

**MAKING THEM LOSE IN
MELBOURNE:
A GUIDE**



**Slackbastard,
Anarchist Affinity &
The Melbourne Street
Medic Collective**

Who the fuck are Reclaim Australia?

by Andy Fleming

slackbastard.anarchobase.com

‘Reclaim Australia’ is the name adopted by Islamophobes to promote a series of public hate rallies, the first of which took place on April 4, 2015 and the second of which will take place on July 18/19. The April 4 rallies were the largest mobilisations by the Australian far right for many years, staged in order to ‘reclaim’ Australia from the minorities, especially Muslims, who have allegedly usurped it.

Neo-Nazi and fascist involvement in Reclaim Australia (RA) was present at its inception and is direct and ongoing. This extended from the agitprop promoting the rallies through to the appearance of a considerable number of neo-Nazi skinheads at the Melbourne rally. Indeed, RA provided precisely the kind of warm, nurturing environment of ultra-nationalist rhetoric which meant that neo-Nazis could stand shoulder-to-shoulder with a much larger mob of angry white men draped in the Australian flag – the supposed inheritors of ‘The ANZAC Spirit’. They also formed part of the vanguard used to attack the anti-racist picket.

While there are many claiming to speak on its behalf, RA was the brainchild of Shermon Burgess, a council worker from Cooma in NSW and a member of the Australian Defence League (Southern NSW Charter). It was in his capacity as an ADL member and singer in the band ‘Eureka Brigade’ that Burgess first came to media attention in April 2014. Greg Ansley wrote in *The New Zealand Herald*:

“Footage of navy ships has been used in videos made by heavy metal band Eureka Brigade formed by ADL member Shermon Burgess, whose lyrics proclaimed the riot between white Australians and Lebanese youths at Cronulla in 2005 ‘Australia’s Muslim holocaust’. Eureka Brigade’s inflammatory songs ‘Border Patrol’ (supporting operations against asylum seekers) and ‘ADL Killing Machine’ are posted on the internet.”

These videos, along with a range of other provocative materials, have since been removed from YouTube. One video, in which Burgess expresses racism towards Indigenous peoples and hatred of the left, escaped deletion and was the subject of further reportage.

Following the arrest of ADL leader Ralph Cerminara for inciting a brawl in Lakemba in December 2014, at the beginning of 2015 Burgess rebranded himself as ‘The Great Aussie Patriot’. In collaboration with a tiny Melbourne-based neo-Nazi group called ‘Nationalist Republican Guard’ (NRG), Burgess then began producing a series of YouTube videos promoting RA. NRG’s chief claim to fame prior to this was when one of its members, Neil Luke Erikson, was convicted in February 2014 of harassing a rabbi.

While the appearance of a considerable number of neo-Nazis and fascists at Reclaim Australia rallies surprised some, the far right made no secret of the fact that they would be present. Locally, fascist parties such as Australia First committed themselves to attending, and popular US-based neo-Nazi sites such as *The Daily Stormer* and *Stormfront* implored their readers to do likewise.

Of course, RA’s appeal extended far wider than the very small, radical right-wing circles from which the rallies emerged and in which they were chiefly promoted. The Christian right, in particular Danny Nalliah’s *Catch the Fire Ministries/Rise Up Australia Party*, jumped on board, as did a dizzying array of anti-Muslim blogs, sites and/or Facebook pages.

Who the fuck are the UPF?

by Andy Fleming

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The ‘United Patriots Front’ is a fascist organisation founded by Burgess & Co in the aftermath of April 4 following disagreements with RA organisers. In essence, the UPF is a coalition of neo-Nazis, fundamentalist Christians belonging to the Rise Up Australia Party (RUAP), and a handful of semi-pro Islamophobes.

The United Patriots Front (UPF) staged its first public rally in Richmond on May 31. Around 50-70 attended the event, called in order to protest the presence of a socialist (Steve Jolly) on Yarra Council. A counter-rally effectively shut down the UPF on this occasion. The UPF also engaged in a media stunt on June 27 outside the ABC studios in Melbourne. UPF members present on that occasion were Troy Bloodstone, Warren Broadhead, Blair Cottrell, Neil Erikson, Rod Mathers, Thomas Sewell, Chris Shortis and Linden Watson: the leadership of the UPF.

