

## 2. Offending behaviour

Information reported in this section includes a combination of self-report obtained from the physical health questionnaire, results of the criminal history questionnaire and information extracted from the Juvenile Justice Client Information Management System (CIMS). Therefore, participant numbers vary in this section. CIMS is the operational database for Juvenile Justice, holding verified information from police, court and internal sources. All results are based on self-report unless CIMS is specified.

### 2.1 Previous juvenile detention custody

#### Any previous juvenile detention custody

For both the 2003 and 2009 YPICHs, the CIMS was used to determine the history of previous incarceration in juvenile detention. There was a slight increase from 72% of 2003 YPICHs participants reporting previous time in juvenile detention to 79% in 2009 YPICHs participants. Aboriginal young people in 2009 were significantly more likely to have a history of previous juvenile detention than non-Aboriginal young people (85% vs 73%,  $p < 0.01$ ). The proportion of young women with a history of juvenile detention decreased from 95% in 2003 to 83% in 2009.

Table/Fig 2.1.1 Any previous juvenile detention custody (CIMS)



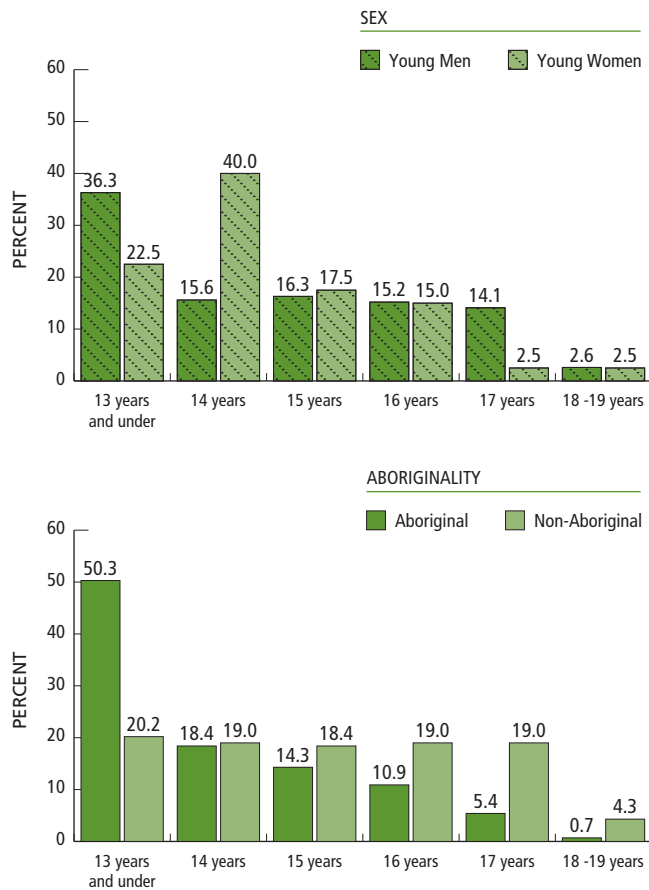
	2003			2009		
	n	Total	%	n	Total	%
Young Men	157	223	70.4	249	319	78.1
Young Women	18	19	94.7	35	42	83.3
Aboriginal	90	102	88.2	147	174	84.5
Non-Aboriginal	85	140	60.7	137	187	73.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>72.3</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>78.7</b>

2009 YPICHs participants were also asked if they had spent any previous time in juvenile detention. Participants under-reported their history of juvenile detention by 8% (71% reporting a history of juvenile detention compared to 79% found using CIMS). Young women and Aboriginal young people were the most likely to accurately report their previous juvenile detention. The largest discrepancy was found in non-Aboriginal people, of whom 61% reported having previously been in juvenile detention, compared to 73% recorded in CIMS. A small proportion (3%) of participants over-estimated the number of times they had previously been in juvenile detention and indicated it had been 10 or more times when CIMS found it to be less. These discrepancies should be taken into account when interpreting the self-reported data on the number of times participants had previously been in custody.

#### Age of first juvenile detention custody

Participants were asked to recall the age they were first admitted into a juvenile justice centre. Just over half of the sample (53%) reported they were first admitted to custody at age 14 years or younger. A higher proportion (63%) of young women than young men (52%) reported being 14 years or younger when first admitted into a juvenile justice centre. Aboriginal young people were almost twice as likely as non-Aboriginal young people to report being 14 years or younger when first admitted into a juvenile justice centre (69% vs 39%,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table/Fig 2.1.2 Age of first time in juvenile detention custody**



The self-reported average age of first admission to custody was 14.3 years. The median age for first admission was 14.0 years. Both young men and young women had a mean age of first admission of 14.3 years. Aboriginal young people were significantly more likely than non-Aboriginal young people to be admitted at an average younger age (13.6 years vs 14.9 years,  $p < 0.001$ ). The median age of admission for Aboriginal young people was also significantly lower at 13.0 years than the non-Aboriginal young people (15.0 years).

**Table 2.1.3 Age (in years) of first time in juvenile detention custody**

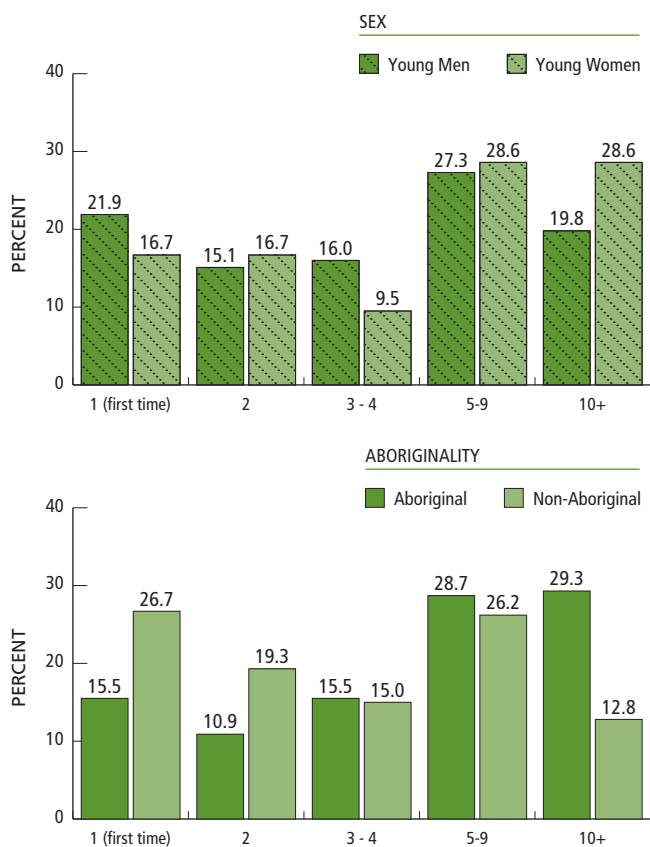
	Young Men	Young Women	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Total
N	270	40	147	163	310
Mean ( $\pm$ sd)	14.3 ( $\pm$ 2.1)	14.3 ( $\pm$ 1.4)	13.6 ( $\pm$ 1.9)	14.9 ( $\pm$ 1.9)	14.3 ( $\pm$ 2.0)
Median	14.0	14.0	13.0	15.0	14.0
Range	8-19	12-18	8-19	8-19	8-19

### Number of times in juvenile detention custody

Aboriginal young people were significantly more likely than non-Aboriginal young people to have had 10 or more times in juvenile detention (29% vs 13%,  $p < 0.001$ ) according to CIMS records. A higher proportion of young women also had 10 or more previous juvenile detention episodes (29%) compared to young men (20%).

