

# Impact Report 2022

**Groundswell acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. Sovereignty has never been ceded.**

**We pay our respect to the Elders past, present, and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions and culture.**

**We acknowledge that First Nations people have been holding the frontlines of both caring for and protecting Country, and hold the knowledge to create a just and sustainable future.**

**Our community understands that it is vital to centre First Nations justice as we work together for climate justice, and that there is no one without the other.**

# We fund climate action.

## **Our Mission**

To accelerate climate action in Australia by creating a community of givers who fund strategic, high-impact climate advocacy.

## **How It Works**

We pool our money and make strategic grants to people and organisations tackling the climate crisis. All donations to Groundswell are tax-deductible and 100% go directly to climate action.

## **Our Values**

We respect the knowledge and leadership of First Nations people.

We support just and sustainable solutions and transitions.

We are grounded in climate science.

We are strategic.

We are political, but not partisan.

We lead with courage and hope.

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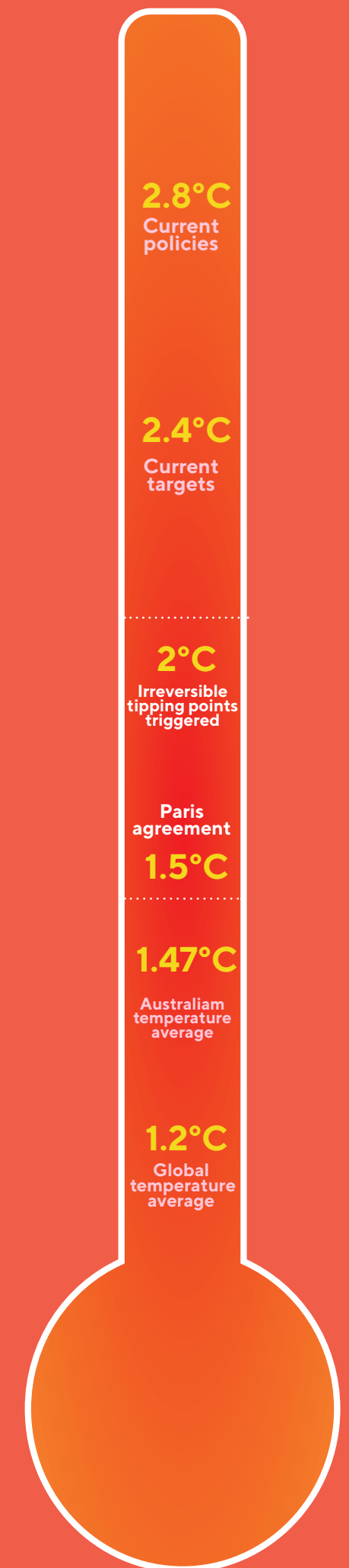
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# Our Moment

**‘Groundswell has to succeed as we’re getting close to the last chance we’ll ever have to stabilise the climate of our planet.’**

Tim Flannery

**We are living in a climate emergency and the window for taking action is closing. Everything we do now counts.**



<https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2022>

# Together we are powerful

**Groundswell launched in early 2020, amid the haze and horror of the Australian Black Summer bushfires, and at the beginning of a decade deemed by scientists to be critical – our last chance to take action to avoid irreversible tipping points in our climate system. In the extreme weather events that have followed, we have seen first-hand how the people and places we love will be affected by the climate crisis.**

The climate movement has grown significantly over the last three years. In May 2022, Australians elected a new government with a mandate to take definitive action on the climate crisis. Since then, Labor has legislated a 43% emissions reduction by 2030 and made substantial budget commitments to climate action.

This is significant progress, but there's a long way to go. The science tells us we need to curb global emissions by 75% by 2030<sup>1</sup> to avoid catastrophic levels of warming. This is ambitious but attainable. It means we need to stop burning fossil fuels immediately. As one of the largest emitters in the world, Australia has an important role to play in achieving this. Given our low population density and extraordinary renewable resources, we have the easiest path of any developed country to zero emissions.

