

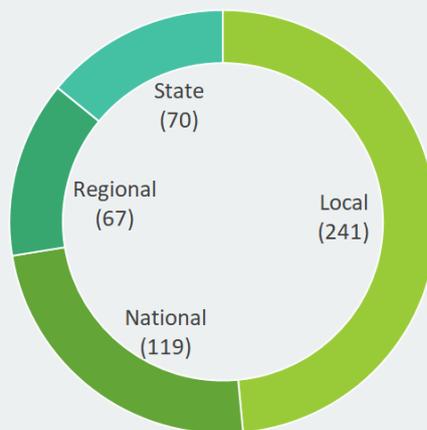
ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS: WHERE, WHAT AND WHEN



We know little about the full breadth of the Australian environmental movement. This report highlights the key findings from stage one of a doctoral investigation into the characteristics of the movement, including its current activities and the campaigns it runs to conserve and protect the environment.

Method

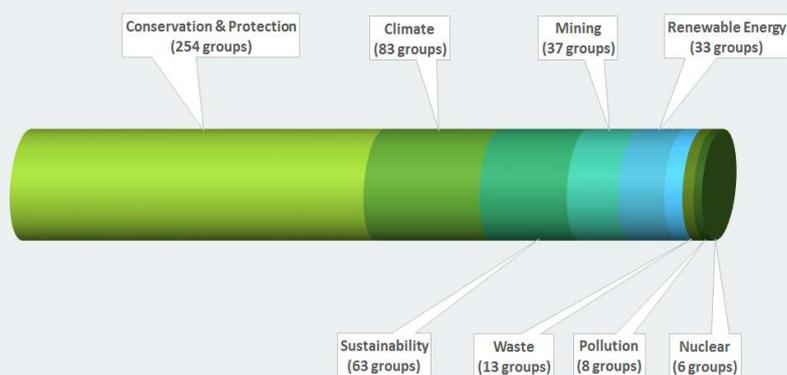
A search of online databases and links within websites identified over 3,000 environmental groups in Australia in early 2017. Each group was reviewed to see whether they undertook environmental advocacy or environmental campaigns. Of these groups, 497 were found to do some form of advocacy and had a functioning website. These websites were then reviewed to collect data on the characteristics and activities of the environmental advocacy movement.



Geographical area of focus

Just under half of all groups worked at a local level, usually within a town or a suburb of a larger city. The larger organisations often worked at a national scale, with a smaller number of groups focusing on state issues or those affecting a region such as the Murray Darling Basin. Organisations with paid staff generally worked at the national level, and those relying on volunteers were predominantly local in their activities.

Environmental issues and number of groups



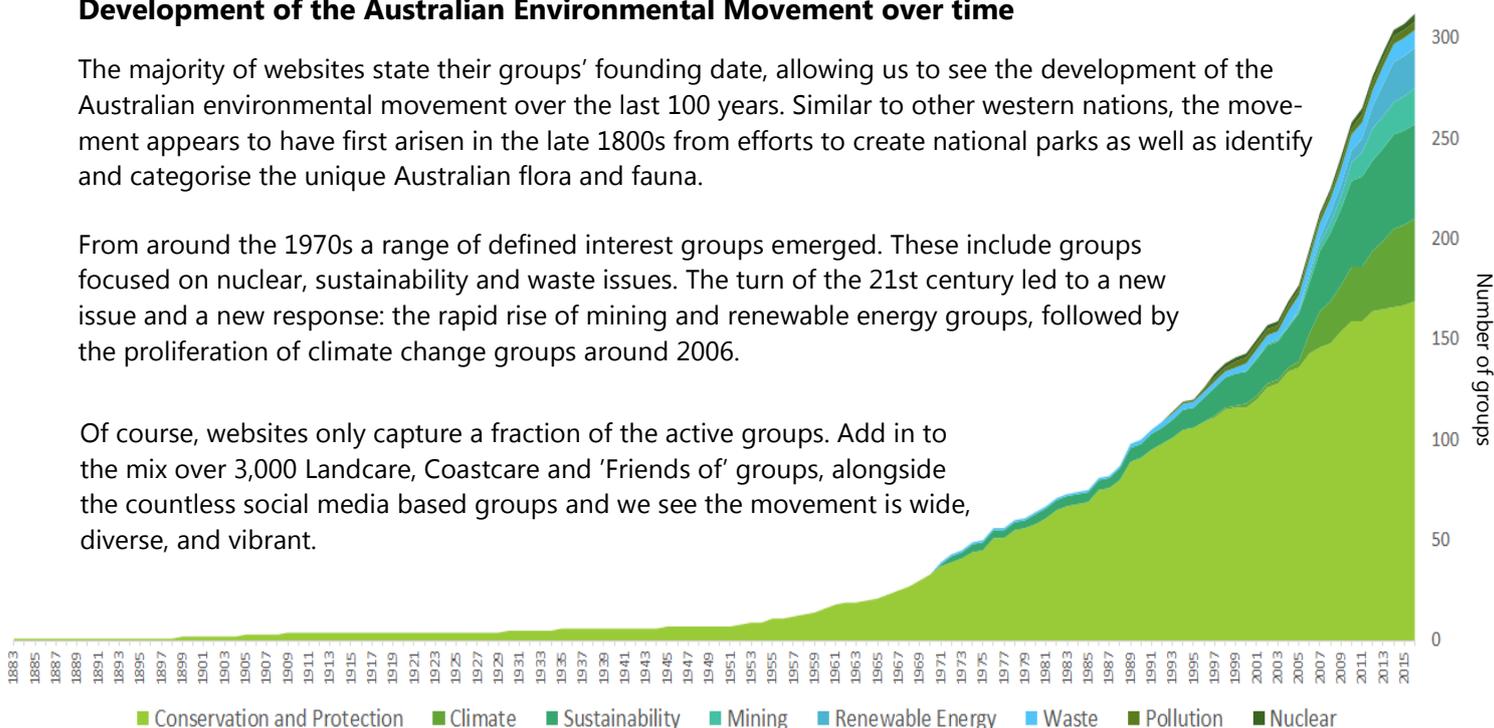
Of the 497 groups, the majority (254) focus on conservation and protection issues, including campaigns on conservation of water, protection of forests and marine fauna and reserves. The next most prevalent issue was climate (83 groups). Renewable energy and sustainability groups were similar to climate change groups but with a more specific focus. While groups were categorised into one core environmental focus, many undertake campaigns across multiple issues. This is particularly the case for larger national groups.

