



SHALLOW DIVES

AUSTRALIAN POLICY CHANGE



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Cover image: [Harry Cunningham](#).

There are well over a hundred organisations working to accelerate climate action in Australia. The [Climate Action Network Australia](#) alone has 125 member organisations. They range from large international non-government organisations through to small-scale local charities and community groups.

The [Giving Green Australia: 2021 Research Process](#) sets out the steps we took to determine which of the organisations working to accelerate climate action in Australia stand to make the greatest impact with a marginal dollar donation.

To make the task feasible, it was necessary to narrow the scope and sharpen our research focus on high-priority areas. We settled on policy change, because effective policy – both public and corporate – has consistently proven to be a key driver of technological, human, business and industry behaviour changes. This doesn't mean that there aren't organisations doing great work beyond the policy sphere, but we will leave research into their effectiveness for another time.

We conducted hour-long semi-structured interviews with 23 experts around three topics: (1) barriers to improving climate policy in Australia, (2) strategies or methods to overcome those barriers, (3) effective climate organisations that would make the best use of a marginal donation.

From this process, we developed a longlist of 15 organisations to investigate further through 'shallow dives'. Each shallow dive drew on desk research and insights from the expert interviews. We assessed each organisation on the list using the following questions:

1. What are they and what do they do?
2. What have they accomplished or claimed to have accomplished?
3. What potential do they have for impact?
4. How strong is the organisation and what are their risks?
5. What is their financial need?

Based on that initial assessment, we narrowed the list down to 12 organisations that were asked to complete a short survey about themselves focussed on the assessment criteria. Several organisations also participated in hour-long semi-structured interviews on their work. This report includes the 'shallow dives' of these 12 organisations.

Australasian Centre for Corporate Accountability (ACCR)

What are they and what do they do?

Established in 2012, the Australasian Centre for Corporate Responsibility (ACCR) is a research and shareholder advocacy organisation. It is focused on how listed companies, industry associations and investors manage climate, human rights and governance issues. In addition to research and analysis on corporate Australia, ACCR has a portfolio of shares it holds as a way to engage with companies.

ACCR's national '[climate and environment](#)' team pursues the organisation's flagship work of accelerating Australia's transition to a low carbon economy by engaging with major listed companies. ACCR presents opportunities for institutional investors to take material, effective steps to decarbonise heavy emitters using the powers it is afforded as shareholders. ACCR's is best known for filing shareholder resolutions, but its tools extend from company analysis, to media and narrative influence, and considering complaints to regulators and litigation where appropriate.

ACCR can be characterised as a non-profit organisation that behaves as an institutional investor, but without the limiting structures and commercial imperatives of a service provider or client-based fund.

What have they accomplished or claimed to have accomplished?

ACCR's recent efforts demonstrate significant progress against broader organisational objectives, as well as specific climate focused efforts. For example, in 2017 ACCR's resolution to BHP catalysed the exit of the Minerals Council of Australia's then-CEO Brendan Pearson. In 2018, ACCR played a key role in BHP exiting the World Coal Association and challenged the Mineral Council of Australia's Climate Action Plan for having intangible goals. In 2020, BHP and Origin Energy suspended membership of the Queensland Resources Council over political lobbying. ACCR's resolutions on adverse climate lobbying have continued to build support, and in 2021, the Boards of Rio Tinto, BHP and South32 supported ACCR resolutions requesting suspension of industry association membership where inconsistency with the Paris Agreement Cannot be resolved.

ACCR has continued to challenge heavy emitting and high energy using companies to set and disclose emission reduction targets and details strategies to achieve them. Most recently:

- over 55% of AGL shareholders voted in favour of the ACCR resolution urging the company to set emission reduction targets in line with the Paris Agreement.¹
- it supported a resolution at Origin Energy calling on the company to align its capital expenditure with Paris Goals, which achieved 44% support.

ACCR also recently lodged the first court case in the world to challenge the veracity of a company's net-zero emissions target. It is currently challenging Santo's claims that natural gas provides 'clean energy' in the Federal Court of Australia.

In collaboration with the Children's Investment Foundation Fund (CIFF), ACCR joined the 'Say on Climate' initiative in 2021. This seeks company commitments to regular presentation of climate transition plans for a vote of their shareholders. After engagement by ACCR, Rio Tinto, Woodside, Santos, Oil Search, BHP, Origin Energy and South32 have each committed to presenting such a vote, in effect establishing a new Australian industry norm in under 12 months from launch.

ACCR has had tangible successes in holding lobbyists to account for their activities that have damaged the national climate policy-making environment, and transforming those activities. For example ACCR's efforts in publicly and privately engaging major members of the Business Council of Australia have played a significant part in the BCA's change of tack. In 2019, the BCA labeled the Labor Party's 45 percent reduction on the 2030 target as "economy wrecking" but endorsed a 50 percent reduction of the 2030 target in October 2021.

¹ <https://www.accr.org.au/news/accr-shareholder-resolution-to-agl-energy-ltd-on-paris-goals-and-targets/>

ACCR also launched Global Climate Insights (GCI) in 2021 in response to investor demand for timely, equities-style research in company transition plans. GCI will analyse global companies' climate commitments and independently assess whether it is on track to achieve its stated climate goals. The Royal Dutch Shell will be the first company to be studied.

What potential do they have for impact?

ACCR works directly with shareholders to provide them with a suite of tools to challenge companies' commitments where they are underperforming against existing company and global climate targets. ACCR's main focus is on company behaviour, rather than government policy. However, by focusing on major companies, the ACCR gains significant media traction and drives tangible change in company climate policies. In turn, changes in company and industry association behaviour decrease unhelpful forces that block climate action, and increase momentum behind broader advocacy efforts to achieve decarbonisation-focused policy and political change.

Over the next three to five years, ACCR aims to exhaust all possibilities of the existing shareholder strategies that can be deployed to shift company policies and practices as they relate to the climate crisis. Importantly, where all strategies are deployed, ACCR will leverage their research and expertise to develop and present new ones.

How strong is the organisation, and what are their risks?

ACCR is governed by a Committee of Office Bearers (six members) and has a separate research committee (5 members).² It currently has 25 staff, and 15 that are full-time climate focused.

What is their financial need?

ACCR's income, last reported in December 2020, was almost \$1.6 million. ACCR relies exclusively on grants, increasing its need for funding.

ACCR does, however, have a strong support base from some organisations who have donated \$50,000+, including the Sunrise Project, ACME Foundation, Howard Pender, LUCRF Super, and the McKinnon Family Foundation. It is worth noting the strategies employed by ACCR are expensive, requiring recruitment out of the private sector, as well as data and software subscriptions that allow it to compete analytically with investment banks, institutional investors, and major emitters.

In FY21, ACCR's income was \$2.85 million, and its budget for FY22 is ~\$5m. Roughly 20% of these figures relate to DGR funding.

ACCR's DGR status is connected to its research output. ACCR's high-impact advocacy activities are funded through non-DGR donations.

OUR TAKE

ACCR is making strides in shifting corporate policies and behaviors as they relate to climate targets, which has the potential to shift broader market dynamics and internal policies and practices. Given the rapid increase in funding over

² <https://www.accr.org.au/about/>

the last two years, the impact of a marginal investment however, may not be as significant. While ACCR plays both an insider and outsider advocacy role, it also work on expanding and applying the law. Beyond the scale of their existing resources, the direct impact on policy is limited in that it is not squarely within their remit.

Beyond Zero Emissions

What are they and what do they do?

BZE is an independent think-tank whose research shows the technological and financial feasibility of achieving zero emissions in Australia in the short-term.³ Its research identifies net zero pathways to unlock economic opportunities for emissions-intensive industries and regional communities.⁴ This includes showcasing successful projects to inspire policy-makers to replicate and scale. BZE's strategy is to deliver economic research and advocacy that encourages an acceleration towards zero emissions, engages influential stakeholders, and shifts the narrative.⁵

What have they accomplished or claimed to have accomplished?

