



Statistical Publication

NSW Inmate Population: Visualising the Trends 1999

Sylviane Mariasson & Simon Eyland

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NSW Department of Corrective Services

**NSW INMATE POPULATION:
VISUALISING THE TRENDS**

1999

Sylviane Mariasson & Simon Eyland

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The NSW data was collected by the staff of the Research and Statistics Unit either from returns from the correctional centres or retrieved from the Department's computer database the Offender Management System (OMS). Community Corrections Data was supplied by the Information Technology Branch. Data on imprisonment rates from other states was taken from "Australian Prison Trends" published by the Australian Institute of Criminology and "National Correctional Statistics: Prisons" published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Many thanks to all those involved over the years. Thank you in particular to Deputy Governors and Clerks for sending in weekly states returns, Nicolle Brown, Clerical Officer for collating these returns for the last few years. A special thanks to Barbara Thompson, Research Statistician for her time and advice in editing this report.

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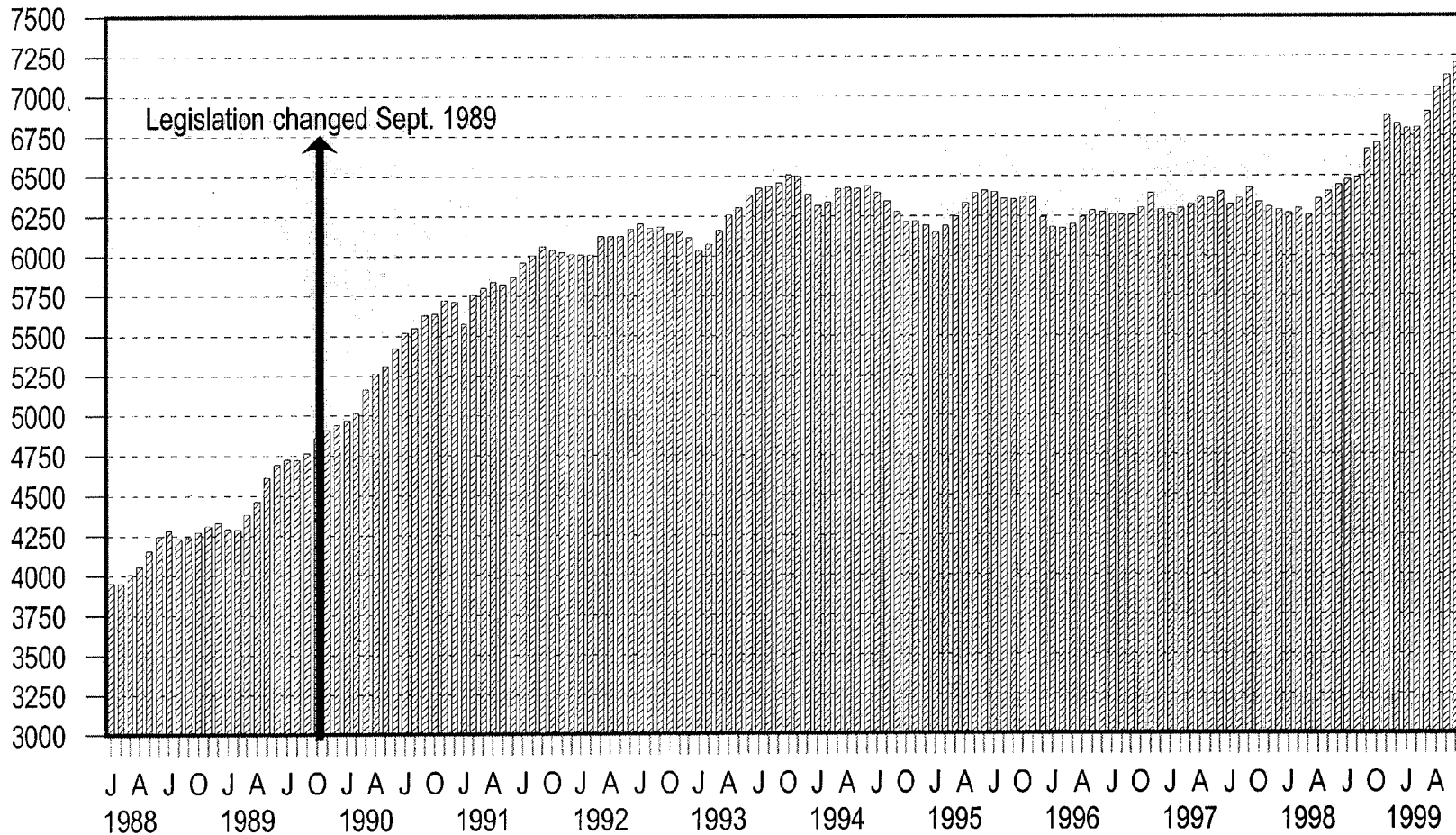
Total in full-time Custody

I. TOTAL FULL-TIME CUSTODY

- ◆ The Number of inmates in full-time custody was increasing prior to the introduction of the Sentencing Act, (1989) on 25th September, 1989. However, after the introduction of the Sentencing Act, numbers increased rapidly for about two years. This increase had stopped by the end of 1993.
- ◆ The increase in correctional centre population attributable to the introduction of the Sentencing Act, was predicted to be most marked during the period 4 - 17 months after the introduction of the "Truth in Sentencing" legislation, i.e., from February 1990 to March 1991 (Gorta & Eyland). This prediction is clearly confirmed in the graph of the daily average number of inmates.
- ◆ It is common for the correctional centre population to decrease or remain fairly constant in December, January and February each year (except 1989/90 following the introduction of the Sentencing Act). This cyclic pattern is quite evident from 1990 onwards. This cycle is mainly due to Court's calendar.
- ◆ The number of inmates in full-time custody was relatively stable for five or six years (1993-1998) following the increase due to the Sentencing Act, (1989). This is reflected in the Trend chart which shows both the highest and lowest weekly state numbers closely grouped around the daily average for this period.
- ◆ There has been a very rapid increase in full-time inmate numbers from May 1998 which is similar of that experienced following the introduction of the Sentencing Act, (1989). This has been attributed to increased Police activity.

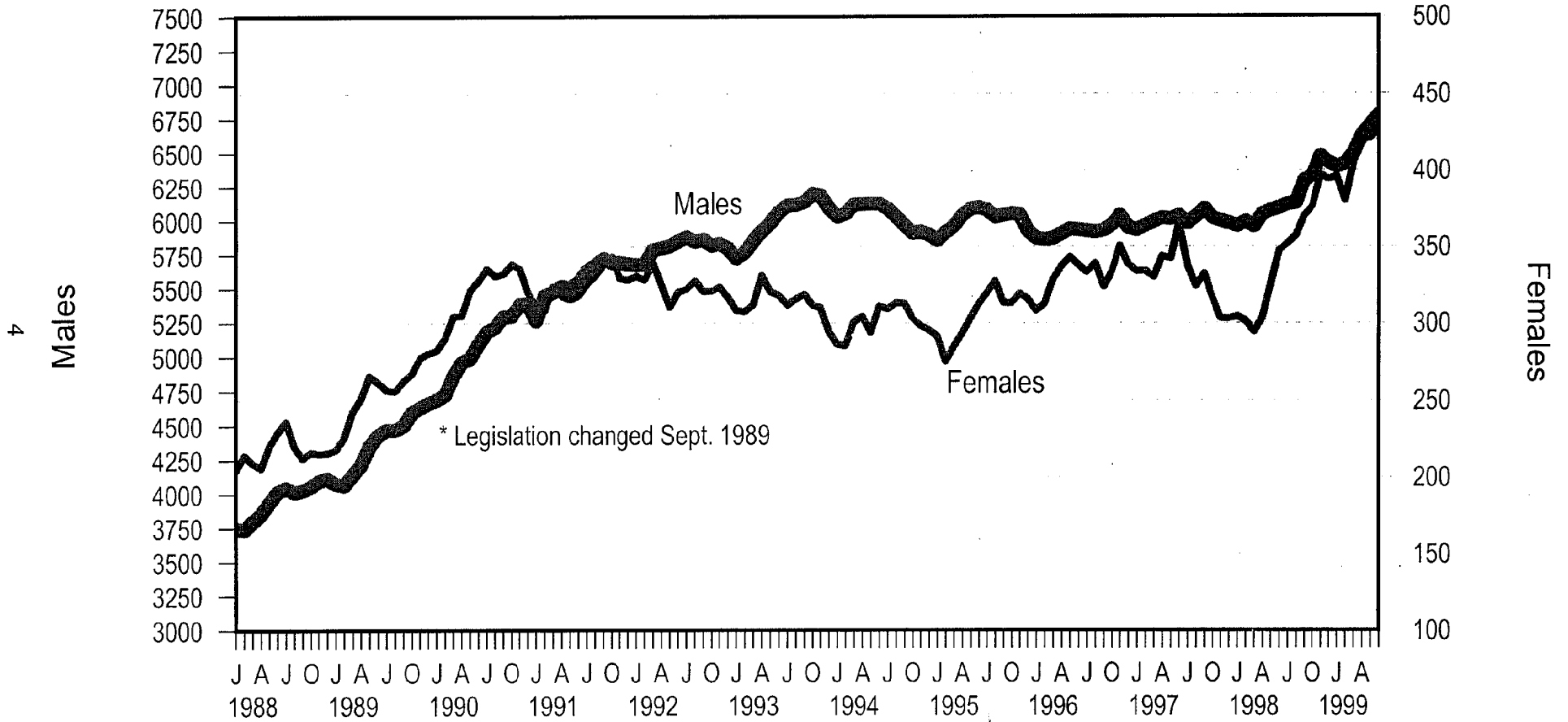
Daily Average Number of Inmates in NSW Correctional Centres (excludes Periodic Detainees) January 1988 to June 1999

3



Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services.
Source: Supplied on weekly basis from Correctional Centres

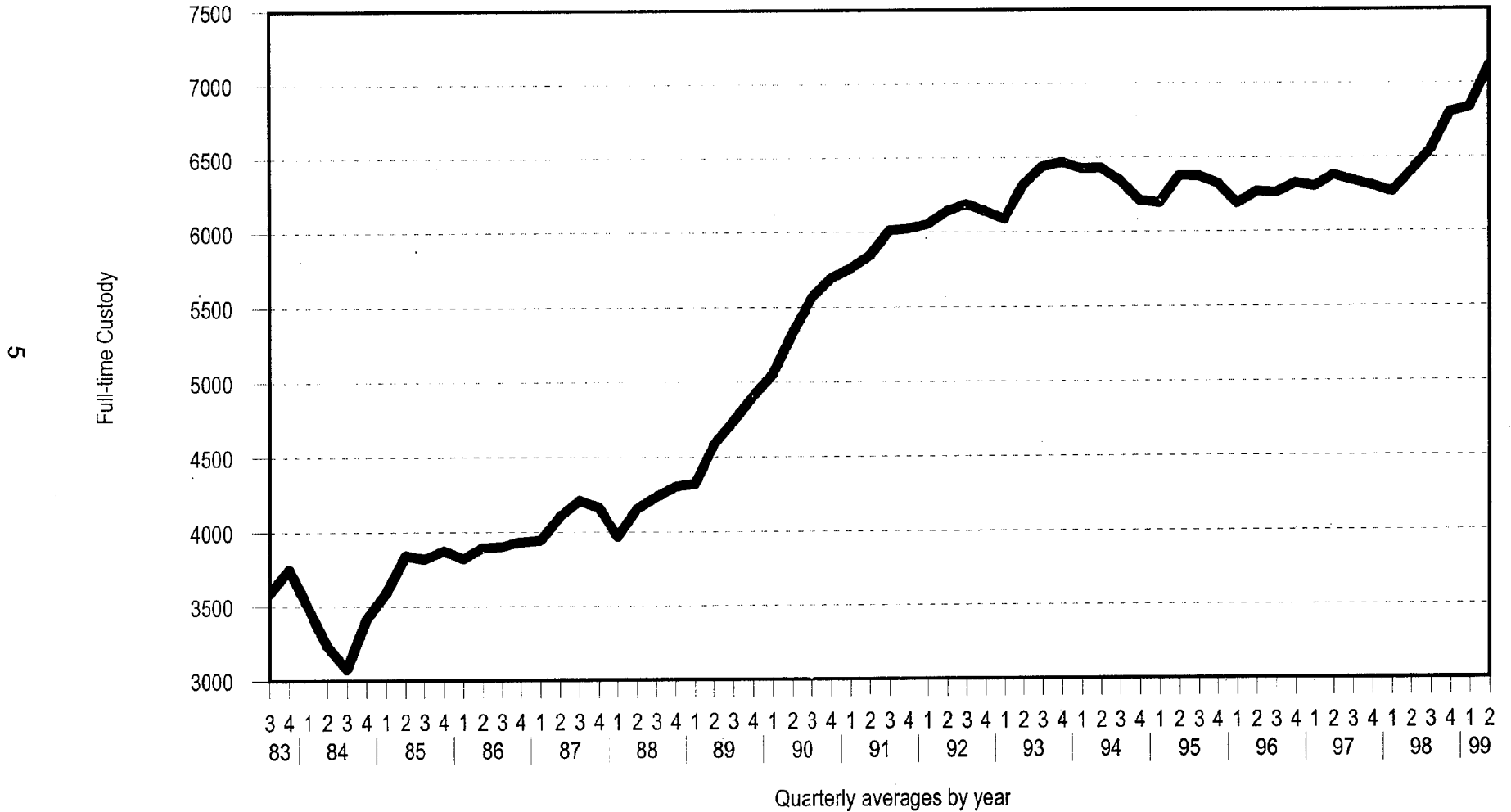
Daily Average Number of Inmates in NSW Correctional Centres (excludes Periodic Detainees) January 1988 to June 1999



Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services.
Source: Supplied on weekly basis from Correctional Centres

