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## Public confidence in the New South Wales criminal justice system: 2019 update

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### AIM

This study aims to (1) examine the level of public confidence in the NSW criminal justice system (CJS) in 2019; (2) explore the variation in confidence levels across different segments of the NSW population in 2019; and (3) document changes in public confidence, punitiveness and knowledge from 2007 to 2019.

### METHOD

Data were sourced from a repeated cross-sectional survey of the NSW public (n=2,002 in 2007; n=2,001 in 2012; n=1,989 in 2014; n=2,000 in 2019). Bivariate relationships were explored using Pearson's chi-square test of independence, and multivariate relationships were examined using logistic regression models. Accuracy on the knowledge and perception questions was determined using the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research crime and sentencing data. To determine the direction of any shifts in knowledge, the proportion of accurate responses was compared to previous survey waves.

### RESULTS

In 2019, most NSW residents were confident that the CJS brings people who commit crimes to justice (60%), respects the rights of the accused (74%), treats accused persons fairly (74%), and felt that sentences were too lenient (66%). Fewer NSW residents were confident that the CJS meets the needs of victims (44%) or deals with cases promptly (31%). Overall, respondents reported higher levels of confidence in the police compared with the criminal courts. Reading or watching the news on television or radio was associated with more confidence in the CJS, whereas listening to talk-back radio was associated with less confidence. From 2007 to 2019, levels of confidence in the CJS generally did not improve, punitive attitudes fluctuated, and only modest improvements occurred in knowledge of crime trends and estimates of conviction and imprisonment rates. However, in 2019, confidence that the CJS 'meets the needs of victims' was significantly higher than in 2007 (44% vs 36%, respectively).

### CONCLUSION

While the small improvement in knowledge of crime trends is encouraging, there has been little impact on levels of confidence in the CJS. Exploring opportunities to further increase knowledge may be key to improving confidence in the CJS. The influence of social media on confidence in the CJS warrants further investigation.

### KEYWORDS

public confidence

repeated cross-sectional survey

police

courts

knowledge

media

## INTRODUCTION

The criminal justice system (CJS) comprises a number of different agencies, including those responsible for policing, youth justice, court systems and processes and corrective services. In NSW, a number of CJS reforms have been introduced in recent years (for more details see NSW Communities & Justice, 2019) with the stated goals to ‘make communities safer’, and provide ‘swift and certain justice’. Ideally, these reforms should also contribute to improving public confidence in the operation of the CJS. Confidence is critical to the effective functioning of the CJS (Butler & McFarlane, 2009; Indermaur & Roberts, 2009). With higher levels of confidence in the system, victims are more likely to report crime and actively participate in the court process, and the general public will be more likely to participate as witnesses and contribute productively as jurors. As such, it is important to understand public confidence levels in the CJS and measure changes in confidence over time.

In 2007, the NSW Sentencing Council, in collaboration with the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR), conducted a survey of NSW residents to assess public confidence in five key dimensions of the NSW CJS. Modelled on the British Crime Survey (UK Government, 2012), the survey measured people’s confidence that the NSW CJS could bring the offender to justice, meet the needs of victims, respect the rights of the accused, treat the accused fairly, and deal with cases promptly. This baseline ‘Confidence in the CJS’ survey (Jones, Weatherburn & McFarlane, 2008) was replicated in two follow-up surveys, conducted in 2012 (Snowball & Jones, 2012) and 2014 (Halstead, 2015).

The baseline survey found that the majority of respondents were confident that the CJS respects the rights of the accused (72%) and treats the accused fairly (75%), but were less confident that the CJS brings people to justice (55%), deals with cases promptly (30%) and meets the needs of victims (35%). In addition, two out of every three NSW residents believed that sentences imposed on convicted offenders were too lenient. The 2012 follow-up survey saw a slight strengthening in confidence in the NSW CJS, and a slight decrease in punitive attitudes towards sentencing. In 2014, confidence levels remained higher than those recorded in 2007, but were largely unchanged since 2012. Punitiveness intensified between 2012 and 2014, returning to the level observed in 2007 (Halstead, 2015).

The results from other surveys conducted in Australia and internationally (predominately in the United States, United Kingdom and Canada) are consistent with these BOCSAR studies. In general, the majority of survey respondents perceive sentencing as too lenient (Gelb, 2006, 2008; Gillespie & McLaughlin, 2002; Mackenzie et al., 2012; Roberts, Crutcher, & Verbrugge, 2007). It is more difficult to compare survey findings on confidence in the CJS as ‘confidence’ is measured and operationally defined in different ways (Gelb, 2008). For example, respondents may be asked about various parts of the CJS or about the CJS as a whole. A survey from the United Kingdom found a larger proportion of respondents (64%) viewed the ‘CJS as a whole’ as fair compared to effective (48%) (Jansson, 2015). These findings are consistent with the earlier BOCSAR reports (Halstead, 2015; Jones et al., 2008; Jones & Snowball, 2012). Confidence levels also vary across different justice agencies. Surveys have consistently found that the public has greater confidence in the police than the criminal courts and prisons (Gelb, 2008; Hannam, 2012; Jansson, 2015; Roberts, 2007; Snowball & Jones, 2012). Indermaur and Roberts (2009) refer to an ‘evaporation effect’ whereby confidence declines with progression through the CJS. The high visibility of police in the community and being the first point of contact with the CJS, appear to drive higher confidence ratings (Jansson, 2015; Roberts, 2007).

Research has consistently found that younger respondents, those with higher levels of formal education and people with higher incomes are more confident in the CJS and are more likely to perceive sentencing as appropriate when compared with other survey respondents (Halstead, 2015; Jones et al., 2008; Marsh, McKay, Pelly, & Cereda, 2019; Spiranovic, Roberts, & Indermaur, 2012). Victims of crime, on the other hand, appear to have lower levels of confidence in the CJS, even after controlling for socio-demographic characteristics (Halstead, 2015; Jansson, 2015). The relationship between exposure to crime and punitive attitudes, however, is less clear (Gelb, 2006, 2008; Halstead, 2015). For example, Halstead (2015) found that respondents reporting exposure to any crime in the past 12 months were less likely to believe

sentences are 'about right', whereas Gelb (2006, 2008) reports that victims of crime are no more punitive than the general community.

Research also suggests that the public consistently over-estimates the proportion of crimes that involve violence, believes that crime rates (particularly violent crime) are on the rise, and demonstrates poor knowledge of actual conviction and imprisonment rates (Butler & McFarlane, 2009; Gelb, 2006, 2008; Marsh et al., 2019; Spiranovic et al., 2012). Lower levels of knowledge of the CJS have been found to be associated with less confidence in the CJS. Roberts and Indermaur (2007), for example, report that criminal justice knowledge and attitudes are strong predictors of punitiveness even after controlling for demographic factors, political orientation, religious attendance and media consumption.

Knowledge of the CJS seems to come largely from media reports (Gelb, 2006; Gillespie & McLaughlin, 2002; Hannam, 2012; Pfeiffer, Windzio, & Kleimann, 2005). As most individuals have little direct contact with the CJS, this means that the media have an important role to play in shaping public opinion on CJS performance. News programs on television or radio are most often cited as people's main source of information about the criminal justice system (Duffy, Wake, Burrows, & Bremner, 2008; Gelb, 2006, 2008; Gillespie & McLaughlin, 2002; Office for National Statistics, 2015), and appear to be particularly influential in promoting the view that sentencing is excessively lenient (Marsh et al., 2019) or that crime is rising (Duffy et al., 2008; Pfeiffer et al., 2005). This likely stems from the fact that the media are selective in what they report, choosing high-profile, violent, and rare crimes written to trigger emotion and shock (i.e., moral judgements are favoured over sentencing rationale) (Berry, Philo, Tiripelli, Docherty, & Macpherson, 2012; Marsh et al., 2019).

The last 10 years have seen a steady rise in the number of people using social media platforms, yet limited research exists on the role that social media play in influencing public opinion on the CJS. Recent research from the UK (Marsh et al., 2019) has identified Facebook as the most commonly cited social media platform that people use to access news (reported by 44% of the sample). Not surprisingly, 18-34 year olds were the most likely age group to use social media as a news source (Marsh et al., 2019). Moreover, a recent US study found consumption of sentencing- and punishment-specific content on social media was significantly related to punitive attitudes, even after controlling for demographic and other relevant correlates (Intravia, 2018). There remains little research in Australia about the impact of social media use on perceptions of the CJS relative to other factors.

## THE CURRENT STUDY

This bulletin reports the results of the fourth wave of BOCSAR's 'Confidence in the CJS' survey. This survey was administered to a random sample of 2,000 NSW residents in May and June 2019 via computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). As with the previous three waves, this survey was designed to assess how confident respondents are that the NSW CJS achieves various objectives. For the most part, the 2019 survey included the same questions as previous survey waves to ensure continuity in the series (Halstead, 2015; Jones et al., 2008; Snowball & Jones, 2012). The questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix A1. A notable addition is that the current survey collected more comprehensive data on information sources influencing respondents' perceptions of the CJS, including online sources and social media.

Confidence in the CJS is critical to the effective functioning of the system as a whole. As such, improving and maintaining public confidence in the CJS should be an ongoing priority for criminal justice agencies. There have been significant justice reforms<sup>1</sup> since the previous survey conducted in 2014, which warrant monitoring changes in confidence over time. The NSW Government also introduced legislation to allow broadcasting of judgements and sentencing for major criminal trials with the aim of improving community confidence in the CJS and demystifying the court process (NSW Department of Communities and Justice,

<sup>1</sup> Recent justice reforms likely to have influenced public opinion include: (1) changes to the NSW Bail Act which aimed to simplify the bail laws but, in practice, the changes made it more difficult to get bail (Yeong & Poynton, 2018); (2) sentencing reforms which had the objective of increasing the proportion of people sentenced to supervised community-based orders; (3) Early Appropriate Guilty Plea reforms which aimed to deliver swift and more certain justice; (4) parole reforms which introduced statutory parole and changed the way Community Corrections managed parolees; (5) introduction of the Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) compliance checks by NSW Police Force to ensure the offender is complying with ADVO conditions; (6) Sydney lockout laws with the objective of reducing alcohol-fuelled violence. See NSW Department of Communities & Justice (2019) for more detail on these reforms.

2014). Measuring current levels of confidence in the courts provides evidence of whether these recent reforms have successfully achieved the aim of increasing public confidence. Furthermore, the proliferation in the use of social media since the last survey suggests it is timely, five years on, to reassess confidence in the NSW CJS.

The specific aims of the current study were:

1. to examine the level of public confidence in the NSW CJS in 2019;
2. to explore variation in confidence levels across different segments of the NSW population in 2019; and,
3. to document changes in public confidence, punitiveness and knowledge from 2007 to 2019.

## METHOD

### DATA COLLECTION

Data collection for the 2019 survey generally followed the method used in previous waves of the BOCSAR 'Confidence in the CJS' survey (for further details, see Halstead, 2015; Jones et al., 2008; Snowball & Jones, 2012). BOCSAR engaged a market research company to undertake a CATI survey of a random sample of NSW residents. Quotas for age, sex and residential location were applied (with a 5% tolerance limit) to ensure that the survey sample was representative of the wider NSW population on these characteristics. Only English-speaking people aged 18 years or more were eligible to take part. No attempt was made to contact hard-to-reach populations, such as institutionalised or homeless people. In previous survey waves, potential participants were contacted using only random digit dialling (RDD) of fixed-line residential telephone numbers. However, the percentage of adults who use fixed line phones is currently below 50 per cent, and much lower among individuals aged 18-34 years (compared to individuals aged 55 years or more) (Australian Communications Media Authority, 2019). Therefore, the 2019 survey employed a hybrid strategy using both validated RDD fixed-line phone numbers located in NSW, as well as the 'SamplePages' database of mobile numbers of adults who have consented to be called and are known to be located in NSW. In order to achieve quotas most efficiently, interviewers first sought to survey the youngest adult male household member, followed by the youngest adult female household member, or failing that, another adult. The telephone interviews were conducted in May and June 2019.<sup>2</sup>

### Response rates

For the 2019 survey, 38,813 valid phone numbers were called with the following outcomes:

- 16,552 respondents refused to participate;
- 909 were ineligible to participate due to a language barrier;
- 1,600 were excluded due to the age quota being full;
- 17,748 were still active at the end of the study period (i.e., no answer, busy tone, answering machine/voicemail, appointment made but not kept); and
- 2,004 completed interviews.<sup>3</sup>

The nominal response rate (the number of completed interviews divided by the sum of completed and refused interviews) in 2019 was 10.8 per cent. This compares to 24.6 per cent in 2014, 28.9 per cent in 2012, and 11.0 per cent in 2007. Using quota-based sampling would have artificially deflated response

<sup>2</sup> Each survey wave was conducted at a different time of the year, i.e., 2007, in August-September; 2012, in March-April; 2014, in April-May. It was assumed that levels of confidence in the CJS would not vary seasonally.

<sup>3</sup> Four cases were removed from the final dataset as it was determined in the 'cleaning' process that the respondents 'used to live in NSW' but do not now, or live on the border and are not technically in NSW.

rates across all survey waves (Snowball & Jones, 2012) as respondents excluded for falling outside the age and/or sex quotas are included in the denominator. The response rate in 2019 is acceptable, and in line with estimates in a recent review (Bednall, Spiers, Ringer, & Vocino, 2013). While differences in the 2019 methodology, such as the use of mobile phone numbers in combination with fixed-line phone numbers, could have contributed to the drop in response rate, Australian evidence suggests that using a combination of fixed-line and mobile numbers will decrease the chance of biased estimates in outcomes (Baffour, Haynes, Dinsdale, Western, & Pennay, 2016). Although it is not possible to be certain of the degree to which non-response introduces bias, the use of quota sampling preserves a degree of representativeness for age, gender and location. In addition, meta-analytical evidence suggests that low response rates do not always equate to high non-response bias (Groves & Peytcheva, 2008).

