

SECTION FOUR

INCIDENCE OF VIOLENCE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section addresses the first of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, presenting a comprehensive review of available statistics on the occurrences of youth violence primarily within New South Wales. The limitations of the data are also highlighted.

Recent media reports suggest that youth violence, and particularly school-based violence, is increasing. Newspaper headlines have included:

- "Schoolyard war zones"
- "Schoolyards become the devil's playground"
- "Knives, bombs, drugs as violence erupts"
- "Classes in chaos"
- "Violence in school surges"

Some examples of incidents of youth violence reported recently in the media include:

- an argument between three school students which resulted in the death of one student when he fell and struck his head on a steel door frame and a desk. A 14 year old boy was charged with manslaughter in relation to the incident
- a group of boys allegedly dressed in school uniform assaulted and robbed a travel agent
- a shooting from a car at Campsie where an 18 year old was killed and a 16 year old injured while standing outside a disco. Four teenagers and a 20 year old were charged in relation to the incident.

4.2 ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH DETERMINING THE INCIDENCE OF VIOLENCE

Even though there has been significant public concern about youth violence for some time, there has been relatively little research into youth violence in Australia. While police and court statistics provide a limited perspective on youth violence, they remain the primary source of data on its incidence. This paper does not purport to provide a complete picture of the incidence and nature of youth violence. For example, sexual assault data are not included in all tables. The limitations of the statistics also prevent definitive conclusions being drawn. The paper is intended to provide details of likely patterns associated with the incidence of youth violence.

The statistics in this section relate to offender or conviction data. The offender data are based on offences which have been cleared by police. For an offence to be cleared, the offence has to have been reported to police and an alleged offender or offenders identified. The limitations with using cleared offence data include:

- for an offence to have been recorded by the police it needs to have been reported and accepted by the police as being genuine. It has been well documented that many violent offences are not reported to police (for example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics Crime and Safety Survey conducted in New South Wales in 1991 revealed that 68% of assault victims did not report the incident to police)
- not all offences are cleared. However, the age of the alleged offender is not likely to be known until an offence has been cleared. Even if the age is known it is not always recorded
- youth may be more likely to be apprehended for their crimes than adults because of their relative inexperience in avoiding detection. This may mean that a comparison of offence rates is misleading.

Conviction data are also subject to these limitations. Additional limitations include the fact that not all those identified as the alleged offender are convicted of the offence. Using data from the Children's Court also means that only issues relating to the 10-17 age group can be examined.

Some data are also available and presented only in terms of cleared offences, rather than numbers of offenders. There can be a number of alleged offenders for a single offence which will not be evident from statistics which treat incidents as one

offence, regardless of the number of perpetrators involved. The ages of these offenders may also vary.

All sources of data share a further limitation in that statistics provide a limited picture of the seriousness of a violent crime. For example, aggravated assault can range from inflicting an injury resulting in a black eye to one which permanently disables a person.

4.3 INCIDENCE OF VIOLENCE AMONG 10-17 YEAR OLDS

Table 1 shows the number of alleged violent offenders known to be aged 10-17 years for the past three years. This table shows that youth aged 10-17 years arrested for violent offences were most likely to have allegedly committed non-aggravated assault. The total number of alleged violent offenders aged 10-17 years decreased between 1990 and 1992 by 418 offenders. This represents a decrease of 13%. The number of alleged offenders aged 10-17 years decreased for virtually all violent offence types between 1990 and 1992, particularly aggravated assault.

Table 1 also shows that youth aged 10-17 years allegedly committed a low proportion of violent offences resulting in death, and a relatively high proportion of the less serious violent offences of robbery without a weapon and robbery with a weapon which was not a firearm. Overall, just over one-tenth of all alleged violent offenders between 1990 and 1992 were aged 10-17 years. This proportion is similar to the proportion 10-17 year olds represent of the total population of New South Wales.

Table 2 shows the number of violent offences proven by the Children's Court over a period of nine years. The table also shows the percentage of all offences proven by the Children's Court which were classed as violent offences. While the Children's Court does not have jurisdiction to determine certain violent offences, including homicide, certain categories of sexual assault, and offences for which the penalty is penal servitude for life or 25 years, this table provides an indication of trends in the incidence of violent offences for which 10-17 year olds were convicted.

