

The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and  
Research presents

Applied Research in **Crime**  
and **Justice Conference 2013**

27-28 February 2013  
Bayside Level 2, Sydney Convention Centre  
Darling Harbour Sydney NSW

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**Handbook**



NSW Bureau of Crime  
Statistics and Research

## Program

### DAY 1

### Wednesday 27 February 2013

8.00am - 9.00am	Registration: Bayside Level 2 foyer	
9.00am - 9.10am	Introduction: <b>Dr Don Weatherburn</b> , Director, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (Room 204)	
9.10am - 9.20am	Welcome to country: <b>Donna Ingram</b> , Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council	
9.20am - 9.30am	Opening of proceedings: <b>The Honourable Greg Smith MP</b> , NSW Attorney General and Minister for Justice	
9.30am - 10.30am	Keynote 1: Chair, <b>Professor Paul Mazerolle</b> <b>Professor Mark Kleiman</b> , UCLA School of Public Affairs - Public Policy How to have less crime and less punishment	
10.30am - 11.00am	MORNING TEA	
11.00am - 1.00pm	Session 1A: Chair, <b>Ms Jackie Fitzgerald</b> (Room 204)	Session 1B: Chair, <b>Professor Rod Broadhurst</b> (Room 202)
	<b>Catriona Mirrlees-Black</b> , Law & Justice Foundation of NSW. Community justice in the UK: does it work?	<b>Andrew McGrath</b> , Charles Sturt University. An Australian juvenile offender risk-need inventory and what we have learnt about its accuracy.
	<b>Craig Jones</b> , NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. Long-term outcomes from a randomised controlled trial of intensive judicial supervision on Drug Court.	<b>Elizabeth Moore</b> , Justice Health, NSW. Risk factors for re-incarceration among young people in custody.
	<b>Jane Goodman-Delahunty</b> , Charles Sturt University. Parental sexual offending: Managing risk through diversion.	<b>Sarah Hopkins and Alistair Ferguson</b> , Justice Reinvestment for Aboriginal Young People Campaign. Articulating policy change in NSW: A case study of the justice reinvestment for Aboriginal Young People Campaign.
1.00pm - 2.00pm	<b>Peter Schofield</b> , University of Newcastle. Traumatic brain injury and offending: cause or confound?	<b>Michael Livingstone and Julia Boffa</b> , Jesuit Social Services. Research for reform: The experience of youth on remand in Victoria.
	LUNCH and poster session (1:15pm - 2.00pm)	
2.00pm - 3.30pm	Session 2A: Chair, <b>Dr Suzanne Poynton</b> (Room 204)	Session 2B: Chair, <b>Mr Michael Thorn</b> (Room 202)
	<b>Nadine Smith</b> , NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. Longitudinal correlates of physical assault against women.	<b>Robin Fitzgerald</b> , The University of Queensland. Toward a typology of neighbourhood crime types.
	<b>Paul Mazerolle and Li Eriksson</b> , Griffith University. Exploring offending histories for men who murder intimate partners vs. men who murder others.	<b>Anna Stewart</b> , Griffith University. Targeting crime prevention to reduce offending: Identifying communities which generate chronic and costly offenders.
	<b>Roderick Broadhurst</b> , Australian National University. The recidivism of homicide offenders.	<b>Andrew Webber and Emma Worthington</b> , NSW Department of Attorney General and Justice. The selection of targets by break and enter offenders in NSW: Implications for crime prevention policy.
3.30pm - 4.00pm	AFTERNOON TEA	
4.00pm - 5.00pm	Keynote 2: Chair, <b>Mr Brendan Thomas</b> , NSW Attorney General & Justice (Room 204) <b>Professor Kate Bowers</b> , University College London - Dept of Security and Crime Science Situational crime prevention: what we know and what we are starting to understand.	
5.00pm - 7.00pm	COCKTAIL PARTY - Bayside Terrace	

# Applied Research in Crime and Justice Conference 2013

## DAY 2 Thursday 28 February 2013

8.30am - 9:00am	<b>Registration</b>	
9:00am - 10:00am	<b>Keynote 3: Chair, Commissioner Andrew Scipione (Room 204) Professor Eli Silverman</b> , John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York The crime numbers game: Deterrent to effective policing.	
10:00am - 10:30am	<b>MORNING TEA</b>	
10:30am - 12:30am	<b>Session 3A: Chair, Dr Nadine Smith (Room 204)</b>	<b>Session 3B: Chair, Mr Paul McKnight (Room 202)</b>
	<b>Tanya Chikritzhs</b> , National Drug Research Institute, WA. Revealing the link between licensed outlets and violence: counting venues versus measuring alcohol availability.	<b>Suzanne Poynton</b> , NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. Bonds and re-offending: Does the length of the order matter?
	<b>Jenny Chalmers</b> , National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, NSW. Heterogeneity and interrelationships in response to alcohol and other drug prices: an online experimental study of young Australian's behaviour on Saturday night.	<b>David Tait</b> , University of Western Sydney. Are fines criminogenic? The impact of monetary sanctions on re-offending in NSW Local Courts.
	<b>Wayne Hall</b> , The University of Queensland. What does addiction neuroscience tell us about the responsibility of addicted persons for crimes committed to fund their drug use.	<b>Karen Gelb</b> , Sentencing Advisory Council, VIC. Applying evidence to sentence policy and practice.
	<b>Louisa Degenhardt</b> , National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, NSW. The epidemiology of engagement with the criminal justice system among opioid dependant people: Retrospective cohort study.	<b>David Indermaur</b> , The University of Western Australia. Is there a correct understanding of public attitude when it comes to sentencing?
12:30pm - 1:30pm	<b>LUNCH</b>	
1:30pm - 3:00pm	<b>Session 4A: Chair, Professor Judy Cashmore (Room 204)</b>	<b>Session 4B: Chair, Mr Greg Chilvers (Room 202)</b>
	<b>Elizabeth Moore</b> , Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network, NSW. Cannabis use and offending among juvenile detainees.	<b>Sally Kelty and Roberta Julian</b> , University of Tasmania. How to identify and employ top-performing crime-scene examiners and why it matters in criminal justice.
	<b>Jake Najman</b> , The University of Queensland. Determining priorities for intervention and life course research.	<b>Richard Watkins</b> , Victoria Police. Increased drug offending or increased police productivity? Estimating total drug offending in Victoria using statistical methodologies.
	<b>David Fergusson</b> , University of Otago. The prevention, treatment and management of conduct problems in childhood and adolescence.	<b>Henk Elffers</b> , NSCR Amsterdam & Griffith University. Police data are bad, but are victim surveys any better?
3:00pm - 3:30pm	<b>AFTERNOON TEA</b>	
3:30pm - 4:30pm	<b>Keynote 4: Chair, Ms Maree Walk</b> , Dept. of Family and Community Services (Room 204) <b>Professor Jim Alexander</b> , University of Utah Evidence based treatments for high risk youth and families: Integrating theory, research, clinical experience, cultural competence, and therapists into an effective intervention	
4:30pm - 4:40pm	<b>Closing remarks: Dr Don Weatherburn</b> , NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research	