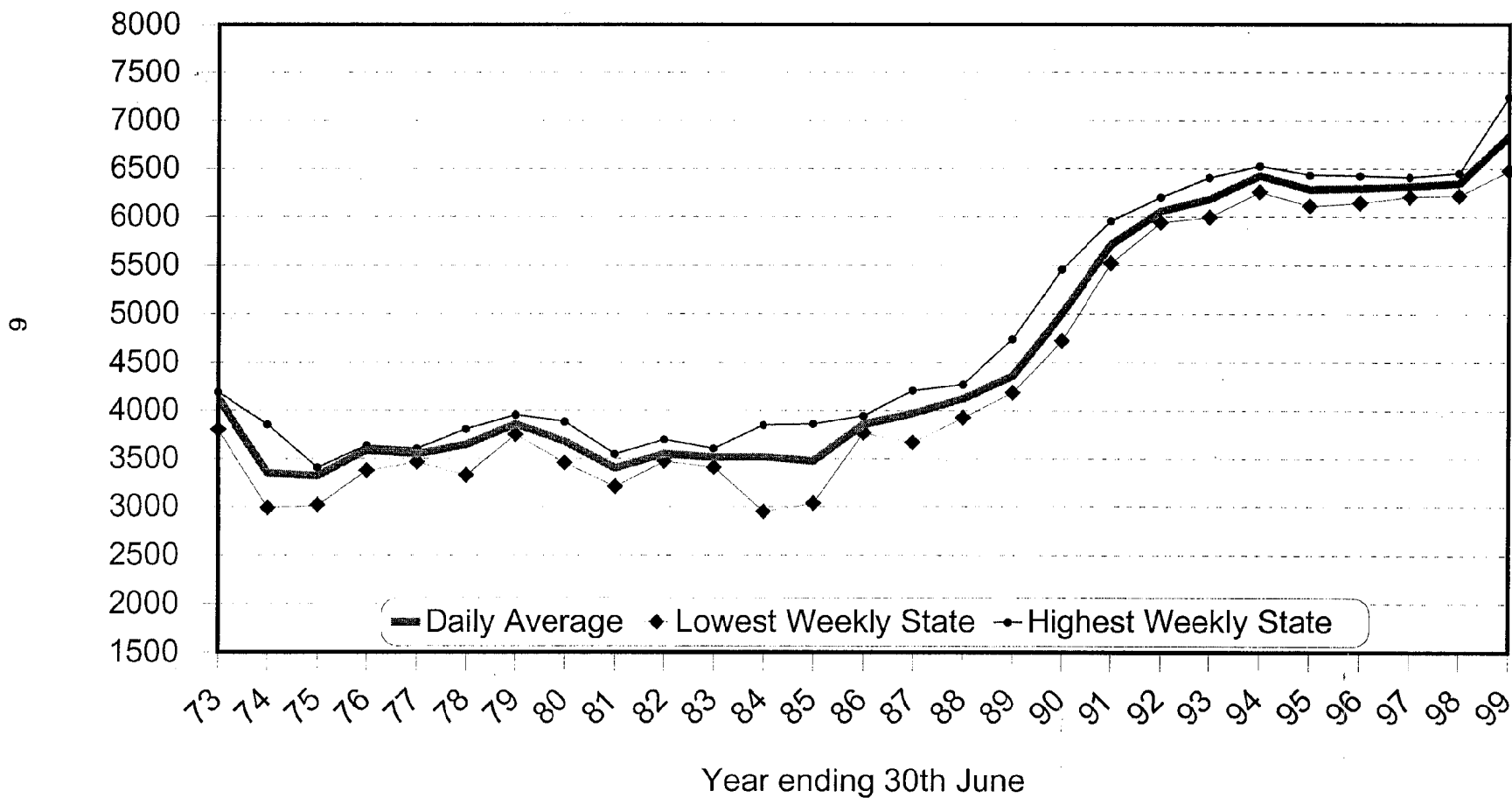
Quarterly Daily Average of Inmates

July 1983 to June 1999



Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services

Trends in the Inmate Population 1973 to 1999 Full-time Inmates



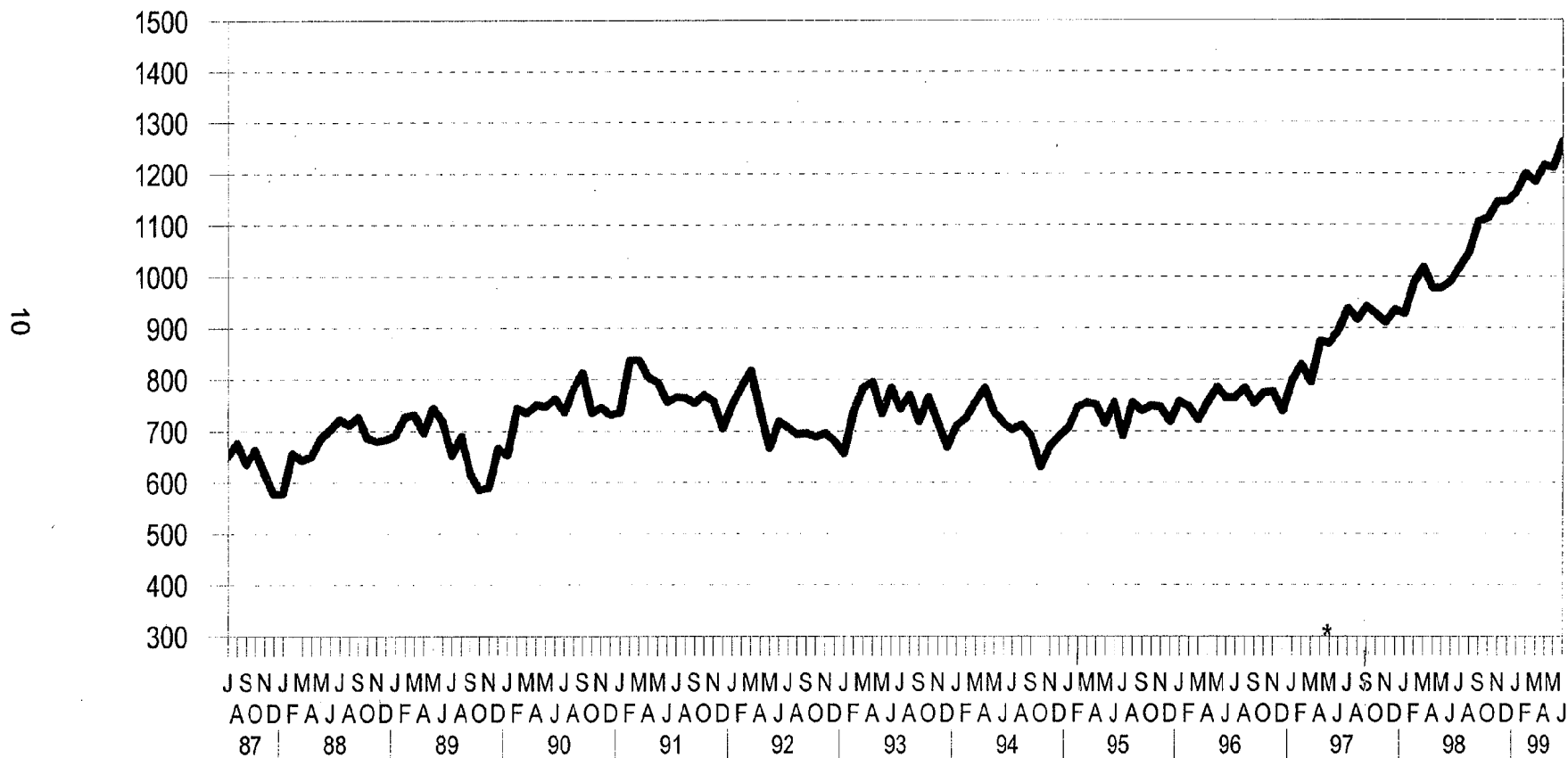
Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services.

Inmates in full-time custody by gender

II. MALE INMATES IN FULL-TIME CUSTODY

- ◆ Sentenced male inmates comprise the largest segment of the NSW correctional centre population. Hence trends in the number of sentenced males are closely reflected in the trends for the total number of inmates in full-time custody.
- ◆ The number of sentenced male inmates increased by approximately 2000 (66%) in less than 5 years (from January 1990 to June 1994) and 402 (8.6%) in the period May 1998 to June 1999.
- ◆ The total number of male inmates increased by 753 (12.4%) in the period May 1998 to June 1999.
- ◆ The greatest rate of increase in sentenced males was between January 1989 and November 1990, as predicted from previous calculations on the effect of the introduction of the "Truth in Sentencing" legislation. The recent increase in numbers was similar to this earlier increase and was attributed to police activity.
- ◆ The number of male inmates on remand, or awaiting trial or deportation fluctuates with a cyclic pattern of low numbers being held at the end of each calendar year prior to the Court's Summer recess. There has been a large increase in these numbers in recent times (May 1998 onwards) which has built upon a rising trend from the last quarter of 1996.
- ◆ The number of male appellants increased sharply following the introduction of the Sentencing Act. In the 4 years of this increase, the number of male appellants increased from approximately 250 to 550 (120%). Male appellants' numbers increased between June 1997 and June 1999.

N.S.W. Male Inmate Population Remands, Trials and Deportees July 1987 to June 1999

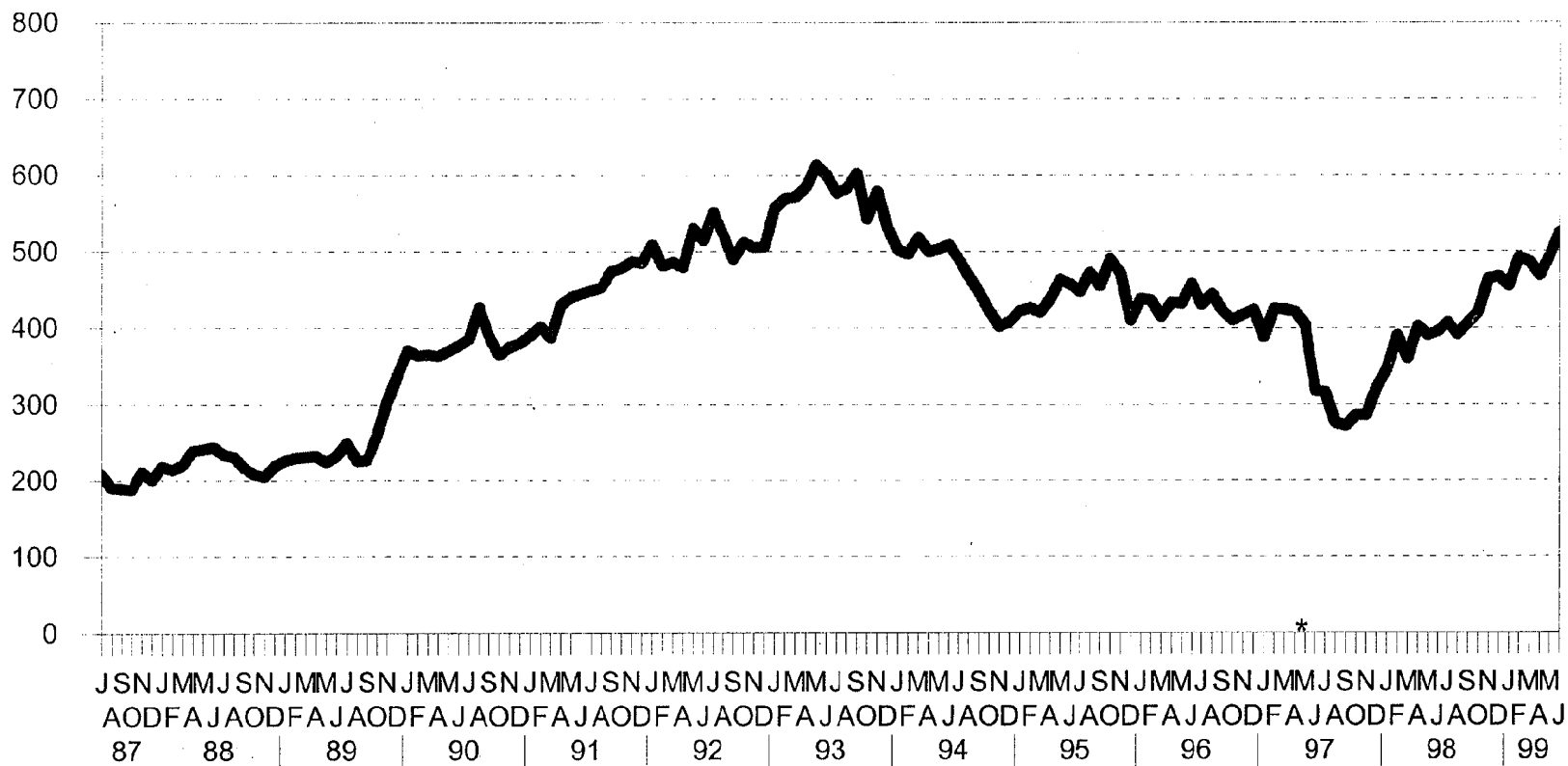


Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services
Source: Weekly states first Sunday of each month

* Method of collecting data changed during May 1997

N.S.W. Male Inmate Population Appellants Only July 1987 to June 1999

11



Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services
Source: Weekly states first Sunday of each month

