



A giant bilby blocks a bulldozer headed for Walmadan

FOR THE KIMBERLEY

A GLIMPSE OF RECENT RESISTANCE

Environs Kimberly, ENVIRONSKIMBERLY.ORG. Footnotes available.

JUNE 7: Broome community surveillance see Woodside's private security, Hostile Environment Services, hurtling down the highway, and follow to find a bulldozer on the back of a loader heading out to Walmadan. Word goes out and the bulldozer convoy is stopped 10km short of its destination by a lone protestor standing in the road.

Moments later, someone locks himself onto the bulldozer. Following negotiations between Traditional Owners and police, the person unlocks at the request of the Traditional Owners. Police issue a move-on order. The convoy precedes a further 5km.

Meanwhile, a car body has mysteriously appeared on a stretch of road too narrow for the convoy. Fifty protestors from all directions and walks of life—Traditional Owners, business people, musicians, artists, tourists, grey nomads, and filmmakers—have now turned up. One slips under the bulldozer and locks on again. Goolarabooloo woman Theresa Roe says to the gathered media throng: *"We don't want the money, we want that country alive. I want to see it for my grandchildren. I gotta fight!...Turn that tin can around and take it back to town!"*

JUNE 8: After 27 hours, two people are taken to the Broome police station for processing. Back at the blockade, everyone gets their swags out for another night under the stars.

JUNE 9 & 10: Police negotiators arrive. Negotiations continue for 7 hours. Police warn that move-on notices will be issued if any attempt is made to impede the unlawful work. The convoy is allowed to proceed to a side track 500 meters short of its destination. The road is still blocked with people. The dozer is parked south of Walmadan, where it remains surrounded by a crowd of Broome community members.

JUNE 10: Woodside arrives at dozer to find it covered with banners and still surrounded by people refusing them access. Stand-off continues all day. Woodside goes home, while police warn of arrests.

JUNE 11: About 100 people blocking entry. The protest is led by indigenous women, who invoke the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People on matters of free, prior and informed consent; cultural responsibility; and the rights of indigenous peoples to uphold their Law. Neither the police nor Woodside are prepared to move the women aside. The women declare: *"you don't recognize our law; we don't recognize yours."* Woodside turns around and heads home.

JUNE 17: Musician John Butler and the gathered crowd

of over 70 people sing the sun up and await the arrival of Woodside and the police. Goolarabooloo Law Boss Joseph Roe urges the crowd to "stand strong for country." The regional and local papers, and TV Channels arrive. The camp phone rings off the hook all morning with radio programs around the country. The story goes national. In a surprise move, West Australian Premier Colin Barnett defends the right to protest and says he has no plans to intervene: *"What this is about is preliminary work on the site and look, people have got a right to protest, if they want to sit out on the road for a while they can do that."* Later that day, the Premier announces a \$63 million 'conservation' package for the Kimberley, but environment groups question \$3 million earmarked for identifying potential new mines.

JUNE 18-20: Woodside workers are met each day by the roadblock, and following negotiations, turn around. A community meeting and a letterwriting workshop are held at the blocakde to help people express their opposition to federal Environment Minister Burke.

JULY 5: Woodside pressures the police riot squad to assist them in carrying out their 'lawful' duties, to clear pristine wilderness in endangered bilby habitat, along the Lurujarri Heritage trail and within culturally sacred burial ground sites, without consent from Traditional Owners, permits or approvals from the government. There are 25 arrests of old, young, indigenous and non-indigenous activists. Woodside breaks through the protest nearly running over a camera man.

AUGUST 1: A man is arrested after locking himself to the axle of a vehicle near the blockade site, which stopped the clearing of land at the site for more than six hours while police worked to remove him.

AUGUST 2: Thirty protesters greet Australian Federal Minister Tony Burke as he stepped onto the red cliffs of Walmadan—first trip to the Woodside gas site. Earlier, three more were arrested, including a former Broome Shire Councilor, at the blockade site. Later, bout 50 protestors blocked the intersection at Manari and Cape Leveque Road and police issued move-on notices.

AUGUST 26: 50 protesters blocked a convoy of 30 trucks under police escort from making its way to the site. A 57-year-old woman was arrested after she locked herself to a low-loader trailer. Protesters clashed with police. The convoy was also blocked from the site with two people locking themselves to heavy machinery and a concrete barrel...