

# Australians Blockade World Economic Forum - 2000

## Goals

The goal was to prevent the meeting of the 2000 World Economic Forum from happening.

## Time period notes

Sept 11 - 13, 2000

## Time period

11-SEP, 2000 to 13-SEP, 2000

## Country

Australia

## Location City/State/Province

Melbourne, Victoria

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## PCS Tags

- [Included Participation by More Than One Social Class \(/index.php/category/pcs-tags/included-participation-more-one-social-class\)](/index.php/category/pcs-tags/included-participation-more-one-social-class)

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## Methods ➤

### Methods in 1st segment

001. [Public speeches \(/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/001-public-speeches\)](/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/001-public-speeches)

007. [Slogans, caricatures, and symbols \(/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/007-slogans-caricatures-and-symbols\)](/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/007-slogans-caricatures-and-symbols)

008. [Banners, posters, and displayed communications \(/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/008-banners-posters-and-displayed-communications\)](/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/008-banners-posters-and-displayed-communications)

016. [Picketing \(/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/016-picketing\)](/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/016-picketing)

036. [Performances of plays and music \(/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/036-performances-of-plays-and-music\)](/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/036-performances-of-plays-and-music)

performances-plays-and-music)

037. Singing (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/037-singing)

047. Assemblies of protest or support (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/047-assemblies-protest-or-support)

062. Student strike (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/062-student-strike)

122. Literature and speeches advocating resistance (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/122-literature-and-speeches-advocating-resistance)

137. Refusal of an assemblage or meeting to disperse (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/137-refusal-assemblage-or-meeting-disperse)

171. Nonviolent interjection (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/171-nonviolent-interjection)

## Methods in 2nd segment

007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/007-slogans-caricatures-and-symbols)

008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/008-banners-posters-and-displayed-communications)

016. Picketing (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/016-picketing)

036. Performances of plays and music (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/036-performances-plays-and-music)

037. Singing (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/037-singing)

047. Assemblies of protest or support (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/047-assemblies-protest-or-support)

122. Literature and speeches advocating resistance (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/122-literature-and-speeches-advocating-resistance)

137. Refusal of an assemblage or meeting to disperse (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/137-refusal-assemblage-or-meeting-disperse)

171. Nonviolent interjection (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/171-nonviolent-interjection)

## Methods in 3rd segment

001. Public speeches (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/001-public-speeches)

008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/008-banners-posters-and-displayed-communications)

016. Picketing (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/016-picketing)

037. Singing (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/037-singing)

038. Marches (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/038-marches)

047. Assemblies of protest or support (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/047-assemblies-protest-or-support)

122. Literature and speeches advocating resistance (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/122-literature-and-speeches-advocating-resistance)

171. Nonviolent interjection (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/171-nonviolent-interjection)

## Methods in 4th segment

001. Public speeches (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/001-public-speeches)

008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/008-banners-posters-and-displayed-communications)

016. Picketing (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/016-picketing)

037. Singing (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/037-singing)

047. Assemblies of protest or support (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/047-assemblies-

protest-or-support)

171. Nonviolent interjection (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/171-nonviolent-interjection)

## Methods in 5th segment

001. Public speeches (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/001-public-speeches)

008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/008-banners-posters-and-displayed-communications)

016. Picketing (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/016-picketing)

037. Singing (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/037-singing)

038. Marches (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/038-marches)

047. Assemblies of protest or support (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/047-assemblies-protest-or-support)

171. Nonviolent interjection (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/171-nonviolent-interjection)

## Methods in 6th segment

001. Public speeches (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/001-public-speeches)

008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/008-banners-posters-and-displayed-communications)

016. Picketing (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/016-picketing)

037. Singing (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/037-singing)

038. Marches (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/038-marches)

047. Assemblies of protest or support (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/047-assemblies-protest-or-support)

171. Nonviolent interjection (/index.php/category/gene-sharps-198/171-nonviolent-interjection)

## Segment Length

1/2 day

## Leaders, partners, allies, elites

### Leaders

S11 Alliance, one major spokesperson was Jorge Jorquera of Democratic Socialist Perspective

### Partners

Democratic Socialist Perspective, Resistance, Friends of the Earth, Socialist Party and many other progressive and environmental groups.

### External allies

Trade unionists, especially Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) and Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU), students

## Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

## Opponents

World Economic Forum and defenders: Australian government and police

## Campaigner violence

None, just resisting the efforts to push through the crowd by the police.

## Repressive Violence

Police used violence, ex. shoving, jabbing with batons, striking with batons, riding horses into the crowd, to break the blockade and force entrance and exit for attendees, starting the evening of the first day, Sep 11, 2000, and escalating on Sep 12. The Forum had threatened to cancel and reschedule if access wasn't opened up by the police. 30 protesters were hospitalized on the 12th. An unidentified driver run over a protester. More violence on the 13th.

## Classifications

### Cluster

Economic Justice

### Classification

Change

### Group characterization

socialists

Environmentalists

trade unionists

students

## Joining/exiting order of social groups

### Segment Length

1/2 day

## Success Outcome

### Success in achieving specific demands/goals

3 out of 6 points

### Survival

1 out of 1 points

## Growth

2 out of 3 points

## Total points

6 out of 10 points

## Notes on outcomes

The meeting was not prevented, so there was not complete success. But it was reported that a third of the attendees didn't get in the first day, and every entrance and exit was challenged. The effort did publicize their criticisms of the neo-liberal policies of free-trade, deregulation, and globalization, and draw attention to the existence of the WEF.

