



Victoria: youth justice supervision in 2015–16



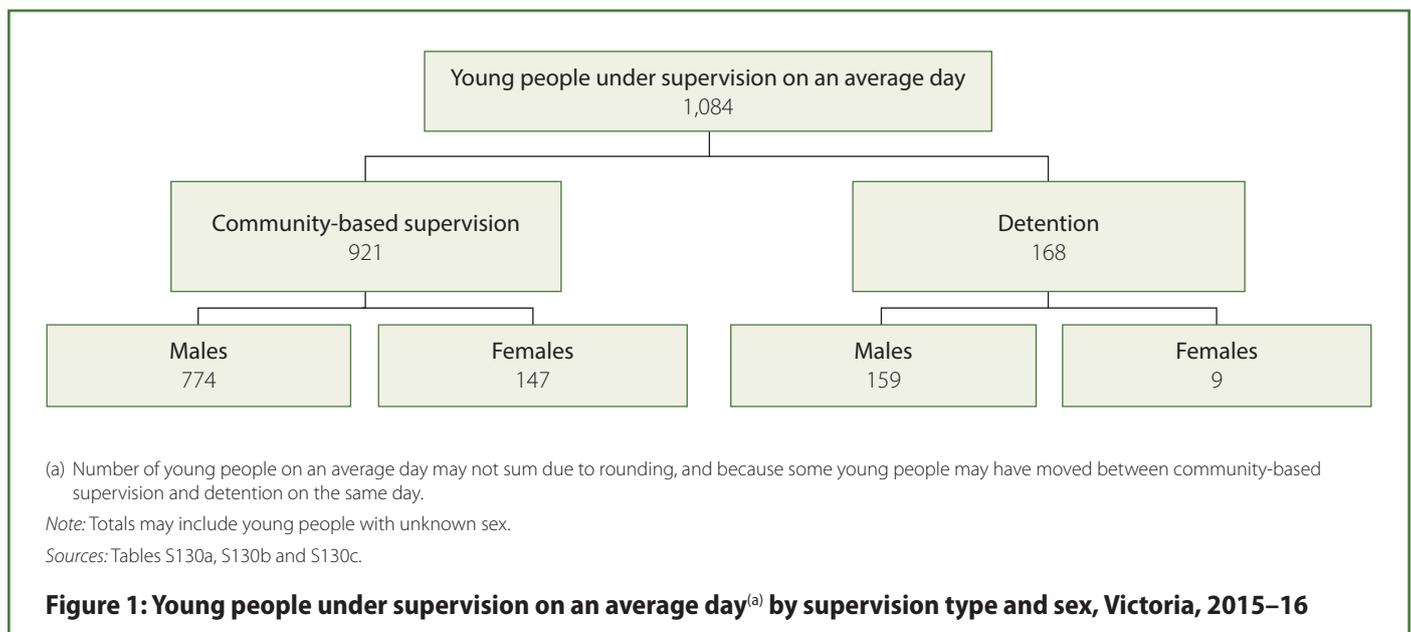
This fact sheet focuses on youth justice supervision in Victoria in 2015–16 and includes some national comparisons.

Differences in youth justice supervision among the states and territories may reflect differences in legislation as well as policy and practice. Detailed information about the youth justice systems, policies and programs in each state and territory is available online: <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/youth-justice/states-territories>>.

Number and rate under supervision

On an average day in 2015–16, there were 1,084 young people (aged 10 and over) in Victoria who were under youth justice supervision (Figure 1; see Box 2 for a definition of ‘average day’). Young people under supervision in Victoria made up 20% of all young people under supervision on an average day in Australia (Table S1a).

Most (85%, or 921) young people under supervision in Victoria on an average day were supervised in the community and the remainder (15%) were in detention (Figure 1). (Note that some young people may have moved between community-based supervision and detention on the same day.) This was similar to the proportion of young people under community-based supervision nationally (84%) (tables S1a and S36a).



In 2015–16 Victoria had the lowest rate of young people aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day of all the states and territories at 14 per 10,000 (Table S4a). The rates of young people under community-based supervision (12 per 10,000) and in detention (less than 2 per 10,000) were also relatively low in Victoria (tables S39a and S77a).