## Keynote speaker abstracts

### Evidence based treatments for high risk youth and families: Integrating theory, research, clinical experience, cultural competence, and therapists into an effective intervention

**Jim Alexander**

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When we develop and adopt a specific program, what are our goals? Is the program designed to have maximum positive impact on specific youth / cultures / clinical problems? Is it designed to cost the least amount of money? Designed to produce the “best” cost/benefit ratio? To weed out youth we can help from those that are incorrigible? To help the youth specifically or to also help the family that will be still involved? To provide safety for the community? To reduce unwanted pregnancies?

For 4 decades FFT (Functional Family Therapy) has faced and dealt with such questions and challenges. In today’s plenary, as FFT Developer I will:

1. share briefly how FFT developed in response to diverse challenges,
2. discuss how clinical theory, strategies, techniques, and therapist characteristics were interwoven to address the challenges at the clinical level, and
3. how change mechanism and outcome research was integrated to both guide and evaluate the model.

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### Situational crime prevention: what we know and what we are starting to understand.

**Kate Bowers**

University College London  
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The purpose of the first part of this talk is to summarize the available evidence on the effectiveness of situational crime prevention measures at reducing and preventing crime problems. In reviewing the evidence, some broad conclusions will be drawn about the types of situational interventions that show promise, and there will be a discussion of some of the factors that influence whether or not programmes are effective. In addition, consideration will be given to standards of evidence and how the findings of evaluation studies can be synthesized to draw conclusions concerning what works. The second part of the talk will focus on some of the less well-explored issues and future challenges. These include; first, estimating the cost effectiveness of interventions in terms of (for example) the financial return per 1 dollar spent. This is supplemented by consideration of how intense - in terms of investment per head of population - schemes may need to be to be cost efficient. Second is consideration of the timing and longevity of treatment effects. That is, are interventions sustainable in the long term of treatment and what about documented ‘anticipatory benefits’ that may occur even before an intervention goes “live”. Third, and by no means last, consideration will be given to the potential side effects of situational measures in the form of displacement to other locations. Current evidence on the spatial movement of crime will be summarized and the challenges associated with assessing other types of changes (such as temporal- or crime type-displacement) will be highlighted.

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**How to have less crime and less punishment.**

**Mark Kleiman**

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Crime and punishment are both social evils. In some circumstances, it is worth inflicting more punishment in order to have less crime. But it would be preferable to have less of both.

Systems of deferred, sporadic, and yet occasionally severe punishment create much less crime reduction at far higher cost than could be achieved by substituting swiftness and certainty for severity. Tightly coupling offender outcomes to offender behaviour can also help offenders develop the capacity or self-command crucial to their successful integration into law-abiding society.

Criminal justice supervision outside the walls of correctional institutions offers major opportunities for reform, and some programs of “smart community corrections” show dramatic results in the form of reduced crime, reduced incarceration, reduced expenditure, and transformed lives.

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**The crime numbers game: Deterrent to effective policing**

**Eli B Silverman**

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The development of police performance management systems has been instrumental in the advancement of effective policing. New York City Police Department’s (NYPD) introduction of a performance management system (Compstat) is generally regarded as strongly contributing to New York City’s rapid crime decline. Worldwide attention to this so called NYPD management model has led to various forms of replication in police forces around the world.

Integral to this Compstat model is its four point mantra: Accurate and Timely Intelligence; Effective Tactics; Rapid Deployment; and Relentless Follow Up and Assessment.

Absent the reliability of the first component, Accurate and Timely Intelligence, the other three parts of the mantra are greatly eviscerated and lose their potency as effective crime fighting tools. Crime patterns are belatedly or not detected at all. Citizens are not informed and their complaints are not heeded. Credible tactics, such as stop and frisk, are distorted and abused.

My research and other evidence clearly demonstrate the diminution in the reliability and integrity of accurate and timely intelligence reflected in tarnished crime statistics and overaggressive tactics. This talk presents the wide range of evidence of these phenomenons and offers explanations for their escalation in New York City and elsewhere.

In conclusion, I will address what I believe is necessary to restore full bodied police performance management in support of effective policing.

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## Session abstracts

### The recidivism of homicide offenders

Roderic Broadhurst and Ross Maller

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The research estimates the long-term rate of recidivism for 1096 homicide offenders (including driving causing manslaughter) arrested in Western Australia between 1984-2005 and their risks of homologous (repeat homicide) and other dangerous re-offending. The variable risks and severity of re-offending (defined as re-arrest) in the population taking account of gender, age (especially juveniles), Aboriginality, cardinality (prior record) and other factors of interest are also measured. The research enhances existing statistical methods to explore the effects of covariates and to provide reliable measures of error.

