



Date: 1st May 2026

Contact: [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Address: PO BOX 50 Newcastle NSW 2300

Dear Senator Thorpe,

Below is a collective response from Yung Prodigy (YP) to your questions on notice.

Question 1. What does the federal government do to support your work in terms of: a) funding, b) resources, c) access to incarcerated people in detention?

a) Funding

Yung Prodigy has not received federal government funding. The only government funding we have received at any level was through a City of Sydney grant on which we were a named partner, with FBI Radio as the primary applicant.

This is not for lack of trying. As of 17 April 2026, GrantConnect lists 132 open grant opportunities, and our programs are ineligible for all but one, which we cannot access as it is restricted to capital works.

We currently have five unfunded programs waiting for support:

1. a project scoping Alternative First Responder training for young people impacted by the carceral system;
2. a program in which young people with lived experience of a loved one's incarceration are trained as peer mentors, driving teenagers in the same situation to and from prison visits;
3. a monthly bushwalking club;
4. a food sovereignty and security program teaching cooking, budgeting, and vegetable growing through hands-on skill-building and;
5. a monthly cultural health and healing events series;

Every one of these was designed by our young members in direct response to needs they identified. They are practical, preventative, and ready to deliver.

We want to name two distinct problems, as they require different solutions. The first is volume. Community organisations are chronically underfunded and financial instability is the norm. The second is distribution. The available funding flows disproportionately to large national



organisations, while smaller community-embedded organisations face compliance costs and impact measurement frameworks that are structurally stacked against them.

If this inquiry leads to new funding commitments, we would ask that they include multi-year terms, proportionate compliance requirements, dedicated streams for smaller community-based organisations, and impact frameworks with realistic timeframes and metrics. We would also note that funding structures which create pressure on organisations to avoid criticising the agencies that fund them are not in the long-term interest of good policy, and that independent community voice is essential to accountability.

b) Resources

We have received no resources from the federal government in any form.

c) Access to incarcerated people in detention

This is not currently a dimension of our work. We note, however, that barriers to family contact during incarceration are consistently raised by our members as a significant source of harm, and federal attention here could make a material difference to families. Our campaign *Freedom on the Line*, which calls for free prison calls in NSW, is one example of the concrete advocacy our members are driving to reduce these barriers.

Question 2. What, if any, expert advice do you provide to the federal government? How is your expert advice used by the federal government?

This inquiry is the first time Yung Prodigy has been invited to provide expert advice to any level of government.

The young people at the heart of our organisation hold direct, lived expertise of the systems this inquiry is examining. That expertise, developed under conditions no researcher can replicate, is among the most reliable sources of knowledge available about what these systems actually do to people, and what might work better. It deserves to be treated as such.

An invitation to testify, however welcome, is not the same as a structural role in policy development. Lived expertise is most valuable when it is present from the design stage, not introduced at the end to humanise conclusions already reached. We encourage the Committee to consider what durable, resourced mechanisms for ongoing engagement with young people with lived experience could look like, and we remain willing to contribute to that conversation.



Many thanks,

The team at YP.