

# THE GRASSROOTS REPORT

2022 Quarter 1: January, February, March



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 1

If you have any questions or comments please contact the Organising Team at [communityorganising@amnesty.org.au](mailto:communityorganising@amnesty.org.au)

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# NATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

The first quarter of 2022 has finally seen a full return to events, activities and face to face group meetings. It's so incredible to see our movement active and back out on the streets!

As we watch the horror unfold in Ukraine, never has our activism and our movement been more needed. The brutal and aggressive war that has broken out in the centre of Europe continues to escalate, people are dying, including children, and many thousands more lives are at risk. On top of that terrifying reality anti-war protesters and influential critics of the state that have expressed their opposition to Russia's invasion of Ukraine face an absurd number of arbitrary charges merely for speaking out.

Many of you have participated in vigils, held events and or fundraisers for the global emergency fund. Thank you for all of your efforts, never underestimate their impact. Your actions go a long way to supporting the people of Ukraine and sending a strong message to our government to take action. We will continue to take action together over the coming days and weeks.

This return to 'normal' activity of course still comes with its challenges as Covid continues to spread so please make sure you are continuing to take precautions to keep yourself and others safe!

Australia is now in full election mode and many of you have engaged with our Human Rights Agenda. Over the last 3 months many of you have participated in MP engagement training and in turn used that learning to meet with MPs and hold local forums to make sure that human rights are at the centre of the decision making and thinking of our leaders. Almost every issue discussed, debated and campaigned on during a federal election has a human rights impact.

Whether it be climate change, trade, or even the many challenges posed by COVID-19 and vaccine inequality, the fundamental impacts these have on the rights of people in our communities (globally and domestically) needs to be central to all decision-making. By identifying the intersection between these issues and human rights we can make human rights a central part of the conversation this election and beyond.

As we close out Q1 we now have the final count on all of our combined W4Rs activities and efforts and I am excited to report back to all of you that for the first time ever we cracked a quarter of a million actions, with a total of 275,000 actions taken by 103,000 people - of which 40,000 people were new to Amnesty. Zhang Zhan's case was featured in our end of year fundraising campaign, and our combined fundraising activities for W4R raised over \$283,000. And last but absolutely not least all of you held over 40 events, both offline and online helping contribute to these incredible figures. These realities save lives and they help us grow our movement. Thank you for everything you have done for each and everyone of the people we campaigned for in this year's W4Rs campaign especially on the back of 2 years of COVID uncertainty. To finish this strong is a testament to the persistence of all of you and the strength of this movement.

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



Movement Manager  
Sarah Gooderham

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# ACT/SNSW REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

This quarter we farewelled our amazing President, Kathy Allen. Kathy has done an incredible amount to grow the ALC, and make Amnesty ACT/SNSW the thriving community it is today. Myself (Jay Moran) and Christian Lambang Fonye have been elected as Co-Presidents.

The ALC is going strong, and have been working towards a large town hall on the topic of a federal Human Rights Act. We have also put in a submission to the ACT Inquiry into a pathway for remedy under the ACT Human Rights Act.

Our wonderful Wagga Wagga team worked in collaboration with the Salvation Army to interview and document poor working conditions of migrant workers under the Pacific labor scheme, and have engaged with Michael McCormack MP on this issue. They also ran a vigil for Ukraine, and have been involved in actions for Tibet.

The Canberra teams have run the Vigil for Ukraine, which attracted around 150 people and included Members of Parliament, and the Ambassador for Estonia. The team have supported/spoken at rallies in support of Sudan (at both the Egyptian and Sudanese embassies), Myanmar (multiple events, including outside the Thai, Cambodian and Myanmar embassies) and Tibet (the Losar event, as well as the National day of Action). We've also participated in actions in support of human rights in Kashmir, as well as rallies to oppose the Religious Discrimination Bill.

We planned (but sadly cancelled) a flotilla stunt in support of the Write for Rights handover. Whilst this event didn't go ahead, its a proof-of-concept that we can use for future actions.

Jay and Christian  
actsnswpresident@amnesty.org.au

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# WA REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

The WA ALC has concentrated on supporting and developing activism in the region for the first quarter of 2022. Incorporating feedback from members and the 2021 national activist census, we have finalised the WA ALC's 2022 plan. We are focused on improving support & communication with our action groups, actively engaging with and growing our financial members and continuing WA's tradition of strong governance.

Whilst WA has been in a very unique position the last two years throughout COVID, we have now had to adjust to living with COVID and what this means for our activists. We're incredibly thankful to follow the example set by other states and have communicated to our members how to approach QR code check-in's and vaccination requirements, as well as ensuring hand sanitiser and facemasks are available for all activists.

Key feedback we heard from our members is the need for improved communication. So we are now sending bi-monthly emails to all our members, keeping them up to date on events, initiatives, opportunities and making the ALC more accessible to everyone.

