

Incidents summary and statement of accounts provided by Legal Observers NSW on the basis of first-hand accounts

Police visits

Between 21-28 June, 13 people were visited in their homes by police and questioned about their knowledge of upcoming protest activity. One person who lives in the Gosford area was visited by two police officers on the evening of 23 June. They were asked a number of questions from a typed sheet, including whether they were aware of the upcoming Blockade Australia protests, whether they planned to attend, whether they understood the 'requirement' to have a Form 1 and whether they knew the penalties for blocking roads illegally. The person in question had no public connection to Blockade Australia.

Several other individuals who received visits from police were subject to the same line of questioning. Police visited individuals in Sydney, Newcastle, and Wingham. Several individuals were asked by police if they knew that "protesting without a Form 1 is illegal". Police also visited a backpacker hostel at 7 St on 26 June and made the same enquiries of several individuals staying at the hostel.

When questioned by one of the individuals visited as to their purpose, police stated that they had been given a list of people to make visits to. The individuals visited included individuals connected to climate-related protest groups and family members of individuals involved in Blockade Australia.

Stop and searches

Between 21 June – 1 July, a number of people were subject to stop and searches on the pretext of a random breath test or checking their license and then questioned about their involvement in protest activity. One person was stopped in their car in Newtown on 27 June and told they had been stopped because they were driving a car with Victorian plates. They were then questioned about their reason for being in Newtown and subject to a search of their car and belongings. After finding a paint marker in the person's bag, the police questioned the person about why they had a marker. When the person replied that they were an artist, the police questioned them as to why they didn't have their drawings with them or a whiteboard to use the marker on. The police then charged the person with possessing a graffiti implement.

A number of stop and searches were undertaken on individuals in the vicinity of Addison Rd Community Centre in Marrickville. One person was pulled over in their car on 1 July while exiting the Community Centre and told that they were pulled over because of the "illegal protests of Blockade Australia" and that the police would do a breath test on them and search them and their car. The police officers asked the person whether they were involved in the protests and where they were travelling to. They searched the person's car and on finding swag poles questioned the person about what they were for and whether they were to be used for illegal protest. When told they were for a swag which was in the Community Centre, they asked if they could be let into the Community Centre to see the person's swag. The person declined to do so and the police left.

Another person was stopped in the vicinity of Addison Rd on 27 June and subject to a police search on the basis that police were "trying to prevent violent protest". A police officer took the person's phone and tried to put several passcodes in, before giving it back.

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A community member delivering barrels to Reverse Garbage inside the Addison Rd Community Centre was pulled over by police, given a breath test and questioned about what the barrels were for and whether they were to be used in protest activity.

On 30 June several police officers entered Hurlstone Park Bowling Club and one of the officers announced they would be ID'ing several individuals in relation to "illegal protest". One of the individuals had left their phone in the bathroom and a police officer seized the phone and refused to give it back to the individual on the ground that they couldn't prove it was their property. When the person asked to unlock the phone to prove it was theirs, the police officer refused to hand it over and told the person they would have to say their passcode to the officer. The officer then stated that they had a request to seize the phone for evidence. The phone has not, to our knowledge, been returned to the individual.