

Research Report No. 3/2022

A Closer Look at Hooning in Tasmania

In the June edition of the *Monthly Bulletin*, traffic related offences such as dangerous driving, drink driving, and speeding were strongly identified by survey respondents as the most important issues affecting their community. A third of respondents said 'hooning,' as a specific type of traffic offence, was a key issue in their area.

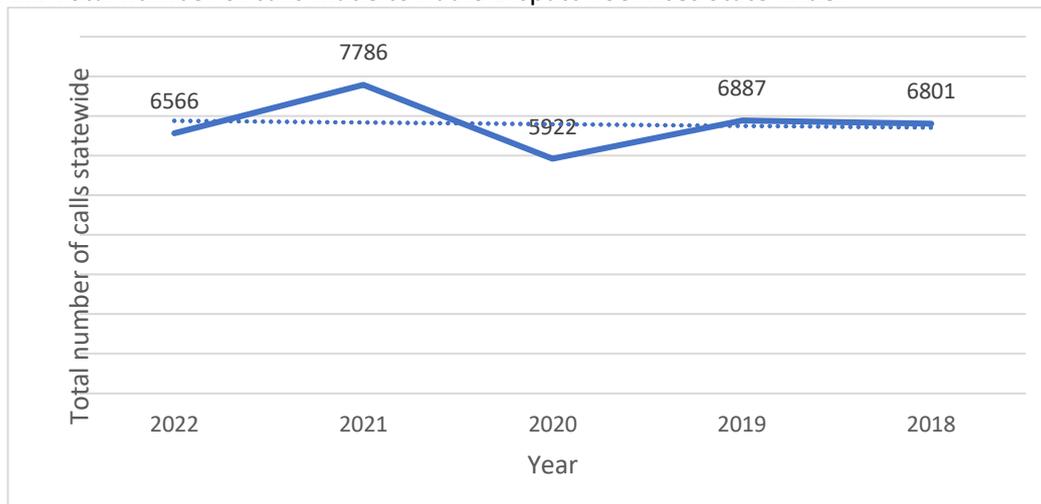
According to the (then) Police Minister, Jacqui Petrusma, when addressing the 2022 Legislative Council Estimates Committee, police recognise the problem of hooning "...as an enormous menace" to the community with potential "...devastating consequences on our roads." The Minister went on to say that Tasmania Police continually undertake proactive enforcement strategies aimed at combatting the problems. These strategies included a mixture of high-visibility policing, plainclothes patrols, where police use unmarked vehicles, as well as motorcycles to intercept offenders.¹

This month's report for July 2022, presents an analysis of one key indicator that underpins the traffic related offences associated with hooning, as reported in the *Corporate Performance Report (CPR)*, which is the data on the number of vehicle complaints made to Police Radio Dispatch Services (RDS).

Vehicle Complaints made to Radio Dispatch Services (RDS)

The rate of calls across the districts over a five-year period is in Figure 1.1. The total number of calls received is mostly consistent with an average of 6792 calls for the year.²

Figure 1.1 Total number of calls made to Radio Dispatch Services State-wide.³



¹ Parliament of Tasmania, Legislative Council Estimates Committee A; Wed 8 June 2022, Hon Jacqui Petrusma MP, pp.124-125, <https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/parliament/hansard.html> accessed 26 July 2022.

