Beyond winning: party goals and campaign strategy in Australian elections

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Student declaration

I declare that the PhD thesis entitled *Beyond winning: party goals and campaign strategy in Australian elections* reports finding from my own original research. Except where indicated otherwise, this thesis is my own work. It contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma.

Signature:  
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Abstract

Discussions of election campaigning and strategy often focus on winning. Researchers and practitioners alike aim to tease out the campaign tools and methods that help parties pull in votes, while positing a desire to win as the rationale behind almost every campaign decision.

But is winning the only goal that parties hold when embarking on an election campaign? Drawing on qualitative interviews with more than 50 representatives from 13 Australian parties, this research finds that parties actually articulate a broader range of goals, including taking (or retaining) majority government, preserving a viable parliamentary presence, maximising their influence over the political process and advocating for specific policy issues. These objectives are discussed in the context of existing research on party goals, as this research seeks to incorporate the voices and views of real campaign practitioners into an academic space where they have often been more noticeable by their absence.

Building from the understanding that parties hold different goals, this research then explores the relationship between these goals and the strategies adopted by different parties in five case study elections between 2010 and 2013. Informed by content analysis of campaign materials and observation of party activities, it finds that parties with different goals make different strategic choices in a range of key areas, including their choice of target audiences, their selection of key messages and themes, and their preferred communication tools and channels. Importantly however, it also find that a party's goals are not the only factor driving decisions about campaign strategies, with institutional, organisational and environmental features also playing an influential role.

In exploring the interaction between party goals and campaign strategies in Australian elections, this research contributes a different perspective on party behaviour to the international discussion about electioneering. It also helps to broaden understanding of the Australian political landscape both by analysing the campaigns of major and minor parties from across the political spectrum, and by including the direct perspectives of local campaigners. As someone who has been fortunate enough to work in and around politics for several years, it was surprising to discover that the voices of those who practice this on a daily basis have not often been included in past academic studies. This project therefore represents an attempt to bring those voices into the conversation, while also demonstrating to other researchers that there is value and benefit in doing so.
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Introduction

When campaigning for an election, why do some parties pour their energies into dominating the nightly news, while others aim to colonise the online space or do battle in the suburbs with traditional grassroots tactics? What makes policy the primary focus for some political campaigns, and a relative after-thought for others? Why do some parties target voters in their traditional heartlands, while others range further afield in pursuit of new support? And what lies behind the varying use of leaders, party members and other public advocates when engaging voters?

The standard answer to all these questions is that political parties make calculated decisions about what will help and hinder them when campaigning for office, and adopt the platforms, tools and tactics which will provide them with the greatest advantage. This spartan explanation of campaign behaviour can be found in any number of political memoirs and ‘how-to’ guides; so much so that it has become something of an article of faith amongst political insiders and their media counterparts.

But if this answer is considered more closely, it actually explains very little about why political parties behave as they do when campaigning. It reveals nothing about the inputs of their strategic decision-making, nor the criteria used in deciding if something is helpful or harmful to their cause. It does little justice to the complex range of policy positions, communication channels and outreach tactics that political actors must choose from in building modern-day campaigns, and airbrushes out the influence of history, organisational structures, personalities or resources in directing or constraining those choices. Most importantly, it glosses over the question of how different parties and candidates define advantage, and the issue of what they are actually trying to achieve by competing in elections.

The aim of this thesis is to provide some more satisfying and comprehensive answers to the questions above by combining the insights and perspectives of party representatives with in-depth analysis of their campaign activity. This research encompasses original interviews with more than 50 representatives from 13 Australian major and minor parties, as well as content and document analysis on more than 5,000 campaign texts and media items. This mixed methods approach has been used to dig deeper into why parties make the decisions they do on the campaign trail, and go beyond the theoretical analysis which has informed much of the discussion about campaigning to date.
In exploring the drivers and influences of campaign strategy, this research proceeds in two stages. It starts by asking a deceptively simple question: how do parties define their goals when campaigning in elections? That is, what does success look like for any given party, and how do conceptions of this differ from one to another? In line with the work of party scholars such as Muller and Strom (1999) and Harmel and Janda (1994), a key finding of this research is that the parties under analysis entered the electoral arena with a range of goals in mind. Significantly however, this thesis shows that these goals encompassed both familiar objectives such as controlling government and advocating for policy, and less-publicised goals such preserving a viable parliamentary presence and maximising political influence. Importantly too, the thesis demonstrates that these articulated goals diverge somewhat from the categories laid down by the authors above and others who have followed them, leading to questions about the completeness of the existing goals literature.

Having established that parties enter elections with different goals in mind, the thesis then asks: how do these goals influence strategic decision-making about their campaign approach? Specifically, it examines the strategic decisions parties made in relation to their focus issues, targeting strategies and communications tools and tactics, and explores how these were linked to their stated goals. The major finding here is that parties with similar goals often make similar strategic decisions, and ones which, collectively, set them apart from those with different goals. This suggests that party goals exert an important influence over campaign decision-making, and are therefore central to answering the questions posed at the start of this chapter.

While this observation may appear straightforward, it has rarely been acknowledged in the existing literature on elections and campaigning. As discussed through the survey of that literature in Chapter One, previous authors in the electoral studies field have tended to assume that winning is the only goal that matters. Since these scholars have rarely paused to consider the range of alternative goals parties may hold, they have also paid scant attention to how these differing goals might influence decisions about strategy. This research therefore makes two contributions to knowledge about campaigning: firstly by drawing attention to parties’ diverse goals, and secondly by exploring the divergent decisions that parties make when they hold different goals.

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Part One—Introductions

However, in the course of arriving at these key findings, this thesis also identifies a range of more practical drivers which must be taken into account when explaining campaign strategies, including resource, organisational, environmental and institutional factors. The following pages therefore also explore how these factors interact with parties’ broader goals when they are designing and delivering election campaigns.

To conduct this detailed dissection of party strategies, this thesis employs a range of influential frameworks drawn from the existing literature on campaigning, including Petrocik’s (1996) concept of issue ownership and the related notion of issue positioning, Rohrschneider’s (2002) idea of the mobilising-chasing continuum; and Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli’s (2009) framework for classifying the communications repertoire of modern campaigning. Through applying these frameworks empirically, this research has identified a range of ways in which they may need to be adapted or altered to fit real-world campaigns. This therefore represents a third area in which this thesis contributes to the broader scholarship in this field.

Finally, by using Australian state elections as the case set and incorporating both major and minor party campaigns into the analysis, this research weaves new threads into the ongoing story about home-grown political actors, institutions and events. A review of available literature suggests that this project brings together the broadest range of Australian party voices and perspectives yet captured in a single project, and so reveals much of interest about how big and small parties alike approach the task of running for office. The Australian political landscape represents a fascinating site for study because it combines diverse institutional features such as bicameralism, parliamentary executive government and compulsory voting, along with a relatively minimalist model of electoral regulation and an evolving party ecosystem in which the dominance of the major Labor and Liberal parties is gradually giving way to a more varied range of actors. By exploring in-depth the motivations, strategies and choices of Australian parties as they navigate this distinctive landscape, this thesis both deepens existing scholarship on Australian politics and opens up an intriguing new range of research questions for future exploration.

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Idea s and influences

Before embarking on a discussion of this project's original research and findings, it is necessary to set the stage by exploring both the work of previous authors and the analytical frameworks which have provided the scaffolding for this study. This chapter first addresses the international literature on political campaigning, and highlights how this research brings together two previously-distinct fields of work on party goals and campaigning. As this research is specifically cited in the Australian political context, this chapter then goes on to explore the Australian campaign landscape and what is already known about how local parties operate within this.

Campaigns, not elections

In setting out to explore the why, how and what of political campaigning, it is important to emphasise the distinction between campaign studies and other related fields. The academic study of campaigning—as opposed to election or voter studies—is something of an emerging field, having really only taken shape over the past 20 years. Of course, the study of campaign tools and tactics goes back much further, particularly in America, but this work has primarily been carried out by practitioners for the purpose of refining and improving their ability to win elections, and disseminated mainly in the form of 'how to' manuals for other practitioners. Thanks to the work of authors such as Budge, Robertson and Hearl (1987), Farrell (1996), Petrocik (1996), Norris (1997; 2000), Blumer and Kavanagh (1999), Plasser and Plasser (2002) and Rohrschneider (2002) however, the study of campaigning has gradually assumed greater prominence and is increasingly recognised as a distinct field of political inquiry.

Where electoral scholars focus on the systemic and institutional factors that shape the political playing field, and voting researchers trawl the minutiae of election data to explore the social, cultural and demographic influences of voter decision-making, campaign scholars are interested in the act of campaigning itself—the strategic choices parties and candidates make when running for elected office, the interdependence of form and content in campaign delivery, and the complex balance of media, partisan, professional and electoral pressures which shape today's campaigns. To explain it another way, both electoral and voting studies are primarily focused on the outcomes of electioneering; their fundamental question is 'how does X affect the way people vote?' By contrast, studies of campaigning are primarily focused on inputs and outputs; election results are, in many ways, secondary to questions about who made what decisions and why, which tools and tactics were brought to bear in attempting to persuade voters, and how

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campaign activities intersect with other political roles such as governing, policy advocacy and constituent representation. That is not to say that campaign scholars do not care about who wins and who loses—identifying successful approaches and important innovations is a key focus for many campaign scholars, particularly those who mix research with professional practice in countries such as America. But perhaps influenced by these real-world practitioners, campaign scholars tend to view election outcomes in binary terms: there is the winner, and there is everyone else. And so in line with this way of thinking, examining how the game is played becomes far more interesting than the final score.

Ideas and influences
While the specific literature on campaigning is relatively new, it has been influenced by a range of ideas from both politics and communications theory. It is important to identify and understand these ideas because they provide a formal framework for explaining what is actually going on in political campaigns. A number of the key concepts are briefly explored here, although both Rohrschneider (2002) and Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli (2009) also offer in-depth reviews of relevant works.

Although this project makes the case for campaign studies as a distinct field of inquiry, there can be no denying that this has grown out of the older field of voter studies, and particularly the work of campaign effects theorists. Prior to the 1970s, there was a consensus amongst political scholars that campaigns played little, if any, role in influencing voter choice. This minimal effects mindset was informed by the pioneering work of Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1944) and Campbell et. al. (1960) who found that voter preferences could be predicted with a high degree of accuracy before a campaign even began, by examining extant factors such as party identification and socioeconomic background.

However, from the 1970s onwards the minimal effects thesis was challenged by new research in the communications and media fields, particularly the ideas of agenda setting, framing and priming. Collectively, these concepts draw on the post-modern belief that knowledge is not absolute and impartial, but rather shaped by actors who have a stake in what information is communicated, how and to whom.

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Briefly, Cohen (1963), Lang and Lang (1966) and McCombs and Shaw (1972) developed the concept of agenda setting as a means of explaining the influence of the newly-pervasive broadcast mass media in the post-war era. Cohen (1963: 16) neatly encapsulates the theory by suggesting that the media 'may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling [audiences] what to think about.' As McCombs and Shaw demonstrated with their study of media coverage in the 1968 American Presidential campaign, media outlets select their stories from a broad array of possible topics. By choosing some issues over others, they implicitly bestow increased significance on the chosen few and bring them to greater public prominence. This, in turn, encourages the viewing audience to focus on these specific issues to the exclusion of others, and to see them as more important, more urgent or more salient (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). Later scholars of politics and public policy such as Baumgartner and Jones (1993), Petrocik (1996) and Kingdon (2003) borrowed this agenda setting concept to explain how political actors attempt to shape political discourse by focusing on issues which provide them with some advantage or benefit, and ignoring those which are negative or contentious. This has given rise to the concept of issue ownership in political discourse, which will be explored further in a moment.

Priming is an extension of agenda setting, as it focuses on the role of media coverage in shaping the criteria used to assess leaders, public policies, and other social phenomena. Iyengar and Simon (1993: 368) suggest that: 'the more prominent an issue in the national information stream, the greater its weight in political judgements.' In other words, the average voter does not independently decide which criteria to use in assessing the competence of political leaders, but rather bases their assessment on performance in areas that have received a lot of media attention. For example, in the wake of the 11 September terrorist attacks, national security issues were given great prominence in the Australian media. Simms (2002) suggests that this primed Australian voters to assess the Howard Government and the Beazley Opposition according to their competence on national security, rather than on other potential issues such as health, education or the economy. As Druckman, Jacobs and Ostermeier (2004) point out however, it is not only the media which primes voters to base their decision-making on particular issues. Politicians themselves have long been wise to the advantages of this approach, and so engage in their own attempts at priming both by focusing their direct messaging on advantageous issues, and managing the media so that news coverage reflects their preferred agenda.
Finally, framing refers to the way information is presented once a media outlet has made its choice of topics. It draws on Goffman’s (1974) theory that as people struggle to make sense of a complex world, they apply a series of ‘frames’ or short-hand mental schemas which help them process new information in the context of what they already know. Gans (1979) adopted this idea to explain how media outlets distil complex information into digestible news items, by presenting information in a way that matches the mental schemas of the audience. The most commonly-cited example of framing is the use of conflict as a prism through which to portray complex political issues. Rather than dissecting the detail of policy differences between two political parties, media outlets instead present politics as a generalised and personal conflict between the leaders and other prominent party figures (de Vreese, 2004).

At a more complex level, the theory of framing recognises that there are multiple ways to interpret most situations or issues. To use one particularly thorny Australian policy issue as an example, declaring a moratorium on logging can be interpreted as a win for the environment because it protects old-growth forests. However, it can also be seen as a devastating loss for communities which rely on forestry jobs for their economic survival. The short and shallow format of news reporting is ill-suited to conveying this kind of ambiguity, and so Gans (1979) suggested media outlets simply choose one ‘frame’ or interpretation as the focus of their reporting. Of course, the rise of political media management means this frame is increasingly selected by politicians themselves and then presented to media outlets as ‘the story’. However, media outlets still have an important role to play in choosing whether to accept this interpretation of events, or seek out alternatives (Sparrow, 1999).

While these concepts were not specifically designed to explain political campaigning, they opened the door for a new way of thinking about how campaigns might influence voters. Specifically, campaign effects advocates such as Jacobson (1988; 1989), Johnston et.al. (1992) and Holbrook (1996) highlighted the role of campaigns in focusing voters’ attention on some issues over others (agenda setting), shaping the way the electorate thinks about those issues (framing), and limiting the range of actions perceived as appropriate to address them (priming). This led to a growing understanding that campaigns do matter to some degree, although how much, when and under what conditions continue to be questions of heated debate for voting scholars. Nonetheless, these concepts have provided some useful tools for examining the
content of political campaigns and exploring party efforts to shape campaign discourse in favourable ways.

What's the goal here?
A second stream of work which is of relevance to this study addresses political actors, and specifically their individual goal orientations or objectives. Downs (1957: 34) asserted that 'the main goal of every political party is the winning of elections', but more recent authors have suggested that parties are actually motivated by a wider range of goals than just numerical dominance at the ballot box. For example, Strom (1990) suggests that parties may oscillate between three goals depending on institutional, organisational and resource factors, including: vote-seeking, office-seeking and policy-seeking. Similarly, Deschouwer (1992) proposes that parties may seek power—defined as dominance of the institutions of government; and participation—defined as the provision of a mechanism for identifying, articulating and pursuing members' wishes; in addition to seeking pure electoral success. Drawing on these and other authors, Harmel and Janda (1994) suggest that although political parties have numerous goals, at any given time a party will have a primary goal which can be classed in one of four categories:

- **vote maximisation**—securing the greatest possible number of votes at the ballot box
- **office maximisation**—achieving the strongest position to participate in the formation of government
- **policy advocacy**—pursuing the development or implementation of preferred policies on issues of perceived importance
- **intra-party democracy maximisation**—providing careful and active representation of members' wishes.

Harmel and Janda acknowledge that party goals are not static, but vary across time in line with changes in leadership and organisation, electoral volatility and a host of other factors. More recently, Pederson (2012) has also pointed out that the distinction between these goal categories is often unclear, particularly at their margins and when seeking to integrate the different authors' definitions of them. The complexities of classifying party goals will be explored further in Chapter Three; the important point to note here is that party goals are believed to matter because they may affect the choices parties make about everything from their organisational structure and policy positions, to their leadership and allocation of

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resources (Harmel and Janda, 1994). A party which is focused on maximising its vote share may value policy pragmatism over ideological purism, while a democracy-maximising party may be happy to accommodate lengthy debate and consultation even at a high cost to its policy productivity. To put it more simply, what is viewed as a ‘win’ by one party may be seen as a ‘loss’ by another if they are pursuing different goals.

Such insights have spawned an enormous empirical literature examining how parties go about achieving their diverse goals, particularly in the multi-party democracies of Western Europe (for example, the diverse contributions to Muller and Strom, 1999). Interestingly however, the great bulk of these studies are devoted to ideology and policy formation or coalition-building strategies. Where campaign strategies are considered, it is usually in the context of one or other of these things—how parties adapt their policy manifestos to appeal to different sections of the voting public (Loomes, 2013; Greene, 2012; Adams and Somer-Topcu, 2009), or how they position themselves relative to other potential coalition partners during the electoral process (Curtin and Miller, 2011; Luther, 2007; Szczerskiì, 2003). With a very few exceptions (Rommele, 2003; Gibson and Rommele, 2001) the question of how party goals might affect the strategising behind campaigning itself has rarely been addressed.

This is surprising, because the understanding that political actors might define success in different ways raises a host of fascinating questions about campaign behaviour. If it is no longer assumed that all parties are equally motivated by winning the greatest share of votes, then it must be asked what does motivate them, how these motivations vary between different types of parties, and how they affect parties’ choice of themes, messages, tools and tactics on the campaign trail. These questions are the primary drivers of this research project, and will be addressed in more detail shortly when discussing its specific research expectations.

Returning briefly to the literature on political parties, Harmel and Janda’s work runs parallel with that of such authors as Kirchheimer (1966), Panebianco (1988) and Katz and Mair (1995), who were focused on the organisational structure of parties and the evolution of their ideological orientations over time. Kirchheimer coined the term ‘catch-all parties’ to describe political organisations which pursued mass appeal by jettisoning traditional ideological baggage and moving towards the middle-ground in the post-war era (Kirchheimer, 1966: 190). According to Kirchheimer, vote maximisation was the primary goal of catch-all parties, and everything from

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their choice of leader to their selection of policy platforms was informed by this goal (Ibid). Panebianco suggested that by the 1970s and 1980s Western democratic parties had moved past this catch-all stage and towards an 'electoral-professional' model which saw them concentrate power and decision-making in the hands of a small group of seasoned political professionals (Panebianco, 1988: 264). Like catch-all parties, electoral-professional parties were believed to have vote maximisation as their primary goal, but where Kirchheimer saw catch-all parties continuing to concern themselves with governing between bids of office, Panebianco suggested that the modern electoral-professional party was solely focused on getting itself re-elected, even to the extent of using governing as a form of campaigning.

Katz and Mair (1995) built on Panebianco's work by suggesting that in systems dominated by a small number of powerful electoral-professional parties, these organisations morph into 'cartel parties' which work to maintain their collective grip on power and limit the growth of smaller or newer competitors. While cartel parties are motivated primarily by electoral success, they are also driven by the desire to protect the status quo and ensure that neither they nor their cartel partners are 'ever definitively 'out' (Katz and Mair, 1995: 22). Katz and Mair saw the development of cartel parties as the final stage in an evolutionary process that had begun with cadre parties (groups of elites formed to advocate for elite interests), and progressed through the development of mass parties (class-based organisations formed to advocate for the interests of the newly-enfranchised masses) towards the catch-all and then cartel models during the 19th and 20th centuries (Katz and Mair, 1995). While cadre and mass parties had goals beyond simple vote maximisation, Katz and Mair appear to believe that these models of party organisation have been supplanted by cartel parties and no longer exist in mature Western democracies.

Collectively, these models imply that pursuing vote maximisation to the exclusion of other objectives is a mark of maturity for political parties, as the catch-all, electoral-professional and cartel party forms are each seen as the most advanced stage in their respective typologies of party development. But does this mean that all modern parties are, first and foremost, oriented towards vote maximisation? The question of how closely these organisational models reflect the reality of party behaviour continues to be debated (for example, Marsh, 2006; Koole, 1996), while Harmel and Janda's more nuanced picture of party goals certainly appears to provide greater scope for understanding the behaviour of minor and special-interest parties. As shall

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shortly be seen however, many campaign scholars continue to work from the assumption that campaign behaviour is motivated by the desire to win the most votes.

Media rises, parties fall

The third significant stream of literature emerged from a combination of political marketing and party organisation studies, and has gradually morphed over time to form a significant area of campaign research in its own right. This literature is broadly grouped around the concept of campaign professionalisation, which suggests that the style, format and content of election campaigns has changed significantly over time as a result of evolving communication technologies, the decline of major political parties and changing social demographics.

One defining feature of the early works on campaign professionalisation is the desire to break the past down into a series of different eras or phases characterised by distinct features in the political and media landscape. Authors such as Swanson and Mancini (1996), Farrell (1996), Blumler and Kavanagh (1999), Norris (2000; 1997) and Wring (2001) have each proposed their own models which divide the past into several distinct phases. In their landmark study of global campaign styles Plasser and Plasser (2002) combined these models into one inclusive framework which identifies premodern, modern and postmodern phases of political communication, and so, by extension, of campaigning.

According to this framework, the premodern phase is dominated by political parties: they are the primary source and conduit for political information, they command an army of loyal and active grassroots members, and they can rely on relatively stable support from an electorate which is characterised by strong and enduring class-based cleavages (Bartle, 2001). In this phase, the dominant modes of political communication are personal and direct, including rallies, speeches, handbills and posters (Kavanagh, 1995). Opportunities for engaging voters through the media are limited to radio broadcasts and print advertising in partisan and mainstream newspapers, with the result that most people’s experience of election campaigning is based on personal contact with party-sponsored and managed activities (Norris, 2000). Further, because parties can generally rely on a stable share of voter support there is little need for intensive or aggressive campaigning to shift votes, and so campaigns are relatively low-budget and ad hoc affairs (Harrop, 2001). The authors of these models are somewhat vague on the timing and duration of their phases, but based on the features they describe it seems likely that—in established
democracies such as the US, UK and Australia at least—this premodern phase ran from the opening up of mass franchise to approximately the end of the Second World War.

All of the phased models agree that the next, modern stage was ushered in by the rise of the mass media after World War II, and particularly the advent of television. In this phase, voters primarily receive political information and messages through the media, rather than directly through parties and their partisans, and this fundamentally changes the nature of election campaigning. Parties and candidates must now focus on communicating with, and appealing to, a mass audience instead of a small, localised one, and they must pitch their activities and presentation to the TV cameras rather than flesh-and-blood voters (Kavanagh, 1995). Alongside this fundamental shift in technology, in the post-war era long-standing social cleavages were being replaced by more complex and varied networks of relationships, stripping parties of their traditional support bases and bringing about some increase in electoral volatility (Bartle, 2001).

With less rusted-on support and more votes up for grabs, scholars of professionalisation suggest that campaigning became increasingly important. Parties began planning their campaign activities more tightly to target key segments of the community, and spending more to reach them through avenues like television advertising and mass mailing. This increased the importance of senior strategists in party headquarters and diminished parties' reliance on activists on the ground, as well as creating new roles for external consultants with specialist experience in managing media-driven and marketing-oriented communication initiatives (Plasser and Plasser, 2002).

The duration of this modern phase is somewhat ambiguous, as although most authors agree it began immediately after World War II, the transition from this to the final, postmodern phase appears to have been an incremental one. That is to say, as the trends discussed above gathered pace throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and as different modes of communication and voter engagement emerged in the form of the internet, cable television and mobile telecommunications, they brought about a further shift in the political and communications environment. However, the line of demarcation between these two phases is not as stark as that between the premodern and modern phases because there was not a single, decisive factor such as the introduction of television which fundamentally altered the political landscape.
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The defining characteristics of the postmodern phase are more contested than the previous eras, principally because it is currently unfolding and so the long-term impacts of major developments—such as the rise of the internet and social media, or the apparent decline of party membership and identification—are far from clear. However, this phase is broadly characterised by a widening gulf between parties and the values that they once stood for, and a resulting approach to parties as products to be ‘sold’ like any other (Kavanagh, 1995). The decline in party identification observed in the modern era is believed to have accelerated to the point where few voters have fixed and reliable voting preferences, making a party’s campaign pitch crucial in attracting voter support. Because of this, parties are thought to have moved from a ‘selling’ approach which involves promoting the virtues of their ideologically-informed policies, towards a ‘marketing’ mode in which they monitor the preferences of a segmented and elaborately researched electorate and tailor their offerings accordingly (Stromback, 2007: 58). Declining party affiliation and the concentration of power at the top of parties has also hollowed out their branches and divisions, meaning that parties can no longer mobilise many grassroots supporters to campaign on their behalf. Instead, they must rely on a corps of paid, professional campaigners who lack any great commitment to the party’s core ideology, but who do possess highly specialised expertise in the vital campaign arts: polling, advertising production, media management and telemarketing (Friedenberg, 1997). Further, the fragmentation of the media landscape following the introduction of cable television, the internet and social media channels has limited the effectiveness of modern-era broadcasting approaches, with the result that parties increasingly campaign by narrowcasting: the targeting of very small and specific segments of the electorate with messages tailored to their interests (Delli Carpini and Williams, 2001; Graber, 2001). In this postmodern era, parties operate in a campaign mode throughout the political cycle, developing policies with an eye to their electoral appeal, maintaining a steady stream of narrowcast messages to key audiences, and drawing on opinion polls and focus groups to help determine their governing agenda (Savigny and Wring, 2009). Not surprisingly then, campaigning in the postmodern era is an incredibly expensive undertaking, and the costs continue to climb with each electoral contest (Johnson, 2001).

It should be clear from this brief outline that these phased models of campaign change are built on extensive theoretical foundations, which encompass such diverse topics as political identification and party decline/renewal, political marketing, party organisation, mediatisation and elite dominance of political representation. It is beyond the scope of this project to explore

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each of these foundation concepts and associated debates, particularly as they have been
extensively addressed by authors such as Dahl (1956), Kirchheimer (1966), Panebianco (1988),
and Stromback (2008). Instead, the above narrative about the evolution of the political and
communications landscape will be accepted at face value so that this thesis can focus on the
ideas about campaigning which sprang from it. Furthermore, despite some contention over the
details there is broad consensus within the literature that the political and social context of
elections has altered significantly in recent decades, so this project is not working on overly shaky
foundations in building from this assumption.

The authors discussed above were primarily interested in observing and cataloguing the changing
social, political and technological environment within which campaigns take place. Their focus
can thus be described as ‘outside-in’, as they were chiefly concerned with how the campaign
environment affects the choices of political actors. The unifying thesis of these authors is that
campaigners are, in many ways, victims of their environment because their choices and actions
are constrained by forces which are largely beyond their control.

In the last decade however, scholars with a specific focus on the mechanics of campaigning have
begun to take a more party-centred view, which looks at campaigns from the inside out. This
perspective, which was first advanced by Gibson and Rommele (2009; 2001), takes issue with the
representation of parties as passive victims of a campaign environment they cannot control.
Instead, the party-centred theory of campaign professionalisation emphasises the crucial significance of
party goals, resources and capabilities in guiding campaign strategy and delivery. Gibson and
Rommele’s work marks something of a break with past approaches to the study of campaigning,
and so provides a useful point of transition from this broad review of the influences of campaign
studies, to more campaign-specific theories and research.

The view from the inside: what we (think we) know about campaigning

Gibson and Rommele’s article opens with a concise rejoinder to the idea that changes in election
campaign styles can be attributed solely to the environment in which they take place. They write:

...it is clear that parties at some stage must be consciously involved in the uptake of
new campaigning. It is a process that involves extensive senior level decision making,

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organisational reform, and financial muscle—consultants have to be hired, polls and focus groups commissioned, and media training undertaken. Such a change could not simply be foisted on parties, but would require consent...beyond these logical objections however, if systemic factors were solely responsible for professionalisation then we would expect all parties to be at a similar stage in their use of [professionalised] techniques. The empirical evidence suggests, however, that there is considerable variance within party systems over the timing and pace of professionalised campaigning. (Gibson and Rommele, 2001: 35)

This statement sums up the central arguments of the party-centred theory of campaign professionalisation, but it is worth unpacking these in more detail.

Gibson and Rommele acknowledge that new media technologies and other environmental factors have led to changes in four key areas of party organisation and activity, including: the adoption of high-tech tools and tactics as well as the more intensive use of existing tools such as opinion polls and focus groups; a lengthening of the campaign period into one essentially continuous and permanent campaign incorporating more expensive, aggressive and attack-oriented activities; the use of more interactive and individualised modes of voter engagement; and the concentration of campaign effort and resources around the party leader (Gibson and Rommele, 2009). However, they suggest that these changes are only one part of a bigger story which must also encompass where parties have come from, and where they want to go.

Gibson and Rommele point out that if campaign strategies and activities were solely determined by environmental factors, then all political actors would be expected to do essentially the same things, in the same way, on the campaign trail. To test this, they developed a 10-point Campaign Professionalisation Index which can be used to measure the uptake of ‘professional’ tactics such as the use of polling and media management techniques within individual campaigns. Their instrument allows parties or candidates to be assigned a numerical score signifying their degree of professionalisation, to facilitate comparisons between parties in individual elections, across different countries, and over time. To demonstrate the instrument, Gibson and Rommele (2009) applied it to the 2005 German federal elections, while Stromback (2009), Nigmatov (2009) and Tenscher, Mykkanen and Moring (2012) have also applied it in Sweden, Russia and a four-country study of European Parliament elections respectively.
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Each of these studies found significant disparities in party behaviour in the 10 areas of campaign activity encompassed by the index. For example, Gibson and Rommele (2009) found that the CAMPROF scores for the parties contesting the 2005 German elections ranged from 27 for the Social Democratic Party to just 13 for the Green Party. Stromback (2009) similarly found that Sweden's Social Democrats ranked highest with a CAMPROF score of 20, while its Green Party also ranked lowest, scoring just 6. Nigmatov's study is particularly interesting as although it again found a wide gulf between the highest-scoring party (YABLOKO—21 points) and the lowest (Communist Party of Russia—6), it also showed that the winning United Russia party made very limited use of professional tools and tactics, scoring just 8 (Nigmatov, 2009). Finally, Tenscher, Mykkanen and Moring's study is slightly different from the previous three because they proposed revisions to the index which resulted in parties being given a percentage score rather than a simple numerical one. However, their results are notably similar to these other authors, as they found that parties demonstrated varying uptake of professional tools and tactics in each country studied (Tenscher, Mykkanen and Moring, 2012). Collectively, these findings provide valuable leverage for further research into differences in party campaign styles.

Gibson and Rommele suggest that such variation occurs because parties differ in both their willingness and their capacity to adopt more professional modes of campaigning, and draw on Harmel and Janda's (1994) work to argue that different factors provide a catalyst for the uptake of this depending on a party's specific goal orientation. They propose that in any given system, the most 'professional' campaign is likely to be run by a 'well-funded, right-wing party with significant resources and a centralised internal power structure that has recently suffered a heavy electoral defeat and/or loss of governing status.' (Gibson and Rommele, 2001: 37–38). This hypothesis has largely been borne out by the few CAMPROF studies conducted to date, although more research is needed to make this link definitive.

For the purposes of this research, Gibson and Rommele's formal hypothesis is less relevant than their suggestion that party campaign activity is, at least in part, a product of party goals and objectives. Although it has been 20 years since Harmel and Janda (1994) emphasised the variable goals of political actors, much of the available work on political campaigning either continues to assume that parties are primarily motivated by winning, or focuses on the external influences of their strategic decision-making (for example, Walter, van der Brug and van Praag, 2013; Maarek, 2011; Lees-Marshment, 2009; Norris, 1999). Authors such as Petrocik (1996), Rohrschneider

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(2002) and Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggi (2009) have provided in-depth analysis of the various strategic choices and actions parties must make when planning and delivering election campaigns, and each of these authors’ arguments will briefly be explored because they contribute a great deal to understanding of campaign inputs and outputs. But as shall be discussed, none of these authors has effectively addressed the role of party goals in driving campaign decision-making, and so all have missed an important opportunity to make sense of parties’ strategic thinking.

Looking first at the idea of issue ownership, Petrocik (1996) built on Budge and Farlie’s (1983a) selective emphasis concept by observing that parties and candidates do not enter election campaigns as blank slates. Rather, they carry with them associations and images which are linked to their record of performance on policy issues, their personal histories and interests, and the actions of their party over past governing cycles. Belanger and Meguid (2008) combine these perceptions under the name ‘issue reputations’, and suggest that parties enter the campaign arena with a mix of positive and negative ones. For example, the Australian Labor Party entered the 2010 Federal Election campaign with a reputation for positive management of industrial relations issues, having scrapped the unpopular WorkChoices program and introduced new workplace fairness standards. At the same time, it was dogged by a negative reputation on environmental issues and broader perceptions of truthfulness, as it had backed away from promised national action on climate change. Issue reputations can arise from single, decisive political events—such as Julia Gillard’s deposition of Kevin Rudd—or be formed over a long period of consistent policy advocacy and action—such as the Liberal Party of Australia’s history of support for small business. Where a party is strongly and favourably associated with a particular policy or issue, it is said that they ‘own’ that political territory to the exclusion of other actors, hence the term ‘issue ownership’ (Petrocik, 1996: 827).

Recognising that both they and their competitors have staked out different issue territory, Petrocik (1996: 825) suggests that parties try to ‘emphasise issues on which they are advantaged and their opponents are less well regarded’ when campaigning for office. He further suggests that they attempt to do this primarily through the techniques discussed earlier, including agenda setting, priming and framing. That is, by focusing attention on issues which they are positively associated with, parties attempt to prime voters to use competency on those specific issues as the basis of their voting choice. Further, moving the campaign battleground to territory where they

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are strong and their opponents are weak allows parties to frame the electoral choice as one between competence and incompetence, action or inaction, and so reduce complex policy differences to simple binary choices. Of course, parties will differ in their ability to effectively shape the campaign discourse based on factors such as the strength and durability of their issue reputations, the competing narrative efforts of their rivals, and external factors such as the state of the economy (Meguid, 2005). But Petrocik suggests that parties will at least attempt to fight the campaign on their most favourable turf.

Although it makes sense for parties to focus their campaign narrative and activities around issues they have ownership of, this would appear to be a reasonably conservative strategy which allows parties to consolidate support and shore-up their current position without necessarily affecting the status quo. If a party wants to significantly broaden its appeal or change its position in relation to other political actors, it surely needs to move out of the pigeonhole voters have placed it in by demonstrating competence or ability in different issue areas. Past research suggests that it may do this either by focusing on new topics which are not considered to be ‘owned’ by any party, or, more ambitiously, it can seek to muscle in on territory which is owned by its competitors.

For example, Blomqvist and Green-Pedersen (2004) have demonstrated that efforts by parties to take ownership of previously neutral or emerging issues can be highly disruptive for the political status quo. They studied the experience of parties in Norway, Denmark and Sweden as issues such as the European Union, immigration and private sector growth assumed increasing importance throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Because these issues had previously been considered less important than questions about the management of the welfare state and associated social welfare issues such as health and education, they were not seen to be ‘owned’ by any of the established parties. Blomqvist and Green-Pedersen show that party efforts to establish ownership over these issues occurred parallel with a period of unusually high electoral volatility in these countries, and particularly with a significant loss of voter support for previously-dominant social democratic parties. They suggest that this volatility came about because the emergence of these new issues, and the parties’ efforts to assert ownership over them, gave voters a range of new factors to consider when assessing the competence of well-known parties. In other words, the parties changed the way they were perceived by moving into new issue territory—sometimes for the better, but sometimes for the worse.

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Similarly, Kaufmann’s (2004) study of 10 US Senate elections found that Democrat and Republican candidates increased the number of voters defecting from their opponents to their own party when they campaigned on issues which were traditionally owned by those opponents. For example, Kaufmann cites the example of the former Ohio Governor, Republican George Voinovich, whose Senate campaign emphasised his personal record as ‘the Education Governor’ despite education being firmly within Democrat issue territory. Democratic voters switched to Governor Voinovich in far higher numbers than Republican voters defected to his opponent, suggesting that this strategy of tackling opposition ground was an effective one. After examining similar incidents of this strategy at work, Kaufmann concluded that it is possible for candidates to ‘outflank [their] opponents on their own issues if bolstered by a public record of attention to these issues’ (Kaufmann, 2004: 284). Holian (2004) similarly found that political actors can benefit from moving into opponent issue territory through his case study of Bill Clinton’s rhetoric on crime during the 1992 Presidential campaign. He suggests that law and order issues had been exclusively owned by the Republican Party since at least the 1960s, in part because of the Democratic Party’s moral and rhetorical struggles with support for the death penalty. Yet during the Presidential campaign Clinton effectively ‘stole’ ownership of this issue from the Republicans by emphasising his record of support for the death penalty as Governor of Arkansas, while simultaneously moving the rhetorical frame of the debate from punishment to prevention. Holian argues that Clinton’s personal record on the death penalty inoculated him against attacks that he was ‘soft on crime’, which gave him the space to promote the Democrats’ crime prevention approach without this affecting overall perceptions of his competence on the issue. Holian’s work reinforces Kaufmann’s finding that it is possible to steal issue territory from opponent parties, while also noting that it is possible to achieve this by re-framing the terms in which issues are discussed.

On a different note, Belanger and Meguid (2008) point out that in any given political context, there exists an additional category of ‘contested’ issues. These are issues on which different parties are rated relatively evenly in their capacity to deliver positive outcomes, and where perceived ownership may change hands relatively frequently depending on factors such as which party is on power and the specific policy initiatives announced by each. In their study of Canadian issue ownership dynamics, these authors found that a range of major issues were best described as ‘contested’ rather solidly and consistently ‘owned’ by any party, including crime and taxation.

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Together, these studies demonstrate that parties may not be limited to campaigning on issues they already own. Depending on their circumstances, they may also have the option of staking a claim on previously neutral territory, striving for the upper hand in contested issue space, or aggressively fighting opponents on their own issue turf. This is an important point, and one which shall be returned to shortly in discussing the research expectations of this project.

Turning next to the concept of the *mobilising-chasing continuum*, or what campaign practitioners might simply call ‘targeting’, Rohrschneider (2002) synthesises literature from spatial voting theorists, alignment studies and party organisation scholars to identify a series of critical trade-offs political actors face when deciding their campaign approach. He suggests these can be boiled down to the following five questions:

- to what extent do parties maximise votes or emphasise the representation of policies?
- to what extent do parties aim at mobilizing their core constituency or unaligned voters?
- to what extent do parties rely on ideological programs (policies) or modern technologies (polling) in designing an election appeal?
- to what extent do parties rely on a leader or (intra-party) constituencies in targeting voters?
- to what extent do parties view intra-party democracies as a symbolic component of the campaign message or a mechanical means to reach voters? (Rohrschneider, 2002: 376)

Depending on their decisions about these trade-offs, Rohrschneider suggests that parties come to occupy different positions along a theoretical continuum, from ‘mobilising’ voters to ‘chasing’ them. He writes:

At one polar end is the *mobilising* strategy, which 1) is motivated primarily by policies, 2) focuses on reaching core voters, 3) primarily relies on its ideological heritage, 4) predominately emphasises a party’s core constituencies, and 5) mainly views organisations as instruments to contact voters, not to attract new voters on the basis of attractive participatory opportunities. (Rohrschneider, 2002: 376)
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The *chasing* strategy represents the other end of the continuum, as it:

1) aims at maximising its vote share, 2) predominately aims at attracting unaligned voters, 3) mainly emphasises modern technology, not ideology, in designing an election message, 4) tends to emphasise leaders and 5) views organisational innovation as part of the campaign theme to increase a party’s electoral attractiveness. (Rohrschneider, 2002: 377)

While Rohrschneider’s analysis seems generally sound, one issue arises with his suggestion that chasing unaligned voters is the logical extreme of the continuum. In describing unaligned voters, Rohrschneider appears to be talking about those who have no fixed or constant voting preference—the famous ‘swinging voters’ in Australian political parlance, or US ‘independent’ voters. But in addition to these swinging voters, there also exists a category of voters who regularly support a particular party, but whose support may be soft or wavering at any given election because of dissatisfaction with that party’s performance, changes in their socio-economic status and other factors (Steel, 2010a). For example, at the 2011 New South Wales state election, many thousands of people who had exclusively supported Labor in the past switched their votes to the Coalition because of extreme dissatisfaction with the long-term incumbent government (Dusevic, 2011). For political parties, these defectors represent a different target group from unaligned or swinging voters, because their history of support for one party creates a psychological and social barrier for switching to another (Author interviews, 2013). Nevertheless, parties can and do target these voters—particularly in elections which are expected to result in a landslide loss for the governing party. As a result, this thesis argues that pursuing defectors or ‘non-supporters’ actually represents the end point of a fully chasing strategy. This assertion will be tested further when exploring the different parties’ targeting efforts in Part Three.

Rohrschneider (2002) suggests that parties’ choices about where to place themselves on this continuum may be influenced by institutional and environmental characteristics, by the strength of existing links to defined demographics and the relative significance of unaligned voters, and by structural factors such as party size and organisation. In this, his work partially overlaps with the party-centred theory of campaign professionalisation, as he recognises that the ideology, structure and capabilities of parties affect the way they run campaigns.

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However, he has overlooked an additional factor that would appear to be critical for party
decision-making (and which Gibson and Rommele do acknowledge). That is, strategic decision-
making about the targets of campaign activity is surely influenced by the specific goals or
objectives that a party wants to achieve, as much as it is by other external factors. In fact, in
outlining what fully-developed mobilising and chasing strategies would look like Rohrschneider
has hinted that these would achieve different outcomes and attract different audiences; his
definition of a mobilising strategy looks very much like one that would be favoured by a policy
maximising party, while his chasing strategy seems closely aligned with the goals of a vote
maximising one. Despite the closeness of fit in these cases however, Rohrschneider has not
made the conceptual leap of recognising party goals as a significant factor in determining where
parties place themselves on the mobilising-chasing continuum of campaigning. This is an
oversight that this project attempts to remedy through its exploration of campaign decision-
making.

This thesis frequently draws on Rohrschneider’s work on the mobilising-chasing concept, as this
framework appears to have been quite influential in the international literature on elections and
campaigning. His 2002 article has been cited by dozens of the other works consulted during this
project, and the trade-off between mobilising partisans and chasing unaligned voters appears to
have been widely accepted as one of the core strategic decisions parties must make (for example,
Lilleker and Jackson, 2013; Green-Pedersen, 2007; Karp, Bowler and Banducci, 2003). The
findings of this research challenge some of the core assumptions of Rohrschneider’s model and
the thesis concludes by suggesting a series of revisions to it. It is worth noting however that he
has also written extensively about other aspects of democratic representation and the electoral
process (for example, Rohrschneider, 2012; 2009; 2003), so that critique should be understood as
being confined to his specific predictions and formulations about the mobilising-chasing
continuum.

To briefly foreshadow one of these identified issues with the continuum, not everyone agrees
with Rohrschneider that party campaign strategists must choose one targeting strategy to the
exclusion of any other. Albright (2008: 713) states: ‘There is no obvious reason why campaigns
must focus either solely on mobilising the party’s base or on attempting to win the support of
cogitating, politically sophisticated independents. It is indeed most plausible that parties employ
an amalgamation of mobilising and chase strategies when carrying out a campaign.’ He further
suggests that because most modern-day parties do not have a sufficiently large base to win government in their own right, ‘a two-pillared strategy is therefore necessary. The first pillar focuses on animating the party base before and between campaigns in order to solidify long-term support. The second is based on issuing rationalist messages through the mass media directed towards independents’ (Ibid).

Albright’s work is also important because he directly challenged the idea that party campaigners are exclusively interested in winning, and tested this by interviewing 47 high-level politicians and campaign managers from across the political spectrum in Spain. He found that a majority of those interviewed were focused on maximising their party’s vote share, but that participants also identified other goals such as representing the interests of particular communities or regions, and advancing ideologically-informed policy programs; this was particularly true of regional and minor party strategists (Albright, 2008). He argues that while it is difficult to make any definitive claims from his relatively limited interview set, his findings suggest decisions about campaign strategy and targets may be influenced by multiple and varied goals.

Finally, in addition to highlighting issue emphasis and targeting as key areas of campaign decision-making, Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli (2009) also stress that parties face choices in relation to their communication repertoire. They argue:

In a given context, campaigners have learnt how to use a well defined set of communication routines which they apply in a standardised way. Such routines may be legally prescribed, but more often they are the result of informal rules that have been established over the course of the years. While fairly institutionalised, such routines are also subject to change as new channels become available thanks to technological change, or as new actors enter the fray who experiment with new techniques and who, if successful, are imitated by their competitors. (Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli, 2009: 349)

These authors suggest that parties can communicate campaign messages and information to voters through two channels: their own organisations and the media. Within each of these channels they also face a choice between direct and indirect communication methods. Examples of direct organisational communication channels may include printed flyers, direct mail, SMS and email—items produced by the party and distributed directly to individual voters. Direct
communication through the media primarily involves the use of paid advertising, as parties can control every aspect of the message, presentation and placement. Indirect methods of organisational communication may include the use of local activists to promote party messages within their communities, as well as rallies and other public events where campaign messages are transmitted to a mass audience. Indirect media communication takes place primarily through ‘earned’ media—unpaid spots on television news and in newspapers which are generated by the activities of the leader and candidates or policy announcements and promises (Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli, 2009: 351).

These authors further suggest that ‘the communication strategy of a given actor crucially depends on his resources’ (Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli, 2009: 352). In other words, parties make choices about which communication tools to employ, and when, based on the availability of financial, human and other resources. There are two issues with this statement: first, it ignores the role that strategic goals (whether vote-based or otherwise), play in decision-making about campaign communication strategy. This goes against the campaign professionalisation literature discussed above, which argues that the use of particular communication tools and channels is heavily linked to their value in mobilising, attracting and engaging target voters. A second, and related issue, is that their claim fails to acknowledge that the actual selection of communication tools is heavily value-laden. As Marshall McLuhan famously noted with his dictum that ‘the media is the message’, different communication formats convey implicit messages in their own right (McLuhan, 1964). These messages need to be consistent with a party’s more explicit campaign themes if they are to serve any strategic purpose. Take, for example, a left-leaning Green Party which wants to portray itself as different from elitist business-oriented parties and demonstrate its ethos of member participation. Such a party seems unlikely to invest in slick, high-rotation TV ads even if it could afford them, because this format carries associations which run counter to its primary campaign messages. It would seem far more likely to choose a grassroots strategy based on word-of-mouth advocacy, as this would reflect and reinforce its authenticity. This is not to say that resources do not play any role in determining parties’ selection of communication tools; cost is obviously one factor that decision-makers must consider in designing their campaign approach. But to suggest that it is the main factor influencing strategic decision-making is somewhat unconvincing.

