

ALWAYS WAS ALWAYS WILL BE

SOVEREIGNTY

WAS NEVER CEDED

ACAB

ANTI CAPITALISM

STRENGTH THRU SOLIDARITY!

KEEP FIGHTING!

WE HAVE A

WORLD

TO WIN!

BLOCKADE

IMARC '19

PROTECT OUR OCEANS

STOP URANIUM MINING

FREE WEST PAPUA

SACRED TREES

WE STAND WITH CHILE, HONG KONG, ERITREA + ALL OTHERS

NATIVE LAND RIGHTS NOT MINING RIGHTS SHUT IMARC DOWN!

This zine is dedicated to

Madeleine Eyre

22 March 1994 – 11 July 2020

We love you and we miss you



"We gave [Madi] a skin name, Nakamarra, which means someone we can continue to talk to and be a friend to. We're going to miss her and the memory is still with us. Yeah it's really sad and we will miss her. When I was down [in Melbourne] I gave her the Jukurrpa which I painted. It is part of the Ngapa dreaming, a water dreaming of the Walpiri."

Ned Jampijinpa | Judith Napangardi

The first time I saw Madi was at Friends of the Earth in Fitzroy, Melbourne. The event was an art auction to raise funds for legal costs associated with the campaign to stop logging in Gippsland. There'd recently been a court win due to the fauna survey work done by forest protectors, so the event was quite upbeat. It was one of the first activist events I'd been to since moving to Melbourne.

Madi was standing, kinda awkwardly, behind a stall just inside the front door with pamphlets, stickers and the usual stuff. Tall, dark and wild-eyed. I was struck with intrigue. That's the kind of impression Madi had on people. That random, distant encounter makes sense now. The way she held herself in space, with vulnerability but power, aloof but certain.

Only shortly before Madi's death did I fully realise that she is a third generation environmental activist whose connection to forest campaigns, green politics and indigenous solidarity was not only continued by her actions but creatively embraced and taken to new horizons, artistically, spiritually and strategically.

The first time I properly met Madi was at an after-dinner gathering for a Rubicon Forest Protection action. This was one of my first deeply social encounters with Melbourne's environmental activist community, so I was braving the usual social anxieties that we feel when surrounded by inspiring, energetic, boisterous people.

We quickly discovered a shared interest in permaculture. Madi was studying landscape architecture at the time. Given my lack of graphic design skills and the limitations we all have at realising shared dreams of radical social change through isolated individual actions, I was quick to suggest that we catch up sometime to discuss future collaborations.

This was the beginning of what was a slowly unfurling relationship of co-creation.

I only knew Madi for two years. I feel like I'd only just begun to get to know her. Looking back it seems obvious that our mutual trust and respect was established early on as we both walked through the forests of Rubicon that'd been napalmed to hell in an act of ecocide.

From this moment we were comrades of a special type. Let's face it; we're both eco-anarchists. And very fucking proud of it.

We'd always try to get the other involved in projects so we'd have a chance to work together. This was the case with the zine *Beyond the Dark Horizon*, a publication of green anarchist art, poetry, stories, rants. She invited me to write for it early on. The second edition of the zine will be out soon and will be dedicated to her.

The same was the case with Blockade IMARC. I invited her to be involved with the counter-conference working group I was a part of. The people involved were incredibly friendly and a pleasure to work with. I felt Madi would really enjoy it and have great contributions to make. We'd also never really worked on an activist project together, so I was excited to see that evolve. We were able to create working relationships and a vision for the working group quickly in a creative, collaborative way. The first meeting that Madi came to was a revelation. She was an old hand at this type of activist work, bringing people together over a shared vision for change while always centring the stories of indigenous, land-based struggles.

Continued over page

But there's always a spiritual and political price to be paid for struggling in the world to undo the traumas of genocide and ecocide...Madi's suicide can be seen as a deliberate, defiant act that symbolises the turning of an age.

We are heading into a new, accelerated stage of social decay and civilisational collapse that was first set in motion by the violent exportation of colonial capitalism around the globe.

Capitalism is being run by a particularly nasty bunch with old ideas, brutally enforced by new technologies of power and control. State and corporate-structured authoritarian governments, roundly controlled by extractivist capitalist elites are pursuing their sole interest of profiting from the wholesale destruction of the natural world and caring human relationships.

This reality is being held together by a thin veneer.

The historical, economic and scientific truths are thus: we're at the beginning of the end of the sixth mass extinction and there's no sign of an exit strategy being put in place on a large enough scale to reverse the trend of ecological collapse. The faux-ideological conflict generated by social media narratives of Covid-19 and 'Deep State' conspiracy theories has reached a crescendo. Madi could see this crisis play out in front of her. She felt it in every fibre of her being and she was scared to death by it.

Madi has a deep connection to land that was recognised by indigenous elders and seen in the art she was universally adored for. Her connection to reality and realms beyond was unquestionable. To see her suicide solely as a terrible accident, which it surely was, casts darkness over how deeply she loved this world, nature and the people in it. She couldn't live to see this world continue to burn to death with everyone she loved suffering. She couldn't bear witness to the cruel injustices that permeate all our interactions. So rather than stand idly by or feel useless in her own activism, she made the ultimate sacrifice of love, the giving of her own life, so that we would have the opportunity to question ourselves, our ideas and the worlds we've practised into habit

Some of Madi's last actions were attending the Black Lives Matter protest, creating the Elders Solidarity Network and contributing to the Permaculture Crisis Response Group. These are just a few things that I'm aware of. No doubt there were many, many more.

Madi was a passionate revolutionary who embodied her praxis. Her life was a work of art emboldened by deep love and wild fury.

She was primal, prefigurative, principled and most importantly, direct.

Rest In Power.

Kegan



We have all experienced the stress, anxiety and trauma of living in a world full of death and destruction. Wherever we look, people are hurt and abused for profit and power. Madi and the communities she was a core member of, experience this more than many others. Whether it was indigenous elders, activists or visionary creatives, the feelings of despair and anger that permeate our daily lives can have a long lasting impact on our mental health.

Sometimes, no matter how much support we have from our friends and families, there's the risk that these forces can spiral out of control. We must be vigilant for one another, but we must firstly be vigilant for ourselves.

If you're struggling during this incredibly dark period of human history and are needing support, please please please please, reach out to those closest to you. Please let them know what you're experiencing, even if you're scared that they won't understand, please trust that they will care for you no matter what.

We must be strong for ourselves, but we're not invincible. We all need to support each other. You are never, ever, ever alone.

If, for some reason, you don't feel comfortable speaking to friends or family, there are other people and organisations trained in helping people who are struggling with mental health issues.

Please reach out. To someone. Anyone. We are always stronger when we're together holding each other in the pain that we carry.



Resources:

Beyond Blue

1300 22 4636

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/grief-and-loss>

Wings of hope:

<https://wingsofhope.org.au/>

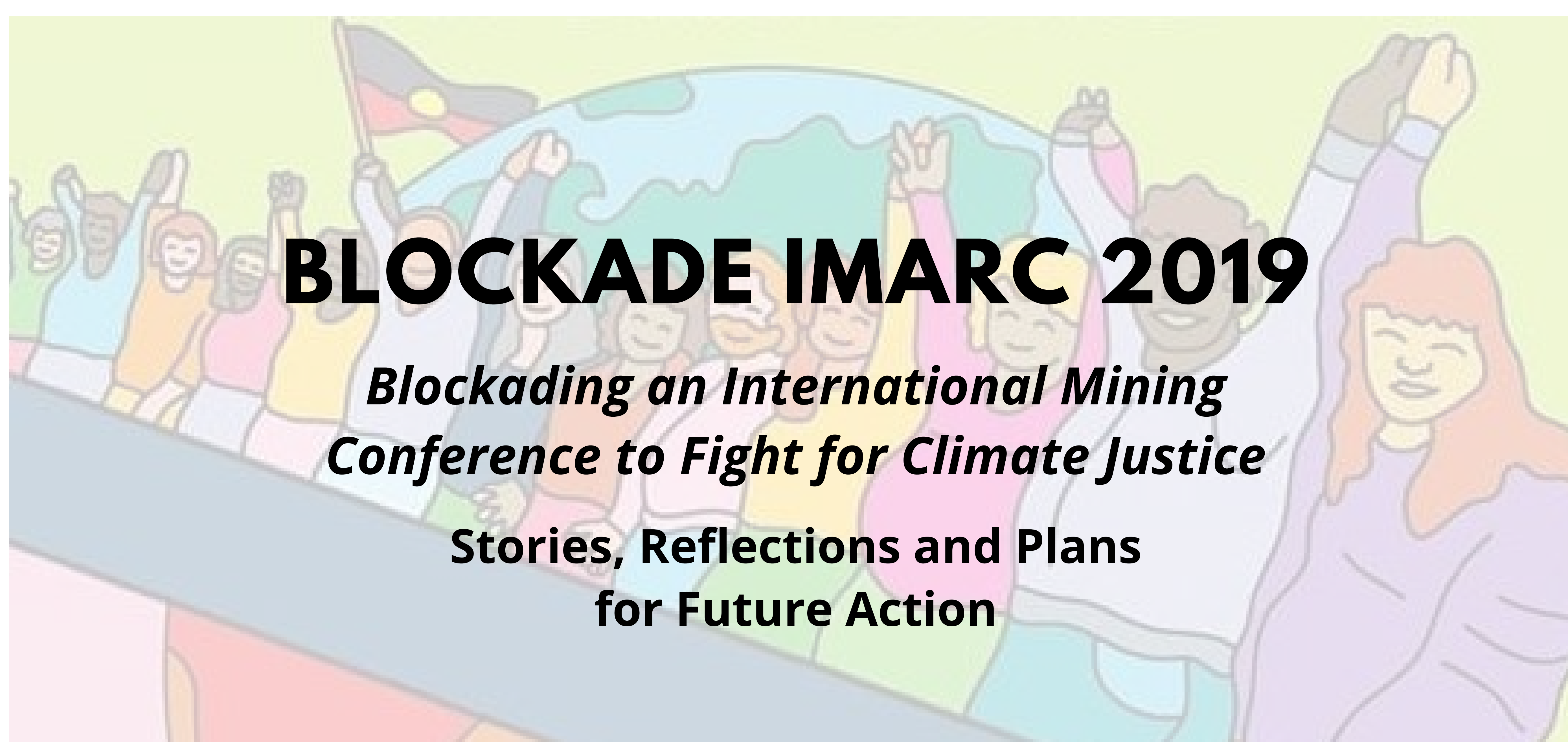
Lifeline

13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service

1300 659 467

<https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/>



Contents

What is Blockade IMARC?.....	6
Planning and collaborating.....	7&8
Counter-conference.....	9&10
First nations voices.....	11&12
International solidarity.....	13&14
Brutal politics.....	15-18
At the blockade.....	19&20
Decentralised direct action.....	21
Blockading a building.....	22
Direct action at Blockade IMARC 2019.....	23
Emotions.....	24
Everybody hates the police.....	25-29
Too many cops, not enough justice.....	30
Supporting each other.....	31&32
Dealing with pepper spray (how-to).....	33&34
Self and collective care.....	35&36
The blockade continues.....	37&38



