



# SOS

## Green Spaces

COMMUNITY ACTION TOOLKIT



TOTAL  
ENVIRONMENT  
CENTRE





# Our Green Public Spaces

**We all need breathing space!** *The busier our lives, the more that special tree, or park, or patch of grass means to us. These cooling green places are not for sale. They are the filters for our pure air and clean water, the sanctuaries for our native plants and animals, and the balm for our bodies and minds. This tool kit will show you how to defend your green places from multiple threats.*

## HOW TO DEFEND YOUR GREEN BREATHING SPACES

Total Environment Centre Inc  
Level 1, 99 Devonshire Street, Surry Hills. NSW 2010  
PO Box K61, Haymarket. NSW 1240  
[www.tec.org.au](http://www.tec.org.au)



For over 40 years TEC has been working with you, saving trees, protecting water, fighting pollution, and nurturing ecosystems – for a brighter greener future. The effectiveness of our campaigns depends on the generosity of your support. We can make a difference by helping each other.

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Unfortunately NSW has had a long history of poor planning. Competition for urban land by developers and infrastructure projects has repeatedly pushed environmental and community interests aside. This has resulted in loss of native vegetation and connectivity of natural areas, the degradation of water resources, urban sprawl and pollution.

The last cohesive plan to fully integrate an open space vision into Sydney's metropolitan growth was created over 50 years ago for the County of Cumberland.

Much of the 'green belt' envisaged in that plan has been swallowed up by urban sprawl. And the balance between transport infrastructure, green space and commercial enterprise in Sydney is no longer functional.

Today, Sydney's burgeoning growth urgently requires comprehensive policies for urban planning and transport infrastructure, as well as strategic integrated land use. Some local councils already have green space strategies, cycleways and green space programs, but others are embarking on schemes to rezone open space lands to operational lands, and sell off public assets, including parks and playgrounds.

In 2014 the NSW Government proposed A Plan for Growing Sydney that envisaged a 'Green Grid' incorporating existing projects from the Metropolitan Greenspace Program, the Sharing Sydney Harbour Program and the Regional Tracks and Trails Framework.

This plan could link a network of open spaces, parks, bushland and waterways with tree-lined walkways and cycleways across the city, creating green connections from homes to workplaces and leisure facilities.

Ideally a Green Grid should build on existing bush and park lands. Unfortunately many of the areas required for a 'Green Grid' could be threatened by a new review into how Crown lands are administered in NSW.

On a brighter note, options for the renewal of bushland in urban areas are currently being investigated by The Department of Planning and Environment.





# THREAT #1

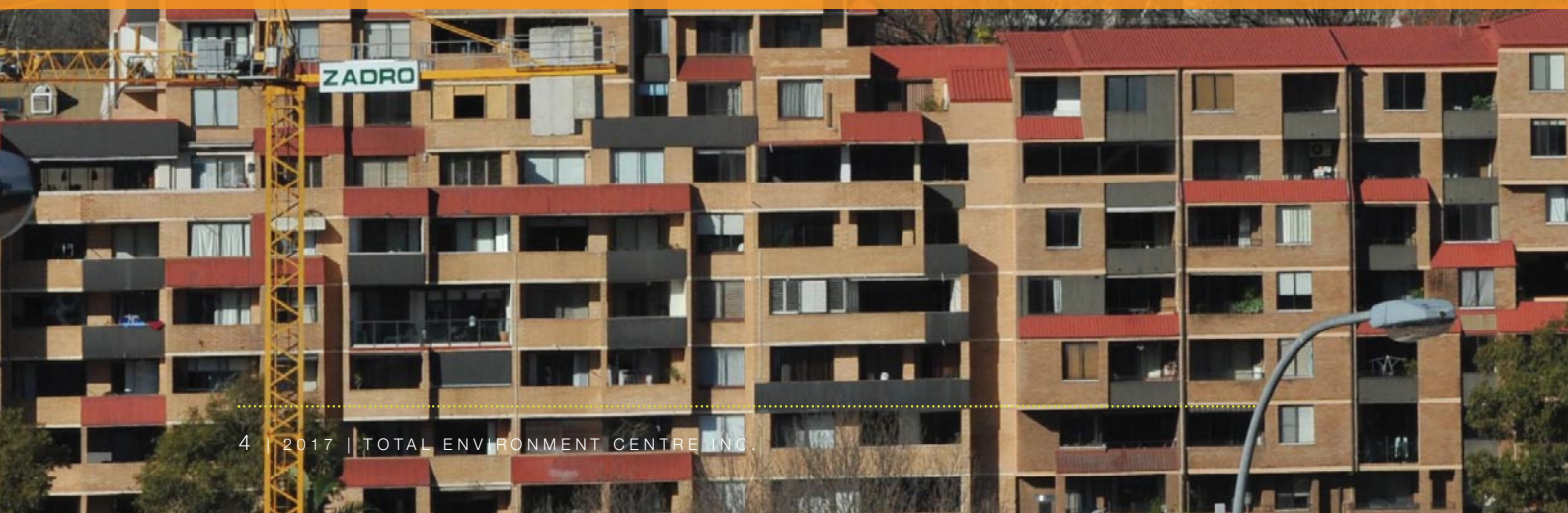
## Lack of planning

Effective planning strategies have been consistently under-resourced in NSW for decades, leaving most communities vulnerable to short term, chaotic and in some cases extremely ill advised development. The weakening of environmental regulations has also favoured the interests of developers rather than the public good, a situation that has yet to improve under the current government.



