

YUNG PRODIGY

IMPACT REPORT



2025



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LETTER FROM FOUNDING DIRECTOR



Maia Ihemeje

Founding Director, Yung
Prodigy

And just like that, another year comes to a close.

As we wrap up 2025 and step into 2026, I want to take a moment to reflect on the year that was and the ground Yung Prodigy has continued to cover. This year marked growth, learning, and expansion, not just in what we delivered, but in how we showed up for young people and community.

Yung Prodigy was founded as a response to a reality too often ignored. Across so-called Australia, tens of thousands of young people are impacted by parental incarceration, yet remain largely invisible in policy, service design, and public discourse. The prison system continues to function as a structural pipeline, steering our communities away from care and rehabilitation and towards ongoing contact with the carceral system and other harmful institutions.

Yung Prodigy exists to counter this. We are not state-led. We are community-led. We are an alternative ecosystem of care, built alongside young people with lived experience, grounded in transparency, dignity, and collective power.

Entering our fourth year, I am immensely proud of what we have built together. This report captures our progress across 2025, the impact we've had, and the foundations we've laid for what comes next. None of this would be possible without the trust, energy, and leadership of young people, our partners, and our wider community.

WHO ARE WE?



MISSION

Yung Prodigy mobilises young people to reclaim the basic human rights stolen from them as a result of parental incarceration.

VISION

Yung Prodigy's vision is for young people to be liberated from the impacts of the carceral system.

VALUES

Yung Prodigy's values are: grassroots, community, intersectionality and transparency.

OVERVIEW

We are an organisation founded on lived experience. We focus on mobilising young people impacted by parental and kinship incarceration, addressing an often-invisible issue and policy gap in Australian service provision. This gap impacts an estimated 40,000+ young people. Our vision is to liberate young people from the impacts of the carceral system, equipping them with the skills, resources, and community support needed to dismantle cycles of systemic disadvantage. Yung Prodigy operates through five key avenues being; research, advocacy, education, mentorship, and nourishment. Ultimately, Yung Prodigy's work fosters systemic change, creating pathways to thrive that steer away from carceral cycles. By centering the voices of lived experience, we aim to dismantle intergenerational cycles of incarceration and disadvantage.

2025 AT GLANCE



500+

Petition signatures

21

Coalition members

5

Initiatives
undertaken

30

Letters sent to the minister and
commissioner for corrective
services

2

New board members
(announcement early 2026)

2000+

New friends in the online word

40,000+

OUR WORK 1

FREEDOM ON THE LINE CAMPAIGN

Freedom on the Line is a statewide advocacy campaign launched in 2025 in partnership with the Foundation for Young Australians. The campaign is grounded in a simple principle: contacting loved ones is not a privilege, it is a right. The campaign calls for free prison phone calls to nominated numbers in NSW, recognising the critical role of connection in rehabilitation, family cohesion, and wellbeing, particularly for children and young people.

The campaign officially launched on Mother's Day 2025 with coverage from About Time which was also picked up by The Guardian. In June 2025, It was then hard launched at the 18th Reintegration Puzzle Conference held in Mparntwe, Alice Springs.

IMPACT

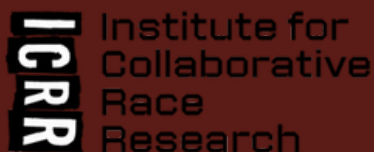
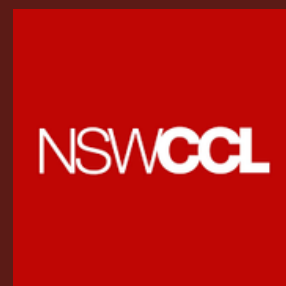
Within the campaigns first year, the Minister and Commissioner for Corrective Services announced a reduction in prison phone call costs, signaling recognition of the issue and the power of our collective advocacy.

Launching at the conference was an opportunity to build momentum with practitioners, advocates, and people with lived experience to collectively push for systemic change.

In addition, to build our influence, we coordinated the creation of a coalition with aligned organisation. As this impact report is being written, we have built our coalition to 21 organisations.



COALITION MEMBERS



OUR WORK: CONTINUED 2

COMMUNITY RETREAT

In December 2025, Yung Prodigy delivered its second Community Retreat, bringing young people together for two nights and two-and-a-half days of rest, creativity, and collective imagining.

