



**Youth
Against
Violence**
ENDING YOUTH VIOLENCE

Sentencing for firearms, knives and other weapons offences - Submission

02/03/2023

Youth Against Violence have worked with communities across New South Wales since our establishment in August 2021, all knife crime incidents that have taken place in New South Wales since August 2021 have required intervention from our organisation.

Knife crime is a specific focus for our organisation as we continue to see young people as young as 13 years old involved in fatal knife crime incidents.

Our team have carried out research through out 2022 to pinpoint the causes of knife possession, specifically amongst young people and how knives and weapons are then used to carry out attacks amongst the community.

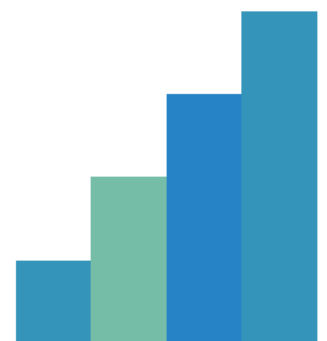
A survey conducted by our team in early 2022 targeting 381 young people (ages 10 – 18) in the demographic of Western Sydney revealed that 83% of teens carry or know someone that carries a knife, when asked what the motivator was the answer mainly fixated on two things – protection and status.

It is evident that the carriage and usage of knives and weapons amongst young people has become perilous as their popularity continues to be widespread from fatal incidents occurring in Western Sydney, NSW North Coast, NSW South Coast and two occurring in Casino, NSW in 2022.

As well as these areas we have seen non-fatal incidents occurring through out the state of New South Wales and there is concern in the community that sentencing laws are too light and giving young people the impression that what their doing isn't too serious.

Communities have constantly raised concerns around knife crime and the anxiety surrounding the amount of young people in possession of weapons, and then using those weapons to carry out serious violent crimes.

The following documents will contain topics that are relevant to this submission.

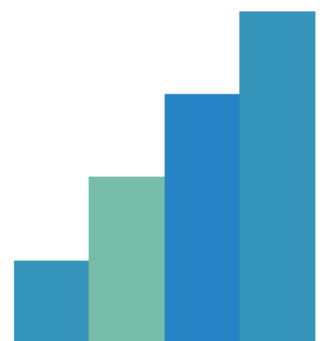




**Youth
Against
Violence**
ENDING YOUTH VIOLENCE

Sentencing for firearms, knives and other weapons offences - Submission

02/03/2023

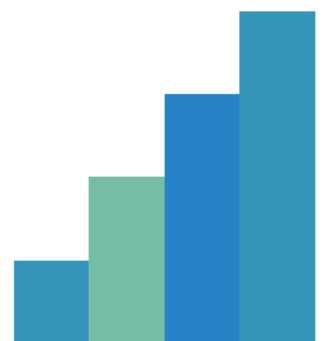




**Youth
Against
Violence**
ENDING YOUTH VIOLENCE

Sentencing for firearms, knives and other weapons offences - Submission

02/03/2023

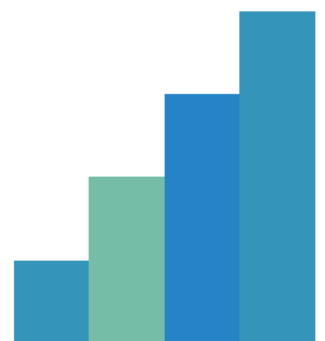




**Youth
Against
Violence**
ENDING YOUTH VIOLENCE

Sentencing for firearms, knives and other weapons offences - Submission

02/03/2023





**Youth
Against
Violence**
ENDING YOUTH VIOLENCE

Sentencing for firearms, knives and other weapons offences - Submission

02/03/2023

Summary:

We have been involved with the families and communities of all the incidents stated in this document, and we will continue to do so as we plan to launch programs in primary and high schools to educate young people on knife crime.

We hope that through this submission the NSW Sentencing Council take into consideration the rise in fatal incidents and the prolonged effect these incidents have on families and the general community who have expressed feeling uneasy with letting their kids out of the house alone.

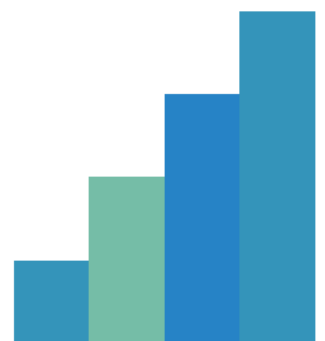
It is also important that sentencing laws are tightened and amended to fix the current misguided impression on the possession of knives and ensuring methods of early-intervention and prevention are used in schools and detention centres.

Rehabilitation programs for inmates who have been sentenced for violent crimes involving the use of a weapon is crucial to ensuring a decrease in re-offending.

Families, loved ones and community members deserve to feel safe in their own environments and with the current escalation in youth knife crime fatalities, many are concerned that it will continue to escalate if laws aren't tougher.

There have been many incidents that have occurred involving the use of weapons in New South Wales amongst both young people and adults, and is proving to be a serious crisis within the younger generation as they believe knives can be used for protection and status.

Some young offenders caught with knives are often given police cautions and let out on bail left to face no consequence which continues to leave a misguided impression on young people, with a lack of early-intervention or rehabilitation.





**Youth
Against
Violence**
ENDING YOUTH VIOLENCE

Sentencing for firearms, knives and other weapons offences - Submission

02/03/2023

Our Recommendations:

1. A public and proactive ad campaign that encourages young people to drop their knives and remember the consequences of carrying a knife.
2. Raising the criminal penalty of carrying or possessing firearms, knives and other weapons for both adults and young people.
3. Incorporate a mandatory rehabilitation program for offenders who are found guilty of possessing knives or/and any knife crime offences.
4. Introduce a bill giving the NSW Police Force the power to use security wand sticks to detect knives in the community, as rolled out by the Queensland Government.
5. Fund early-intervention, prevention and education programs that educate primary and high school students about the consequences of possessing a knife or using a knife as well as deterring young people from violent offences involving weapons.
6. Mandate a rehabilitation course when sentencing an offender who has committed a crime with a firearm, knife or any other weapon.
7. Introduce a **state-wide** Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) like the one in the United Kingdom which has proven to be effective in engaging young people and lowering the youth knife crime rates.
8. Ban Kirpans in all NSW public schools.

With these recommendations and the information provided in this document we wish the NSW Sentencing Council all the best in completing this review, the importance of this review is significant in ensuring the safety and security of New South Wales residents against crimes involving firearms, knives and other weapons offences.

We look forward to the completion of your review and hope for much needed change to come from this review.

Kind Regards,

Ouwais Menzel | **Founder of Youth Against Violence**

