

# Non violent direct action and the CSG campaign

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# How is the CSG campaign different?

- A fast growing mainstream movement
- That cuts across established political loyalties
- It's in everyone's backyard
- Is introducing a whole new demographic to direct action for the first time



■ Lock The Gate set the tone of the emerging movement as a rare alliance of environmentalists and rural landowners and farmers



**LOCK  
THE GATE**

**TM**



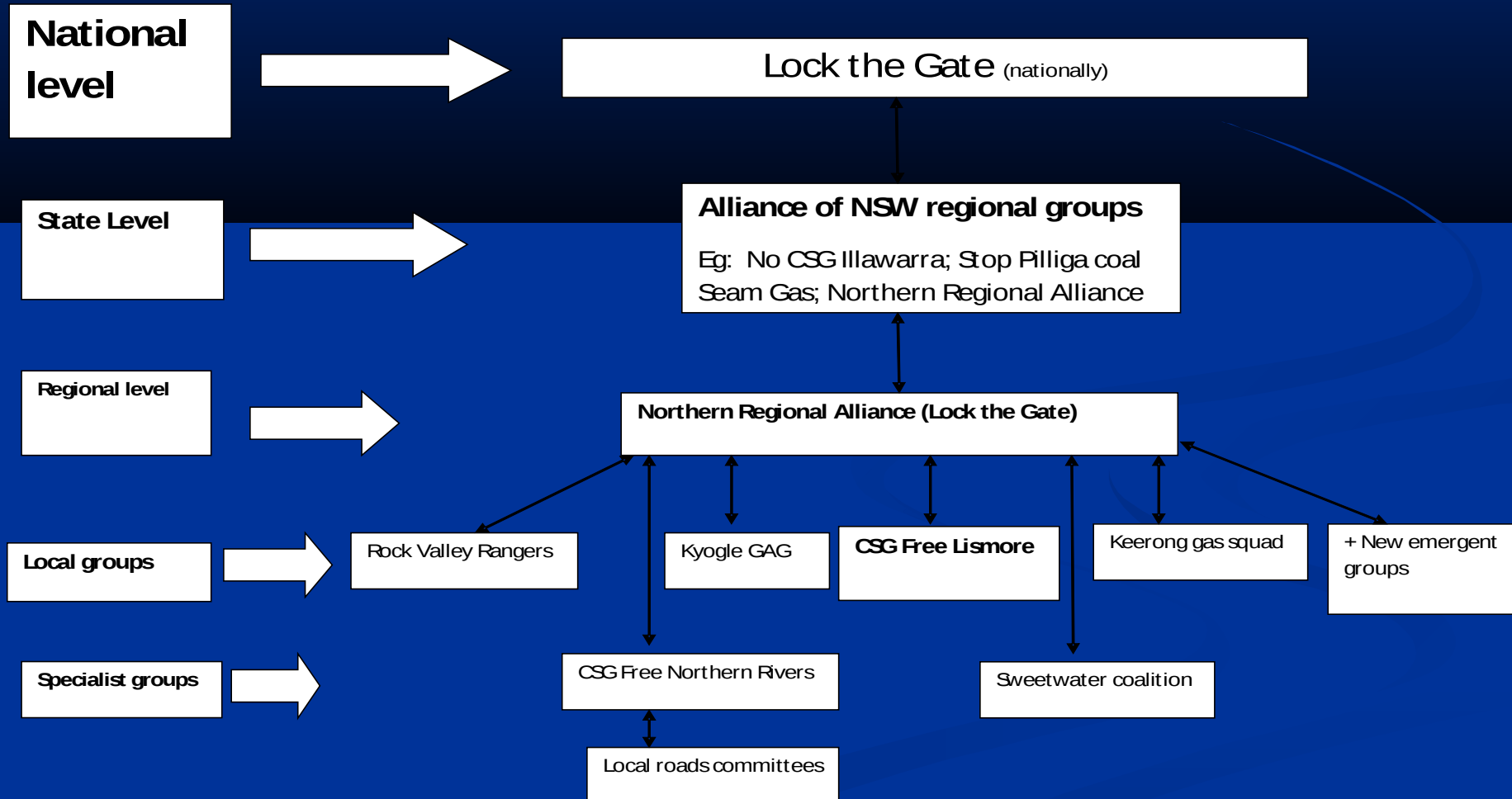
# Lock the gate, lock the road protect your community

- The tactic of locking the gate has been powerful because it helps landowners resist the approaches of mining companies for access to their land but it still relies on ownership rights and individual action
- A whole of community strategy extends the power of locking the gate to a whole of community level and provides greater solidarity and power

# What are the emergent dynamics of the CSG campaign?

- Fast growing and highly decentralised
- Lots of new groups and new people involved
- Highly organised opposing forces (Petro China and Shell for example)
- Urgent need and demand for training in campaigning and non violent direct action

## The broad anti CSG alliance (from Lismore's perspective)



# Training roll out

- Experienced activists have prepared a training package covering :
  - The nature and life cycle of social movements
  - Planning and strategic mapping of campaigns
  - Non violent direct action training including
    - Training presentations
    - Mockade simulations



# Training mockade

Truck stoppage



Locking on





# The Activists' Handbook



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# The power of blockades

- Blockades have been a powerful tool for
  - capturing the public imagination
  - Propelling an issue into the political spotlight
  - Frustrating opponents
  - Empowering participants
  - Achieving strategic advantage whilst pursuing other political and legal solutions



