



Youth justice in Australia

2013–14

Summary

This bulletin presents information on all young people who were under youth justice supervision in Australia during 2013–14, both in the community and in detention. It also explores key aspects of their supervision, and recent trends.

6,100 young people were under youth justice supervision on an average day

On an average day in 2013–14, there were 6,100 young people aged 10 and older who were under supervision in Australia due to their involvement or alleged involvement in crime. About 4 in 5 (82%) were male, and a similar proportion (79%) were aged 14–17.

Among those aged 10–17, this equates to a rate of 23 per 10,000, or about 1 in every 433 young people. Indigenous young people were about 15 times as likely as non-Indigenous young people to be under supervision on an average day, with a rate of 189 per 10,000 aged 10–17, compared with 13 per 10,000 for non-Indigenous young people.

Most young people were supervised in the community

In 2013–14, 85% of young people under supervision on an average day (or 5,191 people) were supervised in the community, and 92% of those under community-based supervision were serving a sentence. There were 951 young people in detention on an average day—just over half (52%) were unsentenced (awaiting the outcome of their legal matter or sentencing).

Rates of young people under supervision are declining

Over the 5 years to 2013–14, there was an overall drop in the rate of young people under supervision on an average day from 28 to 23 per 10,000 aged 10–17. This decrease occurred in both community-based supervision (from 24 to 20 per 10,000) and detention (from 4.0 to 3.5 per 10,000).

Between 2012–13 and 2013–14, the number under supervision fell by 5% (from about 6,400 to 6,100) while the rate dropped from 24 to 23 per 10,000.

Indigenous over-representation rising

Although the rate of young people under supervision fell in recent years, the decrease was proportionally greater for non-Indigenous young people than for Indigenous young people. This means that the level of over-representation of Indigenous young people (as measured by the rate ratio) increased over the 5-year period to 2013–14, from 13 to 15 times the non-Indigenous rate. This over-representation rose from 12 to 14 times the non-Indigenous rate for community-based supervision and from 21 to 24 times for detention.

Rates of supervision varied among the states and territories

The rate of young people aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day in 2013–14 was lowest in Victoria at 14 per 10,000, and highest in the Northern Territory at 61 per 10,000. Over the 5-year period to that point, rates fell in all states and territories except Queensland, where there was no consistent change, and the Northern Territory, where rates rose over the 3-year period from 2011–12 to 2013–14 (data unavailable for the Northern Territory for 2009–10 and 2010–11).

Variations in the rates of supervision among the states and territories reflect differences in legislation, policy and practices in the respective youth justice systems, including types of supervised orders and options for diversion that are available.

Young people spent 6 months under supervision, on average

When all periods spent under supervision during 2013–14 are considered, young people, on average, spent 6 months (182 days) under supervision. They spent more time under community-based supervision (175 days on average) than in detention (67 days).

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- Community Services Directorate, Australian Capital Territory
- Department of Correctional Services, Northern Territory.

Abbreviations

AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Aust	Australia
JJ NMDS	Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set
UN CRC	United National Convention on the Rights of the Child

Symbols

n.a.	not available
n.p.	not published due to confidentiality and/or reliability concerns
↑	increase
↓	decrease
↔	stable

Introduction

The youth justice system

The youth justice system is the set of processes and practices for managing children and young people who have committed, or allegedly committed, an offence. While each state and territory in Australia has its own youth justice legislation, policies and practices, the general processes by which young people are charged and sentenced, and the types of legal orders available to the courts, are similar.

Separate justice systems exist for young people and adults. Young people can be charged with a criminal offence if they are aged 10 and older. The upper age limit for treatment as a young person is 17 in all states and territories except Queensland, where the limit is 16. However, some young people aged 18 and older are also involved in the youth justice system. This may be due to the offence being committed when the young person was aged 17 or younger; the continuation of supervision once they turn 18; or their vulnerability or immaturity. Also, in Victoria, some young people aged 18–20 may be sentenced to detention in a youth facility under a ‘dual track’ sentencing system, which is intended to prevent vulnerable young people from entering the adult prison system at an early age.

A young person first enters the youth justice system when they are investigated by police for allegedly committing a crime. Legal action taken by police may include court actions (the laying of charges to be answered in court) and non-court actions (such as cautions, conferencing, counselling or infringement notices). A court may decide to dismiss the charge, divert the young person from further involvement in the system (for example by referral to mainstream services), or transfer them to specialist courts or programs. If the matter proceeds and the charge is proven, the court may hand down any of a number of orders, either supervised or unsupervised.

Youth justice supervision

One major aspect of youth justice is therefore the supervision of young people on legal orders. They may be supervised in either their communities or in secure detention facilities.

The notion that young people should be placed in detention only as a last resort is one of the key principles upon which Australia's youth justice systems are based. This principle can be found in youth justice legislation in each state and territory (with the exception of Queensland which revised its legislation in March 2014). It is also consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) and the Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice ('The Beijing Rules') (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 1985, 1989). The UN CRC states that children should be deprived of liberty only as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time. Accordingly, most young people under youth justice supervision are supervised in the community rather than in detention.

Young people may be supervised 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. However, most of those under supervision have been proven guilty in court and sentenced.

This bulletin

This bulletin presents information on the young people who were under youth justice supervision during 2013–14, both in the community and in detention. It also explores the characteristics of their supervision, and recent trends.

The information in this bulletin is based on data from the Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set (JJ NMDS), along with non-standard data for Western Australia and the Northern Territory (see 'Technical notes' section later in this bulletin for more details). Unless otherwise stated, Australian national totals include Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

The bulletin is part of the *Youth justice in Australia 2013–14* release, which includes supplementary tables (those with a prefix of S), fact sheets and web pages. These can all be downloaded free of charge from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) website at <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/youth-justice/>>.

Number and rate under supervision

National

On an average day in 2013–14, 6,100 young people aged 10 and over were under youth justice supervision in Australia (Table 1). A total of 12,265 young people were supervised at some time during the year.

On an average day in 2013–14, over four-fifths of young people (5,191 or 85%) were under community-based supervision, and the remainder (951 or 16%) were in detention (note that totals may not sum due to rounding, and because some young people may have been under community-based supervision and in detention on the same day).

The rate of young people aged 10–17 under youth justice supervision was 23 per 10,000 on an average day in 2013–14 (or 1 in every 433 young people), and 46 per 10,000 during the year. There were 20 young people per 10,000 aged 10–17 under community-based supervision on an average day, and 3.5 per 10,000 in detention.

Table 1: Young people under supervision by supervision type, states and territories, 2013–14

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Number—all ages									
Average day^(a)									
Community	1,271	1,065	1,395	703	363	190	73	130	5,191
Detention	321	148	184	162	60	12	17	48	951
All supervision	1,584	1,210	1,572	850	421	201	89	174	6,100
During the year									
Community	2,661	2,248	2,693	1,781	677	349	153	284	10,846
Detention	1,842	661	963	882	441	56	88	271	5,204
All supervision	3,334	2,346	2,834	1,954	862	357	174	404	12,265
Rate—age 10–17 (number per 10,000)									
Average day									
Community	17.0	12.7	26.6	26.4	18.6	24.8	18.3	44.5	19.7
Detention	3.8	1.1	3.8	6.3	3.0	2.1	4.0	17.9	3.5
All supervision	20.8	14.0	30.3	32.3	21.7	27.2	22.5	61.2	23.1
During the year									
Community	34.6	25.9	51.9	66.4	34.7	45.6	38.1	99.2	40.7
Detention	22.9	7.5	19.9	34.6	25.5	9.5	21.6	101.8	20.6
All supervision	42.0	26.9	54.9	73.6	44.8	46.6	42.1	143.9	46.1

(a) Numbers of young people on an average day may not sum to the total, due to rounding and because some young people may have moved between community-based supervision and detention on the same day.