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Thanks to the authors discussed above, it is clear that parties face a range of complex choices when they enter the campaign arena. They have to choose between fighting the campaign on their own issue territory, staking a claim on contested or unclaimed ground, or assertively moving into their opponent’s issue terrain. They must select their place on the continuum between mobilising and chasing by deciding which audiences to target, when and with what messages. And they must decide which mix of direct and indirect communication tools is most appropriate for the task from an evolving communications repertoire.

These concepts explain much about the what of party campaign decision-making, but frustratingly little about the why. As has been mentioned, this appears to be due to a continuing assumption that parties enter campaigns with the goal of winning. However, this overlooks the more nuanced picture of party goals that authors like Harmel and Janda (1994) have painted, in which vote maximisation is only one of several possible drivers of party decision-making. Further, the recent spate of CAMPROF studies have provided some early evidence that differing goal orientations (along with other structural and resource issues) determine parties’ uptake of the specifically ‘professionalised’ mode of campaigning; from this it can be inferred that goals may also affect other aspects of party strategy and decision-making. All of this suggests that it is worth looking far more closely at how parties define their goals when campaigning in elections, and how their specific goals influence strategic decision-making about their campaign approach—particularly their choice of issues, targets and communication repertoires.

Research expectations and hypotheses

Based on the existing literature and research discussed above, this thesis proposes two overarching research expectations and a series of specific hypotheses.

The first of these expectations is that parties will be found to enter campaigns with different ideas about what success looks like— that is, different goals. To frame these goals in Harmel and Janda’s terms, it is hypothesised that the major Labor and Liberal parties will identify themselves as vote-seekers, while established minor parties such as the Nationals and Greens will claim office-seeking as their goal. It is further hypothesised that micro parties such as Family First, Katter’s Australian Party and the Socialist Alliance will identify policy-seeking as their primary goal.
Importantly however, this thesis also hypothesises that for the major parties, the concept of vote seeking – or vote maximisation – is better conceptualised in more specific terms. These more specific goals are: to become (or continue as) the governing party, and to avoid an electoral wipe-out. The question of whether votes have an ‘intrinsic’ value or are only ‘instrumental’ towards some larger objective is a highly contested one in the existing goals literature (for example, Wolinetz, 2002; Muller and Strom, 1999; Laver and Schofield, 1998). Chapter Three has a good deal more to say on this point, but in laying out the above hypothesis about the more specific purposes vote-seeking may serve, this thesis is clearly aligning with the instrumentalist perspective.

Having explored the differing goals of political parties when campaigning, the second objective is to examine how these differences are linked to variance in campaign strategies. It stands to reason that if parties want different things, then the strategies they pursue to achieve this should also differ.

Based on this common-sense assessment, this thesis’s second research expectation is that parties with similar goals will be seen to make similar strategic decisions about the format, content and delivery of their campaigns, and ones which are substantively different from parties holding different goals.

In reference to the literature above, it is expected that this will be evident in a number of key areas, including:

- how the parties approach issue ownership in their selection of core campaign policies and themes. This thesis hypothesises that vote-seeking parties will primarily seek to fight their campaigns on their own favourable issue turf, but will also move into their competitors’ issue space if there is an opportunity to do. This is in line with Albright’s (2008) observation that major parties need to engage both their own base and others beyond this to maximise their vote share. It further proposes that office-seeking parties will stick firmly to their established niche by emphasising their ‘owned’ issues, because their goal can potentially be met with electoral support for their core voters alone. Finally, it is expected that policy-seeking parties will strike out into unclaimed issue space because drawing attention to new issues or agendas is often their reason for existing in the first place.
• where the parties can be placed on Rohrschneider’s mobilising-chasing continuum, based on their selection of target audiences, messages and the role of both the party leader and organisational membership.

In line with Rohrschneider’s description of what fully-realised mobilising and chasing strategies would look like (see pp.20-21 above), it is hypothesised that vote-seeking parties will strongly position themselves at the chasing end of this continuum to maximise new support. Office-seeking parties are expected to take the opposite approach and primarily seek to mobilise existing support, while policy-seeking parties may take up a position mid-way between these two poles because they are less likely to have a significant base of support and so need to pursue new voters to some extent.

• the parties’ selection of tools from the established campaign communication repertoire, based on the priority given to different internal and external, direct and indirect communication channels.

The hypothesis on this front is that vote-seeking parties will prioritise external and direct communication channels such as advertising, which they can exert a significant degree of control over and use to reach a very broad audience. As discussed above in our survey of trends in campaigning over the past 40 years, the ‘air war’ of large-scale advertising has long been a primary focus for major parties in communicating with the electorate. As such, it is expected that the vote-seeking parties in this project will also give priority to these particular tools and channels when choosing from the campaign communications toolkit. By contrast, this thesis hypothesises that office-seeking parties will draw more heavily on indirect communication such as public events and ‘earned’ media. This is partly a question of resources, as the types of minor parties who are expected to identify as office-seekers simply do not have the same kind of money as their major party counterparts. But it is also a question of public perception and standing – by holding public events and being featured on the nightly news, office-seeking parties are able to present themselves as serious political players. Finally, it is expected that policy-seeking parties will emphasise internal and direct forms of communication such as grassroots advocacy by party activists. Again, this acknowledges Kriesi, Bernhard and Hänggli’s point about the importance of resources, but also recognises that the kind of detailed (and sometimes controversial) policy ideas that these parties aim to advance are most effectively conveyed person-to-person by their passionate supporters.
If these research expectations and specific hypotheses prove correct, then it should be possible to propose some guidelines for predicting campaign behaviour based on a knowledge of party goals, or inferring party goals from observations of campaign behaviour.

This would not only provide campaign practitioners with some useful insights for anticipating the strategic choices of their political rivals, but might also help voters to make better sense of what lies behind the sound and fury of political campaigning. Ideally, this thesis aims to create a typology of campaign styles which synthesises all of the above theory into a single accessible framework identifying the strategic choices parties should make when they hold different goals.

The following sections and chapters explore the feasibility of developing such a typology by applying these important theories to real-world campaigns. To very briefly flag the key finding of this project, it does not appear possible to create any such typology to a level of specificity that would be meaningful for predicting future campaign activity.

This is because a) real-life parties do not always behave in the ways that the above theories predict they should, and b) environmental, resource and institutional factors exert a powerful influence over how parties behave in any given campaign. However, this thesis does find that parties with common goals demonstrate important similarities in the strategic thinking which sits behind their campaigns, even where this leads to different actions or outcomes. This distinction between overarching strategic thinking and on-the-ground campaign action will be explored in some depth as the thesis moves through the specifics of the chosen case study campaigns.

Campaigning in Australia

This thesis explores these significant research questions through analysis of Australian electioneering, and so it is important to briefly explore that specific political landscape. The following discussion focuses on what is already known about how Australian parties behave when campaigning; more general details of Australia's party system and electoral habits can be found in the work of authors such as McAllister (2011), Orr (2010a), Marsh (2006), Smith (2001) and Jaensch (1997).

The study of elections in Australia has broadly mirrored international patterns, in that for much of the 20th century researchers were focused far more on their outcomes—voter support and the

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influences of individual voting decisions—than on the art and science of running campaigns. Campaigning was considered to be if not irrelevant, then certainly not very significant, as the combination of compulsory voting and entrenched party identification across generations meant that Australians could be relied upon to turn out and vote in fairly predictable and unchanging ways. However, from the 1960s onwards Australia began to see the same decline in party identification observed around the world (Marsh, 2006; McAllister, 1992; Jaensch, 1989; Aitkin, 1977), and this led to a greater focus on how parties use the electoral process to re-connect with disengaged supporters and persuade unaligned voters. Gough Whitlam’s 1972 It’s time campaign kicked off a particular interest in the mechanics of Australian campaigning, as it was widely seen as the first modern, professional and national political campaign.¹

Seeing the Australian Labor Party reverse more than a decade of voter distrust and reenergise the political landscape in the course of a single well-funded and tightly-disciplined campaign caused Australian researchers to look more closely at what happens before, during and in-between elections, and this revealed that Australian campaigning was undergoing a similar process of professionalisation to that observed overseas. As Mills (2013; 1986) notes, throughout the 1970s and 1980s the Labor and Liberal Parties progressively moved away from grassroots campaigns run by enthusiastic amateurs, and towards a more corporate approach which placed full-time, paid party staffers at the centre of a network of commercial campaign operatives selling advertising, direct mail, telephone, media and polling services. By the mid-2000s, Young (2004: 50) suggests that these parties had become ‘centralised and professionalised to within an inch of [their lives]’, and addicted to polling and tracking techniques which allow for sophisticated targeting of key voters in marginal seats. Mirroring the international literature discussed above, Ward (2006) argues that this shift from amateur to professional campaigning initially came about as a means of compensating for a decline in party membership and active participation, but accelerated significantly once party powerbrokers realised they could run more disciplined and strategic campaigns over the airwaves than through messy, time-consuming and untrackable grassroots activities.

¹ As Mills (1986: 88) notes, the Liberal Party’s 1949 campaign effort to elect Robert Menzies should more accurately be recognised as Australia’s first modern campaign, as that party was the first to bring commercial advertisers and marketers into the campaign team and employ broadcast media persuasion on a mass scale through the innovative John Henry Austral radio serial.
There is an extensive literature cataloguing this progressive professionalisation and the diverse campaign practices it has lead to. Authors such as Goot (2012; 2005a; 2005b; 2002), Mills (2012; 1986) and Ward (2003; 1993) have explored how polling informs and guides party campaign strategies, while Senior (2007; 2006), Young (2008; 2006; 2003) and Younane (2011; 2008; 2007)—amongst others—have delved into the complexities of political communication, campaign messaging and media management. More policy-minded researchers such as MacDermott (2008), Orr (2011; 2010b) and van Onselen and Errington (2007; 2005; 2004) have explored how Australian parties both benefit from the institutional context within which election campaigns take place, and shape this to their advantage, while authors including Chen (2011; 2010; 2008), Flew (2008a; 2008b) and Macnamara (2011; 2008) have shone a spotlight on the role of online technologies and social media in helping parties target increasingly narrow segments of the electorate and capture younger voters during their formative political years. All of this research has helped to paint a rich picture of how Australian parties campaign at the aggregate level. Past authors have clearly described what Australian campaigns look like, who directs and delivers them and roughly what their individual components are. It is well understood that parties target particular voters in certain seats at strategic times, through carefully-chosen channels and with messages that have been deliberately designed to push the right emotive or cognitive buttons. However, there is still much that is not known about why or how Australian parties decide which voters, channels or messages are the right ones in the first place, because the literature discussed above generally makes two common assumptions.

Firstly, much of the Australian literature on campaigning (and elections more generally) suffers from what Mayer (1980) called 'big party chauvinism'—the assumption that only the Labor and Coalition parties really matter. This is perhaps due to the strong and enduring two-party nature of Australian electoral politics; since the modern-day Liberal Party came into being in 1944, either it, its National Party coalition partner or the Australian Labor Party has won every single state, territory and federal election (University of Western Australia, 2012). Furthermore, with the exception of a handful of occasions these parties have generally formed majority governments (Horne, 2010), leaving minor parties and independents with little opportunity to hold the balance of power or participate in governing coalitions. When discussing party behaviour and campaign strategy then, there is a tendency to view the major parties as the only real contenders, and relegate minor parties to 'a collective other' (Jaensch and Mathieson, 1998: 4), a group of 'vague idealists and soft utopians' (Mayer, 1980: 345) who are not important enough
to be analysed alongside their big party counterparts. Interestingly, the Australian Greens have managed to move out of this category and earn a place alongside the established major parties in recent scholarly works (for example, Simms and Wanna, 2012; Rootes, 2008; Gibson and Ward, 2002), as the now largely defunct Australian Democrats did before them (for example, Bean and Kelley, 1995; Ward, 1982). By and large though, studies of Australian campaigning are really just studies of Australian major party campaigning, which perhaps explains the prevalence of the second common assumption: that winning in the only goal that drives campaign behaviour.

As with the international literature, this assumption is rarely made explicit but becomes evident in a range of different ways. For example, the often-expressed view that minor parties only do well when there is significant frustration and disillusionment with the two major parties points to a fairly one-sided understanding of what parties can achieve through campaigning (for example, McAllister, 2003; Butler, 1973); while the language of many studies suggests that the possibility of alternative goals has not even been considered (for example, Denemark and Bowler, 2002; Marks and Bean, 1992; McAllister, 1992). This is perhaps unsurprising given that Australian elections are dominated by just two (or three) large parties who, by most accounts, are very focused on winning. But it also means that the existing explanations for campaign behaviour generally, and minor party behaviour specifically, are somewhat unsatisfying.

A handful of authors have gone some way towards recognising this: Jaensch and Mathieson (1998) suggest that policy advocacy, institutional reform and longevity within the two-party dominant system are alternative markers of 'success' for Australian minor parties, while Chalmers and Hutchison (1983: 125) suggest that such parties may see their purpose as 'educating and raising new issues' and 'mobilising people not normally interested in politics', rather than garnering strong electoral support. Further, Smith (2006) has identified a range of special and sectional interests that minor parties and independents have been able to represent despite rarely breaking into Australian parliaments, including class interests (the Communist Party, Socialist Alliance), race and national identity issues (Australians Against Further Immigration, Unity), environmental concerns (Nuclear Disarmament Party) and values issues (Call to Australia, Christian Democratic Party). He cites a number of cases where these organisations have deliberately used election campaigning 'as part of their arsenal for influencing governments', and suggests that such parties are truly successful when they expand the range of ideas and issues discussed in mainstream politics, whether or not this is achieved by winning.
seats (Smith, 2006: 100–101). Using Australian state elections as the project’s case set will allow more detailed exploration of the motivations and behaviours of Australian minor parties through questioning a range of them about their goals. By doing this, the thesis will contribute some empirical data to discussions which are more often abstract than concrete, and which rarely include the actual views of minor party actors.

Secondly, just as scholars are wrong to treat political parties as unitary actors, it is naïve to treat Australia’s federated national parties as single entities with a consistent interest in winning above all else, as many of the authors discussed above have done. State Labor or Liberal parties may each campaign in ways designed to maximise their vote share, but does that mean they necessarily share the same goals? As foreshadowed in the preceding section, this research proceeds from the premise that winning the greatest number of votes possible is an instrumental goal rather than an intrinsic one; that is, something which helps parties achieve a wider purpose rather than being valuable in its own right (Muller and Strom, 1999). Wider goals served by maximising vote share may include gaining or maintaining the right to govern, securing a mandate for contested policy reforms, gaining the capacity to re-shape political, social or economic institutions, and providing effective opposition to a dominant government, amongst other things. In the process of exploring this issue the thesis will examine whether individual branches of Australia’s large national parties share the same goals or pursue different ones, adding new layers to existing knowledge about these key political actors.

In short, this project contributes to understanding of Australian politics by generating new insights on what drives campaign decision-making both within major parties and their minor party counterparts. The findings detailed in parts Two and Three go a long way towards explaining why and how Australian parties decide that particular voters, channels and messages matter, and how those decisions feed into the campaigns which are served up to the public. They are particularly significant because they shed light on the why of campaigning, amongst an Australian literature that has often been more focused on the what.

Where to from here
The coming chapters explore the issues discussed above by looking first at the question of party goals, and then at the content, form and delivery of campaigns. The next chapter provides an

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Chapter One—Ideas and influences

outline of the case studies selected as the focus of this analysis, and the methodologies used to undertake it.

Following this, Part Two explores how those involved in planning and delivering political campaigns approach this work, and in particular, how they articulate their goals. Chapter Three reports on the findings from interviews with 52 Australian campaign managers, politicians and candidates, and discusses how these findings relate to the existing literature on party goal orientations. Chapter Four highlights the links these interviewees reported between their goals and their strategic thinking, and also explores the information inputs which informed their strategy design.

Part Three then provides an in-depth analysis of these parties’ campaign strategies, with individual chapters looking at the similarities and differences in the strategies adopted by parties with common goals. Finally, Part Four weaves the strands of this project together by exploring what this analysis adds to the international picture of party campaign behaviour, as well as how it extends understanding of the Australian political landscape.
Cases and methods

To explore the question of party goals and their influence on campaign strategies, this project proceeded along two distinct avenues of enquiry. This chapter broadly maps out these avenues and explains the methods and case studies used to traverse them. It also explores the strengths and weaknesses of these chosen methods, and provides important contextual details to establish the backdrop against which the elections in this case set were fought. At the conclusion of this chapter, readers will be fully equipped to embark on an in-depth exploration of the objectives Australian political parties pursue by competing in elections, and how these influence the strategic choices they ultimately make.

Unearthing party goals

The first avenue of research pursued in this project was to identify the individual goals that parties held upon entering the campaign arena—in short, how they defined success. Speaking directly with party representatives was considered the most effective way to gain these insights, but this raised the question of which actors are best able to speak for political parties, and who ultimately determines their goals. As Muller and Strom (1999: 12) acknowledge, there is a tendency in political science literature to treat parties as ‘unitary actors, as if each party were a person’. The reality—as these authors note—is more complicated, as political parties are made up of individuals who may have distinctly different ideas about their goals and purpose, as well as the best strategies to achieve these. Further, these individuals are grouped together into at least three internal constituencies: the party in public office (parliamentarians), the party in central office (paid party staffers) and the party on the ground (grassroots members) (Katz and Mair, 1993). Various authors have noted that these internal constituencies face different pressures and incentives when undertaking party work (Carty, 2004; Mair, 1995; Panebianco, 1988), and so could also be expected to have different ideas about the party’s goals and strategies. Researchers such as Luther (2011) and Jackson (2011) have addressed this issue by interviewing several dozen members of the same party and aggregating their views. However, such an approach was not feasible for this project because it would have severely restricted the number of parties that could be analysed. Also, Muller and Strom acknowledge that although parties are not unitary actors, they do have ‘oligarchic tendencies’ which result in critical decisions being made by just a handful of people in senior leadership positions (Muller and Strom, 1999: 13). On this basis, scholars such as Gibson and Rommele (2009) have limited their interviewing to party...
secretariat heads, arguing that these individuals are charged with pursuing agendas which have been negotiated and agreed between senior representatives of all three party wings. This approach has the advantage of being far more achievable, but it is also unlikely to pick up on information about competing goals and agendas which may be critical for understanding strategic decisions made on the campaign trail. For this reason, it seemed important to interview more than one party representative where possible, and particularly to seek out the views of representatives from the different party wings.

In particular, capturing the views of both the party in central office and the party in public office seemed critical to understanding party goals and campaign behaviour. The literature discussed in Chapter One suggests that campaign strategy is a product of negotiation between these two groups; the hollowing out of party branches combined with the increasing professionalisation of campaigning means that the party on the ground now has little say in setting either broad goals or strategies for their day-to-day pursuit (for example, Norris, 1997; Swanson and Mancini, 1996; Blumler and Kavanagh, 1999). This project therefore drew on the views of campaign managers and party leaders (whether currently in parliament or unelected) to gain insight into party goals and the influences of party strategic decision-making, but did not seek the views of grassroots members or supporters. When reference is made to a particular party’s goals or the factors which shaped its campaign thinking then, this means the goals and influences reported by the party oligarchs. It must be acknowledged that these views may not have been shared by every other member of their party, however they do provide a sufficient snapshot of internal thinking for this project’s purposes.

One further qualification is necessary in relation to the term ‘goals’. Political parties generally have broad and varied goals, ranging from the very aspirational and long term—such as overthrowing the capitalist economic hegemony—to the concrete and mundane—such as hitting specific fundraising targets. It is beyond the scope of this project to identify and catalogue all of these goals, although this would make an interesting research project in its own right. This project is focused on the specific goals that parties entered an election campaign with; or what they hoped to achieve by going through the process of nominating candidates, communicating with the electorate, promoting policies and carrying out the myriad of other tasks that modern-day political campaigning involves. These goals may be broad and altruistic—driving an agenda for national action on climate change—or narrow and self-serving—winning the requisite

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number of seats to dominate the parliament. This thesis does not make judgements about the worthiness of these goals or explore how and why the parties arrived at these (for an in-depth discussion of these processes, see Muller and Strom, 1999). Its focus is simply on teasing out what these goals were and exploring their relationship to the campaign strategies that the parties choose to adopt.

Observing campaign strategy
In keeping with this focus, the second avenue of research involved tracking party activity to gain a detailed understanding of individual campaign decision-making and strategies. The literature on campaigning suggests that strategy encompasses decisions about target audiences, messages and themes, the use of specific voter engagement and communication tools and channels, the division of roles between the party leadership and membership, and much more besides (for example, Green and Gerber, 2008; Trent and Friedenberg, 2008; Stockwell, 2005). While it is impossible to reconstruct a party’s entire campaign strategy from external observation of its activities, it is possible to draw some reasonable conclusions about the components mentioned above by analysing party campaign materials, contemporaneous media reportage, and internal documents such as post-campaign review reports. These conclusions can then be compared with first-person accounts from the campaign managers and party leaders to test their robustness and identify important discrepancies or differences. This approach has successfully been employed by campaign researchers such as Tenscher, Mykkanen and Moring (2012), Stromback (2009) and Nigmatov (2009), and has also been used to inform this project’s discussion of party goals and campaign strategy.

Finding the right cases
Having identified some suitable methods for exploring these issues, a question then arose about which campaigns to apply these methods to. Party actors rarely share insights about their goals or strategies for upcoming elections, which limited the field to campaigns which had already passed. However, these campaigns needed to be relatively recent to ensure that the recollections of the key campaign actors were still fresh and that campaign documents and materials were readily available.

For these reasons, the five most recent Australian state elections were chosen as the case set for this project—the 2010 South Australian and Victorian elections, the 2011 New South Wales

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election, the 2012 Queensland election and the 2013 West Australian election. Although the 2010 Tasmanian state election was originally also included in this data set and interviews with relevant Tasmanian parties were conducted towards this, it quickly became clear that Tasmania’s Hare-Clarke, multi-member electoral system generated distinctly different strategic imperatives for parties which were not replicated in the other states. The primary distinction between Hare-Clarke elections and those in the other Australian states is that party candidates compete against each other for seats in the parliament as well as against candidates from other parties. In Tasmania, for example, the Labor, Liberal and Green parties all stand a full ticket of five candidates for each of the five state electorates. With the major parties historically only winning between two and three of the seats within each electorate and the Greens winning no more than one, any given candidate must conquer their party comrades as well as those from other parties in order to win a spot.

In practical terms, this means that each party’s campaign effort is much less centralised and cohesive than in other Australian states, as candidates make individual decisions about what will help or harm their chances. For example, in past Hare-Clarke elections in both Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory, candidates from the same party have been observed to make very different use of the party leader in their own materials depending on their personal level of popularity and visibility in the electorate. They have also been seen to adopt their own colours and branding rather deploying the standard party brand, and make other choices along these lines which are designed to help them stand out from their party colleagues.

This makes Hare-Clarke elections fascinating for anyone interested in the dynamics of candidate and party office relationships during elections. However, this research primarily addresses the strategic decision-making which sits behind a party’s overarching, state-wide campaign. It is much more difficult to determine what that strategic thinking is in Hare-Clarke campaigns because of this complexity added by intra-party candidate competition and the differing strategic decisions that candidates may therefore make for themselves. For a more detailed discussion of the challenging strategic dynamics of Hare-Clarke campaigning, see Hallaj (2012). For the purpose of this research, it was ultimately decided to exclude the Tasmanian case from the data set, because comparing Hare-Clarke campaigns with those run in the single-member systems used in the other Australian states is simply not comparing like with like. There remains a very

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interesting work to be written on the many ways that these different institutional contexts shape the strategic imperatives of political parties campaigning within them.

Working with this specific set of five campaigns offers a number of advantages, not least of which is the fact that all of these elections took place in a single country context, within very similar electoral systems and over a relatively short period of time. This largely removed the need to control for cultural, institutional and technological differences when comparing party campaign activity, as would be the case when comparing elections in different countries or over a longer period of time. However, there were some institutional and regulatory differences which emerged as significant in the course of this research, and so the specifics of each state’s arrangements are detailed in Table 1.

Importantly too, each of these elections were contested by the state branches of Australia’s federated national parties—the Australian Labor Party, the Liberal Party of Australia, the National Party and The Greens—as well as a number of state-based minor parties and independent candidates such as Katter’s Australian Party, the Australian Sex Party, Family First and the Socialist Alliance. This allowed for interesting comparison of major and minor party goals and strategy, and ensured that this analysis captured a reasonable mix of political philosophies and organisation styles, as well as both established and much newer parties. Table 2 provides a brief summary of the key background details for each of these campaigns; further details will also be provided as necessary throughout the coming discussion.
## Table 1—Institutional features of Australian state parliaments and electoral systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>No. seats in parliament</th>
<th>Electoral system</th>
<th>Voting</th>
<th>Reporting requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>59 Legislative Assembly 36 Legislative Council</td>
<td>Legislative Assembly members elected by single transferrable vote to single member electorates 6 x Legislative Council members elected by proportional representation to each of 6 regions</td>
<td>Compulsory</td>
<td>All parties required to lodge election-specific returns detailing donations and expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>89 Legislative Assembly</td>
<td>Legislative Assembly members elected by single transferrable vote to single member electorates No upper house</td>
<td>Compulsory</td>
<td>All parties required to lodge election-specific returns detailing donations and expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>93 Legislative Assembly 42 Legislative Council</td>
<td>Legislative Assembly members elected by single transferrable vote to single member electorates State serves as single electorate for Legislative Council; 21 of 42 council seats up for election by proportional representation at each state election</td>
<td>Compulsory</td>
<td>All parties required to lodge election-specific returns detailing donations and expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>88 Legislative Assembly 40 Legislative Council</td>
<td>Legislative Assembly members elected by single transferrable vote to single member electorates 5x Legislative Council members elected by proportional representation to each of 8 regions</td>
<td>Compulsory</td>
<td>None — Victorian parties only required to comply with federal electoral reporting requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>47 Legislative Assembly 22 Legislative Council</td>
<td>Legislative Assembly members elected by single transferrable vote to single member electorates State serves as single electorate for Legislative Council; half of 22 council seats up for election by proportional representation at each state election</td>
<td>Compulsory</td>
<td>None — South Australian parties only required to comply with federal electoral reporting requirements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by author from Electoral Act 2002 (Victoria); Electoral Act 1992 (Queensland); Electoral Act 1985 (South Australia); Electoral Act 1907 (Western Australia); Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 (New South Wales)

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## Table 2—Background details for thesis case study campaigns, 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Election date</th>
<th>Party in power at time of election</th>
<th>Length of term in office</th>
<th>Premier at time of election</th>
<th>Opposition leader at time of election</th>
<th>Minor parties included in data set</th>
<th>Overall result</th>
<th>Lower house seat result</th>
<th>Upper house seat result</th>
<th>Notable outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>9 March 2013</td>
<td>Liberal National Coalition</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Colin Barnett (LIB)</td>
<td>Mark McGowan (ALP)</td>
<td>Australian Christians The Greens The Nationals Liberal win LIB 31 ALP 21 NAT 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Liberals earned government in own right without Nationals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>24 March 2012</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>14 years</td>
<td>Anna Bligh (ALP)</td>
<td>Campbell Newman (LNP)</td>
<td>Katter's Australian Party The Greens Liberal National win LNP 7 ALP 7 IND 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of ALP MPs reduced to just 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>26 March 2011</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>Kristina Keneally (ALP)</td>
<td>Barry O'Farrell (LIB)</td>
<td>Christian Democratic Party Family First Socialist Alliance The Greens The Nationals Coalition win LIB 51 ALP 20 NAT 18 GRN 1 IND 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ALP's worst electoral result in NSW in over 100 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>27 November 2010</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>John Brumby (ALP)</td>
<td>Ted Baillieu (LIB)</td>
<td>Australian Sex Party Country Alliance Family First Socialist Alliance The Greens The Nationals Coalition win LIB 35 ALP 43 NAT 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coalition won office by a slim two-seat majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>20 March 2010</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>Mike Rann (ALP)</td>
<td>Isobel Redmond (LIB)</td>
<td>Dignity 4 Disability Family First The Greens The Nationals ALP win ALP 26 LIB 18 IND 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Liberals won popular vote but failed to win a majority of seats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by author from state electoral commission resources and media reportage

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Chapter Two—Cases and methods

Original data—collection and analysis

In line with the discussion of methods above, a mix of approaches were employed to collect and analyse this project’s original data on party goals and campaign strategies.

Semi-structured interviews were used to question party representatives about their goals and campaign activities. The aim was to speak with the most senior person available and willing to participate from both a party’s campaign headquarters and their parliamentary leadership (or candidate team). This represented a purposive sampling approach, in which participants were selected ‘on the basis of known characteristics...which relate to factors such as experience, behaviour, roles, etc relevant to the research topic’ (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 108). This approach does not seek to produce a statistically representative sample group, and no attempt is made to control for factors such as gender, age or professional background. Rather, the aim is to gather qualitative insights from a collection of individuals who were the central actors in the activity being studied. In practice, this meant that the interview participants were predominantly male, exclusively Anglo-European and aged between 30 and 60—an issue which is discussed further in Chapter Ten.

To begin with, five scoping interviews were conducted with prominent past and current Australian campaign personalities. Each of these individuals had worked on multiple campaigns over several decades for either the Labor or Liberal parties, and was selected on the basis of their broad experience across several different facets of campaigning. In speaking with these individuals, the aim was to test some of the assumptions and ideas in the academic literature against the lived experience of real campaigners, and identify important gaps, challenges or inconsistencies through this.

To engage participants for the project’s formal case set, an initial approach list was then drawn up which identified the campaign director and leader or lead candidate of each party contesting lower house seats at the five chosen elections. Parties which only fielded candidates for the upper house were excluded from this study, as it was expected that the unique dynamics of upper house contests would make the strategic imperatives of these parties too different to reasonably compare with those running candidates in both houses.
Importantly, each state branch of the federated national parties was approached as an individual entity, so that, for example, the initial contact list featured five sets of Australian Labor Party representatives. This is because the various branches of Australia’s political parties operate largely independently of each other in the context of state elections, and so a representative from any one state would not necessarily have an in-depth knowledge of what went on in any other.

Each of the individuals on this initial contact list were approached by email as the first point of contact, with multiple follow-up phone calls and emails then being necessary to secure their participation. Where these key people were unavailable or unwilling to participate, subsequent approaches were made to their deputies and other members of the campaign team/parliamentary leadership until a willing participant could be identified. For the Labor, Liberal, Green and National parties, both a party office representative and a parliamentary one participated in 12 out of 19 cases, with a representative of either the parliamentary or party wings being interviewed in the other six cases. In these cases, additional information on the party’s goals and objectives was sought through public channels such as media reportage and post-election party documents, to check that the views expressed by the single interviewee were not wildly divergent with the views of their wider party leadership. In all cases, this open-source material broadly reinforced the information provided through the interviews.

While the initial intention was to also interview representatives from the two wings of each minor party, it quickly became apparent that a) many minor party lead candidates either could not be located or had severed their association with the party in acrimonious circumstances, and b) the campaign structures of these parties were such that candidates had little, if any, involvement in the kind of strategic decision-making addressed in this project. For that reason, efforts were concentrated on securing the participation of the most senior party office representative available—many of whom did also actually run as candidates in the relevant campaigns. Where these minor parties did have parliamentary representatives, or where the senior candidates could be contacted and were willing to participate, interviews were also

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2 The average number of follow-up contacts required was three, although several particularly reticent figures required six or more separate contacts before agreeing to participate. This point is worth bearing in mind for other researchers interested in pursuing interviews with campaign practitioners—persistence in the face of an apparently-closed door is often needed.

3 The Liberal Party of Australia was notably more reluctant to participate in this study than other parties—of the six state offices contacted, only three were willing to be involved. By comparison, all six of the Australian Labor Party and Australian Greens state branches and the three Nationals state branches chose to participate.
conducted with these representatives, but this was a minority of cases. Of the 16 minor parties approached for interview, participation was secured from 13.

A further seven interviews were conducted with Tasmanian major and minor party representatives, although these were ultimately excluded from the data set once the decision was made not to proceed with the 2010 Tasmanian election case study. In total then, this thesis reports primarily on findings from interviews with 52 representatives of 32 Australian political parties. A review of available literature suggests that this is the most extensive collection of in-depth, face-to-face interviews conducted with Australian party representatives for a single research project to date. What's more, it incorporates the broadest range of Australian political parties ever consulted for a project of this kind, as previous authors have generally restricted their work to either major or minor parties, rather than considering both together as this research does.

A number of the interviewees were only willing to participate on condition of anonymity, and for that reason, all participants have been de-identified in this thesis. For the purposes of reporting the content of the interviews, each participant has been assigned a unique code which identifies their state (e.g. NSW), party (e.g. ALP) and whether they were a representative of the party headquarters (HQ), the parliamentary leadership (PL) or a senior candidate for a non-parliamentary party (SC). Thus, the identifier NSW-PL-ALP signifies that the interviewee was a member of the NSW ALP parliamentary leadership, while VIC-HQ-GRN signifies a senior staff member of the Victorian Greens’ campaign headquarters.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen over a formal interview or questionnaire format because this component of the research was less concerned with what parties actually did in their campaigns than in what the campaign planners thought about this, and what their influences or constraints were. Semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity to follow interesting tangents and delve into the impressions or views of the participants, while still ensuring that the material generated could be subjected to comparative analysis. As such, each interview was based upon a common list of questions which aimed to tease out information about the party’s goals and strategic thinking, however discussions also diverged from this where necessary (See Appendix One for question list).

4 The Australian political community is a small pool, and it would be easy to identify some of those who requested anonymity by looking at the types of roles occupied by those participants who were happy to be named.

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Chapter Two—Cases and methods

Following approval from the ANU’s Human Ethics Committee (HREC Protocol 2012/203) these interviews took place primarily in Australia’s state capitals between September 2012 and October 2013. Where possible, the interviews were conducted in blocks so that all participants from a particular election were interviewed within the same two-week period. Each interview was held at a location of the participant’s choosing, and these ranged from private homes to parliament offices, party secretariats and public service departments. A small number of the participants were not available for face-to-face meetings, and so these interviews were conducted by phone and in one case, by email.

In preparation for these interviews, document-based research was carried out to clearly establish the context of each campaign: what the key political issues were both in the lead-up to, and during, the campaign period, what the mood of the electorate was in relation to the incumbent government and their challengers, what each party did on the campaign trail, and what the final results were. This primarily involved examining contemporaneous media reporting, official records such as state electoral commission filings, and any scholarly analysis produced after the fact. The purpose of this background research was to establish a clear picture of the events under discussion before the semi-structured interviews were conducted, so that these could then focus on information which was unique or specific to the participants.

Each interview was scheduled to last for one hour, although actual interview times ranged from 30 minutes for some sitting Parliamentarians, to over 90 minutes for some former leaders and campaign managers. With the consent of the participants, most interviews were digitally recorded, and detailed notes were also taken as a failsafe.

These interviews were then manually transcribed by the researcher, and analysed to identify common patterns and themes relating to the participants’ perspectives on campaigning, their objectives and their strategic choices about campaign delivery. The key findings from these interviews are detailed in chapters Three and Four.

As a research methodology, elite interviewing clearly has both advantages and drawbacks. As Lilleker (2003, p.208) notes, interviews: ‘provide insights into events about which we know little: the activities that take place out of the public or media gaze, behind closed doors. We can learn

\[5\] The following interviews were conducted by phone: WA-PL-LIB; QLD-PL-LNP; QLD-HQ-LNP; NSW-PL-ALP
\[6\] The following interview was conducted by email: NSW-PL-FF

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more about the inner workings of the political process [and] the machinations between influential actors.' Furthermore, interviews generate rich insights into real people’s experiences, perspectives and beliefs, resulting in data which is ‘warm and vivid’ rather than ‘dull and clinical’ (Seldon, 1988, as quoted in Richards, 1996, p.200). For a topic such as that which forms the focus of this thesis – campaign strategy – interviews are generally the only way to access certain information about party activity because this is simply not published or made available anywhere else.

However, it must be acknowledged that interviewing presents a number of methodological challenges, and interviewing political elites, even more so. Firstly, the information gained through interviews is highly subjective, and represents a single individual’s recollection or perception of events rather than some empirical set of ‘facts’ (Pierce, 2012). The different participants in an event or activity may recall it in multiple ways, with the researcher then needing to make judgments about where the truth lies. Furthermore, interview participants may intentionally mislead the interviewer about sensitive topics or tailor the information provided to present themselves, their organization or group in a positive light (Barakso, Sabet and Schaffner, 2014). This is particularly true of public elites such as politicians and party representatives, who operate within a highly partisan environment and have strong professional and personal incentives to ‘talk up’ their activities and achievements (Berry, 2002). For this reason, Pierce (2012) argues that researchers must continually ask themselves a set of questions about the reliability of their interviewees, including: who is this person? What role did they actually play in the events under discussion, and what conversations, documents and information were they feasibly party to? What would be motivating them to share this information? Keeping these questions in mind both during interviews and when analysing the content gained through them can help researchers maintain a level of critical distance from their subject material. Pierce (2012) also notes that it is important to seek out multiple views and sources to corroborate information provided by any single interviewee.

At a more abstract level, Mycoff (2012) points out that meaningful interviewing depends on the interviewer and interviewee having a shared understanding of the terms and concepts under discussion. If these two actors do not define key terms in the same way, or conceptualise significant issues within different intellectual, ethical or historical frameworks, there is a risk that the interview will simply fail to generate meaningful data. An example of this would be an
Chapter Two—Cases and methods

Australian researcher interviewing an Indonesian politician about corruption – their ideas about what constitutes corrupt behaviour and its appropriateness within government systems may be so divergent as to present real challenges for meaningful interviewing. To guard against this, interviewers need to think carefully about the terms and concepts they wish to discuss and how these may be interpreted by their interviewees.

Finally, interviewing social elites such as politicians represents a particular set of challenges because of the potential power imbalance between interviewer and interviewee. Many politicians are extremely skilled at controlling a conversation to get their message out, and are used to doing so in high-pressure interview settings (Lilleker, 2003). This means that the researcher is often at a distinct disadvantage from the outset – especially in cases where they may also be younger, of a different gender or inexperienced at interviewing (such as in the case of a PhD student). To manage this power imbalance, it is important for interviewers to be well-prepared in their background knowledge of the topic so that they can establish a foundation of respect with the interviewee, and be able to probe or challenge their answers (Richards, 1996).

For this project, some of these methodological challenges were addressed through the research design, while others were considered to be less problematic because of the background and experience of the researcher. To address the issue of reliability and verification, multiple representatives were interviewed from each party wherever possible, and the information provided was also cross-checked against the finding of the project’s content analysis (discussed below). In cases where it was not possible to interview more than one party representative, particular effort was made to verify their information through contemporaneous media reports, public interviews given by party representatives, and other primary materials.

Mycoff’s point about shared meaning and understanding is an important one for researchers to bear in mind. However, in this case it was not considered to present significant challenges as this author had previously worked in state and federal politics alongside the types of people who were interviewed for the research. The interviewer and interviewees therefore had a common vocabulary for discussing political activity, their roles and experiences, as well as a shared understanding of the key technologies, tasks and components of election campaigning. This prior experience in working with political actors did not entirely ameliorate issues of power imbalance – particularly given the author’s comparative youth and gender. However it certainly
helped reduce this to a manageable level, as did the author’s past training and experience as a journalist.

In parallel with these interviews, party campaign materials were collected and examined using content analysis to gain an understanding of how parties ran their campaigns at the relevant elections. These materials included websites, brochures, speeches, media releases and advertising, as well as party documents such as polling and review reports where these were available. Table 3 provides a breakdown of the types of materials analysed. For electronic materials, these were sourced exclusively from the party’s official website or social media channels (accessed through the National Library of Australia’s Pandora web archive), while print materials were sourced from State and Parliamentary Library collections, the collaborative website Electionleaflets.org, and the parties themselves (See Appendix Two for full list of sources and collections). While it was generally not possible to obtain hard copies of these materials for storage due to their diverse ownership, electronic copies were made and stored according to the ANU’s data management guidelines.

Table 3—Breakdown of campaign and media materials analysed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>No. items analysed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Billboards and posters</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadcast advertisements (TV and radio)</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individually-addressed direct mail</td>
<td>902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media releases</td>
<td>610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-addressed pamphlets and flyers</td>
<td>1475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy documents</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print newspaper articles</td>
<td>907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online newspaper articles</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speeches</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web pages</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Collated by author from raw content analysis database—see Appendix Six for sample coding sheet

In examining and coding these materials, the aim was to explore the design, delivery and implementation of each party’s campaign, including which audiences their campaign themes and messages were targeted at and what those themes or messages were; how they made use of both the leader and party membership; which communication tools and channels they employed; and how they allocated campaign resources. The details of this analysis are discussed in Appendix Three, but this broadly involved classifying party activities into distinct categories (e.g. advertising, leader statements, community visits, etc) to gain a sense of how extensively parties

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undertook these, and draw some inferences about the relative importance of these components in each party's overall campaign strategy. Content analysis was also used to look for patterns in each party's campaign messaging and the geographic focus of their activities, to help inform conclusions about their target audiences, their approach to issue ownership, and the key themes upon which each campaign was built. In line with the formal content analysis approach, a code book was developed specifically for this project which identified items of interest and assigned each a discrete code (See Appendix Five for coding details). All coding was manually conducted by the researcher between June 2012 and December 2013.

As with elite interviewing, the content analysis methodology has both strengths and limitations. Its primary advantages are that it can be conducted on essentially any text — from newspaper articles and advertising, to leaflets, leader speeches, blogs, tweets and more (Devereux, 2007). Furthermore, because the analysis is carried out on an identified set of texts using a specific codebook, there is greater potential for replication of research findings than many other forms of media and literary analysis (Bryman, 2012).

However, content analysis also presents a significant challenge in that it is heavily reliant on interpretation by individual coders (Riffe, Lacy and Fico, 2005). As Bryman (2012) notes, it is almost impossible to create a codebook which does not require coders to make judgements about the presence or absence of content to some extent. To take one example from this project's own codebook, assessing whether a piece of campaign ephemera included the party's standard branding sometimes involved assessing the choice of colours, the presence of a logo or its individual design elements and the selection of fonts to arrive at a decision about how that item should be coded. This problem is compounded in content analysis projects which are not simply counting the presence or absence of things, but rather seeking to interpret cultural references, metaphors or meaning (Devercaux, 2007). Coder reliability and the potential for individuals to make different judgements about the content of texts is a particular challenge when multiple researchers are coding content for a single project.

When conducting qualitative content analysis of the type used for this project, it is also important to remember that this can only reveal what is physically in the chosen texts. Anything that is then inferred about the intention of the author, speaker or producer is just that — inference. If a researcher wishes to assert that an emphasis on certain topics or the use of certain

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terms has an intended meaning or purpose, this needs to be verified through other sources (Messenger Davies and Mosdell, 2006). This is why mixed-methods approaches such as the one employed by this project are so valuable when seeking to establish a link between observed actions and the strategic thinking behind them.

Conducting quality content analysis also requires the researcher to identify an appropriately reliable and representative sample of texts from the sources of interest. Researchers must ask themselves whether their coding sample is authentic (i.e. actually produced by the actors or organisations being studied), representative (i.e. large enough to capture a reasonable picture of the activity of interest) and robust (i.e. not open to charges of selectivity) (Bryman, 2012). While sampling for a content analysis project is rarely ‘random’ in the way that sampling for quantitative surveys or randomised controlled trials are, it is still critical to ensure that the selection of texts for analysis meets the standards mentioned above. If appropriate attention is not paid to sampling at the outset of a content analysis project, there is a real risk that the findings will be skewed or unrepresentative.

For this project, the problem of coder judgement and reliability was largely addressed by the fact that all coding was done by a single researcher. Furthermore, the conclusions drawn from the content analysis about the parties’ chosen focus issues and priority communication channels could be cross-checked against the information provided by the interviewees. As noted above, the interviews were also critical for verifying the inferences drawn from the raw numbers generated by the content analysis.

In terms of the sampling for this part of the project, it was decided to only analyse materials which were authorised by the party’s registered agent, state secretary or campaign director to ensure authenticity. This authorisation is a legal requirement in all Australian states and territories, and provided an important means of guaranteeing that any given text was actually produced by the parties in this data set.

It was also decided that every text available through the state library collections and online sources such as Electionleaflets.org.au would be analysed, to ensure that the sample was sufficiently representative and robust. Because these materials are submitted by members of the public or selected for archiving on the basis of different organisational policies, it is not possible to state

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that this research has analysed *all* relevant materials from the case study campaigns. However, a total of 4,544 individual items of ephemera and 1,375 media clips were coded and analysed in the course of this research, which can be assumed to represent a reasonable cross-section of the campaign materials actually produced.

When used in combination with other methodologies such as elite interviewing, content analysis can help the researcher gain a rounded understanding of the topic or process under analysis, and provide an important means of cross-checking data gathered from other sources. That is how the content analysis data was used throughout this project—as both a source of insights into the focus, emphasis and extent of party campaign activities, and a means of verifying the information provided by the interviewees. After analysing a substantial body of campaign materials and drawing some initial inferences from this, these findings were then compared with the information gathered directly from the campaign professionals to test their veracity. A series of questions about each party's target audiences, use of campaign resources and selection of messages were deliberately included in the semi-structured interview question list to allow for this comparison and cross-checking.

