

SEXUAL ASSAULT IN NSW

Recorded incidents and victims, April 2016 to March 2026



1.1 Long-term trends in recorded sexual assault incidents

13,089

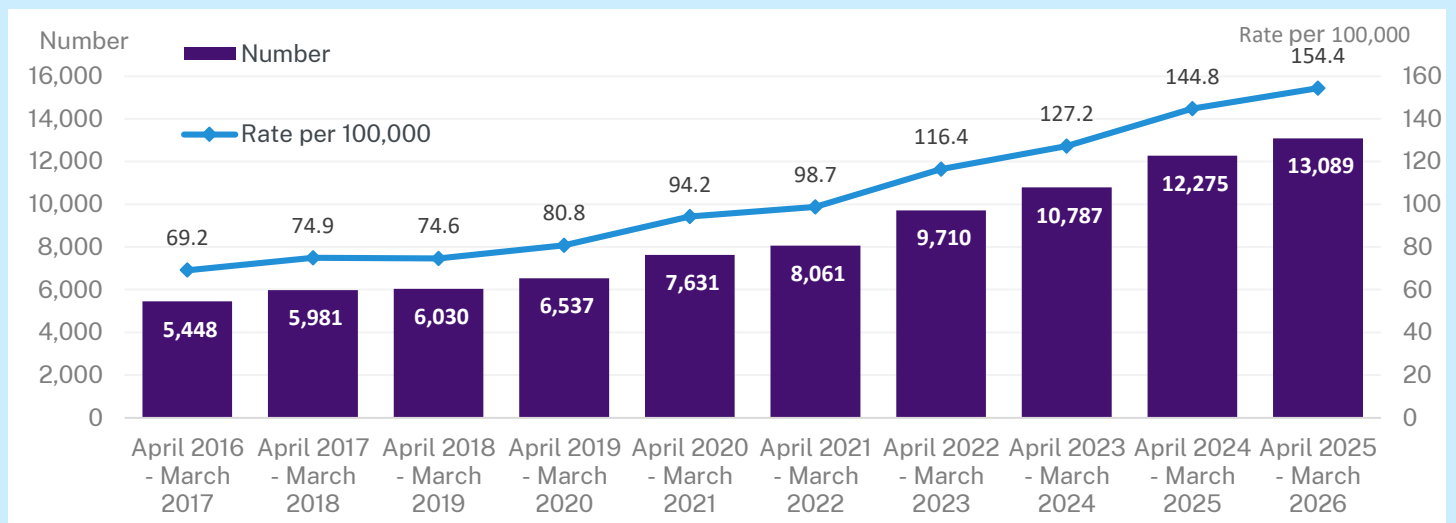
Sexual assault incidents were recorded by NSW Police Apr 25-Mar-26

Stable

2-year trend to Mar 2026

↑ Up 10.2%

10-year trend to Mar 2026
Annual average % change



1.2 Type of recorded sexual assault incidents

44% of sexual assault incidents involve **adult sexual assault** (victim 16+ yr)

Up **11%** per year
10-year trend

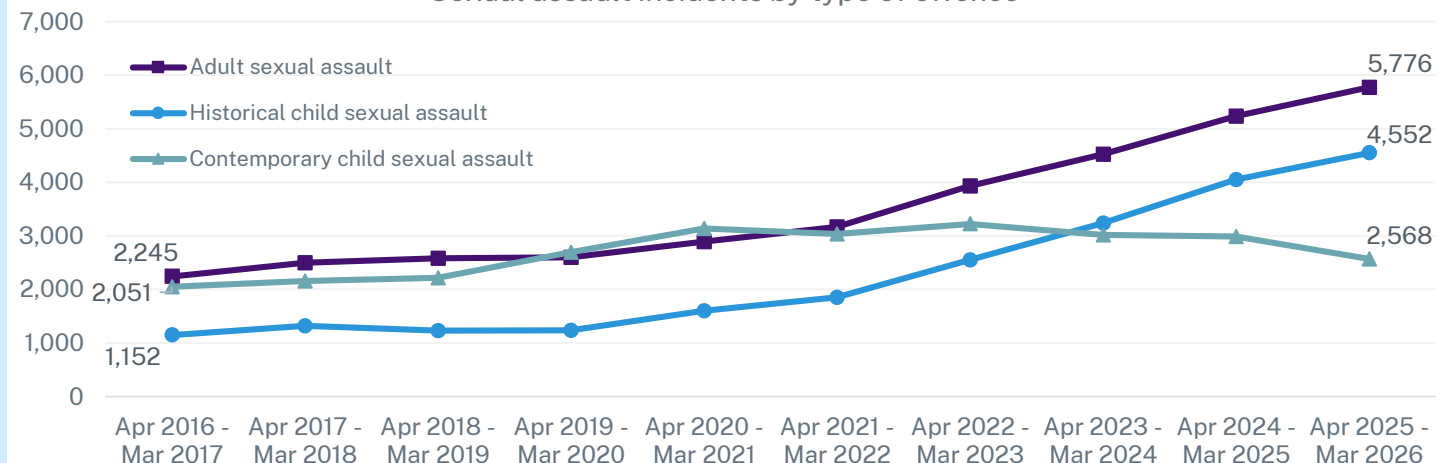
20% of sexual assault incidents involve **contemporary child sexual assault**