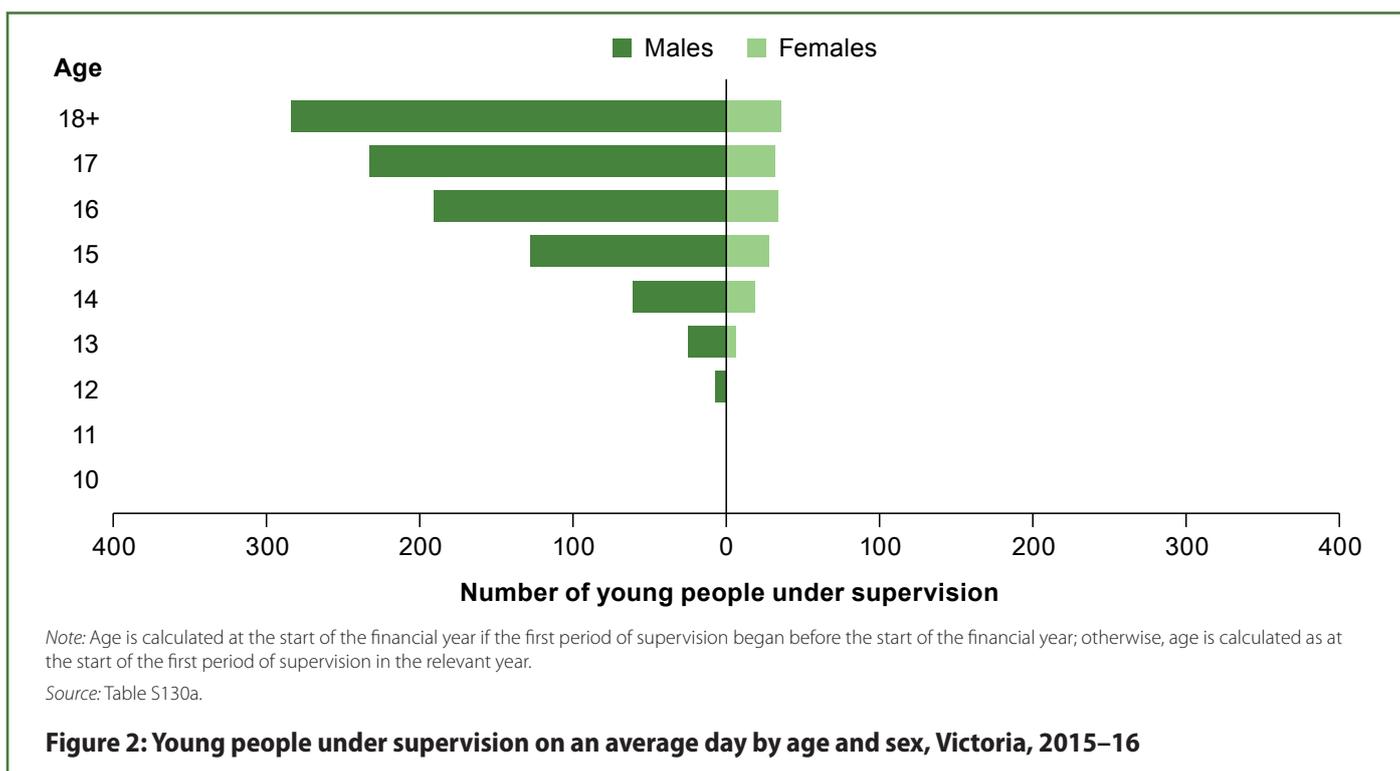
Age and sex

In most cases in Australia, the upper age limit in the youth justice system is 17 years at the time of the offence. However, it is possible for young people aged 18 and over to be under youth justice supervision. Reasons may include their age at the time of the offence, the continuation of supervision once they turn 18, or their vulnerability or immaturity. In Victoria, some young people aged 18–20 may also be sentenced to detention in a youth detention centre rather than in an adult prison (in a system known as ‘dual track’). For more information about the youth justice system and policies and programs in Victoria, see <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/youth-justice/states-territories/vic/>>.

