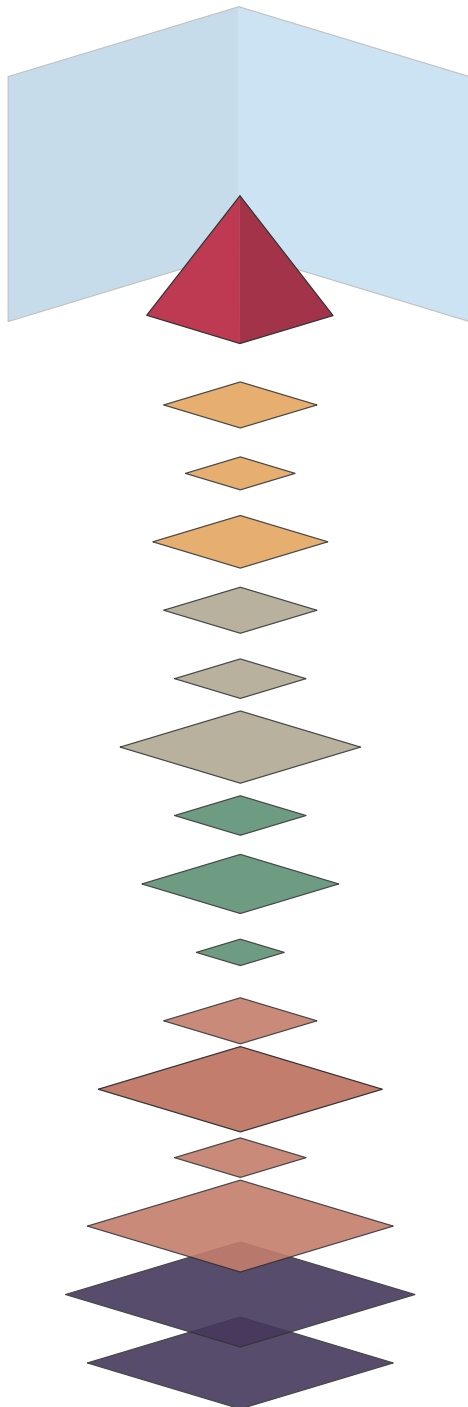


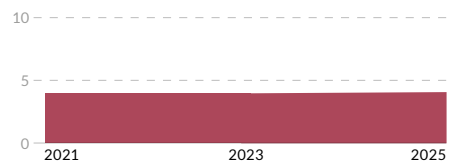


AUSTRALIA



4.07 $\nearrow 0.07$
CRIMINALITY SCORE

152nd of 193 countries -
4th of 14 Oceanian countries $\nearrow 1$
2nd of 2 Australia and New Zealand countries -



CRIMINAL MARKETS 4.43 $\nearrow 0.13$

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	3.50	0.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	2.50	0.00
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	4.00	$\searrow 0.50$
ARMS TRAFFICKING	3.50	0.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	3.00	$\nearrow 1.00$
ILLCIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	5.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
FLORA CRIMES	3.00	0.00
FAUNA CRIMES	4.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	2.00	0.00
HEROIN TRADE	3.50	0.00
COCAINE TRADE	6.50	0.00
CANNABIS TRADE	3.00	0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	7.00	0.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	8.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
FINANCIAL CRIMES	7.00	0.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS 3.70 0.00

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	4.50	0.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.00	0.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	2.00	$\searrow 0.50$
FOREIGN ACTORS	4.00	0.00
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	3.00	$\nearrow 0.50$



