



Note from Roxy

Hi there – I'm Roxanne Moore. I'm a proud Noongar woman from Margaret River in Western Australia and one of the Indigenous Rights Campaigners at Amnesty International Australia.

Right now I'm in the middle of a research trip looking into why so many Indigenous children end up in the justice system in Queensland, and what we can do to make the system fairer.

*Last May we kicked off our Community is Everything campaign with two reports detailing recommendations nationally and for WA. I've been so impressed at how Amnesty activists have stepped up to raise this campaign in their communities and take this issue to their MPs, with creative and diverse activities across the country. It is because of you we have already seen a number of successes. **This is unusual at such an early stage of the campaign and it's all thanks to you!***

Our Board has made a commitment to our supporters and Indigenous partners that we'll work on this campaign for the next five years. We've got five years to ensure important change occurs. We do not want our kids to grow up in prison. Indigenous kids are still 24 times more likely to end up in detention than non-Indigenous kids. And we know that once they are locked up their chance of returning to prison increases.

We have two really clear calls this year:

- We need justice targets to keep our politicians, courts and police accountable.
- We need to raise the age of criminal responsibility to 12 years, in line with international standards.

I'm really excited to see what 2016 brings. Your activities in your local community, your lobbying of local leaders, your support for Indigenous communities can all bring change for Indigenous kids across the country.

Roxy visiting the Amnesty Newtown Group's Healing Tree at the Sydney Invasion Day rally. 26 January 2016. © AI



CAMPAIGN REFRESH

Community is Everything 101

Our goal: to pressure state and federal governments to reduce the over-representation of Indigenous kids in prison by 25 per cent by 2020.

Indigenous people in Australia know that Indigenous kids in the justice system is an issue and have been working hard to implement solutions to empower kids and keep them connected with their community. We all want our community safe and to reduce crime levels but locking up kids isn't the answer.

Our power in this campaign is to reach non-Indigenous Australians, to educate them and to encourage them to pressure local politicians to implement changes. It's too easy for Australians to ignore Indigenous rights and to ignore the gap between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians; in health, in education and in imprisonment. We can't ignore this any longer.

As local activists you know the best way to engage your local community in this campaign. [Draw up a local plan of action](#) to put this issue front and centre in your community. Make sure your local MP can't ignore how important this is.



Check out our [past toolkits](#) to get updated on the ins and outs of the campaign. You can also find [research reports and recommendations](#), watch the [documentaries and movies available](#), and research what programs in your area support and empower kids.

Our Indigenous partners

Indigenous people have been central to this campaign. Our Indigenous Rights team has spent years researching and planning the campaign using a consultative approach.

We are also part of a coalition called "Change the Record" which includes:

- the Australian Human Rights Commission
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS)
- National Congress of Australia's First Peoples
- Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)
- Indigenous Doctors Association
- National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (NFVPLS)
- National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)
- Human Rights Law Centre
- Oxfam Australia
- Australian Council of Social Services
- Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR)
- Sisters Inside
- Federation of Community Legal Centres (VIC)
- First Peoples Disability Network
- the Law Council of Australia

"We do better at keeping Aboriginal people in prison than in school"

Mick Gooda, Social Justice Commissioner

CAMPAIGNING IN 2016



STEP ONE: learn about the campaign

Our campaign is about supporting Indigenous-led solutions to reducing the over representation of Indigenous kids in the justice system while addressing disadvantage.

Why prevention?

While there are many reasons why Indigenous kids are over-represented in our prison systems, a factor is the social and economic disadvantage that Indigenous people face as a legacy of colonisation. Evidence clearly demonstrates that people who come into contact with the criminal justice system are highly likely to have experienced severe social and economic disadvantage.

So it makes sense then that a fairer, better-functioning justice system for Indigenous people is one that addresses the underlying causes of crime rather than punishment. This means addressing education, housing, health and mental health, disability, employment, family violence, child removal, and alcohol and drug use.

Indigenous people have the solutions and there are already many great programs out there designed to show kids a different path, provide them with a sense of belonging and connect them to their community.



We need more Indigenous-led solutions like...

"I love **Clean Slate Without Prejudice** in Redfern, NSW.

Local Indigenous leaders alongside the police have created a boxing program to get kids up and active, connecting with peers and elders in their community, building their identity and purpose as well as providing breakfast for them before they go to school. On Friday mornings they learn more about Indigenous culture and language. These are the sort of things we should be supporting and celebrating. Crime rates relating to robbery offences have dropped in Redfern since the inception of the program."

Amanda Atlee (NSW Community Organiser)

STEP TWO: spread awareness

We have strong conversations happening on domestic violence, on asylum seekers ... but there is a large gap on Indigenous rights. You have an opportunity to put this in the spotlight.

Why campaign in your community?

So we can change the hearts and minds of decision-makers through community support for better, smarter solutions for Indigenous kids. You can do this by being visible and vocal in your community. You know your own community and know best how to have the greatest impact locally.

How?

This is a complex campaign and it can be hard to convince someone with a tagline at a stall so here are some other tried and tested campaigning ideas from our Community is Everything Advisory Group to get people more deeply considering Indigenous rights and this important campaign.

The main thing when considering community activities is how to reach out to non-Indigenous Australians to get them connected to these issues and how you can put this on the agenda of your local MP.

“Dreamtime stories are inherent in Aboriginal culture, and everyone loves stories. As adults we read, watch and tell them, and as a child we find great joy in having them told to us. Hosting a **'Stories Under the Stars'** night could be a great way to gain the attention of wider audience and still have a strong connection to Indigenous history. To gain interest you could approach local schools or PCYC-type facilities and engage with staff to assist in planning. This is also an opportunity to take petitions and information on the CIE campaign to distribute at the event. Don't forget to invite contacts from local Indigenous organisations or members of the Indigenous community. Have fun!”

