

Postcode link to city violence - *The Age* 11/08

The apparent high rates of violent crimes within the CBD committed by youths from Melbourne's northern and western suburbs ("Postcode link to city violence" *The Age* 11/08) is best understood by a range of indicators of poverty and disadvantage.

These suburbs also report lower educational attainment, higher rates of school dropout, higher youth unemployment and high levels of inter-generational unemployment. Higher rates of preventable illness, poor public transport, high food prices and alcohol and drug use are also prevalent in these areas.

Our work with disadvantaged youth in these areas shows that a broad range of creative, realistic strategies are needed to support young people in pathways to education, work and social inclusion, and away from senseless acts of drunken violence.

We can and should do so much better for young people in these areas. Local, grass roots solutions are needed to address the issues we see daily among youth in the postcodes mentioned: social marginalisation, substance abuse, mental health issues, poor nutrition and body image.

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