Blockade IMARC took place on the stolen lands of Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung people of the Kulin nation. This zine was collated and produced on the lands of the Woiwurrung people. Sovereignty of these lands was never ceded and this land always was and always will be Aboriginal land. We pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging.

What is IMARC?

In October 2019, some of the world's worst climate criminals gathered in Melbourne for the annual International Mining and Resources Conference (IMARC). Companies that profit from fuelling climate change, stealing Indigenous land and exploiting workers were in attendance. Their actions drive animal extinction as well as mass displacement of people.

What is Blockade IMARC?

A broad coalition of groups and individuals based in Naarm/Melbourne, on the stolen lands of the Wurundjeri/Boonwurrung people in so-called Australia, came together in early 2019 with the shared goal of planning to shut down IMARC using mass civil disobedience. This diverse coalition of people, who refused to accept that these climate criminals should come to our city to meet and plan their continued reckless agenda of extractivism, destruction, dispossession and environmental degradation, formed the Blockade IMARC Alliance, and organised this mass blockade in the name of climate justice.

Thousands of people gathered to blockade the conference. The blockade brought together students, climate and mining activists, trade unionists and other community activists to stand together in solidarity for a world where respect for people, animals and the planet comes before profit. The Blockade recognised that Indigenous people worldwide are the most affected by mining and lead the resistance globally.

What is this zine?

After the Blockade, organisers invited blockaders to come together to de-brief as a group about their experiences, emotional reactions, and to plan for future actions. This zine is a collation of anonymous contributions from those who attended the all-in debrief as well as additional contributions of words and art from blockaders and supporters. The zine will in no way be a definitive account of the Blockade - it is only a small sample of the thousands of moments that made up Blockade IMARC 2019.

This zine is the collection of many voices. Because of this you may hear different politics, beliefs or theories of change. We invite you to read with your own perspective ready to fill the gaps, or challenge what is written. We'd expect nothing less from our community.

The aim is to sketch a picture of what happened across the week of action, to shed light on the aspects and moments that got less media attention, to share strategy and tactics, to build a sense of possibility and hope for the climate justice movement in so-called Australia and to build momentum for Blockade IMARC 2020.

To request hardcopies, give feedback, ask questions or anything else, you can email: community@blockadeimarc.com.

MESSAGES and DAYS and MONTHS and PREPARATION MONTHS and WEEKS and DAYS and SUCCESS and TIREDNESS and MEANING

What an amazing achievement, especially given that only months before the event blockading IMARC was simply an idea a few of us had! We are so grateful to the months before IMARC which allowed us to create relationships and trust without which we couldn't have achieved nearly as much. A big thank you goes out to everyone who put so many long hours and hard work to make it what it was. There are too many to name.

It is always going to be hard when different groups and individuals come together to organise. We have different ideas of how we want the world to look, and different ways we want to get there. We want to focus on different things, and even have different practices, norms and words to describe things. We had socialists, communists, anarchists, social democrats, vegans, freegans, vegetarians, egalitarians, Indigenous people, Black people, People of Colour, and settlers all expressing their own values. Just because we all want to get rid of capitalism doesn't mean we're homogenous in our thoughts, feelings and beliefs.

Of course we're always hopeful that there is a way for socialists, unionists, anarchists, ecowarriors and more, to come together. For now, in this zine we're taking these two pages to explore what worked and reflect.

Ed of Socialist Alternative thought that the organising was "overall pretty good, various factions and interests were represented well I think. I'm not a fan of consensus decisions though. Obviously consensus should be aimed for but when consensus can't be reached it's more democratic to go with majority vote than allow a minority to block the decision." What is more democratic is certainly a point still up for debate.

Whilst there are many nuanced factors that lead us to be proud and happy with the Blockade IMARC event we feel that there are three things that fundamentally helped us to move through so many differences. Good facilitation, a clear determination to make things happen, and working groups.

Firstly, good facilitation with a solid meeting framework, in particular for the main all-in meetings, helped us through the conflicts. In the all-in meetings we heard report backs from working groups, had discussion around proposals, and then split off into working groups to get things done. Meetings can be really important and exciting places, where we get to hear what is going on, make plans, and practice working together. People often complain about meetings, and when they aren't facilitated well or don't have good group culture they can be very draining. We are really proud of what we achieved in the Blockade IMARC meetings. If we want to organise collectively to get rid of capitalism and colonisation, and build something much better, we are going to need a lot of meetings, so we better practice getting good at them and enjoying them!

S and MINUTES and SECONDS and MEETINGS and CALLS and CATCHUPS and MEALS and POSTERING and JOY and FRUSTRATION

It was interesting combining different meeting styles, where some of us were used to more conversational type meetings, with others used to more rhetoric and speech style comments. Some groups were more used to and preferred decentralised decision making, while others saw the importance of centralising decisions around things like safety. A question for the next big organising project is whether we continue to have so many decisions made centrally, or whether affinity groups and working groups can autonomously make decisions and need only to be sharing information and discussing strategy. Some have said that the capacity time required to navigate theories of change can be better spent getting shit done, though there are pros and cons for everything.

Second is the determination of the people involved. People who came and stuck around took on work and were accountable for it. The level of centralisation of decision making, through fortnightly meetings, meant that there was some personal commitment required to further the planning. With such a short lead in time it was amazing to see so many people come together and make that commitment. Without the almost exponential growth in people as the event grew nearer it would have been impossible to pull off what we did. Again, thanks to all those people for that commitment.

The division of work amongst different groups is the final area we thought helped in the organising of the blockade, as it meant for the most part that work could be allocated and undertaken quickly and easily. A lot of autonomy was given to working groups so that they could deal with issues within the group that related to their planning. For example the skills and services working group, a smaller group, were able to quickly plan a two day counter conference, food for the week, and some wellbeing and arrestee support without having to deal with the central meetings for each small but important decision. The media working group also quickly and neatly created messaging, media content and managed the social media page with the autonomy given them by the whole collective.

Another interesting thing to look back on was which groups/individuals ended up doing which kinds of work. In general people who leaned towards anarchism were seen to do more care work, including cooking food, having the info stall and rest area, being the street medics, legal observers and arrestee support, while people who leaned more towards trotskyist socialism did a lot of the frontline work, contacting and talking to media, chanting and making speeches, doing outreach through posters and conversations. As far as we can tell this was similar at the S11 protest in 2000 (send us an email at blockadeimarczine@gmail.com for more info). Looking at this through a gendered lens of which work is stereotypically “women's” and “men's” work adds another dimension to this, though it's important to note that through pretty much all parts of the blockade there was a lot of gender diversity without one gender dominating.