### Your questions about local urban planning:

- How does public space near you fit into strategic planning at State and local government level?
- Is it 'protected' or 'under threat'?
- Is it green space or urban bushland, and what environmental or social values can be calculated for it?



# THREAT #2

## The big sell-off

### Public Land

Public Land is owned by local councils. In the last decade NSW councils have sold, developed or reclassified almost 20% (over 27,000 ha) of public open space.\* Land sales are often seen as the easiest way to balance the books by rate-capped local governments, particularly since the global financial crisis in 2008.

Council owned public land comes under two classifications. Community Land includes parks, reserves or sports grounds and cannot be sold by the local council. Operational Land is not generally open to the public but is used for purposes such as works depots or garages. It may also be held as a temporary asset. Operational Land can be sold or developed for private use.

In most cases a lease or a licence may only be granted on land classified as Community Land if the plan of management allows it for the purpose concerned (a variation to the plan of management must be placed on public exhibition for 28 days). Public Land can be classified or reclassified as either Community or Operational Land by a resolution of the Local Council (with a 28-day public exhibition period for submissions) or through a Local Environmental Plan (LEP). A Council must arrange a public hearing if a draft LEP (or planning proposal) seeks to reclassify Community Land as Operational Land.

All such proposals can be found on your local council's website or will be advertised in the local newspapers.

\* Comparative Information on NSW Local Government: Measuring Local Government Performance 2011/12, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2013

### Your questions about Public Land:

- Are there any proposals by your local council to reclassify community land?
- Has community land in your area recently been reclassified to operational land? How much and what is its value?
- Has a Plan of Management of community land been varied to allow for commercial leasing?







## THREAT #2

### The big sell-off

#### Crown Land

Crown Land is owned by the NSW Government. Because nearly half the area of NSW is Crown Land, your favourite park or beach is probably Crown Land.

As the law currently stands the management principles for Crown Land include consideration of environmental protection, encouragement of public use and a requirement that natural resources of the land be conserved wherever possible and sustained for future generations.

The NSW state government is proposing, however, to establish a Crown Lands Division as part of a public trading enterprise that will promote economic growth over social and environmental concerns. It will also overhaul the ownership of Crown lands which could potentially result in their widespread sale or commercialisation by the government and/or transfer to local councils.

The proposed new legislation would wipe out these management principles along with the governing objective of ecologically sustainable development. A pilot program examining the transfer of Crown Land to local councils is currently taking place in the Tweed, Tamworth, Warringah and Corowa LGAs.

This means that Crown Reserves near you are probably vulnerable. They include areas set aside for public purposes, environmental and heritage protection, recreation, sport, open space and community facilities. Types of Crown Reserves include state parks, beaches, caravan and camping grounds, cemeteries, racecourses, showgrounds, community halls, sporting fields, parks, wharves and ports. Much of the Crown Land in NSW has social, cultural, environmental heritage, or indigenous values.

Other lands owned by state government departments such as schools, hospitals and golf courses have also recently been sold into private hands.

#### Your questions about Crown Land:

- How much crown land is there in your area?
- What values does it have - environmental, social or heritage?
- Has your local council indicated how it would manage or sell crown land if transferred into its management?



## THREAT #2

### The big sell-off

#### Land owned by the Federal Government

Many large open spaces in urban areas are under the management of the Federal Government, including military reserves (current and former) and other tenures. In recent times the Finance Department has attempted to sell some of these areas for development (such as at Middle Head and Malabar Headland) but these proposals were headed off by strong local campaigns.

Unfortunately there are no laws governing the clearing of vegetation on military land (such as that which has recently taken place at Holdsworthy), which means the protection of vital habitat is unregulated.

#### Your questions about Federal Land in your area:

- How much federally owned open space is there in your area?
- Who manages this land and is it currently in use?
- Is its future as publically owned land secure?





# THREAT #3

## Road and infrastructure projects

Transport policy and congestion are hot issues in the greater Sydney region. Elections are always dominated by promises of big motorways and projects, even though we have seen a growing shift by the population away from cars towards public transport and cycling. Indeed the recent privatisation of NSW's poles and wires was deemed necessary to fund these large transport projects.

