



THE 2022 CLIMATE ELECTION:

Unpacking how climate concerned
Australians voted

THE 2022 CLIMATE ELECTION: UNPACKING HOW CLIMATE CONCERNED AUSTRALIANS VOTED

Votes are still being counted, but one thing is indisputable: climate action is the winner of this election. Millions of Australians put climate first at the ballot box, and the politicians who dragged their heels on the most important challenge of our time are paying a price for that. It's clear the Australian Parliament is now set for an unprecedented shake up, and all eyes are on what climate action will be achieved by the incoming government. This Climate Council analysis of key seats in the 2022 Federal Election makes a compelling case for the strong connection between climate concerned Australians and their voting behaviour.

KEY FINDINGS

- › Climate change is a defining issue of this election in the city, the suburbs and the regions. Candidates championing strong climate action were rewarded by voters across the country.
- › Voters in most electorates hit by climate-fuelled disasters, like the Black Summer Bushfires and the 2022 floods, swung away from the Coalition and towards those championing stronger climate action.
- › The Senate is likely to have a climate action-friendly majority with candidates who ran on strong climate platforms performing well.
- › The new Australian Parliament has a strong mandate for game-changing climate action, and pressure will continue to be applied (both domestically and abroad) on the federal government to accelerate its efforts this decade.



Image 1: People canoeing down a flooded street in Lismore during the floods in February 2022. Image credit: Supplied.

CLIMATE ACTION A VOTE WINNER IN THE REGIONS, THE SUBURBS AND THE CITIES

Independents who stood for strong climate action enjoyed big swings across capital cities, with up to five on track to win lower house seats that have long been strongholds of the Liberal Party. These include: Sydney (Wentworth, Mackellar, North Sydney, Warringah, Bradfield), Melbourne (Kooyong, Goldstein), Perth (Curtin) and Adelaide (Grey). Also notable was the performance of an independent in the ACT Senate.

There has also been substantial swings toward the Greens, particularly in south-east Queensland and Northern NSW where extreme flooding has pummeled communities this year.

Across regional Australia there are many examples of seats where candidates with strong climate platforms gained significant swings. For instance:

- › **Cowper** in north-eastern NSW which was affected by terrible flooding and fires in recent years. The community swung away from the sitting National MP by 6% and a climate independent running for the first time gained more than 25% of the primary vote, and is likely to run second.
- › In **Eden Monaro** the sitting ALP MP (from a by-election) gained a 4% swing, with a 5% swing away from the Liberal candidate. This seat was heavily affected by Black Summer, and the sitting candidate has been a vocal supporter of climate action.
- › **Nicholls** in northern Victoria saw a 25% swing towards an independent with strong climate policies.
- › Kangaroo Island in **Mayo** was heavily affected by Black Summer. The Liberals experienced an 11% swing against their candidate with the majority of disaffected voters switching to the Greens and ALP. Incumbent Central Alliance representative Rebekha Sharkie, who has strong climate policies, retains the seat.
- › **Gilmore** on the south coast of NSW was heavily affected by the Black Summer fires. The region saw a 12% swing to Liberal candidate Andrew Constance, a vocal former member of the NSW Parliament with a strong climate platform.
- › In **Page** (Northern Rivers of NSW) that was heavily affected by the recent flooding disaster there was a 12% swing to a pro-climate independent.
- › Helen Haines, independent for **Indi** in northern Victoria, strengthened her lead over the Liberals with an 8% swing. Ms Haines has strong climate policies and the north-eastern part of her electorate was burnt during Black Summer.

[ABC's Vote compass](#) shows that climate change was a top issue across the country, from the cities, through the suburbs, to the regions. In almost 90% of electorates (132 out of 151) climate change was rated as the most important issue by more than one in five people. In the seats where there was a teal independent candidate concern was even higher. With 42% of people rating it as the most important issue in Wentworth, 40% in Kooyong and 39% in North Sydney. Climate concern was also very high in seats where there have been recent climate change-driven extreme weather events like Richmond (34%), Macquarie (30%), Gilmore (30%) and Eden Monaro (31%). In fact, climate concern was very high across the board including in communities within traditional "coal seats" like Newcastle (33%) and the Hunter (23%). Polling run throughout the election campaign also consistently found that climate change was a top voter issue.

