

THE GRASSROOTS REPORT

2021 Quarter 4: October, November, December

**CELEBRATING
60 YEARS
OF
AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**

FRIDAY 10 DECEMBER 2021

**POST A PHOTO OF A LOCATION ON THE MAP LIT UP YELLOW AND TAG
#LIGHTUPAMNESTY**

#LIGHTUPAMNESTY



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 2022 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 4

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

NATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

It's safe to say that 2021 was another year of uncertainty for grassroots activism. So many times over the course of the year we had to re-scope, scale back, postpone or outright cancel our plans. All of us multiple times in 2021 battled the frustration of not being able to take action in exactly the way we would like or when we would like. But what I have learned thanks to all of this is that we are a movement capable of incredible adaptability, a movement capable of really exciting innovative and creative thinking and a movement made up of incredible kindness and compassion for each other.

I thank each and every one of you for the kindness you continue to show each other and the movement team as we continue to traverse these crazy times together.

As usual we closed out the year with action for Write for Rights. This single point in the year of global unity of ten million people in more than 170 countries always reignites my passion for what is possible when we come together to challenge injustice.

Write for Rights projections across Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane in December quite literally shone a light onto three of the cases making up this year's campaign. It's thanks to initiatives like this and all of the events and activities you all took part in that Amnesty Australia has so far collected a staggering quarter of a million signatures. And we still have more incredible Write for Rights activities to come over February.

I also want to give a special nod of thanks to a special group of activists who have been working over the last quarter of 2021 as part of a membership working group. This group has been working in partnership with staff to develop ideas and content to reinvigorate our membership proposition and improve the membership experience. I am excited to announce that thanks to this work we are set to launch lots of new exciting things in the membership space in the coming months.

We could not do this kind of work without the input of members, activists and supporters who are prepared to help shape the future of our work.

Thank you for all that you continue to do advance human rights and build people power



Movement Manager
Sarah Gooderham

ACT/SNSW REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

The last quarter of 2021 came with a range of highs and lows for the ACT and Southern NSW region. We lost a dear friend of the region, and spent a time together to support each other and celebrate Bede Carmody's life. Activists came together from around Canberra and Wagga Wagga as lockdown restrictions began to ease to take time to reflect, grieve and remember.

A key focus at the end of the year was reflection, re-engagement, and supporting diaspora groups. The ALC worked on setting out our vision for 2022 as well as dividing up roles and responsibilities. We took stock of how far we had come over the year, despite the lockdown associated challenges and celebrated the human rights impact of the region, and growth of activist leadership.

In October the ANU group was relaunched, with contested elections! Congratulations to Margherita who is the new President, and all of the committee. Thanks to Saad, Stephen and Sally who were involved in helping to support the group to get off the ground!

In November we re-launched the Amnesty and ANU Eminent Speakers program in a slightly new format involving a panel discussion of topical human rights issues. The first panel was in parallel with COP26 and featured:

- Tony McAvoy Australia's first Indigenous Senior Counsel and has written on the notion of Indigenous rights in Australia, and the impacts of those rights in a climate change policy vacuum.
- Sanjule Weerasinghe a lawyer who works at the intersection of international law, humanitarian crises and displacement.
- Folole Tupuola a storyteller and artist of Samoan descent. She advocates for climate and social justice through a lens of cultural resilience and artistic healing with and for Oceania.

- Folole's work brings to light mental well-being, activism and decolonisation as a young Pacific diaspora youth in so called Australia. She is the Pacific Climate Warriors Coordinator in Victoria, Australia.
- Annika Reynolds, CEO and Founder of GreenLaw, a youth-led organisation that empowers environmentally conscious organisations to engage effectively with legal institutions, will moderate the session.

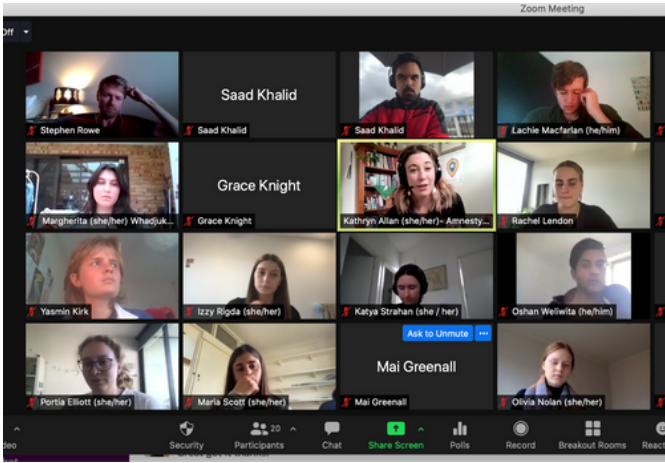
The Jervis Bay group marked International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women, and the Wagga Wagga, Bay and Basin, and Canberra Letter Writing groups hosted Write for Rights events, for many these were the first 'face to face' events post-lockdown in NSW and the ACT. The fundraising group had an amazing end to the year with a Fundraising bike ride, raising \$1000!