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### Articulating policy change in NSW: A Case Study of The Justice Reinvestment for Aboriginal Young People Campaign

Sarah Hopkins, Tom Calma and Alistair Ferguson

Justice Reinvestment for Aboriginal Young People Campaign  
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**Aim:** This paper examines a state based justice reinvestment initiative, the Justice Reinvestment for Aboriginal Young People Campaign. JR represents a strategy that co-ordinates evidence-based interventions specifically aligning outcomes with reducing the risk of offending/re-offending and the demand for custodial services. JR was initially proposed as a solution to addressing the over-representation of Indigenous Australians in the criminal justice system in the ATSI Social Justice Commissioner's 2009 Social Justice Report. Recently there have been sustained efforts to develop JR policies at both federal and state levels.

**Method:** This NSW campaign targets the overrepresentation of incarcerated Aboriginal juveniles. The paper provides a case study that examines contemporary justice policymaking and what is required to change current policy and implement a

JR policy. The paper will examine the strategies used to develop this campaign and its success in bringing its policy platform to Government.

**Results:** Campaign members met with NSW Government Ministers in October 2012 to discuss the proposed policy shifts. Outcomes of those discussions and the government's response will be discussed at the conference.

**Conclusion:** This NSW campaign provides a specific approach to JR that has the potential to lead the way in how jr policies might be implemented in Australia.

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### Heterogeneity and interrelationships in responses to alcohol and other drug prices: an online experimental study of young Australians' behaviour on Saturday night

Jenny Chalmers<sup>1</sup>, Rebecca McKetin<sup>2</sup>, Matthew Sunderland<sup>1</sup> and David Bright<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, University of NSW, <sup>2</sup>Centre for Research on Ageing, Health and Well-being, Australian National University, <sup>3</sup>Research School of Social Sciences, University of NSW  
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**Introduction:** Alcohol price increases reduce population level drinking, just as population level use of an illicit drug is restrained by its price. Less is known about the implications within sub-groups of the population and the impact of the price of one substance on the use of another

**Method:** An online experiment was used to examine changes in alcohol and illicit drug use following increases in the price of alcohol, ecstasy and cannabis. Australians aged 18 to 30 years (N = 2010) were quota sampled to ensure representation of cannabis and ecstasy users. Respondents were asked to purchase alcohol and/or illicit drugs to use on a hypothetical Saturday-night.

**Results:** While overall demand for alcohol and the illicit drugs fell with increases in their own prices, there was marked divergence in responsiveness. Some people maintained their consumption by spending more or buying alcohol more cheaply. Poly drug users tended to be most responsive to price increases, substituting the use of a price affected substance with another.

**Conclusion:** The practice of combining alcohol and other drug use on a single occasion warrants attention when considering the effectiveness of using the price of one drug to stymie its harmful use.

**Revealing the link between licensed outlets and violence: counting venues versus measuring alcohol availability**

**Tanya Chikritzhs and Wenbin Liang**  
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**Aim:** Associations between alcohol-related harms and numbers of outlets at the neighbourhood level have been demonstrated, however the degree to which alcohol consumption or sales plays a part in levels of violence is not clear. This has contributed to uncertainty regarding the actual mechanisms by which outlet density may influence levels of violence. This ecological cross-sectional study investigated the effect of outlet numbers and alcohol sales on the risk of assault in Western Australia.

**Method:** For 2000/01, information on type, number and wholesale alcohol purchases of all licensed outlets in operation, police reported assault offences, socioeconomic/demographic data were obtained from official sources. Multivariate negative binomial regression was applied to at local government area level in order to assess associations between outlet density, alcohol sales and violence occurring in both licensed and domestic settings.

**Results:** Average alcohol sales volume per off-site outlet was significantly associated with all measures of assault. Numbers of on-site outlets significantly predicted violence with the exception of assaults occurring at residential premises. Alcohol sales from off-site outlets predicted violence occurring at on-site outlets.

**Conclusion:** The link between on-site outlets and violence may be primarily underpinned by negative amenity effects while off-site outlet effects occur via increased availability. Alcohol sales volumes from off-site outlets influence levels of violence which occur at both licensed and residential settings. The substantial and wide-ranging effects of liquor stores on alcohol-related harms may have been under-estimated in the literature and by policy makers.

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**The epidemiology of engagement with the criminal justice system among opioid dependent people: Retrospective cohort study**

**Louisa Degenhardt<sup>1, 2</sup>, Judy Trevena<sup>1</sup>, Sarah Larney<sup>1, 3</sup>, Jo Kimber<sup>1</sup>, Tony Butler<sup>4</sup>, Richard P. Mattick<sup>1</sup>, Don Weatherburn<sup>5</sup> and Lucy Burns<sup>1</sup>**

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**Aim:** Studies of offending among people who use drugs typically focus upon small and potentially unrepresentative samples. We aimed to examine the epidemiology of an entire population of opioid dependent clients' contact with the criminal justice system. Specifically, we examined levels of charges, their outcomes, the nature of charges and charge rates by sex and age.

**Method:** Retrospective linkage study of all entrants to opioid substitution therapy (OST) for the treatment of opioid dependence in NSW, 1985-2010 (n=50,698), with data on court appearances from 1993-2011. Person years (PY) of observation were calculated, and charge rates for major crime categories estimated by sex and age.

**Results:** 640,376 charges were laid against cohort members; 86% were considered proven. Three quarters of males (77%) and 63% of females had at least one charge; charge rates were 86 per 100PY among males, and 48 per 100PY among females. Rates peaked in 2001, and declined since. Charge rates were highest at ages 15-19 years (172/100PY among males, 73/100PY females) and 20-24 years (141/100PY males, 81/100PY females), thereafter declining. The most frequent charges were theft and related offences (25% of all charges), traffic and vehicle offences (16%), offences against justice procedures (10.5%), illicit drug offences (10%), intentional injuries (10%) and public order offences (9%). Twelve percent of the cohort accounted for 50% of all charges; 20% of the cohort accounted for 67% of all charges.

**Conclusion:** There is a high level of contact with the criminal justice system across the population of OST clients in NSW. However, through the use of a population-wide linkage involving all OST clients, we

were able to establish that: a minority of OST clients account for the majority of this contact; levels of offending are NOT static over time; offending declines with age; and many of the charges OST clients face have little to do with their drug use directly. Rather, there may be a level of identification and surveillance by police over potentially “known” clients, and their adherence to “public order”, justice and other procedures.