<sup>1</sup> The Climate Council 2022

Everything is in our power. We have the scientific knowledge and the solutions exist, but there's currently a gap between action and funding. Enter Groundswell. We back the organisations creating the social, economic and political conditions that bring solutions to the climate crisis to life. By supporting advocacy work through our grantmaking we are collectively creating the change we need to see.

Groundswell's momentum is building, and we're seeing just how powerful our strategy is. Funding a co-ordinated and strategic effort is delivering real breakthroughs for climate policy, litigation and action across the country. These changes are being driven by the values our community shares – advocacy centred in climate justice, ensuring change happens *with* people, not *to* people.

The stakes for taking action on climate change couldn't be higher and there isn't time to be holding back. We know we need to scale up and deploy funds to match the scale of the crisis – for ourselves, for our children and for generations to come. We need your help to do this.

**By being a Groundswell member you are making an ongoing meaningful impact, accelerating climate action when it matters most. Right now.**



Groundswell co-founders Anna Rose, Clare Herschell and Arielle Gamble



# Our Impact

**‘It’s easy to feel helpless and hopeless in the face of the overwhelming challenge of climate change – but supporting Groundswell is a fantastic way to truly making a difference.’**

Professor Lesley Hughes

**\$1,640,000**  
granted since launching

**700**  
members

**46**  
grants

**246**  
one-off givers

**36**  
lifetime  
members

**50**  
First Nations  
members

**255**  
grant applications

**11.7k**  
online followers

**22**  
First Nations led  
projects funded

# Our grants

**2022** Australian Youth Climate Coalition | Doctors for the Environment | Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council | Indigenous Peoples Organisation | Cairns and Far North Environment Centre | FrontRunners | Hi Neighbour | Gudanji for Country | Tomorrow Movement | Victorian Forest Alliance | Better Renting | Save Our Songlines | Climate Justice Legal Project | Multicultural Leadership Australia + Caring for Country grants TBC

**2021** Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council | Indigenous Peoples Organisation | Our Islands Our Home | The Next Economy | Environment Centre NT | Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation + Agency Projects | Hunter Jobs Alliance | Australian Parents For Climate Action | Environmental Justice Australia | Bushfire Survivors for Climate Justice | Environment Victoria | Sweltering Cities + The Australia Institute | Environmental Defenders Office | Solar Citizens

**2020** Emergency Leaders For Climate Action | Seed Indigenous Youth Climate Network | Climate And Health Alliance | Lock The Gate | Clean State WA | Farmers For Climate Action | Doctors For the Environment

**‘I had a fire in my belly about climate change but didn’t know what to do with it. Now I do.’**

Sam, Groundswell member

**‘I joined Groundswell because inaction is just not an option anymore. I love that the community can take action into their own hands.’**

Cat, Groundswell member

**‘I really think that the work Groundswell is doing is changing the world for the better.’**

Alex, Groundswell member

**‘Joining Groundswell is a way to use our financial resources to directly address the climate emergency. We particularly want to support First Nations voices in the pursuit of climate justice.’**

Peggy, Groundswell member

**‘There is no greater threat to humanity and the planet than climate change and no greater cause to invest our time, energy and resources in.’**

Stephen, Groundswell member

**‘I’m sick of feeling helpless. We need to take action now. Thank you Groundswell.’**

Maureen, Groundswell member

**Groundswell funds  
an ecosystem of**

**Advocacy**

**Campaigning**

**Litigation**



**to drive systems change  
for a safe climate future**



# Our Grant Winners

**‘Groundswell’s power is  
multilayered: its focus on  
climate advocacy and deep  
commitment to justice is  
catalysing positive  
impact across Australia.’**

Claire O’Rourke, author  
of ‘Together We Can’



# Some big wins

At its core, Groundswell funds work to keep fossil fuels in the ground and accelerate a just transition to a decarbonised world. We can't bank on one project to fix climate change, which is why we fund and support an entire ecosystem to collectively work together. Here are a few big wins that Groundswell members helped make possible this year.



## Environmental Justice Australia \$40,000 August 2021

EJA lawyers submitted an enormous body of evidence to Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek, imploring her to protect thousands of nationally significant living wonders threatened by the impacts of nineteen proposed coal and gas projects. For the first time in Australian history, the government has accepted a climate-focused reconsideration request as valid and will reconsider the proposals.



