

# COMMUNITY IS EVERYTHING

## ACTIVIST TOOLKIT, AUGUST 2016

### Note from Julian

*The mass imprisonment of Indigenous children has been cast into the national spotlight. Following the Four Corners episode, "Australia's Shame", we need to remember this boy, Dylan Voller, and demand a solution.*

*As you know, that way lies in Indigenous-led solutions in local communities. To give these solutions the support that they deserve, we need, more than ever, national leadership. And for that we need national action.*

*While Amnesty International Australia has welcomed Turnbull's establishment of a Royal Commission, we can't wait for an inquiry – he needs to act now.*

*We must protect kids in the care of the government. To ensure transparency the Government should establish an independent body that has the power to assess and monitor detention centres, report on the treatment of children in detention and recommend changes. We can do this by ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT). Australia has signed OPCAT but hasn't taken the next step of ratifying and putting it into domestic law.*

*But this alone is not enough. We must do more to ensure that kids don't end up in prison in the first place. This is what you and groups all around the country have been working on for over a year now. Thanks to your hard work, your community conversations and meetings with MPs we have ramped up the pressure on states, territories and the Federal Government. Let's make sure this is the start of continued, meaningful discussion and action on this issue.*

*In the lead up to COAG we will be handing our petition calling for justice targets over to Turnbull to ensure he sets goals and strategies to reduce the number of kids ending up in prison. We will also be putting pressure on Premiers and Chief Ministers to support holistic, Indigenous-led community solutions that prevent kids coming into contact with the justice system.*

*Alongside this work, we will continue conversations with community members and members of parliament around reducing the rate of family violence and raising the age that kids can be sent to prison.*

*Finally we know that all of this work can only proceed if it is in partnership with Indigenous people and communities. Continue learning, listening and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and events in your community. Only by working together with our Indigenous communities will we ensure that Australia is more than a boy in a hood strapped to a chair.*

**Julian**

**Indigenous Rights Campaigner**

**Amnesty International Australia**



## **2016 SO FAR:**

# **RECENT CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS**

Here's just some of what you've achieved so far. Thank you for your commitment and hard work!

### **TASSIE ACTIVISTS MET WITH STATE PREMIER**

After months of sustained effort, activists from two Tasmanian Action groups, along with the Branch Committee, finally met with the Tasmanian Premier, Will Hodgman, to talk through elements of the Community is Everything campaign. The Premier agreed and committed to write to COAG about the three major campaign asks.

### **SPOKEN PORTRAITS OF CHILDHOOD**

The Sydney CBD, Redfern and Newtown groups from NSW had 80 people come together for a night of storytelling. Local Aboriginal leaders recounted their childhood and reflected on how our community can do more to support Indigenous kids.

### **PHOTO EXHIBIT**

In July, the ACT Branch launched a Community is Everything photography exhibition showcasing the stories of Indigenous kids and the success of Indigenous-led community solutions. Over 50 people came along, including kids from the local Solid Sistas and Brothas Aboriginal program, and the ACT Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.

