A case study of feminist activist interventions in Queensland party politics: #sackgavin

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This paper uses the case study of a Twitter hashtag label #sackgavin to offer a self-reflexive analysis of an Australian feminist activist campaign. More broadly, it provides a critical interrogation of online feminist political interventions into discourses of silencing, exclusionary tactics and victim blaming. Although this case study offers some critique about the normalisation of violence against women, it primarily tests the efficacy of employing online petitions to intervene in entrenched gendered discourses which shift responsibility from the perpetrator to the victim. I both narrate and interrogate my practices as a creator/campaigner. The main campaign goal was to increase awareness and to motivate people to take action. The success of this type of campaign is not quantifiable; however, I judge its achievement in terms of the "noise" created through social, online and mainstream media around victim blaming. Additionally, I explore the costs in terms of time, trolling and emotions. This paper argues that, while not always consistent with initial activist goals, what can be considered successful in a campaign such as #sackgavin is diverse, much like activism itself.

Introduction

This paper uses the case study of a Twitter hashtag label #sackgavin to offer a self-reflexive analysis of an Australian feminist activist campaign. More broadly, it provides a critical interrogation of online feminist political interventions into discourses of silencing, exclusionary tactics and victim blaming. Although this case study offers some critique about the normalisation of violence against women, it primarily tests the efficacy of employing online petitions to intervene in entrenched gendered discourses which shift responsibility from the perpetrator to the victim. I both narrate and interrogate my practices as a creator/campaigner. The main campaign goal was to increase awareness and to motivate people to take action. The success of this type of campaign is not quantifiable; however, I judge its achievement in terms of the "noise" created through social, online and mainstream media around victim blaming. Additionally, I

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Hashtag feminism

Taylor contends "social movements such as feminism have always relied heavily on the publicity afforded by media technologies" (2008, 11). In recent years, the velocity of feminist discourse has substantially escalated in the Australian mediasphere and there are now multiple ways to mobilise feminist communities online. For example, Shaw's research finds "online feminist blogging communities have a central role to play in the development and continuity of Australian feminism. Bloggers are engaged in the active negotiation of feminist politics" (2012, 232). Undoubtedly the rise and convergence of technologies such as the internet and mobile devices in the digital or hyper-connected era have affected the way much activism is currently conducted. This is arguably evidenced by—but certainly not limited to—developments in online communicative technologies facilitating the emergence of highly visible online activist campaigns. Indeed, discussion of "hashtag feminism" is becoming more prominent in scholarly discourse (Higgs 2015; Khoja-Moolji 2015; Stache 2015), reflecting that it is an increasingly common feminist activist tool deployed globally.

Australian feminist campaigns primarily run in the online environment have included #destroythejoint, #vilekyle and #sackalan, which all began in 2012. The #vilekyle and #sackalan campaigns used Twitter hashtags in grassroots feminist campaigns to highlight sexism by Australian radio "shock jocks" Kyle Sandilands and Alan Jones. Both campaigns initially involved the same online petition platform used in the #sackgavin campaign, Change.org, to call on the sponsors of each radio program to withdraw their support. The #destroythejoint community arose after Alan Jones complained on his radio programme that women were "destroying the joint", specifically targeting then Prime Minister Julia Gillard (Caro 2013). These campaigns furthered public debate and the issues were illuminated because of the celebrity status of their targets, as well as high-profile support from celebrity feminists and popular feminist media commentators. Destroy the Joint outlived the initial campaign and has developed into a well-known online activist group.

Trolling and cyber-bullying

Speaking out demands personal resilience to deal with the abuse of trolling and cyber-bullying. Such abuse, which takes multiple forms, can feel like, and qualifies as, a form of violence in itself. Jane defines e-bile as "the extravagant invective, the sexualized threats of violence, and the recreational nastiness that have come to constitute a dominant tenor of Internet discourse" (2014, 532). Jane also argues there is much "scholarly silence" around e-bile and that "far from being a technology-related moral panic—e-bile constitutes a field of inquiry with a pressing need for recalibrated scholarly intervention" (2014, 531). The ability to speak out, although highly privileged, is not without a level of risk. While e-bile is not restricted to women, Jericho's research into the Australian political blogging scene argues it can affect women—especially higher profile women—more than men (2012). Indeed, after my brief and first significant experience of persistent e-bile in #sackgavin, I concur with Jane's assertion that "toxic and often markedly misogynist e-bile no longer oozes only in the darkest digestive folds of the cybersphere but circulates freely through the entire body of the Internet" (2014, 532). Opposition to e-bile is emerging as the problem becomes more visible, however there is "a strong *prima facie* case that gendered cyber-hate has increased markedly since at least 2011" (Jane 2016, 1).