As a result, the age distribution of young people under supervision in Victoria differs from the national picture. In Victoria, almost one-third (30%) of those under supervision on an average day in 2015–16 were aged 18 and over (Figure 2), compared with just 12% nationally (Table S1a). The proportion of those under supervision in Victoria who were aged 18 and over was higher for those in detention (39%) than for those in community-based supervision (29%) (tables S130b and S130c).

Consistent with the national result (82%), the majority of young people (86%) under supervision on an average day in Victoria were male (Table S2a). This proportion was higher for those in detention than for those in community-based supervision (95% compared with 84%, respectively) (Figure 2).

Of those under supervision in Victoria, males were more likely than females to be aged 18 and over (31% compared with 23%: see Figure 2). This was consistent with national results, where males were older, on average, than females: 13% and 8%, respectively, were aged 18 and over (Table S5a).



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people have a long history of over-representation in both the youth and adult justice systems in Australia. In Victoria, Indigenous young people constitute only 2% of the state’s population aged 10–17 (Table S145) but made up 18% of those aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day in 2015–16 (Table S3a). This was substantially lower than the national result (48%).

The rate of Indigenous young people aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day in Victoria was 152 per 10,000, compared with 12 per 10,000 for non-Indigenous young people (Table S4a). This means that an Indigenous young person in Victoria aged 10–17 was 13 times as likely as a non-Indigenous young person to be under youth justice supervision on an average day in 2015–16. This was lower than the national level, where it was 17 times as likely.

The level of Indigenous over-representation in community-based supervision in Victoria was lower than the national level; it was 13 times the non-Indigenous rate compared with 15 times nationally (Table S39a). The level of Indigenous over-representation in detention was substantially lower than nationally, at 12 times as likely compared with 25 times (Table S77a).

Time under supervision

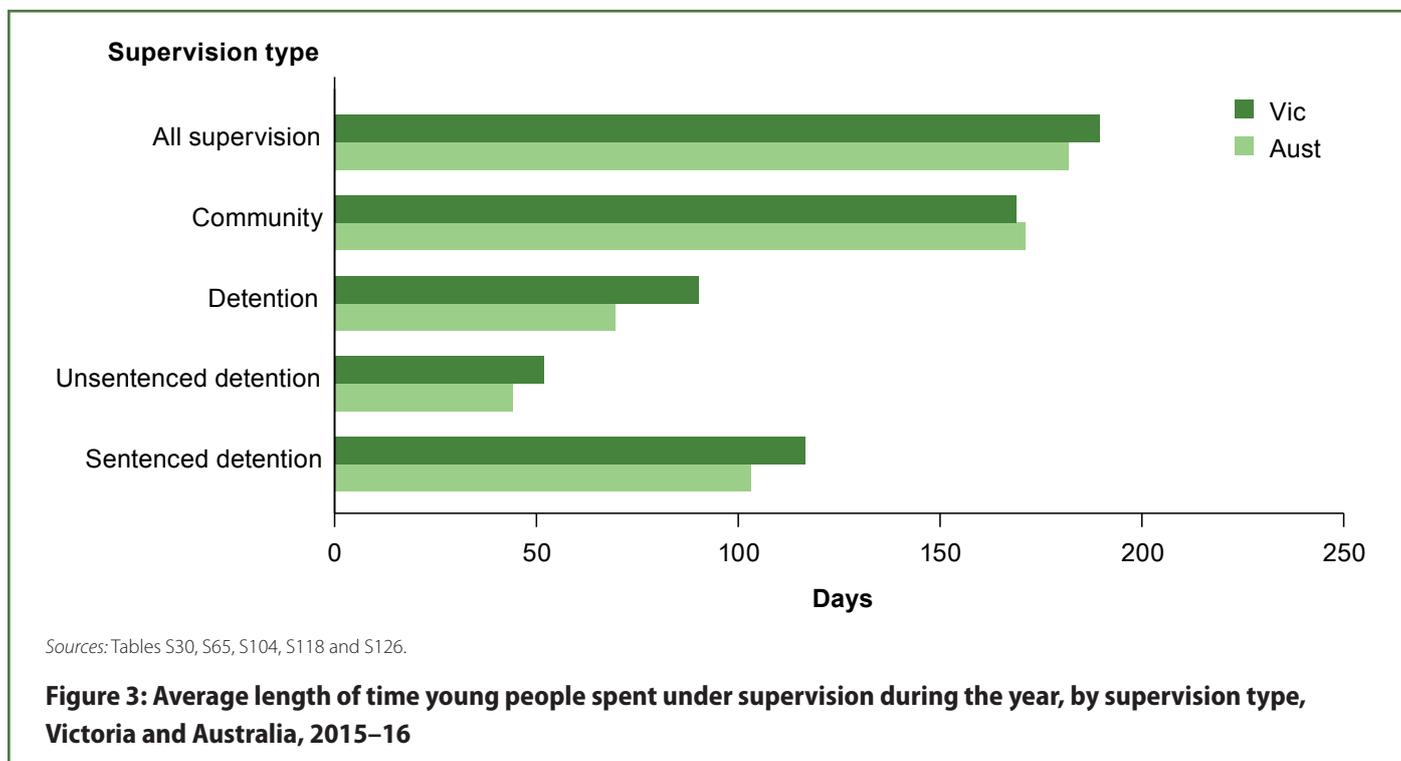
In Victoria, the median duration of periods of supervision that were completed during 2015–16 was 184 days, or about 26 weeks. Note this includes time under supervision prior to 1 July 2015 if the period of supervision began before 1 July 2015 (Table S29). This was longer than the national median of 123 days.