RA in Melbourne is headed by Bendigo businesswoman Monika Evers. Evers has been very active with ‘Stop the Mosque in Bendigo’ and is a fundamentalist Christian. The split which produced the UPF centred upon allegations of allegedly corrupt activity by Evers and a commitment by the UPF to violently confront ‘the left’ on May 31 and July 18.

The UPF, then, may be considered a fascist vanguard. Its leading spokespersons in Melbourne – Cottrell and Erikson – have expressed support for Nazi Germany and its legacy, a hatred of Jews and, along with Burgess, a commitment to ‘smashing the left’ as well as eradicating Islam from Australia.

But wait, there's moar...

Below is a very brief summary of most (but not all) of those groups and projects which I think can reasonably be placed in this category. Further detail is available on slackbastard.anarchobase.com

Anti-Antifa Australia

A project of neo-Nazi skinhead and Brisbane resident Chris Smith, AAF exists largely as an attempt to monitor and expose anti-fascists in Australia, details of which are published on Smith’s blog. Smith has a criminal record for robbery and assault.

Australia First Party (AF)

AF is the largest and most well-established of the far-right groups. Founded in 1996 by former Labor MP Graeme Campbell, AF is currently having its federal registration reviewed by the AEC. [Dr James Saleam](#) is the party’s current leader, a position he assumed a few years after being let out of prison for organising a shotgun assault upon the home of Eddie Funde (then the African National Congress representative in Australasia). Previously, Saleam was the leader of neo-Nazi group National Action and in the late 1960s/early 1970s a member of the Australian Nazi Party. The party regularly contests elections and its HQ is in Sydney — where it has the largest following. Two AF reps have been elected to local council (Bruce Preece in Adelaide and Maurice Giroto in Penrith – both resigned their memberships following their elections). Saleam and other party members frequently post on Stormfront (the world’s leading neo-Nazi/White supremacist website) and occasionally on Daily Stormer (another US-based neo-Nazi site).

Australian Defence League (ADL)

The ADL formed within the space of a year following the establishment of the English Defence League in 2009. Gaining only a fraction of the support the EDL did, the ADL has undergone numerous splits, fractures and changes in leadership, but of those who’ve nominated themselves its leader Martin Brennan and Ralph Cerminara – along with Nathan Abela – are probably the best-known, along with Shermom Burgess (‘The Great Aussie Patriot’). There have been dozens of Facebook pages created by and for the ADL and it exists as a very loose network of anti-Muslim activists. Sporadic public rallies in Melbourne and Sydney have been poorly-attended but the group has been very active on social media. *See* : [Who Are The Australian Defence League?](#), New Matilda, January 29, 2014.

Australian League of Rights (ALOR)

The Grand Old Man of Australian fascism, the ALOR has been around for a very long time, successfully defending God, Queen & Country from the ravages of International Communism. The group's weekly newsletter may be read online and is useful for gaining some insight into the 'Lunar Right' and the many, er, interesting, characters which populate its ranks.

Australian Liberty Alliance (ALA)

A yet-to-be-launched political party modelled on Geert Wilders' Dutch party — largely the creation of The Q Society.

Australian Patriots Defence Movement (APDM)

Est by Darren Beatle Bailey-Morris, the APDM is (was) a short-lived, Brisbane-based project very similar to the ADL and PDLA. The APDM is largely defunct but may continue to eke out an existence online and has most recently been invoked as a supporting organisation to the UPF.

Australian Protectionist Party (APP)

The APP formed as a split from AF in 2007 when one of its Sydney branches — the two most prominent members of which were Nicholas (Hunter) Folkes and Darrin Hodges — elected to defect. It was active for a few years, producing propaganda and holding events, but is now largely moribund. Tasmanian Andrew Phillips is its leader.

Blood & Honour (B&H)

B&H is a neo-Nazi musical network, originally est in England in the late 1980s, and has been operating in Australia for over 20 years. Activities are generally confined to selling neo-Nazi muzak and merch (via 9% Productions) and holding gigs. It functions essentially as an adjunct to the SCHS.

Christian Identity (CI)

CI is a tiny sect on the fringes of the far right with a handful of adherents and a miniscule social media presence. One, James Lawrence, popped up at the May 31 UPF rally.

Christian Separatist

A tiny, bizarre White supremacist kvlt. 'Pastor' Ken Cratchley is its chief propagandist in Australia.

Citizens Electoral Council (CEC)

The CEC is the name under which the LaRouchite kvlt travels Down Under. Seemingly most active in Melbourne, the group presents a range of entertainingly batshit theories about the world [Lyndon LaRouche](#) inhabits.

