

THE GRASSROOTS REPORT

2021 Quarter 3: July, August, September



This quarterly report is an overview of Amnesty's National Organising Program which is sent to leaders and staff. It shows how we are tracking against key goals in the 2021 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:

- Share some National Highlights from our Movement Manager
- Share Regional Highlights from this Quarter
- Share Activist Updates
- Share Membership Updates from Quarter 3

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

NATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

The COVID context continues to be the backdrop of our work and as we head into the final months of the year many of us remain either in lockdown or under some kind of restriction. There is no denying the impact all of this is having on all of our mental health and Wellbeing. I am immensely grateful for the commitment and passion you continue to inject into your activism in this reality.

We could not possibly look back on this last quarter without acknowledging the horror of the crisis in Afghanistan, which continues to play out today. As the situation escalated we quickly mobilised in full force, signing petitions, emailing, calling and tweeting at our local MPs demanding action be taken to protect people in Afghanistan and for the humanitarian program to be extended to those fleeing the crisis. As a movement we made over 2000 calls and collected over 41000 actions. We continue to call for an increased humanitarian intake and reforms to the Community Sponsorship Program for Refugees.

One of the major highlights of this quarter has to be the activism forum, our first online forum and our first fully activist led forum. What a challenge to move to two full days online and online in a way that feels valuable and meaningful. But this incredible movement is not afraid of a challenge instead we take them head on. What a powerful example of staff and activist leaders working together to deliver what was asked for by our Movement. While we are still in the process of evaluation, we know we had 115 attendees and 33 new/renewed members who signed up to attend the Activism Forum. Congratulations to everyone involved, in particular the Steering Committee and activist leaders who designed, shaped and facilitated sessions. I loved every second of it and I can't wait to see what continues to grow from the seeds planted on this weekend.

I know many of you will be thinking about plans to take action for Write for Rights, some of you will be making plans for how to get your state to Raise the Age of criminal responsibility and some of you will be making plans to grow our movement in 2022. This is who we are, a movement of people persistent and courageous in the face of what every barrier the world puts in our way. We are unstoppable together.

Thank you for your continued dedication and passion for human rights.



Movement Manager
Sarah Gooderham

ACT/SNSW REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

What a quarter! Everytime I go to write a quarterly report I am always in awe of what our activists have been able to achieve. I am humbled and honoured to lead a region that is full of passion, care, and commitment to defending human rights. This quarter, I have found strength, dedication and resilience in our community as we have faced lockdowns, isolation, and ongoing crises.

The beginning of the quarter continued with feminist activists supporting the Equality Rights Alliance and joining the call for the Australian government to do more to promote and protect women's safety, highlighting intersectional discriminations that exist in current systems.

The ACT Legislative Assembly released their discussion paper on Raising the Age of criminal responsibility, to which Amnesty International Australia wrote a submission including an addendum from the ACT & Southern NSW ALC. Aunty Matilda House spoke in depth to us about the importance of working with Aboriginal peoples in the fight for justice, where Raising the Age is the first step.

Injustices in Myanmar worsen, and we continue to work alongside the community in their fight for human rights. ALC member, Jay Moran spoke to the online Global Rally to recognise and condemn the ongoing human rights abuses happening at the hands of the military in Myanmar. We continue to meet fortnightly with the community to support and co-design campaign strategies that react to the rapidly changing situation in Myanmar.

Amnesty ACT & Southern NSW launched the new Amnesty Australia vision, joined by the National Director and Movement Manager.

highlight of this quarter was the Activism Forum, of which four members of the ACT & Southern NSW ALC Stephen, Joe, Christian, Maria and myself presented, and assisted with panels.

Joe, with the help of Stephen and staff, has tirelessly worked on a concept of 'Activism journeys' which is an ongoing project that gives a strong focus on activist development on a national level. Christian gave an incredible presentation on working with diaspora communities, focussing on working within refugee communities. Christian highlighted the need for co-conspiracy and working to achieve mutual goals for meaningful change in engagements with the community. Maria organised and facilitated a highly topical and activating discussion on climate justice and the intersections of climate and human rights. I was lucky enough to be joined by fellow organisers of the March for Justice to discuss feminist leadership and organising for impact.

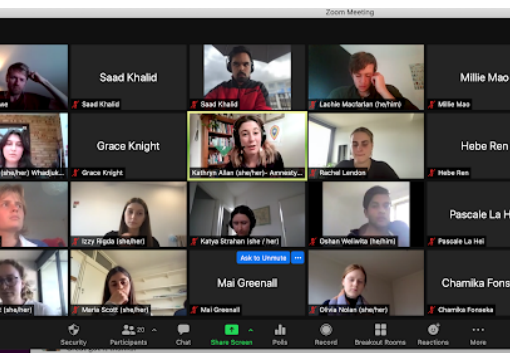
A core part of our work is to support, revive, and help new Amnesty groups form. Most recently, the ALC supported the ANU Group to reform. Over 60 new members, and every single executive position was contested. The ANU is crucial to work in the region, as it connects us to academics, forums and people passionate about human rights!

