



YES2RENEWABLES TOOLKIT

FOR COMMUNITIES AND
ORGANISERS TO CREATE A BETTER
ENERGY FUTURE



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@yes2renewables on Facebook, Instagram

@yes2renewables.bsky.social on BlueSky

yes2renewables@foe.org.au

www.yes2renewables.org.au

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay respect to their Elders past and present and to the pivotal role that First Nations Peoples continue to play in caring for Country across Australia.

Photo by Elsa GUYADER on Unsplash



YES2RENEWABLES
Friends of the Earth Australia

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

Welcome, and thanks for being part of the movement.

This toolkit is your practical guide to going from feeling alone in your support for renewable energy to becoming a confident, connected member of a growing community — ready to speak up and take action.

Use it your way: dip into the sections that matter most, or follow the step-by-step roadmap to build momentum from start to finish.

Whether you're starting a new climate or pro-renewables group, strengthening an existing one, or just figuring out where you fit, you'll find real stories from community organisers, proven case studies, and clear, practical resources to support you at every stage of the journey.

THANK YOU

Yes 2 Renewables would like to thank the following individuals and groups who provided the interviews and research that powered this toolkit:

Community Organisers:

Chloe Aldenhoven
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Cath Thompson
Coco Venaglia
Cam Walker

Community Groups:

Good for the Gong
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Organisations:

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Artists and Designers:

Judy Kuo (artist, @judykuo__)
Georgina Gascoigne
Peter Beaver (@peberrart)



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INTRODUCTION: THE POWER OF PEOPLE

This toolkit is for anyone interested in renewables, from those who are curious and want to know more, to those who are currently experiencing changes in their community, and those who are keen to step up and help advocate for their community in the shift to renewables.

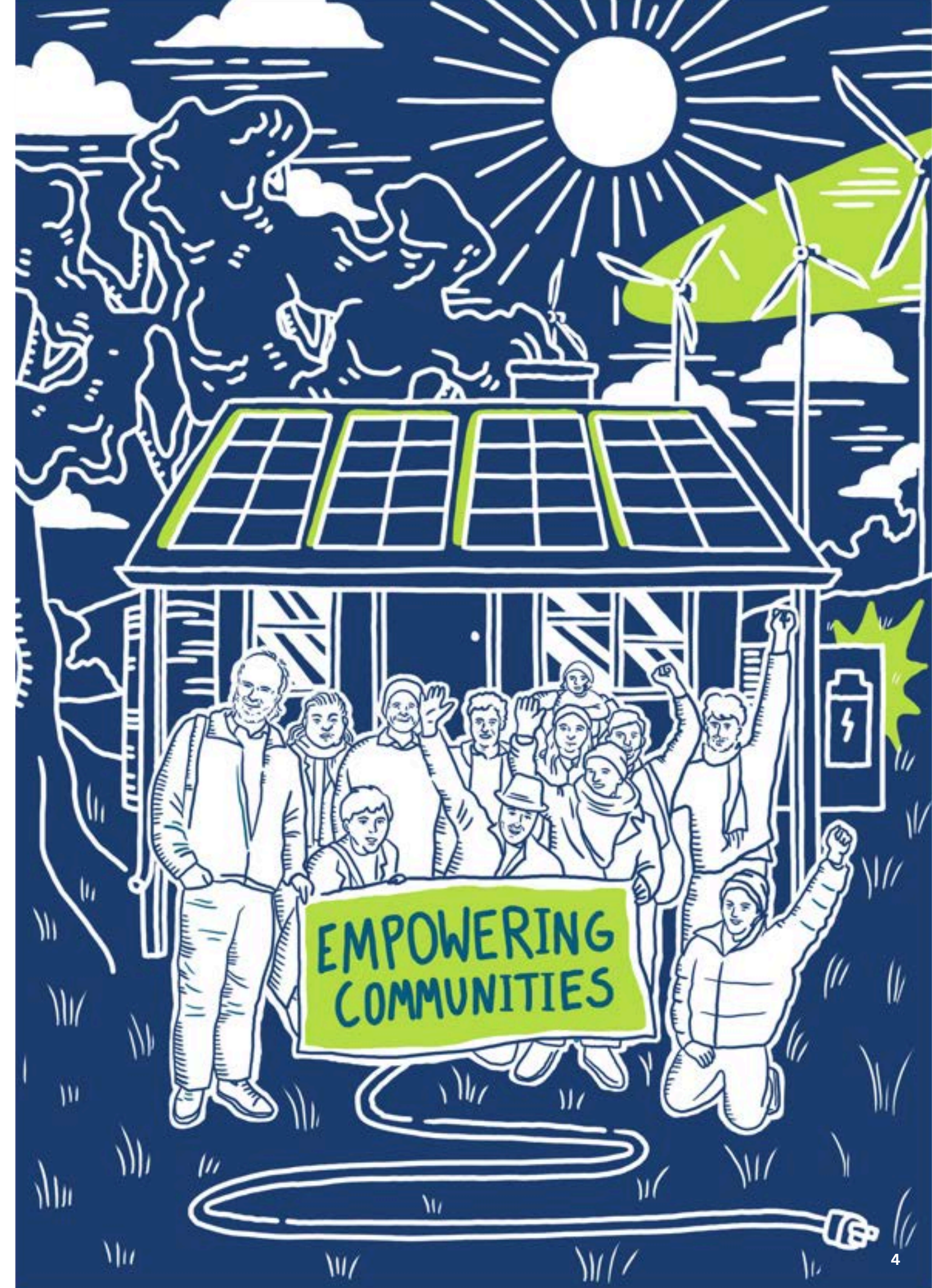
This toolkit will help nurture the conditions for people to come together and work towards a pro-renewables narrative and campaign in their community.

We know that each community is different, and that knowledge is held at the heart of this toolkit. We have found that there are common experiences, tactics and tools that communities can use to help find your people and find your voice.

You will hear from campaigners who have decades of experience in advocating for the badly needed renewable energy transition. Throughout the toolkit you will also be guided by the stories of community members who are just like you.

Read on to learn from their lessons on how to organise your community, build collective power, combat misinformation and disinformation, and develop your own pro-renewables group and strategy.

We hope that by the time you finish this toolkit you will feel emboldened and empowered to make change in your own community, while elevating the possibilities, benefits, and strengths of your community and what you love about the places and people around you.



WHO IS YES2RENEWABLES?

Business as usual - led by big fossil fuel corporations - is destroying our land and undermining our economy. Our Federal and State governments have the power to act - we need them to get off the fence and work with the community - not provide cover for the big fossil fuel companies.

Yes 2 Renewables is a grassroots network working with communities across Australia to build community support for renewable energy and make sure the shift to wind and solar delivers for communities.

We help develop local leaders and voices from communities who can advocate for their best interests, local benefits and community outcomes, protect our environment, and help shift Australia to a cleaner energy future. We're based at the environmental justice organisation Friends of the Earth and have been organising for renewable energy for over fifteen years.

We know that the necessary shift to renewable energy is coming and, in many cases, is already here. Let's seize this opportunity to maximise the benefits to our communities and protect our environment, farming, local businesses and economy from the impacts of climate change. From landowners, workers, local businesses, and local Councils - the more we embrace the transition, the more the benefits will flow to our community.



THEORY OF CHANGE

What is a theory of change, and why do we use it?

Building community power and creating real change takes a lot of work. So how do we know what works? A key idea to help us understand whether our actions are having a positive impact is theory of change. A theory of change is basically a statement of what impact we believe our actions will have in the world, and explains how we will achieve change through these actions. In its simplest form a theory of change is an if-then-because statement:

IF (we do these things)

THEN (this will change)

BECAUSE (some persuasive causal logic)¹

This is really helpful to use when organising communities because it helps us clarify our own assumptions and purpose in our minds. When things get very busy in community organising it's helpful having a clear statement like this to come back to. It also helps to keep ourselves accountable – when we take action we can ask ourselves, did our actions have the impact we thought they would? Assessing this over time is a key part of knowing whether we are successfully creating change.

¹James Whelan, "Theories of Change", The Social Commons, <https://commonslibrary.org/theories-of-change-2/>.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE:

The shift to renewable energy is not only a technical engineering problem - it is fundamentally social and political. If we're going to successfully shift to wind and solar power, it is critical that communities are at the heart of that shift.

Yes 2 Renewables helps **organise, mobilise** and **empower** communities to create the conditions for a faster and fairer shift to renewable energy. We have a vision for a **better energy system** powered by renewable energy, where people have access to **good jobs, affordable electricity** and clean air while ensuring **nature is protected** in the process.

By providing communities with factual information, practical resources, and creating networks of grassroots organisations and leaders, we can empower Australians to not only shape the shift to renewable energy for the better, but make this shift truly people centred.

THE POWER OF RENEWABLES

Australia is already a world leader in renewables, and is close to hitting its goal of 82% renewables by 2030 already.

We know that one of the biggest contributors to global warming is the burning of fossil fuels. We have an economy that has been extracting wealth from mining and burning coal, oil and gas for generations. Australia continues to be a world leading exporter of fossil fuels²; we continue to mine and produce large amounts of coal, oil and gas, which means what happens in Australia has a big impact.

² Australian Government, Geoscience Australia, Australia's Energy Commodity Resources 2025, last updated: 23 October 2025 [https://www.ga.gov.au/aecr2025/production-and-trade#:~:text=Black%20coal%20\(metallurgical%20and%20thermal\)%20and%20natural%20gas%20\(LNG,%25%20respectively%20from%202021%E2%80%9322.](https://www.ga.gov.au/aecr2025/production-and-trade#:~:text=Black%20coal%20(metallurgical%20and%20thermal)%20and%20natural%20gas%20(LNG,%25%20respectively%20from%202021%E2%80%9322.)

Accelerating our renewables rollout is climate action. We are well positioned to switch our energy system to renewables, with an abundance of sun, wind and other clean energy solutions available to us. We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to change the way we produce energy and ensure it is done well, protecting the environment while also providing benefits to the communities that host it.

The time is NOW to push for this change. Each and every individual in Australia is a valuable voice to add to this conversation. Most of Australia's ageing coal-fired power stations are retiring over the next decade, and we are on the path toward renewable energy being the major source of energy in our country, providing a reliable, affordable and stable opportunity to secure Australia's future energy needs.

While this shift can be daunting for communities, community advocacy can help people to understand and define the transition in ways that work for them. For some communities where new projects and infrastructure are being built the transition can seem fragmented and chaotic. For communities faced with the loss of older industries that provided stability for generations, it can seem a frightening and uncertain prospect. By using community advocacy, communities have the power to define expectations, build community benefits in a way that meet their specific needs, and manage any potential impacts that development may have on the natural environment around them.

