

# POLICING INTERNAL BORDERS

## Risk-based policing and belonging

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BORDER CROSSING  
**OBSERVATORY**  
BORDERS, CRIME, JUSTICE

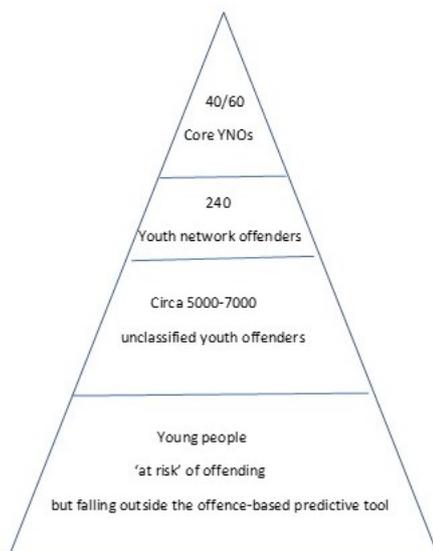
<https://www.monash.edu/arts/border-crossing-observatory/home>

### The study

From mid-2016 to mid-2018 a series of focus groups, interviews and discussions were conducted with youth workers, young people and some adult members from culturally diverse communities living in the Greater Dandenong and Casey area. In total 80 community participants were included in the formal data collection, with a particular focus on young people from Pasifika and Sudanese backgrounds. Young people were asked to recount both positive and negative experiences with police, and invited to report how these encounters had made them feel. Six interviews were conducted with Victoria Police personnel to provide context about the approach taken to the policing of young people in the area. Risk-based and predictive policing methods emerged as the predominant policing style being employed. This study was not an evaluation of these tactics. However, many of the experiences reported by community members could be understood as arising from these practices.

### Risk-based policing

Intelligence-led or risk-based policing is the pre-eminent mode of policing around the developed world today. It is technology-enabled and provides a powerful tool for targeting police resources by analysing crime and other data to identify risky people and places. The use of risk categories and predictive modelling has now developed to the extent that aspects of this style of policing are often referred to as predictive or preventive policing in which police intervention may occur before particular crimes or incidents of disorder take place.



The Victoria Police employ a risk-based system that classifies young people who have been in conflict with the law as ‘youth network offenders (YNOs)’ or ‘core youth network offenders’. A senior local officer explained: ‘We can run that tool now and it will tell us - like the kid might be 15 - it tells how many crimes he is going to commit before he is 21 based on that, and it is a 95% accuracy. It has been tested.’

These categorisations are based primarily on the number and type of previous offending. To be classified as a ‘core YNO’ a 10 to 14 year old has to be charged with at least 20 offences. The threshold for 15 to 17 year olds is 30 or more charges, and for 18 to 22 year olds is 60-plus. Figures in the diagram opposite were accurate at the time of interview for Dandenong Division.

A wider range of data, including family circumstances, missing persons reports or police contacts, is used to identify young people ‘at risk’ of future offending: ‘So they might not have committed a crime but they have been checked at midnight a couple of times, out with other kids.’ (Local senior officer)

Police dealings with young people are largely determined by these risk classifications. At risk young people may be referred to multi-agency programs for ‘early intervention’ support aimed at preventing their entry into the criminal justice system. YNOs, particularly core YNOs, are more likely to receive intensive monitoring and police intervention.

