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## Youths in custody in NSW: Aspirations and strategies for the future

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**Aim:** To investigate the extent to which youths in custody 1) rate specific life goals as important and likely to eventuate; 2) have strategies to achieve their goals; and 3) can anticipate barriers to achieving their goals.

**Method:** A total of 107 detainees drawn from NSW Juvenile Justice centres were interviewed about their life goals.

**Results:** Most youths rated specific life goals, such as having a well-paying job and avoiding trouble with the police, as 'quite important' or 'very important' goals to achieve in the future. When youths were asked how likely it was that these specific goals would be realised, the most common response was 'quite likely' or 'very likely'. The most frequently identified strategies for having a well-paying job included getting the necessary diplomas and starting in a junior position to get experience. The most frequently identified strategies for avoiding trouble with the police were resisting peer pressure and obeying the law. Commonly reported barriers to achieving these goals included associating with antisocial peers, drugs and alcohol usage. Many youths also recognised that getting into trouble with the law would also be a barrier to having a well-paying job.

**Conclusion:** Most youths interviewed in this study placed high importance on specific life goals and were generally optimistic about achieving them. Furthermore, most youths could think of strategies that would help them achieve their goals as well as identify possible barriers to achieving them. These findings have the potential to help service providers and policy makers target their services and policies appropriately.

**Keywords:** youth, juvenile, detainee, custody, future, aspirations, goals, strategies, barriers

### INTRODUCTION

Many incarcerated youths have multiple disability and health problems, including cognitive impairment, mental illness and drug and alcohol abuse. Many also have parents with histories of incarceration, drug and alcohol dependence and low socio-economic status (Indig et al., 2011). These challenging circumstances make it difficult for incarcerated youths to transition effectively from custody back into the community and achieve goals such as completing school, getting a job and avoiding future contact with the criminal justice system.

In addition to addressing the disability and health problems listed above, effective future-oriented planning is likely to be an important tool for the successful reintegration of detainees back into the community and for achieving important life goals. Many researchers have noted the importance of detainees having comprehensive pre-release plans for the future (Graffam,

Shinkfield, Lavelle, & McPherson, 2004; Hammett, Roberts, & Kennedy, 2001; Seiter & Kadela, 2003; Taxman, 2004). At least one study has even demonstrated that detainees who re-offend after being released from custody had significantly poorer reintegration planning scores than a matched group who did not re-offend (Willis & Grace, 2009). Although much of this cited research has been with adult offenders in the United States, the principles are likely to also apply to juvenile offenders in other western countries like Australia.

One component of future-oriented planning is to know what one wants or expects in the future. Of the limited research on the future life goals of juvenile detainees, Abrams (2007) and Clinkenbeard and Zohra (2012) are two notable studies. Abrams (2007) only interviewed 10 detained youths but reported that most of them said that finding a job or finishing school were very important for their future and they were focused on achieving

those goals. More recently, when Clinkenbeard and Zohra (2012) surveyed 543 incarcerated youths, most youths reported between two and three expected outcomes for themselves in the next year. The most commonly reported expectations for the future were not being in custody, doing well at school and having a job.

The Abrams (2007) and Clinkenbeard and Zohra (2012) studies also asked detainees about their strategies to achieve their future goals. Strategies are important because they provide the mechanism for achieving the desired or expected future-self. Strategies could also be thought of as reducing the psychological distance between the present situation and the desired future-self (Oyserman & Markus, 1990).

Abrams (2007) noted that 'learning to cope with freedom' was one of the commonly reported strategies by the detained youths in her study. An example of this strategy was a plan by one detained female to effectively self-manage her time by keeping a diary of all of her plans for each day and keeping strictly to that plan. Abrams (2007) also reported that detained youths were focused on logistical matters in preparation for their release into the community. That is, applying for jobs, finding pathways for continuing their education or trying to secure stable accommodation. Abrams also asked detainees about their potential barriers to a smooth transition back into the community. All of the detained youths interviewed in her study were aware that the influence of old friends (i.e. those who break the law, have substance abuse problems, etc) would present a significant challenge.

Clinkenbeard and Zohra (2012) reported that 90 per cent of the detained youths in their study were able to provide at least one strategy to achieve their goals. They noted, however, that many of the strategies were 'abstract in nature and unlikely to be helpful toward goal achievement' (p. 251). For example, one detainee said that he wanted to live independently from his parents, with his girlfriend and daughter and his strategy for achieving this was to 'change his life' (p.251). Approximately 60 per cent of detainees were able to provide at least one 'concrete' strategy to achieve their goals. An example of a concrete strategy for attending college and learning a trade was to do well at school and 'work with staff to get in the program' (p. 251).