There is no doubt that we need improved public transport networks to service our growing population and the protection of our remaining green spaces should be integrated into them. Built-in sustainability is in the community's long-term interest. Major toll roads for instance have been shown to encourage more cars into high density areas, even though the streets in these areas simply can't accommodate them. It is the local community that suffers the consequences.

Yet the community's ability to genuinely participate in the assessment of large scale infrastructure projects has been a major casualty of NSW's poor planning track record. And the situation appears to be worsening. For the next 20 years, planning decisions across NSW could be made without adequate assessment of environment protection or impacts brought about by climate change, because of new Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plans. The principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) have been removed, even though they were crucial to resolving the conflicts between economic, social and environmental forces. Numerous mechanisms to reduce the decision making power of local councils and also the local community have also been introduced, such as Urban Activation Zones and the establishment of super bodies like the Greater Sydney Commission and Urban Growth NSW.

Planners often choose to reduce public space and remnant bushland when plotting the routes of new road projects because of the political difficulties surrounding compulsory acquisition in established suburbs. A current example is the threatened destruction of a significant area of Wolli Creek bushland to facilitate the Westconnex M5 extension. The development of Badgery's Creek airport, the Northwest Rail Link and the Moorebank Intermodal Terminal for trucking freight, also have the potential to see large areas of public land annexed and/or cleared.

### Your questions about Infrastructure:

- What infrastructure projects are proposed for your area?
- Do planning strategy documents for your region propose projects that could impact upon public lands?
- Is its future as publically owned land secure?



# THREAT #4

## Loss of tree cover

Tree cover is crucial to combatting the urban heat island effect that compromises health and longevity in urban populations by raising city temperatures. It particularly afflicts the very young and the elderly. But despite their well-documented importance, Sydney's big old trees are in decline. When it comes to retaining its tree cover, Sydney has a middle ranking among the state capitals.\* Proposed removal of street trees, subdivisions for higher density living, and increased floor space ratios in numerous LEPs are seeing the felling of many arboreal individuals of note.

Significant Tree Registers to protect trees both on public and private lands have been created by some, but not all, councils. This has proven to be an effective first step in their defence.

The latest wave of destruction sustained by Sydney's flora and fauna has been caused by the introduction of the '10/50 law'. Introduced hastily to reduce bushfire risk, Code 10/50 allowed developers to clear trees and landowners to improve their views by destroying thousands of trees, until a public backlash prompted the state government to announce a review. It later emerged that the government was warned that woodchips left as a result of the clearing could create a greater bushfire risk.

In addition to this Wyong Council recently used the 10/50 laws as an excuse to weaken tree protection protocols. This accelerated in the shire after the severe storms of 2015, when virtually all protections stopping trees from being cleared without approval on properties less than 1500 square metres, were removed. This decision came without inquiry or scientific backing.

Large numbers of hollow bearing trees and significant wetlands which have flourished in golf courses (both public and private) are also under threat from the sale of crown lands or part annexation for housing developments.

In many cases trees at risk from urban development are already classified as threatened species or part of an endangered ecological community under NSW law, or a threatened ecological community under federal law. There are various legal protections for threatened species in NSW and Australia.

\*Benchmarking Australia's Urban Tree Canopy: An i-Tree Assessment, Final Report, Institute of Sustainable Futures, 2014.

### Your questions about your local trees:

- Does your local government area have a significant tree register?
- Have changes to your local government's development regulations strengthened or weakened tree protection?
- What threatened species and ecological communities are present in your area?





## THREAT #5

### Privatisation or semi-privatisation

The privatisation of public spaces constitutes another insidious threat to Sydney's vital tree canopy. Commercial leasing can be used as a critical tool to provide funding for operations in some parks and reserves. But land grabs and the critical loss of public amenity and native habitats too often occur when the selling or commercial leasing of public space is applied poorly, or without transparency and proper public consultation. This has become a high profile issue in Sydney with increasing commercial activity in the Royal Botanic Gardens and Centennial Parklands, and exclusive private leasing arrangements proposed for the promised open space at the Barangaroo development.

The philosophical and economic debate currently taking place around open spaces and publicly owned lands such as these raises two questions. Should these spaces be self-funded, or run as a public asset, and can their administrators be trusted to manage them for the public good?

Significantly, community groups recently managed to stop the development of a public recreation area in Newcastle. The NSW Land and Environment Court recently found against a proposal to develop a function centre, public kiosk, and car park on the site of an old bowling club at King Edward Park which had been approved by Newcastle Council. Sanctuary Defenders in the local community argued that the site was public recreation land that could not legally be used for commercial premises.



#### Your questions about commercialisation:

- What commercial activities (regulated or unregulated) take place on public land near you?
- Determine if these have changed how members of the public can use that space?
- Are there any proposals to lease off areas of a park near you to a commercial operator?