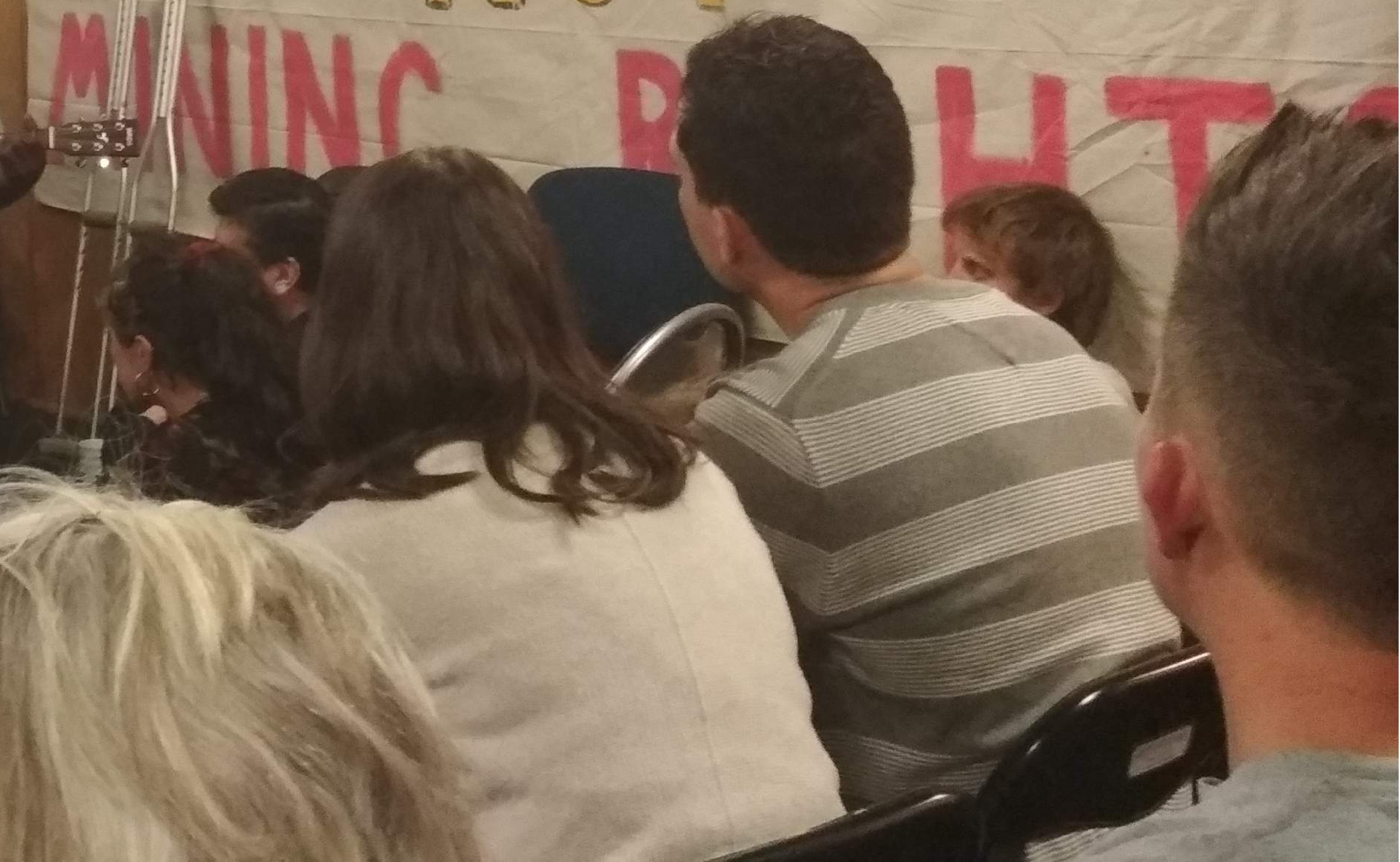
The weekend before the blockade, we came together for a counterconference called 'Block!Aid! Upskill!' The weekend included direct action training, a talk on decolonising activism, and an all-in briefing. There was a panel of first nations speakers discussing the impact of mining on their communities, and their communities' struggles against mining and resource extraction.

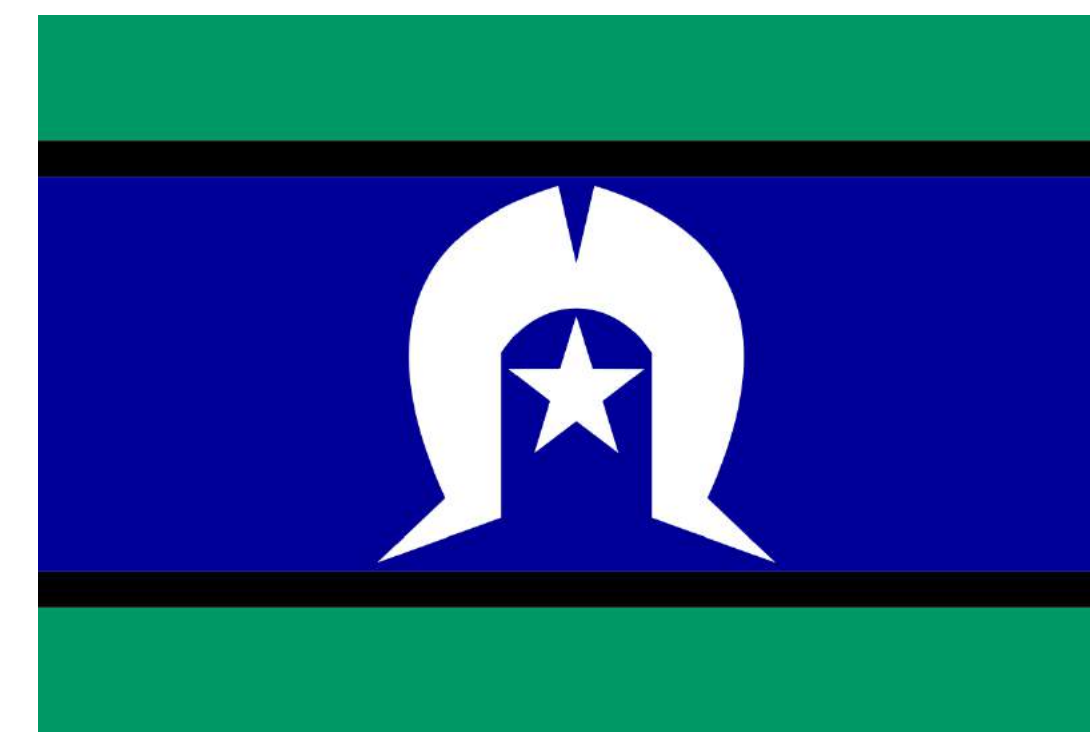
This set the context for the week of blockading. Hearing and sharing stories of struggle, and seeing the big picture of global mining and fossil fuel extraction spurred us on to get out there and blockade IMARC!



LAND RIGHTS
NOT

MINING RIGHTS





REFLECTIONS ON THE BLOCKADE

There are two things that I want to emphasise; care for elders, and respecting the Welcome to Country. Often there are elders and traditional owners who come from far away, places with different climates, and we need to be looking out and caring for them. For example Uncle Ned was having a great time, and people at the blockade were bringing him food and water, but he was sitting in the sun for a long time. Old people won't moan and complain about the things that make them uncomfortable, and when I got him moved into the shade he was very thankful. There are things I've learnt from looking after old people all my life. It's good to make sure we have a roster to make them as comfortable as they can be.

We can't take the Welcome to Country for granted. Anyone who wants to protest on country has to adhere to protocols of the Traditional Owners. Auntie Carolyn, the Boon Wurrung elder who did the welcome, told us the importance of respecting the country we are on. I saw someone abusing a young woman in the line of linked arms, and that just isn't on. I told him that there are rules for being on country, and that he was going against the Lore of the land. We need to have rules about safety. The woman was totally fine, but if we want to encourage people to be part of these spaces, we can't stand by and let that sort of behaviour happen.

The food was incredible, the whole set up was incredible. It was all really well organised.

The police disrespected the Welcome to Country and Aunty Carolyn, a senior Traditional Owner. I talked to a few police, including the negotiator, to explain that Aunty Carolyn wanted to do the Welcome to Country, and send a message of peace and calm, from the steps in front of the exhibition centre, but the police denied that right. She was behind me when I asked, and obviously she wasn't going to do anything or barge the doors, but I think the police were happy for things to be agitated. I see that as inciting the crowd. We need to hold the police accountable.

Lidia Thorpe

Gunnai-Gunditjmara

Activist and Greens Senator for Victoria



Robbie Thorpe (Gunnai-Mara) and Viv Malo (Gooniyandi) get the crowd fired up on the first day of the blockade.



Uncle Ned Jampijinpa Hargraves (Warlpiri) sits out the front of the Exhibition Centre and leads in the making of a message stick.



Viv Malo addresses the crowd.



Lidia Thorpe (Gunnai-Gunditjmara) and Vicky Abdullah (Tjiwarl) stand strong against Uranium mining. Vicky spoke at the counterconference about her community's struggle against uranium mining in Yeelirrie, Western Australia.

