

Child Development Lecture (but really about young people)

Garner Clancey



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY



Acknowledgement of country

We recognise and pay respect to the Elders and communities – past, present, and emerging – of the lands that the University of Sydney's campuses stand on. For thousands of years they have shared and exchanged knowledges across innumerable generations for the benefit of all.



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

My Background

• Study:

• BA (Psychology Major); Masters Criminology (Honours); two non-award urban planning units; PhD.

• NSW Public Service Work (1992-2002):

• NSW Dept. of Juvenile Justice & NSW Police Force

• Relevant Research and Consultancy Projects (2002-2025):

- Young People and Performance Crime for Australian Institute of Criminology
- 'What works' crime prevention review for Australian Institute of Criminology
- Review of Funded Services for Youth Justice NSW
- Review of prisoners legal needs for Legal Aid NSW
- Review of a security classification methodology used in custodial environments for Youth Justice NSW
- Impact of population growth on crime
- Staying Home Leaving Violence residential security training and guide
- Evaluation of a public space CCTV network
- Research for a Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into CPTED
- Authored 'Considerations for establishing a public space CCTV network' for the Australian Institute of Criminology
- Developed crime prevention plans for NSW and other councils and completed multiple community safety audits and crime risk assessment reports

• Tertiary Teaching (2000-2024):

• Taught/teach undergraduate and postgraduate courses on crime prevention, policing and security at USYD, UNSW, UWA, UNE, UWS, CSU

• Recent Select Publications:

- Clancey, G., Lulham, R. (2024). *Youth Crime, Youth Justice and Children's Courts in NSW*. Australia: LexisNexis.
- Clancey, G., Drumore, C., Metcalfe, L. (2024). A whole-of-university response to youth justice: Reflections on a university–youth justice partnership. *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice*, 691.
- Metcalfe, L., Little, C., Clancey, G., Evans, D. (2024). The Changing Nature of Education in Youth Justice Centres in New South Wales (Australia). *Journal of Prison Education Research*, 8(1, article 5), 1-22.
- Clancey, G., Evans, J., Friedlander, L. (2023). Some long-term positive trends in youth detention in New South Wales (Australia). *Safer Communities*, 22(1), 15-27.
- Clancey, G., Metcalfe, L. (2022). Inspections, Reviews, Inquiries and Recommendations Pertaining to Youth Justice Centres in New South Wales Between 2015 and 2021. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 34(3), 255-274.
- Sutton, A., Cherney, A., White, R., Clancey, G. (2021). *Crime Prevention: Principles, Perspectives and Practice - 3rd Edition*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Clancey, G., Lin, B. (2020). Crime Prevention and Reduction. In D. Dalton, W. de Lint and D. Palmer (Eds.), *Crime and Justice: A Guide to Criminology, 6th Edition*. Pyrmont, NSW: Thomson Reuters.
- Clancey, G. (2020). Teaching Crime Prevention and Community Safety. In Darren Palmer (Eds.), *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Criminology*, (pp. 59-85). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Clancey, G., Lin, B., Delahunty, B. (2019). 'Law and order' policy. In P. Chen, N. Barry, J. Butcher, D. Clune, I. Cook, A. Garnier, Y Haigh et al (Eds.), *Australian Politics and Policy: Senior Edition*, (pp. 645-666). Sydney: Sydney University Press.

Quick Quiz

- What is the minimum age of criminal responsibility in NSW?
- What is *doli incapax* and why does it matter?
- What types of offences to young people commit?
- What are the long and short term trends in youth crime in NSW?
- How many young people in custody at any one time in NSW?
- How much does it cost per annum to lock up one young person?
- How might we prevent youth crime?