The overall purpose of this analysis was to map each party’s position in relation to the three dimensions of campaigning explored in Chapter One: their approach to *issue ownership*, their chosen position on the *mobilising—chasing continuum*, and their preferred *communications repertoire*. As will be detailed in Part Three, a series of specific indicators were developed to assist with this analysis, allowing this thesis to map each party’s campaign strategy using a common set of criteria. Having developed these strategy maps, the final step was to compare these strategies with the parties’ reported goals to determine whether holding differing goals really did lead to differences in the format, content and delivery of election campaigns. This involved grouping parties together according to their stated goals, and then comparing the strategic choices of each party within that group in the three areas listed above. The findings from this analysis are presented in chapters Five to Eight, while their implications for both the project’s overall research questions and the literature on campaigning are discussed in Part Four.

In setting out the methods and sources used throughout this project, this chapter has laid the groundwork for the coming discussion of party goals and campaign strategies in parts Two and Three. The important point to note is that by combining elite interviews with content analysis...
and other document-based research, this project has brought together two methods of political analysis which provide different, but highly complementary, forms of data. The advantages of using such a mixed methods approach will shortly become apparent in discussing the project's original research findings, as these offer one of the most rounded portraits of Australian political campaigning available to date.
Part Two—Party goals

Party goals

Before exploring the link between party goals and campaign strategy, it is necessary to establish the specific goals that the parties in this data set held during the five elections selected as case studies. It is also necessary to explore how party representatives themselves conceptualise the relationship between goals and strategy, and what the major inputs of their strategic thinking are.

Part Two therefore reports on the original findings from semi-structured interviews with Australian party representatives. Chapter Three catalogues and classifies the goals identified by each participating party, and explores how the views of these political practitioners compare with the picture of party goals presented in past scholarly literature. A key finding of this chapter is that there does not appear to be a neat fit between the goal categories outlined in Chapter One and the goals identified by these interviewees. Based on analysis of their reported goals, a refined set of categories are proposed which appear to better describe the parties' objectives in the specific context of election campaigning.

Chapter Four outlines the different ways in which goals can drive strategy, according to the project's participants. Not surprisingly, the interviewees reported that their goals had a direct and significant impact on their party's strategic decision-making, including in such areas as the selection of target seats and key audiences, issue choice and campaign messaging, and the use of different communication tools and channels. This chapter also explores how parties translate abstract goals into concrete strategies by outlining the key information inputs that the interviewees reported relying on to guide their strategic decision-making.

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This chapter explores the answers provided by the interview participants in response to the question: ‘What would you say your primary goal was going into the campaign? What would success have looked like to you?’

This question was deliberately open-ended, and the participants were not provided with any specific options to choose from. Some participants chose to answer this with very specific details of seat targets and electoral outcomes, while others focused on processes or statements of a more philosophical nature. Where a participant’s answer was ambiguous, or where they identified multiple goals, follow-up questions were used to clarify their responses. Examples of these secondary questions include: ‘Of those different goals, would you say that one was more important than any other?’ and ‘Would it be correct to say then that your primary focus was on...?’

Many of the participants also referred to their party’s goals and objectives at other points during the interviews, particularly as a means of explaining why they had made particular strategic choices. This material is explored more directly in Chapter Four, but it has also been used to inform the development of the goal categories outlined here and in grouping parties within these.

In Chapter One it was hypothesised that major parties would identify themselves as vote-seekers, while minor parties such as the Greens and Nationals would identify as office-seekers and micro parties would tend towards policy-seeking.

However, the interviewees were deliberately not presented with these specific options in order to explore whether they are actually the categories or terms parties use to conceptualise their goals. By asking these party representatives to describe their goals, the interviews sought to test the project’s research expectation that parties define these in different ways. The interviews also allowed for testing of the more specific hypotheses about which parties would profess which goals, as their answers could be compared across major and minor parties, parties in and out of government, and other combinations.

At the same time however, the open-ended nature of the interview questions allowed this project to test the veracity of these goal categories themselves. As discussed in Chapter One, it was hypothesised that vote-seeking might actually be better conceptualised as two distinct goals:

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Chapter Three—In their own words: party goals

gaining enough support to win government and preventing an electoral wipe-out. As a more
general observation, none of the key works on party goals actually draw on the voices or views
of real-life party actors, so there is a real question worth asking about whether the goals that
parties profess to hold align with those attributed to them by the literature.

By avoiding the specific categories in the literature and approaching these discussions on a more
open-ended basis, the researcher was therefore able to both test the project’s own proposed
framework and explore the real-world applicability of the literature it has been drawn from.
In analysing the range of goals identified by the participating parties, it became clear that there
was not a complete fit between these and the categories identified in the existing party goals
literature. Although many of the parties could roughly be said to have had votes, office or policy
as their objectives, there were important differences in how these goals were articulated, and
these differences lent themselves to more specific classification.

The following chapter therefore outlines the four types of goals identified by the participating
parties, and discusses how these intersect with the existing goal categories in the literature. This
chapter also briefly addresses how these goals were distributed across Australia’s major and
minor parties, with the aim of deepening understanding of how these diverse political actors
approach the electoral process.

Having laid out the goal categories that will provide the basis for analysing party campaign
strategies in Part Three, three possible explanations are then proposed as to why the goals
identified by the Australian parties participating in this project might not align neatly with those
found in the literature. This section identifies a number of areas where further research may be
warranted to explore both the applicability of the party goals literature to two-party political
systems generally, and in the context of election campaigning more specifically.

This, and subsequent chapters of the thesis, assume some familiarity with Australia’s political
parties – particularly their histories, ideological orientations, party types and sizes. Readers
seeking more background on the parties discussed here will find this in Brown (2014);
Dyrenfurth and Bongiorno (2011); Bramston (2011); Jackson (2011); Hancock (2007; 2000);
Davey (2006); and Jaensch and Mathieson (1998), amongst others.
Chapter Three—In their own words: party goals

Party goals—Australian political parties 2010–2013

Goal 1: Government

Not surprisingly, earning the capacity to control government was the primary goal identified by many of the parties participating in this project. As Table 4 highlights, this goal was most often articulated by the major Labor and Liberal parties, although the NSW and VIC National parties also professed to hold it as partners in established coalitions.

Table 4—Parties categorised as ‘government-seeking’, Australian state elections 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Campaign headquarters</th>
<th>Senior candidate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal National Party</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For some parties—such as the WA Liberal Party and the QLD Liberal National Party—this goal was expressed as a desire to take as many of the available seats as possible and dominate the resulting parliament:

'The success of the campaign was to win as many lower house seats as possible. We wanted to achieve a majority in the Legislative Assembly in our own right, and not rely on the National Party.'

—WA-HQ-LIB

'Our primary goal was to win the election. Our primary goal was to win, and win as many seats as possible. Anyone who doesn't have that as their primary goal in a political party going into an election is going off the wrong track!'

—QLD-PL-LNP

Others—including the Victorian Labor Party and both South Australian major parties—saw this goal as being satisfied by more modest margins:

'Keeping government. I think we knew the election was going to be very close, so we were really just hoping to hold on by a handful of seats.'
As will be explored in Part Three, the decision to aim for more or less ambitious seat margins appears to be primarily determined by the political environment and the party’s standing with the electorate. For the purposes of the current discussion however, it is enough to note that earning the capacity to govern was the clear and unambiguous goal for many of the parties in this data set.

Interestingly, the NSW and VIC National parties also identified this as their primary goal, and emphasised that they had a central role to play in achieving this within their respective coalitions:

'Success was winning government. That was the motivation, that was the drive, that was the reason you’d get out of bed very early in the morning to get up and do another day...but from a Nationals point of view, we had to play a part in that. We needed to win seats. We couldn’t just rely on the Liberals to pick up seats in the city areas.'

—VIC-HQ-NAT

'We deliberately decided that we wanted to present as a government, or a potential government...so it was Libs run in 73, and we’d run in 20...from there, we were going to go out and win as many of those 20 as we could, the Liberals were going to win as many of the 73 as they could. The polling indicated that both parties would do well and we were more than confident that we’d have the numbers to form a government.'

—NSW-PL-NAT

Both of these parties were in formal coalition with the Liberals at the time of these elections—the Victorian Coalition had re-formed in 2008 after a decade-long hiatus, while the New South Wales Liberal-National Coalition is the longest unbroken partnership in Australian political history (Cafagna, 2008; Davey, 2006). These standing coalition arrangements guaranteed the National parties Cabinet positions and other office benefits in the event of a Coalition election win, which perhaps explains why they shared the Liberals’ explicit focus on taking government rather than having one of the more modest goals articulated by the minor parties discussed below.
Chapter Three—In their own words: party goals

In the context of the party goals literature, the parties in Table 4 could be categorised in one of two ways. The first would be to classify them as vote seekers—parties that ‘seek to receive more votes than any other’ (Downs, 1957: 31). Drawing on work by Robertson (1976), Muller and Strom point out that in multidistrict electoral systems parties that wish to control government must prioritise the winning of seats over the simple winning of votes, and so in these systems it is more accurate to refer to such parties as ‘seat maximisers’ (Muller and Strom, 1999: 9). This point is best illustrated in an Australian context by the 1998 Federal Election, which the Labor Party lost despite winning 50.98 per cent of the overall vote (Barber, 2011). The party secured 67 House of Representatives seats to the Liberal-National Coalition’s 80, and so was not able to form a government on the floor of parliament. Despite the emphasis on seats over votes, Strom (1990: 567) argues that seat maximising parties still belong to ‘the family of vote-seeking parties’ because their emphasis is on attracting the broadest possible support.

As the parties in this data set would be unable to achieve their stated goal (controlling government) without winning more seats than any other party, Downs and his followers would no doubt argue that they are best described as ‘vote-seekers’. However, various authors have argued that votes (or seats) can only ever be instrumental goals (for example, Franzmann, 2011; Miller and Curtin, 2011; Muller and Strom, 1999). That is, they are a means to achieve other things—power, policy influence, representation—rather than being an end in themselves. This point has essentially become a question of philosophical debate, and like all philosophical questions, is beyond definitive resolution. Having conducted over 60 interviews for this research,7 the author is of the view that some political actors do indeed value votes intrinsically—particularly political professionals whose careers may hinge on how many they can rustle up for their parties. However, where a party’s representatives indicate that they held some larger goal which is achieved by gaining electoral support, it seems reductive (and therefore not particularly useful from an analytical point of view) to argue that this ultimately makes them vote-seekers. In line with this, it is suggested that the interviewees’ stated focus on taking government indicates they had a concrete goal beyond maximising their vote share, and so the parties in Table 4 cannot be classed as pure vote-seekers.

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7 This figure includes the 52 representatives of the parties in our five case study campaigns, plus the initial five scoping interviews and the seven representatives from our excluded Tasmanian case study.

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But does this then mean that they should be classified as office-seekers—those focused on ‘controlling the executive branch, or as much of that branch as possible’ (Muller and Strom, 1999: 5)? This description intuitively seems like a better match, given that it recognises votes and seats as a means to the larger end of executive office. However, this apparent fit is complicated by the fact that almost all of the literature on office-seeking comes from the multi-party democracies of Western Europe. Because of this, office-seeking is generally equated with maximising gains in coalition formation, rather than winning government outright. Harmel and Janda (1994: 270) state that: ‘office maximisers focus on holding portfolios in a coalition government’ and argue that there can be no distinction between vote-seeking and office-seeking in two-party systems because ‘winning the election also means controlling government’. Laver and Schofield (1998: 40) highlight the tendency to view office as ‘a prize captured by the winning coalition and divided among its members’, while authors such as Wolinetz (2002) and Martin and Stevenson (2001) explicitly position their discussions of office-seeking in the context of feasible coalition formation. Given this emphasis on maximising gains within coalition government in descriptions of office-seeking, this classification does not appear to properly fit the governing objective of most of the parties in Table 4 either.

The possible exceptions to this are the VIC and NSW Liberal and National parties, as their agreements to form a post-election governing coalition and divide the prize of government amongst themselves would appear to bring them into line with the standard conception of office-seeking parties. That said, the fact that the parties were in an established coalition before the election and indicated an intention to continue as one even in the event of an election loss, along with the highly integrated and coordinated nature of their campaigning, also places them somewhat apart from the European office-seeking parties found in the literature. Despite their formal existence as separate parties then, it is perhaps more useful to think of each pair as a single entity with a shared governing goal. This view is lent weight by the parties’ frequent decision to brand themselves as ‘the Coalition’ or ‘the Liberal-Nationals’ throughout both campaigns.

In contrast with the ‘vote-seeking’ or ‘office-seeking’ labels discussed above then, describing the parties in Table 4 as ‘government-seeking’ acknowledges their focus on controlling executive office in their own right. It also implicitly recognises an orientation towards maximising electoral support, but without becoming unnecessarily bogged down in the debate about instrumental...
versus intrinsic goals. For these reasons, it is argued that this classification more accurately describes the goal orientation of the parties identified above than either the vote- or office-seeking labels.

Goal 2: Preservation

A second clear goal identified by some of the interviewees was to *minimise their party’s anticipated losses* and so maintain the largest possible parliamentary presence. Importantly however, this goal was not linked to taking or maintaining government, or to being included in any kind of governing coalition.

Table 5—Parties categorised as ‘preservation-seeking’, Australian state elections 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Parliamentary leadership</th>
<th>Campaign headquarters</th>
<th>Senior candidate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rather, the parties listed in Table 5 indicated that they aimed to maximise their parliamentary representation so as to exist as a viable opposition after a near-certain, and significant, defeat:

‘*Having a group of opposition MPs who could effectively work together to hold the LNP government to account, would have been our aim.*’

—QLD-HQ-ALP

‘*I think it was important to ensure that you did have, as far as you can, a reasonable number of people that upon a change of government, you would have enough firepower to mount a serious opposition.*’

—NSW-PL-ALP

The representatives of the two outgoing Labor governments appeared to see this as a goal in itself, as they did not link being a viable opposition to their future electoral prospects. This is perhaps due to the projected scale of the party’s losses in 2011 and 2012, which would have made a return to office in the near future appear extremely unlikely (Holmes, 2012; 2011). By contrast, the non-incumbent WA Labor Party did appear to view providing effective opposition as part of a longer-term political strategy, as both the parliamentary and head office representatives mentioned the role this can play in ‘setting yourself up’ for future elections.
When pressed on this point however, both interviewees indicated that this did not play a significant role in their strategic thinking, for as one put it:

‘You can’t fight the next election or the last one, you’ve got to fight this one...I might not be in [my] job next time, Mark [McGowan—the ALP leader] might not be in the job next time, there’s all those things which add to the uncertainty. So you can’t assume that it will all just roll forward.’

—WA-HQ-ALP

These interviews indicate that even major parties do not enter every election with the goal of winning or retaining office. In some circumstances the political environment means that the most they can realistically aim for is to ‘save the furniture’ instead. While this is hardly an unexpected finding, and has been anecdotally reported in some political memoirs and media articles (for example, Hawker, 2013; Watt, 2010; Watson, 2002), this has rarely been acknowledged in academic work on elections and campaigning. An interesting offshoot of this research would be to explore just how bad a major party’s fortunes must be before it adopts preservation as its primary goal, as the three cases highlighted above suggest different thresholds. Ahead of the 2011 New South Wales state election, the Labor Party saw its projected primary vote crash to 22 per cent, with some analysts predicting the party would be reduced from 52 seats to just 13 (Nicholls, 2011). By contrast, QLD Labor’s primary vote was polled at 32 per cent ahead of that state’s election in 2012 (Wardill, 2012), and the WA Labor Party’s was very slightly better at 35 per cent in 2013 (Newspoll, 2013a). It would be interesting to identify other cases where parties adopted this preservation goal ahead of an election campaign—such as the federal Labor Party reportedly did under Julia Gillard’s leadership in 2013 (Hawker, 2013)—to further explore the factors contributing to this.

Given their stated emphasis on maximising the number of members returned to parliament, party goals scholars would presumably view the parties in Table 5 as pure vote/seat seekers. This is supported to an extent by the interviewees, as several reported that their tactical focus was on identifying which seats could feasibly be saved and aggressively pursuing votes there. However, in line with the position stated above on instrumental versus intrinsic goals, it is important to look to the broader objective that the parties saw this serving. The fact that all three of the parties explicitly linked their pursuit of seats to their existence as a viable opposition suggests that the former was only a means to this latter goal.

8 NSW-HQ-ALP; QLD-HQ-ALP; WA-HQ-ALP

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As a further argument against viewing these parties as pure vote seekers, Downs' classic definition of such parties as ones which 'seek to receive more votes than any other' simply does not apply to these cases. A number of the interviewees in this group indicated that they accepted the opposing parties would significantly outperform them at the ballot box, and planned their campaigns with this in mind. In reality, these parties sought to receive as many votes as humanly possible given an unfavourable political climate; a very different objective from the one described by Downs.

Out of all of the parties participating in this research, those listed in Table 5 are perhaps most in need of an alternative goal classification to those provided by the literature. Rather than seeking to win government, hold key posts or pursue specific policies, these parties simply aimed to preserve enough of their parliamentary membership to exist as a viable political force after electoral wipe-out. The label 'preservation-seeking' is proposed as one which recognises the distinctly different strategic calculus of parties which find themselves in this political position, while also acknowledging something of the desperation which leads parties to set their sights so low.

**Goal 3: Influence**

A third goal identified by the participants in this research was securing strategic representation in parliament in order to exert maximum influence over the political agenda. As Table 6 illustrates, this goal was expressed exclusively by minor parties who had already passed the threshold of holding parliamentary representation.

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9 QLD-PL-ALP; NSW-PL-ALP; WA-HQ-ALP

*Beyond winning: party goals and campaign strategy in Australian elections*
Table 6— Parties categorised as ‘influence-seeking’, Australian state elections 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Parliamentary leadership</th>
<th>Campaign headquarters</th>
<th>Senior candidate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals Western Australia</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens Western Australia</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katter’s Australian Party Queensland</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens Queensland</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens New South Wales</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens Victoria</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Labour Party Victoria</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens South Australia</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

# Denotes a party officer who also ran as a candidate

Just over half of the party representatives who professed to holding this goal articulated it in quite a specific way: as a desire to hold the balance of power between the major Labor and Liberal parties and so exert maximum control over the parliament’s activities and outcomes. This sub-group included representatives from the WA Nationals and Greens, the QLD Katter’s Australian Party and the VIC Family First and Greens parties. Despite the wide variation in political philosophies across these parties, there was a good deal of similarity in how their representatives articulated this goal, as the following quotes illustrate:

‘To hold the balance of power. Balance of power in the Legislative Council is the goal. Twelve of the 16 years I was in parliament, we had the balance of power. And so we were able to shape and impact on quite a lot of legislation and to engage a whole lot of enquiries and questions that weren’t going to happen without the numbers. So that is the name of the game.’

—WA-PL-GRN

‘We had a view that if you could control the State Parliament, then that would be a very powerful position to be in...if you can position yourself in that place where every decision made needs your imprimatur, then there is no better place to be.’

—QLD-HQ-KAP

‘We felt it was really important to maintain our vote, and also to try and get one or two [more] people elected...if you’re elected and you hold some form of balance of power, and you say something, they must listen.’

—VIC-SC-DLP

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It is perhaps not surprising that minor parties who have already had some experience of parliamentary representation would see holding this position as the best means to exert influence. In Australia’s two-party dominant system, minor parties that do not hold the balance of power generally find the opportunities to shape outcomes in their preferred direction are quite limited. Several of the interviewees directly acknowledged this point, and indicated that it is often only through holding a casting vote between the major parties that minor ones can have any real influence.¹⁰

Interestingly however, while the QLD, NSW and SA Greens and SA Family First all mirrored this focus on influencing the political agenda, their representatives did not explicitly link this to a balance of power position. The following two quotes are indicative of the views expressed within this sub-group:

‘Our primary goal was to get Robert Brokenshire re-elected. That was our number one goal; that was really our only goal, to be frank...we see ourselves as a check on government, as any minor party would be...so our fundamental role in terms of getting Robert re-elected and having two votes in the Legislative Council is to be a check on government, on their policy positions. I think it’s very difficult for minor parties to introduce policies in their own right, but what you can do is substantially modify policies in line with your supporter base’s wishes.’

—SA-PL-FF

‘Success would have been getting two MLCs [elected], because that was our objective... The idea of getting into parliament, there’s always two sides of it. There’s our proactive agenda, getting our issues aired...but the other thing is that you’re influencing the agenda that’s already happening, the agenda of the government of the day.’

—SA-PL-GRN

These parties appeared to believe that it is possible to exert influence over the actions of government and other political actors simply by securing some threshold level of parliamentary representation—whether multiple upper house seats in the case of the South Australian parties, or a lower house seat in the cases of Queensland and New South Wales.¹¹ These parties therefore pursued this representation without necessarily seeking a formal balance of power position.

The articulated goal of these parties appears to place them on a blurred boundary between the existing office and policy categories. In the first instance, the parties’ focus on obtaining strategic positions within parliament would appear to indicate an orientation towards office-seeking.

¹⁰ WA-PL-GRN; QLD-PL-KAP
¹¹ QLD-HQ-GRN; NSW-HQ-GRN; SA-HQ-FF; SA-HQ-GRN

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course, they are not seeking inclusion within a governing coalition and access to the associated office benefits, as this is not on offer in Australia’s two-party dominant parliaments. But they are pursuing a position of strategic strength which gives them access to many of the same office benefits that Laver and Schofield (1998) suggest office-seekers covet: influence over political outcomes, access to the leaders of government, recognition as central political players, and perhaps even the prestige of committee chairpersonships and other parliamentary sinecures.

However, all of the parties in Table 6 indicated that they wished to use their strategic parliamentary presence to shift the actions of government closer to their own policy or ideological preferences. This would appear to align them with Muller and Strom’s description of a policy-seeking party—one which ‘seeks to maximise its impact on public policy’ (1999: 7). De Swaan (1973: 88) has argued that ‘the parliamentary game is, in fact, about the determination of major government policy’, and this view was certainly articulated by some of the parties listed in Table 6. Having said that, none of these parties explicitly highlighted policy advocacy as their goal in response to a direct question about this. What’s more, none identified specific agendas that they were keen to use their parliamentary position to progress, as one might expect a primarily policy-oriented party to do (and as the parties in the following category did). Rather, it appeared that these parties had a general ideological orientation or ‘worldview’ that they were keen to bring to bear on all matters considered by the parliament, and saw holding strategic seats as the best way to achieve this.

Perhaps the best way to sum up these parties’ focus then is to say that they were not only office oriented but not entirely policy oriented. That is, they appeared to place a high value on being central actors in the parliamentary arena, and attach some significance to the office benefits which flowed from this. However, they also had a stated desire to use those office benefits to mould policy and political outcomes in their desired directions. It is argued that describing them as ‘influence-seeking’ acknowledges this tension between office and policy goals; this description is particularly necessary to distinguish them from the more pure policy-seekers discussed below.

Goal 4: Policy

In contrast with the influence-seeking parties discussed above, there was a group of parties within this data set who explicitly and directly linked their activities to policy. In interviews, the
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representatives of the parties listed in Table 7 indicted that their primary purpose in seeking election was to *publicise and pursue specific policy agendas*. These parties were of the view that having representation in parliament provided an unmatched platform for policy advocacy, and so aimed to win a seat as a way of amplifying their agendas in the public sphere.

It is interesting to note that all but one of the parties in this group did express a specific desire to gain parliamentary representation as a means of advancing their policy agenda. The exception was the SA Dignity 4 Disability party, whose representative stated that the party really only aimed to draw attention to disability issues and put pressure on the government to pursue service reforms.\(^{13}\) It is possible that this focus on securing elected representation emerged only because these parties were being questioned about their goals in the specific context of an election campaign. Alternatively, this may well be a central concern for all but the most niche of political groups. It is not possible to draw firm conclusions on this from this project’s relatively small data set, but this would be an interesting point to explore through further minor party interviews.

Table 7—Parties categorised as ‘policy-seeking’, Australian state elections 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Parliamentary leadership</th>
<th>Campaign headquarters</th>
<th>Senior candidate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Christians</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Nation</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>1#</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Democratic Party</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family First</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>1#†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Alliance</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>1#</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family First</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>1#</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Sex Party</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>1#</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Alliance</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>1#</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Alliance</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dignity 4 Disability</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>1#</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Denotes a party officer who also ran as a candidate

A significant distinction between these parties and those listed in Table 6 is that each interviewee offered an unprompted summary of the policy focus their party intended to bring to the parliament if elected. These ranged from broad ideological and religious agendas to specific, localised concerns, as the following quotes highlight:

\(^{13}\) SA-HQ-D4D

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'It is about being able to introduce [civil liberties] law reform change, and to be able to far more effectively change laws. Obviously having someone elected, while one person is only one voice, it makes it a hell of a lot easier...'

—VIC-HQ-ASP

'Our goal was basically to get someone into parliament...We believe Christians have a lot to offer in terms of policy and policy direction in this country, we believe there’s a lot of common sense contained in Scripture that can—in all areas of life, but in Parliament in particular—good policy direction can come from Christians and from scripture.'

—WA-HQ-AC

'[The goal was] to continue the work...win[ning] back the seat put me in a key position to actually be a real player in what I believed was the most important issue for my electorate and the nation, which is getting a better deal for the River Murray.'

—SA-PL-NAT

'It was pretty much to separate a vote and make it count to issues that affect country people or people who use the country lifestyle...access to public land for fishing, and access to public land for hunting, [access for] industry, which relied on the red gum for furniture and that sort of thing...the parties weren’t supporting that kind of thing.'

—VIC-SC-CA

Supporting the idea that these parties were primarily policy-oriented, many of the interviewees in this group indicated that they saw the process of running for parliament itself as a valuable way of drawing attention to their policy agendas.14 In particular, parties such as the SA Dignity 4 Disability party and the VIC Country Alliance indicated that they approached the election period as an opportunity to secure specific policy concessions or promises from other parties:

'The only reason we formed a political party [was because] political parties like Labor and Liberal won’t have meetings with you. So if we presented a case about ‘here’s this person who’s going to be homeless because his parents are going to die next week and he’s in a wheelchair, he’s 56 years old, where are you going to put him?’ They wouldn’t listen. We couldn’t get meetings with them. As soon as you become a political party, or let them know that you’re going to run as an independent, they’ll have a meeting with you! ...the strategy was: meet with the Ministers, force their hand, tell them that you’re going to preference this way or that, get some promises from them which then become real once that government is in power.'

—SA-HQ-D4D

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14 VIC-SC-FF; VIC-HQ-SA; NSW-HQ-CDP; NSW-HQ-SA

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The best way we have found to influence change is to just let the major parties know that there is a significant body of voters out there whose vote can determine the outcome in marginal electorates...and that if they wanted to ensure our preferences, then both as parties and as individual politicians they had to be aware of the groups behind us and what their interests were.'

—VIC-HQ-CA

Other party representatives suggested that the campaign period provided an opportunity to publicise their policies and demonstrate that there was public support for them, such that these would then be taken up and implemented by a larger party. With a few exceptions, none of the parties within this group had ever secured parliamentary representation at the state level at the time of the elections covered by this data set. This perhaps helps to explain both why they were focused on the simple threshold of getting a member elected, and why they saw running for office in itself as having some wider awareness-raising or policy impact.

These parties are the easiest to classify according to the existing goals literature, as their emphasis on pursuing specific, stated policy agendas would seem to define them as classic policy-seekers. Admittedly, all but the Dignity 4 Disability party had some orientation towards obtaining parliamentary representation (office-seeking) but this was explicitly framed as a platform for policy advocacy, rather than as an end in itself. Furthermore, many of the interviewees indicated that their parties were unwilling to compromise on their policy agenda in pursuit of broad electoral support—something that Laver and Schofield (1990) identified as a defining feature of the primarily policy-oriented party.

A more interesting question is what distinguishes them from the influence seeking parties in Table 6, as each of these parties also undoubtedly wished to exert influence over the government of the day. It is argued that the difference is one of emphasis: where the parties in Table 6 saw gaining the position of most overall influence on government as their goal, the parties in Table 7 appeared to be interested in advocating for—and therefore exerting influence over—only certain

15 WA-HQ-AC; QLD-HQ-ONP; NSW-HQ-CDP
16 QLD One Nation, the NSW Christian Democratic Party, NSW Family First and the SA Nationals all had some past experience of parliamentary representation. However, One Nation had lost its last sitting member at the previous Queensland state election in 2009, while Family First only gained a representative through the defection of Gordon Moyes from the Christian Democratic Party and had never won elected representation in its own right. Furthermore, while both the Christian Democratic Party and The Nationals had enjoyed periods of good electoral fortune in the past, at the time of our case study campaigns both had been reduced to representation by a single member in parliament.
17 WA-HQ-AC; NSW-SC-CDP; VIC-HQ-SA; NSW-HQ-SA; SA-PL-NAT

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specific policy issues that fell within their field of interest. This narrower focus is perhaps best encapsulated by one of the VIC Country Alliance interviewees, who stated:

'[P]olicies on world peace and global hunger are not terribly relevant to Country Alliance. And we assiduously avoid what I describe as the moral issues. Our candidates are allowed to take a position should it come to a vote, should they be elected to parliament...but they’re not front and foremost for the people who support us. [We’re] more concerned with, you know, what’s happening with the TAFE system in Victoria, why is it that many country towns don’t even have a resident GP...these are the real issues.’

—VIC-HQ-CA

Describing the parties in Table 7 as ‘policy-seekers’ therefore not only reflects their close alignment with the category of parties found in the existing goals literature, but also acknowledges an important distinction in the scale and scope of their political ambitions compared with the parties in Table 6.

What does all this tell us?

The discussion above sheds some light on two issues of relevance to this project’s research questions. Firstly, it highlights that political parties do indeed enter electoral contests with a range of goals in mind, albeit not necessarily the ones identified in the existing literature. Secondly, it indicates that while Australian major parties (with a few exceptions) can be said to approach elections with the goal of dominating all others at the ballot box, minor parties appear to have a broader range of objectives in mind. Before concluding this chapter, it is worth reflecting on each of these points and how they relate to the body of work discussed in chapters One and Two.

Which goals?

Considering the range of goals articulated by the interview participants, there is clear evidence supporting the first of this project’s overarching research expectations: parties do enter campaigns with different ideas about what success would look like. Interestingly however, the above discussion does not always lend support to the specific hypotheses outlined about which parties would hold what goals. This is primarily because the goal categories identified in the literature do not appear to fully encompass or adequately describe the range of goals that real-world parties hold.
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Looking first at the major Labor and Liberal parties, it was hypothesised that they would identify as vote-seekers, although a question was raised about whether this actually represented two distinct objectives of winning government versus ‘saving the furniture’. The interview findings suggest that the major parties do see winning government as their goal in most elections, regardless of whether they are in or out of office. However, in a small number of cases where major parties had identified that they had no realistic chance of achieving that goal, minimising their losses instead became their professed objective. As discussed throughout this chapter, this suggests that the catch-all category of ‘vote-seeking’ is not the most analytically useful way to define major parties’ goals.

In the case of minor and micro parties, it was hypothesised that the former would identify as office-seekers and the latter as policy-seekers. However, the participating parties actually divided themselves in more complex ways, apparently on the basis of both their prior experience of parliamentary representation and their relationships with other parties. This was particularly evident in the case of the Nationals, who in some states joined their Liberal coalition partners in seeking to win government, while in other states saw themselves as seeking a position of maximum influence or simply promoting their policy agenda. Similarly, a number of parties which would be considered as very minor or micro parties in the broader electoral context (such as Katter’s Australian Party and Family First) saw themselves as influence-seekers rather than policy-seekers, in a departure from the original hypothesis about their objectives. Interestingly too, no party articulated an equivalent of Harmel and Janda’s ‘intraparty democracy’ goal, as parties such as the Socialist Alliance or The Greens might have been expected to do.

In summary then, the claim that parties hold different goals when entering elections has clearly been demonstrated. In the process however, it has been demonstrated that these goals are not always the specific ones ascribed to parties in the existing literature. The initial hypotheses about how major, minor and micro parties would define their goals were therefore also found to be somewhat off the mark.

As anyone with some exposure to the practical world of elections and campaigning would attest, the fact that parties hold different goals is not an earth-shattering finding. However, this idea is surprisingly little-acknowledged in the existing literature on election campaigning and strategy. As discussed in Chapter One, much of the campaigning literature works from the (often unstated)
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premise that parties are, first and foremost, vote seekers, and so gives limited thought to alternative goals or how these might impact strategic decision-making. Of course, there may be some scholars who would still argue that each of the parties discussed above are ultimately vote seekers, because none of their broader objectives can be achieved without winning electoral support. While this is undoubtedly true, it is also true that a party seeking to win government or exert strategic influence needs a very different number of votes, distributed across a very different selection of the available seats, than does a party with policy or preservation as its goal. When examining campaign strategy, differences in the quantum and distribution of required votes matter a lot, because these may lead parties to make very different choices about their target audiences, messages and themes, allocation of resources, and much else besides. That is why it has been argued it is reductive to focus on vote-seeking to the exclusion of a party’s broader goals.

Party goals scholars obviously do not share the view that all parties are vote seekers, as their work is entirely premised on the idea that parties can, and do, define success in different ways. However, an unexpected finding to emerge from these interviews was that the goals articulated by the Australian political parties in this case set do not easily align with those identified in that literature. As discussed in Chapter One, the consensus within this field is that parties may see votes, office, policy or some form of member representation as their primary goal; the focus of scholarly attention is then on what parties hold which of these goals, when and why (for example, Bräuninger and Debus, 2009; Ganghof and Bräuninger, 2006; Heller, 2001; Martin and Stevenson, 2001). But as has been demonstrated, the party representatives interviewed for this project often defined their goals in ways which called for more specific classification. Why this difference? There are three possible explanations for this, although further research would be needed to determine which, if any, is correct.

Two-party dynamics?

The first potential explanation is that the existing party goals literature simply may not apply well to two-party dominant political systems, because it has primarily been developed in Western Europe and is informed by the more complex multi-party parliamentary arrangements which are the norm there. All of the key party goals texts (Muller and Strom, 1999; Harmel and Janda, 1994; Strom, 1990) work from a set of assumptions which reflect this multi-party view of politics. As has been discussed above, these include an emphasis on coalition formation over

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single-party government, and the supposition that ongoing inter-party negotiation—both in and outside of parliament—is central to securing policy outcomes. More generally, this goals literature incorporates a particular view of party competition as taking place in an arena with many different actors of potentially equal or near-equal capacity to win electoral support and influence outcomes. By and large, none of these assumptions hold true in the Australian political context. Here, single party government is the norm, and this gives the government of the day considerable autonomy to decide and deliver its policy agenda without input from other actors (Maddox, 1996). Furthermore, the historical, organisational and financial dominance of the major Labor and Liberal parties means that Australian minor parties compete on a far more uneven playing field than their counterparts in Europe's multi-party systems.

This difficulty in matching the assumptions of the standard party goals typology with the realities of two-party politics perhaps explains why there appear to have been only a few studies applying this model to party activity in prominent two-party parliamentary systems like the United Kingdom and Australia. Interestingly, none of the handful of authors who have done so reported a particular mismatch between observed party behaviour and the existing goal categories (for example, Pettitt, 2012; Fabre, 2008; Ganghof and Bräuninger, 2006). Having said that, none of these authors were specifically focused on identifying party goals in their respective projects, but rather on exploring how holding different goals might affect party change and legislative behaviour. It makes intuitive sense that two-party systems might create sufficiently different opportunities and constraints as to lead parties to adopt a different set of goals from those generated in multi-party systems. It is difficult to draw any conclusions about this from the small number of studies apparently available, but exploring this point further would make for a very interesting future research project. At present, this is simply proposed as one possible explanation for the lack of fit between the goals articulated by the parties in this project, and those found in the literature.

Missing important voices?

A second possible explanation arises from the fact that of the several dozen books and papers on party goals which were consulted as part of this project, only a handful based their findings on direct interviews with, or surveys of, party representatives (for example, McAngus, 2013; Jackson, 2011; Luther, 2007; Bennie, 2004). The great majority of the published studies on party goals take their insights from external observations of party behaviour—whether through the
study of policy manifestos and other public party documents, legislative bargaining and votes on
the floor of parliament, published speeches and statements by party leaders, or other open-
source materials. While it is understandable that researchers would make use of such plentiful
and accessible material, it is also perplexing that so few of those working in this field have
actually asked parties directly about what their goals were. Even key authors such as Muller and
Strom and Harmel and Janda—who are quoted by almost all subsequent authors in this field—
appear to have developed their goals typologies through analysis of earlier theoretical models of
party behaviour\(^{18}\) rather than any direct discussion with the actual actors of interest. It would
certainly be overreaching to assert that this entire literature is incorrect or ill-informed, on the
basis of a single study involving 52 Australian party representatives. However, it is suggested that
given how rarely the actual voices of party representatives have been heard in this discussion of
party goals, it is possible the literature has not yet recognised the full range of goals these actors
actually hold, or how their articulation of these might differ from party theorists. Again, this is an
open question which can only be answered with further research.

Elections bring an electoral focus?

The third, and final, potential explanation for the mismatch between the goals as articulated by
the literature and the parties in this data set has already been foreshadowed in the discussion
above. That is: all of the interviewees were asked about their goals in the context of an election
campaign, which would be assumed to focus their thinking on a particular time period and a
specific operational context. Within the literature, party objectives are often studied in broadercontexts such as over an entire parliamentary term or even through multiple governing cycles
(for example, Marsh and Mitchell, 1999; Share, 1999). It may be that when looking at party
activity over an extended period of time, broad patterns of behaviour emerge which are
consistent with the standard vote, office, policy or representation goals. By contrast, the finite
and competitive context of an election campaign may well lead parties to articulate a more
specific range of goals.

As one of the only Australian studies to explicitly question party representatives about their goals
outside of an electoral context, Jackson’s (2011) study of the Australian Greens provides a rare
insight on this question. In surveying more than 400 party activists and staffers about the party’s
objectives, Jackson found that they articulated a range of goals, including promoting the party’s

\(^{18}\) Such as those of Downs (1954), Riker (1962) and De Swann (1973)

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program and policies, expanding its parliamentary representation, gaining government office, creating a more democratic party, increasing its membership and influencing other parties’ policies. A comparable membership survey of the Scottish Greens (Bennie, 2004) found that its activists articulated a similar range of objectives for their party when asked about these in a non-electoral context. These studies lend weight to the suggestion that parties may articulate their goals differently from the party theorists (although they must be balanced against the work of McAngus (2013) and Luther (2007), whose findings broadly reinforced the standard categories). Importantly, both Jackson and Bennie’s studies also suggest that parties might hold these more diverse goals throughout the governing cycle rather than only at election time. However, a key difference between those studies and this one is that the party representatives surveyed were general activists and staffers, rather than the senior party leadership. So while they provide some encouragement that the goals identified here may reflect those found in parties beyond this data set, further research would be needed to draw any solid conclusions.

This research project is primarily about campaign strategy and the influence that a party’s goals exert upon this. It is not, and does not claim to be, a detailed dissection of the party goals literature or its applicability in different political and temporal contexts. Although the above discussion raises several interesting questions about this, these are somewhat tangential to this project’s core purpose. The objective of this chapter is to identify how the parties in this data set defined their goals, so as to lay the groundwork for more in-depth examination of how these affected their decision-making on the campaign trail. Based on the content of the interviews, it has been argued that these goals are best categorised as government, preservation, influence and policy. It shall be left to future researchers to examine whether this typology holds in other places and contexts, and whether it more accurately reflects the goals articulated by party actors themselves than those found in the previous literature.

What about Australia?

Turning briefly to what the above findings add to the Australian story, these interviews highlight three important things. Firstly, they suggest that Australia’s major parties are broadly homogenous in their goals. In keeping with their historic status as Australia’s only two governing parties, the different branches of the Labor and Liberal parties each appear to see winning government as their primary goal in all but the most dire political circumstances. In such desperate circumstances, their focus was then uniformly seen to shift to maintaining a viable
political presence on the opposition benches. While this finding is not surprising, and aligns with what the authors discussed in Chapter One have long suggested about these parties, it is also somewhat disappointing. In undertaking this research, it was initially anticipated that the individual branches of the major parties would be more distinct than had previously been acknowledged in some of the Australian literature. Perhaps naively, it was also imagined that major parties might hold a broader range of goals beyond taking government or maintaining their political viability, including *securing a mandate for contested policy reforms* and *gaining the capacity to re-shape political, social or economic institutions*. Unfortunately, neither of these views were supported by the responses from the major party interviewees. While it could be argued that winning government is a necessary precondition to achieving these more noble goals, it was quite clear from the interviews that the major parties viewed winning government as an intrinsic goal, rather than an instrumental one. This is perhaps best illustrated by one Queensland Liberal National Party interviewee, who was literally struck dumb by the question: *Why was it important to you to get enough seats in Parliament to form a government?* In a similar vein, it is illustrative that in circumstances where they knew defeat was looming, the parties turned their focus to saving their own political furniture, rather than pursuing policy advocacy or other goals.

The second important issue highlighted by the discussion above is that it somewhat alters current understanding of what drives Australian minor parties. Chapter Two outlined a range of objectives that Australian authors have suggested minor parties may pursue besides winning elected office. These included *expanding the range of ideas and issues discussed in mainstream politics, influencing governments, institutional reform and longevity and mobilising people not normally interested in politics*. While these former two objectives were regularly mentioned by the interviewees—giving rise to the influence and policy goal categories—only a handful of these minor parties mentioned the latter two, and only then as second-order objectives within a broader focus on either influencing government or advocating for policy.19

Furthermore, the interviewees almost uniformly saw winning seats in parliament as a key part of their strategy for achieving these objectives. The literature, and more anecdotal observation of politics, would suggest that these goals can also be satisfied without getting into parliament, so it was surprising to find such a strong electoralist orientation within these minor parties. Of course, this focus may simply have come about because of the framing of the interviews, as has already

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19 The parties which did mention these additional objectives were: the NSW Greens, NSW Socialist Alliance, VIC Country Alliance and VIC Socialist Alliance.
been discussed. Further research would be needed to explore how great a significance these parties attach to elected office outside of the specific context of an election campaign.

The third point highlighted by the above findings is that Australian minor parties are not just a 'collective other', to borrow Jaensch and Mathieson's phrase. Rather, there were significant differences amongst these parties in terms of how they articulated their goals, and therefore how they conceptualised their position within the Australian political system. As has been seen, some viewed themselves as parties of government or sought to occupy a crucial hinge point at the centre of decision-making, while others simply wished to make their voices heard on key policy issues. Although these parties were not specifically asked about why they had adopted their particular goals, through the interviews it became clear that access to resources—both financial and knowledge-based; institutional factors—particularly the presence or absence of an upper house and the composition of this; and the political environment—including the party’s present standing with the electorate, all played a significant role in determining their objectives. These are just some of the factors that Muller and Strom (1999) have identified in their formal model of the influences on party goal setting. Given this, it would be interesting to extend their full analysis to the different branches of Australia’s minor parties.

The professionalisation literature discussed in chapters One and Two also suggests that the presence of paid, professional party staff exerts a narrowing and homogenising influence over parties’ interests. While these findings are only anecdotal, the interviews suggest that minor parties with professional staff are more likely to pursue influence over other goals, as all but two of the nine parties in Table 6 had access both to paid campaign staff and parliamentary staffers at the state level.20 By contrast, only five of the 11 policy-seeking parties in Table 7 had any paid staff at all.21 Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to fully explore how and why these minor parties arrived at their goals. However, these interviews provide an interesting insight into the diversity and complexity which awaits any future researcher who tackles this task.

Taken together, these interviews largely confirmed existing scholarship on Australia’s major parties, but shed quite a bit of fresh light on the objectives of minor ones. More practically, they

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20 These parties were the QLD Greens, who did not have any parliamentary staff but did contract a paid campaign coordinator for the election period; and the VIC Democratic Labour Party, who had parliamentary staff through the office of Peter Kavanagh MLC but no paid staff in the party’s central office.
21 These parties were: the WA Australian Christians, NSW Christian Democratic Party, NSW Family First, VIC Australian Sex Party and SA Nationals.

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have provided enough information about each individual party's goals to allow them to be grouped for comparison of their campaign strategies in Part Three. Before turning to this comparison however, it is worth briefly examining how the parties in this data set conceptualised the link between goals and strategy, and what the inputs of their strategic thinking were. It is to this important task that Chapter Four now turns.
In their own words: strategy and inputs

Having established what the parties’ goals were in each of the five case study campaigns, it is important to explore what influence the interviewees saw these exerting over their strategic decision-making. Chapter One identified a range of key choices that the literature suggests parties must make when designing and delivering an election campaign. These choices include their approach to issue ownership, where they place themselves on the mobilising-chasing continuum and which combination of tools they select from the communications repertoire of modern campaigning. But is there a connection between the choices parties make in these areas and the goals they hold for a campaign?

As expected, the interviews conducted for this project strongly suggest that there is. This chapter explores that connection by discussing the interviewees’ responses to the question: ‘How do you think your primary goal influenced your party’s strategic choices throughout the campaign?’ As with the initial question about their goals, the participants were not given any options to choose from in responding to this question, but were instead invited to reflect broadly on their own experiences and identify relevant areas. The interview questionnaire also included a number of other questions which frequently caused the participants to reflect on the link between their goals and their strategic choices (whether directly or indirectly). While this was not intentional, it did provide further insights into the relationship between goals and strategy, and so some of these responses have also been reported below.

Unlike the previous chapter, this one does not specifically break down the interviewees’ responses by party or goal type. That is because this chapter is only seeking to establish that parties generally do see a connection between goals and strategy, and clarify the nature of this connection in their view. So the primary points of interest are the broad themes emerging from the 52 interviews collectively, rather than the detail of each party’s responses.

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22 These questions included: ‘Thinking first about the focus of your election campaign: did you feel this was primarily aimed at existing supporters of your party, undecided voters, or people who had primarily supported other parties in the past?’; ‘How did you read the mood of the public and come up with themes or messages that would respond to that mood?’ and ‘How did the campaign team decide which tools or communication channels would be most appropriate to reach your target audiences?’

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Chapter Four—In their own words: strategy and inputs

**How do party goals influence campaign strategy?**

The participants in this project regularly cited three ways in which their party’s goals influenced their strategic choices. These were: decisions about the selection of target seats and audiences, the choice of campaign themes and focus issues, and the selection of communication tools and tactics. As will be discussed, these are closely aligned with the dimensions of strategic choice outlined in Chapter One.

