

THE GRASSROOTS REPORT

2020 QUARTER 1 (JAN - MAR)



This quarterly report is an overview of Amnesty's national Organising program which is sent to activist leaders and staff. It shows how we're tracking against key goals in the 2020 vision, but it is also a snapshot of some of the most exciting activities and innovations activists have done over the last few months. We want to show key examples of how our grassroots movement has had impact for human rights as a result of their commitment, strategic thinking and hard work.

The purpose of this report is to:

- enable activists to see their individual contribution and understand their collective impact
- show transparency
- share activist led innovation
- identify our areas of strength and where we need to improve

If you have any questions or comments please contact the Organising Team at communityorganising@amnesty.org.au.

Image: 2020 Sydney Mardi Gras

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NATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MOVEMENT MANAGER

We started 2020 in disbelief as we witnessed the devastating bushfires rage across our country and destroy so much in their path. We watched in shock as the pictures of smoke covered cities filled our news feeds; we were all deeply affected by what we experienced as a country. The climate crisis affects us all and there can be no doubt that Australia is experiencing its very real effects already. As a movement we asked Scott Morrison to step up and take action to protect our planet. Thank you to all of you who participated in that action and joined us in asking for Australia to lead in the fight against climate change. I am constantly amazed by the tenacity and determination of our movement that even in the face of such devastation and loss we continue to raise our voices

At the start of the year we celebrated Vietnamese activist Tran Thi Nga release after serving three years in prison. She agreed to go into exile as a condition for her release, and has since arrived in the USA safely along with her partner and two sons. The letters you wrote and the petitions you collected helped secure this incredible result for Tran Thi Nga.

We deployed Human Rights observers at this year's Invasion Day rally in Brisbane and we made sure that the message is clear that the right to protest is fundamental. Amnesty has a role to play in making sure that protest is safe for people of all walks of life to participate in and we will continue to develop this form of action as a pivotal tool for human rights change in our toolbox.

We now face another devastating crisis in Covid - 19. Our lives have been turned upside down by this virus, the ways we connect, communicate and call for change have also been significantly challenged. However much like during the bushfires it is the spirit of community that is getting us through. I have been in awe of how quickly we have responded and developed ways to support one another. The newly formed Activist Communications Volunteer Team has been focused on making sure our movement is connected to staff, to each other and to the information they need to take action. This quarter they launched our monthly People Powered Bulletin providing a much needed space for our successes and work to be shared and a National Activist Facebook Group, which has been an incredible example of our activism community in practice.

I have been amazed by the localised creative responses to activist leadership development and by the innovative ideas that are being designed to make sure that we continue to defend and protect lives. Two key examples of the agility we have demonstrated over this challenging quarter are the QLD/NNSW Activism Leadership Committees swift switch to a successful online skillshare and the move to take the planned creative origami mobilisation for Yasaman Aryani online. Together we made hundreds of flowers and posted them alongside an incredible 100,000 signatures you all collected directly to the Iranian embassy.

So Whilst Covid - 19 has paused some of our plans and has meant a significant change in our tactics and approaches it has not changed the determination and power of our movement. We have continued to welcome new activists through our relaunched Get Active process with monthly introduction webinars. We have quickly refocused our attention on the human rights issues arising from the impacts of the virus. We have worked in Coalition to make sure that extended police powers do not go unchecked and we have joined with our friends at Democracy in Colour to amplify their calls to make sure health care can be accessed by everyone at this critical time. Never has our resolve to challenge injustice and hold bad guys to account been more in focus.

On behalf of the Movement Team thank you for all that you do to defend and protect human rights.



Sarah Gooderham
Movement Manager

HIGHLIGHTS FROM REGIONAL PRESIDENTS

Ronnie Gori (ACT / SNSW President) / actsnswpresident@amnesty.org.au

We would like to pay special mention to Dorothy Bennett who has been a member and volunteer with Amnesty since 1973 - 47 years! She has led the ACT/SNSW Urgent Action Network and is infamous in getting everyone she's ever met to sign Write for Rights petitions (generally collects around 600 signatures for that campaign alone). Dorothy decided earlier this year to step down from convening the Urgent Action Network and we would like to sincerely thank her for her invaluable contribution to the region and to human rights.