BZE and its volunteers have been recognised as significant contributors to the climate movement. In 2020, BZE was awarded Best International Climate Change and Environment Think Tank by the UK's Prospect Magazine, and also received the Environmental Philanthropy Award from Philanthropy Australia. In 2019, BZE won the inaugural Victorian Premier's Sustainability Award for Environmental Volunteering.⁶ In explaining BZE's success, one expert that we interviewed said BZE has a very capable and diverse team. BZE's key success has been "to put 100 per cent renewables and electrifying industry on the map" in Australia. It has "a strong history and track record of mobilising key issues in this space". The policy-maker we interviewed said that BZE is "certainly impacting our thinking", and that "they're great with outreach and regularly come and speak to us about their work and reports".

BZE's research has gained traction with policy-makers at a federal and state level. There has been bipartisan support for its work on [Renewable Energy Industrial Precincts](#), which will connect energy-intensive manufacturers such as those in the Hunter Valley and Gladstone to abundant and cheap renewable energy.⁷ Federal and state governments have also been inspired by BZE's [Million Jobs Plan](#). The Plan shows how 1.8 million new jobs could be created in five years by renewables and low emissions projects, identifying key sectors across Australia's economy where strategic investment would have the most impact and create the most jobs.⁸ A key focus of the Plan is on diversifying the mining-dependent Hunter Valley. By collaborating with communities and industry to develop plans to secure jobs in regional electorates such as these, BZE's research is helping to overcome a major political barrier to decarbonisation policy in Australia.

Another example of BZE's work influencing climate policy is its [10 Gigawatt Vision](#) for the Northern Territory. The NT Labor government adopted many of the report's ideas in its energy policy.⁹ With the NT having significant mining, manufacturing and agricultural sectors, it is significant that the NT government adopted solutions produced by BZE's research. The 2020 NT election period became the first to have widespread bipartisan support for renewable energy. BZE's Chair Eytan Lenko was appointed to the Territory Economic Reconstruction Commission.

³ <https://www.givenow.com.au/beyondzeroemissions>

⁴ <https://bze.org.au/about-us/>

⁵ Giving Green - BZE survey response

⁶ <https://bze.org.au/about-us/awards/>

⁷ https://bze.org.au/research_release/renewable-energy-industrial-precincts/

⁸ https://bze.org.au/research_release/million-jobs-plan/

⁹ <https://bze.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/BZE-annual-report-2019-2020.pdf>

BZE is also working with communities to empower them to reduce local emissions. It now has over 65 [Zero Carbon Communities](#) all around the country networked together.¹⁰

What potential do they have for impact?

BZE's research on the regional economic and employment benefits of net zero emissions pathways could help allay the fears of some regional Australians that a net zero transition would cause many to lose their jobs. This has been a major barrier to climate action in Australia. If regional communities that traditionally depend on the fossil fuel industry become vocal supporters of a clean economy, there will be greater adoption of climate-positive solutions nationally. This support is critical to decarbonising Australia at scale and speed.¹¹

How strong is the organisation, and what are their risks?

BZE is one of the longest standing not-for-profits we have explored, having been founded in 2006. This may imply a minimised risk of disparity in the structure of BZE. BZE currently has 17 staff (12.5 FTE)¹², six board members, two expert advisors, and thousands of volunteers. While the organisation is fairly dispersed by its volunteers and communities, it seems to be largely centralised by permanent staff.

What is their financial need?

BZE's income in the 2019/2020 financial year was \$1.1 million. Over 75 percent of this came from donations. The remainder came from grants, membership subscriptions and consulting fees. Its resources have grown recently, thanks to donations from several high net worth individuals. Its funding for this financial year (2021/22) is \$3.4 million, and is projected to increase to \$3.8 million in the following financial year.¹³ BZE's significant reliance on donations means additional funding would make BZE's budget more sustainable.

OUR TAKE

The combination of BZE's research and advocacy work has had a significant influence on climate change policy in Australia. Additional marginal investment could help BZE extend its successful Million Jobs Plan and Renewable Energy Industrial Precincts to develop a plan to inspire climate action that achieves zero emissions in 10 years. This warrants further investigation in terms of both long- and short-term impact.

Blueprint Institute

What are they and what do they do?

Blueprint was established in 2020 following the 2019-20 bushfire season. It is a registered charity with tax-deductible status. Blueprint exists to influence better policy outcomes from the Federal government. Blueprint's primary purpose is to support and undertake scientific research and rigorous analysis into the economic, social and environmental

¹⁰ [Zero Carbon Communities](#)

¹¹ Giving Green - BZE survey response

¹² Giving Green - BZE survey response

¹³ Giving Green - BZE survey response

challenges and opportunities for Australia. Its team has experience that spans politics, bureaucracy, business, academia, and civil society. Blueprint uses this expertise, as well as stakeholder engagement, to understand the players and processes in Government, and to educate, influence public discussion, and shift the perspectives of decision-makers. Blueprint's research is intended to lead to practical policies that build a 'modern, resilient, and prosperous Australia'. Its approach is market driven, with a focus on efficient allocation of government resources. Blueprint's research spans three key areas, including 'climate and energy', where they are proposing practical and ambitious climate policies aligned to the language and principles of policy-makers that traditionally oppose it.

What have they accomplished or claimed to have accomplished?

Blueprint's research educates policy-makers about climate and energy policy and supports them to take bold and informed policy positions. While Blueprint research covers a number of areas, including tax reform and productivity, more than half their work to-date has focussed on energy and climate policy. Blueprint's papers aim to depoliticise climate and energy policy, cultivate a coherent, evidence-based and ambitious conservative narrative on climate, and tells a realistic story about the economic benefits available to Australia as it reduces emissions

Over the 2020-21 period, Blueprint has published nine reports that cover Energy and Climate, Budget Blueprints, Tax and Fiscal Reform, and Early Learning. Four of the eight major events hosted by Blueprint in the same period have focused on climate change. Blueprint has briefed over 100 politicians on its climate and energy research, including around half of the Government's politicians.

In the latter half of 2021, Blueprint has focussed on the role of the regions (and by implication, the National party, the regional party in Australia) as a potential enabler of climate action. It has developed a series of research papers which attend to the specific challenges and opportunities faced by regional Australia. *Phasing Down Gracefully* calls for the management of the exit of coal-power, to provide certainty. *From the Ground Up* provides a comprehensive plan for a fair transition in Australia, based on international examples. Blueprint's upcoming polling, *Voices from the Regions*, provides the first detailed look at the attitudes of coal-connected communities to potential policy change, highlighting their willingness for policy that supports emissions reduction and spending on green programs as well as the ongoing need for clarity around the energy transition. These reports, targeted communications and government relations strategies have focussed on educating regional politicians about the views of their electorates and of best practice public policy in energy transition.

As a result of Blueprint's work, Blueprint is regularly sought out for input into policy discussions, including by key members of the Government. Blueprint reports to have played a central role in building an enabling environment for the Federal Government to reform climate and energy policy and reducing the barriers to a net zero announcement being made by the Government. While attribution is difficult, there has been a substantive shift by the Prime Minister and senior cabinet leaders on climate and energy policy as instructive of the broader movement they have contributed to. The Nationals have agreed to a more ambitious position on climate and embrace green stimulus in hydrogen and other regional industries.

What potential do they have for impact?

Blueprint's unique potential for impact derives from its demonstrated capacity to influence the conservative narrative on climate. With staff and a Board with experience and connections across the Coalition, in the space of 18 months, Blueprint

has elevated itself to a genuine influencer. Blueprint is now a leading think-tank in the Australian policy ecosystem, with relationships with key journalists, thought-leaders and policy-makers. It is sought out by senior political offices, with its research being used in media appearances.

Blueprint expects its impact on accelerating climate action to increase in the coming year and beyond. In its first 18 months of operation it has been focused on building a credible and sustainable business model for lasting impact, and directly influencing policy outcomes in the immediate term. In the next period it will shift from a phase characterised by establishing relationships, to one that can mobilise social capital to influence policy outcomes.

Blueprint is not solely focused on climate change and balances this work with other research streams. However, donations can be directed to their climate-focused work.

How strong is the organisation, and what are their risks?

