

Community voices

Has Climate 200 taken the “community” out of the Community Independents Project and replaced it with “big money”? The “Voices of” movement began in the Indi electorate as a local grassroots movement. It was people-powered. The movement relied on community-building strategies such as kitchen-table conversations to engage people in the electorate on issues that mattered to them. There were no billboards on freeways, digital advertising and salaries for staff. Instead, the Indi electorate was flooded with individuals showing their support for Cathy McGowan by wearing her campaign T-shirt while talking with people at local events and households putting her sign on their fence. This was genuine participatory democracy. A decade later, there is a stark difference between those community independent candidates who use community-building strategies to engage their electorate and those who use expensive marketing strategies.

- Sarah Russell, Mount Martha, Vic