	Young Men		Young Women		Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
13 years and under	98	36.3	9	22.5	74	50.3	33	20.2	107	34.5
14	42	15.6	16	40.0	27	18.4	31	19.0	58	18.7
15	44	16.3	7	17.5	21	14.3	30	18.4	51	16.5
16	41	15.2	6	15.0	16	10.9	31	19.0	47	15.2
17	38	14.1	1	2.5	8	5.4	31	19.0	39	12.5
18-19 years	7	2.6	1	2.5	1	0.7	7	4.3	8	2.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table/Fig 2.1.4 Number of times in juvenile detention custody (CIMS)



	Young Men		Young Women		Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1 (first time)	70	21.9	7	16.7	27	15.5	50	26.7	77	21.3
2	48	15.1	7	16.7	19	10.9	36	19.3	55	15.2
3-4	51	16.0	4	9.5	27	15.5	28	15.0	55	15.2
5-9	87	27.3	12	28.6	50	28.7	49	26.2	99	27.4
10+	63	19.8	12	28.6	51	29.3	24	12.8	75	20.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The number of times in juvenile detention was obtained using CIMS information, considered to be the most reliable. On average, the 2009 YPICHS participants had been in juvenile detention an average of 5.2 times, with a range of 0 to 37 times. Young women had more times in custody on average than young men (6.0 vs 5.1), although this difference was not significant. Young Aboriginal people in the sample had significantly more times in custody on average than non-Aboriginal young people (6.4 vs 4.1,  $p < 0.001$ ). The difference in medians was also significant, with the median number of admissions for Aboriginal young people being five times, compared to two times for non-Aboriginal young people, and three times for the overall sample.

Table 2.1.5 Average number of times in juvenile detention custody (CIMS)

	Young Men	Young Women	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Total
N	319	42	174	187	361
Mean ( $\pm$ sd)	5.1 ( $\pm$ 6.1)	6.0 ( $\pm$ 6.8)	6.4 ( $\pm$ 6.3)	4.1 ( $\pm$ 5.8)	5.2 ( $\pm$ 6.1)
Median	3	5	5	2	3
Range	0-33	0-37	0-33	0-37	0-37

### Juvenile detention community and control orders

Young people who are charged with an offence and found guilty are subject to the following outcomes as defined under Section 33(1) *Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act, 1987* (CCPA). Section 33(1B) of the CCPA also allows for the suspension of a custodial order if the young person enters into a good behaviour bond. Upon a finding of guilt, the Children's Court may:

- Dismiss the charge, or dismiss with a caution;
- Release on a bond not exceeding two years;
- Impose a fine not exceeding the maximum prescribed for the offence, or \$1000, whichever is less;
  - release on a condition that the young person complies with a youth justice conference outcome plan determined at a conference held under the *Young Offenders Act, 1997*;
  - adjourn the proceedings for up to 12 months from the finding of guilt to assess the child's rehabilitation prospects or progress;
- Impose a bond and a fine;
- Release on probation not exceeding two years;
- Impose a community service order up to 250 hours (up to 100 if under 16);
- Impose a control order in a detention centre for a period not exceeding two years.

The options set out in the CCPA allow for a myriad of non-custodial based options to be tried in order to assist young people to rehabilitate and cease offending. It is important to note that there are some offences that are not able to be heard by the Children's Court. These are: serious indictable offences (see s17 of the CCPA); indictable offences, or those offences elected to be committed to a higher court (see s18 of the CCPA); and some driving offences, which are referred to in s28 of the CCPA.

The receipt of a control order is the most serious finalised outcome that can be received in the Children's Court. A control order is the term given to a fixed period that a young person is sentenced to by the Children's Court after they are found to be guilty of an offence. A control order functions similarly to a sentence (the adult term of imprisonment). There are some differences between the children's and adult orders, including: a control order can only be given for a period of up to two years (three years for cumulative orders); a control order of six months or less must be served in full; a person serving a control order may be eligible for leave; and there are provisions for early release under certain sections of the CCPA. As the majority of young people in juvenile justice centres are serving a control order (as opposed to an order of adult imprisonment), control orders and sentences have been combined for reporting purposes in this report.

Using the Juvenile Justice CIMS database to assess the 2009 YPICHS sample, the majority (63%) of young people had never served a control order. A very small proportion had served 10 or more control orders (6%), with young men being three times as likely to have served a control order as young women (6% vs 2%), though this was not significant. Aboriginal young people were significantly less likely to have never received a control order than a non-Aboriginal young person (51% vs 75%,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 2.1.6** Number of juvenile detention control orders (CIMS)

	Young Men		Young Women		Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
None	195	61.1	33	78.6	88	50.6	140	74.9	228	63.2
1	28	8.8	4	9.5	15	8.6	17	9.1	32	8.9
2	21	6.6	2	4.8	13	7.5	10	5.4	23	6.4
3-4	27	8.5	2	4.8	21	12.1	8	4.3	29	8.0
5-9	29	9.1	0	0.0	22	12.6	7	3.7	29	8.0
10+	19	6.0	1	2.4	15	8.6	5	2.7	20	5.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The mean number of control orders ever received by the 2009 YPICHS sample was 1.8 orders, although most (63%) had never previously received a control order. Young men received significantly more orders on average than young women (2.0 to 0.6,  $p < 0.03$ ). Similarly, Aboriginal young people received significantly more control orders than non-Aboriginal young people (2.7 to 0.9,  $p < 0.001$ ). The range of control orders was large, with the total ranging from 0 and 32 control orders; the greatest variation was found for young men and Aboriginal young people.

**Table 2.1.7** Average number of juvenile detention control orders (CIMS)

	Young Men	Young Women	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Total
N	319	42	174	187	361
Mean ( $\pm$ sd)	2.0 ( $\pm$ 3.9)	0.6 ( $\pm$ 1.7)	2.7 ( $\pm$ 4.6)	0.9 ( $\pm$ 2.5)	1.8 ( $\pm$ 3.8)
Median	0	0	0	0	0
Range	0-32	0-10	0-32	0-21	0-32

A community order includes orders such as a bond, probation or parole, which allow the recipient to serve their sentence in a community based setting. These orders are periods of time during which the young person must exhibit good behaviour, and obey conditions as set out by the Court. These may include a period of supervision such as reporting to police, to Juvenile Justice, drug testing, counselling, attending a drug or alcohol rehabilitation centre, attending school, or any other condition that may be ordered by the Magistrate. A young person may be sentenced to a community based order on its own, or to a control order plus a period of probation or parole to be served after release from custody.

In the 2009 YPICHS sample, one-third (33%) of participants had never received any form of community based order. Over one-third (38%) had received five or more community orders, which was significantly higher in Aboriginal compared to non-Aboriginal young people (47% vs 27%,  $p < 0.001$ ). Aboriginal young people also had the highest re-presentation (21%) in the 10 or more community orders category.