The ACT & Southern NSW ALC worked with the Burmese Diaspora at our end of year picnic to highlight the ongoing military coup. We had the honour of speaking and attending a rally on Tibet for Human Rights Day, which included an evening of Tibetan Dancing and incredible food! It was a fantastic reminder that activism is only sustainable when we can find community connection and a bit of fun.

I want to say a massive thank you and congratulations to all of our groups. It was a challenging quarter but we still managed to make a significant impact. I am so proud of what the region has achieved this year, and I cannot wait for 2022.

Kathryn Allan (ACT/SNSW President)
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ACT/SNSW REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS



WA REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

During Q4 2021, the WA ALC focused on improving assistance to groups, communication and 2022 planning, with the new Regional Presidents Euan Gleeson-Brown and Richa Malaviya spearheading the change.

The WA ALC is now up to full capacity with 12 members, recently welcoming our new members Bruce Campbell and Melani De Alwis onboard. This will enable more activism around WA, as we are now the largest ALC in Australia.

WA youth activists continue their dedicated work in the region, with Shelby Pannell, the 2021 UWA Vice-President, representing WA on the national Youth Advisory Group until recruitment is finalised in 2022.

The Youth Action Plan continues to grow group capabilities and take action in WA, with recruitment for new university groups ongoing at Murdoch and being finalised at Curtin. Our UWA and Sheridan College group have been busy in the last few months of 2021, holding volunteer events and recently electing UWA's new executive and President Bahira Farrag at their AGM.

Our new WA Human Rights Legal Group has energetically started their activism, and are looking to create a bi-annual AIWA policy submission in relation to a human rights act for WA. They've also begun developing meaningful partnerships with like-minded organisations to strengthen the WA sector's collective advocacy impact and Amnesty's role within it. ALC members Brett Osler and Richa Malaviya have also continued their work with the Human Rights Act group, and are looking forward to a very productive 2022.

A new WA Climate Justice Group has just finalised recruitment, which will focus on research into advocacy solutions to specific climate justice issues, as well as consultation with relevant NFP groups and communities. Once a national climate justice policy is finalised, they will begin to take more direct action and lobbying.

Euan Gleeson-Brown and Melani De Alwis, WA Co-President and ALC member also delivered the keynote address at AIESEC UWA's Youth Speak Forum in December. Speaking to over 70 attendees around the theme of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, they discussed the global issue of COVID vaccine access, their own activist journeys and how to become sustainably involved in the social impact sector.

Here's some of the events that took place in WA during Q4:

- WA for a Human Rights Act Support Event with a Welcome to Country on October 27.
- PRIDE Parade in Gloucester Park on November 27.
- Write for Rights event at Clancy's Fish Pub on December 1 (run by Fremantle Group).
- ALC Keynote presentation to AIESEC UWA's Youth Speak Forum on December 4.
- PRIDE Fairday stall at Hyde Park on December 14.

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

On 21 October 2021 Victoria's sixth lockdown ended after 77 days.

Victorian Activism and Leadership Committee members undertook the anti-racism training delivered by Phoebe Mwanza, Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Specialist on 16 October 2021.

The Victorian Refugee Network held a fascinating online event on the Intersectionality of Refugees Panel on 23 October 2021 where speakers shared their experiences advocating for refugee rights highlighting the importance for change in Australia and around the world for refugees. Panellists included Mary-Woo the former Chief Human Rights Commissioner of the British Columbia Human Rights Commission in Canada.

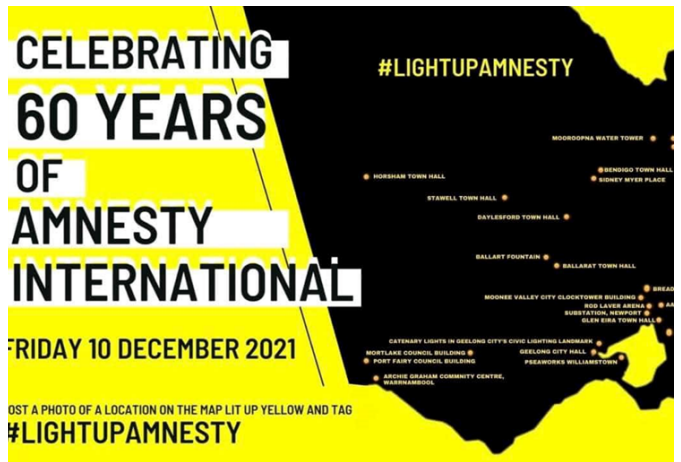
In October 2021 the VALC elected their first Co-Vice-President's Fiona Bachmann and Emily Watson. Human Rights Day – 10 December 2021 was a huge day in Victoria. The VALC hosted three events - a Write for Rights event at our Action Centre and End of Year Party at a local venue. In honour of our 60th birthday the VALC organised #LightUpAmnesty where dozens of landmarks around Victoria light up yellow. Landmarks included AAMI Park and Rod Laver Arena, Seaworks in Williamstown, the Newport Substation and the Drum Theatre in Dandenong.