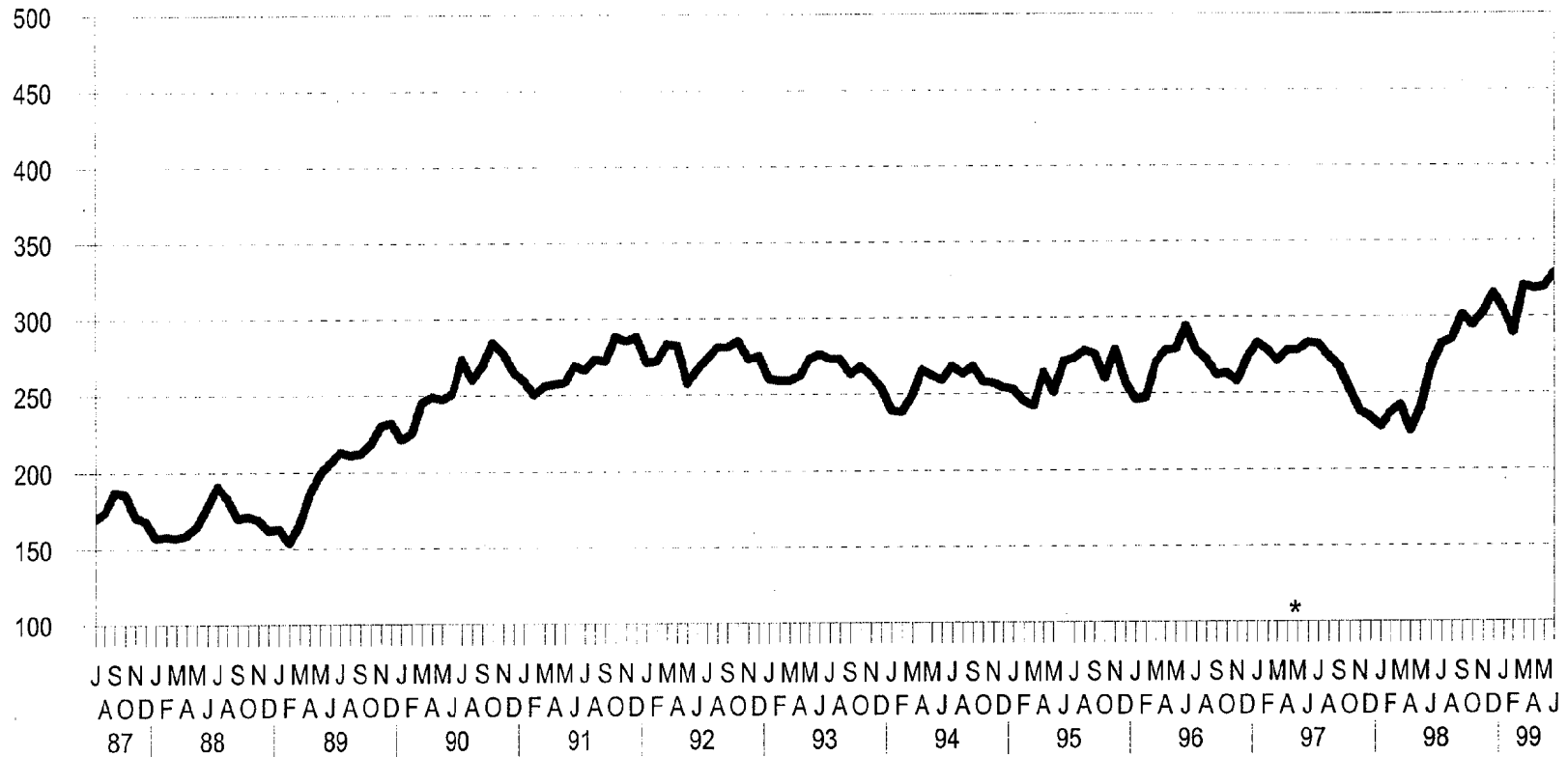
* Method of collecting data changed during May 1997

III. FEMALE INMATES IN FULL-TIME CUSTODY

- ◆ Trends in the number of female inmates have typically not been as easy to discern as those in the number of male inmates because of the relatively small numbers involved.
- ◆ There was a substantial increase in female numbers from January 1989 to mid 1990 with a particular increase in sentenced females between January 1989 and March 1990, as for the males, consistent with the predicted effects of the "Truth in Sentencing" legislation. This increase has been overshadowed by a more recent increase in the full-time female inmate population.
- ◆ In the chart of daily average number of inmates which plots both female and male numbers it becomes clear that although female numbers in general have followed the overall upward trend in male numbers, there have been periods where the female daily average numbers have shown a decreasing trend only to be met with a matching increasing trend which tends to take their numbers back towards the male trend.
- ◆ The number of female inmates on remand or awaiting trial or deportation has been following an upward trend since 1995.
- ◆ The number of female appellants has remained comparatively low in total numbers over the years.

N.S.W. Female Inmate Population Sentenced (includes appellants) July 1987 to June 1999

13

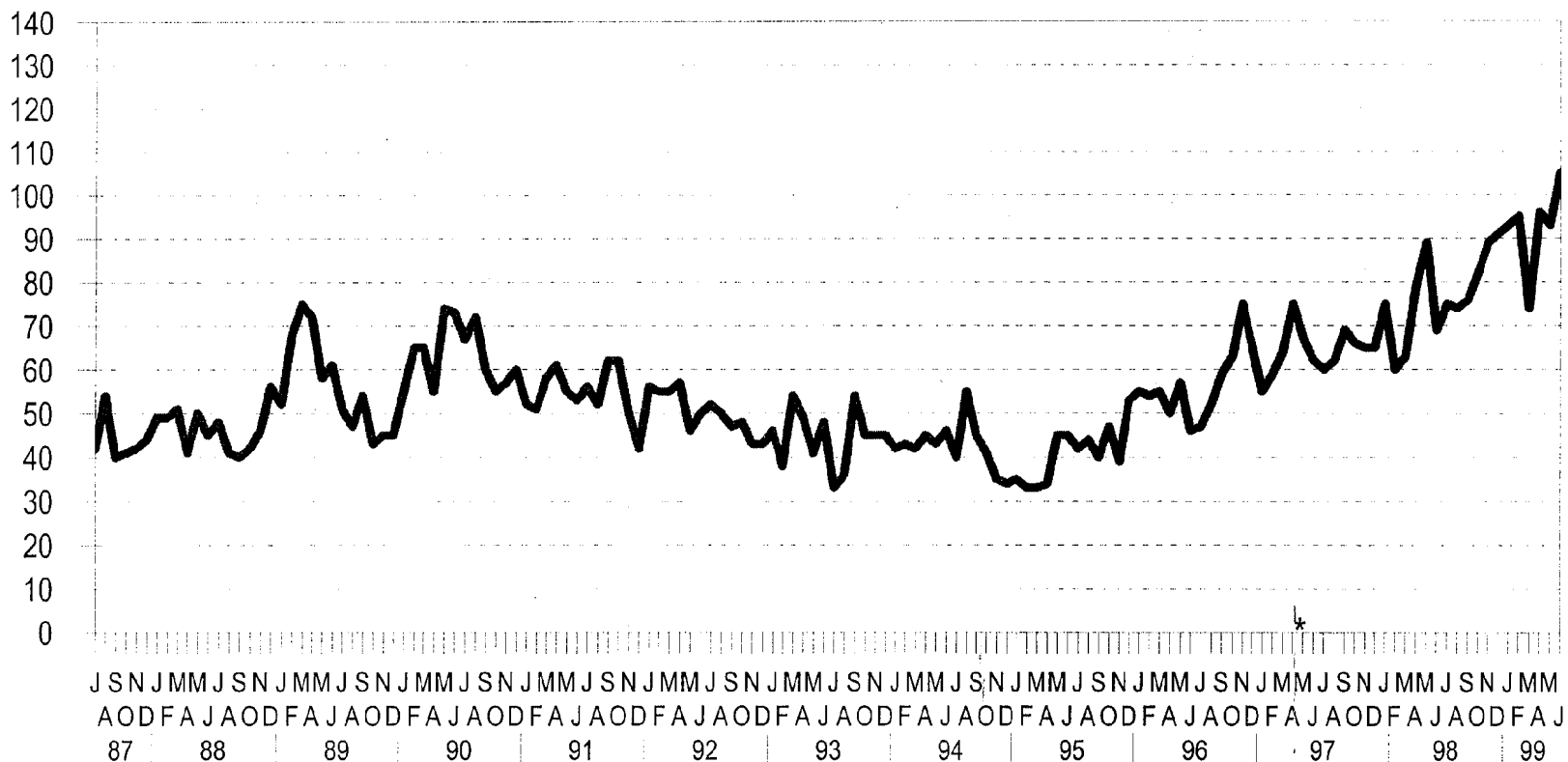


Research & Statistics , NSW Department of Corrective Services
Source: Weekly States first Sunday of the month

* Method of collecting data changed during May 1997

N.S.W. Female Inmate Population Remands, Trials and Deportees July 1987 to June 1999

14

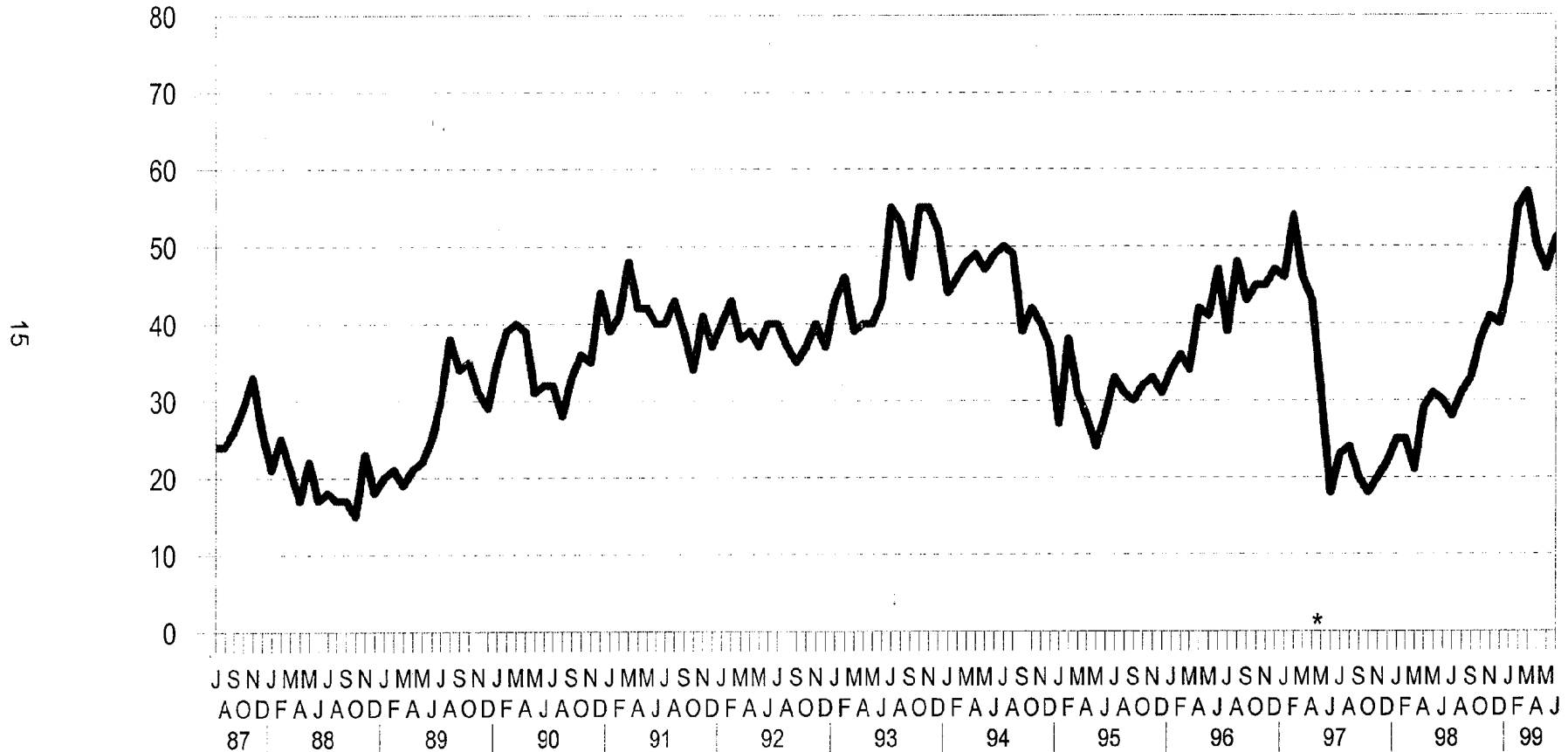


Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services

Source: Weekly States, first Sunday of the month

*Method of collecting data changed during May 1997

N.S.W. Female Inmate Population Appellants Only July 1987 to June 1999



Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services

Source: Weekly States, first Sunday of the month

* Method of collecting data changed during May 1997

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Periodic Detention

IV. PERIODIC DETAINEES

- ◆ Changes in counting rules make the examination of trends in the numbers of periodic detainees difficult.

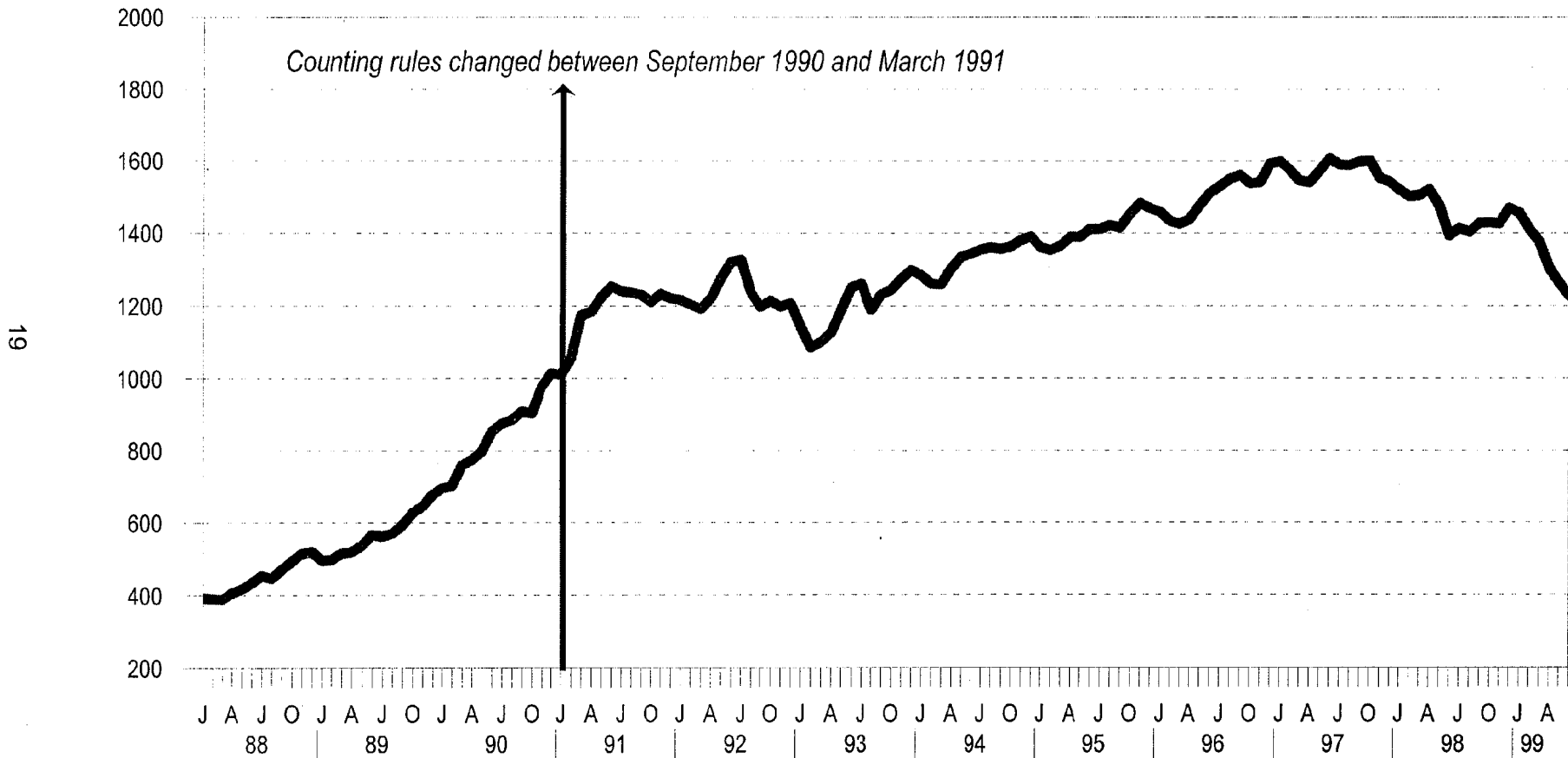
- ◆ Prior to October 1990 the number of Periodic Detention warrants for inclusion in the Weekly States report was accepted without question as notified to the Research and Statistics Unit. Since that time efforts have been made to standardise the definition of "live warrant" and to include all live warrants in the count. This has led to unavoidable sudden increases in the number of warrants appearing in the Weekly States report as the counting rules changed at a particular Periodic Detention Centre (PDC), or when a collection of old warrants, previously omitted from the Weekly States report, was included. Most of these jumps were in October or November 1990, although in late February 1991 there was an occurrence when 96 live warrants that had not been counted were notified to the Research and Statistics Unit for the first time.