**Table 2.1.8 Number of juvenile detention community orders (CIMS)**

	Young Men		Young Women		Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
None	102	32.0	17	40.5	43	24.7	76	40.6	119	33.0
1	31	9.7	4	9.5	8	4.6	27	14.4	35	9.7
2	22	6.9	3	7.1	11	6.3	14	7.5	25	6.9
3-4	41	12.9	6	14.3	28	16.1	19	10.2	47	13.0
5-9	78	24.5	7	16.7	47	27.0	38	20.3	85	23.6
10+	45	14.1	5	11.9	37	21.3	13	7.0	50	13.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The average number of community orders ever received by the 2009 YPICHS sample was four. Young women and non-Aboriginal young people had on average fewer community orders and control orders than the overall sample. The median number of orders ranged from one community based order for non-Aboriginal young people, 1.5 for young women, three for both young men and the overall sample and the highest being four for Aboriginal young people.

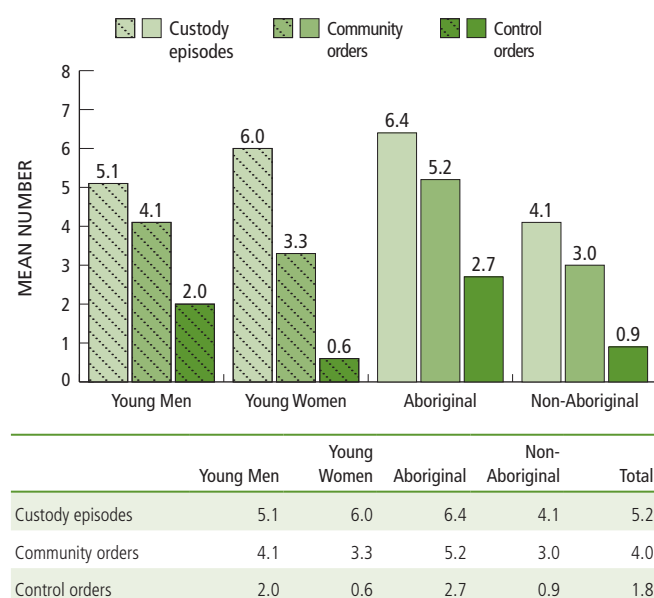
The range was less than that found for the control orders, being 0 to 27 community orders. The widest variation could be found among young men and non-Aboriginal young people; both showed the full range of 0 to 27 orders. No gender differences were found in the mean number of community orders ever received. However, Aboriginal young people were found to have received significantly higher numbers of community orders than non-Aboriginal young people (5.2 to 3.0,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 2.1.9 Average number of juvenile detention community orders (CIMS)**

	Young Men	Young Women	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Total
N	319	42	174	187	361
Mean ( $\pm$ sd)	4.1 ( $\pm$ 4.7)	3.3 ( $\pm$ 4.5)	5.2 ( $\pm$ 4.8)	3.0 ( $\pm$ 4.2)	4.0 ( $\pm$ 4.6)
Median	3	1.5	4	1	3
Range	0-27	0-20	0-22	0-27	0-27

A comparison of the mean number of admissions to custody, community and control orders for the 2009 YPICHS sample is presented below.

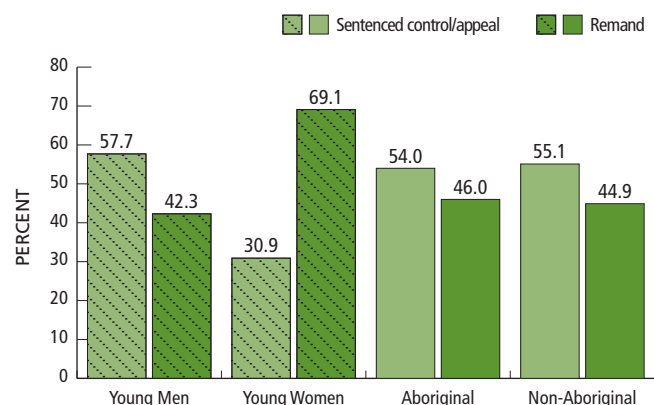
**Table/Fig 2.1.10 Average number of juvenile detention custody episodes, control orders, and community orders (CIMS)**



## 2.2 Current detention

Using CIMS to determine the legal status of the 2009 YPICHS sample, just over half (55%) were on sentenced control or appeal orders, compared to 45% on remand. Young women were significantly more likely to have been on remand than young men at the time of the YPICHS (69% vs 42%,  $p < 0.05$ ). There was no difference by Aboriginality relating to whether the young person was sentenced or on remand. Participants were also asked their current legal status in custody. The majority were able to correctly determine if they were sentenced or on remand.

Table/Fig 2.2.1 Current status in custody (CIMS)

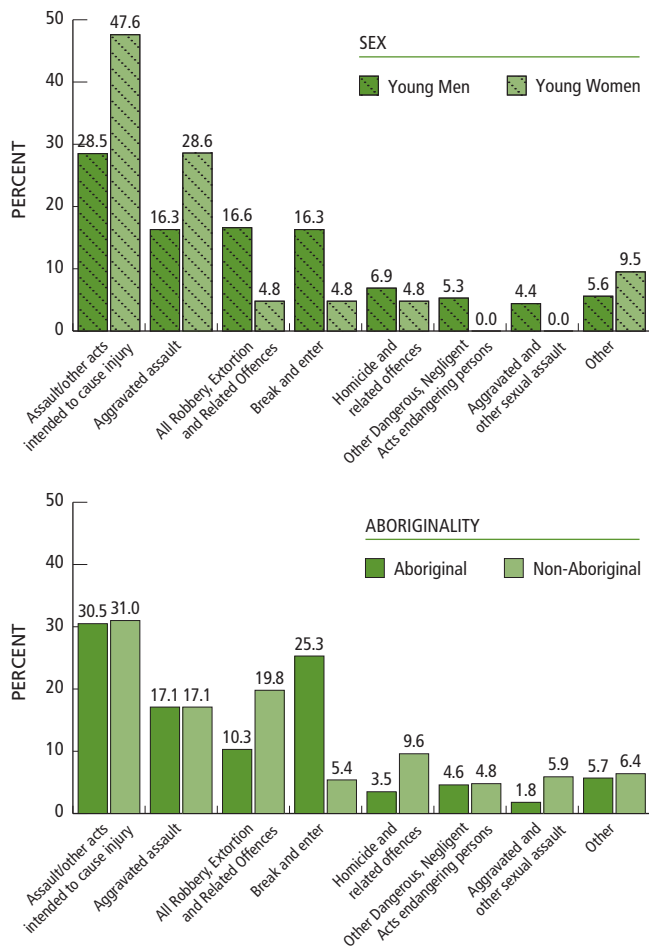


	Young Men		Young Women		Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sentenced control/appeal	184	57.7	13	30.9	94	54.0	103	55.1	197	54.6
Remand	135	42.3	29	69.1	80	46.0	84	44.9	164	45.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The CIMS database records the most serious offence for each admission to custody. There are 19 higher order categories which comprise the most serious offence categories in the database. These categories are based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics classification systems of the *National Offence Index (2009)* and the *Australian Standard Offence Classification (ASOC) (ABS, 2008b)*. The table below shows the most serious offences for the 2009 participant sample. Please note that each participant may have been charged with or convicted of more than one offence for this admission to custody; therefore this should be taken into consideration when interpreting these statistics. Small numbers of offences were combined into the 'other' category. The offence categories of illicit drug offences, justice offences (e.g. abscond, breach order, and fail to appear at court), road traffic and motor vehicle regulatory offences, and weapons and explosives offences were not represented in the most serious offences for the 2009 sample.