The main aim of the current study was to extend the above research to detained youths in NSW to explore a) their life goals, b) the extent to which they have strategies to achieve their goals and c) the extent to which they can anticipate barriers to achieving their goals.

A secondary aim of this study was to examine whether the importance, likelihood of achieving, or ability to identify strategies or barriers to achieving specified goals differed according to the demographic characteristics of age or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) status.

## METHOD

### SAMPLE

The sample comprised detainees from seven of the eight<sup>1</sup> Juvenile Justice (JJ) centres across NSW. JJ staff from each centre informed the detainees about the study and asked for volunteers to participate. During the recruitment period an average<sup>2</sup> of 310 young people were detained in custody in NSW. Of those 310 youths, a total of 100 males and seven females were interviewed. Seventy-six youths were from JJ centres in the Sydney metropolitan area and were interviewed in person on site. Thirty-one youths were from regional JJ centres and were interviewed by phone. The youths ranged in age from 14 years and 2 months to 21 years, with a mean age of 17 years and 5 months.<sup>3</sup>

Fifty youths were on remand and 57 had been sentenced. The median length of time youths had spent in custody was 17 weeks and, for those who had been sentenced, the median length of sentence was one year.

Most youths (87%) were born in Australia, with 6 per cent of young persons born in New Zealand and the remaining youths being born in Samoa, Afghanistan, China, Sudan, South Korea and Bosnia. A total of 57 per cent of youths said they identified as ATSI.

The young people interviewed in this study were not necessarily representative of all detained youths in NSW (it is possible that the youths who volunteered to participate had different characteristics from those who chose not to participate in the study). On the basis of self-reported sex, age, current detention status (remand or sentenced), country of birth and ATSI status, however, the sample interviewed in the current study were similar to the broader population of NSW youths in custody. As a reference, summary data on these demographic characteristics from the current sample and from the 2009 NSW Young People in Custody Health Survey (Indig et al., 2011) are provided in Appendix Table A1. Self-reported data on the type of offences for which the youths in this study had been incarcerated are presented in Appendix Table A2.

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Youths were first asked to indicate how much they had thought about their future on a four-point Likert scale as follows: 'never', 'sometimes', 'often', 'always'.

Youths were then presented with a list of specific life goals and asked to rate how important and how likely it is they would achieve them. The wording and content of these questions were based on the items in the Pittsburgh Youth Study in the United States (Loeber, Stouthamer-Loeber, Van Kammen, & Farrington, 1991). The goals which youths were asked to rate included

finishing school (i.e. completing Year 12), getting a well-paying job and staying out of trouble with the police. These ratings were made on a four-point-Likert scale which was read aloud to participants. For example, when asked about the importance of having a well-paying job in the future, youths had the following choice of responses: ‘not at all important’, ‘a little bit important’, ‘quite important’ or ‘very important’.

Youths were also asked to report any strategies they could think of to help them achieve their goals and any potential barriers which may prevent them from achieving their goals. The questions about strategies and barriers to achieving life goals were open-ended.

**STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

Descriptive statistics have been utilised to report on youth’s answers to the interview questions. To simplify the reporting of the responses to the closed questions, the four response categories on each of the Likert scales were collapsed into two categories. For the question about the extent to which youths thought about their future, ‘never’ and ‘sometimes’ were collapsed as were ‘often’ and ‘always’. For the questions about the importance of achieving specific life goals, ‘not at all important’ and ‘a little bit important’ were collapsed as were ‘quite important’ and ‘very important’. Similarly, for the question about the likelihood of achieving specific life goals, ‘not at all likely’ and ‘a little bit likely’ were collapsed as were ‘quite likely’ and ‘very likely’. Chi-square analyses were then conducted to see if any of the youth’s responses to these questions, or the ability to think of strategies or barriers, were significantly related to ATSI status or age. As noted previously, the age of detainees varied between 14 and 21 years. To simplify the reporting of age differences, age was collapsed into two categories; younger than 18 years of age

(n = 52) and 18 years of age and over (n = 55). With only seven females in the study it was not possible to conduct chi-square analyses on sex because expected cell counts were less than five.