## Samples

The socio-demographic characteristics of the unweighted samples in each survey wave are shown in Table 1. Population weights for age, sex and residential location can be applied to correct for slight variations in the distribution of these characteristics in the sample compared with the wider NSW population. The quota sampling ensured that the weighted and unweighted estimates did not differ substantially (see Appendix Table A2); all analyses reported in the current study used unweighted estimates.<sup>4</sup> The 2007 and 2014 estimates reported in the current study may vary slightly from those presented by Jones et al. (2008) and Halstead (2015) due to the fact that unweighted estimates are presented.

Table 1 shows statistically significant differences in the age, education, household structure and household income level of the samples across survey waves. Respondents in the later surveys were more likely to be older, live in Sydney, have post-secondary school qualifications, and report higher levels of household income. The majority of respondents across each survey wave reported living in a couple household with children, although this proportion has decreased significantly since 2012 (45.3% in 2012 vs 31.8% in 2019). A little over half the sample identified as female. The changes noted across survey waves are consistent with published data for socio-economic changes for the wider NSW population.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> While survey weights were provided, they were not utilised in the analyses as there was little difference in the weighted and unweighted samples for each demographic characteristic (see Appendix Table A2). Weighted data increase the standard error of the estimate (thereby reducing statistical power) and give very little reduction in possible bias if there are negligible differences on the demographic variables from the population.

<sup>5</sup> The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimate that 34.4 per cent of NSW residents aged 20 to 64 had attained a bachelor degree level or above in 2018, up from 23.9 in 2007 (ABS, 2018). In addition, the mean gross household weekly income rose from \$2,111 in 2007-2008 to \$2,445 in 2017-2018 (\$109,772 to \$127,140 in annualised terms) (ABS, 2019a). The proportion of persons living alone has remained stable in NSW from 2011 to 2016 (ABS, 2019b). The BOCSAR survey sampling methodology used 'households' as the primary sampling unit; this may have resulted in an over-representation of people living in one-person households.

**Table 1. Unweighted survey sample composition (%), by survey year and socio-demographic characteristics**

| Characteristic                      | Unweighted sample (%) |                |                |                | <i>p</i> -value <sup>a</sup> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|
|                                     | 2007<br>n=2002        | 2012<br>n=2001 | 2014<br>n=1989 | 2019<br>n=2000 |                              |
| Gender                              |                       |                |                |                |                              |
| Male                                | 48.0                  | 49.5           | 49.2           | 46.2           | 0.145                        |
| Female                              | 52.0                  | 50.5           | 50.8           | 53.8           |                              |
| Age group (years)                   |                       |                |                |                |                              |
| 18-34                               | 29.3                  | 30.5           | 30.2           | 28.4           | 0.027                        |
| 35-49                               | 28.6                  | 29.3           | 29.4           | 26.3           |                              |
| 50+                                 | 42.1                  | 40.2           | 40.4           | 45.4           |                              |
| Residential location                |                       |                |                |                |                              |
| Sydney                              | 60.6                  | 63.3           | 62.9           | 65.6           | 0.013                        |
| Rest of NSW                         | 39.4                  | 36.7           | 37.1           | 34.4           |                              |
| Education                           |                       |                |                |                |                              |
| Year 10 or less                     | 21.9                  | 16.2           | 16.4           | 13.2           | <.001                        |
| Year 11 or 12                       | 21.0                  | 19.5           | 20.8           | 12.9           |                              |
| TAFE                                | 20.6                  | 24.9           | 22.9           | 24.0           |                              |
| University                          | 36.5                  | 39.4           | 39.9           | 49.8           |                              |
| Household structure                 |                       |                |                |                |                              |
| Person living alone                 | 17.2                  | 12.3           | 11.5           | 16.7           | <.001                        |
| Couple with no children at home     | 26.8                  | 23.4           | 23.6           | 27.5           |                              |
| Couple with children at home        | 39.1                  | 45.3           | 42.9           | 31.8           |                              |
| Single-parent with children at home | 6.5                   | 5.2            | 5.2            | 5.8            |                              |
| Group household/other               | 10.4                  | 13.8           | 16.7           | 18.2           |                              |
| Household income                    |                       |                |                |                |                              |
| < \$60,000                          | 33.7                  | 27.3           | 23.9           | 23.2           | <.001                        |
| \$60,000 - \$99,999                 | 20.0                  | 20.7           | 18.3           | 16.0           |                              |
| \$100,000 - \$129,999               | 10.5                  | 13.2           | 12             | 11.0           |                              |
| \$130,000 or more                   | 12.8                  | 20.1           | 23.6           | 27.5           |                              |
| Can't say/refused                   | 23.0                  | 18.7           | 22.2           | 22.2           |                              |

Notes. <sup>a</sup> *p*-value for Pearson chi-square test of independence between respondent characteristics and survey year.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

In the first part of the survey, respondents were asked the following five questions to measure their *confidence in the criminal justice system*:

'How confident are you that the criminal justice system....'

1. '...is effective in bringing people who commit crimes to justice?'
2. '...meets the needs of victims?'
3. '...respects the rights of people accused of committing a crime?'
4. '...treats people accused of committing a crime fairly?'
5. '...deals with cases promptly?'

After each question, the interviewer read aloud four options: 'very confident', 'fairly confident', 'not very confident', and 'not at all confident'. For a randomly selected subset of 50 per cent of respondents, the response options were reversed. Respondents were also asked the same five confidence questions listed above, separately for the police and criminal courts.<sup>6</sup>

A general *measure of punitiveness* was collected:

'In general, would you say that sentences handed down by the courts are too tough, about right, or too lenient?' Following with the probe: 'is that a little too tough/lenient, or much too tough/lenient?'

This item was coded on a five-point scale: 'much too tough', 'a little too tough', 'about right', 'a little too lenient', and 'much too lenient'.

The next six questions measured respondents' *perceptions of crime trends and knowledge of criminal justice outcomes*:

1. 'I would like to ask whether you think that the level of property crime in NSW has changed over the past five years. Would you say there is more property crime, less property crime or about the same amount (since five years ago)?'
2. 'Of every 100 crimes recorded by the police, roughly what number do you think involve violence or the threat of violence?'
3. 'Of every 100 people charged with home burglary and brought to court, roughly what number do you think end up convicted?'
4. 'Out of every 100 men aged 21 or over who are convicted of home burglary, how many do you think are sent to prison?'
5. 'Of every 100 people charged with murder and brought to court, roughly what number do you think end up convicted?'
6. 'Out of every 100 men aged 21 or over who are convicted of murder, how many do you think are sent to prison?'

Responses for item 1 were coded on a five-point scale: 'a lot more crime', 'a little more crime', 'about the same', 'a little less crime', and 'a lot less crime'. Items 2 to 6 were scored as integers between 0 and 100.

The survey also included three *questions designed to capture respondents' experience of crime in the previous 12 months*. Respondents were asked 'In the last 12 months...'

1. '...have you had any property stolen or purposely damaged, or has there been an attempt to steal or damage your property?'

<sup>6</sup> The questions specific to police and courts were asked towards the end of the survey to avoid contamination with the questions asked about the criminal justice system as a whole.

2. '...did anyone, including people you know, use physical force or violence against you?'
3. '...did anyone, including people you know, try to use or threaten to use physical force or violence against you?'

### Items unique to the 2019 survey wave

In 2019, an additional item was included to measure public perceptions of trends in violent crime. Respondents were asked:

'I would like to ask whether you think that the level of violent crime in NSW has changed over the past five years. Would you say there is more violent crime, less violent crime or about the same amount (since five years ago)?' Following with the probe: 'is that a lot or a little more/less?'

Responses were coded on a five-point scale: 'a lot more crime', 'a little more crime', 'about the same', 'a little less crime', and 'a lot less crime'.

While previous survey waves asked about influential sources of information on the criminal justice system (2007), and media consumption behaviours (2014), the 2019 survey measured this construct more comprehensively. Respondents were asked specifically to comment on whether or not each source was influential:

'People get their information about the criminal justice system from many sources. For each source I'm about to mention, please indicate whether it is an influential or not influential source of information about the criminal justice system for you personally?' Response options were randomly rotated<sup>7</sup> except for 'j'.

- a) personal experience;
- b) relatives' and/or friends' experiences;
- c) word of mouth/information from other people;
- d) newspapers, in print or online (e.g., Sydney Morning Herald, The Australian, Daily Telegraph, local newspaper);
- e) news/current affairs programmes on television (TV)/radio;
- f) talk-back radio;
- g) Government publications/websites;
- h) books/school/college/university courses;
- i) social media (including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn etc.);
- j) other online sources (*not social media or online newspapers*).

### ANALYSIS

The distribution of responses to each measure of confidence was examined, including separately for police and courts. The four-point scales were collapsed with 'confident' comprising the categories 'very' or 'fairly' confident, and 'not confident' comprising the categories 'not very' or 'not at all' confident. Respondents who stated that they did not know how confident they were or who did not answer the question were removed from the analysis.<sup>8</sup> The distribution of responses for punitiveness is reported in full (Figure 3). In subsequent analyses, respondents who reported that sentences handed down are 'about right' were considered to perceive sentencing as appropriate (i.e., less punitive views on sentencing).

<sup>7</sup> To avoid bias, the response options for this question were not always given by the interviewer in the same order (i.e., respondents were given the response options in a random order).

<sup>8</sup> The proportion of missing responses within each survey wave is shown in Appendix Table A3. There were no meaningful differences between survey waves in the proportion of respondents who refused to answer the questions on confidence in the CJS and views on sentencing.



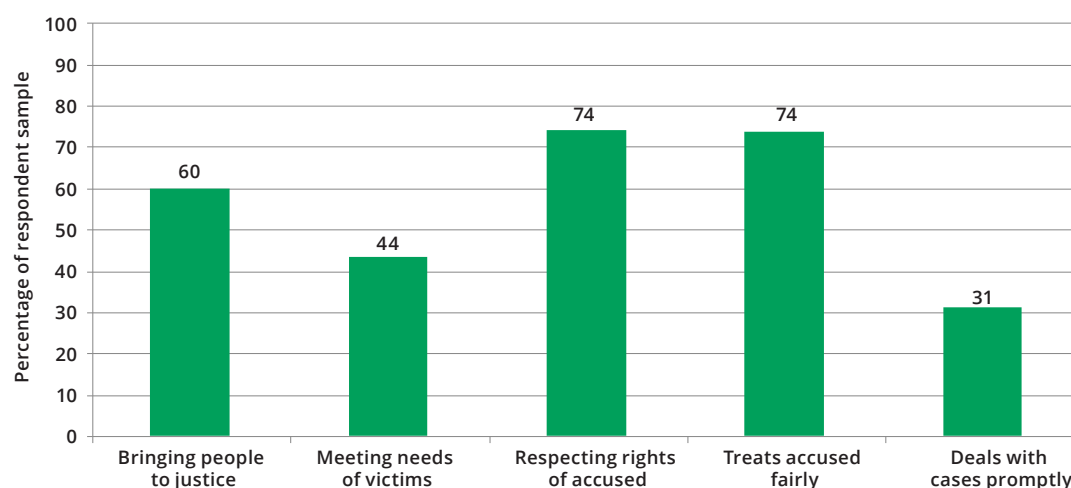
Bivariate relationships were explored initially using Pearson's chi-square test of independence to examine variation in confidence levels across different segments of the NSW population using 2019 survey data. Multivariate relationships were examined using logistic regression models, allowing for the control of covariates (socio-demographic characteristics and perceptions of crime) to explore changes in public confidence from 2007 to 2019. Accuracy on the knowledge and perception questions was determined using BOCSAR's crime and sentencing data (see Appendix Table A4), and then compared against the survey responses. To determine the direction of any shifts in knowledge, the proportion of accurate responses was compared to previous survey waves.

## RESULTS

### PUBLIC CONFIDENCE AND PUNITIVENESS IN 2019

Figure 1 shows that six out of every 10 NSW residents (60.3%) are either 'very' or 'fairly' confident that the CJS brings people who commit crimes to justice. A larger proportion of participants, almost three-quarters, reported feeling 'very' or 'fairly' confident that the CJS respects the rights of the accused (74.4%) and that the CJS treats the accused fairly (73.9%). Less than half of all participants reported feeling 'very' or 'fairly' confident that the CJS meets the needs of victims (43.6%) or that the CJS deals with cases promptly (31.3%).

