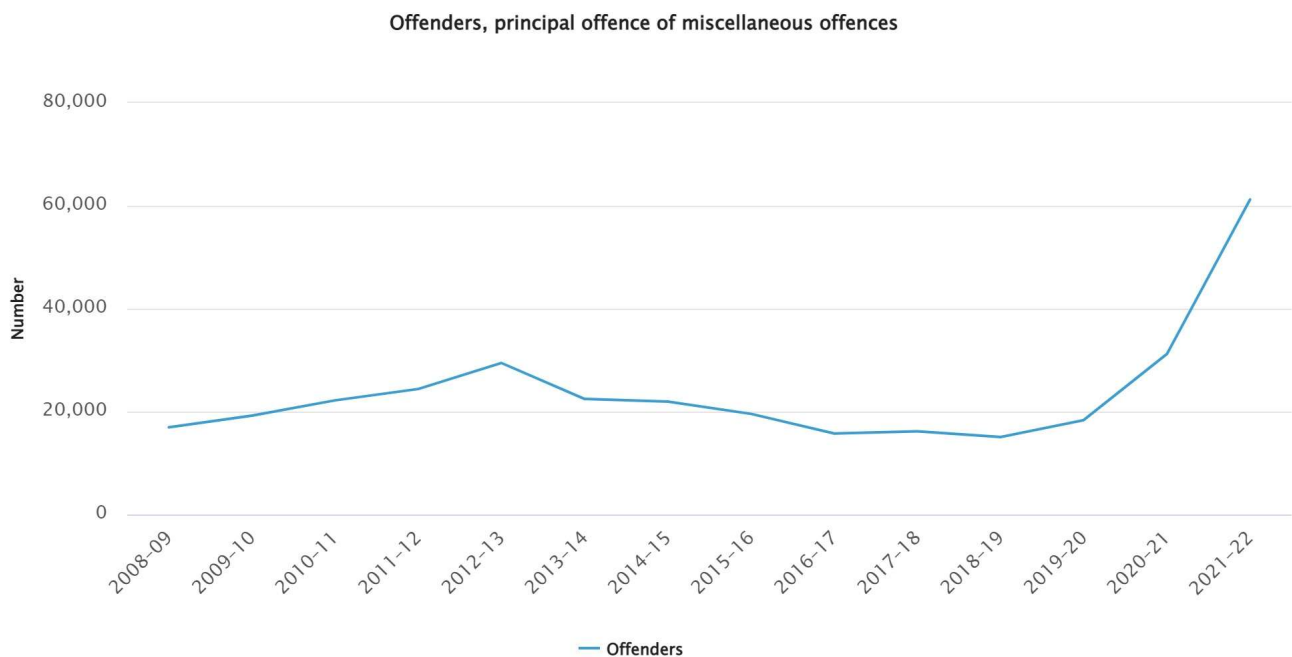


Juvenile Crime Prevention: Shortening The Gap

Australia's [juvenile crime](#) prevention has been a subject of debate for many years. According to the Australian Institute of Criminology, the rate of [youth offenders](#) (aged 10-17 years), specifically in illicit drug offences, has been steadily decreasing since 2008. However, it still remains high compared to other age groups ([Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023](#)). In 2021-2022, there were 45,210 youth offenders, a 2% increase from the previous year. Juveniles commit theft, property damage, public order offences, and acts intended to cause injury. Although there has been no significant increase, this topic has become one of the most followed stories in the [Australian media](#) recently. So, can education promote social inclusion?



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Recorded Crime – Offenders 2021–22 financial year

There were 369,488 offenders proceeded against by police in Australia, up 3% from 2020-21.

Source: [Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023](#)

[Education](#) has been identified as a [potential solution](#) to juvenile crime prevention in Australia, as it can promote social inclusion and [prevent](#) young people from engaging in delinquent behaviour. Social inclusion refers to ensuring that all members of society have access to the same rights, opportunities, and resources, regardless of their background ([Juvonen et al., 2019](#)). Research has shown that

social exclusion and inequality can increase youth crime risk ([Kramer, 2000](#)).

Education can play a significant role in promoting social inclusion and reducing youth crime risk. By granting young people [access](#) to quality education, they can develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to participate fully in society. This includes developing their empathy, communication, and problem-solving skills, which can prevent delinquent behaviour ([Song & Kim, 2022](#)).

What is social Inclusion?

[Social inclusion](#) is an essential concept in social policy. It aims to ensure that all individuals have access to the same opportunities and benefits, regardless of background. It is about creating a sense of belonging, respect, and value for all members of society. Social inclusion is crucial for [promoting equality](#) and reducing poverty and social exclusion.