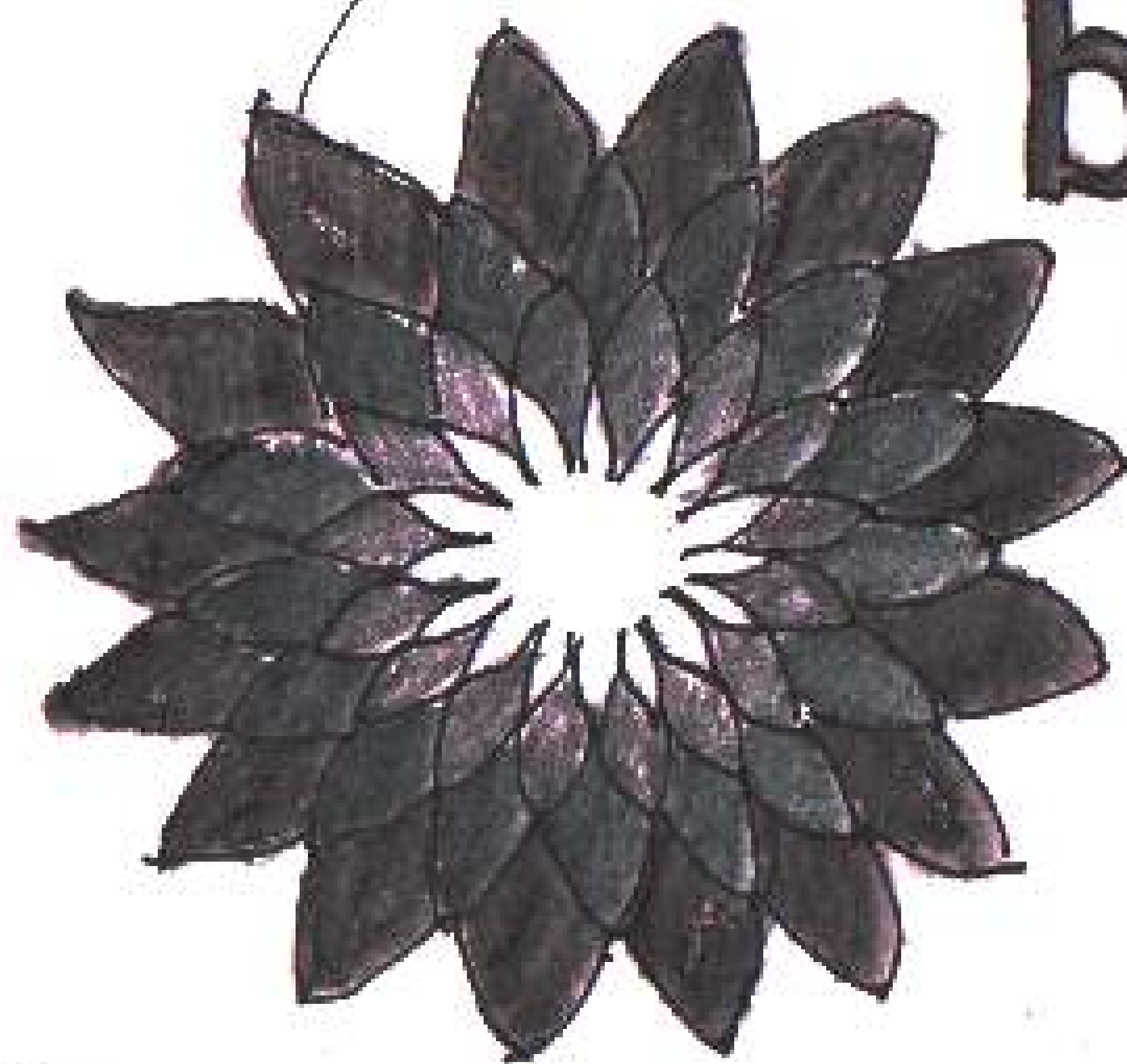
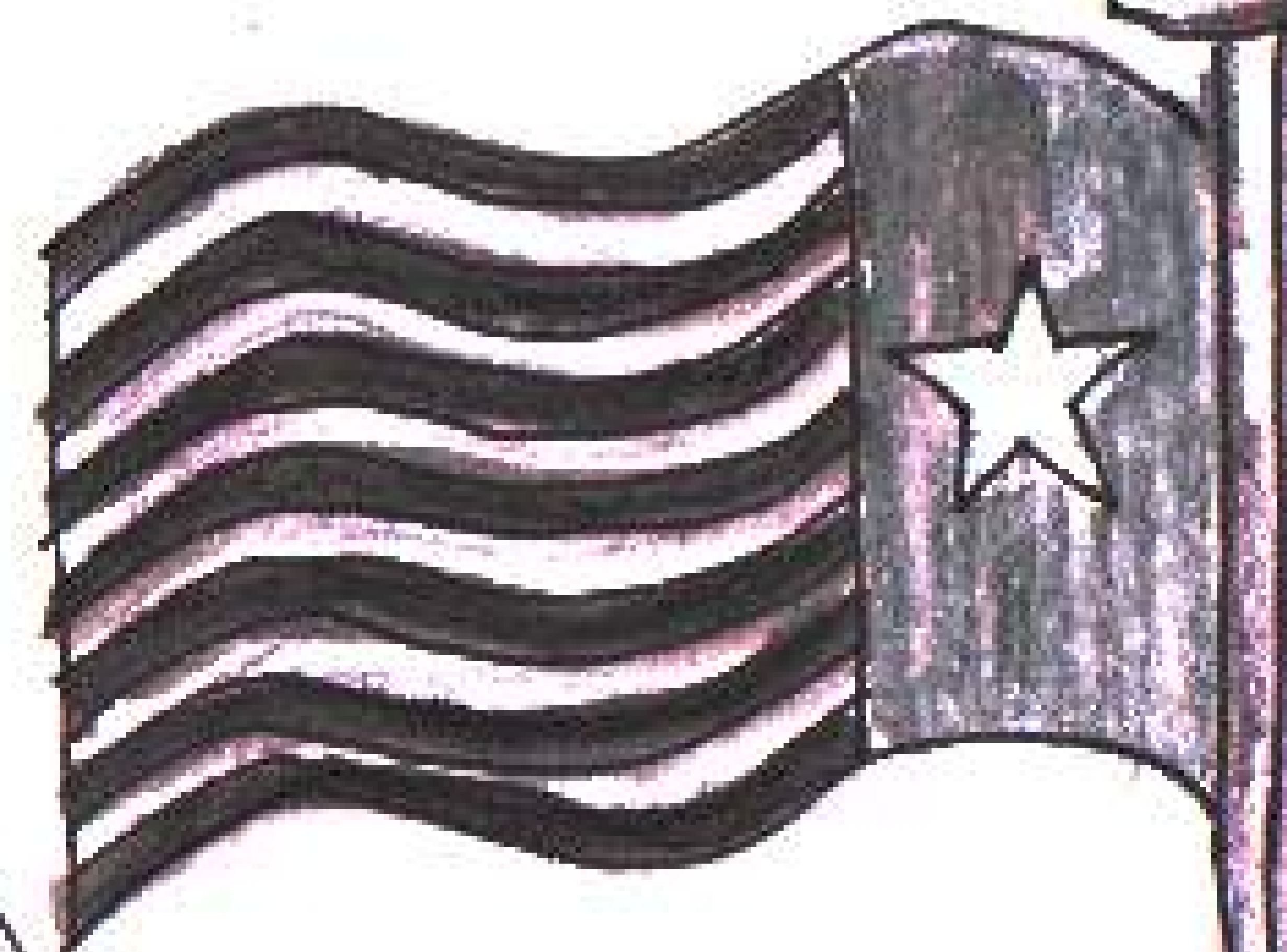
NEVER BE DEFEATED

There was **international solidarity** shown with communities affected by destructive mining operations, including Eritrea, Phillipines, Chile and West Papua.

Extractive Industries

+
Neo-Liberalism

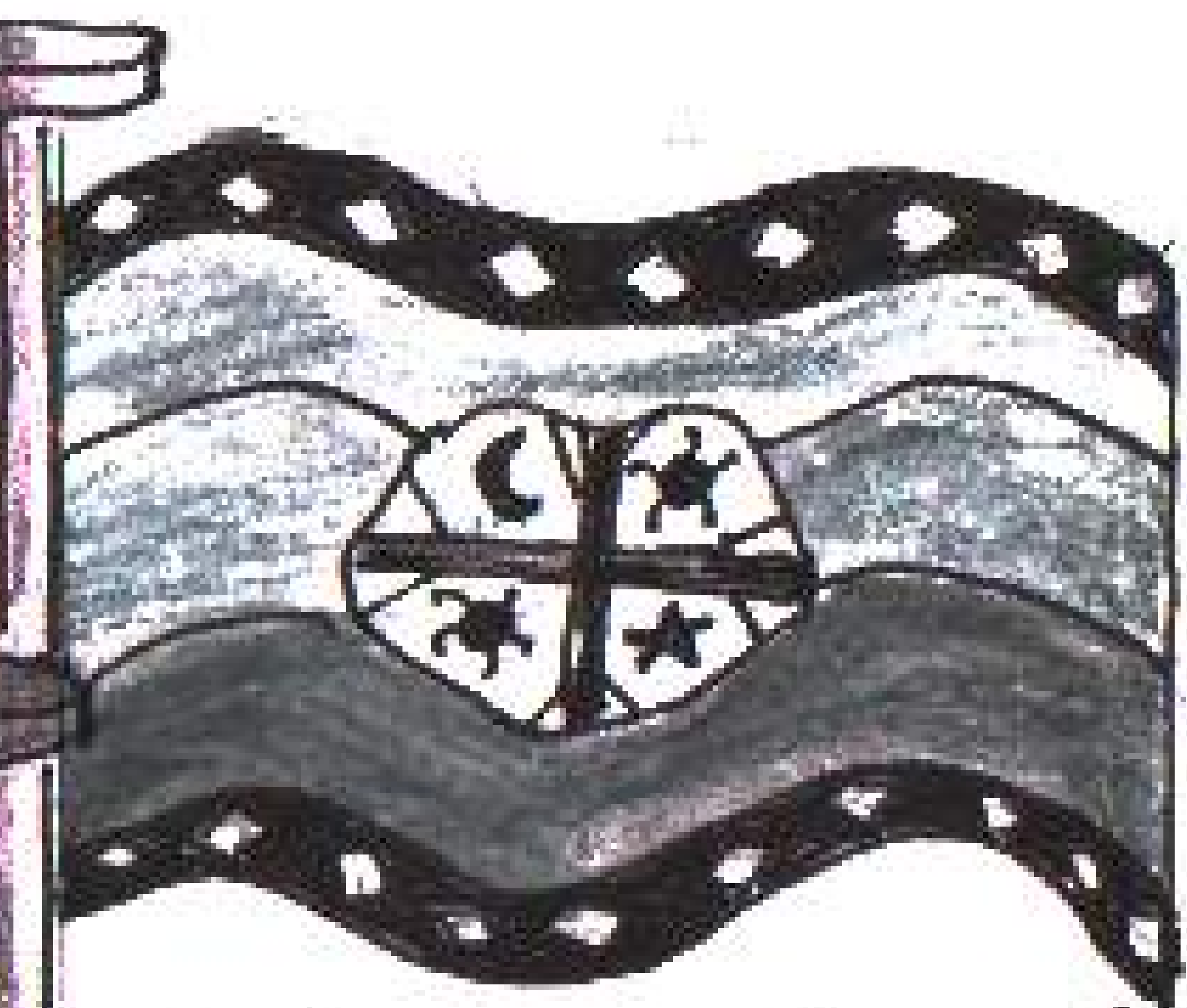
=
Poverty
+
Genocide



bp

THE PEOPLE

EL PUEBLO



Chile's out on strike
Hong Kongers won't give in
Fuck you and your corporate greed
We've got a world to win



Blockaders called out international mining,
destruction, globalisation, extractivism,
international caste system and borders.

