

Trends & issues

in crime and criminal justice



Australian Government
Australian Institute of Criminology

New AIC report explores the experiences of young people with acquired brain injury in the criminal justice system

The Australian Institute of Criminology has today released a report by researchers from Monash University on the issues experienced by young people with acquired brain injury (ABI) when involved with the criminal justice system. It shows:

- ABI is often accompanied by a range of other conditions and complex trauma, including family neglect and violence, other forms of victimisation and substance misuse.
- Young people with ABI often have difficulty comprehending complex legal processes and are often unable to instruct lawyers because they cannot contemplate the long-term consequences of their actions.
- The justice system has difficulty responding to the needs of this client group, often due to a lack of awareness, understanding and training among professionals.

Read: [Young people with acquired brain injury: Preventing entrenchment in the criminal justice system](#)

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Youth justice in Australia: Themes from recent inquiries

The AIC has released a study describing some of the key themes arising from recent reviews and inquiries into Australian youth justice systems.

Key reviews and inquiries into particular Australian youth justice systems (or particular aspects of Australian youth justice systems) in the last five years were identified and findings and recommendations analysed.

Key themes include:

- Young people who enter youth justice systems, especially those who serve some period in detention, frequently present with an array of vulnerabilities and complex needs. These vulnerabilities might be exacerbated by spending time in custody, especially in segregation and isolation. This is particularly the case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, who continue to be over-represented in youth justice systems across Australia.
- Detention should be a last resort for young people. To ensure that youth justice detention is used as a last resort, recommendations from reviews include that the minimum age of criminal responsibility should be increased; diversion should be prioritised (where appropriate); and alternatives to custodial remand should be employed more often.

- In situations where detention is required, youth justice detention centres should provide appropriate programs to all detainees; properly train and supervise staff; have systems in place to ensure operational integrity is maintained; and make education programs available to as many detainees as possible and for as long as possible.

Tweets: Almost all Australian states and territories have undertaken some form of review or inquiry into youth justice systems in recent years.

Our latest report looks at the key themes that have arisen out of these reviews #youthjustice #juvenile Recent reviews and inquiries into Australian youth justice systems have found that young people in contact with these systems often have multiple and complex needs #youthjustice #juvenile

The report is available for free download on the AIC website:

<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi605>

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What are the characteristics of effective youth offender programs?

Corrected summary

The AIC has released a study describing the findings from a systematic review of 44 studies of tertiary youth offender programs.

The review focused on understanding the characteristics of tertiary youth offender programs that were empirically or theoretically associated with reductions in reoffending. Nine components of effective programs appeared to be supported by evidence:

- program theory;
- risk of reoffending;
- risk, needs and responsivity assessment;
- cultural sensitivity;
- fidelity;
- dosage;
- practitioner-client relationship;
- intra and inter-agency coordination; and
- evaluation.

Considered collectively, the findings suggest that tertiary youth offender programs are most effective when they are implemented as intended, and are underpinned by a clearly articulated and evidence-based theory of change. However, the way in which the program is delivered should be flexible enough to meet the individual needs and circumstances of the young people.

The report is available for free download on the AIC

website: <https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi604>

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Care-experienced children and the criminal justice system

The Australian Institute of Criminology has released new mixed-methods research that explores the criminal justice involvement of care-experienced children.

This research builds on previous evidence that has shown how care-experienced children face a range of adverse conditions associated with their previous life-experiences and their experiences in care.

The mental health of defendants was noted as an important issue, exacerbated by the problems posed with obtaining suitable medical assessments for those remanded in custody.

Case file analysis showed that care experienced children were more likely to be Indigenous, have previous charges, have previous custody experience, to have reports on file, to have a mental health condition, to be homeless, to have experienced abuse or neglect and to have educational problems. They were also much more likely to have breached an Apprehended Violence Order.

Qualitative interviews with magistrates and legal practitioners highlighted concerns over the negative experience of children in out of home care. This included concerns that problematic behaviour was criminalised, with matters appearing before court which should have been addressed in other ways. Impaired educational opportunities, mental health issues and a lack of suitable accommodation were all raised as issues faced by this group.

The research is available on the AIC website for free download:

<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi600>

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New research on public views towards sentencing for child homicide offences reveals:

- Sentences for child manslaughter are often viewed by the community as inadequate. Those who held more punitive views towards crime and justice generally were more likely to feel that imposed sentences were overly lenient.
- Sentences were not felt to take sufficient account of the vulnerability and defencelessness of the child victim.
- The conduct of the offender before and after the offence was also considered as important factors by community members in assessing the severity of a case.