Development of the Australian Environmental Movement over time

The majority of websites state their groups' founding date, allowing us to see the development of the Australian environmental movement over the last 100 years. Similar to other western nations, the movement appears to have first arisen in the late 1800s from efforts to create national parks as well as identify and categorise the unique Australian flora and fauna.

From around the 1970s a range of defined interest groups emerged. These include groups focused on nuclear, sustainability and waste issues. The turn of the 21st century led to a new issue and a new response: the rapid rise of mining and renewable energy groups, followed by the proliferation of climate change groups around 2006.

Of course, websites only capture a fraction of the active groups. Add in to the mix over 3,000 Landcare, Coastcare and 'Friends of' groups, alongside the countless social media based groups and we see the movement is wide, diverse, and vibrant.



ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP DISTRIBUTION AND CAMPAIGNS



This project also mapped the spatial distribution of the groups that undertake advocacy and campaigning, and created a database of the many hundreds of campaigns they run across the country.

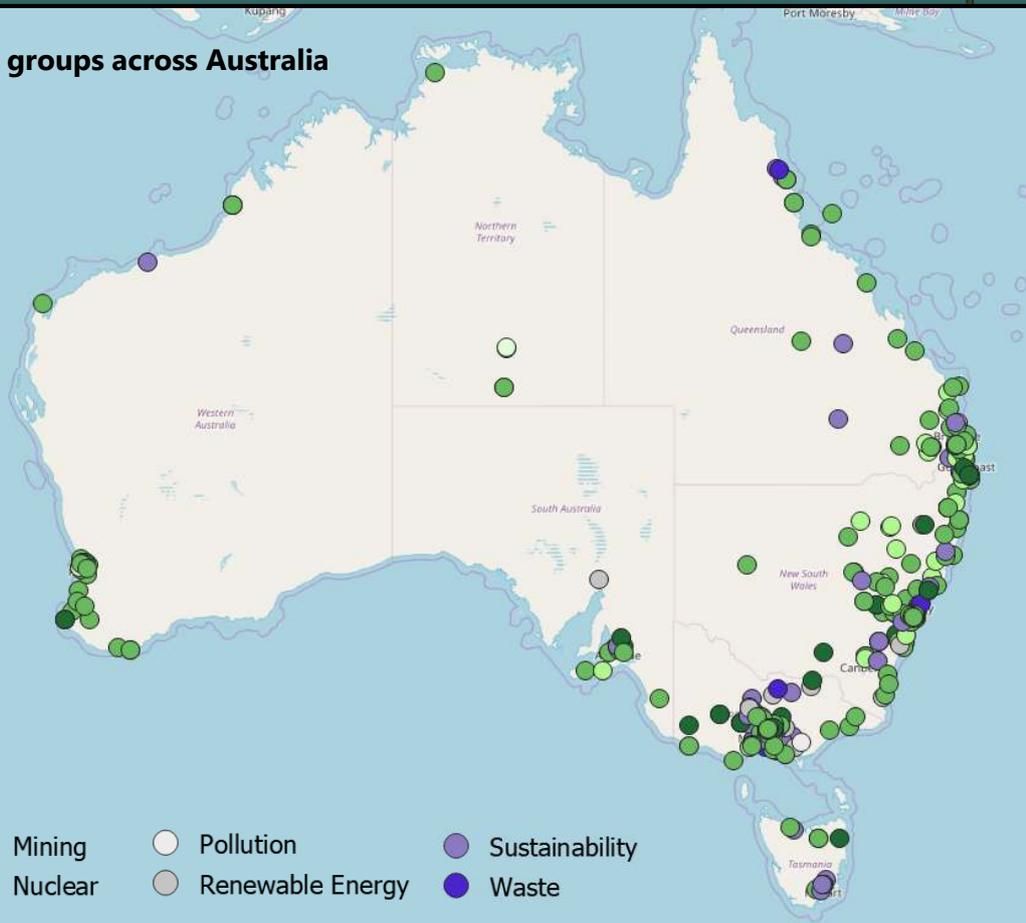


Spatial Distribution of environmental groups across Australia

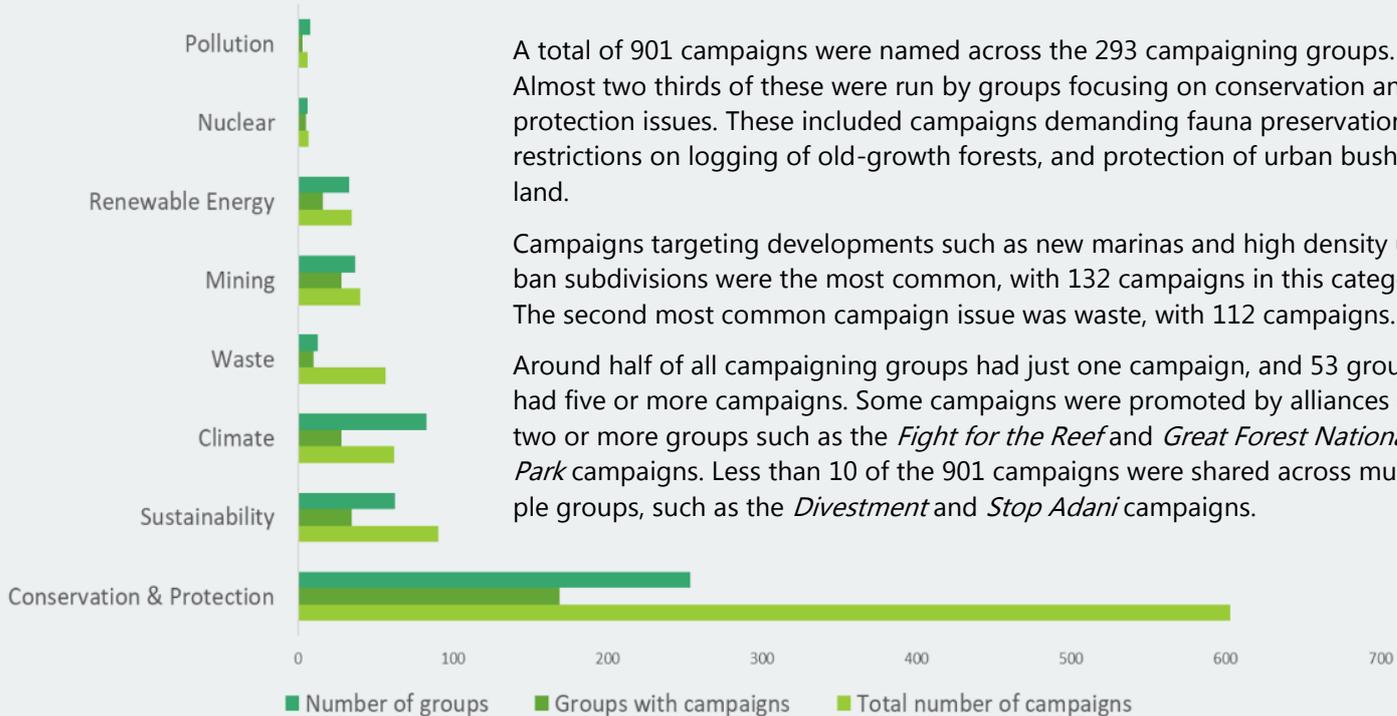
The distribution of groups largely mirrored the population distribution across Australia. Large regions such as the Kimberley and the Northern Territory had few groups; however, many city-based groups also undertook campaigns covering issues across these regions.

