

COMMUNITY IS EVERYTHING

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Welcome to the Community is Everything campaign!

This campaign is a long time in the making and will take on an important Australian human rights issue. This toolkit will help you get started learning about the disproportionate number of Indigenous kids being removed from their communities and locked up, how to start planning for the campaign and key dates and activities.

The campaign

Kids have healthy, happy childhoods when they live in loving and nurturing communities. It's kids' connections with family and community that allows them to flourish, and sets them up for positive lives.

But government policies are separating Indigenous kids from their communities. By locking up kids as young as 10, we are repeating our past mistakes and threatening our future as a fair, just and harmonious community.

This campaign is about getting Federal and State Governments to reduce the numbers of young Indigenous people incarcerated across the country. We will campaign to have governments implement practical recommendations which give better support to Indigenous led community solutions and comply with international legal obligations to ensure Indigenous kids get a childhood and can stay connected to their communities.

What's in this toolkit?

- A letter from Rodney Dillon
- The issue in a nutshell
- Indigenous people are central to this campaign
- The plan to win
- Creating your group plan to win
- The launch
- Community briefings
- Getting in touch with Indigenous organisations in your area
- Key dates calendar



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Campaign toolkit, May 2015

Hi everyone,

Rodney Dillon here. I'm an Aboriginal man from Tasmania. I've been part of a lot of campaigns for justice for my people. Right now I work as the Indigenous Rights Advisor here at Amnesty.

I wanted to write you a letter before we embark on this journey together through the Community is Everything campaign.

This new campaign, Community is Everything, is very important. We don't want to see our kids locked up anymore. We want to see them living in happy, healthy communities, coming out of school educated and getting good jobs. We want to put them on the road to become community leaders.

The last 200 years have been very hard for Aboriginal people, our forebears took care of each other and they cared for this country for 70,000 years. They lived here in harmony. But today a lot of our people don't have harmony, many of us haven't got the same standard of housing, we generally have worse health and education outcomes and more people going in to jail, even our kids.

There needs to be a turning point. There are two pathways to choose and we need to choose the path towards change for Indigenous kids together as Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. We need everyone involved to get the change we want because if we don't strive as people together we won't make it.

There's great stories, there's people working tirelessly to make change. We've got Aboriginal judges, doctors and lawyers but we still need more support for the people who are falling through the gaps.

I believe Amnesty is the right vehicle because it's independent of government and has a history of working on sensitive issues like this before. We've also got activists like you in towns all over Australia that can talk to the public and put pressure on politicians to make it happen.

Will you give us a hand to make change?

Rodney

Members of Amnesty's Indigenous Rights team:



Rodney Dillon

Rodney Dillon is the Indigenous Rights Advisor for Amnesty International Australia. Rodney, a Tasmanian Aboriginal man (Palawa), was an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) Commissioner. As ATSIC Commissioner, his achievements included pushing for the continuing presence of the Tent Embassy and undertaking various reviews of fishing rights around the country. Rodney was awarded the NAIDOC male Person of the Year in 2006. Among his favourite achievements is the purchase of a sheep station on Bruny Island for the Aboriginal people of Tasmania.



Tammy Solonec

Tammy is a Nyikina woman from Derby in the Kimberley of Western Australia and mother of two children. She is the Manager of Indigenous Programs at Amnesty International Australia, and is also a member of the WA Aboriginal Lawyers Committee. Tammy was awarded Young Female Lawyer and Lawyer of the Year (with less than 5 years experience) for WA in 2012. She studied law at the University of WA, and completed her legal qualifications through the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA, where she worked for four years including as Managing Solicitor of the Law and Advocacy Unit. Throughout her career, Tammy has been involved in advocating for Indigenous peoples on local, state, national and international levels, including at the UN.