Read: [Sentencing for child homicide offences: Assessing public opinion using a focus group approach](#)

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The AIC has today released a new report by researchers from Queensland University of Technology and the University of New England.

- **The research identifies a range of ways in which women were subject to digital coercive control.**
- Geographic remoteness exacerbates abuse because of the difficulties experienced by victim-survivors in finding and sustaining support networks, allied with the ability of perpetrators to control the narrative in small communities.

Read: [Spaceless violence: Women’s experiences of technology-facilitated domestic violence in regional, rural and remote areas](#)

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The feasibility and utility of using coded ambulance records for a violence surveillance system: A novel pilot study

The Australian Institute of Criminology has released a new paper on the use of ambulance records for a violence surveillance system.

- This research, undertaken through a Criminology Research Grant by researchers from Monash and Deakin universities, uses ambulance data from Victoria and Tasmania to examine patterns of intimate partner violence, other family violence and community violence. It also examines the co-occurrence of risk factors such as alcohol and other drug use (AOD) and mental health issues.
- Intimate partner violence victims were mostly female (84%) and most frequently aged 18-29 or 30-39. Thirty seven percent involved AOD. Multivariate analysis showed that female victims were less likely than male victims to have an attendance with a co-occurrence.
- Intimate partner violence aggressors frequently involved those aged over 60 years (26%), or 18-29 year olds (24%). Twenty eight percent had co-occurrence of violence and mental health symptoms.
- Other family violence victims were equally likely to be male (49%) as female (51%). Over a quarter (26.4) were aged 18-29 years.
- Other family violence aggressors were most likely to be aged under 18 (31.4%) or 18-29 (28.7%). Multivariate analysis found those aged 18-29, 30-39, 40-49 and 50-59 years were more likely to have co-occurring issues.
- Community violence victims were more likely to be male (67%). Over a quarter (28%) were from the most disadvantaged socio-economic group.
- Community violence aggressors were also more likely to be male (62%) and from the most socio-economically deprived group (31%).

The paper is available for free download on the AIC website:

<https://aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi595>

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Research conducted for the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability reveals that:

- Women with a restrictive long-term health condition were more likely to experience physical or sexual violence and/or coercive control in the three months prior to the survey than women who did not have a long-term health condition.
- Relative to the rest of the female population, women with a restrictive long-term health condition were also more likely to report the onset of violence or coercive control.
- The violence they experienced typically increased in frequency or severity compared with the six-month period prior to February 2020.

The report is available for free download on the AIC website:
<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/sr/sr32>

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New research reveals the extent of attrition among modern slavery prosecutions

- The overall prosecution attrition rate was 73 percent.
- Attrition was most evident during the initial phases of prosecution, when the decision to lay charges was being considered (44%). However, if a defendant was charged, there was a 60 percent chance of conviction.
- While human trafficking and slavery matters comprised the largest proportion of charges (60% vs 40% for lesser charges, eg migration offences), they comprised the smallest proportion of convictions (39% vs 61% for lesser charges).

Read: [Attrition of human trafficking and slavery cases through the Australian criminal justice system](#)

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A new AIC study analysed chat logs from Australian men who viewed live streaming of child sexual abuse (CSA), to examine the characteristics of this harmful crime

- Offenders communicated with victims and facilitators on mainstream communication platforms and used the video call functions to view children being abused in the Philippines.
- Offenders used popular remittance services to pay victims and facilitators small amounts (median A\$51) to view the abuse.
- The findings suggest a need for international law reform in the regulation and accountability of popular online messaging platforms to prevent and detect CSA live streaming, taking into account the challenges to investigation posed by end-to-end encryption.

Read: [Live streaming of child sexual abuse: An analysis of offender chat logs](#)

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New AIC report examines the production and distribution of child sexual abuse material

A systematic review of the literature shows that:

- There is an overlap between child sexual abuse and child sexual abuse material (CSAM) production and distribution. Those with a history of child contact sexual offending are more likely to have produced CSAM.
- CSAM offenders are commonly known to their victims and are likely to be family members or acquaintances. It is less common that CSAM offenders meet their victims online or are strangers.
- Traditionally, offenders have accessed and distributed CSAM through P2P networks and websites, but the advent of new technologies have provided new opportunities for sharing CSAM.

The report is available for free download on the AIC website:

<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi617>

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New study identifies cyber strategies with the potential to identify and protect victims of child abuse material

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) has today released a paper that identifies cyber strategies that have the potential to identify victims of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) and detect offenders. *Cyber strategies used to combat child sexual abuse material* reviews existing research on cyber strategies to disrupt and prevent CSAM offending.