This project was funded in part
by a grant from the United
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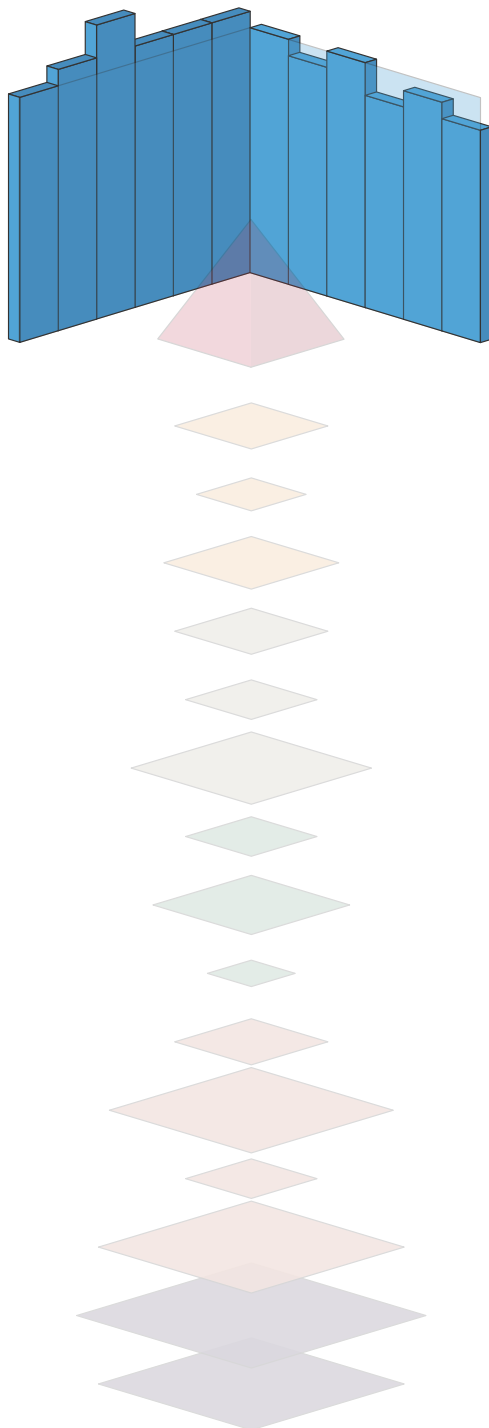


Funded by
the European Union

ENACT is funded by the European Union
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affiliation with the Global Initiative Against
Transnational Organized Crime.



AUSTRALIA



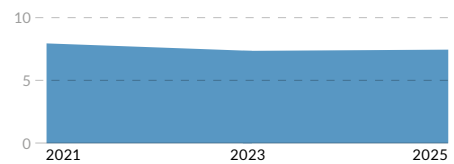
7.54 $\nearrow 0.17$

RESILIENCE SCORE

13th of 193 countries $\nearrow 6$

2nd of 14 Oceanian countries -

2nd of 2 Australia and New Zealand countries -



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	7.50	0.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	8.00	0.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	9.00	0.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	8.00	0.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	8.00	0.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	8.00	0.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	7.50	0.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	7.00	0.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	7.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	6.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
PREVENTION	7.00	$\nearrow 1.00$
NON-STATE ACTORS	6.50	0.00



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Australia is a destination country for human trafficking, where victims are subjected to both sexual and labour exploitation. Women from Asia, Eastern Europe and Africa are coerced into commercial sex work in legal and illicit brothels, massage parlours, motels and private residences. Victims are often subjected to physical abuse, threats, debt bondage or manipulation by illicit drugs. Cases of forced marriages leading to domestic servitude have also been reported. Labour trafficking is especially prevalent in the agriculture, fishing, construction and hospitality sectors, with foreign workers from Asia and the Pacific Islands forced to work under exploitative conditions. Some victims have also been trafficked to work at drug production facilities in remote locations. Organized crime groups operate trafficking networks with links to international syndicates. For instance, criminal bosses with connections to Chinese Triads reportedly control trafficking operations in Brisbane and Melbourne. Unregulated education and immigration agents have been implicated in luring international students and women into exploitative sex work and labour, with some visa schemes linked to forced labour. The illicit sex trade is also present, operating openly in establishments known to local communities, while law enforcement finds itself hampered by resource constraints and legal challenges.

Human smuggling in Australia is relatively unstructured, with most cases involving visa overstays rather than organized smuggling networks, and boat arrivals are rare – an exception was a 2024 incident involving 39 foreign nationals. Members of diaspora communities manage smuggling operations from origin and transit countries in South and East Asia, providing transport and financial support. Australia's longstanding policy of deportation and offshore detention has curtailed human smuggling, although concerns persist over criminal actors potentially exploiting licit migration pathways.

Extortion and protection racketeering is not considered a consolidated criminal market in Australia. However, criminal gangs, including the 'Toecutters' who are notorious for kidnapping and torturing rival criminals for ransom or financial extortion, are operating in some parts of the country. Outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMCGs) and ethnic street gangs also use extortion tactics within their own communities due to mistrust in authorities.