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### Police data are bad, but are victim surveys any better?

**Henk Elffers**

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Criminologists are well aware of the limitations of police data. Since the seventies victim surveys have been developed as an alternative way of estimating the number of various types of crimes. During the early phase of developing this new instrument, there was ample concern for methodological flaws in victimization surveys. Much of the findings bolster the statement that victim surveys overestimate the numbers of crimes considerably. Nevertheless the general trend seems to be to have more confidence in victim surveys than in official data when researching the extent of crime.

The present paper revisits the issue and investigates the discrepancy between victimization surveys and police data nowadays. We looked into the extent to which crimes that are reported in one source can be traced back to the other, using simultaneously reverse and forward record checks to investigate reciprocal validity for the case of police data and a victim survey from Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The results corroborate what was found in the seventies: overreporting as well as underreporting is a serious threat to validity, telescoping remains a huge problem as well. We discuss the implications of these findings for the use of crime data.

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### The Prevention, Treatment and Management of Conduct Problems in Childhood and Adolescence

**David Fergusson**

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This presentation is based on the work of the New Zealand Advisory Group on Child Conduct Problems (AGCP). The paper will present:

- a) An overview of the long term consequences of childhood conduct problems ( ODD, CD) for later developmental outcomes including crime , mental health , substance misuse and teen pregnancy.
- b) A brief summary of the evidence based interventions for the prevention , treatment and management of conduct problems in childhood and adolescence.
- c) A description of the progress that has been made in New Zealand in translating the research evidence into policy

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### Toward a Typology of Neighbourhood Crime Types

**Robin Fitzgerald**

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**Aim:** There has been little systematic exploration of whether and why some crime types predominate over others in a given area. Existing research tends to focus simply on variation in crime rates—or more recently on the ratio of violent to non-violent crime—rather than on variation in more complex patterns of crimes. This study considers the diversity of police-recorded crime across local areas and whether the socio-demographic factors that typically predict neighbourhood crime rates are associated.

**Method:** For the first time, this study employs latent profile analysis, a statistical classification procedure, to determine whether profiles of ‘neighbourhoods’ can be classified based on recorded-crime variables. The study draws on NSW police-recorded crime data and ABS census data by postcode area to examine whether it is possible to discern unique crime-mix profiles, and whether particular socio-economic characteristics predict an area’s crime profile.

**Results:** The results reveal considerable diversity in crime patterns across NSW postcode areas, and that certain structural inequalities increase the likelihood that postcode areas also possess certain crime-mix profiles.

**Conclusion.** These findings highlight the importance of considering more detailed crime patterns across space. Implications for theory and policy as well as directions for future research are highlighted.

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### Applying evidence to sentence policy and practice

Karen Gelb

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In contrast to many other western jurisdictions, in Victoria the prison population is rising at an ever-increasing rate as new tough-on-crime policies are being implemented. With prison capacity being stretched to its limits, the availability of viable alternatives to prison becomes ever more salient. But Victorian practitioners and policy-makers have been hampered by a distinct lack of evidence about the effectiveness of different sentencing options in reducing crime.

As part of its statutory functions, the Sentencing Advisory Council conducts research and publishes statistical information on sentencing. For the first time in its eight years, the Council has recently turned to the task of understanding recidivism, developing a reoffending database based on Victorian courts data. This database has allowed the Council to examine some of the patterns and precursors of reoffending in the Victorian courts, providing a solid foundation on which both policy-makers and sentencers can build evidence-based policy and practice in sentencing.

This presentation will provide an overview of the Council's work on reoffending, and will discuss the implications of the evidence for both policy and practice.

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### Parental sexual offending: Managing risk through diversion

Jane Goodman-Delahunty<sup>1</sup> and Kate O'Brien<sup>2</sup>

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**Introduction:** Few community-based diversionary programs for sexual offenders have been empirically evaluated. Policy initiatives to manage parental child sexual offending have been hindered by risk instruments insensitive to unique factors associated with the *distinctive profile of this core group of offenders*.

**Aim:** Retrospectively compare risk levels and reoffence rates of offenders diverted to community-based treatment with those who attended court for standard criminal prosecution.

**Method:** The Violence Risk Scale-Sexual Offender Version (VRS-SO), an actuarial risk assessment and

treatment planning tool, measured dynamic risk before and after treatment in a sample of 172 male parental offenders referred to community-based treatment.

**Results:** The VRS-SO effectively distinguished high from low risk parental offenders. Offenders with low VRS-SO scores were significantly more likely to be accepted into treatment, spend longer in treatment, and complete treatment than offenders with high VRS-SO scores. In a follow-up period averaging 9 years, low risk parental offenders who experienced standard criminal prosecution and sentencing reoffended 4.6 times faster and were 5 times more likely to relapse than their counterparts who attended the community-based program.

**Conclusion:** Diversion was an effective preventive intervention that increased offender desistance and reduced threats to the safety and welfare of young children and their families

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### What does addiction neuroscience tell us about the responsibility of addicted persons for crimes committed to fund their drug use?

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Neuroscience research on addiction promises to assist in answering the question of whether addicted persons are responsible for their drug use and whether they should be held criminally responsible for any offences that they commit to obtain drugs or fund their drug use. Two conflicting views about addiction have dominated policy discussion of this issue - the commonsense view that drug use is a free choice and the brain disease model in which chronic drug use produces a brain disease that impairs the capacity of addicted persons to control their drug use. The paper; outlines the evidence and arguments marshalled for each view; the competing interpretations of neuroscience research that are offered by their advocates; and considers what impact neuroscience research might have on current legal practice adopts an ambivalent compromise between these two positions in holding addicted offenders responsible for their criminal offences but accepting addiction as a mitigating factor by offering legally coerced addiction treatment as an alternative to imprisonment.