Notes

1. Includes non-standard data for Western Australia and the Northern Territory, as JJ NMDS data were not supplied for 2013–14 (see 'Technical notes' section in this bulletin).
2. See 'Technical notes' section in this bulletin for more information about 'average day' and 'during the year' measures.

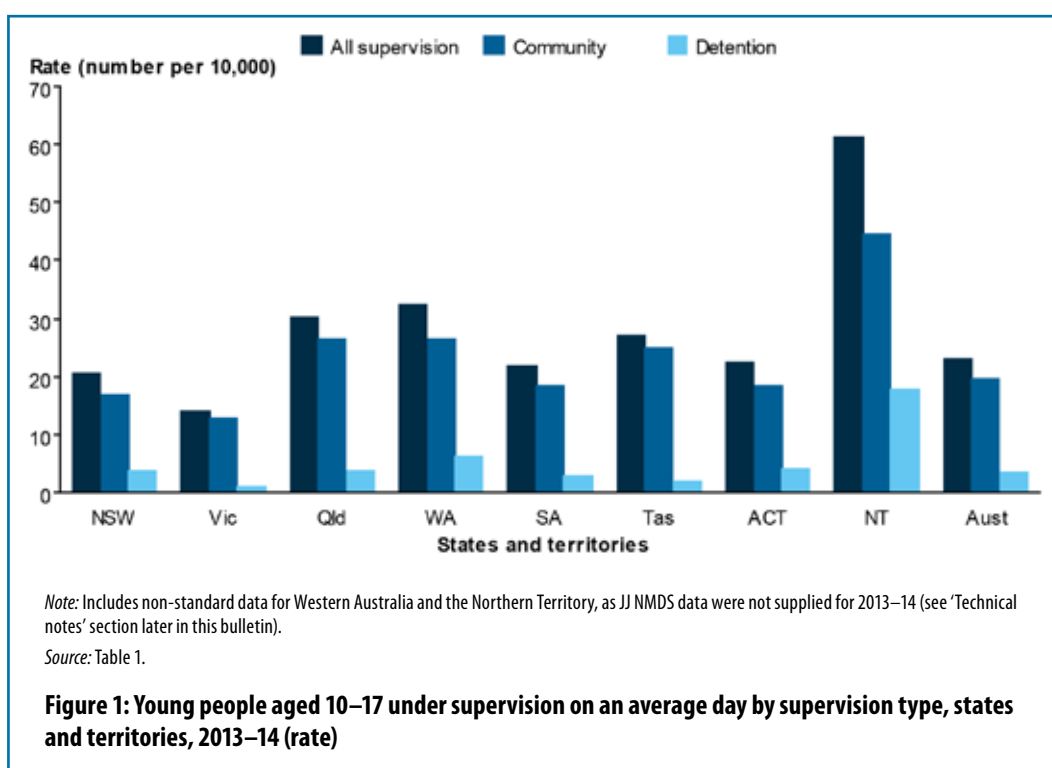
Source: Tables S1, S4, S36, S39, S74 and S77.

States and territories

On an average day, just over one-quarter (26%) of those under supervision were in New South Wales, and another one-quarter (26%) were in Queensland (Table 1). Queensland had the largest group of young people under community-based supervision (27% of the total); however, New South Wales had the largest group in detention (34%).

Rates of young people under supervision varied among the states and territories (Figure 1). The rate of young people aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day was lowest in Victoria at 14 per 10,000, and highest in the Northern Territory at 61 per 10,000. The rate of young people aged 10–17 under community-based supervision ranged from 13 per 10,000 in Victoria to 45 per 10,000 in the Northern Territory; similarly, the rate in detention ranged from 1 per 10,000 in Victoria to 18 per 10,000 in the Northern Territory.

Variations between states and territories may reflect differences in legislation, policy and practices in the respective youth justice systems, including the types of supervised orders and options for diversion that are available.



Young people under supervision

Age and sex

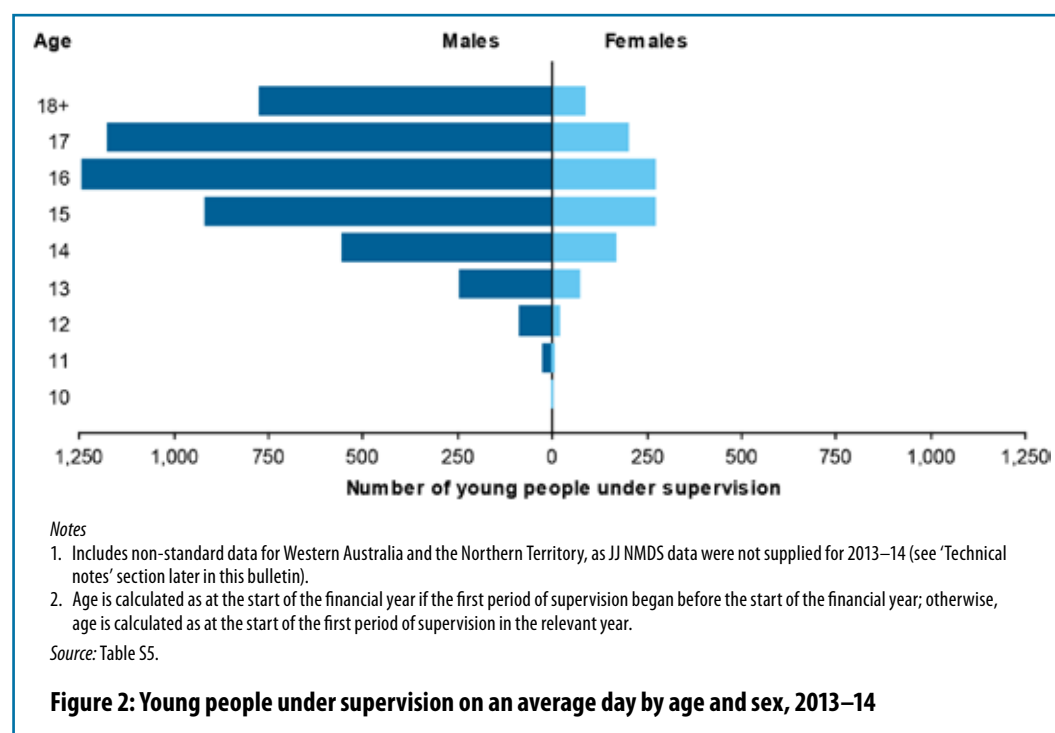
About 4 in 5 young people (82%) under supervision on an average day were male (Figure 2 and Table S2). The male proportion was higher for young people in detention (90%) (Table S75). Put another way, males aged 10–17 were about 4 times as likely as females to be under supervision on an average day (rates of 37 and 9 per 10,000 respectively) (Table S4).

Males also substantially outnumbered females among all the states and territories, with the proportion of males under supervision on an average day ranging from 73% in the Australian Capital Territory to 87% in Victoria (Table S2).

Nationally, 79% of young people under supervision on an average day were aged 14–17, with proportions among the states and territories ranging from 60% to 88% (Table S7).

Only 7% of young people under supervision were aged 10–13 (with proportions ranging from 1% in Tasmania to 11% in Queensland). About 14% were aged 18 and over (from 5% in New South Wales to 38% in Victoria, with the high proportion in Victoria in part due to the operation of the ‘dual track’ sentencing system—see ‘The youth justice system’ in the ‘Introduction’ section). Rates of supervision were highest among those aged 16 (53 per 10,000) (Table S6).

