

Girls' violence on the rise

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The link between cyber-bullying and an increase in violence among young women will be featured in a new book published in November.

Professor Kerry Carrington, head of Queensland University of Technology's School of Justice, has collected 45 years of data and can confirm, contrary to general academic opinion, young women are fast catching up to boys in violent crime.

Professor Carrington will present her findings, to be revealed in her book *Offending Youth: Sex, Youth and Crime* published this November, at a talk on Thursday, September 24, at Old Government House, Brisbane.

At the talk, Professor Carrington will discuss whether increases in cyber-bullying are related to increases in female delinquency and boys' continuing monopoly over sexually violent crimes.

The book also includes chapters on the over-representation of Indigenous youth in the juvenile justice system, dispelling unfounded myths and fears about ethnic youth gangs, and key contemporary patterns of delinquency and the response to these by juvenile justice agencies.

Professor Carrington said her data backed up anecdotal reports that [violence](#) among [girls](#) was increasing.

"There's been a long dispute whether it was happening, but this data shows a pattern of statistics that point to a clear trend," Professor Carrington said.

"And it is not just in Australia, but across Europe, the UK and US as well."

Professor Carrington said there were different theories about why this was the case, including treating girls' crime equally with boys' crime and increasing female participation in what used to be traditional masculine roles, but these did not

adequately explain the recent sharp increase.

"Increases in violence began when girls began moving into drug and street cultures in the 1980s, but the most significant increases in violence was in the past decade," she said.

"Girls are taking to cyber space, e-technology and mobile phones with a passion and evidence shows girls are more likely to use these to bully.

"These technologies massively inflame conflict between girls. Increasingly, girls are bashing other girls, and videos of these are being put onto YouTube.

"Bullying used to end at the end of school, but now it follows you home and can escalate over night."

Professor Carrington said a long-standing reluctance to accept increasing violence between girls meant there were few specific programs to address it.

"The majority of rehabilitation programs focus on boys' delinquencies which may not be as effective in dealing with violent girls," she said.

Professor Carrington said from 1960 to 2007, the ratio of [young women](#) to young men appearing before the NSW Children's Courts for criminal matters has narrowed from 1 in 14 to 1 in 5, and girls continued to narrow the gap in violent crime.

"Boys' crime rates are falling in overall terms, but within that, rates of sexual violence are of an increasing concern," she said.

Girls' [crime](#) rates are increasing overall and girls' violence, usually directed towards other girls, is increasing."

Source: Queensland University of Technology ([news](#) : [web](#))

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