**RESULTS**

The results are split into four sections: the extent to which youths had thought about their future; the importance of specific life goals; the likelihood of achieving specific life goals; and the strategies for, and barriers to, achieving specific life goals.

**THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOUTHS HAD THOUGHT ABOUT THEIR FUTURE**

As shown in Table 1, prior to arriving in custody, most youths had ‘never’ or only ‘sometimes’ thought about their future. Since arriving in custody, however, most youths thought about their future ‘often’ or ‘always’. These ratings did not differ according to ATSI status or age.

*Table 1. The extent to which youths had thought about their future (n = 107)*

	Never/ Sometimes		Often/ Always	
	n	%	n	%
Prior to arriving in custody	66	61.7	41	38.3
Since arriving in custody	26	24.3	81	75.7

**IMPORTANCE OF SPECIFIC LIFE GOALS**

As can be seen in Table 2, most of the specified life goals were rated by most participants as ‘quite important’ or ‘very important’. One exception should be noted. More participants rated

*Table 2. Youth’s ratings of the importance of specific life goals (n = 107)*

	Not at all important / A little bit important		Quite important / Very important	
	n	%	n	%
Having a well-paying job	9	8.4	98	91.6
Having a good reputation	20	18.7	87	81.3
Working hard to get ahead	9	8.4	98	91.6
Saving money for the future	11	10.3	96	89.7
Being careful with how much money you spend	19	17.8	88	82.2
Having a happy family life	2	1.9	105	98.1
Getting married	63	58.9	44	41.1
Having children	18	16.8	89	83.2
Avoiding trouble with the police	6	5.6	101	94.4
Finishing school <sup>a</sup>	29	27.6	76	72.4

<sup>a</sup> Two youths did not answer this question.

marriage as ‘not at all important’ or only ‘a little bit important’ than ‘quite important’ or ‘very important’. For all other listed goals, however, ‘quite important’ or ‘very important’ were clearly the most common ratings. These ‘quite important’ or ‘very important’ ratings were made by 94 per cent of youths about avoiding trouble with the police, by 92 per cent of youths about having a well-paying job and by 72 per cent of youths about completing high school. The remaining goals were rated as ‘quite important’ or ‘very important’ by at least 81 per cent of youths. Moreover, there were no differences in the ratings of importance according to ATSI status. One significant difference, however, was observed for age. Compared to youths under 18 years of age (77%), a greater proportion of youths who were 18 years or older (94%) reported that it was ‘quite important’ or ‘very important’ to be careful with how much money they spend ( $\chi^2 = 4.14, df = 1, p = .042$ ).

**LIKELIHOOD OF ACHIEVING SPECIFIC LIFE GOALS**

As can be seen from Table 3, most of the specified life goals were rated by most participants as ‘quite likely’ or ‘very likely’ to be achieved. Two goals received approximately equal numbers of ‘not at all likely’ or ‘a little bit likely’ ratings as ‘quite likely’ or ‘very likely’ ratings. Those two goals were getting married and completing high school. All other goals, however, were rated by at least two-thirds of participants as being ‘quite likely’ or ‘very likely’ to be achieved. Eighty per cent of youths rated staying out of trouble with the police as ‘quite likely’ or ‘very likely’ and 68 per cent of youths rated having a well-paying job as ‘quite likely’ or ‘very likely’.

Two likelihood ratings differed significantly according to age. Compared to youths under 18 years of age, a greater proportion of youths who were 18 years and over said they would be ‘quite

likely’ or ‘very likely’ to be careful with how much money they spend (61% for under 18 years compared to 81% for 18 and over,  $\chi^2 = 4.04, df = 1, p = .044$ ) and avoid trouble with the police (73% for under 18 years compared to 97% for 18 and over,  $\chi^2 = 7.88, df = 1, p = .005$ ). One likelihood rating differed according to ATSI status. Compared to non-ATSI youths (35%), a greater proportion of youths who identified as ATSI (66%) reported they were ‘not at all likely’ or ‘a little bit likely’ to get married ( $\chi^2 = 9.97, df = 1, p = .002$ ).

**STRATEGIES AND BARRIERS TO FINISHING SCHOOL, GETTING A JOB AND AVOIDING TROUBLE WITH THE POLICE**

Of the 73 youths who had not yet finished school but indicated that they intended to do so, 53 (73%) said they were able to think of at least one strategy that would help them to complete high school. As shown in Table 4, when those 53 youths were asked to describe their strategy, 25 per cent said ‘completing school via alternate pathways such as TAFE’ and 19 per cent said ‘attend the classes’. The ability to think of a strategy to finish school did not differ according to age or ATSI status.