TRADE

Despite strict firearm regulations, Australia has a consolidated illicit arms market, with over 260 000 firearms circulating within the black market. OMCGs, foreign crime groups originating from Western Asian countries and drug traffickers are involved in trafficking firearms, which are stolen, diverted from legal owners or homemade 3D-printed weapons. Firearm homicides remain low, but drive-by shootings and targeted attacks have risen, particularly in gang disputes. Australia has committed to becoming a top global arms manufacturer, raising concerns over potential vulnerabilities to illicit arms trafficking.

Counterfeit goods, including luxury clothing, pharmaceuticals and food products, are in circulation in Australia. The domestic fashion industry loses significant revenue due to counterfeit imports from China and Vietnam, while the increase in reports of counterfeit weight loss medication and antidepressants raises public health concerns. The bulk of counterfeit transactions occur through online marketplaces, with Chinese e-commerce platforms serving as major distribution hubs.

A prevalent criminal market is the illicit trade in excisable goods, particularly tobacco and e-cigarettes. Organized crime syndicates, including Western Asian crime networks and OMCGs, dominate the trade. Illicit tobacco cropping in Queensland supplies domestic markets, while imported cigarettes originate from South East Asia. Violence linked to control of the illicit tobacco trade has intensified, with increased arson attacks on rival businesses. The Australian government has implemented bans on disposable vapes and stricter regulations, although their effectiveness remains to be seen.

ENVIRONMENT

The illegal logging trade is not highly organized or widespread, but unregulated land clearing continues to affect local ecosystems and biodiversity, which is of concern. In addition, Australia imports illegal timber sourced from high-risk supply chains in Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and China.

The illegal wildlife trade continues to target Australia's endangered native wildlife, especially birds and reptiles (such as crocodiles, lizards and snakes), due to strong international demand for exotic pets. The trade is bi-directional, with exotic animals also being smuggled into Australia for collectors. Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing occurs, as highlighted by seizures of illegally exported sea cucumbers and shark fins. Despite the high number of seizures, Australia's vast exclusive economic zone presents enforcement challenges in curbing IUU fishing. Syndicates originating from Hong Kong and Indonesian fishing vessels

are the most prominent transnational organized criminal networks involved in these illicit activities.

Non-renewable resource crimes occur on a small scale, with cases of unauthorized mining, especially for opals and coal. Corruption within the mining industry, in particular related to the allocation of mining licences, has raised concerns over regulatory oversight. Copper theft is an emerging issue that disrupts telecommunications infrastructure.

DRUGS

Cannabis is the most widely used illicit drug in Australia, supplied mostly by domestic cultivation. Recent decriminalization measures and medical cannabis regulations have shifted market dynamics, which could lead to the consolidation of criminal groups.

The cocaine trade is one of Australia's most lucrative drug markets. Consumption in Sydney is estimated to be rampant. Latin American cartels, Albanian crime groups and OMCGs facilitate imports by sea (through Papua New Guinea) and by air ('black' flights). The market is characterized by high prices and increasing violence among criminal networks vying for control. Wastewater testing indicates a significant rise in cocaine consumption in Australia, and the street price for cocaine in Australia remains among the highest globally, making the trade highly lucrative for traffickers. In 2024, major law enforcement operations resulted in record cocaine seizures that had a significant impact on organized crime networks.

In contrast, Australia's heroin market is limited in scope and scale, and is supplied mostly from the Golden Triangle in South East Asia. Organized crime syndicates, particularly those with connections to Hong Kong, Malaysia and Southern China, oversee importation and distribution, smuggling the heroin in air cargo or in shipping containers, yachts and light aircrafts. Heroin consumption remains relatively stable, but consumption of synthetic opioids and methamphetamine is rising.

Methamphetamine dominates the synthetic drug market and originate mainly from the Golden Triangle, with precursors supplied by China and India. Organized crime groups that control importation and distribution include OMCGs, Vietnamese syndicates and Afghan criminal rings. Afghanistan has become an emerging source of methamphetamine, with increasing shipments intercepted at Australian borders. A significant portion of methamphetamine originates in Mexico from where Mexican cartels traffic the drugs to Australia via Pacific Island countries. Seizures of synthetic opioids, including Fentanyl, have also increased, heightening public health concerns.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

