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Linking up research, policy and practice: Lessons from a collaborative crime prevention project

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This paper reports on a three-year collaboration between the Australian Institute of Family Studies and Crime Prevention Victoria investigating the development of antisocial behaviour among adolescents and young adults. The project collected and analysed data as part of the longitudinal Australian Temperament Project. Over the three years, there was a close interchange between the collaborative team and a technical advisory group which included representatives from Victoria Police, a number of government departments as well as academic institutions. Three reports were produced and among the key findings that resonated strongly were the identification of differing developmental pathways, key transition points, risk and protective factors, the overlap between different types of problem behaviours, and the phenomenon of resilience. Also highlighted were the implications for crime prevention policy and practice, particularly the timing and content of early prevention and intervention efforts, and the need for cross-agency initiatives. The reports were supplemented by a series of workshops explaining the findings to groups of practitioners and policy makers from a range of government portfolios. Attempts to promote the take-up of the research evidence in policy and practice proved more difficult and slower than expected, with a number of unanticipated challenges.