Forty-five (62%) of the 73 youths who had not yet finished school but indicated that they intended to do so, were also able to think of at least one potential barrier to finishing school. As shown in Table 5, when those 45 youths were asked to describe the potential barriers to finishing school, 42 per cent said getting into ‘trouble with the law’, 22 per cent said ‘peer influence’, 16 per cent said ‘drugs’ and 16 per cent said ‘alcohol’. The ability to think of a barrier to finishing school did not differ according to age or ATSI status.

**Table 3. Youth’s perceptions of the likelihood of achieving specific goals (n = 107)**

	Not at all likely / A little bit likely		Quite likely / Very likely	
	n	%	n	%
Having a well-paying job	34	31.8	73	68.2
Having a good reputation	35	32.7	72	67.3
Working hard to get ahead	12	11.2	95	88.8
Saving money for the future	28	26.2	79	73.8
Being careful with how much money you spend	35	32.7	72	67.3
Having a happy family life	8	7.5	99	92.5
Getting married	56	52.3	51	47.7
Having children <sup>a</sup>	16	15.2	89	84.8
Being a good father/mother	2	1.9	105	98.1
Avoiding trouble with the police	21	19.6	86	80.4
Finishing school <sup>b</sup>	50	48.5	53	51.5

<sup>a</sup> Two youths did not answer this question.

<sup>b</sup> Four youths did not answer this question.

**Table 4. Strategies for completing high school (n = 53)**

	n	%
Complete via alternate pathways (e.g. TAFE)	13	24.5
Attend the classes	10	18.9
Stay focused	8	15.1
Work hard	8	15.1
Do the set work	7	13.2
Utilize support from youth worker	6	11.3
Other (included stop using drugs, stay out of trouble, perseverance, find stable accommodation, read more, be organised, stick to a routine)	16	30.2

Note: The percentages in this table do not sum to 100 per cent (similarly, the number of participants do not sum to 53) because several youths reported more than one strategy.

**Table 5. Barriers to finishing school (n = 45)**

	n	%
Trouble with the law	19	42.2
Peer influence	10	22.2
Drugs	7	15.6
Alcohol	7	15.6
Family issues	4	8.9
Suspension/Expulsion	4	8.9
Getting into fights	4	8.9
Lack of motivation	3	6.7
Other (included truancy, being bullied, social isolation, getting a job, family issues)	7	15.6

Note: The percentages in this table do not sum to 100 per cent (similarly, the number of participants do not sum to 45) because several youths reported more than one barrier.

Of the 107 youths who participated in the study, 103 youths could nominate a job they wanted to have in the future. Ninety-three (90%) of those 103 youths were able think of at least one strategy to secure the desired job. As shown in Table 6, when those 93 youths were asked to describe their strategies for securing their desired employment, 67 per cent said ‘get the necessary TAFE certificates’, 26 per cent said ‘start in a junior role to get experience’ and 14 per cent said ‘finish high school’. The ability to think of a strategy to secure a desired job did not differ according to age. A significant difference was observed, however, for ATSI status. Compared to ATSI youths (83%), a larger proportion of youths who did not identify as ATSI (98%) were able to think of a strategy for securing their desired form of employment ( $\chi^2 = 5.56, df = 1, p = .018$ ).

Eighty-five (83%) of the 103 youths who could nominate a desired job for the future were able to think of potential barriers that could stop them from obtaining their desired type

of employment. As shown in Table 7, when those 85 youths were asked to describe the barriers that could stop them from obtaining their desired type of employment, 46 per cent said getting into ‘trouble with the law’, 26 per cent said their ‘criminal record’, 17 per cent said the influence of ‘antisocial peers’, 13 per cent said ‘drugs’ and 9 per cent said ‘alcohol’. There were no differences in the ability to identify potential barriers to securing desired employment according to ATSI status. One significant difference, however, was observed for age. Compared to youths 18 years or older (66%), a larger proportion of youths under 18 (85%) could think of a barrier to getting their desired job ( $\chi^2 = 5.33, df = 1, p = .021$ ).