UNIDO

JAMAS

SEPA

VENCIDO



Brutal Politics

Two recent events may have given us a glimpse of the future. In the first, a climate protest was met with brutal response from the police. In the second, a prime minister declared that he would introduce new laws that would erode civil liberties to prop up a dying industry.

Climate change is altering both the physical environment and the political landscape. Opinion about what constitutes a legitimate protest is divided and some media coverage has contributed to this polarisation.

In the last week of October, climate change activists demonstrated outside the international Mining and Resources Conference in Melbourne. The range of actions included an attempt to impede IMARC delegates by blockading the entrances to the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. The police responded with batons, horses and pepper spray; measures immediately condoned by Victorian Premier Dan Andrews and his police minister Lisa Neville as appropriate use of force. Inevitably, the clashes themselves became the story, with considerable attention given to the aggressive behaviour of a handful of blockaders. A cursory glance at the comments section across more progressive media outlets indicates that the opinions of moderate and sympathetic observers is in flux. It is easy to portray the protesters as criminal or wrongheaded in their approach, or, on the other hand, to see them as the hapless victims of a brutal police state. There is a more complex story to be told.

What we didn't see in the reporting was the complexity and careful management of the protest

The IMARC Blockade was orchestrated by a diverse coalition of groups that included Front Line Action on Coal, Socialist Alliance, Whistleblowers Activists and Community Alliance and the Latin American Solidarity Network. The organisers stated aim was to

put a stop “to the mass destruction caused by extractive industries across the globe and the harm they cause to human communities, animals and ecosystems”.

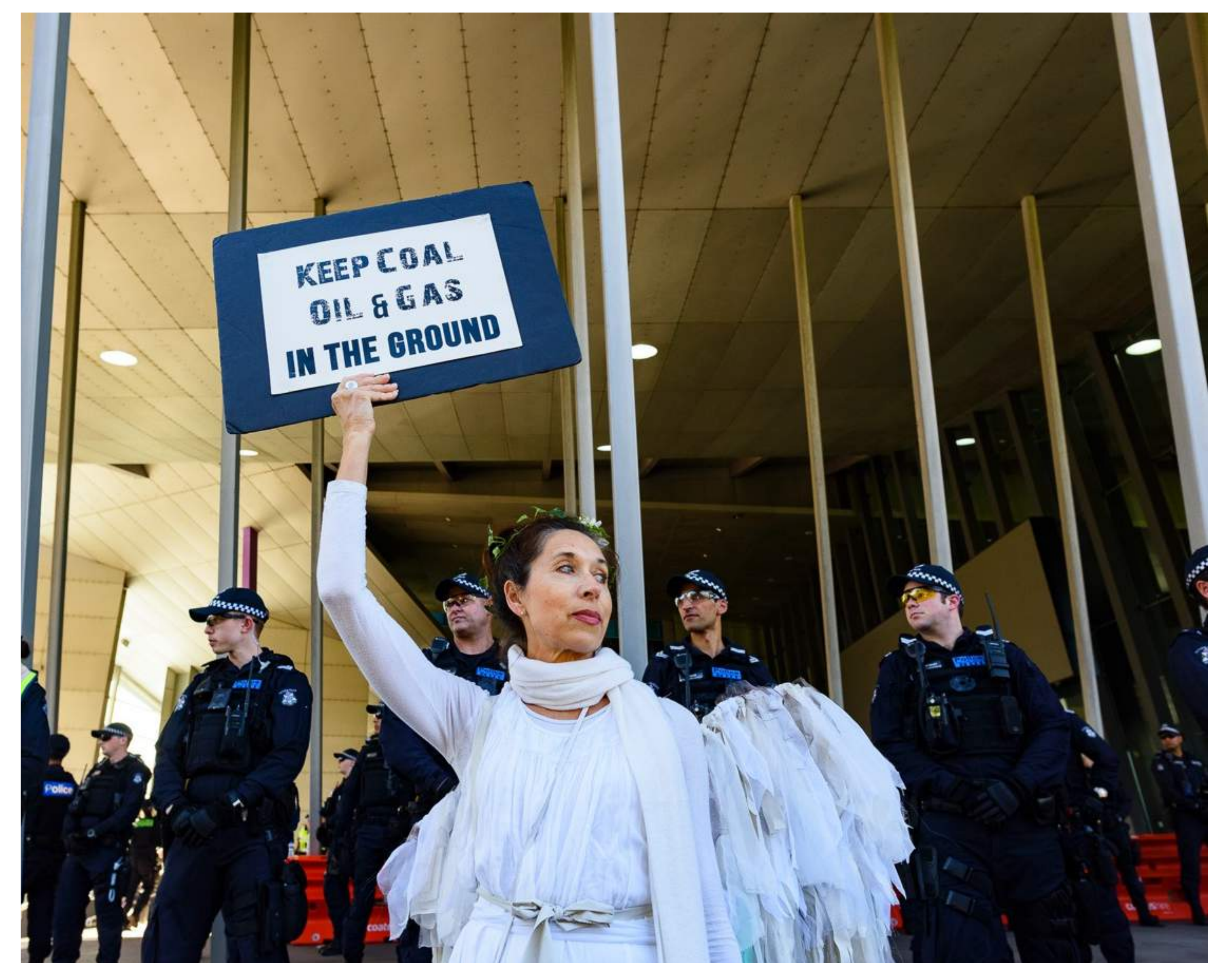
What we didn’t see in the reporting was the complexity and careful management of the protest which included the appointment of police liaison representatives, the provision of first aid and legal support and the development of a daily program of performances, music, creative actions, information and dialogue.



The blockade was opened with a traditional Aboriginal smoking ceremony combined with an ‘unwelcome to country’ message for the conference delegates performed by Gunnai/Mara campaigner Robbie Thorpe and Gooniyandi activist iv Malo. Warlpiri Elder Uncle Ned Jampijinpa Hargraves described the dangers facing local First Nations communities since the Northern Territory Government lifted the moratorium on fracking for coal seam gas.

By 7am on Tuesday, the first day of the conference, the convention centre forecourt was full of protestors and police and chanting was drowning out the din of early morning traffic. A team of volunteers in pink fluoro vests had taken up position to observe events on behalf of the Melbourne Activist Service Legal Service. By 9.15am, MALS had documented the following: snatch (arrest) squads targeting organisers, punches by police, horses pushing into crowds, police officers without ID tags, police deploying batons and OC spray — oleoresin capsicum or pepper spray — and more than 20 arrests. They subsequently released a statement of concern about police practices.

But a lot of other things were going on at the site too. Within metres of the picket line, the Climate Guardians enacted a silent vigil dressed in white robes and feathered wings to communicate the urgent need to respond to the climate emergency. Simultaneously, Extinction Rebellion conducted a “coal = death” die-in. Sirens wailed, then death bells tolled, as people collapsed on the ground. The bodies symbolising current and future victims of climate change were outlined in white chalk.



Minutes after the last bell tolled, another percussive sound burst through the yelling on the convention centre steps. An older gentleman wearing a wide brown hat had brought his favourite cooking pot to bang — a long established protest action particularly popular in Latin America. A surge of movement identified his location, as a sea of blue uniforms piled in, hauled the man out of the line of protestors, to be dragged away and charged with resisting arrest.

These contrasting scenes were repeated throughout the three days of demonstrations. On the second morning, the Climate Choir Melbourne added their voices to the protest at one of the many entrances. After politely asking the chanting blockaders to be quiet for a bit, the group of about 20 singers accompanied by accordion sang jaunty lyrics about stopping Adani to favourites tune ‘The Saints Come Marching In’. The picketers, linked arm-in-arm swayed and bobbed to the songs. Stoic coppers watched on and conference delegates looked bemused.

*No warning was given,
and no explanation
provided.*



On Wednesday the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change organised a group meditation lead by Buddhist monk and climate activist Tejopala Rawls. Not long after the 15 meditators had completed their contemplation on a grassy spot near the Yarra, a small group of protestors were taking a selfie on the steps of the convention centre. They were not part of the blockade line, but police pushed them from behind, forced them down a flight of steps and then sprayed them with pepper spray. Several of the protestors were quite elderly and feared for their safety. No warning was given, and no explanation provided.

During the week protestors listened to music and performance, intermingled with accounts by visiting activists whose land and people are being damaged by global mining practices. Philippines Australia Solidarity Association, for example, gave a detailed account of OceanaGold’s (OGPI) human rights violations. Current and former Greens parliamentarians also spoke.

Occasionally a mining delegate deliberately chose to raise the temperature — possibly seeking bragging rights — by running the gauntlet through the protestors, rather than taking the open route to the convention centre that had been cleared for them by police. Some of these interventions produced confrontational media images of blockaders and conference delegates hurling abuse at one another.

Many protestors who weren’t injured were nevertheless deeply upset by what they saw and heard — police directing pepper spray into the faces and eyes of protestors and the screams of agony as the injured were helped off to the first aid area for treatment. A team of about 30 volunteer medics thought they had trained and organised well. But they found themselves overwhelmed by the number of people



needing to have the burning foam cleansed from their eyes and skin. The emotional aftermath will be substantial and the trust in the police force shattered.



The current wave of climate protests is rising in response to the escalating warnings about the science and urgency for climate action. The effects are already with us, as ecosystems collapse around the world.

Young people in particular are justifiably angry. Their future is threatened by a problem not of their making and the older generation who hold power continue to pursue business as usual. Scott Morrison's description of protestors as "indulgent and selfish" and his pledge (before another meeting of miners) to outlaw secondary boycotts has added fuel to the fire. It is hardly surprising that the message many protestors took away from the IMARC blockade is that the state will wield a big stick as soon as demonstrations stray beyond the boundaries of the polite and peaceful. If you seek in any way to actually interfere with the operations of corporate capital, then push will quickly turn to shove. Yet the history of successful movements for social change — women's suffrage, civil rights, the campaign against the Vietnam War, or saving the Franklin River — have all involved deliberate law-breaking.