Table 2 shows that the number of offences against the person, and robbery and extortion, for which 10-17 year olds were convicted has increased considerably since 1983/84. The percentage of all offences which were violent and for which 10-17 year olds were convicted has also increased since 1983/84. However,

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young people from this age group are much more likely to be convicted of non-violent offences.

Table 1

Number and percentage* of alleged violent offenders aged 10-17 years for 1990, 1991 and 1992

Offence	1990		1991		1992	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Murder	9	(7)	5	(6)	2	(3)
Attempted murder	4	(6)	13	(17)	2	(3)
Murder accessory, conspiracy	2	(17)	-	-	-	-
Manslaughter (not motoring)	1	(7)	2	(10)	-	-
Assault aggravated ¹	572	(13)	498	(13)	447	(13)
Assault non-aggravated ²	2278	(12)	2367	(11)	2059	(10)
Robbery without a weapon	247	(39)	235	(30)	217	(40)
Robbery with a firearm	22	(9)	45	(14)	35	(13)
Robbery with a weapon, not firearm	131	(31)	99	(24)	86	(26)
Total	3266	(13)	3264	(12)	2848	(11)

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

* Expressed in terms of the proportion of the total of all offenders allegedly committing the offences in question

Notes:

- 1 Includes assault causing grievous bodily harm, assault occasioning actual bodily harm, malicious wounding, shooting with intent, culpable driving causing grievous bodily harm and negligent act causing grievous bodily harm
- 2 Includes common assault, assaulting police, assaulting female, culpable driving causing actual bodily harm

Table 2
Number and percentage of offences proven by the Children's Courts
1983/84 - 1991/92

Year	Type		of		Offence
	Against the Person ¹		Robbery and Extortion		All Offences
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.
1983/84	494	(3.4)	54	(0.4)	14683
1984/85	702	(4.5)	96	(0.6)	15652
1985/86	703	(5.4)	130	(1.0)	12901
1986/87	871	(6.7)	131	(1.0)	13034
1987/88	1120	(8.1)	117	(0.8)	13789
1988/89	1586	(11.2)	137	(1.0)	14223
1989/90	1921	(13.1)	189	(1.3)	14657
1990/91	1834	(12.5)	244	(1.7)	14663
1991/92	1712	(13.5)	267	(2.1)	12660

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research and Office of Juvenile Justice

Notes:

- 1 Includes homicide, attempted homicide and other non-sexual assaults

4.4 INCIDENCE OF VIOLENCE AMONG 18-24 YEAR OLDS

Table 3 shows the number of alleged violent offenders known to be aged 18-24 years for the past three years.

This table shows that, like 10-17 year olds, offenders aged 18-24 years were allegedly most likely to commit non-aggravated assault. The total number of alleged violent offenders aged 18-24 years decreased between 1990 and 1992 by 391 offenders. This represents a decrease of 5%. The number of alleged

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offenders for virtually all violent offence types decreased between 1990 and 1992, particularly for aggravated assault.

Table 3

Number and percentage of alleged violent offenders aged 18-24 years for 1990, 1991 and 1992

Offence	1990		1991		1992	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Murder	49	(40)	26	(30)	16	(21)
Attempted murder	22	(32)	14	(8)	13	(22)
Murder accessory, conspiracy	1	(8)	-	-	-	-
Manslaughter (not motoring)	4	(29)	8	(38)	7	(39)
Assault aggravated	1734	(39)	1549	(39)	1420	(40)
Assault non-aggravated	6277	(32)	6413	(31)	6307	(30)
Robbery without a weapon	250	(39)	234	(39)	174	(32)
Robbery with a firearm	83	(34)	112	(34)	115	(42)
Robbery with a weapon, not firearm	164	(39)	178	(43)	141	(43)
Total	8584	(33)	8534	(32)	8193	(32)

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

Youths aged 18-24 years allegedly committed a relatively high proportion of all violent offences. About one-third of all alleged violent offenders between 1990 and 1992 were aged 18-24 years. This age group is over-represented in terms of alleged violent offending, as the group comprises only 11% of the total population of New South Wales.