Social inclusion is crucial for [promoting equality](#) and reducing poverty and social exclusion.

Source: [Youth Networks](#)

In contrast, [social exclusion](#) refers to the processes that lead to people being marginalised or excluded from participating fully in society. Social exclusion can take many forms, including poverty, unemployment, lack of education, and discrimination. When people face socio-economic barriers, they are either not in a position or are less likely, to participate in social, economic, and political life (Levitas, 2005). This often creates further disadvantages and exclusion.

The concept of social inclusion has undergone wide-ranging discussion in academic and policy circles, in particular in [social welfare](#) and human development. Many countries and international organisations have adopted it.

This includes the [European Union](#) and the [United Nations](#), who have both identified it as a key policy objective.

Several [initiatives](#) have been implemented to promote social inclusion in different contexts. For example, inclusive education aims to provide equal access and opportunities to education for all students, regardless of their background. In the workplace, diversity and inclusion [programs](#) aim to create a more inclusive environment, promoting equal opportunities for all employees.

achieving this through the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs)

The United Nations has set a series of goals known as the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)). The goals aim to address poverty, inequality, and other social issues that impact society, including social exclusion. One of the goals, [SDG 4](#), focuses on ensuring everyone has access to equitable and quality education that promotes lifelong learning. This recognises education as a fundamental human right and a key driver of economic growth, social inclusion, and sustainable development.

[SDG 10](#) is another key goal to reduce inequality within and among countries. It acknowledges that inequality, whether economic, social, or political, is a major obstacle to sustainable development. It also recognises that reducing inequality is essential to achieving the other SDGs.

Case Study

Although exclusion in education may be considered '[colourblind](#)', different groups are affected differently from one another. Therefore, it is important to look at previous case studies that have been systematically reviewed. This case study is based on *The Impact of Racism on the Schooling Experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students: A Systematic Review* by Moodie N., Maxwell J., and Rudolph S. ([2019](#)), which is part of "The Australian Educational Researcher" journal.

"How is racism understood to influence schooling experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students?"

[Moodie et al., 2019](#)

The review is based on 46 studies, some dating back to 1989. This is when the first National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education policies were released by the [Department of Education](#). Racism has evolved in understanding. This has led to a broader understanding of how racism affects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These effects include withdrawal from school, de-identification as Indigenous, emotional distress, and internalisation of negative beliefs about Indigenous intelligence ([Moodie et al., 2019](#)). This is a problematic situation as it can lead to school engagement difficulties later in life, including as parents. No matter how proud you are of your own identity, it can be negatively affected. This is especially true throughout youth, including in a school environment.



In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education unionists highlight the need for collegial and professional support in public education to promote social inclusion.

Source: [Education International](#).

Discussion: How do we Prevent Juvenile Crime?

[Moodie et al. \(2019\)](#) say that the understanding of racism has changed in the past

27 years from when the Department of Education started its policies. Racism was defined as follows:

“...discrimination and oppressive practices such as demeaning attitudes, stereotyping, subjugation, ostracism, prejudice, exclusion, exploitation, dominance, marginalisation, and alienation.”

[Moodie et al., 2019](#)

Later, this understanding of racism expanded. Discussions around the subject now recognise that racism can also lead to low expectations, deficit thinking, and intra-cultural racism in the Aboriginal community ([Moodie et al., 2019](#)). This enhances society’s understanding of the problem, thus opening the door for further discoveries and strategies for combatting the problem.

Research has also shown that white dominance, white privilege, and culturally dominant ethnic privilege have become more relevant in recent years. Racism’s impact was recognised as historical, ongoing, repeated, and maintained by hidden ideologies ([Moodie et al., 2019](#)). This is alarming, as it has already been recognised that racism has a repetitive cycle and is maintained through hidden ideological constructs ([Banaji et al., 2021](#)). It happens daily in schools, governments, institutions and in public. Racism occurs on such a large scale that it is difficult to tackle. As a result, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural identity is at risk of being eroded.

Discussing Mass Incarceration

Michelle Alexander’s [book](#), *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, sheds light on the plight of young black men in American cities. They find themselves either warehoused in prisons due to a lack of economic opportunity or permanently trapped in [second-class status](#) as “felons” with criminal records. The U.S. criminal justice system disproportionately targets communities of colour, perpetuating discrimination often overlooked in the era of colourblindness. This has devastating effects on these communities. Exploring the parallels between the historical Jim Crow era and the current mass incarceration crisis ([Forman Jr, 2012](#)), it is clear that the racial caste system persists despite evolving racial control approaches.