The study identified five key cyber strategies: peer-to-peer network monitoring; automated CSAM detection tools; web crawlers; pop-up warning messages; and facial recognition.

AIC Deputy Director Dr Rick Brown said these strategies also have the potential to automate the removal of large amounts of CSAM, identify CSAM sites for detection and prevent individuals from viewing and sharing the material.

“During National Child Protection Week, this is incredibly hopeful news, and puts us one step closer to improving our understanding of an extremely serious and harmful form of crime against our most vulnerable children.

“The automated nature of these identified strategies is particularly important given the demands placed on law enforcement by the dramatic growth in CSAM,” Dr Brown said.

The report is available at <https://doi.org/10.52922/ti78313>

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New AIC research has used a machine learning statistical model to predict prolific live streaming of child sexual abuse.

High-volume live streaming offenders were likely to:

- make frequent transactions of small monetary value, typically less than \$55, at intervals of less than 20 days
- have a limited criminal history, featuring few violent offences
- begin non-sexual offending later in life.

Read: [Predicting prolific live streaming of child sexual abuse](#)

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New research reveals role of parents in producing child sexual abuse material (CSAM)

- CSAM produced and distributed by parents and/or parental figures most often involved a male parent - 52 percent of cases involved biological fathers and 41 percent involved a stepfather, a parent's partner or a foster father.
- The victim's biological mother was involved in 28 percent of cases.
- Victims were predominately girls under nine years of age.
- The study identified distinct patterns and scenarios of parental CSAM offending that can inform prevention, early intervention and improved responses to victims.

The report is available for free download on the AIC website:

<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi616>

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New AIC research has reviewed the evidence on reoffending among child sexual offenders.

- Between one-fifth and one-half of child sexual offenders go on to reoffend in some way, although rates of sexual reoffending were 15% or less.
- General and sexual reoffending were most likely in the first two to four years after criminal justice system contact.
- Escalation from non-contact to contact sexual offending was rare.

Read: [Patterns and predictors of reoffending among child sexual offenders: A rapid evidence assessment](#)

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New AIC research on Child Sexual Abuse Material reveals:

- A new crime script of how CSAM offenders operate on the darknet, based on interviews with Australian law enforcement darknet investigators.
- There are three phases of CSAM offending on the darknet: learning via the clear web how to protect identity and access CSAM on the darknet; consuming CSAM on the darknet; and networking and increasing status among other offenders.

- The study will help inform policy development and law enforcement operations in identifying intervention points for prevention, disruption and detection of CSAM offending.

Read: [Child sexual abuse material on the darknet](#)

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Enhancing evidence-based treatment of child sexual abuse material offenders: The development of the CEM-COPE Program

The AIC has released a paper describing the development of the CEM-COPE (Coping with Child Exploitation Material Use) Program, a pilot program that aims to reduce reoffending among convicted child sexual abuse material (CSAM) offenders. The CEM-COPE Program builds upon existing CSAM treatment research, programs, and evaluation outcomes by providing intervention that targets the likely criminogenic needs of CSAM offenders. The development of the CEM-COPE was informed by a thorough review of literature and relevant treatment manuals, and the contributions of an expert consortium of leading international and national clinicians and/or researchers in the fields of CSAM offending, sexual offending, and forensic intervention.

The overarching objective of the CEM-COPE program is to reduce the risk of future CSAM offending by supporting group members to:

- gain an understanding of why and how they offended to identify avenues for intervention and skill development;
- build psychological skills and reinforce existing strengths to support desistance, including cognitive skills, general coping skills, emotional awareness and regulation skills, sexual regulation skills, and relational awareness and communication skills; and
- develop self-management plans based on their learnings throughout the program, including the identification of any ongoing offence-specific or broader psychological treatment needs.

The program draws on concepts and techniques from a range of evidence-based psychological treatment modalities, including Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy.

The report is available for free download on the AIC website:

<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi607>

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Misconceptions of sexual crimes against adult victims: Barriers to justice

- The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) has just released a paper discussing misconceptions about sexual crimes perpetrated against adults.
- Societal beliefs regarding sexual violence have significant implications for victims of sexual violence, and may create barriers to reporting as well as poor criminal justice outcomes.
- Based on a synthesis of over 40 years of research, this research highlights the most common and enduring misconceptions regarding sexual crimes perpetrated against adults. In particular, the review focuses on misconceptions relating to victim behaviour, sexual crime dynamics and the prevalence and nature of sexual offending.
- Common and harmful misconceptions associated with victim/or complainant behaviour include: reporting (eg the belief that victims should report immediately after the assault), the prevalence of false allegations, resistance during sexual assault (ie that victims should fight back during an assault) and emotion during reporting (ie the requirement that a victim be emotionally distressed).
- Misconceptions associated with sexual crime dynamics include: the relationship with the offender (eg the belief that most sexual assaults are perpetrated by strangers), location (ie that sexual assaults are more likely to occur in public places) and can be corroborated through witness testimony or physical evidence.
- Misconceptions of the prevalence and nature of sexual offending include: the gender of victims (eg belief that men are not victims of sexual assault), and age of victims (that only young women experience sexual assault).