**Selection of target audiences and seats**

The most frequent area in which the interviewees reported a link between their goals and their campaign strategies was the selection of target audiences and seats—which segments of the electorate they focused their energies on during the campaign. As was discussed in Chapter One, parties may choose to focus entirely on their base of strong, past supporters, pursue swinging or undecided voters who have no firm party preference, convert supporters of other parties, or hedge their bets by placing themselves somewhere on the spectrum between these points. As psephologists such as Antony Green and Peter Brent have long pointed out, within the Australian voting landscape party support tends to be clustered in different locations, as do collections of soft and swinging voters (Brent, 2014; Green, 2014). For example, at the federal level the 16 electorates within the region of Western Sydney are famous for regularly swinging from one party to another, while there are seats in inner Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane which have only ever elected Labor or Liberal members of parliament. This means that a party seeking to connect with its base must focus its energies on a very different seat of seats from one which is aggressively pursuing new support or targeting swinging voters.

Similarly, electorates contain different concentrations of demographic and socioeconomic groupings such as families with young children versus older people, or those working ‘blue collar’ jobs compared with ‘white collar’ professionals. According to the campaign professionalisation literature and popular media commentary (for example, ABC TV, 2013; Schubert, 2007; Nickerson, 2006; Webber, 2006; Blumler and Kavanagh, 1999) parties seek to earn the support of different demographic and socioeconomic segments in order to boost their performance at the ballot box. This, too, may lead them to focus their efforts on particular audiences in particular places during election campaigns.

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In line with this, the majority of the parties in this data set indicated that they had some specific target audiences and seats in mind during the case study campaigns. Only five interviewees (9 per cent) indicated that their parties were aiming to engage with every eligible voter, while two (3 per cent) reported that they were either not aware of, or could not recall, any details about specific target audiences. In each of these cases, the interviewees represented minor parties with either minimal or no parliamentary representation. All of the other interviewees (86 per cent) both identified specific target audiences and drew some link between their campaign objectives and the selection of these. This was the case across each of the four identified goal categories, although the nature of these goals appeared to lead the parties to make quite different choices, as illustrated by the following quotes:

Government

'Our intention was really to try and obviously to hold onto government...so our view—I guess we didn’t target particularly young or old, or mums or dads, or males or females—but we certainly did focus on the regions as a group, we believed we had something to offer them. And our, sort of, political strategy was that if we did do very well in the regions, it was almost impossible for us to lose.'

—VIC-PL-ALP

Preservation

'In the context of a government seeking a sixth term and one that was fundamentally behind the eight ball, we were definitely trying to appeal to people who had previously supported the government, and it was very much a campaign which had elements of appealing to the base rather than a campaign that was trying to pick up a different segment of the vote.'

—QLD-PL-ALP

Influence

'The intention was to maintain the numbers we picked up in 2008 and attract new voters, predominantly in new seats throughout the north of the state. So we positioned ourselves to try and attract the Labor voters, essentially...I guess that was our focus.'

—WA-PL-NAT

Policy

'[We] ran campaigns for people in Vietnamese and Indian communities, as well as Muslim communities and obviously, you know, the strong Christian community that lives within the mortgage belt...their values are consistent with our values.'

—VIC-HQ-FF

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Chapter Four—In their own words: strategy and inputs

The specifics of these choices are explored further in Part Three, when looking for patterns within the goal categories in terms of parties’ selection of target audiences and seats. For the moment, it is sufficient to note that this was one of the most frequently-cited ways in which parties saw their goals exerting an influence over their strategic decision-making.

As the above quotes indicate, many of the interviewees also framed this in terms which align with Rohrschneider’s suggestion that targeting strategies range along a continuum from mobilising core supporters to chasing new ones. This provides confidence that his framework is an appropriate one to use for dissecting parties’ individual campaign efforts, albeit one that might be refined by applying it empirically. As part of this project, a set of specific indicators were developed to map parties’ choices on each of the five trade-offs Rohrschneider identified (see Appendix Three). A review of available literature suggests that the continuum has never been operationalised like this, and by doing so, this project has been able to test some of his assumptions about what different strategies should look like. As will be discussed in Part Four, its findings reinforce some aspects of Rohrschneider’s argument, but also open up questions for further research in a number of important areas.

Key themes and focus issues

A second, and related way in which the parties reported a link between their goals and their strategies was in relation to the selection of key themes and focus issues. The parties in this data set focused their campaigns on a broad spectrum of issues and themes, ranging from concrete topics such as health, education and infrastructure delivery, to wider issues such as employment, the economy, environmental sustainability, governing competency and family or social issues. These were framed by a range of different ‘campaign narratives’ or themes, including those emphasising leadership, progress, stability, transparency and equity.23 To put this in Budge and Farlie’s (1983b: 24) terms, the parties employed ‘selective emphasis’ by moving some issues to the centre of their campaigns and disregarding or downplaying others.

Of the 52 interviewees, 39 (75 per cent) indicated that their choices about which particular themes and issues to focus on had been influenced by their goals—whether directly, or indirectly through the preferences and interests of their target audiences. Only 13 (25 per cent) stated that

23 For more on the specific set of narratives at work in Australian election campaigns, see Bartlett, D and Rayner, J. 2014. ‘This campaign is all about...' Dissecting Australian campaign narratives’, Communications, Politics & Culture (forthcoming).
these were dictated by policy concerns or their party membership without any particular thought to how these would connect with the wider electorate. As would be expected, the participants expressing the latter view were all from small, ideologically-driven parties such as Socialist Alliance, the Christian Democratic Party and Family First.

Within the group of parties which acknowledged such a link, a small number traced a direct connection between their campaign goals and the themes or issues they chose to focus on. For example:

'‘We effectively developed a message based around this principle, or this whole idea of ‘don’t give them a blank cheque’. I mean, it was called different things and I think the language we used that came out of the research in the end was more around ‘don’t give them too much power’...the reason why we were running with [that message] is that you had to give people a reason to vote for you. We had to give Labor voters a reason to vote for us.’

—NSW-HQ-ALP

'We knew that we couldn’t afford to have the election turn into a referendum on Labor’s 11 years in office. Because we knew, obviously, how hard it was going to be to win after 11 years in office...so we knew it couldn’t be a referendum, we knew we needed to find a frame that made it a choice for people, and we thought, why not use the leaders? It’s easy for people to plug into, people are very good at tuning into personality politics, so we thought we’d make it a choice between the leaders.’

—VIC-HQ-ALP

More commonly however, the interviewees reported an indirect connection by indicating that particular issues or themes were chosen because of their capacity to connect with strategically significant target audiences, as in the following examples:

'The [messages] that we took a proactive approach to were things which I think were really just appealing to the people that we saw as our target audience...I mean, it’s the whole sort of red tape, nanny-state approach to things, which we focused a lot on. Rural issues—you know, there’s a fair rural market. And then those things along the lines of the hunting and fishing, outdoors activities, because we thought—and I think, reasonably so—that there was a large appeal for people who had been disenfranchised by both the major parties...'

—QLD-HQ-KAP

'[B]ecause the Premier was in such bad condition, like her own standing in the community was quite negative, education was something that she personally had a good record on...so we thought that from her personal brand it would be a way of connecting with people; a traditional Labor strength as well...we also thought that amongst the
soft voters, and particularly women, it was one where we actually had quite a good record on and a decent message to sell.'

—QLD-HQ-ALP

What we tried to do was make our campaign feel like voting Green is a natural home for progressive and socially conscious voters. And that’s why some of our campaign materials...the headline was something like: ‘Can’t vote Labor but can’t bring yourself to vote for the Coalition?’

—NSW-SC-GRN

Knowing that the parties decided to campaign on particular issues and themes because these somehow supported their goals is one thing. But having acknowledged this, and identified what those particular issues were in any given campaign, how might these choices be compared for the purpose of analysing the broader strategy behind them? This is where the concept of issue positioning becomes useful, as it allows translation of specific issue choices into a set of common strategic positions. In looking at the parties quoted above, for example, it becomes evident that the Queensland Katter Party opted to occupy issue space which had been neglected by the major parties (outdoor recreation issues, the nanny state), and so support its goal of drawing disgruntled supporters away from both Labor and the Liberals.24 By contrast, the Queensland Labor Party aimed to shore up its base by sticking to issue territory it was solidly and positively associated with (education), while the New South Wales Greens worked to grow the party’s support by moving into issue space which had traditionally been occupied by Labor (progressivism, social welfare).25 By applying this framework to each of the other parties in the data set too, it is possible to make meaningful comparisons between their strategies even though the specific issues may be different. Without such a framework, analysing these issues would be like comparing apples with oranges, making it difficult to draw any solid conclusions.

Importantly, using this framework also allows this project to further refine the concept of issue positioning itself. This literature currently has much to say about which issue positions parties may adopt, but little about why they might choose to stick to their own issue territory versus striking out into unclaimed issue space or muscling in on their opponent’s turf. Part Three provides some insight into this by exploring the issue positions adopted by parties with common goals, and the implications of this for the broader literature are discussed in Part Four.

24 QLD-HQ-KAP; QLD-PL-KAP
25 QLD-HQ-ALP; QLD-PL-ALP; NSW-HQ-GRN; NSW-SC-GRN

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Selection of communication tools and channels

The third area where parties commonly saw a link between their goals and their strategic decision-making was in the selection of communication tools and channels. As Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli (2009) emphasised, modern-day parties have a broad range of communications options at their fingertips, ranging from direct, one-on-one communication by party activists, through to mass broadcast advertising and much else in between. They theorised that a party’s choices about which tools and channels to use are primarily driven by access to resources, but also, to a lesser extent, by institutional rules such as advertising bans and spending caps (Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli, 2009). In Chapter One, it was suggested that party goals would presumably also play some role in the selection of communication tools and channels. This is because certain mediums such as TV advertising are value-laden and convey messages about who or what a party is in addition to the specific campaign messages conveyed through them, as well as because different tools and channels are favoured by different audiences. Interestingly, the responses from the interviewees suggest that both Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli’s arguments and those proposed by this author apply in different circumstances.

Of the 52 interviewees, 12 (23 per cent) indicated that their selection of communication tools and channels was driven primarily by resources, rather than by broader considerations of what would best serve their campaign goals. These respondents were all from minor parties with either no representation in parliament, or representation by a single member. A lack of financial resources was the primary obstacle reported by many of these parties, for one Australian Christians representative put it: ‘The basis [is]: what can we do for nothing?’ The disparity between major and minor party campaign budgets was often remarked upon by the participants in this project, and expenditure returns from the Western Australian, Queensland and New South Wales elections highlight how great this really is. The total amounts spent by each of the parties in the data set at these elections are detailed in Table 8; this level of disclosure is not required in Victoria or South Australia so it is not possible to provide comparable figures for those campaigns.

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26 WA-HQ-AC
27 The remaining Australian states do not currently require reporting of campaign expenditure so equivalent figures are not available for these elections.

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Table 8—Party campaign spending in states with mandatory reporting requirements, 2011–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Total reported budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>$5,141,459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>$2,756,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>$446,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>$323,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Christians</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>$60,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal National Party</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>$7,154,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>$7,118,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katter’s Australian Party</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>$11,801,719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>$748,054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Nation</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>$40,657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>$11,376,435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>$11,105,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>$2,993,694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Democratic Party</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>$308,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>$1,686,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family First</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>$37,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Alliance</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>$9,662</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Financial resources are not the only ones that matter however. Access to a sufficient number of active and willing volunteers was also cited by many of these parties as a constraint on their choice of communication tools and tactics. This is best illustrated by one of the Queensland Greens representatives, who stated:

‘To a significant extent the tools I ended up using were more chosen by what was achievable by me and my branch, than by what would ideally be the most effective way to reach out to people....So, I wanted to do more doorknocking than I did, for example. A lot of the feedback I got from more experienced campaigners within the Greens was that those face-to-face conversations are amongst the most effective ways to reach people, and I was willing to put the time in. I needed more people to help me so I could reach more houses...but volunteers are very scared of doorknocking, it’s one of the things they find most intimidating, so that limited how much of it I did.

And similarly, you know, people often voiced doubts about how effective it is to just letterbox drop...but I had to factor in the fact that a lot of our volunteers will do that but won’t do anything else. So maybe it’s a small return on investment but I’m not really choosing between doing that and doing something with more impact. With this group of volunteers, I’m choosing between them doing that or them doing nothing.’

—QLD-SC-GRN

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For parties whose access to financial and human capital is constrained then, it seems that Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli are right in asserting that resources are an important factor in guiding which communication tools and channels they employ. Interestingly, several of the interviewees in this group indicated that they would have engaged in broadcast advertising and other forms of persuasion marketing if they had had the money to. This was surprising given that many represented parties—such as Socialist Alliance and The Greens—who might have been assumed to have some ideological reservations about this approach to electioneering.

Where Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli’s argument does not appear to hold is in circumstances where parties do have access to significant financial resources. Forty of the interviewees (77 per cent) indicated that their choice of particular communication tools and channels had been influenced substantially by their goals, with these participants primarily coming from major parties and the minor parties with larger parliamentary representation. Again, the nature of their goals appeared to lead these parties to prioritise different tools and channels, but the overarching calculus was how each would contribute to their desired outcome. For example, one Victorian Labor representative indicated that the party’s decision to invest heavily in new online channels was driven by the popularity of these channels with target voters in its key seats:

‘I really pushed [the LaborTV YouTube channel and campaign website] because I think that political parties need to find new ways to engage with voters...I was looking for new channels and new ways of getting to them, and new voices for them to hear talking about politics...we thought the audience for that would be younger voters, and as I’ve said to you, younger voters were a target cohort that we were trying to chase. We also thought inner-city voters would quite like it, that was another target audience with a few key marginals we were trying to chase there.’
—VIC-HQ-ALP

Similarly, the South Australian Nationals representative indicated that the party’s focus on one-on-one communication was influenced by a desire to win support for policies which were too complex to explain through mainstream media:

‘I spent a lot of time doing what we called ‘Shed meetings’. I would—through my networks—seek for a meeting to be held at someone’s farm, and call in the neighbours. I’d take a carton of beer and we’d sit down after work, and we would just talk through the issues...I needed to get down to the nitty-gritty of explaining all the complexities we were dealing with, which are too hard to explain in a 30-second media grab, or even a two-minute media grab.’
—SA-PL-NAT

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28 NSW-HQ-SA; NSW-HQ-GRN; VIC-HQ-GRN; WA-HQ-AC; SA-HQ-GRN; QLD-SC-GRN; VIC-SC-DLP
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Similar links between goals and communication tools and tactics were traced by all of the interviewees who reported that they were not entirely constrained by resources. However, none did so more amusingly than the Katter's Australian Party parliamentary representative, who indicated that his party's influence goal led them to adopt the maxim that any publicity was good publicity:

'We had quirky things like a double-decker bus from the 1960s all done out, and we had the Bad Boys film clip outside of Parliament—you have to do these quirky things, sort of raise your head every few weeks so that at least you're on the radar. And they might be calling you a turkey, but at least they're talking about you.'

—QLD-PL-KAP

These interviews suggest that for the Australian parties in this data set, campaign goals exerted an important influence over choices about the use of different communication tools and tactics. However, this was only true for parties that were rich enough to enjoy the luxury of choice. For resource-poor parties, practical considerations about what was feasible and affordable seemed to exert at least as much influence—and in some cases, far more—than any consideration of their goals. This is an important modification of Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli's argument about what drives parties' choice of communication tools and channels. However, it does not alter their fundamental point that parties may choose from a broad range of both internal and external, direct and indirect channels when campaigning. The interviews confirmed this, as different participants reported deploying everything from television, radio and online advertising to phone canvassing, doorknocking and 'Town Hall' meetings, as well as earned (unpaid) and social media, direct mail, leaflets and email. This suggests that regardless of what motivated the parties, Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli's categories are an appropriate way of classifying their communication tactics for the purpose of the comparative analysis in Part Three.

How do parties connect their goals to hard strategic action?

Having identified the key areas of strategic decision-making where the parties in this data set reported being influenced by their goals, a question remains about how they arrived at the specific decisions they did. It is all very well for a party to decide, for example, that it wants to target undecided voters and campaign on issues which will resonate with them. But how do they actually work out who and where those voters are, what their concerns or interests may be and how best to engage with them? This section briefly explores the information inputs of parties' strategic decision-making, to outline how they connect their goals to concrete campaign

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activity. The interviewees indicated that they drew insights and ideas from a range of different sources, however three were consistently mentioned across the interview group: market research, public data, and party activists, supporters and grassroots members.

**Market research**

The professionalisation literature suggests that market research has played an increasing role in recent decades in helping parties design and deliver election campaigns (for example, Norris, 2004; Lees-Marshment, 2001b; Sparrow and Turner, 2001). This project’s interviews certainly bear this out, as 32 participants (61.5 per cent) indicated that market research was either one of the most significant, or the most significant, inputs for them when working out how to translate their objectives into deliverable campaign activity. These participants primarily represented the major parties and The Nationals, although in some states, smaller parties including The Greens, Family First, the Australian Sex Party and Katter’s Australian Party also reported making use of market research tools. The remaining 20 interviewees (38.5 per cent) indicated that they had not made use of commissioned research because they could not afford it, although many indicated that they would have done so if they had had access to sufficient resources. Unsurprisingly, these participants represented the smaller minor parties, and particularly those without parliamentary representation. The use of market research is one of the key indicators in determining where parties are placed along Rohrschneider’s mobilising-chasing continuum, so the specifics of each party’s research use will be discussed further in Part Three. This section simply highlights some interesting findings from the interviews about what role the parties saw market research playing in the development of their campaigns.

Within the parties that reported using commissioned market research, the range and scope of services used appeared to vary significantly. For example, major parties such as the VIC Labor Party, QLD Liberal National Party and WA Liberal Party reported using a suite of different research inputs, including quantitative polling (both rolling tracking polls and individual issue surveys), qualitative focus groups, media market segmentation, demographic analysis and advertising testing. At the other end of the spectrum, the WA Greens indicated that their resources had only been able to stretch to a small collection of focus groups and some limited

29 This section touches on the question of how professionalised Australia’s political parties have become in their approach to designing and delivering election campaigns, but space does not allow for exploration of this point to its full extent. For more on professionalisation within Australia’s state parties and its impacts, see Rayner, 2013a.

30 WA-HQ-LIB; WA-PL-LIB; QLD-HQ-LNP; VIC-PL-ALP
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exit polling. It is not surprising that resources play a major role in the scale and scope of research use, as party campaign returns indicate that a single round of focus groups can cost upwards of $10,000, while a quantitative telephone poll costs between $1,500 and $13,000 depending on the provider and the sample size (Western Australian Electoral Commission, 2013; Electoral Commission Queensland, 2012).

The interviewees indicated that market research can provide a wide range of insights, including into: how the party and its leadership is viewed by the community; what the strengths and weaknesses of the respective parties in the electoral contest are; how support is distributed across the electorate and where soft or swinging voters are located; which issues, messages and themes resonate best within the community; which issues are the ones that will actually convince people to change their votes; and which tools or channels to use to reach specific audiences. This is all critical information for a party seeking to translate its abstract goals into a concrete strategy, as the interviewees indicated that it allows more informed decision-making about where to focus their party’s energies and resources, which themes and issues to focus on, which audiences to talk to and much else besides.

Interestingly, all of the interviewees in this group scoffed at the popularly-held view that focus groups or polling are used to determine actual policies or governing agendas. The sentiments expressed in the following two quotes were echoed by many when discussing this point:

‘If you go to [a researcher] and say: ‘we don't know what we want to do and we're starting at scratch, what should we do?’, you're wasting your time and you're wasting your money. You have to know what you want to say.’
—NSW-HQ-ALP

‘I think one of the greatest misconceptions of politics is that...everything is focus group driven and polling driven. What that misunderstands is just how damn expensive that stuff is. You only do it sparingly and you only do it when you’ve got a reasonably well-formed view about what you’re testing.’
—QLD-PL-ALP

Without actually working within one of these campaign teams, it is difficult to assess how accurate this perspective is and what approach the parties really did take to their market research programs. However, the fact that almost all of the major party participants expressed some

31 WA-PL-GRN 32 WA-HQ-LIB; WA-HQ-ALP; WA-PL-GRN; QLD-HQ-ALP; QLD-HQ-LNP; QLD-HQ-KAP; QLD-SC-GRN; NSW-HQ-ALP; NSW-HQ-LIB; NSW-HQ-GRN; NSW-HQ-NAT; VIC-PL-ALP; VIC-HQ-ALP; VIC-PL-LIB; VIC-HQ-NAT; SA-HQ-ALP; SA-PL-LIB; SA-HQ-FF

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version of this view during the interviews indicates that it is at least a widespread ‘line’ within the campaign community, whether or not it is wholly true.

Another commonly expressed view about market research was that it is necessary to help parties understand how disengaged voters see the world, as campaign teams are primarily staffed by people with a passion for politics and a high level of policy and issue literacy. As one Liberal campaigner put it:

‘At the end of the day, I’ve sat in focus groups with a view of how things should be, and then you walk out going: ‘actually, they’re right. I’ve thought about this the wrong way.’ So anyone that thinks they automatically know what things should be because of the conversations they’ve had with friends who are engaged in politics, it’s just mad. You need to take yourself out of the political environment. You need to have a very raw understanding of what people’s priorities are in order to communicate that to them. And that’s where research is critical.’

—WA-HQ-LIB

While some might interpret this as a sign of the major parties’ disconnection from the everyday voting public, similar iterations of this view were expressed by representatives of much smaller and more grassroots-oriented parties, including The Greens and Family First:

‘I guess I’m aware that my own experience is quite selective, and just not a very rigorous way to go about things...for instance, questions of public transport, I would have said that was one of the leading issues for Mount Coot-tha in terms of being front of mind, but it didn’t come up at all in the research.’

—QLD-SC-GRN

‘Whenever I [assume I know what voters want], I make mistakes! That’s why I have around me people who profoundly disagree and challenge some of the things I think people will want to hear. I test it, we make sure that we test everything...it’s not about us. It’s about either the voter or our member/supporter, and just finding out what’s important [to them].’

—SA-HQ-FF

These interviews suggest that staying ‘in touch’ with regular, and particularly disengaged, voters is a challenge for anyone who is highly involved with politics, not just those within the major parties. In one sense then, market research could be seen as a positive tool for helping parties engage with voters at the level of their interest, rather than as the nefarious tool for manipulation that it is often portrayed as in the media.
Regardless of whether market research is viewed as a positive or negative tool, it is clear from these interviews that it is a pervasive and influential one for Australian parties when designing their campaign strategies. It is also clear that the more resources a party has access too, the better the insights it is able to buy to guide its strategic decision-making. This raises important questions about how equitable the current campaign landscape is, and what role market research may be playing in entrenching the electoral dominance of wealthier political parties. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss these issues further, but for a more detailed exploration of these issues see Rayner (2013a).

Public data

Parties which cannot afford commissioned market research do not operate entirely in the dark when making decisions about their campaign strategies. That is because all parties have access to a wealth of open-access data from sources such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) and public polling firms such as Newspoll. These interviews suggest that minor parties are taking full advantage of these resources, as 85 per cent of those interviewees who said they did not have access to formal research indicated that they mined these public resources as an alternative source of insights. Many of the parties who did commission research also highlighted the importance of this data, although those interviewees often mentioned combining it with their own quantitative and qualitative data to generate deeper insights or extrapolate particular findings out to the wider electorate.33

Of the minor parties who relied exclusively on publicly available data, most reported undertaking a similar process of analysis to inform their campaign decision-making. This began with examination of AEC and state electoral commission data on past election results, to gain an understanding of how support for different parties was previously distributed across the electorate and where their own vote had been strongest and weakest in the past. Having identified promising-looking electorates or regions, the parties next drilled down into the ABS data for those areas to understand their demographic and socio-economic composition and work out who their target audiences might be. They then combined this information with public data from organisations like Newspoll and other media commentary about key issues within the wider community, as well as public polling on voter sentiment towards the major parties.34 This process

33 WA-HQ-ALP; WA-HQ-LIB; QLD-HQ-LNP; QLD-HQ-ALP; SA-HQ-ALP; NSW-HQ-LIB
34 NSW-HQ-GRN; NSW-HQ-SA; VIC-HQ-GRN; VIC-HQ-FF; VIC-HQ-CA; SA-HQ-GRN
allows these minor parties to build a reasonably detailed map of the electoral landscape at limited
cost. However, the interviewees suggested that their capacity to understand the electoral terrain
using this approach was inferior to the major parties’ in several important ways.

Firstly, several of the interviewees pointed out that the long gaps between elections and major
survey events such as the Census mean that publicly available data is usually a year or more old
by the time they need to use it.\textsuperscript{35} This means that it does not account for demographic shifts,
boundary redistributions and other important changes which may have occurred since it was
collected. By contrast, commissioned research provides access to what one Greens campaigner
rather wistfully called ‘fresh’ data—information which reflects the current state of affairs.\textsuperscript{36}
Secondly, in order to make effective use of AEC, ABS and other data, minor parties need staff
or volunteers with sufficient skills and time to mine this. Overlaying ABS data with electorate
maps and parsing individual booth results is technical work that requires some specialised
knowledge, and can be very time consuming depending on the number of seats of interest and
the amount of data available. As many of the interviewees pointed out, minor parties are often
entirely reliant on volunteers who hold down full-time jobs and are generally not political
specialists, compared with major parties who have paid, specialist staff to handle such analysis.\textsuperscript{37}
This affects both the quality and the amount of analysis minor parties are able to do; the
presence of paid staff employed by members of parliament is apparently seen as a significant
boon for this reason, amongst others.\textsuperscript{38} Finally, the fact that these parties are reliant on data
created and published by other agencies means that this does not always contain all the
information they need or want to know. One Socialist Alliance interviewee raised this point in
particular reference to Newspoll’s public data. Although he believed it contained useful insights
about which issues were live in the community and how party support was shifting, he indicated
that it did not help Socialist Alliance understand public opinion on the party’s own key issues
such electoral and institutional reform, because these questions were simply not on Newspoll’s
agenda.\textsuperscript{39}

As a result of these issues, many of the interviewees in this group indicated that they were
essentially making a series of educated guesses about their strategic approach, as they simply did

\textsuperscript{35} VIC-PL-GRN; NSW-HQ-SA; VIC-SC-DLP
\textsuperscript{36} NSW-HQ-GRN
\textsuperscript{37} WA-HQ-AC; QLD-HQ-ONP; SA-HQ-GRN; VIC-HQ-FF; VIC-HQ-SA
\textsuperscript{38} QLD-SC-GRN; VIC-SC-DLP
\textsuperscript{39} NSW-HQ-SA

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not have enough information, or the right kind of information, to make fully informed decisions. Of course, this is true of major parties too to some extent, as a number of the paid, professional campaigners indicated that electioneering remains as much an art as a science. But the uncertainties of campaigning appeared to be felt much more acutely by the minor parties who were entirely reliant on public data, because their decision-making involved so many more unknowns.

Although these parties felt that their insights did not stack up to the major parties', it is worth noting that most appeared to approach campaign design with a level of professionalism that the Australian literature suggests was unheard of two or three decades ago (for example, Jaensch and Mathieson, 1998; Mills, 1986). These parties consciously sought out a diverse range of information sources, collated and compiled these in deliberate ways and used this data to guide their decision-making about how, where and when to campaign. So although they may not have used commercial market research or had paid, professional staff to guide this process, it is clear that these minor parties have also attained some degree of professionalisation in their approach to campaigning.

Activists, members and local communities

A final source of information and insights frequently mentioned by the interviewees was their party's own activists and members, as well as the local communities they lived within. Many participants indicated that they actively sought suggestions, ideas and feedback from these groups about which issues to prioritise in the campaign, how to reach out to different communities or sections of the electorate, where to focus their resources and the practical logistics of day-to-day campaigning. Importantly however, there was a clear divide between the parties which used market research and those which did not in terms of how much weight the views of these groups carried in guiding strategic decision-making.

Of the 20 interviewees who said they did not have access to commissioned market research, 14 (70 per cent) indicated that they actively sought and welcomed ideas or suggestions from their activists, members and local communities. These parties included branches of The Greens, Socialist Alliance, Family First and the Christian Democratic Party, and often this inclusiveness

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40 WA-HQ-ALP; VIC-HQ-NAT; SA-HQ-ALP

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was articulated as an important demonstration of the party's values. However, resource considerations also clearly played some role, as the following quotes highlight:

'[Membership input] is a hugely important factor. A) because of our starting premise, which is that members and supporters have to be involved, that's exactly what we believe in; and b) because we can't afford to do it differently anyhow... so the strategy is worked out within the party with as broad an input from members as we can possibly get. It's talked about at branch level, it's talked about at regional level, and at state council level.'

—VIC-HQ-GRN

'The local branches, who live local, we believe are the best people to make local decisions... so [each] branch will work out if they're going to run a candidate, what the local issues are, how they're going to run their campaign, if they can raise any money to do whatever. The question always comes up about the money!

—VIC-SC-DLP

The remaining six interviewees in this group (30 per cent) indicated that their ideas and insights were generated by a small core of committed activists and/or MPs at the top of the party, with limited opportunity for members or supporters outside of this circle to have a say. For some—such as the QLD Katter's Australian Party—this appeared to be due to the personal preferences of those core personalities, as well as a numerical lack of party members.41 By contrast, the interviewees for parties such as Queensland One Nation and South Australian Dignity 4 Disability suggested that they would have welcomed broader input, but lacked either a sufficiently active membership or enough public profile to attract this.42

Within the parties which could afford commissioned research, attitudes to input by activists, members and local communities were quite starkly different. Twenty-two of these interviewees (69 per cent) said that there were few or no opportunities for these groups to provide ideas or information to inform their campaign strategies, while only 10 (31 per cent) indicated that they sought or welcomed this contribution. What's more, most of those 22 interviewees were quite dismissive of the idea that the broader party or local communities could make a useful contribution to their strategic decision-making, with many articulating similar views to those included here:

'The worst thing you can do is have a large number of people trying to make strategic decisions. What you need is a key strategy group of five or six brains who can just make those kinds of decisions.'

41 VIC-HQ-CA; VIC-SC-CA
42 QLD-HQ-ONP; SA-HQ-D4D
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—WA-HQ-ALP

‘By and large, the strategics is done through the standing campaign committee of the party, who I guess is aware of research, polling, media clippings and so forth. So you’ve got a much bigger picture if you’re on the campaign committee. They were getting briefings that I guess the regular grassroots member wouldn’t have access to, and so were in a better position to set the framework for the strategics.’

—VIC-HQ-NAT

‘That art of who do you target and [similar]—I think that side of things is really lost on people.’

—QLD-SC-GRN

Having said that, almost all of these interviewees praised the important instrumental contribution that party members and supporters in the community make to election campaigns. That is, they placed great emphasis on the work of these groups in implementing the campaign strategies which had been developed by the party oligarchs, particularly through physical tasks such as letterboxing, phone canvassing and staffing booths on Election Day. The following quote from a QLD Liberal National Party representative neatly encapsulates the (slightly patronising) gratitude with which these groups appear to be viewed by those at the top of the larger parties:

‘I think the party members still have a very substantial role in the campaign. They are our foot soldiers to spread our message. They are the people who provide us with the sustenance we need during the lengthy campaigns...I mean, people say, ‘they’re only handing out how to vote cards’—can I tell you, I think handing out how to vote cards is a very important thing to do. Because they do represent the face of the party. And if they are smiling, happy, cheerful, all that, that makes an enormous impact on voters as they walk into an election booth...they’re also vital for spreading the message to their business contacts, their friends, their families, all the people they know.’

—QLD-PL-LNP

This is an important point to note, as while academics tend to view this practical campaign work as the hollowed out shell of more meaningful, past forms of democratic participation (for example, Whiteley, 2009; Young, 2004), the parties themselves appear to still see this as both an essential and valued part of their overall operations. Of course, a cynic would say that these party oligarchs only value this on-the-ground activity because it supports their electoral ambitions and helps maintain their access to public funding and other office benefits. This may be so, but at an individual level, the interviewees certainly seemed genuine in their appreciation of the work that party activists and supporters do during election times.

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To return to the larger point of this section, the clear finding is that parties with access to market research are much less likely to view activists, supporters and local communities as a source of information and insights than those which do not make use of this. This is consistent with a broad range of literature arguing that the professionalisation of campaigns shrinks the variety of people who have active input into their strategic design (for example, Karlsen, 2010; Plasser and Plasser, 2002; Farrell, Kolodny and Medvic, 2001). This is often assumed to have negative effects on both the representativeness of parties’ political offerings and the quality of democratic participation. Whether or not this is really the case is a complex issue, not least because discussions about this often rest on normative assumptions about what ‘representativeness’ and ‘democratic participation’ should actually entail. The content of these interviews do not allow this thesis to shed much light on this debate, beyond pointing out that there were plenty of parties in this data set who did seek and welcome broad involvement from activists, supporters and members of the community. This suggests that there continue to be opportunities for people from all walks of life to engage in high-level, active engagement in political campaigning in Australia. It is simply that these opportunities generally exist outside of the major political parties.

No place for eggheads?

There is one additional finding that is worth briefly highlighting from these interviews, as it speaks to the connection between academic research and the real world of politics. Just one of the 52 interviewees (1.9 per cent) mentioned using scholarly publications or academic research findings to inform his party’s campaign strategy. This was the case despite an explosion in empirical research in areas such as political communication, mobilisation, political marketing, voter psychology and many other relevant fields in recent years. While political practitioners are obviously not the only audience for such research—or perhaps, even, the intended audience—it should give researchers some pause for thought to find that their work is so little used by people for whom it should be very relevant. Furthermore, it suggests that Australian researchers may need to more actively promote relevant findings and research to political practitioners outside of the academy, as well as considering how such work can best be communicated to audiences with a practical, rather than a theoretical, interest in the subject.
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**Laying the groundwork**

The following chapters break down 32 individual campaign strategies and explore the similarities and differences between those adopted by parties within the four goal categories. This chapter has laid the groundwork for that discussion in several key ways. Firstly, it has demonstrated that the participating parties themselves saw some connection between their goals and their strategic decision-making. While this is hardly surprising, it is a necessary link in the thesis' overall argument that differing goals drive different strategies. If the interviewees had not reported any particular connection between their goals and their strategic decision-making, then this thesis would not be on very firm ground in arguing that one is related to the other. As these interviews clearly demonstrate however, the participants did report that their goals influenced their strategic thinking, particularly when it came to selecting target audiences, focus issues and themes, and communication tools and channels.

Secondly, the fact that these three areas are closely aligned with the aspects of strategy highlighted in Chapter One supports the selection of the research frameworks used to analyse the parties’ strategic decision-making. Rohrschneider’s mobilising-chasing continuum directly addresses the question of target audiences, while Petrocik and others’ work on issue ownership and emphasis links in with the selection of focus issues and themes. Finally, Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggii’s communications repertoire addresses the tools and channels open to parties for engaging those audiences and spreading such messages, and so connects to this third aspect of strategic choice.

Finally, by identifying the information inputs that the parties drew on to connect their goals to decisions about strategy, it has been shown that this process is not random or informed by simple guesswork. Rather, parties consciously and deliberately seek insights from a range of different sources—including market research, public data and their own networks and communities—to help them make strategic decisions. Again, this would hardly be news to anyone, but acknowledging this provides a basis for understanding how parties with similar goals might arrive at apparently similar strategic decisions.

With the accumulated insights of chapters Three and Four in mind, the reader is now fully equipped to move on to an in-depth exploration of party campaign strategies in Part Three.

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Campaign strategies

The following four chapters break down the strategies adopted by each of the parties in this project’s data set and explore the key similarities and differences between them.

The major finding to emerge from these chapters is that parties in each of the four goal categories were often seen to make strategic decisions that were more similar to each other than to parties with different goals. However, it also becomes clear that in some important areas, parties with different goals made common choices.

In exploring these areas of divergence and convergence, the following discussion demonstrates the significant influence that access to resources—both human and financial—and organisational factors play in driving campaign decision-making, in addition to a party’s goals. In particular, these chapters argue that the parties in each of the goal categories sometimes made similar decisions not because these would necessarily best support their goals, but simply because these were ones that their decision-makers were accustomed to making, or because they did not have the money to make others, or because their existing party structures favoured a particular mode of campaigning. Based on this, it is argued that some of the choices highlighted in the literature should not really be considered ‘strategic’ ones at all, as they seem to be determined more by internal factors than by any consideration of what will best support a party’s goals.

The coming chapters also highlight the significant influence that environmental and institutional factors exert over campaign decision-making. In making strategic decisions about how to achieve their goals, it is observed that parties must manoeuvre through a political landscape which offers each of them different opportunities and constraints, while also anticipating or reacting to the behaviour of other political actors. This need to be highly responsive to context sometimes leads parties to behave in superficially different ways, even when they are working from a shared, underlying strategic calculus about how to achieve their common goals.

None of that should be interpreted as downplaying the significance of goals as a driver of campaign decision-making however. The following discussion highlights a range of ways that goals do appear to influence strategy, and particularly demonstrates that parties which hold alternative goals to running government make very different choices from those wishing to do so. This is important because it deepens understanding of how parties behave on the campaign

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trail, as well as broadening the focus of research beyond the handful of major political actors who often dominate discussions of campaigning. But on the basis of the evidence presented here, it certainly could not be said that goals were the only driver of campaign decision-making; or even, for some parties, the most important one.

Mapping campaign strategies

The findings reported in the following four chapters are based upon in-depth analysis of party campaign activity and the information provided by party representatives through the semi-structured interviews.

To develop a clear understanding of each party’s strategic approach, campaign activities were analysed using a set of indicators developed specifically for this project. These indicators represented an attempt to operationalise issue ownership, the mobilising-chasing continuum and the communications repertoire of campaigning for the purpose of comparative analysis. Appendix Three outlines the key components of this approach in detail.

In combination with the interview material presented in chapters Three and Four then, these four chapters present the bulk of this project’s original research findings. Each unfolds according to a common pattern so that readers wishing to cross check or compare distinct aspects of the parties’ strategies can easily do so.

Each chapter focuses on one of the goal categories and undertakes side-by-side analysis of the campaign strategies adopted by the parties within this. This analysis is broken down into segments on issue ownership, the mobilising-chasing continuum and communications repertoires so that these individual segments of strategic decision-making can be considered in isolation.

Each of these segments begins with some discussion of how the literature and this project’s own hypotheses would predict the parties to behave. Each also then concludes by addressing how well the observed reality matches up to this.

At the conclusion of each of these chapters there is some discussion of how the strategic decisions pursued by the parties in that group compared with those of parties in the other goal
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categories. A more detailed concluding section which draws together all the key points of similarity and difference and summarises the project’s main original findings then follows on p.211.

These four chapters focus primarily on mapping out the parties’ campaign strategies and exploring how these relate to the hypotheses outlined in Chapter One. The broader implications of these findings for the original literature which informed this project are discussed in a following section (Chapter Nine), along with what they add to understanding of the Australian political landscape (Chapter Ten).
Government-seeking strategies

This chapter explores the strategies adopted by parties who identified their primary campaign goal as winning or retaining government. As outlined in Chapter Three, these parties were all state branches of the major Labor and Liberal parties, along with their Nationals counterparts in Victoria and New South Wales.

Dissecting the campaign strategies adopted by the parties in this group reveals a high degree of consistency in their decisions about issue positioning and communications repertoires. It also highlights some interesting divergences within the mobilising-chasing dimension, which shed light on the different imperatives faced by parties according to the political environment.

Issue positioning

As discussed in Chapter One, past research suggests that political parties have four options when making decisions about which issues to emphasise in their campaigns. They may choose to focus on issues on which they already possess a favourable reputation (their 'owned' issues), or on those where they are relatively evenly rated compared with other parties ('contested' issues). Alternatively, they may challenge the status quo by focusing on issues which are traditionally associated with their opponents ('opposition owned' issues), or establish credentials in new areas by focusing on issues which are not associated with any particular party ('unclaimed' issues). The original proponents of issue ownership theory (Budge and Farlie, 1983a; 1983b; Petrocik, 1996) suggested that parties will primarily focus on issues they are favourably associated with and work to downplay or disregard issues where their opponents enjoy an advantage. However, examining the focus issues adopted by the government-seeking parties suggests that this is not always the case.

In determining which issues each of the parties in the data set made the focus of their campaigns, this and subsequent chapters draw on both content analysis of campaign materials and information provided by the interviewees. For the government-seeking parties, this analysis shows that each focused on a range of different issues throughout their campaigns, and did not restrict themselves to just one or two topics. In fact, these parties addressed a surprising diversity of issues in their campaign materials, with the average number of issues covered per party being 21.

For full details of the methodologies used in these chapters, see Appendix Three.

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However, some issues were clearly given more prominence than others. This was evident from the frequency with which they were mentioned in the campaign materials, as well as their inclusion in key campaign set-pieces such as the leader's launch speech and the parties' television advertising. Table 9 outlines the top five issues each of these government-seeking parties focused on in their respective campaigns. It also identifies which parties currently ‘own’ these issues in the Australian political context.43

This analysis shows that far from emphasising only their own favourable issues, each of these parties actually ranged across the different issue categories. In what appears to be a common pattern within this group, the parties emphasised a package of issues which featured both their own favourable ones and those owned by their opponents, as well as contested issues and what this thesis dubs ‘process’ issues—those which relate to the process of governing instead of a specific policy area. Themes such as ‘risk’ and ‘incompetence’ are categorised as process issues because they are designed to draw attention on a party’s overall ability (or lack thereof) to deliver acceptable outcomes, rather than addressing a particular area of policy or service delivery.

In translating these choices into an overall strategic issue position then, these parties cannot be said to have primarily occupied either their own, opponent, unclaimed or contested issue space. Rather, they can best be described as having adopted a mixed issue position, in which they simultaneously played to their strengths and sought to establish their credentials in other areas, while also casting doubt on the capacity of their opponents by emphasising process issues.

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43 Issue ownership has been determined using aggregate data from Newpoll’s ‘party best to manage’ survey for the period 2010 to 2013 (Newspoll, 2013b). The use of public polling as an indicator of issue ownership is common in studies of this topic, including those of Belanger and Meguid (2008), Damore (2004), and Kaufmann (2004).
Chapter Five—Government-seeking strategies

Table 9—Identified focus issues for government-seeking parties, 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Top five focus issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>Infrastructure (contested), Law and order (COALITION), Education (ALP), Health (ALP), ‘Risk’ (process)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal National Party</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>Cost of living (COALITION), Infrastructure (contested), ‘Incompetence’ (process), Economic management (COALITION), Health (ALP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>Infrastructure (contested), ‘Transparency’ (process), Economic management (COALITION), Health (ALP), Environment (GREEN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>Regional affairs (COALITION), Infrastructure (contested), ‘Representation’ (process), Health (ALP), ‘Transparency’ (process)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Law and order (COALITION), Infrastructure (contested), ‘Incompetence’ (process), Health (ALP), Education (ALP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Regional affairs (COALITION), Law and order (COALITION), Health (ALP), Infrastructure (contested), Education (ALP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Education (ALP), Health (ALP), Environment (GREEN), Economic management (COALITION), Jobs (ALP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>Health (ALP), Water (COALITION), Infrastructure (contested), Education (ALP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>Jobs (ALP), Infrastructure (contested), Water (COALITION), Health (ALP), Law and order (COALITION)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled by author based on original content analysis.

In the interviews, many of the participants reflected on the importance of this approach in demonstrating broad capacity to govern. In particular, several of the interviewees indicated that voters are looking for an overall ‘plan’ from a future government rather than a focus on any single issues or initiatives, and said that they consciously aimed to present a well-rounded package of policies and ideas as a result:

'We had all these different individual policy ideas...but what we found in our research was, it wasn’t specifically our individual policies that were important to people. They wanted to know that we had a package of policies. They wanted to know that we had a clear plan and a direction for the future.'

—WA-HQ-LIB

46 WA-PL-LIB; WA-PL-LNP; VIC-PL-LIB; VIC-PL-ALP; SA-PL-LIB

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While these parties appeared to deliberately select a diverse range of focus issues, it is not clear that the ownership status of these played a particular role in their decision-making. That is because few of the interviewees appeared to conceptualise individual issues in such nuanced terms. More commonly, they were viewed in a binary sense as being either 'good' or 'bad' for the party. Aggregating the observations of many participants in this goal category and the preservation-seeking group, a 'good' issue appears to be one which is highly salient for voters, and on which the party has either a reasonable record of delivery or something new to offer. Conversely, 'bad' issues are those which link the party to past underperformance or scandals, where the community has expectations that the party cannot—or will not—meet, or where different segments of its potential support base hold diverse and conflicting views. This perspective is supported by Goot (2005b), who has argued that when choosing issues to emphasise, major parties look for those which are a) highly salient, in the sense of both mattering personally to voters and being relevant to their voting decision, and b) on which voters actually see the parties as being different in either their ideas or plans.

Importantly too, the parties appeared to be far less concerned with issue reputations over time than with the landscape immediately in front of them. For example, at the 2008 Western Australian state election, the Liberal Party had sought to downplay the issue of health because it was seen as having underperformed in this area when last in government. By contrast, in 2013 the party made health a particular focus of its campaign because this was a highly salient issue for voters and the party was considered to have delivered strongly on this over its first term in government.

The interviews suggest that for the parties in this group, decisions about which are 'good' and 'bad' issues at any given point in time are primarily informed by commissioned research, as polling and focus groups allow them to track perceptions of their performance on a broad range of issues, while also measuring the salience of these to voters (see section below). A formerly 'good' issue can quickly become untouchable if the political environment changes,

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47 WA-LIB-HQ; WA-LIB-ALP; QLD-PL-ALP; NSW-HQ-ALP; NSW-PL-NAT; VIC-PL-ALP; VIC-HQ-NAT; SA-HQ-ALP
48 WA-PL-LIB

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while a ‘bad’ issue may similarly see a revival thanks to a change of leader, a new policy direction or some larger unforeseen event.\footnote{QLD-HQ-LNP; WA-PL-LIB; VIC-PL-ALP}

It is worth noting too that within the parties in this group, ordinary members, candidates and even some sitting MPs apparently have little say over which issues become the focus of a campaign. The interviews suggest such decision-making is limited to senior party leaders and strategists, because it is they who have access to the research showing what is ‘good’ and ‘bad’.