**Figure 1. Confidence in the NSW criminal justice system, 2019**



**Figure 2. Confidence in NSW police and courts, 2019**

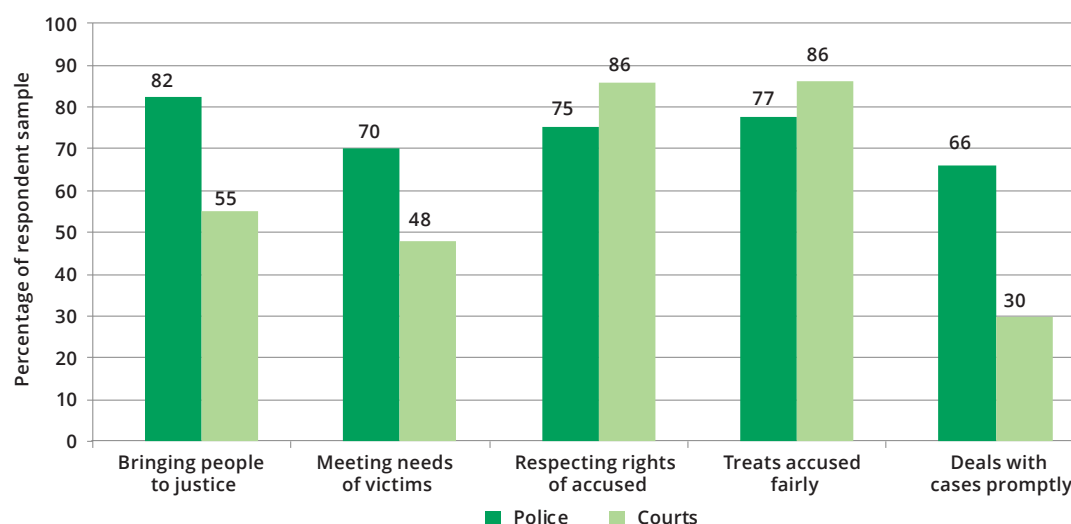
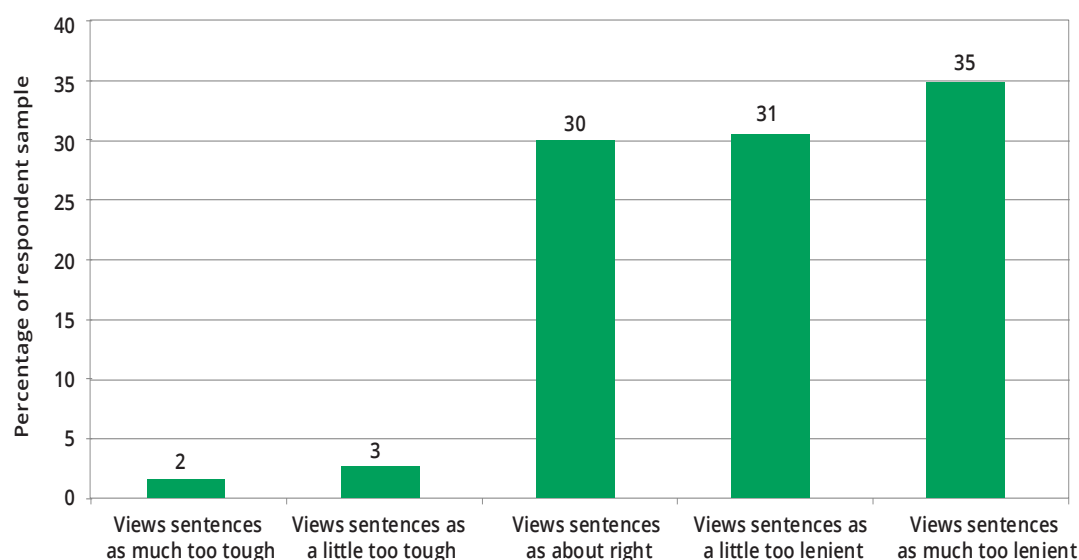


Figure 2 shows confidence levels separately for the NSW police and criminal courts. Respondents reported noticeably higher levels of confidence that the police bring people to justice compared with the criminal courts (82.2% vs 54.8%, respectively), meet the needs of victims (70.0% vs 47.7%, respectively) and deal with cases promptly (65.8% vs 29.8%, respectively). On the other hand, respondents were slightly more confident that the courts respect the rights of the accused, compared with the police (85.5% vs 75.0%, respectively), and treat the accused fairly (85.8% vs 77.3%, respectively).

Figure 3 shows the breakdown of respondents' views on sentencing. About three in ten respondents (29.5%) indicated that sentences handed down are 'about right'. The majority of respondents felt that sentences were 'a little' or 'much' too lenient (65.9%). Very few respondents felt that sentences were 'a little' or 'much' too tough (4.6%).

**Figure 3. Punitiveness (views on sentencing), 2019**



## VARIATION IN CONFIDENCE LEVELS ACROSS THE NSW POPULATION, 2019

### Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 2 summarises the relationships between the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and each measure of confidence in the CJS using the 2019 survey data. Respondents who were more confident in the CJS and viewed sentencing as 'about right' tended to be male, younger, resided in metropolitan areas, reported higher levels of formal education and higher levels of household income. Respondents in single-parent households tended to be less confident in the CJS, compared to other household types.

Tables 3 and 4 summarise the relationships between the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and each measure of confidence in the police and courts, respectively, using 2019 survey data. Overall, respondents who were more confident in the police tended to be older, and reported lower levels of formal education. By contrast, respondents who were more confident in the courts tended to be male, younger, and resided in metropolitan areas. Consistent with confidence in the CJS overall, respondents in single-parent households tended to be less confident in both the police and the court system, compared to other household types.

**Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristics and confidence in the CJS, 2019**

| Socio-demographic characteristic    | Confident that the CJS (%)                  |                              |                                  |                         |                             | Views sentences handed down as 'about right' % |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
|                                     | brings people who commit crime to justice % | meets the needs of victims % | respects the rights of accused % | treats accused fairly % | deals with cases promptly % |                                                |
| Sex                                 |                                             |                              | *                                | *                       | *                           | *                                              |
| Male                                | 62.1                                        | 45.7                         | 76.8                             | 76.7                    | 34.4                        | 32.0                                           |
| Female                              | 58.8                                        | 41.7                         | 72.3                             | 71.5                    | 28.7                        | 27.4                                           |
| Age group (years)                   | **                                          | **                           |                                  |                         | **                          | *                                              |
| 18-34                               | 66.1                                        | 53.9                         | 73.1                             | 72.8                    | 39.0                        | 34.7                                           |
| 35-49                               | 63.1                                        | 44.9                         | 77.0                             | 74.4                    | 35.9                        | 28.5                                           |
| 50+                                 | 55.1                                        | 36.3                         | 73.7                             | 74.3                    | 23.9                        | 26.8                                           |
| Residential location                | **                                          | **                           | *                                |                         |                             | **                                             |
| Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong       | 63.3                                        | 46.9                         | 76.1                             | 74.2                    | 32.4                        | 31.6                                           |
| Other NSW                           | 51.1                                        | 33.3                         | 69.2                             | 73.0                    | 28.0                        | 23.0                                           |
| Education                           | **                                          | **                           | **                               | *                       |                             | **                                             |
| Year 10 or less                     | 40.6                                        | 34.6                         | 61.6                             | 66.3                    | 28.1                        | 15.1                                           |
| Year 11 or 12                       | 55.3                                        | 42.0                         | 72.1                             | 72.6                    | 34.1                        | 23.3                                           |
| TAFE                                | 52.4                                        | 36.4                         | 75.3                             | 71.9                    | 31.5                        | 21.2                                           |
| University                          | 70.6                                        | 49.8                         | 77.9                             | 77.2                    | 31.4                        | 39.1                                           |
| Household income                    | **                                          | *                            | *                                | **                      |                             | **                                             |
| <\$60,000                           | 51.8                                        | 38.2                         | 68.6                             | 66.3                    | 30.5                        | 21.3                                           |
| \$60,000-\$99,999                   | 59.9                                        | 42.2                         | 74.3                             | 77.2                    | 29.0                        | 30.8                                           |
| \$100,000-\$129,999                 | 63.2                                        | 45.8                         | 78.6                             | 75.0                    | 30.7                        | 32.7                                           |
| \$130,000 or more                   | 70.0                                        | 48.6                         | 79.6                             | 79.2                    | 31.2                        | 35.6                                           |
| Can't say/refused                   | 56.1                                        | 42.8                         | 71.8                             | 72.3                    | 34.5                        | 28.0                                           |
| Household structure                 | *                                           | *                            | **                               | *                       | *                           |                                                |
| Person living alone                 | 58.7                                        | 38.9                         | 69.3                             | 72.1                    | 32.0                        | 30.5                                           |
| Couple with no children at home     | 58.5                                        | 41.4                         | 74.9                             | 74.8                    | 25.1                        | 28.3                                           |
| Couple with children at home        | 64.3                                        | 46.8                         | 81.7                             | 78.1                    | 35.1                        | 29.7                                           |
| Single-parent with children at home | 43.0                                        | 35.1                         | 64.0                             | 63.2                    | 28.4                        | 20.6                                           |
| Group household of unrelated adults | 61.3                                        | 44.0                         | 66.7                             | 73.0                    | 29.3                        | 29.2                                           |
| Group household of related adults   | 64.4                                        | 49.5                         | 70.8                             | 70.5                    | 35.2                        | 34.3                                           |
| Other/Can't say/refused             | 52.4                                        | 40.9                         | 55.0                             | 61.9                    | 40.9                        | 26.1                                           |

Note. \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .001$  based on a Pearson chi-square test of independence.

**Table 3. Socio-demographic characteristics and confidence in the police, 2019**

| Socio-demographic characteristic    | Confident that the police                   |                              |                                  |                         |                             |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                                     | brings people who commit crime to justice % | meets the needs of victims % | respects the rights of accused % | treats accused fairly % | deals with cases promptly % |
| Sex                                 | *                                           |                              |                                  |                         |                             |
| Male                                | 79.6                                        | 69.7                         | 74.7                             | 77.9                    | 64.7                        |
| Female                              | 84.5                                        | 70.3                         | 75.4                             | 76.8                    | 66.7                        |
| Age group (years)                   | **                                          | **                           | **                               | **                      | **                          |
| 18-34                               | 76.4                                        | 63.2                         | 66.0                             | 66.0                    | 59.3                        |
| 35-49                               | 80.8                                        | 69.4                         | 78.2                             | 78.0                    | 65.0                        |
| 50+                                 | 86.7                                        | 74.7                         | 79.0                             | 84.1                    | 70.3                        |
| Residential location                |                                             |                              |                                  |                         |                             |
| Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong       | 83.0                                        | 70.7                         | 75.3                             | 76.8                    | 66.1                        |
| Other NSW                           | 79.8                                        | 68.1                         | 74.3                             | 79.0                    | 64.8                        |
| Education                           |                                             | *                            |                                  | *                       | *                           |
| Year 10 or less                     | 85.9                                        | 76.6                         | 75.5                             | 84.0                    | 74.8                        |
| Year 11 or 12                       | 81.6                                        | 68.6                         | 74.0                             | 76.9                    | 60.8                        |
| TAFE                                | 80.5                                        | 71.6                         | 76.8                             | 78.7                    | 67.3                        |
| University                          | 82.2                                        | 67.9                         | 74.4                             | 75.0                    | 63.9                        |
| Household income                    |                                             |                              |                                  | *                       |                             |
| <\$60,000                           | 81.8                                        | 69.9                         | 72.5                             | 76.6                    | 67.9                        |
| \$60,000-\$99,999                   | 84.1                                        | 70.9                         | 76.6                             | 81.8                    | 62.4                        |
| \$100,000-\$129,999                 | 80.9                                        | 71.6                         | 74.5                             | 75.5                    | 65.3                        |
| \$130,000 or more                   | 80.1                                        | 66.9                         | 73.6                             | 73.8                    | 65.8                        |
| Can't say/refused                   | 84.5                                        | 73.1                         | 78.9                             | 80.2                    | 66.1                        |
| Household structure                 | **                                          | **                           | **                               | **                      |                             |
| Person living alone                 | 84.1                                        | 70.0                         | 74.5                             | 82.2                    | 67.1                        |
| Couple with no children at home     | 83.5                                        | 74.3                         | 77.0                             | 78.8                    | 65.1                        |
| Couple with children at home        | 85.5                                        | 73.2                         | 80.7                             | 81.1                    | 68.2                        |
| Single-parent with children at home | 66.7                                        | 55.8                         | 67.9                             | 66.7                    | 57.1                        |
| Group household of unrelated adults | 77.6                                        | 56.0                         | 60.0                             | 62.7                    | 72.4                        |
| Group household of related adults   | 77.9                                        | 66.5                         | 66.8                             | 69.0                    | 62.0                        |
| Other/Can't say/refused             | 81.8                                        | 42.9                         | 71.4                             | 72.7                    | 61.9                        |

Note. \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .001$  based on a Pearson chi-square test of independence.