## Is there a correct understanding of public attitude when it comes to sentencing?

David Indermaur

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This may seem like an odd proposition, but the question of what can be taken as correct, meaningful or “real” public opinion has been hotly contested. For example Habermas makes the distinction between public opinion (which he sees as refined through a process of public debate) compared to “mere” opinion which is the kind lauded by talk back radio and some politicians. Criminologists have long sought to reduce public punitiveness through providing information and encouraging deliberation. A study I was recently involved in sought to test the hypothesis that information combined with deliberation can reduce punitiveness as well as increase confidence in the courts and acceptance of alternatives to imprisonment. We found that the desired changes were produced but were not sustained at follow up 9 months later. The observed changes were seen as a function of the changed relationship of the respondent to the task. This has important implications for what we take as public opinion. Here the task demands reign supreme and if we want considered judgment from the public we need to provide the right conditions - not only information but the right orientation to the task.

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## Cannabis use & offending among juvenile detainees

Devon Indig<sup>1</sup>, Leigh Haysom<sup>1</sup>, Amie Frewen<sup>2</sup> and Gilbert Whitton<sup>3</sup>

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**Aim:** To assess the relationship between cannabis use and offending behaviour among young offenders in NSW.

**Method:** Analysis of the 2009 NSW Young People in Custody Health Survey which included N=318 young offenders and had an 80% response rate. Cannabis dependence was determined by a score of 4+ on the Severity of Dependence Scale.

**Results:** Participants were mostly male (88%) with an average age of 17 years and 48% were of Aboriginal origin. Nearly all (87%) had ever used cannabis, 50% used cannabis on a daily basis prior to custody and 34% were found to be cannabis dependent. In adjusted multivariate logistic regression models, cannabis dependence was the most significant risk factor in Aboriginal young people for having three or more previous incarcerations (OR=4.16, 95%CI:1.46-11.85). First use of cannabis before 13 years of age was the most significant risk factor in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young people for incarceration at a young age, increasing the risk nine-fold.

**Conclusion:** Cannabis use and cannabis dependence are epidemic in young offenders in NSW, and are leading risk factors for recidivism, incarceration at a young age and offence types. Evidence-based interventions that address cannabis use may reduce offending and recidivism in these young people.

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## Long-term outcomes from a randomised controlled trial of intensive judicial supervision on NSW Drug Court

Craig Jones

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**Aim:** The aim of this study was to describe the long-term impact of intensive judicial supervision on the NSW Drug Court on drug use, program outcomes and recidivism.

**Method:** All 157 participants who began the NSW Drug Court program between March 2010 and April 2011 were block-randomised into either intensive judicial supervision (IJS) or supervision-as-usual (SAU) conditions. IJS participants reported to the judge twice per week during phase 1 while SAU participants reported back the usual one time per week. The two groups were compared on their odds of using illicit drugs while on the program, their likelihood of completing their program and in the time to first re-offence.

**Results:** IJS participants had significantly lower odds of substance use while on the program and were more likely to complete the program. There was no evidence of any difference between groups in time to first re-offence, although there was low statistical power to detect subtle differences in recidivism risk.

**Conclusion:** Intensive judicial supervision during the early program stages is a very effective means of encouraging program compliance but there was insufficient evidence from the current study to conclude that intensive supervision reduces risk of recidivism.

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### How to identify and employ top-performing crime scene examiners and why it matters in criminal justice

Sally Kelty<sup>1</sup>, James Robertson<sup>2</sup>, Alastair Ross<sup>3</sup> and Roberta Julian<sup>4</sup>

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The crime scene is where forensic science begins. High quality forensic science contributes to positive justice outcomes and leaves fewer cases unsolved. Low quality evidence collected by poor crime scene examiners (CSEs) can play a role in ineffective investigations or wrongful convictions, as in the cases of McCann (Portugal/UK), Chamberlain and Plumb (Australia). Several US and UK reports highlight how some CSEs clearly outperform peers in their work. What neither report explained was why these CSEs excel. If collecting valuable evidence from crime scenes is so vital, what are the attributes of top-performing CSEs? Through interviews and job-analytical techniques with 72 senior detectives, forensic scientists and police managers we identified the top 18 Australian CSEs. The top 18 CSEs then took part in interviews and psychometric tests to identify the critical skills that set them apart. The critical skills clustered into seven categories: knowledge, experience, work orientation, approach to life, communication, professional demeanour and cognitive abilities. The results were published in international journals in 2012, generated international interest and are driving policy change. The researchers are currently working with Victoria Police and the Australian Federal Police to develop a recruitment package that will change the way CSEs are recruited.

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### Research for reform: The experience of youth on remand in Victoria

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Practitioners and official statistics have identified the growing numbers of young people on remand as a key challenge facing the Victorian youth justice system. In this context, Jesuit Social Services undertook a year long research project, funded by the Victorian Legal Services Board, to better understand the experience of young people on remand and to inform reform proposals.

Our research included analysis of datasets provided by Victoria Police and the Department of Human Services of all young alleged offenders in 2010/11 and the life-course youth justice history of young people with orders in 2010. Qualitative methods were used to verify our data analysis including observations at the Children's Court and interviews with young people who had experienced remand. Stakeholders were involved in the project through a taskforce that met throughout the year.

The analysis identified issues around the use of short term remand, and troubling trajectories of those who begin offending at a young age within both police and youth justice data. Economic modeling was undertaken to identify the costs of these cohorts and potential for reinvestment. This paper will elaborate these findings to demonstrate how thorough research, coupled with engagement of stakeholders, provided a platform for pursuing reform.

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### Exploring the offending histories for men who murder intimate partners vs. men who murder others

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Research suggests that violent offenders often have a long history of offending behaviour and contact with the criminal justice system. This paper compares the offending histories of men who kill intimate partners to men who kill non-partners, including family members, friends and strangers. Using interview data from over 200 male homicide offenders in custodial and community corrections collected as part of the

Australian Homicide Project, this study examines differences in prior violent, property and drug offending. It further examines differences in age of offending onset. Implications for policy and practice will be discussed.