Glyn Mather (NSW President)
/ nswpresident@amnesty.org.au

Mardi Gras saw an incredible turnout of Amnesty staff and activists to shine a global spotlight on the lives of LGBTQI people. With an array of incredible culture, creativity and community. It was a fun, inclusive and glamorous event.



Maddie Wood (QLD / NNSW President)
/ qldnswpresident@amnesty.org.au

Queensland's online activist skillshare is a definite highlight for the region in Q1. Due to the impact of Covid-19 the team had to adapt to the changing environment and switch the skillshare from in person to online. This activist led event took place over a weekend, with an engaging and interactive agenda to upskill all that attended.

QLD/NNSW SKILLSHARE ONLINE SCHEDULE

SATURDAY 28TH MARCH

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS | 12:30PM

Activist catch-up, discussion and Icebreaker.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE | 1:00PM

An overview of the organisational structure of Amnesty International Australia and the support systems available to activists.

DANCE BREAK | 1:30PM

HOW TO HAVE BETTER CONVERSATIONS | 1:40PM

A workshop to help facilitate better conversations about human rights.

COFFEE BREAK | 2:40PM

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING | 2:50PM

Relationship building for commitment and impact!

DEBRIEF | 4:00PM

SUNDAY 29TH MARCH

WELCOME, REGROUP AND REFLECTION | 12:30PM

Reflections on Saturday's sessions and a welcome to activists joining in for the Sunday session.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WORKSHOP | 12:45PM

AFTERNOON TEA | 1:45PM

STRATEGIC CAMPAIGNING - PART 1 | 2:00PM

Learn the fundamentals of strategic campaigning and community mapping.

BREAK | 3:00PM

STRATEGIC CAMPAIGNING - PART 2 | 3:15PM

Break out discussions.

GROUP DISCUSSION AND COMMITMENTS | 4:00PM

Any questions? Feel free to email: ruth.lcreffield@gmail.com | Zoom link in email and on Facebook event

HIGHLIGHTS FROM REGIONAL PRESIDENTS

Nicole Wedding (SA / NT President) / santpresident@amnesty.org.au

Amnesty's presence and partnership with the Adelaide festival was a major highlight for the region in Q1. We had stalls at 12 performances of the show 150 Psalms, as well as materials and petitions at the production of Aleppo: A portrait of absence and the 150 Psalms photographic exhibition at the QBE Galleries, Adelaide Festival Centre. Over 200 petitions signatures were collected with an 80% increase of action group engagement with the stalls compared with last year.



Greg Luckman (TAS President) / taspresident@amnesty.org.au

A particular shout out to Zainab Clark and everyone involved for organising an incredible Uyghur Speaking Tour with Nurmuhammad Majid Siddiq. There were a total of 5 events: Hobart Mosque (70 people), Carmel Hall in Cygnet (40 people- some pictured below), Multicultural Hub in Moonah (40 people), Sir Stanley Burbury Theatre (60 people) and Macquarie House Launceston (75 people). The team engaged with local MPs, Andrew Wilkie MP, Nick McKim MP, Rob Valentine MP and Rosalie Woodruff with all attending events. These events reached media through The Mercury, The Examiner Q+A, ABC Radio Hobart, ABC Radio Northern Tasmania, 3CR Melbourne Community Radio and through Letters to the Editor. These events raised \$6,408.85 for the Uyghur Fund and \$188.50 for AIA, with over 300 petition signatures collected.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM REGIONAL PRESIDENTS

Katrina North (VIC President) / vicpresident@amnesty.org.au

The LGBTIQ+ Network has continued to thrive and has big plans for 2020. The Network is excited to focus on inclusivity and partnership development as they continue to grow in 2020. In January 2020 the Network held a successful stall at the Midsumma Carnival having achieved a whopping 600 actions for LGTBTIQ+ cases the world over and advertised their group to new members. In February 2020 they marched in the Pride March to elated crowds. In March they held a book/movie club and their first meeting of the year via zoom. They are excited to (hopefully) hold a stall at the first Drag Expo in Melbourne in August 2020. The Network will continue to hold regular book/movie/network meetings via zoom and adapt to the changing landscape to ensure they maintain their meetings and the network as a safe space for LGBTIQ+ Victorians.