**Table 4. Socio-demographic characteristics and confidence in the courts, 2019**

| Socio-demographic characteristic    | Confident that the courts                   |                              |                                  |                         |                             |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                                     | brings people who commit crime to justice % | meets the needs of victims % | respects the rights of accused % | treats accused fairly % | deals with cases promptly % |
| Sex                                 |                                             | *                            |                                  |                         | *                           |
| Male                                | 57.0                                        | 50.2                         | 86.2                             | 87.5                    | 33.8                        |
| Female                              | 52.8                                        | 45.5                         | 84.9                             | 84.5                    | 26.4                        |
| Age group (years)                   | **                                          | **                           |                                  | *                       | **                          |
| 18-34                               | 61.1                                        | 55.9                         | 84.0                             | 81.8                    | 37.4                        |
| 35-49                               | 55.7                                        | 45.9                         | 86.5                             | 87.7                    | 30.3                        |
| 50+                                 | 50.2                                        | 43.5                         | 85.8                             | 87.4                    | 24.8                        |
| Residential location                | **                                          | *                            |                                  |                         |                             |
| Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong       | 57.4                                        | 49.5                         | 86.1                             | 86.3                    | 30.6                        |
| Other NSW                           | 46.6                                        | 42.1                         | 83.5                             | 84.4                    | 27.4                        |
| Education                           | **                                          | *                            | *                                | *                       |                             |
| Year 10 or less                     | 38.1                                        | 47.1                         | 77.6                             | 83.8                    | 33.2                        |
| Year 11 or 12                       | 52.9                                        | 50.2                         | 84.6                             | 83.3                    | 33.9                        |
| TAFE                                | 45.0                                        | 41.4                         | 82.3                             | 82.8                    | 30.1                        |
| University                          | 64.4                                        | 50.2                         | 89.4                             | 88.6                    | 27.8                        |
| Household income                    | *                                           |                              | *                                |                         | *                           |
| <\$60,000                           | 48.9                                        | 45.5                         | 80.3                             | 82.4                    | 29.6                        |
| \$60,000-\$99,999                   | 54.4                                        | 50.8                         | 88.1                             | 86.0                    | 33.0                        |
| \$100,000-\$129,999                 | 57.1                                        | 47.7                         | 82.9                             | 84.9                    | 27.9                        |
| \$130,000 or more                   | 60.2                                        | 47.0                         | 87.8                             | 88.1                    | 25.1                        |
| Can't say/refused                   | 53.1                                        | 48.5                         | 87.5                             | 87.2                    | 34.8                        |
| Household structure                 | *                                           | *                            | *                                | **                      | *                           |
| Person living alone                 | 56.7                                        | 50.5                         | 86.3                             | 89.3                    | 32.7                        |
| Couple with no children at home     | 53.3                                        | 44.6                         | 85.1                             | 87.6                    | 27.9                        |
| Couple with children at home        | 55.0                                        | 47.7                         | 87.9                             | 87.3                    | 27.9                        |
| Single-parent with children at home | 39.6                                        | 36.0                         | 76.3                             | 74.1                    | 22.3                        |
| Group household of unrelated adults | 63.2                                        | 53.3                         | 85.5                             | 78.9                    | 34.2                        |
| Group household of related adults   | 60.2                                        | 54.3                         | 85.0                             | 83.4                    | 37.6                        |
| Other/Can't say/refused             | 30.4                                        | 39.1                         | 68.2                             | 66.7                    | 22.7                        |

Note. \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .001$  based on a Pearson chi-square test of independence.

### Recent exposure to crime

Table 5 presents variation in confidence levels by respondents' exposure to property or violent crime in the 12 months prior to the survey. More than one in four respondents (28.0%) reported being exposed to 'any' crime. Most of these individuals (19.6%) reported being a victim of property crime. A smaller proportion reported recent exposure to violence (7.5%) or the threat of violence (11.9%). Overall, individuals who had been recently exposed to crime were less confident in the criminal justice system (with the exception of dealing with cases promptly) and less likely to agree that sentences handed down by the courts were 'about right'.

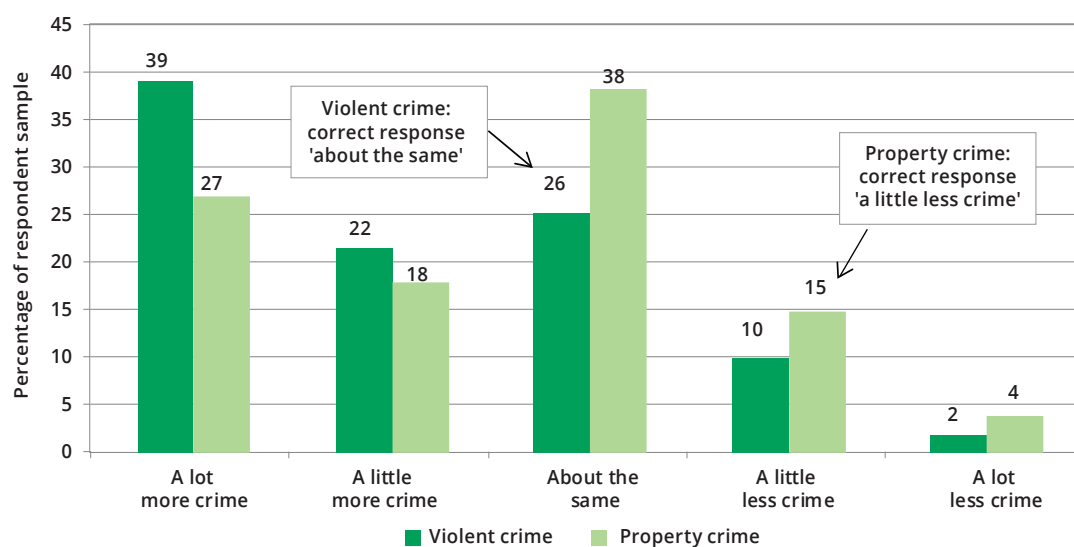
**Table 5. Recent exposure to crime and confidence in the CJS, 2019**

| Socio-demographic characteristic           | Confident that the CJS (%)                  |                              |                                  |                         |                             | Views sentences handed down as 'about right' % |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
|                                            | brings people who commit crime to justice % | meets the needs of victims % | respects the rights of accused % | treats accused fairly % | deals with cases promptly % |                                                |
| Exposed to property crime                  | *                                           |                              |                                  | **                      |                             | *                                              |
| Yes                                        | 53.5                                        | 40.3                         | 71.2                             | 64.1                    | 29.7                        | 24.2                                           |
| No                                         | 62.0                                        | 44.4                         | 75.2                             | 76.3                    | 31.8                        | 30.8                                           |
| Exposed to physical force or violence      | *                                           | **                           |                                  | **                      |                             |                                                |
| Yes                                        | 48.3                                        | 29.3                         | 72.5                             | 56.5                    | 28.3                        | 24.8                                           |
| No                                         | 61.3                                        | 44.7                         | 74.6                             | 75.3                    | 31.6                        | 29.9                                           |
| Faced threat of physical force or violence | **                                          | *                            | *                                | **                      |                             | *                                              |
| Yes                                        | 49.8                                        | 37.2                         | 68.7                             | 63.9                    | 29.5                        | 22.6                                           |
| No                                         | 61.7                                        | 44.4                         | 75.2                             | 75.2                    | 31.6                        | 30.5                                           |
| Any of the above                           | *                                           | *                            |                                  | **                      |                             | *                                              |
| Yes                                        | 54.4                                        | 39.2                         | 71.8                             | 65.0                    | 30.0                        | 24.9                                           |
| No                                         | 62.6                                        | 45.3                         | 75.4                             | 77.4                    | 31.9                        | 31.3                                           |

Note. \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .001$  based on a Pearson chi-square test of independence.

### Perceptions of crime trends

Figure 4 shows respondents' perceptions of trends in violent and property crime in NSW over the last five years. The correct answers are also reported in Figure 4. For example, Figure 4 highlights that the majority of respondents (61.6%) believed there was 'a lot' or 'a little more' violent crime compared with five years ago. The benchmark statistics (shown in Appendix Table A4), however, show that the incidence of violent crime has remained stable over this same period. Only one-quarter of respondents (26.0%) gave the correct response of 'about the same'. Similarly, 44 per cent of respondents believed there was 'a lot' or 'a little more' property crime compared with the previous five years but the (correct) benchmark statistics (shown in Appendix Table A4) highlight that the incidence of property crime has decreased. Only 15 per cent of respondents gave the correct response of 'a little less crime'. Table 6 shows respondents who felt that violent and/or property crime trends in NSW were lower than five years prior were significantly more likely to be confident in the CJS and viewed sentencing as 'about right'.

**Figure 4. Perceptions of 5-year violent and property crime trends, 2019**

**Table 6. Perceptions of crime trends and confidence in the CJS, 2019**

| Perceptions of 5-year crime trends | Confident that the CJS (%)                  |                              |                                  |                         |                             | Views sentences handed down as 'about right' % |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
|                                    | brings people who commit crime to justice % | meets the needs of victims % | respects the rights of accused % | treats accused fairly % | deals with cases promptly % |                                                |
| 5-year violent crime trends        | **                                          | **                           | *                                |                         |                             | **                                             |
| More                               | 52.0                                        | 37.6                         | 72.1                             | 72.1                    | 29.4                        | 20.3                                           |
| About the same                     | 69.9                                        | 50.2                         | 77.7                             | 76.7                    | 34.9                        | 39.9                                           |
| Less                               | 80.6                                        | 60.3                         | 78.8                             | 76.9                    | 33.5                        | 53.4                                           |
| 5-year property crime trends       | **                                          | **                           | *                                |                         | *                           | **                                             |
| More                               | 50.5                                        | 36.3                         | 71.6                             | 72.0                    | 27.8                        | 17.8                                           |
| About the same                     | 65.4                                        | 48.0                         | 76.3                             | 76.7                    | 33.8                        | 35.0                                           |
| Less                               | 73.5                                        | 52.8                         | 78.1                             | 73.4                    | 33.5                        | 44.9                                           |

Note. \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .001$  based on a Pearson chi-square test of independence.

## Sources of influence

In the 2019 survey, respondents were asked to nominate whether or not each source (out of a list of 10) was influential in providing information about the CJS. Table 7 shows the proportion of respondents who identified each source as 'influential'. The sources have been collapsed into five categories for ease of reporting and analysis. Personal/relatives' or friends' experience/word of mouth was nominated as influential by the majority of respondents (89.0%), followed by newspapers/news programs (84.4%), government sources/educational courses (65.5%), social media/other online sources (57.2%) and talk-back radio (40.5%).

**Table 7. Proportion of respondents endorsing each source as 'influential' in providing information about the CJS, 2019**

| Source                                       | % 'yes'     |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Personal experience                          | 66.4        |
| Relatives' or friends' experience            | 71.4        |
| Word of mouth                                | 56.5        |
| <b>Any of the above</b>                      | <b>89.0</b> |
| Newspapers                                   | 65.6        |
| News/current affairs programs on TV or radio | 74.1        |
| <b>Any of the above</b>                      | <b>84.4</b> |
| Government publications/websites             | 47.2        |
| Books/school/college/university course       | 49.2        |
| <b>Any of the above</b>                      | <b>65.5</b> |
| Social media                                 | 40.7        |
| Other online sources                         | 36.2        |
| <b>Any of the above</b>                      | <b>57.2</b> |
| Talk-back radio                              | 40.5        |

**Table 8. Sources of influence and confidence in the CJS, 2019**

| Source                                                                  | Confident that the CJS (%)                  |                              |                                  |                         |                             | Views sentences handed down as 'about right' % |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                         | brings people who commit crime to justice % | meets the needs of victims % | respects the rights of accused % | treats accused fairly % | deals with cases promptly % |                                                |
| Personal experience, relatives' or friends' experience or word of mouth |                                             |                              |                                  |                         |                             |                                                |
| Influential                                                             | 60.6                                        | 43.2                         | 74.1                             | 74.2                    | 31.3                        | 29.5                                           |
| Not influential                                                         | 57.7                                        | 46.8                         | 77.3                             | 71.7                    | 31.5                        | 30.0                                           |
| Newspapers or news on TV or radio                                       | **                                          |                              | *                                |                         |                             |                                                |
| Influential                                                             | 62.2                                        | 43.8                         | 75.6                             | 74.5                    | 31.2                        | 30.3                                           |
| Not influential                                                         | 50.3                                        | 42.3                         | 67.9                             | 70.5                    | 31.8                        | 25.0                                           |
| Government publications/websites or educational courses                 | **                                          | **                           |                                  |                         |                             | *                                              |
| Influential                                                             | 63.4                                        | 47.1                         | 74.7                             | 74.3                    | 32.1                        | 32.0                                           |
| Not influential                                                         | 54.5                                        | 36.6                         | 73.9                             | 73.2                    | 29.9                        | 25.0                                           |
| Talk-back radio                                                         | **                                          |                              |                                  |                         | *                           | **                                             |
| Influential                                                             | 54.4                                        | 42.5                         | 75.7                             | 73.7                    | 34.8                        | 22.4                                           |
| Not influential                                                         | 64.3                                        | 44.4                         | 73.8                             | 74.1                    | 28.9                        | 34.5                                           |
| Social media or other online sources                                    |                                             |                              |                                  |                         | *                           |                                                |
| Influential                                                             | 59.3                                        | 44.5                         | 73.4                             | 72.5                    | 34.3                        | 28.6                                           |
| Not influential                                                         | 61.6                                        | 42.2                         | 75.9                             | 75.7                    | 27.3                        | 30.9                                           |

Note. \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .001$  based on a Pearson chi-square test of independence.

Table 8 shows the relationship between different information sources and levels of confidence in the CJS. Individuals who nominated newspapers or news programs as influential sources were more confident that the CJS brings people who commit crime to justice and respects the rights of the accused. Similarly, nominating government publications/websites or educational courses as sources of influence was associated with increased confidence in the CJS bringing people who commit crime to justice, meeting the needs of victims, and sentencing people appropriately. Talk-back radio as a source of influence was associated with decreased confidence in the CJS bringing people who commit crime to justice, and adequacy of sentencing, but increased confidence in the CJS dealing with cases promptly. Interestingly, social media or other online sources were only associated with a small increase in confidence that the CJS deals with cases promptly. No significant relationships were identified between personal experience or the experience of relatives' or friends' or via word of mouth and confidence in the CJS.