Blueprint's staffing profile is 5.4 FTE (9 staff). It outsources a range of support including media (0.2 FTE), social media (0.1 FTE), report design, accounting, legal and HR services. Blueprint has worked to establish its legal and governance processes in line with similar think tanks in the space, including Bright Blue in the UK. It has strong partnerships with other think tanks and major universities, and plays an important role in informing centre-right discussions about climate change.

We have identified two key risks for Blueprint.

The first relates to the replacement of key staff. Blueprint's co-founder and CEO, Harry Guinness, who has been an integral part of Blueprint's success to date, will depart the organisation at the end of 2021. This presents a key person transition risk, given Guinness holds many of the key relationships that have enabled Blueprint to be as impactful and effective as it has been. However, mitigating this risk is the fact that Guinness has been gradually transitioning leadership over the last five months, working closely with interim CEO, Liana Downey. Downey has been in the role since August this year and brings direct policy, climate and government experience as a senior bureaucrat in the NSW government, a strategic advisor at the Federal, State and local level, a senior leader at McKinsey & Company, and as a former special advisor to the Department Prime Minister and Cabinet. Furthermore, Guinness will join the Blueprint Board, which, together with the Strategic Council, comprises several former senior Liberal and National Party ministers, representatives, and staffers.

Also, in mid 2021, Blueprint's part-time Chief Economist, along with three out of five of its research committee members, quit due to disagreements over the design of a survey of peoples' views on climate change (reporting from the [Financial Review](#)). While it has been difficult for Giving Green to gain more insight into the details of this spat, we view it as a point of potential concern. However, since then, Blueprint has established a partnership with Dr Dylan McConnell (an experienced and highly respected expert on the National Electricity Market) and established relationships with a number of other highly accomplished economists to contract on specific pieces of work.

The second risk is the potential electoral defeat of the Liberal-National Coalition at the next federal election in 2022. Should the Australian Labor Party take power, Blueprint's influence on government policy would likely diminish. However, even if this were to transpire, the Coalition is likely to remain a major force in Australian politics for years to

come. Indeed, the Coalition has historically proven itself to be a particularly influential force on climate policy when in opposition. Therefore, in that scenario, Blueprint would likely continue to make a valuable contribution by advocating for the Coalition opposition adoption of constructive, market-oriented climate policy proposals.

What is their financial need?

Blueprint is a non-profit organisation that is independent and does not accept donations from political parties. To date, its funding has come largely from large philanthropic donations, including multi-year funding from the Susan McKinnon Foundation. Last year, Blueprint raised over \$1 million and will be posting its first financial report in the coming year. As an early stage start-up, additional donations to its climate-focused work could help scale efforts to inform centrist and centre-right policies.

OUR TAKE

As a centre-right think tank with links to current and former Liberal Party politicians, Blueprint has high potential to influence the climate policy views of moderate conservatives. The organisation also has a wide reach of expertise, including within regional and remote Australia. As an early stage start-up, additional donations to its climate-focused work could help scale efforts to inform centrist and centre-right policies.

Climate Council

What are they and what do they do?

The Climate Council is a science-based communications organisation that provides publicly accessible advice on climate change and solutions. The Council was founded in 2013 in response to the abolition of the Australian Climate Commission to create an independent and community-funded organisation. The 'climate councillors' consist of climate scientists, energy, health, and policy experts. Their work largely comprises media outreach and research.

The Climate Council focuses on three [strategic priorities](#), including:

1. Ensuring that climate change is at the top of Australia's agenda
2. Build a strong narrative on solutions to climate change, with particular focus on the economic benefits of implementing climate policies
3. Empower everyday Australians, communities and local governments with the tools and skills to enact change

The Climate Council's Theory of change is grounded in the belief that in order to make good decisions, decision-makers need the right information. It is focused on creating the pre-conditions in which good decisions that can lead to emission reductions can be made, and in doing so, create a virtuous cycle where others feel compelled and inspired to act.

What have they accomplished or claimed to have accomplished?

The Climate Council works to mainstream climate change related issues in the media, primarily through media training and outreach. The Climate Council has media advisors who help train Australians to approach the media with their experience of climate change to major media outlets such as *The Australian* and *The Project*. For example, the Council has helped fossil fuel industry workers to speak about renewables and regional farmers in NSW to talk about the devastating results of prolonged drought. In line with this, the 2020 Annual Report highlighted that with the help of the Climate

Council, the Emergency Leaders for Climate Action (ELCA) were able to distribute the message that the Black Summer bushfire crisis was exacerbated by climate change across commercial broadcast news, major newspapers, and radio shows. This work in particular, received global recognition.

The Climate Council also launched the Cities Power Partnership, which is Australia's largest network of local councils leading the way to a thriving, zero emissions future.¹⁴ The network is made up of 160 councils, representing almost 65 percent of the Australian population. Members commit to making five action pledges to tackle climate change related to renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable transport, among others.

The Climate Councillors and senior researchers also provide expert evidence to parliamentary inquiries. In 2020, the Council made eleven submissions, including on bushfires, and the Technology Investment Roadmap. The direct impact of these submissions on new policies would need to be examined further.

What potential do they have for impact?

The Climate Council works to enhance information available to decision makers and the Australian public. It has a strong media presence, with connections across mainstream media outlets, including one of the most widely read newspapers, *The Australian*,¹⁵ and free-to-air news program *The Project*. Combined with their suite of publications, this provides a wide audience for climate issues and solutions. In 2018, for example, the Council received more media mentions than the next four organisations combined.¹⁶

Its spokespeople and experts are sought after to provide expert evidence to parliamentary inquiries. Climate Councillor, Greg Mullins, gave evidence at the Federal Parliament inquiry for response and recovery efforts following the 2019-2020 bushfire season. Such trust of an organisation is an important step towards influencing and strengthening policy decisions. However, the Climate Council's direct impact on policies is, to date, unclear. The organisation has a potential for indirect impact on climate-policy.

How strong is the organisation, and what are their risks?

The Board consists of seven members and there are 20 listed experts who are remunerated. The Council has a large base of supporters and volunteers who contribute to the research and advocacy efforts. There are 55 staff working nationally with expertise in research, communications, fundraising and advocacy. With a relatively small number of experts compared with the number of reports released by the Council, the organisation seems to rely significantly on volunteers and partnerships.

While the communications landscape has undoubtedly shifted, public fatigue, greenwashing, and challenging discourse associated with 'adaptation over mitigation' presents further challenges for the Climate Council to address.

What is their financial need?

The Climate Council is completely independent and relies on donations from the public and philanthropy. In the [2019/2020 financial year](#) the Council's income was over \$6 million. This number is significantly larger than the previous financial year, and the projected budget for the 2022/23 financial year is \$8.1 million. The number of core regular (weekly

¹⁴ <https://citiespowerpartnership.org.au/about/#>

¹⁵ <https://www.statista.com/topics/5109/newspaper-industry-in-australia/>

¹⁶ <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Annual-Report-2018.pdf>

and monthly) donors is over 5,250 people and the average regular donation is \$28. This may indicate that it does not have a large financial need.

OUR TAKE

At the outset the Climate Council is a well-funded organisation with significant resources. It has, and will continue to play an important role shaping the media narrative around climate change. It is highly cited and engaged in the media and political spheres and has an important role to play in continuing to change the story and through this, support for policy change. Given the scale of their budget however, the impact of a marginal investment would be arguably much lower.

ClimateWorks Australia

What are they and what do they do?

ClimateWorks is the largest Australian institute focused on catalysing action to net zero from a Systems Change approach. Co-founded by Monash University and the Myer Foundation to bridge the gap between research and climate action. The organisation's 'research to action' approach applies a systems change lens to help key players in Australia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific take action to reach net zero emissions by 2050. ClimateWorks creates evidence-based solutions that work to influence decision-makers to reduce emissions at scale. The organisation's systems thinking acknowledges that structures are complex and should be examined as a whole. This holistic view aims to help identify where interventions have high potential to support large-scale change, and change that is systemic rather than incremental.¹⁷

ClimateWorks is focused on four physical systems of the economy that produce emissions; land, food and oceans, industry, cities and energy. It has an 'end-to-end' process that underpins how the organisation collaborates and designs programs that enable emissions reduction within these systems:

- Agenda setting research: Build the case for action through evidence-rich data.
- Applied research: Translate research into practical information, tailored to organisational needs
- Implementation: Work with business and policy decision-makers to enable action.
- Engagement: Engage decision-makers and third parties to build understanding and support for action.
- Build Capacity: Infuse our future work and the work of others with what we've learned.