Combat 18 (C18)

C18 is another foreign import, having its origins in England in the late 1980s. The group was est in order to protect B&H gigs and other fascist events from disruption by anti-fascists and has a rather bloody history. It's widely suspected that it was infiltrated by British intelligence on account of the close relationship b/w C18 and Ulster paramilitaries. In Australia, the 'brand' has been adopted by a number of different neo-Nazis including in WA, where C18 was responsible for a poorly-executed attack upon a mosque (see Bradley Trappitt). AFAIK, its only active 'branch' currently is in Melbourne under Patrick O'Sullivan.

Creativity

A bizarre, White supremacist 'religion' est in the US some decades ago. It's undergone numerous, often violent splits: its main exponent in Australia is Colin Campbell (Adelaide) and Patrick O'Sullivan (Melbourne). Scott Harrison was a 'Reverend' in the 'church' for many years before joining the Young Liberals.

Eureka Youth League (EYL)

AF's yooof wing; largely inactive.

European Australian Civil Rights League (EARL)

A one-man band est a few years ago by Melbourne-based neo-Nazi activist Neil Erikson. EARL later morphed into NRG. Erikson has a criminal conviction for harassing a Melbourne rabbi and was close to the 'Crazy White Boys', a short-lived neo-Nazi group responsible for badly beating Vietnamese student Minh Duong in 2012.

Full Blooded Skips (FBS)

A White yooof gang based in Melbourne which emerged shortly after the SCS, the FBS are closely-linked to NRG and a shifting network of neo-Nazi skinheads. Several FBS members were present at the April 4 Reclaim Australia rally in Melbourne and the May 31 UPF rally in Richmond.

Golden Dawn (GD)

Golden Dawn is the Australian branch of the Greek neo-Nazi party. Its chief spokesperson in Australia is Iggy Gavrilidis. GD has a very small support base in Melbourne and Sydney and over the last few years has raised funds for its parent body and organised a handful of protests in conjunction with AF and a smattering of local neo-Nazis and fascists.

Klub Nation/Klub Naziya

A bizarr0 groupuscule based in Sydney. At one point KN attempted to infiltrate and take over the Humanist Society of NSW. It didn't work, but the nazis had a red-hot go.

Ku Klux Klan (KKK)

With an obvious indebtedness to the US, in numerous, generally short-lived permutations and combinations, the KKK has been a minor player on the far right for decades. In one form or another, it continues to generate occasional stories and the image of the KKK is regularly invoked in various rural and regional settings, but the organisation itself is largely moribund.

Nationalist Alternative (NAlt)

NAlt is a neo-Nazi group which has its origins in anti-Muslim agitation in Melbourne. Its leader is Mark Hootsen, who has travelled to the US in order to receive political training with Stormfront. NAlt was present at the April 4 Reclaim Australia rally in Melbourne.

National Democratic Party of Australia

NPDA was launched by UPF activist Blair Cottrell following the April 4 RA rally. Based in Melbourne, the group is tiny but active. Cottrell is a neo-Nazi who believes in a Jewish conspiracy to control the world, is a Holocaust denier, recommends Mein Kampf be read by every Australian school student and claims to have been imprisoned for arson.

Nationalist Republican Guard (NRG)

NRG is EARL rebranded and since the beginning of 2015 has worked closely with Reclaim Australia, UPF and Shermion Burgess in order to produce agitprop promoting these groups and individuals.

New Right (/National Anarchists) (NR)

The New Right emerged in the mid- to late-2000s as a project of Sydney-based fascist Welf Herfurth – Herfurth envisaged NR as the theoretical expression of 'national anarchism', a tendency on the far-right with origins in the UK fascist movement. It has produced some propaganda, staged a few publicity stunts, and attracted a handful of neo-Nazis (ex. Bradley Trappitt) and other fascists to its banner but is currently largely inactive.

One Nation Party (ONP)

See : Pauline Hanson. Initially a deeply attractive formation for the far right, the history of ONP since the mid-'90s is long and complex. Its activists belong to a broader far-right milieu, with some degree of overlap with groups like AF. The possibility of a reconsolidation of the far right in AF remains, though is somewhat complicated by Hanson's periodic political revivals.