## Case Study Details



The World Economic Forum (WEF) coordinated cooperation and activities for the largest and most influential corporations in the world and governments. According to one self-definition, it “engages political, business, academic and other leaders of society in collaborative efforts to shape global, regional and industry agendas.” Each year, WEF held regional meetings of 1000+ attendees. These leaders dominated the setting of economic and social policy around the world and promoted free trade and deregulation, often referred to as a “neo-liberal” agenda. They claimed to be “committed to improving the state of the world through public-private cooperation.” Opposition to their agenda of globalization developed among progressives, environmentalists, and labor unions around the world.

In 2000, WEF planned a regional meeting in Melbourne, Australia, from 11 September to 13 September, the Asia-Pacific Economic Summit of the World Economic Forum, and Australian groups of socialists and environmentalists decided to form a coalition to prevent the meeting from happening as a protest against the policies the WEF promoted.

The group called itself the “S11 Alliance”, referring to the date of the first day of the meeting, 11 September. A coalition of progressive groups came together for this campaign, particularly the Democratic Socialist Party, Resistance, the activist environmental movement, Friends of the Earth, and a variety of independent left, green and progressive activists including smaller left groups: the International Socialist Organisation (ISO), Socialist Alternative (SA), Workers' Power and the Socialist Party (formerly Militant). Anarchist groups also participated at times.

Action against the meeting started on the morning of 11 September, 2000 in Melbourne, at the Crown Towers (a hotel and conference center) and Crown Casino next door. The protesters blockaded all the entrances to the complex to prevent people from attending the meeting. The organizers coordinated the protest from a central stage, using a team of ‘marshals’ to direct participants to the various entrances where people were needed to block entry or exit.

Organizers and marshals used ‘walkie-talkies’ (hand-held radios) to communicate with each other about attempts to break through the blockade and areas needing more support. Marshals observed each blockade site so that the central organizers could be kept up-to-date on where assistance was needed.

Teams at each entrance tried to block any attempts to enter, but sometimes the police and attendees got through, and sometimes they didn't, depending on how many police there were compared to the blockaders and how violently the police responded. Different estimates of the number of protesters emerged, from the police's report of two thousand, to other's estimate of ten thousand. The blockaders set up a barricade on one of the streets on the west side of the complex and later blocked off a major road that ran through the casino building.

In the afternoon of the 11th, a car carrying the premier of West Australia tried to drive through the crowd. Protesters stopped it for an hour by puncturing its tires before police extracted it wielding batons and charging the crowd to clear the way. At the central stage, bands played music, participants gave impromptu performances of drumming and playing other instruments, giant puppets and people in costumes, such as "anti-capitalist clowns" moved through the crowd. This area was more relaxed without confrontations like at the entrances. Graffiti artists painted anti-globalization slogans on walls around the casino. Five hundred high school students left school and marched to join the protest.

The protesters held to their policy of no violence in spite of the violence used against them by the police. There were reports that two to three hundred delegates had been unable to get through the blockade to the meeting, while others had to arrive by boat (one side of the complex was on the Yarra River) or helicopter. Police conducted only two arrests during the day.

The opposition pro-WEF strategy seemed to be to create an expectation that the protest would be violent so the police could violently attack it. They used the media to repeat this message, despite organizers' statements that they would protest non-violently. Headlines that echoed the Seattle, USA, World Trade Organization (WTO) protests from Nov. 1999 reported: 'Police Fear Protest Riots' (Herald Sun, 10 June), 'Violence at World Forum, Police Warn' (Australian, 8 July), 'Fear of Violent Protests' (Australian, 18 August), 'Violence Fears Close Stores' (Herald Sun, 5 September), 'Help at Hand for Protest Violence' (Australian, 6 September), 'Forum Chief Lashes Wild Protesters' (Herald Sun, 8 September) among others. .

On Tuesday, 12 September, police tactics changed. According to the Victorian Trades Hall Council secretary, Leigh Hubbard, the WEF organizers threatened to "pack up and go home" if police did not get more delegates into the meeting over the next days. Two hundred riot police attacked the demonstrators at the Queensbridge St entrance to the Crown Casino to enable delegates to be bussed in. Eleven protesters were taken to the hospital after the action.

Five thousand to twenty thousand union workers marched to join the protesters at the central stage, with union leaders making speeches against globalization. Two unions, Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) were pushing Trade Hall, the trade union organization, to support the blockade, but could only get the march to join the protestors in a rally, not the blockade. Some union leaders publicly opposed the blockade. Disagreement persisted in the union movement about the blockade with the overall group only supporting the protest, not the blockade. The unions clearly opposed the WEF and globalization, but did not agree about tactics.

At the end of the day, Tuesday, five hundred police attacked two hundred blockaders to force a path for delegates to leave the area, reportedly clubbing not only protesters but also mainstream media journalists. Thirty protesters were hospitalized and treated for head and neck injuries.

On Wednesday, 13 September, in the morning, hundreds of police again attacked an

understaffed entrance to get buses in, hospitalizing one protester. At noon, the ten thousand protesters held a 'victory march' through the city with chants of 'Whose streets? Our streets!' and others. After the march, the protesters linked hands in a human chain around the casino. A final incident of police violence involved an unmarked police car driving into the crowd and running over a woman.

The campaign did not achieve their goal of preventing attendance at the Asia-Pacific Economic Summit of the World Economic Forum. They did draw attention to the issues of globalization and free trade policy and maintained discipline to stay nonviolent in the face of police violence.

## Research Notes



### Influences

The campaign was influenced by the protests against the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle, US, in 1999.

### Additional Notes

There was a documentary made about this event, "This is What Democracy Looks Like" by Actively Radical TV. This was available on youtube.com in March 2015 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amrFPkcjZ1I> in 5 parts.

Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy

Jamie Irwin, 03/22/2015



The Global Nonviolent Action Database is a project of Swarthmore College, including the Peace and Conflict Studies Program, the Peace Collection, and the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility.



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