime	% Serious and organised crime		
		Low	Medium	High
Commonwealth				
Office of Parliamentary Counsel	15	0.5	1	2
Federal Court	10	1	2	5
Australian Signals Directorate	15	50	60	70
Australian Law Reform Commission	25	2	5	7
Attorney-General's Department	25	5	10	15
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	30	3	5	7
Australian Taxation Office	30	10	15	18
Australian Security Intelligence Organisation	30	30	40	50
Department of Home Affairs	40	15	30	50
ASIC/ACCC/APRA	50	3	5	7
Australian Federal Police	70	30	40	50
Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions	100	5	10	20
Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security	100	10	20	30
Office of National Intelligence	100	30	60	70
Australian Institute of Criminology	100	40	50	60
Australian Transactions Reports and Analysis Centre	100	80	90	100
National Anti-Corruption Commission	100	80	90	100
Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission	100	80	90	100
State and territory				
Attorney-General	50–100	1–10	1–15	2–20
Justice departments	80–100	8–10	10–20	20–25
Crime and corruption commissions	80–100	25	45	60
Police	80	10	15	20
Director of Public Prosecutions	100	5	10	20
Youth justice	100	5	8	10
Criminal courts	100	8	15	20
Prisons	100	50	60	75
Community corrections	100	50	60	75

Note: ASIC=Australian Securities and Investments Commission; ACCC=Australian Competition and Consumer Commission; APRA=Australian Prudential Regulation Authority. The National Anti-Corruption Commission estimates based on those reported for Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity, which was replaced by the National Anti-Corruption Commission in 2023. In some cases, a range of percentages is specified (eg 8–10%) to reflect the relevant percentages involved in various subdivisions of entities' operations. Some proportions have been modified since the previous iteration (Smith 2024) based on new information from agencies

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