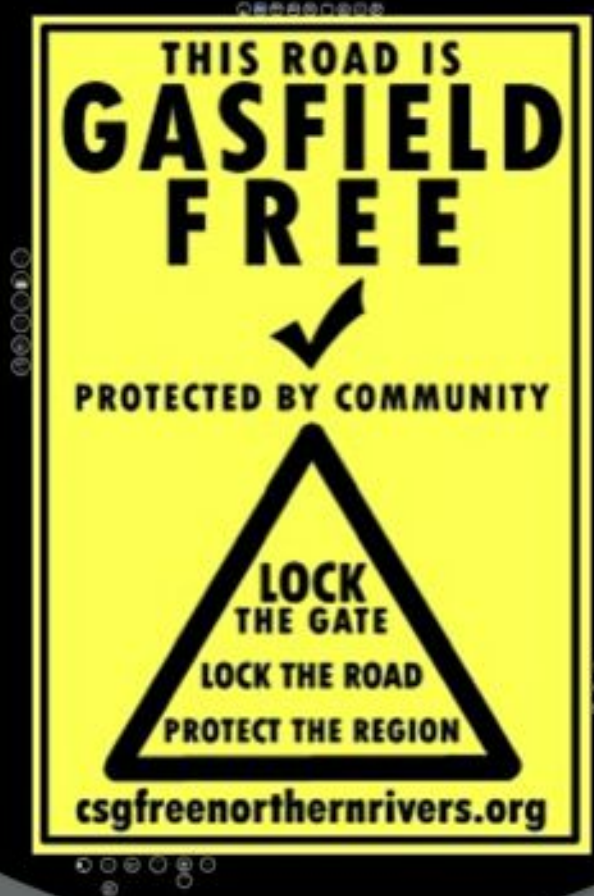


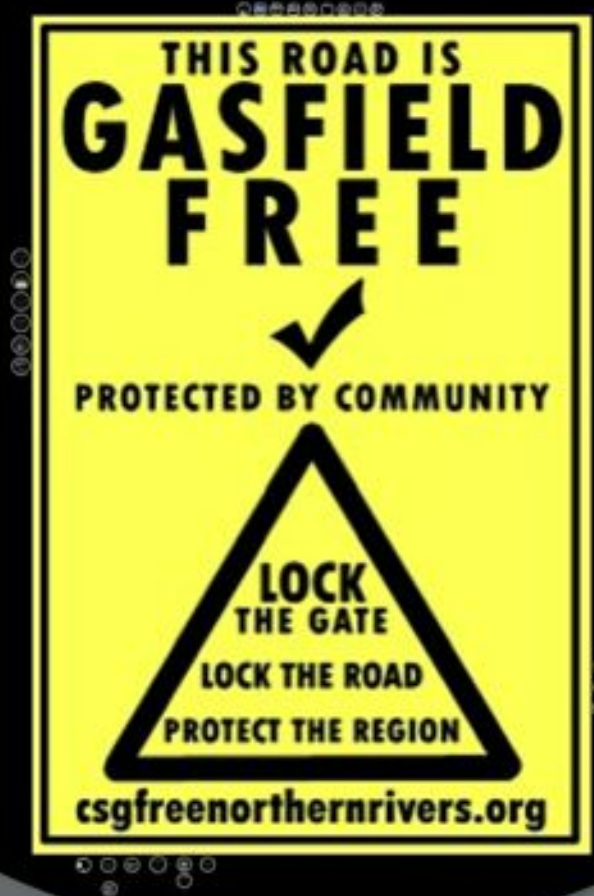
Non-Violent Direct Action

A supplement to the Activists'
Handbook by Aidan Ricketts



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New book available !



'The Activists' Handbook' is a powerful guide to grassroots activism. A priceless resource for everyone ready to make a difference, environmental activist Aidan Ricketts offers a step-by-step handbook for citizens eager to start or get involved in grass-roots movements and beyond. Providing all essential practical tools, methods and strategies needed for a successful campaign and extensively discussing legal and ethical issues, this book empowers its readers to effectively promote their cause. Lots of ready-to-use documents and comprehensive information on digital activism and group strategy make this book an essential companion for any campaign. Including case studies from the US, UK, Canada and Australia, this is the ultimate guidebook to participatory democracy.