Leonie Alexander (WA President) / wapresident@amnesty.org.au

WA came together to create over 200 flowers in support of Yasaman. WA activists then met in Perth and took action for Yasaman on International Women's Day, handing out these flowers and gathering petition signatures. This was followed by an event that included diverse speakers, including two women from Iran, the CEO of WACOSS and speakers for Reclaim the Night.



OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Youth Advisory Group (YAG) / yag@amnesty.org.au

Our Youth Advisory Group came together in February to write our next National Youth Strategy for 2020-2023. This incredible group of young activists, Anita Nair, Anita Chaplin, Emily Watson and Fin Spalding will be leading our organisation on all things Youth. If you want to chat to the team about Youth activism in your region you can find them at yag@amnesty.org.au.



Amnesty in the News / media@amnesty.org.au

In total for the quarter, we had 2726 mentions of Amnesty International in the Australian media, with a potential audience reach of 174,020,900. This coverage included some wonderful pieces organised by activists around the country including several pieces in Tasmanian media to support the Uyghur campaign as well as Write for Rights events all over the country. Thank you for your hard work and dedication!

Along with the rest of the campaigners, the media team moved quickly to adjust our existing plans to respond to COVID-19. Our priority was ensuring we could amplify the voices of those who would be most affected by the government's response to the pandemic. The areas we've focused on in relation to COVID-19 are:

- Indigenous rights
- Government and police accountability
- Refugees in detention at risk

And we've been able to secure coverage to highlight the issues in these areas and many more over the course of the first quarter. You can find all the latest media releases on our website here: <http://amnesty.org.au/news>

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

International Women's Day (IWD) in solidarity with Yasaman:

IWD was one of our primary campaign opportunities during Q1 and we campaigned for the release of Yasaman Aryani. Between Jan and March 19,489 actions were collected in support of Yasaman, we had over 500 individuals sign up to host individual events and we had 12 action groups hold activities in support. As Covid-19 hit, our activists didn't stop, they were innovative and kept working towards human rights impact.



ACT: Pat Boldra adapted to the sudden impact of Covid-19 by holding a flower making session online.



Bay and Basin action group



Sydney: Supporter Care volunteer Erika led some great events and actions for Yasaman in Q1. Erika took the action to Greenpeace leading a flower making session. On IWD Erika led a second flower making session and took to the streets during the March in Sydney, handing out the flowers and contributing to us reaching over 100,000 signatures for Yasaman.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Membership & Governance

Become a member of Amnesty International at <https://action.amnesty.org.au/membership>.

As a member led movement, it is important that we grow and engage our membership. If you are not a member already, you can join today for a \$22 annual fee. By being a member you can feed into Amnesty's decision making processes, stand for board positions, join committees, and vote on important resolutions.

In Quarter 1, a number of communications were sent to members to advise them of the different ways in which they can take on leadership positions and shape the direction of the movement. Different channels were used so as to maximise coverage.

In February, we trialled Facebook promotion to increase our membership to a range of audiences. The response has helped inform us of the areas we need to focus on to improve the membership product and membership communications. Also in February a monthly calling program began to non-renewed (lapsed) members as a part of the new renewal communications process, and initial results indicate a positive conversion rate.

In March, the company secretary invited all active members to nominate for Activism Leadership Committee positions in their region, or for General Meeting Voter positions, the latter being the ones who have voting rights at the Annual General Meeting.

Four Board meetings were held in Quarter 1, including a two-day strategic planning session in February. Initial preparations were made in advance of the virtual Annual General Meeting in July.



National board members, regional presidents and AMT at strategic planning meeting in Feb 2020

What we are trying to achieve:

For each human rights issue we work on we create campaign plans around what we want to achieve and how we will create change. Similarly we need to have goals and strategies around how we are going to grow, deepen and improve our movement and its activism so that no matter what the issue, we are powerful and ready to act. The following goals for 2020 show what we want to achieve this year:

2020 Vision goals

Double our membership to 10,000 AIA members - including encouraging our existing activists to become members

Grow our activist base: 1,300 Engaged Activists, 500 Committed Activists and 200 Core Activists

Raise \$25,000 with our movement

Collect 800,000 signatures online and support our movement to collect 30,000 offline signatures

What are all these things?