The Canberra Letter Writing Group continued to meet in person, and have a new convenor, Helen who has been a member of the group for many years.

Our activists all over the region continue to meet online, join National actions, and write letters from home. Without passionate and committed volunteers we simply could not do what we do.

We continue to work with our community, attending events, and offering support where we are able despite the ongoing lockdowns.

Kathryn Allan (ACT/SNSW President)
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WA REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

During Q3 2021, the WA ALC underwent significant structural changes with the outgoing Regional President, Leonie Alexander, stepping down after six years in the role. Leonie continues her role in the WA ALC and is assisting with the transition to the new Presidents.

WA voted to have two new Regional Presidents (Euan Gleeson-Brown and Richa Malaviya) elected, and another two Vice-Presidents (Tara Boyhan & Jacob Stokes) in the hopes to alleviate some of the workload historically undertaken by the RP.

The WA ALC now sits at twelve members, with the co-option of our newest members Melani De Alwis and Bruce Campbell in July 2021. This means the ALC is currently working at full capacity. In July 2021, an induction was held for the new members by the then WA ALC executive.

The WA youth activists continue to lead the way for activism in the region. With 4 youth activists now sitting on the ALC the youth voice continues to be represented in the region. In particular, our WA University groups have been very active in the region.

The Youth Action Plan continues to take action and build momentum in WA, with recruitment for new university groups at Murdoch and Curtin being finalised. Other groups such as Sheridan College & UWA have been busy holding O-day stalls and micro-volunteering sessions packing stationary for children in need and a clothing drive to support people experiencing homelessness in Perth.

A new WA Human Rights Legal Group is also finalising recruitment, which will create a bi-annual AIWA policy submission in relation to a HRA for WA, as well as developing meaningful partnerships with like-minded organisations to strengthen the WA sector's collective advocacy impact. Lastly, we have been partnering with WA's Ethiopian and Tigrayan communities and spoke at their rally outside Parliament House protesting the genocide and sexual violence.

We are also working on a new Human Rights Act Group. Recruitment for this group will begin shortly. ALC Members Brett Osler and Richa Malaviya have been attending the state wide Human Rights Act Working Group (a soft launch will be in october and the official launch in december).

Lastly the WA Labour State Conference has announced they voted to support 'Raise the Age'. In the leadup to this event, the ALC continued to send a representative (Greg Stitt) to Social Reinvestment meetings and we have continued to partner with them on events. This is an ongoing partnership held by the WA ALC.

Here's some of the events that took place in WA during Q3:

- LGBTQIA+ Ally Training on 17 July (run by the WA LGBTQIA+ Group)
- Sheridan open day - intro to AI on 17 July (run by sheridan college, speakers from WA ALC)
- 8 Years is Enough: Permanent Safety Now! Vigil on 17 July (run by WA Refugee Group, Speakers from WA ALC)
- Amnesty Planning Session on 31 July (run by ALC)
- Iran Military Protest on 29 July (partner run with speakers from WA ALC)
- Screening of Amphibian on 5 August (partner run & supported by Margaret River)
- Afghanistan Refugee Protest on 22 August (partner run with speakers from ALC)
- Human Rights with Sophie McNeil on 30 August (run by Margaret River Group)
- Tigray Protest on 14 Sept (partner run with speakers from WA ALC)

Euan Gleeson- Brown and Richa Malaviya
(WA President)
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VIC REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

During Q3 2021, Victoria experienced three more stage four lockdowns, making it a total of six since the beginning of 2020. Lockdown six began on August 5 and continues due to high case numbers. By the end of the quarter Victorians had spent a total of 240 days in lockdown.

Despite the difficult times, our groups have continued to utilise technology to meet and support one another.

The Victorian Activism and Leadership Committee has grown to nine members with the co-option of our latest general member Tom Jessup in September 2021.

The VALC, Legal Subcommittee also contributed to an AIA submission to the Inquiry into Victoria's Criminal Justice System, focusing on AIA's Community is Everything Campaign - recommending that Parliament raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 14 years of age.

VALC members presented at the Activism Forum over the 18 and 19 September 2021.

VALC President Suzan Gencay and Secretary Clive Weston created an original presentation on human rights for Essendon North Primary School, which they presented on September 15. One of the teachers sent a special thank you message: "I just wanted to thank you both on behalf of the teachers and students for your presentation. It was so relatable for them and inspiring, for both them and the teachers."

Suzan Gencay (VIC President)
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QLD & NNSW REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Despite a Constant threat of COVID lockdown, there have been a handful of significant events in the region. The main highlight was the School Conference at the end of July. Involving 10 schools and 200 participants, it featured Peter Greste as a special guest speaker. Griffith University Group provided a number of workshop leaders and we got a lot of great feedback about these workshops.

