

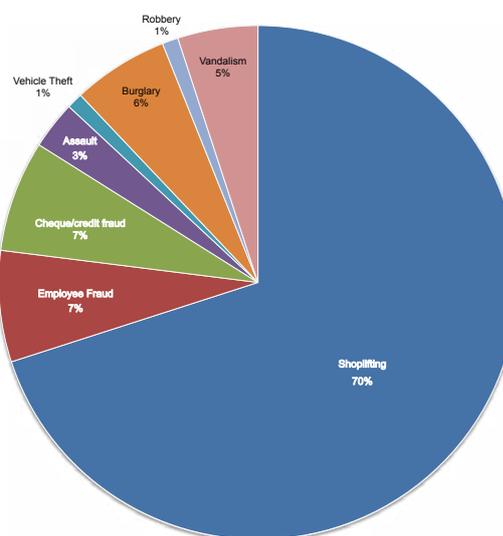
An overview of retail crime in Australia



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Retailers may experience a variety of crimes but shoplifting is the most prevalent. The chart¹ below shows the breakdown of all incidents of crime, by crime type, experienced by retailers.

Crime and the small business



The 2011 Global Theft Barometer indicates that shrinkage on a global scale is increasing, and retail theft costs the Australian economy more than \$2 billion. Globally, in 2010 Australia records the second highest levels of employee theft in the world, with over 40 per cent of theft resulting from employees. Employee theft has consistently remained a significant concern in Australia for a number of years. The Global Theft Barometer indicates that the top five items stolen in Australia are lipsticks, shaving products, fragrances, infant formula and clothing.²

Retail theft has been fuelled by consumer demands for low-cost goods coupled with a reduction in staff on the retail selling floor.³ This environment provides numerous opportunities and motivation for the enterprising shoplifter and dishonest employee. Research has shown that often goods stolen are resold on the secondary market, through auction sites for example, and to unscrupulous retailers. On average products resold on the streets will attract approximately 30 cents on the dollar, and in anonymous internet sites up to 70 cents on the dollar.⁴

Retailers also have a general duty of care or legal obligation to their employees to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees and others who come in to the store. It is the employer's responsibility to ensure that all reasonably practicable measures have been taken to control risks against all possible injuries arising from the workplace.⁵

¹ "Reporting of crimes against small business", Crime Facts Info – Number 43. 18 February 2003.

² "Liquid Technology to Reduce Retail Theft", RetailBiz: Australian Retail News.

Accessed 11/05/2011: www.retailbiz.com.au/2010/11/17/article/Liquid-technology-to-reduce-retail-theft/UYXYCQREXG.html

³ Lynch, M. (2009). "Retail Theft Soars in Economic Downturn (WWD)". RILA (Retail Industry Leaders Association).

Accessed 23/11/2009: www.rila.org/news/Documents/WWD%20BD%20ORC.pdf

⁴ Leavenworth, J. (2009). "Sophisticated and Organized Shoplifters Are An Alarming Trend", All Business.

Accessed 13/01/2010: www.allbusiness.com/crime-law-enforcement-corrections/law-police-forces/13581552-1.html

⁵ WorkCover Authority of NSW. "Duty of Care". Accessed 8 June 2011: www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/healthsafety/Pages/Dutyofcare.aspx