### **NORTHERN TERRITORY ACTIVISTS**

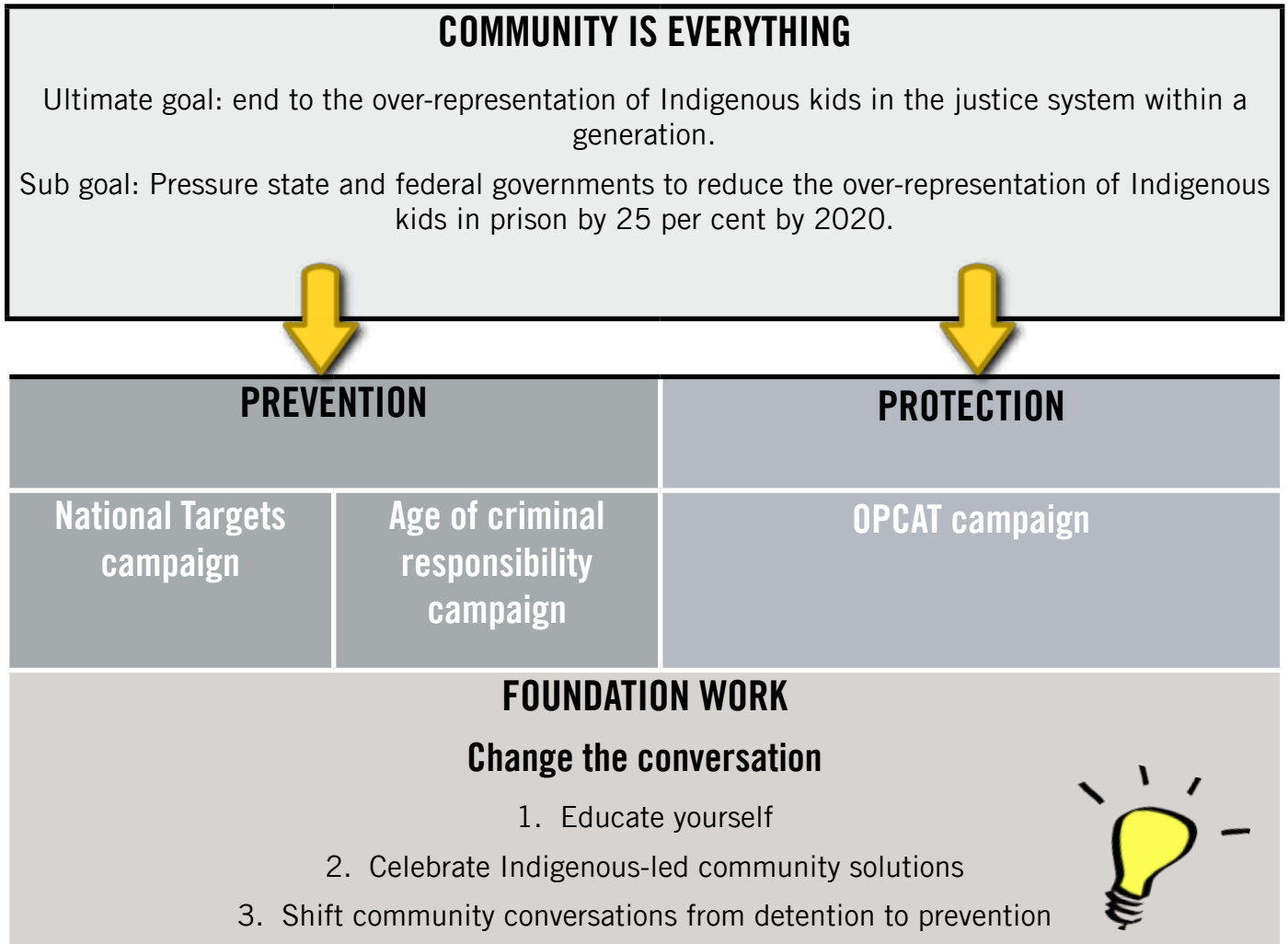
Activists in NT worked together to put pressure on key MP, Larissa Lee, to defeat the damaging proposed changes to the NT Bail Act. These new activists then held a vigil outside Don Dale detention centre, in partnership with the Aboriginal community. The vigil received extensive media coverage!

### **QUEENSLAND**

A big congrats to activists in Queensland. Submissions, justice forums and a whole lot of MP engagement has really ensured that youth justice reform is in the spotlight. With no doubt, due to your commitment, parliament passed two positive youth justice bills!

# CHOOSE YOUR CAMPAIGN FOCUS

Here's an overview of the many 'cogs' of the CIE campaign. It's a multi-faceted approach that, together, works towards one ultimate goal.



## Change the conversation

### Educate yourself:

1. Learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture. Borrow library books on Aboriginal history, and search for information on the local traditional owners.
2. Support local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events in your community (Survival Day, NAIDOC week and Reconciliation Week are perfect opportunities).
3. Find out what your local Indigenous community is talking about and asking for.

### Educate others:

1. Share stories of Indigenous-led community solutions. Find information on any programs in your area that are supporting children to stay in their communities eg Wayapa Wuurrk.
2. Discuss justice reinvestment with people in your area. Justice reinvestment looks at the big picture of a community to understand what is driving crime and recidivism, and to understand the current challenges local service providers face. Then the community and government

work together to create community-led services that reduce crime. Find out about justice reinvestment projects happening in your state. We also have a page on the portal with a justice reinvestment video and presentation that you can use to talk to people in your local community.

## NATIONAL TARGETS

### 1. Targets to close the gap in Indigenous prison rates

We have collected around 20,000 petitions calling for national justice targets. The Eastern Suburbs group (NSW) is aiming to hand these over to Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull in September so please return your petitions to your action centre by the end of August.

### 2. Targets to reduce the rate at which Indigenous people experience violence.

In the lead up to 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) you can reach out to your MP, to women's rights groups and to service providers to ensure that Aboriginal women are heard in this space. Host events in your community, write to your local paper and inform people that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised and 10 times more likely to die from family violence-related assault. How we address this is to ensure the whole family and community are supported and properly funded.

## MINIMUM AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY

Did you know kids as young as 10 and 11 are locked up by our politicians?

An international comparison of the age of criminal responsibility in 90 countries found that the most common age of criminal responsibility was 14 years old and that the median age of criminal responsibility was 13.5 years.

Use this petition to call on the federal Attorney General, Mr Brandis to increase the age of criminal responsibility to 12, in line with international standards. These kids should be in primary school, not behind bars.

## OPCAT

This petition is in response to Don Dale and other evidence of child abuse in detention centres across Australia.

Detention should be the absolute last resort for kids. We want police and courts to exhaust all possible other avenues first. But if children do end up in prison, they need to be treated humanely and given every chance to rehabilitate.

At the moment we have no independent oversight of our detention facilities. Governments are failing children in their care.