4.5 RATES OF VIOLENT CRIME AND OLDER ADULT OFFENDING

The actual numbers of alleged violent offenders provided in the tables above do not provide an indication of the magnitude of the problem of youth violence because they do not take into account the size of the population in the age group in question, nor do they compare youth offending with older adult (those aged 25 years or more) offending.

In this section, rates of offending are calculated by dividing the number of offenders by the size of the population in each age group, and expressing this incidence rate per 100,000 of each age-specific population group. This results in standardised rates which provide a comparison of the incidence of violence across the various age groups. Table 4 shows rates of alleged violent offending for 1992 for older adults, as well as 10-17 and 18-24 year olds.

Table 4

Number and rate per 100,000 population of alleged violent offenders aged 10-17, 18-24 and 25+ years for 1992

Offence	Age 10-17		of 18-24		Offender 25+		(Years) Total	
	No.	(Rate)	No.	(Rate)	No.	(Rate)	No.	(Rate)
Homicide ¹	4	(0.6)	36	(5.8)	116	(3.2)	158	(2.8)
Aggravated assault	447	(66.7)	1420	(227.0)	1579	(44.0)	3565	(62.2)
Non-aggravated assault	2059	(307.3)	6307	(1008.4)	11674	(325.2)	20895	(364.5)
Robbery	338	(50.4)	430	(68.7)	336	(9.4)	1140	(19.9)

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research for numbers of offenders

NB: Population data are based on the 1991 Census.

Notes:

1 Includes murder, attempted murder, and manslaughter (not motoring)

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This table shows that rates of alleged homicide are relatively small. The rate of alleged non-aggravated assault is relatively high, particularly for the 18-24 age group, which has an incidence rate over three times that of the other groups. This group is also over-represented in terms of aggravated assault, with five times the rate for offenders over 25 years, and for robbery, with over seven times the over 25 year rate. The 10-17 age group, while not having a significant incidence rate for homicide, has a slightly higher rate for aggravated assaults than offenders over 25 years, but the rate is still lower than the average. This age group has the lowest rate of non-aggravated assaults, but over five times the robbery rate of offenders over 25 years.

Table 5 shows the rates of violent offences proven by the Children's Court for the Census years of 1986 and 1991.

Table 5

Number¹ and rate per 100,000 population of youth
for violent offences proven by the Children's Court in 1986 and 1991.

Offence	1986		1991	
	No.	(Rate)	No.	(Rate)
Against the person	703	(99.1)	1834	(273.7)
Robbery and extortion	130	(18.3)	244	(36.4)

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research and NSW Office of Juvenile Justice

NB: Population figures from 1986 and 1991 Census

Notes:

- 1 As Children's Court figures are based on a financial year, 1985/86 and 1990/91 figures are used.

This table shows that not only has the number of violent offences for which 10-17 year olds were convicted increased, but that the rate of violent offending also increased, between 1986 and 1991.

4.6 GENDER DIFFERENCES

Table 6 shows the number and percentage of male and female alleged violent offenders for 1992.

Table 6

Number and percentage of male and female alleged violent offenders aged 10-17 years and 18-24 years for 1992

Offence	AGE 10 to 17		OF 17		OFFENDER 18 to 24		(YEARS) 24	
	No	Male (%)	No	Female (%)	No	Male (%)	No	Female (%)
Homicide	4	(100)	-	-	28	(82)	6	(18)
Aggravated Assault	395	(88)	52	(12)	1284	(92)	116	(8)
Non-aggravated assault	1593	(78)	456	(22)	5543	(89)	701	(11)
Robbery	301	(89)	37	(11)	397	(93)	31	(7)
Total	2293	(81)	545	(19)	7252	(89)	854	(11)

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

This table shows that alleged violent offenders aged 10-17 years were four times more likely to be male than female (that is, of 10-17 year old alleged offenders, approximately 80% were male and 20% female). Alleged violent offenders aged 18-24 years were nine times more likely to be male than female (that is, of 18-24 year old alleged offenders, approximately 90% were male and 10% female).