Anti-renewables campaigning, NIMBYism (Not In My Backyard), and political agendas all risk slowing down and stalling renewable energy development. This, in turn, puts Australia at greater risk of climate change impacts. New renewable energy opportunities aren't guaranteed, and we have an important window of opportunity to embrace investment in renewable energy. This is a chance for us to help revitalise Australia's energy production, build a future on more sustainable power sources, and embed energy justice, community needs, and community benefits in the process.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS OF RENEWABLE ENERGY:

- Economic benefits for surrounding communities including landholders, increased local jobs for workers, and income for local businesses that supply and support the industry and workers
- Community benefit schemes can provide communities with the resources and community investment that they need
- Wind, solar and storage are the cheapest new forms of electricity: more renewable energy means cheaper electricity for everyone
- Reducing carbon pollution made by burning fossil fuels, which results in a safer and healthier community
- Reducing air pollution and damage to the environment in areas that currently host fossil fuels
- When electrifying your home you can reduce power costs and in some cases sell your excess energy back to the grid

FOSSIL FUELS, DENIAL, AND DELAY

As our renewable energy rollout accelerates, we will soon be able to power our country entirely with renewables. However, entrenched ideas about fossil fuels and vested financial interests from fossil fuel companies are working hard to slow this transition.

In the fight for a renewable future, organised people are up against an organised fossil fuels industry that uses money, PR campaigns and sophisticated lobbying strategies that weaponise false claims about wind, solar and energy storage.

Ultimately the fossil fuel industry's goal is to disrupt and delay the shift to renewable energy in order to protect their own profits.

Understanding this connection is vital to understanding where false claims about renewable energy come from.

As early as the 1950's the fossil fuel industry was warned about the impacts of digging up and burning coal, oil and gas which heat up the global atmosphere. Despite this, the industry went on to spread climate change denial globally as a strategy to obstruct attempts to keep our climate stable³.

Now, at a time where climate disasters regularly frequent news headlines and denial is no longer possible, the new climate denial has shifted to *discourses of delay*⁴ - this includes strategically undermining solutions like renewable energy. As demonstrated by Prof Christian Downie, PR firms are spreading climate disinformation on behalf of fossil fuel companies, including through the use of astroturfing campaigns such as 'Australians for Natural Gas' that claim to be grassroots organisations. The goal of the industry is to actively influence public perceptions and divide communities, which causes delays to projects and slows the shift to renewable energy - so they can keep making money.

Historically, anti-renewables disinformation focused on promoting bogus health claims about wind farms, as documented by Prof. Simon Chapman in the book '*Wind Turbine Syndrome: A communicable disease*'. These bogus health claims have been thoroughly debunked through several reviews by the National Health and Medical Research Council, and in 2014 eventually led to regulators revoking the charity status of the anti-wind group The Waubra Foundation⁶.

Now, anti-renewables disinformation campaigns tend to focus on claims about the environment, visual impacts or impacts on land value, false claims about materials used in renewables, and recently, the overblown risks of fire at renewables locations. While there are genuine concerns among communities hosting renewable energy that should be addressed, the overarching aim of anti-campaigns is to distract and divide communities, and to delay projects.

This is keeping Australia from taking the urgently needed steps towards a clean energy economy. But we know that these views do not represent the majority of people, and communities have a vital role in shaping the public narrative by sharing and fighting for their own vision for Australia's renewables future.

³ Royce Kurlmelovs, *Slick: Australia's toxic relationship with Big Oil*, University of Queensland Press, 2024.

⁴ Dr. William F. Lamb, 2020, "How 'Discourses of Delay' are Used to Slow Climate Action," Carbon Brief, <https://www.carbonbrief.org/guest-post-how-discourses-of-delay-are-used-to-slow-climate-action/>

⁵ Christian Downie, 2025, 'PR firms are spreading climate misinformation on behalf of fossil fuel companies. Could Australia stop them?' <https://theconversation.com/pr-firms-are-spreading-climate-misinformation-on-behalf-of-fossil-fuel-companies-could-australia-stop-them-266353>.

⁶ National Health and Medical Research Council, Feb 2015, "Information Paper: Evidence on Wind Farms and Human Health." <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/reports/wind-farm-info-paper-eh57a.pdf>.

FACTS THAT STICK —

The reality of renewable energy



- Multiple polls consistently show that Australians overwhelmingly support renewable energy. For example:
 - A 2024 CSIRO study found that **9 in 10 Australians support the shift to renewable energy**, and more than half want the shift to go faster⁷.
 - A 2025 Climate Council report found that 67% of Australians support the shift to renewable energy, including in their own regions⁸.
 - A 2025 poll of regional people by Farmers for Climate Action found that **62% of people living in Renewable Energy Zones where the largest projects are being proposed support the shift to wind and solar**⁹.
- Australia is a global leader in solar power, with **the highest per capita installation of rooftop solar in the world**¹⁰.
- After decades of building wind and solar projects, in the last quarter of 2025 Australia generated over half of its electricity using renewable energy, even with an increase in the amount of energy people are consuming annually¹¹.
- During a heatwave in January 2026 when air conditioner use and electricity demand spiked, **rooftop solar played a crucial role keeping the lights on**¹².

FACTS THAT STICK —

The reality of renewable energy



SOURCES

- ⁷ CSIRO, 2024, “CSIRO Survey Reveals Australians’ Attitudes toward the Renewable Energy Transition,” April 10, 2024, <https://www.csiro.au/en/news/All/News/2024/April/CSIRO-survey-reveals-Australians-attitudes-toward-the-renewable-energy-transition>.
- ⁸ Annika Dean et al., 2025, “ELECTRIC SHOCK! AUSTRALIA’S LIGHT-BULB MOMENT,” https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Electric-Shock-Australias-lightbulb-Moment_Climate-Council.pdf.
- ⁹ Rob Jennings, “Country people underestimating local support for clean energy poll,” Farmers for Climate Action,” 2025, <https://farmersforclimateaction.org.au/blog/2025/11/12/country-people-underestimating-local-support-for-clean-energy-poll/>.
- ¹⁰ Dr. Jennifer Rayner et al., “Seize The Sun: How to supercharge Australia’s rooftop solar”, Climate Council, 19 Sept 2024, <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/seize-the-sun/>.
- ¹¹ Helen Clark, “Australia hits new renewable milestone of over 50%”, Reuters, 29 Jan 2026, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/australia-hits-new-renewable-milestone-over-50-2026-01-29/>.
- ¹² Daniel Mercer, “Solar to the fore as grid sails through heatwave and record demand,” ABC, 9 Jan 2026. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-01-09/solar-powers-australia-through-heatwave-conditions/106211394>

FACTS THAT STICK —

The reality of renewable energy



- **Just one spin of an offshore wind turbine** provides the same amount of electricity as a single home solar system does for an entire day¹³.
- Wind turbines can *pay back* energy used during manufacturing in as little as six months, and pay back emissions in close to two years¹⁴. As renewable energy dominates the grid more and more, this will only reduce.
- Despite this, The Climate Council found there is a “perception gap” – **Australians believe we are further behind in the shift to renewables than we really are, and underestimate how strong public support for renewable energy really is**¹⁵. This perception gap is largely fueled by the media covering divisive community stories over good news stories about renewable energy and community support for renewables projects. You’ll often find that when you start talking to people in your community most people either support the shift to renewables or consider it something that is already happening.

FACTS THAT STICK —

The reality of renewable energy



SOURCES

- ¹³ Star of the South, Offshore Wind Turbines Factsheet, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5eb3699d1492806f7759caf4/t/673d051e91885c58f1c0eca6/1732052310769/Turbines+factsheet>.
- ¹⁴ Rachel Williamson, ‘Wind turbines pay back life cycle carbon emissions in less than 2 years, NZ study finds’, Renew Economy, 15 May 2025, <https://reneweconomy.com.au/wind-turbines-pay-back-life-cycle-carbon-emissions-in-less-than-2-years-nz-study-finds/>.
- ¹⁵ Dean et al., 2025, “ELECTRIC SHOCK!” https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Electric-Shock-Australias-lightbulb-Moment_Climate-Council.pdf.

WHY COMMUNITY VOICES MATTER



Without organised local support, communities risk missing out on the opportunity to define local benefits from renewables projects, and, in cases where there is strong opposition, there is a risk of losing the project altogether.

Community voices are a pivotal part of ensuring we can build a new energy system that is just and fair for all. As such, it's vital to share lessons in building movements that work - directly from people on the ground who have built a positive vision for renewables in their communities and faced down disinformation campaigns in the process.



COMMUNITIES SHOULD KNOW...

- **Their voice matters.** When communities are organised they can influence and shape local conditions and benefits for local people and the environment in relation to renewables projects.
- **Building local voices, leaders and capacity is the key to success.** Tap into existing civil society structures to help get the word out and draw local people out who want to build a positive vision with you.
- **Leadership, support, and training are critical tools.** People step up and sustain engagement long term when they feel confident in what they are doing. Sharing skills with each other and building the leadership of everyone in the group is an important step. Communities can also access free and discounted resources and training from groups within the environment movement.
- **Care is the pathway to resilience.** Taking care of yourself and the others around you is vital to keeping campaigns sustainable for the long term - look out for each other and share the load so you don't burn out.
- **Opposition is a natural part of the process.** Change often brings uncertainty, with some people either opposing the change or feeling unsure about it. Remember that this is a normal part of the process and most people are willing to learn more and develop their perception. Acknowledging people's genuine concerns and doubts can be a good starting point to build trust. That being said, it's important to tell the difference between genuine concerns and bad faith claims, which are often used to divide communities.
- **Lead with shared values, not problems.** It's important to find shared values and focus on those values when engaging the public. When we focus on problems people can become overwhelmed and disengage; but when we focus on shared values people are more likely to be open to your perspective.
- **And lastly - the community can win!** We have seen many communities rising up and sharing their passion and voice for renewables and they can make a big change. Always keep in mind that you can win this.

A LATROBE VALLEY FIRST

Yes2Renewables campaigned for many years in support of the Delburn wind farm proposal. Located in a traditionally coal powered region, the project is a clear sign of the changes happening in Gippsland. The wind farm will be the first built in the Latrobe Valley area and is located in a pine plantation.

We felt that the location in a pine plantation was perfect for a renewable energy facility. When meeting with the developer **we encouraged them to reduce any potential impact of the proposal on local koala populations**, as there were small pockets of remnant native vegetation within the footprint of the project. This involved assessing individual trees for their habitat values and negotiating for the protection of individual trees of high value.

Locally, the Strzelecki Sustainable Futures (SSF) group played a key role in sharing factual information about the project covering the benefits for local jobs, climate action, and scrutinising the project from an environmental perspective. The group joined a wind farm tour to see turbines up close and to better understand the technology. As well conducting site visits to inspect habitat trees for the Strzelecki Koala.

