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VIOLENT OFFENDER SURGE UNDERSCORES URGENT NEED FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

"New ABS data again shows that continued increases in violent crime right across the nation will not go away unless political leaders commit to wholesale criminal justice reform focused on preventing crime and keeping communities safe," said Mia Schlicht, Research Analyst at the Institute of Public Affairs.

Released today, the Australian Bureau of Statistics' latest data detailing recorded crime and offenders proceeded against by police shines a spotlight on the surge in violent crime across the nation. The data shows:

- **Although the overall number of offenders has declined by 13 per cent in the last 10 years, the number of violent offenders has increased by 29 per cent.**
- **In 2022-23, acts intended to cause injury reached a record high and represented 26 per cent of all crime.**
- **In 2022-23, one in seven offenders were aged between 10-17 years.**
- **In the last year, the number of youth offenders grew by 6 per cent, and the number of violent youth offenders grew by 16 per cent.**

"Violent offending is rampant across Australia, driven by young offenders who show no fear or respect for the law. No matter where you look, the data is telling us in black and white, that our current approach to justice is not working," said Ms Schlicht.

The data follows IPA research which found federal and state governments spent approximately \$6.4 billion in 2023 on prisons, including \$2.4 billion on incarcerating offenders for non-violent crimes.

"Conservative states in the United States, such as Texas and Georgia, have found that sentencing non-violent offenders to alternatives to prison has not only saved billions of taxpayer dollars, but has also reduced violent crime," said Ms Schlicht.

"If governments stopped allocating scarce resources to incarcerate non-violent offenders, savings could be redirected, putting more police on the beat to stop crime before it happens and ensuring prisons have the capacity to detain violent and sexual offenders for longer."

"It has been established that many opportunistic crimes, often violent, would be deterred if there was a heightened belief an offender would be caught in the act by police. This is why we need to refocus our efforts," said Ms Schlicht.

The ABS data follows last week's Productivity Commission data, which showed governments are not solving the crime crisis, but merely spending record levels of taxpayers' money on a system which is not fit for purpose and in dire need of reform.

"Spending on youth detention has increased for the eighth consecutive year, despite youth crime continuing to spiral out of control. It is clear that youth prisons are not improving community safety and are in fact creating lifelong criminals," said Ms Schlicht.

"Overall, our prisons are approaching capacity because sentencing practices are not sophisticated enough to delineate between violent offenders that need to be locked away for longer, and non-violent offenders whose incarceration comes at significant cost to taxpayers, without improving community safety," said Ms Schlicht.

To download the IPA's research [click here](#).

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