## CHANGES IN CONFIDENCE, PUNITIVENESS AND KNOWLEDGE, 2007 TO 2019

Figure 5 highlights changes in confidence in the CJS as reported in each of the four survey waves from 2007 to 2019. As reported by Halstead (2015), confidence levels were significantly higher in 2014 compared to 2007 across all dimensions measured. In 2019, after controlling for other characteristics, the increase in confidence levels relative to 2007 is only observed for one dimension: the CJS meets the needs of victims (see Appendix Table A5). Confidence in the other four dimensions of the CJS (brings people who commit crime to justice, respects the rights of the accused, treats the accused fairly, and deals with cases promptly) has returned to the levels observed in 2007. In fact, confidence in the CJS 'treating the accused fairly' is significantly lower in 2019 compared to 2007, and this decrease is sustained after controlling for other factors, including socio-demographic characteristics and perceptions of crime trends (see Appendix Table A5).



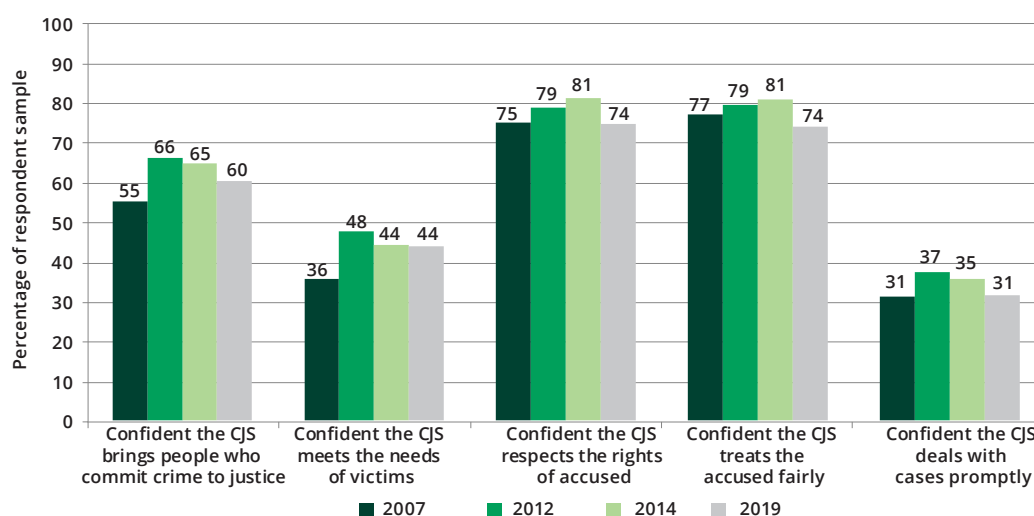
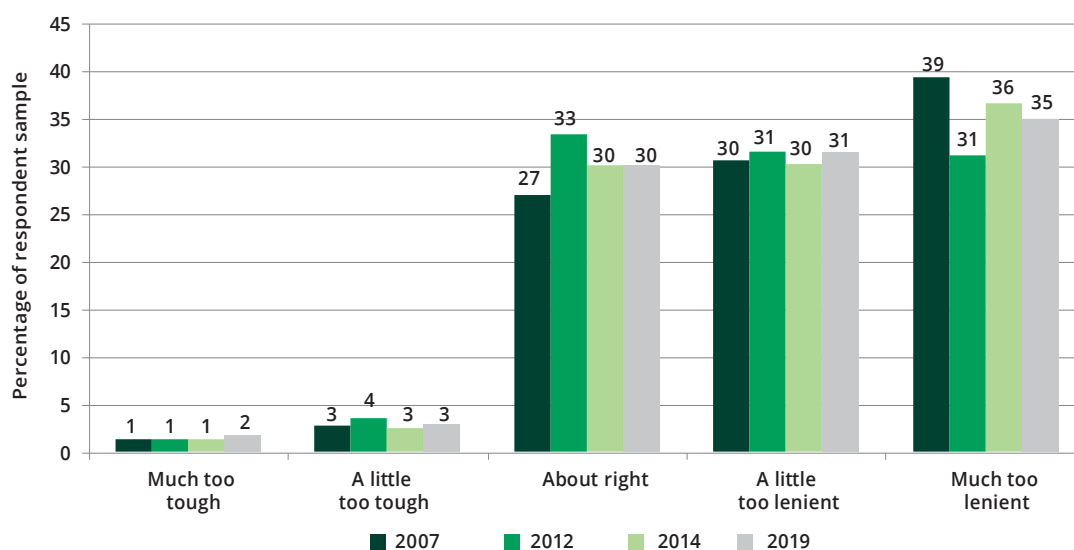
**Figure 5. Confidence in the CJS by survey year, 2007-2019**

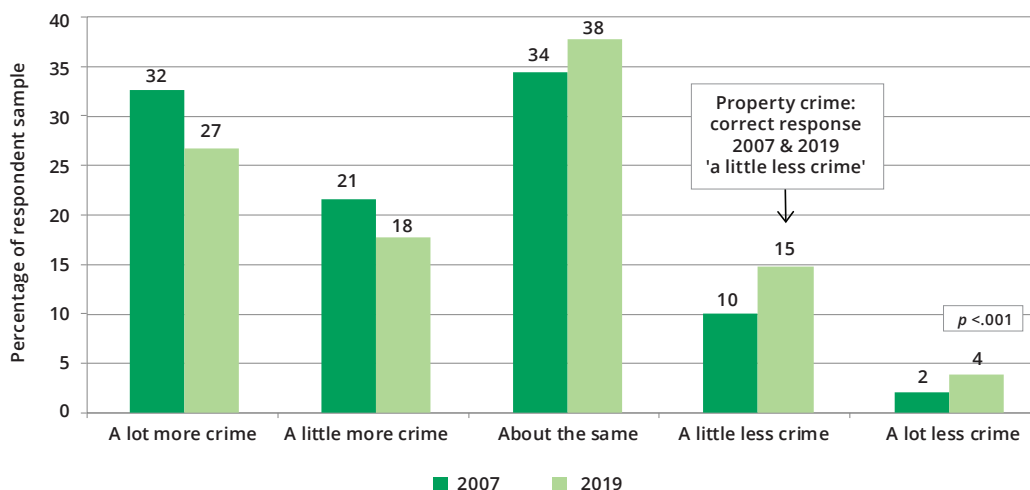
Figure 6 shows views on sentencing over time. The fluctuations noted by Halstead (2015) in public punitiveness have continued in 2019. For example, the percentage of respondents who consider sentences to be 'much too lenient' dropped from 39.0 per cent in 2007 to 30.9 per cent in 2012, then returned to 36.3 per cent in 2014, and has remained stable at 34.6 per cent in 2019. The percentage of respondents who perceived that sentences handed down by the courts were 'about right' increased significantly from 2007 (26.7%) to 2012 (33.1%), fell slightly in 2014 (29.8%) and continued to fall in 2019 (29.5%) (Figure 6). After adjusting for socio-demographic factors and perceptions of crime, the proportion of respondents who viewed sentences as 'about right' was significantly lower in 2019 compared to 2007 (see Appendix Table A5).

**Figure 6. Punitiveness (views on sentencing) by survey year, 2007-2019**

Overall, benchmark official statistics relating to the survey knowledge and perception measures have not changed substantially since 2007 (see Appendix Table A4). Some changes have been noted though in the public's perceptions of crime and justice outcomes.

Figure 7 shows respondents' perceptions of recent trends in property crime reported in the 2007 and 2019 surveys. A higher proportion of respondents in 2019 (14.6%) identified the correct response 'a little less property crime' compared to 2007 (10.0%). Despite this, the majority of respondents still (incorrectly) believed property crime to be increasing, although the proportion to report there was more property crime (compared to five years ago) has fallen significantly since 2007 (see Table 9).

**Figure 7. Perceptions of 5-year property crime trends, 2007 vs 2019**



**Table 9. Average knowledge of crime and the CJS and statistically significant changes over time (2007 – 2019)**

| Knowledge measure                               | Average estimate by survey respondents<br>(benchmark statistic) <sup>a</sup> |                           |                            |                           | Statistically significant<br>changes over time |           |           |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
|                                                 | 2007                                                                         | 2012                      | 2014                       | 2019                      | 2007-2014                                      | 2014-2019 | 2007-2019 |
| Incidence of violence in reported crime (%)     | 57.5<br>(7)                                                                  | 56.0<br>(6)               | 56.3<br>(6)                | 57.1<br>(6)               |                                                |           |           |
| Property crime trending higher (%) <sup>b</sup> | 53.8<br>(‘a little less’)                                                    | 49.8<br>(‘a little less’) | 38.3<br>(‘about the same’) | 44.1<br>(‘a little less’) | -                                              | +         | -         |
| Conviction rate for home burglary (%)           | 42.8<br>(74)                                                                 | 49.1<br>(70)              | 49.9<br>(70)               | 50.1<br>(74)              | +                                              |           | +         |
| Imprisonment rate for home burglary (%)         | 32.3<br>(59)                                                                 | 38.0<br>(60)              | 38.0<br>(61)               | 40.9<br>(66)              | +                                              | +         | +         |
| Conviction rate for murder (%)                  | n/a                                                                          | 60.9<br>(47)              | 61.5<br>(61)               | 61.8<br>(54)              | n/a                                            |           |           |
| Imprisonment rate for murder (%)                | n/a                                                                          | 76.0<br>(100)             | 76.3<br>(100)              | 77.1<br>(100)             | n/a                                            |           |           |

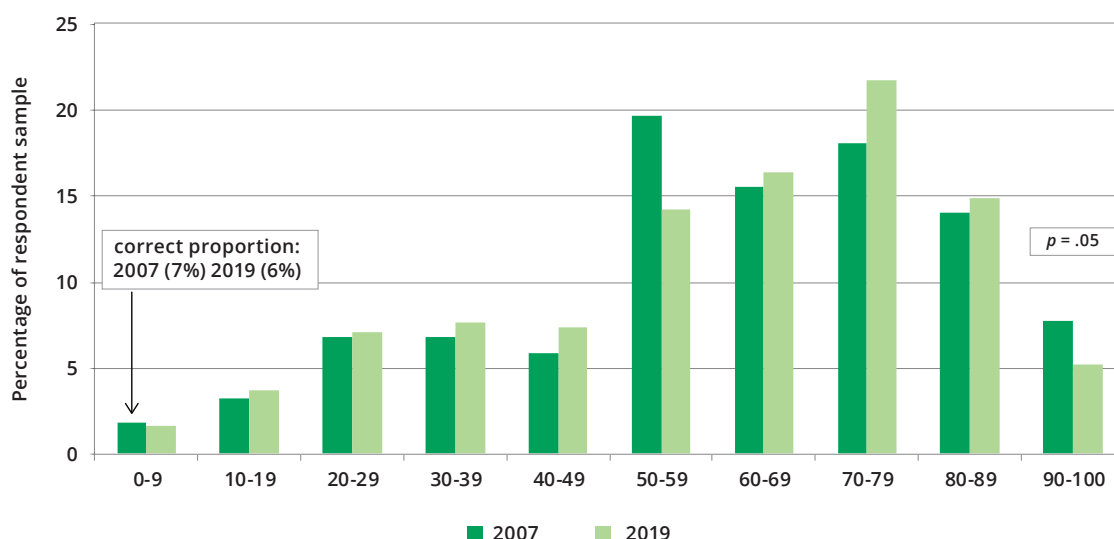
Notes. n/a = not applicable (i.e., question not asked in 2007 survey wave). +/- signify increases/decreases in estimates significant at the  $p < .05$  level in a Pearson chi-square test of independence for the binary property crime trend measure, and by comparison of means using one-way ANOVA for all other measures.

<sup>a</sup> The benchmark statistics from Table A4 are shown in parentheses.

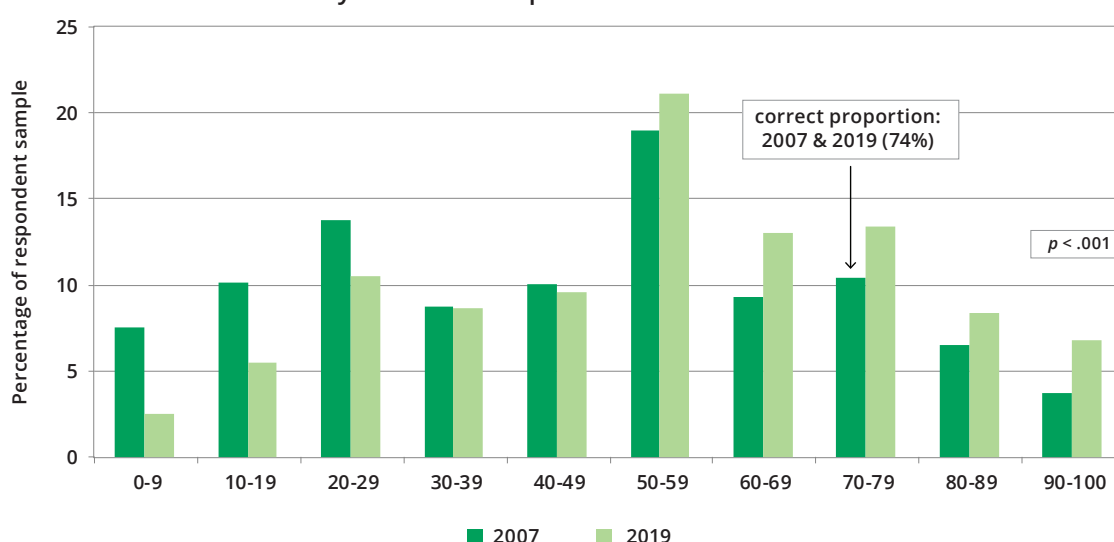
<sup>b</sup> Average statistics reports proportion of respondents estimating ‘a lot more’ or ‘a little more’ property crime (compared to ‘about the same’, ‘a little less’, or ‘a lot less’).

