

COMMUNITY IS EVERYTHING

ACTIVIST TOOLKIT - JUNE 2018

A MESSAGE FROM THE CAMPAIGNER

Hi everyone
Woah! Last year was a big one!



Australian people and politicians are much more aware of problems within the youth justice system after the NT Royal Commission released their report and more abuses in detention were uncovered across the country. A combination of this, and your relentless work advocating to end the overrepresentation of Indigenous kids in prison, has created momentum across most states and territories.

While we didn't get the national leadership we wanted from Turnbull, our activism opened up opportunities and discussions in states and territories around the country that didn't exist before. In 2018 we are taking the campaign back to the states where opportunities exist for positive approaches to youth justice that can give all kids the best chance to thrive.

It's going to be a big year, but I think together, we can achieve some serious human rights impact.

Belinda Lowe
Indigenous Rights Campaigner



ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

Our long-run vision is that within a generation, Indigenous children are no more likely to be imprisoned than non-Indigenous children. In 2018, we're focusing on raising the age a child can be locked up to at least 14 years and funding Indigenous-led alternatives to prison for all kids to help them get back on track.

Across Australia, children as young as 10 are charged, brought before a court, sentenced and locked up behind bars. This is in stark contrast with the international community, which has a median age of 14 years old.

Research shows that at this age, children's brains are still developing and they are not able to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Locking young kids up also increases the likelihood they will get in trouble later in life, with children arrested before the age of 14 three times more likely to commit offences as adults than children arrested after 14.

Indigenous-led programs around the country like bush camps and training and mentoring programs are having great results. Kids who complete these programs are far less likely to get in trouble again.

If governments turn away from failed approaches and support this positive approach that focuses on prevention not detention, we can give all kids the best chance to thrive and start to reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous kids in prison.



HOW YOU CAN HAVE IMPACT

Growing support for the campaign in your local community and building strong partnerships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations is vital. Strong allied community pressure directed at elected state representatives across the country will send a clear message that it's not ok to lock up children as young as 10. If elected representatives across the country are speaking out, we can create the pressure we need at a state and national level to win this.

THEORY OF CHANGE: **HOW** DO WE WIN?

1 COMMUNITY WIN

More Australians show their support to raise the age and fund Indigenous-led programs that give kids what they need and are alternatives to prison.

A large groundswell of public support is demonstrated through individuals, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and community organisations standing together to call for change. E.g. Indigenous-led organisations are partnering with you on the campaign. Hundreds of locals are signing your petition.



2 LOCAL WIN

State MPs across the country are showing support for the campaign

E.g. they speak out publicly to the media or in Parliament on the issue, give your group a statement of endorsement or take a photo with your group at your MP meeting to endorse their support.



3 CAMPAIGN WIN

State and territory governments recognise the need to focus on prevention, not detention:

Raise the age a child can be locked up to at least 14 and commit funding for Indigenous-led solutions.

LET'S GET TO WORK

STEP 1 GATHER INFORMATION AND MAP YOUR COMMUNITY.

If there is an Indigenous Rights Network in your region, they will get in touch with you to inform you of the plan to create change in your region and put you in touch with other groups working on the Community is Everything campaign.

Attend training to learn how to map your community: find out who the local Indigenous organisations are, who is working on this issue, where your state or territory Minister of Parliament (MP) sits on Indigenous rights and who their influencers are. Check out the [Activism Planner](#) or ask your Community Organiser how you can attend this training.

Make sure to find out which country you are on, who the Elders are in your area and Indigenous community leaders.

The better understanding you have of your community, the more people you can engage in the campaign and the more influence you'll have on your state or territory MP.

Create a plan to roll out your campaign locally - think about how you will build partnerships, engage with your community and your state or territory MP.

STEP 2 BECOME A GOOD ALLY AND BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

Complete the ally training so you can build culturally sensitive and sustainable relationships with your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Get in touch with your Community Organiser to book it in.

Do your research on the Indigenous organisations and communities in your area and think about the best way to approach and build a relationships.

Reach out to those Indigenous organisations and community leaders and start to build a relationship and engage them in your local campaign. Ask them what you can do to help support their work. If they are unable to engage in the campaign, make sure you inform them of what you're doing. Relationships take time to build and work both ways.

STEP 3 BUILD COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Set an achievable target for how many petition signatures your group can collect.

Spread the word in your community - attend community events or hold your own, door knock and do activities that make your campaign visible, raise awareness and collect signatures. Think about where people are in your community who care about children's rights, it could be schools, doctors or at weekend sporting events.

Get in touch with community groups that might be interested in the issue - Parents and Citizens Associations at schools, local church groups and other like-minded advocacy groups like your Amnesty group.

Hold events to engage your community and build support for the issue.

STEP 4 DEMONSTRATE YOUR COMMUNITY POWER

Stick posters up around your community - make your campaign visible.

Engage with local media to amplify your local group's campaign and reach more of your community. Use [this simple media toolkit](#) to get you started.

Be where your MPs are - find out where they'll be and turn up to ask them questions.