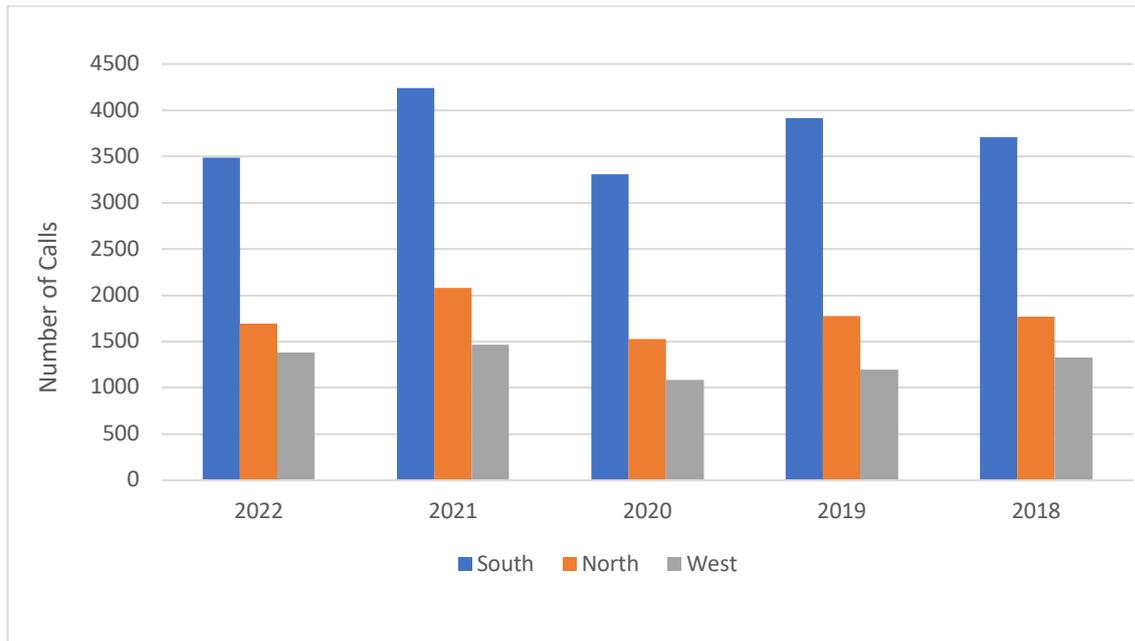
² There is scope for the number in 2022 to change when year-end data becomes available. The number shown is as of March 2022, whereas the other numbers are the year-end (June) result.

³ *Corporate Performance Report* March 2022, p51, June 2021, p51, June 2020, p 54, June 2019, p 43, and June 2018, p 43.

In the most recent CPR available (March 2022), there has been a total of 6566 calls from across the state to register a complaint about vehicles and this figure represents approximately 7.6% of all operational radio dispatch incidents.⁴ The daily rate of calls to register a complaint is 17.9 calls, which is just below the five year average of 18.6 calls per day.⁵ In Southern District there are 9.5 calls per day; for the North it is 4.6 calls; and Western District records 3.7 calls per day.⁶

The number of calls made across the districts is in Figure 1.2. There is a consistent pattern over the five-year period, with most calls (over half) from the Southern District; followed by Northern District with about a quarter of all calls; and Western District having the least number at a rate of about 20%.

Figure 1.2 Vehicle complaints made to Radio Dispatch Services (RDS) ⁷



The number calls across the three Districts is proportionally consistent with the population numbers as the South (279,000) has nearly double the population of the North (148,023) and over twice the population of the Western District (113,755).⁸

The survey respondents also expressed a wish for more localised information in respect of offences occurring in their area. A recent article in *The Mercury* newspaper referenced a police divisional list of reported hooning incidents.⁹ Most prominent was Bridgewater, followed by Clarence, then

⁴ Operational Radio Dispatch Incidents Recorded. *Corporate Performance Report*, March 2022, p 15 <https://www.police.tas.gov.au/about-us/our-performance/> accessed 27 July 2022.

⁵ This figure uses the data for up to March 2022 and the end of year (June) data for the other four years. Therefore, there is scope for the figure to change when yearend data for 2022 becomes available.

⁶ *Corporate Performance Report*, March 2022, p 51 <https://www.police.tas.gov.au/about-us/our-performance/> accessed 05 July 2022.

⁷ *Corporate Performance Report* March 2022, p51, June 2021, p51, June 2020, p 54, June 2019, p 43, and June 2018, p 43.

⁸ *DPFEM Annual Report 2020 -21*, pp 14-15 <https://www.police.tas.gov.au/about-us/corporate-documents/annual-report/> accessed 05 July 2022

⁹ Augustine, July 2022, 'Blackened Streets: The Tactics council is using to catch Glenorchy hoons', *The Mercury*, 03 June 2022 <https://www.themercury.com.au/news/tasmania/blackened-streets-the-tactics-council-is-using-to-catch-glenorchy-hoons/news-story/0527717857bea227905cda620c34b066> accessed July 27 2022

Launceston, Glenorchy and Burnie. Kingston and Devonport followed respectively as sixth and seventh. The presence of Southern District divisions in the top four is consistent with the reported rates of calls, and population levels, as presented in this report.

Next month we will present an analysis of the data for Vehicles Clamped and Confiscated which will show a breakdown of the key traffic related offences including hooning as another measure of activity in this area.