## THREAT #6

### Illegal activities

There will always be dodgy developers who try to get their hands on the land you own, but members of the public can also degrade public land through their own illegal activities. Illegal dumping from household waste, stolen cars and more serious materials dumped on an industrial scale, pose significant environmental and health risks.

Many unlawful mountain biking and trailbike tracks have also been constructed in urban bushland in the last decade that severely impact on flora and fauna. The use of heavy earthmoving equipment is increasing. In some cases in the northern suburbs, the National Parks and Wildlife Service has resigned itself to constructing its own tracks through bushland. This sort of compromise comes at a cost.

The investigation of all incidents of illegal dumping is the responsibility of the Environmental Protection Authority, although under-resourcing constrains its effectiveness.



#### Your questions about illegal activities in your area:

- Is illegal dumping taking place in your local park, waterway or urban bushland?
- Has illegal track construction taken place on public land near you?





# Campaigning



**Campaigning can be a lot of fun and it's very rewarding when it produces a result. But it does take expertise and commitment. Developers who want to take over public land rarely back down just because you ask them to.**

When a community faces opponents with vast resources, and a developer-friendly government seems to be on their side, it can be very difficult to keep going.

But community based campaigns do win. They win a lot more than governments would like to admit. And guess who likes to take the credit when a community does get a good result? The government!

Sometimes winning is pretty black and white – a loved place is saved and protected, a good law or binding plan is passed. More often than not, grey areas abound – a development proceeds with improved environmental safeguards, restraints are placed upon the worst aspects of a proposal, or a new law still requires further improvement.

What is even harder to accept is that some campaigns have to be won two or three times, because a developer or industry keeps coming back for another bite at the cherry for years or decades afterwards.

**DON'T LET THIS STOP YOU!**

# Campaigning

## Single issue or the big picture?

*You've just found out your favourite reserve is about to be rezoned to operational land by the local council. This means they can sell it. Then you discover this is happening all over your local government area. As you start digging the names of a couple of big developers keep coming up. They seem to be connected with the rezoning, but you can't prove it.*

When individuals and groups are preparing for a battle such as this they should begin by asking - "How far are we aiming?"

Do you want to focus on the immediate issue or causal problem? Will it be 'SAVE OUR PARK' or 'STOP THE REZONING'?

If you determine the scope of your campaign at the very onset it will allow for a realistic calculation of the resources, time and commitment required. It's also worth finding out if existing groups are already working on the big picture and addressing the issue with their resources, so that you can collaborate with them as you work on your local issue.

A single issue campaign usually has a timeline with an end date that you know will see the matter resolved one way or the other. A big picture campaign takes longer and is harder to win because it often involves engaging in state, and possibly federal government processes, and policy work. You should note that while a single issue local campaign can be easier to win, it may have limited big picture benefits.





## Structuring your campaign

*It's true! The council has proposed to rezone the reserve. More land is needed for housing and business development across the council area. Public submissions in response to the proposal are due in a few days. One of your neighbours has called a meeting. About five people from your street attend. You love the reserve and can't believe that it can be sold off and developed so easily. You need a plan!*

### CRITICAL CAMPAIGNING QUESTIONS TO ASK

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>A</b> WHAT'S THE ISSUE?     | <b>E</b> WHAT IS THE STRATEGY?                     |
| <b>B</b> WHAT'S THE GOAL?      | <b>F</b> WHAT ARE THE TACTICS?                     |
| <b>C</b> WHAT'S THE MESSAGE?   | <b>G</b> WHAT MATERIALS AND RESOURCES DO YOU HAVE? |
| <b>D</b> WHO ARE THE TARGET/S? | <b>H</b> WHO DO YOU CONTACT?                       |

#### A. The issue

All campaigns, big or small, need to recruit volunteers, and attract funds and media. The good news is, small groups galvanised by a single issue can be just as effective as big ones with a broad agenda.

To identify your campaign objectives it can help to write down where your campaign sits in relation to your own community and those other groups of people who share a common area and interest. How can your campaign change your community for the better, and where could it make the biggest difference?

#### B. Goals

*It's very late on a weeknight. Having met over too many cups of tea and biscuits you've all agreed that the rezoning proposal needs to be fought, but how? By sharing information you've realised that numerous parcels of community land in the council area are up for rezoning, and the same developers appear to be involved. A local environment centre is already preparing a campaign. A journalist from the local paper is also aware of the rezoning. But it's your local reserve that is the first to go....*

Your campaign goals are critical to the success of your efforts. They allow you to stay focussed, keep within the limits of your resources, and present your campaign consistently. Sometimes this is easy. Advocacy campaigns, such as getting a bill or resolution passed, involve a straightforward goal with clear steps to achieving it. But an educational campaign, for instance, may kick off with more general goals, such as educating the public about a certain issue, and attracting media attention to it and your organisation.