"We didn't want the project affecting the environment negatively. It was important that it was in a pine plantation. The fact that there was less need for building more grid infrastructure because it was connecting to the existing grid was also important. We decided because there was so much misinformation around that we would start a myth buster sheet" said Cath Thompson from Strzelecki Sustainable Futures. **The group started their own website to promote factual information, distributed printed factsheets and ran a letter writing workshop to make sure they could counter false claims in local media and share their own vision.**

This included countering claims the wind farm would increase fire risk in the plantation. The project is surrounded by a number of small townships including Boolarra, Yinnar and Mirboo North so it was important to address these communities' concerns.

The group showed how the design of the project would actually *improve* fire management in the plantation due to the use of fire suppressant technology in the wind turbines, AI early monitoring systems, and better road access. It is a great example of unexpected local benefits.

As of January 2026, 100% of the project has since been purchased by the newly reformed State Electricity Commission - meaning that **the Delburn wind farm is the first publicly owned wind project in Victoria.**

BUILDING SUPPORT FOR RENEWABLES

The success of the Yes 2 Renewables campaign lies in building community power at the grassroots level, and linking communities and stakeholders together into a bigger narrative to enable us to influence governments at the state and federal level.

Yes 2 Renewables was created to build a positive campaign around renewable energy during a moment when bogus health claims about wind power were rife. On the back of this, Victoria's troubled Baillieu government introduced the strictest anti-wind laws in the country, crippling the local industry and even banning community wind farm proposals.

At the same time, the conservative Abbott government had killed the Carbon Price and slashed the national Renewable Energy Target, cutting thousands of renewable energy jobs throughout the country, including those of the Keppel Prince wind manufacturing workers in Portland. We decided to fight back, making the case that **Victoria needed its own renewable energy target to secure regional jobs and investment, and to support communities that wanted to be part of a renewable energy future.**

In the early phase of the 'wind wars', this meant deep engagement in community conversations around specific wind farm proposals, attending consultations and town hall meetings, providing outreach to the community through public events, forums and info stalls, and lobbying of the Coalition to adopt a more progressive energy policy. After several years of organising and campaigning collectively throughout the state we were ultimately successful in convincing Premier Dan Andrews to legislate a Victorian Renewable Energy Target. Years later, we've built on those wins and the state now has ambitions to become the first in the country to build offshore wind.





LESSONS FROM THE GASFIELD FREE VIC CAMPAIGN

There are a lot of lessons on building a joyful, mass movement that can be learned from the experience of Gasfield Free Vic. The campaign started as a grassroots resistance tactic against gas fracking in Victoria and built into a national alliance that stopped fracking and unconventional gas in its tracks - and won an Australia-first statewide ban on fracking.

It also shows us the power of 'no': giving us important perspectives on how disinformation campaigns can seek to use, or simulate, similar methods and successes.

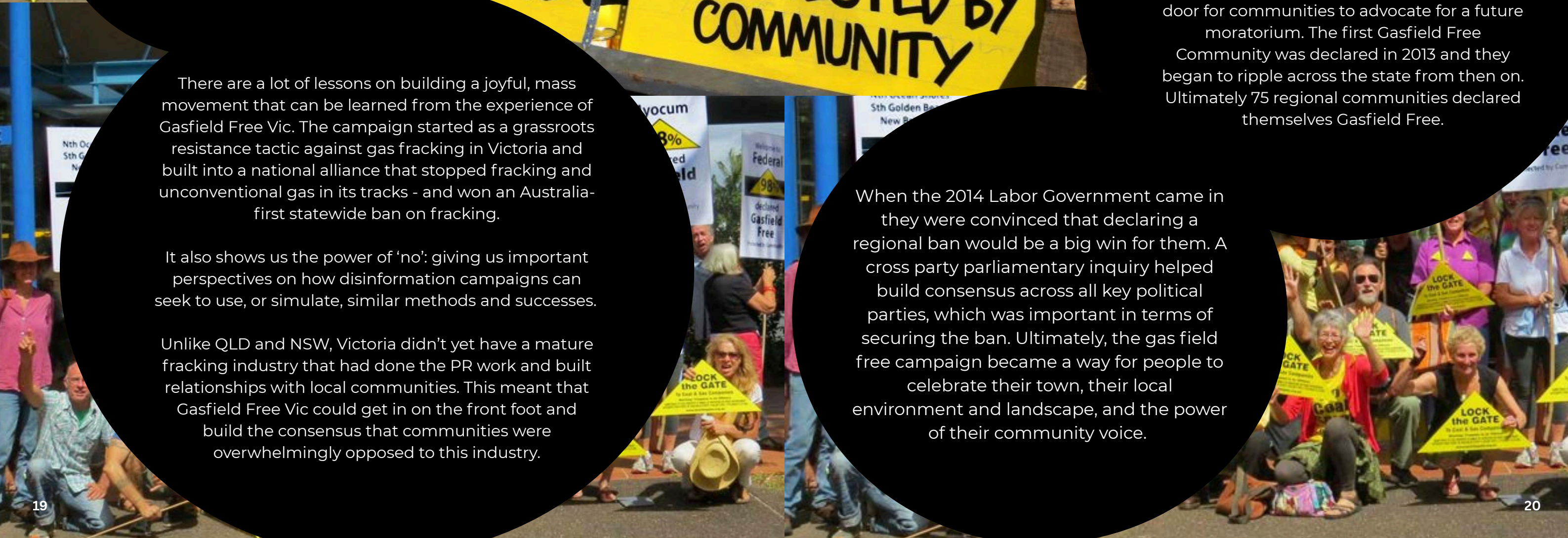
Unlike QLD and NSW, Victoria didn't yet have a mature fracking industry that had done the PR work and built relationships with local communities. This meant that Gasfield Free Vic could get in on the front foot and build the consensus that communities were overwhelmingly opposed to this industry.



The power of this community response resulted in a short-term moratorium on exploration licenses that was brought in after threats of direct action from farmers who were against fracking - this gave the campaign the opportunity to get out to communities before the industry machine could.

This became an effective wedge between the National and Liberal Parties and opened the door for communities to advocate for a future moratorium. The first Gasfield Free Community was declared in 2013 and they began to ripple across the state from then on. Ultimately 75 regional communities declared themselves Gasfield Free.

When the 2014 Labor Government came in they were convinced that declaring a regional ban would be a big win for them. A cross party parliamentary inquiry helped build consensus across all key political parties, which was important in terms of securing the ban. Ultimately, the gas field free campaign became a way for people to celebrate their town, their local environment and landscape, and the power of their community voice.



SECTION 2: COMING TOGETHER

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Sometimes it can feel like you're the only one feeling the urgency to do something about supporting renewables or tackling climate change. Sometimes you're lucky enough to have others around you in your friends, family or community that feel the same. Whatever situation you are facing in your community, you are not alone. This toolkit has been designed to help chart a path through these situations.

What's at stake?

- It's imperative that communities are brought along during the process of developing our future energy system, and that locals are able to have a seat at the table to ensure that renewables in their community suit their needs and their vision for their future.
- If we don't change something in our energy system, we put the future for our kids, the environment and our economy at risk. We can no longer rely on ageing and harmful fossil fuels as a bedrock of our energy system.
- Will the transition include strong community benefits and good local jobs? As champions and leaders of your community you'll be able to find an answer to these questions and work out how to bring your community along with you.

The difference comes down to people like you:

- You have a special role to play locally in helping other people see the opportunities available to them, to have a say in the process, and to step up into leadership too.
- Yes 2 Renewables believes that by training and supporting community leaders like you to champion this shift to renewable energy we can accelerate the just people-powered renewables rollout that we need.

COMMUNITY CAMPAIGNERS IN ACTION - THEIR STORIES:

These personal stories from three community campaigners will guide you on your journey through this toolkit. They transformed their lives — from coal miner, housewife, and office worker — into powerful community leadership, mobilising their regions to support renewable energy.



DARRYL BEST

EX-COAL MINER, RENEWABLES AND JOBS ADVOCATE



Darryl worked as a coal miner for his whole working life.

He was at Tarmwell Colliery in the Southern Highlands when the fires hit in 2019. His mum, 94 at the time, was surrounded by flames on her 40-acre property. The fires, the floods, the climate impacts; they were happening too frequently. As coal mines began to shut around him he had to think about what was best for the future of his kids, and his coal mining community.

“Back in 2015, I got laid off and I had the time to think. My concern over climate change gradually got worse and I needed to do something about it. Robust conversations with my family, especially my kids and grandkids, made it real. **We weren’t just talking about the climate. We were talking about the kind of world I wanted to leave behind.**”

When I moved from Lithgow to Wollongong, I found myself in a new community, surrounded by people with different views. At a writers' festival, listening to people like Scott Ludlam and Veronica Greevy talk about climate justice, I offered to write a submission to oppose a coal mine expansion. That led to a cup of coffee with Cath Blakey, a Greens councillor, and ended with my first ABC radio interview. I was really nervous about it!

What I was saying aligned with what others were trying to do. I found like-minded people to work with in groups like Good for the Gong, Beyond Zero Emissions, and Hi Neighbour. I met other local leaders for coffee who critiqued my speeches. They gave me skills, training, and confidence.”

Darryl is now advocating for more renewable energy and a strong transition pathway for coal miners to shift their skills to the renewable industry. “The jobs just aren’t going to be there - coal is dead, and we need to act fast to have a pathway for the folks working in the coal industry.”

Darryl has now spoken on several panels, done plenty of media interviews, regularly writes to the local paper, and is widely considered a powerful local advocate and voice in the shift to renewables.



WENDY FARMER

HOUSEWIFE, MOTHER AND POWERFUL VOICE
FOR THE COMMUNITY

Wendy lives just 2 kms from the Yallourn coal power plant and Australia’s second largest open cut mine. Wendy and her family deal with the impacts of coal daily - from washing coal dust off her home grown vegetables before they can eat them, to the constant whirring of the power plant in the background of her life. Wendy saw her Latrobe Valley community left without answers or support in the wake of the devastating Hazelwood mine fire which left communities with long lasting health impacts and blanketed in smoke and ash for six weeks in February and March 2014. **She wanted to understand how “a housewife” could stand up, be heard, and demand accountability, justice, and the health resources they badly needed.**

“My daughter was already an activist—we used to joke that she should get a real job. But when watching a powerful film about the impact of coal together, something shifted. I asked myself: How does a housewife get the support she needs when asking hard questions? How do you even begin to stand up?

We didn’t know how to write a media release or reach the media. But someone from Friends of the Earth reached out; not to take over, just to offer help. That was the first turning point. It showed me the power of reaching out, and of being reached out to. **I realised how important it is to support others—especially when they’re just starting out. I knew what it felt like to feel alone,** like at my first environmental justice meeting in Melbourne. I remember feeling completely disconnected from the people in the room. It taught me how vital it is to make everyone feel like they belong.