Up **3%** per year
10-year trend

35% of sexual assault incidents involve **historical child sexual assault**

Up **16%** per year
10-year trend

Sexual assault incidents by type of offence



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1.3 Pathways of reporting to Police

Trends in reporting pathways, over the last 10 years to Mar 2026:

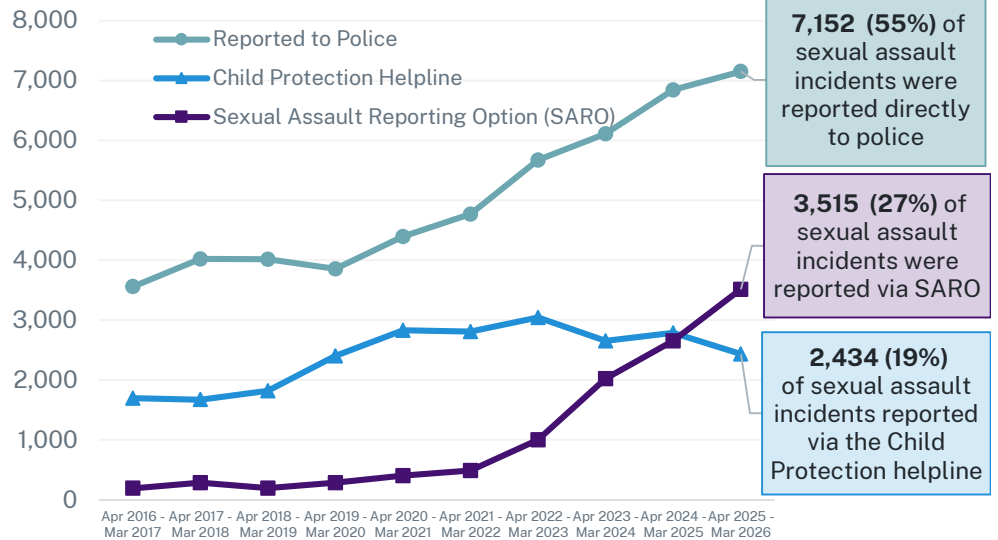
47% of the increase was driven by reports directly to Police.

43% of the increase was driven by SARO* reports

10% of the increase was driven by reports to the Child Protection helpline (including mandatory reports)

*SARO allowed online reporting from January 2023 – see notes p4

Sexual assault incidents by method of reporting



In 12m to Mar 26,
26% of adult sexual assault incidents were reported using SARO

40% of historic child sexual assault incidents were reported using SARO

68% of contemporary child sexual assault incidents were reported via the child protection hotline