Be clear about what it is you want to achieve, how the community will benefit from it, and how you will go about it. Be realistic about what you can achieve and don't forget that public awareness is one of the keys to winning any campaign.

Be specific. A specific goal enables you to lay out precise steps to achieve it. It's also easier to measure. Having goals such as "raising awareness" or "educating the public" are important, but they are too vague to action. You've got to think about exactly what has to happen for the campaign to be successful. Rather than calling for "more accountability", identify specifically what must be accomplished to make that a reality.

Measurable goals will also help to attract members and supporters, and keep them and maintain their motivation. The progress of your campaign should be constantly evaluated. Measurable goals are a key fundraising tool as donors want to feel their funds are being put to work effectively.

What is achievable? If you have garnered public support you will be in a better position to negotiate. Don't give up too soon, and keep talking to your community. Also remember that your opponents may harbour doubts about their own ultimate success which you can exploit. They will probably have fall back positions already in mind.

Consider these points:

- What are the legal barriers and opportunities to the change you want to make?
- Are your goals politically achievable and do you have can build negotiation power?
- Have other campaigns achieved comparable goals?

Also examine your own capabilities and work to improve them, including:

- financial resources and sources
- personnel and their priorities
- potential for outside support

**TIMING.** Deadlines are essential. You may not always meet them, but a timeline provides a valuable structure for the campaign. It is also important to be strategic with scarce resources. Use them wisely.



## C. Messaging

*What's the story? You know a developer is behind the council's rezoning of your park. But how are you going to motivate people to say "this park is not for sale"? Perhaps there is a weekly stall in the local mall that will help you get the message out. A sign writer down the road might whip up some banners and the local paper could run a story. A Facebook page has been set up. You're on your way.*

Your campaign's success or failure will depend on how effectively you communicate your message.

**MESSAGING IS STORY TELLING.** A good story will engage, motivate and inspire people to support your campaign. It will spread by word of mouth, but it will spread much further and faster if you can get it out there through the print, broadcast and online media. They are the gateway to a larger audience. Once people power gets behind your message, you are in business.

**YOUR COMMUNICATIONS PLAN** is essential. To make one consider these points

- Who are you talking to?
- What kinds of media do they engage with?
- What message (visual or spoken) will motivate them to take action?
- How can you package and deliver this message?
- Who will be the best person to get your message heard?
- How do you tie your information and actions into milestones that make good stories?

**BUILD A LIST** to reach your target audience. This would include the mainstream media (television, radio and print) from major outlets down to local, weekly publications or those targeted to a specific audience. Don't forget to think about non-English speaking communities and the internet. Most areas have numerous websites and bloggers specialising in community matters. Once you have built this list, identify the particular reporter or editor you need to talk to.

**CLARIFY YOUR MESSAGE.** A campaign must inform and motivate. One does not happen without the other. Having worked out what your messages are, use them constantly.

Powerful messages are:

- short, simple, memorable
- honest, inspiring, grounded in the values of your target audience
- avoid jargon, acronyms and getting deep into policy
- employ a strong human interest angle

**CHOOSE SPOKESPEOPLE.** These are people who can effectively communicate and reinforce your stories and campaign messages. They should be credible, articulate, available and preferably experienced – although there's nothing like learning on the spot. Include people who are interesting to the local community and good at rallying community support.

**ESTABLISH KEY RELATIONSHIPS.** You should do everything you can to help a reporter get critical access and information. Your opponents are certainly providing the media with slick promotional footage. But you can go a long way with a friendly and helpful attitude.

Dealing with media contacts:

- Provide them with useful accurate information
- Return their phone calls or emails quickly
- Meet their deadlines
- Be aware of when you're being quoted

**MAKE IT INTERESTING.** Journalists are story-tellers and information hounds. They work under a lot of pressure to meet deadlines and address their target audience. They need strong visuals, a reason to care, a bona fide angle that will not collapse on close inspection, and above all, great quotes and characters to build their story around. News stories are built on drama, and rely on conflict – just be mindful that the use of conflict is a two edged sword. It could get you a front page story, but it could also devalue your campaign.

**PITCHING TO JOURNALISTS** has some simple rules. Be prepared. Think about what the journalist needs to make a good story. Don't ramble or detour. Stick to the point and be concise. Persistence and politeness are essential but don't be afraid to keep pushing. Remain cheerful, never become angry or aggrieved. Make your calls in the morning when people are fresh. It is really smart to research an individual journalist's style and interests.

**GETTING AIR TIME** for the campaign is critical. But you may only get one shot at it. Always rehearse what you are going to say before talking to a reporter. Practice it in bullet points. Repeat the key messages. If questions stray from the main issue don't be afraid to steer the interview firmly back.