Party for Freedom (PfF)

Modelled on Geert Wilders' Dutch party, PfF is what happened when the Sydney branch of APP decided to hold a public rally demanding that the Australian government blow up refugee boats. APP disavowed the action and so the Sydney branch of APP decamped to form PfF. It holds regular events in Sydney but has no discernible support outside of it. Chief spokesperson is Nicholas (Hunter) Folkes.

Patriotic Youth League (PYL)

The PYL was est in the early 2000s as the yooof wing of AF. It was not a successful venture and collapsed a few years later to be replaced by the EYL.

Patriots Defence League of Australia (PDLA)

An ADL splinter, the PDLA is largely a Facebook creation, with numerous, very small branches across the country which hold semi-regular, private meetings. In its latest incarnation, the PDLA was established as an incorporated association (Australian Defence League) which later changed its name to PDLA. Mark Lenthall, TJ (Torin) O'Brien and Daniel Sutcliffe are its current office bearers. Also prominent is John Oliver of Newcastle, who helped organise and spoke at the Reclaim Australia rally in Newcastle on April 4.

Q Society

The Q Society is an anti-Muslim propaganda group which functions as the ideological ballast for the anti-Muslim movement in Australia and largely consists of educated, middle class, bigots. *See* : [International guests Q up for bigotry](#), Andy Fleming, Overland, March 10, 2014.

Reclaim Australia

Largely the brainchild of online activist and ADL member Shermion Burgess ('The Great Aussie Patriot'), RA was the first anti-Muslim project of its kind to generate anything more than minimal public interest and to successfully mobilise anti-Muslim networks. Its April 4 rallies attracted several thousand supporters who attended over a dozen rallies across the country to which the largest and most effective opposition was in Melbourne. Following April 4, RA split and Burgess est the UPF. RA's next series of anti-Muslim rallies is scheduled to take place on the weekend of July 18/19. Currently, RA's online activities are largely directed by Bendigo businesswoman and anti-Muslim activist ('Stop the Mosque in Bendigo') Monika Evers.

Restore Australia

Another one-man band, Restore Australia is the political vehicle of Queensland-based anti-Muslim activist Mike Holt. Holt/Restore Australia is part of a shifting network of anti-Muslim activists, largely active online on sites like Facebook.

Rise Up Australia Party (RUAP)

The political vehicle of Christian fundamentalist Pastor Danny Nalliah ('Catch the Fire Ministeries') who is perhaps best known for blaming the Victorian bushfires of 2009 on the state government's decision to decriminalise abortion. Recently, RUAP has entered into an alliance with RA and the UPF.

Southern Cross Hammerskins (SCHS)

SCHS is the Australian franchise of neo-Nazi skinhead gang the Hammerskins. It was introduced into Australia 20+ years ago via Scott McGuinness, the lead singer in neo-Nazi band Fortress (now defunct). The Hammerskins last came to world attention when in 2012 one of its members, Wade Michael Page, shot dead six worshippers at a Sikh temple in Wisconsin.

Southern Cross Soldiers (SCS)

A short-lived yooof gang from Melbourne which came to public attention following the police killing of Tyler Cassidy in 2008. The group has been re-invoked by Shermom Burgess as a supporter of the UPF.

Squadron 88 (S88)

S88 is a tiny neo-Nazi group based in Sydney. Its titular head is Ross 'The Skull' May, an ageing bonehead and one of Dr Jim Saleam's closest allies. S88 has organised a protest against the construction of a mosque in Penrith and has obtained some small media traction via stuffing letterboxes in Sydney with badly-composed anti-Semitic tracts.

United Australian Front (UAF)

A new player on the far right block, the UAF brings together many of the leading organisers of RA and UPF. Its members were present at the RA rally of April 4 and UPF rally of May 31 sporting UAF merch.

United Patriots Front (UPF)

A recent split from RA, the UPF brings together neo-Nazis, fascists, White supremacists and Christian fundamentalists and conceives of itself as the Antipodean expression of various European fascist parties

and movements. It organised an unsuccessful rally in Richmond on May 31 to protest socialism; the rally attracted around 50-70 participants. On June 27, the UPF staged a tiny rally outside ABC HQ in Melbourne to protest Islam and the presence of Zaky Mallah on the previous week's episode of Q&A. Members present were Troy Bloodstone, Warren Broadhead, Blair Cottrell, Neil Erikson, Rod Mathers, Chris Shortis, Thomas Sewell and Linden Watson.

