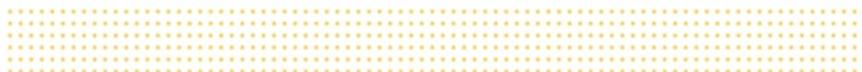


**PRISON
SONGS****NEWSLETTER
AUGUST 2016**

Dear <<First Name>>

A Chat With Prison Songs Ambassador Keenan Mundine

Keenan Mundine is a Youth Worker for a non-profit community services organisation in Sydney. He is also an Ambassador for Prison Songs and Just Reinvest NSW.

The following is drawn from an interview between Keenan and rapper Briggs for a short film due to be released soon- keep your eyes peeled!

Keenan grew up on the Block in Redfern in the 1990s. When he was a kid, he noticed that there was a divide between him and his Indigenous friends, and the richer, white families that he played footy and went to school with. These kids always had new shoes and new clothes, and one of their parents always showed up to the game. This was Keenan's only insight into 'other lives'. He thought his life, surrounded by police sirens, drugs, and violence, was pretty normal.

When Keenan was around 6 or 7 years old he lost both his mum and dad, and went to live with his uncle. At that time, he felt a huge sense of alienation and loss, especially being separated from his brothers and his community. A combination of leaving school early and not having the right support or care led Keenan to get mixed in with a crowd of older boys who taught him 'street skills' and about how to survive.

When Keenan first got sent to juvenile detention for some petty crime, he thought it was actually a pretty natural pathway for boys like him. From the age of 14, he spent only his 16th birthday out of juvenile detention. When Keenan turned 18 he was transferred to adult prison. This was a huge shock to him where there was a totally different culture, with an extra level of violence including calculated attacks and stabbings.

It wasn't until Keenan came before a particular Judge that he found himself with an opportunity to be involved in a 'Diversionary

Program' at Goulburn Maximum Security Prison. This program allowed him to be introduced slowly back into the community for periods at a time. For Keenan, this was a life-changing experience.

Now, Keenan works as a Youth Worker supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Around 93% of the kids Keenan works with live in social housing, and over 60% identify as Indigenous. Keenan teaches these kids life and other skills, including about good friendships, healthy cooking, and sports.

Keenan is also an Ambassador for Prison Songs and Just Reinvest where he is an advocate for early intervention and diversionary programs, and for the use of support networks giving young Indigenous people a voice and ownership over what they want to achieve.

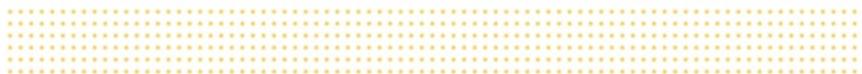
When asked what Keenan would say to his 14 year old self, he answered "talk to that person and understand what they're going through rather than tell them what to do... no one really asked what me and my brothers wanted, they made a decision for us."



Keenan (R) chats to Indigenous rapper Briggs (L)

Photography: James Henry

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Past Screenings and Testimonials

It's been a busy few months for Prison Song with lots of screenings all around Australia:

Prison Songs was selected as part of the [Human Rights Arts and Film Festival](#). It was screened in Darwin, Melbourne, and Sydney to sell out crowds!

[DLA Piper](#) hosted private corporate screenings in their Sydney, Brisbane, and Perth offices for National Reconciliation Week.

[Australian National University- Indigenous Health, Medical School](#) hosted a public screening on the 2nd August in Canberra. There was a post-screening Q and A with panel members Father Frank Brennan (*Professor of Law, Australian Catholic University*), Ms Aimme Capper and Harold (*The Connection*), and Professor Michael Levy (*Clinical Director, Justice Health Services, ACT Health*).

[Amnesty International QLD](#) hosted a screening in Brisbane for their 'Meaningful Movies' event. There were some exciting guest speakers: Dr Wayne Anderson (*ANTAR*), Associate Professor Terry Hutchinson (*Queensland University of Technology*), Aunty Denise Proud, and Shane Duffy (*ATSILS and Change The Record*).

[The Law Institute of Victoria](#) in partnership with [Tarwirri](#) hosted a screening of Prison Songs in June. Following the screening distinguished guest speakers Judge Parsons from the County Court and Meena Singh the Associate Director of Aboriginal Services at Victoria Legal Aid provided some insights into how Victoria is responding to the crisis and what the Victorian legal profession and community can do to help reduce Indigenous over-incarceration.

