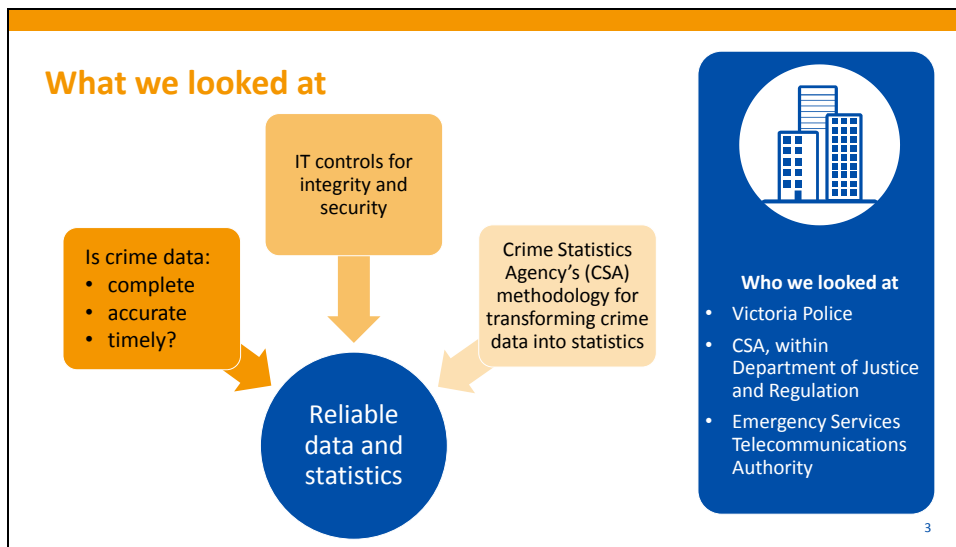Slide 1

This presentation provides an overview of the Victorian Auditor-General's report *Crime Data*.

Slide 2

Accurate crime statistics provide the community with an understanding of community safety and assurance that police are accountable.
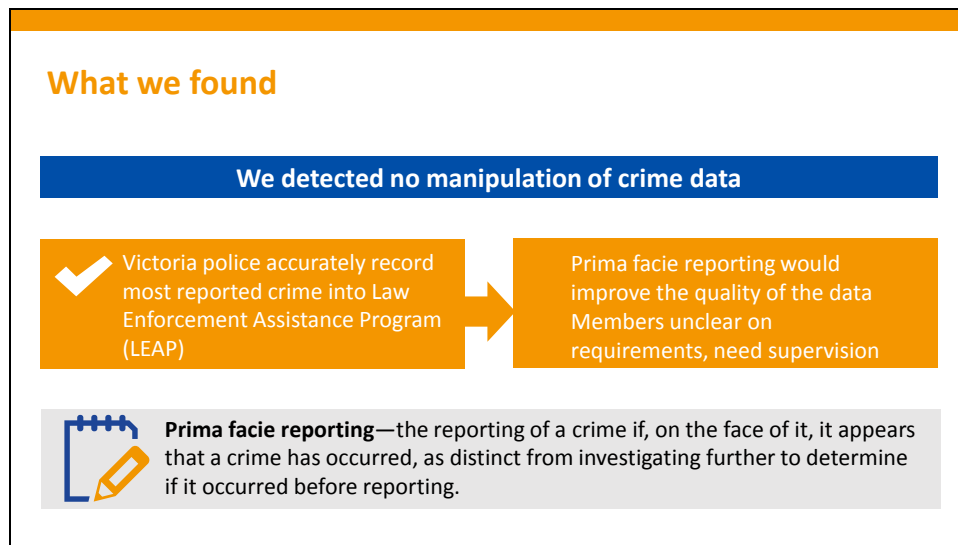
This audit assessed whether crime data is reliable and looked at whether crime statistics are fair and accurate. The audit also follows on from previous investigations into inappropriate crime reporting practices.

Slide 3

In this audit we looked at the completeness, accuracy and timeliness of crime data, the IT controls over data integrity and security, and the Crime Statistics Agency's (CSA) methodology for transforming data into statistics.

We did this by analysing crime data from 2012 to September 2017. We also examined Triple Zero reports to police divisional vans, and CSA's methods for counting, ranking and classifying crime data.