Online activism and slacktivism

Much of the research about online communications has advanced from considering the "real versus virtual dichotomy" (Beneito-Montagut 2011, 716) to conceding the integration of, and potent relationship between, our online and offline lives (Garcia et al. 2009). Digital technologies and mobile platforms have extended the reach of the internet and increased opportunities for user connectivity. Digital technologies are providing the means not only for production and connection, but also for the fostering of collectives between those who are engaged on an issue and, as Chen argues, "at the grassroots level, we have also seen the way a range of applications of the internet have affected the political world" (2011, 1). This has implications for various activists, including feminists, in organising collectively and strategically.

The debates about online participation in causes still invoke binarised tensions about the real world versus the virtual world and concerns about whether online participation translates into material change, action or

awareness. For example, Twitter has "significantly weakened the mass media's existing dominance … of political issues in the public sphere" according to Bruns (2007, 12). In this way, social media makes room for actors who lack access to mainstream media. This should not be overestimated, as the efficacy of "slacktivism" (a contraction of "slacker" plus "activism") in increasing civic mobilisation is controversial (Morozov 2009). While cyber-utopians insist on the positive contributions of online activism to participatory democracy, supporters of the slacktivism argument dismiss it as a "hedonist activity that carries little societal benefit" (Breuer and Farooq 2011, 1).

Case study: what Gavin did

Gavin King was the Editor-in-Chief at the News Limited newspaper the *Cairns Post.* In 2008, during his time as a journalist, he authored an article entitled "Women should play it safe" (King 2008c) in which he posed and answered the following question: "*If a woman drinks to excess and is raped or assaulted, is she partly to blame? As uncomfortable and difficult as this question is, the answer surely is yes*". King's words were unequivocal and formed part of an ongoing and provocative career trajectory. He never backed away from this assertion.

In 2011, the Queensland Liberal National Party (LNP), then in opposition, endorsed King as the 2012 state candidate for Cairns. He then stood down from the *Cairns Post* to focus on his political aspirations. After King announced he was running for State Parliament, a blog (www.hillybillywatch.com) highlighted his remark, on 19 September 2011. Queensland's major newspaper, the *Courier Mail*, published an article on 7 October 2011 after the LNP leader, Campbell Newman, defended King over his commentary (Condon 2011). In a media conference, Newman said he was not aware of the article but was sure it had been misinterpreted. King explicitly defended his column, stating "if you read the whole column rather than one sentence you will see it's a very sensible column based on a police press release" (King in Schwarten 2011). It is difficult to deny King *was* blaming *some* victims of sexual assault: those who had consumed alcohol. It was later revealed to a broader audience that King has a journalistic history of provocative observations; therefore this comment was far from being "poorly worded", as Newman (2011b) claimed.

As King attempted to enter the political arena, his journalistic work was increasingly scrutinised, which resulted in outrage even from within his

own political party. For example, Joel Harrop, former LNP state secretary, stood down in protest at King's endorsement, stating in his resignation letter that King's "misogynistic, women-hating views … are untenable, and I cannot remain the member of an organisation that endorses a man who spruiks such vile" (Harrop 2011). Notwithstanding some media attention, the LNP and Newman continued to support King. Despite political pressure from Anna Bligh's Labor government in calling for King's disendorsement, the issue received scant attention from mainstream media or from many relatively well-known popular media feminists, despite activists such as myself bringing it to their attention.

Frustrated by the lack of interest given to the issue of an apparent rape apologist standing for and potentially being voted in to public office, the revictimisation that such a situation can create, and the complicity of the LNP in supporting King, I collaborated with a friend and began an online, explicitly feminist campaign in October 2011. This action was an attempt to offer feminist viewpoints and to inhabit the public discourse around victim-blaming narratives, and to seek King's disendorsement from the Queensland LNP. Neither my friend nor I had membership of any political party and reiterated that the issue had much broader relevance than political alignment within state/territory boundaries.

This paper summarises the events of the campaign, describes the methods we employed and evaluates the efficacy of the campaign strategies. It is advantageous that some time and space intervene since the campaign in order to allow proper reflection, as well as examining it in the context of "more successful" later campaigns such as #destroythejoint. I discuss the viability of small-scale grassroots campaigning in relation to my personal experience.