Incident region

All

Method of legal proceeding

All

Offence type

All

Offender's gender

All

Reset filters

☒ All NSW ☐ Greater Sydney ☐ Regional NSW

Number of young offenders, January to December 2024

21,393

Number increased by

 +2.8%

Ten years to Dec-24

Proceeded to court

11,402 | 53.3%

Youth Justice Conference

923 | 4.3%

Caution

6,306 | 29.5%

Warning

2,762 | 12.9%

Number

Rate

Trends in youth offending

Method of legal proceeding

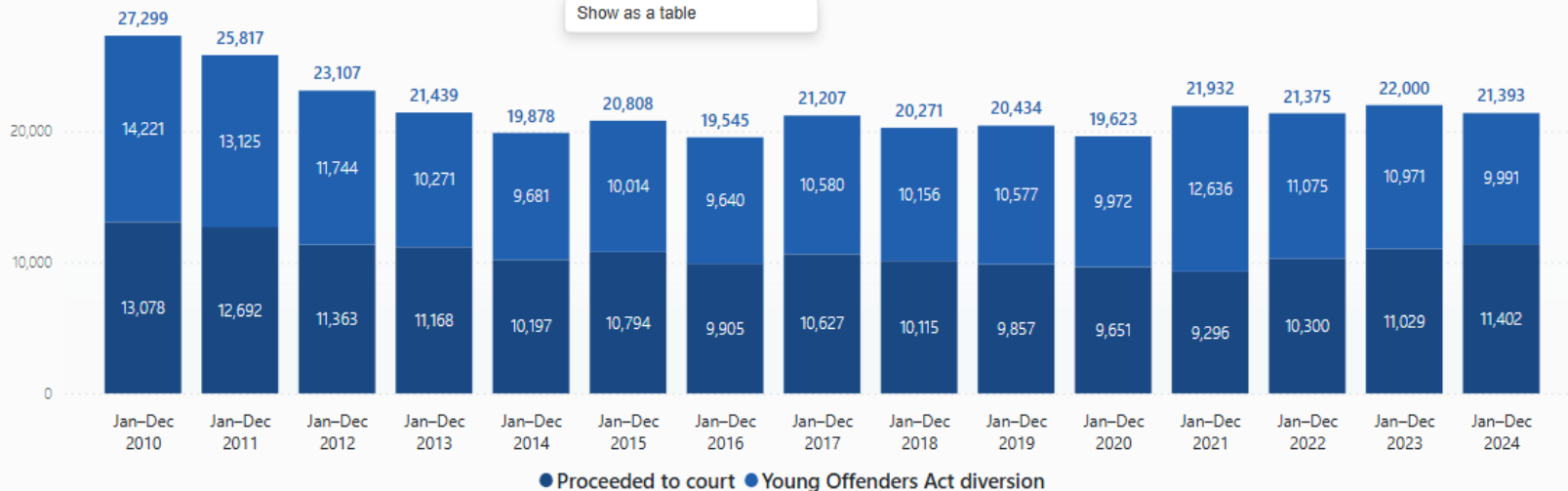
Number of young people proceeded against by NSW Police by year

All legal proceedings

All NSW

All offence types

Show as a table



12 months to date

December 2024

Incident region

All

☒ All NSW ☐ Greater Sydney ☐ Regional NSW

Method of legal proceeding

All

Offender's gender

All

[Reset filters](#)