To purchase copies online go to
<http://aidanricketts.com>

The Awakened Citizen

The moment when you see something happening around you that is so unacceptable that you personally decide to do something about it, you have awakened from political passivity

This is your first momentus step in becoming an awakened citizen

What are social movements?

Social movements emerge when groups of citizens join together to respond to failures by government and other power holders

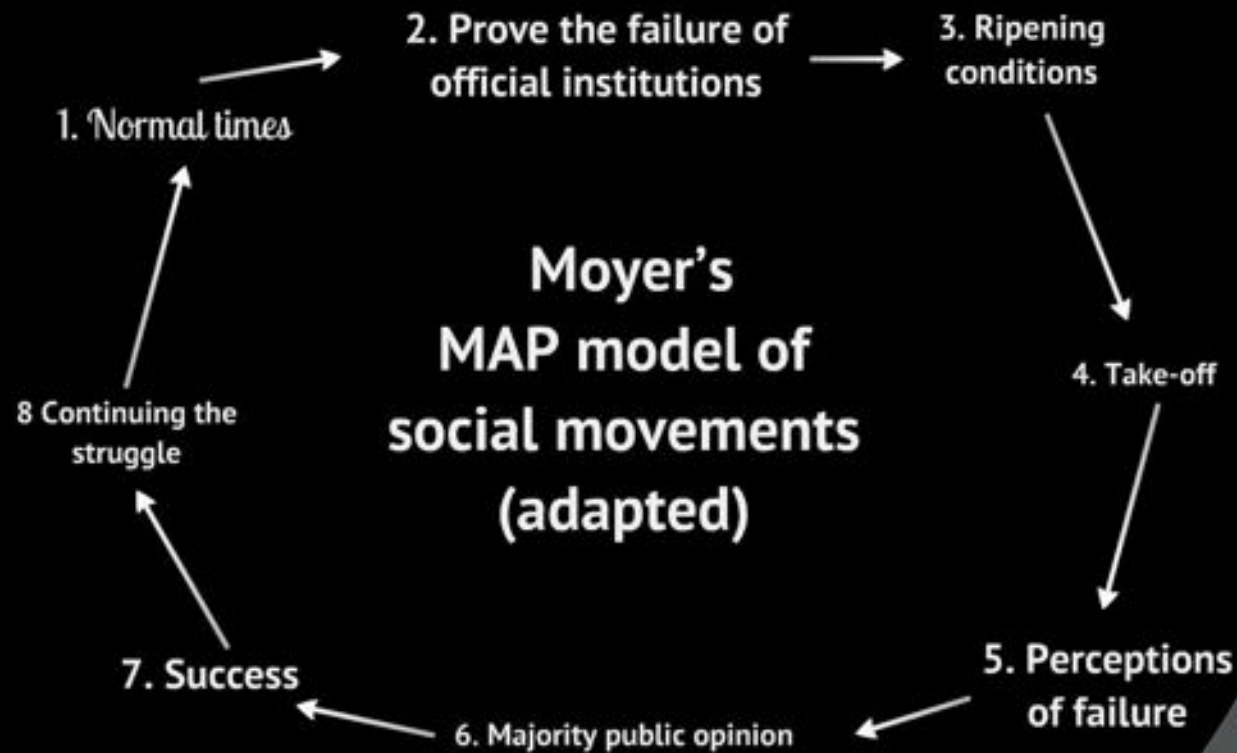
Social movements become activated around an important underlying value that is widely shared in the community

They take action to expose the failure of power holders to respect that value and they work to promote that value in the public sphere

The Life Cycle of Social Change

- Social movements are like other living things, the movement and the people in and around it go through cycles of change
- these include:
 - eight stages of a successful social movement
 - the four roles of awakened citizens,
- Author Bill Moyer presents a theoretical map of the stages of a successful social movement

The eight stages of social movements



The Life Cycle of the Awakened Citizen

As individuals become awakened and active citizens their world view and experiences begin to change and develop

As they experience the backlash from powerholders and vested interests that they are questioning then they begin to see more deeply the lies, greed and often corruption that lies behind the issue they dared to question

This often ignites a personal and political outrage in the person and they commit themselves to working to change those underlying conditions as well as work on the issue that got them started

Growth and change

As individuals work in a social movement setting they often adopt particular roles, sometimes simply as the awakened citizen, sometimes for a while as an angry rebel, and often they also develop a deeper set of social change skills over the years and learn to work effectively as change agents and reformers

Moyer explains these terms more in his book "Doing Democracy"

The four typical activist roles



Reformer



Citizen

All four roles must be
played effectively in a
successful social movement
(Moyer 2001)

Change agent



Rebel



What is special about the CSG campaign?



