

MEDIA RELEASE



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Human rights in the spotlight at CHOGM

ANTaR is concerned that security arrangements in place for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) will impact disproportionately on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Perth and exacerbate the crisis of over-imprisonment.

The bi-annual Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) officially opens today in Perth. In the lead up to the meeting, 700 additional police have been stationed around the city.

“ANTaR is concerned by reports that activists have been arrested for planning to take protest action to coincide with CHOGM,” said Ms Tammy Solonec, ANTaR WA Chair.

“More broadly, we fear that significantly increased surveillance and regulation is likely to disproportionately target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and result in further arrests.”

“With Western Australia having the highest over-representation of Aboriginal people in prison in the country, this is a cause for serious concern. At a rate of over 4,400 per 100,000 of the adult population, imprisonment rates for Aboriginal people in WA are among the highest recorded anywhere in the world.”

“Activists have a right to express their views in our democratic country. This freedom should be a badge of pride for our nation, rather than cause for a security crack-down.”

ANTaR is campaigning nationally to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in prison. In April this year, to mark 20 years since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody report, we released a National Call to Action. For more information, go to:

http://antar.org.au/issues_and_campaigns/reducing_indigenous_incarceration

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