Julian Cleary

Julian Cleary is an Indigenous Rights Campaigner and Researcher. Prior to joining Amnesty International Julian worked in policy and legal roles with the Central Land Council in Alice Springs. At the Central Land Council, Julian worked closely with the Aboriginal communities and their organisations throughout Central Australia and the Northern Territory to develop policy and research and campaign for social justice outcomes. Julian has also worked with the Victorian Government's Solicitor's Office as a graduate human rights intern and as a research assistant to the Foundation Chair of Australian Indigenous Studies at the University of Melbourne, Marcia Langton. He holds a Bachelor of Laws (Honours) from the University of Melbourne and a Bachelor of Arts from Monash University (Anthropology and Hispanic Studies).

TELL ME ABOUT THE ISSUE

Community is Everything will bring attention to the kids who have been removed from their communities and placed in the justice system. We're campaigning with solutions to the overrepresentation of these Indigenous kids in the justice system throughout Australia. We will be putting pressure on the national government to make changes that will have impact across all states. But will also call for specific state based solutions to some of the more concerning trends in Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

The overrepresentation is huge and totally unacceptable. Indigenous kids make up only five per cent of young Australians, but make up more than half the kids locked up nationally and are 26 times more likely to be detained than other young Australians. These statistics are worse in WA, and NT and the situation in Queensland is deteriorating fast.

There have been lots of reports and inquiries since the landmark 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody which have called for far reaching reforms to the ways the police and other government agencies deal with Aboriginal kids and their families. The 2011 House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs report 'Doing time - Time for Doing' said the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in prison is a 'national disgrace'.

The Community is Everything campaign is a positive campaign. We will present positive solutions that have been developed by Indigenous people, solutions that empower kids and their communities and ensure they can be happy, safe and most importantly together. Our research shows us what factors lead to these unacceptable numbers of Indigenous kids being removed and therefore what solutions are needed to fit the problems.

What are the solutions?

To have a solution that works properly and for everyone, state and federal governments need to work together. While the federal government has some oversight and the ability to influence and put pressure on the states, it's the state and territory governments that have responsibility for the criminal justices system. The states need to make substantial changes to the way they work with Indigenous kids and their communities and the way they spend money.

Overall we want to see the end of the overrepresentation of Indigenous kids removed from their communities and placed in the justice system in a generation -- that's 25 years.

And we can make this happen. Together we will join our Indigenous and non-Indigenous brothers and sisters, partners and allies and campaign for:

- All Australian governments to work on a strategy to reduce the number of Indigenous kids getting into trouble and being locked up in a generation
- This plan to be jointly funded, nationally coordinated, with particular care to ensure the programs for Indigenous kids are implemented by or in partnership with Indigenous community controlled organisations.
- Justice targets to be included in the [Closing the Gap framework](#).



HOW WE'RE WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE ON THIS CAMPAIGN

Indigenous people have been central to this campaign since its inception. Our Indigenous Rights team has spent years researching and planning the campaign using a consultative approach. This means that all the research and campaign plans have been developed under the guidance of key stakeholders in the WA Indigenous community including Elders, Indigenous people affected and Indigenous community and legal services. Nationally, our partners in the National Justice Coalition have also been consulted on project plans and provided feedback that has been integrated where it fits.

Did you know?

The National Justice Coalition launched its ['Change the Record'](#) campaign on 30 April this year. It's a group of organisations working together to end the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in prison and Indigenous victims of violence.

Organisations include:



THE PLAN TO WIN

This campaign is going to run for five years, and in this time we're working towards achieving some BIG goals. To win we need to make it an issue that politicians at the state and federal levels can't ignore. We need to get both levels of government working together and singing the same tune. It's going to take a lot of work but together we can do it.

WHICH BITS OF THE PLAN DO WE WORK ON THIS YEAR?

This year we need to build broad community support and put the issue on the agenda of politicians and key decision makers. This means you'll need to get out into your community and have conversations with people about the issue and how, together, we can support strong Indigenous communities and their kids. You can do this by holding briefings in your community and events in partnership with Indigenous communities and organisations around NAIDOC Week. The more signatures you collect at NAIDOC Week and within your community the more power your group will have with your MPs.