- Be truthful. If you don't have the facts, promise to get back to them with the correct details – and make sure you do!
- State the key messages clearly and repeatedly
- Take your time
- Be friendly, but remember everything you say is on the record

**MEDIA RELEASES** are documents that sell the key points of your story to time-poor journalists. They are built around a hook, or simple angle. They should never be longer than one page. The ingredients are simple: a catchy headline, quotes from your spokesperson, and some relevant facts. Extra information can be provided upon further inquiry.

**THE LETTERS PAGE** is another great way to get coverage for your campaign. The best letters are time sensitive and 200 words or less. They are more likely to be printed if the issue is current. They need not be critical. A letter can support a positive story.

**ONLINE MEDIA** has democratised the playing field, but you still need to play by the rules. Tweets and Facebook are highly interactive and reactive media. Think before you post! At its best online media can be used to storm the citadel. The gatekeepers of the old media can't keep you out. But use it wisely. You need to motivate action, not just "likes" on a Facebook page. Provide links to petitions and political representatives or other bodies.

- Create an attractive and easy to navigate website
- Create a social media presence using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr etc.
- Learn the art of using these resources effectively

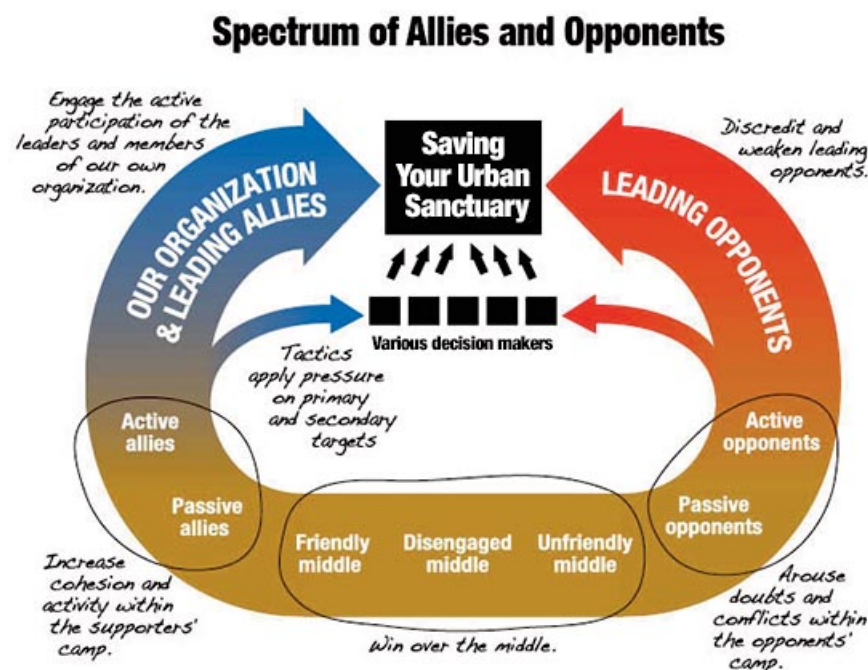


## D. Targets

*Who are your allies? The local environment group has promised to fight and will mobilise its members. The local park users should be told what is going on. A story in the local paper stirs up some controversy, revealing sneaky details about the rezoning, and outlining the history of the park since the early 1900s. By phoning all the councillors you've discovered that 4 out of the 9 oppose the rezoning. A well-known celebrity played there as a kid and s/he agrees to go public and do media. Under pressure from the newspaper article and a deluge of phone calls, Council agrees to extend the submission period for a month. You've bought some time.*

**REACHING THE PEOPLE.** Who do you need to reach to achieve the campaign's goals? Make a list of all the parties involved. Identify friends, opponents and neutral players or those who need to be convinced. All of these parties need to be contacted and influenced by your campaign.

**STUDY THE TERRAIN.** Using another list or diagram, divide the parties into who makes the rules, who influences those who make the rules, and from which side that influence comes.



Adapted from Campaign Planning Handbook, Rob Fairley and Mike Balkwill, Toronto and York Region Labour Council 2011.

**FIND YOUR FRIENDS.** Who uses the land that is under threat, and who uses a similar place that could well face the same fate? History shows that change can happen when diverse voices unite around a shared goal.

**REACH OUT TO THE MASSES.** The general public uses parks and public reserves, pays the rates and taxes, and votes. While many of us don't feel particularly politically motivated or attracted to activism, a certain percentage will get involved if they feel something is intrinsically wrong. Your campaign must reach all the people who haven't yet taken action.

**RESEARCH YOUR COMMUNITY.** Nearly everyone is a member of some sort of community group. These range from sporting, academic and professional, to religious, ethnic, political, health, dog walking and so on. How will these groups be impacted by the issue, are they aware of it, and have they taken action yet? Each community subset has reach and influence – their support could be critical.

