

‘COME OVER, THERE’S A
FIGHT!’

YOUTH VIOLENCE, CONFLICT
TRIGGERS AND CULTURAL
DIVERSITY IN MELBOURNE’S
INNER WEST

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DON'T GO THERE!



**Young People's Perspectives on
Community Safety and Youth Policing**

START

Screen shot of survey instrument title page

Cultural diversity of DGT survey participants (n=500)

Self-identified cultural background	Percentage (%)
Australian only	30
Australian + another cultural identity	14
Cultural identity other than Australian	56
Total	100

Young Sudanese men on racism as a conflict trigger

- *When you talk to people and they say the bad word – that can lead you to fight. ... If someone calls you the ‘n’ word you will get pretty upset about it.*
- *If he calls you a nigger you do it [hit him] straight away – you don’t even need to talk about it.*
- *If someone says a really strong word and you can’t control your anger, and then when you can’t control your anger and you hit that person... [Otherwise] they would just keep going and they would tell their friends to call you that.*

Violence as reactive response to conflict (young Sudanese men)



There is a point where you can't argue anymore and that is the point where you take action.

Violence as pre-emptive response to conflict (young Pacific Islander men)

- *We're mainly physical. Probably Australian people, they're just verbal.*
- *Yeah, because the verbal stuff is going to get you nowhere. It all ends in this bullshit and that bullshit.*
- *Whereas physical stuff leaves it in that place and that time, and that's it. ... If they come back for a second time, let's go round two. If you come for round three – it's good exercise.*
- *It puts them in their place. That's how we resolve things. Violence comes first. Plus they don't come back and verbal.*

Young Sudanese and Pacific Islanders on why arguments escalate into brawls

- **Peer pressure:** *There ended up being 100 people there [at Highpoint]. And she didn't want to fight, like she wanted to talk it out but there were so many people around her and they were pushing her and she ended up on top of [another girl] and bashing her ... and after everyone left she apologised.*
- **Loyalty to peers, back-up:** *If everyone gathers round, no one's going to turn down and back away because they've got their friends there.*
- **Reinforcement of belonging to group:** *I'm not fighting 'cause I need to, it's because my friends are here.*
- **Fear of loss of status within group:** *To back down from something while all your mates are around is like being a wimp.*
- **Strategic response to threat:** *If the person is bigger or stronger than you, you're not going to fight them, you're going to call someone else to fight for you.*