In recent years, cybercrime incidents have grown significantly in Australia. Major threats are ransomware and data breaches, as state-sponsored hacking groups and transnational cybercriminals orchestrate attacks on businesses and government entities, with cryptocurrency platforms particularly vulnerable. Cybercrime-as-a-service has expanded accessibility for lower-tier criminals.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes are a significant concern in Australia, particularly cyber-enabled frauds, which include credit card fraud and identity theft. Illicit proceeds from these crimes are frequently funnelled into broader organized criminal activities, with organized crime networks exploiting financial institutions and casinos. Australia is mainly a destination and operational hub for financial crime, with some activities linked to transnational networks, while some OMCGs have been implicated in tax fraud related to refunds.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

OMCGs in Australia, including The Comanchero and Hells Angels, exhibit characteristics associated with mafia-style groups, such as hierarchical structures and symbols. These groups engage in various illicit activities, including drug trafficking, firearms smuggling and money laundering. Their transnational operations in South East Asia, Western Asia and Europe include narcotics, chemical precursors and illicit firearms. OMCGs expand their influence through establishing chapters in Pacific Island countries and maintaining relationships with traditional organized crime groups.

Australia has extensive criminal networks that operate as both structured syndicates and loose associations of independent operators. A notable example is the 'Aussie Cartel', which is an alliance of criminal entities, including OMCGs, that pools resources and expertise to maximize profits from illicit markets. The Aussie Cartel is believed to be responsible for importing substantial quantities of methamphetamine and cocaine into the country. Loosely organized criminal networks and local drug gangs are involved in domestic drug production to cater to local demand.

Although corruption levels in Australia are relatively low, there have been isolated incidents of corruption linked to organized crime, particularly in Customs and Border Security, with some officials facilitating the smuggling of contraband into the country. However, there is no evidence of systemic corruption or direct ties between organized crime and politicians.

Australia has long been a destination for foreign criminal groups. Various foreign actors have embedded themselves within Australia's organized crime landscape, capitalizing

on global smuggling routes and financial networks. The Italian 'Ndrangheta and Western Asian and Asian organized crime groups are involved in drug trafficking, money laundering and fraud. Chinese crime syndicates finance drug importation from the Golden Triangle and maintain connections with South American and Mexican cartels. Albanian mafia cells, particularly in Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne, are suspected of working with 'Ndrangheta and Balkans-based criminal figures to import large volumes of cocaine.

Private-sector actors enable organized crime in Australia through money laundering and tax evasion. Some actors

in the mining and logging industries operate outside legal frameworks, often engaging in corruption or regulatory violations. Organized crime has exploited the financial sector, with major money-laundering networks linked to excise fraud and illicit tobacco trade. Investigations have exposed fraudulent activities within financial institutions, but enforcement actions have resulted in limited systemic changes. Private security firms are an area of concern, as limited regulatory oversight has allowed people with criminal affiliations to enter the industry. Welfare fraud has also been linked to organized crime groups seeking to exploit government funds.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Australia has strong political commitment to combating organized crime and has established national strategies and task forces at both federal and state levels. The democratic process is largely protected from criminal influence, but concerns have arisen over the use of government resources and political advertising to influence elections. Despite strong political and civil liberties, Australia faces governance challenges, including foreign political influence, restrictive asylum seeker policies, systemic discrimination and increasing constraints on press freedom.

Australia's government transparency and accountability is relatively strong and supported by established anti-corruption frameworks. Compared to global standards, the country has low levels of corruption. However, public trust in government institutions has declined due to high-profile incidents of conflicts of interest in mining concessions and political appointments. In 2023, the establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Commission marked a significant step toward reinforcing integrity. Watchdog agencies play an essential role in maintaining oversight, but gaps remain in the enforcement of regulations. The right-to-information framework is also hindered by broad exemptions and limited applicability that affect transparency.

Australia actively participates in international efforts against organized crime and adheres to multiple global treaties, including the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the UN Convention against Corruption. It collaborates extensively with international law enforcement agencies and regional security networks. In 2024, Australia launched the Pacific Policing Initiative with the aim of bolstering law enforcement capabilities across the Pacific Islands. The Australian Federal Police also introduced a new international strategy to enhance cooperation in combating transnational crime, with an emphasis on

intelligence-sharing and cybercrime mitigation. These initiatives underscore Australia's proactive approach to international security, although strategic competition in the Pacific region presents additional complexities.