**RALLY YOUR ALLIES.** When seeking potential allies be open minded. You may not share all the same beliefs or ideals, and may even oppose each other on other issues. This is about strategic engagement with a specific goal in sight. Your campaign will be the stronger for diversity in expertise and the experience of working together. Lasting relationships are often formed by these short term alliances and serve to strengthen your community by overcoming differences. The glue is provided by the underlying values that help the different groups focus on what they want to achieve.

**THE BLOODY POLITICIANS!** There is probably no job more despised or derided than that of the politician. But the fact is, they generally work hard and late into the night. They are besieged by businesses that wish to influence them, and are constantly called upon to make tough decisions based on compromise. Their responsibilities are wide-ranging and complex. Party aligned politicians usually have to vote along party lines, and deal with the machinations of their own party room. They will only fight on your side if they are 100% convinced by your campaign.

**MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN.** If the majority of an elected government is siding with your opponent, you will probably have to rely on public opinion to force a change in policy. But there is often a lot of internal debate within a political party, and the more of that you can generate the better. So in the long term, it's not quite as simple as whether your campaign is supported or not. Your opponent may be talking up the dollar value of their development while ignoring the community values. That could be a weakness you can exploit to put internal party room pressure on the politicians involved.

- be deadly accurate with the information you provide, and back it up with evidence
- the real value of water, clean air and green space is becoming increasingly obvious. It is measurable and demonstrable. Make this clear.
- highlight all the benefits of supporting your campaign
- give credit for decisions made and actions taken

**DEALING WITH MEDIA BIAS.** Good reporting is supposed to be objective but most media outlets have set agendas dictated by their owners. Get to know what they are. Don't be intimidated by a negative reception. It's not personal. By providing reliable information and clear concise messaging your reputation for integrity will impress the journalists you deal with, whatever the orders from above.



# Campaigning

**THE DEVELOPER IS THE TARGET.** The influence of developers in NSW politics is well known. It's true they often get away with whatever the government allows them to. But don't throw all your focus onto the government. Corporate social responsibility has become quite fashionable, and you can get a lot of mileage out of forcing a company to live up to its public image. Acquaint yourself with its website, study its past and present activities. Publicly hold it to account in terms of the law and its environmental credentials. Developers usually plot and plan for years before the push to rezone or build ever becomes public. If you do your research you might bring these plots to light before they are ready, and use that to your campaign's advantage.

## E. Strategy

*You've got your one month extension! And the issue is in the public spotlight, which the council majority hoped to avoid. One of the pro-development councillors lives in your ward – will he take a balanced view? It's time for your next meeting. 20 people roll in but some are grumbling about the late night. Impressive facilitation and a good dinner cheers the mood significantly. You've become a movement!*

Your strategy is the plan you follow to win your campaign. The tactics are the specific methods you use along the way to maintain pressure on your target and enable you to achieve your goal. A campaign strategy without tactics cannot be actioned. A campaign with tactics but no strategy is like a bomb with no timing device.

The strategies you identify will help you choose which tactics to employ. Sometimes generating intense media attention will be appropriate. In other scenarios working quietly behind the scenes may be more effective. Make strategic planning a project in itself. Gather together the key people who are committed to the goals. Ask this group these questions:

**WHO ARE THE DECISION MAKERS?** Identify the people, agencies and/or institutions who will determine whether or not you will succeed and who within that system is in the best position to advance the issue. Identify the process to follow, and who is in the best position to drive it.

**WHERE DO THEY STAND?** Once the key movers and shakers have been identified establish what you know about them. What is their previous form on issues similar to yours? What have they said before on record? If you don't know, write to them and ask them to outline their position.

**WHAT MAKES THEM LISTEN?** What issues do they most care about? Do their main interests connect to yours? Who have they been influenced by? Are they driven by financial considerations or are they conscience based? What is their electoral situation in terms of their ambition, or the margin they hold their seat by?

Now, assess your ability to reach these key people. Look at the relationships people in your group may already have with elected officials, and study the resources you have at your disposal.

# Campaigning

Once you have addressed these questions you will have:

- clear and achievable goals
- people in power who can help you achieve those goals
- an understanding of the official decision making process
- a firm grasp of your campaign's resources

Now it's time to create your strategy document.

## CAMPAIGN STRATEGY DOCUMENT

This creates an outline for all the steps required to win your campaign.

It includes a timeline for the campaign as a whole, and deadlines for the steps along the way. It assigns clear responsibilities for each aspect of the campaign to your members and supporters.

## F. Tactics

*Submissions are in, and there are a lot of them. Hundreds have attended your picnic launch in the park that is NOT FOR SALE. Your celebrity ally got up and asked the councillor in your ward about his relationship with the developer. This garners more media coverage. Donations to your campaign have now reached a few thousand dollars – it's slim pickings compared to the developer's account, but every dollar helps.*

With your strategy document in hand, you are now ready to decide on the tactics for each step of the strategy.