What have they accomplished or claimed to have accomplished?

ClimateWorks accomplishments can be mapped onto each of the systems of focus. The industry focused work includes the 'Australian industry energy transitions initiative' (ETI), which aims to develop pathways and actions that accelerate emissions reductions across whole supply chains.¹⁸ It will specifically focus on opportunities across the five supply chains that contribute more than a quarter of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions and generate exports worth around \$160 billion.¹⁹ As part of its work on sustainable corporations, Climateworks also recently launched the 'net zero momentum tracker', which provides a central place to track net zero commitments in Australia. The organisation is undertaking analysis of commitments in collaboration with the Monash Sustainable Development Institute to produce regular

¹⁷ <https://www.climateworksaustralia.org/our-work/>

¹⁸ <https://www.climateworksaustralia.org/project/australian-industry-energy-transitions-initiative/>

¹⁹ Ibid.

updates on pledges and activity across key sectors.²⁰ In 2020, it release the 'Decarbonisation Futures' report²¹. The report details its system-wide decarbonisation modelling, and gained media coverage including from The Guardian, The Age, Sydney Morning Herald and Australian Financial Review. Also in 2020, ClimateWorks released the 'Reshaping Infrastructure for a net zero emissions future' and the 'Moving to Zero', which was a first-of-its-kind comprehensive guide to reaching zero emissions in the transport sector in Australia. This is just a snapshot of the work undertaken by ClimateWorks.

What potential do they have for impact?

ClimateWorks' focus on systemic change has an important role in shifting the narrative of climate change in Australia and, as a result, changing policies. Its work on the 'net zero momentum tracker', for example, has potential to be an effective mechanism to communicate and visualise what can otherwise be abstract progress. The organisation's work is also being covered by popular media sources such as The Guardian, The Age, and the Sydney Morning Herald. Typically, these sources appeal to Liberal-National voters, a party that has so far significantly stifled progress towards improved climate policies. The existing networks and connections, capacity to drive system level outcomes, and non-partisan approach make ClimateWorks well-placed to have a significant impact on climate change industry specific policy and practice, however further work would be needed to determine direct impact on Federal policy.²²

How strong is the organisation, and what are their risks?

ClimateWorks has a large number of staff that work with country offices in Australia and Indonesia, while working with partners across Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Being founded in 2009, it is one of the longest standing climate entities explored in this document and the largest organisation in Australia and the region focusing on Climate Change action. While climateWorks is a well established organisation with significant funding, it is largely reliant on grant and philanthropic funding. The failure to maintain a sustainable operating model to support the strategic aspirations was raised as a risk, as was the impact of political or anti-climate commentary on their reputation.²³

What is their financial need?

ClimateWorks' budget increased significantly in the 2020 period. In 2020 the total funds raised was \$16,250,901 which was 104.75 per cent more than the previous year. In 2020 this was raised from 48 grants and contracts and almost 56 percent from philanthropy. ClimateWorks is not a membership organisation and has small but significant backers and other diverse income channels beyond just philanthropy. In 2021 it is anticipated it will reach \$21,048,737 (Expected by end of December), which is almost 30 percent more than 2020 - 2021. This was raised from 51 grants and contracts and over percent from Philanthropy.

OUR TAKE

ClimateWorks has had a significant impact on the broader climate movement and makes a significant contribution to shifting the narrative on climate change in the Australian media and political landscape. While it will continue to do important work across all their key work areas, the impact of a marginal investment would not be as significant given the scale of their budget.

²⁰ <https://www.climateworksaustralia.org/project/net-zero-momentum-tracker/>

²¹ <https://www.climateworksaustralia.org/project/decarbonisation-futures/>

²² Giving Green - ClimateWorks survey response

²³ Giving Green - ClimateWorks survey response

Environmental Defenders Office (EDO)

What are they and what do they do?

Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) is the leading public interest environmental law centre in the Australia Pacific region. It protects peoples, nature and our climate by delivering innovative legal solutions. EDO has a track record of winning ground-breaking legal actions that protect biodiversity, achieve water law reform and spearhead the legal fight against dangerous climate change. A key goal of EDO is to bring about systemic legal change that protects nature and climate. Their Safe Climate Team develops landmark, innovative litigation on behalf of clients that prevent new coal and gas proposals and stop existing projects expanding. EDO lawyers scrutinize activities and actions which jeopardise a safe climate, and develop strategic litigation to drive policy reform.

With multiple offices across the country, their team of lawyers offer all Australians free or low-cost legal advice pertaining to environmental matters. It has also run legal cases on behalf of clients that build stronger environmental laws. The work done by the EDO includes public interest litigation, holding government and industry to account for environmental mismanagement, providing educational resources for the public, and training opportunities for the next generation of environmental lawyers.

What have they accomplished or claimed to have accomplished?

Legal cases undertaken by the EDO ensure that companies are held accountable for the climate impacts of their projects and the associated carbon emissions. It empowers clients to defend their communities from destructive development and to have a voice against powerful people and corporations in court. The EDO has had a number of significant [legal victories](#) in legal battlefields such as the Adani coal mines, drilling in the Great Australian Bight, and protecting whales in the Antarctic. EDO's climate cases have demonstrably shifted the legal landscape on climate in Australia, making a transition to clean energy production and a safer climate for nature and peoples more likely. Millions of tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions remain in the ground because of EDO lawsuits.

New and innovative climate cases brought by EDO are focusing on [corporate social responsibility](#) and the [use of public funds to subsidise gas projects](#). Prior to this, EDO has had several significant successful cases. The Rocky Hill coal mine judgment (2019), in which [EDO successfully argued](#) for the refusal of the Rocky Hill coal mine in Gloucester NSW, was the first time an Australian court refused a fossil fuel development, partly on the basis of climate impacts. This decision helped create a precedent that continues to impact coal mine approvals across the country. In EDO's recent [legal win on climate](#) - Bushfire Survivors v NSW EPA (2021) – the court ruled that the NSW EPA has a duty to develop objectives, policies and guidelines to protect the environment from climate change. This case is a game-changing legal win, which breaks new ground for climate litigation in Australia. It is the first time that an Australian Court has ordered a government to take meaningful action on climate change. EDO's work to stop [the Bylong Valley coal mine](#) is currently preventing the extraction of 6.5 million tonnes of thermal coal per year. The New South Wales Independent Planning Commission supported the action, recognising, among other things, the long-term environmental cost for future generations.

Outside its litigation work, the EDO conducts community workshops and produces reports that aim to empower communities to participate in decisions about their natural environment. The EDO has a clear commitment to Aboriginal engagement and provides legal advice and community education on related environmental issues, including environment and biodiversity protection and planning laws, and the protection of culture and heritage.

The EDO also has a scientific advisory service that aims to bridge the gap of scientific and legal understanding of environmental issues. The program provides objective scientific and technical advice to increase the community's capacity to participate effectively in the environmental planning and development assessment process. This includes getting expert climate science and evidence before the [courts](#).

What potential do they have for impact?

The EDO uses a range of legal interventions and strategies to achieve environmental reform and to empower Australian citizens to defend the environment now and for future generations. This approach operates at a grassroots, legislative, and policy-development level, and at all levels of the court system. With the relatively small funds that the EDO has, it has succeeded in numerous landmark environmental cases of national significance. Even if the cases have been unsuccessful and/or ongoing, the EDO presents the Australian community with a tangible and affordable opportunity to protect the environment through various legal interventions.

The EDO's potential to influence policy is limited by the current politics of climate change in Australia, and the obstacles associated with litigation, including high-costs, issues of standing, conservatism of the courts, for example. However, direct impact on policy has been achieved through court case.

How strong is the organisation, and what are their risks?

The EDO is a united national organisation with eight offices around Australia. The EDO has a range of programs with a director and team-members operating either at the national or state level. In 2020, the EDO merged its State and Territory based teams, which has created greater operational efficiencies across the organisation.

