The Comparative Youth Penality Project

The Comparative Youth Penality Project (CYPP) is an ARC Discovery Project led by Professor Chris Cunneen, Professor Eileen Baldry, Emeritus Professor David Brown, Melanie Schwartz and Professor Barry Goldson (University of Liverpool).

The CYPP is an international comparative study of youth punishment in Australia (focusing on NSW, Victoria, Queensland and WA) and in England and Wales. The project aims to analyse developments in the punishment of children and young people over the last 30 years. This is the first in-depth analysis of Australian youth penality and the first comparative study of youth punishment across these jurisdictions.

The Project seeks to answer the following questions:

- What are the defining features of contemporary juvenile justice penality?
- How has youth penality changed since the early 1980s across the jurisdictions that are the subject of this project?
- How have changing approaches to youth penality impacted upon particular social groups, including racial minorities, Indigenous youth, young women, and young people with mental and cognitive disabilities?
- What, if any, jurisdictional differences are to be found in discourses on community safety, the nature of childhood and youth (including child welfare and protection), the appropriateness of rehabilitation and the character of punishment practices for youth?
- How has the development of a human rights framework impacted on penal law, policy and practice as applied to youth? What impact, if any, has a children’s rights framework had on differentiating youth justice from adult penal systems?

This newsletter provides stakeholders with an update on the progress of the CYPP. It also lists some of the latest news and research in the field of youth penality. For more information please visit our [website](#) or contact CYPP Research Associate, [Sophie Russell](#).
Interviews

During September, three members of the Western Australian judiciary were interviewed, as well as five young people from the Northern Territory who have spent time in custody. All CYPP project interviews have now been completed.

Juvenile Justice Workshop in Vietnam

In October, Professor Chris Cunneen travelled to Vietnam to participate in a number of international workshops focused on juvenile justice. The workshops were presented as part of the ‘Vietnam-Australia Human Rights Technical Cooperation Program’ organised by the Australian Human Rights Commission in Ho Chi Minh City, Nha Trang and Ha long.

Conference Presentations


On 23 September, Professor Barry Goldson presented the opening keynote address at The Age of Criminal Responsibility (ACR) Conference hosted by Northumbria University in partnership with the University of Sydney. Barry's presentation was entitled: ‘Beyond questions of “criminal capacity”: five reasons for raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility’.

Professor Barry Goldson is scheduled to present a keynote paper titled: ‘Why are children imprisoned and why do child prison populations vary over place and time?’ at a ‘Making Research Count’ event: The Controversies of Child Imprisonment: Messages from Research at Salford University on December 10 2015.

UNSW Justice Reinvestment Event

On 12 October, the University of New South Wales held a Criminologists in Conversation event with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda, and CYPP Chief Investigators Professor Chris Cunneen and Melanie Schwartz as panel discussants. The event
discussed the value of justice targets and a justice reinvestment approach to the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in adult and juvenile criminal justice systems across Australia.

IAMHDCD Project Report Published

In early November, CYPP Chief Investigator Eileen Baldry, along with Ruth McCausland, Leanne Dowse and Elizabeth McEntyre published the report of the Indigenous Australians with Mental Health Disorders and Cognitive Disabilities in the Criminal Justice System (IAMHDCD) Project: A Predictable and Preventable Path: Aboriginal people with mental and cognitive disabilities in the criminal justice system’. The study found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with mental and cognitive disabilities are significantly over-represented in Australian criminal justice systems. The study also found that Indigenous people with mental health disorders and cognitive disabilities are 2.2 times more likely to be Juvenile Justice clients compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts.

News (Australia & UK)

Australia

Boot camps to close across Queensland, Amy Remeikis, Brisbane Times, 20 August 2015.

Briggs, rapper and role model for incarcerated Indigenous Youth, Fred McConnell, The Guardian, 10 September 2015

Teenage detainees hooded, gassed in Northern Territory adult prison, Kate Wild and Katherine Gregory, ABC, 18 September 2015

Northern Territory youth justice system risks breaching human rights, UN told, Helen Davidson, The Guardian, 21 September 2015


Law Council calls for urgent action over report into Don Dale youth detention in Darwin, Natasha Robinson, ABC, 9 October 2015.

Young offenders must be screened for fetal alcohol spectrum disorders before sentencing, Elizabeth Elliott, The Conversation, 13 October 2015.
Youth detention centres need immediate reform, says NT children’s commissioner, Malarndirri McCarthy, NITV, 16 October 2015.

Young Indigenous imprisonment in NT: ‘You wouldn’t believe it in a modern-day society’, Helen Davidson, The Guardian, 22 October 2015

Calls to raise criminal age of responsibility to 12 years old, Rachael Brown, ABC Radio AM, 24 October 2015.

Screening for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder could impact level of youth crime, experts say, Katherine Gregory, ABC, 26 October 2015


Indigenous prisoners and FASD, Damien Carrick, ABC Radio National, 10 November 2015.

UK


Boost for G4S as it wins UK secure training centre contract, Reuters News, 4 September 2015.

Council chiefs agree to hand their youth offending service to the police and crime commissioner, Tom Edwards, Worcester News, 19 October 2015.

Replace child prisons with small units, report says, BBC, 22 October 2015.

£250K to help keep teens out of trouble in Hull, Hull Daily Mail, 10 November 2015.

Research


**Events**

The 2015 ANZSOC Conference is being held in Adelaide from Wednesday 25 – Friday 27 November. The topic for this year’s conference is “Security and Rule of Law: The changing face of criminal justice”. For more information about the conference, or to register, please visit the ANZSOC website.