When all periods of supervision are considered (including periods that are ongoing, that is, yet to be completed), young people in Victoria spent 190 days (27 weeks) in total under supervision during the year (Figure 3). This was one week longer than the national average (182 days).

The average amount of time spent under youth justice supervision varied according to the type of supervision. Completed periods of community-based supervision were substantially longer, on average, than completed periods of detention with a median 120 days compared with 22 days (tables S64 and S103). When all periods of supervision during the year are considered, young people in Victoria spent an average of 169 days under community-based supervision, compared with 90 days in detention (Figure 3).

Young people may be under supervision when they are ‘unsentenced’—that is, when they have been charged with an offence and are awaiting the outcome of their court matter, or when they have been found or pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing. They may also be ‘sentenced’ to a period of supervision if proven guilty in a court.

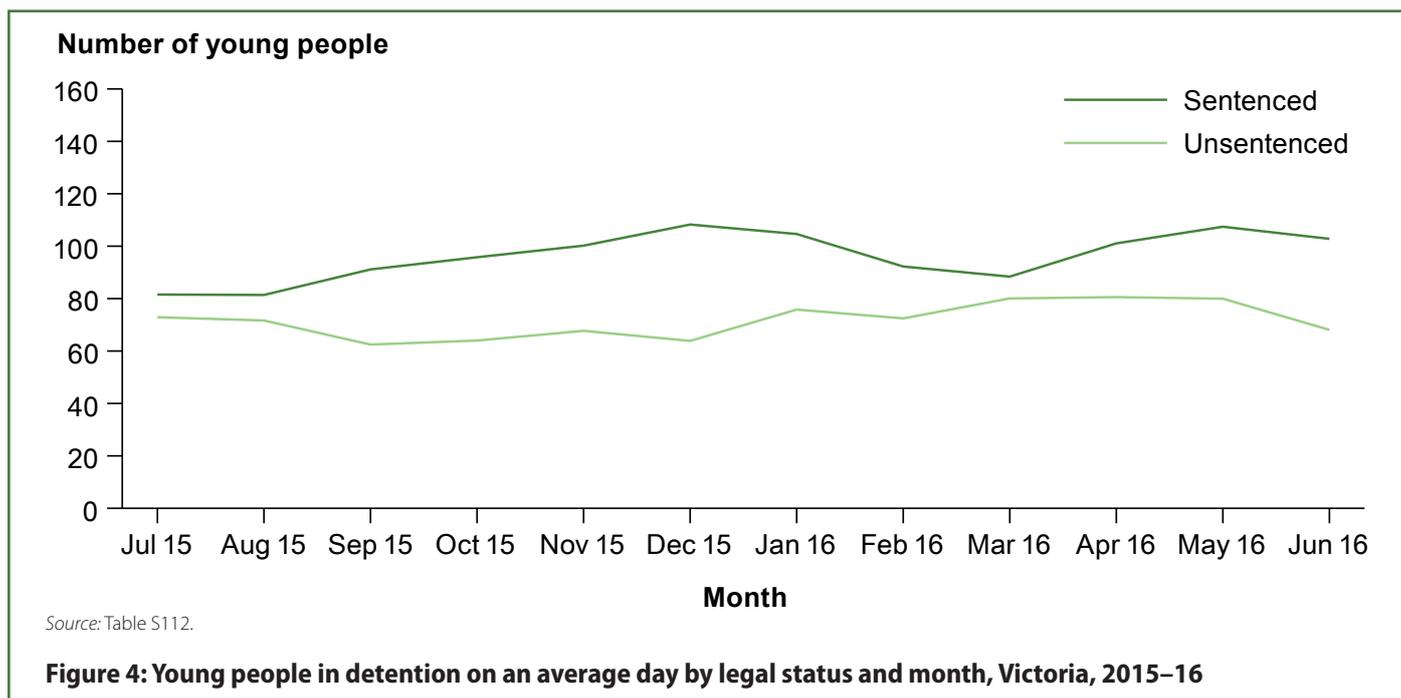
In 2015–16, completed periods of sentenced detention in Victoria were typically longer than periods of unsentenced detention: the median was 88 days compared with 15 days (tables S117 and S124). Similarly, when all time in detention during the year is considered, young people spent longer in sentenced detention: 117 days, on average compared with 52 days in unsentenced detention (tables S118 and S126). This was similar to the national pattern.