If you seek in any way to actually interfere with the operations of corporate capital, then push will quickly turn to shove.

No doubt there will be more civil disobedience and confrontation and more arguments about the limits of legitimate protest. The political climate, like the atmospheric climate, is getting harsher.

(at) the

positive things:

direct action education for participants.

turning away entitled rich dudes.

staunch and amazing women
leading chants and making things
happen.

seeing a genuine diversity of
voices.

making new friends.

making our feelings
known to delegates.

working together to hold the line.

new and excellent chants invented.

perservering despite police violence.



biookade

locking arms and sharing moments
when the group became a
powerful force.

de-arrests and people physically
protecting each other.



the music, singing and slam poetry.

stressful things:

moments of vulnerability with the
line stretched thin.

watching corporate media, pro-cop spin.

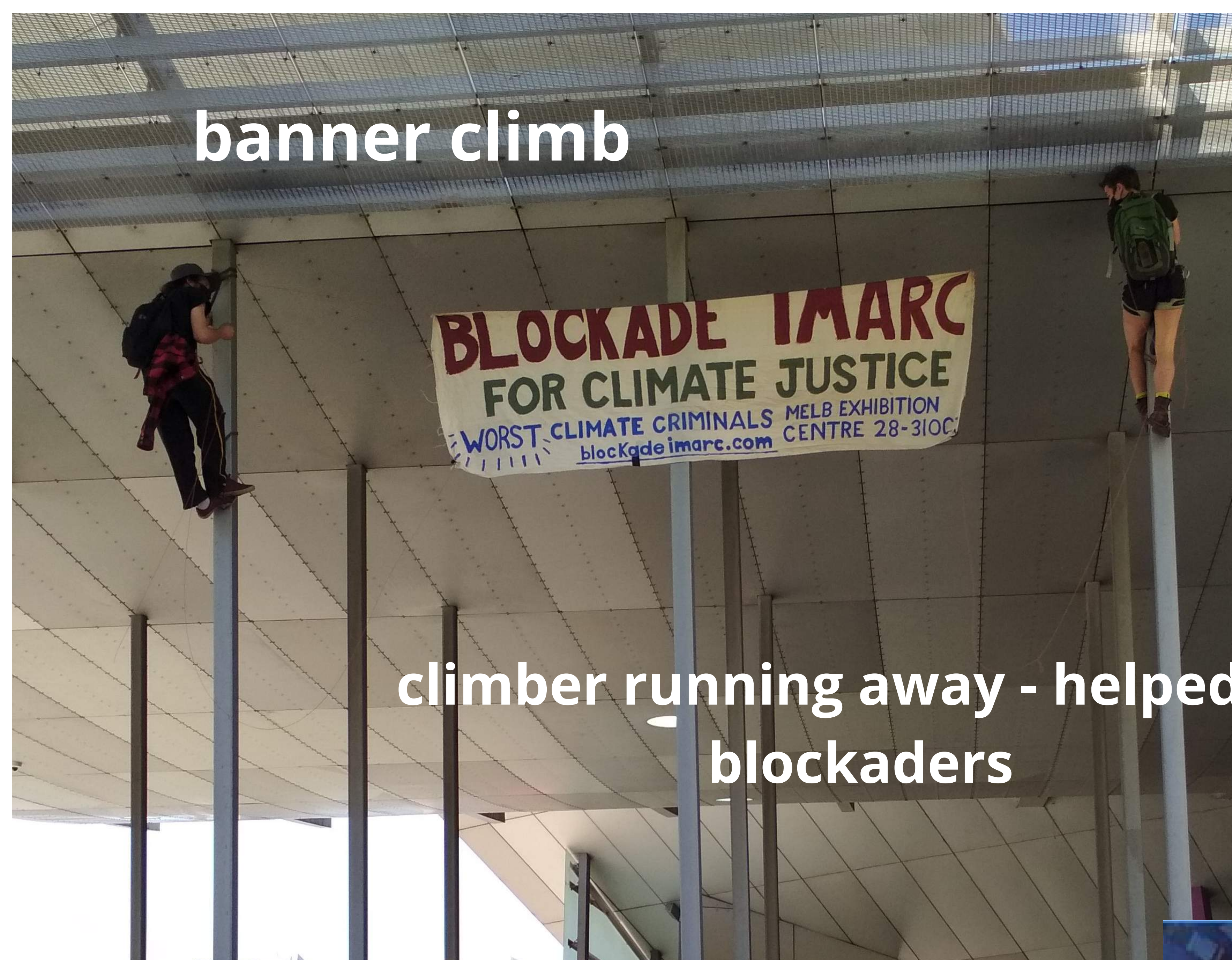
feeling personally ineffective in
the moment.

issues with decision-making and strategy.

feeling powerless to get to the
front doors.

police violence and use of pepper
spray, especially after the banner
climb.

direct action at blockade imarc '19



Admiration
 demotivated empowered
 impressed loved **SHOCKED** **ADRENALINE**
 HELMED **defiance**
 Up and down
 Shit
 Upset
 Stressed
 STRONG
 in awe **ANGER** Driven

Emotions during IMARC

fragile
 POWERFUL loving
 Inspired
 Hopeful
 WHAT THE FUCK?
 Outraged relaxed
 Drained
 uncertainty?
 Proud
 Excitement
 happy
 ANXIOUS
 undignified
 alone

decentralised direct action

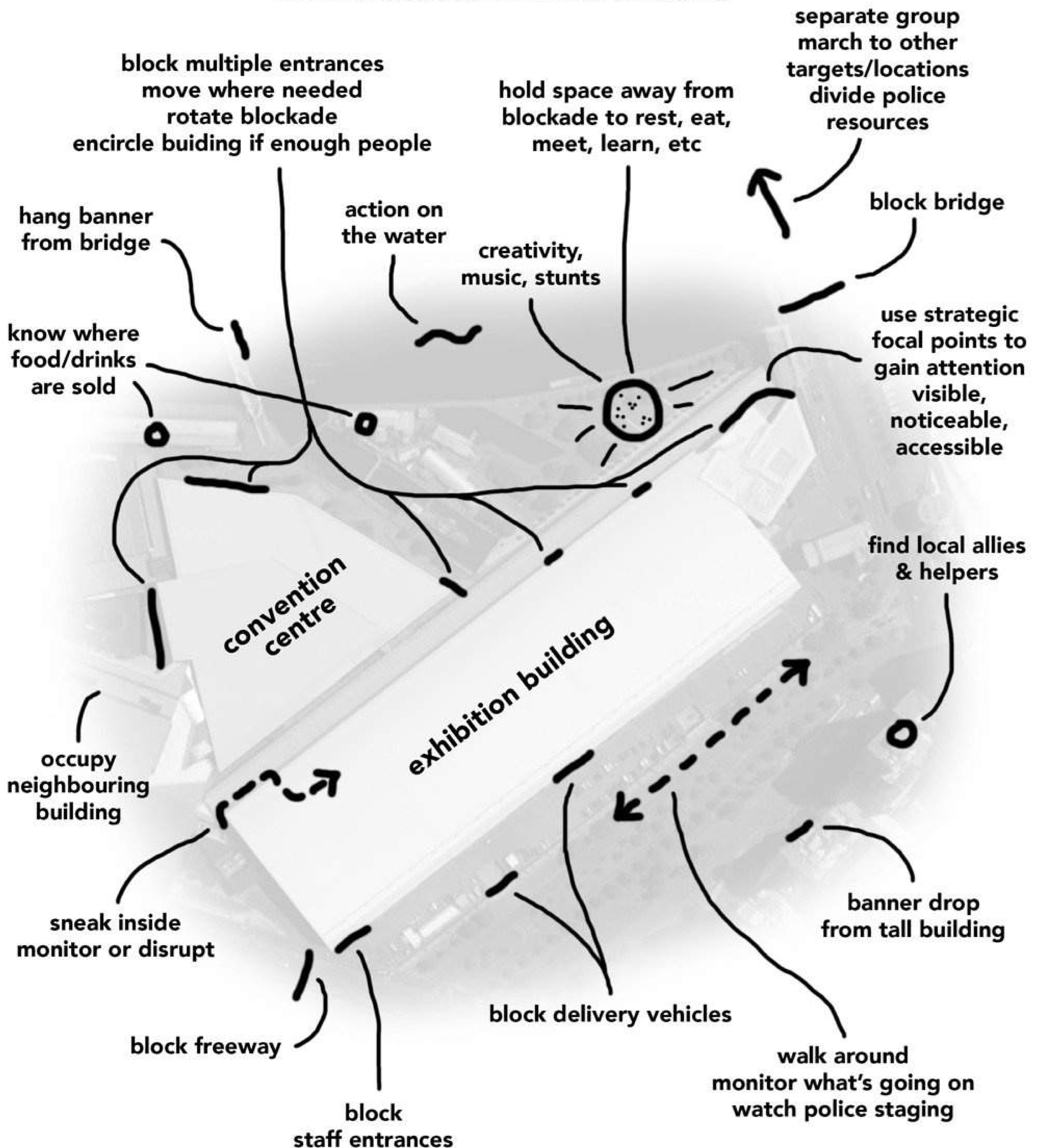
like a flock of birds, we're stronger together



direct action against environmental destruction, colonialism, the state, capitalism, private property, etc, is defensive. property destruction is not violence. direct action works when it disrupts or blocks & forces power holders & hegemonic systems to concede to your demands or dreams. stop work, strike, blockade, picket, sit-in, sabotage, culturejam, hack, live alternatives, educate, share, support, care & collectivise!

blockading a building

decentralised direct action tactics



make plans & backup plans, be adaptable, change when needed,
hold ground when strategic, be fluid when strategic, think critically and
autonomously and collectively, assess effectiveness, imagine big ideas,
take care of yourself & those around you, take breaks, rotate roles,
never talk to police (unless acting as police liaison)

Everybody Hates the Police

text from: darknessoutside.home.blog



For a few days in late October, protesters attempted to shut down the International Mining and Resources Conference (IMARC) because fuck mining and capitalist resource extraction as it murders Indigenous peoples, devastates the environment and creates the conditions for the world to burn. Numbers weren't large enough and tactics not fluid enough* to be entirely successful but there was significant disruption.