Hand out flyers with your MP's picture on it and their position on the issue at schools, train stations, shopping centres.

Engage with your MP. Write to them, call them, meet with them.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Collect petition signatures at a market stall or other community event

Hold an Amnesty stall at your local farmer's market or set up a table at other community events so you can raise awareness in your community, collect petition signatures and recruit people to your group.

- As soon as you find out they are on, email or call the organisers of the event and ask to have a stall or table there. They will often ask for Amnesty insurance, we have it!
- [Register your event!](#) Let us know in the form if you need the insurance doc and we'll send it to you.
- Arrange to collect or have petitions, flyers, pens, so on and so forth sent to you. You can enter these details into the [Host an Event form](#).
- If they are repeated events (like local markets) ask if you can have monthly stalls or stalls that are around the time of the key dates above to draw attention to the cases.
- Set up on the day and away you go!
- Snap a photo of your petitions when they are complete and email your photo to activism@amnesty.org.au
- For more info and training on events, check out our [host an event guide](#).



Host a film screening

[After the Apology](#), is a brilliant new documentary written and produced by deadly Eualeyai and Kamillaroi woman, academic and writer, Larissa Behrendt.

The film follows the story of four Aboriginal grandmothers who challenge government policies to bring their grandkids home. Their grassroots actions spearhead a national movement to curb the skyrocketing rates of child removal in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This powerful documentary also gives context to one of the key drivers of the overrepresentation of Indigenous kids in prison. Kids who have been removed from their families, community and culture are far more likely to end up in the justice system.

You can host a screening of [After the Apology](#) in your local area to engage your community on the issue and inspire people to get on board with the campaign.

To arrange a screening of [After the Apology](#) you'll need to register your interest through [Demand Films](#) who have arrangements with cinemas around the country that will screen the film if 40+ tickets are sold. Demand Films will organise your venue, your role is to promote your film widely to ensure people purchase tickets online by a set date. If the target is met your screening goes ahead, if not it cancels at no cost to anyone.

Check out [Demand Films](#) for more info. *The ticket sales will actually contribute to our RAP goal of supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses!

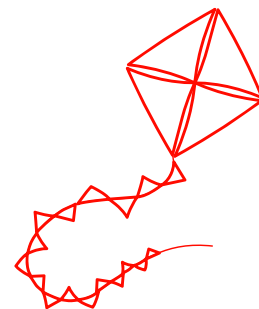
To make the most out of your screening, consider doing the following:

- Contact your Community Organiser if you want to host this film.
- If you have relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders, invite them to collaborate with you on the event.
- Contact Paddy Gibson at Padraic.Gibson@uts.edu.au from the film team so he can put you in touch with local organisations involved in the film / issue.
- Find a suitable venue and lock in a date.
- Give your group enough time to prepare properly, including promoting and selling tickets..
- Promote the event far and wide in your community. Ask your Community Organiser to promote the screening to Amnesty supporters in your area. Stick posters up in local shops and community centres.
- Use social media to create some buzz.
- Invite local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders you have built relationships with to speak at the event. Make sure to organise a Welcome to Country or say an Acknowledgement of Country at the start of your event
- **Important:** please ensure you announce a trigger warning prior to screening and make sure the trigger warning is present on all promotional materials: **WARNING: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewers are advised that After the Apology contains images and voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may have passed and contains some distressing content.**
- Invite your state MP to the event. Ask them to speak or take questions from the crowd.
- Invite local media to cover the event. Take lots of photos and video to share on social media.
- Make sure you get consent before using photos of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Don't forget to ask people to take action at your event! Every person that comes should sign the petition. Ask them if they would like to volunteer with your local group. Use this as an opportunity to recruit people to your group to work on the campaign.
- Use a sign up sheet for attendees and be sure to follow up with an email. Thank them for coming, send them photos and feedback from the event. And invite them to join your group again or come to another meeting or event you have organised.
- Take lots of photos so you can share them with your community later.

Fly kites to raise the age

Get your group together, invite friends, family and community and fly kites to raise the age.

- Pick a date and a place and send out your invites.
- There are loads of instructions on how to make kites online so get Googling! Check out the materials you need and get them ready for your event.
- When your guests arrive, get crafting! Make your kites colourful and fun.
- Once your kites are ready, write messages on them in support of kids in prison.
- Fly your kites to raise the age a kid can be locked up so all children can be #FreeToBeKids
- Take lots of photos and share them with your friends and community.



USEFUL RESOURCES

Check out the [Amnesty website](#) for:

- [Ten ways to be a genuine ally](#) with Indigenous communities + Workshops
- [Effective Advocacy Module](#)
- Petition sheets
- [Activism Planner](#)
- Cultural competency modules
- [Cultural Learning Hub](#)
- [Tips on avoiding burnout](#)

KEY DATES

- 5 July - #RaiseTheAge national campaign launch
- NAIDOC Week 8-15 July (attend [events](#) in your community)
- 4 Aug - National Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Children's Day