Campaign methods, events and actions

The Tools of the Zeitgeist are what I label campaigning tools deployed with the goal of enabling broader, bolder feminist agitation and renewed recognition of the power of the collective. Although it is often not sustainable, bold agitation can be reiterated so it gradually creates a shift in the cultural imagination. These tools are dynamic in that they have undefined and indefinable temporal and cultural boundaries; this suits feminist activism, which arguably should not be dictatorial. Some types of activism are better suited to certain types of issues or targets. Some of the current Tools of the Zeitgeist are online petition platforms, celebrity endorsement, celebrity re-Tweeting and the use of Facebook to publicise

events and make complaints. I contend that boldness and surveillance of the zeitgeist tools are vital, so as not to accept the tools uncritically, but to provide awareness about which elements need to be discarded and to ascertain which have utility and could be better appropriated.

With #sackgavin, we had to strategise expediently during this institutionally unaligned grassroots activist campaign; for example, we created an online shop selling campaign t-shirts and totes (with all proceeds going to a local rape crisis centre), contacting Members of Parliament via email, and asking for re-tweets from celebrities and popular media feminists, and others with a social media presence. We had no budget and no idea the #sackgavin campaign would become such a lengthy and emotionally gruelling process, nor that it would gain considerable media and public attention. We knew the King article had been written three years previously, but felt the timeframe was largely irrelevant—especially because we were armed with an awareness of King's history of discriminatory missives. We also knew it would be difficult to convince a mainstream audience that sexual violence deserves attention—both locally and globally.

We decided to use Change.org because it has been the world's largest online petition platform since 2007, although it only developed a team in Australia in 2011. The platform was relatively unknown at the start of our campaign; however, this changed exponentially within one year. The King petition was one of the earliest on the Change.org platform in Australia and, almost immediately after this other popular media-centric campaigns emerged (e.g. #vilekyle, #sackalan, #destroythejoint). Each time a person signed the #sackgavin petition, Newman and King received an email from Change.org. I did not receive any direct contact from Newman or the LNP administration at any stage regarding the petition. It is probable the petition's targets simply blocked emails from Change.org.

Before Change.org started assisting us more directly, the petition had fewer than 1000 signatures, although we were already very active and it had been mentioned many times on Twitter, Facebook and various other websites. Additionally, online news outlets *The Punch* and *Crikey* ran pieces on the case and the petition was referred to in an article in the *Courier Mail*. We also approached female members of the LNP in person (like candidate and then MP Saxon Rice) to seek their opinions about King's suitability for public office. Rice was dismissive, but took our email addresses; we never heard from her again. We emailed elected representatives of the LNP and were met with silence. We distributed

flyers at the Brisbane "Reclaim the Night" rally in late 2011 and we engaged in conversations about the issue with most people we met.

Change.org provided assistance with two press releases and helped to organise what I call the "Facebook climax" of the campaign. In conjunction with me, Change.org emailed its members to ask if they would assist the campaign by writing a message about King's comments directly on Newman's Facebook page. This mailing list was crucial because the reach of Change.org was far greater than our own. On that day, various media outlets were contacted via a press release, with me listed as the contact person. Throughout the days that followed, Change.org provided advice and support for liaising with the media.

Calling in support

My colleague and I sent hundreds of emails to feminist groups and well-known identities, including feminists around the world asking them to lend support to the Change.org petition. It is worth noting that some high-profile signatures and several people with large online and offline networks assisted us by re-tweeting or sharing information, emailing and sending us encouragement. In assessing the limited uptake of supporters we can speculated that this may have been because they all lived outside Queensland and therefore had low levels of vested interest. There is low visibility of "authorised" feminist speakers in Queensland's mainstream media; the hub of media outlets and activity in Australia is in the southern states. Further, the feminism-as-neoliberalist-business-model which occupies considerable media space in Australia (Casey 2015) tends not to get involved in protest activism. It may have been a form of "petition fatigue", not dissimilar to "compassion fatigue" (Moeller 1999) which restricted the uptake of the #sackgavin campaign online. It may have been because King was not yet an elected representative; he was a relatively unknown identity and this was seen as a Queensland controversy and a political party matter. When compared with the later campaigns of #vilekyle and #sackalan, and the community that formed around #destroythejoint, the key difference is that these later campaigns had celebrity targets, and had high-profile celebrities and celebrity feminists driving them publicly (see Casey 2015). As a target King lacked celebrity, and I lacked celebrity as a campaigner. Given that not every campaign target or campaigner will have celebrity status, platforms such as Change.org are crucial in developing surround-sound effects around campaigns, as well as solidarity with campaigners.