The report is available for free download on the AIC website:

<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi611>

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New research reveals the different recorded offending trajectories among individuals involved in Australian organised crime.

- Four groups were identified that differed in terms of their onset, peak and frequency of offending. Groups also differed in offending versatility, seriousness and escalation.
- There was a large group of late-onset offenders. These are individuals who do not have any involvement with the criminal justice system until relatively late in life.
- There were different pathways into organised crime offending, including serious drug trafficking offences, which reflect the different recruitment pathways.

Read: [Organised crime and criminal careers: Findings from an Australian sample](#)

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New AIC research reveals extent of criminal mobility across state and territory borders among Australian outlaw motorcycle gangs

- Around 1 in 10 outlaw motorcycle gang members in Australia have offended across more than one jurisdiction.
- Criminally mobile outlaw motorcycle gang members are highly concentrated in a small number of chapters.
- Patterns of criminal mobility among outlaw motorcycle gang members primarily involve movements into New South Wales and Queensland.

The report is available for free download on the AIC website:
<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi619>

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New reports show how outlaw motorcycle gangs in Australia are changing

The changing culture of outlaw motorcycle gangs in Australia

- First hand insights from former members show how some clubs are recruiting younger members who are more criminally-inclined, self-interested and financially motivated.
- These changes have resulted in more conflict and less loyalty between members, which was an important motive for leaving clubs.

Effects of outlaw motorcycle gang membership and the support needs of former members

- Negative effects of outlaw motorcycle gang involvement included poor mental health, the breakdown of relationships, and problems finding legitimate employment.
- The research was used by Queensland Police Service to develop a new intervention model to prevent recruitment and support former members to reduce gang involvement.

The reports are available for free download on the [AIC website](#).

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Understanding the structure and composition of co-offending networks in Australia

- The Australian Institute of Criminology has today released a Trends and Issues paper on the structure and composition of co-offending networks in Australia.
- The paper presents the first Australian study of co-offending networks, based on arrests recorded by the police in Melbourne.
- An examination of 216,000 offences found that six percent involved co-offenders (low by international standards).
- Co-offending declined with age. While 25 percent of offenders aged 18-25 were co-offenders, this declined to nine percent for those aged over 45.

- Property offences were most likely to involve co-offenders (25%) compared with illicit market related offences (18%) and violent offences (11%)
- Co-offending typically involves two offenders (80%) with a further ten percent involving three offenders.
- Offenders tend to offend with others of a similar age and typically offend with others who have a similar number of co-offenders in their networks.

The paper is available for free download on the AIC website:

<https://aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi597>

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New AIC report identifies differences in perceptions of cybercrime between the police and community.

- Police officers were more likely than community members to view cybercrime as a serious offence.
- There were notable differences between the two groups in their knowledge of how cybercrime affects policing—police officers were more likely to note the considerable effect of the changing cybercrime landscape.
- Members of the community were more confident in the ability of the police to address cybercrime than were the police officers surveyed.

Read: [Responding to cybercrime: Results of a comparison between community members and police personnel](#)

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New analysis shows how best to manage police misconduct.

- Recognition of positive workplace behaviour, through awards or complimentary remarks, was an important prevention measure against serious police misconduct.
- Timely management actions in response to minor instances of misconduct were effective measures to prevent serious misconduct, but beyond four instances, this protective effect diminished.
- Regular transfers of officers between workplaces did not prevent serious misconduct.

Read: [Effective management of serious police misconduct: A machine learning analysis](#)

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New AIC research identifies strategies to improve video-link court appearance processes for young people in detention.

- While interviewees expressed overall support for the use of audiovisual links (AVL) for young people in the youth justice system, there remain limitations.
- In some cases, the use of AVL isolated the young person from proceedings and restricted interaction between the young person and court.
- The study recommends the use of AVL should be based on the individual child’s suitability, with issues such as fitness to plead, cultural and language factors, and hearing and sight problems being considered.