The Legacy of Jim Crow

The [term](#) “Jim Crow” refers to the racial caste system that operated in the United States from 1877 to the mid-1960s. It encompassed rigid anti-Black laws and a pervasive way of life that relegated African Americans to second-class citizenship. The system mandated [de jure racial segregation](#), particularly in the Southern states of the former Confederacy. Despite the notion of “separate but equal,” the reality was that African Americans faced systemic inequality throughout everyday life, including in education, economics, and social opportunities ([Banaji et al., 2021](#)). While de jure segregation was prevalent in the South, de facto segregation persisted in the North through practices such as housing discrimination and job inequalities.

The Civil Rights Movement and Its Reforms

President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the [Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) into law. This marked a significant milestone in the fight against racial discrimination. The act enabled the commerce clause to outlaw discrimination in public accommodations, private schools, and workplaces. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 followed this. This act aimed to eliminate barriers to voting and provide federal oversight in areas with historically low voter turnout. These reforms were intended to [dismantle](#) the Jim Crow system and its discriminatory practices.

The Rise of Mass Incarceration

However, Michelle Alexander [argues](#) convincingly that the criminal justice system has replaced Jim Crow as a tool for racial control. Rather than explicitly relying on racial attributes, contemporary forms of “racial control” have adapted to changing political circumstances and standards. [The War on Drugs](#) became a primary tool for targeting communities of colour. This led to a disproportionate number of young black men trapped in the criminal justice system. The racial caste system, as Alexander describes it, persists in a new form, perpetuating racial inequality and social marginalisation.

The Australian Context

The relevance of Jim Crow and mass incarceration extends beyond the United States, reaching [Australia](#) and its treatment of Indigenous Australians. The Australian criminal justice system has been accused of being a race-based institution. This means disproportionately targeting and punishing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. [Incarceration rates](#) for Indigenous Australians have significantly increased, with Indigenous people being incarcerated at much higher rates than non-Indigenous people. The system's aggressive treatment of Indigenous youth and the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people for minor offences reflect a de facto form of racial control ([Blagg et al., 2005](#)). Perhaps most telling is the fact that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the most [incarcerated](#) people in the world ([United Nations Association of Australia, 2021](#)).



Transforming Power: Voices for Generational Change

Source: [Australian Human Rights Commission](#).

practices that prevent Juvenile Crime

One key way to prevent juvenile crime is equal access to education, healthcare, and other resources. Studies have shown that equal access to these resources reduces social exclusion and promotes social cohesion ([European Parliament](#),

[2022](#)). Initiatives such as providing scholarships and grants to students from disadvantaged backgrounds can help achieve these objectives.

Community involvement is another practice that promotes social inclusion. Encouraging community members to participate in local activities and decision-making processes can promote inclusion and belonging, help build stronger social connections, and reduce isolation. Studies have shown that community involvement can lead to increased well-being and decreased social exclusion ([Castillo et al., 2019](#)).

The [promotion of diversity](#) and multiculturalism is also imperative for promoting social inclusion. Celebrating and valuing diversity can help people feel included and valued, regardless of their background or cultural identity. Additionally, promoting diversity can help break down stereotypes and reduce prejudice, both of which contribute to social exclusion.

How Does Education Prevent Juvenile Crime?

Education is widely recognised as a key driver of social inclusion ([OECD, 2022](#)). Quality education can provide individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate fully in society. This includes accessing employment opportunities and contributing to their communities. As well as reducing social exclusion, providing individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to improve their socioeconomic status can reduce poverty and inequality ([UNESCO, 2023](#)).



Moving toward a more inclusive education system for every human.

Source: [OECD](#)

In addition, education can promote social inclusion by providing a space for individuals from different backgrounds and cultures to interact with one another. This can help promote multiculturalism and diversity, which in turn can reduce isolation and exclusion whilst promoting social cohesion. Studies have shown that exposure to diversity and multiculturalism can increase empathy and understanding, reduce prejudice, and encourage social integration ([Murrar et al., 2020](#); [James & Prilleltensky, 2002](#)).

Furthermore, education can also help address structural barriers to social inclusion, such as discrimination and inequality. By providing individuals with critical thinking skills and knowledge about social issues, education can [empower](#) them to challenge discrimination. This can play a pivotal role in the fight for social justice and equality.

moving forward

There are several strategies for juvenile crime prevention through education. One is to provide equal access to quality education for all members of society,

regardless of their background or identity. This includes individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds, indigenous communities, and other marginalised groups. Providing access to quality education can reduce inequality and promote social mobility, which contributes to social inclusion ([UNESCO, 2023](#)).