Facebook bombing

The strategy we worked out with Change.org was to build media momentum leading up to the 2011 Queensland political leaders' debate between Bligh and Newman. By coincidence this was to be held on White Ribbon Day (25 November) and was an optimal time to attract media attention. We decided Change.org would send a press release co-written with me early on the morning of 23 November 2011 to alert the media to the petition. By this time, it had gained considerable signature support through Change.org's broader mailing list of supporters. This can be seen as both problematic and advantageous. From the morning of 23 November and continuing intensely for over 48 hours, the petition edged closer to 5000 signatures. Newman's Facebook wall was inundated by concerned citizens outraged at the lack of response, with almost 1000 posts during this time, and activity continued in the social media world. After the press release, the mainstream media took more notice and the King topic was reported nationally in newspapers and on radio and television, and I was being contacted as a spokesperson. This was confronting.

Newman made a short statement on his Facebook wall claiming he stood by King, and King had apologised. Newman released the following statement on his official Facebook page on 23 November 2011:

> As I have stated previously, both Gavin King and myself are of the view that no woman ever deserves to be raped.
>
> Mr King has apologised for his blog and admitted that it was poorly worded and that his intention was to warn young women to be careful and look after their own personal safety given the appalling law and order situation in Cairns.
>
> As a father of two teenage girls I always remind them to be mindful of their personal safety as there are grubs out there who will take advantage of people if they can get away with it. (2011b)

Consistent with victim-blaming narratives, Newman's statement individualises blame. Women are still being held to account for their own safety, and Newman's message is contradictory. Further, no such apology could be found, then or since, despite the petition having been operational for several weeks beforehand and several thousand email notifications having been sent to Newman and King. I was never contacted by Newman's office about the petition.

On 23 November 2011, Dengate and MacDonald wrote in the *Courier Mail* that:

> Within minutes of posting the statement, the LNP leader's Facebook page was bombarded with dozens of angry comments. Mr Newman again refused to disendorse Mr King later in the day and blamed the irate response across social networks on Labor supporters … [Newman said] "I suppose 50 or 60 or 70 Labor Party supporters have been asked to make comment on my website".

In fact, nearly 1000 posts were made by hundreds of different people on Newman's Facebook page calling for King's disendorsement.

At that stage, despite weeks of calls for him to apologise, King was still scarcely addressing the concern of victim blaming. Instead, even after the media attention, King positioned himself as a victim of political tactics, stating that "it's driven by Labor—we knew they would go to the gutter and we're not surprised at all" (2011b). The calls to disendorse King, along with the petition and the Facebook "bombing" of Newman's wall, remained in the news for days. It was a leading story on News.com.au on both 23 and 24 November 2011. The *Courier Mail* (2011) even conducted a poll asking "Should Campbell Newman move to have Gavin King disendorsed as an LNP candidate?" to which 60.28 per cent (of 2676 people) voted "yes".

Politics

On 25 November 2011, White Ribbon Day marked a call to eliminate violence against women. It was also the day of the 2011 Queensland leaders' debate between Newman and then Premier Bligh. In the debate, Newman paid tribute to two female Brisbane City Councillors who had helped set up the "mud army" during the Brisbane floods in January, stating it was important to acknowledge them on White Ribbon Day (*Brisbane Times* 2011). The tenuous connection between White Ribbon Day and women helping during a flood demonstrates a lack of comprehension around the issue of victim blaming and the relevance of White Ribbon Day two days after the intense media coverage over the King issue. When asked by journalist Frances Whiting during the debate about his support for King, Newman concluded by again saying it was time for everyone to "move on" (*Brisbane Times* 2011). This was a repeated strategy. The day after the main media activity (November 23, 2011), Newman pledged on television to double the funds to the Women's

Legal Service and provide an extra $250,000 per year. He stated "Mr King has apologised, he knows he did the wrong thing. I think it is time to move on for him too" (in Agius and Cartwright 2011). The apology cannot be located, and the reference to moving on are messages that Newman used several times. Then Deputy Premier Andrew Fraser labelled the offer of extra funding "hush money" (in Howells 2011). Various media outlets reported that on the same day the Legal Service had offered King counselling on his views (Agius and Cartwright 2011).