4.7 GEOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

Table 7 shows the number and rates of alleged offenders for violent offences against the person for NSW statistical divisions in 1992. (A table showing rates

for statistical sub-divisions within Sydney is at Appendix 1. A list of local government areas included in each statistical division is at Appendix 3.)

The data demonstrate that the number of alleged offenders aged 10-17 years for violence against the person is much less than the number of alleged offenders of other age groups in each statistical division. The number of alleged offenders aged 18-24 years, in turn, is much less than the number of alleged offenders aged 25 years or more in each statistical division.

However, Table 7 also shows that the rates of alleged violent offenders vary considerably between geographical areas. The fact that a particular area has a large number of alleged offenders does not necessarily suggest that the incidence of violent offences is comparatively high in that area, as is demonstrated by the conversion of the figures to incidence rates.

Using population breakdowns for each age group within the various statistical sub-divisions, incidence rates are expressed per 100,000 of the various age-specific populations. These rates provide a clearer picture of the comparative incidence of violence within the various groups across regions than can be provided solely by a comparison of the numbers of the alleged offenders. While Sydney had the highest numbers of alleged young violent offenders, for example, it had one of the lower comparative rates for such offenders. On the other hand, while the Far West had the lowest numbers of alleged young violent offenders, it had the highest comparative rate for such offenders. The North-Western area also has significantly higher rates, although this is also true for adult offenders in these regions. The comparative differences in rates for adult offenders, however, are less dramatic.

Table 7

Number and rate per 100,000 population¹ of alleged offenders
for violent offences against the person²
in 1992 by statistical division

Statistical Division	AGE OF 10-17		OFFENDER 18-24		(YEARS) 25+	
	No	(Rate)	No	(Rate)	No	(Rate)
Sydney	1428	(353.36)	3832	(927.17)	7178	(322.82)
Hunter	222	(373.78)	750	(1389.78)	1171	(363.12)
Illawarra	136	(341.81)	373	(1088.51)	581	(275.89)
Richmond-Tweed	66	(305.56)	234	(1608.91)	542	(467.14)
Mid-North Coast	103	(352.88)	369	(2209.31)	701	(447.04)
Northern	95	(401.91)	393	(2052.75)	627	(578.98)
North Western	117	(834.99)	489	(4551.80)	607	(874.62)
Central West	84	(378.34)	340	(2080.78)	468	(470.38)
South Eastern	60	(502.84)	281	(1638.96)	539	(475.45)
Murrumbidgee	91	(488.40)	266	(1710.50)	402	(477.71)
Murray	75	(543.59)	265	(2680.28)	383	(576.13)
Far West	33	(1134.80)	170	(6157.18)	167	(926.90)

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

Notes:

- 1 As no population data were available for 1992, rate calculations are based on population data from the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme and the Australian Bureau of Statistics *New South Wales Young People: A Statistical Profile (1993)* (Catalogue No. 4123.1)
- 2 Includes homicide, aggravated assault and non-aggravated assault

Table 8 shows the incidence rates for alleged robbery offenders for NSW statistical divisions in 1992. (A table showing rates for statistical sub-divisions within Sydney

is at Appendix 2. A list of local government areas included within each statistical division is at Appendix 3.)

Table 8 shows that, in terms of geographical differences, the number of alleged robbery offenders is much greater in Sydney than the other statistical divisions. Inner Sydney has the highest number of alleged robbery offenders (see Appendix 2). This is not surprising given that the Sydney CBD is located in this statistical sub-division and has large numbers of people resident in other areas who may commit crimes in this area. Sydney also tended to have a slightly higher incidence rate for alleged robbery offenders than the other statistical divisions. The Illawarra and North-Western areas had a high incidence of robbery offenders in the 10-17 year age group. The mid-North Coast, North-Western, Central Western and Hunter regions also had rates greater than 50 per 100,000 for this age group. While there were no alleged robbery offenders aged 10-17 years and 25 years or more in the Far West, this area had the highest incidence rate for alleged robbery offenders aged 18-24 years.