# Working direct action into the campaign plan

- The Kerry blockade in SE Qld proved that when the industry forces its way into a rural community over the head of local opposition it takes a giant step backwards politically
- This message has to be repeated again again at increasing political cost to the miners
- To be successful blockading needs to be sustainable and for this campaign ubiquitous

# Back to the CSG campaign

- The obvious strength of the csg campaign is its mainstream profile especially in rural Australia
- Building a broad social movement is a key strategic imperative





# Breaking the mould

- The scene of farmers protesting or being arrested has proved to be a powerful iconic image in the CSG campaign, this is the famous akubra last stand



# The CSG-free community strategy

- A new and powerful tactic for CSG is the idea of creating gasfield-free areas enforced by community action
- Relies on and supports direct local democracy
- Ultimately it is headed towards a 'whole of community' resistance to all CSG activity



**THIS ROAD IS  
GASFIELD  
FREE**



**PROTECTED BY COMMUNITY**



**[csgfreenorthernrivers.org](http://csgfreenorthernrivers.org)**

# DECLARATION

**We people of** *name of road & locality*

**DECLARE THAT THIS ROAD IS CSG-FREE**

**PROTECTED BY THE WILL OF THE COMMUNITY**

This decision was made through community consultation and engagement.

We recognise that our best defence is by standing together. If we detect any activity by gas companies here, we will raise an alert and ask their representatives to leave.

We are committed to stop gasfield industrialisation. In doing this, we protect the water, soil and air.

We will protect our community from the destructive impacts of the gasfield industry.



# The power of the CSG-Free campaign

- Because it is decentralised it will be almost impossible to combat by targeting individuals or organisations
- It will make ongoing CSG operations both politically and economically costly



# [www.csghreenorthernrivers.org](http://www.csghreenorthernrivers.org)

- The CSG-Free northern rivers website has been established to provide support for autonomous local groups wishing to take part
- The process invokes and builds local democracy
- The individual 'pledge' is also a key component
- CSG free community launch video: view

# What is the process to be csg free community?

- Go to [csgfreenorthernrivers.org](http://csgfreenorthernrivers.org)
- Organise a local public meeting
- Show the available DVD
- Conduct a vote at the meeting to declare yourselves csg free
- Conduct follow up surveys with neighbours face to face using the kit provided



# How can community resistance work

- Once areas are declared csg free
- Neighbours create sms or phone tree networks to mobilise local surveillance and instant help
- The pledge helps build personal commitment to stopping all CSG company movement in those zones
- Communities need to access NVDA training



# What kinds of actions?

- It is up to local groups to determine tactics
- Can be as simple as “parking in” vehicles or delay by talking front and back of vehicle
- Use sms and phone trees to attract neighbouring support
- Use of vehicle lock on devices and local small scale ‘blockades’ of mining vehicles

# How can we optimise the use of non violent direct action strategies?

- By linking NVDA into a whole of campaign plan
- Building exit strategies into the model
- Using strategic blockade methodology



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# Key themes of training

- Strategic arrest vs. mass arrest
- Exit strategy awareness
- Police liaison
- Avoid unnecessary arrests
- Every time the companies invade our communities they take a step backwards politically



# What's wrong with mass arrest ?

- Mass arrest tactics tend to rely on large numbers of people being removed by police
- Police are tempted to use crowd control techniques (pain pressure points)
- protesters who are hurt may lash out
- Mass arrest ties the movement up in bail conditions fines and court appearances



# What's the alternative?

## strategic arrest

- Strategic arrest means that intentional arrestable situations are planned and designed to achieve maximum effect
- Strategic arrest usually means very few people need to be arrested, and others can peacefully and lawfully support as witnesses from the sidelines

# Strategic arrestable actions

Well placed, comfortable and difficult to remove, one protester achieves more than 30 in a mass arrest scenario



# Blockade devices

- Strategic arrest usually relies upon the use of blockade devices that need to be expertly removed before a person can be taken away
- Police tend to respond to these in a professional way (they are used to attending car accidents)







# Some rules to make it safer

- Robust devices are needed
- The person must be locked in
- A “buddy” must be in the crowd with the key available should the person need to be removed



# Ways to make political actions safer and more effective

- Police liaison
- Legal observers
- Cameras, video
- Media liaison
- Follow up support
- Official complaints





# Follow up support

- Follow up for arrestees, bail, representation, financial support
- Complaints: Ombudsman, parliament, Courts



# Exit strategy

- It is anticipated that the industry will be determined to 'break' blockades symbolically
- So its important to know ahead of time that each local blockade is a battle in a longer war
- A blockade proves the industry is being forced onto communities against their will

# Theory of change

- Every time the government and companies use force against rural communities they take a backward step politically
- Communities involved in csg free strategies aim to demonstrate that the political and economic cost is too high
- The people can and will win !



# Take home messages

- Non-violent direct action has been proven to be one of the most successful forms of protest  
\*when used as a part of a well planned campaign strategy
- Careful use of strategic arrestable situations increases effectiveness of protests whilst reducing the risk of mob scenes and violence
- A growing network of empowered local communities defending their patch and linked to neighbouring communities will present an insurmountable obstacle

**Even when the companies win they  
lose in the court of public opinion....**



# Conclusion

- No-one is being encouraged to do any of the things featured in this presentation
- All direct action protests and actions occur as the result of the autonomous decisions of the individuals involved

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The people vs CSG the birth of the CSG free community