Number of young people proceeded against by NSW Police, January to December 2024

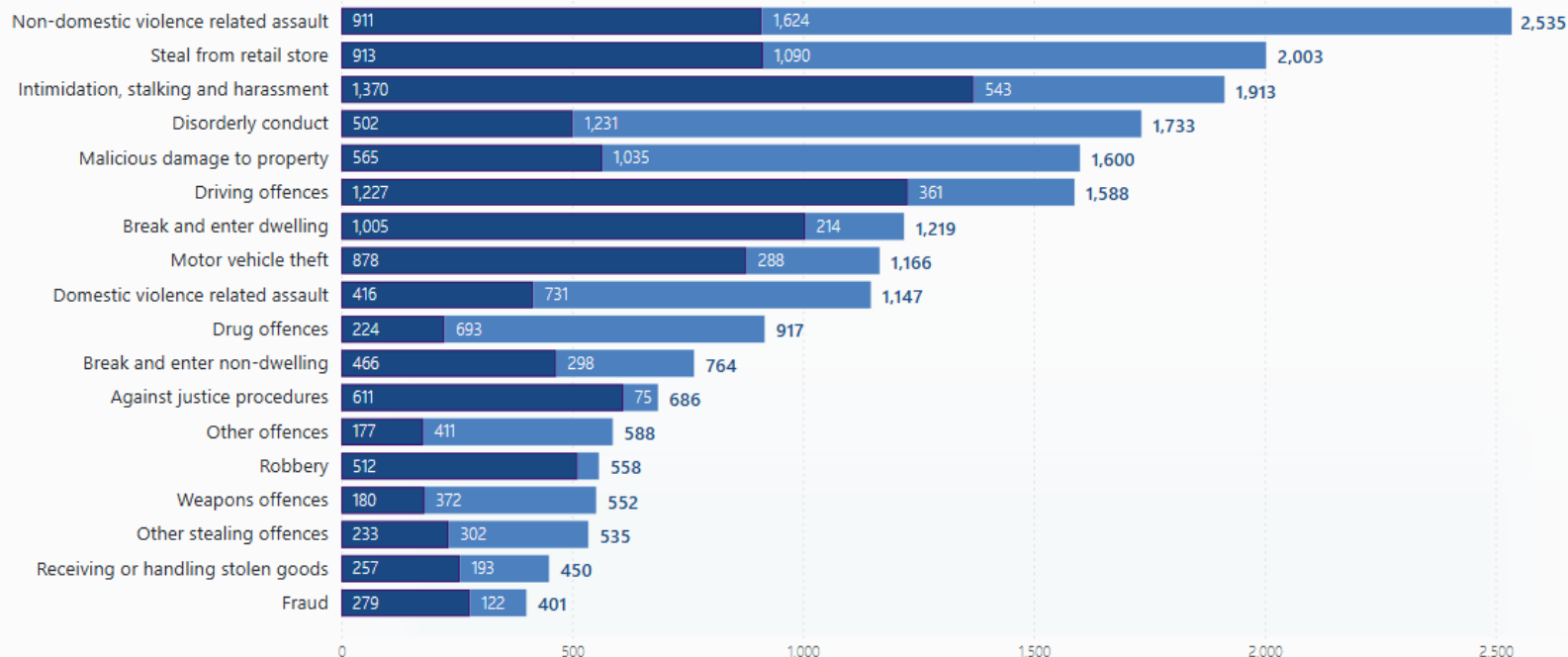
All legal proceedings

All NSW

[Show as a table](#)

Offence profile

Method of legal proceeding



● Proceeded against to court ● Young Offenders Act diversion

Date range December 2014

to December 2024

Legal status All

Aboriginality All

Gender All

Most serious offence All

Domestic violence related Not available

Reset

225

Decreased **-22.4%**
from December 2014 to December 2024

Young people in custody, December 2024

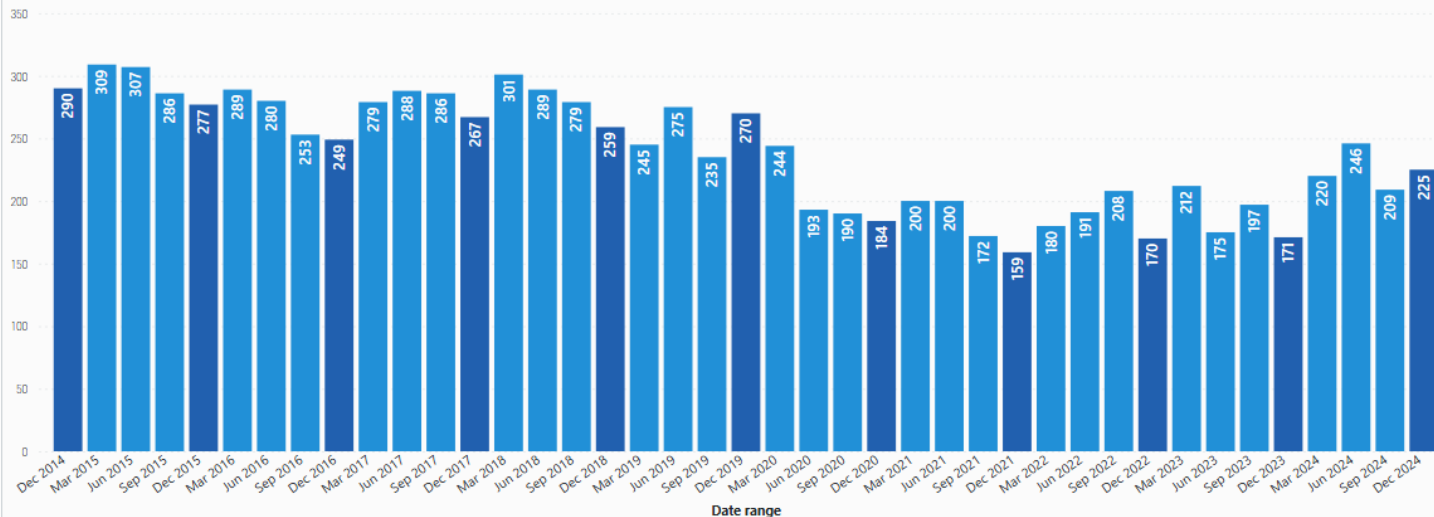
172 | 76.4%
Remand53 | 23.6%
Sentenced129 | 57.3%
Aboriginal94 | 41.8%
Non-Aboriginal15 | 6.7%
Female210 | 93.3%
MaleNot available
DV-relatedNot available
Non DV-related