For the questions shown in Figures 8 to 12, integer responses have been categorised into deciles for ease of graphing. Consistent with the findings of Halstead (2015), between the 2007 and 2019 surveys, there was very little change in the public's estimates of the number of crimes involving violence or the threat of violence (see Table 9). While there were no statistically significant differences noted over time, the results still show that the public drastically over-estimated the number of crimes which involve violence or the threat of violence. For example, in 2019 the benchmark figure was 6 per cent of all crimes, compared to the mean estimate of 57 per cent (Figure 8).

**Figure 8. Of every 100 crimes recorded by the police, roughly what number do you think involve violence or the threat of violence? 2007 vs 2019**

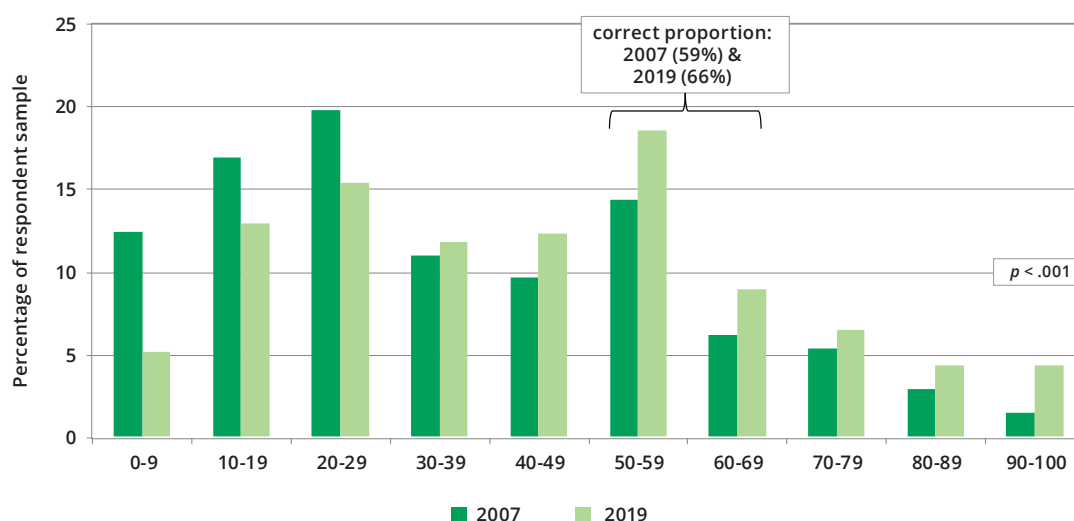


**Figure 9. Of every 100 people charged with HOME BURGLARY and brought to court, roughly what number do you think end up convicted? 2007 vs 2019**



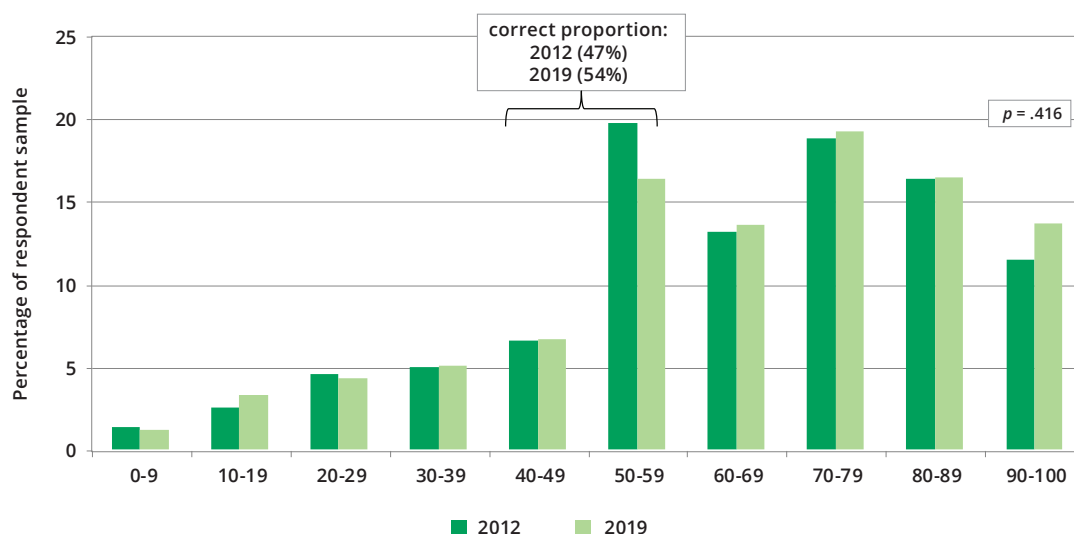
Figures 9 and 10 show respondents in 2019 estimated higher (and more accurate) proportions for home burglary conviction and imprisonment rates compared to 2007. Table 9 reports statistically significant increases for home burglary conviction rates between 2007 and 2014, and between 2007 and 2019. Similarly, for home burglary imprisonment rates, statistically significant increases were noted between 2007 and 2014, 2014 and 2019, and 2007 and 2019.

**Figure 10. Out of every 100 men aged 21 or over who are convicted of HOME BURGLARY, how many do you think are sent to prison? 2007 vs 2019**

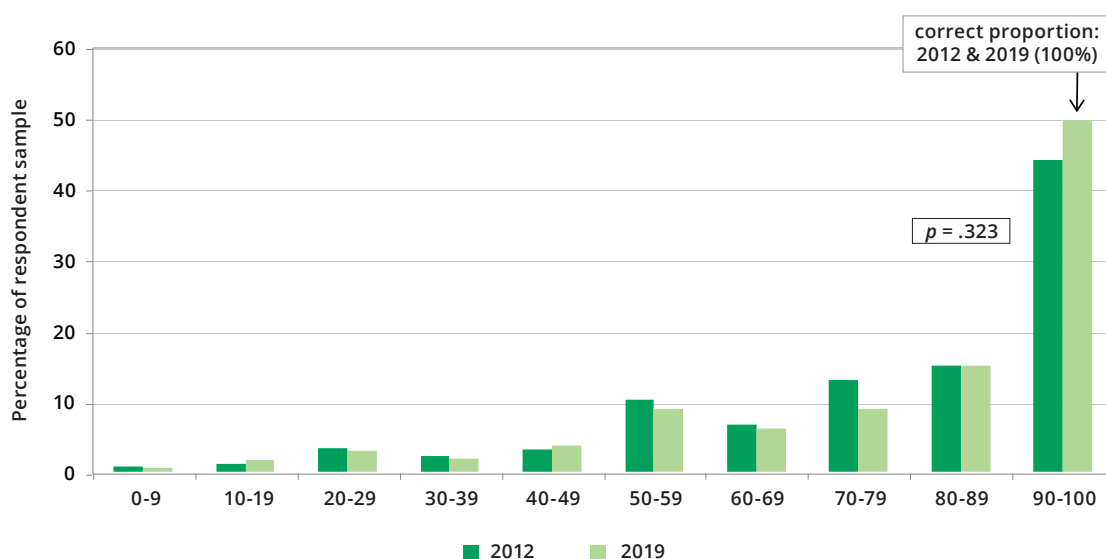


Figures 11 and 12 show the distribution of responses to the questions about conviction and imprisonment rates for persons charged with murder for the 2012 and 2019 surveys, respectively. These questions were not asked in the 2007 survey. Table 9 highlights that there have been no significant differences over time in the average estimates for either conviction or imprisonment rates for murder. Respondents tended to over-estimate the conviction rates for murder, and under-estimate the imprisonment rate for murder. For example, in 2019, the benchmark conviction rate for murder was 54 per cent, compared to a mean estimate of 62 per cent, whereas in 2019, the benchmark imprisonment rate for murder was 100 per cent, compared to a mean estimate of 77 per cent. Overall, respondents tended to be most knowledgeable about imprisonment rates for murder with almost half the respondents (48%) in the 2019 survey indicating an estimate of between 90 and 100 for the imprisonment rate for murder.

**Figure 11. Of every 100 people charged with MURDER and brought to court, roughly what number do you think end up convicted? 2012 vs 2019**



**Figure 12. Out of every 100 men aged 21 or over who are convicted of MURDER, how many do you think are sent to prison?, 2012 vs 2019**



## DISCUSSION

This study reports the results of the fourth wave of BOCSAR's 'Confidence in the CJS' survey. The survey of 2,000 NSW residents undertaken in 2019 found that the majority of people were confident that the CJS brings people who commit crimes to justice, and treats offenders with fairness and respect. By contrast, the results also suggest that less than half of all NSW residents felt confident in the ability of the CJS to meet the needs of victims, and only a third reported confidence in the ability of the CJS to deal with cases promptly. Punitive views were common, with two-thirds of respondents agreeing that sentences handed down by courts were 'too lenient'. Overall, the study found respondents with the following characteristics were more likely to be confident in the CJS achieving its objectives: being male, younger, residing in metropolitan areas, having more formal education, and with higher household income levels. By contrast, single-parent households with children were less likely to be confident in the CJS. NSW residents who perceived crime (both violent and property crime) to be 'trending lower' were more likely to be confident in the operations of the CJS, including sentencing practices. These findings are generally consistent with results from the earlier BOCSAR surveys (Halstead, 2015; Jones et al., 2008; Snowball & Jones, 2012).

In 2019, modest improvements were found in the proportion of respondents who could (correctly) identify that property crime has been trending down over the last five years. Similarly, NSW residents estimated higher (and more accurate) conviction and imprisonment rates for home burglary in 2019 compared to 2007. On the other hand, there has been very little change in the public's perceptions of the incidence of violent crime, with the vast majority of people drastically over-estimating the number of crimes involving violence, and, furthermore, there has been no significant change in the public's knowledge of conviction or imprisonment rates for murder. While the small improvement in knowledge of crime trends is encouraging, it seems to have made very little impression on levels of confidence in the CJS. The 2019 data show that the levels of confidence in the CJS have generally not improved over time. The exception is the extent to which the CJS meets the needs of victims which was significantly higher in 2019 than in 2007. Similarly, punitive attitudes have fluctuated over time - decreasing from 2007 to 2012 then increasing in 2014, and in 2019, returning to the levels observed in 2007.

Comparing confidence in the police and courts, in 2019, respondents reported noticeably higher levels of confidence in the police on three measures: bringing those who commit crime to justice, meeting the needs of victims, and dealing with cases promptly. Conversely, respondents had slightly higher levels of confidence in the courts on the remaining two measures: respecting the rights of the accused, and

treating the accused fairly. These findings are very similar to those identified in the 2012 survey (Snowball & Jones, 2012), and are consistent with other surveys (Gelb, 2008; Hannam, 2012; Jansson, 2015; Roberts, 2007). The higher levels of confidence in the police expressed by respondents could be due to the police being more visible and having increased opportunities for interaction with the general public compared with the court system (Jansson, 2015). Improving community knowledge on the intersection between police and the court system may help to foster confidence in the CJS as a whole.

Survey respondents who reported recent exposure to crime were less confident in the CJS and were also less likely to agree that sentences handed down by the courts are about right. These results are also consistent with the earlier BOCSAR surveys (Halstead, 2015; Jones et al, 2008; Snowball & Jones, 2012). The consistency of these findings suggests that direct experience as a victim of crime may reduce one's confidence in the system. This could be because the individual was dissatisfied with the outcome or the way in which they were treated by the system. In fact, the last 30 years in Australia have seen concerted efforts to improve the victim experience in the court process, including the provision of specialised liaison and support services, better information on justice processes, and victim impact statements (Ross, 2015). Reassuringly, 'meeting the needs of victims' was the one dimension of the survey where an increase in confidence levels since 2007 was evident, and this improvement was sustained even after controlling for other confounding factors.

A large majority of survey respondents cited newspapers or news programs on television or radio as an influential source of information on crime and justice. Citing newspapers or news programs as a key source of influence was associated with more confidence in CJS functions. On the other hand, reporting talk-back radio as a key source of information on the CJS was associated with less confidence in the functions of the CJS. Social media/online sources were also reported by over half of all respondents to be an influential source of information about the CJS but did not appear to exert much influence on confidence levels (with the exception of the question about the CJS dealing with cases promptly). This is a notable finding given that social media as an information source was not explored in the earlier surveys and is an area where very little research has been undertaken to date. It would be beneficial to further explore the types of online sources and social media platforms people mostly access for information on the CJS, and the types most influential on criminal justice perceptions.

The low response rate is a limitation of the current survey that should be noted. However, the quota sampling and hybrid strategy employed here help ensure that the views measured in the survey represent those of the broader NSW resident population (Bednall et al., 2013). Furthermore, evidence suggests that low response rates do not always equate to high non-response bias (Groves & Peytcheva, 2008).