The age distributions of young males and females under supervision were similar, however males tended to be slightly older, on average (Figure 2). In 2013–14, the numbers and rates of young people under supervision on an average day were highest among males aged 16 and 17, and females aged 15 and 16 (Tables S5 and S6).



Indigenous young people under supervision

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people have a long history of over-representation in both the youth and adult justice systems in Australia (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs 2011; Johnston 1991). Close to half (45%) of young people aged 10–17 under youth justice supervision on an average day in 2013–14 were Indigenous (Table S3), despite comprising only about 6% of young people aged 10–17 in Australia (Table S144). In detention, this proportion was even greater, at 58% (Table S76).

The rate of Indigenous young people aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day in 2013–14 was 189 per 10,000, compared with 13 per 10,000 for non-Indigenous young people (Table 2). Indigenous young people aged 10–17 were therefore about 15 times as likely as non-Indigenous young people to be under supervision on an average day. This level of Indigenous over-representation, as measured by the rate ratio (see ‘Technical notes’ section) was higher in detention (24 times as likely) than in community-based supervision (14 times).

Indigenous young people were also over-represented in youth justice supervision within each state and territory (Figure 3). The rate of Indigenous young people aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day was lowest in Tasmania (35 per 10,000) and highest in Western Australia (334 per 10,000). Similarly, the level of Indigenous over-representation (rate ratio) was lowest in Tasmania, where it was slightly higher than the non-Indigenous rate, and highest in Western Australia (29 times) (Table 2).

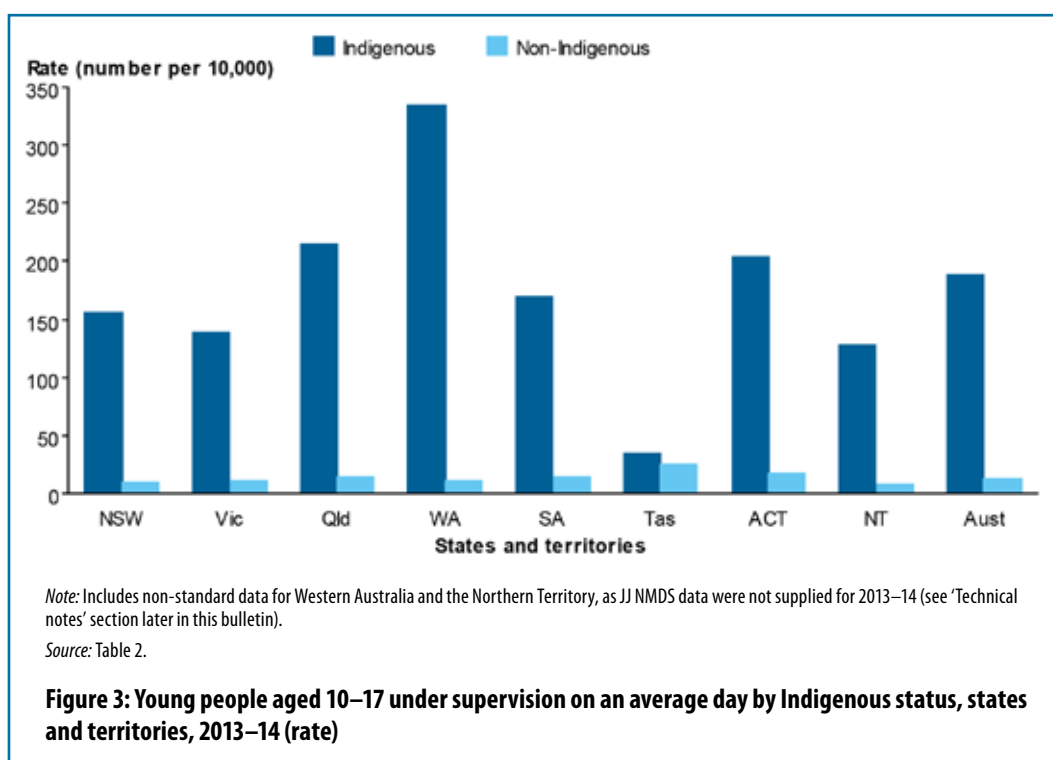


Table 2: Young people aged 10–17 under supervision by Indigenous status, states and territories, 2013–14 (rate)

Indigenous status	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based supervision rate—average day									
Indigenous	122.1	126.7	183.2	263.0	135.7	33.4	152.4	91.4	153.1
Non-Indigenous	8.7	10.8	13.2	10.1	13.1	23.6	14.2	6.7	11.0
<i>All young people</i>	<i>17.0</i>	<i>12.7</i>	<i>26.6</i>	<i>26.4</i>	<i>18.6</i>	<i>24.8</i>	<i>18.3</i>	<i>44.5</i>	<i>19.7</i>
Rate ratio	14	12	14	26	10	1	11	14	14
Detention rate—average day									
Indigenous	34.4	12.1	32.9	76.0	34.3	n.p.	n.p.	39.2	37.1
Non-Indigenous	2.0	1.0	1.4	1.5	1.6	2.1	2.7	n.p.	1.5
<i>All young people</i>	<i>3.8</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>3.8</i>	<i>6.3</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>2.1</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>17.9</i>	<i>3.5</i>
Rate ratio	17	13	24	52	21	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	24
All supervision rate—average day									
Indigenous	156.5	138.8	215.0	334.0	170.4	35.3	204.3	128.0	189.0
Non-Indigenous	10.7	11.8	14.6	11.4	14.9	26.1	17.0	7.7	12.6
All young people	20.8	14.0	30.3	32.3	21.7	27.2	22.5	61.2	23.1
Rate ratio	15	12	15	29	11	1	12	17	15

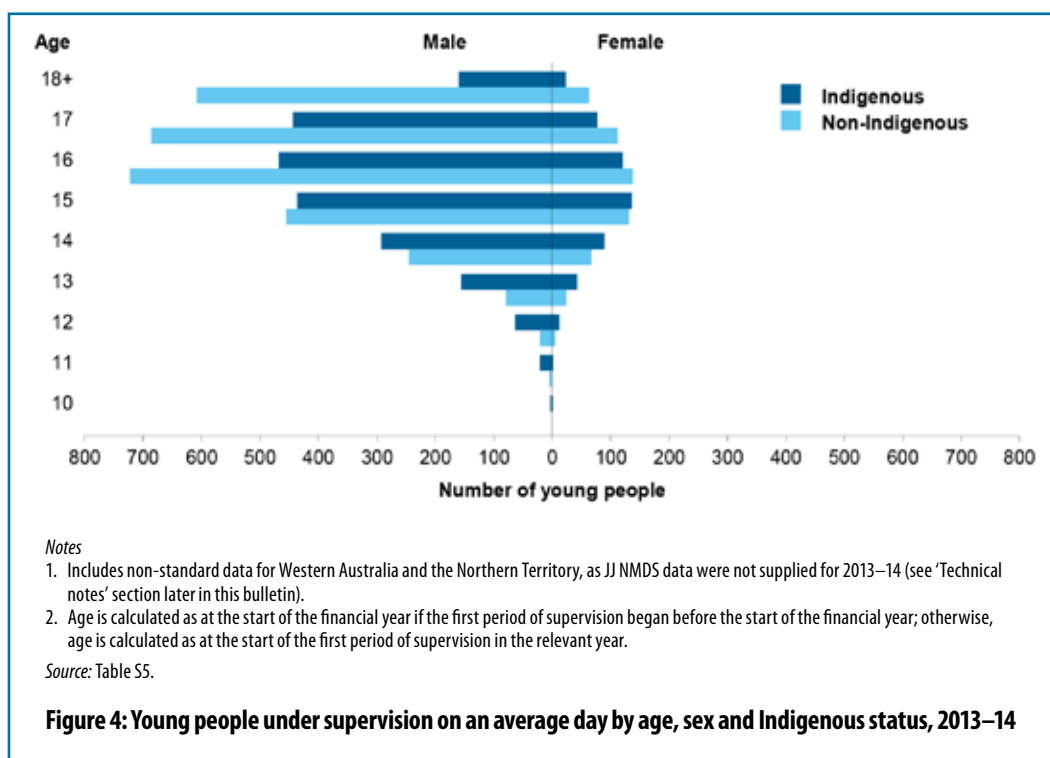
Notes

1. Includes non-standard data for Western Australia and the Northern Territory, as JJ NMDS data were not supplied for 2013–14 (see 'Technical notes' section later in this bulletin).
2. Rates are not published where there were fewer than 5 young people.
3. As some denominators may be less than 10,000, rates should be interpreted with caution.
4. The rate ratio is calculated by dividing the Indigenous rate by the non-Indigenous rate.