The offence category of other acts intended to cause injury was the most frequently occurring most serious offence category across the entire 2009 sample. Young women were most often charged with violent offences, with the most serious offence for 76% of young women involving some form of assault (compared to only 45% of young men). The majority of most serious offences for young women were either other acts intended to cause injury or aggravated assault. For Aboriginal young people break and enter offences accounted for a quarter of all most serious offences recorded. One in five non-Aboriginal young people had robbery, extortion and related offence as the most serious offence. Males and non-Aboriginal young people made up the majority of the sample who had been charged with homicide and related offences as their most serious offence.

**Table/Fig 2.2.2 Most serious offence for current juvenile detention (CIMS)**



	Young Men		Young Women		Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Assault/other acts intended to cause injury	91	28.5	20	47.6	53	30.5	58	31.0	111	30.8
Aggravated assault (e.g. malicious wounding, GBH)	52	16.3	12	28.6	32	17.1	32	17.1	64	17.7
All robbery, extortion and related offences (not break and enter)	53	16.6	2	4.8	18	10.3	37	19.8	55	15.2
Break and enter	52	16.3	2	4.8	44	25.3	10	5.4	54	15.0
Homicide and related offences	22	6.9	2	4.8	6	3.5	18	9.6	24	6.7
Other dangerous, negligent acts endangering persons (inc dangerous driving)	17	5.3	0	0.0	8	4.6	9	4.8	17	4.7
Aggravated and other sexual assault	14	4.4	0	0.0	3	1.8	11	5.9	14	3.9
Other	18	5.6	4	9.5	10	5.7	12	6.4	22	6.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: The "Other" Category includes the offence categories of abduction and related offences; aggravated drink driving; deception offences (e.g. fraud, forgery); motor vehicle theft; other theft and related offences; property damage; and public order offences.

Over one third (37%) of participants had been in custody for less than four weeks at the time of their baseline interview. A higher proportion of young women had been in custody for less time with 60% being in custody for less than four weeks compared to 34% of young men ( $p < 0.01$ ). Similarly, more Aboriginal young people were in custody for less than four weeks than non-Aboriginal young people (47% vs 28%,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 2.2.3 Amount of time served for current juvenile detention (CIMS)**

	Young Men		Young Women		Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<1 week	27	8.5	4	9.5	23	13.2	8	4.3	31	8.6
1-<2 weeks	35	11.0	10	23.8	26	14.9	19	10.2	45	12.5
2-<4 weeks	47	14.7	11	26.2	33	19.0	25	13.4	58	16.1
1-<3 months	86	27.0	9	21.4	54	31.0	41	21.9	95	26.3
3-<6 months	61	19.1	0	0.0	21	12.1	40	21.4	61	16.9
6-<12 months	41	12.9	4	9.5	13	7.5	32	17.1	45	12.5
1 year or more	22	6.9	4	9.5	4	2.3	22	11.8	26	7.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>100.0</b>

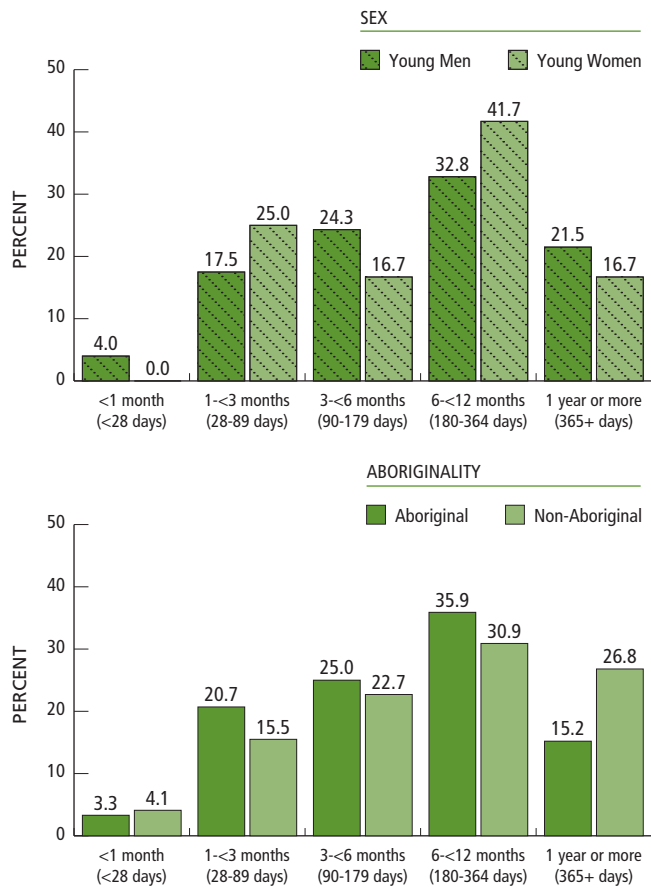
The average number of days that had been spent in custody at the time of the first interview was 119 days for all 2009 YPICHS participants. Non-Aboriginal young people were, on average, in custody for longer than Aboriginal young people (166 vs 69 days;  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 2.2.4 Average days served for current juvenile detention (CIMS)**

	Young Men	Young Women	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Total
N	319	42	174	187	361
Mean ( $\pm$ sd)	118 ( $\pm$ 156)	127 ( $\pm$ 295)	69 ( $\pm$ 95)	166 ( $\pm$ 218)	119 ( $\pm$ 177)
Median	62	18.5	29.5	99	52
Range	0-1070	3-1331	0-501	1-1331	0-1331

Among sentenced young people, the majority (54%) were serving a sentence for six months or more. A higher proportion of non-Aboriginal young people were serving a sentence of six months or more than Aboriginal young people (57% vs 51%), though this difference was not significant. Very few (4%) participants were serving a custodial sentence for less than one month.

Table/Fig 2.2.5 Sentence length (if sentenced) for current juvenile detention (CIMS)



	Young Men		Young Women		Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<1 month	7	4.0	0	0.0	3	3.3	4	4.1	7	3.7
1-<3 months	31	17.5	3	25.0	19	20.7	15	15.5	34	18.0
3-<6 months	43	24.3	2	16.7	23	25.0	22	22.7	45	23.8
6-<12 months	58	32.8	5	41.7	33	35.9	30	30.9	63	33.3
1 year or more	38	21.5	2	16.7	14	15.2	26	26.8	40	21.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Approximately half of the sample was serving a control order or sentence at the time of testing (52%). Information was extracted from the CIMS database in order to determine the length of the control order that was being served by these 189 young people. On average, the length of order was approximately one year (367 days), and the median length of order was six months (180 days). There was little variation in the median length detected across gender or Aboriginality. However, non-Aboriginal young people on average had a longer control order or sentence than Aboriginal young people (455 days vs 275 days,  $p < 0.001$ ).