We founded Voices of the Valley, born out of that mine fire and our community’s grief and anger. Our community had been built by coal - and destroyed by it. What we needed was hope. Leigh Ewbank was one of the first to help me understand how a coal community could lead the call for renewables. **But it was never easy. I faced personal attacks. I was accused of shutting down the mine, but I kept going.**”

Wendy has gone on to be a powerful advocate for the Gippsland community, campaigning on everything from preventing nuclear power in the region to helping the community better understand and accept the benefits and opportunities that offshore wind and other renewables projects provide. Wendy is now frequently sought after as a community voice in the media, and is invited to renewable industry panel events to speak as a strong voice in her community.

ALI GERRITSEN

EVERYDAY OFFICE AND FAMILY LIFE TO COMMUNITY
ADVOCACY



Ali was already concerned about the climate, but this really elevated when she had children. From finding herself tearing up while listening to the radio on the run to nursery, to joining a local pro-renewables group, her journey started when an offshore renewables project was announced in her community and she wanted to learn more.

"I didn't know much about clean energy back then, but some loud voices in the community were already saying "no."

I turned to a sciencey friend who helped me understand that this was happening all over the world, Australia was just a little late to the game.

That's when I saw Good for the Gong online. I posted a few sketches in the Facebook group, and someone reached out personally and asked me if I wanted to be involved? This personal touch led me to lean in.

My first action was letterboxing. **It felt like a small step, but I met a group of volunteers. All lovely, kind, decent people. And I felt I was in the right place.**

What's special about Good for the Gong is how well it recognises people's different skills and circumstances. Our amazing volunteer coordinator would get in touch by text or email. Her asks were really considered, with no pressure to do things I wasn't ready for. If I had been asked to do calls straight off the bat I'd have probably refused! That thoughtful approach gave me the confidence to grow."

Ali has now taken on the role of coordinating the Good for the Gong group, she's done media interviews, written blogs, made videos and is actively out in the community talking to people daily to build the region's support for renewables projects.

A CHORUS IS LOUDER

*We may not always feel powerful, but collectively we have strength in our stories, relationships, and in our connection to our communities. When it comes to building people-power we can think of leadership like this: **people, power, change.***

We build relationships with *people*, we focus on building *power*, and we aim to make lasting *change*.

The important thing to note is that each voice has power - one person can make change, but the more voices you add the more powerful it can become.

Organising people to build that power is rooted in five key practices:

Telling stories that connect to values and inspire action

Building intentional relationships

Structuring teams to distribute responsibility and develop leaders

Strategising to plan and win

Taking Action

As we come to understand the people we are working with, we see the small changes or accommodations which can enable and empower them to act further, with more confidence.

2. COMING TOGETHER

REACHING OUT TO YOUR COMMUNITY

Your community is a valuable and important resource. We want to build up the joy and positives of the community while talking to people about renewables and aiming toward a shared vision of what your community's future could look like.

The biggest hurdle in speaking to your community about renewables is doing it for the first time. Try speaking to your friends and family first - maybe start with someone who you know is aligned with what you think and ask them to practice with you, or try with someone who might not agree with you and see where you can get to.

There is no right or wrong way to approach it, everyone is different and will respond positively to different things. The more you try out these conversations with others, the more you will learn and be able to understand what approaches, values and narratives work for you and your community.

TELLING STORIES THAT CONNECT TO VALUES AND INSPIRE ACTION

Telling stories helps people to connect and share their genuine experiences. Think back to how we introduced our community advocates to you - their stories give them life, help us to understand where they come from, and connect to what they see as meaningful. You may have seen parts of yourself in their stories.

Your story, and the story of your community, are tools that you can use to connect people and bring them along on your journey of supporting renewables.

Connecting those stories to values - like secure jobs, protecting nature, or inoculating the region from drought, floods and fires - helps people to see why you care, and why they should care too.

And finally, sharing your story of how you or your community are taking action helps other people to feel like they can also take the next step.

Your story matters: We won't win the shift to renewables we need by focusing on a few big names, it will take more of us speaking up, directly to our communities. No one knows your community like you do, your voice is persuasive and it helps find other people keen to lead the conversation with you in your community.

CASE STUDY: OPENING THE GATE FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

In the Gasfield Free Vic movement, we talked a lot about 'attractors'. 'Attractors' are things that draw people together around something, and are the things that kick off movement dynamics.

For the gasfield free strategy, the first 'attractor' was a community wide meeting put on by a small group of locals to talk about the impacts of fracking or coal mining, and what other communities have done to Gasfield Free Vic to gas and coal mining companies. That brought concerned people in the community together to think both about the problem, but also about the action they could take.

At the end of those meetings we would call out for anyone who was enthusiastic to be part of a community-wide survey asking if they wanted to declare the area coal mine and gasfield free, and this would usually find the most passionate and proactive people in the community to start an action group. The survey itself meant that we met everyone in the community, across the political spectrum, and could ask them if they wanted to get involved. The survey itself was an attractor that engaged everyone in the community and mobilised the most proactive people.

Finally, the 'Gasfield Free' declaration would be another attractor, bringing together people across the community in celebration of what the community wanted to protect. By making it a family fun day, or making a 'ute' sign or 'tractor' sign, they incorporated attractors that would bring along different parts of the community!

All kind of things can be attractors: face painting to bring along young families - movies with pizza and beer for students - just think through who you want to attract, what might bring them in and keep experimenting! - *Chloe Aldenhoven, Gasfield Free Vic Campaigner*



CASE STUDY: VALUES REACH THE PEOPLE

"The Illawarra region, just south of Sydney in NSW, is full of different kinds of people - from coal miners and steel workers, families, world renowned academics, tradies, retirees and environmental activists. The one thing we all have in common is a love for the amazing natural beauty of the area.

When we started Good for the Gong ('Gong' being the local slang for the main city centre Wollongong), we first wanted to find out if the proposed offshore wind project was going to be harmful for the local environment. The core organisers found each other through local facebook groups, at council meetings and through word of mouth, and we started organising to answer this question.

We reached out to local energy and marine science academics at Wollongong University and found that the history of coal mining and shipping at the local port meant that the ocean floor was already in pretty bad shape, and that having offshore wind there actually provides an opportunity to let that marine ecosystem recover without being disturbed by container and coal ships mooring there everyday.

This became one of the core values we used to talk to people and became a pretty convincing point for many people we spoke to in the community. This along with helping people understand the location and mitigation methods that could be used to protect the environment really turned the tide on local support for the project by those who cared about the ocean" - Coco Venaglia, *Good for the Gong*.



BUILDING INTENTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

One of the key ways to start reaching out to your community is through building intentional relationships. People trust people they connect with and who have shown them empathy, comradery and care.

Key points:

- Relationships are the key to building the power we need to change and influence the world around us.
- Relationships are key to getting people engaged and ready to act.
- People are more likely to act when asked by someone they know.
- These relationships can be kickstarted by reaching out for 1:1 intentional conversations - a core foundational skill for growing new relationships and building up existing ones.
- A handy tip, this conversation should last as long as it takes for one cup of coffee (or tea) to get cold.
- See also 'Relational Organising' on page 51



"I would not go and protest about coal mines, but I'll go talk to coal miners instead. I was clear I'm pushing for renewables for this reason: making sure communities didn't die or suffer when these coal mines shut down."

- Darryl Best



2. COMING TOGETHER

REACHING PEOPLE THROUGH 1:1 CONVERSATIONS

Holding one-on-one conversations with people is a surefire way to build intentional relationships. This could be a 1:1 coffee conversation with someone you know to see if they are interested in getting involved, meeting with a local business leader, or holding a stall with some friends at the local market where you can speak to people in the street.

One-on-one conversations can include:

Meeting to recruit someone to your team: Use your personal story to express the values and goals of your campaign and open up space to understand theirs. If you see shared experiences or values, you might want to give them a solid ask: to join your team, join a local volunteer action like a letter drop, or sign up to your mailing list.

Maintaining an existing relationship: Have regular check-ins with people on your core team, and create opportunities to give feedback and help people grow as leaders and organisers.

Escalation or agitation: You may see someone who is ready to take on more responsibility, engage in a more important task, or act more independently. It's important to build peoples' confidence, especially new activists and team members or people getting out of their comfort zone. Remind them of their successes and how far they have come, and propose the next step they can take in the campaign.

A clear purpose: Ask yourself why are you meeting this person, and why now? You should come prepared with questions to help you understand the interests, values, story and resources a new contact brings to the table. For existing relationships, you might be checking in after a big event, debriefing after a win or set-back, or trying to understand any challenges they may be facing.

Exchange of information: Explore insights, stories, or resources that can connect to your goals or campaign and set up further exchanges down the line.

A commitment to action: Will you start working together, or deepen your collaboration?

SHARED VALUES

"These campaigns can be long and difficult. But they're also joyful, creative, and rooted in a deep love for the places, country, communities, and people we want to see thriving long into the future." - *Coco Venaglia, Good for the Gong*

Example 1:

Someone in a farming community might be worried about a new wind farm because they think it might damage the agricultural land, and you might also be worried about the future of farming in the areas because of the impact of climate change. These are values you can align on - a shared concern for the security of farming in the area. There are many examples of how solar and wind on farming land have helped alleviate the impacts of drought in both the long and the short term, and helped farmers who host renewables to have a stable income when stock prices fluctuate.

Example 2:

Someone might be worried about their kids being able to stay in the area; they may have come from a family who has worked and lived for generations in this community. This might be something you're also worried about, the future of your kids. There might be a local renewables project that can help keep jobs in the area, but it can also help stop damage to the community from floods, fires and other natural disasters. It might be a way for the community to step away from the negative health impacts of a coal mine nearby, or it might be that a proposed offshore wind zone in the area could provide 'safe spaces' for commercial fishing that is protected from high boat traffic. There are many combined benefits from renewables projects that can reflect shared values and help you reach people.



"We sparked Nanna's Against Nuclear from a coffee at a kitchen table. We showed that everyone can lead in their own way. Some people made signs. Some people delivered leaflets. Every bit matters." - *Wendy Farmer*

2. COMING TOGETHER

FINDING LOCAL LEADERS & INTERESTED COMMUNITY MEMBERS

If you are reading this, congratulations, you are already showing leadership! Being curious about how to make things better for your community is a key aspect of leadership. But we can't lead alone – leadership involves building groups of people to create community power.

Leadership has been defined as 'empowering and navigating others to achieve a shared purpose in the face of uncertainty'¹⁶.

You'll likely find other people who are interested, passionate and have the capacity to become leaders through your conversations within your community. The next step is to encourage them to join you and the community you are building in support of renewables in your area.

Some key things to look out for in potential leaders:



If you're lucky you may have found people who already feel the same way you do - but if you haven't, one of the easiest ways to find allies is to reach out to existing groups in your area.