In terms of their strategic decision-making then, the interviews suggest that these government-seeking parties aimed to focus their campaigns on a collection of issues which were deemed ‘good’ for the party at the time of the election, with the intention of demonstrating well-rounded governing capacity. Analysis of the campaign materials indicates that this commonly meant adopting a mixed issue position, in which the parties campaigned on a blend of their own, opponent-owned and contested issues. While this observation provides a benchmark for comparing these parties’ strategies with those in the other goal categories, there is little evidence that the parties themselves conceptualised their issue choices in these terms. Furthermore, this group’s choices lend weight to the suggestion made in Chapter One that parties are not limited to campaigning on issues they already own. Both of these points will be explored further when outlining the issue positioning strategies of parties in the other three goal categories; the possible implications of this for the literature are also discussed in Part Four.

**Mobilising-chasing continuum**

Turning next to the question of targeting, Rohrschneider identified five strategic choices that parties make, and which locate them along a continuum from mobilising core supporters to chasing unaligned voters. Chapter One pointed out that ambitious parties may go further by also targeting non-supporters—those who have never previously voted for that party but may be enticed to do so at a particular election. Analysing the targeting strategies of the parties in this government-seeking group indicates that they made similar decisions in many of Rohrschneider’s five areas. However, there were also some interesting divergences of approach which highlight the importance of the campaign environment in guiding parties’ strategic choices. The following section addresses each of Rohrschneider’s five questions in turn before drawing some overall conclusions about these parties’ targeting strategies.

\footnote{QLD-HQ-LNP; WA-PL-LIB; VIC-PL-ALP}

_Beyond winning: party goals and campaign strategy in Australian elections_
To what extent do parties maximise votes or emphasise the representation of policies?

To determine whether the parties in the data set aimed to maximise votes or represent policies, both the content and distribution of their election policy promises were examined. In particular, this analysis explored what proportion of policies delivered tangible benefits to specific, electorally-significant seats or communities, and what proportion delivered either abstract or statewide benefits. Examples of the former included specific dollar promises for upgrades to individual schools, local roads or community facilities, while the latter included law reform and public service delivery upgrades. The larger the proportion of policies delivering tangible benefits to specific areas, the more parties were considered to be maximising votes. Conversely, the larger the proportion of policies with statewide or abstract benefits, the more focus parties were assumed to have on policy representation.

Table 10 summarises the findings of this analysis for the government-seeking parties. It is worth noting that the number of election policies and promises located for each party varied significantly, as it appears that some political parties did not give permission for the policy sections of their websites to be archived by Pandora. In cases where original policy documents were not available, media reportage of policy announcements and details made available through other campaign materials such as media releases, direct mail and advertising were used as alternative sources. Because of this, the project may not have located and analysed all policies and promises released during these campaigns.

Looking at the breakdown in Table 10, it is clear that all of the government-seeking parties engaged in some level of attempted vote buying during their campaigns. However, the extent of this varied quite significantly, with approximately 20 per cent of policies delivering tangible and targeted benefits in the case of the New South Wales Coalition and the Queensland Liberal National Party, ranging up to 45 per cent in the case of the Victorian ALP.

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50 For full details of the decision criteria, see Appendix Three.

Beyond winning: party goals and campaign strategy in Australian elections
Table 10—Policy/vote seeking ratios for government-seeking parties, 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Number of election-specific policies or promises identified</th>
<th>Number delivering statewide outcomes or abstract benefits</th>
<th>Number delivering tangible benefits to specific electorates</th>
<th>Policy/vote split (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>60/40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal National Party</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>76/24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>81/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>76/24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>59/41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>59/41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>55/45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>72/28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled by author based on original content analysis.

Looking at the circumstances surrounding these campaigns, there is no clear pattern to which parties pursued votes more intensively than others. For example, incumbent parties did not appear to pursue votes or policy more consistently than non-incumbents. Similarly, the political context did not appear to drive decisions about this, as parties running in very competitive races (the South Australian Labor and Liberal parties) displayed a similar policy/vote ratio to those in more one-sided ones (the Queensland Liberal Nationals and NSW Nationals). The interviews also did not reveal any particular patterns in why these parties pursued the approach that they did, and so this is clearly a question which warrants further investigation. There are a range of party-specific factors which may be determinative here—such as the leader’s level of personal commitment to policy representation, or how much influence the strategists in party head office are allowed to have over the policies announced in the campaign. Further research—and particularly more party interviews—would be needed to explore this point.

In terms of what this data reveals about overall targeting strategies, it demonstrates that each of these government-seeking parties were chasing votes to some degree, but not necessarily to the extent that may have been expected. While there was significant variation within this group in terms of how extensively they pursued votes, the average was a 68/32 ratio. This suggests that
although vote maximising was a significant consideration, policy representation remained a strong focus for these parties.

To what extent do parties aim at mobilising their core constituency or unaligned voters?

In the majority of countries around the world which do not have compulsory voting, mobilising voters refers quite particularly to the process of engaging voters so that they will turn out on Election Day. However, Australia’s system of compulsory voting means that local parties do not have to physically muster voters to attend a polling booth and support them. Instead, campaigning tends to focus on convincing voters to cast their ballots a particular way; Australian ‘mobilisation’ is primarily about persuading past voters to stick with you and giving unaligned or defecting voters a reason to support you (Karp, Banducci and Bowler, 2008). Rohrschneider’s term will remain in use throughout this thesis, however it should be understood that in doing so, this refers to the Australian form of mobilisation rather than the type observed in overseas campaigns.

To determine which constituencies the parties aimed to mobilise, distribution patterns for their campaign materials were cross-checked against the self-reporting of the interviewees. Table 11 outlines the top five priority seats identified through this process for each of the government-seeking parties, as this provides a snapshot of their wider targeting approach. The table also indicates which party held each of these seats, and by what margin, at the time of the relevant elections.

51 For full details of the decision criteria, see Appendix Three.
### Table 11—Identified target seats for government-seeking parties, 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Top five priority seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>Perth ALP held with 57.8 per cent of 2008 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mount Lawley LIB held with 52.2 per cent of 2008 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Belmont ALP held with 56.7 per cent of 2008 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Balcatta ALP held with 52.3 per cent of 2008 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kalgoorlie IND held with 53.6 per cent of 2008 TCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal National Party</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>Ashgrove ALP held with 57.1 per cent of 2009 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stafford ALP held with 57.3 per cent of 2009 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Greenslopes ALP held with 59.5 per cent of 2009 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Toowoomba North ALP held with 53.2 per cent of 2009 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brisbane Central ALP held with 55.9 per cent of 2009 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>Wyong ALP held with 56.9 per cent of 2007 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Manly LIB held with 53.3 per cent of 2007 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parramatta ALP held with 63.7 per cent of 2007 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Balmain ALP held with 53.8 per cent of 2007 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>East Hills ALP held with 61.4 per cent of 2007 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>Tamworth IND held with 54.8 per cent of 2007 TCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Monaro ALP held with 56.3 per cent of 2007 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bathurst ALP held with 63.05 per cent of 2007 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cessnock ALP held with 62.4 per cent of 2007 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dubbo IND held with 50.9 per cent of 2007 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Prahran ALP held with 53.6 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kew LIB held with 59.7 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Carrum ALP held with 56.7 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mordialloc ALP held with 53.5 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hastings LIB held with 50.9 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Morwell NAT held with 52.1 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gippsland East IND held with 53.4 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bendigo West ALP held with 50.8 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mildura NAT held with 56.08 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Murray Valley NAT held with 71.8 per cent of 2006 TPP (retiring member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Ivanhoe ALP held with 60.5 per cent of 2006 TPP (resigned member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brunswick ALP held with 53.7 per cent of 2006 TPP (retiring member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mitcham ALP held with 51.9 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prahran ALP held with 53.6 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Northcote ALP held with 58.5 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>Hartley ALP held with 54.7 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Norwood ALP held with 54.3 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bragg ALP held with 59.5 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Davenport LIB held with 56.5 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Morialta ALP held with 57.9 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>Morialta ALP held with 57.9 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>West Torrens ALP held with 68.3 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mawson ALP held with 52.2 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hartley ALP held with 54.7 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Norwood ALP held with 54.4 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Five—Government-seeking strategies


Target seats identified by author based on original content analysis and party interviews.

The most immediate observation to leap out from this data is that the governing parties which held office in their own right (SA and VIC Labor) primarily focused their efforts on seats they already held. By contrast, the parties which were out of government (the QLD, NSW and VIC Coalitions and SA Liberals) or in minority government (the WA Liberals) campaigned intensively in seats held by their opponents. This makes perfect sense, given that the incumbent parties already held the necessary number of seats to form government, while the non-incumbent and minority governing parties needed to actually increase their existing seat share to achieve their respective goals.

However, this does not necessarily indicate whether parties were targeting their core constituency, unaligned voters or defecting non-supporters. A useful proxy for this is the margins of the individual target seats, as low margins generally indicate a high prevalence of swinging voters, while higher margins indicate a larger proportion of committed voters for one or other party. The AEC defines a ‘marginal’ seat as one held by a buffer of less than six per cent, while seats held by between six and 10 per cent are considered ‘fairly safe’ and those held by more than 10 per cent are seen as ‘safe’ (Australian Electoral Commission, 2014a). Of course, the actual safety or otherwise of a seat depends on the swing at any given election. For example, at the 2011 New South Wales election the average statewide swing to the Liberals was 14 per cent, sweeping away Labor-held seats which would have been considered extremely safe in more conventional times (Rayner, 2013b). However, the AEC’s definition provides a useful rule of thumb for classifying seats, particularly as the average swing at all Australian state elections for the decade preceding the 2010 to 2013 electoral cycle was 4.62 per cent.32

It has therefore been assumed that efforts directed at seats held by margins of less than six per cent were targeted towards unaligned voters, while those at seats above six per cent were targeted at either core supporters or non-supporters, depending on the party holding these. Viewed in this light, it becomes clear that the targeting strategies of the parties in this group differed significantly. Specifically, the incumbent VIC and SA Labor governments appear to have been targeting both unaligned voters and their core supporters, as their top five focus seats encompassed marginal and reasonably safe seats held by ALP members. By contrast, the

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32 Average swing calculated using two party preferred swing figures from relevant electoral commissions.

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incumbent and non-incumbent Liberal/Liberal National parties and the NSW Nationals appear to have targeted unaligned voters and non-supporters, as their focus seats each included fairly safe Labor seats as well as marginal ones held by both their own members and the ALP.

These observations are supported by the interviewees from each of the parties. The Labor representatives indicated that because they were in a relatively defensive position going into their respective elections, their focus was on previous supporters of the party and swinging voters. By contrast, the Liberal, Liberal National and NSW National participants reported that the context of their elections fostered a more expansionary mindset, and so they adopted an aggressive focus on previous Labor supporters in addition to swinging voters. As will be discussed below, the identification of which specific seats to focus on to reach these general cohorts was primarily informed by polling and research.

The VIC Nationals are an interesting exception to this trend, as that party’s focus seats suggest that it was targeting unaligned and core supporters. The VIC Nationals representative indicated that the party had little choice but to direct significant resources to two of its ostensibly safe seats, because in one (Murray Valley) the long-term incumbent MP was retiring, and in the other (Mildura) a strong field of independent candidates was challenging its sitting member. This highlights the role that individual seat dynamics can play in determining parties’ targeting strategies, independent of the wider political environment. Again, this makes polling and research an important input for parties in deciding which seats are safe and which are in play at any given election.

Overall, examining these parties’ approach to mobilisation reveals that they shared a focus on unaligned voters in marginal seats, while differing in their engagement with other categories of voters. The favourability of the political environment appeared to influence each party’s approach here, as the incumbent governments fighting for survival focused on mobilising their core supporters in addition to the unaligned, while minority and non-incumbents directed their energies towards mobilising defecting non-supporters instead.
Chapter Five—Government-seeking strategies

To what extent do parties rely on ideological programs (policies) or modern technologies (polling) in designing an election appeal?

Major political parties are often criticised for being ‘poll-driven’ and ‘focus group-obsessed’ (for example, Costar, 2013; Grattan, 2011), with the implication being that they rely on these modern technologies as a substitute for guiding beliefs and original policy thinking. However, the findings of this research suggest that the relationship between policy and polling in election campaigns is more nuanced than these critics give parties credit for.

To explore the respective influences of policy and polling for the parties in this data set, it was necessary to rely primarily on the insights provided by the interviewees, as there are few alternative sources of information about this particular aspect of campaigning. In the states that require reporting of campaign expenditure—New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia—it was possible to compare parties’ self-reported use of research with their publicly-reported spending to see if they had under- or over-stated the extent of this. In some cases, it was also possible to gain insights into the role of research through media leaks and party post-mortems conducted after the fact (for example, Wright, Lee and Tebbutt, 2012; Griffin, 2011). This cross-checking suggests that the interviewees were surprisingly honest about how market research was combined with policy and other inputs to inform the development of their campaigns. However, it should be acknowledged that the findings reported in this thesis may not tell the entire story, as it must be assumed that the interviewees tailored their responses to some extent to present their parties in a positive light.

Amongst the representatives from the government-seeking parties, there was a clear view that market research has become a critical input for designing effective election campaigns. All of the parties in this group reported making significant use of polling and focus groups, with these research programs typically assuming a common pattern. Firstly, these parties conduct benchmark polling 12 to 18 months out from the election date to establish a clear sense of their standing with the electorate, which issues are most prominent, and how support is distributed across individual seats. Based on this research—and other factors such as their budget and the presence of retiring members or particular star candidates—the parties then select a basket of seats for more intensive ‘burrow-down’ polling which seeks to disaggregate the voting public both in terms of high-salience issues and demographic factors. As the campaign progresses, rolling tracking polls provide the parties with insights into how their policy initiatives, messages and announcements are being received by target voters in these key seats, as well as how voting

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intentions may be firming or weakening in response. Running parallel with this quantitative research, qualitative focus groups are used to gain insights into the subjective and emotional assessments voters are making about the parties, their leaders and live public issues, as well as to test their response to proposed messages, advertisements and other campaign materials. This research can occupy a major component of party budgets—campaign returns show that the QLD Liberal National Party alone spent more than $975,000 on this at the 2012 campaign, from a total budget of $7.1 million (Electoral Commission Queensland, 2012).

In terms of how this research actually guides the development of their campaigns, the interviewees reported using this in two particular ways: to determine which seats should be the focus of their most intensive campaign efforts; and to help decide which issues and policy programs to place at the centre of their campaign messaging.

Looking first at the selection of target seats, the following two quotes neatly encapsulate the approach taken by the parties in this group:

‘All political parties do the same thing: they do their research, they draw up what we call the battleground, and that battleground is divided between target A, target B, target C-type seats. So target A seats are those that are probably capable of you winning and that’s where you’re going to put most of your resources; target B seats are the next tier down, and target C are those that traditionally...always will be tough to move and limited resources go into them.’

—QLD-HQ-LNP

‘A lot of it is driven by polling. So polling would show that maybe a Labor seat, if someone’s retired, it might be up to eight or 10 per cent but its worthy of a really strong campaign. Whereas a seat that might even be our way, where we’ve had someone retire, could be vulnerable. So you’ve got to target your campaign to wherever the polling is showing your strengths and weaknesses are.’

—WA-PL-LIB

In other words, these parties allow the research to tell them where their best electoral prospects lie, where soft and swinging voters can be found, and where particular campaign effort may be needed to shore up past support. This allows them to make strategic decisions about how to allocate resources so as to best achieve their campaign goals.

For example, at the 2010 South Australian state election the Labor Party’s polling showed that it was facing a significant swing against it, and that it would struggle to hold office as a result. But
the research also showed that individual ALP members in a number of low-margin seats around suburban Adelaide had a good level of personal popularity, while voters in these areas remained undecided about the Liberal opposition and its then-leader, Isobel Redmond. As a result, the party reportedly focused up to 90 per cent of its central campaign budget on these seats, effectively sandbagging them against the expected anti-government swing. ALP members in seats higher up the pendulum were left to bear the brunt of this swing, but most were able to hang on because of their larger pre-election margins. In this way, the party managed to achieve its goal of retaining government despite an average statewide swing of 7.4 per cent, for a net loss of only two seats (Steel, 2010b). Without this detailed and highly nuanced understanding of the electorate, the ALP would not have been able to develop and deliver such an effective, targeted campaign.

The selection of target seats and allocation of resources to them is a critical aspect of campaign strategy, as it determines the practical delivery of a party’s campaign efforts. It is clear from the interviews that these government-seeking parties were highly reliant on polling and research to guide this aspect of their decision-making. However, this does not appear to be what Rohrschneider had in mind in querying the relative weight given to policy and polling when designing electoral appeals. Rather, his interest is in whether parties campaign on an ideologically-informed platform which reflects their own convictions and values, or instead use modern research technologies to work out what voters want them to stand for (Rohrschneider, 2002: 369).

None of the interviewees in this government-seeking group admitted using market research to design their entire campaign offering. As discussed in Chapter Four, many were scornful of the suggestion that any party could actually afford to do so, given the great expense of commissioning polling and focus groups. Rather, the parties in this group reported that policies and program ideas emerge from a range of sources, including the parliamentary leadership, lobbyists, think tanks, community groups, interstate or international initiatives and occasionally even the party on the ground. Having developed a suite of policies which reflect the party’s priorities and values, research is then used to identify which specific issues are most salient within the community, and which of these pre-existing policies will therefore resonate best. As two of the interviewees explained:

56 SA-HQ-ALP
57 WA-HQ-LIB; QLD-PL-LNP; VIC-HQ-NAT; VIC-HQ-ALP; SA-PL-LIB

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'We listen very much to our members on the ground, obviously we monitor the media to see what [people] are talking about, we look at promises, broken promises from the incumbent government and see how those issues have been dealt with, and then on top of that we also do research...so typically polling is you research a whole range of issues, but within those issues you refine it more to decide what are the potential vote swingers.'

—QLD-HQ-LNP

'Through the research that is undertaken, you start to get a feel for the soft belly issues that are likely to change someone's vote. So you tend to focus in on the issues that impact with people...just because it's in the newspaper, doesn't mean it's a soft belly issue or a vote changing issue for a voter. So you do a bit of research...you need to sort of hone in on the issues that resonate and really do mean something on the ground, locally.'

—VIC-HQ-NAT

In other words, these government-seeking parties seek to match their campaign offerings to the interests of voters by emphasising the issues and policies which their research shows are 'soft belly' or vote-changing ones. This does not mean that the actual content of their offerings has been informed by research, but only the parties' decision to emphasise particular policies over others. As one campaigner quite bluntly put it:

'I can assure you that research, here in this state, research does not drive the policy at all...but it's the tool that [we] use to tell [us] which policies to focus on. There were some very good policies that just didn't see the light of day. They weren't focused on or highlighted—there was a press conference, they were released, they did their job, but they didn't fit into our campaign plan so we didn't focus on them.'

—WA-HQ-LIB

Having helped them identify which issues to emphasise, the interviewees in this group indicated that research also plays a role in guiding how these are presented to the electorate. As Victoria's two ALP representatives explained:

'What polling can tell you, and what the research, the group research on advertising can tell you, is how best to communicate your message to the people. So, you know, we had a great program on health...how do you tell that story, that we're investing in health and investing in people's future?'

—VIC-PL-ALP

'It really is in that communication function that focus group work and research really comes into its own. Working out ways of talking about issues that resonate with voters, that frame the issue in a way that fits with what the political party's values are and connects powerfully with voters.'

—VIC-HQ-ALP

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This comes back to the point raised in Chapter Four about politically-engaged, highly informed campaigners being poor judges of what will engage the interest of the average voter. However, it also speaks to the professionalisation of these parties, in that they have clearly adopted the logic and language of marketing. Rather than being content to let their policy offerings speak for themselves, these parties consciously work to package and present these in a way which maximises their appeal to the electorate. As shall shortly be seen, they are certainly not the only ones to do this, but the interviews suggest that their use of research to inform this process is considerably more advanced than most of the other parties in this data set.

It should be clear from this discussion that the government-seeking parties relied extensively, but not exclusively, on modern research technologies in designing their electoral appeals. These parties used polling and other forms of research to guide their selection of focus policies and issues, and to determine how to get the message out about these in the most effective and engaging way. However, market research was by no means the only input shaping their campaign offerings, as the interviewees reported that traditional inputs such as the party’s leadership, its members and the community still play a dominant role. While some may be sceptical of this view, it is supported by similar findings in recent research by authors such as Lees-Marshment (2012) and Goot (2005b). On a more practical level, the huge expense involved in commissioning large amounts of market research would certainly provide an incentive for parties to look to these other inputs for policy and program ideas.

To what extent do parties rely on a leader or (intra-party) constituencies in targeting voters?

Turning next to the question of how ‘leader-centric’ these campaigns were, Rohrschneider predicted that mobilising parties would primarily emphasise their core constituencies, while those engaged in chasing voters would tend to emphasise their leaders. It is not clear who exactly Rohrschneider is referring to in mentioning the role of ‘core constituencies’, but his reference to ‘intra-party’ constituencies implies a focus on those who actually belong to a party. For the purposes of this analysis then, it has been assumed that he is referring to the prominence and visibility given to party members within the campaign, compared with that afforded to the party leader.

To determine this, the party-produced campaign materials were analysed to explore how frequently the party’s leader featured in these, compared with how often party members were included. This analysis also examined how frequently these materials featured only the local...
candidate for a given seat, as this is another ‘intra-party’ constituency that parties may use to engage voters separate to their leaders.

Table 12 summarises the findings of this analysis for the parties in this government-seeking group. As this demonstrates, all of these parties pursued an extensively leader-centric approach at the electorate level, with the notable exception of the New South Wales Nationals. Interestingly, leaders were less prominent overall within party-produced media materials (media releases and advertising), although they were still the most visible single party representative within these materials.

Table 12—Prominence of leader, party members and candidates in government-seeking party campaign materials, 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>% of electorate materials featuring party leader</th>
<th>% of electorate materials featuring only local candidate</th>
<th>% of electorate materials featuring party leader</th>
<th>% of electorate materials featuring only local candidate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal National Party</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled by author based on original content analysis.

NOTE: Percentages do not round to 100 as some materials featured other senior party figures such as Ministers or Shadow Ministers, combinations of candidates or party-branded attacks on opposing candidates.

* The ‘Media’ section of the SA Liberal Party’s website was not archived in Pandora and so it was not possible to locate or code more than a handful of the party’s campaign media materials.

Although the majority of these campaigns were extensively leader-focused at the electorate level, the visibility of the individual leaders varied significantly. Putting aside the New South Wales Nationals for a moment, Victorian Opposition leader Ted Baillieu was the least visible, being featured in 58 per cent of all campaign materials. Western Australian Premier Colin Barnett was the most visible, appearing in more than three-quarters of all electorate campaign materials.

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Unlike in the other targeting dimensions discussed above, there does not appear to be a relationship between the closeness of the electoral race and the visibility of the leader. The South Australian and Victorian parties placed divergent levels of emphasis on their leaders despite being in close competition with each other, while the Queensland Liberal Nationals and New South Wales Liberals displayed similar levels of leader focus to parties in those more close-run states. Rather, the interviews suggest that decisions about how much emphasis to place on the leader were informed by their standing with the electorate at the time of the campaign. For example, at the 2010 Victorian election, the ALP’s internal research reportedly showed that then-Premier John Brumby provided a ‘lift’ for the party’s vote while Ted Baillieu was a ‘drag’ on the Liberals’. As a result, the party sought to make the election into a Presidential-style contest between the two by focusing strongly on Brumby (Reece, 2010). Although the Liberal representative did not directly address this point, it is likely that the party had access to similar research findings of its own, which perhaps explains Baillieu’s more limited visibility in the Liberals’ 2010 campaign.

Table 12 further indicates that when the parties focused heavily on their leaders at the electorate level, there was a corresponding drop in emphasis on local candidates, while a lesser focus on leaders generally resulted in increased visibility for individual candidates. An interesting outlier in this regard is the 2012 Queensland Liberal National campaign, which had a lesser focus on individual candidates than other parties who placed similar emphasis on their leaders. Examining the content of the party’s materials shows that the gap was filled by a high proportion of materials attacking individual members of the opposing Labor Party. According to media reports at the time, the party had a ‘decapitation strategy’ aimed at deposing the entire senior leadership of the then-Labor Government (Walker, 2012). To support this, the party distributed a significant number of attack items targeting Labor Ministers such as Andrew Fraser, Cameron Dick and Kerry Shine. As was common across the campaigns in this data set, these negative materials were generally not linked to an individual LNP candidate, but were rather distributed under the party’s name alone or with no brand attribution (see Figure 1).
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Figure 1—Candidate attack materials distributed by Liberal National Party, Queensland 2012

Materials sourced from the political ephemera collection of the Queensland State Library

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It is also clear from the data in Table 12 that intra-party constituencies were only rarely visible in the materials produced by the parties in this group, and there does not appear to be any particular pattern to this across the individual campaigns. Again setting aside the New South Wales Nationals, it is clear that the three parties who were seeking to maintain government featured party members more frequently than those campaigning from opposition. However, these materials still represented less than five per cent of the total in all cases, and so could hardly be said to have represented an important component of the party’s pitch to voters.

The New South Wales Nationals were an interesting exception to all of the above observations. That party’s materials indicate that it relied far more heavily on individual candidates than leader Andrew Stoner in its campaign, and also highlighted its members to a greater extent than all but the three incumbent parties. Interviews with Nationals representatives from this state suggest that the party made a deliberate choice to emphasise its candidates, because local people have far more appeal in regional communities than a statewide leader. Similarly, local networks and personal referrals are believed to carry great weight in terms of influencing people’s vote in these communities, hence the higher prevalence of endorsements from local party members. This makes a good deal of sense, and shows that the party was tailoring its appeal to the specific communities it was running in. However, it is puzzling that the Victorian Nationals did not appear to adopt the same approach, given its similar focus on rural and regional seats. Neither the data nor interviews present any obvious explanation for this difference, although the number of electorate-level materials located and coded for the Victorian Nationals was about half that of the New South Wales party. Given this, it may simply be the case that the project’s sample of Victorian materials does not accurately represent the party’s overall approach.

Turning briefly to the parties’ media materials, it is clear that local candidates and party members had no visibility whatsoever in these for most of the parties in this government-seeking group. While there were a range of media materials published by, or featuring, candidates other than the leader, analysis shows that the vast majority of these were Ministers or Shadow Ministers holding specific portfolios, and were featured in the context of these roles. Within these materials, no media items were located in which a Minister or Shadow Minister addressed an issue of specific relevance to the electorate they were running in. For this reason, media materials involving these senior party figures were not coded as featuring local candidates.

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58 NSW-HQ-NAT
59 NSW-PL-NAT

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As Table 12 demonstrates, leaders were again prominent in these materials, but to a lesser extent than in the electorate-level materials. Interestingly, it was observed that the leaders were almost exclusively featured in media materials which were positive or comparative in content, and promoted the benefits or advantages of the party’s agenda. By contrast, a far higher proportion of the media items featuring Ministers and Shadow Ministers were negative in tone and made attacks on opposing parties or demanded particular action from them. To give just one example, for the 2012 Queensland election, 90 per cent of Liberal National media materials featuring Campbell Newman were either positive or comparative in tone. By contrast, only 30 per cent of the media materials featuring the party’s Shadow Ministers were similarly positive or comparative, with the remainder being emphatically negative. One of the party’s representatives indicated that this was a deliberate choice, saying:

‘[That way] your leader is left free of all the backwards and forwards sort of thing, and some of the nastiness...not sullying his hands with the day-to-day grind of the viciousness of politics.’

—QLD-PL-LNP

The data suggests that a similar approach was adopted by each of the other Labor and Liberal parties in this group.

The Nationals were again outliers, as both branches of that party made far less use of their leaders in media materials than the other parties, and also distributed a small number of media items exclusively featuring local candidates—primarily television and radio ads. In interviews, the Nationals representatives indicated that the lower cost of broadcast advertising time in regional electorates means that local candidates can be the focus of advertising in a way that is often not possible in larger metropolitan media markets which span dozens of seats. Although neither party’s representatives acknowledged this, National Party leaders also tend to have a lower profile than their Labor and Liberal counterparts because of the organisation’s third-party status. This may also have played a role in their strategic thinking about how intensively to focus on Andrew Stoner and Peter Ryan respectively. Finally, it is worth noting that although these parties ran less leader-centric campaigns than the Labor and Liberal parties in this category, they still exhibited a far greater focus on leaders than almost all of the parties in the other goal categories (see chapters Six to Eight for more details).

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60 See Appendix Four—Project codebook for details of our coding approach
61 NSW-HQ-NAT; VIC-HQ-NAT

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Overall then, this analysis indicates that the government-seeking parties relied heavily on their leaders in their efforts to connect with voters, and made limited use of intra-party constituencies such as their members and local candidates. While the extent to which each party focused on its leader varied somewhat—apparently in connection with the leader’s personal popularity—in most cases these parties clearly chose to give them a more central and visible role in the party’s pitch to voters than other party constituencies.

*To what extent do parties view intra-party democracies as a symbolic component of the campaign message or a mechanical means to reach voters?*

Turning finally to the question of party organisation, Rohrschneider (2002: 376) suggested that parties range from highlighting ‘organisational innovation as part of the campaign theme to increase a party’s electoral attractiveness’, to viewing their branches, offices and members simply as ‘instruments to contact voters’. To determine how the parties in the data set approached this, their campaign materials were examined for references to organisational innovation and opportunities for participation. The interviewees were also questioned directly about the role of their party organisations in designing and delivering their campaigns, and opportunities for participation more broadly.

Based on this analysis, the parties in this government-seeking group can firmly be placed at the instrumental end of Rohrschneider’s range. No evidence was found to suggest that these parties used intra-party democracy or organisational innovation as symbolic components of their campaigns; these were simply not mentioned in any of the campaign materials collected and coded.

Furthermore, when questioned about the role of their party branches and members on the ground, all of the interviewees in this group primarily highlighted their practical contribution as foot soldiers delivering the party’s messages and materials on the ground in their communities. Some also identified a role for the party organisation in identifying local issues and filtering up policy suggestions to those with real decision-making power. However, this was often framed as a secondary contribution to the delivery of local campaigns, as the following two quotes illustrate:
"I mean, they have some role in developing policies. But mostly the grassroots are the people who support individual campaigns...it's fine to have the party room and head office telling candidates what to do, but they've got to have the army behind them."
—WA-PL-LIB

"They are the ones who select who is going to run for parliament and who get out there and raise the money and stand on street corners and hand out how-to-vote cards...every candidate [also] has their own campaign team around them within their local area, and they'll put together a set of wish lists, if you like, about what they may require in their electorate. And that feedback will come from the campaign team and the broader membership as well. But the real strategic direction...is very centralised."
—QLD-HQ-LNP

Rohrschneider’s characterisation of party organisations as ‘a mechanical means to reach voters’ is an apt summary of the attitudes expressed by the interviewees in this group. As highlighted in Chapter Four, this does not mean that they were dismissive or scornful of the party on the ground; often they were highly effusive about the importance of their contribution and the party’s inability to deliver campaigns without them.\footnote{WA-PL-LIB; QLD-PL-LNP; NSW-PL-NAT; SA-PL-LIB; VIC-HQ-NAT} It is simply to observe that issues of organisational innovation and democratic participation did not seem to be a focus for these parties—either in their public campaigning or their internal operations.

This is interesting because Rohrschneider suggested that parties engaged in a fully chasing strategy would emphasise such innovation and opportunities for participation, while mobilising parties would take a more instrumental approach. In most other respects, the parties in this group appear well advanced towards the chasing end of Rohrschneider’s continuum, yet on this indicator their strategic choices run completely counter to his expectations. This issue will be discussed further in Part Four after exploring how other parties in the data set approached this choice.

**Mobilising or chasing?**

Having considered each of Rohrschneider’s five strategic ‘trade-offs’ individually, it is now possible to draw some conclusions about the government-seeking parties’ overall targeting strategies. All of these parties appeared to make a concerted effort to win votes in addition to representing policy, and focused significant effort towards unaligned voters as one source of these. However, the parties were also observed to target their own core supporters and defecting
non-supporters in different political contexts. This supports an assertion made in Chapter One: that there is a further point on the spectrum of potential support past the unaligned or swinging voters that Rohrschneider proposed as the logical end. It also supports Albright’s (2008) suggestion that parties actually employ an amalgam of targeting strategies rather than pursuing any single category of voters to the exclusion of all others. The parties in this group each relied heavily on modern research technologies in designing their campaign pitch to the public, although this was by no means their only input. With a few exceptions, these parties also displayed a heavy emphasis on their leaders as the central salespeople for that pitch, while primarily viewing their party organisations as instruments to deliver it to voters on the ground.

Excepting this last choice, all of these decisions locate the government-seeking parties towards the chasing end of Rohrschneider’s continuum. However, as the above discussion demonstrates, none could be said to have adopted a fully chasing strategy of the kind outlined in Chapter One. Furthermore, there were significant shades of difference in how much each of these parties embraced chasing over mobilising in the five areas discussed above, with factors such as the political environment and the standing of their leader apparently playing a role in this. For this reason, it is not really possible to say that any one party adopted the most intensive chasing strategy overall, or to rank them from most to least chasing-oriented. The best this thesis can do is state that these government-seeking parties commonly adopted an extensively, but not exclusively, chasing approach to targeting voters in their campaigns. This provides a basis for comparing these parties’ strategies with those in the other goal categories, while acknowledging the difficulty of locating parties at any precise point on Rohrschneider’s continuum.

Communications repertoires
To map out the different communication tools and channels chosen by the parties in this data set, the format of every item of campaign ephemera was logged and unique codes were assigned to different forms of advertising and electorate-level materials (see Appendix Five for details). The interviewees were also questioned about the communication tools deployed in their campaigns, and further asked to identify which were seen as the most valuable or significant for getting their messages out.

Table 13 lists the tools and channels selected by the parties in this government-seeking group. In line with Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli’s observation that parties may communicate both through their own organisations and through the media, the different tools have been separated...
into these internal and external categories. These have also been further categorised according to whether they involved direct communication between the party and voters, or whether this was mediated and filtered through other actors. The bolded items indicate the tools which were identified as most important by the interviewees from each party.

It is clear from this table that the government-seeking parties shared an emphasis on direct mail, television advertising and broadcast news (television and radio) as the most effective means to reach voters. As Young (2004) has outlined, this is a mass-market style of campaigning which aims to repetitively expose people to a focused set of messages and so influence their voting decision, in much the same way that regular exposure to commercial product messaging aims to influence buyer behaviour. It is particularly aimed at the broad swath of the electorate which has little or no interest in politics, as it inserts political information into places where voters cannot help but see it—within their favourite television programs, on the nightly news and in their own letterboxes. Mills' (1986) work indicates that Australian major parties have favoured these modes of communicating since at least the 1980s, if not earlier, and much of the media discussion about campaigns tends to focus on these channels (for example, Lion, 2013; van Onselen, 2013; Wills, 2012).

However, Table 13 also indicates that these parties' communications repertoires extended well beyond such tried-and-tested tools. All of these parties used a broad mix of internal and external tools, and interviews suggest that this was seen as necessary to achieve cut-through in a busy and fragmented communication environment. One interviewee summed up a view articulated by many in this group in saying:

'In an increasingly cluttered landscape of information that people have access to, being able to get your information to people is critically important...because you're now competing with the 24-hour news cycle, information turning up on Twitter, on iPhones and Androids, as well as a very foreshortened evening news cycle. If you have a look at the news, we're out of news by 10, 12 minutes past the hour and into sport and infotainment after that. So it's very important to be able to get the message out.'

—QLD-PL-LNP

By employing a wide range of tools and channels, these parties apparently hoped to catch voters' attention regardless of when, where and how they consumed information.

*Beyond winning: party goals and campaign strategy in Australian elections*
### Table 13—Government-seeking party communications repertoires, 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Internal tools</th>
<th>External tools</th>
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<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>Liberal National Party</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>Direct mail, Polling booths, Doorknocking, Email, Flyers/leaflets, Social media, Website</td>
<td>N/A, TV advertising, Online advertising, Radio advertising, Ambient advertising, Broadcast news, Online news</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Direct mail, Doorknocking, Email, Flyers/leaflets, Website, Polling booths</td>
<td>N/A, TV advertising, Print advertising, Radio advertising, Ambient advertising, Broadcast news, Print news, Online news</td>
</tr>
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<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Direct mail, Flyers/leaflets, Website, Polling booths</td>
<td>N/A, TV advertising, Print advertising, Radio advertising, Ambient advertising, Broadcast news, Print news, Online news</td>
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<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
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<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>Direct mail, Social media, Doorknocking, Email, Flyers/leaflets, Website, Polling booths</td>
<td>N/A, TV advertising, Online advertising, Print advertising, Radio advertising, Ambient advertising, Broadcast news, Print news, Online news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Direct mail, Social media, Doorknocking, Email, Flyers/leaflets, Website, Polling booths</td>
<td>N/A, TV advertising, Online advertising, Print advertising, Radio advertising, Ambient advertising, Broadcast news, Print news, Online news</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled by author based on content analysis and interviews with party representatives.

NOTE: 'N/A' indicates that no evidence was located regarding parties' use of these particular tools. This does not necessarily mean that the parties did not do so, only that the document analysis and interviews did not generate evidence of this.
Importantly, employing a mixed communications repertoire also allows parties to be more targeted in their messaging to appeal to different audiences. The interviewees particularly highlighted the value of social media and online advertising as communication tools, reporting that these allowed them to deliver highly focused messages to small and specific segments of the electorate that were deemed strategically important. This increased focus on targeted engagement was matched by a decline in the perceived value of more traditional tools such as print media and radio, as almost all of the interviewees reported that they had greatly reduced their use of these in recent campaigns. The only exceptions to this were the two National parties, whose representatives reported that local print media and regional radio continue to occupy a significant place in the daily lives of their target voters. As a result, these tools also maintained a prominent role within their campaigns.

It is worth briefly noting a few other things about these parties’ chosen communications repertoires. Firstly, none of the government-seeking parties appeared to use internal, indirect channels to any great extent, and in five of the nine case studies, no evidence was located to suggest that they did so at all. This may simply be because community events, rallies and stunts leave less trace than flyers and advertising, although evidence of such activities was located for many of the other parties in the data set. Rather, it seems that the limited use of such channels may reflect the different risk calculus for these parties. In campaigns, major parties now seek to avoid negative publicity as much as to generate positive exposure (Gawenda, 2013). If a party leader or senior figure attends a community rally or open public event, they risk being heckled, put on the spot about a controversial issue or even simply losing their way in an unfamiliar environment. This can generate negative or mocking media coverage which far outweighs any benefits the party gained by conveying its messages to those present. For this reason, it makes sense that the parties in this group would prefer to communicate through more contained and controlled channels. The campaign launches and the leader ‘debates’ participated in by these parties provide a good illustration of this—in the past these events were relatively open and unscripted functions that allowed parties to indirectly disseminate their messages to a diverse group of real voters. More recently, they have become tightly managed events which are scripted

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63 WA-HQ-LIB; QLD-HQ-LNP; SA-HQ-ALP; VIC-HQ-ALP
64 NSW-HQ-NAT; VIC-HQ-NAT
65 Local candidates and individual members from each of these parties would presumably have carried out some internal, indirect engagement with voters in their own electorates, as this is an expected part of running for office locally. However, our focus here is on the statewide, centralised campaign run by party head office, and so we only sought to map the activities managed or directed at that level.
for the media, and delivered before groups of handpicked supporters to portray exactly the right image of dynamism and positivity (Young, 2003).

Secondly, analysis of available campaign spending figures suggests these parties were able to pursue a broad communications mix, and match particular tools and channels to their chosen audiences, in part because of the size of their budgets (see Table 8, p.77). Although each of the interviewees indicated that they would have liked a larger budget, most also acknowledged that the amount available to them was sufficient to mount a high quality campaign and indicated that they did not feel unduly restricted by resources. As shall shortly be seen, this is in stark contrast with many of the other parties in the data set, whose choices regarding their communications repertoires were far more constrained by access to resources.

Thirdly, the parties in this group—along with many others in the data set—specifically highlighted polling booths as a medium for communicating with voters. Recognising that a percentage of electors do not make up their minds about who to vote for until they are physically entering a polling place, many of these parties reported deliberately attempting to influence that decision through signage and messaging at booths.66 The presence of friendly, polite and smiling party volunteers at booths was also identified by these interviewees as an important way to connect with voters at the point of casting their ballots. This is interesting because few, if any, voters would presumably admit that the signage and scrum of supporters outside a booth influenced their decision. Yet the interviewees consistently emphasised their polling place presence as a specific and important medium for communicating with voters. This suggests that either the parties overestimate the impact of this, or, more likely, that voters are swayed by what they encounter at their local booth in ways they are not consciously aware of. While a survey of existing political science literature did not turn up any empirical research addressing this, it would align with the vast psychological literature on how subconscious influences can affect product choice in a commercial setting (Fitzsimons et al, 2002 and Theus, 1994 provide good summaries of this literature).

Finally, phone canvassing was frequently mentioned in the interviews as a valuable and important communication tool. This involves using party volunteers to contact individual voters with highly tailored messages reflecting their interests or local concerns. While phone canvassing is by no means a new tool, it has enjoyed a revival in recent years because it is seen as a critical

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66 WA-HQ-LIB; WA-PL-LIB; QLD-PL-LNP; NSW-PL-NAT; NSW-HQ-NAT; VIC-HQ-NAT

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component of Barack Obama’s landmark win at the 2008 presidential election (Osborn, McKlurg and Knoll, 2010; Masket, 2009). Although many of the interviewees in this group acknowledged its value, they were notably reticent to talk about whether, or how much, their own parties actually engaged in this. Based on discussions with them and wider reading of the Australian campaign landscape, it appears that this is because major parties see this particular aspect of their communications repertoire as a current source of competitive advantage.

Australia’s compulsory voting system means that local parties have not traditionally engaged in canvassing to the same extent as parties overseas, and they appear to still be working out how to use this most effectively in combination with other data-driven targeting and mobilisation systems. In this context, it is not surprising that the parties would be loathe to discuss their canvassing activities, as this would involve giving away insights or innovations their opponents may not yet have mastered. As an emerging medium, it will be interesting to watch the continuing evolution of phone canvassing within Australian campaigns. Its prominence and visibility in the campaigns for the 2013 election compared with the campaigns in this data set certainly suggests that the major parties have become fairly sophisticated users of this medium within the space of just a few years (for example, ABC TV, 2013; Bramston, 2013).

In terms of what this discussion reveals about the government-seeking parties’ overall strategic choices, it highlights that the parties in this group adopted a common multi-channel approach. Each of these parties were seen to emphasise direct internal and external tools such as television and direct mail, while also making use of a range of other mediums to connect with voters. As has been discussed, most steered clear of internal, indirect channels and saw print and radio as less valuable than online, targeted engagement tools, although these more traditional mediums did still form part of the communications repertoire for their campaigns.

**Conclusions**

Having considered issues, targeting and communications tools and channels in turn, it is evident that the government-seeking parties discussed here made many similar strategic decisions in each of these three key areas. Specifically, all appear to have taken a mixed approach to issue ownership, chased voters more than mobilising supporters, and adopted a broad and varied communications repertoire which prioritised direct and mass-reach channels. What’s more, these choices appear to have been quite consciously directed in support of the parties’ common governing goal. That is, by demonstrating a well-rounded focus on issues which mattered to the electorate, targeting resources towards seats which they needed to win or retain for a
parliamentary majority, and engaging voters across a range of channels, these parties specifically worked to build a governing mandate.

However, as should be clear from the above discussion, this does not mean that all of the government-seeking parties ran identical campaigns. It has been shown that there was a good deal of variation in several areas, including how aggressively parties pursued votes over the representation of policy, which specific audiences were the focus of their targeting, and how intensively they emphasised leaders and other party constituencies. These variations appear to have come about as a result of the different opportunities and pressures bearing down on parties at each individual election, including those relating to the closeness of the race, the popularity of the leader and individual seat dynamics.

While this chapter therefore provides some early support for the assertion that parties with similar goals make similar strategic choices, it also highlights the importance of a range of other factors in shaping parties' campaign decision-making. This tension between goals and other influences will be explored further in the following chapter, while examining the strategies adopted by preservation-seeking parties.
Preservation-seeking strategies

This chapter explores the strategies adopted by the parties that Chapter Three defined as ‘preservation-seeking’—those who know they cannot win and are instead simply aiming to save the electoral furniture. Within the data set, this group encompassed only the WA, QLD and NSW Labor parties, as it appears to be quite rare for parties to pursue preservation over other goals like taking government or advancing policy. They do so only in the most unfavourable of political environments, such as in the wake of the corruption scandals which rocked NSW Labor (West, 2012), or in the midst of the national leadership bloodletting between Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard which bedevilled WA Labor’s run for office (Tingle and Coorey, 2013).

It must be acknowledged that any observations made about the campaign strategies of these preservation-seeking parties will necessarily be constrained by the small number of cases available. It is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from a sample of just three campaigns, and so the following discussion is premised by saying that further case studies would be needed to determine whether the strategic choices observed here are indeed the same ones that other preservation-seeking parties make.

Having said that, comparing these parties’ strategies to those explored in Chapter Five reveals some interesting and important differences. In particular, these three parties appear to have focused on playing to their core strengths and mobilising their existing supporters to a far greater extent than the government-seeking parties did. As in the previous chapter, their strategies will be dissected by considering issues, targeting and communications repertoires in turn, before arriving at some overall conclusions about the format, content and delivery of their campaigns.

Issue positioning

Similar to the parties in Chapter Five, the preservation-seeking parties discussed a broad range of issues in their campaigns, with the average number of topics covered being 18. As Table 14 indicates however, some issues were given more intensive focus than others, and in doing so each of these parties appears to have also adopted something of a mixed issue position. Interestingly however, for QLD and NSW Labor this involved emphasising their own favourable issues along with process and contested ones, while the WA party adopted a more expansive approach that looked much like that of the government-seeking parties.
Chapter Six—Preservation-seeking strategies

Table 14—Identified focus issues for preservation-seeking parties, 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Top five focus issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>Infrastructure (contested)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'Priorities' (process)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Law and order (Coalition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cost of living (Coalition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Education (ALP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>Local achievements (ALP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Education (ALP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Infrastructure (contested)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'Too much power' (process)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'Scandal' (process)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>Local achievements (ALP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'Too much power' (process)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Infrastructure (contested)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Education (ALP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Health (ALP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled by author based on original content analysis.