Table 2.2.6 Average sentence length (if sentenced) for current juvenile detention (CIMS)

	Young Men	Young Women	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Total
N	177	12	92	97	189
Mean ( $\pm$ sd)	369 ( $\pm$ 181)	347 ( $\pm$ 440)	275 ( $\pm$ 516)	455 ( $\pm$ 879)	367 ( $\pm$ 729)
Median	181	180	180	182	180
Range	0-6208	29-1260	0-4380	6-6208	0-6208

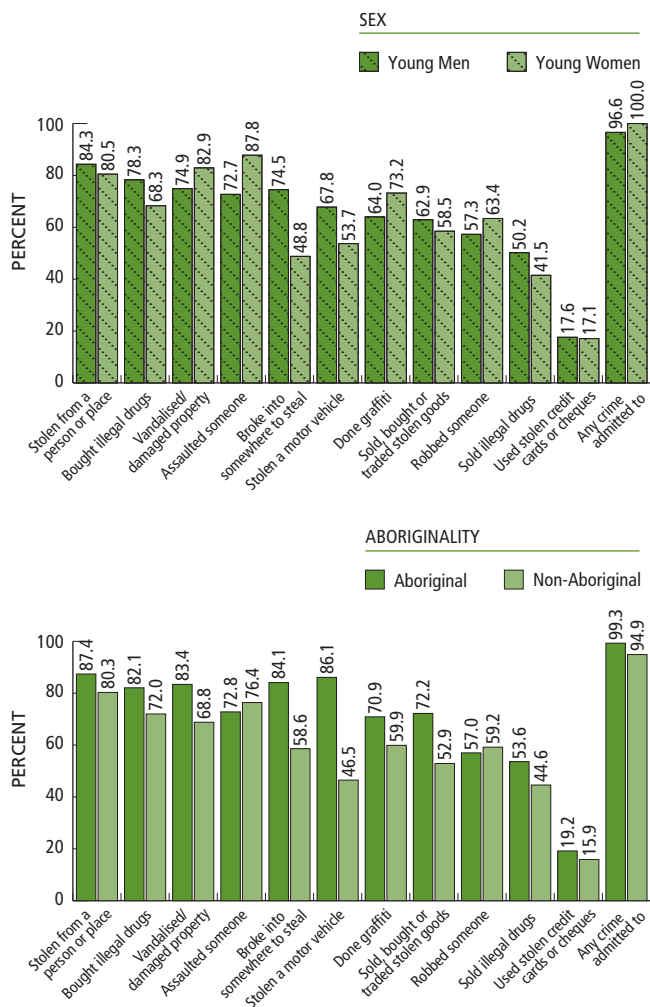
## 2.3 Self-reported offending history

Participants were asked about specific offence types in order to gain a better picture of the origins of offending and the developmental pathway for offending behaviour. The criminal history questionnaire used was adapted with the permission of the Australian Institute of Criminology, who developed the questionnaire for the national research programs of Juvenile Drug Use Careers of Offenders (DUCO) (Pritchard & Payne, 2005a; Pritchard & Payne, 2005b) and Drug Use Monitoring in Australia (Gaffney et al., 2010). Comparisons were made with the findings from the Juvenile DUCO where appropriate. This questionnaire was not used in the 2003 YPICH; therefore, comparative information is not available.

The questions in the criminal history questionnaire did not require participants to disclose details of undetected offending that would require information to be reported to the police. Questions were amended in order to ensure that neither the young person nor the interviewer was placed in such a position. The questionnaire was administered by a Juvenile Justice staff member who was experienced in asking questions in this area in order to further minimise the potential of ethical issues arising in the administration of this questionnaire. Participants were first asked if they had ever committed 11 different types of offences. If they answered yes, they were then asked at what age they first committed the offence type, how many times they had ever committed the offence and the frequency of committing the offence in the six months prior to this admission to custody.

Nearly all (97%) participants admitted to committing at least one crime, with significantly more Aboriginal young people admitting to a crime than non-Aboriginal young people (99% vs 95%,  $p < 0.02$ ). Stealing from a person was the most common offence admitted to (84%), followed by buying illegal drugs (77%) and vandalising property (76%). Aboriginal young people were significantly more likely than non-Aboriginal young people to have bought illegal drugs (82% vs 72%,  $p < 0.04$ ), vandalised property (83% vs 69%,  $p < 0.01$ ), stolen a car (86% vs 47%,  $p < 0.001$ ), dealt in stolen goods (72% vs 53%,  $p < 0.001$ ) or committed a break enter and steal offence (84% vs 59%,  $p < 0.001$ ). Two crimes were significantly different by gender. These were break, enter and steal, more likely to have been committed by young men (75% vs 49%,  $p < 0.001$ ); and assault, more likely to have been committed by women (88% vs 73%,  $p < 0.04$ ).

Table/Fig 2.3.1 Offences ever committed



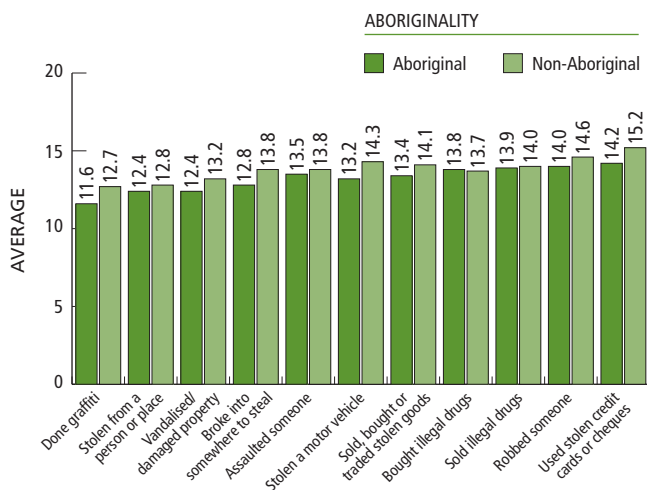
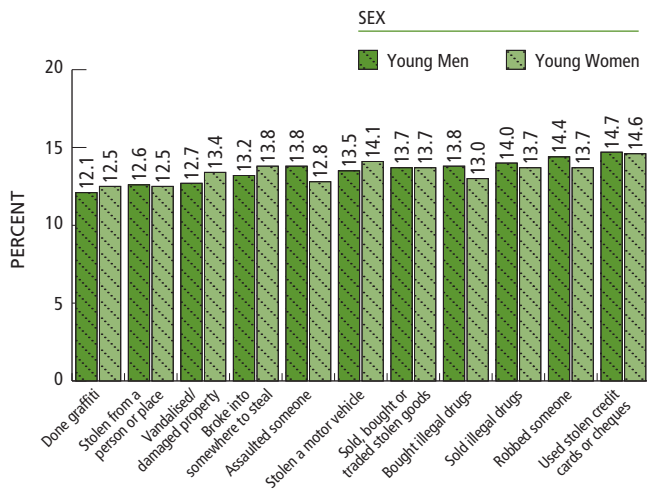
(Multiple response)	Young Men		Young Women		Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Stolen from a person or place	225	84.3	33	80.5	132	87.4	126	80.3	258	84.0
Bought illegal drugs	209	78.3	28	68.3	124	82.1	113	72.0	237	77.2
Vandalised/damaged property	200	74.9	34	82.9	126	83.4	108	68.8	234	76.2
Assaulted someone	194	72.7	36	87.8	110	72.8	120	76.4	230	74.9
Broke into somewhere to steal	199	74.5	20	48.8	127	84.1	92	58.6	219	71.3
Stolen a motor vehicle	181	67.8	22	53.7	130	86.1	73	46.5	203	66.1
Done graffiti	171	64.0	30	73.2	107	70.9	94	59.9	201	65.6
Sold, bought or traded stolen goods	168	62.9	24	58.5	109	72.2	83	52.9	192	62.5
Robbed someone	153	57.3	26	63.4	86	57.0	93	59.2	179	58.3
Sold illegal drugs	134	50.2	17	41.5	81	53.6	70	44.6	151	49.2
Used stolen credit cards or cheques	47	17.6	7	17.1	29	19.2	25	15.9	54	17.6
Any crime admitted to	258	96.6	41	100.0	150	99.3	149	94.9	299	97.4

### Age first committed offence types

The first offence type committed was on average graffiti at 12.1 years, with fraud and forgery (e.g. using stolen credit cards or cheques) first committed at the latest in the offence range at 14.7 years. Most offence types had a mean age for commencement of 14 years or below. Only robbery and using stolen credit cards or cheques (fraud, forgery) had a mean commencement age above 14 years.

