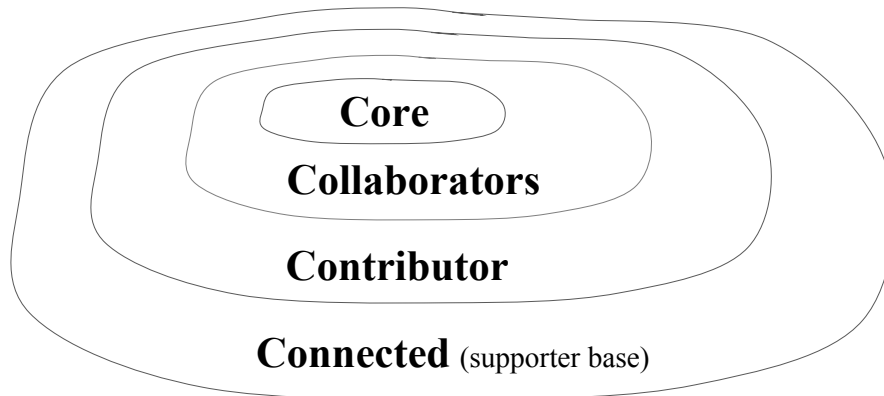




Tip Sheet - Smart Emails and Calls to Action

To build community power we need to invite more and more people into our campaign.

This means learning about emails and communication. The type of email we send to someone depends on where they sit in the overall movement. *The Circles of Engagement* (from The Change Agency) help us pitch our communication. Below is an adaptation for local groups.



Connected supporter base

We can't win unless we're connected – so at every opportunity, we invite people to give us their contact details so they can receive updates from your local group and from Lock the Gate. These people are our *connected* supporter base. From time to time we reach out to them in a *Call To Action*, or an appeal for donations. We communicate with them in a different way to those with whom we work more closely.

Contributors are people who will help with something when asked, such as taking on a role at an event, coming to a direct action, fundraising or promoting our events through their networks. Most likely, they are not in any group. These people are happy to help for a specific task when asked.

Collaborators are more engaged and have a greater sense of belonging in the movement. They may already be in some community group, or a working group for a time-limited period. They may be in a LTG Volunteer Team, taking on important roles like merchandise, stalls, phone teams or data entry.

Core people are the most involved - working in Action Groups, or in a regional alliance. They have very strong commitment and show a lot of initiative.

All these people are vital in our campaign. We need them all. Our job is to create opportunities for people to become active, to get more involved, to find *'the thing that they can do'*. We need to be skilful – we don't want to irritate supporters by sending too many emails. They will ask to be removed from your email group!

The way we email, phone and text is important. When we email people we need to ask:

- Are they part of our **core group** where we work out lots of detail, and communicate frequently?
- Are they someone with whom we **collaborate** on a specific project? In this case we may want to restrict our communication to the shared project.
- Are they people who **contribute when asked**, eg, people who would help with something if phoned?
- Or are they **part of our general supporter base**? Emails to our supporter base need to be short, well-crafted, and to a purpose. If we send long-winded, frequent emails some will ask to be unsubscribed. It's a good idea to discuss in your group before sending emails to your base, and to have a system of editing to ensure good, sharp writing. Learn to strip unnecessary words from text.

Calls To Action – a special kind of email

From time to time we ask our supporters to take an urgent action: a *Call to Action*. These should not be sent too often or people will switch off. We need to craft the email to motivate our supporters.

Step 1: What is the action?

People are more likely to take an action that is simple, and that has immediate effect. So choose your target and the action you want people to take thoughtfully. Is the target able to make the change you want? Is there a deadline? Is the action you want from the target reasonable? Some examples:

- Ask people to phone a Minister or powerful bureaucrat shortly before they'll make an important decision.
- Ask people to write letters to the papers to follow up a story about your issue.
- Ask people to send email submissions as part of a formal public input process.

In each case, you need to be clear before you start: **who** is the target, **what do we want** the target to do, and **why**, so you can clearly communicate the logic of the *Call to Action*.

STEP 2: Write the *Call To Action*

Often, your *Call to Action* will take the form of an email, but it can also be a landing page on your website, or a script for a phone-call to your supporters.

It's important to get to the point quickly. Practice writing the following in one or two sentences: the **reason** why your supporter's participation is important, the **outcome** you're seeking and the **urgency**. An example is "we need Minister Roberts to hear from people in Cessnock that we don't want CSG exploration in our area -before he makes his decision on 5 April."