Volksfront (VF)

VF is another neo-Nazi skinhead organisation, a US import which was active for several years but whose current status is unknown. Its parent body in the US was declared dissolved after the massacre by VF associate Wade Michael Page. Its principal activist is Chris Smith (Anti-Antifa Australia) and while active VF worked closely with the NR (Welf Herfurth).

White Pride Coalition of Australia (WPCA)

The WPCA was est in the early 2000s as a coalition of neo-Nazi and White supremacist groups. It was eventually disbanded but briefly re-emerged last year before disappearing again. Prominent members include(d) neo-Nazis Peter Campbell (Sydney) and Jim Perren (Brisbane). Both men are responsible for the 'Whitelaw Towers' blog.

Women for Aryan Unity (WAU)

In Australia, WAU is a tiny group very closely associated with the SCHS. Recently, it raised funds to support the Azov battalion in the Ukraine, to which many neo-Nazis and other fascists across Europe have been drawn.

A quick guide to staying safe & being effective: All out against the fash

(Adapted from a guide first published by Anarchist Affinity, April, 2015)
www.anarchistaffinity.org

If you're planning on going out to oppose "Reclaim Australia" & their fascist brethren the "United Patriots Front", it's totally legitimate to feel a bit anxious or worried about what the day might have in store. We hope that this quick primer will provide you with a few tips and resources about how to be keep one another safe, how to be effective and (hopefully) have a bit of fun running the racists out of town.

Get organised:

If you're not already involved in organising against Reclaim Australia/UPF there's still time. Search for the counter rally page in your city, read up about what's going on and consider making contact with the organisers to answer any questions you might have.

Talk to your friends, your family and anyone else about what you want to do, and get them to come along with you. The more of us there is, the easier & more fun this is all going to be.

Have a plan:

1. Check out the transport options, figure out with your friends how you're gonna get there on the day and then stick to that plan. We highly recommend travelling together – it's good for safety, but also good for building solidarity & keeping morale up. The most important thing is that everyone is on the same page, and knows what is expected of them, where to be & at what time. Getting out of bed on time really matters on demo days! Also sort out how you are going to get home in advance, and have a back up plan in case of changing circumstances.

2. Know where you're going & what the protest area looks like. Look at a map & try to memorise the layout of the streets, landmarks etc in the immediate area. Better yet, go down & have a walk around. Figure out how you will move between transport & the rally area.

3. Dress appropriately for the conditions in your city. Whatever the weather, hats and sunglasses are going to be useful if you're standing outside all day & they can also help protect your identity (if that's something you are concerned about). It's also a good idea to stash a change of top in your back pack, in case you want to change it up on your way home

4. Bring water, snacks, sunscreen, umbrella/raincoat, a bit of cash, photo ID and any medications you require (in their original packaging).

Safety & strength in numbers:

This is pretty common sense really but it is worth repeating.

Any time you got out on an action, no matter what sort, we reckon it's worth buddying up. This will not only help you communicate, co-ordinate and get things done on the day, but it will keep you all safe.

Pick a buddy, stick with them, and co-ordinate amongst a broader group of people so everyone can check in & be accounted for.

Whatever dangers do exist when dealing with the far-right can be effectively minimised on the day provided we stick together & look out for one another.

If you don't have a buddy or a group of contacts to coordinate with, then ensure you to get to the event before the scheduled start time, stick with the crowd & try to make some friends.

Remember that solidarity is contagious. If you are feeling nervous, chances are someone else is too. Speak up, reach out & support one another.

A few points about Nazis:

Given that every nationalist, white-supremacist & neo-Nazi organisation in the country (including the Australia First Party, the Australian Defence League, Nationalist Republican Guard & former Australian Protection Party Nick Folkes' vanity project the 'Party For Freedom') is being encouraged to attend the Reclaim Australia rallies, consider the following points.