Groups around the country will be raising this issue with their state and federal MPs. Will your group help put the issue on their agenda? By having a broad and sustained engagement with politicians we can ensure that they actively campaign on the issue within parliament and their political parties. Ahead of us this year we have some important events happening in the political space where we have a great opportunity to have those conversations and make a difference.

The Federal Senate has opened an Inquiry into Indigenous incarceration due to report on 13 August-- this report should analyse the national problems and propose a set of recommendations. In addition to this there will be COAG meetings that look at law and order where state and federal government cooperation is essential. Let's ensure that the over-incarceration of Indigenous kids is discussed. These two events are going to be key points for us this year where we can work to put pressure on the state and federal politicians who have the power to keep communities and their kids together.

There'll be a second toolkit out in a few months with more detail on what type of MP engagement your groups can do. But you should map out some advocacy activities between August and October.

What is COAG?

COAG or the Council of Australian Governments is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia.

The members of COAG are the Prime Minister, State and Territory Premiers and Chief Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association. The Prime Minister chairs COAG.

The role of COAG is to promote policy reforms that are of national significance, or which need co-ordinated action by all Australian governments.

COAG meets as needed, usually once or twice a year, though at times it has met up to four times in a year. COAG may also settle issues out-of-session by correspondence.

CREATING YOUR GROUP PLAN TO WIN

This is going to be a five year campaign and in those five years we've got some pretty ambitious goals - goals that we will be able to achieve if we've got good plans.

You can use the local strategy template on the next page to plan your activities to make sure they're strategic and you can get the most human rights impact for your work. You can print off the second template and take to your group. It's already got some of the campaign goals mapped out so you don't need to do that bit of work.



LOCAL STRATEGY CHART

GOALS	ALLIES & OPPONENTS	TARGETS	TACTICS
<p>Long term What do we want to eventually happen? eg: end offshore processing</p> <p>Intermediate What are the steps towards our long term goal? What do we want to achieve over the next six months? eg Get our local MP to publically admit to problems with current refugee policies</p> <p>Short term What are the small steps we can achieve towards our long term and intermediate goals? eg: _____% of local church groups signing a resolution condemning the current policy</p> <p>Organisation-building goals Specific ways in which your group will be strengthened by the campaign eg: # people involved in our group # local contacts/activists • # signatures collected # allies strengthened group experience/skills in _____.</p>	<p>Allies</p> <p>Answer these questions to identify allies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which are the important organisations in the region? Are they well organised? Can they help? • Who might care about this issue enough to join in or help out in our campaign? • Who shares our values? • What do they gain if we win? • What are the risks they are taking? • What power do they have over the target? • What are the common areas of concern? • What relationships do they have with others that can assist? <p>Opponents</p> <p>Answer these questions to identify opponents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are our opponents? • What will our victory cost them? • What will they do/spend to oppose you? • How strong are they? 	<p>A target is always a person – it is never an institution or an elected body.</p> <p>Primary targets</p> <p>The people with the power to give us what we want.</p> <p>eg Tony Abbott or your state or territory Premier/ Chief Minister</p> <p>Secondary targets</p> <p>Who has more power over the primary target than we do, and that we have more influence over?</p> <p>eg: a local state or federal MP, head of local chamber of business, president of the local country womens' association, leader of a community or religious group.</p> <p>NB: Local group activities should generally focus on secondary targets because these are the people you can get to more directly.</p>	<p>NB: This column should always be completed last as tactics should not be planned in isolation from the larger strategy.</p> <p>For each target, list the tactics that you can use to put pressure on the target. Write down what each ally will do which target.</p> <p>Tactics must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be in context • be flexible and creative • be directed at a specific target • make sense to your supporters • be backed up by a degree of power and make a specific demand. • meet your goals. <p>eg tactics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approaching key groups to support your local campaign • giving the presentation to new audiences • lobbying a local MP • asking supporters to push your local MP to take action • media events aimed at the target • a stall at a market • a film night to help educate supporters and find new activists

IDEAS TO GET YOUR COMMUNITY INVOLVED AND FOR NAIDOC WEEK

NAIDOC Week

NAIDOC stands for National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee. Its origins can be traced to the emergence of Aboriginal activist groups in the 1920s which sought to increase awareness in the wider community of the status and treatment of Indigenous Australians.