These groups are already a meeting place for different kinds of people so they are a good spot to try and speak to as many people as possible in a shorter timeframe. But once you find people who are interested, you need to follow up with a more personal conversation.

¹⁶ Maxwell J. Smith, 2021, "Community Organising Leadership in Uncertain Times," The Commons. October 4, 2021. <https://commonslibrary.org/community-organising-leadership-in-uncertain-times/>

¹⁷ ibid.

FORMING A CORE GROUP

A core team can distribute tasks, keep focused on a common goal, set out clear roles, and give people an opportunity to grow and develop as they take on more responsibility.

There are a number of ways to establish a core group. You could identify likely members and approach them directly, go to a possible host organisation, check with a larger organisation to see if they might be willing to put you in touch with their members locally, or call a public forum in a community space such as a library, see who attends, and then have a follow up meeting to establish a core group.

A core team:

- Is able to meet, coordinate, and drive your campaign forward.
- Is as diverse as the community it's drawn from. It will have a variety of skills, perspectives, and experiences that can combine effectively.
- Does thinking and planning, outreach to the community and local decision makers, engages with local planning processes, researches facts and shares them with the community, acts as spokespeople in the local media, posts on local social media, organises local events, and does fun activities together.
- Meets regularly and locally. It has the ability to directly engage the local institutions, spaces and decision makers needed to guide a local renewables project.
- Shares strong commitment, values, and a core goal.
- Consists of at least 3 - 6 people as a sustainable starting point. Having more than that is great, but larger groups will require some extra skills to facilitate and coordinate smoothly - it's okay to be small!

People who are likely to be able to commit to being in the core group tend to have:

- Enough passion and time to commit to organising.
- A concern about how the environment or climate is impacting them, their community, or a larger climate change perspective.
- Interactions with people and places that care, like schools, land care groups, unions, local business or workers who can see the purpose and knock-on opportunities that will follow.
- Involvement in council or regional development groups.
- Diverse skills that can be identified and help the group's work!
- It could also be anyone! From grandparents, to students, to local sparkies, anyone who cares and has enough capacity can form an incredible group.

DEFINING GROUP VALUES

Once you've identified a few people who are keen to put some energy into forming a group, the first action is to get everyone together and define what is important to each of you and what you can agree on as the defining values of the group.

This can be done through a meeting, and it's important to provide space for everyone's opinions and perspectives and try to draw out what you all have in common.

Be clear on the values that unite you

These would be ethics you would re-emphasise in meetings together, for example:

- We want to protect land, we want to protect water
- We want to protect what we have for future generations
- We are nonviolent but not afraid of confrontation
- We want people to step towards us
- We want to support and strengthen our community, including ensuring it benefits economically and environmentally from the energy transition

The Braid of Values

"During the Gasfield Free Vic campaign we often talked about the Braid of Values. There were many reasons people were concerned: fears of groundwater contamination, of noise, of a decline in property values, impacts on local housing availability, safety on the roads because of increased truck traffic, the impacts of greenhouse gases and so on. Each of these was a 'braid'. To be involved in a local group you didn't need to be concerned about everything. But if you held concerns about one braid, then there was room for you in the movement. A piece of string on its own can be broken. But when they are woven together they form a rope that is hard to break."
- Cam Walker, Friends of the Earth

A similar concept can be used by a renewable energy group, with many possible braids:

- Concern for the climate and benefits of climate action
- Benefits of lower energy prices
- Benefits for the local environment
- Benefits to host land owners
- Benefits to local businesses
- Benefits to the community through profit sharing or community grants programs, which could include funds for environmental restoration
- Concerns about local industry shutting down

VISIONING

Now is a good time to develop a vision for what your group would like to see for the future of your community. Visioning is an amazingly connecting and insightful experience. And you can do it by yourself or with a group of people who you have found have similar interests.

Key points to explore to create a 'vision' of your community's future:

- What would you like to see for the future of your community? Each person will approach this from a different perspective and that's great - using a visual aid like a sheet of paper or a whiteboard to map this out is helpful to gather everyone's perspectives.
- Bring people out wider - what would you like to see this community looking like in 50 or 100 years?
- Work back from there - what do we need to do to make that happen?
- The key for this activity is to find a vision you all agree on. Sometimes you might need to define this by values e.g. 'a place where my kids can thrive', 'a place where nature is just as beautiful as it is now or where it can recover', or 'a place where we have good jobs'.
- All of these things can lead back to the kinds of decisions you want to make now. Do we need to influence the local MP to advocate for more renewables projects in this area? Do we need to work toward a balance between nature and where we get our power?
- Visioning will help you define what you're asking for and communicate the future to your community and decision makers.



"Good for the Gong is so inclusive of different people and skills. It's a collection of talents, and that's so important to keeping up momentum. The group is family-friendly, mindful of people's time, and meetings are flexible. It's not about being perfect, it's about showing up with a good heart. You learn as you go." - Ali Gerritsen



"I was afraid of depressed communities being left in the wake of closed coal mines. I saw in the United States how renewables are found in Texas or California, not in West Virginia where the coal mining communities are. I didn't want that for Lithgow or other communities here. I asked myself, can coal miners transition into renewables? I made charts showing how miners could do 52% of renewables jobs. I joined a group called Hi Neighbour, and did scholarships for people to transition into renewables." - Darryl Best

COMMUNITY MAPPING

What you need to look for: who are the 'warm' allies who you can mobilise easily, who among the opponents can you shift, and who should you seek to marginalise to reduce their influence?

Activity: Map where people meet - the physical and online spaces, what they are interested in, and where different people in the community come together. This will help in finding people who share your vision.

Here are some suggested groups who may be interested in joining you:

- Trade unions: start with your local trades hall.
- Local climate and environmental groups: renewables are climate action, but without organised local support, communities risk losing both the project and its potential benefits for the planet.
- Local cultural groups, sports groups, food or wine, local businesses, local firefighters or farmers or mothers groups - everyone has a part to play and an interest in preventing the devastation of climate change. Can we bring them along with us?
- Local business and industry groups: local businesses can often work as contractors on renewable energy projects building everything from fences to roads, while other small businesses like hospitality benefit from extra money circulating from workers. These are real, tangible economic benefits and powerful stories to tell.

More information:

- The Social Commons - Constitutions: Introduction to Community Mapping <https://commonslibrary.org/introduction-to-community-mapping/>

POWER MAPPING

Each community is different and your community will have its own power structure. Maybe you have a strong business council, or maybe your community is heavily influenced by your local council or MP. Getting people and groups with influence on board can make a major difference in getting closer to winning for the community.

Activity: Map where the influence and power exists in your community - this will help you figure out where you need to start talking to people. You'll be surprised by who you might be able to get on board and help influence others when you start talking to people.

Where does power sit within your community? By 'power' we mean where decisions are made, who influences the community, or the local government, or businesses. Sometimes you will only find this out by talking to people - so don't be afraid to start asking people who they listen to in the community and why.

Eventually, you might hope to leverage some of the power bases in your community by either bringing them on board with your perspective, or highlighting something they value in your argument and showing why they should see the value in yours too. At the very least, talking to people and groups who hold power and sharing your perspective can be a really powerful tool in preventing them from dissenting against a renewables project. Doing this as an individual can be powerful; doing it as a group builds your power together.

More information:

- The Social Commons - Constitutions: How to Build Durable Groups <https://commonslibrary.org/constitutions-how-to-build-durable-groups/>
- The Social Commons - Movement Compass <https://commonslibrary.org/the-movement-compass-and-worksheet/>
- The Social Commons - Facilitation Guide <https://commonslibrary.org/facilitating-meetings-a-guide-to-making-your-meetings-effective-inclusive-and-enjoyable/>
- Community Power Agency - Collaborating for a fair energy shift toolkit <https://cpagency.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Collaborating-for-a-fair-energy-shift-A-handbook-for-communities.pdf>

SECTION 3: CAMPAIGNING

WHAT IS A CAMPAIGN?

A campaign is typically made up of a group of people organising together and using tactics, strategy and messaging to communicate their point with their audience. Usually the point of a campaign is to get more people to agree with you and to show up in support of your message.

Things will look different in every place. For the **Gasfield Free Vic campaign**, their strategy was not just about saying ‘no’ to gasfields but also about celebrating what the community had to offer. For **Good for the Gong**, their strategy was to highlight what a future offshore wind project could bring to the community as a pathway to transition from a declining coal industry. In our campaign for the **Victorian Renewable Energy Target (VRET)**, we focussed on the needs for states like Victoria to lead on renewable energy jobs after cuts by the federal government.

For all of these campaigns, each event was a unique gathering that featured the strength of that community - in some places it involved creating signs from hay bales or farm equipment; for others it was creating family friendly fun days to show how people wanted to secure a safe future for their kids. In Boolara, in Gippsland, the gas ban campaign featured local musicians and local produce. Positive signage was always an important part of the celebration and ongoing campaigning. The image of Portland wind manufacturing workers demanding local climate jobs was powerful in our campaign for a state renewables target.

These campaigns were able to come together around widely shared community values and create a positive vision that bridged existing divisions to create a new sense of pride and identity in their communities. While the Gasfield Free Vic campaign was saying ‘no’ to something, the tactic of using positive messaging and highlighting the things that the community values is a great lesson to learn from in saying ‘yes’ to renewables.

What universal value do you share with the community? Develop your movement building and message around something everyone can agree with. Figure out what the universal value is that you share in the community: e.g. creating a secure future for the next generation, creating sustainable jobs in the region, empowering the community to build a secure energy future.



DEVELOPING A STRATEGY

A strategy is basically the map you make to get from where you are to your goal. It can be as simple or complex as you and your group determine. It should communicate your theory of change, the political context you are working in, the problems and solutions, your goals, power analysis, community mapping, your tactics and your timeline.

A simple campaign planning grid could include columns for each of the following elements of strategy: vision; goals; objectives; organisational considerations; constituents, allies and opponents; tactics; and timeline.

The Democracy Centre recommends nine steps to plan advocacy campaigns, based around some simple questions¹⁸. By answering each question, campaigners develop each element of their strategy.

1. What do we want? (Goals)
2. Who can give it to us? (Audiences)
3. What do they need to hear? (Messages)
4. Who do they need to hear it from? (Messengers)
5. How do we get them to hear it? (Delivery – strategy and tactics)
6. What have we got? (Resources and strengths)
7. What do we need to develop? (Challenges and gaps)
8. How do we begin? (First steps)
9. How will we know it's working, or not working? (Evaluation)

Mapping support and opposition using the *Spectrum of Allies*:

A useful way to start mapping your community and the varying levels of support for your vision or a project is the Spectrum of Allies tool. This maps groups, politicians, leaders etc. on a spectrum from Active Opposition and Passive Opposition through to Neutral, Passive Support, to Active Support. Use these questions to map groups along the spectrum – then you can figure out how to move people towards Active Support.