Because csg mining threatens broad scale destruction of rural landscapes across Australia it has awakened a very large and diverse group of citizens and there is now a rapidly growing social movement in response



So what can you do about CSG?

Concerned citizens magnify their power and political impact when they take part in broader social movements

You can get together with friends and neighbours, start new groups or join existing groups committed to fighting the scourge of csg and other mining impacts in your communities

Individual Activity

Individual actions, like locking your gate matter, but they are much more powerful when done in solidarity with your community



The CSG-free community strategy

- A new and powerful tactic for CSG is the idea of creating no-go areas enforced by community action
- Its an extension of lock the gate beyond the property boundary to the public sphere
- First agree with neighbours to lock your road, then your valley, community, shire
- Ultimately: a CSG free community !



But how do we go about this?

www.csgfree northernrivers.org

- The www.csgfree northernrivers.org website has been established to provide support for autonomous local groups wishing to take part
 1. Go to csgfree northernrivers.org
 2. Read about the strategy and download relevant templates and materials
 3. Organise a local public meeting
 4. Show the available DVD
 5. Conduct a vote at the meeting to declare yourselves csg free
 6. Conduct follow up surveys with neighbours face to face using the kit provided
 7. Educate yourselves and your community about campaigning and activism using The Activists' Handbook

What is available?

- The csgfree.northernrivers.org.au website aims to provide resources to help communities in the northern rivers region and ultimately australia wide join together to create gasfield and coal mine free zones enforced by community political action
- On the website you can find templates and instructions for holding your first public meetings, collecting the views of neighbours, establishing road committees and decalring yourselves csg free

What will be required of us?

**Once your community has decided to go csg free you will need to internally organise yourselves to watch over your patch
you will need phone trees to help with alerting each other to incursions by mining companies
You will need to meet and discuss your community's action plans**

Be Watchful

A key ingredient is community vigilance, keeping an eye out and alerting each other about what you see.

real defence is like a cross between neighbourhood watch and the rural bushfire brigade.



Get Ready to Hold Your Roads

Your community, with the help of your surrounding community and the wider social movement may need to consider the use of civil disobedience and non violent direct action to prevent mining activity

this is made necessary because of the failure of parliament and politicians to have stood up to the power of the mining corporations

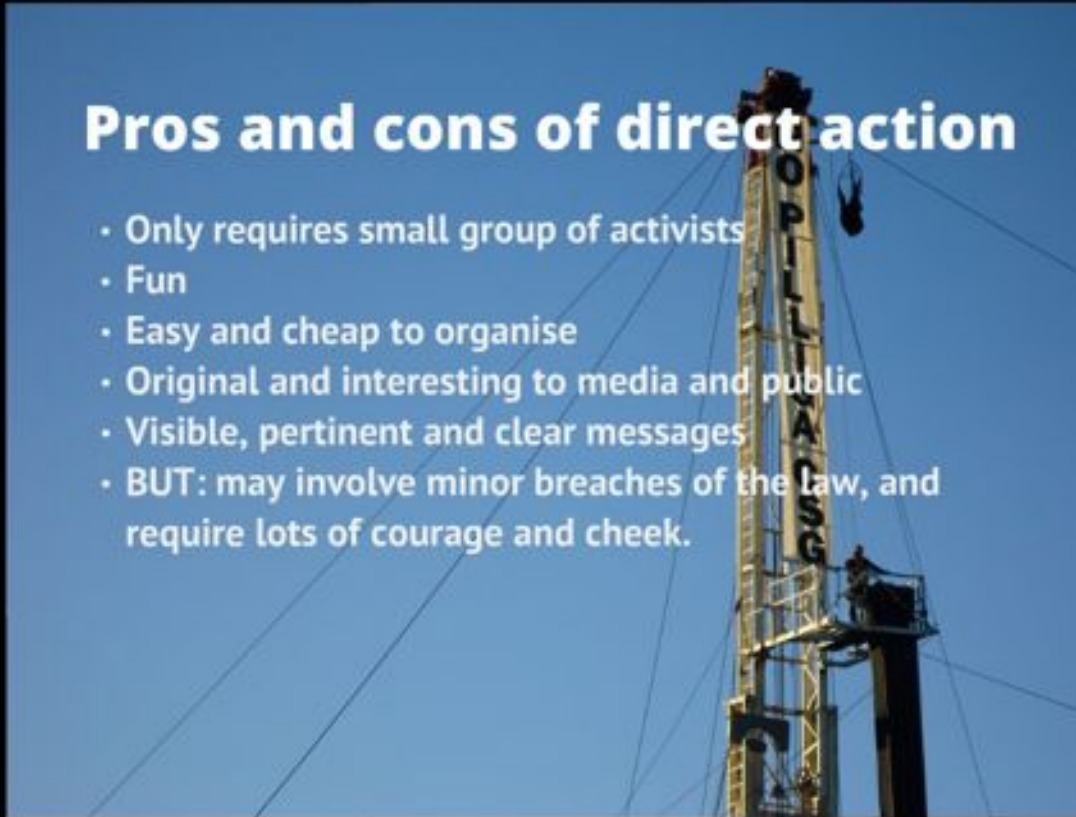
What is Direct Action?