And so the police went hard. And people were staunch. And the police went harder. I've been up close with plenty of scenes of police violence and even still it was distressing as I stood there unable to see – having lost my glasses in the scuffles – but hearing people wailing and being sick from the effects of copious amounts of capsicum spray used viciously at close quarters.

So lets say that the police violence that occurred at IMARC was for me, and i'm sure many others, exceptional. And lets hold that for a moment and recognise it as subjectively true. Maybe you're a little more fearful of going to demos in future. Maybe your body is still a little banged up. Maybe you're exploring different forms of militancy for next time. Maybe you have the legal system to deal with now. Maybe you had a real light-bulb ACAB moment and it feels a little exciting/ liberating. Maybe you had to deal with depression and anxiety in the period following. Maybe some/all of these things happened in various combinations. And all of them (and many more) are real and valid. Hopefully you're having good debriefs and chats with trusted crews.

Also, lets recognise that these situations where subjective experiences are transmitted into a shared moment of collectivity are significant. By the end of the IMARC protests, the often articulated disdain for the police became a viscerally understood basis of commonality and – although there wasn't too much we could do to act on it in that moment – it still felt powerful. The issue now becomes one of not diminishing that sense of power or allowing it to be channelled back into the arms of the State through appeals to the 'right to demonstrate' and liberal suggestions that police violence is unacceptable when it is deployed against 'well-intentioned' protesters. Instead, how we

choose to politicise our response to state repression and police violence – giving real consideration to the scope and purpose of how it is deployed – can become a point of connected-ness and solidarity because, if not everybody, a lot of people do hate the fucking police.

*(‘Be Water’ scream the streets of Hong Kong, as everyone here shrugs their shoulders and proceeds to render our collective mass immobile and entirely at the mercy of a vindictive and tooled up, blue army. But this article is not conceived as a discussion about tactics, we’ll have those in other spaces. For now, let’s just agree that we hate the police together and think about what that means politically.

Exceptional state violence, all the time.

Just a couple of weeks after the IMARC protests, police burst into a house in the Northern Territory community of Yuendumu and shot dead a young Aboriginal man, Kumanjayi Walker. The murder of Walker reinforces what all of us should already understand: that exceptional state violence (murder) is mostly unexceptional, commonplace. We have come up in a country where the resistance of First Nations’ people has ensured that ‘deaths in custody’ isn’t just a phrase describing how things are, but a site of struggle. We have also seen that the use of that phrase is unceasing, with new names constantly being added to the list¹. This constant state violence is a reminder – if one was needed – that the police are institutionally an occupying, colonial force that continues to treat Indigenous communities and bodies as abject and exterminable.

It is not the legacy of colonial genocide that sees the police continuing to murder and brutalise Indigenous people – that would suggest that there is a separation of sorts between policing and colonialism. No. The police have always been, and remain, integral as the armed enforcers who control, discipline and murder those that aren’t easily incorporated into the ‘order’ of capitalist, colonial states (a point that I’ll return to later). Indigenous peoples bear the brunt of this as their unceded, sovereign relationship to country ensures that their existence will always be a problem for the State’s righteous claims to sovereign rule.

State violence such as murder is not exceptional, it is recurrent and normalised within the logic of colonialism. But there’s something else that goes missing when we position policing as ordinarily neutral or as not being violent until they murder someone (or use horses, capsicum spray, batons on protesters). That is, the ‘ordinary’ presence of police amongst Indigenous communities (or at

protests) is only established on the grounds of prior acts of violence and its accepted ordinariness functions through the continuous threat of further violence – a threat that is often enough carried out. Their violence is their existence: the ever-present, watching and disciplining, colonial, patriarch.



The community of Yuendumu knows this violent presence well, having been one of the communities impacted by the militarised incursion into Indigenous communities that the Australian government called the Northern Territory Intervention. That military operation might have lacked the outright violence of carpet-bombing or massacres, but through bureaucratic intercession managed to position policing and state control at the centre of NT Aboriginal communities. Amy Thomas has described in more detail

the implementation of these repressive measures backed by increased policing, arguing that the government's idea of a solution to the fallout wrought by two centuries of racism, dispossession and genocide, "was the free market, delivered by the State's jackboot"². All this occurred against the communities' recommendations for resolving their own issues and with the obvious corollary of being a land-grab to facilitate further exploitative resource extraction.

The point here is to demonstrate a trajectory that contextualises the police violence at IMARC within the broader violence of the colonial state. It is to follow Natasha Lennard's argument that "even the rhetoric of police turning violent during a specific protest ignores that policing, as an institution in this country, functions as a force of consistent violence against black life"³. Lennard is a white writer writing from the USA, but it is clear that this quote is directly applicable to policing here. So, even as we tend to our wounds and trauma, we can step back from the police violence at IMARC to recognise it as relatively unexceptional when considered next to the violence of police murdering Aboriginal people. And from there, we can step back again to recognise that police violence isn't only about these most brutal moments, but is established as a permanent presence in the ongoing functioning of the colonial state.



A constant state of exception.

A few days after the IMARC protests had finished, one mainstream news channel reported from the police academy about a series of training exercises that the riot squad were undertaking in relation to dealing with crowd control and riotous situations. The riot squad spokesperson, speaking to camera, makes reference to new tactics as well as "keeping it contemporary", through paying attention to what's going on around the world (and mentioning how "they" – all of us who'll have every reason to be in confrontation with the police/state – have evolving tactics as well). What we should glean from hearing this is the awareness that those in positions of authority have that this conjunction of crises (environmental, economic) is entirely global and that the upsurge in resistance around the world could potentially occur here. Even in this country, where protest tends to be polite, placid and un-threatening, there is the expectation that we aren't more than a trigger away from seeing an upsurge in militant resistance that mirrors so many other parts of the world.

While the capitalist drive to profit and resource accumulation has always and consistently generated social crises, any suggestion that this is merely part of inevitable, cyclical periods of calm-upheaval-calm, is being exposed as one uprising leaks into the next, crossing diverse geographical and geo-political terrain. And of course, the unalterable nature of environmental destruction and climate change ensures no realistic endpoint can be envisaged within the current systems. In this context, policing takes on an ever-more totalising role in the protection of wealth and state power. Not simply the armed thugs, they are in fact the guarantors of the State's existence and are leveraging the importance of that position to gain more power and resources.

Within this situation, the feared upheavals to "our (white Australia's) way of life" caused by social, economic and environmental disorder is used as a mandate to ensure a constant state of exception that allows the State to assign itself (and the police) ever more authority and the means to enforce it. As such, the police's capacity for violence is multiplied through new laws, increased powers, hi-

tech weaponry and in simply being a constant presence. This follows the Invisible Committee's line that the police are "the persistent and constant expression of the state of exception – that which every sovereign wishes it could hide, but which it is regularly forced to exhibit in order to make itself feared"⁴. In the current climate of crisis-afflicted governance, the state of exception becomes the norm and the full repressive apparatus of the police is permanently mobilised against more and more people.

We should note here that crisis and the state of exception are not the same thing, but they do have something of a symbiotic relationship. The key difference being that we are the crisis, while a state of exception is what the State introduces in its attempts to establish 'order' against unruly populations. There is a symmetrical interplay to this: as this system throws our lives into crisis by only creating insecure and unsustainable forms of existence, we return the crisis to it through our acts of collective solidarity and struggle. These are varied in form, with no singular underlying cause or desired outcome (and certainly, at times, some of them provide space for the manifestation of reactionary forces) but they are part of an upsurge in resistance that threatens state power.

This multitude of diverse rebellions against the economic exploitation and environmental degradation inherent to colonisation and capitalism is now unceasing and cannot be restrained without even more excessive state violence. As the news reported from the police academy, it is the riot squad that is the fastest growing section of the police. This underscores the importance of their role as the government, business, intelligence agencies and police in this country are all aware that conditions are becoming less easily recoverable through typical governmental or capitalist strategies (such as the 'green-washing' of capitalism). And with that we are seeing increasing evidence of the constant state of exception.

Bringing an ACAB attitude, instead of 'the right to demonstrate'.

Within this larger context, to plead for the State to guarantee a 'right to demonstrate' or that police should be nicer towards protesters is to act out our resistance in a space that both – police and the government – are familiar with and in control of. It allows them to set the terms of engagement, appearing to be in dialogue with whatever dissent confronts it, but firmly drawing the line about what is allowable well short of anything that might threaten it. Instead of recognising the context of how the police are mobilised in this moment and acting politically to create space beyond that, the impulse tends to be to fallback into what is known and comfortable. It all has a similar



resonance to proposing green capitalism as a response to climate change – a 'solution' that would allow all the same exploitative and destructive mechanisms of the market to remain while appearing to be doing something.

Situating our actions within this type of civil society discourse suggests that there is a level of equilibrium between 'rights' and policing that can be attained. As I have already argued, there is no 'ordinary' level of policing that does not serve a violent, murderous function. It is a mis-direction to plead for a 'normality' that cannot exist and which, in any case, is simply an incubator for the state violence that takes more overt forms now. And of course, any 'normality' that has previously existed was the normality of the white, colonial Australian state that perpetrates acts of genocide

and dispossession against Aboriginal people. As such, asking the state for 'rights' in this way is simply giving legitimacy to the conditions of its sovereign rule.