- Who are the local voices in the area who are for and against renewables?
- Who is already standing up and how can we support them?
- How do we work with people who are supportive but silent and help them take action for the first time?

Key tips:

- It's vital to find your silent supporters - and think about how to help these people feel able to shift off the fence and into a publicly pro-renewables position.
- It's important not to inflate the power of your opposition - if you withdraw from a space when anti groups push back, then they appear more prominent.
- People may not always agree with you but they will respect you for respectfully and consistently expressing your views. Even when engaging people who disagree with you, remember your audience is not necessarily the person who disagrees but the silent majority of people listening in.
- Map the opposition as well and see how their networks operate and interact; do they meet in a closed Facebook group? Are they putting on events or talks you can go to as well? Where are they getting their power and resources from? Is there anything you can learn from them?

Developing an initial strategy, *lessons from Good for the Gong*:

Good for the Gong got everyone together - at that stage it was a group of about 6 people who had found each other through local conversations - and ran through some of the tools that we have put in this document to develop what we wanted to achieve and how we would achieve it.

In the end we decided that highlighting the positive story, focusing on community connections, holding community conversations, and providing a space that was safe and free of anger and aggression was the most important thing to do.

So we focused on maintaining our Facebook page - and saw heaps of people who were against offshore wind come over to our conversation just to get away from the aggression of the small angry minority.

We held community stalls and little events at local gathering places that allowed people to be in the same room with experts from the university who could answer their questions. This strategy really worked for us - people wanted connection and they wanted access to trusted information. We did this through a lens of what was important to our community.

More information:

The Social Commons - Developing/Reviewing an Organising Program - https://commonslibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/Template_-_Developing_Reviewing-an-Organising-Program.pdf

¹⁸ "The Democracy Center", <http://www.democracyctr.org/>.

WHAT TACTICS WORK FOR YOUR GROUP?

If a strategy is like a stairway that takes us from our present position to where we want to go, tactics are like the individual steps.

Tactics are the component parts which, when brought together, form a plan of action. There are literally scores of tactics that a group can use. A few examples are: letter writing, petition gathering, community conversations, information events, marching, blocking access and sitting in.

Some examples of tactics are:

- Holding community stalls at local events like farmers markets where people can come and chat with you.
- Writing up Frequently Asked Questions addressing local concerns about a renewables project and letter boxing or providing it to local community spaces, or online.
- Writing op eds or letters to the editor for publication in local media.
- Attending local council meetings and asking them for their perspective on local renewables projects, or for answers to why they don't support it.
- Setting up a local community group to discuss renewables, or holding a 'kitchen table conversation' where you encourage people to talk to their friends and family about renewables at home and at work.
- Holding meetings with influential people and groups in your community to discuss what your group would like to see out of a renewables project in your area.
- Holding a community photo with people who support local renewables projects holding signs and in a location related to the project - and trying to get this in the local media or other areas where local people can see it.

'When we had a community meeting with experts, we would ask the audience to put up their hands, asking if they wanted to declare this community gas field free. People realised that they weren't alone and that built courage and galvanised action.' - *Chloe Aldenhoven, Gasfield Free VIC*

TACTIC EXAMPLES

Yes 2 Renewables Family Fun Day

"Our group decided to hold a 'Family Fun Day' in a Wollongong park. It was a beautiful sunny day right next to the industry focused port and where the offshore wind area is located. We wanted to show that this area is already used for industry, and that it is not 'pristine' and therefore not at dire risk from the impact of offshore wind development.

We asked local environmental groups, energy focused groups - like the local university and a scholarship program for women to work in the renewables sector - and tradies who provided home solar and other electrification products to come and hold stalls where people could find out more information. We also invited each of the political representatives in the area to have a stall and share their views.

Around this we had an ice shaving machine powered by an electric bike, a marching band, talks by community members and experts, a free ice cream stall donated by a local maker, and a bunch of other local food and drink stalls.

The anti-offshore wind group threatened to show up, but they never did. We wanted to highlight how Wollongong is for the future of our kids and our community, and that offshore wind provides a future for workers that would be shifting from the local coal industry, steelworkers, and for the wellbeing of our kids who are facing the impacts of climate change." - *Coco Venaglia, Good for the Gong*

Workers for the Win - Yes 2 Renewables

Shining a light on the stories of workers and communities from Portland in the west to Yackandandah in the north and the Latrobe Valley in the east, we pushed back on anti-renewables misinformation and built a powerful narrative that people were demanding wind and solar. Through a network of leaders and local groups who could champion their own region's aspirations we led letter writing campaigns, helped community members to contact their MPs and Ministers, get skilled up in social media and make their voices heard. This approach saw the campaign built from the ground up by building real relationships, and using all of the tools presented in this toolkit at different stages.

SECTION 4: COMBATTING MIS- AND DISINFORMATION

We currently live in a complex information landscape, where people are peppered with information and it can be difficult to decipher what is true and what isn't. Like all topics, there is factual information out there about renewables and some is either misguided or untrue.

- **Misinformation** is untrue information that is shared without the person realising that it is untrue or without the intention of misleading people. It's very easy to spread misinformation without meaning to, via social media or in conversations with friends and family.
- **Disinformation** is intentionally false information. It is deliberately created and shared with the intention to derail, confuse, and discredit topics and issues with false or misleading information. Whether it comes from fossil fuel industry lobbyists, politically motivated campaign groups, or elsewhere, it can often have one goal in mind: to divide communities on an issue, undermine trust in a process, or derail the credibility of a project

Communities in Australia are seeing a rise in misinformation and disinformation. This could be coming from community members or groups who hold genuine concerns, or it could be coming from background groups that are purposefully spreading disinformation to meet their own political agenda. Or it could be coming from both.

Mis- and disinformation is shared and created to respond to and leverage these types of concerns, and leaves communities feeling confused and uncertain about what is happening. We have found similarities between community concerns and mis- and disinformation about renewables across Australia:

- Loss of heritage career and economic opportunity in the area
- Impacts on the local environment or the way people use the environment
- Impacts on existing industries and business in the area
- Lack of opportunity for the community to positively shape the project
- Fear of exposure to increased electricity prices
- Fear of potential health impacts or risk of fire
- Fear of economic impacts on local land or house prices

Does any of this sound like concerns in your community?



Renewables projects should always be assessed for their suitability and potential impacts on the local environment and community - however this should be done using accurate information, effective consultation and real research. The sharing of mis/disinformation keeps communities divided and locked out of the conversation.

4. COMBATTING MIS- AND DISINFORMATION



Using positive messaging to inoculate against misinformation

In 2010, concerns about public health impacts, property values and 'desecration' of the environment were dominant features of the anti renewables campaigns. Yes2Renewables directly contested the false claims and fear-based narratives by engaging experts to share the facts and connecting potential host communities with existing wind farm hosts. This created an inoculation against misinformation in many communities because it spoke directly to people's concerns, demonstrated the benefits of renewable energy to local communities (including land owners, local councils and businesses), and made it clear that the claims about health impacts were incorrect. Simple actions such as sharing mythbusters and factsheets, writing blog articles and letters to the editors, and featuring credentialled experts at public forums are all simple ways to educate and empower community members. The campaign took a positive frame by calling for a strong state renewable energy target. We built the campaign by building a loose network of local sustainability and community energy groups and wind energy workers, and collaborated with unions and urban climate groups. Our story was one of positivity and a bright future for the regions with renewables as an asset, not a risk.

Identifying mis- and disinformation

There was a serious information vacuum when offshore wind was first proposed in the Illawarra. This was because there was a lack of detailed information and communication from the government, who announced the idea of offshore wind by putting a leaflet in everyone's mailbox and didn't follow up with any further information in a suitable timeframe.

The anti-offshore wind group in the area started up pretty quickly, with individuals around town starting to talk about the proposal with a really negative view. They had genuine concerns about what it would look like and how it would impact the marine environment, fishing businesses and house prices. But it got out of hand really quickly - the conversations turned aggressive, some people in town were either outwardly angry about it or they didn't want to talk about it at all because of how sour the conversation had gotten. People started saying that offshore wind would change the tide flows, and the wind currents and would destroy the surf - which, after talking to experts, I found is all ridiculously untrue. People were attending the town hall meetings and being really aggressive toward anyone who spoke in support of offshore wind - they even rudely shouted down a First Nations elder who was supportive.

HOW DO PEOPLE USE MIS- AND DISINFORMATION?

People often share mis- and disinformation to address concerns that they hold or when they feel like their concerns haven't been heard.

People might share misinformation to:

- **Prove their point**, often from a highly emotional or values driven perspective.
- **To try to inform others**, even if the information is not true
- **Confuse people** and encourage them to mistrust traditional information sources like universities, the media, or the government.
- **Instill fear in something**, like a new industry, a type of technology or a vaccine.
- **'Muddy the waters'** by adding more and more mis- and disinformation so that people can no longer discern what the real conversation is about.
- In the case of disinformation - **to set an agenda that is useful to them**, like a political agenda or to distract or delay from moving away from fossil fuels, which then keeps the money coming in for fossil fuel companies.

Where do we see this happen?

- **Online algorithms:** online social media, news and information risks blurring into info-tainment. Headlines may be optimised for clicks and visibility and not for accuracy or informativity. People share images and statements that are not accurate. The more people engage with mis- and disinformation online, the more the algorithm sends them in a circle of the same types of information. You need to check the source of the information.
- **Our personal bubble:** we may be seeing content and information that's been tailored to our interests. Our neighbours may be seeing the same news but with a completely different spin.
- **Conversations:** people often share information with each other that they haven't fully thought through or vetted. We have all seen something online and told someone else about it without having fully looked at where that information came from - these are the cracks that mis- and disinformation slip through.
- **Media, public voices, and politicians:** public information today has moved further toward opinion and away from fact. Watch out for news articles, public voices and political agendas that are sharing their opinion without it being backed by factual evidence or without providing enough evidence to tell the whole story.

What you can do to avoid sharing mis- or disinformation:

- **Check the sources of information.** Did this information come from a reputable source? Are they experts in their field? Are there multiple scientific perspectives on the topic that align with this view? Does the source have vested interests e.g. associations with fossil fuels, nuclear or political agendas?
- **Corroborate information.** Make sure there are multiple reliable sources of information that agree with a view - e.g. if there are concerns about the impacts of wind turbines on wildlife, what is the broad evidence from overseas studies and experts in the field?
- **Share information you know is correct.** We all need to take the responsibility of ensuring our information is backed up by science and reliable sources. Use information that you have checked for accuracy and reliability.