In a political climate with an unprecedented swing against Labor, it was almost inevitable King would take the seat of Cairns. He also became the Assistant Minister for Tourism. King kept social media channels open to me, at one stage contacting me through Twitter offering to meet, until he attained power through his election to Parliament, and then he blocked me. Although we believed disendorsement to have a slim chance, we met the key aim of the #sackgavin campaign: to raise awareness and generate discourse around victim blaming. We managed sustained media attention for a time and the campaign highlighted broader problems.

In his maiden speech in the Queensland Parliament on 29 May 2012, King's very first words were:

> Inspired by the campaign tactics of the Australian Labor Party, I will start by quoting from one of my old newspaper columns. On this occasion, however, I will endeavour to keep it in context (King 2012, 1).

The irony of King inserting himself into the role of victim and the transfer of the perpetrator status to feminists and Labor figures is highlighted by his introductory remarks. King's belief, as stated in the original 2008 article, is that victims of sexual assault are sometimes partly to blame; however, those who become "victim" when they are held to account are not responsible for the behaviour that leads to such attacks. The evidence consistently indicates attitudes are fundamental in combatting violence against women (Flood and Pease 2006, 2009; VicHealth 2014; WHO 2013). The #sackgavin campaign further demonstrates these issues are marginalised and need urgent mainstream attention.

Personal reflection and evaluation

I discovered feminist activism that involves any degree of public attention is extremely political, regardless of whether it is associated with party

politics. I was soon cast as partisan and labelled, among other names, a "Labor stooge" for speaking out. It did not matter that I had been involved in feminist politics at various levels for more than twenty years, was conducting feminist research and had never held any political party membership. Trolls targeted me for months on Twitter and I received vitriolic, abusive emails, readers' comments and prank phone calls from a particular unlisted telephone number over an extended period. The negative effects of hate speech, cyberviolence and trolling should not be ignored. As Anne Summers outlines in *The Misogyny Factor*, social networking sites such as Facebook, which have significant reach in terms of numbers, have "given us new ways to intimidate, bully, harass and defame on a remarkable and previously unimaginable scale" (2013, 119).

Change.org was critical in the moderate success of #sackgavin. It provided the necessary turning point for the campaign when the number of signatures remained low even though the petition had been in the media and mentioned in Parliament prior to the campaign. After several weeks, Change.org approached me and asked why I was doing the petition and how I thought the organisation could help the campaign. Change.org was collaborative and inclusive, and offered free assistance. This was imperative, as we had no campaign budget and no access to large networks; however, we did have access to social media. The key benefits of using a platform such as Change.org are that it is free for users, easy to navigate and popular with people who have never campaigned before. It was extremely useful for gaining not only signatures, but also attention. While there are concerns about slacktivism, petition fatigue and signatures becoming empty signifiers with little real-world action post-signing, when well-known people such as popular feminists and other types of celebrity share petitions they can become effective tools for mobilising the public to act. These types of petitions can also assist with networking and organising further activism.

An issue with many petition platforms—not only Change.org—is the sending of petitions by the platform via their mailing lists to target people who have signed similar petitions in the past. While this often creates media coverage (because larger numbers can help apply pressure), it can conversely appear that the petitions are being bought and sold alongside mailing lists, and therefore the larger numbers do not lead to organic action. Such concerns need to be carefully negotiated by activists. Another important issue is the corporatisation of petition platforms. Change.org is free to use, but is *not* a not-for-profit organisation; it is a corporation that calls itself a social enterprise: "the use of business for

social good" (Change.org). It operates by selling mailing lists and advertising, and also sponsors some petitions, which means agenda-setting is often driven by both the audience and Change.org. Whether this matters is a question activists need to address. For me it did not matter, as the net value (i.e. media attention and increased conversation around victim-blaming narratives) outweighed such concerns.

Since #sackgavin, Change.org's Australian presence has grown exponentially. The #vilekyle, #sackalan and #destroythejoint campaigns gained much more traction. This is arguably due to their targets being two non-political, highly visible media commentators who were already divisive within the Australian mainstream media, which attracted the support of many popular media feminist commentators and other celebrities. The #destroythejoint campaign remains highly influential. For example, the *Destroying the Joint* anthology (Caro 2013) features many popular media feminist commentators. However, like #sackgavin, #destroythejoint illustrates such campaigns are not "owned" by the originating campaigners, but in many ways become collective capital. Although full control is not possible (or even desirable) once a campaign is released on the internet and beyond, it is still crucial to plan in the early stages, while operating with a level of flexibility. For example, online activist groups could evacuate their politics of meaning if they take on too many concerns, in much the same way that a celanthropist (celebrity philanthropist) could "vamp" (be overused in the promotion of products or endorsement of issues).