Members are Amnesty supporters that pay an annual fee to have a larger say in our movement. They are able to vote for or become leaders through our governance process.

Activists are Amnesty supporters that work on our campaigns at a deeper level. They raise awareness and encourage others to take action. Depending on how involved they are or how deep their engagement they sit at a different level. Core activists are our leaders who define the work we do. Committed activists are long term activists that may or may not have higher responsibilities. Engaged activists are new to the movement.

An offline action is when someone gives their details to take action. Most of them come from hardcopy petitions.



Coffs Coast action group at Harbourside Markets

2020 Q1 data	QLD / NNSW	NSW	ACT / SNSW	VIC	TAS	SA / NT	WA	National	2020 Q4
No. of groups (total)	18	30	10	23	4	10	12	107	119
No. of activists (total)	61	116	33	54	26	40	32	362	362
- Engaged level	42	299	70	61	15	26	28	541	-
- Committed level	48	108	36	60	18	25	18	313	251
- Core level	22	25	12	18	10	16	22	125	111
No. of members (total)	647	1,584	380	1,511	201	457	405	5,216	5,292

Between Jan and March 2020 activists held 77 Events and sent in 9,735 offline actions 60% of which had data. This is compared to 113 Events, 20,418 Actions 75% with data in Q4, 2019.

Key takeaways:

Going well / On track

- One of our goals in Quarter 1 was to better understand our movement. The Activism Leadership Committees supported two key projects - Group Registration and Group Calling Programs which resulted in significantly improved data. We cleaned up our groups, identified 320 new engaged supporters and added 89 brand new people to our database.
- With better knowledge of who makes up our movement and talking to our activists about membership we have witnessed a 5% increase of core/committed activists who are Amnesty members. 76% of core activists are now members and 30% of committed activists are members.
- We have relaunched our Get Active sessions and set up introduction pathways for new people to join our movement.
- We implemented activist recommendations to improve communications by launching the National Activist Facebook Group and the People Powered Bulletin
- We are continuing to diversify our action options by implementing the Human Rights Observers Program.

Areas to improve

- There is more work to be done to refine our membership product and promote to a wider audience. As our membership numbers grow and more activists become members we also need to review and improve communications and journeys for Amnesty members. We want a community of engaged members with a sense of belonging year round not just in the lead up to our AGM.
- There is an opportunity to build on our Get Active success of this quarter by creating follow up journeys for participants. These journeys should introduce new Amnesty activists to ongoing support structures to support their experience. These journeys could also be relevant for new activists recruited through campaign moments like International Women's Day.
- We had to react quickly to the COVID-19 crisis and the situation was evolving constantly. In future we need to establish Crisis Response processes to include activists in shaping our response and ensuring we are communicating consistently across our movement.

Keep connected

Keep connected with our [national Facebook group for activists](#). The perfect place to interact with and stay connected to your Amnesty peers.

Spread some [#ViralKindness](#) with tips and tricks on how to remain connected and healthy during Covid-19.

Key dates & opportunities

Governance dates:

Voting

- **13 May** - Voting opens for GMV and ALC members
- **27 May** - Voting closes for GMV and ALC members
- **5 June** - Election results announced and communicated to candidates

Annual General Meeting

- **22 May** - Call for Board member nominations
- **1 June** - Deadline for Board nominations
- **8 June** - AGM notice sent
- **26 June** - Deadline for resolutions going to AGM
- **18 July** - Annual General Meeting held via video-conference, at which General Meeting Voters will vote on resolutions and for Board positions

Make sure you check the Activism planner regularly for key dates and upcoming training opportunities at - <https://www.amnesty.org.au/activism-planner/>

For events in your region go to - <https://www.amnesty.org.au/events/>

To host your own events go to - <https://www.amnesty.org.au/host-an-event-2/>

Here is our learning resources on activism and leadership - <https://www.amnesty.org.au/skill-up/>

If your group does something in Q2 that you think should be highlighted in the next report make sure to let our Community Organisers know by emailing communityorganising@amnesty.org.au.

Thanks for reading! We'll be back again after Q2 to show more about our organising program. If you have any feedback, comments or questions about this report please feel free to get in touch.



Origami flower making session in Sydney for Yasaman.