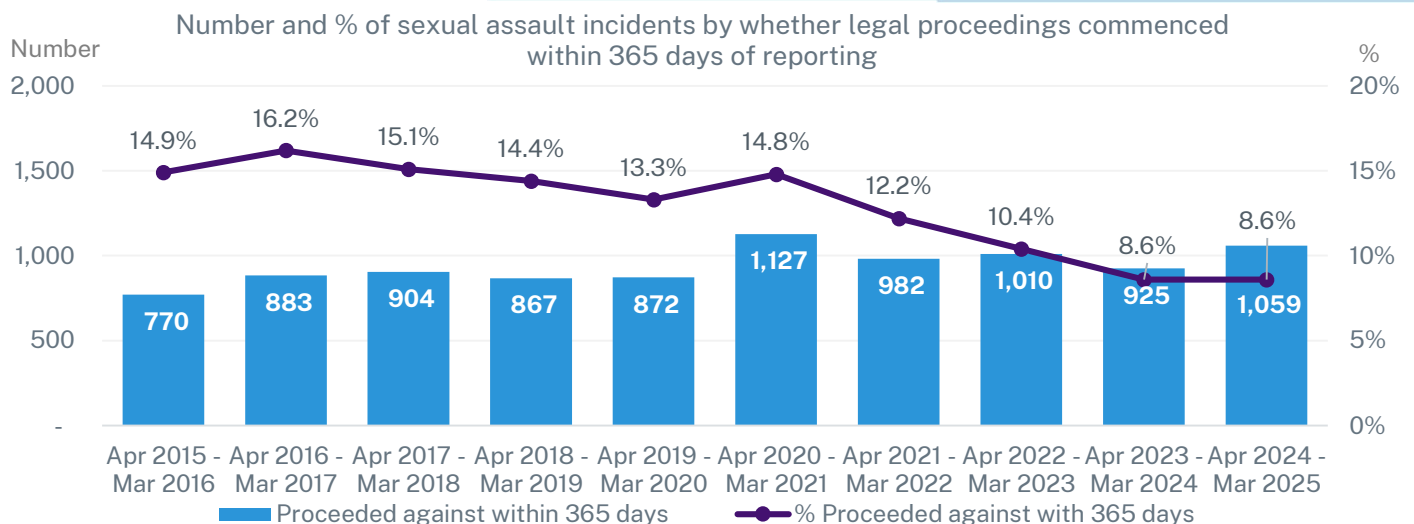


1.4 Trends in legal action

Legal proceeding commenced in **14.2%** of incidents reported directly to Police in 12m to Mar 25

Legal proceeding commenced in **<1%** of incidents reported by SARO in 12m to Mar 25

Legal proceeding commenced in **2.8%** of incidents reported by Child Protection helpline in 12m to Mar 25



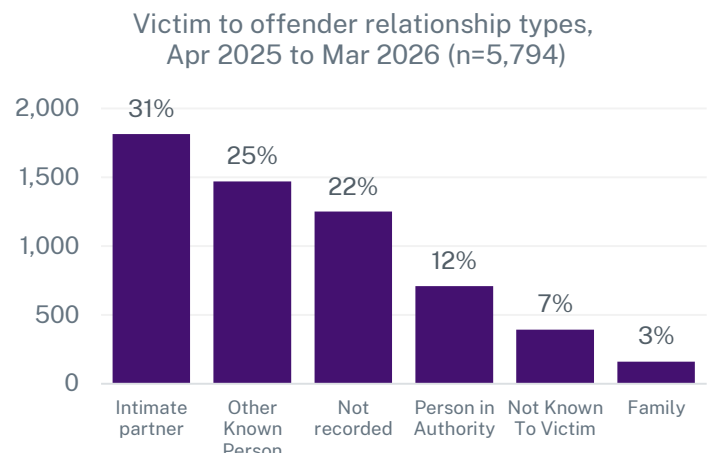
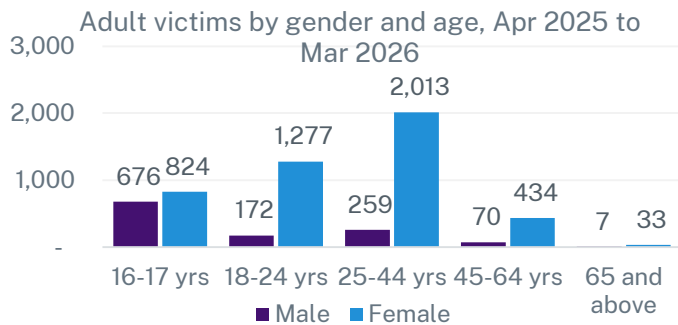
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2.1 Adult sexual assault

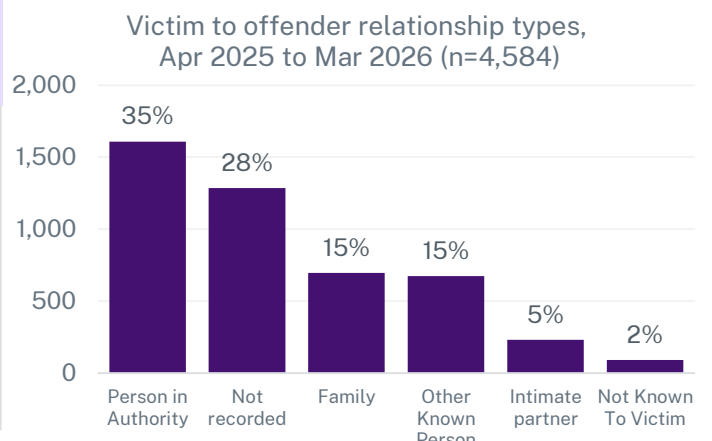
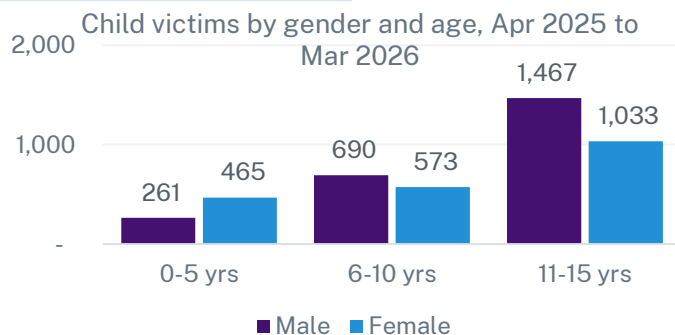
79% of adult victims are women