On examining age of first offence by offence type, significant differences were found by gender and Aboriginality. Aboriginal young people were, on average, significantly younger than non-Aboriginal young people when they first committed the following offences: graffiti ( $p < 0.001$ ), vandalising property ( $p < 0.01$ ), stealing motor vehicle ( $p < 0.001$ ), break enter and steal ( $p < 0.001$ ), dealing in stolen goods ( $p < 0.01$ ), and robbery ( $p < 0.02$ ). Young women were significantly younger, on average, than young men when they first committed the crimes of assault ( $p < 0.02$ ) and robbery ( $p < 0.04$ ).

**Table/Fig 2.3.2 Mean age offences first committed (if ever committed the offence)**



(Multiple response)	Young Men		Young Women		Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal		Total	
	n	Avg	n	Avg	n	Avg	n	Avg	n	Avg
Done graffiti	165	12.1	30	12.5	104	11.6	91	12.7	195	12.1
Stolen from a person or place	219	12.6	33	12.5	129	12.4	123	12.8	252	12.6
Vandalised/damaged property	194	12.7	34	13.4	123	12.4	105	13.2	228	12.8
Broke into somewhere to steal	194	13.2	20	13.8	124	12.8	90	13.8	214	13.2
Assaulted someone	189	13.8	36	12.8	107	13.5	118	13.8	225	13.6
Stolen a motor vehicle	178	13.5	22	14.1	127	13.2	73	14.3	200	13.6
Sold, bought or traded stolen goods	165	13.7	24	13.7	106	13.4	83	14.1	189	13.7
Bought illegal drugs	205	13.8	28	13.0	122	13.8	111	13.7	233	13.7
Sold illegal drugs	132	14.0	17	13.7	80	13.9	69	14.0	149	14.0
Robbed someone	150	14.4	26	13.7	83	14.0	93	14.6	176	14.3
Used stolen credit cards or cheques	45	14.7	7	14.6	27	14.2	25	15.2	52	14.7

Each young person was also asked if they had committed their offence in the six months prior to being in custody. For example, among N=239 participants who indicated they had ever bought illegal drugs, 89% reported that they had bought illegal drugs in the six months before they came into custody. Other common crimes reported to have been recently committed by 2009 YPICHs participants included break enter and steal (74%), stealing from a person or place (74%) and stealing a car (70%). Aboriginal young people were significantly more likely to report crime in the past six months than non-Aboriginal young people across nearly all crime categories except buying or selling illegal drugs, acts of fraud, or robbing a person. There were no differences by gender for recently having committed any of the crime categories.

**Table 2.3.3 Offences committed at least once in six months prior to custody (if ever committed offence)**

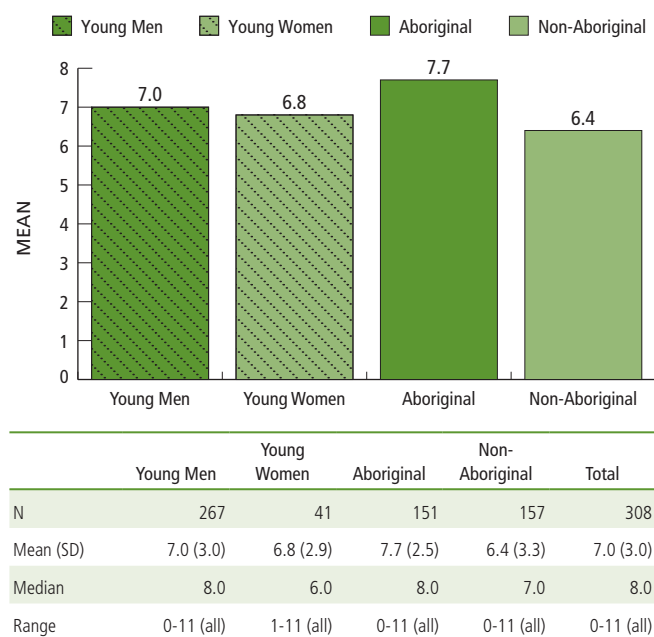
(Multiple response)	Young Men		Young Women		Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Bought illegal drugs	186	89.0	25	89.3	114	91.9	97	85.8	211	89.0
Broke into somewhere to steal	146	73.4	17	85.0	101	79.5	62	67.4	163	74.4
Stolen from a person or place	168	74.7	24	72.7	106	80.3	86	68.3	192	74.4
Stolen a motor vehicle	128	70.7	13	59.1	98	75.4	43	58.9	141	69.5
Done graffiti	117	68.4	18	60.0	81	75.7	54	57.5	135	67.2
Vandalised/damaged property	111	56.1	21	61.8	79	62.7	53	50.0	132	56.9
Sold illegal drugs	102	76.1	12	70.6	64	79.0	50	71.4	114	75.5
Used stolen credit cards or cheques	22	46.8	5	71.4	17	58.6	10	40.0	27	50.0
Sold, bought or traded stolen goods	130	77.4	19	79.2	88	80.7	61	73.5	149	77.6
Assaulted someone	146	75.3	25	69.4	93	84.6	78	65.0	171	74.3
Robbed someone	103	67.3	18	69.2	59	63.4	62	72.1	121	67.6
Any crime admitted to	233	90.3	37	90.2	143	95.3	127	85.2	270	90.3

## Number of crime types ever committed

Young people were asked if they had ever committed any of 11 offence types. Participants generally reported committing a range of offences, with little evidence of specialisation. This is consistent with the findings of the Juvenile DUCO research (Pritchard & Payne, 2005b).

Participants admitted having ever committed an average of seven types of crime. Young Aboriginal people admitted to having committed more types of crime than non-Aboriginal young people (7.7 vs 6.4 types;  $p < 0.001$ ). There were no gender differences in the average number of crime types admitted, although young men admitted committing a higher median number of crimes than young women (8.0 vs 6.0), but this difference was not significant.