- ◆ The daily average number of periodic detainees increased from the beginning of 1989 up until the counting rules were changed in October 1990. For the period 1991, 1992 the numbers of periodic detainees with live warrants fluctuated around their new high only to be followed by a period of slow growth for the next five to six years. These have been a decreasing trend in overall periodic detention numbers since the middle of 1997.

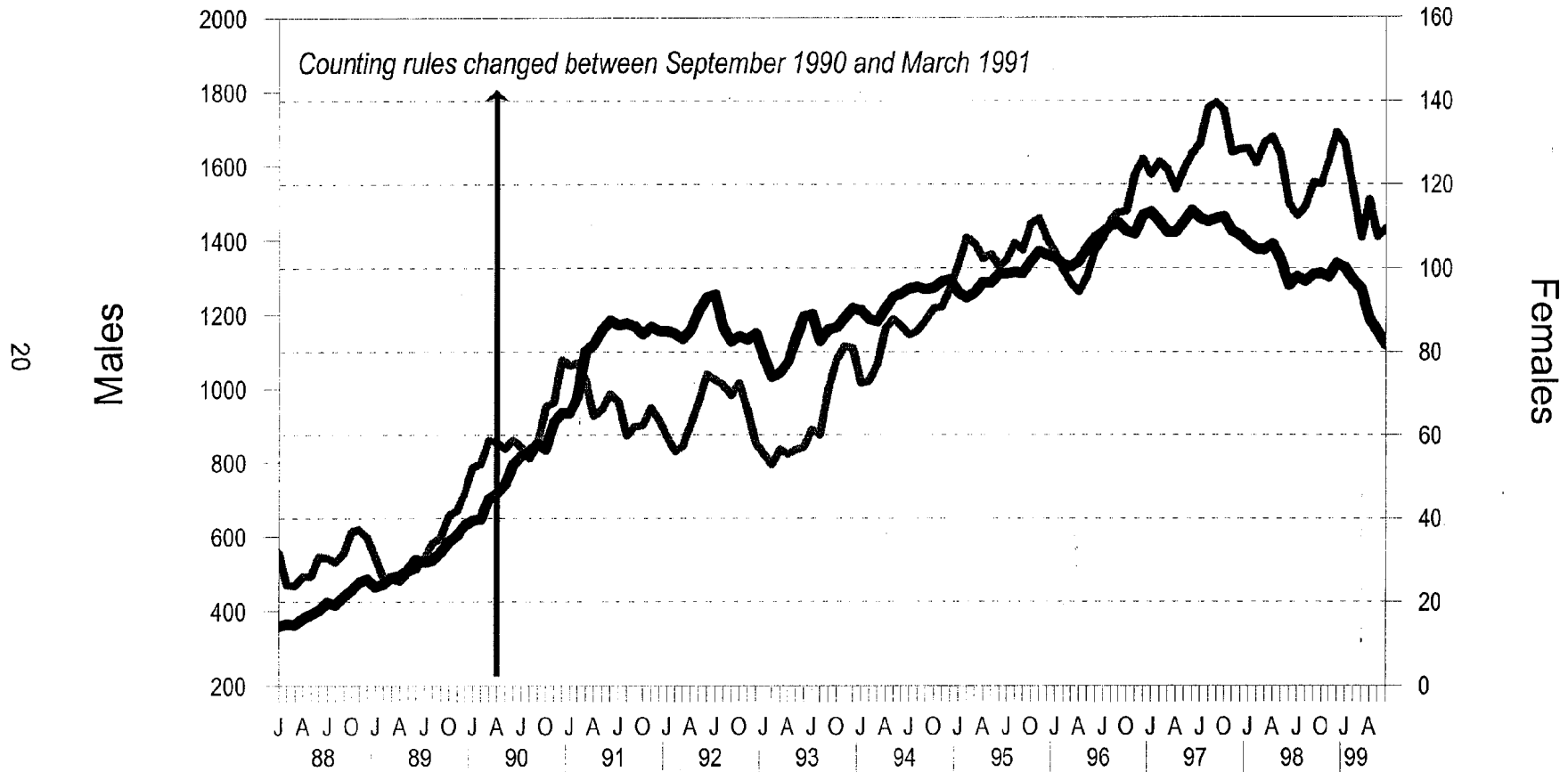
- ◆ Starting February 1999 new legislation made it easier to cancel the orders of periodic detainees who did not attend.

- ◆ The numbers of female periodic detainees have continued to grow in number since 1993. Although their numbers overall are low compared to the male detainees.

Daily Average Number of Periodic Detainees in New South Wales January 1988 to June 1999



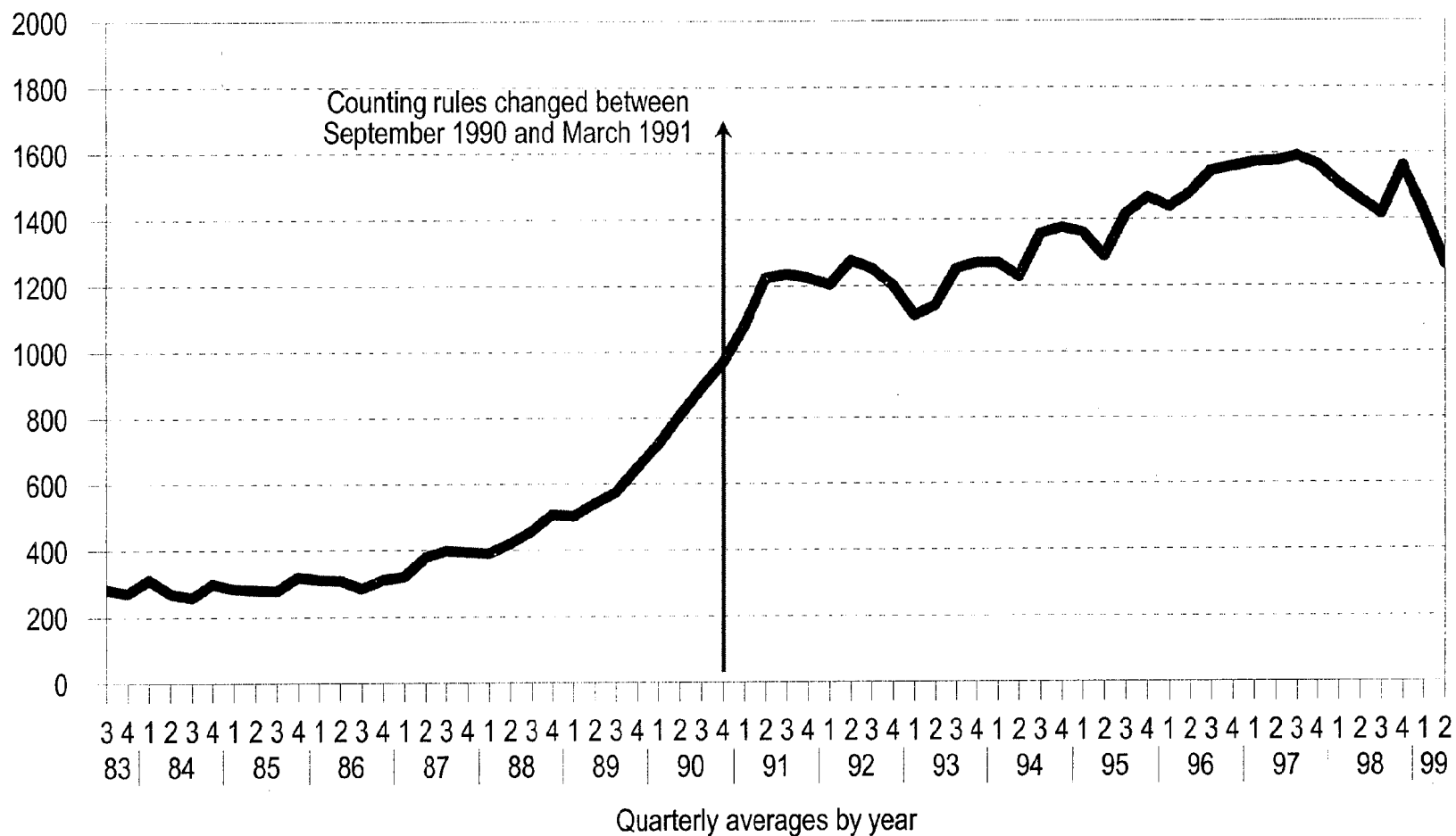
Daily Average Number of Periodic Detainees in New South Wales January 1988 to June 1999



Research & Statistics, Department of Corrective Services

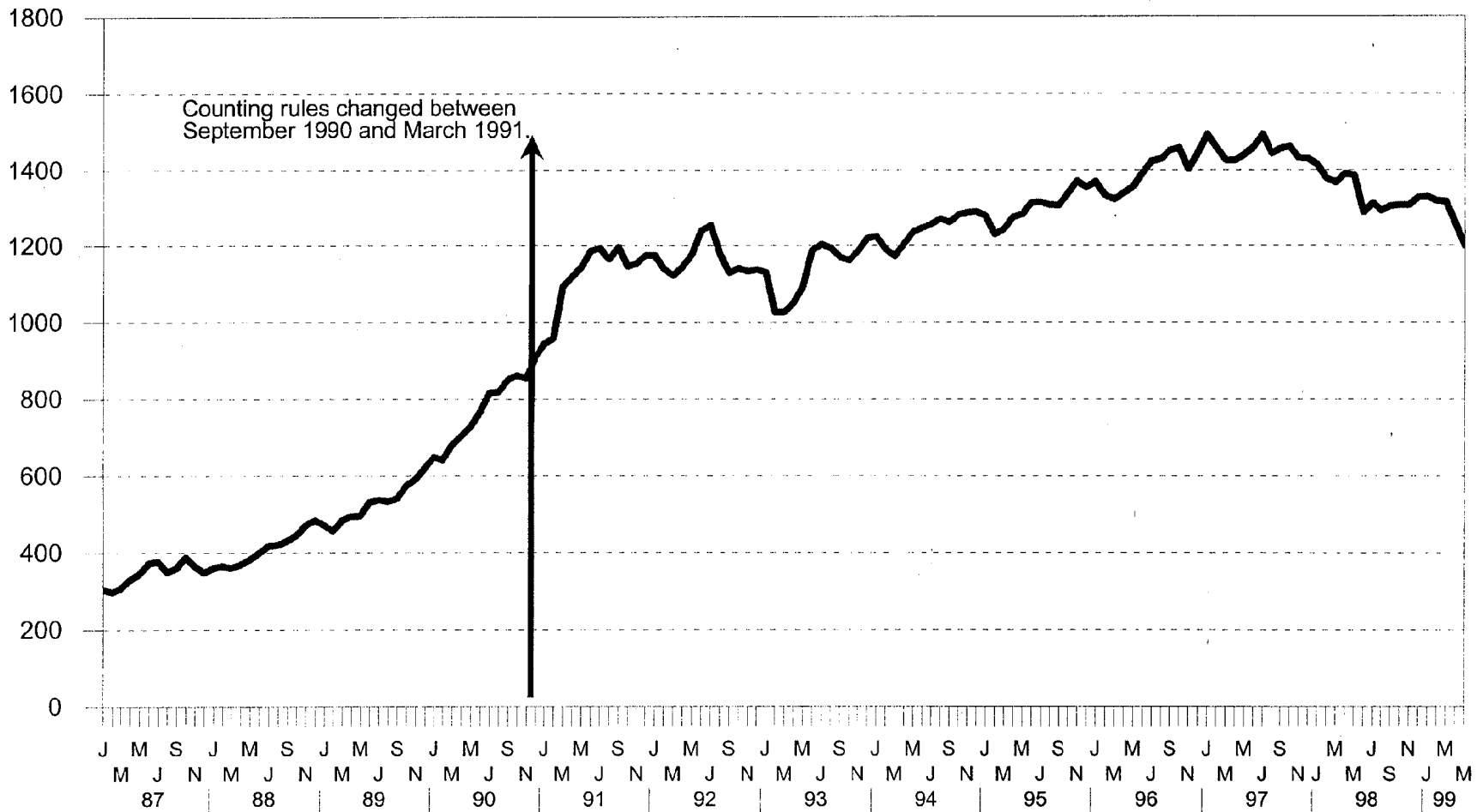
Quarterly Daily Average Number of Periodic Detainees