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### An Australian juvenile offender risk-need inventory and what we have learnt about its accuracy

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We begin by reporting the predictive validity of the Australian Adaptation of the Youth Level of Service Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI-AA) for a large sample of young offenders under community supervision in NSW (N=3568). Findings show the instrument has acceptable ability to predict recidivism within a year ( $r = .26$ ,  $AUC = .652$ ). These statistical indices, however, are of limited practical value for users of the instrument. To address this we show how scores on the instrument can be used to create categories of risk with distinguishable levels of reoffending within each band. We then go on to consider moderators that might influence the accuracy of these predictions. These factors include ethnicity, gender, custody versus community setting, and number of times the instrument had been administered. Finally, we draw attention to inventory, user, and systemic process matters that further impact the accuracy and utility of risk assessment instruments such as the YLS/CMI-AA.

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### Community Justice in the UK: does it work?

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Community Justice has many guises but generally involves a holistic approach to offending that takes into account the crime experience of the local community. The UK's Community Justice Centre in North Liverpool was modelled on the Red Hook Community Justice Centre in New York and is currently the only such approach to justice in the UK. The Centre is based in a bespoke building and has a single judge. Staff from a range of criminal justice agencies are based at the court and work in partnership in

responding to offenders' needs. The Centre has been evaluated a number of times since it opened in 2005.

This paper reports on the most recent evaluation which focused on the Centre's impact on reoffending and its relative efficiency as a court. The evaluation used matched sample conviction records to take into account the different offence mix dealt with by the Centre compared to other courts. A particular challenge for the analysis was the extent to which the processes of the Centre and the activities of the local police might undermine the comparability of reconviction rates across areas. Overall there was no evidence of a positive impact on reoffending and mixed findings regarding court efficiency.

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### Risk factors for re-incarceration among young people in custody

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**Aim:** To identify key predictors of re-incarceration among young offenders in NSW across multiple domains: demographic information, family and social factors, offence history, intellectual ability, psychological health, and substance use history.

**Method:** Data were analysed from the 2009 NSW Young People in Custody Health Survey, conducted in nine juvenile detention centres, and representing 80% of all young people in custody (n=361). Baseline and follow-up interviews (3-, 6-, 12-months) were conducted. Data on 18-month re-incarceration were obtained from Department of Attorney General and Justice - Juvenile Justice.

**Results:** Preliminary results suggest 48% of males and 61% of females were re-incarcerated (either adult or juvenile detention) during an 18-month follow-up period. A number of risk factors for re-incarceration were identified including socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., younger age, unemployed prior to custody, Aboriginality, being placed in care as a child), offending characteristics (e.g., 3 or more previous incarcerations), and substance use history (e.g., recent illicit (including cannabis, ecstasy, and psychostimulants) drug use, regular alcohol use).

**Conclusion:** Static (i.e., being placed in care as a child, Aboriginality) and dynamic risk factors (i.e., unemployed, substance misuse) for re-incarceration were identified highlighting areas amenable to intervention. Further research to assess the efficacy of evidence based interventions to reduce re-incarceration is warranted.

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### Determining Priorities for Intervention and Life Course Research

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While there is understandable interest in early intervention to deter or prevent adolescent and young adult offending, the question of the optimum timing of intervention programs, and of the specific targets of that intervention remain a matter of debate. Pregnancy, early childhood and the adolescent period have all been identified as stages of the life course when intervention is advocated. Targets of intervention may be very general (eg. overall life conditions) or may involve such specific targets as the early onset of mental illness, aggression/delinquency or poor cognitive/intellectual development (Low IQ).

This paper takes data from a large-scale Australian birth cohort study (Mater University of Queensland Study of Pregnancy - MUSP - and its outcomes) to address the twin issues of the timing and targets of intervention. Data are taken from childhood (age 5), and the adolescent period (age 14); age 5 and 14 onset of mental illness, behaviour problems and poor cognitive development (low IQ) are used as the predictors of outcome. Outcomes of interest are age 21 offending history, substance abuse and dependence, aggressive and delinquent behaviour and psychotic/delusional thoughts. The research examines the extent to which age 5 and 14 indicators of mental illness, behaviour problems and cognitive impairment independently predict 21 year outcomes, and the extent to which these predictions provide an empirical basis for interventions.

### Bonds and re-offending: Does the length of the order matter?

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**Aim:** To examine the effectiveness of good behaviour bonds in reducing re-offending.

**Method:** Propensity score matching techniques were used to match offenders who received a court imposed bond of less than 24 months with offenders who received a court imposed bond of 24 months or more. These two matched groups were then compared on two re-offending outcomes; the likelihood of reoffending within three years of the index offence and the time to first new conviction.

**Results:** After adjusting for other factors, the probability of reconviction and the time to reconviction were lower for offenders placed on bonds 24 months or longer compared with offenders placed on shorter bonds. A significant effect of bond length on reoffending was apparent for both supervised and unsupervised orders.

**Conclusion:** This evidence suggests long bonds are more effective in reducing re-offending than short bonds.

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### Traumatic brain injury and offending: cause or confound?

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**Background:** High rates of traumatic brain injury (TBI) have been reported among prisoner populations (range 22-100%) leading to the suggestion that TBI may be responsible for up to half of all crimes leading to incarceration.

**Aim:** To address the question: Does traumatic brain injury (TBI) lead to offending?

**Method:** Study 1: Case control study of self-reported TBI within a male prisoner population (n=200, cases) and non-offending male individuals matched for location of usual residence (n=200, controls) Study 2: Record linkage study investigating the association between TBI leading to hospital attendance (exposure) and subsequent offending. Gender-matched unexposed individuals from the general population and from

siblings of those exposed constituted two separate control groups.

**Results:** Study 1. A history of TBI was very common within the prisoner group (82%) but unexpectedly high also within the community control group. When adjusted for potential confounds, no significant association remained between TBI and group membership. Study 2. There was a modest (approximately two-fold) increased risk of offending related to TBI when compared with general population controls, but no increased risk relative to siblings.

**Conclusion:** Previous suggestions of a strong causal link between TBI and offending are not supported by this research.

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### Longitudinal correlates of physical assault against women

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**Aim:** To examine whether having financial or social stressors or poor social support increases women's risk of physical assault.