This series of BOCSAR surveys indicate very little improvement in public confidence in the NSW criminal justice system over the last decade (Halstead, 2015; Jones et al, 2008; Snowball & Jones, 2012), despite the significant justice reforms that have been introduced in NSW in recent years. This is concerning as confidence is critical for the effective functioning of the system. Given evidence that the provision of accurate, factual information can boost confidence in the criminal justice system (Chapman, Mirrlees-Black, & Brawn, 2002; Halstead, 2015; Warner, Davis, Walter, Bradfield, & Vermey, 2009), exploring opportunities for addressing misperceptions may be the key to improving confidence levels. Ensuring that independent reports on crime trends and court penalties are made accessible to the general public (Duffy et al., 2008) and increasing exposure to court proceedings through media coverage, news reports and documentaries (for example, see IMDB, 2020) are consistent with this approach. The rise in popularity of true crime documentaries and podcasts in recent years is likely to influence public confidence in the CJS and perceptions of miscarriages of justice, especially if their focus remains on high profile cases, but the impact of this platform is yet to be seen (Mahdawi, 2018). The use of social media may be an additional avenue to pursue, especially in reaching younger people and increasing their confidence in the CJS (Marsh et al., 2019). The current survey found younger individuals were less likely to feel confident in the activities of the police compared to the courts. The online presence and engagement of NSW Police Force on social media platforms such as Facebook in recent times presents an opportunity to engage young people and

potentially improve confidence. However, it appears from the current survey results that traditional media sources still play a key role in shaping perceptions and must therefore be continually engaged. Websites such as the UK's 'You be the Judge' (YBTJ), and in Australia, Queensland's 'Judge for Yourself' (Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council, 2020) and Victoria's 'You be the Judge' (Victorian Sentencing Council, 2020) have demonstrated that online tools can also be helpful in changing views about sentencing (Cuthbertson, 2013). For example, the YBTJ website allows users to see what factors judicial officers consider in sentencing decisions and provides users with the opportunity to decide on the sentence they would give, both before and after hearing the evidence of the case. Tools of this kind could be adapted for other jurisdictions and made more widely available through public websites and/or educational institutions at a relatively low cost. Any new initiatives that are trialled should, however, be accompanied by regular surveys (Duffy et al., 2008) in order to test their success (or otherwise) in influencing knowledge and confidence levels.

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## APPENDIX

### AI: Confidence in the Criminal Justice System Survey, 2019: Questionnaire

#### INTRODUCTION

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is [INTV] from [NAME OF COMPANY] the survey research company. We are conducting a short random survey into people's views of the criminal justice system in New South Wales and we'd like your help. Could I please speak to the youngest male aged 18 years or over who lives in the household?

[IF NOT IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE, ASK:]

**What would be a good time to call back when I might be able to speak to him?**

[MAKE AN APPOINTMENT]

[IF NO MALES IN THE HOUSEHOLD ASK:]

**Then may I please speak to the youngest female aged 18 years or over who lives in the household?**

[IF NOT IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE, ASK]

**What would be a good time to call back when I might be able to speak to her?**

[MAKE AN APPOINTMENT]

[IF YOUNGEST MALE OR FEMALE IS NOT GOING TO BE AVAILABLE IN THE NEXT 2-3 WEEKS OR IS NEVER WILLING TO DO SURVEYS, SPEAK TO ANYONE IN HOUSEHOLD ENSURING THEY ARE WITHIN QUOTAS]

[REPEAT INTRODUCTION IF NEW PERSON COMES TO THE PHONE]

SAY, IF NECESSARY: **Your replies will, of course, be treated in complete confidence.**

SAY, IF NECESSARY: **This is solely for research purposes and we will not try to sell you anything afterwards.**

SAY, IF NECESSARY: **Depending upon your answers, the survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.**

**Is now a good time to speak to you or would it be more convenient if I made an appointment to speak to you at a later time?**

IF NECESSARY MAKE AN APPOINTMENT.

IF NOT WILLING TO PARTICIPATE, ASK IF THERE IS ANYONE ELSE IN HOUSEHOLD WHO WOULD BE WILLING TO HELP. TRY FOR NEXT YOUNGEST IF POSSIBLE.

**At the end of this survey and in accordance with Privacy Guidelines, we will tell you the name of our client on whose behalf we are conducting this research.**

**Q1S. Do you live in Sydney, Newcastle or Wollongong or elsewhere?**

1. SYDNEY
2. NEWCASTLE
3. WOLLONGONG
4. ELSEWHERE (specify)

INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF 'ELSEWHERE' CONFIRM THEY LIVE IN NSW.

**Q2S. RECORD GENDER**

1. MALE
2. FEMALE

**Q3S. What was your age at your last birthday? RECORD EXACT AGE.**

INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF REFUSED TO GIVE AGE, MENTION THAT WE NEED THEIR AGE SO THAT WE GET A GOOD CROSS-SECTION OF PEOPLE.

IF STILL REFUSED TO GIVE AGE, THANK RESPONDENT FOR THEIR TIME AND THEN SELECT ESC (TOP LEFT-HAND CORNER OF KEYBOARD), TO TURN ON THE SELECTION OF MENU BUTTONS, AND THEN SELECT THE QUIT BUTTON AND CODE AS REFUSED AGE.

**Q1PRE**

**The next few questions are about the criminal justice system as a whole. By this, I mean the police, the courts, the people that prosecute offenders and the prison system.**

**Q1a. How confident are you that the criminal justice system is effective in bringing people who commit crimes to justice? READ OUT**

(Reverse order for random selection of half of the respondents).

1. Very confident
2. Fairly confident
3. Not very confident
4. Not at all confident
5. DO NOT READ: (DON'T KNOW)

**Q1b. How confident are you that the criminal justice system meets the needs of victims of crime? READ OUT**

(Reverse order for random selection of half of the respondents).

1. Very confident
2. Fairly confident
3. Not very confident
4. Not at all confident
5. DO NOT READ: (DON'T KNOW)

**Q1c. How confident are you that the criminal justice system respects the rights of people accused of committing a crime?** READ OUT

(Reverse order for random selection of half of the respondents).

1. Very confident
2. Fairly confident
3. Not very confident
4. Not at all confident
5. DO NOT READ: (DON'T KNOW)

**Q1d. How confident are you that the criminal justice system treats people accused of committing a crime fairly?** READ OUT

(Reverse order for random selection of half of the respondents).

1. Very confident
2. Fairly confident
3. Not very confident
4. Not at all confident
5. DO NOT READ: (DON'T KNOW)

**Q1e. How confident are you that the criminal justice system deals with cases promptly?**

READ OUT

(Reverse order for random selection of half of the respondents).

1. Very confident
2. Fairly confident
3. Not very confident
4. Not at all confident
5. DO NOT READ: (DON'T KNOW)

**Q2. In general, would you say that sentences handed down by the courts are too tough, about right, or too lenient?**

1. Much too tough
2. A little too tough
3. About right
4. A little too lenient
5. Much too lenient
6. DO NOT READ: DON'T KNOW

PROBE: **Is that a little too tough/lenient or much too tough/lenient?**

**Q3a. I would like to ask whether you think that the level of PROPERTY crime in NSW has changed over the past FIVE YEARS. Would you say there is more property crime, less property crime or about the same amount (since five years ago)?**

1. A lot more crime
2. A little more crime
3. About the same
4. A little less crime
5. A lot less crime
6. DO NOT READ: DON'T KNOW

PROBE: **Is that a lot or a little more/less?** PROMPT: **If you don't know, please just guess.**

**Q3b. I would like to ask whether you think that the level of VIOLENT crime in NSW has changed over the past FIVE YEARS. Would you say there is more violent crime, less violent crime or about the same amount (since five years ago)?**

1. A lot more crime
2. A little more crime
3. About the same
4. A little less crime
5. A lot less crime
6. DO NOT READ: DON'T KNOW

PROBE: **Is that a lot or a little more/less?** PROMPT: **If you don't know, please just guess.**

**The following questions ask you to give an answer out of 100. If you are not sure about the number, please give your best guess.**

**Q4a. Of every 100 crimes recorded by the police, roughly what number do you think involve VIOLENCE or the THREAT of violence?**

0...100

**Q4b. Of every 100 people charged with MURDER and brought to court, roughly what number do you think end up convicted?**

0...100

**Q4c. Now, I would like you to think about the kinds of sentence that are imposed for murder. Out of every 100 men aged 21 or over who are convicted of MURDER, how many do you think are sent to prison?**

0...100

**Q4d. Now, turning to home burglary. Of every 100 people charged with HOME BURGLARY and brought to court, roughly what number do you think end up convicted?**

0...100

**Q4e. Now, I would like you to think about the kinds of sentence that are imposed for home burglary. Out of every 100 MEN aged 21 or over who are convicted of HOME BURGLARY, how many do you think are sent to prison?**

0... 100

**Q8pre.**

*The earlier questions asked about the criminal justice system as a whole. In the next few questions, I would like to ask you about your views towards the police and the courts separately.*

*Firstly, I want to ask you about your impressions of the police.*

**Q8a. How confident are you that the police are effective in bringing people who commit crimes to justice? READ OUT**

(Reverse order for random selection of half of the respondents)

1. Very confident
2. Fairly confident
3. Not very confident
4. Not at all confident
5. DO NOT READ: (DON'T KNOW)

**Q8b. How confident are you that the police meet the needs of victims of crime? READ OUT**

(Reverse order for random selection of half of the respondents).

1. Very confident
2. Fairly confident
3. Not very confident
4. Not at all confident
5. DO NOT READ: (DON'T KNOW)

**Q8c. How confident are you that the police respect the rights of people accused of committing a crime? READ OUT**

(Reverse order for random selection of half of the respondents).

1. Very confident
2. Fairly confident
3. Not very confident
4. Not at all confident
5. DO NOT READ: (DON'T KNOW)

**Q8d. How confident are you that the police treat people accused of committing a crime fairly?**

READ OUT

(Reverse order for random selection of half of the respondents).

1. Very confident
2. Fairly confident
3. Not very confident
4. Not at all confident
5. DO NOT READ: (DON'T KNOW)

**Q8e. How confident are you that the police deal with cases promptly?** READ OUT  
(Reverse order for random selection of half of the respondents).

1. Very confident
2. Fairly confident
3. Not very confident
4. Not at all confident
5. DO NOT READ: (DON'T KNOW)

**Q9PRE. Now, I want to ask you about your impressions of the courts.**

**Q9a. How confident are you that the courts are effective in bringing people who commit crimes to justice?** READ OUT  
(Reverse order for random selection of half of the respondents).

1. Very confident
2. Fairly confident
3. Not very confident
4. Not at all confident
5. DO NOT READ: (DON'T KNOW)

**Q9b. How confident are you that the courts meet the needs of victims of crime?** READ OUT  
(Reverse order for random selection of half of the respondents).

1. Very confident
2. Fairly confident
3. Not very confident
4. Not at all confident
5. DO NOT READ: (DON'T KNOW)

**Q9c. How confident are you that the courts respect the rights of people accused of committing a crime?** READ OUT  
(Reverse order for random selection of half of the respondents).

1. Very confident
2. Fairly confident
3. Not very confident
4. Not at all confident
5. DO NOT READ: (DON'T KNOW)



**Q9d. How confident are you that the courts treat people accused of committing a crime fairly?**

READ OUT

(Reverse order for random selection of half of the respondents).

1. Very confident
2. Fairly confident
3. Not very confident
4. Not at all confident
5. DO NOT READ: (DON'T KNOW)

**Q9e. How confident are you that the courts deal with cases promptly?** READ OUT

(Reverse order for random selection of half of the respondents).

1. Very confident
2. Fairly confident
3. Not very confident
4. Not at all confident
5. DO NOT READ: (DON'T KNOW)

**Q10. People get their information about the Criminal Justice System from many sources. For each source I'm about to mention, please indicate whether it is an INFLUENTIAL or NOT INFLUENTIAL source of information about the Criminal Justice System for you personally?**  
(ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS EXCEPT FOR J)

- a) Personal experience
- b) Relatives' and/or friends' experiences
- c) Word of mouth/information from other people
- d) Newspapers (e.g. Sydney Morning Herald, The Australian, Daily Telegraph, local newspaper) (in print or online)
- e) News/current affairs programmes on TV/radio
- f) Talk-back radio
- g) Government publications/websites
- h) Books/School/college/university courses
- i) Social Media (including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)
- j) Other online sources (not social media or online newspapers)

1. Influential
2. Not influential
3. (Don't know) NOT READ OUT – ONLY CODE IF RESPONDENT TRULY DOESN'T KNOW

**Q11. Apart from those I just mentioned, are there any other sources of information about the Criminal Justice System that are influential for you personally? PROBE WELL**

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**Q12PRE. Now, I want to ask you a few questions about crimes that you may have experienced.**

**Q12a. In the last 12 months, have you had any property stolen or purposely damaged, or has there been an attempt to steal or damage your property? This could include your home, your car, or other personal possessions.**

1. Yes
2. No

**Q12b. In the last 12 months, did anyone, including people you know, use physical force or violence against you? Please do not include verbal abuse or threats of violence.**

1. Yes
2. No

**Q12c. In the last 12 months, did anyone, including people you know, try to use or threaten to use physical force or violence against you?**

1. Yes
2. No

**Q13PRE**

**And finally, I would like to ask you a few questions about yourself to make sure we have a good cross-section of people in our survey.**

**Q13a. Which of the following best describes your household? [READ OUT]**

1. Person living alone
2. Couple with no children living at home
3. Couple with children living at home
4. Single-parent with children living at home
5. Group household of unrelated adults
6. Group household of related adults
7. Something else (specify)
8. [DO NOT READ OUT] Can't Say/Refused

**Q13b. Can you please tell me the highest educational level you have completed? READ OUT**  
INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF VOLUNTEERS "College" CODE AS 3.