Table/Fig 2.3.4 Mean number of crimes admitted



## Reasons for first committing crime

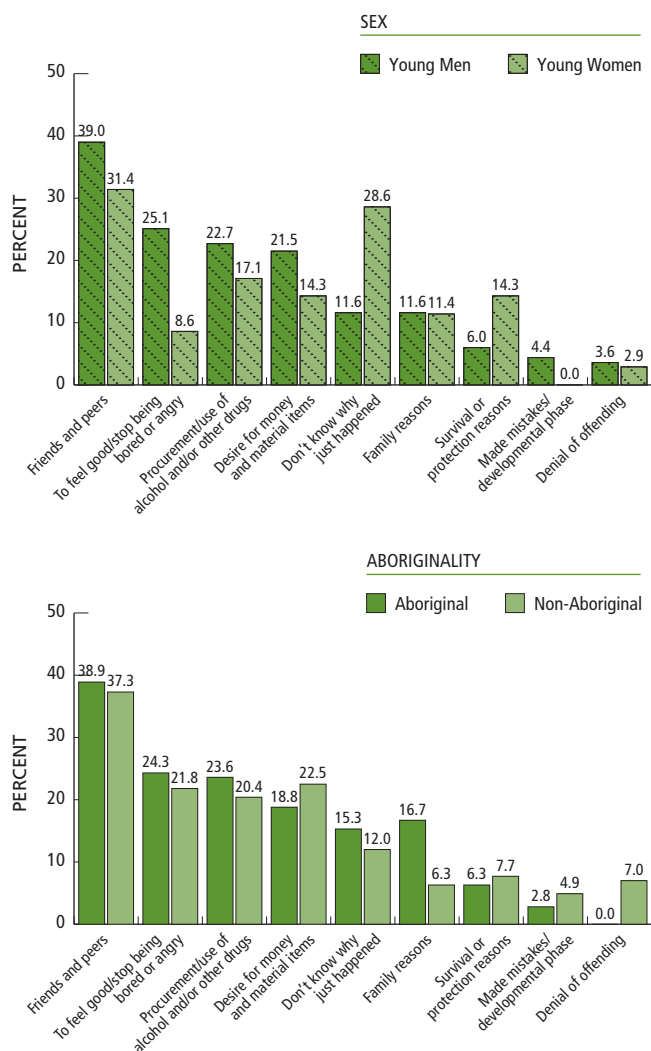
At the end of the 2009 YPICHS questionnaire, young people were asked an open-ended question to elicit the reasons why they first started to commit crime. Responses were categorised into nine themes. A total of 410 reasons were given by the 286 participants who provided a response to this question, ranging from no response to a maximum of four reasons why they first starting to commit crime. Twenty two (8%) young people did not provide a response to this question.

The most frequently given reasons for first starting to commit crime related to friends and peers, identified by 38% of the sample. Some of the reasons identified by the participants were: 'hanging out with the wrong crowd', 'peer pressure', 'wanting to fit in with older peers', 'being involved in gangs', 'wanting admiration and respect' and 'all my friends were doing it'. Young men and Aboriginal young people more often gave the reason 'all my friends were doing it' than young women or non-Aboriginal young people.

Responses related to feelings or emotions were next highest, given as a reason by 23% of the sample (again higher proportions of males and Aboriginal young people gave this as one of their reasons). Some respondents gave anger, or wanting to get back at the world as a reason. Another common reason was the adrenaline rush of doing crime, or being addicted to crime and feeling good when doing crime. Some related the rush of crime as 'fun' or 'easy'. Some participants described crime as something they did to relieve boredom.

The procurement of drugs and/or alcohol, or the use of substances was the third most common theme, accounting for 22% of responses in the sample. Again, a higher proportion of young men and young Aboriginal people gave this response.

**Table/Fig 2.3.5 Themes describing reasons for first committing crime**



Themes for first committing crime (Multiple response)	Young Men		Young Women		Non-Aboriginal		Total			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Friends and peers	98	39.0	11	31.4	56	38.9	53	37.3	109	38.1
To feel good/stop being bored or angry	63	25.1	3	8.6	35	24.3	31	21.8	66	23.1
Procurement/use of alcohol and/or other drugs	57	22.7	6	17.1	34	23.6	29	20.4	63	22.0
Desire for money and material items	54	21.5	5	14.3	27	18.8	32	22.5	59	20.6
Don't know why just happened	29	11.6	10	28.6	22	15.3	17	12.0	39	13.6
Family reasons	29	11.6	4	11.4	24	16.7	9	6.3	33	11.5
Survival or protection reasons	15	6.0	5	14.3	9	6.3	11	7.7	20	7.0
Made mistakes/developmental phase	11	4.4	0	0.0	4	2.8	7	4.9	11	3.8
Denial of offending	9	3.6	1	2.9	0	0.0	10	7.0	10	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>87.8</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>50.3</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>49.7</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The theme of wanting money or material things included reasons such as: 'wanting what other people had', 'wanting my own money', 'had no money', 'was poor' and 'did not want to pay'. Young men and non-Aboriginal young people provided the highest proportions of responses in this category.

Family reasons included reasons such as: 'crime runs in my family' and 'they all do crime', 'bad childhood' or 'family problems', 'parent or caregiver left the family home' or 'family member passed away'. Aboriginal young people were most likely to provide this reason compared to non-Aboriginal young people. The proportions within gender were consistent.

Survival or protection reasons included: 'lived on the streets and had to support self', 'no school or job', 'lived in area of crime', 'to protect family or friends' and 'support family or friends'. Young women were the highest proportion giving this as a reason for first committing crime. A small proportion of the population gave reasons relating to their age and making mistakes, including reasons such as: 'not having thought of the consequences', 'being young and experimenting', 'being immature', 'stupid behaviour' and 'lost control of who they were'. Interestingly, only the young men in the sample provided any of these reasons for first committing crime.

The response of 'don't know why' was given by 14% of the sample. A much higher proportion of young women gave this reason than any of the other groups. A 'don't know' response could indicate avoidance of the real reasons for committing crime, lack of trust, insight or interest in thinking about the reasons. The majority of the sample, however, provided a tangible reason for the commencement of their offending behaviour. Similarly, the low rate of 3.5% giving reasons related to the denial of offending, or denying knowledge that what they were doing was a crime, is also important for future rehabilitation prospects.

