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Climate convergences promise civil disobedience across three continents

Action begins with massive human blockade of coal trains in Australia

On July 13th, over a thousand peacefully halted all rail transit of coal in Newcastle, Australia in a daring daylight blockade that cost the industry an estimated \$1.2 million. The following day, the same group temporarily shut down the world's largest coal port at Kooragang. Over the next few weeks activists intend to bring the escalating protest tactics against the fossil fuel industry and climate change to the US.

Inspired by the UK's Camp for Climate Action last year – which drew international attention for targeting London's Heathrow airport – six convergences are taking place throughout July and August in the US, UK, Australia, and Germany. In the US the events will be held in New York, Oregon, and Virginia between July 28th and August 11th.

"Climate change is here, and more and more people are refusing to sit by waiting for governments to act and watching them fail. The Climate Convergence is part of a new wave of direct action against the root causes of climate change, a global protest movement mobilizing in response to this global threat," said Alicia Ng of Portland, Oregon.

The camps share the same four key objectives: showing sustainable alternatives in action, sharing skills and knowledge, building a grassroots movement for climate justice, and taking direct action to stop dirty energy and climate change – which participants view as a necessary response to the scope of obstruction from the fossil fuel industry. The event is a cabaret of workshops, music, strategy sessions, and sustainability demonstrations, all with the goal of promoting a just, rapid transition away from fossil fuels and towards a sane, equitable and just society.

"The convergences amplify the voices of the communities who are most affected by climate change, dirty energy, and the systems of injustice that are causing both," added Dagoten Lamat, of Rhode Island. "Scientists, politicians, and other so-called 'experts' have more than enough air-time on this issue. At the convergences we will take the time to listen to the stories of the people with the most at stake in solving the climate crises and building a just future."

There is agreement amongst the gatherings that governments are stalling on climate action and that communities must take matters into their own hands. "We are running out of time," said Lizbeth Halloran from the Australia camp. "The G8 are making pitiful noises and insulting our intelligence with their so-called targets. With world leaders clearly demonstrating that they serve the corporate fossil fuel agenda, it is up to ordinary people to put the brakes on climate change when no one else will."

The camps have solidified a sense of climate activism as an internationalized social movement "Whatever we achieve in our local struggles this summer, they are amplified by the achievements of the five other climate camps around the world, and many more planned for next summer. A global social movement has emerged that is both resisting runaway climate change caused by the pursuit of corporate profits, and building pathways to a sustainable future," stated Connor O'Brien, a spokesperson from the UK's Camp for Climate Action.

The camps started July 10-15 in Newcastle, Australia. Upcoming gatherings are July 28-August 4 in Eugene, Oregon and High Falls, NY; August 3-11 in Kent, UK; August 5-11 in Louisa County, Virginia; and August 15-26 in Hamburg, Germany.

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