Other highlights for the quarter included:

- Gold Coast Vigil for Refugees outside a local federal members office.
- Chermside group held a stall with petitions at the Sandgate Einbunpin Festival
- Gold Coast group organised event for the International Day of Peace

A number of groups are planning for a couple of big events for the coming quarter, and the ALC will be launching Write for Rights with an exciting event in the heart of Brisbane (Meanjin) - more details to come. Griffith University Group is also planning a gala night to raise money for Amnesty. Chermside Group has entered the Brisbane Bridge to Bridge to raise funds for Amnesty - \$1900 so far - you can contribute via [this link](#)

QLD & NNSW ALC
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ACTIVIST HIGHLIGHTS

YOUTH IN OUR MOVEMENT

YAG have been busy this quarter developing projects integral to fulfilling the outcomes of the National Youth Strategy and integrating youth across the organisation.

To stay up to date with all things youth, check out the [Youth in our movement](#) page on the website.

You will find links at the bottom of this page for:

- [Youth Resources](#)
- [Our National Youth Strategy](#)
- [YAG's yearly report on the outcomes of the Youth Strategy](#)
- [Ways to join our youth movement](#)

Anita Nair (Chair of YAG)

MEMBERSHIP & GOVERNANCE UPDATES

Work is continuing to progress on revitalising the membership offering. Both the Membership Coordinator and Engagement Officer are working alongside an external communications agency to create new and enticing marketing collateral, acknowledgement packs and emails, to contribute to the growth and development of the membership offering. The team is in the process of implementing an interim acquisition and retention plan that will scale membership up to 8,000 members by EOY 2021. There are multiple projects running simultaneously including the scoping and building of a new membership engagement platform, planning of member only events, increase of youth participation, collateral design and the scoping of a mentoring program. Membership is still continuing to consult with activists, staff and our membership working group, comprised of current members, on all projects currently being undertaken.

There are currently 5214 members and we have maintained a 96.65% conversion rate of existing members throughout Q3

QUARTER 3 DATA: JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021

	ACT/SNSW	NSW	QLD/NNSW	SA/NT	TAS	VIC	WA	National	Total	
No. groups (total)									Q3	Q2
	11	29	21	17	6	25	14	201	142	129
No. Activists (total)									1173	1092
Engaged	83	241	51	28	17	15	37	96	611	587
Committed	31	92	56	37	18	64	21	56	375	351
Core	21	43	26	25	12	30	26	4	187	168
No. Members (total)	391	1551	652	450	193	1377	376	150	5140	5131
<u>Urgent Actions total</u>									2386	2272

KEY TAKEAWAYS

GOING WELL / ON TRACK

- It was inspiring to witness the rapid response of our staff and movement to the emerging situation in Afghanistan. From fundraisers in Adelaide to a virtual speakers event run by the Eastern Suburbs group, activists mobilised quickly and continue to campaign to call for increased humanitarian intake.
- Regions are localising national campaigning priorities, like Raise the Age. We recognise the hard work of activists in WA and TAS in building community support and influencing decision makers on this important campaign.
- Mapping out our supporter journey from when an individual signs a petition to when they join an action group or become a committed activist is progressing well, with the opportunity to trial some of our learnings during the end of the year particularly for Raise the Age and Write for Rights campaigns.
- We have started including national activist leadership teams and advisory groups in our reporting, allowing us to have a clearer picture of the breadth of our Movement
- Some of our most successful communications this quarter have been those targeted to localised audiences and/or issues. It will be important to further test and refine in the next quarter for Write for Rights.
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AREAS TO IMPROVE

- We are hearing from our movement that more support is needed to revitalise groups with new members and shared leadership. With key campaigning opportunities next quarter around Raise the Age and Write for Rights think about how you can further promote your group, activism and events to new people. How can you welcome them to your group? And enable them to take on tasks or leadership opportunities? We will look to roll out related training to support you in the next quarter.
- Training will be a key focus of Quarter four in skilling up our movement with the above skills
- Rolling out tactics on the ground with a Movement that is either overloaded and/or not activated. Importance of growing our activist audience at the engaged and committed level. This will ensure that together our movement is strong, collaborative and enables one another to achieve human rights impact.

KEY DATES & UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

OCTOBER

21st: National Amnesty Refugee Network Meeting and workshop on writing letters to the editor

23rd-31st: Aus Children's Week 2021

26th: TAS Motion and Debate on Raise the Age

27th: Children's Day

NOVEMBER

8th November: Get Active: Intro to Activism at Amnesty

18th: National Amnesty Refugee Network Meeting

20th: Universal Children's Day

25th: International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

DECEMBER

5th International Volunteer Day

6th: Get Active: Intro to Activism at Amnesty

10th: Human Rights Day

[Click to view the Activist Planner](#)

KEEP CONNECTED

Keep connected with our [National Facebook Group](#) for activists. The perfect place to stay connected to your Amnesty peers.

It is important during this time to practice self care and remain socially connected. Check out the self care pack for more tips and tricks.