## Our Islands Our Home \$40,000 June 2021

350.org supported Torres Strait Islanders with their Our Islands Our Home campaign, which culminated in a complaint made to the UN Human Rights Committee against the Australian government for failing to act on climate change. They won, meaning the Australian government is obliged to pay compensation and do whatever it takes to ensure the safe existence of the Torres Strait Islands, setting a legal precedent for First Nations rights around the world.



## Bushfire Survivors for Climate Action \$40,000 November 2021

Took the NSW Environmental Protection Authority to court to demand more action on climate change and won. This is the first time an Australian court has ordered the government to take meaningful action on climate change. As a result, real steps are being taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in NSW, setting a benchmark for other states to follow.



## Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) \$40,000 November 2021

EDO took oil and gas giant Santos to court for failing to consult with the Traditional Owners of the northern Tiwi Islands about the impact a drilling project would have on their Country. They won and Santos was ordered to shut down their drilling project and move out of Tiwi Sea Country within two weeks, putting other fossil fuel companies on notice not to ignore First Nations peoples.



## FrontRunners \$40,000 September 2022

FrontRunners is harnessing the cultural power of sport to accelerate climate action by motivating and mobilising athletes and sporting organisations to speak up about "sports-washing". By providing the right information, tools and opportunities, they've supported Australian cricket captain Pat Cummins, the Australian Diamonds netball team, and AFL players to push back on fossil fuel sponsorships.



## Australian Parents for Climate Action (AP4CA) \$40,000 August 2021

In the lead up to the federal election, AP4CA galvanised a national network of parents to conduct 83 meetings with federal election candidates and distribute over 5,000 'Climate Action Now' signs. They enlisted 135 candidates from all sides of politics to sign their 'Solar Our Schools' pledge, resulting in 22 elected parliamentarians providing a new cross-party foundation for federal climate action. The climate swings in AP4CA's three target electorates were 50% above average, with strong Greens and Labor support.





**Solar Citizens**  
**\$40,000 December 2021**

Influenced the national climate change narrative in the lead up to the federal election by building community support for local renewable energy projects in Queensland. This put pressure on both the federal and state government to adopt more ambitious clean energy policies and move from a position of political deadlock on climate to a target of 70% renewable energy in Queensland by 2032.



**Hunter Jobs Alliance**  
**\$40,000 August 2021**

As a collective of unions and environmental groups based in New South Wales' mining heartland, HJA knows the best solutions for the clean energy transition must come from within the community. In the lead up to the election they ran a successful campaign by speaking directly to regional values and shared interests rather than messages increasing scepticism or hostility.



**Environment Victoria (EV)**  
**\$40,000 November 2021**

EV, represented by lawyers from Environmental Justice Australia, took the Victorian Environmental Protection Agency to court in October 2021 for failing to protect the community and environment from coal pollution. This was the first test to Victoria's key climate change legislation and could set a vital legal precedent. While the verdict is yet to be announced, if successful it could lead to much stronger pollution limits on power stations, reducing the toxic health burden that coal-burning power stations have on communities.

**Just to name a few...**



**'EDO is increasingly achieving historic wins for climate action and breaking new ground in Australia. Groundswell is helping to fund the urgent work that is required in the face of fossil fuel expansion.'**

Environmental Defenders Office

**'As a tiny but impactful organisation, this grant will go a long way. It will allow us to focus on the work that really matters and makes a difference.'**

FrontRunners



**'This grant will allow us to continue our fight to protect our Country, songlines, sacred sites and non-human kin from the imminent threat of fracking.'**

Gudanji for Country



# Caring for Country Grant Program

## Supporting and resourcing First Nations people to continue to care for and protect Country is a fundamental and urgent climate solution.

Having cared sustainably for Country for millennia, First Nations people are now living on the frontlines of climate change impacts and fossil fuel extraction. At the same time, First Nations communities are doing some of the most strategic work across the country: protecting and restoring valuable carbon sinks, opposing fossil fuel extraction and expansion, and innovating to find solutions for a clean energy future.