There are, of course, occasions where creating a bit of room to manoeuvre within the current state apparatus is a required move. This is exemplified by Aboriginal resistance across this continent, where assertions of sovereignty and anti-colonial struggle challenge the very the basis of so-called Australia, but also necessarily occur alongside demands made of the state that seek to redress the violence perpetrated upon Indigenous bodies (see the powerful statement from the family of Tanya Day⁵).



But lets be clear in differentiating this as a strategy from the almost instinctive 'right to demonstrate' insistence that occurs whenever protesters face police violence. Too often, when this demand is made after a protest, it reads as a desperate attempt to cling to the position of governable subject within liberal democracy. This subject position cannot simply be extended to Indigenous people (or refugees, or even certain other migrant groups), because their position in relation to the colonial state is peripheral, that of the dangerous 'other' that can barely be incorporated into the citizenry and so will always be something of a threat. When you have always been considered marginal, on the outside, it is a strategy of survival to fight for what those in the centre have and that is not a comparable situation.

Arguing for the 'right to demonstrate' quickly seems irrelevant next to the actual struggles for survival that are occurring on this continent and around the world. And while the impediments for Indigenous survival are most brutally exemplified in the murder of Walker and deaths in custody, it isn't reducible to just these moments. It is about the entire apparatus of colonisation as administered by the State and enforced by the police. To be appealing to that same system to treat us better even as we know it cannot be salvaged is neither courageous nor an act of solidarity. It is to suggest that in protesting we are acting within the bounds of governability, in such a way that will never seek to actually upturn it, and therefore should not be met with punishment. Rather than constraining the rebelliousness of our actions and the extent of our solidarity within the limits of liberal, civil society, maybe we could try pushing the commonality of that ACAB attitude we discovered and see what new alliances emerge from there.

Notes:

1. see *The Guardian's*, 'Deaths Inside' online interactive report.
2. <https://overland.org.au/2017/07/our-souls-are-in-jail-the-nt-intervention-ten-years-on/>
3. from 'Riots for Black Life' found in *Being Numerous: Essays on Non-Fascist Life*.
4. from *Now* by the Invisible Committee.
5. <https://www.hrlc.org.au/news/2019/11/11/family-of-tanya-day>

TOO MANY
CROPS



NOT
ENOUGH
JUSTICE

SUPPORTING

- 1 PREPARING AND PASSING AROUND FOOD, WATER, MASKS, AND SUNSCREEN.



- 2 DECONTAMINATION AND FIRST AID.

People guided protestors who were pepper sprayed by the police away from the blockade and to the volunteer medic station - where they stayed until they recovered.

- 3 DE-ARRESTING EACH OTHER.

People intervened when police targeted individuals at the blockade, making arresting people more difficult and often preventing arrest entirely.



EACH OTHER

ARRESTEE SUPPORT AND SOLIDARITY.

4

The arrestee support team kept track of everyone apprehended, and ensured that there were people waiting at the cop shop for their release. Arrestee solidarity continued for months, with people showing up en masse to each others court hearings.



DEBRIEFING.

5

Days ended with all-in debriefs and debriefs between affinity groups. This allowed people within and across collectives to emotionally support each other and share experiences, tactics and learnings from the day.

DE-ESCALATORY ACTIONS.

6

Many creative and playful actions were used to diffuse hostility, quell police brutality, and keep activists' energies high.



DEALING WITH PEPPERSPRAY

Protecting yourself and your friends from cop tactics

Get goggles to protect your eyes



Get a mask, to protect your face and prevent you from breathing it in

You can get your goggles and mask from a local hardware store

Also, you can hold a sign in front of your face to protect from pepperspray



What happens when you dont wear and mask and goggles?

Pepperspray burns your skin on contact and can last for hours. It gets in your eyes, causing burning pain, making it hard to open your eyes, which can cause people to panic

Decontamination

What to do if you get sprayed

Let the people around you know that you've been sprayed with pepperspray



Get someone to walk you over to the activist run street medic area, or call out for a medic if you cant find it.

Keep your hands by your side. Do not touch your face, or your eyes.

Once in the medic space, sit down with your hands flat out infront of you, touching the ground and wait for the medic's advice.

The street medics will decontaminate your eyes by wiping and flushing them with saline. They will then wipe off any other traces of the pepperspray. Listen to their instructions



Once decontaminated, please sit and relax for a while, to allow the effects of the pepperspray to completely wear off.

If you'd like to help and be part of the awesome street medic crew, please let the street medics know. You'll be trained up so you can help

self & collective care

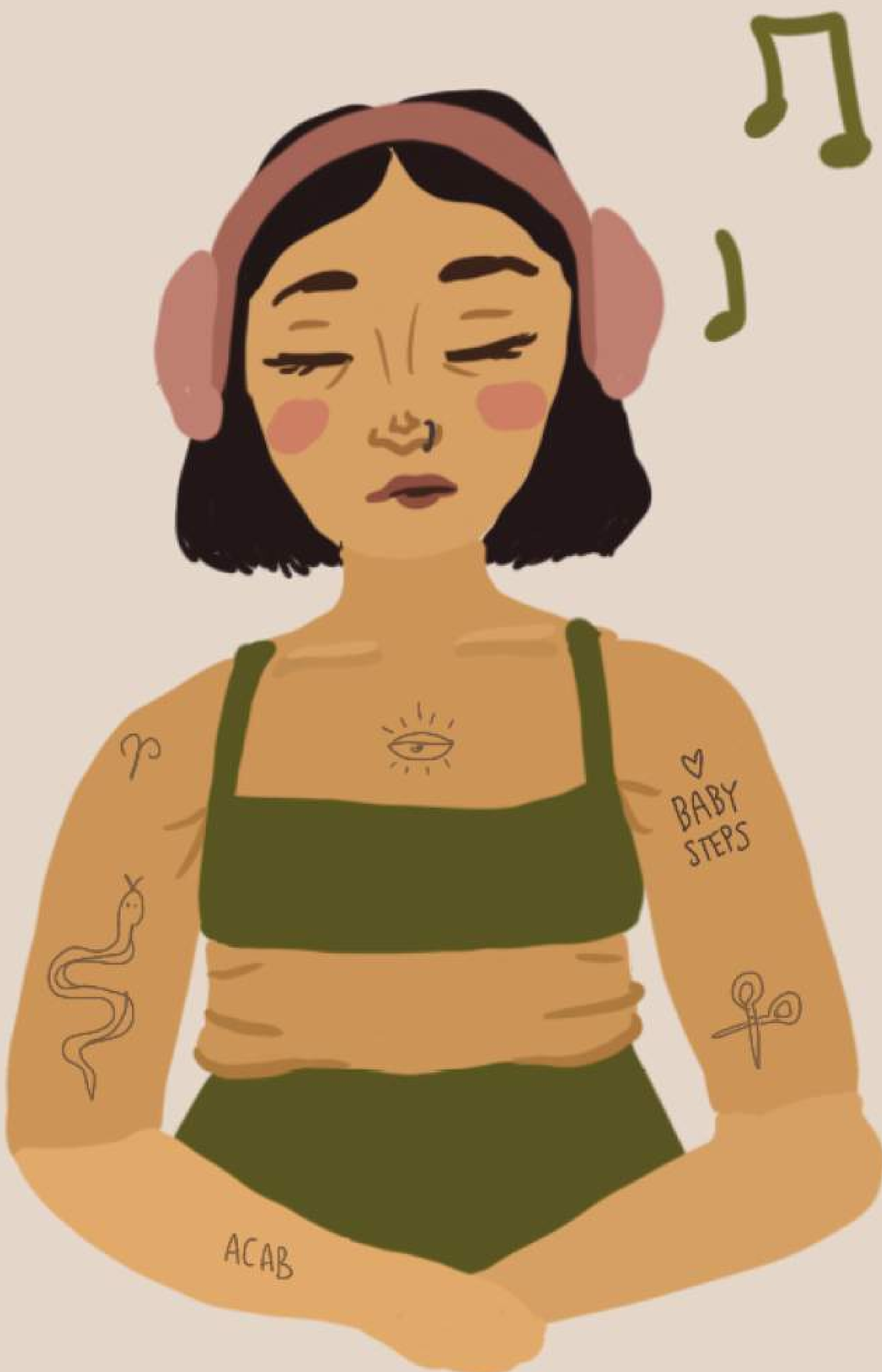
taking care of ourselves and others is really important! here are some things you could do after the blockade...



journal
& reflect



do some
gardening



meditate or
listen to music



do some exercise



cry (if
you need!)



talk with friends & comrades

keep on
protesting &
organising!

see your
therapist

eat some
choccie

NO
JUSTICE
NO
PEACE!



get some rest!

BLOCKADE IMARC 2020

With the Covid pandemic, IMARC has been forced to go online. And so will our resistance.

IMARC online will be very similar to all the other IMARCs. The same people will be there. Talking about the same corrupt shit. This isn't about stopping one conference in Melbourne, it is about sending a signal to people in power who use their positions and wealth to systematically oppress people that we have had enough.

Although this year we won't be able to create the revolutionary space we created last year, we can use it to build for next year - keep building the resistance with other activists and deepen our understanding of the extractivist world of IMARC.



[WHAT CAN I DO?]

*** SIGN UP FOR UPDATES AT:
www.blockadeimarc.com/**

*** CONSIDER HOW YOU WANT TO
CONTRIBUTE. SOME AREAS OF WORK ARE:**

*** CREATING ONLINE CONTENT
TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT
THOSE WHO ATTEND
IMARC.**

*** JOIN THE COUNTER CONFERENCE
WORKING GROUP.**

*** OUTREACH.**

*** PROMOTION.**

*** GET TALKING WITH YOUR FRIENDS,
FAMILIES AND LOVERS TO GET THEM
INVOLVED!**

My notes and plans:

