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SUMMARY

Law and order in Queensland is maintained through various institutions, mainly the police service, the court system and correctional centres. Statistics from these institutions are used to indicate levels of and trends in crime. Reported crime per 10,000 of population declined in the first four decades of the twentieth century but has increased since World War II. Crime victim surveys now supplement reported crime statistics in an attempt to obtain a more accurate measure of crime levels.

The size of the police force increased from 907 in 1895 to 6,406 in 1996. The range of duties carried out by police has expanded over the period. Their main mode of transport has progressed from foot to horse, bicycle and motor vehicle. The Queensland court system comprises the Supreme Court, the District Court and the Magistrates Court. The number of criminal offences heard before the courts has escalated from 281 in 1938–39 to 5,887 in 1993–94 in the higher courts and from 35,434 to 145,895 over the same period in the lower courts. Queensland had 12 prisons in 1996 compared with 11 in 1896. However, the number of prisoners increased from 587 to 2,870 over this period, with most of the increase occurring since the 1960s. There is an increased emphasis on rehabilitation.

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