Read: [Court appearances via video link for young people in detention in Queensland](#)

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New AIC report benchmarks the use of audiovisual link technologies in Australian criminal courts before the pandemic.

- Prior to the pandemic, audiovisual link (AVL) technologies were used extensively for administrative and minor matters in the criminal courts such as applications for adjournments, mentions and uncontested plea hearings. In 2017, AVL was used to receive evidence from accused and witnesses in trials and for sentencing hearings in a minority of cases.
- AVL hearings took, on average, 12 minutes. Short, procedural applications sometimes occupied only a few minutes, while hearings in which witnesses gave evidence via AVL occupied an hour or more.
- Technological problems were evident in almost 70 percent of cases. Problems with visual images occurred in approximately 28 percent of cases and problems with the quality of audio in almost half of the cases.

Read: [Benchmarking the use of audiovisual link technologies in Australian criminal courts before the pandemic](#)

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Data from the Drug Use Monitoring in Australia (DUMA) program during 2020 indicated that:

- Overall, 45 percent of police detainees reported using methamphetamine in the past 30 days, but methamphetamine use declined as restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic were introduced. Past-month heroin use also declined, from nine percent in January–February to five percent in October–November.
- Respondents perceived methamphetamine as extremely available and high in quality during January–February. Ratings of availability and quality were lower in April–June and July–August, before recovering in October–November. Ratings of heroin availability and quality also decreased during the pandemic.
- Almost half of the detainees surveyed reported using cannabis (47%) in the past 30 days. Fewer detainees reported past-month use of benzodiazepines (21%), cocaine (8%) or ecstasy (5%).

Read: [Drug use monitoring in Australia: Drug use among police detainees, 2020](#)

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The AIC has released a Research Report on community perceptions of biometric technology, showing that:

- There is a generally high level of previous exposure to biometrics, with an increasing willingness to use biometric technologies in the future, especially among previous victims of identity crime.
- Survey respondents show general approval for the use of biometric technologies by government authorities for law enforcement and national

security reasons and as a means of obtaining access to government services.

- Feelings towards the use of biometric technologies for public surveillance and by private industry are mixed, with privacy, ethical use, data access and storage security the main concerns.

Read: [Changing perceptions of biometric technologies](#)

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New AIC research on Domestic Violence reveals that:

- There is very little empirical evidence that escalation of domestic violence behaviours are the ‘norm’ within abusive relationships; it is primarily present in relationships characterised by ongoing and severe forms of abuse.
- However, the prevalence of escalation varies depending on the data and methods used; when women are asked about patterns of violence they are more likely to report patterns of increasing frequency and severity of abuse.
- The impacts and prevalence of non-physical, coercive controlling and threatened behaviours are very real for victim–survivors, but they are difficult to ‘count’ and so may be missed when we map trajectories of violence in intimate relationships over time.

Read: [How does domestic violence escalate over time?](#)

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New AIC research on Domestic Violence has found:

- Most domestic violence offenders committed a range of non-domestic violence offences, and were generally more prolific and persistent than other offenders – eg over a 10-year period, domestic violence offenders were proceeded against for 19 offences, compared to 3.2 offences for non-violent offenders.
- The criminal histories of domestic violence offenders were often characterised by a relatively low rate of domestic violence and other offending, with a very small proportion exhibiting patterns of persistent and specialised domestic violence offending (4%).

The report is available for free download on the AIC website:

<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi624>

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New AIC research reveals that:

- One in two women who had experienced coercive control also reported some form of physical violence, including non-fatal strangulation (27%) and assault with a weapon (23%).

- Help-seeking was much lower among women who were experiencing coercive control, but not physical/sexual violence, when compared to women experiencing both.

The report is available for free download on the AIC website:

<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/sb/sb30>

More information: <https://www.aic.gov.au/media-centre/news/experiences-coercive-control-among-australian-women-during-covid-19>

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New research documents extent of illicit firearms available on the darknet

- Over 2,000 weapons were identified, of which 11 percent were found on niche markets. Available firearms included 1,497 handguns, 218 rifles, 41 submachine guns and 34 shotguns.
- Omnibus markets also sold other weapons such as tasers, pepper spray and knives, and digital products, mostly DIY weapon manuals.
- 215 vendors were identified, nearly one in ten of whom were active across more than one market.

The report is available for free download on the AIC website:

<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi622>

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Deaths in custody in Australia 2018-19

The Australian Institute of Criminology has released the latest report from the National Deaths in Custody Program. The *Deaths in custody in Australia 2018–19* Statistical Report details the 113 deaths in custody in 2018–19—89 in prison custody and 24 in police custody or custody-related operations—and compares these findings to longer term trends.