Number of young people in custody

Custody trends

Legal status

Offence profile





Aboriginal young people comprise approx. 8% of the NSW population but are over-represented at each stage of the Criminal Justice System



NSW Bureau of Crime
Statistics and Research



POLICE COURT ACTIONS

57%

of young people brought to court by police are Aboriginal
16 x higher than other young people

Total 6,443
10 year change ↑ 50%

1



FOUND GUILTY IN COURT

53%

of young people who are found guilty are Aboriginal
16 x higher than other young people

Total 2,163
10 year change ↓ 26%

3



COURT BAIL DECISIONS

70%

of young people that are refused bail at their first court bail appearance are Aboriginal
29 x higher than other young people

Total 1,017
10 year change ↑ 36%

4



YOUTH CUSTODY POPULATION

57%

of young people in custody are Aboriginal
17 x higher than other young people

Total 129
5 year change ↓ 12%

5



SENTENCED TO CUSTODY

80%

of young people sentenced to custody are Aboriginal
49 x higher than other young people

Total 187
10 year change ↓ 52%

*Aboriginal young people comprise approx. 8% of the NSW young people population (ABS 2021)

*Data in this infographic is from 2024

For any questions about this infographic or the data presented, please contact us at bcsr@dcj.nsw.gov.au

Young People in Custody Health Survey Data

NSW Young People in Custody Health Surveys			
	2003	2009	2015
Demographics			
In care before age of 16	28.40	27.20	21.00
Education			
Not attending school prior to custody	81.50	62.10	73.00
Accommodation			
No fixed abode prior to custody		6.10	13.00
Children of detainees			
Have children	10.10	8.20	8.30
Family			
Parent ever in prison	42.90	44.60	54.00
Offending behaviour			
Previous juvenile detention custody	72.30	78.70	84.70
Drug use			
Weekly illicit drug use in year prior to custody	78.60	65.00	81.00
Substance-related disorders	61.00	63.50	64.50
Intellectual ability			
Extremely low (<70) IQ score	17.40	13.60	18.10
Borderline (70–79) IQ score	27.00	32.20	39.20
Childhood abuse and neglect			
Any childhood abuse or neglect	68.10	59.90	69.70
Severe abuse or neglect	25.00	22.80	29.90

Picture is worse for young women

- 2015 Young People in Custody Health Survey in NSW to demonstrate this:
 - 32% girls placed in care before 16 – 20% boys
 - 74% have had a parent in prison – 51% males
 - 45% had experienced severe abuse – 27% males
 - 73% met criteria for 2 or more psych disorders – 62% males
 - 50% had engaged in self-harm – 12% males / 26% girls done so in custody compared with 9% males
 - 60% had severe difficulties in core language skills – 47% males
 - 53% had a head injury resulting in unconsciousness – 23% males
 - 32% had ever been pregnant and average age of 14.2 years for first pregnancy

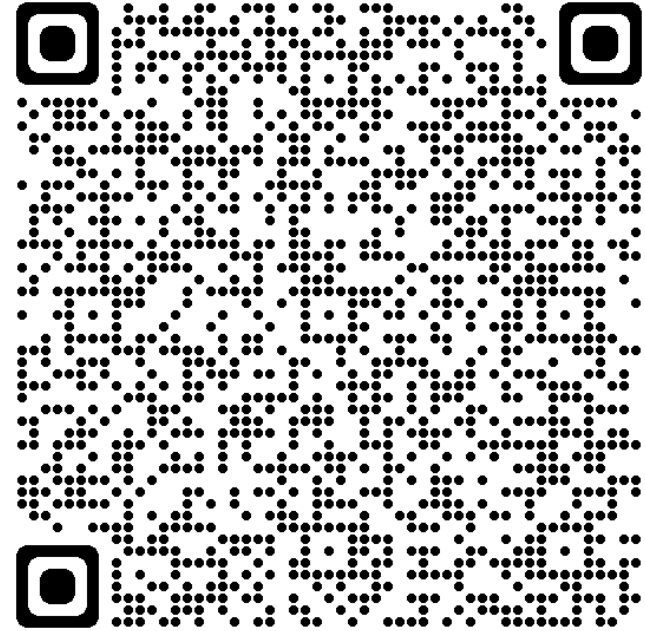
(2015 Young People in Custody Health Survey factsheet: key findings for young females | NSW Government / 2015 Young People in Custody Health Survey: full report | NSW Government)