Source: Tables S4, S39 and S77.

Indigenous young people under supervision were younger, on average, than non-Indigenous young people (Figure 4). This applied to both males and females. Indigenous young people under supervision on an average day were most commonly aged 15 or 16, compared with 16 or 17 for non-Indigenous young people. About half (49%) of all Indigenous young people under supervision were aged 10–15, compared with less than one-third (31%) of non-Indigenous young people (Table S5).

Similar proportions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people under supervision were male (80% and 84%, respectively) (Table S5).



Remoteness and socioeconomic status

Most young people (aged 10 and over) who were under supervision on an average day in 2013–14 lived in *Major cities* (49%) and *Inner and outer regional areas* (40%) before entering supervision (based on postcode of last address) (Table S21). (Note that Western Australia and the Northern Territory are excluded from this section, as relevant data were not available for these 2 jurisdictions).

Based on supervision rates (number under supervision per 10,000 population), young people from geographically remote areas were the most likely to be supervised (Table S22). Young people aged 10–17 from *Remote areas* were 5 times as likely to be under supervision on an average day as those from *Major cities* (75 per 10,000 compared with 15 per 10,000), while those from *Very remote areas* were about 7 times as likely (107 compared with 15 per 10,000).

About 2 in every 5 young people (39%) who were under supervision on an average day were from areas of lowest socioeconomic status (based on postcode of last address) (Table S23). Young people aged 10–17 from areas of lowest socioeconomic status were about 7 times as likely to be under supervision as those from areas of highest socioeconomic status (37 per 10,000 compared with 5 per 10,000) (Table S24).

Consistent with the geographical distribution of the Indigenous population in Australia, Indigenous young people under supervision on an average day were more likely than non-Indigenous young people to have lived in *Remote* or *Very remote areas* before entering supervision (11% compared with less than 1%) (Table S21). They were also more likely to have lived in the areas of lowest socioeconomic status before entering supervision (44% compared with 36%) (Table S23).

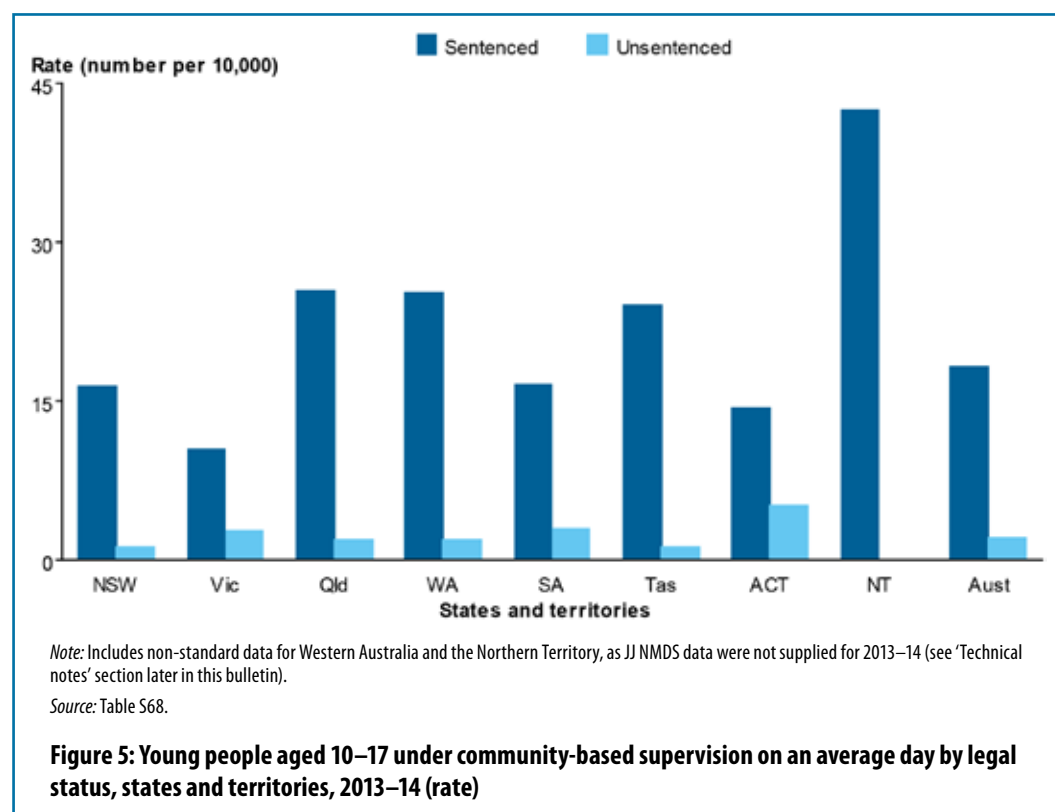
Types of supervision

Community-based supervision

In 2013–14, 85% of young people who were under supervision on an average day were supervised in the community (5,191 young people) (Table 1). The rate of community-based supervision was 20 per 10,000 young people aged 10–17.

Community-based supervision occurs as the result of both unsentenced and sentenced orders, reflecting the legal status of the person under supervision. Unsentenced orders, where the young person awaits the outcome of their legal matter or sentencing, can include supervised or conditional bail, and home detention bail. Sentenced orders can include: probation (where regular reporting to the youth justice agency and participation in treatment programs are often required); suspended detention (where the young person must meet certain conditions); and parole or supervised release (supervision that follows a period of detention). Young people can change legal status or be on multiple types of orders on the same day.

On an average day in 2013–14, most (92% or 4,773) young people aged 10 and over who were under community-based supervision were serving a sentence (Table S66). Nationally, around 18 young people per 10,000 aged 10–17 were under sentenced community-based supervision (Figure 5). Among the states and territories, the rate was lowest in Victoria (10 per 10,000) and highest in the Northern Territory (42 per 10,000).



'Probation and similar' was the most common type of sentenced community-based supervision, accounting for about 86% of young people under sentenced community-based supervision on an average day (excluding Western Australia and the Northern Territory, as data were not available for these 2 jurisdictions) (Tables S62 and S66). About 9% were on parole or supervised release, and 7% were on suspended detention orders.

Only about 10% of those under community-based supervision on an average day were under unsentenced community-based orders (527 young people) (Table S66). Nationally, the rate of young people aged 10–17 under unsentenced community-based supervision was 2 per 10,000 (Figure 5). Among the states and territories, rates ranged from 1 per 10,000 in New South Wales and Tasmania to 5 per 10,000 in the Australian Capital Territory.