VOTERS IMPACTED BY EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS TURNED AWAY FROM THE LIBERALS

The following table considers seats across many parts of Australia that have suffered from catastrophic floods and fires in the previous term of government. There have been swings away from the Coalition towards candidates with strong climate platforms - whether they were standing for the Greens, an independent or the ALP - across the majority of seats in the Northern Rivers and Southeastern Queensland affected by the 2022 flooding disaster. Similarly, in seats where communities suffered the most during Black Summer voters turned away from the Liberals.

The table below highlights a range of seats in South East Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

2022 FLOOD DISASTER

Electorate	Properties at medium or high risk of riverine flooding in 2030*	Swing/notes^	Result
Lilley (Suburban Brisbane)	2.98%	Big swing away from LNP (-12.4%) Swings to ALP (+7.4%) and Greens (+3.3%)	ALP retain
Griffith (Suburban Brisbane)	25.27%	Big swing away from LNP (-11.1%) Big swing to Greens (+12.5%), who have won this seat	Greens gain
Brisbane (Suburban Brisbane)	24.49%	Big swing away from LNP (-10.9%) Swings to ALP (+3.3%) and Greens (+5.7%)	Greens ahead
Ryan (Suburban Brisbane)	11.98%	Big swing away from LNP (-10.7%) Big swing to Greens (+10.7%), who have won this seat	Greens gain
Moreton (Suburban Brisbane)	14.91%	Big swing away from LNP (-8.9%) Swings to ALP (+3.1%) and Greens (+4.5%)	ALP retain

Electorate	Properties at medium or high risk of riverine flooding in 2030*	Swing/notes^	Result
Fadden (northern Gold Coast)	9.06%	Big swing away from LNP (-8.1%) Swing to Greens (+2.7%)	LNP retain
McPherson (southern Gold Coast)	6.39%	Swing away from LNP (-5.3%) Swing to Greens (+4.5%)	LNP retain
Richmond (Northern Rivers)	30.00%	Very big swing against Nats (-13%) Big swing to Greens (+5%)	ALP ahead
Page	15.00%	Big swing to a independent with strong climate platform (+12%)	Nat retain
Cowper (Port Macquarie)	5.23%	Swing against Nats (-6.6%) Very big swing to independent with strong climate platform (+26.6%)	Nats ahead
Groom (Toowoomba)	1.63%	Big swing away from LNP (-11.9%) Big swings to two independents with strong climate platforms (+8.9%, +7.5%)	LNP retain

BLACK SUMMER FIRES

Electorate	Properties at medium or high risk of riverine flooding in 2030*	Swing/notes^	Result
Eden Monaro	10.95%	Swing away from Lib (-4.7%) Swings to ALP (+4.5%) and Greens (0.2%)	ALP retain
Macquarie (Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury)	54.86%	Big swing away from Lib (-10.1%) Swings to ALP (+5.3%) and Greens (+0.1%)	ALP retain
Cowper (northeast NSW)	15.66%	Swing away from Nat (-6.6%) Very big swing to independent with strong climate platform (+26.6%)	Nat ahead
Gilmore (southeast NSW)	23.79%	Big swing to a Liberal who has been outspoken on climate action in the wake of the Black Summer fires (+13.2%)	ALP ahead
Indi (northeast Victoria)	4.92%	Swing away from Lib (-4%) Big swing to independent with strong climate platform (+8.6%)	Ind retain
Mayo (south of Adelaide, including Kangaroo Island)	13.01%	Big swing away from Lib (-11.2%) Swing to Greens (+2.5%) Retained by Centre Alliance incumbent with strong climate platform	Centre Alliance retain

*Data on % of properties at risk is from Climate Council's Climate Risk Map, using the high emissions scenario: <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/climate-risk-map/>

^Results as of 8am Monday 23 May, 2022. Swings are based on first preference count. Source: ABC.

The Climate Council is an independent, crowd-funded organisation providing quality information on climate change to the Australian public.


The Climate Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, meet and work. We wish to pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and recognise the continuous connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country.

Cover image credit: Flickr user: bertknot, creative commons

CLIMATE COUNCIL

 facebook.com/climatecouncil

 twitter.com/climatecouncil

 info@climatecouncil.org.au

 climatecouncil.org.au