

Category A and B serious youth offences committed by children and young people

Youth justice

Legislative reform

McGorry, P., Schollum, P., & Bathy, Z. (2026). *Category A and B serious youth offences committed by children and young people*. Sentencing Advisory Council; Australian Policy Online (APO). <https://apo.org.au/node/334955>

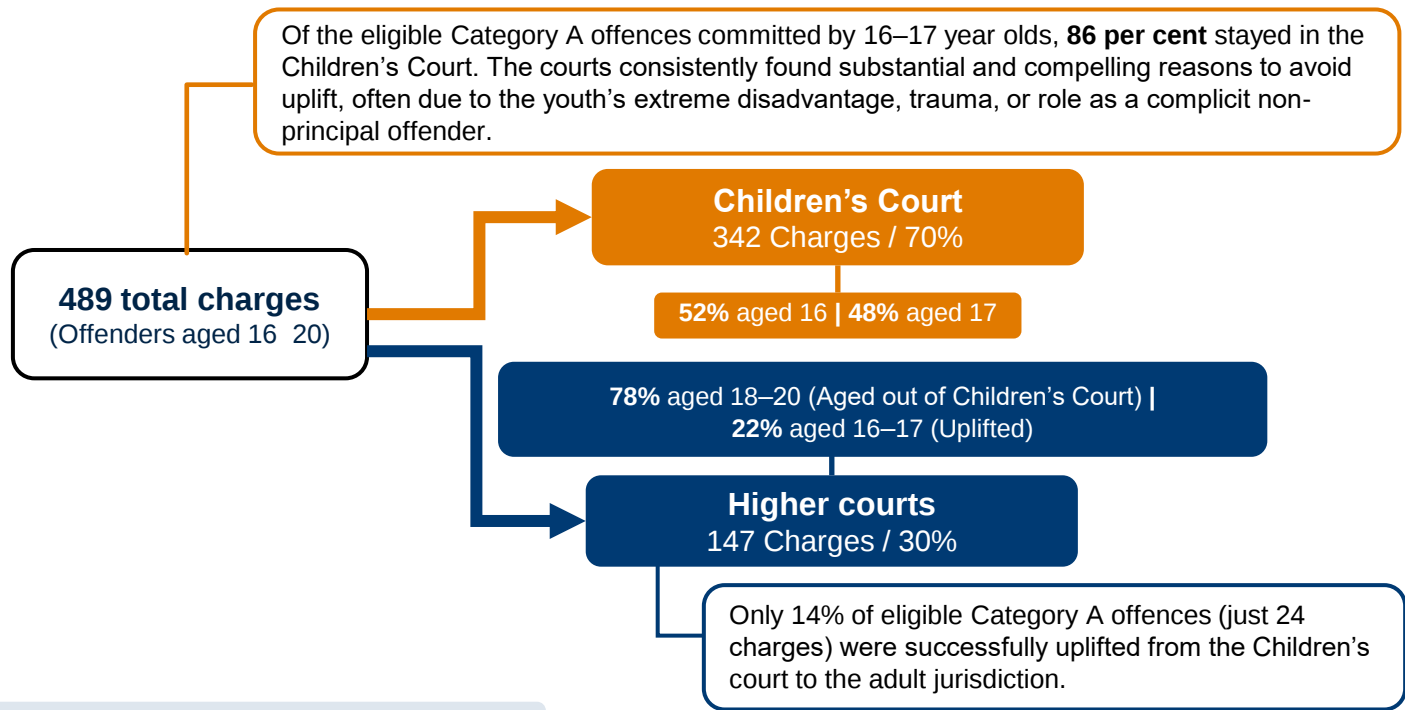
Context A baseline analysis by the Sentencing Advisory Council in Victoria reviewing 489 charge across 418 sentenced young people between February 2018 and June 2024. The study examines the impact of the 2018 legislation intended to uplift 16+ year old serious offenders to adult courts and impose adult imprisonment.

Key findings:

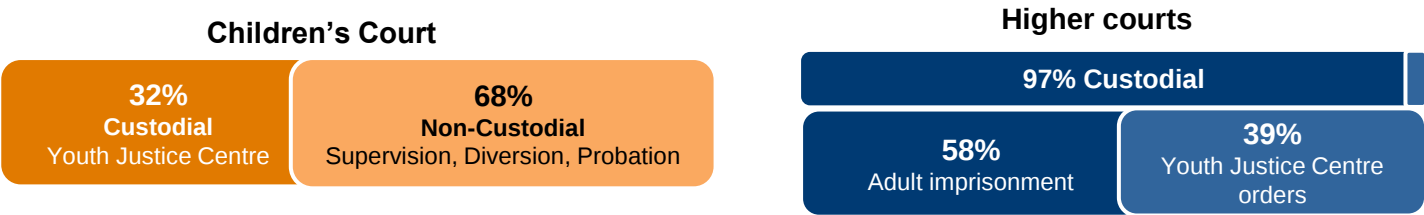
- Volume & frequency:** Relatively few cases occurred (averaging 66 per year). Repeat Category A (e.g., Murder, Attempted murder, Manslaughter) or Category B (e.g., Home invasion, Carjacking) serious youth offences were exceedingly rare, only 41 youths had relevant priors.
- Gender & offending:** Offending was overwhelmingly male. The 8% of female offenders were primarily involved in carjackings and home invasions, almost exclusively as co-offenders, with zero gross violence or rape offences.
- High rate of Category B:** 55 per cent of all sentenced charges were Category B, which carries a default presumption to remain in the Children’s Court unless exceptional circumstances required transfer to adult jurisdiction.

*Please note, in Victoria, the correct name is *Children’s Court*.

Justice funnel and dual pathways:



Sentencing outcomes by jurisdiction:



Summary: While the 2018 legislation functioned as designed, actual uplift of cases to adult courts remained extremely low (14 per cent for eligible Category A offences). The exceptionally high rates of childhood trauma, violence, and disadvantage among these youths frequently met the strict legal thresholds required to keep their cases in the Children’s Court or avoid adult imprisonment.