As a predominantly "lone-wolf" activist (Earl and Kimport 2011), I could not bring to the #sackgavin campaign what a celebrity feminist might in terms of currency for feminist activist agendas. However, their deployment can be fraught, so I signal the need for careful, strategic negotiation by feminist activists. #sackgavin also highlights that although coalitions can be built, reaching the privileged celebrity feminists is complicated. Although this type of activism can valorise and further elevate the already-heard voices of the privileged, they are already figures in the mediasphere and have greater access and reach. Engaging feminist celebrities for activism can therefore be highly effective for lesser-known activists.

Much of the tweeting about the King case was by a relatively small number of people. This is where larger collective-action activist groups such as Destroy the Joint can be useful. In the case of #sackgavin, the utility of Twitter was marginal simply because the issue was not seen as

global or even federal; additionally, the peak of the activity occurred before the Queensland state election campaign. Although we did group #sackgavin tweets with other hashtags about victim blaming, Slutwalk and some of the common state political tweets, we could have used these strategies more as hashtags assist in harvesting greater online conversation noise around a topic. The use of hashtags is crucial because they "make topical tweets more visible: drawing on Twitter's search functionality, users can find (and even subscribe to) all tweets marked with the same hashtag—regardless of whether these tweets originate from established followers or previously unknown users" (Bruns and Burgess 2012, 3). In the case of the later, larger campaigns such as #sackalan, #destroythejoint and #vilekyle, hashtagging was (and is) an important way of locating tweets.

The #sackgavin campaign, while not attaining King's disendorsement, helped to create a greater level of awareness about the issue of victim blaming in Queensland politics. Although it took some time for the problem to be acknowledged by the LNP (although it was never adequately resolved), King as an individual and the LNP as an organisation were certainly not isolated in their lack of understanding of the issue. While I do not advocate condemning or "calling out" every possibly offensive comment or opinion held by high-profile people, the King situation was imperative because of the political nature of his status, rather than being a case of what can often occur in the social and online mediasphere: what Australian feminist blogger Jane Gilmore calls "meaningless outragegasm" (2013).

Campaigns such as #sackgavin are not owned or even run by one person. I always regarded the #sackgavin campaign as a collaborative effort that involved those who signed, supported, discussed or provoked debate publicly, privately or collectively. This is the key strength of such campaigns, even though trolling, for example, may fall predominantly on their public facilitators. The King campaign was efficacious in revealing entrenched sexism and anti-feminist views and #sackgavin is an example of how issues can be raised rapidly—especially in a digital environment.

Sawer (2013) outlines the counter-campaigns that mobilised social media, not insignificantly because of Destroy the Joint and the attention given to the issues of gender, misogyny and sexism highlighted by then Prime Minister of Australia Julia Gillard. While the King comments were not directed at a female politician, the collective mobilisation and attention given to gendered violence, discrimination and sexism since the King

campaign have arguably increased in the mainstream, social and online mediaspheres. While I questioned why feminists who had been heavily involved in activism such as the Slutwalk movement were relatively disengaged from the King issue when it involved a major political party in their own country, I have concluded that gaining attention is often a mix of trend, savvy networking, tenacity and building an active online presence. Despite my own distaste for necessary unholy media alliances, #sackgavin reinforces the obvious: we need more diverse feminist voices in the media not only to disrupt normalising discourses, but also to prevent rape apologists from participating in drafting laws. Ultimately, it emphasises the need for more collective and visible feminist activist campaigning in Australia.

Online activism should be viewed as a gateway to other engagements—as an awareness-raising tool with the potential to convert moral conscience into action. The challenge for feminist campaigns is to implement long-term strategies based on moral agency and to promote awareness of structural issues with sustainable movements and solutions. There must still be multiple actions, both online and offline, and voices the old media might have silenced can now be heard through alternate pathways. The problem is the consistency of the noise; campaigners must work out how awareness can best be disseminated. Online petition platforms such as Change.org and social media can afford a collective presence and opportunities to change or intervene in the agenda; however, netizens should not exaggerate their use for revolution. The use of online technologies has much activist potential but, rather than making a distinction between digital and traditional activism, it is more helpful to understand the strengths and weaknesses of online activism, and to view both types of activism as complementary and useful to each other. Accordingly, surveillance of the Tools of the Zeitgeist is critical when choosing activist campaigning methods. While Gavin King *was* eventually sacked as an MP in 2015, this campaign was one moment in a much larger narrative that needs persistent engagement from a variety of feminist activist interventions.

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