



Research Directions

Office of Research Services

Building Bridges to Reduce Youth Crime

Dr Elizabeth Watson from Social Justice Social Change Research Centre and Dr Murray Lee from the University of Sydney, together with PhD student Natalie Scerra are collaborating with the Airds Bradbury Community Centre to explore the success of schemes to tackle youth crime, as part of funding from the Commonwealth Attorney Generals Department.



'Much theory about criminal behaviour attributes youth crime to social and economic disadvantage, giving rise to the suggestion that interventions that address youth disadvantage can reduce crime' says Dr Watson. 'A lot of public funding in Australia and overseas has been provided for social interventions to improve community functioning, and our partner, Airds Bradbury Community Centre, has received such funding. They have used it to introduce a project that provides family activities, education workshops, and training courses on life skills and employment skills. This research will evaluate the effectiveness of this and other related schemes in reducing crime on the Airds and Bradbury local area.'

Working closely with the Community Centre, the research team will conduct interviews, focus groups and surveys to seek the views and attitudes of young people, police, service providers and the local community on the value of crime reduction strategies and other alternative ideas. The team will use this information to assess the possible association between family breakdown, unemployment, poverty and youth crime, and the effect that building a sense of community can have on these important social issues.

In an area where a significant proportion of families live in disadvantaged public housing estates, and the incidence of crimes such as property damage, theft, assault and break-ins is relatively high, this project will assist the partner to streamline their community engagement activities into areas that are most effective in addressing the social issues that may lead to crime. In the longer term this could make the Airds and Bradbury local area a safer and more enjoyable place to live, work and play.

Project Title: Burning Bridges: Can community building reduce youth crime?

Funding has been set at: \$10,000

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