- Protest activity that 'directly' engages with the the issue or problem
- usually direct in the sense of physical, practical to prevent or delay an activity or to make a powerful statement
- Does not usually require large
- numbers
- Must communicate a clear message
- Direct actions often theatrical and visual



Pros and cons of direct action

- Only requires small group of activists
- Fun
- Easy and cheap to organise
- Original and interesting to media and public
- Visible, pertinent and clear messages
- BUT: may involve minor breaches of the law, and require lots of courage and cheek.



The Importance of Non-Violence

- **Non-Violence is an essential pre-condition to any discussion about activism, direct action, protest, both philosophically and practically**
- **We should distinguish between intended violence and sporadic unintended outbursts**
- **Outbreaks of sporadic violence are often associated with policing practices**
- **Media will distort violence**



Civil Disobedience

- The courts will not allow anyone to break the law but they have discretion over sentencing and can discharge without penalty or record (NSW s 10 Crimes Act)
- At the very least an intentional law breaker has a right to break the law and to be arrested and processed according to law for doing so
- Conscientious objection is different to crime, there is no dishonesty, and no attempt to evade the legal consequences

The Role of Police and Police Liaison

- **Police liaison is essential to maintain respectful and cordial relations with police:**
 - **it is about communication not control**
 - **you should aim to talk to police to establish what are arrestable and non arrestable activities**
 - **Explain that law breakers have a right to due process**
 - **Be polite, firm and direct with police**
- **This is a complex area but The Activists Handbook should help you understand this area better**

The Theory of Change

Our politicians and parliaments have failed to provide the community with adequate protection from the risks associated with widespread coal seam gas mining and other types of mining to the point where mining companies have an almost carte blanche power to enter properties and cause damage

Communities are resisting this. Every time a community resists non-violently they succeed in proving that there is no social license or consent for this invasion of communities

Inevitably the political costs for the politicians and for the companies themselves will build until a political solution is unavoidable

Community resistance on a grand scale is all that can save us now

United Action and the Long Haul

We cannot expect this campaign to be fast or easy.

the billions of dollars that mining companies seek to extract will make them very determined to go ahead regardless of the social environmental or other costs

politicians will not back down easily

Communities should expect to lose many battles along the way, but it is the sheer perseverance of communities that will win this

Resilience

The final chapter of the Activists handbook provides insights on how individuals and groups can ensure their long term emotional physical and mental well being whilst engaging in the fight for their lives. make sure you read this and take heed

*Remember the Successful Social Movements
and the perseverance that was needed.*

**Perseverance of social movements is
what makes them succeed against all
odds**

**politicians and companies work on
short cycles of profit return and
elections and cannot endure a
sustained and widespread community
campaign**

remember:

**The campaign to get the vote for
women, for an end to slavery, and to
exit the vietnam war**

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