Putting aside WA Labor for a moment, the QLD and NSW parties’ issue strategies look strikingly similar in several ways. Firstly, individual electorate-level issues were given far greater priority in these campaigns than in any other across the data set. These parties focused on what was happening in voters’ own neighbourhoods more than they focused on any statewide or general issue, with highly localised concerns such as road upgrades, school infrastructure and the availability of childcare places being given pride of place in the parties’ campaign materials. To give some idea of how extensive this focus was, 22 per cent of QLD Labor materials and 29 per cent of NSW Labor items exclusively mentioned local issues specific to the electorate they were distributed in. This compares with just 3 per cent of QLD Liberal National materials and 7 per cent of NSW Liberal materials at the same elections. Interviews suggest that this focus on local issues was part of a conscious strategy to remind voters about the benefits and achievements of their local MP, and so separate them from the negativity felt towards their parties as a whole. As one New South Wales interviewee put it:

'By and large, we had to attempt to position sitting local members as local heroes, or: ‘Ok, you hate the Labor Government, you hate Labor, you want to change the government. Notwithstanding that, Kevin Green in Oatley is a terrific local member...you can change the government, we all know that’s going to happen, but re-elect Kevin who you’ve got a very high regard for.’ That was sort of the message.'

—NSW-PL-ALP

In addition to emphasising these local issues, the Queensland and New South Wales parties also appear to have shied away from direct engagement with Coalition-owned issues. Instead, both emphasised strongly Labor-owned issued such as education and health, while pleading with voters not to support their opponents on the basis of process concerns. Several of the
interviewees from these parties indicated that they had little choice but to adopt such a defensive approach, because they lacked 'a good story to tell' on most other issues. As the two Queensland Labor representatives explained:

'When you're in government, obviously you've got a record and...the canvass is coloured in. And if you're a long-term government, then there's a fair few scratch marks and bullet holes in the canvass as well. So that defines your starting point.'

—QLD-PL-ALP

'Because the Premier was in such bad condition, like, her own standing in the community was quite negative, education was something that she personally had a really good record on...also, we thought that amongst soft voters, and particularly women, it was one where we actually had quite a good record on and a decent message to sell. Compared with every other issue basically that we were behind the eight ball on.'

—QLD-HQ-ALP

These interviewees' comments again reflect the good/bad binary conception of issues discussed in Chapter Five—education was 'good' for Labor because of Anna Bligh's personal record, while most other issues were 'bad' because of unpopular decisions or failed policies during the government’s 14 years in office. This highlights the point that a governing party’s issue choices become more and more restricted over time, as the bad issues pile up and good issues become fewer and further between. It also helps to explain the focus given to process issues in these two campaigns—in the absence of anything positive to talk about, the parties instead fell back on fostering doubt and concern about their opponents.

Returning to Western Australia, Table 14 suggests that the non-incumbent Labor party did not feel the same constraints as its two counterparts in government. WA Labor focused on a mix of its own, Coalition-owned, contested and process issues, and paid little attention to local issues of interest in specific electorates. In fact, its issue approach appears to have had more in common with the government-seeking parties in Chapter Five than the other two parties who shared its reported goal.

The difference between campaigning from government and opposition is undoubtedly relevant in explaining something about this divergence. Interviews with the WA Labor representatives suggest that they chose to focus on issues such as infrastructure, having the 'right priorities' and cost of living because these were areas where the Liberal government was seen as
underperforming during the period leading up to the election. As with the parties in Chapter Five, the fact that the Liberals traditionally owned some of these issues played far less of a role in Labor's thinking than what their research was telling them about the current state of play.\(^{67}\) Parties in opposition are much freer to capitalise on opportunities like this than are governing parties, because they do not carry the same baggage of policies and programs that are already in train.

However, the interviews also suggest that the long lead-time involved in designing and delivering an election campaign accounts for much of the difference in WA Labor's approach. Specifically, when the party started planning its 2013 campaign effort some 13 months before Election Day, it believed that it had a real (although admittedly slim) opportunity to win government. This is in stark contrast with the Queensland and New South Wales parties, who were in little doubt about the electoral beating that awaited them at their respective polls. The West Australian party therefore chose a campaign theme and focus issues which could present a strong contrast between the Barnett Government and itself, and began rolling these out through various communication channels to lay the groundwork for the campaign proper.\(^{68}\) However, Labor's electoral fortunes declined throughout late 2012 and early 2013 because of the ongoing instability within the federal ALP, which meant that by the time of the formal campaign period, the party's focus had shifted to preserving its existing seats and members. Having invested significant resources and time campaigning on issues such as infrastructure and priorities, it was ill-positioned to revert to a more defensive, localised issue focus and so the party largely persisted with its existing approach through to Election Day. This again highlights the importance of the political environment in guiding parties' issue choices, as the fact that WA Labor initially approached its election as a real contest led it to make very different choices from the other two parties in this group. Importantly, this case study also emphasises the fact that a party's activities in the formal campaign are often the product of planning and strategising which has taken place a long time before this. It is therefore important to keep this broader timeframe in mind when seeking to understand campaign behaviour.

As was flagged in the introduction, it is difficult to draw strong conclusions about how preservation-seeking parties approach issue positioning from just three case studies. However, there were some clear parallels in the strategic choices made by QLD and NSW Labor which

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\(^{67}\) WA-HQ-ALP
\(^{68}\) WA-HQ-ALP; WA-PL-ALP

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point towards a common approach. Both of these parties adopted a mixed issue position, but specifically one which emphasised local concerns over statewide issues, as well as their own and process issues over those owned by their opponents. This relatively defensive approach was not replicated by WA Labor, who instead took up the more expansive issue stance occupied by those within the government-seeking group. It is argued that the former approach makes more sense than the latter if the goal is to preserve as much of the electoral furniture as possible. But it would be necessary to identify and analyse several more campaigns to determine if preservation-seeking parties really do make common choices about their issue strategies; particularly those who are in and out of government. Briefly, the mixed issue position adopted by these parties further reinforces the idea that parties may opt to campaign on issues other than their ‘owned’ ones, although there was clearly a stronger inclination towards such issues in this group than amongst the government-seeking parties.

Mobilising-chasing continuum

In exploring the targeting strategies of these three parties, there is evidence a strong orientation towards mobilising voters in some areas, but an emphasis on chasing them in others. As with the government-seeking parties, some interesting variation is also observed in the choices made by individual parties on Rohrschneider’s five trade-offs, although it appears that overall their strategies had more in common with each other than with the parties in that former group.

To what extent do parties maximise votes or emphasise the representation of policies?

Looking first at the trade-off between vote-seeking and policy representation, it appears that the West Australian and Queensland parties engaged in fairly extensive vote-seeking, with 45 and 50 per cent of their respective campaign policies targeting particular communities or electorates. By contrast, NSW Labor appeared to place a greater emphasis on policy representation, with only 35 per cent of its policies and promises delivering targeted benefits.
Chapter Six—Preservation-seeking strategies

Table 15—Policy/vote-seeking ratios for preservation-seeking parties, 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Number of election-specific policies or promises</th>
<th>Number delivering statewide outcomes or abstract benefits</th>
<th>Number delivering tangible benefits to specific electorates</th>
<th>Policy/vote split (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>55/45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>50/50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65/35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average policy/vote split</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>57/43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled by author based on original content analysis.

As with the parties in Chapter Five, there is no obvious explanation for why NSW Labor appeared to devote more of its efforts to policy representation than the other two parties in this group. Again, it seems possible that internal party factors such as the influence of leaders versus strategists may play some role in this, but it is not possible to draw any specific conclusions about this on the basis of currently available evidence.

In terms of differences between the parties in the government- and preservation-seeking groups, one observation that is immediately apparent is how divergent the average policy/vote ratios of these groups are. Where the average for the government-seeking parties was 68/32 in favour of policy representation, the preservation-seeking parties had an average ratio of 57/43, indicating that their policies and promises delivered specific benefits far more often than those in the former group. This makes a certain amount of sense because as will be discussed below, these parties were essentially battling to claw back seats one-by-one.

Again though, caution must be exercised about drawing firm conclusions from such a small number of cases. Perhaps the best that can be said is that when making decisions about the trade-off between maximising votes and representing policy, these parties tended to choose votes more often than the majority of parties in the government-seeking group.

To what extent do parties aim at mobilising their core constituency or unaligned voters?

Turning next to the question of the preservation-seeking parties' campaign targets, Table 16 outlines the top five priority seats for each of these three parties. As with the question of issue positioning, there was an apparent divergence of approach between the non-incumbent WA Labor party, and the two incumbent parties in Queensland and New South Wales.

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Table 16—Identified target seats for preservation-seeking parties, 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Top five priority seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian Labor Party</strong></td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>Belmont: ALP held with 56.7 per cent of 2008 TPP (retiring member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Baldivis: ALP held with 52.3 per cent of 2008 TPP (retiring member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Riverton: LIB held with 50.2 per cent of 2008 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jandakot: LIB held with 51.8 per cent of 2008 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mount Lawley: LIB held with 52.2 per cent of 2008 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian Labor Party</strong></td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>Ashgrove: ALP held with 57.1 per cent of 2009 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Greenslopes: ALP held with 56.9 per cent of 2009 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mount Coot-tha: ALP held with 55.2 per cent of 2009 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yeerongpilly: ALP held with 58.7 per cent of 2009 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bulimba: ALP held with 57.7 per cent of 2009 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian Labor Party</strong></td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>Marrickville: ALP held with 57.2 per cent of 2007 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Keira: ALP held with 72.1 per cent of 2007 TPP (retiring member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oatley: ALP held with 64.3 per cent of 2007 TPP</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parramatta: ALP held with 63.7 per cent of 2007 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Monaro: ALP held with 56.3 per cent of 2007 TPP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Target seats identified by author based on original content analysis and party interviews.

The Queensland and New South Wales parties were clearly targeting their core supporters, as their focus seats encompassed safe and very safe Labor electorates which had been in the party’s hands for decades. This was reflected in the interviews, where representatives of both parties indicated that they started with their safest seats and worked backwards towards more marginal ones to work out what could be saved. As one New South Wales representative explained, this is exactly the opposite of how parties usually approach seat targeting:

‘The bit that was so different was that we started from the opposite end of the pendulum. So normally you’d start in the middle and if you’re in government, you try to protect seats and hope to maybe pick up one or two to negate losses; if you’re an opposition you’re looking to pick up what you can… but we were starting from the position of ‘how much can we hold?’ So you’re obviously starting backwards.’

—NSW-HQ-ALP

In deciding which seats to focus resources on, these parties needed to be mindful not only of what their research was telling them about which were salvageable, but also of factors such as the retirement of sitting members and the targeting strategies of opposing parties. For example, even in NSW Labor’s dire straits, a seat such as Keira—which was held by a 22 per cent margin—should have been relatively safe. However, the fact that the long-term incumbent member was retiring meant that the party had to marshal particular resources there to ensure that this crown Labor jewel remained in its hands. Similarly, in a more conventional election Queensland Government ministers such as Andrew Fraser, Kate Jones and Cameron Dick

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69 QLD-HQ-ALP; QLD-PL-ALP; NSW-HQ-ALP; NSW-PL-ALP
70 NSW-PL-ALP

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would have been expected to retain their seats because of their high public profiles and relatively comfortable buffers in electorates which had been held by Labor for a decade or more. However, as noted in Chapter Five, the Liberal Nationals reportedly targeted these senior Labor MPs as part of a 'decapitation strategy' aimed at crippling the party’s future leadership capacity. This, combined with research pointing to larger than usual projected swings, meant that the party had little option but to focus its campaign on these core assets.\(^{71}\) In other words, these parties’ choices appear to have been influenced not only by the hostility of the political environment, but also by the behaviour of other actors within that environment. This reinforces the point made in Chapter Five about the importance of considering individual seat dynamics when designing an overall targeting approach.

While QLD and NSW Labor were primarily focused on mobilising their core supporters, the WA party appears to have targeted unaligned voters in its campaign. Of the top five seats which were observed to be the focus of the most intensive campaigning, four were very low margin electorates—one which was already in Labor’s hands and three held by the Liberals. This is not only a departure from the targeting approach employed by the other two preservation-seeking parties, but it also jars with the interviewees’ own account of their strategy. While the WA Labor interviewees did mention putting some effort into marginal seats, they emphasised consolidating seats the party already held in response to how poorly it was polling and the expected swing against it.\(^{72}\) In other words, the focus of the senior party leadership appears to have been on mobilising core support rather than unaligned voters.

There are a number of possible explanations for this mismatch between reported and observed behaviour. Firstly, the collation of materials from the campaign may simply not have captured all activity in some seats—a strong possibility given that this project relied on publicly-donated collections and archived materials. Alternatively, the party itself may have misjudged how its campaign efforts were actually being divided between marginal and safer seats. A third, and more intriguing, possibility is that the ALP was actually targeting unaligned voters in very low margin seats in order to offset expected losses elsewhere—particularly seats like Pilbara and Kimberley which were under strong threat from The Nationals (Green, 2013). After all, a party does not necessarily need to retain the same seats to maintain its representation in parliament. Given this, chasing unaligned voters would appear to be a feasible alternative strategy to mobilising core

\(^{71}\) QLD-PL-ALP
\(^{72}\) WA-PL-ALP; WA-HQ-ALP

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support, particularly for a non-incumbent party who does not already hold many very marginal seats. Neither of the Labor representatives mentioned having such a strategy when interviewed, although it was suggested to them by at least one media commentator in the lead-up to the West Australian poll (Murray, 2013). If this was a part of their strategy that the Labor interviewees chose not to disclose, it was singularly unsuccessful. The ALP not only lost Belmont and Balcatta along with other seats higher up the pendulum, but also failed to pick up the three Liberal marginals.

While there remains a question mark over the Western Australian ALP’s mobilisation approach then, it seems evident from this discussion that the preservation-seeking parties placed a greater emphasis on mobilising their core supporters than other categories of voters. This emphasis was clearly apparent in the QLD and NSW Labor parties’ seat activity and interviews. It was also apparent from the interviews with WA Labor’s representatives, even if this was not necessarily reflected in their observed activity on the ground.

To what extent do parties rely on ideological programs (policies) or modern technologies (polling) in designing an election appeal?

As with the government-seeking parties, the three parties in this group reported making extensive use of modern research technologies to help guide their selection of target seats, choice of focus issues and framing of messages within their campaigns. As one interviewee indicated, research programs are extensively integrated into major party decision-making processes these days, which means that parties continue with these regardless of whether the outcome itself is a foregone conclusion:

‘Both major parties engage in constant, regular research with the voters—both qualitative and quantitative. So the Labor Party and its pollsters certainly engaged in that throughout the campaign... notwithstanding the fact that we knew we were going to lose and lose heavily, there was still the now-customary involvement of research.’

—NSW-PL-ALP

Several of the interviewees indicated that research continues to be valuable in very one-sided elections for identifying which seats can feasibly be saved—and therefore warrant the investment of campaign resources—and which are beyond hope and must be abandoned to their fate.

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Furthermore, it can help parties to identify a strongly resonant message which gives their core supporters a reason to stay faithful, as the following quote illustrates:

‘What we wanted to say was this: Labor can’t win this election, but if you don’t create a proper opposition, then our opponents, the Conservatives, are going to behave appallingly. They’re going to behave like bad Conservative governments, which effectively means cutting, selling hurting people’...so how do you say that? How do you make that simple?...the research gives you clarity. And the research told us clearly, the clearest way of saying that is: ‘don’t give them too much power.’
—NSW-HQ-ALP

While research was an important input for these parties in designing their election appeals, all noted that they spent less on this in the campaigns under analysis than at previous elections. As one Queensland ALP representative highlighted, this runs counter to the well-established trend of campaign spending increasing over successive elections (Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, 2011):

‘[We] spent less on research in the 2012 campaign compared to 2009. Which, as you’re probably aware, the arms race dictates that you keep spending more and more and more, but we didn’t when it came to research because, you know, it wasn’t telling us anything we didn’t know...the money was better spent in other areas, trying to defend as many seats as possible.’
—QLD-HQ-ALP

It is not possible to confirm that this was, indeed, the case for the Queensland and New South Wales parties, as the laws requiring detailed disclosure of campaign spending were not in place for the previous elections in these states. However, reviewing the election returns for WA Labor at the 2008 and 2013 elections confirms that the party spent less on research in the latter campaign—$159,290 compared with $180,762 (Western Australian Electoral Commission, 2013). This was part of an overall trend towards reduced spending in the 2013 campaign, as the party’s total reported budget came in at just over $2.7 million compared with $3.2 million in the more competitive election of 2008. By contrast, the party’s Liberal opponents spent $155,212 on research in 2008 and $182,194 in 2013, out of total budgets of $3.05 million and $5.1 million respectively (Western Australian Electoral Commission, 2013).

Both these spending figures and the above quote illustrate something else that is relevant to these parties’ use of research: in very one-sided elections, the predicted loser often struggles to attract financial support from organisational and individual donors. All of the interviewees in this

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group indicated that their budgets were somewhat constrained by this fact, and reported having to make difficult choices about where to allocate resources as a result. As discussed in Chapter Three, polling and focus groups can cost thousands of dollars per round, and the parties in this group often determined that their resources would be better spent on sandbagging individual seats than conducting more research.

In relation to the policy content of their campaigns, all of the interviewees in this group shared the view that this was the product of their parties' values and wide engagement with a range of stakeholders, rather than market research. However, several of the interviewees reflected that policy becomes less significant in very one-sided elections because there is little expectation that the party will be in a position to deliver on its commitments. As one NSW Labor representative quite candidly put it:

_'Whatever policy announcements that Kristina or the party made, no-one cared because everyone knew we wouldn't be in government to implement them...I mean, we had to go through the motions of running some policies up the flagpole...but no-one took it seriously because, you know, everyone knew the government was going to change.'_

— NSW-PL-ALP

In such an environment, parties would appear to have little to gain from relying on policies and ideological programs to drive their electoral appeals.

Overall then, it is evident that the parties in this group also made extensive use of modern research technologies in designing their campaigns. As with the government-seeking parties, polling and focus groups were used to guide both the allocation of campaign resources and the selection and framing of core campaign messages. While these preservation-seeking parties reported spending less on research than their counterparts in Chapter Five, this was because their resources were needed elsewhere rather than because of any lack of faith in the utility of this. Also in parallel with the government-seeking parties, these interviewees denied that market research was used to decide the content of their policy offerings, although they did acknowledge that policy played a diminished role overall within these specific campaigns.

Ultimately then, the difference between the government- and preservation-seeking parties' reliance on research seems to be one of degree rather than substance. It appears that major parties combine research and other inputs in relatively consistent ways when designing their

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75 QLD-HQ-ALP; NSW-HQ-ALP

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electoral appeals, regardless of whether they are seeking to take government or simply aiming to save the furniture.

To what extent do parties rely on a leader or (intra-party) constituencies in targeting voters?

Turning next to the relative visibility of leaders, party members and individual candidates in these three campaigns, there was a stark divergence of approach with the parties in Chapter Five. Specifically, these preservation-seeking parties chose to rely far less heavily on their leaders when engaging voters at the electorate level, and made local candidates much more prominent. What’s more, these parties amplified the visibility of local party members and supporters to an extent not demonstrated by any other parties across this project’s data set.

As outlined in Table 17, New South Wales Premier Kristina Keneally was the least visible leader in this group, being featured in just 26 per cent of electorate-level campaign materials. By comparison, Liberal opposition leader Barry O’Farrell was featured in 72 per cent of materials at the same election. The most visible leader in this group, WA Labor’s Mark McGowan, was almost twice as visible as Keneally at the 2013 West Australian election, being featured in 47 per cent of electorate-level materials. However, his opponent, Colin Barnett, was featured in fully 80 per cent of the Liberals’ electorate materials at the same election—making him 41 per cent more prominent in his party’s on-the-ground campaign than McGowan was in Labor’s.

Table 17—Prominence of leader, party members and candidates in preservation-seeking party campaign materials, 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>% of electorate materials featuring party leader</th>
<th>% of electorate materials featuring party members</th>
<th>% of electorate materials featuring only local candidate</th>
<th>% of media materials featuring party leader</th>
<th>% of media materials featuring party members</th>
<th>% of media materials featuring only local candidate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled by author based on original content analysis

NOTE: Percentages do not round to 100 as some materials featured other senior party figures such as Ministers or Shadow Ministers, combinations of candidates or party-branded attacks on opposing candidates.

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Figure 2: Examples of candidate-centric campaign materials

Clockwise from top, materials distributed by: WA Labor; Queensland Labor; NSW Labor. Materials sourced from State Libraries of NSW, Queensland and Western Australia.

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Figure 3: Leader-centric campaign materials

Clockwise from top, materials distributed by: NSW Liberals; SA Liberals; QLD Liberal National Party; VIC Labor; WA Liberals. Materials sourced from State Libraries of NSW, South Australia, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia.

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The party leaders’ diminished presence was mostly compensated for by a focus on local candidates. In the Queensland and New South Wales campaigns—and to a lesser extent in Western Australia—voters were treated to detailed individual profiles of their ALP candidates, including their personal histories, achievements, hopes and plans for the electorate. This was in sharp contrast with candidates for the government-seeking parties, whose presence was often confined to a printed name on an otherwise-standard leaflet (see Figures 2 and 3). To demonstrate the extent of this difference, Table 17 notes that local candidates were the sole person featured in 61 per cent of the NSW Labor materials, 48 per cent of those from Queensland and 42 per cent of Labor items distributed in Western Australia. As Table 12 (p.108) indicates, the corresponding figures were 21 per cent for Liberal materials distributed in New South Wales, 5 per cent for those in Queensland and 17 per cent in Western Australia. This suggests that parties choose to make their local candidates increasingly visible as their fortunes decline, although there does not appear to be a clear and corresponding reduction in candidate visibility for parties that expect a comfortable win. It would be interesting to test these kinds of observed relationships using quantitative methods and a larger number of cases, but this kind of analysis is not possible with the current data.

As highlighted above in discussing the prominence given to electorate-specific issues, these parties consciously chose to focus on individual candidates in the hope of quarantining them from antagonism towards the party as a whole. As one party office representative explained:

'We told the branches] You have to make this as local as possible and you have to make this about your local MP. Because the overall brand, you know, they're not going to vote Labor for the sake of Labor after 16 years; the last few of which were disappointing.'

—NSW-HQ-ALP

The intensive use of endorsements and messages of support from local party members was reportedly also directed towards this end of ‘giving people a reason to vote for you’. By demonstrating that a candidate was supported by someone prominent within their local community, the parties aimed to leverage the power of peer-to-peer recommendation. That is, they hoped that the local footy club president’s endorsement of Candidate X as ‘a good bloke’ would override more indirect negative perceptions of the party formed through the media. With this in mind, QLD Labor featured these intra-party constituencies in almost a quarter of all electorate materials, while one in six of NSW Labor’s items featured them prominently.

76 NSW-HQ-ALP

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Interestingly, WA Labor did not make such extensive use of member endorsements, although they were still featured in that party’s materials about twice as often as in the opposing Liberal Party’s or any other government-seeking party in the data set.

On the media front, the Queensland and New South Wales leaders were no more or less visible, on average, than leaders from the government-seeking parties while both party members and candidates were similarly invisible. Furthermore, all three of these parties also employed the tactic of allocating positive and comparative statements to their leader, and leaving ministers or other senior party officials to engage in ‘the viciousness of politics’. In Western Australia, 91 per cent of Mark McGowan’s media items were positive or comparative, compared with only 37 per cent of other ministers’. Eighty-five per cent of the media materials produced by Anna Bligh were similarly positive or comparative while only 42 per cent of her ministers’ were, and the equivalent figures for New South Wales were 88 per cent and 33 per cent respectively. Again, the interviewees reported that this was a conscious and important choice, with one stating:

‘[F]or many people, their engagement within politics is limited to a superficial engagement during the election period. So if what they see is the leader teeing off or barking off, then the fleeting interaction that they have can be negative.’

—QLD-PL-ALP

In reviewing the media materials produced by the parties in this group, the only result that stands out is Mark McGowan’s high prominence in his party’s materials compared with those in both this and the government-seeking group. McGowan was featured in 67 per cent of all WA Labor media items, compared with 55 per cent for Colin Barnett and the Liberals. Across the parties in the government-seeking group, the average visibility of leaders in media materials was just 44 per cent, which places McGowan’s prominence in even starker contrast. One of the party interviewees suggested that this was purely a geographic calculation, saying:

‘This is the most centralised state in Australia. Eight-five per cent of people live in Perth, we’re a single, unique media market. So if Mark is on the front page of the paper or leading the evening news, he’s communicating with almost everybody...because Perth is Perth, it’s one single media market that holds most of the seats, the leader becomes more important as the messenger. It’s not the same as NSW where you’ve got that stretch up the Central Coast and all those big towns, it’s not the same as Queensland, where you’ve got all those large regional centres all the way up the coast.’

—WA-HQ-ALP
That being the case, the Liberal Party would have been expected to give Colin Barnett a similarly prominent role in its media materials, which it did not. It seems likely that as a fairly new opposition leader—and a relatively unknown one at that—there was also an element of profile-raising in the ALP’s decision to make McGowan so visible in its media campaign. This was tacitly acknowledged by the WA party office interviewee, who reflected that introducing voters to McGowan and building their trust in him had been one of the strategic priorities for the campaign.\(^7\)

Returning to the broader question of how leader-centric these campaigns were, there was a clear trend towards minimising the role of the party leaders and amplifying local candidates and party members at the electorate level. This was in stark contrast with the government-seeking parties, who chose to rely more heavily on their leaders to engage voters and made candidates and members far less prominent. However, WA Labor aside, there was no significant difference between the preservation-seeking parties and those discussed in Chapter Five in terms of leader, candidate or member visibility in media materials. This indicates that leaders continue to be used as the public face and general spokesperson for preservation-seeking parties, even as these parties work to carve out an individual profile and support base for their candidates on the ground.

*To what extent do parties view intra-party democracies as a symbolic component of the campaign message or a mechanical means to reach voters?*

On Rohrschneider’s final question about the role of party organisations, again there was no reference made to internal democracy or participatory opportunities in the campaign materials distributed by the preservation-seeking parties. The interviews also indicate that these party oligarchs held a similarly instrumental view of their members and supporters to those discussed in Chapter Five.\(^8\)

While all three of these parties actively and prominently promoted opportunities to be involved in their *campaigns*, these opportunities were limited to mechanical tasks such as doorknocking and phone canvassing, and did not extend to wider involvement in the party’s organisation or activities as a whole. As will be discussed below, the preservation-seeking parties saw peer-to-

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77 WA-HQ-ALP
78 WA-HQ-ALP; QLD-PL-ALP; QLD-HQ-ALP; NSW-HQ-ALP; NSW-PL-ALP

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peer communication as particularly important in these campaigns because this offered them the chance to counteract negative media messages and demonstrate to voters that some members of the community were still prepared to support them. However, in calling on people to engage friends and neighbours on their behalf, interviews indicate that these parties saw their members and supporters as a communication channel rather than a participatory constituency. This approach is perhaps best illustrated by the following quote from one of WA Labor's representatives:

What we tried to do at the state election, through the mechanism of Metronet exciting people, was to create a reserve army...amongst the people who vote for us but aren't necessarily members. To then spread the word that only under Labor will you get Metronet...we wanted to kind of use them as our messengers.

—WA-HQ-ALP

This idea of mobilising support from beyond the party membership to reach voters was often raised by the interviewees in this group. Several reflected that because their standing with the community was so poor, even their core supporters were often not available or inclined to support the mechanical delivery of these campaigns:

There was a collapse of party morale over the four years prior to the 2011 election. There was a collapse of party membership and branch infrastructure...more than 100 Labor Party branches shut their doors in that period of 16 years of uninterrupted government. The party came to rely on large corporate fundraising, massive TV advertising, and a marketable leader to win elections...and I think that was to our great cost.

—NSW-PL-ALP

Being a Labor Party member in Queensland—basically since the asset sales in mid-09—has been a pretty tough gig. You know, it's really only the true believers who've been out there on the ground, selling the message. So it was quite difficult in 2012 to motivate the troops...the campaigns who did best in terms of motivating their members were the sitting MPs who had the best rapport with their own branch members.

—QLD-HQ-ALP

The Queensland and New South Wales parties particularly indicated that the lack of willing volunteers made delivering local campaigns very difficult and effectively hobbled their electoral efforts. Both parties have since put in place programs and processes to bring members back to their organisations; in doing so they have particularly emphasised democratisation and opportunities for internal participation (for example, Atfield, 2013; Queensland Labor, 2012; NSW Labor, 2012; Dastyari, 2011). So although the parties did not focus on these things in their

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most recent election efforts, the fact that they were starved of an instrumental campaign resource appears to have subsequently led them to reconsider their relationship with members.

**Mobilising or chasing?**

After exploring how the preservation-seeking parties approached each of Rohrschneider’s five key choices, it is apparent that they did not consistently pursue either mobilising or chasing, but rather a combination of both. For example, analysis shows that these parties pursued votes relatively intensively—particularly in comparison with the majority of the other parties in this data set. Similarly, modern research technologies played a significant role in the design and delivery of their campaigns, while policy and the party’s core values were less influential. These choices align with Rohrschneider’s description of a chasing strategy. Yet at the same time, these parties appeared to focus more on their core supporters than unaligned electors, emphasise their candidates and members more than their leaders when engaging voters on the ground, and view their organisations primarily as instruments to contact voters. According to Rohrschneider, these are choices that characterise a mobilising strategy.

Does this then mean that the preservation-seeking parties belong somewhere in the middle of the continuum between mobilising and chasing? Or should some of these choices carry more weight than others in determining which description best characterises the strategic approach adopted by these parties? Rohrschneider gives no guidance on how to deal with parties who make such a mixed series of choices—an issue that shall be discussed further in Part Four when exploring the implications of this research for his framework. Given that these parties pursued a mobilising approach on three of the five strategic trade-offs, it seems appropriate to situate them near the midpoint of Rohrschneider’s continuum, albeit closer to the mobilising pole than the chasing one.

This provides a point of comparison with the government-seeking parties in Chapter Five, whose strategic decisions located them much further along the continuum towards the chasing pole. But setting aside this visualisation of their overall positioning, comparing the choices these two groups of parties made on each of the five individual trade-offs also points to clear areas of similarity and difference between them. It is evident that, on average, the preservation-seeking parties chose to pursue votes more often than their government-seeking counterparts, targeted their campaigns at core supporters more intensively, and relied far less on their leaders to
connect with voters in some contexts. On the other hand, the preservation-seeking parties aligned with the government-seeking ones in making extensive use of modern research when designing and delivering their campaigns, and primarily viewing their party organisations as instrumental tools to achieve this. This begins to suggest that some campaign choices may be influenced by a party’s assessment of what will best serve its goals, and others by its pre-existing organisational resources and structures. This question will be explored further in the following two chapters, when examining how the minor parties in the data set approached Rohrschneider’s five key trade-offs.

Communications repertoires

Turning finally to the communications repertoires adopted by the preservation-seeking parties, Table 18 maps the range of internal and external channels selected by these parties to connect with voters during their campaigns. As in the previous chapter, the items marked in bold indicate the tools which the interviewees singled out as being particularly important within their overall communications mix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Internal tools</th>
<th>External tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>Flyers/leaflets, Doorknocking, Phone canvassing, Direct mail, Email, Social media, Polling booths, Website</td>
<td>N/A, TV advertising, Online advertising, Radio advertising, Ambient advertising, Broadcast news, Print news, Online news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>Flyers/leaflets, Doorknocking, Phone canvassing, Direct mail, Email, Social media, Polling booths, Website</td>
<td>N/A, TV advertising, Online advertising, Radio advertising, Ambient advertising, Broadcast news, Print news, Online news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>Flyers/leaflets, Doorknocking, Phone canvassing, Direct mail, Email, Social media, Polling booths, Website</td>
<td>N/A, TV advertising, Online advertising, Print advertising, Radio advertising, Ambient advertising, Broadcast news, Print news, Online news</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled by author based on original content analysis and party interviews.

As is evident from this table, the parties in this group employed a similarly broad and diverse mix of communication tools and channels to those discussed in Chapter Five. As with the

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government-seeking group, these parties saw broadcast advertising and news as very important tools for getting their messages to voters, both because of their broad reach and their capacity to connect with disinterested voters.\(^{79}\) Also in parallel with those other parties, no evidence was located indicating that the preservation-seeking parties coordinated indirect, internal activities such as rallies or open public events through their central campaign infrastructure.

Unlike the government-seeking parties however, the parties in this group were observed to make far less use of centralised and standardised direct mail. Instead, they made extensive use of leaflets and flyers which were tailored to individual electorates. This often included replacing the party brand and colours with pictures of the local candidate and their own chosen colour scheme, as well as minimising the presence of the party leader and focusing on local issues over statewide ones (see Figure 2). As has been previously discussed, this was part of a conscious strategy to shield individual candidates from broader negativity towards their parties. Because of this, several of the interviewees indicated that local candidates were given far more control over the content, design and distribution of their flyers and leaflets than is usually the case in more competitive elections.\(^{80}\)

Personal and one-on-one communication tools were also given a higher priority within these three campaigns than within the government-seeking group. In particular, doorknocking and phone canvassing were cited as crucial tools in such a hostile political environment, because these allowed the parties to counter negative messages coming from the media and opposing parties with personal and direct endorsements from people’s friends and neighbours. As one New South Wales Labor representative explained:

‘[The doorknocking and canvassing] was all very, very tailored. So it was local people talking to other local people about their MP. And it was run at a local level...the local reasons for keeping your MP were developed locally.’
—NSW-HQ-ALP

Again, several of the interviewees reflected that this level of local control over the party’s pitch to voters was highly unusual, and only came about because in the political environment then facing them, these parties had ‘nothing to lose and everything to gain.’\(^{81}\)

\(^{79}\) WA-HQ-ALP; QLD-HQ-ALP; NSW-HQ-ALP
\(^{80}\) QLD-HQ-ALP; NSW-HQ-ALP
\(^{81}\) QLD-PL-ALP

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Interestingly, the representatives of these three parties seemed far more open about their use of telephone canvassing than those in Chapter Five. Not only did all three indicate that they had made this a key plank of their communications approach, but their representatives also reflected at some length about how they saw this fitting into the campaigns of the future. One common view was that while canvassing is emerging as a valuable and important means of communicating with voters, it may also be beneficial for re-engaging party members who have become disillusioned or disenfranchised by the centralised mode of campaigning which has dominated for the past 30 years. The following quote sums up a view which was expressed by several of the interviewees in this group about phone canvassing:

'That's where, I think, a lot of branch members are finding more worth as a party member, in that they actually enjoy having those conversations with people and trying to change a vote. So rather than sticking something in a letterbox, having a conversation with Fred who's been a swinging voter, and trying to convince him. It's something I think they're finding more rewarding.'
—QLD-HQ-ALP

As with the question of intraparty democracy discussed above, it would appear that changing campaign practices and requirements are feeding into a wider reconsideration of the role of members for these parties. It will be interesting to see if these new practices can arrest and reverse the trend of declining party membership which was arguably created, at least in part, by the centralisation and professionalisation of campaigns over the past few decades.

Overall, it is evident that the preservation-seeking parties employed the same wide-ranging mix of communication tools and channels as those in Chapter Five, and placed considerable emphasis on mass-reach, broadcast media channels. Alongside this however, they prioritised one-on-one communication through phone canvassing and doorknocking, devolving the task of connecting with voters to local people who could deliver heartfelt endorsements and personal stories. The extent of their emphasis on direct, personalised communication was a clear point of divergence with the government-seeking parties, and one which was directly informed by their desire to save the electoral furniture.

Conclusions
Based on the above analysis, it appears that the WA, QLD and NSW Labor parties made some quite different choices than did either their opponents at these three elections, or their sibling parties in other states. In relation to their issue positioning, use of targeted policy promising,
choice of seat targets, use of party constituencies and one-on-one communication, these preservation-seeking parties generally adopted a defensive strategy which played to their traditional strengths and gave core supporters a reason to stay faithful. This is in contrast with the government-seeking parties discussed in Chapter Five, whose choices in these areas generally reflected a more aggressive and expansive approach. This lends further support to the suggestion that parties with shared goals pursue campaign strategies which have more in common with each other than with parties holding different goals—at least in these particular areas.

Importantly however, these preservation-seeking parties also made extensive use of market research and took an instrumental approach to their own party organisations, as did the parties discussed in Chapter Five. In doing so, they demonstrated that parties sometimes make common choices, regardless of their diverse goals. In looking at the areas where the government- and preservation-seeking parties converged, it seems clear that their shared preference for research and instrumental view of party members was a product of their common professionalism, their access to significant financial resources and their centralised organisational structures. That is, some areas of campaign decision-making appear to be driven less by any specific consideration of what will serve a party’s goals, and more by pre-existing resource and structural factors. Where parties have similar structures and resources then, it makes sense that they would make similar choices even if they ultimately hold different goals.

This point will be unpacked and explored further in the next two chapters, which dissect the campaigns run by the influence- and policy-seeking parties. In particular, close attention will be paid to whether deliberate strategising or internal factors appear to be more influential in guiding these parties’ choices in the two areas highlighted above.
Influence-seeking strategies

In turning attention to the group of parties described as 'influence-seeking', this discussion is moving away from Australia's major parties and into the realm of minor ones. As outlined in Chapter Three, the parties who aimed to position themselves to exert maximum influence over the political agenda were all representatives of minor parties with some past parliamentary experience: The Greens, Family First, The Nationals, the Democratic Labour Party and Katter's Australian Party.

In dissecting these parties' strategies, it quickly becomes apparent how much diversity there is amongst and between Australia's minor parties, particularly in relation to their organisational structures, access to resources and stability of operations. This makes side-by-side comparison of their strategic decision-making challenging, because a complex range of potentially mitigating circumstances must be factored in. What's more, the frameworks of analysis which have so far been applied to major party campaigns sometimes appear ill-suited to exploring the strategic choices of minor parties, because the opportunities and constraints they face are so different. These challenges will be addressed further in the sections below as part of the discussion of influence-seeking party strategies.

Overall, these parties displayed less consistency in their decision-making across the three dimensions of strategy than any of the other parties in this data set. While it is possible to identify some broad trends in areas such as their choice of focus issues and target audiences, in other areas no such patterns are evident. It is argued that this diversity of approaches is partly the product of these parties' vastly different structures and resources. However, it is also suggested that this springs from the fact that parties' ability to achieve their influence goal is highly dependent on the specific opportunities offered by the political environment in front of them. For example, in the context of a predicted minority government, an influence-seeking party might best achieve its goal by campaigning to win key lower-house seats. By contrast, in a majority government situation these parties would be better off to focus their energies on securing the balance of power in the upper house—except in places such as Queensland which have unicameral parliaments. In other words, these parties must be both opportunistic and very responsive to context in pursuing strategies that will achieve their influence goal. For this reason, they appear to behave far less consistently than do major parties facing a more common and structured set of opportunities.
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**Issue positioning**

In looking first at these parties’ choice of focus issues, two things need noting. Firstly, these parties addressed a much smaller range of issues in their campaigns than the parties in either of the previous two chapters. While the government-seeking group discussed an average of 21 issues in their campaigns, and the preservation-seeking set addressed an average of 18, the parties in this group averaged 14 issues across their campaign materials. Furthermore, a majority of their materials tended to focus on just two or three issues, with a smattering of materials then addressing other topics. For example, of the materials collected and coded for the WA Nationals, 65 were focused on the topic of regional affairs, while 18 mentioned infrastructure and 11 focused on the party’s intention to defend its Royalties for Regions program from the major parties. A further seven items each were then dedicated to health and education, and one or two each to a range of other issues such as tourism. It might therefore be possible to list the top five issues discussed by these parties, as was done in the previous two chapters. But this would not give an accurate picture of their issue emphasis, as this clearly rested on a smaller number of topics. For this reason, only the top three focus issues identified through the content analysis and interviews are listed here, as this provides a clearer picture of these parties’ strategic thinking.

The second point worth noting is that Newspoll’s ‘best party to manage’ surveys—and all equivalent Australian surveys—only cover a selected range of major policy issues such as the economy, employment and national security. Furthermore, they only ask voters to nominate whether they see Labor, the Coalition or ‘someone else’ as the better managers of these. These surveys are therefore less useful for assessing the issue positioning of minor parties than the major ones—both because they do not ask about a wide enough spectrum of issues, and because they do not test which, if any, issues minor parties themselves are seen to own. For that reason, this project had to establish some further, original decision criteria for exploring minor party issue choice.

Specifically, it was decided that the environment should be classified as a Greens-owned issue and regional affairs as a Nationals-owned one. Given that the definition of issue ownership encompasses a strong, enduring and positive association between a party and an issue in the public mind (Walgrave, Lefevere and Nuytemans, 2009), it seems clear that the Greens and Nationals own the environment and regional affairs respectively in the Australian political context. The major Labor and Liberal parties may also wrestle for dominance here—both with...
Chapter Seven—Influence-seeking strategies

each other and the minor parties. But for reasons of history and ongoing advocacy, these two parties are more deeply and intrinsically linked to these issues than the major parties seem likely to ever be.

The second criterion established was that issues should be considered ‘unclaimed’ when neither of the major parties were seen to address these in their campaign materials. For example, so-called ‘values issues’ such as abortion and euthanasia are often raised by minor parties but studiously avoided by major ones. Within this data set, issues such as returning state assets to public hands and making politicians more accountable were also frequently raised by minor parties but invisible within the major party materials. ‘Unclaimed’ issues are therefore separate from ‘contested’ and ‘owned’ ones, in that they represent issue space which is largely vacant of other political actors.

Having established those criteria, it is now possible to examine the issue choices made by the influence-seeking parties in their respective campaigns. As Table 19 outlines, some of these parties chose to focus on a mix of their own, opponent-owned and contested issues, while others devoted themselves primarily to addressing unclaimed issues.

Table 19—Identified focus issues for influence-seeking parties, 2010—2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Focus issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The Nationals                 | Western Australia 2013 | Regional (own)  
|                               |                  | Infrastructure (contested)  
|                               |                  | ‘Defend Royalties for Regions’ (process)                                    |
| The Greens                    | Western Australia 2013 | Environment (own)  
|                               |                  | Infrastructure (contested)  
|                               |                  | Jobs (ALP)                                                                  |
| Katter’s Australian Party     | Queensland 2012  | Sale of state assets (contested)  
|                               |                  | Public service cuts (contested)  
|                               |                  | Coal Seam Gas mining (contested)                                           |
| The Greens                    | Queensland 2012  | Environment (own)  
|                               |                  | Health (ALP)                                                                |
|                               |                  | ‘Transparency and integrity’ (process)                                       |
| The Greens                    | New South Wales 2011 | Environment (own)  
|                               |                  | Planning (contested)  
|                               |                  | ‘Clean politics’ (process)                                                  |
| The Greens                    | Victoria 2010    | Infrastructure (contested)  
|                               |                  | Environment (own)  
|                               |                  | Education (ALP)                                                            |
| Democratic Labour Party       | Victoria 2010    | Protection of life from conception to natural death (unclaimed)  
|                               |                  | Infrastructure (contested)  
|                               |                  | Ban poker machines (unclaimed)                                              |
| The Greens                    | South Australia 2010 | Environment (own)  
|                               |                  | Education (ALP)                                                            |
|                               |                  | Social services (ALP)                                                       |
| Family First                  | South Australia 2010 | Social services (ALP)  
|                               |                  | Families (unclaimed)                                                       |
|                               |                  | Water (COALITION)                                                           |

Source: compiled by author based on original content analysis.

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While it is hard to see much of a pattern in these parties’ choices from the data alone, the interviews clearly pointed to one common strategic calculus. That is, these parties sought to emphasise issues on which they believed there were no significant policy differences between the major Labor and Liberal parties, and where they could therefore offer a strong point of comparison with both. This approach was well summarised by the following two interviewees in discussing their reasons for focusing on particular issues in the 2013 Western Australian and 2012 Queensland campaigns:

‘So coal seam gas was one, and the sale of assets. The Labor Party had a $15 billion fire sale of assets, but of course privatisation has always been part of the LNP’s policy platform so that was another sort of checkmate issue. So both had been fairly quiet on CSG, both had been fairly quiet on asset sales, and the third one was the public service. Labor had earmarked about 5,000 public servants to go, and everyone sort of knew that when a Liberal government got in, that would happen...so they were sort of the three ones that struck a chord.’
—QLD-PL-KAP

‘We did have an overall statewide theme, a message, which was ‘true progress’. And the thinking there was to say that WA is a state that’s wealthy and there’s a boom going on in terms of mining, and that’s often portrayed by [the major parties] as progress, but what would true progress look like? It would look like you’ve got good access to public transport. It would look like you were sourcing your electricity from renewable energy...it would be about caring for people, because people are falling behind in the two- or even three-speed economy we’ve got in Western Australia.’
—WA-PL-GRN

In a similar vein, the Victorian Greens reportedly focused on issues such as public transport and public education as a counterpoint to the major parties’ perceived focus on new roads and private education providers, while the WA Nationals emphasised regional services and infrastructure to show that they were not ‘preoccupied with Perth’ in the way that Labor and the Liberals were. By focusing on issues where they could paint the major parties as alike and offer a point of difference, these influence-seeking parties aimed to give voters a reason to direct their vote beyond these two traditional actors.

Unlike the parties discussed in chapters Five and Six, the ownership status of these issues did appear to be somewhat relevant for these parties in making decisions about which to emphasise. While none explicitly indicated an intent to steal another party’s issues or trespass in their space,
several of the interviewees did talk about emphasising issues which would appeal to traditional supporters of one or other of the major parties. This suggests both that they had some sense of how issue ownership is distributed, and that this information was an input for them when choosing their own focus issues. For example, it hardly seems a coincidence that the Green parties in most states had an emphasis on issues which are traditionally owned by Labor—the party from which the Greens harvest most of their support. However, this consideration was not mentioned by the interviewees as often as the one above about marking a point of difference with the two major parties collectively, suggesting that the ownership status of issues may be something of a secondary concern.