[Call on the Federal Government to ratify the Optional Protocol of the Convention Against Torture \(OPCAT\).](#)

# CREATE YOUR CAMPAIGN PLAN

Now that you have the campaign overview, create a [local plan of action](#). Some questions to consider:

1. What goals are your members passionate about? Try to choose one focus from the previous pages.
2. What sort of skills / group capacity do you have?
3. What makes you / your group / your area unique in this campaign? Eg great local Indigenous-led programs that you can champion, good relationship with your member of parliament, a progressive state premier.
4. How do your tactics / activities fit into the larger campaign goal?
5. Are you preaching to the converted? How can you reach new audiences?

Still not sure how to create change? Check out some suggested activities below.

FOR EVERYONE			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch the Cultural Competency videos on the portal</li> <li>• Learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history in your area               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request Ally training from your CO</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Attend Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander activities in your local community</li> </ul>			
LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write to your local MP</li> <li>• Write a letter to the editor or your local paper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise a stall to get petitions signed</li> <li>• Take petitions into your workplace</li> <li>• Organise a film screening or public forum on the issue</li> <li>• Organise a Community is Everything exhibition in an art space or your local library (talk to your ASC)</li> <li>• Attend rallies / marches / vigils in your local area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise a blitz in your local community - volunteers on streets getting signatures (particularly after issues have been in the media)</li> <li>• Organise a rally / march / vigil in your local area</li> <li>• Organise a yarn circle in your community to learn and share stories with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Workshop ways that you can better work together</li> <li>• Organise a table talk in your community to educate and discuss action. Reach out to persuadables eg rotary clubs</li> <li>• Call up your local radio station</li> <li>• Call your MP and ask for a meeting with your local MP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative activism and stunts egguerilla posters in Premiers electorates, forum theatre</li> <li>• Actively make community partnerships and organise activities together</li> <li>• Partner and perhaps help design a locally relevant campaign (talk to your CO)</li> </ul>

# QUEENSLAND REPORT LAUNCH BRIEFING

## Extra information for Queensland groups and activists

Since mid-2015 Queensland activists have been calling on state members of parliament to change youth justice policies that result in Indigenous kids being over-represented in detention. You've also been asking the government to fund more Indigenous-led prevention and diversionary programs.

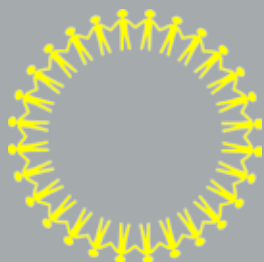
We've had some wins, such as the passage of two youth justice bills, but our researchers have uncovered information that shows Queensland still has a long way to go. To support these claims we will be launching a Queensland report for Community is Everything at the end of August.

In the last week of August, Amnesty campaigners will be in Brisbane to talk with the media and lobby politicians. We'll be raising awareness of Queensland kids in detention and mount pressure on the State Government. Queensland activists are vital in achieving this pressure, which is why we're asking for your help.

Here is what Queensland groups can do, in order of priority, to promote the Queensland report launch (**preferably between 29 August and the 11 September**).

1. Local media engagement (particularly for groups outside of Brisbane): We want activists to speak about youth justice on regional media – print, radio and TV. We will have a template media release that you can send out and speaking notes if you are successful in getting an interview. Not only will this push the youth justice campaign, it will also help you build stronger relationships with local media.
2. Petitioning between 29 August – 1 September: Hit the streets to collect signatures calling for Australia to ratify the Optional Protocol of the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT). You could do this at a market stall or blitzing on a busy street. Set a target for how many petitions you want to get signed and let us know – then we'll be able to set a goal for the whole state.
3. Activists in Brisbane and Townsville: come along to the launch events being planned in your areas, such as the media briefing at Parliament House and ARTillery's two week exhibition of Indigenous artists.

Staff from the Queensland action centre will be in touch soon to discuss how you can be involved.



### Stay in the loop

There's also a webinar about the launch for Queensland groups on 24 August at 6pm. Please make sure that at least one person from your group attends.

[RSVP for the webinar here.](#)



# CALENDAR 2016

<b>AUG</b>	<p>4 August - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day</p> <p>9 August - International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples</p> <p>12 August - International Youth Day</p> <p>25 August - CIE Catch Up (How to be an ally)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Return your justice targets petitions to your local Action Centre by the end of August</li> </ul>
<b>SEP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 September- Anniversary of Convention on the Rights of the Child coming into force</li> <li>29 September - CIE Catch Up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eastern Suburbs group to hand over justice targets petitions to Turnbull.</li> <li>You can build pressure in the electorate of your Premier or Chief Minister. Talk to your CO about your regional strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>OCT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22-30 October - Australia Children's Week</li> <li>27 October - CIE Catch Up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible COAG Meeting TBC</li> </ul>
<b>NOV</b>	<p>24 November - CIE Catch Up</p> <p>25 November - International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women &gt; starts 16 days of activism against gender based violence</p> <p>25 November - Write for Rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible COAG Meeting TBC</li> <li>Support women's rights events in your local community - are Aboriginal voices present?</li> <li>Possible Community is Everything case in Write for Rights</li> </ul>
<b>DEC</b>	<p><b>10 Dec - Human Rights Day</b></p>	