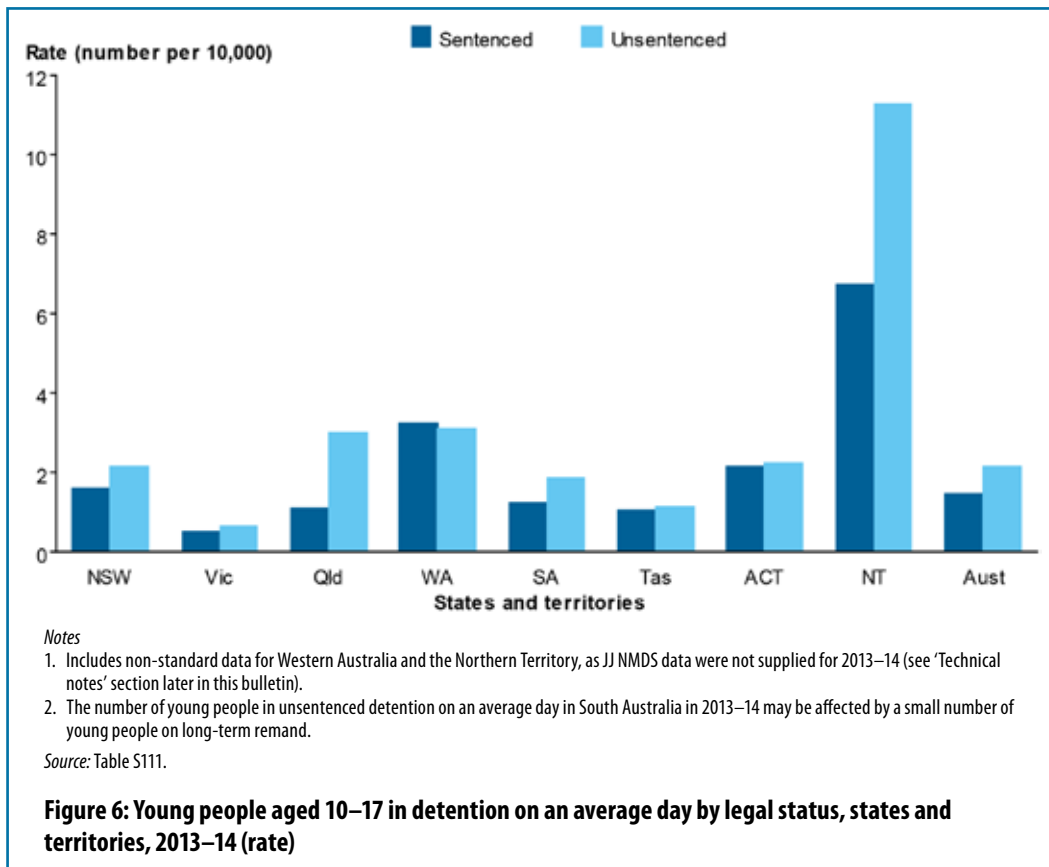
Detention

On an average day in 2013–14, about 16% of young people under supervision were in detention (951 young people) (Table 1). The rate of young people aged 10–17 in detention was 3.5 per 10,000.

Despite the low rate of those in detention on an average day, many young people experienced detention at some time during the year. Overall, about 2 in every 5 young people (42%) who were supervised during 2013–14 were in detention at some time; this proportion ranged from 16% in Tasmania to 67% in the Northern Territory (Table 1). Differences in the proportions of young people in detention on an average day and at some time during the year reflect the fact that young people spent substantially less time in detention, on average, than under community-based supervision (see 'Technical notes' section in this bulletin).

Nationally, just over half (52%) of all young people aged 10 and over in detention on an average day were unsentenced (Table S109). The proportion is 60% when only young people aged 10–17 are considered (Table S110). The rate of young people aged 10–17 in unsentenced detention on an average day in 2013–14 was 2 per 10,000, with just over 1 per 10,000 in sentenced detention (Figure 6).

Among the states and territories, rates of young people aged 10–17 in both unsentenced and sentenced detention on an average day were lowest in Victoria (less than 1 per 10,000 for each type of detention) and highest in the Northern Territory (11 and 7 per 10,000, respectively).



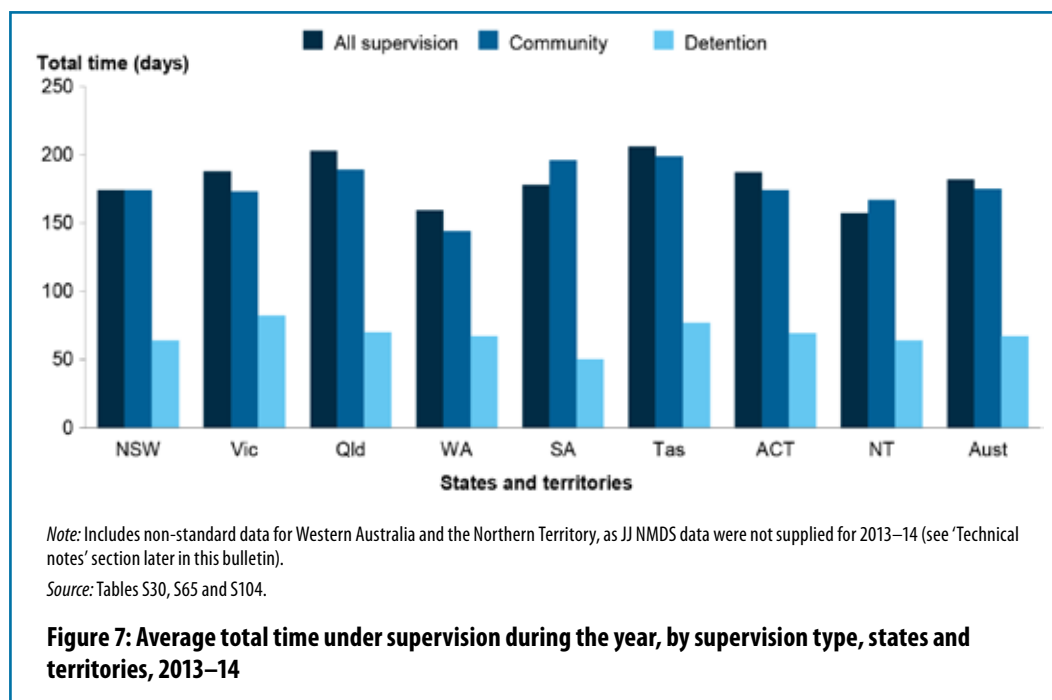
Time under supervision

Total time under supervision

When all periods spent under supervision are considered (including periods that are not yet completed), young people who were supervised during 2013–14 spent a total of 182 days, or 6 months (26 weeks), on average, under supervision (Figure 7). This was lowest in the Northern Territory (157 days or 22 weeks) and highest in Tasmania (206 days or 29 weeks).

Young people spent more time, on average, under community-based supervision during the year (175 days, or 25 weeks) than in detention (67 days, or almost 10 weeks). Again, there were differences among the states and territories. The average total amount of time spent under community-based supervision ranged from an average of 144 days in Western Australia to 199 days in Tasmania, while the time in detention ranged from 50 days in South Australia to 82 days in Victoria.

There were also differences between sentenced and unsentenced detention; nationally, young people spent substantially more time in sentenced detention (106 days, or 15 weeks) than unsentenced detention (40 days, or about 6 weeks) (Tables S118 and S126). This is to be expected, as young people are typically placed in unsentenced detention for relatively short periods while awaiting the outcome of their legal matter or sentencing.



Nationally, males spent an average of two weeks longer, in total, under supervision during the year than females (184 days compared with 170) (Table S30). Males spent 3 fewer days than females under community-based supervision (174 days on average, compared with 177) (Table S65) but about twice as long as females in detention (73 days compared with 36) (Table S104).