Another strategy is to promote community involvement in education. Encouraging parents and community members to participate in school activities and decision-making processes can achieve this. By involving the community in education, schools can build stronger social connections and foster a sense of belonging. Additionally, schools can incorporate community service and volunteerism into their curriculum to encourage community involvement among their students. This can help students develop a sense of [civic responsibility](#) and contribute to their communities ([Borman & Dowling, 2008](#)).

Moreover, inclusive education practices can also prevent juvenile crime by ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities and special needs, have equal access to education. Inclusive education practices aim to address learners' diverse needs, creating an equitable learning environment ([UNESCO, 2023](#)).

For example, Australia has implemented several initiatives to promote social inclusion through education. One example is the [Youth Participation Framework](#) in Queensland. This aims to provide young people with opportunities to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives. The Australian government has also invested in the [Equity in Education](#) program, which aims to improve educational outcomes for students from low socio-economic backgrounds.



Teaching young learners about civic duty and community involvement.

Source: [Planbook](#).

A Thrivable Framework: Juvenile Crime Prevention

[The THRIVE Project](#) invests interest in issues fundamental to our society, including those related to the judicial process and human rights. Safeguarding human well-being in all domains is paramount to THRIVE's mission. This aligns with the issue of youth crime in Australia, as addressing this problem contributes to creating a society where young individuals can thrive.

The THRIVE Project believes that the problem of youth crime in Australia can be addressed more effectively with the knowledge currently available to us. By focusing on sustainable solutions, we prevent crime's negative consequences and also offer the potential for flourishing societies. In the context of youth crime, this means exploring strategies that promote social inclusion and educational opportunities for young people.

We recognise that the pursuit of human happiness can sometimes compete with

environmental well-being. Therefore, THRIVE utilises our [ciambella chart](#) to illustrate the concept of the '[thrivable zone](#)'. In the context of youth crime, this means addressing the root causes in a manner that is sustainable. By promoting education and social inclusion, we aim to create a society where young people thrive while ensuring the well-being of the environment.

To learn more about how The THRIVE Project is researching, educating, and advocating for a future beyond [sustainability](#), please visit our [website](#). You can follow our informative blog and [podcast series](#) to learn about our regular live [webinars](#). We feature experts in sustainability fields, including many rich discussions on social inclusion. [Sign up for our newsletter](#) for regular updates.

why Is it essential we focus on Juvenile Crime Prevention?

Research has shown that education plays a crucial role in juvenile crime prevention and promoting social inclusion. Access to quality education enables individuals to feel less excluded and more willing to participate positively in society. This can reduce criminal behaviour and other social issues ([Lochner & Moretti, 2004](#)).

Education can also provide individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to further their employment prospects, which can, in turn, reduce poverty. Research has shown that higher education levels are associated with higher employment and earnings, as well as better health outcomes and lower poverty rates ([OECD, 2022](#)). Education can also promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills, empowering individuals to make positive changes in their communities ([UNESCO, 2023](#)).

In addition, education can promote juvenile crime prevention by providing individuals with opportunities to develop social and emotional skills, such as empathy, communication, and conflict resolution. This can help people build positive relationships and make meaningful contributions to their communities ([OECD, 2022](#)).

Conclusion

In conclusion, addressing youth crime rates in Australia requires a multifaceted approach that focuses on juvenile crime prevention and providing quality education opportunities. While juvenile offenders have decreased in recent years, they still remain high compared to other age groups. Education provides a potential solution to youth crime, as it can prevent delinquent behaviour by promoting social inclusion.

Social inclusion ensures that all individuals have equal access to rights, opportunities, and resources, regardless of their background. It is crucial for promoting equality and reducing poverty and social exclusion. Education plays a significant role in juvenile crime prevention by providing young people with the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes to participate fully in society. This includes developing social and emotional skills that prevent delinquent behaviour.

Initiatives such as inclusive education, diversity and inclusion programs in the workplace, and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to promote social inclusion in various contexts. The SDGs, particularly SDG 4 on quality education for all, recognise the importance of education in promoting lifelong learning and social inclusion. Case studies, such as the impact of racism on the schooling experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, highlight the detrimental effects of social exclusion and discrimination.

In the pursuit of creating a thrivable society, addressing youth crime in Australia is essential. By focusing on sustainable solutions that promote social inclusion and educational opportunities, we can create an environment where young individuals thrive. Education plays a crucial part in juvenile crime prevention and promoting social inclusion. It is imperative to prioritise its role in addressing these issues.