July 1983 to June 1999



Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services

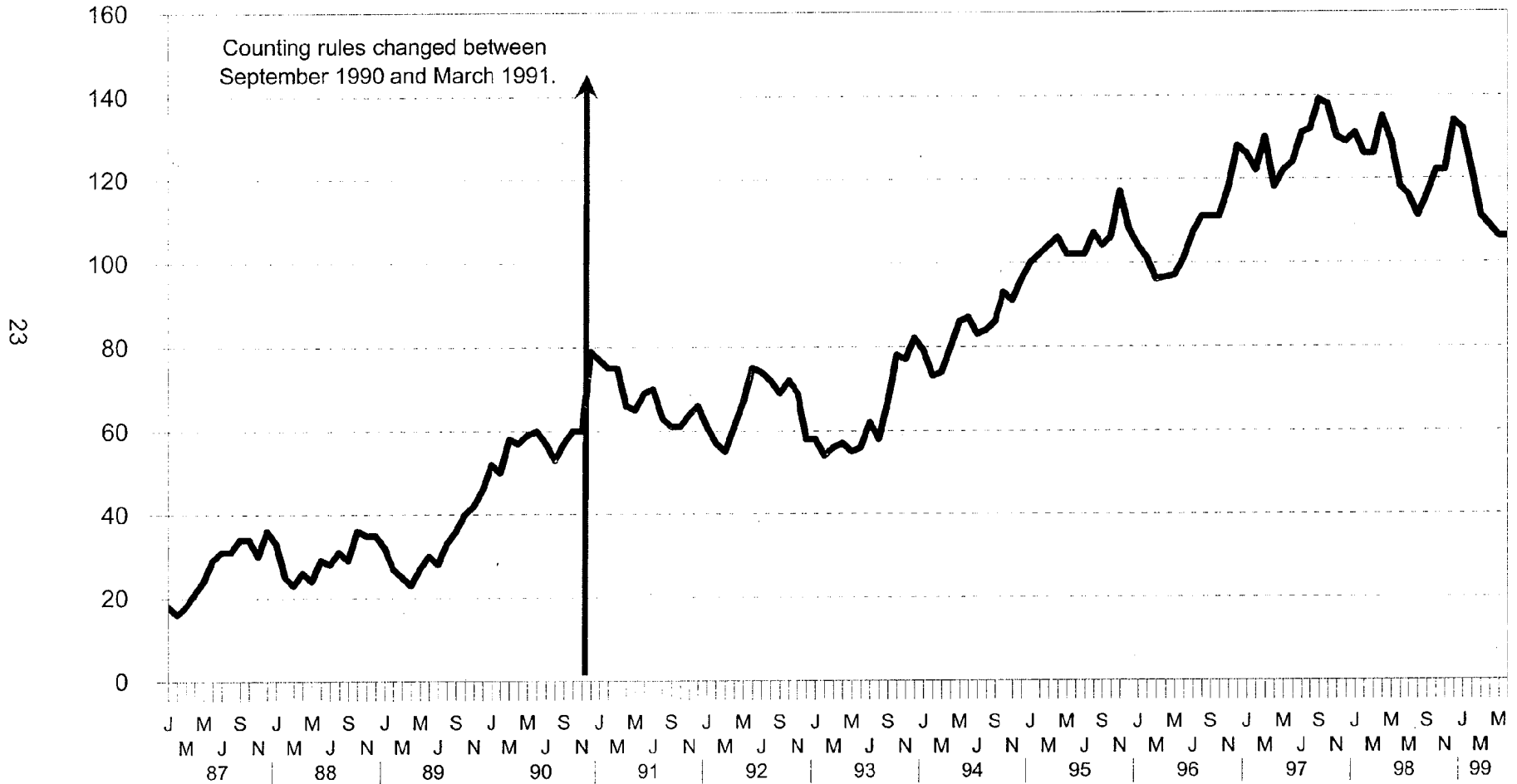
Number of Male Periodic Detainees in New South Wales July 1987 to June 1999



22

Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services
Source: Weekly States First Sunday of the Month

Number of Female Periodic Detainees in New South Wales January 1987 to June 1999



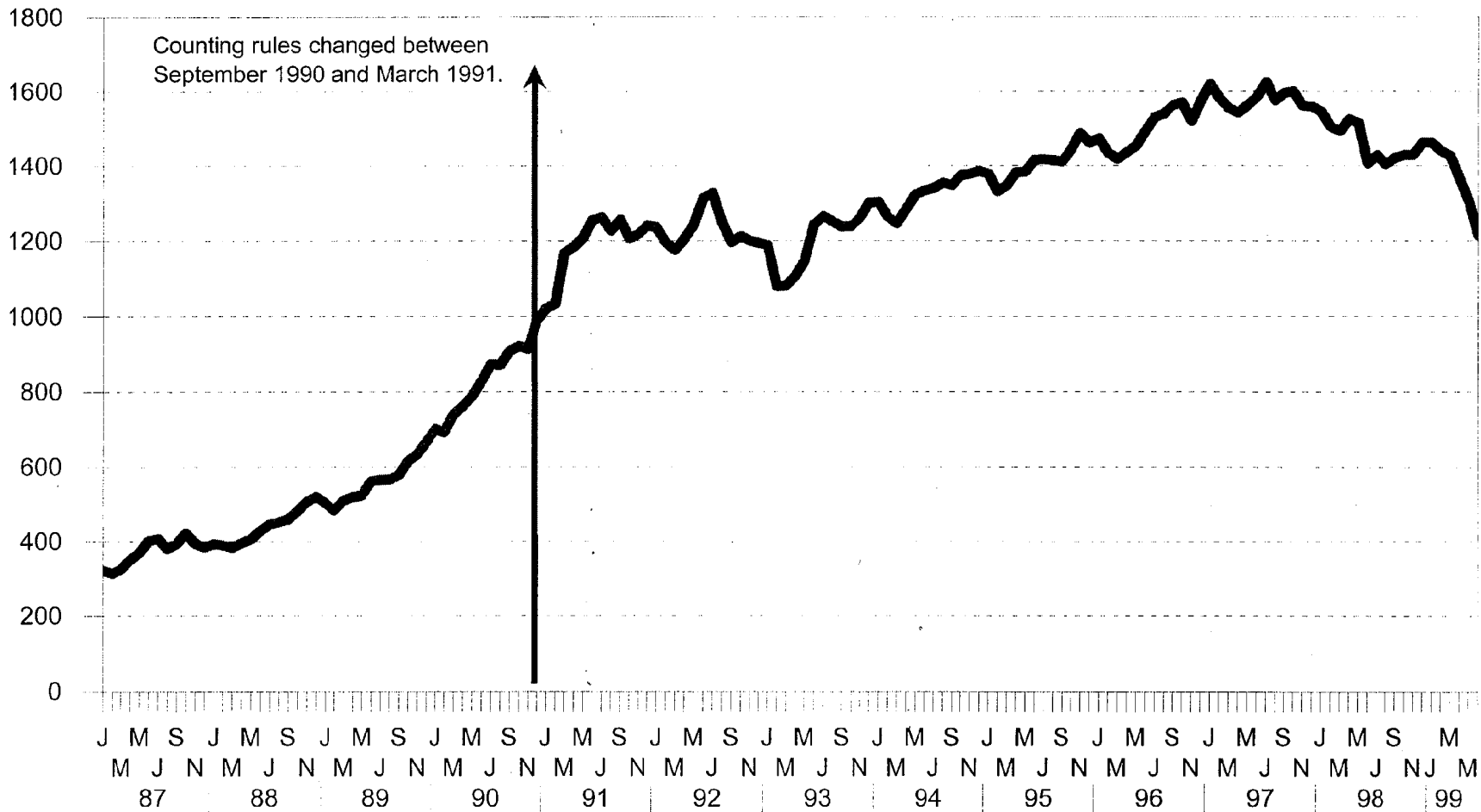
23

Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services

Source: Weekly States First Sunday of the Month

Total Number of Periodic Detainees in New South Wales January 1987 - June 1999

24



Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services

Source: Weekly States First Sunday of the Month

Fine Defaulters

V. FINE DEFAULTERS

Fine Defaulters Received

- ◆ The moratorium on the reception of fine defaulters into NSW correctional centres at the end of 1987 and the legislative amendments introduced in January 1988 reduced the number of fine defaulters received into NSW correctional centres. There was a further moratorium on the execution of fine default warrants between March and June 1994, and an additional amnesty on the execution of warrants commencing on 1st October 1997. New legislation directly aimed at preventing individuals from being imprisoned solely for fine default was commenced on 27th January 1998.

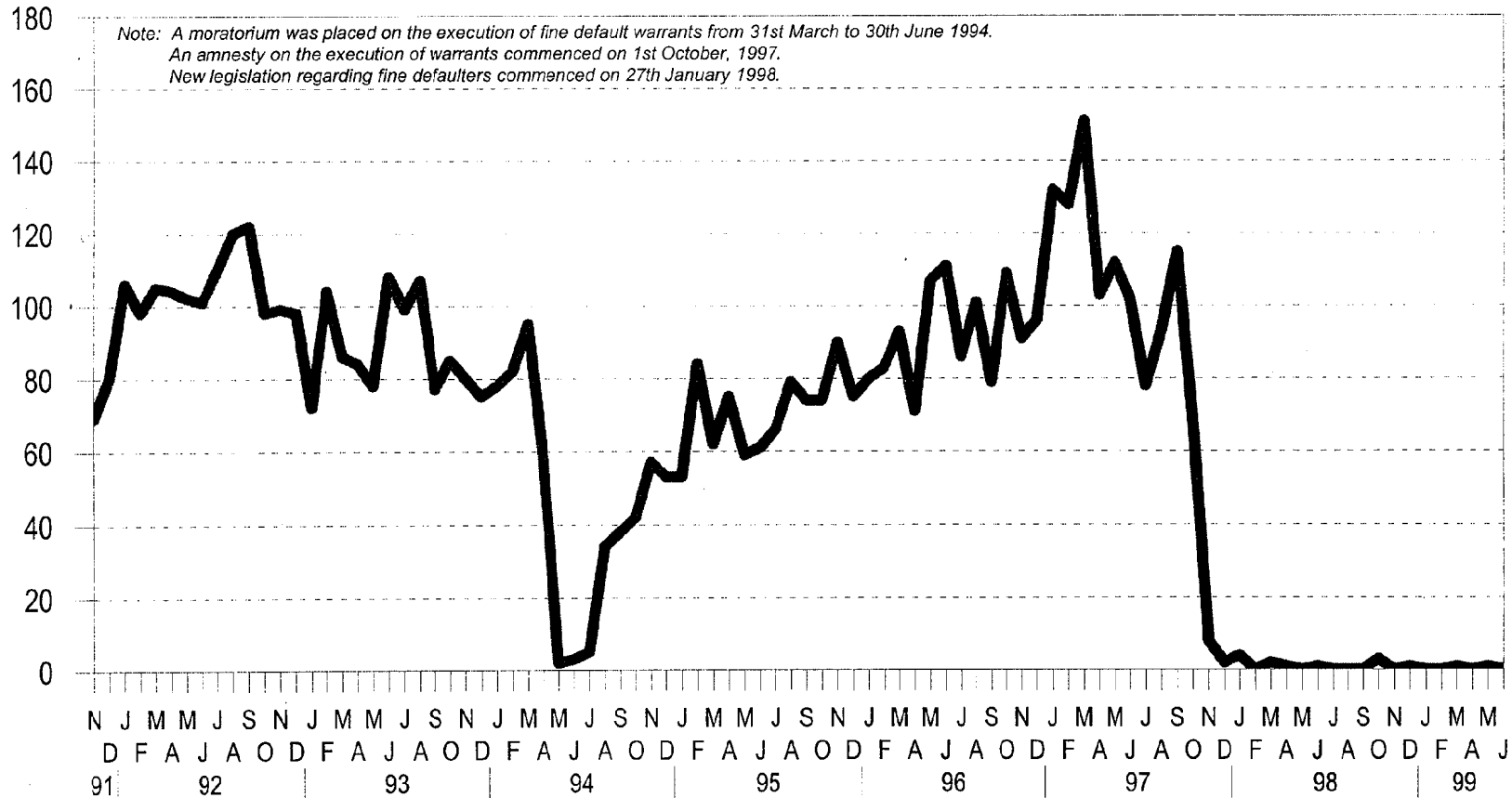
- ◆ The number of inmates received into NSW correctional centres for the sole reason of default of fine has been reduced to almost zero from January 1998.

Fine Defaulters Present on a Given Day

- ◆ The number of inmates held in correctional centres on a given day for the sole reason of default of fine has only been collected since November 1991. The relatively low number present on any one day combined with the large number received clearly illustrates the large flow of these kinds of inmates through the correctional centres for relatively short periods of stay that used to be the case before the introduction of the new Fine Default legislation.

- ◆ Since the new legislation the only fine defaulters in NSW Correctional Centre are for ACT, interstate or Federal fines.