Although strengthening the EDO, a potential risk from the merger is the impact it may have on the ability of the EDO to continue to attract state and territory government funding for its localised services. Federal Government funding was withdrawn from all State and Territory EDOs in 2013.

What is their financial need?

The EDO [2019/2020 Financial Report](#) indicates that their total income was just over \$7 million. Around 60 percent of this was from donations and philanthropy, around 19 percent from government and PPF, 6 percent from programs income, 5 percent from professional fees and the remainder from 'other'. The EDO has many cases in development, and could use additional funding to progress cases with more pace and at scale.

OUR TAKE

The work of the EDO is important and will make a significant impact on the broader efforts to address and accelerate climate action by slowing down or preventing the environmental impact of expanded or new fossil fuel projects. Further, the EDO offers a platform for the voices of those most impacted by such projects. In saying this, while legal interventions are useful they are also time-consuming and expensive, and changes in government policy or legislation risk undermining the outcomes of legal cases and therefore the impact of the verdict. The EDO will continue to have a significant impact, however the impact of a marginal financial donation on changing Australian climate policy may be limited.

What are they and what do they do?

Farmers for Climate Action (FCA) is a movement of farmers, agricultural leaders and rural Australians working to ensure they are a key part of the solution to climate change. Established in 2016, FCA is the only farmer-led organisation focused specifically on adapting and mitigating climate change in the Australian agricultural sector.²⁴ Driven in large part by the lack of response to ongoing calls to strengthen climate pollution targets by farmers, the FCA has adopted an evidence based, organising model that helps farmers implement climate solutions on their land and to influence the farming sector and the government to implement climate policies that reduce pollution and benefit rural communities.²⁵ The FCA now represents more than 6,500 farmers and has over 45,000 supporters.

FCA's Strategic plan 2018-2021 explains how the organisation is working to achieve its goals. It details how FCA is working to increase the uptake of climate smart agriculture across the supply chain, mobilising farmers to drive a clean energy transition, engaging politicians to champion climate action in rural and regional Australia, and building stronger agricultural voices that can also champion climate action. Broadly, FCA's work involves encouraging industry leaders and politicians to encourage stronger climate action and policies. This is supported through farmer capacity building initiatives and building strategic partnerships to conduct research.

At the time of writing, FCA were in the final stages of developing the next Strategic Plan, which will focus on getting stronger climate policies, and growing the number of farmers actively involved in FCA initiatives to strengthen their advocacy work.

What have they accomplished or claimed to have accomplished?

The FCA annual reports detail progress against its strategic plan. It has a dynamic impact measurement framework to assess progress towards key goals monthly. Despite the pandemic, FCA have continued to provide educational resources that support farmers to implement solutions on farm, including a series of conferences, forums and workshops that showcase the latest in climate change and agricultural science²⁶, the annual climate-agriculture master class, and are in the process of developing a suite of publications and toolkits on climate-smart agriculture. In 2019 alone, 720 farmers completed the climate-smart agricultural training, with 60 percent reporting that they intend to implement changes as a result.²⁷

Since their establishment, FCA has remained consistent in their efforts to shift climate policy as it relates to the agricultural sector. FCA played a key role in gaining bipartisan support for a net zero by 2050 target through its work with conservative politicians, the NFF, and its contribution to shifting the conversation about climate change across the agricultural sector. Prior to this, expert interviews pointed to the role FCA played in the NFF backing a net zero target. This was a significant policy achievement as the NFF is the nation's peak agriculture body and has a strong relationship with the Nationals. The NFFs shift in climate policy has contributed to the growing schism within the Nationals, which

²⁴ <https://farmersforclimateaction.org.au/what-we-do/>

²⁵ <https://farmersforclimateaction.org.au/what-we-do/>

²⁶ https://farmersforclimateaction.org.au/conferences_and_workshops/

²⁷ See p. 8 in Strategic Plan: https://farmersforclimateaction.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/FCA_2018-2021_Public_Strategy_Document_vo6_SCREEN.pdf

was made clear when Victorian Nationals politicians recently came out strongly in favour of stronger climate action.²⁸ In 2021 the FCA launched a roadshow in the electorate of Mallee and engaged over 60 farmers through events culminating in a forum where the local member, Anne Webster, announced she would not uphold the Nationals line on coal.²⁹

In 2018, the FCA reported members' roles in successfully shifting climate and energy policy at the sector level³⁰, and in 2019 published extensively in the media on renewables and energy³¹, released reports and lead communications campaigns to support broader lobbying efforts to establish the National Climate Change and Agriculture Work Program for state and federal agricultural ministers, which was adopted in 2019.³² In 2015, FCA supported fundraising efforts to send two farmers to the Paris Climate negotiations, and since then have mobilised lobbying efforts at the local and national level. In 2016, it ran a nationwide survey of farmer attitudes towards climate change, with approximately 1300 farmers participating. The results were presented to politicians and industry leaders in Canberra.³³

The FCA has also played a significant role shifting the public discourse on climate policy and agriculture's contribution to net zero. Following the Government's announcement that it would not sign up to the Global Methane pledge launched at COP26 in November 2021, the FCA were one of the main industry bodies challenging the Nationals' party suggestion that this decision was to protect the agriculture sector.³⁴

What potential do they have for impact?

With agriculture accounting for almost 15 percent of Australia's emissions and contributing over \$67 billion to the economy, FCA members have an important role to play in the national response to climate change. Farming communities have a major influence on public policy decision-making through their political representatives, however many are represented by the Nationals or Liberal Party. This arguably makes their political advocacy efforts more important, given this research identified the Liberal National Coalition Government as the second most significant barrier to effective policy change. Mobilising farmers as climate action advocates, practitioners, and beneficiaries could potentially make a major contribution to unlocking the deadlock on climate change that has existed as a federal level for over a decade.

The FCA is a young organisation with relatively small funding. With the funds it has, it has succeeded in mobilising Australian farmers and rural citizens who have placed pressure on politicians to implement effective climate policies.

FCA also work directly with farmers to implement changes at the farm-level, including agricultural practices that have been shown to demonstrably reduce carbon emissions. In 2021, it released a report that highlights what the sector would need to do across the supply chain that would 'easily reduce greenhouse gas emissions'.³⁵ The uptake of practices promoted in the report (and associated training and education programs) would need to be examined to determine direct impact.

²⁸ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-07-02/victorian-nationals-rift-with-federal-colleagues-barnaby-joyce/100263620>

²⁹ Giving Green - FCA Survey Response

³⁰ See 2018 Annual report, p. 23:

https://d3n8a8pro7vymx.cloudfront.net/farmersforclimateaction/pages/1172/attachments/original/1565850926/2018_FCA_annual_report_WEB.pdf?1565850926

³¹ <https://farmersforclimateaction.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2019-FCA-Annual-Report.pdf> (see page 8 and 16)

³² <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/climatechange/national-approach-agriculture>

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/nov/04/farmers-split-on-australias-refusal-to-sign-up-to-global-methane-pledge-at-cop26>

³⁵ <https://farmersforclimateaction.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/FCA-EY-FINAL-Report-Low-emissions-future-for-Agriculture.pdf>

How strong is the organisation, and what are their risks?

The FCA board directors are industry leaders with 200+ years of combined experience in agriculture. Its staff has expertise in politics, advocacy, regional development, agricultural research, media and marketing and it is supported by Australia's leading climate and agricultural researchers. FCA has over 45,000 supporters, of which 6,500 identify as farmers. It is an associate member of the National Farmers' Federation and has partnerships across the agriculture and climate sectors.

FCA are in a period of rapid growth and as noted by several experts, it's ongoing impact will be reliant on the ability to expand the team in a way that caters to their growing supporter base, hones the targeted political and industry policy expertise required and achieves ongoing financial sustainability.

