

Thursday 30th April 2015

Record must be changed to turn crisis around

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights organisation ANTaR joined with coalition partners today to launch a new campaign to change the appalling rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' imprisonment and experience of violence.

The 'Change the Record' campaign is calling for a new approach that focuses on early intervention, prevention, and diversion strategies that address the root causes of violence and imprisonment.

National Director Andrew Meehan said that ANTaR was very pleased to be part of this important national campaign coalition to focus much needed attention on the issue.

"For far too long we have seen the rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imprisonment, and experience of violence, continue to skyrocket. It's time for national action," Mr Meehan said.

"It's not acceptable for Australia to sit back while the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in prison goes through the roof as it did between 2004 and 2014, with an increase of nearly 90%. Nor is it acceptable that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children are at a much higher risk of family violence than non-Indigenous people," he said.

Mr Meehan said that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are now 13 times more likely to be imprisoned than non-Indigenous people, and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised as a result of family violence.

"Behind these rates are real people, families and communities. This is devastating lives," Mr Meehan said.

Mr Meehan said that 'Change the Record' is a broad group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations committed to working together on a long-term campaign to address the issue.

"This is an issue all Australians should find out more about, and get behind by taking the Change the Record pledge at www.antar.org.au or www.changetherecord.org.au

ANTaR is the only non-Indigenous organisation dedicated solely to supporting the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and working to educate the wider community, shape public opinion, and speak up for justice, rights and respect for Australia's First Peoples.