

Live tweeting at rallies and marches

This is a companion resource to live tweeting for direct action by CounterAct.

Why use twitter at rallies? As with other events, twitter is a very useful way to share your story outside traditional networks. Increasingly twitter quotes and photos are used to embed in traditional media, and with a small amount of effort you can get your event trending. This will alert politicians and media to your issue.

- Make sure you have charged phone and backup charger. We use a small backpack to keep the phone attached a charger. Other tools that can be helpful are a selfie stick (no, not for duck pouts selfies 🐤) and a microphone)
- Research to see what hashtags people are using. If you have a relationship with organisers, suggest they mention the hashtag multiple times and encourage tweets and Instagram (as well as facebook but that can tend to circulate mainly among already converted friendship networks) If there are multiple hashtags use the dominant one and cross tweet, or tweet at prolific users and see if you can combine forces.
- If you are tweeting from an organisation, understand their “voice” and tone. Some people will have formal resources on this – with others you can scroll back to see how they like to communicate. Some accounts may want to be politically neutral, and offer simple commentary. Others may be more defiant/cheeky etc
- Its sometimes useful to use two different apps on your phone. We use the twitter app for posting, as well as another to sometimes another to monitor hashtags. If you have office admin supporters at home they can use tweetdeck to monitor multiple hashtags and accounts



Try different angles. Sometimes space is good.

ON THE DAY

- Get there early to check out vantage points and ensure you can get in close for footage and pics of speakers
- Wander the crowd. Ask for consent to take pictures of individuals and small groups. See if they want a one-two sentence quote added to their picture. Portrait shots and shots of fun signs help personalise/humanise attendees and the stories shared
- Get good crowd shots. If you are short, a selfie stick can help this. Practice a bit and get it up to take wide crowd shots. You can also use this to try and get some good, slow-pan footage. This will be most effective to

Basic phone pic, but shows crowd, time of day



capture the mood if there is some movement and chanting in the crowd

- Think about who you are platforming – if its an Indigenous rights rally – obviously you want to hear from mainly Aboriginal speakers. At any rally or event, you should aim for diversity of representation. We try and aim to platform voices less commonly heard, rather than tweeting every single quote from high profile speakers.

To video or not to video

Periscope is now embedded in twitter for livestream capability. Be warned it does need a decent signal and can eat up bandwidth. If we can't get a good signal, we focus on getting short (non-live) video clips of speakers, and movement shots (ie, standing in one place with a good vantage point and getting vision of the crowd walking past)

If you are using Periscope make sure you put a good clear descriptor in the tweet where you first post the stream that links in any relevant hashtags and gives context for the post. It can be tricky to manage trolls and comments singlehandedly whilst filming so plan ahead if you want to do this.

If you are wanting to multi task photos and footage (use them later for an edited video or sharing elsewhere) we use the phone camera and video and take landscape footage and photos instead of the in-built twitter app. For quick video footage just for twitter we use the in-built video.

To see what makes a good photo, we have more information on our other resources, but briefly...

- Photos that capture the spirit of the occasion. People in action. Take multiple pictures of speakers and try and get one that shows them gesticulating or making a point. If you can see your phone well, (tricky on bright days with small screens) quickly cull/discard ones that aren't great – it saves heaps of time later.



Great action shot by Hayley – captures energy well

- Photos that show the scale of the crowd. If its not a large crowd, keep them cropped in close to focus on the people there, not empty spaces
- Try and get a high vantage point – even just benches, or bins on the side of the road can help, but if it's a really big event do a pre-scout and see if there is anywhere to get into a higher building for overhead shots. If you are organised and don't mind carrying it, a little fold out stool could be helpful.

- Taking pictures of lead banners – can be useful, but difficult. You are competing with professional photographers, multiple cameras, marshalls in the way all while maybe walking backwards. Unless it's a really organised rally where marshalls are organised to stop the march at a point where there will be a good viewpoint of the rally and



front banner, it can sometimes be better to try and take it on an angle from the side of the road, with people and movement. If you can though, hop on a hill or higher vantage point and get the lead banner with the crowd behind to give a sense of scale. Either way, take lots and quickly cull and sort for the best one.

- Everyone loves a good sign, and there is more traditional media outlets collating collections of these after rallies – so get some close ups of clever signs and people holding them (Examples from School kids Climate Strike in [Junkee](#) and [Guardian](#))

Examples of tweets embedded in other media: [here](#), and [here](#).

Other tips

A super quick in phone edit can be very useful. Just open up the picture, make sure you copy it to save the original, and quickly lighten up if needed or crop to focus on important detail.

Use the opportunity to pump up and highlight other people. If you are seeing someone posting great content, give them a shout out. Live tweeting events can be a great way to add more followers, and you can use this to share the digital solidarity around!



For video

If you have a buddy for video this can be great. Especially for live feeds you don't want a bunch of people saying no, they don't want to talk to you. So, having someone to work with to find folk who can speak, and help keep you from bumping into people can be great (this goes for livestreaming facebook as well)



These examples shared are all photos taken on phone cameras by the CounterAct team. None of us are professional photographers, and these shouldn't be considered brilliant examples of "photos" in terms of composition or skill, but some decent examples of untrained people using the tool we carry everyday – our phone.