As these tables demonstrate, young alleged offenders are over-represented in crime statistics. Based on a comparison between the proportion of the population they represent, and that represented by adults, the 18-24 year age group are four or five times more likely to be accused of committing a violent offence against the person in almost every geographic area in New South Wales. Young people aged 10-17 years are more likely than adults to be accused in five of the 12 statistical divisions. In 1992 both age groups of young people were several times more likely to be accused of robbery offences than adults in almost every statistical division. In some instances young people were up to ten times more likely to be accused of robbery offences than adults.

Table 8
Number and rate per 100,000 population¹
of alleged robbery² offenders in 1992
by statistical division

Statistical Division	AGE OF 10-17		OFFENDER 18-24		(YEARS) 25+	
	No	(Rate)	No	(Rate)	No	(Rate)
Sydney	276	(68.29)	328	(79.36)	255	(11.46)
Hunter	16	(26.93)	30	(55.59)	23	(7.13)
Illawarra	17	(42.72)	17	(49.61)	14	(6.64)
Richmond-Tweed	3	(13.88)	3	(20.62)	6	(5.17)
Mid-North Coast	3	(10.27)	12	(71.84)	8	(5.10)
Northern	5	(21.15)	7	(36.56)	8	(7.38)
North Western	6	(42.82)	6	(55.85)	3	(4.32)
Central West	4	(18.01)	9	(55.07)	5	(5.02)
South Eastern	1	(8.38)	8	(46.66)	5	(4.41)
Murrumbidgee	6	(32.20)	5	(32.15)	5	(5.94)
Murray	3	(21.74)	-	-	4	(6.01)
Far West	-	-	5	(181.09)	-	-

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

Notes:

- 1 As no population data were available for 1992, rate calculations are based on population data from the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme and the Australian Bureau of Statistics *New South Wales Young People: A Statistical Profile (1993)* (Catalogue No. 4123.1)
- 2 Includes robbery without a weapon, robbery with a firearm, and robbery with a weapon which is not a firearm

4.8 DIFFERENCES RELATED TO ETHNICITY AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Official police and court records do not record information about the ethnicity or cultural background of offenders. However, this information is available for residents of juvenile justice centres. Table 9 shows the ethnicity or cultural background of residents of juvenile justice centres between January 1991 and May 1993 who were convicted of violent offences.

Because not all juvenile offenders who are convicted of violent offences are sentenced to juvenile justice centres, the data presented below need to be interpreted with some caution.

Table 9

Violent offences by ethnicity/cultural background for residents of juvenile justice centres between 1/1/91 and 31/5/93

Ethnicity/Cultural Background	TYPE OF OFFENCE		OFFENCE	
	Against the Person ¹		Robberies	
	No	(%)	No	(%)
Anglo-Australian	1088	(51.9)	414	(40.0)
Aboriginal	607	(28.9)	239	(23.1)
New Zealand/Maori	78	(3.7)	38	(3.7)
Indo-Chinese	30	(1.4)	70	(6.8)
Lebanese	56	(2.7)	59	(5.7)
Other	237	(11.3)	214	(20.7)
Total	2096	(100.0)	1034	(100.0)

Source: NSW Office of Juvenile Justice

Notes:

- 1 Includes sexual offences

This table shows that Aboriginal offenders are substantially over-represented in terms of being convicted for violent offences. While Aboriginal youth represent 1.8% of all youth living in New South Wales, they are convicted of about one-quarter of violent offences.

4.9 SCHOOL VIOLENCE

The statistics presented in this section are based on offences recorded by police as having occurred on school grounds. This does not necessarily mean that the offences were committed by school students, nor does it necessarily mean that they were committed during school hours.

Table 10 shows the number of recorded violent offences which took place on school grounds between 1989 and 1992.