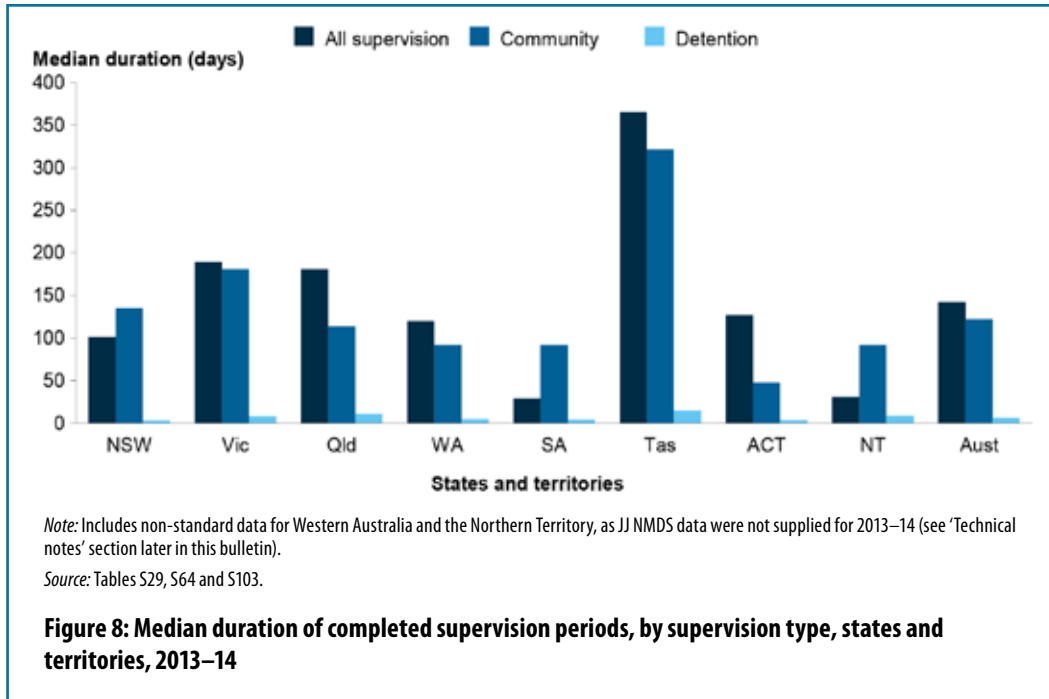
Indigenous young people spent 5 days longer, in total, under supervision during the year than non-Indigenous young people (187 days on average, compared with 182) (Table S30). Indigenous young people spent 9 days longer in unsentenced detention on average (45 days compared with 36), but 14 fewer days in sentenced detention (99 days compared with 113) (Tables S118 and S126).

Individual supervision periods

Nationally, the median duration of individual periods of supervision that were completed during 2013–14 was 142 days, or about 20 weeks (note that this includes time under supervision prior to 1 July 2013, for periods that started before 1 July 2013) (Figure 8). Median duration varied substantially among the states and territories, ranging from 31 days in the Northern Territory to 365 days in Tasmania. The median total duration of completed individual supervision periods is a new measure that is included in this report for the first time (previous reports in the *Youth justice in Australia* series only considered time under supervision during the most recent year when examining the median duration of individual completed supervision periods).

Completed periods of community-based supervision were substantially longer, on average, than completed periods of detention (median 122 days compared with 7 days). Again, there were notable differences among the states and territories; in community-based supervision, the median ranged from 48 days in the Australian Capital Territory to 322 days in Tasmania. In detention, it ranged from 3 days in New South Wales to 22 days in Tasmania.

As expected, completed periods of unsentenced detention were much shorter than periods of sentenced detention (median 6 days compared with 73 days) (Tables S117 and S124), and this pattern was common to all states and territories.



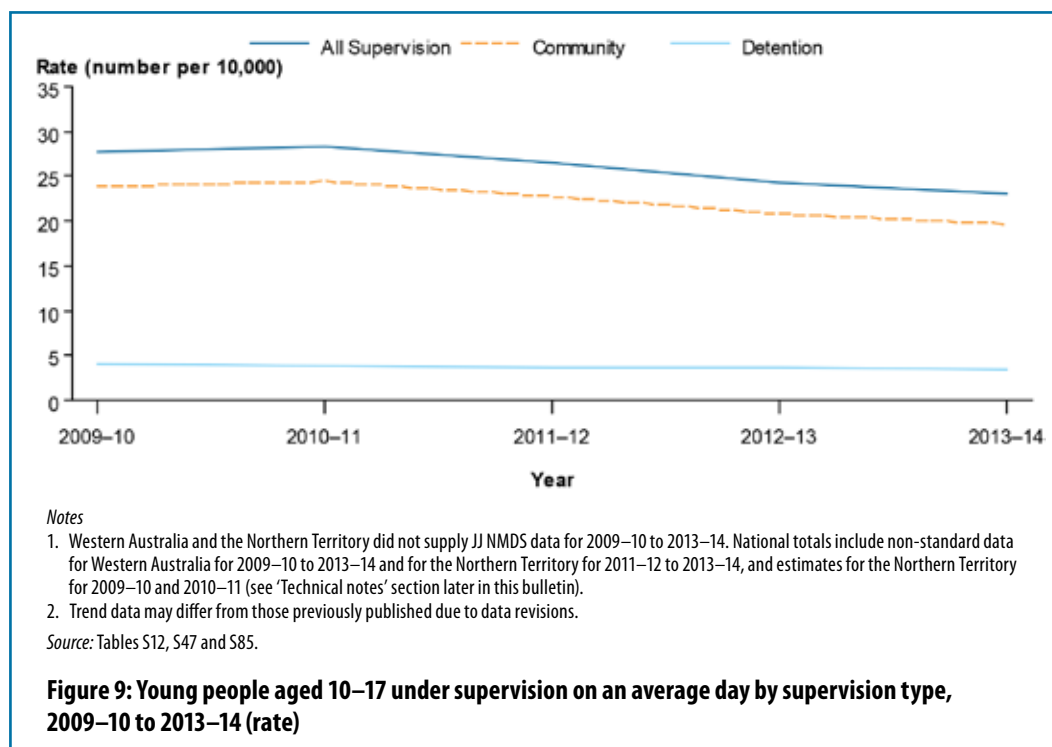
Recent trends

National

Nationally, there were falls in numbers and rates of young people under supervision on an average day over the 5 years from 2009–10 to 2013–14 (Figure 9 and Table S11). Both the number and rate were highest in 2010–11, with a steady fall over ensuing years. Between 2009–10 and 2013–14, the number of young people (of all ages) under supervision on an average day fell from 7,276 to 6,100 (down 16%), while the rate (among those aged 10–17) dropped from 28 to 23 per 10,000 young people. Between 2012–13 and 2013–14, the number under supervision dropped from 6,408 to 6,100 (down 5%) while the rate dropped from 24 to 23 per 10,000. This pattern was seen in both community-based supervision and detention.

Over the same 5-year period there was a 17% fall overall (from 6,233 to 5,191) in the number of young people (of all ages) on an average day under community-based supervision (Table S46), while the rate of young people aged 10–17 dropped from 24 to 20 per 10,000 (Figure 9).

For young people in detention, there was a steady decline in both numbers and rates over the 5-year period. Between 2009–10 and 2013–14, the number of young people (of all ages) in detention on an average day fell by 12% (from 1,084 to 951; Table S84) and the rate fell from 4.0 to 3.5 per 10,000 young people aged 10–17 (Figure 9).



