

MEDIA RELEASE



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Report confirms reducing over-imprisonment is critical to close the gap

The National Director of ANTaR says a report released today confirms the urgent need for governments to reduce the disproportionate number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being imprisoned.

Jacqueline Phillips says the latest report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows the imprisonment rate of Indigenous Australians has increased by more than 50 per cent over the last decade.

“While ANTaR applauds the commitment by governments to reduce the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in areas such as employment, education and life expectancy, it is impossible to close the gap in these areas while the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our prisons continues to skyrocket,” Ms Phillips said.

“It is simply outrageous that Indigenous Australians comprise more than a quarter of all people in prison, when they are just 2.5% of the total population.”

ANTaR recently released a national Call to Action, endorsed by a wide range of Aboriginal and community legal services and human rights organisations, which urged the adoption of a national plan to reduce Indigenous imprisonment rates.

“There are initiatives and programs which have been shown to be successful in reducing rates of offending and re-offending, but they are under-funded and piecemeal.

“Governments must divert some of the money currently being spent on building and running prisons to fund programs in disadvantaged communities to reduce offending through a justice reinvestment approach.

“This will result in significant savings in the long run and will create healthier, safer and more prosperous communities for everyone.”

ANTaR’s National Call to Action is available at:

<http://www.antar.org.au/sites/default/files/Call%20to%20action%20to%20reduce%20Indigenous%20imprisonment%20final%20version.pdf>

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ANTaR relies on the support of generous donations to continue its work supporting the rights and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