Maddie Wood



"I have found that **film nights** are a great way of introducing a community to a campaign. Both the activists and the attendees gain something from film nights. They're engaging, insightful, they foster great discussion and they motivate people to act. "The Inside Out" documentary enabled us to better understand the issues surrounding incarceration rates. We will be using this documentary at our own film night later in the year."

Chloe Clark from Goulburn Valley



"**Art exhibitions** featuring Indigenous artists are a great way of conveying the themes of the Community is Everything campaign in a creative and engaging way. Art appeals to both the head and the heart and allows for a really intimate insight into an individual's culture and experiences. I feel that art-centric actions also have the ability to reach out to both seasoned activists and those who may be less aware of the issues addressed by CIE."

Srimayee Vaidyanathan from SA / NT Branch Committee



STEP THREE: Educate your MPs

The Federal Government and State Governments are integral to achieving the change we need on this campaign. We need both levels of government to act.

Educating MPs is never easy. Amnesty's Government Relations team has found that, even when speaking to senior levels of government, many people just don't know the extent of Indigenous kids in detention. When talking to an MP, arm yourself with at least one fact eg Indigenous kids are 24 times more likely than their non-Indigenous peers to be imprisoned. This shows that this is a national problem and something they can't ignore.

Who?

Your best target is your local MP (State or Federal). Why? They are accountable to you (and the hundreds/thousands of Amnesty supporters in your electorate). They can raise your concerns with their colleagues and leaders. Think strategically about how you can put pressure on your local MP - pressure doesn't just come from meetings but a range of other tactics to grab their attention! Be sure to check out the difference between your local state MP and your local federal MP to make sure your asks are relevant to them.

Meeting with your State MP

If your MP is a backbencher, they're not going to have the power to enact our campaign goals themselves. But they might ask you how they can help. Ask them to raise the issue with the Attorney-General or the Premier / Chief Minister. Include this ask in any letters to your MP too.

Tactics to engage MPs

- tag them in social media posts
- leave information with their office
- hold an event near their local office
- hold an event somewhere they have a relationship with eg the local surf lifesaving club
- call their office
- send them a letter
- meet with them!

Meeting with your Federal MP

Law and justice issues are mainly a state government responsibility. If you're meeting a Federal MP, they're likely to try to pass the buck.

But this is a national issue, so our campaign needs federal leadership. That's where the federal government comes into play, by:

- including justice targets in the Close the Gap framework
- properly funding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services
- using national/state platforms like COAG (Council of Australian Governments meeting) to lead the agenda on Indigenous justice policies.

Our main targets for this campaign are:

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull: we can put pressure on him through federal MPs and state / territory Premiers / Chief Ministers. We want Turnbull to take leadership and set national justice targets. The time is ripe for this as Labor leader Bill Shorten has supported national justice targets and states/territories have already demonstrated the importance of them (VIC and ACT have justice targets already, and the NT are confirming details on theirs now).

Attorney General George Brandis we can put pressure on him through state Attorneys-General. Brandis needs to raise the age of criminal responsibility. The fact that we have 10 and 11 year-olds in prison is a national disgrace. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has recommended multiple times that we raise the age of criminality to 12.

"It was great to see the **Crisis Response group in WA** try out a creative way to get the attention of their Premier Colin Barnett during last year's week of action for COAG. They stood outside his office with painted signs during peak hour morning traffic encouraging passes by to honk their horn in support of Indigenous kids to make sure he couldn't ignore us. "

Sarah Gooderham, Activism Coordinator on campaign project team.

KEY DATES

Look out for [MP engagement training in March.](#)

The Community is Everything Advisory Group has created **monthly catch-ups** to update you on campaign information and to brainstorm ways we can take this to the streets. [Register for the catch-ups here.](#)

MONTH	KEY DATES	THINGS YOUR GROUP CAN DO
MARCH	17 March - Close the Gap Day 31 March - CIE Catch Up	Collect signatures in your community to call for a national justice targets Attend MP engagement training
APRIL	8-17 April - National Youth Week 15 April - 25 year anniversary of the Deaths in Custody Royal Commission 28 April - CIE Catch Up	Roll out lobbying tactics for your local MP (create a social media strategy, line up a meeting, invite them to an event, hold a stunt - get creative!) 15 April: bring up the recommendations from the Royal Commission and raise the research and recommendations to reduce Indigenous kids in prison.
MAY	27 May - 3 June Reconciliation Week 26 May - Sorry Day, CIE Catch Up	Have you shown a film in your community yet?
JUNE	30 June - CIE Catch Up	
JULY	3-10 July NAIDOC Week 28 July - CIE Catch Up	Support your local Indigenous community and celebrate at NAIDOC week events. Our friends at AIME will hold a National Hoodie Day - buy one and support them!
AUG	4 August - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day 9 August - International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 12 August - International Youth Day 25 August - CIE Catch Up	Time to ramp up the pressure on 10-11 year olds in prison. Collect signatures in your community to increase the age of criminality Possible pre-federal election lobbying TBC. We don't know when the election is coming but it will be a critical time to talk to all sides of the political spectrum to call for support of Indigenous rights and for leadership on reducing the number of Indigenous kids in prison.
SEPT	2 September- Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child coming into force 29 September - CIE Catch Up	Possible pre-federal election lobbying TBC
OCT	22-30 October - Children's Week Australia 27 October - CIE Catch Up	

Instead of working on a different campaign every 3-4 months, we are seeking groups to work with us to develop a local plan of action for the Community is Everything campaign that covers the whole year. Please let your Community Organiser know if your group or a group member would be interested.