**Method:** Data were from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey. Analyses were run on the 42,030 records from the 7,950 females aged 15 years or more who responded to whether they were a victim of physical assault in the past year for any two consecutive waves of HILDA survey between 2002 and 2010 inclusive. Measures included scores on financial stressors, social stressors (adverse life events) and social networks. Factors associated with being a victim of physical assault were assessed with logistic generalized estimating equation models applied to cross-sectional and longitudinal data.

**Results:** Cross-sectionally and longitudinally, females were more likely to be a victim of physical assault if they were younger, in a de facto relationship (rather than married), separated from their partner in the past year, were heavy drinkers of alcohol, would have difficulty raising money in an emergency, reported financial or social stressors or had poor social networks.

**Conclusion:** Financial and social stressors and poor social networks are cross-sectional and longitudinal risk factors for being a female victim of physical assault.

### Targeting crime prevention to reduce offending: Identifying communities which generate chronic and costly offenders

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**Aim:** Recently there has been renewed interest in place-based approaches for targeting crime prevention strategies such as justice reinvestment. This project combined methods and findings from criminal careers and place-based research to identify communities that generated chronic and costly offenders.

**Method:** The 1990 Queensland offender cohort includes all individuals born in 1990 who had contact with the Queensland justice system when aged 10 to 20 years old (N = 14,171). The Semi-Parametric Group-based Method (SPGM) was used to identify non-normative or chronic offender trajectories. Almost 16% of the offender cohort was classified as chronic offenders and were responsible for almost 70% of all offences. The geographic distribution of chronic offenders was examined based on their first recorded residential postcode.

**Results:** The top 10% of locations, with the highest proportion of chronic offenders, accounted for 20.5% of chronic offenders. However, the top 10% of costly locations, identified by totalling the criminal justice system, social and economic costs of chronic offenders, contained 40.4% of chronic offenders and accounted for 50.5% of the total cost of chronic offenders. Examination of the geographic size of locations indicated that crime prevention resources should be targeted towards the top 10% of costly locations (which represented 20.0% of Queensland), rather than the top 10% of locations that had the highest proportion of chronic offenders (32.9% of Queensland). Identified locations had a high proportion of Indigenous youth, were in remote or very remote locations and experienced high levels of disadvantage.

**Conclusion:** We conclude that there is an urgent need for early/developmental interventions and place-based crime prevention strategies to reduce crime and victimisation in these communities.

**Are fines criminogenic? The impact of monetary sanctions on re-offending in NSW local courts**

**David Tait**

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**Aim:** Comparing the effectiveness of sanctions is an ongoing preoccupation for criminology. It was hypothesised, based on previous research, that those who receive a sentence of imprisonment re-offend at a higher rate than those apparently equivalent offenders receiving other sanctions, whereas suspended sentences are expected to be associated with lower recidivism rates. Fines are expected to have no particular impact on re-offending rates.

**Method:** Offenders receiving each penalty type in NSW local courts from 2000 to 2009 were matched in terms of key characteristics to offenders who appeared otherwise identical but received another penalty. The two groups were then compared in terms of two-year reoffending rates. This process was undertaken for each pair of penalties - prison- community service order, fine-suspended sentence etc.

**Results:** Against expectations, offenders sentenced to prison were no more likely to be reconvicted within two years than other matched offenders receiving other sanctions, and those receiving suspended sentences fared no better than their matched counterparts. Those receiving a fine however were considerably more likely to re-offend than matched offenders receiving each of the other sanctions. The study examines possible explanations for this surprising finding.

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**Increased drug offending or increased police productivity? Estimating total drug offending in Victoria using statistical methodologies**

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Victoria Police recently released crime statistics for 2011/12 that showed a total recorded crime increase of 8%. Part of the increase was attributable to a rise in recorded drug offences, which rose by 23% and comprised approximately 5% of total recorded crime. The use of drugs is also known to cause a proportion of crimes against the person and property offending. However, recorded crime does not completely capture the true 'dark figure' of crime. In this analysis,

Victoria Police aimed to answer whether the rise in recorded drug crime reflected a real increase in levels of illegal drug use in the community, or whether the addition of nearly 600 frontline staff caused greater detection of drug offences.

Using both Good-Turing Estimation and Capture-Recapture statistical methodologies, offender data was analysed to determine whether the increases in recorded drug offences were caused by increases in actual drug offending or by the additional police capacity. Allowing for the increased police capacity, the analysis showed that there was an actual increase in the level of drug offending during 2011/12.

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**The selection of targets by break and enter offenders in NSW: Implications for crime prevention policy**

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**Aim:** To determine which characteristics of homes are most and least important to break and enter offenders when choosing targets.

**Method:** 229 interviews of adult inmates of NSW correctional centres that had been convicted of at least one residential break and enter offence were conducted. Inmates were asked to rate the attractiveness of 14 photos of homes. Photos were digitally manipulated to add or remove security features, in order to indirectly evaluate effects of those features. Inmates were also asked to nominate how 25 different security features would affect their decision to try to break into a hypothetical home.

**Results:** Offenders rated factors relating to wealth cues, signs of non-occupancy, and easy access to the property as significant attractors to homes. Most significant detractors were signs of occupancy or proxy occupancy (for example alarms, CCTV, and dogs). These results were confirmed by the photo exercise.

**Conclusion:** Offenders take note of and have strong consistent preferences regarding various characteristics of homes when choosing targets. Offenders appear most concerned with cues relating to occupancy and wealth.

## Poster abstracts

### What works? Effective crime prevention strategies for different types of crime in a local government setting

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While much work has been done to identify what works in preventing crime in different settings, we have a limited grasp of what works to prevent specific crimes, or in a local government setting. The NSW Department of Attorney General and Justice in partnership with the Australian Institute of Criminology undertook a comprehensive literature review to identify crime prevention strategies that work for different types of crime and suitable in a local government setting. Typically only studies of Level 3 or better on the Scientific Measurement Scale are considered rigorous enough for such reviews. Of the 118 studies reviewed we found good evidence for strategies to address assault and break and enter strategies, with 27 studies reaching Level 3 or better for assault and 16 for break and enter. Where local governments are faced with high levels of steal from motor vehicle, malicious damage or steal from person, however, we only have a handful of high quality studies to work with. Our review highlights the critical need to rigorously evaluate more crime prevention strategies in a local government setting. In the absence of such work we are left to work with the best available evidence, and adopt more innovative approaches.