Sentenced and unsentenced detention

On an average day in 2015–16, over half (57%) of young people in detention in Victoria were serving a sentence (Table S109a). This was higher than the national average, where 44% of all young people in detention were sentenced.

On an average day in each month of the year, there were more young people in sentenced than unsentenced detention. Over the 12-month period, the number of young people in sentenced detention on an average day increased while the numbers in unsentenced detention remained relatively steady (Figure 4). The number of young people in sentenced detention on an average day was highest in December 2015, at 108, dropping to 88 in March 2016, before increasing again to 107 in May 2016. The number in unsentenced detention ranged from 62 to 81, dipping to its lowest in September 2015 and increasing to its highest from March to May in 2016.



Recent trends: 2011–12 to 2015–16

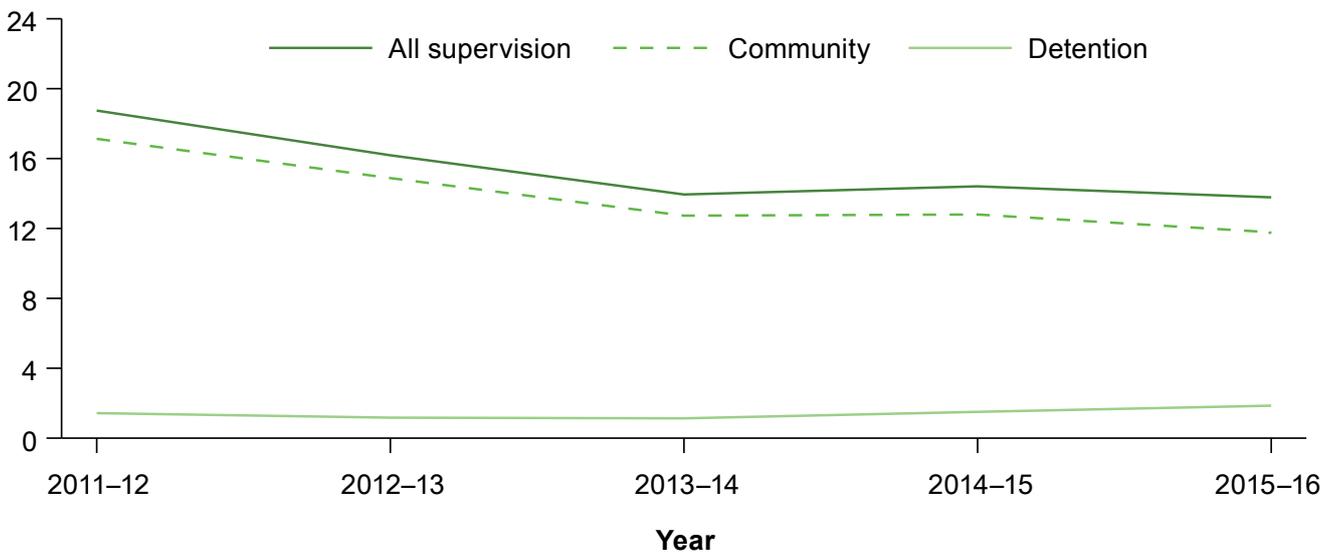
Over the 5-year period from 2011–12 to 2015–16, there was an overall steady drop in the number of young people (of all ages) and the rate of those aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day in Victoria (Figure 5; Table S11a). The number and rate of young people under supervision was highest in 2011–12 with 1,496 young people and a rate of 19 per 10,000 aged 10–17. Both numbers and rates fell over the following 5 years so that by 2015–16 there were 1,084 young people of all ages under supervision, and 14 per 10,000 aged 10–17.