**Table 6. Strategies for securing the desired type of employment (n = 93)**

	n	%
Get the necessary TAFE certificates, diplomas, etc	62	66.7
Start in a junior role to get experience	24	25.8
Finish high school	13	14.0
Use my contacts in the industry (e.g. family, friends of family)	12	12.9
Stay out of trouble	11	11.8
Get an apprenticeship	10	10.8
Other (included being determined, improving fitness, relocate, get a car, resist peer pressure, have prosocial friends, improve general knowledge, read books)	18	19.4

Note: The percentages in this table do not sum to 100 per cent (similarly, the number of participants do not sum to 93) because several youths reported more than one strategy.

**Table 7. Barriers to securing the desired type of employment (n = 85)**

	n	%
Trouble with the law	39	45.9
Criminal record	22	25.9
Antisocial peers	14	16.5
Drugs	11	12.9
Alcohol	8	9.4
Family circumstances (e.g. if I have a child)	7	8.2
Personal injury	5	5.9
Change of mind about career choice	5	5.9
Other (included having a bad reputation, lack of confidence, lack of motivation, lack of education, no accommodation)	12	14.1

Note: The percentages in this table do not sum to 100 per cent (similarly, the number of participants do not sum to 85) because several youths reported more than one barrier.

Of the 107 youths who participated in the study, 98 (92%) could think of at least one strategy to avoid trouble with the police in the future. As shown in Table 8, when those 98 youths were asked to explain their strategy for avoiding trouble with the police in the future, 31 per cent said ‘avoid and/or stand up to peer pressure’, 29 per cent said ‘obey the law’, 29 per cent said ‘get a job’ and 24 per cent said ‘keep busy’. There were no differences in the ability to identify strategies to avoid trouble with the police according to ATSI status. One significant difference, however, was observed for age. Compared to youths under 18 (88%), a greater proportion of youths who were 18 years and over (100%) could think of a strategy for avoiding trouble with the police ( $\chi^2 = 4.19, df = 1, p = .041$ ).

**Table 8. Strategies for avoiding trouble with the police (n = 98)**

	n	%
Avoid / stand up to peer pressure	30	31.2
Obey the law	28	29.2
Get a job	28	29.2
Keep busy	23	24.0
Keep to myself	19	19.8
Go to school / TAFE	15	15.6
Don't drink alcohol	8	8.4
Have positive relationships with family / friends	8	8.4
Geographically relocate	7	7.2
Don't take drugs	7	7.2
Other (included go to church, see caseworkers for support, concentrate on the future, think about what I'm doing, look after my children)	15	15.6

Note: The percentages in this table do not sum to 100 per cent (similarly, the number of participants do not sum to 98) because several youths reported more than one strategy.

**Table 9. Barriers to avoiding trouble with the police (n = 95)**

	n	%
Antisocial peers	55	57.9
Drugs	30	31.6
Alcohol	22	23.2
Criminal activity	10	10.5
Fighting (or other violence)	9	9.5
Lack of money	6	6.3
Other (included too much free time, no job, relationship issues, family issues, bad neighbourhood, bad decisions)	21	22.1

Note: The percentages in this table do not sum to 100 per cent (similarly, the number of participants do not sum to 95) because several youths reported more than one issue that could lead them back to getting into trouble with the police.

Ninety-five (89%) of the 107 youths could also identify issues that could lead them to trouble with the police. As shown in Table 9, when those 95 youths were asked to identify the issues that they thought could lead them to trouble with the police, 58 per cent identified ‘antisocial peers’, 32 per cent said ‘drugs’ and 23 per cent said ‘alcohol’. The ability to identify issues did not differ according to ATSI status or age.

## DISCUSSION

The youths in this study considered specific life goals such as finishing school, having a well-paying job and avoiding trouble with the police to be important. Not only were these and other goals rated as important but participants were also generally optimistic that their goals would be achieved. Moreover, ratings of importance and likelihood of achieving the goals were generally consistent across ATSI status and age.

In addition, consistent with previous research, most youths in the current study could think of strategies for achieving their goals. Although non-ATSI and older youths were significantly more likely to be able to think of at least one strategy to achieve the desired job and avoid trouble with the police, respectively, most ATSI youth and those under 18 years were also able to identify strategies to achieve their goals. Moreover, the majority of strategies that youths identified had elements of specificity and concreteness about them. For example, of the 93 youths who could think of a strategy to secure the type of employment that they desired, 62 said that they intend to get the necessary educational certificates and diplomas that are required to be job-ready; 24 said starting in a junior position and getting experience was their strategy. Relatively few youths identified strategies which were not concrete and/or specific. Examples of these strategies, in relation to securing future employment, were being ‘determined’ ( $n = 4$ ) and ‘increasing my general knowledge’ ( $n = 1$ ).

