

COMMUNITY IS EVERYTHING

ACTIVIST TOOLKIT, JUNE 2017

Note from Julian

As I'm writing this we are fast approaching the 50th anniversary of the 1967 referendum on 27 May. The referendum allowed for Indigenous people to be included in the census, and gave Federal Parliament the power to make laws in relation to Indigenous people – both important steps for Indigenous Peoples' rights.

The fact that 90 per cent of Australians voted “yes for Aboriginal rights” in 1967 is incredible. It happened thanks to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous allies' [concerted campaigning across the country](#). People like Sir Doug Nicholls, Lady Gladys Nicholls, Joe McGuinness, Faith Bandler, William Onus, Gordon Bryant and Oodgeroo Noonuccall led this work. If these names don't ring a bell, [here is a good starting point](#).

I acknowledge and honour the work of these and other Indigenous rights campaigners that came before us. We stand on the shoulders of giants when it comes to the Community is Everything campaign. As you know, so much more needs to be done. And now is the time for us to step up and continue their legacy.

So what does the referendum have to do with our campaign? At the time of the 67 referendum one Senator said, “the history of dealings with the Aboriginal population over the years will show that too often the easy way out has been the claim that the Commonwealth has no power to legislate with respect to Aboriginals.” He said that the ‘yes’ vote in the referendum would “take away the alibi from the Commonwealth”.

But today the Federal Government continues to say that the over-imprisonment of Indigenous children in Australia is not their problem, and that instead it is an issue for the states and territories to sort out. We say enough!

From Barwon in Victoria, to Cleveland in Queensland. From Don Dale in the Northern Territory, Cobham in New South Wales and Banksia Hill in Western Australia, over the past year we have heard many stories of children being mistreated in our youth justice system. And we can't escape the fact that these children are overwhelmingly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

In the coming months we have a plan to ensure that this once in a generation focus on youth justice results in action to end the over-representation of Indigenous children in our justice system.

We plan to build so much pressure on the Prime Minister that he is forced to act and lay the foundations for long term change. Drawing on all of our research over the past four years, and in collaboration with our Indigenous partners, we are currently putting together an eight point plan to fix our youth justice system.

Read on for a sneak preview of the plan and information how you are absolutely critical to our plan to win.

Julian Cleary
Indigenous Rights Campaigner
Amnesty International Australia

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WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN?



In 2016 we successfully lobbied for youth justice to be added to the agenda of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). Since then we've come up against the same barrier – we need the Federal Government to take leadership in overhauling our youth justice policy nationwide.

We need Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull to announce a national plan of action on youth justice which ensures that the Federal Government is taking responsibility for reducing the number of Indigenous kids being locked up and that State governments have a consistent approach in achieving this. Amnesty International is in a great position to work in partnership to shape what the national plan of action looks like. We are consulting on an eight point plan to win.

Here's where it's up to at this stage:

8 POINT PLAN TO WIN

We are currently consulting with our Indigenous partners on an eight point plan to win. Here's where it's up to at this stage.

- 1** Invest in prevention and diversion programs
- 2** Raise the age kids can be sent to prison to at least 12 years old
- 3** End detention of children who have not been sentenced
- 4** Adequately fund Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal services
- 5** Improve conditions in children's prisons
- 6** Set targets to end the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in detention
- 7** Improve data collection to track progress, learn and get it right
- 8** Work with the Indigenous-led Change the Record Coalition to address the bigger picture

WHAT YOU CAN DO: ACTIVISM BLITZ

From 1 September Amnesty activists will take part in a nationwide blitz, with a range of tactics designed to influence the people who can pressure the PM.

The solutions we're proposing are based on the research we've done with Indigenous people and partner organisations nationwide. Now we need to make sure that the Prime Minister (PM) hears all about it and moves quickly to announce a plan. We've waited long enough for the PM to do the right thing, so this year we're setting the time and place for him to make the announcement.

A key date will be the release of the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory report on **30 September**. Youth justice will be in the spotlight again and the government will be expected to respond to the report's recommendations. This is a great opportunity to make sure the response is nationally focused rather than just on the NT.

What will activists do?

Activists and action groups will be targeting specific politicians to remove any obstacles for a national plan of action in parliament. The tactics will differ depending on what electorate you are in. We can help you develop a strategy that works for your area.

For our Liberal and National Party (LNP) targets in particular (see list on this page) we want activists and action groups to hold community / town hall meetings in their electorate. These should be large events with many different community leaders present. We want your member of parliament (MP) to stand up in front of their constituents and commit to lobbying the Prime Minister for a national plan of action.

If groups are in Labor or Greens electorates, we encourage you to meet with your Federal MP and ask them to put pressure on the Federal Government. State Premiers can also bring this issue up through the Council of Australian Government (COAG) meetings with the PM.

During the blitz you can also find out when your MP is out in public so you can turn up and ask them about their stance on Indigenous youth imprisonment.

Our supporters and new activists that aren't part of groups yet will also take part in a range of tactics on a weekly basis. This will include sending emails, phone calls and using social media to target the same politicians our groups and lead activists are engaging with. This will ensure that these politicians cannot escape the issue no matter where they are in the country.

Key electorates and MPs

Target	Electorate
Julie Bishop (WA)	Curtin
Christopher Pyne (SA)	Sturt
Greg Hunt (VIC)	Flinders
Kelly O'Dwyer (VIC)	Higgins
Steven Ciobo (QLD)	Moncrieff
Scott Morrison (NSW)	Cook
Barnaby Joyce (NSW)	New England

13 June Webinar: For more information come along to our next national webinar which will run through some training around our blitz tactics for action groups and lead activists. An invite will go out soon, but to be sure you are involved let your Community Organiser know you want to work on this campaign.

CALENDAR



June – August: Blitz preparation

Growing our movement and building nationwide momentum for the blitz, strengthening our relationships with Indigenous allies & preparing for blitz activities.

13 June: National webinar – how to be prepared for the blitz (action groups & activist leaders)

2 – 9 July: NAIDOC week (attend events in your community)

15 August: National webinar – How to be prepared for the blitz (new activists & supporters)

All action groups & lead activists:

- Attend webinar to run through the strategy for the blitz + learn how to hold a town hall meeting and engage with MPs.
- Hold stalls to collect petition signatures.

Action groups in LNP federal electorates:

- Invite target MPs to town hall meeting between 2 – 15 October.
- Book venue, set date and invite community leaders to take part in town hall meeting.

Other federal electorates & state governments:

- Meet with your federal MP to ask them to publicly support a national plan of action.
- Meet with state MP or advisors to ask them to push for a plan of action through COAG.

September & October: Blitz time

Targeting Prime Minister Turnbull to announce a national plan of action for youth justice

30 September: Northern Territory Royal Commission report released

16 – 19 October: National Press Club event

1 September – 20 October: mobilisation time! Activists, supporters and allies will target key people around the country. Together we will convince Malcolm Turnbull to turn up to our Press Club event in October to announce a national plan of action.

All the best for your activism. Have questions or suggestions? We're here to guide you through your local strategy. Get in touch with the CIE advisory group at cie.group@amnesty.org.au:

back row: Alicia (NSW), Maddie (QLD/NNSW), Andy (Organising rep)

middle row: Roxy (campaigner), Ainoa (SANT), Hayley (WA), Julian (campaigner)

front row: Rebecca (VIC)

Missing: Chloe (VIC), Holly (Activism rep)

