

Breakout Session: What Makes an Effective Action?

Grassroots Campaigning School, March 28

Purpose

Equip participants with a clear framework for planning actions (e.g. protests, rallies, stunts) that actually shift power, not just express frustration.

By the end, participants will understand the core components of an effective action, be able to assess whether an action is strategic or symbolic, and apply a simple framework to improve an action idea.

Quick opener (5 mins)

Prompt participants: “Think of a protest or action you’ve seen or been part of. What made it powerful — or ineffective?”

Pull out 2–3 quick reflections and write keywords such as turnout, media, disruption, or clear demand on whiteboard.

What makes an action effective? (10 mins)

Introduce a simple, practical framework.

- An effective action has a **clear goal** (what are we trying to change and who has the power to deliver it).
- A **target** (specific decision-maker, not “the public”)
- A **strategy fit** (is this the right tactic for this moment, does it escalate pressure or just repeat what’s been done).
- Who is **participating** (who is involved, does it build leadership and grow the base).
- Does it cause **disruption or leverage** (does it create a cost, why would the target care)
- What is the **narrative** (is the message clear in 5 seconds, will the media or the public understand it).
- Is it **safe and sustainable** (are participants supported, is risk appropriate and intentional).

Emphasise that not all actions need to be massive—small, strategic actions can be very effective.

Action breakdown (15 mins)

Give the group a scenario or let them choose, such as a housing protest outside a minister’s office, a rally about cost of living, a direct action targeting a corporation, or a real action they’re planning. Ask them to assess the action using the framework: what’s strong, what’s missing, and how would you improve it.

Discussion (7 mins)

Each group shares one strength and one improvement. The facilitator draws connections and highlights patterns, such as common gaps (unclear target, weak demand) and strong ideas (creative disruption, clear messaging).

Key takeaway (3 mins)

Close with the synthesis: “Effective actions aren’t just loud — they’re strategic. They target power, apply pressure, and move people into action.” Optional final question: “What’s one thing you’ll do differently in your next action?”

Materials Needed Whiteboard, markers, optional worksheet (framework checklist).

Examples:

[Amanda Rishworth Action after indexation - 19 April 2024](#)

[Homelessness Week 2025 - 7th August 2025](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/18EiP1NNbq/>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1DfKs5Lu1L/>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1ENEzfjpPs/>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1MSnb31YEr/>

Response?

[8th August - Nick Champion announces 1,090 new public homes by 2026](#)

11th August - Premiers website

[\\$120 million to help thousands of South Australians own their first home](#)

13th August - Public Service News

[South Australia on track to fulfil public housing promise of 1090 homes by 2026](#)

21st August