Some may suggest that Australia cannot reach net zero emissions unless meat production is drastically reduced,³⁶ such that FCA's lack of a position on reducing herd sizes is inconsistent with effective action on climate change. Our view is that meat producers will continue to produce meat as long as consumers demand it (which 97 per cent of Australians still do)³⁷, and as long as it remains profitable. Neither a Liberal/National nor a Labor Government would ever consider a policy that would make meat production more expensive. It is more realistic to expect an Australian Government to consider policies that would incentivise alternative uses of farmland that help to reduce emissions (i.e. 'carrots' not 'sticks'): which Australia's Emissions Reduction Fund does. Moreover, there is high potential to reduce agriculture emissions using methane-reduction technologies that are in their infancy (such as feeding asparagopsis to cows)³⁸, and improved land-use methods (such as savannah burning)³⁹. Research and development support in the short-term could help farmers commercialise these solutions. FCA is well-placed to advocate for policies to incentivise this. We are therefore confident that FCA's work has positive climate outcomes, especially because of FCA's influence in strategic Nationals-held electorates.

What is their financial need?

FCA's operating budget for the 2021-2022 financial year is \$1.49 million, and is projected to grow to \$1.7 million for the 2022-2023 period. Over 80 per cent of FCA's 2020-2021 funding came from donations and bequests, three per cent from government grants, and six per cent from other revenues.⁴⁰ In 2019, FCA launched the 'Seeds of Change' giving circle, which seeks regular annual donations from within the FCA membership network. This has been a largely successful program, with funds enabling FCA's core strategic work. Farmers for Climate Action's monthly donor program, 'Cli-mates', has tripled this financial year, generating over \$100,000 in donations. It is clear that the FCA relies significantly upon donations and may benefit greatly from extra funding.

OUR TAKE

We believe that FCA is making a significant contribution to accelerating climate action in Australia. FCA are increasingly well positioned to play the role of both an insider and outsider advocate while at the same time helping change the story surrounding agriculture and climate change. Given the National Party, and the broader Coalition Government, is one of

³⁶<https://bze.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Land-Use-report-2014-compressed.pdf>

³⁷<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-10-26/vegans-comprise-just-1-per-cent-of-the-population-survey-finds/11635306>

³⁸<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0247820>

³⁹https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263932348_Fire_in_Australian_Savannas_from_leaf_to_landscape; see also <https://nph.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/nph.13130>

⁴⁰<https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity/bebceb7c0986369732f5048a9980e4e4#overview>

the most significant barriers to climate action in Australia, FCA's influence in key constituencies stands to make a significant contribution to Australia's transition to a net zero emissions economy. We judge the long-term benefits of FCA's activities to likely be significant, and therefore see it as worthy of closer consideration.

Market Forces

What are they and what do they do?

Market Forces exposes institutions that are financing environmentally destructive projects through the release of research reports and running campaigns. Market Forces is an affiliate project of Friends of the Earth Australia and a member of the BankTrack international network. These affiliations connect Market Forces with campaigners, environmental experts, and advocates.

What have they accomplished or claimed to have accomplished?

Market Forces have produced a significant amount of research that is accessible and easy to comprehend. For example, it have developed a webpage called '[tracking the money](#)' highlighting organisations that fund coal mines, coal power, and gas power, among others. It has also produced scorecards and comparison tables of banks and companies to help the public make informed environmentally-minded decisions.

Market Forces is also running a number of campaigns that focus on holding banks, superannuation foundations and insurance companies accountable for their fossil fuel investment. Market Forces' research and campaigners are regularly featured in the media discussing Australian Government policies.⁴¹

What potential do they have for impact?

Market Forces have the potential to indirectly affect political climate action through the exposure of environmentally detrimental institutions and companies. The information that Market Forces' provides and its aptitude for economic communications are important mechanisms to support changing Australian attitudes towards climate solutions. Their affiliated projects also expand the organisation's environmental networks. While Market Forces' direct impact on policies is unclear, its main aim is to shift consumer investment practices by providing easy to navigate, clear information about an institution's investment in fossil fuels. It is worth noting that this impact is widely recognised.

How strong is the organisation, and what are their risks?

The organisation is made up of 15 team members and a number of volunteers. The number of volunteers does not seem to be publicly accessible. More information would be needed to understanding the organisation and its operations.

What is their financial need?

Market Forces is funded by a combination of philanthropic institutions and individual donors and a community of individuals that donate regularly. Its funding is managed by Friends of the Earth. It is wholly independent and does not receive any funding from financial institutions or governments.

⁴¹<https://thenewdaily.com.au/finance/finance-news/2020/01/15/coal-blackrock-scott-morrison/>, see also <https://www.afr.com/companies/financial-services/unisuper-targeted-in-divestment-campaign-20200112-p53qr9>

OUR TAKE

Market Forces has played an important role in encouraging a significant shift in consumer divestment from institutions with investments in the fossil fuel industry. Its research has also informed investment decisions of banks and superfunds, reinforcing its role as in outsider advocacy. While it will continue to play an important role in shifting company behaviour and public investment decisions, more research is needed to determine its role in shifting climate change policy. The impact of marginal donations would therefore not necessarily contribute to addressing the most significant barrier to climate change action in Australia.

Monash Climate Change Communications Research Hub (MCCCRH)

What are they and what do they do?

Established in 2016, the Monash Climate Change Communication Research Hub (MCCCRH) is a research entity dedicated to improving public understanding of climate change through non-partisan, evidence-based communication initiatives. By applying research to the world of climate communication and delivering carefully targeted messages to an audience of millions, it seeks to engage people who don't normally think about climate change but are open to thinking about it if it is delivered to them where their attention already is.

Established in the largest media school in Australia, the School of Media, Film & Journalism, the MCCCRH has grown into a University-wide research institute founded and led by Associate Professor David Holmes. The MCCCRH is a hub for climate research and for the distribution of this knowledge to large media audiences. Sitting in a media school means it brings the science into the media networks it partners with rather than attempting to push it out. Its media partners include television networks, online digital news groups, and popular online apps.

It has since grown to involve eight different faculties, and a range of industries and scientists. Its research maps social attitudes to climate change and how it is reported in the media, which then informs delivery of climate communications that target both local and national audiences.

What have they accomplished or claimed to have accomplished?

MCCCRH projects seek to improve the understanding of climate change problems and solutions. Since launching, it has fostered a network of partners to become part of their newsrooms to influence the way they cover climate change, and have built an audience of 2.7 million digital news readers through their partnership with News Corp. The Changing Climates column is an Australian first and is now featured across digital hyperlocal mastheads across Australia. The flagship program, Climate Communicators, has broadcast 500 climate packages to audiences around the country through ABC, Seven, Nine and WINTV. Further to this, it has launched three new major communication initiatives to regular audiences in the millions, including 500 television broadcasts and over 1800 climate columns and 40 video explainers. The explainers were viewed by around five million users of the weatherzone app.⁴²

⁴² Giving Green - MCCCRH Organisation Survey response.

MCCCRH are also working to improve the influence of climate communications. MCCCRH has a partnership with the ARC Centre of Excellence for Climate Extremes to provide free and accessible lesson plans on climate science in schools, appointed Australia's first Postdoctoral Research Fellows in Climate Change Communication and have presented at leading conferences and the United Nations.⁴³ The team Edited a Research Handbook on Communicating Climate Change with contributions from 39 universities around the world, and released a [literature review of best practices communication of climate science and impacts \(guide for policy makers\)](#). This is a useful document that could have a tangible impact on climate-policy development.

What potential do they have for impact?

MCCCRH has strong potential to tangibly change public perceptions of climate change. The organisation's 'non-persuasive' approach to directing Australians' perceptions of climate change and its solutions reaches a wide audience, including regional communities. Overall, strong communications and narrative-building will play an important role in generating awareness of and support for climate change policy change. While direct policy impact is hard to determine, the reach of their communication products alone has the potential to shift the broader community awareness about climate change.

Over the course of 2021, MCCCRH have been advising and providing interactive graphics for News Corp on their new campaign called 'Mission Zero'. It has also been supporting the news.com.au 'Time is Now' initiative. This initiative helps explain how continued high emissions will affect regional habitability, extreme weather, flooding in coastal cities, and species extinction. This latter partnership has helped shape the editorial stance of the largest news group in the country. The initial 16-page campaign appeared in the Herald-Sun, the Sydney Daily Telegraph, The Courier Mail, The Adelaide Advertiser, The NT News and the Hobart Mercury and is genuinely progressive on climate change solutions.