Number of Fine Defaulters in NSW from November 1991 to June 1999



27

Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services
Source: Weekly States first Sunday of the month

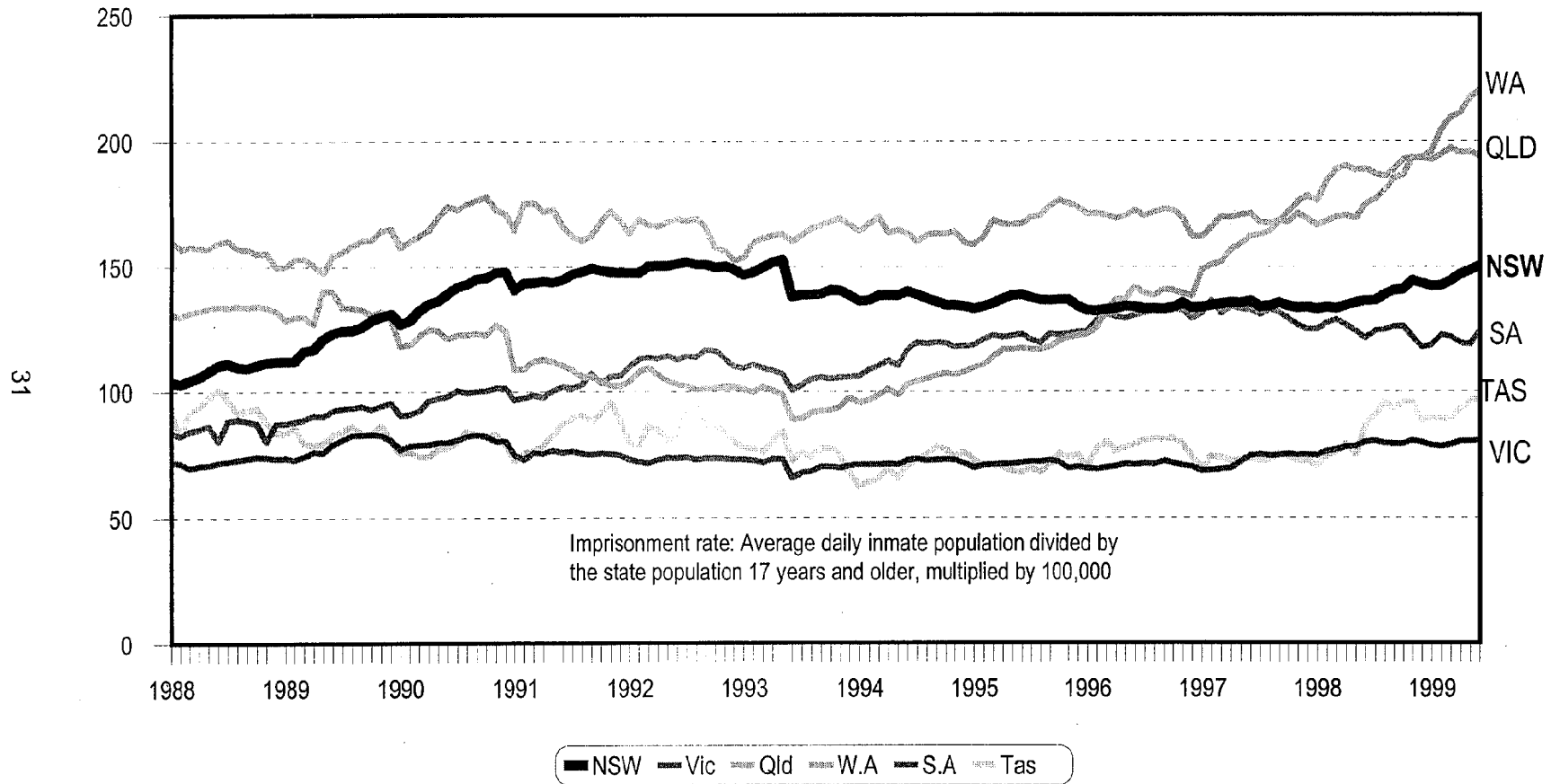
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Imprisonment Rate

VI. IMPRISONMENT RATE PER 100,000 ADULT POPULATION - NSW COMPARED TO OTHER STATES WITHIN AUSTRALIA

- ◆ NSW imprisons a higher proportion of its adult population (150.1 per 100,000 as at June 1999) than does Victoria (80.6), South Australia (123.9) or Tasmania (96.9).
- ◆ NSW (138.4) imprisoned a lower proportion of its adult population than does Queensland (194.0) Western Australia (220.2), or the Northern Territory (469.3) (not shown on the graph).
- ◆ In recent years the only state which has not exhibited a growing imprisonment rate has been South Australia. Queensland in particular has shown a very rapid increase in its imprisonment rate since 1997.

Imprisonment Rate per 100,000 Adult Population January 1988 to June 1999



Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services

Source: Australian Prison Trends, Australian Institute of Criminology and National Correctional Statistics: Prisons, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

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Inmate Classification

VII. INMATE CLASSIFICATION

- ◆ The following graphs show trends in inmate security classification for sentenced inmates as at census day (30th June) each year from 1983 to 1999.

- ◆ Between 1983 and 1992 the percentage of A2 inmates decreased from 33% to 13%, and the percentage of B Inmates increased from 6% to 24%.

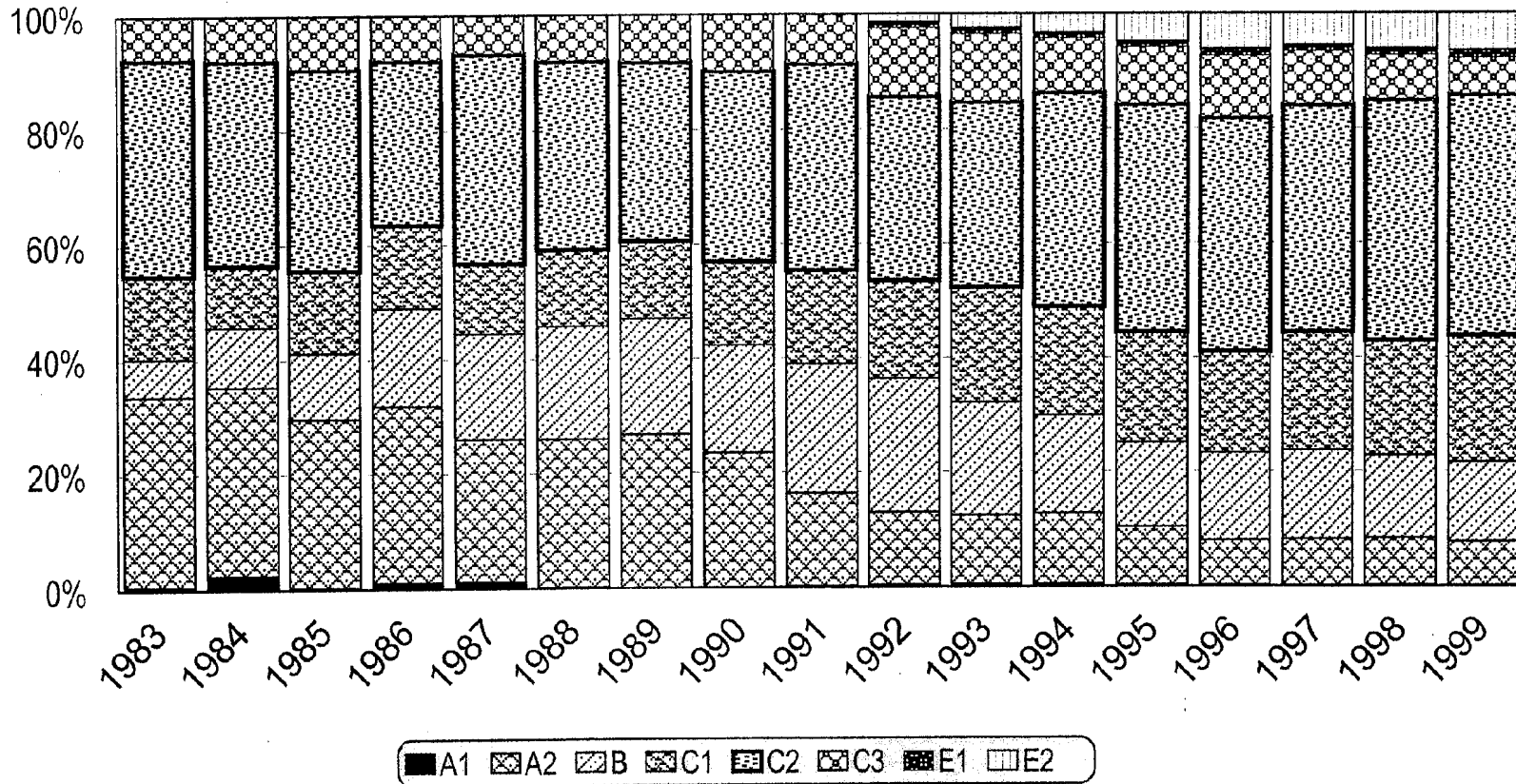
- ◆ Since 1992 the percentages of maximum and medium inmates have both decreased slightly with corresponding increases in the percentages of C1 and C2 inmates.

- ◆ The percentage of C3 inmates in 1999 was the lowest since before 1983.

Inmates Security Classification 30 June each year

Full-time Sentenced Inmates

(Eight Categories)

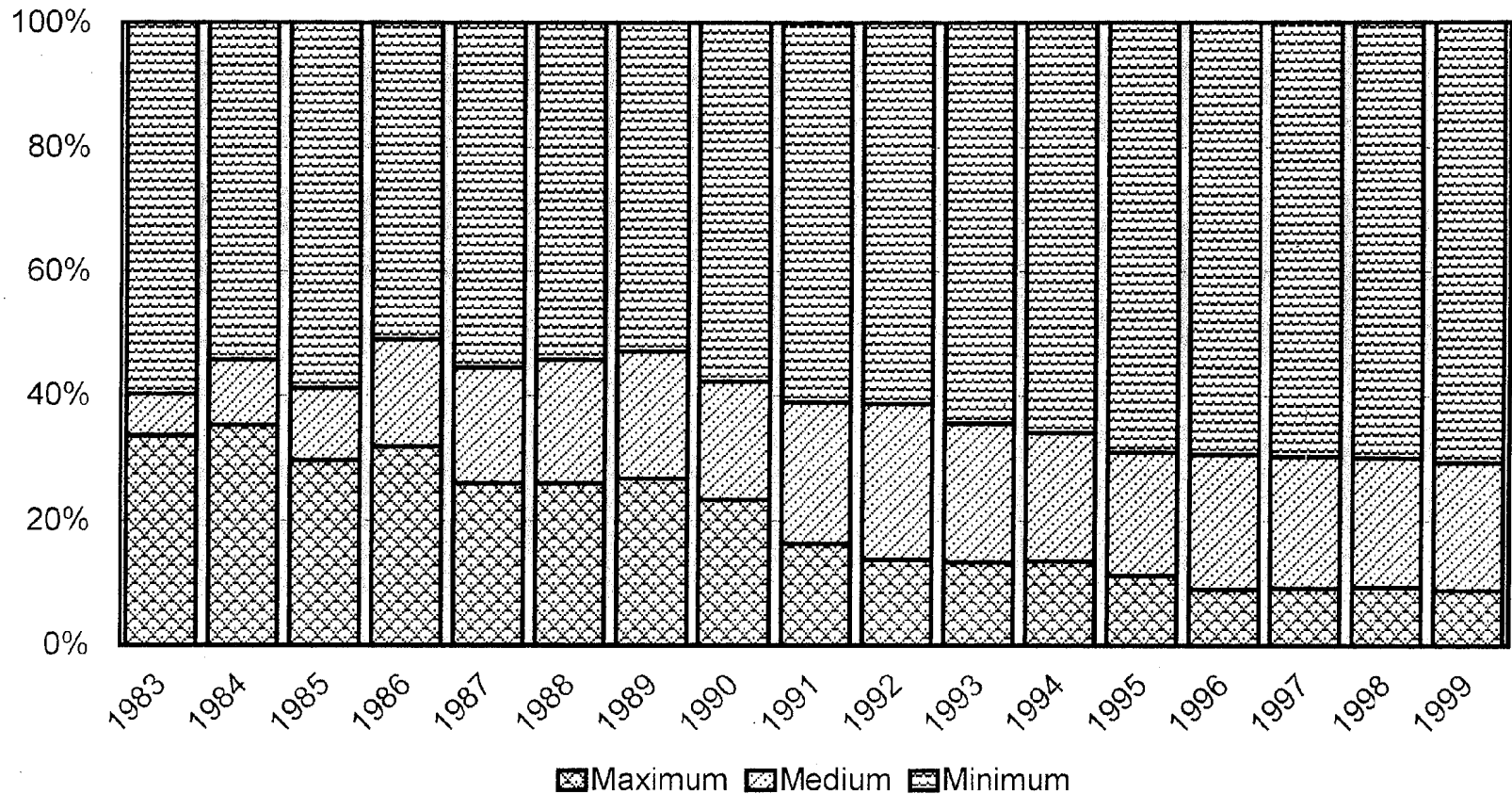


Inmates Security Classification 30 June each year

Full-time Sentenced Inmates

(Three Categories)

36



Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services.
Source: NSW Inmate Census.

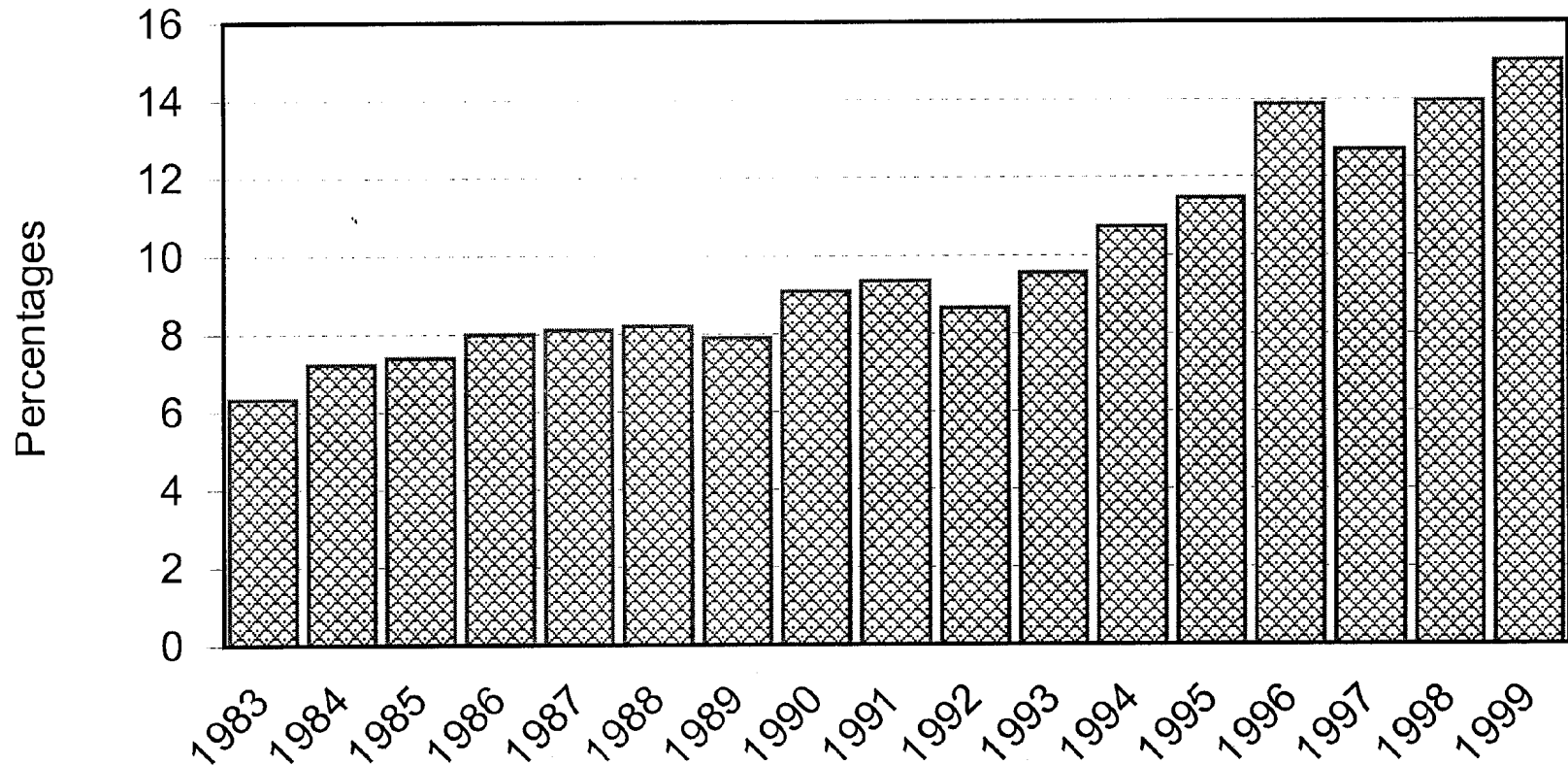
Indigenous Inmates

VIII. INDIGENOUS INMATES

- ◆ The percentage of inmates identifying themselves as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent has increased to about 15%.