BIG PICTURE AND LOCAL CONSEQUENCES

THE BIG PICTURE

The spread of mis or disinformation risks urgently needed projects being delayed or generating costly political backlash, keeping us reliant on fossil fuels and setting back action on climate change. Delayed renewables projects impact our cost of living crisis, with electricity prices being driven up by prolonged dependence on increasingly unreliable fossil fuel sources.

Belief in disinformation acts as a key driver of opposition to renewables. There's a clear link between belief in false statements about renewables projects and opposition to these projects.

LOCAL IMPACTS

*When opposition groups get to fill the airwaves and dominate local social media spaces you can feel people getting divided. **The lesson is clear: anti-renewables campaigns win when they get to speak for your whole community. The second one person stands up to voice a pro-renewables message, the antis have begun to lose.***

Local impacts of mis- and disinformation:

- Emotive and hostile personal attacks can often be used to keep pro-renewables voices silent.
- Polarisation, hostile comments in public spaces, on the community Facebook page, or other local media causes a divide in the community.
- People feel unable to engage in the conversation due to public aggression and confusion.
- Some groups may find themselves isolated and alone amid an organised disinformation campaign that is polarising their neighbours and jeopardising a local renewables project.
- The loss of potential benefits for the community and the environment when renewables are done well.

You want to speak up but it feels like it's not worth the risk:

Speaking up can be isolating at first, but you will find people who agree with you. When we let one group speak for everyone we lose our agency and ability to engage in decisions that matter to us.

Your personal safety should always come first, but when you find people who also want to speak up with you, you are more protected from personal attacks. Reach out to groups like Yes 2 Renewables who can help you organise and create a space where individuals are protected.

ADVICE FROM COMMUNITY ADVOCATES:



"Don't try to take on every argument. It's easy to get stuck in social media, but easier to just ignore. Let more informed people supply the information you need to respond (have your experts at hand). **Find a way through the vitriol, there are so many good people who will help you.**" - Darryl Best



"When it felt like there was a lot more anger and division I had been more worried about being more visible, like, sticking a sticker on my car. **Now, I feel there's a lot more people who are supportive of what we're doing** but we're hearing a lot more from our opponents because they are taking up so much more space, especially the media." - Ali Gerritsen



"It was never easy. I faced personal attacks. I was accused of shutting down the mine. I was even reported to my boss by the company—but I kept going. And then, one day in the supermarket, a woman came up to me and said: **thank you so much for what you've been doing - you've helped me understand and be able to say my piece.** That made it all worth it." - Wendy Farmer

Using your own voice to counter misinformation - Good for the Gong case study

The anti-group in the Illawarra really took over the airwaves, they were being interviewed on the radio and the local papers - it felt like they were everywhere. But that just didn't sit right with me - I knew that this area was full of people who cared deeply about the impacts of climate change. We had all just gone through two massive and unusual floods; we could see the ocean side cliffs eroding in front of our eyes and taking people's backyards with them.

So a group of us who wanted to shift the energy of the conversation found each other through council meetings and talking to people. We decided to come together and do some research into what the impacts of offshore wind would actually be. We talked to a number of experts from the local Uni and sought out other renewables and marine experts. And we found that while there may be some impact as there is with any construction it was nowhere near as extreme as the opponents claimed, solutions are available to deal with the impact and in the grand scheme of things it would greatly benefit the community.

So we started taking up the airwaves ourselves. We started with a Facebook group where we invited people to ask questions and did our best to answer them with the help of experts and the research we had collated. We called the radio, spoke to the papers, got letters to the editor in the local papers, asked experts to write articles for us that we could share around and get in the local news. Eventually we started holding events and community stalls to give people a space to have a conversation without feeling like they were going to be shouted down.

We also found out about groups like Yes 2 Renewables facing similar issues and they really helped support us as we got started. That group space gave people a place to feel safe to have the conversation.

COMBATTING MIS- AND DISINFORMATION

Being bold, reasonable and respectful, and ultimately staying the course is the best counterpoint to mis- and disinformation. When speaking to activists, organisers and community leaders, the same thing comes up time and time again.

Addressing the problem is the best solution: The importance of being on the front foot, actively finding the right information, and building community consensus is pivotal. We can tell a really good news story with the information that we trust from reputable sources.

Consistently showing up is the next best: When anti-renewables sentiment is high, showing up consistently and respectfully to put forward a positive and hopeful case for renewables is an effective way to cut through the noise and gain people's trust.

Build up your information and resources:

- Start with the facts, develop FAQs and other resources for the community that challenge the misinformation.
- Humour is effective, from cartoons and online memes to playing misinfo bingo.
- Speak to people on the ground - like speaking to everyday people at street stalls.
- Engaging people who get it but don't want to get involved publicly is still useful as they will talk to their friends and family and share your message.
- Support each other to have factual and balanced responses to mis- and disinformation. Create messaging that the group agrees on so your views are clear.



"When starting out we were villains to punch, but making a point of putting a hand up and offering a different view won over so many people."
- Cam Walker, Friends of the Earth

"We also have an awesome story. We had this old and damaging fossil fuel system, and we are building a new one. If it's going to happen, why not make it great? Remember, it's a good news story so don't get stuck in the trenches fighting the antis. We have a better story to tell, there's joy in having a good story."
- Cam Walker, Friends of the Earth

Engaging publicly with misinformation and disinformation:

- **Remember your audience:** Don't try to engage with the trolls and bad faith attacks alone but always focus on the public. If your strategy is to engage with bad faith actors, remember that you are very unlikely to shift their views. It is the people observing these interactions who you are really speaking to, so ensure your interactions with opponents don't seem arrogant, rude or belittling. Always be better than your opponents.
- **Don't repeat your opponent's message:** We often fall into the trap of repeating our opponent's messages as we are refuting them. For example, our opponent might say 'nuclear is cheaper energy,' and when we combat this we often say 'the research and modeling shows that nuclear is not cheaper for the Australian energy market.' Research has found that by repeating the opponents main message we are inadvertently reinforcing it: nuclear = cheap. As they say - any publicity is good publicity.
- **Reframe your opponent's messages:** We can avoid this by reframing the messaging toward our own core message, which puts our opponents on the back foot. For example, 'research and modeling from trusted Australian experts like CSIRO and AEMO consistently show that renewables are the cheapest form of energy for the Australian market.'
- **Highlight examples of renewables done well:** Finally, don't be put in a corner where you want renewables at all costs; you can pick fights with renewables companies with bad practices. In fact, picking a fight with a 'cowboy' company - one that cuts corners, disrespects its workers, blatantly ignores its responsibilities to community and environment - can radically boost the reputation of your group because it demonstrates that 'we want good projects, not renewables at any cost.'

Appealing to shared values to combat disinformation - Good for the Gong case study

We started noticing that a lot of information being shared was factually untrue, and it became clear that political interests were getting involved when politicians from the Liberal and Nationals parties started coming to town talking about 'saving the whales' and taking photos holding banners with images of whales on fire in front of wind turbines. We had already spoken to several marine experts who said that, yes, more research needed to be done, but that the whale migration route was 5 kms offshore, and the turbines were proposed for 10 to 30 kms offshore. So it was very unlikely that it would interrupt the migration route - which was something we also cared about. It was clear that we had entered the realm of disinformation.

We started combatting this by pointing out that we all care about the ocean and protecting the whales, and used that shared value to talk about how climate change is the biggest threat to marine life, that the turbines would not be impacting the migration route, and that there are proven methods of dampening the noise that would exist during installation.

In the grand scheme of things doing something to help the local steelworks stop using coal and start using renewable electricity, and creating 'no go zones' for container and coal ships that used the local port, would be vastly more impactful in protecting the whales and marine life. After 8 months of campaigning we noticed a massive decrease in the aggression and the amount of people attending anti group events - their protests went from around 700 people to 100 within that time. If we hadn't spoken up and provided a space for people to hold a more civil conversation, it likely would have just kept ramping up.

4. COMBATTING MIS- AND DISINFORMATION

2016 South Australia Blackout : From Crisis to Opportunity

In 2016, South Australia suffered a statewide blackout after a violent once in fifty year storm knocked over high voltage transmission towers, triggering a cascading loss of power that ultimately impacted over 850,000 electricity users. While it was very clear that this was caused by an extreme weather event, a number of shock jocks and conservative politicians used the crisis to attack South Australia's position as a leader in renewable energy.

For several months, the event was discussed on television, radio and in print media with a lot of attention placed on false claims that renewable energy was to blame for the blackout. False claims also proliferated online, and an investigation by BuzzFeed news found that an army of fake twitter bots sharing misinformation and pro-coal talking points was linked to the Minerals Council of Australia .

Online misinformation attacking renewable energy became a key tool in a wider campaign to undermine states like South Australia and Victoria that were leading Australia's renewable energy policy with their own state-based renewable energy targets.

During this time Y2R implemented a number of different tactics both online and in person to combat the disinformation campaign and make sure communities were getting factual and solutions-oriented information.

- Distributing mythbusting sheets online, sharing factual information through social media graphics
- Promoting factual information and clear images of the fallen transmission towers to make it clear what really caused the blackout
- Letters to the editor in response to false claims made in the media
- Wrote a series of blog articles analysing media responses to the blackout, and promoting community and expert perspectives

We launched a Yes2Renewables roadtrip through regional Victoria, partnering with a number of local sustainability groups to run public forums on the future of energy. The events featured key energy experts who were able to provide clear explanations about real energy security issues, combating false claims about the SA blackout. We also featured local leaders who highlighted community energy projects. This was a great example of how local and statewide groups can work together to run inspiring events that educate the community, creating space to talk about solutions.

Alongside a range of tactics by multiple organisations, the movement was able to resist the false narrative about the SA blackouts and make the argument we needed to scale up renewable energy and storage to build a more reliable energy system.

More information:

- Australian Conservation Foundation - Mis and disinformation quiz: <https://www.acf.org.au/get-involved/community-hub/disinformation-resources>
- The Social Commons - Guide to Prebunking: A Promising Way to Inoculate Against Misinformation <https://commonslibrary.org/a-guide-to-prebunking-a-promising-way-to-inoculate-against-misinformation/>
- The Social Commons - Fighting Fire with Listening: How Climate Conversations Can Help Tackle Misinformation <https://commonslibrary.org/fighting-fire-with-listening-how-climate-conversations-can-help-tackle-misinformation/>
- The Social Commons - Disinformation in the digital age <https://commonslibrary.org/disinformation-in-the-digital-age/>

19 Mark Di Stefano, *Fake Twitter Army That Trolls Renewable Energy Linked To Mining Lobby*, 2016 <https://www.buzzfeed.com/markdistefano/powerful-toot-army>.

M I S I N F O

B I N G O

Play misinfo bingo with your group as a fun way to help identify misinformation - we have added some examples in here but feel free to add your own that you see coming up in your community.