Their work to date suggests that they have the potential to continue to influence the narrative at the community level, and possibly indirectly, influence policy.

How strong is the organisation, and what are their risks?

MCCCRH has a large team of communications specialists, climate scientists, economists, environmental researches, journalists and social sciences. This includes eight full-time staff, four research assistants and several student interns. This provides an elaborate network of workers with varying areas of expertise and community-reach, as well as a strong organisational structure.

What is their financial need?

The budget and resources for MCCCRH are not publicly available or distinct from the budget of the University overall. It is important to note that philanthropic gifts to the University are used for the purpose in which they are given. It is also worth noting that they have attracted significant philanthropic support and can leverage the broader University resources to support their work. More information is needed to understand existing resources and funding and therefore their financial need.

OUR TAKE

⁴³ Giving Green - MCCCRH Organisation survey response.

There remains a few news outlets in Australia which editorialise against the science of climate change and more systems level work is needed to address these forms of media, as well as the tendency for remaining climate divisions to occupy their own social media bubbles. Audiences in regional and rural Australia are also under-served by public interest climate change information, and funding is needed to deliver to these areas that are often the most vulnerable to climate change impacts. While there remains an important need for this work, the recent shift in centre-right popular media outlets, however, has potentially limited the impact that MCCRH can have on changing the story as an immediate need.

Original Power

What are they and what do they do?

[Original Power](#) is working to ensure Australia's First Nations communities benefit from the renewables boom. It uses a collective-action model to resource and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to self-determine what happens on their country. This work is critical because, as Australia's traditional owners, First Nations people have unique rights over 50 per cent of Australia's land, making them critical stakeholders in the transition from a fossil fuel-based economy to one powered by clean, renewable energy. Original Power supports communities in their efforts to protect cultural heritage, challenge fossil fuel developments (if this is what communities decide), and create a just transition to renewables.⁴⁴ Original Power's work can support the rapid roll out of large-scale renewables as an alternative to fossil fuel projects, in turn reducing Australia's emissions.

What have they accomplished or claimed to have accomplished?

Original Power is working to bring the economic benefits of renewable energy to indigenous communities. Original Power is a founding partner of the recently launched [First Nations Clean Energy Network](#). The Network promotes best-practice standards in the renewable energy industry, to ensure that the renewables transition occurs in partnership with First Nations communities: sharing its jobs and economic benefits, protecting sacred sites and respecting native title. The Network has endorsement from First Nations people, community organisations and land councils, technical and legal advisers, impact investors, clean energy industry bodies, trade unions, academia, think tanks, and major climate advocacy organisations.

Original Power has supported communities to develop demonstration community solar projects in [Marlinja](#) and [Borrooloola](#) in the Northern Territory. It developed a [Clean Energy Economic Recovery Plan for the Northern Territory](#), which promoted a clean energy 'superhighway' through the centre of Australia via a high-speed electricity transmission line. The proposed plan was adopted by the Northern Territory Government as a key recommendation of the Economic Reconstruction Commission. Original Power worked with the Australian National University to develop a guide on [Clean Energy agreement making on First Nations Land](#). The First Nations Clean Energy Network will advise First Nations communities and business enterprises seeking to set up or play a part in the establishment of medium- to large-scale export-focussed clean energy projects.

Original Power provides support for First Nations communities to self-determine their own futures in the economic transition from fossil fuels to renewable power. It builds the capacity of First Nations communities who wish to protect their cultural heritage, challenge destructive fossil fuel projects, and ensure that renewable projects are developed in a

⁴⁴ https://www.originalpower.org.au/about_us

way that provides just economic co-benefits to the community. Original Power's [Building Power Guide](#) provides First Nations communities with the knowledge, support and networks they need to protect their communities, land, water, and climate. Original Power has been a key driver of the [Passing the Message Stick Project](#), a two-year research initiative to find messages that are effective in building public support for First Nations self-determination and justice. Original Power is also connecting communities with each other and supporting the exchange of lessons, challenges and successes.

What potential do they have for impact?

Original Power's resources, projects and strategic approach are empowering First Nations communities, who are an important but neglected voice in efforts to address climate change. Its work has a clear community benefit, although the organisation is still relatively young and needs time to demonstrate its impact.

How strong is the organisation, and what are their risks?

The organisation is relatively young, having been established in 2018. Over the last 12 months it has grown to 10 part-time and full-time staff, with people based in the Northern Territory (including two community based organisers in Borrooloola and Marlinja), Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Western Australia.

As a small organisation, Original Power's ongoing effectiveness relies on retaining and attracting talent at all levels. There can be challenges from building and managing a team of very diverse people and skills, working in communities where there may be no computers and limited internet access. To mitigate these risks, Original Power has recently brought on more staff and is implementing a peer-to-peer mentoring program to up-skill and support its team. Original Power is also offering additional support for remote staff, including helping the whole team develop systems that better acknowledge the diversity of language and literacy skills. This will be important as the organisation grows and works to expand its efforts across the country.

What is their financial need?

Original Power is a small First Nations organisation working effectively with limited resources. Its budget for 2020-2021 was \$1.2 million, the majority of which was from individual donations, trusts and foundations. Additional funding could help Original Power expand its on-country community engagement program, evaluate the community and climate impacts of clean energy demonstration projects, and further scale the work of the First Nations Clean Energy Network

OUR TAKE

Original Power is playing an important role in ensuring that First Nations people are integrated into the climate change discussion, while at the same time building the capacity of individuals and communities to be able to contribute to and capitalise on the clean energy transition. The lack of diversity in the climate movement was constantly raised by experts as a barrier to effective climate action, with particular reference to the lack of both culturally and linguistically diverse and First Nations representation. Original Power and its direct action and capacity building work with Traditional Owners will go a long way in shifting the dial on creating a more inclusive, representative movement. Given its work to date and its potential for impact on several fronts, Original Power warrants further exploration.

Seed Indigenous Youth Climate Network

What are they and what do they do?

Seed Indigenous Youth Climate Network (Seed) is an Indigenous, youth-led climate organisation, supported by the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC).⁴⁵ Their vision is “for a just and sustainable future with strong cultures and communities, powered by renewable energy”.⁴⁶ Seed has open petitions such as ‘Protect Country’ and ‘Don’t Frack the NT’ that are led by indigenous youth. These campaigns call upon the Australian government and prominent energy companies to stop investment and subsidies into coal and gas projects. Seed also hold leadership summits to help young indigenous volunteers and leaders to run their own campaigns.⁴⁷ Seed also runs rallies and produces documentaries to raise awareness and build support for climate policy.⁴⁸

Seed is Australia’s first and only Indigenous youth Climate Network. Since launching as a semi-autonomous branch of the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC) in 2014, Seed has rapidly grown to be a powerful, national grassroots network of over 250 volunteers across the country who are leading climate action in their communities. Our work is led by a small team of paid staff together with volunteer state and regional coordinators who support local action groups across the country.

Seed’s main activities include:

- **Building young First Nations leaders** through transformative training and mentoring support programs for the grassroots network of volunteers, ensuring that they have the knowledge, confidence, connections and skills needed to create change in their communities.
- **Running campaigns to protect country and build climate justice** by organising and working with First Nations communities on the frontlines of fossil fuel projects to lead action targeting decision makers and mobilising our network and supporters to act in solidarity
- **Elevating First Nations voices and leadership** through storytelling, media, social media as well as developing and curating powerful content, Seed works to shift the narrative and centre First Nations voices and solutions in the national climate conversation.

What have they accomplished or claimed to have accomplished?

