

Lock the gates and take to the streets for climate change justice

By Michael Marriott

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The time has come for civil disobedience in the face of our captured political system, says [Mike Marriott](#), who suggests three acts of civil disobedience you can do right now.

'If the machine of government is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then, I say, break the law.'

~ [Henry David Thoreau](#), [Civil Disobedience](#)

IN CASE THERE WAS ANY DOUBT, climate sceptics and the fossil fuel lobby have captured the political process, turn your mind to the events of this week.

Last Monday, Prime Minister Tony Abbott, announced a package to assist farmers hit by the drought. When asked if climate change had contributed to the suffering of farmers, Abbott [breezily dismissed the idea](#):

If you look at the records of Australian agriculture going back 150 years, there have always been good times and bad, tough and lush times..."

A day after Abbott's Delphic musing on climate science, the Government [announced a review](#) of the [Renewable Energy Target](#) (RET). Heading it up, [Dick Warburton](#).

For those not familiar with the name, Warburton is typical of the lobbyist and "business figure" often found aligned with the Liberal-National Party Coalition.

Writing for *Quadrant* in 2011, in a two-part series, Warburton [dismissed climate science](#) as a product of "group think". He also questioned why anyone would trust the findings of scientists.

It has also been revealed by Fairfax that [Warburton is being investigated for bribery](#).

In response to the obvious criticism generated by his appointment, Warburton sought to defend himself [in the pages](#) of the [climate sceptic-friendly The Australian](#):

"I am not a denier of climate change," he said. "I am a sceptic that man-made carbon dioxide is creating global warming."

Right. And black is white and ignorance is strength, Dick.

Do you hear what I hear? That's the sound of [George Orwell spinning furiously](#) in his grave in response to such tortured logic.

There is [nothing coincidental in the appointment](#) of men such as Warburton. Ideologues and lobbyists have rushed in to take over the levers of power.

They are gleefully dismantling environmental protections and legislation in order to further their own interests and industry.

But it's [not just scientists](#) and the [renewable energy sector](#) under attack.

It is no overstatement to say that our future, and that of our children, is under assault.

We know what impact a [six degree increase](#) in average global temperatures will have. It will create a literal hell on Earth.

As journalist [Gay Alcorn](#) pointed out in a [recent piece in the Fairfax press](#), the Abbott Government [has been duplicitous](#) in telling Australians our emissions are negligible.

The reality is that we are [among the top 20 emitters](#) in the world. [Recent data from the World Bank](#) suggests we are among the top 15 emitters on a *per capita* basis.

If those of good conscience and moral courage do not act now, then we leave the fate of future generations to men like Abbott and Warburton.

We need to shake-the-tree and rouse the Australian public from its present indifference. We need to pierce the walls of apathy and the pacifying effects of infotainment that currently cocoon the public from the challenge of climate change.

In order to achieve this we must, out of necessity, engage in acts of dissent and non-violent protest.

It is time to embrace all forms of [civil disobedience](#).

Fortunately we do not need to wait for a leader of [Martin Luther King's](#) or [Mahatma Gandhi's](#) stature to [inspire or instruct us](#).

There are three things you can do today – *right now* – that will help this campaign of civil disobedience.

Number 1: Help Lock the Gates

The [Lock the Gate Alliance](#) is a grass-roots movement dedicated to halting reckless coal and gas expansions. Farmers and citizens alike are joining together to protect their land and heritage. You can volunteer, donate and attend events to [help support their cause](#).

Number 2: Take to the streets for the March in March 2014

The [March in March 2014](#) will take place on the between the 15th and 17th of next month. Over 31,000 Australians have stated they will march to signal their lack of confidence in the Abbott government. Rallies like this are powerful symbols and can set the political agenda. You can help the cause of climate justice by attending a rally near you. See their [website or Facebook page for details](#).

Number 3: Capture the public space via social media

The Internet is a public space, where every citizen has the right to express themselves. But it has been captured by political trolls, climate sceptics and

News Corporation. Our task is to be the [immune system of this public space](#), purging from it the disease of spin.

Get onto Twitter and online forums and challenge the sceptics. Use the amazing [Reality Drop](#) website to grab links and stories that counter the most common sceptic arguments.

We can take inspiration from [historical examples](#): the fight to end slavery, the Civil Rights movement and the women's movement.

These are powerful precedents for us to emulate.

As the late activist [Howard Zinn said](#):

"Civil disobedience is not our problem. Our problem is civil obedience."

Some of us ponder the value of civil disobedience. Some remain uncertain as to what action to take. However here are three actions you can take today.

Ask yourself, is it not time to act?

You can read more by [Mike Marriott at Watching the Deniers](#) and follow him on Twitter [@WTdeniers](#).

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