Australia's national policies and legal framework provide stringent measures to counter organized crime. Federal and state laws define and criminalize various forms of organized crime, and recent amendments have strengthened enforcement mechanisms. The country's legal framework includes comprehensive anti-corruption and anti-money laundering (AML) provisions, strict firearms regulations and a national drug strategy. Australia has also enacted new corporate liability laws targeting foreign bribery and tax avoidance that are aligned with global financial crime mitigation efforts.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Australia's judiciary is independent and adheres to the principles of equal treatment and procedural fairness. Although Australia has no specialized courts for organized crime cases, the judiciary oversees investigative processes. Concerns have been raised about the country's immigration detention policies, particularly the prolonged detention of non-citizens, which the High Court ruled unconstitutional in 2023. Prison conditions generally meet international standards and, while OMCGs have reportedly established networks within prisons, there is no evidence of organized crime controlling detention facilities. Indigenous Australians are disproportionately represented in the prison population, with deaths in custody a systemic issue.

Australia's law enforcement is well-resourced and has a strong reputation for effectiveness. The Australian Federal Police coordinates multi-jurisdictional operations and facilitates intelligence-sharing with domestic and

international agencies. The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission plays a crucial role in identifying and dismantling high-risk criminal groups, while the country's involvement in the Five Eyes Intelligence Oversight and Review Council has strengthened operational capabilities. However, increased law enforcement powers, particularly for digital investigations, have been criticized for potentially infringing civil liberties. Moreover, concerns persist over the use of 'criminal intelligence' (classified police information that is not subject to independent review) and its effects on due process, particularly in cases involving OMCGs.

Organized crime groups do not control major trade hubs, but corruption within the shipping industry has facilitated smuggling activities. Australia has a vast and porous coastline, which makes maintaining territorial integrity challenging even with rigorous border controls. Border security is a key priority. Agencies, such as the Australian Security Intelligence Organization and the Australian Border Force, engage in counter-smuggling and migration enforcement. Although Australia's border integrity policies are stringent, enforcement agencies have struggled to secure all entry points.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Australia has a robust AML framework and strong institutional mechanisms for countering financial crime. However, gaps remain in the regulation of certain professions, including lawyers and real estate agents, which are not yet covered under the country's AML laws. The Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre regulates financial institutions and works with law enforcement agencies to disrupt money-laundering networks. Australia is part of the Egmont Group, a global organization that facilitates the exchange of information, knowledge and cooperation to enhance financial intelligence among members. In 2024, the government introduced new legislation to expand regulatory oversight, but implementation challenges persist. Public inquiries into casinos have exposed significant money-laundering vulnerabilities, leading to regulatory scrutiny of financial sector compliance.

The country's economic regulatory capacity is strong, with high levels of market transparency and protection of property rights, and its economy is competitive, with open-market policies facilitating trade and investment. The financial sector is integrated internationally and has strong governance mechanisms. However, periodic reviews have highlighted concerns about market concentration and financial service pricing. Australia continues to rank highly in global economic freedom indices, reflecting its commitment to regulatory integrity and stability.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Australia has established a support framework for victims of organized crime, although gaps persist in witness protection and long-term assistance programmes. Victim services are delivered through collaborations between government agencies, non-profits and private sector entities. In recent years, the government announced further funding to enhance legal aid and victim support services, with an emphasis on assisting vulnerable populations. However, witness protection remains underdeveloped, with limited resources allocated to shielding people who testify against organized crime groups. Priorities in the country's National Drug Strategy 2017–2026 include enhancing access to services and support for drug users.

Prevention is central to Australia's crime reduction strategies, which include federal and regional initiatives aimed at addressing organized crime threats. Programmes, such as the Safer Communities Fund, support crime prevention measures, including increased surveillance and community security projects. The National Drugs Campaign and related harm-reduction initiatives focus on preventing substance abuse, but non-violent drug offenders continue to be incarcerated because of limited decriminalization efforts. The prevention of human trafficking has gained prominence, with Sydney and Melbourne airports launching awareness campaigns in recent years. In 2024, an Anti-Slavery Commissioner was appointed, signalling increased national attention on modern slavery and human trafficking issues.

Non-state actors play an essential role in Australia's resilience against organized crime. Civil society organizations and non-government organizations actively engage in policy advocacy and provide victim support services. However, press freedom faces challenges due to media ownership concentration and political pressures. Investigative journalism is strong, but concerns have been raised over government efforts to limit access to information. The government's relationship with civil society is largely cooperative, although growing pressure from government funding bodies discourages recipient institutions and organizations from openly commenting on the very policies or initiatives they help implement.

This summary was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.