- Of the 89 deaths in prison custody, sixteen (18%) were of Indigenous persons and 73 (82%) were of non-Indigenous persons. Eighty-seven deaths (98%) were of males.
- The death rate of Indigenous prisoners was 0.13 per 100 prisoners, lower than the death rate of non-Indigenous prisoners (0.23 per 100).
- Fifty-one (57%) deaths in prison custody were caused by natural causes. Natural causes were the most common cause of death for both Indigenous (85%, n=11) and non-Indigenous prisoners (65%, n=40).
- Of the 24 deaths in police custody, four (17%) were of Indigenous persons, 19 (79%) were of non-Indigenous persons, and the Indigenous status was unknown in one further case.
- Thirteen deaths (54%) were caused by gunshot wounds—nine were police shootings and four were self-inflicted.

- Two of the four Indigenous deaths in police custody were accidental deaths attributable to other/multiple causes, one was a self-inflicted death attributable to gunshot wounds, and one had no cause or manner of death recorded.
- In the 28 years since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991), there have been 455 Indigenous deaths in custody—295 in prison, 156 in police custody or custody-related operations and four in juvenile detention.

The report is available for free download on the AIC website:

<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/sr/sr31>

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Corporate crime in Australia: The extent of the problem

- The AIC has today released a new study on corporate crime in Australia.
- The study was undertaken by a team of researchers from Griffith University and was funded by a Criminology Research Grant.
- It examines cases of corporate crime reported by ASIC, ACCC, ATO and FWC/FWO.
- The research focuses on offending by 1,941 corporations (33 ASX200 listed parent corporations and their 1,908 wholly owned subsidiary corporations).
- Over the period 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2015, nine (27.2 percent) of the corporate groups (parent corporations and their subsidiaries) examined offended at least once.
- Offending was found to occur in the financial, utilities, communication services and consumer staples sectors.
- Offences were recorded for 21 corporations (six parent corporations and 15 subsidiary corporations).
- Three corporate groups were found to account for three quarters of the offences.
- Offending largely fell into one of three broad categories:
 - breaches of market integrity (including cartel offences)
 - misleading or deceptive conduct (including making false or misleading representations)
 - unconscionable conduct.
- A range of suggestions are made to reduce corporate offending, including making parent companies more accountable and introducing a national database of corporate offending.

The report is available for free download on the AIC website:

<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi613>

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How and why vendors sell on cryptomarkets

The Australian Institute of Criminology has today released a new report – “*How and why vendors sell on cryptomarkets*”. The research, undertaken by researchers from Université de Montréal and Swinburne University and funded through the AIC’s Criminology Research Grant program, conducted online interviews with 13 cryptomarket vendors.

The research found that:

- Most vendors were enticed by the opportunity for profit from buying low cost drugs and selling at a higher price on cryptomarkets. Other explanations were often mentioned, but these were disparate in nature.
- A range of competencies associated with setting up as a vendor on a cryptomarket were identified, suggesting relatively high barriers to entry. The establishment phase was also marked with considerable trial and error.
- The role of mentors and forums were viewed as crucial for obtaining the necessary knowledge to operate on these markets.
- Although lower risk of violence was identified as a benefit of cryptomarkets, some vendors still reported being threatened with violence – either when buying supplies, or by unhappy customers.
- Vendors identified the lower risk of law enforcement detection as a benefit of trading on cryptomarkets, but still noted the risks associated with the physical mailing of drugs, which often resulted in them going to considerable lengths to avoid detection.

The report is available on the AIC website at <https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi608>, along with the CRG report at <https://www.aic.gov.au/crg/reports/crg-5016-17>.

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New analysis explores the sentencing of offenders for social supply and minimally commercial supply offences.

- Almost three-quarters of social supply cases examined related to cannabis supply. They were characterised by supply to friends and family and were typically viewed by judicial officers as being at the lowest end of the supply scale.
- Minimally commercial supply cases commonly involved either amphetamine-type stimulants (47%) or cannabis (45%). These cases were characterised as related to defendants with a drug dependency who were supplying drugs to support their own use, rather than for material benefit.
- Judicial officers questioned the benefit of threshold quantities for considering the seriousness of supply and noted the many factors that could affect the scale of supply.

- There was support for using additional diversionary measures for these low-scale supply offences, although there was acknowledged to be a lack of sentencing options in many jurisdictions.

Read: [Sentencing for social supply of illicit drugs in Australia](#)

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The price elasticity of demand for illicit drugs: A systematic review

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) has released a systematic review of research into the price elasticity of demand for illicit drugs. This is the extent to which the demand for a drug is influenced by its price.