Governance is as strong as ever with ALC, GMV and YAG nominations having closed recently. Pending elections, we will have filled all these positions and are looking forward to the AGM in June. Unfortunately ALC member Saber Jaouadi has stepped down, but we thank him for his years of incredible service and can't wait to see what he does in the future!

To strengthen WA financial membership, we have ensured QR code flyers are available at all events so that signing up has never been easier. We're also reaching out to groups directly to encourage everyone to become a member who isn't already, and are in the beginning stages of creating an ALC calling program to directly reach out to new & lapsed members promptly so that nobody misses out.

Our activist groups remains as important as ever, which is why we have called all our convenors directly and are setting up a group health working committee open to all members. We are going to be working together on prioritising wellbeing & reducing activist burnout, as well as embedding long-term sustainability for groups. Members of this working committee will be direct liaisons who stay in consistent contact with our convenors and groups so that support remains available. We are also focused on helping the new Curtin & Murdoch university groups find their feet, and rebuilding the LGBTQIA+ and Women's rights groups soon.

We've also recently engaged with the Palestinian Community of WA, and are holding MP engagement training for them as well as discussing how we can support their future events. Finally, the UWA group has been busy with their O-day, club carnival and bake sale events, and are preparing for a virtual Palm Sunday event alongside the Refugee Rights & Fremantle group.

Euan Gleeson- Brown and Richa Malaviya  
(WA President)  
wapresident@amnesty.org.au

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# VIC REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

This quarter the Victorian Activism and Leadership Committee have utilised the feedback from the Activist Census and taken to communicating with our State members and activists more about important issues and upcoming events.

On Invasion Day (26 January) VALC attended the Koorie Chill Out event held by Glen Eira City Council; a family-friendly event to recognise what the day means to First Nations peoples to host a stall and share Community is Everything Campaign materials. In response to the Religious Discrimination Bill the Committee liaised with the Victorian LGBTIQ+ Network and drafted a communication to Victorian members and activists and supported the work of our groups in their activism against the Bill.

The Victorian Activism and Leadership Committee were asked to contribute to the Monash Law Students' Society Social Justice and Equity Guide 2022 and proud to share opportunities to get involved with AIA with interested and passionate students. The Committee and several staff attended the International Women's Day March on 8 March 2022.

On 25 March 2022 the Amnesty Bendigo Group held a stall with other human rights organisations including Rural Australians for Refugees and Grandmothers for Refugees at a local expo called Connecting Our Community. The next day, the Bendigo also held a picnic meeting at the local Botanic Gardens.

To promote and support activism in the State in line with our upcoming National Annual General meeting and elections for the Committee and General Meeting Voters, the VALC sent a communication to all Victorian members which included the President's personal experience of her time on the Committee. VALC members also met with interested Victorians to explain our processes and answer questions.

On 24 March 2022 the Inquiry into Victoria's Criminal Justice System Final Report was tabled in Parliament. The report quoted our submission: "Amnesty International and the Law Institute of Victoria also advocated for setting the minimum age of criminal responsibility at 14 years old. Amnesty International claimed that Victoria, and Australia more broadly, is out of step with 'most European countries [which] set their ages of criminal responsibility at between 14 and 16 years and China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Japan, Sierra Leone and Azerbaijan have 14 years as the age.'" Recommendation 10 is that: That the Victorian Government raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility, noting that this is being considered by several jurisdictions via the Meeting of Attorneys-General. We are hopeful to see positive change in this space soon.

Suzan Gencay (VIC President)  
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# VIC REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS



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# NSW REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Group activities have, again, been impacted by Covid with a number of events cancelled due to rising case numbers. Despite this groups have been active in a range of different ways.

The Mudgee group has been working with a local environment group to screen a David Attenborough film *Breaking Boundaries* in April. Two group members have addressed community gatherings: the International Women's Day event, and the Anglican men's monthly dinner. The group are holding their monthly meetings both in person and by Zoom and continue their substantial letter-writing efforts.

The Coffs Coast group managed to run an information stall (with petitions) on 20 Feb at Coffs Harbourside Markets despite the challenges of Covid and continue to produce a newsletter each month that is emailed to around 300 supporters.

The Newcastle group partnered with a local refugee advocacy group, Hunter Asylum Seeker Advocacy, to run a successful fundraising concert with the proceeds going to phone credit for refugees in PNG and Nauru.

The NSW ALC held an Activist Get-together on March 19 with twenty one activists attending either in person, at the Sydney Action Centre, or via Zoom. Two ALC members met with a selected NSW Liberal Senator in January urging the Government to accept the NZ offer. In February, two ALC members had three meetings with Independent Federal candidates and had very constructive discussions about refugee policy, Indigenous rights, Climate Justice and a Human Rights Act. The candidates were well across most issues and were generally supportive of Amnesty's position. ALC members have also been contributing to the development of a Human Rights Education strategy and refugee strategy development.

Kevin Sweeney (NSW President)  
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# TAS REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

The AMC TAS is in the process of receiving TAS ALC nominations. Thanks to everyone involved who has contributed ideas and support for this process - both past and present Amnesty supporters and activists in Tasmania. We acknowledge the tremendous work done previously in this space and look forward to working together to rebuild a sustainable TAS ALC in 2022.