Rather than working toward a fixed outcome, the retreats are intentionally designed as a flexible, co-created space. Participants arrived on Friday evening and departed Sunday afternoon, shaping the experience together as it unfolded.

Across the retreat, participants engaged in creative, nourishing, and reflective activities. Together, we unpacked experiences of parental and kinship incarceration, explored what freedom means on our own terms, and collectively brainstormed pathways forward, including strategic priorities for 2026 and beyond. Our key partners for this Retreat was the Ian and Shirley Norman Foundation and The Maritime Union of Australia.

IMPACT

The retreat strengthened connection between young people, creating space for rest, reflection, and shared understanding outside of institutional settings. It also supported collective visioning, with participants shaping new program ideas and helping guide Yung Prodigy's future direction. Insights from the retreat will directly inform the organisation's upcoming strategic plan, ensuring our work continues to be led by lived experience.



OUR WORK: CONTINUED

3

SOIL RADIO PROGRAM

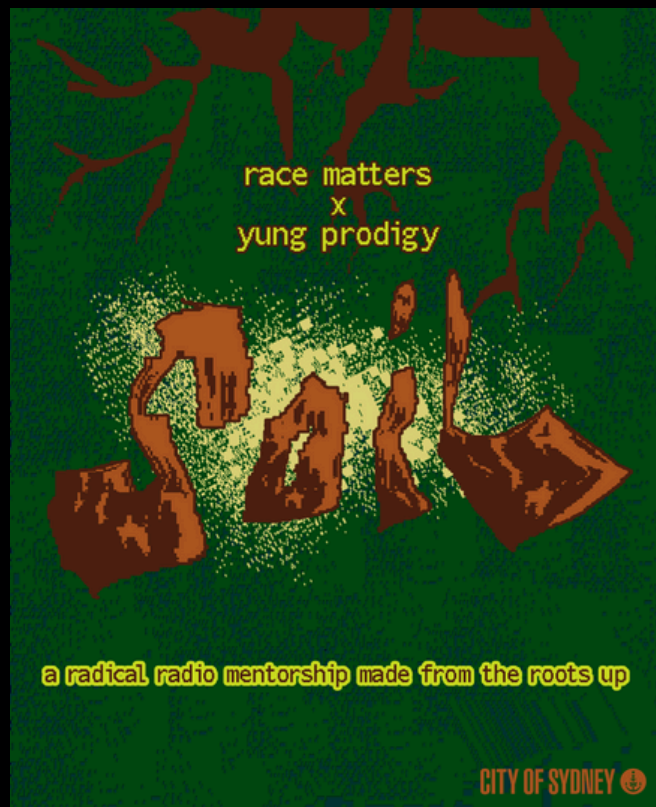
SOIL is a radio mentorship program delivered in partnership with Race Matters (under FBI Radio) and Yung Prodigy, with support from the City of Sydney. The program was designed to empower young people impacted by parental incarceration and racial marginalisation through the powerful medium of community radio. Over 6 weeks, participants developed foundational skills in radio broadcasting, storytelling, and self-expression, while being supported within an explicitly anti-racist, community-led creative space.

SOIL centres lived experience as expertise, enabling young people to reclaim narrative power and experiment with storytelling on their own terms.

The program will culminate in a community radio takeover scheduled for early 2026, providing participants with a public platform to share their voices and perspectives.

IMPACT

Through SOIL, young people strengthened their capacity to tell their own stories using radio as a tool for expression, confidence-building, and collective voice. Participants developed practical broadcasting and storytelling skills while engaging in a creative process that affirmed their lived experience and cultural knowledge. The program also laid the groundwork for sustained engagement beyond the workshops, with a community radio takeover scheduled for early 2026, creating a public platform for participants to share their narratives on their own terms.



OUR WORK: CONTINUED

4

INCCIP CONFERENCE: SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

In July 2025, Yung Prodigy participated in the International Coalition for Children with Incarcerated Parents (INCCIP) Conference, joining an international gathering of young people with lived experience, practitioners, researchers, and advocates working across justice, child wellbeing, and restorative justice. This years conference was titled: Voices of Strength: Resilience of children with incarcerated parents.