Glen Eira Mayor Cr Jim Magee said through education and training, Amnesty International helps people claim their rights — and by telling people's powerful stories, it mobilises millions around the world to campaign for change. "The lighting of Town Hall in yellow is a small gesture to show our support for Amnesty International and the action it is taking for human rights around the world," he said. Groups around Victoria arranged for local vigils including the Bendigo, Nunawading and Williamstown Group. In partnership with the Refugee Action Collective the Refugee Network organised a Vigil at the Park Hotel which included performances and speakers.

On December 11 and 12 the Amnesty Pop-Culture Network had a stall at Oz Comic-Con which inspired over 500 actions.

Suzan Gencay (VIC President)
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VIC REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS



NSW REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Yet again, Covid restrictions limited the face to face activity of NSW groups during Quarter 4.

The major focus this quarter was Write for Rights and most groups adapted by using online events, electronic collection of signatures, and smaller face to face events where possible.

Many groups also worked on the refugee, Afghanistan and Biloela family campaigns.

The Eastern suburbs group commenced its contribution to a 12 month educational project on climate change initiated by Waverley Council. The Newcastle group ran an Amnesty Schools Conference in October with students from six high schools participating. This had to be changed from a face to face event to online due to Covid. This meant the planned performance elements (drama and music) had to be cancelled but the rest of the conference was successfully delivered with 17 sessions over two half-days. The themes were social justice, human rights, the environment and sustainability. A number of the sessions were entirely developed and delivered by students and were excellent. All of the schools are keen to participate in a conference again in 2022.

The NSW ALC conducted the 6 monthly Calling Program, ran a session on Activism models, and held the third NSW Convenor Get-together for the year in November. The ALC continued to develop resources for engaging with schools, and developed new resources for film screenings.

Kevin Sweeney (NSW President)
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TAS REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

In October lead activists from the Southern Group namely Sylvie, Jane and Anne along with the Tasmanian Activism Leadership Committee (ALC) led an excellent campaign in support of a motion to Raise The Age in the upper house of Tasmanian parliament.

The Statement of Support was a central sticking point in the debate. They also built pressure through a range of local media coverage (SBS, Examiner and opinion piece by Tassie activist Oliver Hovenden). The motion passed on 26 October 2021 and the next phase of the campaign will see it become legislation in Tasmania.

The Tasmanian ALC is at very reduced numbers currently. In the next quarter we will need to focus on recruitment and building capacity.


On behalf of the Tasmanian ALC

OPINION NOVEMBER 1 2021 - 2:00PM

A 'quicksand of crime' ... Age of responsibility is criminal in Australia

Oliver Hovenden Opinion

f t e A A A



SHAME: Despite the United Nations calling for this country to raise its age of criminal responsibility from ten to 14 in line with international standards, Australia has refused. Picture: Shutterstock


In the land of the 'young and free', children as young as ten years old can be charged, brought before a court, sentenced and locked up behind bars.

It comes as a surprise to many that ten-year-olds across Australia can be found criminally responsible for crimes, especially considering how society recognises the physical, cognitive and emotional vulnerabilities of children in other areas of life.

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SA/NT REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

On the 9th of November we held an online forum with shadow foreign minister Penny Wong inviting local Adelaide diaspora groups to submit questions. It was a very successful event with over 30 attendees and Minister Penny Wong addressing all questions.

At the end of November ALC hosted an End of Year Celebration where we heard from all of our regions Action Groups with their highlights and achievements of the year, some local Afghan community members and we promoted the W4R campaign. (images below)

Tim Green (SA/NT President)
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QLD/NNSW REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Most groups in the region celebrated W4R including the ALC who hosted a W4R event in Brisbane City to celebrate the 20th anniversary of our letter writing campaign. We had cake and party bags for all and enjoyed a night of quality conversations, live music by Triple J unearthed artist, Arig, a beautiful young lady who had fled Eritrea as a child. We were also lucky enough to have Sam Klintworth join us and give a speech about the campaign. The night was engaging and interactive topped off with a human rights version of spin the bottle, a good time was had by all. (images below)

Amnesty Gold Coast Group hosted an event for International Peace Day. The group screened two films; the first featured Indian environment activist Rajendra Singh the second about Liberian peace activist Leymah Gbowee. After enjoying the shared food, a good discussion followed. (Images below of GC group and event attendees)

Maddie Wood (QLD/NNSW President)
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ACTIVIST HIGHLIGHTS

YOUTH IN OUR MOVEMENT

During the final months of 2021 the Youth Advisory Group farewelled Anita Nair, Fin Spalding and Emily Watson as they came to the end of their terms. These three leaders were instrumental in developing our Youth Strategy and enabling YAG to be the empowering, creative and safe space that it is today. An enormous thanks for their leadership and innovation.