We audited Victoria Police, CSA within the Department of Justice and Regulation, and the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority.

What we found

We detected no manipulation of crime data

✔ Victoria police accurately record most reported crime into Law Enforcement Assistance Program (LEAP)

➜ Prima facie reporting would improve the quality of the data Members unclear on requirements, need supervision

Prima facie reporting—the reporting of a crime if, on the face of it, it appears that a crime has occurred, as distinct from investigating further to determine if it occurred before reporting.

We detected no manipulation of crime data.

We tested a large sample of Triple Zero calls to police to see if crimes were recorded on LEAP. We found almost all crimes were accurately recorded in LEAP and we detected no systemic under-reporting of crime.

Victoria Police can improve the quality of the data by ensuring members comply with prima facie reporting.

Prima facie reporting is reporting a crime if, on the face of it, it appears that a crime *has* occurred, as distinct from investigating further to determine if it occurred before reporting.

However, members are unclear on the need to report a crime on a prima facie basis. More supervision is needed to reinforce this and ensure reports contain all important details.

Slide 5

What we found

Errors meant we could not determine how soon crime data is recorded
No benchmark for timely recording crime

Victoria Police should work to reduce errors

CSA produces reliable crime statistics
Transparent methodology

Victoria Police should collect more specific data on locations and victims

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Errors in how dates are recorded meant we could not determine how soon crime data is recorded once detected and there is no benchmark for timely recording of crime. Victoria Police should work to reduce errors.

CSA produce reliable crime statistics with a transparent methodology. Victoria Police should also collect more specific data on locations and victims to better inform decision making.

We reviewed the controls over the reliability and integrity of crime recording IT systems. We identified the need for more regular reviews of policies, security and user access. However, these issues did not impact on the data reliability.

Data quality involves checks at the police station and, after approval, checks across all of LEAP. We detected systemic data errors, however, they made up less than 1 per cent of the data set so do not impact on the reliability of the crime data or published statistics.

There was no evidence of inappropriate clearing or downgrading of offences.

However, there is no data dictionary for LEAP and few staff understand the technical field names required for analysis.

Data quality—timeliness

- There are errors in how dates are recorded

  → Unsure whether police are entering crime into LEAP in a timely way

- Average gap in 2017 between a crime being reported and being entered is eight days—but this is unreliable

- Delays are caused by members' uncertainty about when to transfer sensitive information onto LEAP

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Errors in how dates are recorded mean that we do not know if police are entering crime into LEAP in a timely way.

Data analysis shows the average gap between a crime being reported and being entered on LEAP is eight days, but this is unreliable.

Delays, caused by members being uncertain about when to transfer sensitive information onto LEAP, impact on the reliability of the data.

Slide 9

CSA publish Criminal Incidents and Recorded Offences tables quarterly.
Its methods are transparent and the published statistics closely reflect Victoria Police's crime data.

Our recalculation of CSA's Offence count statistics over 10 years showed differences of less than 1% each year. The published statistics appropriately reflect Victoria Police's crime data.

Recommendations

9 **Recommendations for Victoria Police:**

- Conduct a training needs analysis to determine members' understanding of prima facie reporting and address any gaps in targeted training

- For crimes where a victim can be identified, mandate that members ask if the victim is comfortable disclosing their country of birth, if so, record this data in LEAP

- Set a benchmark for timely input of data into LEAP and report against this annually

- Improve the accuracy and timeliness of recording in LEAP and monitor and reduce errors in LEAP that cause long gaps between the date the offence is reported and the date it is created

- Adopt a consistent approach to using performance measures computed by CSA in Budget Paper 3 reporting and document the methodology

- Strengthen the information technology general controls for LEAP and the LEAP Electronic Data Recorder Mark 2

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We made nine recommendations for Victoria Police to:
- address gaps in training
- increase accuracy and timely crime reporting, and
- to strengthen the IT general controls around the crime recording systems.

Victoria Police accepted all of the recommendations and advised that it will develop an action plan within three months to detail how it will address them.

Slide 11

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For further information, please see the full report of this audit on our website, www.audit.vic.gov.au.