Shameless plug – look away if you need to

USYD Justice Collaboration (Research Centre)

- The University of Sydney's Justice Collaboration aims to improve justice outcomes.
- The University of Sydney has numerous strengths in this area and has a track record of work across disciplines, faculties and research centres directly and indirectly relevant to justice systems.
- Through a whole-of-university approach, the University of Sydney can have a significant positive impact on justice systems and outcomes.

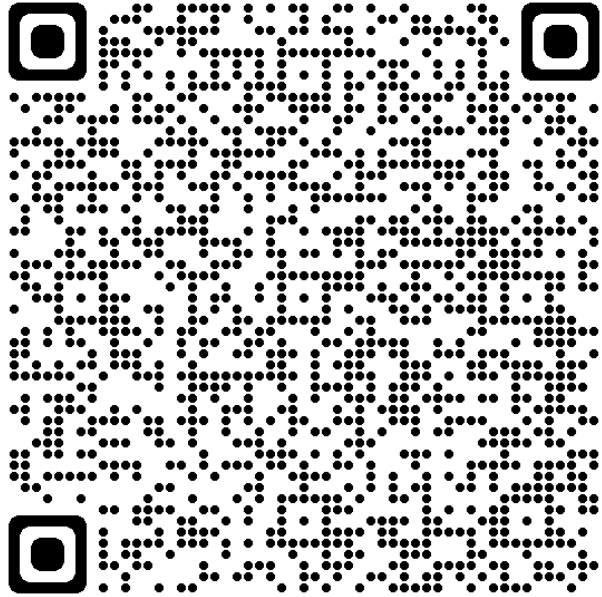


USYD multidisciplinary initiatives and research centres

- [Matilda Centre](#)
- [Brain and Mind Centre](#)
- [Research Centre for Children and Families](#)
- [CREATE Centre](#)
- [Centre for Disability Research and Policy](#)
- [Gambling Research and Treatment Clinic](#)
- [Cyberpsychology Research Group](#)
- [National Centre for Cultural Competence](#)
- [Rural Health Centres](#)
- [Sydney Informatics Hub](#)
- [Sydney Policy Lab](#)
- [Communication Disorders Treatment & Research Centre](#)
- [The Nano Institute](#)
- [Centre for Continuing Education](#)
- [Sydney Institute of Criminology](#)
- Plus involvement in the [Wellbeing Health and Youth Centre of Research Excellence in Adolescent Health](#), the [Life Course Research Centre](#), [Centre for Research Excellence: Indigenous Health and Alcohol](#) (amongst others)



Co-producing knowledge



Youth Crime, Youth Justice and Children's Courts (in NSW)

- A must have contemporary overview into the complex web impacting youth crime, youth justice and Children's Courts.
- Edited by Garner Clancey and Rohan Lulham. Authors include: Jackie Fitzgerald (BOCSAR); Judge Skinner (Children's Courts NSW); Janet Killgallon, Tim Warton and Steve Barracosa (YJNSW), Lobna Yassine, Jioji Ravulo (USYD), Kasey Tyler (former USYD student), Luke Butcher (now NT Health), Lisa Ewenson (now UNSW), Joseph Clarke (Bourke).
- Launch event in early 2024.



Australian Government
Australian Institute of Criminology

Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice

No. 691

Abstract | The University of Sydney and Youth Justice New South Wales signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in July 2021. This MoU builds on various prior collaborative activities between the two organisations and related work in other jurisdictions. This paper reflects on the progress and challenges of collaboration of this kind. Specifically, there has been tentative progress in engaging non-traditional parts of the university in youth justice projects.