For these parties then, a 'good' issue is one on which the major parties have taken a similar line, and where they can therefore offer a clear point of difference. If it is also one which is highly salient for potential defectors from a particular major party, so much the better. As Table 19 highlights, this strategic thinking led the influence-seeking parties to range widely and variably across own, opponent, unclaimed and contested issues, and it is not possible to state that any one of these issue positions was more commonly adopted than others. In short, the underlying strategic calculus was the same, but this manifested in different ways depending on the specific opportunities available to these parties. On another note, this group's choices also demonstrate that the strategy of directly trespassing in other parties' issue space is not confined to major parties.

**Mobilising-chasing continuum**

At first blush, the targeting strategies of the influence-seeking parties also appear to have little in common. These parties were observed to make very different choices about how often to pursue votes over policy, what seats to focus their efforts on and which party constituencies to emphasise in doing so, as well as differing in their uptake of research.

In some of these cases, it appears that there was a genuine divergence of strategy, brought about by the different opportunities and constraints operating upon these parties. In others, however, the interviews reveal that superficially different actions actually stemmed from common strategic thinking. One important theme to emerge from this section is the value of combining observational analysis of party activity with direct questioning of the parties themselves. It is

84 WA-HQ1-NAT; QLD-HQ-KAP; QLD-HQ-GRN; NSW-HQ-GRN; VIC-SC-DLP; SA-PL-FF

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doubtful that it would have been possible to make much sense of the disparate data in this section without the insights provided by the interviewees, and this serves to underline the value of a mixed-methods research approach.

To what extent do parties maximise votes or emphasise the representation of policies?

In considering how often these influence-seeking parties sought to maximise votes or represent policies, a clear distinction emerges between those parties who were aiming to win lower house seats and those who were exclusively focused on upper house berths. As discussed below, the WA Nationals, QLD Katter’s Australian Party and the WA and VIC Greens were all seeking to have members elected or returned to lower house seats so that they could directly influence the formation and function of government. By contrast, the VIC Democratic Labour Party and SA Green and Family First parties were only aiming to have members elected or returned to upper house constituencies.

Table 20 indicates that the influence-seeking parties who were pursuing lower house seats engaged in targeted policy promising more often than their counterparts seeking upper house ones, who were not observed to do so at all.

Table 20—Policy/vote-seeking ratios for influence-seeking parties, 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Number of election-specific policies or promises</th>
<th>Number delivering statewide outcomes or abstract benefits</th>
<th>Number delivering tangible benefits to specific electorates</th>
<th>Policy/vote split (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>67/33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>83/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katter's Australian Party</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>89/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>89/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>87/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>70/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Labour Party</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family First</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>87/13</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled by author based on original content analysis.

This makes a certain amount of sense, as parties campaigning for lower house seats would derive more advantage from promising benefits to specific communities than would parties running for

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85 WA-HQ1-NAT; QLD-PL-KAP; WA-PL-GRN; VIC-HQ-GRN
86 VIC-SC-DLP; SA-PL-GRN; SA-PL-FF

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the upper house. Thus, for example, we see the Katter's Australian Party promising to scrap a proposed $8 billion light rail project for Brisbane city and divert the funds to rural and regional road projects across its target seats (Australian Associated Press, 2012), and the WA Nationals committing significant funds from the Royalties for Regions scheme to school and hospital upgrades in key seats such as Kimberley, Pilbara and Warren-Blackwood (The Nationals WA, 2013a; 2013b). By contrast, the policies and plans put forward by the upper house parties were more general in nature, encompassing such broad commitments as eliminating poker machines (Democratic Labour Party, 2010), supporting families towards home ownership (Family First SA, 2010) and redirecting hospital funding towards primary care (The Greens SA, 2010).

While there was a clear divergence within the influence-seeking group on this basis, collectively, these parties can also be seen to be more policy oriented than either the government or preservation-seeking parties. As Table 20 shows, the average policy/vote ratio for this group was 87/13, compared with 68/32 for the government-seeking parties and 57/43 for the preservation-seeking ones. However, that average is skewed by the fact that three of the seven parties in this group engaged in no targeted policy promising at all. If the average is instead calculated for only the six parties who did promise particular benefits to specific communities, the resulting ratio is 81/19. This demonstrates that even those influence-seeking parties who did engage in some vote buying had a stronger orientation towards policy representation than either group of parties in the previous two chapters.

In interviews, the representatives of these parties indicated both idealistic and pragmatic motivations for emphasising policy representation in their campaigns. At one level, all of these parties expressed an eagerness to expand the political debate beyond the narrow set of ideas and solutions proposed by the major parties. Many saw the campaign period as a valuable window in time when voters are actually willing to consider policy issues and engage in a discussion about priorities and ideas, and so they aimed to take full advantage of this by emphasising their policy offerings. In a more pragmatic sense, placing an emphasis on long-term policy vision and ‘big ideas’ also allowed these parties to further underline their distinction from the two major parties. Within this group, the five Greens parties and Katter's Australian Party particularly framed the two major parties as lacking in long-term vision and favouring the status quo, and held up their

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87 WA-PL-GRN; QLD-PL-KAP; QLD-SC-GRN; NSW-SC-GRN; VIC-PL-GRN; VIC-SC-DLP; SA-PL-GRN; SA-HQ-FF
own platforms as evidence of an alternative approach in their campaigns. In this sense then, it could almost be argued that these parties’ emphasis on policy representation was a form of vote maximisation, in that they aimed to give voters another reason for defecting from the major parties.

To what extent do parties aim at mobilising their core constituency or unaligned voters?

In identifying which seats were the focus of the most intensive campaigning by these influence-seeking parties, there was further evidence of divergent actions stemming from an apparently common strategic calculus.

Table 21 outlines the priority seats identified through both the content analysis and one-on-one interviews with party representatives. Within this group, only the five Green parties and SA Family First mirrored the major parties by running candidates in all seats, while the WA Nationals, QLD Katter’s Australian Party and VIC Democratic Labour Party all fielded a smaller list of contenders. Importantly too, several of these parties reported specifically focusing on upper house seats—either in addition to lower house representation, or instead of it. Because many of these parties had a narrower focus than those in chapters Five and Six, Table 21 looks somewhat different from the equivalent tables in those chapters. Specifically, both upper and lower house seats have been listed where these were identified as targets, and only as many seats as were clearly seen to have received special attention from the parties have been included.

In looking for patterns across these parties’ main seat targets, it first appears that most were seeking to consolidate support in seats they already held, while also reaching out to unaligned voters to expand their parliamentary representation. However, the picture is somewhat more complicated than that, because many of the seats held by these parties at the time of the respective elections had either been won by different candidates, or won by candidates representing different parties. For example, the Western Australian lower house seat of North West Central was won by ALP member Vince Catania at the 2008 state election, but he subsequently defected to The Nationals in 2009 and contested the 2013 election as a candidate for that party. Therefore, although The Nationals notionally held North West Central, this was historically a Labor seat (Western Australian Electoral Commission, 2014). Similarly, at the 2012 Queensland election, all of the sitting members of Katter’s Australian Party were defectors from...
the Liberal National Party who had never previously contested an election under the new party’s brand (Marszalek, 2011). Furthermore, at the 2010 South Australian state election, Family First MLC Robert Brokenshire was standing for his first election as a candidate with that party, having been appointed to replace retiring member Andrew Evans in 2008 after a previous stint as a Liberal MLA (Vaughn, 2008). Because of all this inter-party mobility, the parties in this group were often targeting seats which had a strong tradition of siding with one or other of the major parties, even though they were notionally within the party’s own grasp.

Table 21—Identified target seats for influence-seeking parties, 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Priority seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>Pilbara: ALP held with 53.6 per cent of 2008 TCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Warren-Blackwood: NAT held with 67.3 per cent of 2008 TCP (redistributed seat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>North West Central: NAT held with 55.1 per cent of 2008 TPP*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kimberley: ALP held with 56.8 per cent of 2008 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kalgoorlie: IND held with 53.6 per cent of 2008 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>South West Region: ALP 2; LIB 3; NAT 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>North Metropolitan Region: ALP 2; LIB 3; GRN 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>East Metropolitan Region: ALP 2; LIB 3; GRN 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>Fremantle: IND held with 53.9 per cent of 2009 TCP†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katter’s Australian Party</td>
<td></td>
<td>Narango: IND held with 52.9 per cent of 2009 TCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Beaudesert: KAP held with 56.9 per cent of 2009 TPP‡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dalrymple: KAP held with 55.2 per cent of 2009 TPP#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mount Isa: ALP held with 55.7 per cent of 2009 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hinchinbrook: ALP held with 56.5 per cent of 2009 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>Mount Coot-tha: ALP held with 55.3 per cent of 2009 TCP vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>Balmain: ALP held with 57.1 per cent of 2009 TCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maribyrnong: ALP held with 57.2 per cent of 2009 TCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Legislative Council: ALP 19; Coalition 15; CDP 1; FF 1; GRN 4; Shooters 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Richmond: ALP held with 53.6 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Melbourne: ALP held with 52 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Northcote: ALP held with 58.5 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brunswick: ALP held with 53.6 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Western Metropolitan: ALP 3; LIB 1; GRN 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Labour Party</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Western Victoria: ALP 2; LIB 2; DLP 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>Legislative Council: ALP 8; LIB 8; FF 2; No Pokies 2; GRN 1; IND 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family First</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>Legislative Council: ALP 8; LIB 8; FF 2; No Pokies 2; GRN 1; IND 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Target seats identified by author based on original content analysis and party interviews.

* North West Central was won by ALP candidate Vince Catania at the 2008 state election; he subsequently defected to The Nationals during the parliamentary term and contested the seat in 2013 as a Nationals candidate.
† Fremantle was won by Greens candidate Adele Carles at the 2009 by-election; she subsequently resigned from the party during the parliamentary term and contested the seat in 2013 as an Independent.
‡ Beaudesert was won by Liberal National Party candidate Aidan McLindon at the 2009 state election; he subsequently resigned from the party to form the Queensland Party, which then merged with Katter’s Australian Party ahead of the 2012 state election.
# Dalrymple was won by Liberal National Party candidate Shane Knuth at the 2009 state election; he subsequently defected to Katter’s Australian Party during the parliamentary term and contested the seat in 2012 as a Katter’s Australian Party candidate.

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The Greens' fourth Legislative Council seat was won by Sylvia Hale at the 2003 election; she resigned in 2010 and was replaced by David Shoebridge, who then faced re-election at the 2011 state election some six months later.

Family First's second Legislative Council seat was won by Andrew Evans at the 2002 state election; he subsequently retired and was replaced by former Liberal MLA Robert Brokenshire in 2008.

This raises the methodological challenge of how to really assess whether minor parties are targeting their core supporters, unaligned voters or defecting non-supporters. For the major parties, it is relatively easy in that these categories can be lined up with electoral margins and the voting histories of individual seats—as demonstrated in chapters Five and Six. But for minor parties who do not hold any seats, hold seats only through defections from other parties, or are targeting upper house ones which are allocated on a quota basis, how can this best be assessed? One way is to look at the primary vote for these parties in individual seats and regions, as this provides an indication of how strong or weak their core support is.

When this past support is factored in, it becomes evident that most of the influence-seeking parties who ran in lower house seats particularly targeted electorates where their past vote had been highest. For example, at the 2008 Western Australian election, Nationals candidates came second on the two-party preferred vote in Kalgoorlie and Pilbara, while the party polled almost 23 per cent of the primary vote in North West Central and 18 per cent of in the seat of Kimberley (Western Australian Electoral Commission, 2008). Similarly, all of the lower house seats targeted by the state Greens parties in 2012, 2011 and 2010 were those which had recorded the party's highest primary vote at the preceding elections ( Electoral Commission Queensland, 2009; Electoral Commission New South Wales, 2007; Victorian Electoral Commission, 2006).

The sole lower house seat targeted by the WA Greens in 2013 was likewise something of a stronghold for the party, as it had been won by Greens candidate Adele Carles at a 2009 by-election, although she later fell out with the party and became an independent (Western Australian Electoral Commission, 2009). It is not possible to assess the Katter Australian Party's past support, because 2012 was the first election contested by that party. On the basis of the former five cases however, it appears that these parties were targeting seats where their core support was strongest, and where the number of unaligned or non-supporters needing to be won over was therefore smallest. The interviews support this observation, as all of the representatives from these parties reported using historical voting data to inform their choice of targets. Importantly, these interviewees also indicated that they had little or no access to polling showing how their support was distributed across the electorate at the time of the campaigns. This

89 WA-HQ-NAT1; WA-PL-GRN; QLD-HQ-GRN; NSW-SC-GRN; VIC-HQ-GRN

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meant that the historical data was a more significant input for them than for the major parties, who were able to call on more up-to-date research in setting their target seats.

In looking at the upper house seats, it appears that the parties made a range of different choices. Some—such as the WA and SA Greens—attempted to grow their upper house representation by securing the election of an additional member, while others—including the NSW and VIC Greens, the VIC Democratic Labour Party and SA Family First—aimed to consolidate seats they already held. The interviews suggest that there were context-specific reasons for each of these choices. For example, VIC Greens MLC Colleen Hartland and VIC Democratic Labour Party member Peter Kavanagh had only been narrowly elected on preferences at their previous elections. Similarly, SA Family First’s Robert Brokenshire and the VIC Greens’ David Shoebridge had both been appointed as replacements for other members and so had never yet stood for election in their own right. This meant that their parties needed to focus resources on these seats in order to retain them and maintain their existing level of influence in these upper houses. By contrast, the SA Greens had no sitting members up for re-election in 2010 and so could focus their resources on winning a new upper house seat, while the WA Greens were determined to win back a seat in the South West Region where the party had held representation between 1997 and 2008. In other words, these parties also focused on areas where they had performed well in the past, but made choices about whether to consolidate or expand depending on the political environment in front of them.

In terms of overall targeting strategies then, it seems that these parties primarily focused their efforts on seats where their core support was strongest, and where they therefore needed to convert the least number of new supporters. In practice, this meant targeting both low-margin swing seats and those higher up the pendulum, as well as upper house seats, depending on each party’s unique distribution of past support. Because of this variance, it is hard to see any commonality of approach from the data in Table 21 alone. It is only by understanding the background and context of these seats that the common strategic thread linking them becomes apparent.

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90 WA-PL-GRN; SA-PL-GRN
91 VIC-PL-GRN; VIC-SC-DLP; SA-PL-FF
92 NSW-HQ-GRN; VIC-HQ-GRN; VIC-SC-DLP; SA-HQ-FF
93 WA-PL-GRN; SA-HQ-GRN

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To what extent do parties rely on ideological programs (policies) or modern technologies (polling) in designing an election appeal?

Chapters Five and Six highlighted the significant role that modern research technologies played in helping both government- and preservation-seeking parties to identify their key seats, select campaign focus issues and determine how these would be presented to the public. After examining how extensively the parties in this influence-seeking group relied on research versus their own ideological programs, it appears that polling and focus groups were less frequently used by this group of parties than the former two. However, the interviews suggest that this was driven less by deliberate strategic choice, and more by financial factors.

Of the nine parties in this group, six indicated that they had commissioned research to help guide their campaigns: the WA Nationals and Greens, QLD Katter's Australian Party and Greens, NSW Greens and SA Family First. The other three parties—the SA and VIC Greens and the VIC Democratic Labour Party—reported that they could not afford to use any polling or focus groups when designing and delivering their campaigns.

In interviews, the representatives of the six parties who used commissioned research reported doing so in quite different ways from the major parties in chapters Five and Six. Firstly, only one party—the QLD Greens—reported using polling to work out how their potential vote was distributed across the electorate or help guide their selection of focus issues. All of the other interviewees indicated that they had primarily relied on public data such as booth figures from previous elections to work out which seats should be the focus of special campaigning effort.94 These interviewees often acknowledged that public data provides less precise and up-to-date insights than commissioned polling can, but indicated that they simply did not have the financial resources to conduct this kind of wide-scale research. In fact, the QLD Greens were in a similarly constrained financial situation, but were fortunate enough to have a member who was a social science researcher, and who offered to carry out polling for the party in a volunteer capacity.95 Furthermore, as discussed above, these parties' choice of focus themes and issues was reportedly driven primarily by an assessment of the 'good' issues available to them, rather than by formal polling on the issue preferences of voters.

94 WA-PL-GRN; WA-HQ1-NAT; QLD-HQ-KAP; SA-HQ-FF
95 QLD-SC-GRN

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Instead of relying on polling then, the parties who could afford research primarily focused on using qualitative tools to help mould their campaign messaging. All of these interviewees were at pains to point out that the content of their policies was driven by the party’s own beliefs and values, but acknowledged relying on focus groups to gain insights into how these could be conveyed to voters most effectively. This approach was well summed-up by one of Family First’s representatives, who stated:

‘Absolutely, we start with our policy. We say: ‘why are we here? What do we really believe in?’ Families, housing, employment, life, global poverty, aboriginal affairs, this is what we believe in, this is what we’ll die in a ditch over…we then do the research to get an idea of what the various groups are concerned about, and the phrases that they use, to see how we can communicate or what’s the best way of communicating those aspects of our policies to them...then we can communicate with them in a manner and style that suits their personality.’

—SA-HQ-FF

In other words, these six parties used qualitative research to work out how best to communicate about the issues and policies that they had already decided to place at the centre of their campaigns. This is in contrast with the parties discussed in chapters Five and Six, who also used research to work out which issues and policies to emphasise in the first place.

Again however, this appears to have been less of a strategic choice and more of a resource-driven one. All of these parties indicated that because they had limited funds to spend on research, they needed to use this in ways that would deliver insights not available through other channels. At the 2013 Western Australian election, for example, The Nationals reported a research budget of $30,531 while the Greens spent just $20,053 (Western Australian Electoral Commission, 2013). These budgets represent about a fifth of the equivalent research spending for the Liberal and Labor parties, and on current costs would be enough to cover only two to three rounds of focus groups. In this context, these parties apparently relied on other inputs to guide their policy development and choice of focus issues (such as party members and supporters), and concentrated their limited research resources on finding out how to communicate effectively about these.76

This observation is reinforced by the fact that most of the representatives from those parties who did not use research indicated they would have done so if they could have afforded it.77

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76 WA-PL-GRN; WA-HQ2-NAT; QLD-HQ-KAP; SA-HQ-FF
77 VIC-HQ-GRN; VIC-PL-GRN; SA-PL-GRN; SA-HQ-GRN
Only the interviewees from the Democratic Labour Party expressed scepticism about the value of research, stating that they did not need this because their campaign offerings were informed by the party’s deep and direct engagement with local Victorian communities. It is worth noting that the Democratic Labour Party was also the only one in this group not to employ a paid campaign director or coordinator, and so it may be that the party was simply less aware of the contribution that research could make than the other parties.

The above discussion demonstrates that for these influence-seeking parties, modern research technologies played a much smaller role in helping them to design their election offerings than was the case for the major parties in chapters Five and Six. Where parties could afford to commission research, this was primarily used to help them identify effective ways of communicating about their party’s values and policies. The question of resources appears to have been critical here, because the interviewees frequently highlighted money as a factor holding them back from conducting further research of the type employed by the major parties. Only the Democratic Labour Party’s representatives questioned the basic necessity of research; more commonly, the interviewees indicated that they would have liked to engage in it—or done more of it—if the resources had been available. This further underlines an observation arising from the previous discussion of the government- and preservation-seeking parties’ research use. That is: decisions about the use of research do not appear to be directly related to parties’ goals or any particular strategising about the campaign environment in front of them. Rather, the use of research seems to be linked primarily to a party’s access to financial resources. Again excepting the Democratic Labour Party, all of the parties discussed so far displayed an acceptance of market research as a valuable source of insights, and a necessary tool for effective political campaigning. The fundamental question for parties, then, is not the strategically-driven one: ‘what should we research?’ It is instead the more practical query: ‘how much research can we afford to do?’. Part Four explores this point in more detail when discussing how the findings in this section alter Rohrschneider’s picture of strategic campaign decision-making.

**To what extent do parties rely on a leader or (intra-party) constituencies in targeting voters?**

Moving on to the relative use of leaders, candidates and members in the influence-seeking parties’ campaigns, it is here that the greatest divergence amongst the parties in this group became evident. It is also where some of the greatest difficulty was encountered in conducting

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98 VIC-SC-DLP

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side-by-side comparison of these parties' activities, because of their differing structures, organisations and strategic opportunities.

The major parties discussed in chapters Five and Six were relatively homogenous in their campaign structures, with each having a formal leader who was the party's official face and spokesperson, Ministers or Shadow Ministers who acted as additional spokespeople on key topic areas, and local candidates and members who represented the party on the ground in individual communities. As has been seen, this structural homogeneity meant that patterns were relatively easy to discern in these parties' choices about the emphasis given to leaders, candidates and members. By contrast, the parties in this influence-seeking group differed greatly in their structures, and therefore also in the strategic opportunities open to them.

Firstly, only the WA Nationals, QLD Katter's Australian Party, SA Greens and SA Family First actually had a formal leader at the time of these campaigns. The other five parties had designated spokespeople drawn from their parliamentary wings, but did not have a single public figure to whom voters were encouraged to attach their support. To make matters slightly more complicated, Katter's Australian Party had both a state leader—Aidan McLindon—and a federal leader—Bob Katter—who were actively featured in that party's campaign. Conversely, both the SA Greens and SA Family First leaders were members of the state's Legislative Council and were not actually up for re-election at the 2010 campaign which forms this project's case study. Because of these differences, it was not clear that an accurate understanding of these parties' strategic approach could be gained by assessing them solely on their use of a leader, candidates and members, as was done for the parties in chapters Five and Six.
Table 22—Prominence of leader, party members and candidates in influence-seeking party campaign materials, 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>% of electorate materials featuring party leader</th>
<th>% of electorate materials featuring lead candidate/s</th>
<th>% of electorate materials featuring party members</th>
<th>% of media materials featuring lead candidate/s</th>
<th>% of media materials featuring party leader</th>
<th>% of media materials featuring only local candidate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katter’s Australian Party</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>36 (50)*</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Labour Party</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family First</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled by author based on original content analysis.

NOTE: Percentages do not round to 100 as some materials featured other senior party figures such as Ministers or Shadow Ministers, combinations of candidates or party-branded attacks on opposing candidates.

— Indicates that insufficient materials were located for meaningful analysis.

* While 36 per cent of materials featured Queensland KAP leader Aidan McLindon, a further 50 per cent featured federal party leader Bob Katter.

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Rather, an additional category of ‘lead candidate/s’ has been added to the analysis, as many of the parties in this group gave special prominence to one or more candidates in their campaigns. The project relied primarily on information from the interviewees to determine who these lead candidates were, although this was also cross-checked against analysis of the parties’ campaign materials. Through this process, it was found that some parties had a spokesperson and a group of lead candidates (WA Greens, NSW Greens, VIC Greens), some had both a formal leader and a single lead candidate (SA Greens, SA Family First), and some had a spokesperson who was also the lead candidate (QLD Greens, VIC Democratic Labour Party). Only the WA Nationals and QLD Katter’s Australian Party were structured in a similar manner to the parties in chapters Five and Six. This makes it very difficult to draw clear conclusions about the relative importance placed on different party constituencies, because the analysis is rarely comparing like with like.

However, if this additional ‘lead candidate/s’ category is applied alongside the standard three when analysing the parties’ campaign materials, this delivers the results reported in Table 22. As this table demonstrates, the influence-seeking parties made vastly different use of their leaders and lead candidates compared with other party constituencies, and there was no clear or common pattern to these choices.

For example, of the parties who did have a formal leader, their presence in the electorate-level materials ranged from just five per cent in the case of SA Family First leader Dennis Hood, to 89 per cent for SA Greens leader Mark Parnell. This, despite the fact that neither was actually running for re-election and both parties had a single, lead candidate whose election they were trying to secure. These two parties also made variable use of their lead and local candidates, as Greens candidate Tammy Franks both appeared alongside Parnell in most of the electorate-level materials and was featured in materials of her own, while Family First candidate Robert Brokenshire appeared in just 24 per cent of that party’s materials. Similarly, individual candidates appeared alone in just 7 per cent of the Greens materials, compared with 71 per cent of the Family First ones. Interviews indicate that the Greens decided to leverage Parnell’s profile as an established parliamentarian to draw attention to Franks’ candidacy, while Family First instead focused on linking Brokenshire to the party’s general brand and so minimised Hood’s role to allow him the full spotlight. Both are feasible strategies if the goal is to secure the election of

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99 SA-PL-FF; SA-HQ-FF; SA-HQ-GRN; SA-PL-GRN

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that lead candidate, but depend significantly on factors such as how high the leader’s profile already is within the community, and how established the party’s brand is.

The WA Nationals and QLD Katter’s Australian Party made more similar choices, as both of these parties had a single, high-profile leader (or leaders, in Katter’s case), and were particularly targeting lower house seats which were primarily held by the major parties. In these cases, interviews suggest that these parties saw a clear advantage in making their campaigns highly leader-centric to compete with those major party opponents. As one of the WA Nationals representatives explained:

‘[Brendon Grylls] has a very high favourability rating. People trust him. They associate him with Royalties for Regions and delivering a sense of fairness back to regional WA, and so as a campaign team, you would be silly not to use his reputation and the trust the electorate has in him...so we used him in policy announcements, we used him to raise the profile of candidates...it was extremely important that his role as leader of The Nationals is seen to be as strong as the leader of the Liberal Party or the Labor Party.’

—WA-HQ1-NAT

This leadership angle was seen as even more advantageous for the Katter Party, because by variously using either Aidan McLindon or Bob Katter to sell its message, the party could appeal to both city-based and regional audiences across its target seats.110

For the parties who did not have a leader, there was evidence of slightly more consistency at the electorate level, as all emphasised their local candidates over their lead ones. However, the degree to which they did so still varied significantly, as Table 22 shows. Furthermore, it is questionable whether this actually reveals anything much, because unlike a statewide leader, a lead candidate can only feasibly be included in materials sent to the electorate or region they are standing for. In other words, the fact that the QLD Green and VIC Democratic Labour Party lead candidates were not included in a significant number of party materials does not necessarily reflect a particular lack of leader-centrism within those parties. It may rather reflect the practical reality that it would confuse voters to include these candidates on materials sent to seats where their names would not be on the ballot. The WA, NSW and VIC Greens addressed this challenge by designating several lead candidates, but this then skews the data because the figures given in Table 22 are not directly comparable with the QLD Greens or VIC Democratic Labour Party

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100 QLD-PL-KAP

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ones. This further underlines the challenge of undertaking side-by-side comparison of parties who structure their campaigns—and their wider party organisations—very differently.

Turning to these parties’ media materials, again there was little to no consistency of approach in how extensively these parties relied on their different representatives to sell their message. Furthermore, it was not possible to locate sufficient materials for analysis from the QLD Katter’s Australian Party or VIC Democratic Labour Party, which has diminished the size of the data set.

In looking at the materials which were available, it appears that the two South Australian parties again occupied the extreme ends of the spectrum, with the SA Greens featuring Mark Parnell in 50 per cent of all media materials and SA Family First making Dennis Hood completely invisible in its media items. Interestingly however, neither party included its local candidates in any media materials. It is also evident that Brendon Grylls’ electorate-level visibility was not mirrored in the party’s media materials, as local candidates appeared far more often than The Nationals leader in these items. The VIC and QLD Greens also made extensive use of local candidates to sell their media messages, but varied significantly in their use of lead candidates. Oddly, QLD Greens lead candidate Adam Stone was extensively visible in his party’s media materials, while the VIC Greens made far less use of their multiple lead candidates.

It is hard to know what to make of such disparate findings, and in this area the interviews provided little insight. It was expected that the lead candidates would be especially visible in the parties’ media materials because this would help to raise their profile along with spreading the party’s message. Interestingly however, only some of these parties appear to have taken advantage of that opportunity. Similarly, it was unexpected to see local candidates attempt to engage with the media as often as they did, because candidates can easily do more harm than good if they are not experienced in dealing with journalists. The fact that these parties did not tend to conform to basic media strategy, and made quite divergent choices as a whole, makes this a fertile area for further investigation. But at present, the most that can be said is that these influence-seeking parties were far less consistent in whom they used as media ‘talent’ than the parties discussed in chapters Five and Six.

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One other observation that can confidently be made about this group’s use of different representatives is that party members were not visible at all in their campaign materials. As Table 22 highlights, not one electorate or media item featured endorsements from party members or other signs of member involvement. This is interesting, given that several of these parties come from highly member-centric, participatory traditions. However, as outlined below, these traditions appear to be preserved more in the parties’ internal workings than in their public pitch to voters.

Overall, the data does not show any common pattern in the extent to which these influence-seeking parties relied on a leader or other party constituencies when engaging voters. That is not to say that there was not some common strategic calculus underlying these parties’ decisions. As discussed above, different choices can result from common strategic thinking depending on the specific opportunities available to a party. However, if there is indeed such a common thread, it has not been possible to tease it out here.

To what extent do parties view intra-party democracies as a symbolic component of the campaign message or a mechanical means to reach voters?

Turning then to Rohrschneider’s final strategic trade-off, there was again no evidence of these parties using ‘organisational innovation’ as part of their campaign theme or messaging. In sharp contrast with the parties discussed in chapters Five and Six however, most of these influence-seeking parties were found to be highly internally participatory. That is, they reported providing many opportunities for members to be actively involved in developing the policies that would be put forward in the campaign, as well as having input on priority issues, campaign messaging, strategy and much more. While these parties also looked to their members to play a significant instrumental role in the delivery of their campaigns, they offered a far broader range of participatory opportunities than did any of the major parties in the previous two chapters.

For example, the SA Greens undertook a long-running process of consultation with members over the content of the party’s 2010 election platform. Embarked on some 18 months before the election, this involved leader Mark Parnell running a series of policy workshops which all state Greens members could attend, and where they could participate in developing draft policies for circulation to the wider party. These policies were then distributed to all party branches for discussion and feedback, before being sent for final approval by the SA Greens’ State Council. In
addition to contributing to this policy development process, all members were also eligible to stand for election to the party’s Election Campaign Committee—the central body for strategic decision-making which was made up entirely of party volunteers. While this body was responsible for coordinating some central aspects of the campaign such as printing materials and booking advertising, individual branches had a high degree of autonomy in managing their local campaigns. Members were encouraged to take the lead in choosing how, where and when to spread the word about the Greens’ policies and issues within their local communities, and were then supported in these endeavours by the central campaign staff.101

With the exception of QLD Katter’s Australian Party, all of the other parties in this influence-seeking group reflected similar iterations of this participatory, inclusive approach. However, this is not to suggest that they did not also see members as a means for reaching voters. In fact, most indicated that members were one of their main channels for engaging people—whether through doorknocking, letterboxing, working on polling booths, distributing content through social media or just selling the party’s message to family and friends.102 But they clearly did not see these mechanical tasks as the beginning and end of members’ involvement, as the parties in chapters Five and Six seemed to do. The QLD Katter’s Australian Party is an exception here in that it did not actually have branches or any substantial membership to speak of at the time of the 2012 Queensland election, having only been established six months previously. Given this, the party’s internal workings were highly centralised and dominated by a few key individuals.103

It is not surprising that the minor parties in this group would be more internally participatory than their major party counterparts, given their size and relative paucity of resources. All of the parties in this group had 10 or fewer sitting members and five or fewer party office staff at the time of these elections. Without a significant corps of MPs and associated paid staff in both the parliament and head office, smaller parties are understandably reliant on the volunteer contributions of members to achieve everything from policy development to local campaign planning. As previously mentioned, several of these parties—including the Greens and the Democratic Labour Party—also emerged from highly participatory social movements within which internal democracy and inclusiveness were valued as goods in their own right, and this

101 SA-HQ-GRN; SA-PL-GRN
102 WA-PL-GRN; WA-PL2-NAT; VIC-HQ-GRN; VIC-SC-DLP; SA-HQ-GRN; SA-PL-FF
103 QLD-HQ-KAP; QLD-PL-KAP
ethos still appears to exert some influence over their inner workings. These two points probably help to explain why these parties did not actively promote participatory opportunities as part of their campaign pitch: letting members be highly involved is simply 'business as usual' for them.

Returning to Rohrschneider’s trade-off, it is true that these parties approached their members as ‘instruments to contact voters’. However, it is also true that they offered ‘attractive participatory opportunities’ for any current or prospective member, in contrast with the more centralised, hierarchical parties in Chapters Five and Six. So while it would not be accurate to say that these influence-seeking parties used intra-party democracy to draw in voters, they clearly saw their members as being more than campaign delivery drones.

However, returning to the point raised at the end of Chapter Six, this appears to have had little to do with deliberate campaign strategising, and much more to do with their established structures and resources. These parties did not appear to see any strategic or electoral benefit in allowing their members to be highly involved; this simply reflected a carry-over of their standard mode of operating outside of the election period into the campaign. This lends further support to the suggestion that—as with the use of research—decision-making about the role of members in campaigns is not really a strategic choice, but rather an organisationally- and resource-driven one.

Mobilising or chasing?

The above discussion has highlighted significant diversity in the targeting strategies adopted by these influence-seeking parties. It has also identified a range of methodological challenges arising from this project’s efforts to analyse minor parties according to the same criteria as major ones. Given these two factors, how can these parties’ strategies best be aligned with Rohrschneider’s mobilising-chasing continuum? The short answer is that they do not easily do so, as the parties were seen to make strategic decisions which ranged across different points between Rohrschneider’s mobilising and chasing poles on each of the five individual indicators.

On the question of vote maximisation versus policy representation, it was observed that these parties strongly favoured policy. But the parties running for lower house seats did also engage in

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104 VIC-SC-DLP; VIC-HQ-GRN; SA-HQ-GRN

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some vote-buying, albeit less so than either of the party groupings discussed in chapters Five and Six.

All of these parties were also seen to focus their energies on electorates or regions where their past support had been strongest and where the least number of new voters therefore needed to be converted. This represented an attempt to engage both core and other voters—a reasonable strategy given that core support alone is rarely sufficient for a minor party to win seats.

In designing their election appeals, research was found to be less influential than these parties’ own policies and beliefs, and some of the parties within this group did not use polling or focus groups at all. However, market research was generally seen as a critical input for helping parties communicate those policies and beliefs to the electorate most effectively—even by several of the parties who had not used it. Importantly too, the interviews suggest that these parties’ relatively limited use of research was constrained not by any strategic considerations or lack of perceived necessity, but simply by the availability of financial resources.

The parties in this group made very different decisions about the use of leaders, candidates and other party constituencies when engaging voters. However, it is hard to know how much of this was driven by deliberate strategy and how much by structural factors and organisational necessity, given that the parties in this group were rarely structured alike or addressing a common set of opportunities and constraints.

Finally, these influence-seeking parties were observed to be highly internally participatory while also viewing their members as a mechanical means to reach voters, but without making this a part of their pitch to voters.

Returning to Rohrschneider’s predictions, it is evidently difficult to map these parties to any specific point of his continuum on the basis of these findings. The parties’ emphasis on policy representation places them towards the mobilising pole on this indicator, but their focus on both core and other voters moves them towards the chasing end on this score. Similarly, the parties’ use of research to help them design their election messages is indicative of a chasing emphasis, while the differing use of leaders versus other party constituencies means that each party essentially occupies its own position between mobilising and chasing on this indicator. Finally,

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Rohrschneider suggests that the use of party members as instruments to contact voters indicates a mobilising orientation, while emphasising organisational innovation and participation signifies a chasing one. These parties made practical use of their members while also offering opportunities for internal participation, albeit without making this a focus of their campaign pitch. It would therefore appear that they were doing more than simply mobilising, but less than outright chasing, on this final count.

In short, these influence-seeking parties incorporated both mobilising and chasing approaches without demonstrating a clear orientation towards one strategy over the other. In some ways this makes perfect sense, as parties looking to maximise their influence over the political system will generally need to both lock in their base and attract new support to achieve this goal. However, this result also highlights a potential problem with Rohrschneider's framework. As has been seen in both this and the preceding chapters, each of his five strategic trade-offs appear to be broadly independent of each other. That is, parties may make choices in one area which indicate an attempt to mobilise support, while demonstrating a preference for chasing votes in another—a point Rohrschneider himself acknowledges in discussing the possibility that the mobilising-chasing concept might actually require mapping in multi-dimensional space rather than along a uni-dimensional continuum (Rohrschneider, 2002: 377). If parties do not demonstrate a consistent preference for mobilising or chasing (and assuming that one wishes to maintain some semblance of empiricism by restricting the analysis to a single dimension) there is ultimately nowhere to place them except some ill-defined grey area at the mid-point of this continuum. Now, in locating the influence-seeking parties here, it is still possible to mark out some difference between their targeting strategies and those of the government- and preservation-seeking parties, who were located closer to the chasing and mobilising poles respectively. But it remains to be seen whether this will also allow sufficient differentiation between the targeting strategies observed within this group and those discussed in the following chapter. This issue will be considered further when assessing the targeting strategies pursued by the final group of policy-seeking parties.

Communications repertoires

In exploring the communications repertoires of these influence-seeking parties, the role of money in facilitating or obstructing voter outreach becomes particularly evident. In interviews, these parties exhibited a near-obsession with the gulf between their financial resources and those

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of the major parties', and highlighted this disparity as an impediment to their effective communication with voters. Having said that, many of these parties were observed to employ the same tools and channels as those major parties, albeit with reduced scale and frequency. Table 23 details these tools and channels, and again highlights which were seen to be of most value by the interviewees.

Table 23—Influence-seeking party communications repertoires, 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Internal tools</th>
<th>External tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>Flyers/leaflets Website Polling booths</td>
<td>Candidate forums Community group meetings Country shows Television advertising Radio advertising Print advertising Ambient advertising Broadcast news Print news Online news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>Social media Flyers/leaflets Email Website Polling booths</td>
<td>Candidate forums Community events Rallies and protests Television advertising Radio advertising Print advertising Ambient advertising Broadcast news Print news Online news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katter’s Australian Party</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>Flyers/leaflets Social media</td>
<td>Candidate forums Community events Rallies and protests Television advertising Radio advertising Print advertising Ambient advertising Online advertising Broadcast news Print news Online news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>Doorknocking Flyers/leaflets Email Social media Website Polling booths</td>
<td>Candidate forums Community events Rallies and protests Television advertising Ambient advertising Online advertising Broadcast news Print news Online news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>Flyers/leaflets Social media Doorknocking Email Website Polling booths</td>
<td>Candidate forums Community events Rallies and protests Television advertising Online advertising Print advertising Ambient advertising Online advertising Broadcast news Print news Online news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Flyers/leaflets Social media Doorknocking Email Website Polling booths</td>
<td>Candidate forums Community events Rallies and protests Television advertising Online advertising Print advertising Ambient advertising Online advertising Broadcast news Print news Online news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Labour Party</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Flyers/leaflets Website Polling booths</td>
<td>Candidate forums Community events None Print news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greens</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>Flyers/leaflets Social media Website Doorknocking Email Polling booths</td>
<td>Candidate forums Community events Online advertising Ambient advertising Broadcast news Print news Online news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family First</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>Flyers/leaflets Email Polling booths</td>
<td>Candidate forums Community events Television advertising Radio advertising Broadcast news Print news Online news</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled by author based on original content analysis and party interviews.
The most striking finding from this analysis is how much significance these influence-seeking parties attached to television advertising. This tool appeared to be seen as the holy grail of campaign communications, both because it provided parties with the capacity to reach broad and diverse new audiences, and because it allowed them to compete with the voices of the major Labor and Liberal parties. The following several quotes are indicative of the emphasis seen across this group:

'As a small party, it was really important that we needed to get these tools right, and so going to the largest communication tool of television was where we decided we could have the most effect...knowing that we get swamped by the major parties [in other aspects of the campaign], we have to have ads [to] stand out a little bit.'

—WA-HQ1-NAT

'Our main concern is reach. Everyone has to vote, or everyone over 18, so why not reach them all?...we sat down and talked it through and not surprisingly, we did exactly what the major parties do: we advertised on TV...'

—SA-PL-FF

'[A] lot of the influence—rightly or wrong—happens on the television...and we've decided that this is an arena we have to have a presence in...the repetitive nature of being able to run multiple TV ads does have an impact.'

—WA-PL-GRN

While these parties attached great significance to television advertising, their representatives commonly expressed frustration at the volume of ads they were able to afford, compared with the major parties. Words such as 'swamped' and 'overrun' were frequently used to describe how the major parties dominated the airwaves due to their superior resources, and this complaint is certainly backed up by the available spending figures. For example, at the 2013 Western Australian election, The Nationals spent $49,424 on broadcast advertising and the Greens spent $117,614 (Western Australian Electoral Commission, 2013). By contrast, the WA Liberals spent more than $1.2 million on broadcast advertising, while Labor spent just over $518,000 and its union affiliates spent that much again (Western Australian Electoral Commission, 2013).

Amongst the parties in this group who did not use television advertising, resources were similarly cited as the main factor holding them back. As two of the Greens representatives stated:

105 This figure includes both television and radio advertising as the WA Electoral Commission requires reporting of 'broadcast expenditure' as a single line item. Because of this, we have no way of disaggregating the parties' TV spend from other forms of broadcast advertising.

106 It is worth noting, however, that the WA Nationals and Greens were advertising in only a selected handful of target seats, while the Liberals and Labor were campaigning statewide.
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‘If we’d had the resources we would have matched the other parties in the forums where they were most active. So we would have had TV ads. We would have been on the telly.’

—SA-PL-GRN

‘There were definitely people in the campaign team who were keen to do...television advertising, those kinds of things. But those things have to be done very professionally, otherwise they look terrible, you know? So that can actually backfire. If you go in with a $50 ad as opposed to a $5,000 ad, it’s going to look really bad. It’s not going to convince anyone to vote for us.’

—VIC-HQ-GRN

This emphasis on television advertising provides a strong indication of these parties’ professionalisation, particularly compared with the other minor parties in the following chapter. These parties have obviously paid close attention to how major parties and other large organisations communicate with the public, and are consciously seeking to emulate this to the extent that their budgets allow. As Table 23 highlights, most of these parties also made use of other paid communication channels such as radio, print and online advertising, demonstrating a strong engagement with professional marketing techniques. However, the scale of their uptake of these paid channels was still reported to be dwarfed by the major parties, and significantly constrained by their access to financial resources.\(^{107}\) This is evidently a source of major frustration for these small parties, who see Labor and the Liberals receiving an enduring competitive advantage on this basis.

Briefly, this emphasis on broadcast channels was also seen in these parties’ courting of media publicity through television news and other unpaid media channels. Several of these interviewees reflected that securing mainstream media coverage was a strategic priority because it showed that they were to be ‘taken really seriously’\(^ {108}\) and were not just fringe political players.\(^ {109}\) However, with the exception of the WA Nationals who were in coalition government at the time, all of these parties indicated that it was often difficult to convince mainstream TV, print and radio outlets to take an interest in their messages or activities. As one interviewee complained:

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\(^{107}\) WA-PL2-NAT; QLD-HQ-KAP; VIC-HQ-GRN; VIC-SC-DLP; SA-HQ-GRN

\(^{108}\) SA-PL-GRN

\(^{109}\) WA-PL-GRN; QLD-PL-KAP; VIC-PL-GRN

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‘You’ve got people in the mainstream media...they refuse to have us on. They have the same two parties on all the time. They’ve made terrible decisions but the media has allowed them to be popular...the core problem is you’ve got two parties, and so you’re basically in a two-horse race.’

—VIC-SC-DLP

The ‘horse-race’ coverage of politics by mainstream media outlets is a frequent target of criticism because it is seen as supplementing personal competition for substantive discussion of policy (for example, Hanusch, 2013; Young, 2011; Lee Kaid and Stromback, 2010). But for these influence-seeking parties, it also seems to have a practical impact on how effectively they can communicate their messages to the voting public, as there is rarely much focus on any other runners in a two-horse race.

Turning to the parties’ use of non-media communications, it is evident that these parties made use of indirect internal channels far more frequently than either the government- or preservation-seeking parties. As previously discussed, the risk/reward ratio for major parties communicating through open public events significantly mitigates against this. However, for the minor parties in this influence-seeking group, the strategic calculus appears to be completely different. These parties reported wanting to be as visible as possible in the community, to make up for their more limited exposure through the media. What’s more, many of these interviewees believed that being asked to speak at externally-organised events such as candidate forums and rallies or protests again sent a message to voters that they were to be taken seriously as political actors.\(^{110}\)

In looking at the direct internal tools deployed by these parties, it is similarly clear that they commonly emphasised those which were free or low cost, and which could be delivered using volunteers. For example, instead of using direct mail, the majority of these parties produced flyers which were then letterboxed by members and supporters. Similarly, where the parties in chapters Five and Six tended to use social media as another broadcast channel—for the distribution of advertising or ‘official’ party content produced by the campaign head office— these parties relied more on their members and supporters to generate and share content. This appears to have been a consequence of these parties’ emphasis on television advertising, in that financial resources were set aside for the ads and volunteer resources then used to engage voters through other channels. As one interviewee noted: ‘Where we’re short on money, volunteers are

\(^{110}\) WA-PL-GRN; QLD-SC-GRN; NSW-SC-GRN; VIC-PL-GRN; VIC-SC-DLP; SA-PL-GRN; SA-PL-FF

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something we don’t tend to be short on”. With the exception of the brand-new Katter’s Australian Party, these parties commonly reported having a large and enthusiastic corps of volunteers, and this allowed them to deploy diverse communications repertoires at relatively low cost.

This raises a question on whether communication repertoires also fall into the category of decisions driven primarily by internal structures and resources, or represent genuinely strategic choices. While it is undoubtedly true that resources played a significant role in shaping these parties’ choices, it is argued that these were still driven primarily by strategic considerations about what would best support their influence goal. In particular, the fact that most of these parties relied on free and low-cost channels in some areas so as to be able to focus their financial resources on television and other advertising represents a deliberate strategic choice. These parties could equally have eschewed advertising in favour of direct mail, or poured all their communication funds into doorknocking every home. The fact that they did not choose to do so—and instead focused on breaking into the mainstream, paid channels dominated by the major parties—indicates that decisions about communication tools and channels should be considered strategic choices; at least for the parties in this and the preceding two chapters.

As one final point worth making, most of the parties in this group mirrored their major party counterparts in highlighting polling booths as an important, last-ditch tool for communicating with voters. In fact, one interviewee went so far as to say that if his party could only do one thing in a campaign, it would be to have friendly and approachable representatives stationed at all booths with eye-catching signage and how-to-vote cards. As with the party representatives in chapters Five and Six, these interviewees saw polling booths as an opportunity to reach undecided or wavering electors right at the moment of their voting decision, and so worked to maximise their presence on Election Day. The emphasis that these parties placed on polling booths is quite amusing, given that voters themselves tend to see party booth workers as an irritating obstacle to be navigated around as quickly as possible.