Most youths were also able to think of potential barriers that could stop them from achieving their goals. The ability to identify barriers did not differ according to ATSI status. Although a significant difference was observed for age, most youths in both age groups were able to think of barriers that could stop them from achieving their goals. Getting into trouble with the law, the influence of antisocial peers, and drug and alcohol usage were the most commonly reported potential barriers to finishing school and securing a desirable job. The influence of antisocial peers and the use of drugs and alcohol were also the most commonly reported potential barriers to avoiding trouble with the police. Interestingly, the anticipated barriers that youths reported correspond to the types of issues that are well documented as being challenges for detained youths (e.g. Indig et al., 2011). That is, most young people in this study were well aware of the challenges that could stop them from achieving their goals. This finding is similar to that reported in Abrams (2007).

Findings like the ones reported in this study are important because an understanding of the goals which detained youths have for their future in the community, their self-rated chances of achieving their goals, how they plan to achieve those goals and their perceived barriers to achieving their goals can potentially complement existing knowledge about the life trajectory and issues facing detained youths. This has the potential to help service providers and policy makers to target their services and policies more appropriately.

It was beyond the scope of this study to examine the influence of factors other than the demographic variables of age and ATSI status. Future research could explore the likely complex interactions of other 'background' characteristics and how they influence youth's goals and/or abilities to think of strategies and barriers for achieving their goals. Future research should also be conducted to see whether the responses given by a custodial sample are similar or not to responses given by young people more generally. Again, the results of such a comparison would give greater context to the current findings and have relevance for the development of programs and policies for young people in custody.

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## NOTES

1. During the recruitment phase of this study, eight Juvenile Justice centres existed. There were no detainees, however, residing at the Broken Hill centre. Hence, interviewing of detainees occurred at only seven centres.
2. The average number of detained youths is reported because, during the recruitment and interview period of this study, the number of detained youths was not constant. Several youths were entering custody and others were exiting custody over the three-week period of recruitment and interviewing.
3. Some offenders detained in juvenile detention centres are aged 18 or over because they are serving a control order or on remand for an offence that was committed when they were under 18 years of age.

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APPENDIX

**Table A1. Sex, ATSI status, Age, Country of birth, and Detention status of NSW Young People In Custody**

		Current study		NSW Young People in Custody Survey (Indig et al., 2011)	
		n	%	n	%
Sex	Male	100	93.5	319	88.4
	Female	7	6.5	42	11.6
	Total	107	100	361	100
ATSI status	Non-ATSI	46	43.0	187	51.8
	ATSI	61	57.0	174	48.2
	Total	107	100	361	100
Age	14 years and under	1	0.9	14	3.9
	15 years	7	6.5	47	13.0
	16 years	26	24.3	68	18.8
	17 years	18	16.8	88	24.4
	18 years	37	34.6	93	25.8
	19 years and over	18	16.8	51	14.1
	Total	107	100	361	100
Country of birth	Australia	93	86.9	276	88.5
	New Zealand	6	5.6	16	5.1
	Other	8	7.5	20	6.4
	Total	107	100	312	100
Detention status	Remand	50	46.7	164	45.4
	Sentenced	57	53.3	197	54.6
	Total	107	100	361	100

**Table A2. Types of offences for which youths were detained (n = 107)**

	n	%
Acts intended to cause injury (includes serious assault and common assault)	45	42.1
Robbery, extortion and related offences (includes aggravated and non-aggravated robbery)	43	40.2
Unlawful entry with intent burglary / break and enter	23	21.5
Theft and related offences	21	19.6
Offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations (including breach of community-based orders)	10	9.3
Sexual assault and related offences (includes aggravated and non-aggravated sexual assault)	8	7.5
Prohibited and regulated weapons and explosives offences	8	7.5
Homicide and related offences (includes murder, manslaughter, and driving) causing death)	6	5.6
Property damage and environmental pollution (including property damage other than by fire or explosion)	5	4.7
Traffic and vehicular regulatory offences	3	2.8
Other	7	6.5

Note: The percentages in this table do not sum to 100 per cent (similarly, the number of participants do not sum to 107) because several youths reported that they had been detained for more than one offence. Furthermore, two youths did not answer the question about the offence they had committed.