Table 10

Number of recorded violent offences that occurred on school grounds¹

Offence	1989 No	1990 No	1991 No	1992 No
Attempted murder	-	1	3	-
Aggravated Assault	41	50	62	80
Non-aggravated assault	187	232	297	328
Sexual Assault ²	88	77	161	116
Robbery	5	9	27	25
Other ³	5	4	7	10
Total	326	373	557	559

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

Notes:

- 1 Includes primary and secondary schools, government and non-government schools
- 2 Includes aggravated sexual assault, sexual assault, aggravated indecent assault, indecent assault, act of indecency
- 3 Includes abduction and kidnapping, and demanding money with menaces

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This table shows that, consistent with the types of violent offences allegedly committed by youth in general, the most common recorded violent offence committed on school grounds was non-aggravated assault, followed by sexual assault and aggravated assault. None of the offences resulted in death and there were very few attempted murders. While there has been only a slight increase in the number of offences reported in 1992, the number of recorded violent offences increased by 233 between 1989 and 1992, representing an increase of 71.5%.

In June 1991, the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs directed that principals report to police all assaults on a student on school premises by any unknown adult. This directive may have contributed to an increase in reported assaults in 1991 and 1992.

Table 11 shows the rate per student population of violent offences committed on school grounds between 1989 and 1992.

Table 11
Number and rate per 100,000 school population
for recorded violent offences committed on school grounds¹

	1989	1990	1991	1992
No of Offences	326	373	557	559
No of Students ('000,000)	1.033	1.030	1.037	1.050
Rate	31.55	36.21	53.71	53.23

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research for number of offences, and Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Schools Australia 1992* (Catalogue No. 4221.0) for number of students

Notes:

- 1 Includes primary and secondary schools, government and non-government schools

This table shows that the rate of recorded violent offences committed on school grounds increased by 69% between 1989 and 1992. Even though there was an increase in the number of school students during this period, the increase only

accounted for a very small part of the increase in the number of recorded violent offences. There has, however, been a slight decline in the incidence rate for 1992.

As previously discussed, offences recorded as occurring on school grounds may not necessarily have been committed by students or during school hours. Table 12 provides a breakdown of the three major types of offences reported in 1992 based on the time of the incident.

While the data suggest that assaults are most prevalent during school hours, the evidence is less clear in relation to sexual offences.

According to the New South Wales Department of School Education, 59 incidents of school violence were reported to the Department in the first five months of 1993. Of these incidents:

- the majority of the offenders were male
- 12 incidents involved serious injury or hospitalisation. Injuries included abrasions, bruising, cuts and fractures. Injuries were not specified in 61% of cases
- 18 incidents involved weapons which were either used to inflict injury or as intimidation. Knives were used in 10 instances. In eight cases weapons such as a truck fan belt, sticks and clubs were used. In 69% of cases no weapon was specified
- 23 victims were students, 15 of these were male. Eight teachers were victims, half of whom were male
- only two cases were identified as being of a racial nature (Martin:1993)

Table 12

Number of recorded violent offences that occurred on school grounds¹ in 1992,
by time and date of offence

		Missing Time	Before 8am	8am - 4pm	After 4pm	Total
Aggravated Assault	During Term	2	-	61	12	75
	Not during Term	-	1	-	2	3
	Weekend during Term	-	-	1	-	1
	Weekend not during term	-	-	1	-	1
Non-aggravated assault	During Term	8	5	253	36	302
	Not during Term	-	2	-	3	5
	Weekend during Term	1	2	10	3	16
	Weekend not during term	-	-	2	3	5
Sexual Assault ²	During Term	38	2	24	18	82
	Not during Term	8	1	-	1	10
	Weekend during Term	15	2	4	2	23
	Weekend not during term	-	-	-	1	1

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics

Notes:

- 1 Includes primary and secondary schools, government and non-government schools
- 2 Includes aggravated sexual assault, sexual assault, aggravated indecent assault, indecent assault, act of indecency

4.9.1 Bullying

Bullying appears to be generally accepted as a normal part of school life. As a result, it is unlikely that the vast majority of incidents which might be labelled bullying would show up in official statistics. Children who are inclined to bully others at school are likely to continue to be highly aggressive towards other people in later life (Rigby, Black & Whish, 1993).