1. Year 10 or less
2. Year 11 or 12
3. TAFE
4. University

**Q13c. Would you mind telling me your approximate household annual income from all sources before tax, bearing in mind that this information will remain strictly confidential?**

IF CAN'T SAY ASK: **Well what's your best guess?**

[READ OUT RANGES IF NECESSARY]

IF RESPONDENT IS HESITANT, CLARIFY **Please be assured that this question is asked for research purposes only. Your responses are aggregated and you cannot be identified in any way.**

- |                         |                                 |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Less than \$6,000    | 11. \$50,000 - \$59,999         |
| 2. \$6,000 - \$9,999    | 12. \$60,000 - \$69,999         |
| 3. \$10,000 - \$14,999  | 13. \$70,000 - \$79,999         |
| 4. \$15,000 - \$19,999  | 14. \$80,000 - \$89,999         |
| 5. \$20,000 - \$24,999  | 15. \$90,000 - \$99,999         |
| 6. \$25,000 - \$29,999  | 16. \$100,000 - \$109,999       |
| 7. \$30,000 - \$34,999  | 17. \$110,000 - \$119,999       |
| 8. \$35,000 - \$39,999  | 18. \$120,000 - \$129,999       |
| 9. \$40,000 - \$44,999  | 19. \$130,000 or more           |
| 10. \$45,000 - \$49,999 | 20. [DO NOT READ OUT] Can't say |
|                         | 21. [DO NOT READ OUT] Refused   |

ALL RESPONDENTS

**Just to remind you my name is [INTV] calling from [NAME OF COMPANY]. Could I please have your name so that we can re-contact you if necessary as part of our quality control to validate that this interview actually took place?**

*Once the validation period has finished, please be assured that your name and contact details will be removed from your responses to this survey.*

NAME:

*And what would be the best number to call you on?*

[READ OUT PHONE NUMBER]

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

*As this is market research, it is carried out in compliance with the **Privacy Act**. The information you provided will be used only for research purposes. This research was conducted on behalf of the NSW BUREAU OF CRIME STATISTICS & RESEARCH.*

**Table A2. Confidence in the criminal justice system surveys: Unweighted and weighted survey sample composition (%), by survey year and socio-demographic characteristics**

| Characteristic                      | Unweighted sample (%) |                 |                 |                 | p-value <sup>a</sup> | Weighted sample (%) |                 |                 |                 | p-value <sup>a</sup> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
|                                     | 2007<br>n=2,002       | 2012<br>n=2,001 | 2014<br>n=1,989 | 2019<br>n=2,000 |                      | 2007<br>n=2,002     | 2012<br>n=2,001 | 2014<br>n=1,989 | 2019<br>n=2,000 |                      |
| Gender                              |                       |                 |                 |                 |                      |                     |                 |                 |                 |                      |
| Male                                | 48.0                  | 49.5            | 49.2            | 46.2            | 0.145                | 49.0                | 49.8            | 49.8            | 48.6            | =.870                |
| Female                              | 52.0                  | 50.5            | 50.8            | 53.8            |                      | 51.0                | 50.2            | 50.2            | 51.4            |                      |
| Age group (years)                   |                       |                 |                 |                 |                      |                     |                 |                 |                 |                      |
| 18-34                               | 29.3                  | 30.5            | 30.2            | 28.4            | 0.027                | 30.8                | 30.1            | 30.2            | 25.9            | <.001                |
| 35-49                               | 28.6                  | 29.3            | 29.4            | 26.3            |                      | 28.4                | 26.4            | 26.0            | 31.3            |                      |
| 50+                                 | 42.1                  | 40.2            | 40.4            | 45.4            |                      | 40.8                | 43.5            | 43.8            | 42.8            |                      |
| Residential location                |                       |                 |                 |                 | 0.013                |                     |                 |                 |                 |                      |
| Sydney                              | 60.6                  | 63.3            | 62.9            | 65.6            |                      | 64.0                | 65.0            | 65.1            | 63.8            | =.783                |
| Rest of NSW                         | 39.4                  | 36.7            | 37.1            | 34.4            |                      | 36.0                | 35.0            | 34.9            | 36.2            |                      |
| Education                           |                       |                 |                 |                 | <.001                |                     |                 |                 |                 | <.001                |
| Year 10 or less                     | 21.9                  | 16.2            | 16.4            | 13.2            |                      | 21.2                | 16.5            | 16.7            | 12.8            |                      |
| Year 11 or 12                       | 21.0                  | 19.5            | 20.8            | 12.9            |                      | 21.2                | 19.5            | 20.8            | 13.2            |                      |
| TAFE                                | 20.6                  | 24.9            | 22.9            | 24.0            |                      | 20.5                | 24.8            | 22.7            | 25.4            |                      |
| University                          | 36.5                  | 39.4            | 39.9            | 49.8            |                      | 37.2                | 39.2            | 39.8            | 48.7            |                      |
| Household structure                 |                       |                 |                 |                 | <.001                |                     |                 |                 |                 | <.001                |
| Person living alone                 | 17.2                  | 12.3            | 11.5            | 16.7            |                      | 17.0                | 12.7            | 12.0            | 15.4            |                      |
| Couple with no children at home     | 26.8                  | 23.4            | 23.6            | 27.5            |                      | 26.3                | 24.2            | 24.6            | 24.5            |                      |
| Couple with children at home        | 39.1                  | 45.3            | 42.9            | 31.8            |                      | 39.5                | 44.2            | 41.6            | 34.8            |                      |
| Single-parent with children at home | 6.5                   | 5.2             | 5.2             | 5.8             |                      | 6.5                 | 5.1             | 5.0             | 6.0             |                      |
| Group household/other               | 10.4                  | 13.8            | 16.7            | 18.2            |                      | 10.7                | 13.8            | 16.9            | 19.2            |                      |
| Household income                    |                       |                 |                 |                 | <.001                |                     |                 |                 |                 | <.001                |
| < \$60,000                          | 33.7                  | 27.3            | 23.9            | 23.2            |                      | 33.0                | 27.7            | 24.3            | 21.8            |                      |
| \$60,000 - \$99,999                 | 20.0                  | 20.7            | 18.3            | 16.0            |                      | 20.1                | 20.3            | 18.1            | 16.1            |                      |
| \$100,000 - \$129,999               | 10.5                  | 13.2            | 12.0            | 11.0            |                      | 10.7                | 13.0            | 11.9            | 11.4            |                      |
| \$130,000 or more                   | 12.8                  | 20.1            | 23.6            | 27.5            |                      | 13.1                | 19.9            | 23.1            | 28.8            |                      |
| Can't say/refused                   | 23.0                  | 18.7            | 22.2            | 22.2            |                      | 23.2                | 19.1            | 22.6            | 22.0            |                      |

Notes. <sup>a</sup> p-value for Pearson chi-square test of independence between respondent characteristics and survey year.

**Table A3. Percentage of respondents who did not answer each confidence question in each survey year, 2007 – 2019**

| Measure of confidence              | Survey year |           |           |           |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                                    | 2007<br>%   | 2012<br>% | 2014<br>% | 2019<br>% |
| Bringing people to justice         | 1.1         | 1.0       | 0.8       | 1.0       |
| Meeting needs of victims           | 3.3         | 3.8       | 2.1       | 2.4       |
| Respecting rights of accused       | 4.0         | 3.4       | 3.3       | 3.3       |
| Treats accused fairly              | 3.4         | 3.3       | 2.2       | 1.7       |
| Deals with cases promptly          | 4.8         | 3.6       | 4.8       | 3.0       |
| Punitiveness (views on sentencing) | 4.4         | 5.0       | 3.3       | 3.5       |

**Table A4. Benchmark official statistics relating to survey measures of perceptions of crime and criminal justice outcomes in each survey year, 2007 – 2019**

| Perception measure                      | Survey year | Source data<br>(NSW BOCSAR crime and courts statistics databases)                                                                                                                            | Benchmark year | Statistic (%) |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Incidence of violence in recorded crime | 2007        | Proportion of all police-recorded incidents over the year that fall into categories of homicide, assault (domestic, non-domestic and police assault), sexual offences and robbery            | 2007           | 7             |
|                                         | 2012        |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2012           | 6             |
|                                         | 2014        |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2013           | 6             |
|                                         | 2019        |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2018           | 6             |
| Five-year trend in property crime       | 2007        | Percentage change in number of property crime incidents recorded annually relative to five-years prior                                                                                       | 2007           | -5            |
|                                         | 2012        |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2012           | -2            |
|                                         | 2014        |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2013           | Stable        |
|                                         | 2019        |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2018           | -2            |
| Five-year trend in violent crime        | 2019        | Percentage change in number of violent crime incidents recorded annually relative to five-years prior                                                                                        | 2018           | Stable        |
| Conviction rate home burglary           | 2007        | Annual court conviction rate for people charged with offences under ANZSOC Classification Division 7: unlawful entry with intent/burglary, break and enter (residential and non-residential) | 2007           | 74            |
|                                         | 2012        |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2012           | 70            |
|                                         | 2014        |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2013           | 70            |
|                                         | 2019        |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2018           | 74            |
| Imprisonment rate home burglary         | 2007        | Annual imprisonment rate for people charged with offences under ANZSOC Classification Division 7: unlawful entry with intent/burglary, break and enter (residential and non-residential)     | 2007           | 59            |
|                                         | 2012        |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2012           | 60            |
|                                         | 2014        |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2013           | 61            |
|                                         | 2019        |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2018           | 66            |
| Conviction rate murder                  | 2012        | Annual court conviction rate for people charged with murder                                                                                                                                  | 2012           | 47            |
|                                         | 2014        |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2013           | 61            |
|                                         | 2019        |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2018           | 54            |
| Imprisonment rate for murder            | 2012        | Annual imprisonment rate for people convicted of murder                                                                                                                                      | 2012           | 100           |
|                                         | 2014        |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2013           | 100           |
|                                         | 2019        |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2018           | 100           |

Note. ANZSOC = Australian and New Zealand Standard Offence Classification (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

Table A5. Statistically significant changes in confidence in the criminal justice system over time, 2007 – 2019

| Measure of confidence                                       |                                                          | 2014 vs 2007<br>OR (95% CI) | 2019 vs 2014<br>OR (95% CI) | 2019 vs 2007<br>OR (95% CI) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Confident the CJS brings people who commit crime to justice | Unadjusted                                               | 1.483 (1.305, 1.686)**      | 0.834 (0.733, 0.949)*       | 1.237 (1.091, 1.404)*       |
|                                                             | Adjusted for socio-demographics                          | 1.396 (1.221, 1.595)**      | 0.814 (0.711, 0.932)*       | 1.136 (0.992, 1.300)        |
|                                                             | Adjusted for socio-demographics and perceptions of crime | 1.173 (1.014, 1.358)*       | 0.855 (0.738, 0.990)*       | 1.003 (0.865, 1.164)        |
| Confident the CJS meets the needs of victims                | Unadjusted                                               | 1.418 (1.246, 1.613)**      | 0.985 (0.868, 1.118)        | 1.397 (1.227, 1.589)**      |
|                                                             | Adjusted for socio-demographics                          | 1.386 (1.211, 1.585)**      | 1.033 (0.905, 1.179)        | 1.432 (1.249, 1.642)**      |
|                                                             | Adjusted for socio-demographics and perceptions of crime | 1.223 (1.059, 1.413)*       | 1.080 (0.938, 1.244)        | 1.321 (1.141, 1.531)**      |
| Confident the CJS respects the rights of the accused        | Unadjusted                                               | 1.416 (1.214, 1.651)**      | 0.683 (0.586, 0.796)**      | 0.968 (0.837, 1.119)        |
|                                                             | Adjusted for socio-demographics                          | 1.311 (1.120, 1.535)*       | 0.686 (0.586, 0.802)**      | 0.899 (0.772, 1.047)        |
|                                                             | Adjusted for socio-demographics and perceptions of crime | 1.282 (1.086, 1.512)*       | 0.712 (0.604, 0.804)**      | 0.913 (0.777, 1.073)        |
| Confident the CJS treats the accused fairly                 | Unadjusted                                               | 1.248 (1.069, 1.457)*       | 0.674 (0.580, 0.784)**      | 0.842 (0.727, 0.974)*       |
|                                                             | Adjusted for socio-demographics                          | 1.159 (0.989, 1.358)        | 0.680 (0.582, 0.794)**      | 0.788 (0.676, 0.919)*       |
|                                                             | Adjusted for socio-demographics and perceptions of crime | 1.098 (0.930, 1.298)        | 0.704 (0.598, 0.828)**      | 0.773 (0.657, 0.909)*       |
| Confident the CJS deals with cases promptly                 | Unadjusted                                               | 1.226 (1.071, 1.403)*       | 0.832 (0.727, 0.952)*       | 1.020 (0.890, 1.169)        |
|                                                             | Adjusted for socio-demographics                          | 1.245 (1.082, 1.432)*       | 0.898 (0.781, 1.032)        | 1.118 (0.968, 1.290)        |
|                                                             | Adjusted for socio-demographics and perceptions of crime | 1.133 (0.977, 1.313)        | 0.909 (0.785, 1.052)        | 1.029 (0.884, 1.198)        |
| Views sentences handed down as 'about right'                | Unadjusted                                               | 1.167 (1.013, 1.343)*       | 0.985 (0.858, 1.131)        | 1.149 (0.998, 1.323)        |
|                                                             | Adjusted for sociodemographics                           | 1.072 (0.925, 1.242)        | 0.925 (0.800, 1.070)        | 0.992 (0.854, 1.152)        |
|                                                             | Adjusted for socio-demographics and perceptions of crime | 0.854 (0.725, 1.005)        | 0.962 (0.821, 1.128)        | 0.822 (0.696, 0.970)*       |

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .001$ ; and OR=odds ratio, CI=confidence interval based on univariate logistic regression model (unadjusted without controls), and multivariate logistic regression controlling for socio-demographics (household composition, sex, household income, age, residential location, education), and perceptions of crime (incidence of violent crime, home burglary conviction rate, home burglary imprisonment rate, property crime trends).