States and territories

Between 2009–10 and 2013–14, the rate of young people aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day fell in almost all states and territories (note this section includes trends in the Northern Territory only for the 3-year period from 2011–12 to 2013–14 due to data availability) (Figure 10 and Table 3). The rate declined most markedly in Tasmania, from 50 to 27 per 10,000. In Queensland, the rate of young people under supervision fluctuated at 28–30 per 10,000 each year, while in the Northern Territory there was an overall increase over the 3-year period from 51 per 10,000 in 2011–12 to 61 per 10,000 in 2013–14.

The results were similar for both community-based supervision and detention. Rates fell for both types of supervision in almost all states and territories, with the largest falls being in Tasmania (from 45 to 25 per 10,000 in community-based supervision, and from 5 to 2 per 10,000 in detention) (Tables S47 and S85). There were increases in the rates of young people aged 10–17 in detention in Queensland (from 2.9 per 10,000 in 2009–10 to 3.8 per 10,000 in 2013–14) and the Northern Territory (from 15 per 10,000 in 2011–12 to 18 per 10,000 in 2013–14).

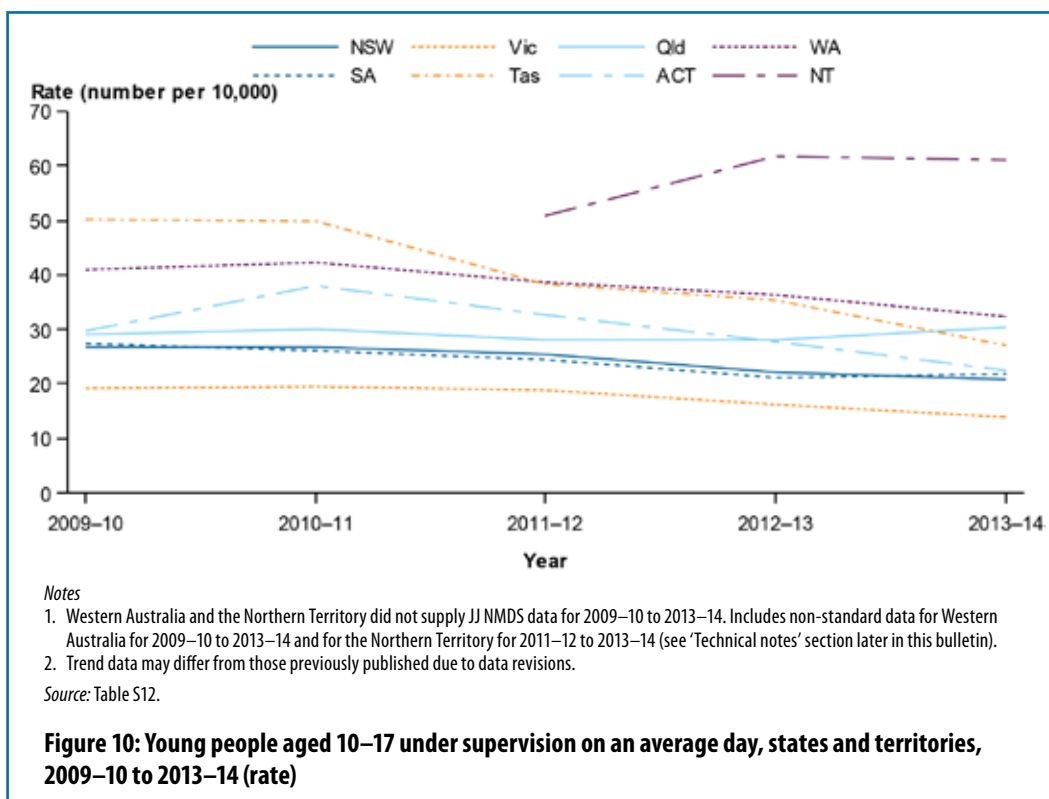


Table 3: Young people aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day by supervision type, summary of trends in rates, 2009–10 to 2013–14

	Supervision type		
	Community	Detention	All supervision
New South Wales	↓	↓	↓
Victoria	↓	↓	↓
Queensland	↔	↑	↔
Western Australia	↓	↓	↓
South Australia	↓	↓	↓
Tasmania	↓	↓	↓
Australian Capital Territory	↓	↓	↓
Northern Territory ^(a)	↑	↑	↑
Australia	↓	↓	↓

(a) Trends for the Northern Territory relate to the period 2011–12 to 2013–14.

Notes

1. Western Australia and the Northern Territory did not supply JJ NMDS data for 2009–10 to 2013–14. Includes non-standard data for Western Australia for 2009–10 to 2013–14 and for the Northern Territory for 2011–12 to 2013–14 (see 'Technical notes' section later in this bulletin).
2. Arrows indicate an overall trend between 2009–10 and 2013–14. Trends may have fluctuated between these years, particularly among smaller jurisdictions.
3. Trend data may differ from those previously published due to data revisions.

Source: Tables S12, S47 and S85.

Age and sex

Most of the decrease in rates of young people under supervision occurred among young males. Over the 5-year period to 2013–14, there was a fall in the rate of males aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day (from 45 to 37 per 10,000) while the rate of females under supervision remained relatively stable (about 9–10 per 10,000 each year) (Table S15). Males were almost 5 times as likely as females to be under supervision on an average day in 2009–10, falling to 4 times as likely in 2013–14. Similar patterns occurred for both community-based supervision and detention (Tables S50 and S88).

The decrease in rates of young males under supervision occurred in almost every single-year age group, with the largest decrease being among young males aged 17, from 96 per 10,000 in 2009–10 to 71 per 10,000 in 2013–14 (excluding Western Australia and the Northern Territory as data were not available) (Table S9). Among young females, there was a decrease in the rate of those aged 17 under supervision on an average day (from 17 to 13 per 10,000) but no consistent change in the other age groups.

Indigenous young people

Over the 5-year period, there was an overall fall in the national rate of Indigenous young people aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day from 210 to 189 per 10,000 (Tables 4 and S12). The rate of non-Indigenous young people under supervision also fell over this time, from 17 to 13 per 10,000.

The falls in numbers and rates of non-Indigenous young people under supervision were proportionally greater than the falls for Indigenous young people. This means that the level of over-representation of Indigenous young people increased over the 5-year period. Indigenous young people aged 10–17 were just under 13 times as likely as non-Indigenous young people to be under supervision on an average day in 2009–10, rising to 15 times as likely in 2013–14 (Table S12).

Similar overall increases in the Indigenous rate ratio on an average day occurred in both community-based supervision (12 to 14 times), and in detention (21 to 24 times) (Tables S47 and S85). Again, this was due to the fact that decreases in the rates of supervision were proportionally greater for non-Indigenous young people.

Over the 5-year period, there were decreases in the rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people overall under supervision in all states and territories for which data were available except the Northern Territory, where rates increased (over the 3-year 2011–12 to 2013–14 period for which data were available), and Queensland, where the rate of Indigenous young people increased (Table 4). The level of Indigenous over-representation in supervision on an average day (rate ratio) increased overall in all states and territories except South Australia and Tasmania, where it decreased (Table S12).

Table 4: Young people aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day by supervision type and Indigenous status, overall trends in rates, states and territories, 2009–10 to 2013–14

	Community		Detention		All supervision	
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
New South Wales	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Victoria	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Queensland	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓
Western Australia	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
South Australia	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Tasmania	↓	↓	n.p.	↓	↓	↓
Australian Capital Territory	↓	↓	n.p.	↓	↓	↓
Northern Territory ^(a)	↑	↔	↑	n.p.	↑	↑
Australia	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

(a) Trends for the Northern Territory relate to the period 2011–12 to 2013–14.