In community-based supervision, the number of young people on an average day in Victoria fell by 30% over the 5-year period (from 1,323 to 921), while the rate also fell from 17 to 12 per 10,000 (Figure 5; Table S46a). For detention, the number fell by 5% (from 176 to 168), while the detention rate of those aged 10–17 remained between 1 and 2 per 10,000 each year (Figure 5; Table S84a). Nationally, numbers and rates of young people under community-based supervision and in detention also fell during the period.

In each of the 5 years to 2015–16, the majority (57–79%) of young people in detention in Victoria on an average day were sentenced (Table S113). Overall, the size of the sentenced population decreased over the 5-year period (from 139 to 96 on an average day), while the size of the unsentenced population increased from 37 to 72 on an average day (Table S113).

The level of Indigenous over-representation (as shown by the rate ratio) of young people under supervision in Victoria fluctuated over the period at around 10–13 times the non-Indigenous rate (Table S12a). This differed from the national pattern, where the rate ratio increased steadily (from 13 to 17 times the non-Indigenous rate). In Victoria, the Indigenous rate ratio in both community-based supervision, and detention ranged from 10–13 times the non-Indigenous rate (tables S47a and S85a).

Number per 10,000



Sources: Tables S12a, S47a and S85a.

Figure 5: Young people aged 10–17 years under supervision on an average day by supervision type, Victoria, 2011–12 to 2015–16 (rate)

Box 1: Youth justice supervision fact sheets

This fact sheet is part of the *Youth justice in Australia 2015–16* release, which also includes a bulletin, supplementary tables and web pages released in multiple stages throughout the year, see <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/youth-justice>.

The supplementary data tables (those with a prefix of S) referred to in this fact sheet can be downloaded from <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=60129554714>.

For more information about young people under youth justice supervision, see <http://www.aihw.gov.au/youth-justice/>.

Box 2: Technical notes

1. Information about young people under youth justice supervision in this fact sheet is based on data from the Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set (JJ NMDS). This data collection contains information about all young people who were supervised by state and territory youth justice agencies in Australia, both in the community and in detention. The Northern Territory did not supply JJ NMDS data for the period from 2008–09 to 2015–16, however non-standard data were supplied and used, where possible, in the calculation of national totals.
2. This fact sheet uses an 'average day' measure to illustrate the number of young people under supervision. The average day measure reflects the number of young people under supervision on a given day during the year, and gives an indication of the average number of young people supported by the supervision system at any one time. It is a summary measure that reflects both the number of young people supervised and the amount of time they spent under supervision.
3. Population rates allow for the comparison of different groups while taking into account differences in population sizes. Rates are restricted to those aged 10–17 due to differences between states and territories; they exclude young people where data is unavailable; and are not calculated where there are fewer than 5 young people due to a lack of statistical reliability.
4. Rate ratios are used to compare Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates and to provide a measure of the level of Indigenous over-representation. Rate ratios should be interpreted with caution where there are small denominators, rare events and rates that converge while declining (or diverge while increasing).

Further technical and data quality information, including definitions of key terms in this fact sheet, is available from <http://www.aihw.gov.au/youth-justice/data-quality/>.

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