### A Profile of Missing Persons

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This study investigated the scientific validity of a profile of missing persons. Three categories of missing person were examined: persons who had run away; persons who had attempted suicide or completed suicided; and those who had met with foul play. Information was extracted from the police files of 357 solved missing persons cases. Based on the information, this research identified and explored 26 variables relevant to pre-disappearance behaviour and circumstances surrounding each missing person's case. The variables reflected various

demographic factors, social background factors, event characteristics, personality factors, mental health factors, and circumstantial details. Employing chi-square analyses and data mining, a number of differences and predictors were identified, with an overall accuracy of 79% being produced. Those who had run away were predicted with an accuracy of 86%. Performing less well were those who had met with foul play (66% accuracy), followed by those missing with the intention to suicide (59% accuracy). The variable contributing the most to the predictive accuracy for all three types of missing person was the suspicions of the reporting person. The results from this research indicate that there are tangible differences between the three categories of missing person. It remains the objective of future research to further explore and refine the accuracy of risk assessment to aid police response when faced with a missing person report.

### Analysis of Criminal Behaviour Using a Logistic Regression Model Based on Attributes

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Understanding the behaviour of criminals is fundamental for crime fighting institutions. The criminal phenomenon can be observed in several parts of a city or area, but there are regions that present higher concentration of crimes and others where the crime rate is lower, suggesting that urban characteristics can be considered as key variables. The aim of this study is to determine the most important features that contribute to the level of criminal activity in a geographical area.

A logistic regression model is developed to determine the characteristics that contribute to the attractiveness of crime towards specific regions of a city. The application of statistical techniques are used to train and validate this model, obtaining an average accuracy of 84% and 3 relevant attributes. Finally, a profile of the most and less dangerous areas is developed to define the combination of urban characteristics that are more influential in the level of crime.

The results show that the most influential attributes on the level of criminal activity are related to pedestrian streets, drugstores and banks. Therefore, it is recommended (i) a important police surveillance in areas where these attributes are present, and (ii) the consideration of these attribute combination for a further urban planning of a neighbourhood, suburb or city.



### Crime Mapping at the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

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Crime maps provide people with a visual representation of where crime is happening, can highlight crime trends and help people to understand data and statistics. At the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) the mapping team is involved in creating annual hotspot maps, rate maps, and completing ad hoc requests. In particular, these requests are largely driven by current issues and topics of interest. These maps can be used to direct crime prevention efforts, highlight areas of concern, identify changes across time and space and to educate the public.

Two of the issues which were highly publicised in the media during 2012 were drive by shootings and alcohol related assault in Kings Cross. In response to this media and public interest, maps were produced to identify the areas where the incidents were concentrated. These maps provide insight for law enforcement agencies, local governments and the general public in an easily understandable format.

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### The impact of the NSW Young Offenders Act (1997) on the likelihood of receiving a custodial order

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The *Young Offenders Act 1997 (YOA)* created a hierarchy of sanctions designed to divert young offenders from the court system including warnings, police cautions and youth justice conferences (YJCs) (Bargen, Clancey & Chan, 2005).

One specific aim of the YOA was to address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the criminal justice system through the use of warnings, cautions and YJCs.

In this report we take a different approach to assessing the effectiveness of diversion. If the YOA is effective in diverting young people from custody (including Indigenous young people), then the likelihood of ever ending up in custody (given apprehension by police) should be lower after the YOA than before. In this report we test this claim for Indigenous and non-Indigenous juveniles.

### Public confidence in the New South Wales Criminal Justice system

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**Aim:** To assess (1) whether confidence in the New South Wales criminal justice system (CJS) has changed since 2007, (2) whether changes in knowledge and/or punitiveness underpin any changes in confidence, and (3) whether confidence in police differs from confidence in the courts (in 2012 only).

**Method:** Repeat cross-sectional survey of the NSW public (n=2,002 in 2007; n=2,001 in 2012). The survey measured confidence, levels of knowledge and public demand for harsher sentencing in both years. Logistic regression models estimated changes in confidence after accounting for changes in sample composition. In 2012, participants were also asked about confidence in the police and courts separately.

**Results:** Participants had high levels of confidence that the CJS respects the rights of the accused and treats them fairly but lower levels of confidence that the CJS brings people to justice, deals with cases promptly or meets the needs of victims. With the exception of confidence in respecting the rights of the accused, confidence was significantly higher in 2012 than in 2007. The 2012 respondents were also more knowledgeable about crime and justice and less punitive than the 2007 respondents. Respondents tended to have higher levels of confidence in the police than the courts.

**Conclusion:** Levels of confidence in the CJS have improved since 2007. Factors such as increased knowledge and decreases in punitiveness may have contributed to these increases. However the changes in all three measures could reflect other factors such as the effect of the media and public policy. While confidence in police is generally high, the public lack confidence in the expediency of the courts and in outcomes for victims.

## Participant satisfaction with Youth Justice Conferences

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**Aim:** To evaluate offender and victim satisfaction with Youth Justice Conferences immediately after conference participation, and to assess whether victim satisfaction is maintained 4-months after the conference date.

**Method:** The target sample consisted of all NSW conference referrals between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> May 2012. Victims and offenders were invited to complete surveys immediately following the conference. Four months after the conference, victims were contacted again to participate in a 20-minute telephone interview.

**Results:** The data showed that immediately following the conference most offenders and victims reported that the conference process was fair to themselves and to the offender, and had high levels of satisfaction with the conference process, outcome plan and overall handling of the case. Similar levels of satisfaction were reported by victims at the follow-up interview. Most victims also reported that it was important that the offender complete the outcome plan. Four months after the conference, however, less than half of the victims reported that they had been informed as to whether or not the offender had completed the outcome plan.

**Conclusion:** The extent to which Youth Justice Conferences are meeting their legislated guidelines is discussed. Implications for the continued role of Youth Justice Conferences in the justice system are also considered.

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