Despite this, First Nations climate justice work remains chronically underfunded and needs to be scaled up. In 2021, the Groundswell core team met with First Nations members to hear their ideas on how this might be done. A challenge outlined was the mainstream definition of climate advocacy being too narrow to include First Nations custodianship as an essential solution to climate change.

On hearing this feedback, we set out to develop a more holistic framework and in September 2022, we launched Caring for Country – a grant funding program specifically for Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Pacific Islander people working towards climate justice. Led by our First Nations team, for First Nations organisations and voted on by our First Nations members, this grant round is the first of its kind.

An initial \$160,000 multi year commitment from the Eisen Family Fund allowed us to launch, and since then we've welcomed a new \$120,000 philanthropic partnership with Oranges & Sardines Foundation. On opening the first grant round, we received an influx of applications and we're thrilled to share that ten of these groups will receive funding, with winners to be announced soon.

Already, the Caring for Country grant round is making a huge impact. As a framework for funding First Nations organisations centred around climate justice, we're leading a power-shift towards authentic self-determination in philanthropy. Given that almost half of Australia's land mass falls under Native Title legislation, supporting these groups means supporting essential First Nations led regeneration across our country.

**PROTECTING COUNTRY**  
Prevention of fossil fuel expansion eg. advocacy and campaigning.

**CARING FOR COUNTRY**  
Land, sea and water management eg. preserving and protecting carbon sinks.

**CLIMATE SOLUTIONS**  
Supporting climate solutions eg. agriculture to sequester carbon and energy transition initiatives.

**PRESERVING CULTURE**  
Strengthening community to ensure ongoing generational care for Country eg. cultural heritage campaigns.





Coming together with our members and friends to celebrate Groundswell in Naarm, June 2022



# Our Members

**‘Climate change is the most important issue of our time. Giving to Groundswell means that I am constantly making an impact, even when I don’t feel up to it.’**

Josh, Groundswell member



# Climate action in action

Every day we are inspired by Groundswell's extraordinary community of passionate people making the world a better place. Here's a snapshot...



## Claire O'Rourke

This year, Claire released *Together We Can*, a book about everyday Australians doing amazing things to give our planet a future: from sportspeople to psychologists, First Nations people to actors, teachers, students and retirees. Claire is generously donating half of the book royalties to Groundswell, and while promoting the book (and Groundswell), she has encouraged many new members across the country.



## Vanessa Farrelly

Vanessa is a proud southern Arrernte woman who works with the Pertame Language School, a community-led language revival program empowering Pertame Elders to pass their language and cultural knowledge onto the next generation. Vanessa has worked with the Groundswell team on holistic frameworks around caring for Country, centred in the knowledge that continuous culture is a climate solution.



## Yael Stone

Yael founded Hi Neighbour – a new NFP organisation based on Dharawal land focused on supporting the transition from fossil fuels to renewables on the Illawarra 'Coal Coast'. Hi Neighbour received Groundswell funding this year to support its mission to work with the local community to help accelerate the uptake of rooftop solar, and provide scholarships for local workers to retrain for technological low-carbon jobs.



## Sam Elsom

Sam runs Sea Forest, a world-first seaweed farm in lutruwita (Tasmania) dedicated to multifaceted climate solutions by reducing CO2 emissions in the livestock and dairy industries. In between expanding his team and establishing a new R&D facility this year, Sam attended COP27 and the inaugural Jobs and Skills Summit. He was also featured in Zac Efron's *Down To Earth* series on Netflix.



## Dylan Mooney

Dylan is a proud Yuwi, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander man from Mackay in North Queensland who created the dynamic artworks that have come to define the 'Our Islands Our Home' campaign. Through an exciting collaboration with Ben & Jerry's, his artwork now appears on ice cream containers nationwide, raising awareness and funds for climate justice in the Torres Strait.



## Georgina Reid

Georgina is the founder and editor of Wonderground Press, a beautiful print and online journal exploring questions of nature, culture and care. She has made Groundswell a community partner for the past two years, donating advertising space and raising funds and awareness for our mission.



## Caro Vu

Caro is the Chief of Staff at the newly established philanthropic fund Boundless. Boundless' purpose is to accelerate climate solutions at the scale and speed required for Australia to do its fair share to avert the climate crisis and is backed by Mike Cannon-Brookes as part of his \$1.B pledge committed in 2021. Our founding advisor, Eytan Lenko, is CEO of Boundless.