2.2 Historical child sexual assault

46% of victims are girls

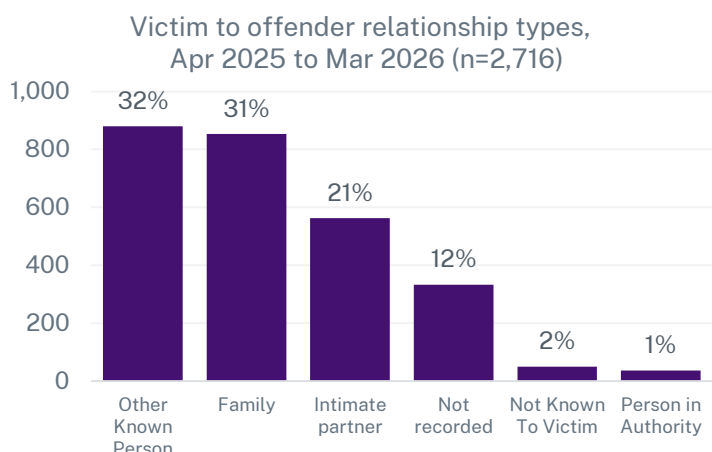
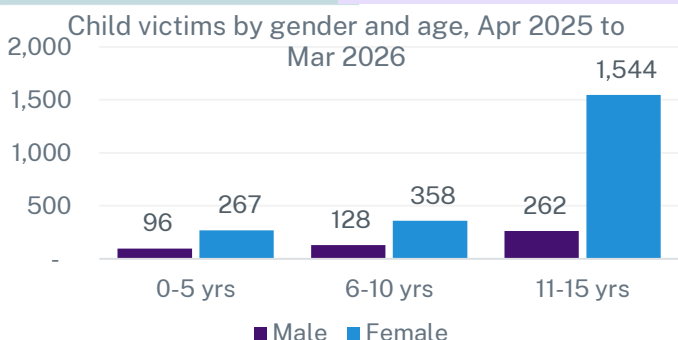
44% of victims were aged 10 years or under



2.3 Contemporary child sexual assault

82% of victims are girls

68% of victims were aged 11-15 years



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Glossary

Type of recorded sexual assault incidents

This report shows Sexual Assault incidents that come to the attention of, and are recorded by, NSW Police. 'Sexual assault' includes the police incident categories of *sexual assault*, *aggravated sexual assault* and *assault with intent to have sexual intercourse*. Recorded Sexual assaults can be categorised into three types:

Adult Sexual Assault: incidents involving victims aged 16 years and over, in line with the legal age of consent.

Contemporary Child Sexual Assault: involves victims under 16 years of age at the time of both the incident and the reporting.

Historical Child Sexual Assault: involves victims under 16 years of age at the time of the incident, but who were 16 years or older at the time of reporting.

Age refers to the victim's age at the time the offence occurred.

Pathways of reporting Sexual Assault incidents to NSW Police

In person reporting to police involves the victim visiting or phoning NSW Police to make a formal complaint. This traditional reporting pathway enables some level of formal investigation.

The Sexual Assault Reporting Option (SARO) is a confidential online pathway that allows individuals aged 16 and over to report sexual assault to NSW Police without speaking directly to police or triggering a formal criminal investigation. SARO offers an alternative to traditional reporting methods, such as face-to-face reporting, enabling victims to share their experience in a way that may feel safer and more comfortable.

SARO reports can be submitted via the online Community Portal (since January 2023), or by completing a downloadable PDF form. SARO submissions create a police record of the incident, but do not lead to investigation or follow-up unless specifically requested by the victim. All questions are optional, and reports can be made anonymously.

The Child Protection Helpline is a state-wide telephone service that receives, and screens reports of suspected abuse or neglect of children and young people. Members of the public and mandatory reporters within NSW can call the helpline to make a report. Mandatory reporters, including health care professionals, welfare service providers, educators (including those in schools and childcare), residential service workers, disability support staff, and members of religious organisations, are required by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect.

Qualified caseworkers staff the helpline. When a report suggests sexual abuse, serious physical abuse, or neglect (i.e. a potential crime), it is referred to the Joint Child Protection Response Program (JCPRP). The JCPRP, which is made up of staff from DCJ, NSW Health, and NSW Police, assesses whether the report should go to the Child Abuse and Sex Crime Squad or a local police command for investigation. BOCSAR data captures all reports referred to police through this process.

Relationship types

Victim and offender relationship types:

- Intimate Partner (including current & ex-spouse/partner, current & ex-boy/girl friend).
- Family (including child, parent, sibling, other family).
- Other known person (e.g. acquaintance, carer, colleague, ex-partner of partner & household member).
- Person in authority (e.g. teacher, medical, religious leader, social worker, employer and government worker).
- Unknown relationship type
- Not known to victim.