1. It is important to consider the potential threat posed by hardcore nationalists without overstating it. Though they claim to be the "master race", and love to act real tough, they're rather less impressive in person. Some are individually dangerous but it's easy to avoid this danger with a few simple precautions.
2. Different towns in Australia have different levels of far-right activity, so it really depends where you are as to what flavour of racist bonehead you might be dealing with. Some general rules still apply though: if you're walking down the street and a gang of boofy blokes wearing flag-capes comes towards you, consider walking somewhere else.
3. Current fuhrer of the Australia First Party (formerly the Australian Nazi Party) "Dr" Jim Saleam has issued a series of dictats to his swastika-licking mates about how they ought to behave themselves on the day. They're encouraging people to leave the nazi getup & sieg-heiling at home, wrap themselves in the Aussie flag (presumably to cover up any fascist tattoos) & spread the word about good ole Adolf in a gentle, less threatening way. Basically, they're going to try to be on their best behaviour.
4. Fascists on di attack? We will film them back! Though self-appointed leader of Reclaim Australia Shermom "shit on a mosque" Burgess is trying to play down his connections to racists, fascists and boneheads around 'Straya, we are well aware of the company he keeps. Unfortunately, this information doesn't seem to matter much to his followers, but it is still important to identify the nazis on the day, both to keep people safety, but also to try & make Reclaim organisers sod the nazis off (like they promised to).
5. The most important thing you can do to stay safe is to look out for one another & stick together. There is no more important time to do this than when the rally breaks up & everyone goes home. Fascists are bullies, but they're also cowards & some may hang around in the city to look to pick a fight. We can protect ourselves from this threat by making sure we move in a group (to the station etc), with purpose & with a clear idea of where we're going. Know the location, know the exit routes & stick to your plan.

Be careful around the police:

It doesn't matter what you actually think about the police, love em or hate em, you will definitely have to deal with them on the day. The Activists Rights Handbook is a much more rigorous & comprehensive guide for dealing with the law than we have room for here, but here are a few tips:

1. Don't talk to them unless you are detained or arrested. You don't have to speak to the cops, and no matter how nice they are, the reason they speak to you is to gain information that they may attempt to use against you or someone else. Better to be safe and say nothing at all.
2. Elect a police liaison to negotiate on your group's behalf. Instead of allowing the cops to decide who they want to put pressure on, choose a confident person whose job it is to communicate with the plod if/when it is necessary.
3. Don't waste your time trying to reason with them about why nazis shouldn't get to parade around in public. They either don't care, or it's their job to not care. An organisation as corrupt and institutionally racist as the police force cannot be used as a tool to confront racism.
4. Use your common sense & don't do anything silly. By all means defend yourself & your friends if attacked, but don't initiate anything with the boneheads, no matter what they say or do. Collective action is what makes antifascism effective, not individual bravado.

Have fun:

For the most part, the kind of muppets who will drag themselves along to a rally about the “evils of Islam” on a bloody public holiday are pitiful, pathetic and ridiculous. Make good use of that fact.

It’s likely that most of their attendees are so attached to their silly conspiracy theories that they are well beyond rational debate. But they are not beyond ridicule.

Blast them with music, sing them songs, chant them down. Dance your ass off to anti-racist tunes, explain to passers-by why they’re plonkers, bring along a vuvuzela.. whatever!

The most effective forms of resistance involve everyone participating how they’re best able, so bring your skills, creativity and your friends and let’s make a go of it!

Stand together, stay safe, no pasaran.

Resources:

There’s plenty of really useful stuff on the internet about preparing for an action like this.

Your first port of call for all things anti-fascist should be hometown hero **Andy Fleming**. Follow Andy on Twitter @slackbastard, like 'slackbastard' on Facebook & be sure to check out his blog: <http://slackbastard.anarchobase.com>

It's also worth checking in with the campaign groups organising in your city. In Melbourne, there are at least three Facebook pages you should keep an eye on for information about the upcoming action:

- **Melbourne Antifascist Info**, [facebook.com/melantifainfo](https://www.facebook.com/melantifainfo)
- **Campaign Against Racism & Fascism**, [facebook.com/campaignarf](https://www.facebook.com/campaignarf)
- **No Room For Racism**, [facebook.com/no-room-for-racism](https://www.facebook.com/no-room-for-racism)

It's also a good idea to get informed about how to keep each other & yourself safe on the day. We recommend checking out **Fitzroy Legal Service’s Activists Rights Handbook** for basic stuff about your legal rights when on a political demonstration or action: <http://www.activistrights.org.au>

We also think this guide from **South London Antifascists** is useful, although not all the points they raise are relevant to activists in Australia: <http://www.slaf.org.uk/post/59993783433/safety>

Also important to have a look at is the **Melbourne Street Medic Collective’s** website. They have an extensive list of resources available covering many different aspects of political action including preparation, staying safe & self-care: <http://melbsmc.org/street-medic-collective-starter-kit/>

A few pro-tips from The Melbourne Street Medic Collective

(Adapted from various articles published on the MSMC blog)
www.melbsmc.org

Preparation, preparation, preparation!