A study of bullying in South Australian schools (Rigby & Slee, 1991) found that:

- about one in ten school students were commonly subjected to bullying at school
- younger students tended to be bullied more often than older students
- female students were less likely than male students to be bullied
- physical bullying occurs much more often among male students than female students.

4.9.2 Harassment

Harassment of different groups within schools appears to be relatively common.

Sex-based harassment of female students by male students has been found to be widespread in co-educational schools (Martin, 1993). Some teachers also experience harassment by male students.

The majority of evidence to the National Inquiry into Racist Violence concerning racist violence in schools suggested that harassment and some verbal abuse were relatively common. There was little evidence of racist violence of a physical nature in schools (Martin, 1993).

A study of gay and lesbian school students found that two-thirds of those aged between 13 and 19 years reported that they had experienced at least one incident of harassment, usually verbal abuse, prompted by anti-gay feelings. Many said that they did not report the incident because they feared retribution, that their parents would find out about their sexuality, or that school staff would not be sympathetic (Griffin, 1993).

4.10 YOUTH AS VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

As noted in Section 3.7, public concern about youth violence tends to focus on youth as perpetrators of violence. Relatively little attention has been given to youth as victims of violence. This section provides statistics on the victims of cleared violent offences. Additional limitations with these statistics include that the age and gender of the victim are not necessarily known, nor are they necessarily recorded.

Table 13 shows the number and age of victims of alleged offenders for 1992. This table shows that the victims of violent crime tend to be of a similar age to the alleged offender, particularly where the alleged offender is aged 10-17 years or 25 years or more. The victims of alleged offenders aged 18-24 years were likely to be aged either 18-24 years or 25 years or more.

Table 13

Number and percentage of victims of 10-17, 18-24 and 25+ year old alleged violent offenders¹ for 1992

Age of Victim	AGE OF 10-17		OFFENDER 18-24		(YEARS) 25+	
	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)
< 10	53	(3)	66	(1)	193	(2)
10-17	912	(50)	578	(11)	554	(6)
18-24	335	(18)	2300	(45)	1775	(19)
25+	530	(29)	2188	(43)	6690	(73)
Total	1830	(100)	5132	(100)	9212	(100)

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

Notes:

- 1 Includes homicide, assault and robbery

Table 14 shows the gender of victims of alleged violent offenders for 1992. This table shows that overall, victims are much more likely to be male than female, particularly where the alleged offender is aged 10-17 years. Both males and females are more likely to be victims of non-aggravated assault than any other violent offence type. Males are much more likely than females to be the victims of aggravated assault. Females are more likely than males to be the victims of non-aggravated assault where the alleged offender is aged 25 years or more.

Table 14

Number and percentage of male and female victims of alleged violent offenders aged 10-17, 18-24 and 25+ years for 1992

Offence	AGE 10 to 17		OF OFFENDER 18 to 24		(YEARS) 25 +	
	Male No (%)	Female No (%)	Male No (%)	Female No (%)	Male No (%)	Female No (%)
Homicide ¹	3 (75)	1 (25)	20 (65)	11 (35)	62 (57)	46 (43)
Aggravated Assault	333 (82)	73 (18)	1415 (84)	263 (16)	1077 (72)	418 (28)
Non-aggravated assault	1222 (63)	710 (37)	3444 (57)	2574 (43)	4320 (39)	6883 (61)
Robbery	184 (76)	57 (24)	175 (68)	82 (32)	98 (60)	66 (40)

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

Notes:

1 Includes murder, attempted murder, and manslaughter (not motoring)

The leading causes of death for 10-24 year olds in New South Wales are motor vehicle accidents, followed by suicide, accidents, drug dependence and homicide.

There are many types of violence committed against youth which are unlikely to be reflected in the statistics presented above. These include violence committed by those in a position of authority. A study of homeless youth in Melbourne found that 86% reported being physically hurt since leaving home and 65% reported being physically assaulted in the previous year (Alder & Sandor, 1990). The study also found that 80% of violent incidents had not been reported to police. The reluctance of Aboriginal people and people from non-English speaking backgrounds to report violence has also been documented (Nugent, Wilkie & Iredale, 1989).