Table 2.3.6 Reasons given for first committing crime

(Multiple response)	Young Men		Young Women		Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Drug use/needed money for drugs	42	16.7	4	11.4	23	16.0	23	16.2	46	16.1
Wanted own money to get things I wanted	40	15.9	5	14.3	20	13.9	25	17.6	45	15.7
Hanging out with wrong crowd	37	14.7	6	17.1	23	16.0	20	14.1	43	15.0
Don't know why/just happened	29	11.6	10	28.6	22	15.3	17	12.0	39	13.6
All my friends were doing it	28	11.2	5	14.3	18	12.5	15	10.6	33	11.5
It was fun/was easy	22	8.8	1	2.9	14	9.7	9	6.3	23	8.0
Peer pressure/wanted to fit in with older people	20	8.0	0	0.0	10	6.9	10	7.0	20	7.0
Boredom	16	6.4	1	2.9	13	9.0	4	2.8	17	5.9
Alcohol use/needed money to buy	15	6.0	2	5.7	11	7.6	6	4.2	17	5.9
Runs in my family/my family all do crime	14	5.6	2	5.7	14	9.7	2	1.4	16	5.6
Adrenaline rush/feels good	12	4.8	0	0.0	5	3.5	7	4.9	12	4.2
Lived on streets/kicked out of home had to support self	6	2.4	3	8.6	3	2.1	6	4.2	9	3.1
Family member/sig other passed away	8	3.2	0	0.0	4	2.8	4	2.8	8	2.8
Brought up in area full of crime	6	2.4	1	2.9	4	2.8	3	2.1	7	2.4
Thought crime was cool/a good idea	6	2.4	0	0.0	3	2.1	3	2.1	6	2.1
Anger	6	2.4	0	0.0	1	0.7	5	3.5	6	2.1
Wanted admiration/respect/good name	5	2.0	0	0.0	2	1.4	3	2.1	5	1.7
Violent or bad childhood/family problems	3	1.2	2	5.7	4	2.8	1	0.7	5	1.7
Had no money/poor	5	2.0	0	0.0	3	2.1	2	1.4	5	1.7
Didn't do any crime/innocent	5	2.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	3.5	5	1.7
Jealousy of what others had and wanted it	4	1.6	0	0.0	2	1.4	2	1.4	4	1.4
Feel comfortable doing it/felt like it	3	1.2	1	2.9	1	0.7	3	2.1	4	1.4
Parent or caregiver left home	3	1.2	0	0.0	2	1.4	1	0.7	3	1.0
Learnt you have to get things yourself	3	1.2	0	0.0	1	0.7	2	1.4	3	1.0
Immaturity/experimental phase	3	1.2	0	0.0	2	1.4	1	0.7	3	1.0
Addicted to crime	3	1.2	0	0.0	1	0.7	2	1.4	3	1.0
Wrong place at wrong time/not my fault	2	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	1.4	2	0.7
To protect family and friends	1	0.4	1	2.9	1	0.7	1	0.7	2	0.7
No comment	1	0.4	1	2.9			2	1.4	2	0.7
Lost control of self/don't know own actions	2	0.8	0	0.0	1	0.7	1	0.7	2	0.7
Hobby/learned process	2	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	1.4	2	0.7
Get stuff for free/didn't want to pay	2	0.8	0	0.0	1	0.7	1	0.7	2	0.7
To support my family- doing it tough	1	0.4	0	0.0	1	0.7	0	0.0	1	0.3
To get back at the world	1	0.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.7	1	0.3
Something different to do	1	0.4	0	0.0	1	0.7	1	0.7	1	0.3
No school/no job	1	0.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.7	1	0.3
Movies and music about crime	1	0.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.7	1	0.3
Moved to Australia and didn't follow the rules much	1	0.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.7	1	0.3
Made a mistake	1	0.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.7	1	0.3
Got involved in gangs	1	0.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.7	1	0.3
Didn't think/consider consequences	1	0.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.7	1	0.3
Didn't know it was a crime	1	0.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.7	1	0.3
Cause I was stupid	1	0.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.7	1	0.3

Note: This question was responded to by N=256 young men and N=35 young women.

## 2.4 Antisocial Process Screening Device

There are multiple causal pathways through which adolescents develop antisocial patterns of behaviour. Not all children exposed to similar experiences of abuse and neglect are affected in the same way. A range of other life experiences and family circumstances (both positive and negative) impact on a child's vulnerability or resilience. These are referred to as risk and protective factors. The Antisocial Process Screening Device (APSD) measures three factors (callous/unemotional; narcissism; and impulsivity) that place a child/young person at risk of developing antisocial behaviour (Frick & Hare, 2001). The APSD gives a total score (0-20) and a score for each of the three factors. Higher scores on these factors indicate higher levels of these traits. For clinical purposes, the APSD is designed for use with youth aged 6-13 years. It is scored from parent and teacher ratings and its reported psychometric properties apply to these published forms. However, the instrument has also been used for research purposes as an adolescent self-report instrument. Munoz & Frick (2007) demonstrated that the self-report version of the APSD showed moderate correlations with parent ratings of traits, and significant correlations with measures of antisocial behaviour.

Research suggests that the APSD factors are associated with clinically and theoretically meaningful variables (Lee et al., 2003). For instance, children with high scores have demonstrated more oppositional and aggressive behaviours and more school suspensions than children with low scores. In regard to the three APSD factors, Lee et al. (2003) reported studies which found that children who score highly on the callous-unemotional factor display a greater number and variety of conduct problems and have more contact with police. In addition, the callous-unemotional factor may be associated with fearlessness and risk-taking behaviours. This enhanced understanding could prove critical for designing more effective interventions for a very difficult-to-treat group of young people (Frick & Viding, 2009).

In the 2009 YPICHS, the youth self-report version of the APSD was administered by experienced Juvenile Justice psychologists or counsellors. Overall, young men showed greater variability in the range of scores compared to young women. It is possible that some young men show very little presence of traits underlying antisocial behaviour. However, on average, neither gender is more likely to behave in an antisocial manner than the other. There were no significant differences in the total APSD score by gender or Aboriginality.

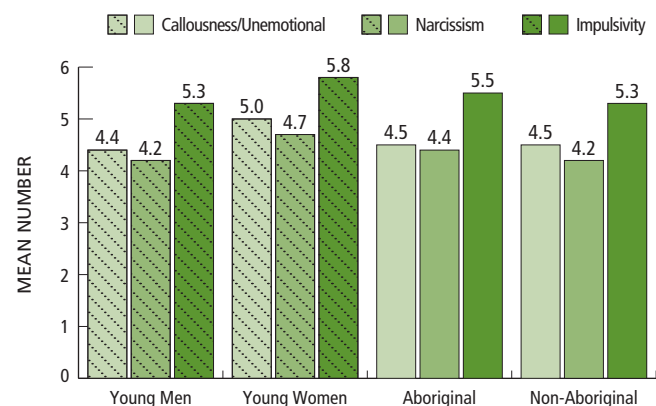
Table 2.4.1 APSD score characteristics

	Young Men	Young Women	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Total
N	267	41	151	157	308
Mean (SD)	16.2 (5.3)	17.3 (4.6)	16.8 (5.3)	15.9 (5.1)	16.3 (5.2)
Median	16.0	17.0	17.0	16.0	16.0
Range	2-31	8-28	5-31	2-28	2-31

When looking at the three factors included in the APSD, it was found that all three traits are present in this population. Though young women scored higher on all the subscales, none of these differences was significantly higher than found for young men. There was no significant difference by Aboriginality.

The total and subscale scores (both means and standard deviations) obtained in this survey are similar to the results from a recent U.S. study of male young offenders (Douglas et al., 2008). This study found the total APSD self-report score to be predictive of violent recidivism and weapons-related recidivism. Among the subscales, the APSD impulsivity subscale was associated with weapons-related recidivism.

Table/Fig 2.4.2 Mean APSD Sub-scales score



	Young Men	Young Women	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Callousness/unemotional	4.4	5.0	4.5	4.5
Narcissism	4.2	4.7	4.4	4.2
Impulsivity	5.3	5.8	5.5	5.3

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## Chapter Summary

Nearly three-quarters of young people had a history of previous juvenile detention, with significantly more Aboriginal than non-Aboriginal young people having a detention history. Aboriginal young people were also significantly more likely to have had their first juvenile detention at a younger age and to have been in detention or received a community order more times than non-Aboriginal young people. The most serious offence for most young women involved some form of assault, and this rate was higher than for young men. Nearly half of young people were currently on remand, with significantly more young women on remand than young men. Non-Aboriginal young people were, on average, in custody for longer than Aboriginal young people. Among those sentenced, most were serving a sentence of six months or longer.

Stealing from a person was the most common offence admitted to by young people followed by buying illegal drugs and vandalizing property. On average, the majority of participants' first offence type was graffiti at age 12.1 years. Significant differences were found according to Aboriginality and gender with Aboriginal young people being significantly younger when they first committed offences including graffiti, vandalizing property and robbery. Young women were significantly younger than young men when they first committed the crimes of assault and robbery. The most frequently given reasons for starting to commit crime related to the influence of the young people's friends and peers. Other reasons related to feelings such as anger, the need for money, family influence, and survival or protection. Some young people indicated that they did not know why they had committed the crime, and this was particularly common among young women.