

# Copenhagen failure sparks coal terminal blockade

Rising Tide, 20/12/09

Forty climate activists have closed down the rail line into the world's biggest coal port this morning, protesting the failure of the UN climate talks in Copenhagen to produce a just, effective, and legally binding treaty.

Twenty five of the diverse group – aged from 19 to 86 years and including a Buddhist priest, and an elected local councillor – are occupying a rail bridge in Newcastle, Australia, and refusing to leave. They have hung large banners reading “Greed wrecked Copenhagen: Now it's up to us all”, and “You could have done something great.”

“The US, Australia, and other wealthy countries wrecked the Copenhagen climate talks,” said Steve Phillips, spokesperson for protest organisers Rising Tide Newcastle.

“They refused to lift their paltry greenhouse pollution targets to the levels required to avoid catastrophe. They insisted on being allowed to fake their way out of real action with dodgy carbon “offsets”. They refused to come up with the funds needed to help poor countries adapt to climate change. They could have done something great, but they failed. They let greed and self interest take precedence over the survival of life on earth, and we are here today to condemn them in the strongest possible terms.”

“We put world leaders on notice that their continuing failure to solve the climate crisis will result in widespread direct action against the causes of climate change, as we are seeing here today. We're taking this action because we have had enough. We've seen too much grandstanding, and precious little action. We won't continue to watch as people die, as species go extinct because of climate change, while emissions continue to rise. Enough is enough.”

Newcastle City Councillor Michael Osborne is among those occupying the rail bridge. He explained why: “The people of Newcastle and the Hunter expected a fair, ambitious, and binding treaty at Copenhagen. They have been let down. Australia has failed to take leadership on this issue, so now people from the Hunter are taking it themselves. It is time we moved away from the fossil fuels that are causing this crisis and embraced the renewable industries that can solve it.”

The protest is adjacent to the Pacific Highway at Sandgate, 10km from Newcastle CBD.

**For further information call Steve Phillips: 0437 275 119**