Indigenous Inmates

as a percentage of Total Inmate Population 30th June at each Year
(including Periodic Detainees)



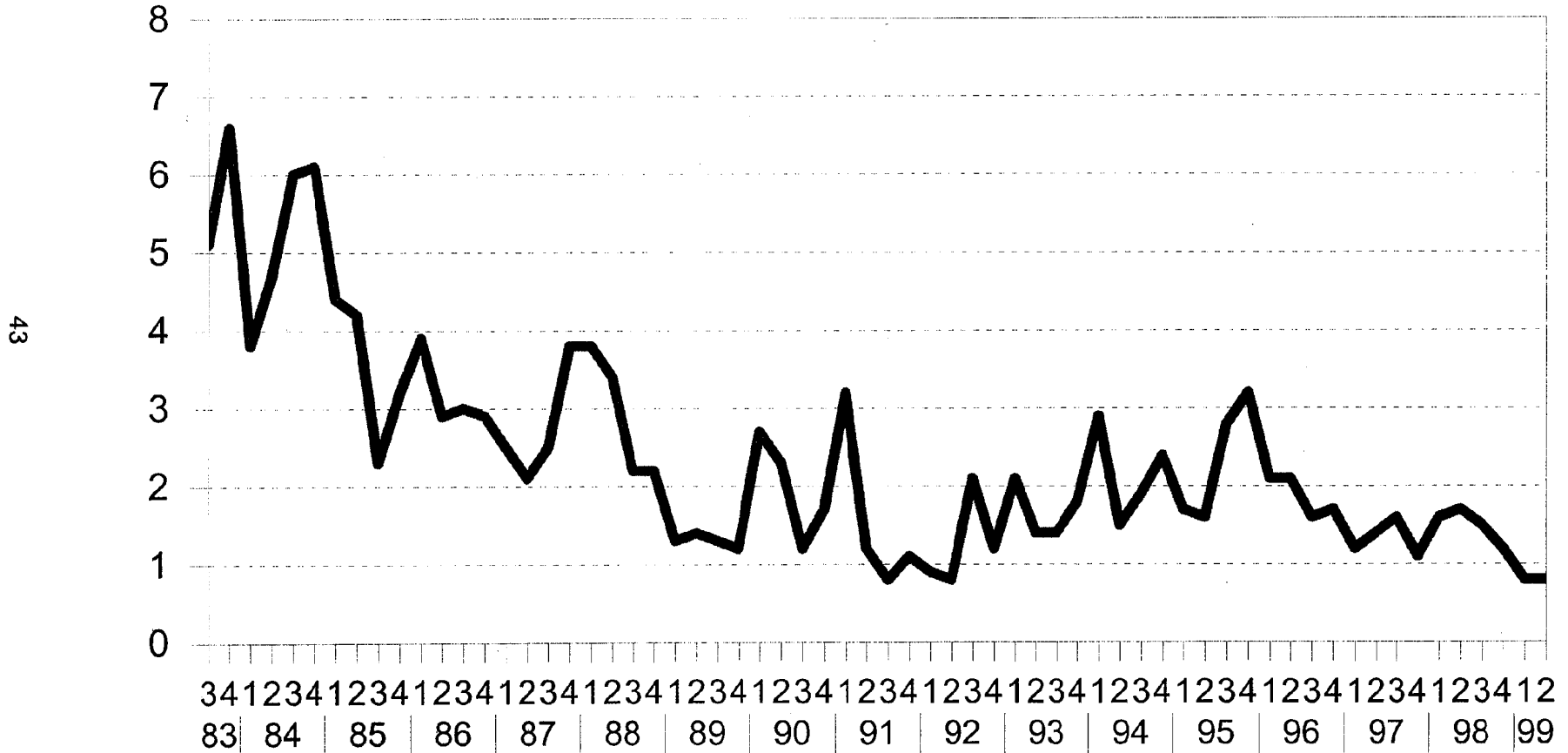
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Escape Rate

IX. ESCAPE RATE

- ◆ The yearly escape rate, measured as the number of escapes per 100 inmate years, is calculated by dividing the number of escapes in a year by the average number of inmates held in that year and multiplying by 100. The quarterly escape rate is calculated by dividing the number of escapes in the quarter by the average number of inmates and multiplying by 400 to produce a figure comparable to the yearly rate.
- ◆ Following the four quarters (12 months) of 1991/92 where the escape rate remained lower than any quarterly escape rate previously recorded in NSW, the escape rate rose, only to fall again to levels equalling those for early 1991.

Escape Rate for each Quarter July 1983 - June 1999



Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services

Escape rate: Number of escapes divided by the daily average, multiplied by 100

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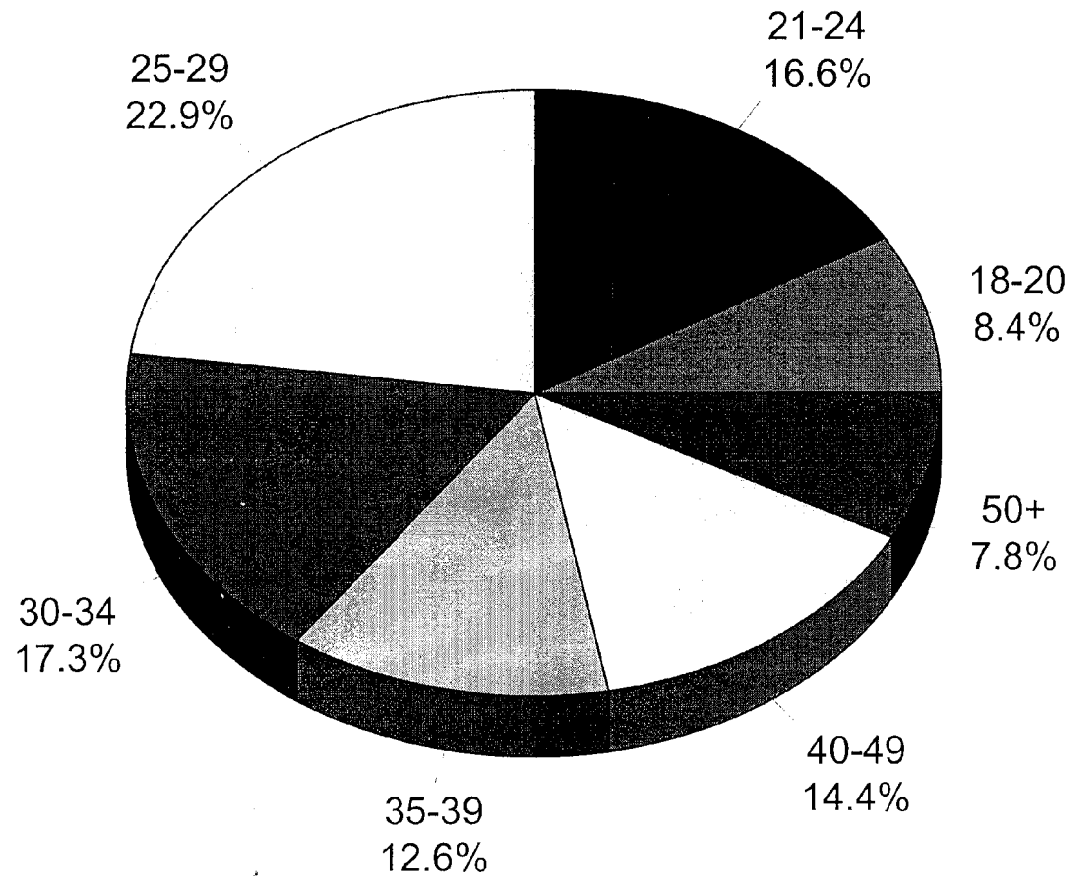
Inmate Demographic Profile

X. A SNAPSHOT OF THE NSW INMATE POPULATION, 30 JUNE 1999

On any given day the NSW inmate population profile is as follows:

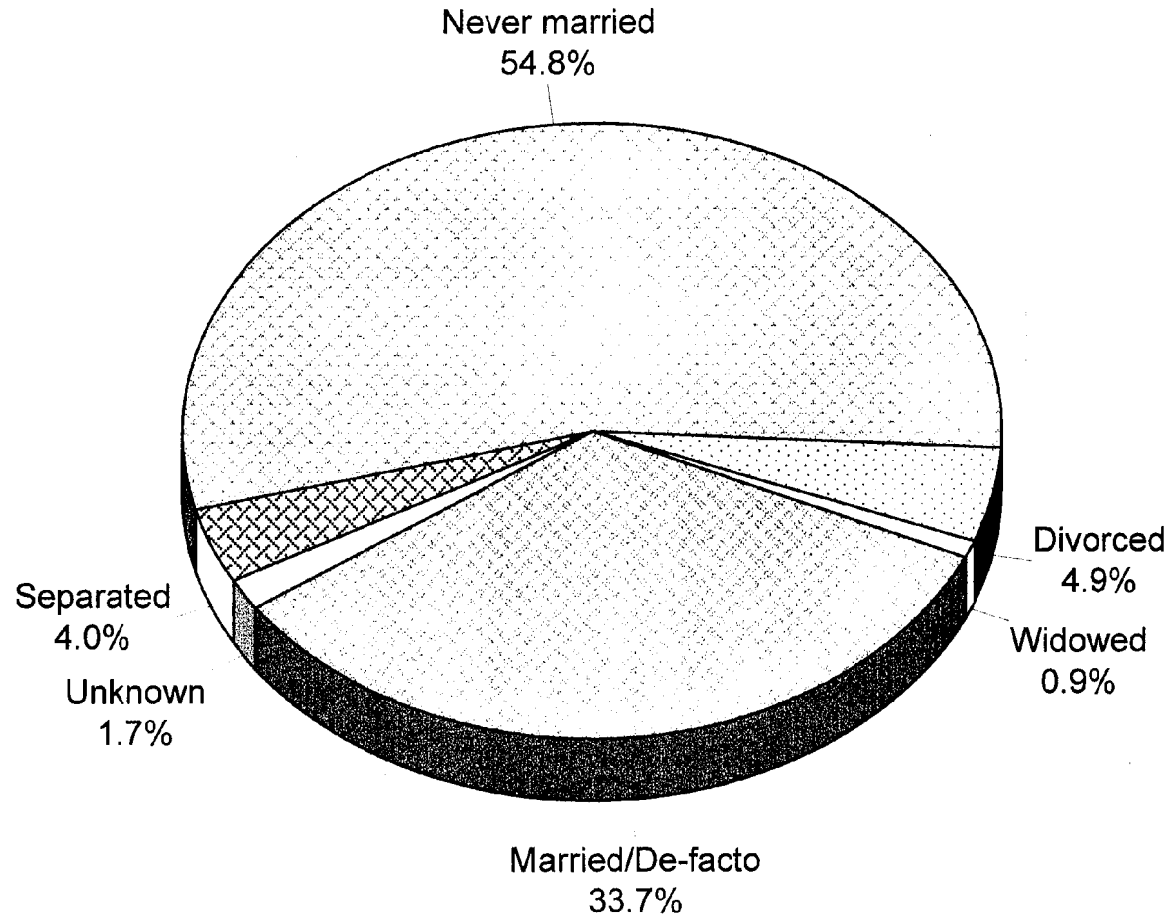
- ◆ Twenty five percent aged 24 years or younger;
- ◆ Forty five percent never having married;
- ◆ Fifty percent having a minimum and additional term to serve;
- ◆ Twenty-four percent of inmates sentenced to either a fixed or minimum term of imprisonment having an aggregate sentence (minimum plus additional term) of less than 5 years.
- ◆ Twenty percent of all inmates imprisoned for a property offence.