Street medics are not a replacement for emergency services. We give care to protestors when needed but emphasize PREPARATION as the key to any successful & safe action. So before leaving the house to demonstrate for a better world consider:

- COVERING YOUR SKIN (long sleeves & pants for limbs & possibly a mask – or a simple scarf – for your mouth & nose)
- WEARING CLOTHES YOU CAN EASILY MOVE IN
- WEARING SUPPORTIVE & COMFORTABLE SHOES YOU CAN RUN IN
- CHECKING THE WEATHER FORECAST (& maybe pack a light waterproof if needed)
- TYING BACK LONG HAIR (so it can't be grabbed)
- CARRYING SOME HIGH-ENERGY SNACKS
- REMOVING (OR TAPING) JEWELLERY (so it can't be ripped off or snagged)
- REMOVING CONTACT LENSES (because chemicals can be trapped & cause eye damage)
- ALWAYS BRING WATER (to hydrate and to irrigate eyes & wounds)
- AND BE PREPARED TO HELP OUT YOUR FELLOW ACTIVISTS IF NEEDED!

What to bring on the day

Here is a list of what to bring to a protest:

- A bottle of water or sports drink
- High energy, low-GI snacks (trail mix, museli bars, dried fruit)
- Your usual prescription medicines (3 days worth – so that if you're arrested you have enough until you are bailed out)
- A camera, smart phone or a note pad (remember we're ALL Citizen Journalists)
- A spare cell phone (or at least load up a new SIMcard)
- Enough cash to get home, have a meal and/or make a phone call.
- ID (if you plan on getting arrested not carrying ID will only temporarily delay the police in identifying you)
- A bandana or scarf, and eye protection
- Light water proof jacket or sun cream (or both if you live in Melbourne!)
- Next of kin/emergency contact numbers (or a legal contact penned to your arm)

This is a basic guide: each protest kit is personal. These basics will help keep you out on the streets longer to protest those dastardly forces which would prefer you to stay home & accept to status quo.

Stay safe, stay together, buddy up!

You should always attend a protest with 2 to 3 people you know and trust ...stick with them all day.

Protesters have been using the Buddy System for decades now because:

- It's safer (you've got each other back);
- You can share supplies;
- You can assess each other's mental & emotional state if things go haywire;
- You can get a second opinion;
- (Street Medics) One person can interact with the casualty whilst the other interacts with the crowd;
- You know what medications your buddy is on & where they are stored
- You'll be able to acknowledge your buddy's warning signs, symptoms & triggers if things become stressful (useful in avoiding Critical Incident Stress developing into PTSD down the line.)
- You'll know what to do if one of you gets arrested.
- You can debrief together afterwards.

Being a Buddy means you never leave your partner(s) field of vision but, if you do get split up during the action be certain to have a back-up plan or meeting place in mind so you can hook up again later.

Linking up: from the buddy system to affinity groups

An Affinity Group (AG) is a group of people who share common interests, perspectives and feel an emotional bond to each other and choose to come together to achieve a certain goal. AGs can exist as a part of or independent from larger actions. Some affinity groups form and exist only during a particular protest or action; others work together for years and may both participate in larger demonstrations as well as other ongoing autonomous actions.

We form AGs so that we can accomplish something with a manageable number of people. We come together in order to better understand the problem and strategise a means of changing the situation. But "I mean, why don't we just all get together and march and chant things and hold signs and then go home?"

Forming affinity groups allows us to take on these big ideas in really tangible ways. Having numerous, smaller groups makes it possible for us to take on many different aspects of these huge issues all at the same time. We can also focus on different priorities, strategies and tactics; some groups may take on the 'spiky' task involved in a direction action, but these are worth little without the crucial support tasks that make any action possible like legals or medics while other groups can concern themselves without outreach to bystanders, running social media accounts etc.

Working as affinity groups is one of many ways that we don't just say that this is a leaderless movement but, in our actions and, display the effectiveness of horizontal organizing within and amongst groups.

Ask people to join you. Seriously. If you have ever had conversations with friends, coworkers, family, neighbors, fellow union members or organising buddies or anyone like that about something that you all wished could change, get together with those folks and make a plan to make it happen.



melbourneantifascists.wordpress.com

slackbastard.anarchobase.com

anarchistaffinity.org

melbsmc.org