Two new chairs were confirmed - Khaled Damag (TAS) and Abbey Marler (QLD/NNSW). Both Abbey and Khaled were already playing lead roles in their regions and on YAG prior to the transition. It was a smooth handover process from the previous YAG leaders. YAG is currently clarifying key priorities for 2022, as informed by the youth strategy and organisational vision. We also have plans to recruit new representatives across the country to be confirmed by April.

Abbey Marler and Khaled Damag (YAG Chairs)
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MEMBERSHIP & GOVERNANCE UPDATES

Building the new infrastructure for our members is still in process. At the end of Q4, membership successfully finalised all new membership collateral ready for the launch of our new membership proposition scheduled for March 2022. This will include improvements to the member experience including a revamped welcome pack, acknowledgement pack at their one year anniversary and promotional material to support local groups and activists to attract prospective members. A key element of this new membership proposition will be a community platform to connect members to each other and to deepen engagement in our campaigns and the governance process. Work is already underway to develop this platform also set to launch in March

There were 5165 members at the end of Q4.

Three Board meetings were held in Q4, 2022. Summary reports can be found on our website, where they are available until the next meeting.

QUARTER 4 DATA: OCT - DEC 2021

	WA	SA/NT	QLD/ NNSW	NSW	ACT/ SNSW	VIC	TAS	National	
No. groups (total)	14	13	20	27	10	21	6	Q4 128	Q3 142
No. Activists (total)	94	95	132	380	141	157	51	1217	1173
Engaged	37	31	52	240	87	59	20	621	611
Committed	30	39	57	96	33	67	19	407	375
Core	27	25	26	44	21	31	12	189	187
No. Members (total)								5165	5140
Urgent Actions total								1975	2386

KEY TAKEAWAYS

GOING WELL / ON TRACK

- Our process of mapping out Activist Journeys has picked up speed again and has allowed us to amend some of the ways we define our circles of commitment for a period of testing in 2022. The Movement team has put a lot of discussion into this piece of work and will be rolling out key tests in 2022 and we are excited to continue sharing some of these results with you and how we will implement them in our activism work.
- Our activist leadership networks remain strong, and continue to grow and develop. To name a few: our Activist Communications Team has successfully replaced a few key team members, while retaining other long-standing team members. Our Activist Skills Collective remains strong, and piloted an activist development project with the ACT/SNSW ALC last year to be duplicated in 2022. We recruited eight new members to our Activist Campaign Strategy Team in Q4, ready for the design of our Human Rights Act campaign in 2022.

AREAS TO IMPROVE

- We hold monthly 'Get Active: Intro to Activism at Amnesty International' sessions and in 2021 we had 127 people come along to one of these sessions - that's an average of 10 per session. Around 42% of those attendees took at least one online action a month after the Get Active session. In 2022 we're hoping to increase attendance at Get Active sessions and increase engagement after these sessions so that hopefully these sessions become a stronger channel to funnel new activists into our movement and into opportunities for important human rights work.
- W4R this year was a great opportunity to mobilise online new and current activists to take action for our cases by either sending a solidarity message or demanding justice from the local authorities. We have not been as successful in mobilising people offline due to external challenges and internal fatigue, so next year we will work towards converting online activism to visible mobilisation more.
- We had ambitious plans for a field organising approach in WA, given the political landscape on this issue in 2021. We learned that when introducing new tactics like doorknocking, or having higher bar asks we need to invest more time and energy into the "forming stage" of these tactics than we would for those that are existing and well understood. Crucially, it is important to take into account the balance between introducing new tactics and continuing well established tactics to ensure that there is ongoing advocacy.

KEY DATES & UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

FEBRUARY

20th: Fairday 2022
Amnesty Stall

21st: Get Active: Intro
to Activism Webinar

24th: How to campaign
during a pandemic &
W4Rs Stunt

25th: Call for Activism
Leadership Committee
(ALC) and General
Meeting Voter (GMV)
nominations
Youth Advisory Group
Recruitment

MARCH

2nd: Human Rights
Agenda launch webinar

4th: Call for Board
Nominations

8th: International
Women's Day

17th: Close the Gap Day

19th: NSW Activist
Gathering

21st: Get Active: Intro
to Activism Webinar

APRIL

5th: International Day
of Conscience

8th-22nd: Voting for
ALC and GMV positions

11th: Get Active: Intro
to Activism Webinar

[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.