Age of NSW Inmates (including Periodic Detainees) 30 June 1999



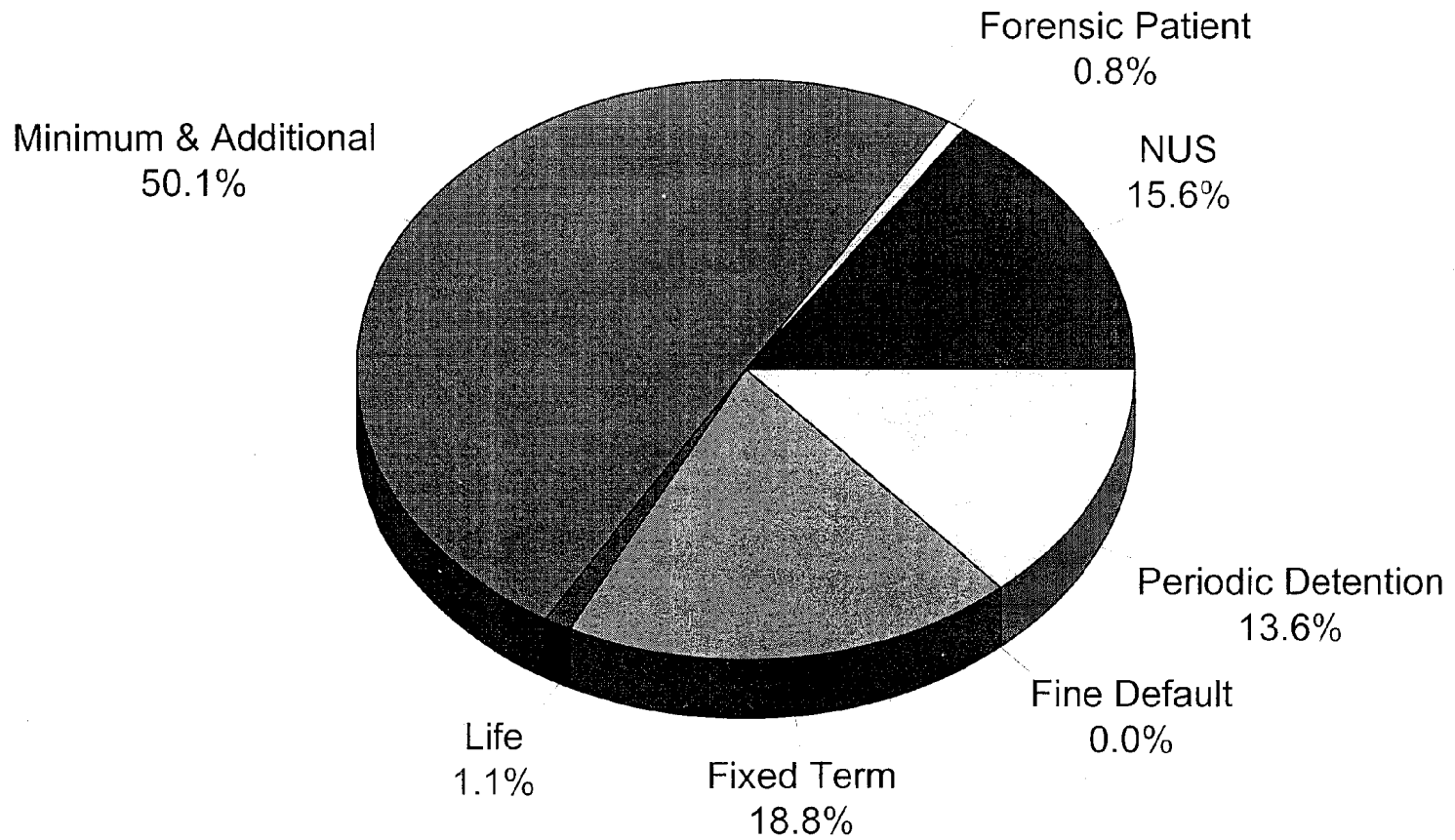
Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services.
Source: NSW Inmate Census

Marital Status of NSW Inmates (including Periodic Detainees) 30 June 1999



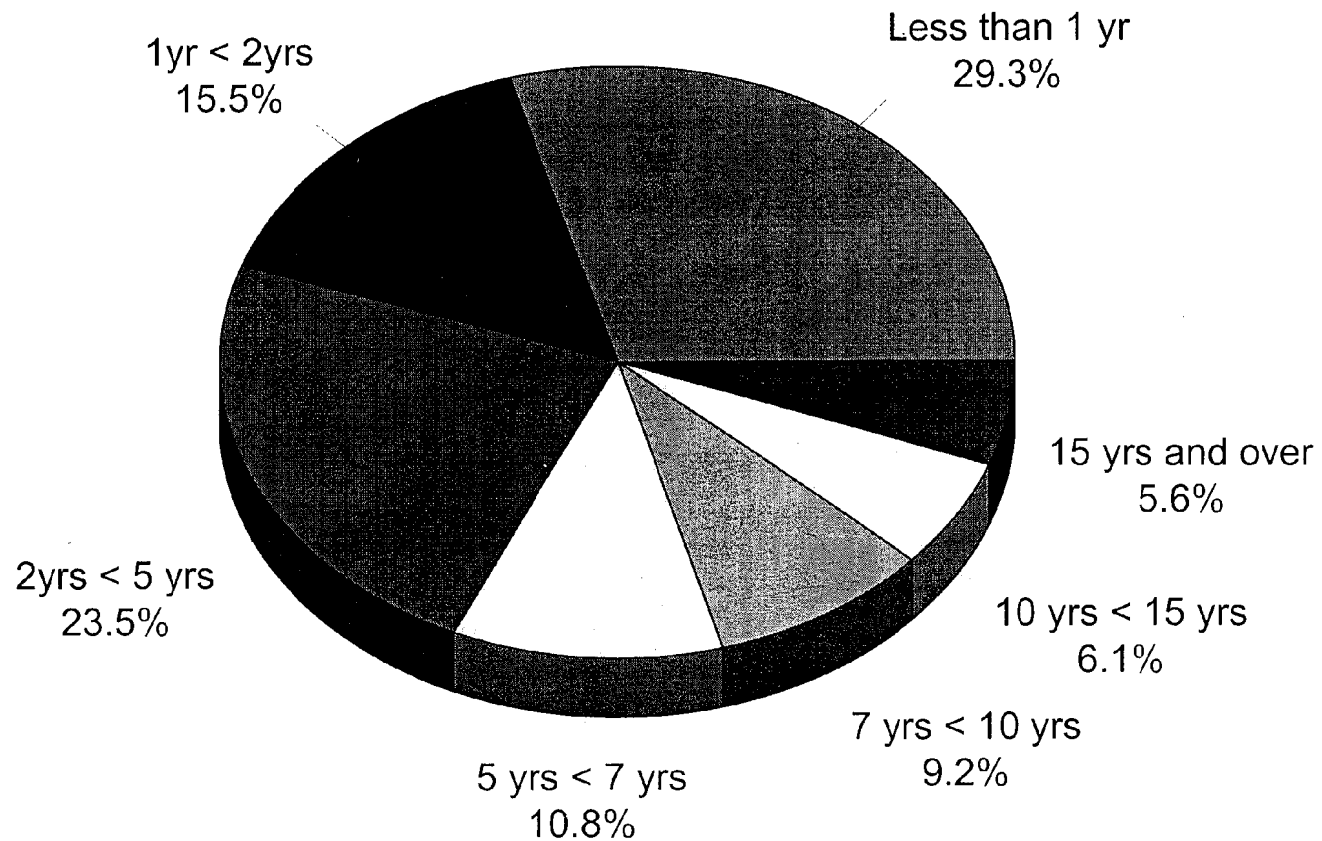
Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services.
Source: NSW Inmate Census

Sentence Type for NSW Inmates 30 June 1999



Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services
Source: NSW Inmate Census

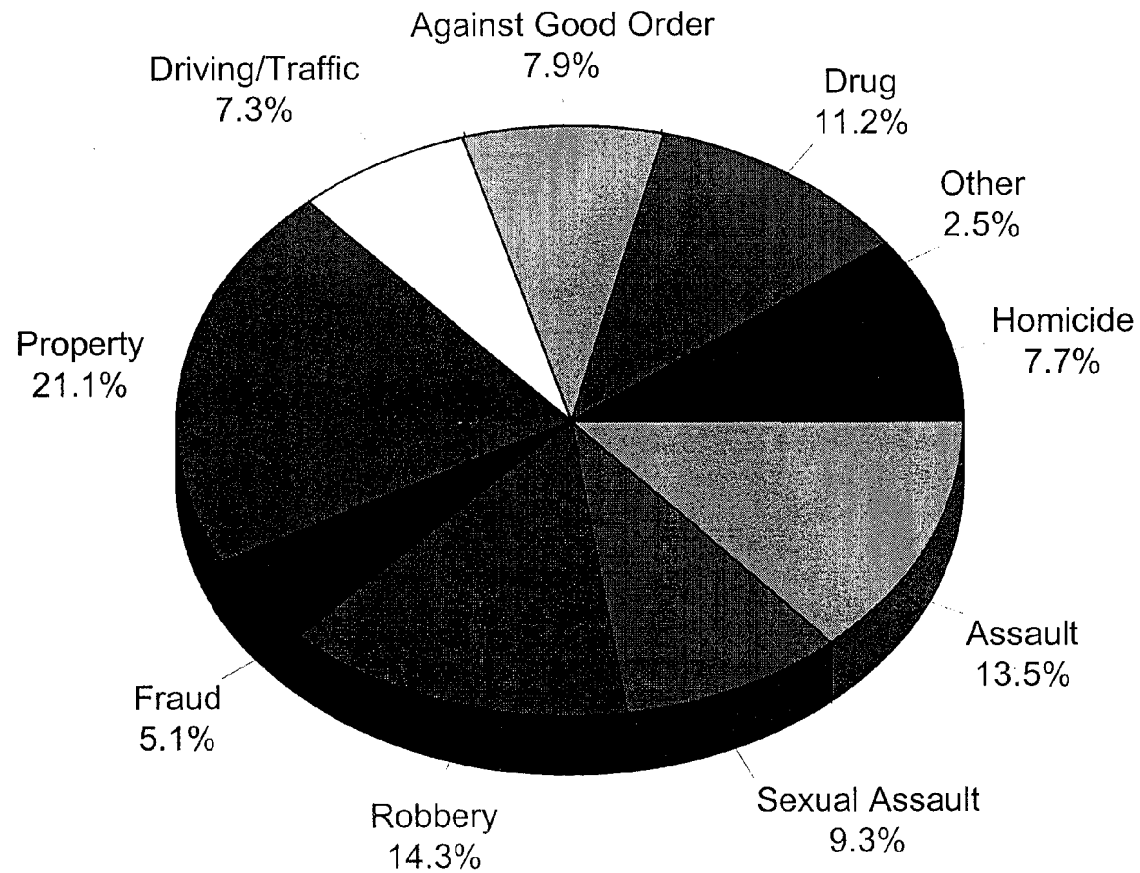
Aggregate Sentence* for NSW Inmates 30 June 1999



* Inmates sentenced to either a fixed or minimum term of imprisonment (Excluding life, forensic patient and periodic detention)

Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services.
Source: NSW Inmate Census

Most Serious Offence of NSW Inmates (including Periodic Detainees) 30 June 1999



Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services
Source: NSW Prison Census

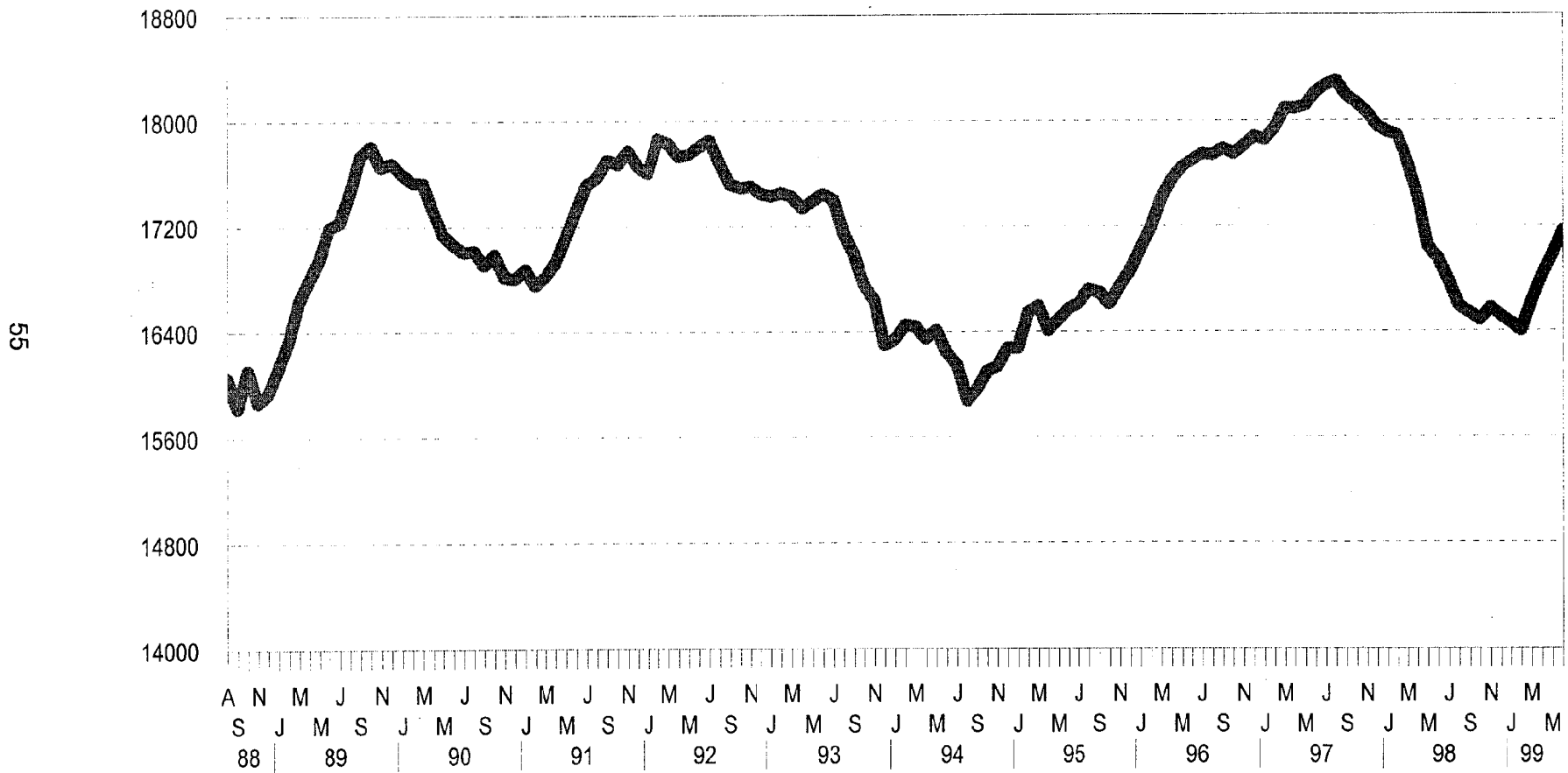
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Community Supervision

XI. PERSONS UNDER COMMUNITY SUPERVISION IN NSW

- ◆ The data in this graph are drawn from NSW Probation and Parole Service Database physically located on the NSW Department Corrective Services computer mainframe.
- ◆ There have been quite large fluctuations in the total number of persons under community supervision over the last eleven years.

Total Number of Persons Under Community Supervision in NSW from August 1988 to June 1999



Research & Statistics, NSW Department of Corrective Services.

Source: Australian Community Based Corrections Data on 1st day of each month supplied by Information Technology Branch of the NSW Department of Corrective Services.