Prison Songs was screened at the [The AIJA Indigenous Justice Conference](#) held in the Northern Territory on the 25-26th August.

There's been some great feedback...

"DLA Piper held screenings of Prison Songs during National Reconciliation Week in offices across Australia, and the film had a big impact on our staff. Reducing the over-incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is a key focus of our Reconciliation Action Plan and our pro bono practice, and hearing the stories of real people brought the issue into sharp focus. People told me their eyes had been opened, and they wanted to know what they could do to help - the screenings and surrounding discussions were an important first step towards greater awareness and understanding, and ultimately towards greater justice and equality."

Elise Williams, Community Engagement Manager and National RAP Manager, DLA Piper Australia

Prison Songs is an exemplary film in the genre of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander films that seek to address the complexities faced within the prison system. The film combines a unique style of first person storytelling in the form of music and humour, which allows people to engage in a relational way to real people with human depth and all the various emotions that we deal with as human beings. The stories break the stereotypical blame and victim positioning so often found in these types of films and TV media presentation. I cannot recommend this film highly enough, it is ground-breaking, thought provoking and offers whole new way to engage in the issues that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people deal with day to day, either for themselves or with someone in their extended family or community. These issues are pressing and the conversations the film starts hopefully will lead to a greater appreciation of the importance of justice re-investment and other ways to address the severe disadvantage and over-representation of Aboriginal people in our prison systems."

Samia Goudie, Senior Lecturer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, ANU Medical School



Upcoming Screenings

EXCITING NEWS!

PRISON SONGS will be screening nationally on NITV at 9.30 pm on the 31st August!

Make sure you click attending on our [Facebook event](#) and share with your friends.



PRISON SONGS SCREENING ON NITV

.....
31ST AUGUST
9.30 pm
.....

www.sbs.com.au/nitv/

Don't forget you can also host your own screening of Prison Songs... just head to www.prisonsongs.com.au



Take Action

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are massively overrepresented in the criminal justice system of Australia

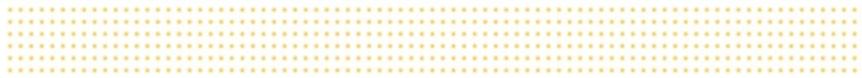
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represent only 3% of the total Australian population yet more than 27% of the prison population are Aboriginal (2016)
- 58% of all children in custody in Australia are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (2013-14)
- Aboriginal women represent the fastest growing prison population in Australia

The [exposure on Four Corners](#) of children being tear-gassed, left in isolation, and strip searched at Don Dale juvenile detention centre in the Northern Territory has sparked a Royal Commission into the treatment of children in juvenile detention.

Unfortunately, mistreatment of children in detention is not confined to the Northern Territory. Amnesty International recently obtained images under Freedom of Information laws which [exposed the abuse of children](#) in Cleveland Youth Detention Centre in Townsville, Queensland. These images depicted a 17 year old boy being held face down by five adult prison guards, handcuffed, and stripped naked after he refused to have a shower. Another set of images depicted a young girl in a swimming pool being threatened by security guards with an un-muzzled dog.

This has sparked renewed calls for the Royal Commission to be extended to other Australian States and Territories.

It also highlights the importance of preventative and diversionary programs which help divert kids away from prison in the first place.

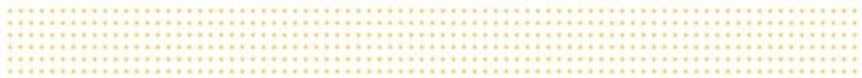


Better investment is needed in early intervention, prevention, and diversion strategies.

Prison Songs has some amazing partners who are working towards reducing the over-representation of Indigenous kids and adults in Australia's prisons.

So what can you do to get involved?

- 1) Follow us on social media- help spread the word about Prison Songs and our campaign around reducing indigenous incarceration rates
 - You can also [host a screening](#) of Prison Songs to raise awareness in your community, school, or workplace
- 2) Sign Amnesty International's petition calling for the introduction of [national justice targets](#)
- 3) Take the pledge to [Change The Record](#)



Thank you for your continued support of Prison Songs and the campaign to reduce the over-imprisonment of Indigenous adults and children around Australia.

Julie Buxton
Prison Songs Impact Producer



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