Report from Rocelyn Ives (ex-ALC) and Tom Leydon (ALC nominee, 2022):

The Launceston vigil went very well. Tom managed it with lots of information sharing emphasising the importance of the situation in Palestine clearly. Those who attended included Labor Federal candidate, 2 Green Federal and Senate candidates, three other human rights leaders in the Launceston community as well as Amnesty activists and supporters. Letters were signed and we had new sign-up's too. Please see attached photographs.

Potential actions in Launceston this year include: the annual Refugee Week, Launceston Peace Festival and the Human Rights Act campaign.

On behalf of the Tasmanian ALC  
With acknowledgement to Rocelyn Ives &  
Tom Leydon, Launceston



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# SA/NT REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Newly appointed Co-President, Adelaide. Vice-President now Tania
- CDU Placements partnership | 3 interns started with Darwin Action Centre
- NEW Refugee & Asylum Action Group
- Darwin Group, Sunshine Coast Group, and Mudgee Group all took action for International Women's Day (IWD) through a community stall, letterboxing, and Clarissa Mort spoke at an IWD lunch
- SA Book Club hosted Mark Isaacs, author of The Kabul Peace House, to discuss his life in Afghanistan and his connections with non-government groups who are looking at peaceful alternatives to war.

Tim Green (SA/NT President)  
santpresident@amnesty.org.au

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# ACTIVIST HIGHLIGHTS

## YOUTH IN OUR MOVEMENT

Recruitment for new YAG representatives from around the country launched in Quarter One with the aim of recruiting and inducting new YAG Reps from all around the country (with the exception of NSW where we have sufficient YAG Reps). We received over 40 applicants for the YAG Rep volunteer position and are in the process of interviewing candidates. Candidates across the country to be confirmed by April.

Chloe & Anita  
Abbey Marler and Khaled Damag (YAG Chairs)  
[yag@amnesty.org.au](mailto:yag@amnesty.org.au)

# MEMBERSHIP & GOVERNANCE UPDATES

We have successfully developed and gone live on a members only portal for all members to use to communicate and connect with each other and with the organisation with communication of this launch going out to members on 16/3/2022. Members can login and participate in discussions via members.amnesty.org.au.

Now that the membership offering has been developed, we are working on now promoting our new membership offering to our existing supporters who are not currently member. A new Membership Acquisition Coordinator has been hired to drive acquisition to new and existing audiences.

We have 5323 members as of 29/3/2022.

## QUARTER 1 DATA: JAN - MARCH 2022

	WA	SA/NT	QLD/NNSW	NSW	ACT/SNS W	VIC	TAS	National
No. groups (total)	15	13	20	28	10	22	6	
No. Activists (total)	108	105	148	420	152	166	54	1153
Engaged	41	33	53	249	89	63	20	
Committed	36	41	64	123	38	70	20	
Core	31	31	31	48	25	33	14	
No. Members (total)								5323
<a href="#">Urgent Actions total</a>								967

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# KEY TAKEAWAYS

## GOING WELL / ON TRACK

Opportunities intentionally targeted at young people at AIA have been very well received. Positions became available in two AIA Board Sub-Committees, the Governance Committee and the Audit and Risk Committee. A decision was made to fill both these positions with a young person aged between 18 to 25 as a means to create more opportunities for young people in a variety of structures at AIA.

The Nominations and Assessment Committee worked collaboratively with staff in Quarter One to recruit young people for these board committee positions, with final recommendations for candidates brought to the National Board. We had 40 applicants for both Board Committee positions from some amazing candidates aged between 18 to 25.

Recruitment for Youth Advisory Group Reps for most regions (except NSW) across the country were also very well received with 42 applicants from around the country.

## AREAS TO IMPROVE

Although the youth-focused national recruitments we rolled out this year (Governance Committee Youth Member, Audit and Risk Committee Youth Member and Youth Advisory Group Representative) drew a very high number of applicants, there were virtually none/very few applicants from the Northern Territory, Tasmania and regions outside of capital cities for these roles. This demonstrates our need to look outside our traditional recruitment channels for recruitment in these regions.

# KEY DATES & UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

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## APRIL

8 - 22nd: Voting for ALC and GMV positions

25th: Session 1 Activist brainstorm session

27th: People Powered Media Influence on the Human Rights Agenda

## MAY

17th: International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOBIT)

9th: Get Active: Intro to Activism Webinar

10th: AGM Notice, ALC induction

16th -22nd: National Volunteer Week

26th: National Sorry Day

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

## JUNE

May 27th -3rd: Reconciliation Week

3rd: Mabo Day

7th: Outcome of AGM

6th: Get Active: Intro to Activism Webinar

11th: NSW Activist Gathering

19 - 25th: National Refugee Week

17th: Close the Gap Day

19th: NSW Activist Gathering

21st: 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.