NAIDOC Week is held in the first full week of July. It is a time to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievements and is an opportunity to recognise the contributions that Indigenous Australians make to our country and our society.

- **Forums and discussion panels** are perfect for those in your community who want to get into the nitty gritty of the issue. At an event like this you'll be able to talk about the issue in detail and get some experts to give their views. Think about local Indigenous organisations, university professors or get in touch with your Action Centre. You might also like to show a short film or do a quick presentation before the speaking to get everyone into the right frame of mind.
- **Art exhibitions and concerts** are a great way to showcase Indigenous talent in your area. Book a space like a library or community hall and reach out to artists in your community. They might be happy for a chance to show their work as part of such a great cause! Can't find an artist? Don't worry! Action Centres have access to photos as part of the campaign that can be printed and laminated for your exhibition.
- **Film screenings**, who doesn't love a good film or documentary? We've got rights to a few feature films and short documentaries. Get in touch with you local action centre to find out what's on offer.
- **Classes about Indigenous food and culture!** Everybody likes to eat and almost everyone likes to dance. See if there are any Indigenous organisations that offer classes in cooking, dancing or about local Indigenous culture. If not, reach out to a community leader and see if they'd like to create one with you. This type of event is an exciting way to get new people to dip their toe into something new and get involved in human rights.

A group of activists have been working on some activities your group could hold as part of the community briefings or during NAIDOC week. These events are a good reason to reach out to your local polliie, invite them along and engage them with the issue. Here are their brilliant ideas.

- **Sit down and have a yarn with a potential partner.** We know that there are many people within local communities doing great work around this campaign already. Have a relational meeting with them to discuss shared values, common interests and potential areas where you can support each other and work together.
- **Stalls at NAIDOC Week fairs and festivals** are a great way to support you local Indigenous community and make sure your event doesn't take away from things they've already organised. Your stall will reach Indigenous people in your community and show solidarity with the work others are doing.
- **Don't forget to get in touch with the media!** Lots of groups have had some great success when they've reached out to their local media. Including spots on the local news, newspaper spreads, radio interviews and more.

The launch of the reports

Salil Shetty, the Secretary General of Amnesty International, is coming to Australia to launch our national report called 'Nurturing the Next Generation' at the National Press Club in Canberra. Lots of decision makers and media will attend this event and we hope it will be a good place to set the agenda.

Claire Mallinson, the National Director of Amnesty International Australia, will launch the WA report, 'There is Always a Brighter Future' in Perth. We'll invite politicians and media to this event and try and engage them positively on the issues.

KEY DATES

2015						
Month	May	June	July	August	September	October
Key dates	27 May - 3 June Reconciliation Week	2 June National Report launch 11 June WA Report launch	6-12 July NAIDOC Week	9 August UN International Day of Indigenous Peoples 10 August Senate Inquiry scheduled to report	COAG Law, Crime and Public safety meeting (Sept or Oct TBC)	COAG Law, Crime and Public safety meeting (Sept or Oct TBC)
Things your group can do	In your group's May meeting you could show the presentation and start planning	Community briefing activities	NAIDOC week events with you local Indigenous community and follow up relational meetings	State MP engagement	State MP engagement Possible activities at State Attorney General or Premier offices This date will depend on the timing of COAG meetings which will be released closer to the time.	Possible activities outside State Attorney General or Premier offices

CAMPAIGN MATERIALS (AVAILABLE SOON)

- UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
- Guide: How to have a relational meeting
- Campaign digest
- Handling objections guide
- Case studies
- Short speech for public events
- Powerpoint presentation with notes (20 mins)
- Letter writing templates
- Films / documentaries