- Researchers from the Australian National University were commissioned by the Serious and Organised Crime Research Laboratory to conduct a systematic review of research into the price elasticity of demand for illicit drugs.
- Taking the average across 44 studies, the mean elasticity of demand for all drugs is approximately -0.9 . That is, a 10 percent increase in price would reduce the quantity demanded by approximately nine percent.
- While technically this is considered weakly inelastic, this suggests law enforcement activities that increase drug prices can have a substantial effect on the quantity demanded—almost a one-to-one relationship.
- Demand appears to be more price sensitive for methamphetamine (when compared with heroin, cocaine or cannabis), users in Australia (as opposed to the US), females, non-dependent users, and over the long term.
- Fluctuations in drug purity and quality, and cross-drug substitution, are both features of drug market activity and can influence calculations of price elasticities.
- Price elasticity of demand appears to be specific to the local or regional context. A number of important local conditions likely impact the relative effectiveness of law enforcement strategies in terms of impacting drug prices.

This systematic review highlights the importance of supply reduction measures that can increase drug prices as a mechanism for influencing demand. The impact of these measures on demand must be weighed against the cost of producing these changes in supply and potential hidden harms that may result.

The report is available for free download on the AIC website:

<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi606>

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The impact of arrest and seizure on drug crime and harms: A systematic review

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) has released a systematic review of the impact of supplier arrests and seizures on drug crime, drug use, drug price, drug purity, and drug harm outcomes.

- Researchers from the University of Queensland and Queensland University of Technology were commissioned by the Serious and Organised Crime Research Laboratory to conduct a systematic review of the impact of law enforcement arrests and seizures on a range of drug-related outcomes.
- The study used the Global Policing Database to identify published and unpublished studies between January 2004 and December 2018 that use experimental and quasi-experimental impact evaluations of policing interventions conducted since 1950.
- Thirteen impact evaluation studies met the inclusion criteria. Only three of these studies contained sufficient data on effect sizes, meaning it was not possible to conduct a meta-analysis.
- An evidence and gap map was constructed, showing that research to date relates primarily to drug harms, followed by drug crime and drug price, and that there are significant gaps in the impact evaluation literature.
- The available research does not show a clear relationship between supplier arrest or seizures on drug use, drug price and drug purity.

This systematic review highlights the need for more research rigorously examining the impact of drug supplier arrest and seizures that can answer nuanced questions with implications for policing practice. The authors note there is evidence showing that proactive law enforcement initiatives that are place-focused and problem-focused are effective in reducing drug-related crime and harms.

The paper is available for free download on the AIC website:

<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi602>

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Street-level drug law enforcement: An updated systematic review

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) has released a systematic review of the impact of street-level law enforcement interventions on drug crime and drug-related calls-for-service.

- Researchers from the University of Queensland and Queensland University of Technology were commissioned by the Serious and Organised Crime Research Laboratory to update a 2007 systematic review of the impact of street-level law enforcement interventions.
- The study used the Global Policing Database to identify studies since 1950 where an intervention involved street-level law enforcement to target any type of illicit drugs. Twenty-six studies were eligible for

inclusion, of which 18 studies reported sufficient data to calculate effect sizes.

- Overall, street-level policing approaches, particularly those involving partnerships, are effective in reducing drug crime.
- Geographically targeted law enforcement interventions are more effective in reducing drug crime than standard, unfocused approaches. Approaches that target larger problem areas for intervention are more effective for reducing drug crime (but not calls-for-service) than approaches that focus on micro problem places.
- Problem-oriented and community-wide policing strategies were shown to be more effective than hotspots policing for reducing drug crime.

The study will assist law enforcement, practitioners and policymakers to identify and develop drug enforcement strategies which are evidence-based, adapted to suit the local context, and delivered in partnership to ensure maximum effect.

The paper is available for free download on the AIC website:

<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi599>

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The relationship between drug price and purity and population level harm

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) has released a paper synthesising the results of a review of research into the relationship between illicit drug price and purity and drug consumption and drug-related harms.

- The project involved a rapid review of 36 Australian and international studies conducted over the period 1990 to 2019.
- It examined the relationship between the price and purity of illicit drugs and seven-population level drug-related harms (ambulance call outs, emergency room presentations, hospital admissions, treatment admissions, overdose, property crime, violent crime) using two indicators (drug possession and supply).
- It also assessed any differences across three drug types (heroin, cocaine and meth/amphetamine) and identified factors that may moderate relationships (e.g. region or drug form).
- The majority of studies examining health care outcomes found that an increase in the price and purity-adjusted-price was associated with reductions in fatal and non-fatal overdose, emergency department admissions and hospital admissions.
- Studies of crime outcomes also consistently found that increase in the price and purity-adjusted-price was associated with reductions in crime.
- Case studies of the 2001 heroin shortage in Australia and methamphetamine precursor controls in North America also support that increased drug price is associated with reductions in crime and health-related harms.