Notes

1. Western Australia and the Northern Territory did not supply JJ NMDS data for 2009–10 to 2013–14. Includes non-standard data for Western Australia for 2009–10 to 2013–14 and for the Northern Territory for 2011–12 to 2013–14 (see 'Technical notes' section later in this bulletin).
2. Arrows indicate an overall trend between 2009–10 and 2013–14. Trends may have fluctuated between these years, particularly among smaller jurisdictions.
3. Trend data may differ from those previously published due to data revisions.
4. Changes in the Indigenous rates for Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory should be interpreted with caution due to small numbers.

Source: Tables S12, S47 and S85.

Time under supervision

Over the 3 years from 2011–12 to 2013–14 the total amount of time young people spent, on average, under youth justice supervision during the year remained stable (180–182 days each year) (Table S30). Among the states and territories, the largest proportional increase occurred in South Australia (from 157 to 178 days, on average) and the largest decrease was in the Northern Territory (from 165 to 157 days).

Over the 3-year period, there was little change in the total amount of time young people spent under supervision during the year in either community-based supervision (172–175 days, on average, each year) or detention (64–67 days) (Tables S65 and S104).

Technical notes

Age

As the majority of young people under supervision in each state and territory are aged 10–17, this age range is used to enable meaningful state/territory comparisons. The age range of 10 and over is used to represent all young people under supervision (that is, including young people aged 18 and older—for more details see 'The youth justice system' in the Introduction).

Average and median

Two measures are used to describe the typical or central value for the data reported in this bulletin. For example, when reporting the total time spent under supervision, the mean (average) duration of all periods is used. However, when reporting the length of completed periods, the median is used due to the skewed distribution of the data.

Data sources

Information about young people under youth justice supervision in this bulletin is based on data from the JJ NMDS, supplemented with non-standard youth justice data supplied by Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set

This data collection contains information about the young people who were supervised by state and territory youth justice agencies in Australia, both in the community and in detention. Data from the JJ NMDS were used in this bulletin for all states and territories except Western Australia and the Northern Territory. However, not all participating states and territories were able to provide JJ NMDS data in the current format for all years of the JJ NMDS (2000–01 to 2013–14).

More information about the JJ NMDS, including details of the data and methods used in reporting, is available from the AIHW website at <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/youth-justice/data-quality/>>. A data quality statement for the JJ NMDS 2013–14 is also available at <<http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/601986>>.

Non-standard data (Western Australia and the Northern Territory)

Western Australia and the Northern Territory did not supply JJ NMDS data for the period 2008–09 to 2013–14. This report uses:

- ♦ non-standard youth justice data supplied by Western Australia for the period 2008–09 to 2013–14
- ♦ non-standard youth justice data for the Northern Territory for the period 2011–12 to 2013–14
- ♦ estimates (based on 2007–08 JJ NMDS data) for the Northern Territory for 2008–09 and 2009–10.

Comparisons between JJ NMDS and non-standard data in this report should be made with caution due to potential differences in data format, specifications, definitions and/or quality.

Estimates for the Northern Territory for 2008–09 and 2009–10 are not published in tables, but are included in national totals where appropriate.

Indigenous status data quality

Less than 7% of all young people in the JJ NMDS since 2000–01 have an unknown Indigenous status. In 2013–14, just under 5% of all young people under supervision during the year had an unknown Indigenous status. Among the states and territories, this ranged from less than 1% in Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia, to 13% in New South Wales.

In *Youth justice in Australia* reports, young people with ‘not stated’ Indigenous status are excluded from analyses of Indigenous status data.

In 2011, an AIHW review of Indigenous data quality in the JJ NMDS found that there were variations among the states and territories in the use of the Australian Bureau of Statistics standard for collecting and recording Indigenous status data. See the report *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identification in community services data collections: an updated data quality report* for more information.

National totals

JJ NMDS data were not always available for all jurisdictions for all years. Accordingly, where possible, non-standard data were used in order to calculate estimates of national totals (see ‘Data sources’ above).

Where national estimates could not be calculated, totals excluding Western Australia and the Northern Territory are reported. This includes analyses such as age of first supervision, remoteness, socioeconomic status, supervision orders, and supervision history.

Tables therefore may include two kinds of national totals:

- **‘Australia excluding Western Australia and the Northern Territory’**—all states and territories with JJ NMDS data.
- **‘Australia’**—an estimated national total derived from the available JJ NMDS data, plus non-standard data supplied by Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

Number of young people under supervision

Two measures of the number of young people under supervision are available from the JJ NMDS—‘average day’ and ‘during the year’.

The ‘average day’ measure reflects the number of young people under supervision on a typical 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 calculated by summing the number of days each young person spends under supervision during the year and dividing this total by the total number of days in the financial year. This summary measure reflects both the number of young people supervised and the amount of time they spent under supervision. This measure is the main focus of this bulletin.

In contrast, the ‘during the year’ measure is a count of the number of unique individuals who were supervised at any time during 2013–14. It is calculated by counting each distinct young person under supervision during the year only once, even if they entered and exited supervision multiple times.

Differences between the ‘average day’ and ‘during the year’ measures generally reflect differences in the amount of time spent under supervision. For example, only 16% of young people were in detention on an average day in 2013–14, but 42% experienced detention at some time during the year. This difference reflects the fact that young people spent substantially less time in detention, overall, than under community-based supervision.

Rates

Population rates allow for the comparison of different groups while taking into account differences in population sizes. Because there are differences between the states and territories in the extent to which young people aged 18 and older can be supervised by youth justice agencies, rates compared in this report are restricted to young people aged 10–17. The calculation of rates excludes young people for whom data on particular variables are not available, and are not calculated where there are fewer than 5 people, due to a lack of statistical reliability.

In this bulletin, rates are expressed as the number per 10,000 young people in the population.

Rate ratios

Rate ratios are used to compare Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates and to provide a measure of the level of Indigenous over-representation. They should be interpreted with caution where there are small denominators, rare events, or rates that converge while declining (or diverge while increasing).

Rate ratios are calculated using the rates rounded to 2 decimal places, as published in the supplementary tables.

Trends

This report examines trends over the period from 2009–10 to 2013–14. Where the number of young people under supervision on an average day is relatively small, the amount of random variation from year to year is more noticeable. This may affect the appearance of trends, which should therefore be interpreted with caution, particularly where they relate to small numbers. In recognition of this, percentage changes are not calculated where they relate to groups of fewer than 100 people.

In this report, comparisons are made between 2009–10 and 2013–14 data. The report aims to highlight the overall or net change over the 5-year period (that is, comparing the start and end of the period), while taking into account the trend within the period. Where possible, changes in the interim years are explored in the text. Full details are available in the supplementary tables.

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More information

This bulletin and associated supplementary data tables (those with a prefix of S) are part of the *Youth justice in Australia 2013–14* release, which also includes a series of fact sheets and web pages. All components can be downloaded free of charge from <<http://aihwstage.aihw.gov.au/publications/youth-justice/>>.

Previous editions are also available for download.

Table 5 provides a guide to the range and location of information available in the supplementary data tables.


Table 5: Index of supplementary tables^(a)

Characteristic	Type of supervision		
	All young people under supervision	Community-based supervision	Detention
Age, sex, Indigenous status	S1–S7	S36–S42	S74–S80
Trends	S8–S18	S43–S55	S81–S93
First supervision	S19–S20	S56–S57	S94–S97
Remoteness	S21–S22	S58–S59	S98–S99
Socioeconomic status of usual residence	S23–S24	S60–S61	S100–S101
Number of orders/supervision periods	S25–S28	S62–S64	—
Time under supervision/supervision history	S29–S35	S65–S73	S102–S104
Receptions/releases	—	—	S105–S108
Legal status	—	—	S109–S113
Detention type	—	—	S114–S127

(a) See also Tables S128 to S143 for detailed state and territory data and Tables S144 to S150 for the population numbers used to calculate rates.

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