Keep the emails short, and repeat the main call to action more than once so your supporters don't miss it. Urgent timeframes get better results (24 hours to go!), as do specific actions that relate to something that's very current, (e.g. add Clarence Valley to the list of the ALP's Gasfield Free Council areas!)

Make sure you include the information that people need to take the action: the email address, phone number, proper title and name of the target, and dot points to help people think about what they'll say. Ideally, you will also be able to include a way for them to let you know they took the action – tweet it, send a carbon copy to someone in the group, record the conversation on a webform.

STEP 3: Distribute and promote

Make sure that lots of people know you have a call to action underway!

- Send an email to your own supporter database, but think about what other groups in your area, or state wide, might do the same.
- Put the *Call to Action* on your website and promote it through social media.
- Set up a phone-up (phone banking) session with your team so you can call your supporters and urge them to take the action.

EXAMPLE OF A CALL TO ACTION

Hi Elly,

In just one week, the Energy Ministers from every Australian Government will meet in Canberra to discuss whether landholders should have the right to refuse access to mining and gas companies.

[Will you join us in asking them to provide farmers and Traditional Owners a legal right to veto mining and gas access?](#)

Currently, we have no legal rights to prevent mining and gas companies forcing themselves on to our land, damaging our water resources and putting the health of our families at risk.

This vast injustice has led to entrenched conflict and caused many families to suffer heavily at the hands of multi-national mining corporations.

Mining companies use the powers that they have to legally enforce access as a way of bullying and intimidating farmers and Traditional Owners.

Let's stand up together now to end this rule of fear by mining companies.

The Council of Australian Governments Energy Council meeting next Friday 4th December is the first time that this issue has ever been properly considered by decision makers.

It is the best chance that we have ever had to make sure that harassment by multi-national mining corporations never again leads to unbearable mental strain and loss of life for rural and regional Australians.

[Can you help us push real change across the line on this one? Please share this email widely and let's make sure all the Energy Ministers know that on 4th December, we'll be watching them.](#)

Thanks for standing with us,

Phil Laird

Email and phone tips

Email can be wonderful. It can also be annoying, ineffective and counter-productive!

	GOOD PRACTICE	AVOID
<p>CONNECTED SUPPORTER BASE Our supporters want to be kept updated. Some may feel ambivalent & unsure if they can get involved. Our skill is to keep them in the loop, to provide ways for them to add value to the campaign, and to feel good about that. We need to balance the good news from the social movement with news of the mining threat.</p>	<p>Emails to supporters should be reserved for calls to action, getting people to events, or occasional updates.</p> <p>People need to hear good news - that we're making a difference.</p> <p>Make your email inviting to look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to the point • Short sentences • Good font size • To inspire, embed photo or short video 	<p>Don't bombard your supporters with emails.</p> <p>Avoid long emails with small font.</p> <p>Supporters won't want tons of technical information. Instead, tell people where they can get info on a website. Or ask them to phone you for it – a phone call might give you an opportunity to invite them to do something...to shift them to <i>Contributor</i>.</p>

<p>CONTRIBUTORS</p> <p>Be <i>selective</i>. Who are you reaching out to? What are you asking them to do?</p> <p>Remember the phone! It's better than emails. Talking builds relationships. Relationships build a movement.</p>	<p>Phone is best for asking people to do something. Want people to leaflet a town? Phone coordinators in the Gasfield Free Communities. Ask them to phone around to get 4 people to help.</p> <p>Email</p> <p>Target emails to the right people. If it's not relevant to the person, don't include them.</p> <p>Re-read before sending. Edit – cut excess words, make it shorter.</p>	<p>Don't send long emails. If your email is getting long, pick up the phone.</p> <p>If recipients don't know each other, they may not like their address being visible in the address bar. You can put their addresses in the BC (blind copy) bar. They'll get the email but won't see the other addresses.</p>
<p>COLLABORATORS</p>	<p>Use Messaging Apps (such as WhatsApp & Viber). These increase connectivity especially in areas with poor mobile coverage. Teach people how they work.</p>	<p>Beware long email tails. You never know what's in the older emails. Start new emails with clear subjects.</p>
<p>CORE</p>	<p>Email. You're competing with busy email traffic. Good subject headings. Keep them brief.</p>	<p>Consider security: Don't write anything you don't want to see plastered in a newspaper.</p>
<p>GENERAL TIPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your subject is the main message. Want attention? Make your subject heading clear. It's like a billboard. For example "FEEDBACK NEEDED on poster before Friday 19th". • Avoid email loops with subject headings that are no longer relevant. • Never write when irritated. Let time pass. Working relationships can be ruined by heated words in print. 		