- hold **a campaign launch** with high profile speakers and your supporters
- hold **fundraising** activities
- write **letters and emails** to the targets of your campaign and decision makers. This will make it a talking point in the seat of power
- **set up meetings** and follow up your targets. Form relationships. If at first you are not granted a meeting with a key target try again.
- make the delivery of your **petition, letters and submissions** a newsworthy event. Success is not just dependent on the delivery, but on letting the public know it's been done.
- have **a street presence** with your campaign materials. A persistent stall in a shopping district or civic centre allows you to gather support offline and face to face.
- **hold a rally** to show your target exactly how much support you have. These take a lot of work to make successful. Make sure you have the human resources and the required number of supporters to pull it off at exactly the right time.
- release **a report**.
- **engage the media** whenever you have a newsworthy event



# Campaigning

- attend the meetings and events of the other organisations or decision making bodies whose help you need.
- make submissions to peak bodies and relevant processes.
- gather endorsements from groups and individuals who may have a connection to your campaign.
- bring key players including the general public, organisations, experts and politicians to a public meeting or forum to have a vibrant discussion.
- employ non-violent direct action

## G. Essential campaign materials and resources

*How are you doing? People keep coming to your meetings and others pitch in. That huge banner on the house opposite the park reminds the council and passers-by of what they are selling off. It gets ripped down late one night but another reappears the next day (the media love this story). A big crowd turns up for the compulsory public hearing into the rezoning and your spokesperson steals the show. 4 councillors are hell-bent on the rezoning, 4 are against and one in your Ward is under serious pressure to come clean. How the story ends is up to you ... go for it!*

Resources are everything. Your people and their skills are your campaign. You can have a competent experienced leader or director, and a coherent spokesperson but if no one does the backroom organising or cleans up after an event – you won't win.

The integrity of the materials produced, and the expertise behind them, reflect the quality of your campaign. Value what anybody offers and respect their capacity. Volunteers are motivated by a passion which just getting "paid to do it" can't beat. If you have attracted 20 people to your meeting you probably have the governmental, bureaucratic, administrative, IT, communications, creative cooking, cleaning and truck driving skills to make it all happen.

## ESSENTIAL CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

**People** – diverse skills and expertise

**Knowledge** – citizen experts

**Communications** – include a brief guide to the issue, a letter writing template, a well designed report (pdf for web) and the history of your issue, a database of supporters and media contacts

**Visual materials** – good photos, videos (maximum 2mins), banners and stickers

**Online materials** – a website and social media presence

# Campaigning

## THINGS TO BEWARE OF

Keeping safe and legal at all times is essential. Check on permissions and permits to ensure your events are legal. Be careful of defamation. While you have a right to public comment (in the media or submissions), don't make it personal. Stick to the issue.  
(If you are unsure consult the Environmental Defenders Office).

## H. Who do you contact?

### Campaign links

[Total Environment Centre](#)

[BPN](#)

[NCC NSW local campaign or member groups](#)

[Local Government](#)

[NSW Local Government Areas](#)

[State Government](#)

[NSW Planning and Environment](#)

[Department of Primary Industries Lands](#)

[NSW Office of Local Government](#)

[Australian Government](#)

[Department of the Environment](#)

[Department of Finance](#)



This tool kit was written by Dave Burgess, TEC's Natural Areas Campaigner for over 15 years.  
[daveb@tec.org.au](mailto:daveb@tec.org.au)



Corinne Fisher is TEC's SOS Green Spaces campaigner. She is always available to help.  
[corinnef@tec.org.au](mailto:corinnef@tec.org.au)



# SOS

## Green Spaces

A TOTAL ENVIRONMENT CENTRE CAMPAIGN

### SOS Green Spaces C H A R T E R

1. A sustainable city must be planned on the basis of enshrined protection of its natural areas and public spaces.
2. Sydney's remnant natural areas and park lands, must be legally protected from urbanisation, over use, weed infestation, illegal dumping, pollution, poorly planned infrastructure and unregulated development.
3. A long-term protection policy and plan must be safeguarded from the influence of private developers on decision makers.
4. The metro 'Green Grid' should be delivered using the best available scientific and planning expertise to provide an environment that meets a variety of human and environmental needs — protecting existing native flora and fauna, maintaining and improving existing parks and connectivity, linking the community in a responsible way to bushland; and delivering clean air, opportunities for interaction, communal activity and relaxation.
5. A co-ordinated approach across local government areas and funding opportunities should assist local government to deliver the plan's bushland and parkland protection objectives.
6. Improved resources should be made available to the large number of community groups involved in the protection of green spaces and natural areas throughout Greater Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong.



**Total  
Environment  
Centre**  
for the future