## Dan Adams

Dan is the co-founder and co-CEO of Amber – a renewable energy retailer established five years ago to transition the retail energy market to 100% renewables as quickly and cheaply as possible, by unlocking the value of renewable energy for all Australians.



## Briony Benjamin

Briony created a national social media campaign with Climate200 to support the eleven climate focussed independents elected at the 2022 federal election. These independents have already helped pass new climate legislation and strengthen climate policy at the federal level.



# Membership

There are four ways to join Groundswell.  
Together, we are powerful!

## Groundswell members

Donate \$20 a week (\$250 a quarter or \$1000 a year),  
voting rights in every grant round

## One-off givers

One-off donation supporting our climate action grants,  
no voting rights

## Lifetime members

Donate 10 years membership upfront (\$10,000 donation),  
voting rights in every grant round and invitation to special events

## First Nations members

Gratis membership for changemakers, voting rights in every grant round, honorariums paid for time on shortlisting committee



Lifetime members climate immersion trip to Spring Bay Mill, March 2022





# Our Future

**‘We don’t get to give up, there’s too much on the line. It’s up to us to do everything we can, while we still can. That’s why I give to Groundswell.’**

Scott, Groundswell member

**We are living through the most consequential decade in human history. Everything we love is on the line.**

**These last few years of fires and floods have offered a glimpse of what living with more extreme weather is like.**

**We have an opportunity, right now, to make transformative change and stabilise our climate systems before we hit critical thresholds and climate change starts to show up in larger and more harmful ways.**

**We need to scale up, fast.**

**For all the brilliant work Groundswell supports, so much important work goes unfunded. This needs to change. If we want to ensure a safe and just future, we need to do everything we can to support the people working hard to get us there.**



# Looking ahead

As we come to the end of 2022, the Groundswell team is reflecting on all we've learnt this year and gearing up for an even bigger year of action in 2023.

## Grantmaking

As we move through the critical decade, it is increasingly important to scale up our grant making. With your support we've been able to increase our grant round funding by 25% to \$200,000. But there is still so much important work that needs funding and next year our plan is to scale up and unlock more strategic climate advocacy. Your continued support will help us reach this goal, as will inviting your friends and family to join Groundswell.

## Support more First Nations climate leaders

After piloting the Caring for Country grant round in 2022, it's clear supporting and resourcing First Nations people to continue to protect Country is a fundamental – and urgent – climate solution. In 2023 we will provide \$280,000 in funding to support First Nations led groups, thanks to the generous support of the Eisen Family Private Fund and the Oranges and Sardines Foundation.

## Events

Bringing together people who care about this planet and want to do more to protect it is our passion. In 2023 we will be running two intensive learning immersions for lifetime members and we have a number of exciting events in the works which we are looking forward to sharing with you soon.

## Stories

Stories are the most powerful tool we have to inspire the social change our times demand. Next year we'll focus on sharing narratives that empower people to take action. We'll continue to grow our audience on existing platforms and look into creating new storytelling channels too – watch this space for podcasts, videos, long-reads and more.

## Major giving circle

In 2023 we are planning to launch a new major giving circle for climate action. A group of 20 members each contributing \$50,000 per year will channel \$1 million of pooled funds into a strategic climate intervention, with the guidance of an expert Advisory Board. We are now taking expressions of interest.

Help us grow a groundswell of people pitching in everything we can, while we can, to protect our one and only precious home.



# 1

**Buy the planet a gift this Christmas and give a one-off donation. At this stage of the game, every dollar counts.**

# 2

**Become a Groundswell member for \$20 a week. This is a great thing to do as a family if you want something climate positive to work on together throughout the year.**

# 3

**If you're already a member, tell your friends! The more members who join = the more grants we can give out = the more climate wins we can make.**



**Heron Island  
Research trip  
in partnership  
with The Climate  
Council, October  
2022**

# Thank you!

Thank you to our community of donors, supporters and volunteers who make our work possible in every single way. Groundswell is people power in action, and we are so proud to be in this with you.