IMPACT

Participation in the conference elevated youth voices on a global platform, positioning young people with lived experience as leaders and contributors in international policy and practice discussions. It also strengthened connections with advocates worldwide, opening pathways for future collaboration and ongoing engagement with INCCIP.

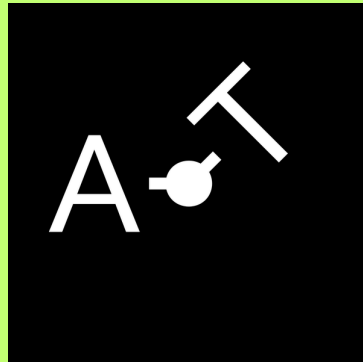
Yung Prodigy attended alongside youth advocates from our community, with support from donors and allies who enabled participation. We hosted a session exploring how decolonial approaches can reimagine justice responses to parental incarceration by centering community controlled actors, disrupting punitive systems, and strengthening pathways toward collective liberation.



A COUPLE MEDIA FEATURES



The Guardian



About Time



3CR Radical
Radio

NEW PARTNERSHIPS



ORGANISATIONAL GROWTH

Over the past year, Yung Prodigy's growth has been most evident in the strengthening of our organisational foundations. We invested significantly in organisational development, formalising structures, systems, and internal processes to ensure the organisation is well-equipped to sustain and ethically scale its work.

Alongside this internal consolidation, we made meaningful strides in our advocacy and campaigning efforts, increasing our influence, visibility, and capacity to contribute to systems-level change. Together, these developments mark an important transition toward greater organisational maturity and long-term impact



WE APPOINTED TWO NEW BOARD DIRECTORS
(ANNOUNCEMENT 2026)



FULLY DEVELOPED OUR INTERNAL POLICIES AND
OPERATIONAL SYSTEMS



WELCOMED TWO FULL-TIME STAFF MEMBERS



RECOGNISED AS CONVENORS & THOUGHT
LEADERS NATIONALLY & INTERNATIONALLY.

2026 PRIORITIES

OUR FOCUS

Moving into 2026, Yung Prodigy is now positioned to deliver a further 3 community retreats, maintaining our core entry point for young people. We will also continue to build momentum for the Freedom on the Line campaign. As we transition out of our start-up phase and into our seedling phase, a key focus for the year ahead is the development of a new strategic plan. This will be directly informed by the ideas, priorities and program directions articulated by young people during our 2025 Community Retreat, where participants collectively envisioned new initiatives for the organisation. Alongside this, we will strengthen our brand identity and communications to ensure our work is articulated with clarity and conviction, while deepening both new and existing partnerships. Our collective approach will ensure our mission and vision continue to be realised at the intersection of community, advocacy and care.



SUPPORT US IN 2026?

Would you, or someone in your network, like to support the next chapter of Yung Prodigy? As our work and impact continue to grow, so too does our need for support. Alongside ongoing fundraising efforts, we are seeking pro bono support in branding, website development and communications, as well as volunteers to support our programs, administration and communications. Every contribution helps sustain and strengthen our impact.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Yung Prodigy's work is made possible through collective care, trust, and collaboration. We extend our deepest gratitude to the young people who continue to share their time, wisdom, and lived experience, shaping everything we do. We also thank our community partners, collaborators, advisors, volunteers, and supporters who have stood alongside us this year both locally and internationally. This work is not done alone, and we are grateful to be held by such a committed and growing community.

STAY CONNECTED

We welcome ongoing connection with those who share our values and vision. Whether you are a young person, community organisation, funder, researcher, or ally, there are many ways to stay engaged with Yung Prodigy's work as we move into 2026 and beyond.

CONTACT US

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Website: www.yungprodigy.org

Instagram: [@yungprodigyorg](https://www.instagram.com/yungprodigyorg)

LinkedIn: Yung Prodigy

**“YUNG PRODIGY
PROVIDES A SAFE,
SUPPORTIVE SPACE
TO LISTEN, TALK,
AND PROCESS OUR
EXPERIENCES. IT
GIVES US A HEALTHY
OUTLET SO WE'RE
NOT HOLDING ONTO
CONFUSING
EMOTIONS ALONE”**

-YOUTH MEMBER