Since launching in 2014, Seed’s work has made significant progress in the climate change and climate justice movement. It has enabled increased leadership, involvement and support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and campaigns across the country. Since 2014, Seed has grown to become a national movement with over 250 young people. Since then, over 800 First Nations young people have participated in its training programs, which help them to gain the knowledge, confidence, connections and skills to lead action for climate justice. Seed holds annual summits that are focused on bringing together First Nations young people from communities and regions most affected by climate impacts and fossil fuel extraction.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ https://www.seedmob.org.au/our_story

⁴⁶ https://www.seedmob.org.au/about_seed

⁴⁷ https://d3n8a8pro7vnm.cloudfront.net/aycc/pages/1813/attachments/original/1559268783/Impact_Report_2018.pdf?1559268783

⁴⁸ https://d3n8a8pro7vnm.cloudfront.net/aycc/pages/1813/attachments/original/1559268783/Impact_Report_2018.pdf?1559268783

⁴⁹ https://d3n8a8pro7vnm.cloudfront.net/aycc/pages/1813/attachments/original/1559268783/Impact_Report_2018.pdf?1559268783

Seed has focused on two major campaigns since launching: Between 2014 - 2017, Seed was a key part of the campaign which saw the big four major banks commit not to fund Adani's proposed Carmichael coal mine and stopped a \$1 billion Federal Government loan. The second campaign has focused on stopping fracking in the Northern Territory. Since being invited to Borroloola by a group of young people in 2015, Seed has been a leader in developing this campaign while working alongside and in support of Traditional Owners, Aboriginal community leaders and young people across the Northern Territory. In 2016, Seed helped secure a two-year moratorium on unconventional gas extraction after the Northern Territory. As part of this campaign, Seed secured a Parliamentary inquiry into the Morrison Government's \$50 million fund for fracking corporations. This victory came just days after Seed travelled to Canberra with Traditional Owners to meet with politicians and urge them to listen to the concerns of Aboriginal communities on the frontlines of fracking. Seed has since turned its efforts towards companies such as Origin Energy instead, leading various campaign actions and participating in the AGM to ask questions about fracking in the Northern Territory.

Outside these two major campaigns, Seed had over 50 screenings of its 'Water is Life' documentary about the Aboriginal communities fighting against fracking plans in the NT. Together, Seed and AYCC had a People's Parliament in the foyer of Parliament House in 2018, alongside snap rallies nationwide, with over 15,000 marching for climate justice.⁵⁰

What potential do they have for impact?

Seed has unified indigenous youth across Australia for a common cause against dirty energy. This coalition of indigenous youth is highly significant, as young people and First Nations Peoples are two groups who disproportionately experience the adverse impacts of climate change. However, the impact of these efforts aimed at stopping Government investment in new coal and gas projects are hard to measure. Their renewed focus on companies has significant potential to place pressure on energy companies to move towards renewable resources.

How strong is the organisation, and what are their risks?

Seed Mob has a National Director, a Queensland Organiser, and a number of volunteers. This is a relatively small team, particularly for an organisation that has reach across Australia. Seed is in the process of transitioning to a separate organisation from AYCC and in the process of finalising its strategic priorities over the next three years. The forthcoming strategic plan outlines the organisations focus over the next three years, which includes, among other things, enhancing the organisational capacity and sustainability. This will include the recruitment of the First Nations Board of directors, a senior executive team, increased staff numbers across all teams, ongoing volunteer positions and a temporary non-Indigenous ally fundraising and transition team. The organisation plans to grow its team to include 18-20 staff across the organisation.

While Seed has a clear mandate on climate change, the leadership team recognise the interconnectedness of issues facing Indigenous people in Australia. The broad systemic change required risks undermining the more focused climate change agenda.

Seed has recognised the risks of rapid growth and is building strategies to mitigate this. The mentorship offered through the Board of Director will be key, as will a clear organisational strategy and structure. As the organisation is in this period

⁵⁰ https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.x.cloudfront.net/aycc/pages/1813/attachments/original/1559268783/Impact_Report_2018.pdf?1559268783

of transition, structures to support financial sustainability are still in progress. This includes registration as a charity and deductible gift recipient (DGR) status. This will help diversify current funding streams.

What is their financial need?

Seeds revenue increased from \$674,797 in 2018 to \$1,968,914 in 2020, with a forecasted revenue goal of \$2,085,083 in 2021. Seed has also focused on building reserves to ensure resilience as an organisation, which has increased from \$57,510 to the current total of \$1,544,522. The majority of the organisations total income was from donations and bequests. This signifies a significant reliance on donations and grants. Marginal donations to Seed have the potential to make a strong impact.

OUR TAKE

SeedMob, like Original Power, is playing an important role in ensuring that First Nations people are integrated into the climate change discussion. The lack of diversity in the climate movement was constantly raised by experts as a barrier to effective climate action, with particular reference to the lack of both CALD and First Nations representation. Seedmob helps to bridge this gap, while at the same time, is also engaging young people; another voice largely neglected in the climate movement. While Seed will play an important role, the focus on young people will arguably be more tractable in the long-term. This also means that there is a longer line between Seedmob and policy makers in this space, suggesting that the marginal investment would take longer to come to fruition.

Voices For Power Sydney Alliance

What are they and what do they do?

The Sydney Alliance was launched in 2011 and it runs a variety of campaigns that aim to achieve fairer and more sustainable cities. The Alliance is a coalition of community organisations, religious organisations, unions and schools who aim to⁵¹:

1. Increase and strengthen the leadership capacity of those involved with the Alliance
2. Deepen the relationships across civil society by strengthening the relationships between partner organisations, and
3. Act for the 'Common Good'.

The Voices for Power Sydney Alliance (VFPSA) is one of the Alliance's campaigns. It brings diverse cultural, religious and community leaders together to build collective power and organise for clean and affordable energy solutions.⁵²

What have they accomplished or claimed to have accomplished?

The campaign focuses on promoting tangible action from local councils and the New South Wales Government to provide affordable, accessible and sustainable energy to minority communities. For example, Jewish Voices for Power built relationships with local governments to apply for a grant to conduct an energy audit of the building in a Jewish retirement

⁵¹ <https://www.sydneyalliance.org.au/about>

⁵² <https://www.sydneyalliance.org.au/voices-for-power>

village.⁵³ The campaign is also a part of the pilot Council's Heat Refuge program that aims to provide safe spaces for people to escape the heat in Western Sydney.⁵⁴ Leaders also met with state Members of Parliament to share experiences of hardships in communities and how programs that promote affordable, clean energy could assist in alleviating such hardships.⁵⁵ It is not clear the impact these discussions have had on policy.

What potential do they have for impact?

At a local community level, this organisation and their Voices for Power campaign has a high potential for impact on local climate policies. While they are largely focused locally, there is electoral significance to building power in Western Sydney at both the State and Federal level. There is potential for impact in the organisation of constituents that are trusted voices in the communities and can catalyse and protect gains in climate action in the long-term. Climate is only one of a long list of general political demands of the Sydney Alliance, meaning that impact at the national level may be harder to determine.

How strong is the organisation, and what are their risks?

The Sydney Alliance have local teams across Sydney, including Blue Mountains, Hornsby, Sutherland, Northern Beaches, Randwick. These local teams are connected to the Alliance through their organisations to work on a range of issues for the common good, including climate justice. The campaign has a relatively small network of staff and volunteers with a reach in the Western Sydney region, but not in a wider geography. The campaign has three leaders who are supported by Sydney Alliance staff.⁵⁶ There are also local teams led by volunteer co-chairs, again with the support of Sydney Alliance staff.

What is their financial need?

Sydney Alliance's total comprehensive income for the end of the 2020 financial year was just under \$200,000.⁵⁷ The specific Voices for Power team have resources amounting to \$300,000, which includes two community organisers and a senior digital campaigner.⁵⁸

OUR TAKE

Voices for Power are making strides in mobilising local communities around affordable renewable energy solutions. While publicly available information suggests that they could scale efforts with increased donations and shape outcomes in important electoral seats in Western Sydney in particular, their campaigns focus on climate is amongst a range of issues, so direct impact would be harder to determine, particularly at the Federal level.

⁵³ https://d3n8a8pro7yhm.cloudfront.net/sydneyalliance/pages/2713/attachments/original/1606869821/SA_Annual_Report_FINAL-compressed.pdf?1606869821

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ <https://www.sydneyalliance.org.au/our-teams>

⁵⁷ https://d3n8a8pro7yhm.cloudfront.net/sydneyalliance/pages/2713/attachments/original/1606869821/SA_Annual_Report_FINAL-compressed.pdf?1606869821 Page 54

⁵⁸ Giving Green - Voices for Power Survey response