Key spatial characteristics:

- The greater Melbourne area has the largest number of groups
- Most of the larger NGOs are based in Melbourne
- Groups focusing on climate were mostly only found in the larger cities



Number of campaigning groups and campaigns within each environmental issue focus



A total of 901 campaigns were named across the 293 campaigning groups. Almost two thirds of these were run by groups focusing on conservation and protection issues. These included campaigns demanding fauna preservation, restrictions on logging of old-growth forests, and protection of urban bushland.

Campaigns targeting developments such as new marinas and high density urban subdivisions were the most common, with 132 campaigns in this category. The second most common campaign issue was waste, with 112 campaigns.

Around half of all campaigning groups had just one campaign, and 53 groups had five or more campaigns. Some campaigns were promoted by alliances of two or more groups such as the *Fight for the Reef* and *Great Forest National Park* campaigns. Less than 10 of the 901 campaigns were shared across multiple groups, such as the *Divestment* and *Stop Adani* campaigns.



ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPAIGN TARGETS AND OUTCOMES



There is no known inventory of campaigns across an entire national environmental movement. To fill this gap a database of campaign issues and targets between early 2017 and mid 2018 was completed. A case study analysing the outcomes of climate change campaigns shows that high levels of success are being achieved.



Campaign targets across different campaigning issues



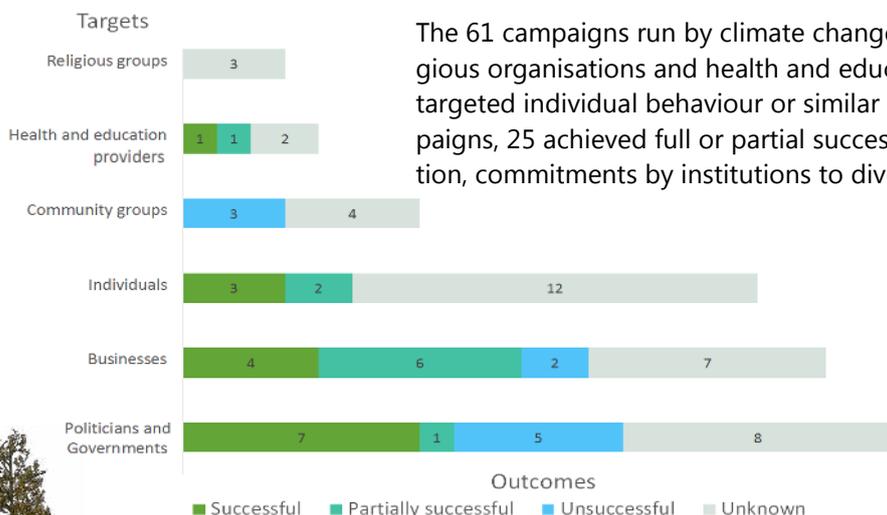
All 901 campaigns were reviewed to identify the campaign issue and target/s. It is important to know what is the most common campaign target, as this demonstrates where environmental groups focus their energies, and how they believe environmental change can occur.

Four particular types of targets were named:

- Political (including Local, State and Federal governments, politicians and political candidates)
- Individuals (such as campaigns to switch electricity providers or reduce plastic waste)
- Businesses/Institutions (such as fossil fuel companies and universities)
- Community groups (including environmental, religious and social groups).

In total, just over half of all 901 campaigns had a political target. This demonstrates that environmental groups are often focusing on changing policy and legislation to enact environmental change, as it has in the past. However, climate change, sustainable living, mining and waste groups also had a high number of campaigns targeting individuals or businesses. This may indicate that the focus of environmental advocacy is changing over time in tandem with the growth of groups focusing on new issues that have arisen in the 21st century.

Case study of climate change campaign targets and outcomes



The 61 campaigns run by climate change groups had 71 targets, which included some religious organisations and health and education providers. Of these campaigns, the 29 that targeted individual behaviour or similar had no known outcome. Of the remaining 32 campaigns, 25 achieved full or partial success. These included outcomes such as new legislation, commitments by institutions to divest and measurable carbon emission reductions.

Most climate change campaigns targeted politicians or governments, however a large number also targeted businesses and individuals. This may demonstrate the ability of environmental groups to create new advocacy strategies which demand action across all sectors to address climate change.