The initial stage of the collaboration highlighted challenges, including structures within the university which can frustrate interdisciplinary work. Time lines, staff turnover and resources also impacted this collaboration. We conclude with an outline of what might be achieved through ongoing collaboration and signal the importance of ongoing research to capture data and insights regarding the nature of this relationship as it develops.

A whole-of-university response to youth justice: Reflections on a university–youth justice partnership

Garner Clancey, Cecilia Drumore and Laura Metcalfe

The University of Sydney and Youth Justice New South Wales (YJNSW) entered into a formal memorandum of understanding (MoU) in July 2021. This whole-of-university approach to youth justice builds on various successful relationships that are broadly similar in many respects. Universities have the potential to offer academic expertise, knowledge and new ideas to different industries which can support innovation (Bacon & Williams 2022). As social issues become increasingly complex, these multidisciplinary partnerships are considered vital to the resolution of these issues (Bacon & Williams 2022). It is unsurprising that universities, youth justice and other criminal justice agencies have formed partnerships of various kinds over the years.

[A whole-of-university response to youth justice: Reflections on a university–youth justice partnership](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10511253.2025.2485986)

JOURNAL OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2025.2485986>



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Reflections from an Industry and University Youth Justice Partnership

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^aSydney Law School, University of Sydney NSW, Australia; ^bYouth Justice NSW, Australia; ^cSchool of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney NSW, Australia

ABSTRACT

Youth Justice New South Wales (YJNSW) and the University of Sydney (USYD) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in July 2021. This MoU established broad parameters for collaboration between both organisations, building on many prior ad hoc joint activities. Research was undertaken to collect insights during the period of the MoU (July 2021 to July 2024), in the hope that these insights might inform and shape similar university and industry collaborations. This article reports on initial findings from interviews with YJNSW staff and survey data from USYD students. Insights gleaned from interviews highlight successes and challenges typical of a nascent collaboration of this kind: building trust and mutual understanding, navigating competing bureaucracies and administrative barriers, and maintaining momentum with time-poor staff. Surveys conducted with USYD students highlight the numerous benefits of student-led projects and placements both for the student cohort and YJNSW, including: student exposure to youth justice work and systems and real-world applicability of research outputs. While many benefits are highlighted from the data across the life of the MoU, wider forces ultimately resulted in its cessation in July 2024, providing a salutary reminder of the challenges of maintaining collaborations of this kind over time.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 27 September 2024
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KEYWORDS

Youth justice; university collaboration; university–youth justice partnership; university–industry partnership; whole-of-university approach to youth justice

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10511253.2025.2485986>

Concerns reported by Police

Decreasing regard for others and social norms.

Dynamics of offending - the desire for notoriety.

Increasing trend of police being filmed and provoked.

Loss of lives in increasingly dangerous car chases.

Competitions between regional areas / towns.

Escalating behaviour and increasing violence.

Virtual victimisation, continuous victimisation.

The involvement of very young people.

The recruitment of young people by organised crime groups.

Sending videos of hits and jobs to gangs as proof of work.



[News](#) > [Northern Territory](#)

Wannabe teenage gangsters in the Northern Territory post histories of crime on social media

WANNABE teenage gangsters are posting photos on social media of themselves brandishing weapons, smoking drugs and boasting about stolen items.

ZACH HOPE

 2 min read January 21, 2015 - 9:06AM

NT News
Northern Territory



0 Comments





Social media sting: Seven charged with online boasting offences

Since passing 'posting and boasting' legislation more than six months ago, just seven people have been charged under the offence. What the CLP government said about the figure.



'Ban them': 90 youth criminals nabbed over social media boasts

There are calls for social media giants to ban juvenile criminals from posting about their law-breaking activities, as tough new laws nab 90 youths. [SUBSCRIBE](#) for details



Selfie incrimination: Dumb young crims entrapped by posting, boasting

Alleged youth lawbreakers are being caught bragging on social media daily, and in some cases being intercepted during live streams. [SUBSCRIBE](#) for details

WHAT IS THE ROMAN NUMERAL FOR THE NUMBER 50?



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P30

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The Courier Mail

Monday, May 12, 2025

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200 KID CRIMS CAUGHT OUT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

BUSTED FOR BOASTING

EXCLUSIVE
Andreas Nicola

Almost 200 young offenders have been charged for boasting about their crimes on social media, as toughened-up post-and-boast laws nab more juveniles across Queensland.

Alleged law-breakers have even been intercepted while live streaming.
Report P7

Sick still



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