Select some misinformation and disinformation that you are hearing in your community and ask players to circle the bingo squares that show what methods the mis/disinfo is using. This helps people actively practice identifying mis and disinfo.

Doesn't have a source		Only provides one side of the argument		Sounds like conspiracy theory
	Only source is a tweet or Facebook post		Unrealistic or fake photo	
Quote taken out of context		FREE SPACE!		
		Statement unrelated to the evidence provided		'Facts' have been debunked by experts
Doesn't know where the information came from	No evidence supports this view		Speaker's expertise is not relevant to the topic	

RELATIONAL ORGANISING -

Cultivating goodwill and strengthening bonds

We have found that relational organising and positive messaging are the best avenues to combat and inoculate against mis- and disinformation.

The Victorian campaign against fracking was based on the belief that people love their local landscapes and sense of community. *By focusing on the things we love and want to protect*, people were able to come together around shared values and a positive vision. As relationships formed, it was then harder for the gas industry to create division in the community.

Relational organising involves building personal relationships and connections to collectively organise people. The power of relational organising is built on trust, shared values, and a sense of community. When people feel connected to one another and believe in a common goal, they are more likely to take action and work together toward achieving it.

Leaning into community, personal connections and shared values allows us to reach people on their level, and create long lasting transformational relationships.

It's important to start with these key tenets in mind:

- **Assume positive intent and meet people where they are at:** It's important to speak to every person and not to assume what they care about or where they stand on an issue.
- **Listen and leave politics at the door:** Start by listening and better understanding other people's feelings and concerns about renewables. Come at the conversation from a place of curiosity, not defensiveness or persuasion.
- **Identify shared values:** People connect on things they care about. If someone says they are concerned about the environmental or job security impact of renewables, that is a great place to start if you also care about those issues.
- **Identify different areas of the community:** Communities are complex and are full of different sub groups and relational circles. Get as many conversations happening in as many different areas of the community as possible. We build power and understanding when we embrace the people around us.

More information:

The Social Commons - 6 Evidence Based Insights for Relational Organising: <https://commonslibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/Tip-sheet-6-Evidence-Based-Insights-for-Relational-Organizing.pdf>

A GUIDE TO POSITIVE MESSAGING

Positive messaging has been shown to be the best method of reaching people. Messaging research shows that when you tell a compelling and positive story people are more likely to engage and follow your journey and your campaign.

Make sure that your group's authentic voice is heard: focus on the positives of your community, what you love about the area and what your vision is for the future. Reach out to decision makers and get involved with the projects, planning process, and the community benefits, and have as much community ownership as possible. Explore all the co-benefits from fixing local roads and infrastructure to supporting lower electricity bills.

Creating a positive message is a great way to engage and mobilise people. People want to have something to aim for that brings hope and joy to them and their community. We have a good news story - so it's important we share it.

Here are some positive messaging tips:

1. Use visioning and community benefits to create a positive story. What does your community want to see for its future? How can we make this happen? Bringing people together to discuss this vision creates a sense of community and will also bring them along in owning the future of their region.
2. Don't repeat opponents' messages - this can inadvertently reinforce their message.
3. Always lead with what you think is positive and important and why - share your version of why you've decided to support renewables.
4. Sometimes a great way to solidify people's positive impressions of renewable energy is to create opportunities for community members to visit existing renewables projects, meet landowners hosting turbines or other infrastructure, or visit businesses and homes that are using renewables and get a sense of how specific projects have brought benefits to those communities. Real life experience helps solidify people's perspectives and can lead to more active community involvement.



"Ask lots of questions, share stories of change, acceptance. Leave the conversation with the other person questioning their own assumptions." - Wendy Farmer

**POSITIVE MESSAGING REINFORCES
CONFIDENCE IN THE BENEFITS OF RENEWABLE
ENERGY:**

- *"Powering our homes, businesses and transport with renewable energy will not only save us money, but will help prevent the worsening droughts, floods and fires that have been devastating Australia."*
- *"We have an opportunity to shape what the renewable roll-out will look like for our community, and make sure it's good for nature, jobs and prevent poor development".*
- *"We as a community can hold governments and developers accountable for addressing local nature impacts. We need to have a say in this so that we can all have confidence that renewables are better than fossil fuels now and well into the future".*
- *"Renewable energy brings jobs to our community, work for our kids and the next generation so they can stay here in the place we love".*
- *"Renewables offer an opportunity for farmers to future-proof farms with income coming in when times are tough, while also co-existing with a profitable farm".*

**LOCALISING POSITIVE MESSAGING SHOWS PEOPLE HOW
RENEWABLE ENERGY WILL BENEFIT THEIR COMMUNITY:**

- *"Most people living in regional communities understand the need to shift to renewable energy but haven't been given enough information to know what this will look like and what benefits it will have for local areas".*
- *"There are specific things that can be achieved for communities that could last well beyond the initial development of projects. This could include cheaper energy bills for everyone, road upgrades, improved internet coverage, funding for community projects, and better investment in neighbourhood improvement schemes".*
- *"To maximise the benefits, communities need to be properly informed and involved to ensure logical, local, long-term benefits."*
- *Sometimes a great way to achieve this is to create opportunities for community members to visit existing renewables projects, meet landowners hosting turbines or other infrastructure, and get a sense of how specific projects have brought benefits to that area".*

The Reframe Game

Changing a negative narrative into a positive is important in addressing people's concerns while also maintaining the integrity of your argument. People want something to believe in and to aim for, having a positive narrative is the best way to bring people on the journey and to dispel mis and disinformation that feeds off of negativity and heightened emotions.

This activity will help you develop positive messaging in response to anti-renewable narratives in your community. By practicing this you will arm yourself with positive responses to opposition that will build your confidence and help you hold those conversations in the community.

Try not to repeat the opposition's point in your answer, doing so inadvertently reinforces their view to the listener.



Instructions:



Think of some of the main points of argument that you are hearing in your community. Write them down in the 'Negative' column, identify what core fact is being disputed, identify what the core value is being triggered, and develop your answer with a positive narrative.

Negative	Core Idea Being Disputed	Core Value or Emotion	Positive Reframing!
"Renewable energy is a fantasy"	Renewable energy is 'unachievable'	Fear of the unknown / fear of change	"I'm worried about the future as well. But when all of our national scientific organisations and experts in energy are telling us that renewable energy is the cheapest, most efficient and best way for us to move forward I think it's a good idea to believe them"
"Renewable energy destroys prime farming land"	Renewables and farming cannot co-exist	Threat to livelihood	"Farming land is important, Australia has some of the best production land in the world. But there are many examples of renewable energy existing side by side with prime agricultural and grazing land. Many farmers have hosted renewables, still have profitable crops, and have said that the extra income helps them get through hard times."



SECTION 5: WINNING CAMPAIGNS

WHAT IT MEANS TO WIN

Winning can look incredibly different in different spaces and communities. A win could be getting your council to vote in support of a renewables project, or it could be having your first person come and give you positive feedback at a community stall. We always celebrate the wins along the way, no matter how big or small – small wins build momentum, keep our goals within reach and continually remind us that we can win.

Don't underestimate the importance of small wins – the biggest campaigns in the country have been made up of many small wins that when added together form a bigger whole over time.

The shift to renewable energy is a multi-decade marathon, not a race. It's important to pace ourselves, and understand the impact that we can have in our own communities over the long term. So how can you track your progress over time? Here are some simple tools you can use to track your success.

WIN OF THE WEEK': TRACKING YOUR SUCCESS

As an organising group, how do you know that what you're doing in the world is having an impact? Tracking your success is really important to understand whether your campaign is working. It's also a chance to celebrate wins – this is really important to keep up morale and get people to focus on actions that are having an impact. It also helps to encourage people to participate, and creates space for diverse forms of change.

A simple way to do this is the 'Win of the Week' or 'Win of the Month' formula:
During your next organising meeting, invite people to nominate a key win since the last meeting. This might be anything from getting a letter published in the local paper, mobilizing dozens of people to visit a local wind farm, or securing a funding commitment for a community energy project from your local MP. You can then ask your group to vote on what they believe is the top win of the week – this is a fun way to use a little competitive tension to celebrate wins and encourage people. Looking back over the course of your campaign, these little wins are what make up the longer term path to winning.

WHAT NEXT?

You've read the toolkit and gained practical skills, like how to form a core organising group and how to have meaningful conversations about renewables with your community. **So, what next?**

Most importantly, keep doing the good work you're doing. People like you are the reason why our movement is so powerful. But we can't do it alone - consider getting in touch with any of the below organisations to make connections and create a network of support for your community and across Australia as a whole.

Email yes2renewables@foe.org.au to get involved and join our network of regional organisers.

   @yes2renewables

FRIENDLY ORGANISATIONS

National:

- Yes2Renewables
- Friends of the Earth
- Re-Alliance
- Community Power Agency
- Beyond Zero Emissions
- 350.org

Young people:

- Seed Indigenous Youth Climate Network
- Tomorrow Movement

State and Regional:

- Look for local environment, sustainability, and advocacy groups in your area.

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MORE INFORMATION

The Social Commons:

- Constitutions: Introduction to Community Mapping <https://commonslibrary.org/introduction-to-community-mapping/>
- Constitutions: How to Build Durable Groups <https://commonslibrary.org/constitutions-how-to-build-durable-groups/>
- Movement Compass <https://commonslibrary.org/the-movement-compass-and-worksheet/>
- Facilitation Guide <https://commonslibrary.org/facilitating-meetings-a-guide-to-making-your-meetings-effective-inclusive-and-enjoyable/>
- The Social Commons - Developing/Reviewing an Organising Program - https://commonslibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/Template_-_Developing_Reviewing-an-Organising-Program.pdf
- Guide to Prebunking: A Promising Way to Inoculate Against Misinformation <https://commonslibrary.org/a-guide-to-prebunking-a-promising-way-to-inoculate-against-misinformation/>
- Fighting Fire with Listening: How Climate Conversations Can Help Tackle Misinformation <https://commonslibrary.org/fighting-fire-with-listening-how-climate-conversations-can-help-tackle-misinformation/>
- Disinformation in the digital age <https://commonslibrary.org/disinformation-in-the-digital-age/>
- 6 Evidence Based Insights for Relational Organising: <https://commonslibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/Tip-sheet-6-Evidence-Based-Insights-for-Relational-Organizing.pdf>
- **Community Power Agency** - Collaborating for a fair energy shift toolkit <https://cpagency.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Collaborating-for-a-fair-energy-shift-A-handbook-for-communities.pdf>
- **Australian Conservation Foundation** - Mis and disinformation quiz: <https://www.acf.org.au/get-involved/community-hub/disinformation-resources>
- **The Climate Council** - Communication Guides: <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resource/communication-guides/>
- Infographics: <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resource/infographics/>
- Explainers: <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources-explainers/>