There is evidence of a consistent inverse relationship between price, purity and drug-related harm, whereby increased purity-adjusted-price is associated with lower harm. This appears to be consistent across health and crime harms, multiple drug types and contexts. The paper

highlights the importance of collecting data on drug price and purity to predict drug market impacts.

The paper is available for free download on the AIC website:

<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi598>

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Malware in spam email: Risks and trends in the Australian Spam Intelligence Database

The Australian Institute of Criminology has released a new report titled *Malware in spam email: Risks and trends in the Australian Spam Intelligence Database*.

A 10 percent sample of a 2016 dataset of 25.76 million spam emails provided by the Australian Communications and Media Authority's Spam Intelligence Database was scanned for malware using the VirusTotal Malware database. Nearly one in 10 (9.9% or 255,222) emails were identified as malware compromised and, similarly, 9.9 percent were identified as inactive.

Of the compromised URL sites, nearly one-third (31.8% or 81,176) could be further classified as phishing (58.4%) or trojan-compromised URLs (40.6%) or dedicated malicious websites (1%).

All 115,025 unique file attachments found in the entire sample (0.5% of all spam) were also scanned and 31.4 percent (36,405) were compromised with various forms of malware.

The majority of compromised attachments were found in images (55.6%), followed by PDFs (15.0%) and binary files (10.0%). Various trojans and ransomware were the most common malware, and these and others identified in the sample are described.

The report was produced by researchers from the Australian National University – Roderic Broadhurst and Harshit Trivedi – and was funded through a Criminology Research Grant.

The report is available for free download on the AIC website:

<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi603>

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Review of the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery 2015-19

The Australian Institute of Criminology has today released a Research Report - *Review of the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery 2015-19*.

The report describes activities undertaken by the Australian government to address human trafficking and slavery. It documents the work of the Commonwealth in preventing human trafficking and slavery; detecting, investigating and prosecuting offenders; and protecting and supporting victims.

The findings show there was strong commitment to proactive identification and reporting of human trafficking and slavery cases, assistance for victims to participate in criminal justice processes, and access to specialist and individualised support services.

There was also a focus on victim support that recognised the rights and needs of trafficked people, was delivered in a timely manner, and was appropriate for a diverse victim cohort.

The review identified a need to more closely monitor the effectiveness of support provided to victims and their experiences of recovery. It also identified a need for greater investment in data collection to support monitoring and evaluation of initiatives.

The paper is available for free download on the AIC website:
<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/rr/rr17>

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Strain, coping and sustained fraud offending

- The Australian Institute of Criminology has today released a Trends and issues paper on strain, coping and sustained fraud offending.
- This qualitative study examines the various ways in which fraud offenders who commit fraud over a sustained period of time use coping strategies to deal with their ongoing offending.
- While there was some evidence of ‘problem-focused’ coping and ‘social-focused’ coping, the research found that examples of ‘emotion-focused’ coping were more prevalent.
- Emotion-focused coping included:
 - Suppression – keeping unwanted thoughts at bay.
 - Compartmentalisation – sectioning off upsetting thoughts, emotions, pressures or relationships.
 - Escapism – absconding from threatening situations through immersion in alternative activities.
 - Compensation – engaging in activities that allow offenders to see themselves in a positive light.
- There was also evidence of behavioural changes as a result of sustained fraud. This included changes in work patterns and social withdrawal.

These findings are of relevance to fraud prevention efforts as they help to identify behaviours that should be treated as risk factors for potential fraudsters who continue to offend over a long period of time.

The paper is available for free download on the AIC website:
<https://aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi596>

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New AIC report examines use of financial investigation in routine policing

The AIC has today released a report that explores the potential of increasing the use of financial investigation methods in routine policing in Australia.

- Following an individual's financial footprint can be used for a range of investigation purposes beyond asset recovery, including tracking persons of interest, linking multiple individuals in a criminal enterprise and corroborating alibies.
- Barriers to implementation include the perception that financial investigation is a specialism, the geographical and organisational isolation of financial investigators, and limited knowledge among general duties police officers.
- Factors facilitating the routine use of financial investigation include leadership, education and training, collaboration, and judicial and government support.

Read: [Financial investigation for routine policing in Australia](#)