Based on this discussion, it is clear that these influence-seeking parties employed many of the same communications tools and channels as the parties discussed in chapters Five and Six. In fact, they appeared to be consciously working to scale up their use of particular channels—such as broadcast advertising and unpaid media—to match these major parties. However, their

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111 VIC-PL-GRN
112 SA-HQ-FF

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capacity to do so was limited by resources, and so they did not use these channels to anything near the extent seen in the major party campaigns within this project’s data set. The parties reportedly sought to compensate for this by amping up their level of engagement with voters through public events and open forums which conveyed a subconscious message about their relevance, as well as by taking advantage of free and low cost communication channels.

This demonstrates two things. Firstly, the results presented so far clearly support the assertion that, in Australia at least, parties employ ‘a well-defined set of communication routines’ when campaigning (Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli, 2009: 349). Across both internal and external channels, the parties discussed thus far have confined their communication efforts to a common set of tools. Also consistent with Kriesi et al’s observation about the gradual incorporation of new tools as technology advances, this common set has been found to include both very old ones—such as doorknocking, and relatively new ones—such as social media and online advertising, which have only emerged in recent years.

However, the fact that these parties drew from the same communications toolkit clearly does not mean that they engaged voters in the same ways. As has been seen, the government-, preservation- and influence-seeking parties all had a heavy emphasis on television advertising, but the scale of their use differed significantly. Furthermore, where the parties in Chapter Five backed this advertising up with other forms of centralised, standardised communication such as direct mail, the parties in Chapter Six instead emphasised one-to-one communication, while those in this chapter favoured community and volunteer-led channels. In other words, the tools and channels may be common, but by prioritising and mixing these in diverse ways parties can create very different styles of campaign. This is an important point to note for the wider discussion of the strategies adopted by parties across the different goal categories. It reminds us to look at the parties’ particular emphasis for an understanding of their strategic approach, rather than simply noting down all the different tools and channels used.

Conclusions
Having detailed the influence-seeking parties’ choices in relation to issue positioning, targeting and communications repertoires, it is clear that this group displayed more diverse campaign behaviour than the government- and preservation-seeking parties in the previous two chapters. Not only were they seen to range widely across the available issue space, but there was also
evidence of divergence in these parties’ chosen target seats, the extent of their efforts at vote maximisation, their use of leaders and other party constituencies and their uptake of research.

Although these parties’ campaigns appear to have little in common on the face of it, it has been demonstrated that much of this diverse activity can, in fact, be traced back to a common set of strategic calculations. In the context of issue choice, these parties pursued issues which allowed them to paint the major parties as alike and present a point of difference. In deciding which seats to make the focus of their efforts, these parties looked to where their past support had been highest, and where the smallest number of new supporters would therefore need to be found. Moreover, in commissioning research and selecting communications tools and channels, these parties commonly prioritised effective, professional messaging disseminated through high-visibility broadcast channels, although their capacity to achieve this varied widely on the basis of available resources. They were also fairly consistent in adopting an internally participatory approach which offered many opportunities for member participation and party democracy, while also leveraging members as tools for communicating with voters. So although it may not be true to state that these parties campaigned in similar ways, it certainly seems that their individual actions were informed by some common strategic calculations.

Having said that, the parties in this influence-seeking group did diverge somewhat in their pursuit of votes over policy, and a great deal in terms of the emphasis given to different party constituencies. It has not been possible to identify any common, underlying calculation which unites their disparate choices here, beyond emphasising both their divergent opportunities and constraints, and the different structural factors at play.

This point about differing opportunities, constraints and structures is worth reiterating, for it is argued that this ultimately explains much of the variation in campaign behaviour observed within this group. As has been demonstrated, the influence-seeking parties had different opportunities in relation to the ‘good’ issues available to them, how their support was distributed across the electorate, and the availability of different party constituencies to engage with voters. They also faced differing constraints—particularly in relation to resources— which affected their capacity to carry out preferred activities such as commissioning research and purchasing advertising. Finally, their divergent structures sometimes meant that what may have been a strategic choice for one

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party was a matter of simple necessity for another, such as in deciding whether to emphasise leaders or candidates.

In short, these influence-seeking parties are a diverse group who must necessarily demonstrate a high sensitivity to context when designing their individual strategic approaches. However, it has been shown that in some important areas there was a common strategic calculus underpinning their decision-making, and furthermore that this calculus was often significantly different from that of the parties discussed in either chapter Five or Six. Of course, the real distinction in campaign strategies may simply lie between major and minor parties—regardless of their goals—so much now hinges on the discussion of policy-seeking party strategies in the following chapter.

Briefly, this chapter has also flagged a range of challenges which arise from analysing minor party activity according to the same benchmarks used for major parties. As has been discussed, assessing minor party strategising in areas such as issue ownership, seat targeting and leader-centrism required altering or expanding on the frameworks drawn from the existing literature, in order to accurately map these parties’ activities. Dispelling the enduring ‘big party chauvinism’ of Australian political research is necessarily going to require the development of analytical frameworks which can easily manage side-by-side comparison of major and minor party activity, but this research suggests that the ones used here are not fully up to that job—even with the modifications adopted. This thesis has more to say about that in Part Four when discussing the future use of these frameworks, but it seems clear that further research is needed to develop or locate analytical tools which can account for differences between major and minor parties while still allowing meaningful comparative analysis.
Policy-seeking strategies

This final results chapter explores the campaign strategies pursued by the policy-seeking parties—those who sought to publicise and advance specific policy agendas. As outlined in Chapter Three, these parties were all small and poorly-resourced organisations with either no—or very limited—history of parliamentary representation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this policy-seeking group also incorporated a range of parties with strong ideological orientations, including the Socialist Alliance party, the Christian Democratic Party and the Australian Sex Party.

In contrast with the influence-seeking parties discussed in the previous chapter, these policy-seeking parties were observed to make fairly consistent choices across many aspects of their campaigning. In large part, this seems to be a product of the parties’ single-minded focus on pushing a small and specific set of issues to the forefront of the political agenda. However, it also appears to stem from the fact that all of these parties had minimal access to resources (both financial and human), and so faced a far more limited range of choices when designing their campaign approach. The dynamic between these two influences will be explored further in breaking down their decision-making in each of the three focus areas.

By this stage of the thesis, it is acknowledged that readers may be feeling some fatigue with the recurring structure of these chapters. However, reporting under a common set of headings provides a clear basis for comparison amongst and between the different goal categories, and so it is hoped that readers will bear with this format just a little longer for that reason.

Issue positioning

While it would not be fair to describe the parties in this policy-seeking group as ‘single issue’ ones, they were certainly observed to have a narrower issue focus than any of the preceding three groups. These parties addressed an average of nine issues across their campaign materials, although commonly the majority of items were devoted to just one or two issues. For this reason, Table 24 again lists only those issues which received special emphasis. As that table highlights, these few focus topics were almost always unclaimed issues which were not being addressed by other parties, and which linked to a particular worldview or ideological framework.
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Table 24—Identified focus issues for policy-seeking parties, 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Focus issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Christians</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>Christian values (unclaimed) 'A powerful and constructive protest vote' (process)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Nation</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>Restrict foreign ownership (unclaimed) Re-industrialise Australia (unclaimed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Democratic Party</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>Christian values (unclaimed) Scripture in Schools (unclaimed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family First</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>Religious, social and human rights (unclaimed) Support for traditional families (unclaimed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Alliance</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>Oppose privatisation (unclaimed) Communities before profit (unclaimed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Sex Party</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Personal freedom and liberty (unclaimed) Online privacy and no internet filtering (unclaimed) Civil liberties law reform (unclaimed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family First</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Families (unclaimed) Small business (unclaimed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Alliance</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Recreational land use (unclaimed) Regional land rights (unclaimed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Alliance</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Oppose privatisation (unclaimed) Free public services (unclaimed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>Water (COALITION)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dignity 4 Disability</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>Disability services (unclaimed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled by author based on original content analysis.

This emphasis on unclaimed issues is no coincidence, as many of these parties indicated that their entire reason for existing was to draw attention to issues or constituencies that were being overlooked within the political sphere. This was commonly expressed both in terms of giving alternative communities a voice, and tackling issues other parties were neglecting, as the following two quotes illustrate:

'We see ourselves as being a voice for families and small business, because we believe that voice is underrepresented in all parliaments, so state and federal. There are a lot of strong voices that represent other interests, and we feel that the community that we represent—families and small business—are underrepresented.'

—VIC-HQ-FF

'If you look at both [major] parties, they are very tied to the Greens vote in the city, so a lot of their policies and the way they were made up actually lent that way. Which meant there was a big downfall as far as policy goes for country people...they didn't want to touch certain things.'

—VIC-SC-CA

This emphasis on unclaimed issues also provided these parties with a point of difference from their competitors, however none of the interviewees mentioned this as a factor influencing their decision-making. Rather, the policy-seeking parties appear to have chosen these focus issues purely out of a desire to publicise and promote them, and not because there was any strategic advantage to be gained from staking a claim on new issue territory. This sets them apart from the parties discussed in the preceding chapters, for whom strategic considerations appeared to be at least as important—if not more so—than any desire to advance specific issues or agendas. To

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put it another way, these parties do not appear to have given any thought to whether or not these specific issues might be ‘good’ for them electorally—pursuing them was simply their raison d’être.

This approach reflects these parties’ broader status as highly ideological movements. To a far greater extent than any of the parties in the previous three chapters, many of these parties are advocates for particular ideologies or worldviews and consciously avoid the ‘catch-all’ approach which characterises larger parties (Kirchheimer, 1966, as referenced in Wolinetz, 1991). For example, within the case study campaigns the NSW and VIC Socialist Alliance parties positioned their focus on issues of privatisation and public service provision within an explicitly socialist value framework (for example, Socialist Alliance, 2011; Socialist Alliance 2010). Similarly, the WA Australian Christians and NSW Christian Democratic Party used their campaigns to advocate for a values-driven, Christian approach to policy and governance (for example, Australian Christians, 2013; Christian Democratic Party 2011), while the VIC Australian Sex Party unequivocally advanced civil libertarian principles (for example, Australian Sex Party, 2010). Even the SA Nationals’ focus on regional water allocations as the party’s primary campaign issue reflects the ethos of ‘country-mindedness’—the view that regional communities are Australia’s backbone and deserve priority above urban interests (Aitkin, 1985). For these parties, the issues they campaigned on were often cited as a vehicle for expressing these underlying philosophies in a concrete way; of demonstrating what ‘Christian’ or ‘socialist’ governance would look like in practice. This is a very different approach from the parties in the government-, preservation- and influence-seeking groups, who did not appear to view their choice of focus issues in such ideologically-laden terms.

Returning to the basic question of issue positioning, these policy-seeking parties were observed to occupy unclaimed issue space almost exclusively, and therefore stand apart from other major and minor party opponents. However, this did not appear to be a deliberate strategic choice designed to increase their electoral distinctiveness. Rather, these parties were simply campaigning on the issues which they existed to call attention to; by definition, this meant issues neglected by other parties.

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Mobilising-chasing continuum
In exploring the targeting strategies adopted by the policy-seeking parties, there was further evidence of these parties putting their principles before the pursuit of electoral popularity. However, in keeping with a theme which has run strongly through these results chapters, it was also evident that resource and organisational factors exerted a significant influence over their decision-making in areas such as their use of market research and the role of their party members.

To what extent do parties maximise votes or emphasise the representation of policies?
Looking first at the question of vote maximisation versus policy representation, Table 25 demonstrates that these parties were unequivocally focused on policy. While sufficient materials for analysis could not be located in the case of the VIC Family First and SA National parties, none of the other parties in this group released any policies which delivered benefits to specific electorates or communities. It is worth noting too that these parties released a significantly smaller number of policies than their counterparts in any of the previous three chapters, providing further evidence of their narrow focus on a core set of topics.

Table 25—Policy/vote-seeking ratios for policy-seeking parties, 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Number of election-specific policies or promises</th>
<th>Number delivering statewide outcomes or abstract benefits</th>
<th>Number delivering tangible benefits to specific electorates</th>
<th>Policy/vote split (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Christians</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Nation</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Democratic Party</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family First</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Alliance</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Sex Party</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family First</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Alliance</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Alliance</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dignity 4 Disability</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average policy/vote split</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100/0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled by author based on original content analysis.

* These parties’ websites were not archived with Pandora and no media or other materials could be located which detailed election policies and promises.

This single-minded focus on policy representation makes sense for several reasons. Firstly, as discussed above these parties exist for little other purpose than representing a specific set of ideas. While they seek seats in parliament as a platform for advancing policies informed by those

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ideas, they also view the election campaign as an opportunity to disseminate these widely within the community (see p.60–61). Given this, chasing votes would represent a diversion from their core purpose and a distraction from their main policy messages.

Secondly, as explored in Chapter Three, many of the policy-seeking parties saw an additional opportunity when campaigning to put pressure on larger parties to take up their preferred policy agendas. This pressure was sometimes exerted directly, through preference negotiations, and other times more indirectly, by demonstrating that there was strong public support for their ideas. Because of this, policy-seeking parties direct their campaigning at least as much towards other political parties as they do towards the voting public. These parties may gain a little by chasing votes in the community, but they can achieve much more by firmly and effectively representing their policies such that these catch the attention of a larger party.

Finally, it was observed in Chapter Seven that the influence-seeking parties who were only targeting upper house seats did not engage in any vote seeking (p.143), and a similar pattern is evident here. As discussed below, most of the parties in this policy-seeking group focused their campaigning on a limited number of upper house seats or regions. Given the size of these upper house electorates, which encompass anywhere from 242,000 to 4.9 million voters, it is more difficult to chase votes through targeted policy promising in these constituencies than it is in smaller, lower house ones. This perhaps helps to explain why parties who target upper house seats commonly emphasise policy over votes. It is worth noting however that three of the policy-seeking parties also targeted some lower house seats in their campaigns without exhibiting any vote-maximising behaviour. So while the choice of target seats may lead some influence-seeking parties to represent policy more than chase votes, it seems that the policy-seeking parties were overwhelmingly concerned with policy representation regardless of their targets.

To what extent do parties aim at mobilising their core constituency or unaligned voters?

Turning next to the question of target audiences, Table 26 demonstrates that many of the parties in this policy-seeking group directed their efforts towards winning upper house seats, rather than

114 WA-HQ-AC; NSW-HQ-CDP; VIC-HQ-ASP; VIC-HQ-CA; SA-HQ-D4D
115 Western Australia’s six upper house electorates have the smallest number of voters, as the state’s electoral laws require that Western Australia’s 1.45 million voters be distributed evenly across these, with no seat to have 10 per cent more or less voters than the average. By contrast, New South Wales has the largest upper house electorate, as the entire state functions as a single electorate with more than 4.8 million enrolled voters (Australian Electoral Commission, 2013b).
particularly targeting either core supporters or new voters in lower house ones. Only three of these parties (NSW Christian Democratic Party, NSW Family First and SA Nationals) had parliamentary representation at the time of these elections, with each holding just one seat. Of the remaining parties in this group, only QLD One Nation had any prior history of parliamentary representation, although its last remaining member had lost office at the previous state election.

None of these parties fielded a full complement of lower and upper house candidates, although the size of each party’s team ranged dramatically. The SA Nationals fielded the smallest list, running candidates in just 2 out of 47 Legislative Assembly seats and none of the Legislative Council seats, while the NSW Christian Democratic Party had the largest, with 86 candidates running out of a possible 93 lower house seats and a further 20 candidates standing for the upper house.

Table 26—Identified target seats for policy-seeking parties, 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Priority seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian Christians</strong></td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>North Metropolitan Region ALP 2; LIB 3; GRN 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>South Metropolitan Region ALP2; LIB 3; GRN1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>East Metropolitan region ALP 3; LIB 2; GRN 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>One Nation</strong></td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>Beaudesert KAP held with 58.3 per cent of 2009 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cook ALP held with 52.2 per cent of 2009 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Christian Democratic Party</strong></td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>Legislative Council ALP 19; Coalition 15; CDP 1; FF 1; GRN 4; Shooters 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family First</strong></td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>Legislative Council ALP 19; Coalition 15; CDP 1; FF 1*; GRN 4; Shooters 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socialist Alliance</strong></td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>Legislative Council ALP 19; Coalition 15; CDP 1; FF 1; GRN 4; Shooters 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian Sex Party</strong></td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Northern Metropolitan Region ALP 3; LIB 1; GRN 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Western Metropolitan Region ALP 3; LIB 1; GRN 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family First</strong></td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Eastern Metropolitan Region ALP 2; LIB 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>South Eastern Metropolitan Region ALP 3; LIB 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Southern Metropolitan Region LIB 2; ALP 2; GRN 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country Alliance</strong></td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Northern Victoria Region ALP 2; LIB 2; NAT 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Western Victoria Region ALP 2; LIB 2; DLP 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socialist Alliance</strong></td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Brunswick ALP held with 53.6 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Footscray ALP held with 74.7 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Nationals</strong></td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>Chaffey NAT held with 67.2 per cent of 2006 TCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dignity 4 Disability</strong></td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>Adelaide ALP held with 60.5 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wright ALP held with 65.2 per cent of 2006 TPP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Target seats identified by author based on original content analysis and party interviews.

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Chapter Eight—Policy-seeking strategies

*The Rev. Gordon Moyes was elected to the NSW Legislative Council as a Christian Democratic Party member at the 2007 election; he subsequently resigned from the party and sat for a period as an independent before joining Family First and contesting the 2011 election as the leader of that party.

As discussed in Chapter Three, these parties wished to win at least one seat in parliament so that they could use this as a platform for advocacy on their preferred policy agendas. As many of the interviewees reflected, it is therefore something of a ‘no brainer’ to target upper house seats, as the proportional representation system used in Australia’s upper houses means the threshold for winning a seat is much smaller than in lower house electorates (Electoral Council of Australia and New Zealand, 2013). However, institutional differences in the composition of these upper houses create divergent opportunities and constraints, and these also appear to have been influential for the policy-seeking parties when determining their particular seat targets.

In New South Wales and South Australia, targeting an upper house seat requires a statewide campaign, as the entire state functions as a single electorate. In particular, it requires organising candidates to stand in different parts of the state so that they can campaign on behalf of the lead upper house candidates. This is generally not a problem for the NSW Christian Democratic Party and NSW Family First, who are able to call upon a network of churches and associated religious organisations to supply the necessary manpower.\(^{116}\) It was similarly not problematic for the NSW Socialist Alliance party, who has a well-established network of small but active branches across much of the state, as well as its own production, printing and distribution facilities associated with the production of the *Green Left Weekly* newspaper.\(^{117}\)

However, running a statewide campaign was reportedly beyond the SA Nationals and SA Dignity 4 Disability party, as both had only minimal access to money and volunteers.\(^{118}\) This appears to explain why these parties broke with the general trend of this group and focused on lower house seats instead of upper house ones—they simply did not have the capacity to mount the kind of statewide campaign needed to win there. The SA Nationals instead focused on retaining the sole parliamentary seat the party already held, as this was seen as the best use of its limited resources.\(^{119}\) The Dignity 4 Disability party took a more interesting tack: it specifically targeted the seats held by the then-Minister for Disabilities (Wright) and the Minister for Mental Health

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\(^{116}\) NSW-HQ-CDP; NSW-PL-FF  
\(^{117}\) NSW-HQ-SA  
\(^{118}\) SA-HQ-D4D; SA-PL-NAT  
\(^{119}\) SA-PL-NAT

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(Adelaide), with the aim of making these key parliamentarians take notice of its policy agenda.\footnote{SA-HQ-D4D} The party did also nominate a small number of Adelaide-based upper house candidates but held out no hope for their election; the fact that candidate Kelly Vincent was ultimately elected was described by the interviewee as 'a fluke'.\footnote{SA-HQ-D4D. The circumstances surrounding Kelly Vincent's election were highly unusual: she was the party's second-listed candidate after Dr Paul Collier, who died several days before the election. His name remained on the ballot paper however, and all votes cast for him automatically transferred to Vincent. Our interviewee reflected that the combination of the publicity surrounding Collier's death and the novelty of voting for a dead candidate ultimately saw his party win a seat that it could never have expected to gain in more usual circumstances.}

By comparison, parties in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia can select particular regions to focus their energies on, as in these states upper house seats are allocated to several multi-member electorates. Analysis of previous election results indicates that, like the influence-seeking parties in Chapter Seven, the policy-seeking parties in these states tended to focus on regions where their past support had been highest (Electoral Commission New South Wales, 2007; Electoral Commission SA, 2006; Victorian Electoral Commission, 2006; Western Australian Electoral Commission, 2008). However, unlike the parties in Chapter Seven, the interviewees from this group indicated that two other factors also influenced their decision-making: the availability of quality candidates, and the strength of party structures to support them. As one interviewee explained:

'Ultimately, a lot of it has to do with where we feel we can field a credible candidate. I'd like to say that we can go through and do the mathematical exercise and say: 'put someone here, here and here,' but it's not possible. We hold the belief that nothing will destroy your party quicker than a lunatic candidate. You've got to be very, very careful about the people you select.'

—VIC-HQ-CA

Having found suitable candidates, the parties also need to be able to support them through the provision of volunteers and other campaign resources. This led several of these parties to target seats where they already had a concentration of members, as the following quote highlights:

'Looking at our membership, we went: 'right, our membership is in these northern suburbs of Melbourne, the northern suburbs and the Inner West.' So we thought we'll run for Western Metro and Northern Metro, because that's where our membership is based.'

—VIC-HQ-ASP

\footnote{120}{SA-HQ-D4D} \footnote{121}{SA-HQ-D4D. The circumstances surrounding Kelly Vincent's election were highly unusual: she was the party's second-listed candidate after Dr Paul Collier, who died several days before the election. His name remained on the ballot paper however, and all votes cast for him automatically transferred to Vincent. Our interviewee reflected that the combination of the publicity surrounding Collier's death and the novelty of voting for a dead candidate ultimately saw his party win a seat that it could never have expected to gain in more usual circumstances.}
It is interesting that the larger minor parties in Chapter Seven did not also highlight these same additional considerations, and this sheds some light on the distinct pressures that parties face at different stages of their development. As was mentioned in Chapter One, there is a tendency in Australia to relegate all minor parties to a collective ‘other’, but it should be very clear from the discussion so far that there is actually a good deal of diversity within Australia’s minor party ecosystem. In particular, this research highlights a clear distinction between parliamentary minor parties and those who are yet to attain parliamentary representation. Where the former are generally long established, reasonably well resourced (except in comparison to the major Labor and Liberal parties) and supported by extensive membership structures, the latter tend to be newer and have far fewer financial or human resources to call upon to support either their election campaigns or their wider activism. A survey of past Australian research did not reveal any work which has probed this gap between parliamentary and non-parliamentary minor parties in great depth, but this would seem to be an interesting and fruitful area for further research.

Returning to the question of seat targets, the VIC Socialist Alliance is something of an outlier, in that it targeted the lower house seats of Brunswick and Footscray instead of pursuing any upper house regions.122 The party contested these same two seats at the 2006 election and polled just 1.94 and 1.46 per cent respectively, although given that it did not appear to contest any other seats, it is hard to know whether the party’s support was highest within these or not (Victorian Electoral Commission, 2006). In any event, the interviews indicate that the party chose these seats because it was already heavily involved in community campaigns around public transport and housing in these areas of Melbourne, and so felt that it could leverage these ready-made community networks for the election campaign.123 Finally, QLD One Nation also targeted lower house seats instead of upper house ones, but in that case this was simply because Queensland has a unicameral parliament. In deciding which of the 89 lower house seats to target, One Nation’s representative reported being driven primarily by the availability of well-known local candidates with access to personal funds.124 Both of these cases therefore reinforce the above points about the importance of institutional factors, support networks and resources in guiding the policy-seeking parties’ choice of target seats.

122 VIC-HQ-SA
123 VIC-HQ-SA
124 QLD-HQ-ONP

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In terms of whether the choices discussed above represent a focus on core supporters or new voters, such considerations do not appear to have been a particularly relevant for the parties in this group. These parties primarily went after upper house seats because these presented the lowest barriers to entry—except where institutional and resource factors prevented them from doing so or when special resources were available elsewhere. For the parties that were able to choose which upper house seats to target, past support evidently played some role in their decision-making, however the availability of candidates and support structures appeared to be at least as important, if not more so. This discussion indicates that the policy-seeking parties were guided by quite a different strategic calculus than the parties in the preceding three chapters when choosing their target seats. Specifically, their decisions appeared to be driven more by institutional and resource assessments of different seats, rather than by any particular consideration of the voters residing within them.

To what extent do parties rely on ideological programs (policies) or modern technologies (polling) in designing an election appeal?

Given the highly policy-oriented and ideological nature of this group, it should come as no surprise that these parties made very limited use of modern research technologies when designing their election appeals. However, the interviews raise an interesting question about whether this was a deliberate choice, or whether this again simply came down to the availability of resources.

Of the 11 parties in this group, only two indicated that they had used any commissioned research: the VIC Australian Sex Party and the NSW Christian Democratic Party. In a similar vein to the parties discussed in Chapter Seven, these two parties reported using qualitative research to help them identify effective ways to communicate about their core policies and values. Both were adamant that they had not allowed the focus group research to shape the content of their campaign offerings, but only the communication of these. Both also indicated that although they had not used any polling to help guide their selection of target seats or other aspects of the campaign, this would have been useful if they could have afforded it.

The interviewees from the other nine parties demonstrated a curiously similar approach when responding to questions about their use of research. That is, they tended to focus first on their

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125 VIC-HQ-ASP; NSW-HQ-CDP
lack of resources to fund this, but then move on to raise questions about the value and necessity of research in general. The following two quotes are indicative of this pattern:

Interviewer: 'Major parties often use polling and market research to guide their campaign offerings—did you use any of those tools in the 2010 campaign?'

Interviewee: 'We can’t afford to, for a start. And I’ve always been suspicious of market research...ifyou’re sufficiently divorced from your electorate that you don’t understand what their issues are, then your market research will be poorly directed.'
—VIC-HQ-CA

'We don’t have to do a—I mean, we can’t afford to—but we don’t have to go and do a survey to find out what people think...we are out on the streets, you know, and I think in a way we have an advantage over the electoral parties who don’t really go out on the streets week after week trying to test their policies.‘
—NSW-HQ-SA

These interviewees clearly wished to convey the impression that they did not need research because they had clearer core values and were more ‘in touch’ with the community than the large, professional political parties. However, the fact that most specifically highlighted their inability to afford this—and did so before addressing the utility of research—suggests that it was actually money that played the major role in determining their research use.

Campaign spending figures are not available for many of these parties because their respective state regulations do not require this. However, considering the figures which are available, the financial constraints upon them compared even with the minor parties in Chapter Seven become very clear. For example, it was previously mentioned that the WA Greens and Nationals spent $20,053 and $30,531 respectively on research, out of total budgets of $446,090 and $323,692. By contrast the Australian Christians’ entire declared campaign budget was just $60,460—a figure which, unsurprisingly, did not stretch to any spending on research (Western Australian Electoral Commission, 2013). Similarly, in Queensland One Nation declared spending of $40,637 compared with $748,000 for The Greens and $1.1 million for Katter’s Australian Party (Electoral Commission Queensland, 2012), while in New South Wales, Socialist Alliance declared $9,622 in spending for the 2011 State Election, compared with $1.68 million for the Greens (Election Funding Authority, 2011a; 2011b). South Australia does not require expenditure reporting, but the Dignity 4 Disability interviewee happily volunteered that his party’s entire budget had been

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$3,500, of which over half had been spent paying candidate deposits. In short, these parties run their campaigns on extremely minimal budgets, to the point where commissioning research is simply beyond the realm of possibility. Interviews suggest that they re-frame this reality as a strength by arguing that they do not actually need research. However, as the researcher conducting these interviews, it often did not appear that the participants actually believed this.

The suggestion that these parties might see more value in research than their representatives let on is backed up by the fact that the two wealthiest parties in this group did carry out research and were generally positive about the value of this. Campaign returns for the 2011 New South Wales election indicate that the Christian Democratic Party had a total budget of $308,447, although it is not clear from the returns lodged exactly what proportion of this was allocated to the research that the interviewees mentioned. Similarly, while campaign-specific returns are not available for the Victorian branch of the Australian Sex Party, the party’s annual disclosure shows receipts of $177,329 and payments of $108,885 for the financial year in which the Victorian state election was held, suggesting that its budget was significantly larger than any other party in this group except the Christian Democrats (Australian Electoral Commission, 2011). As has been discussed, these two parties were otherwise very similar to their counterparts in this group in terms of their strong ideologies, narrow issue focus and single-minded emphasis on policy representation, and so it does not appear that there was any wider difference of approach which would account for their divergent attitudes to research. Rather, it appears that money was again a decisive factor, in that where these parties could afford research, they happily embraced it.

This finding further strengthens the observation that decisions about the use of research are not strategic ones, as Rohrschneider suggests, but rather practical ones driven by a party’s access to resources. The past four chapters have demonstrated that Australian parties of varying sizes, goal types and political persuasions all make use of modern research technologies, and use these inputs in fairly consistent ways to guide the messaging and delivery of campaigns. While there are obvious differences in how much and what type of research parties use, the interviews strongly suggest that this is determined primarily by what they can afford.
To what extent do parties rely on a leader or (intra-party) constituencies in targeting voters?

Moving on to the policy-seeking parties' use of leaders and other party constituencies to target voters, it is not possible to provide much insight on this indicator because campaign materials for many of these parties were few and far between. As Table 27 highlights, the project was unable to locate more than a handful of electorate-level items for the VIC Country Alliance and SA Dignity 4 Disability parties, and hardly any media items for any party except the NSW Christian Democratic Party and NSW Socialist Alliance.

In some cases, this dearth of materials is due to gaps in archiving. For example, campaign flyers for the VIC Australian Sex Party, VIC Country Alliance, VIC Socialist Alliance, VIC Family First and SA Nationals indicate that these parties did have campaign or candidate websites, but these have not been archived by Pandora and have since been either taken down altogether or updated with new content. These campaign websites are generally the only consolidated repository of media materials, and so in instances where these are not archived, there are few alternative sources of data available.
### Table 27—Prominence of leader, party members and candidates in policy-seeking party campaign materials, 2010–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>% of electorate materials featuring party leader</th>
<th>% of electorate materials featuring lead candidate/s</th>
<th>% of electorate materials featuring party members</th>
<th>% of media materials featuring only local candidate</th>
<th>% of media materials featuring lead candidate/s</th>
<th>% of media materials party members</th>
<th>% of media materials featuring only local candidate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Christians</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>71</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<td>—</td>
</tr>
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<td>One Nation</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
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<td>Christian Democratic Party</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family First</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>44</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<tr>
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<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Australian Sex Party</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>—</td>
</tr>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
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<td>Country Alliance</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
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<td>Socialist Alliance</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dignity 4 Disability</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled by author based on original content analysis.

NOTE: Percentages do not round to 100 as some materials featured other senior party figures, combinations of candidates or party-branded attacks on opposing candidates.

— Indicates that insufficient materials were located for meaningful analysis.

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In other cases, this content does not appear to have existed in the first place. For example, the SA Dignity 4 Disability party could not afford a campaign website,\(^{128}\) while the WA Australian Christians only provided reactive media responses when contacted by journalists, rather than proactively pursuing media coverage by distributing media statements and other content.\(^ {129}\) Similarly, both the VIC Country Alliance and SA Dignity 4 Disability parties reported producing only minimal electorate materials such as flyers and leaflets because they preferred to focus their scant resources on other forms of communication.\(^{130}\) Given the overall lack of material available, it is not possible to provide any detailed analysis about the extent of these parties' reliance on different constituencies for engaging voters.

However, there is one observation worth making under this heading. That is, the interviews indicate that these parties were just as inconsistent as the influence-seeking group in terms of their structures. Only two of these parties had a formal leader at the time of the campaign (Fred Nile, of the NSW Christian Democratic Party and Gordon Moyes, of NSW Family First), while the SA Nationals had a de facto leader in Karlene Maywald, given her position as a Minister in the Rann Government.\(^ {131}\) Several other parties had an official spokesperson who was also running as one of the party's upper house candidates (WA Australian Christians; VIC Australian Sex Party; VIC Country Alliance; VIC Family First), while the remainder gave their candidates a relatively free hand when engaging voters, and did not attempt to attach special status or prominence to any of them.\(^ {132}\) As with the influence-seeking parties, this makes side-by-side comparison of the emphasis given to different party constituencies very difficult. Considering the data on electorate-level materials provided in Table 27, it is evident that these structural differences were reflected in the relative visibility of spokespeople, leaders and candidates. But does this actually reveal anything about their strategic decision-making? This thesis argues that it does not, because there is no clear pattern to the parties' use of different constituencies, and also because the comparison is not like with like in the first place.

The fact that this problem has now been encountered with both the influence- and policy-seeking groups reinforces the earlier suggestion that this indicator is ill-suited to analysis of minor party campaign activity. If parties are not structured alike, how can meaningful

\(^{128}\) SA-HQ-D4D

\(^{129}\) WA-HQ-AC

\(^{130}\) SA-HQ-D4D; VIC-HQ-CA

\(^{131}\) SA-PL-NAT

\(^{132}\) QLD-HQ-ONP; NSW-HQ-SA; VIC-HQ-SA; SA-HQ-D4D

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conclusions be drawn about their strategic intentions in emphasising different party constituencies? If they lack a leader or formal spokesperson, is it strategy or necessity that leads them to rely on other public faces to represent the party? This indicator can really only help identify meaningful differences in party strategy when the parties under analysis are structured alike and conform to a model of organisation generally seen in major parties.

Some possible ways to address this issue are proposed in Part Four. But in terms of the project’s results against this indicator as it currently stands, no clear pattern was observed in the extent to which the policy-seeking parties prioritised leaders or other party constituencies when engaging voters. This mirrors the findings in Chapter Seven, where similar diversity was observed in the use of different party representatives by the influence-seeking parties. However, it differs from the findings in chapters Five and Six, where it was shown that the government-seeking parties heavily emphasised their leaders and the preservation-seeking parties relied on local candidates and members to engage the public.

To what extent do parties view intra-party democracies as a symbolic component of the campaign message or a mechanical means to reach voters?

Looking finally at whether the policy-seeking parties approached their party organisations as instruments or symbols, interviews indicate that, like the influence-seeking parties, they were both internally participatory and highly reliant on members as campaign messengers. No evidence was found to suggest that these parties promoted participatory opportunities or democratic innovations within their parties, although several were observed to promote policies supporting greater democratic and grassroots participation in politics more generally.

As with the influence-seeking parties, the interviewees from these parties reported that their members had an opportunity to be involved a range of policy and campaigning processes, including setting the party’s platform and agenda, making decisions about focus issues and undertaking both the strategising for, and delivery of, local campaigns. However, several indicated that they did not promote these opportunities because they were simply not a key consideration for prospective members or supporters. As one interviewee put it:

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133 QLD-HQ-ONP; NSW-SC-CDP; NSW-PL-FF; NSW-HQ-SA; VIC-HQ-ASP; VIC-HQ-FF; VIC-SC-CA; VIC-HQ-SA; SA-HQ-D4D

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Chapter Eight—Policy-seeking strategies

'I think it's a secondary issue. I think people join because of the ideas, and because people are so disadvantaged, so dispossessed by the capitalist economic system.'

—VIC-HQ-SA

Consistent with their status as highly ideological parties, these interviewees appeared to believe that supporters would be attracted by their values, policies and underlying worldview, rather than by any promotion of organisational innovation or participatory opportunities.

In terms of reaching out to voters however, these parties relied more heavily on their organisations than any others within the project's data set. As will be discussed below, only a few of these parties could afford any kind of advertising or communication through the media, and so all of them reported looking to their members as the primary vehicle for disseminating campaign messages and contacting voters. Furthermore, only five of these parties had any paid staff to assist with the coordination and delivery of their electioneering (WA Australian Christians; NSW Christian Democratic Party; NSW Family First; VIC Australian Sex Party; and SA Nationals), which further increased their reliance on members to make their campaigns happen. Importantly however, many of these interviewees noted that they did not have a particularly large or active corps of members, and were therefore somewhat limited in their efforts to contact voters.

On a related note, while none of these parties explicitly promoted intra-party democracy as part of their campaign messaging, several of them reported promoting participation and increased democratisation of decision-making more generally as part of their campaign platforms. For example, both the NSW and VIC Socialist Alliance parties advocated for innovations such as citizen-initiated referenda and community juries as part of their policy manifestos. The VIC Country Alliance party similarly promoted devolution of more decision-making powers to local country councils and communities, while SA Dignity 4 Disability pressed for greater involvement by disability groups in health and disability governance. Again however, interviews suggest that the parties incorporated these themes into their campaign messaging because these reflected strongly-held beliefs about the need for democratic reform, rather than because they believed this would increase their electoral attractiveness.

134 NSW-SC-CDP; NSW-HQ-SA; VIC-HQ-ASP; VIC-HQ-FF; VIC-SC-CA; VIC-HQ-SA; SA-HQ-D4D
133 WA-HQ-AC; NSW-PL-FF; VIC-HQ-ASP; VIC-HQ-CA; VIC-HQ-FF; SA-HQ-D4D;
135 NSW-HQ-SA; VIC-HQ-SA; VIC-SC-CA; SA-HQ-D4D

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In being both internally participatory and highly reliant on members as campaign messengers, these policy-seeking parties mirrored the approach seen in Chapter Seven with the influence-seeking parties. As was discussed in that chapter, allowing members a high level of internal involvement sets these parties apart from those in chapters Five and Six, which had far more top-down decision-making structures and viewed their members almost exclusively as instruments to contact voters. This division would seem to confirm that it is not strategy which determines the place of members in campaigning, but rather broader organisational factors such as the party’s size and access to resources, degree of professionalisation and level of centralisation.

**Mobilising or chasing?**

At the outset of this research, the policy-seeking parties seemed the most likely group to adhere to Rohrschneider’s description of a fully mobilising strategy. As he outlined, such a strategy ‘is motivated primarily by policies...focuses on reaching core voters...primarily relies on its ideological heritage...emphasises core constituencies...and mainly views organisations as instruments to contact voters’ (Rohrschneider, 2002: 376). In other words, parties adopting a purely mobilising strategy should advocate for the things they care about, connect with those who share their views, and make few concessions to the soft or undecided voter in the name of increasing their electoral attractiveness.

As the discussion above demonstrates, the policy-seeking parties conformed to this model on some counts, but not others. This again raises the question of where to place them on the theoretical continuum between mobilising and chasing. Specifically, the decision to exclusively represent policy and rely on their core beliefs instead of research to guide their campaign offerings would place these parties at the mobilising pole of Rohrschneider’s continuum. However, it is difficult to describe their decision to target seats with the lowest barriers to entry and best available resources as either mobilising or chasing, as this represents a separate calculation from targeting core, unaligned or non-supportive voters. Similarly, it was observed that these parties made a range of different choices about which party constituencies to emphasise when engaging voters, making it difficult to identify a common orientation towards either mobilising or chasing on this score. Finally, it was noted that these parties offered their internal constituencies many participatory opportunities in addition to using them as campaign envoys, but did not hold this up as a symbolic component of their campaign messaging. Within
Rohrschneider’s framework, this again appears to place them in a grey area between mobilising and chasing.

As with the influence-seeking parties then, the best that could be said on the basis of the above results is that these policy-seeking parties demonstrated elements of both mobilising and chasing strategies, with perhaps a slightly stronger skew towards the former. This would seem to suggest that the influence- and policy-seeking groups made similar decisions, resulting in broadly comparable campaigns. However, as demonstrated by the above discussion, this was not the case. The misperception arises because on a uni-dimensional continuum, there is no way to differentiate between parties who demonstrate a mixed mobilising/chasing approach, but do so under different indicators. Rohrschneider appears to be right in suggesting that mapping in multiple dimensions would be needed to accurately compare the range of choices some parties make about their targeting strategies. In Part Four it will be argued that he is, however, wrong to suggest that doing so would actually provide any further insights than are gained by the simple process of comparing party activity under each of his five indicators.

Communications repertoires

In considering the tools and channels used by the policy-seeking parties to spread their campaign messages, it is clear that their communications repertoires were much narrower and made greater use of free or low-cost options than the parties in the preceding chapters. In particular, only five of these nine parties used any paid advertising at all, and none appeared to distribute paid direct mail. Instead, these parties reported relying particularly on email and community networks to get their message out, as well as social media and their own websites. Interestingly, there was also a division of opinion within this group about the value of the news media as a communication channel for small parties.

Interviews indicate that access to money and volunteers was the major factor driving most of these parties’ choices about which communication tools to use, rather than deliberate strategy. For example, the parties who did not use any paid advertising all stated that they would have liked to place ads in the print and broadcast media, but simply could not afford it. For those parties who did use advertising, their budgets similarly determined the scope of this, with print and online advertising commonly being chosen over broadcast advertising because it was far

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137 NSW-HQ-SA; VIC-HQ-FF; VIC-HQ-SA; SA-HQ-D4D

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cheaper.\textsuperscript{138} Furthermore, the two parties who did purchase television ads—the SA Nationals and VIC Country Alliance—indicated that they were able to do so only because they were buying in specific regional TV markets where the cost of ads is far lower than in metropolitan areas.\textsuperscript{139}

Similarly, none of these parties reporting using doorknocking or phone canvassing to contact voters, and interviews suggest that this was due to a lack both of volunteer members, and central office staff to coordinate such a direct contact drive. As has been discussed, only five of these parties had any paid staff working on their campaigns, and even then, this was usually limited to just one or two staff members. Furthermore, while membership numbers are hard to come by, the VIC Australian Sex Party interviewee mentioned that this party had approximately 1,500 members in Victoria at the time of the 2010 campaign, while one of the VIC Country Alliance representatives indicated that party’s membership stood at just over 1,000 in the same year.\textsuperscript{140} By comparison, research by Jackson (2012) indicates that the membership of the Victorian Greens was almost three times as large at 2,814 members, while the Victorian Liberal and Labor parties both had membership in the vicinity of 13,000 (Griffin, 2011; Abjorensen, 2010). Given available information about the other parties in this group, there is nothing to suggest that any would have had memberships substantially larger than the Australian Sex Party or Country Alliance. As a result of this lack of human resources, the parties had to rely instead on tools and channels that could be managed by a small core of campaign volunteers and candidates.\textsuperscript{141}

\textsuperscript{138} WA-HQ-AC; NSW-HQ-CDP; VIC-HQ-ASP; VIC-HQ-CA; SA-PL-NAT
\textsuperscript{139} SA-PL-NAT; VIC-SC-CA
\textsuperscript{140} VIC-HQ-ASP; VIC-HQ-CA
\textsuperscript{141} WA-HQ-AC; NSW-SC-CDP; VIC-HQ-ASP; VIC-HQ-CA; SA-PL-NAT

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Two such tools that these parties highlighted as being especially valuable were community group meetings and email. For example, the interviewees indicated that meetings of church groups, local sporting clubs and community associations provided a good opportunity for party representatives to speak to a small number of interested people, who could then pass their message on through word-of-mouth. As one interviewee explained:

'If one of our candidates wanted to engage with the shooters, he’d go to a clay target shoot...and invariably he’d get asked up at the prize giving or whatever: 'is there anything you’d like to tell us about what you guys are up to?’ that sort of thing...so you have a few individuals who can communicate with a few individuals, who can

**Table 28—Policy-seeking party communications repertoires, 2010–2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Internal tools</th>
<th>External tools</th>
<th>Source: compiled by author based on original content analysis and party interviews.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Christians</td>
<td>Western Australia 2013</td>
<td>Website, Email, Social media, Polling booths</td>
<td>Community group meetings, Mailing lists, Print advertising, Broadcast news, Print news, Online news</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Nation</td>
<td>Queensland 2012</td>
<td>Website, Email, Flyers/leaflets, Polling booths</td>
<td>Mailing lists, Print advertising, Broadcast news, Print news, Online news</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Democratic Party</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>Website, Email, Flyers/leaflets, Polling booths</td>
<td>Community group meetings, Mailing lists, Print advertising, Broadcast news, Print news, Online news</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family First</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>Email, Flyers/leaflets, Website, Polling booths</td>
<td>Community group meetings, Mailing lists, Print advertising, Broadcast news, Print news, Online news</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Alliance</td>
<td>New South Wales 2011</td>
<td>Green Left Weekly newspaper, Email, Website, Polling booths</td>
<td>Mailing lists, Rallies and protests, None, Broadcast news, Print news, Online news</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Sex Party</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Email, Social media, Leaflets/leaflets, Website, Polling booths</td>
<td>Pub crawls, Rallies and protests, Online advertising, Broadcast news, Print news, Online news</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family First</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Email, Social media, Website, Polling booths</td>
<td>N/A, None, Broadcast news, Print news, Online news</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Alliance</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Email, Website, Polling booths</td>
<td>Community group meetings, Mailing lists, Broadcast advertising, Broadcast news, Print news, Online news</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Alliance</td>
<td>Victoria 2010</td>
<td>Green Left Weekly newspaper, Email, Website, Polling booths</td>
<td>Mailing lists, Rallies and protests, None, Broadcast news, Print news, Online news</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nationals</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>Email, Leaflets/leaflets</td>
<td>Mailing lists, 'Shed meetings', Broadcast advertising, Radio advertising, Print advertising, Broadcast news, Print news, Online news</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dignity 4 Disability</td>
<td>South Australia 2010</td>
<td>Email, Social media</td>
<td>Mailing lists, Rallies and protests, None, Broadcast news, Print news, Online news</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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communicate with a few individuals. And when you're a small party, you're new and you're talking about something different, then people are more willing to communicate those.'

—VIC-HQ-CA

For the more activist groups such as Socialist Alliance, Dignity 4 Disability and the Australian Sex Party, rallies and protests served a similar purpose: communicating the party’s message to one group of people who could then disseminate this in the community more broadly. Interestingly, none of these parties mentioned that being included in such events meant ‘being taken seriously’, as highlighted by the interviewees in Chapter Seven. This suggests that they were more focused on simply getting their message out than on the symbolism of presenting as real political players.

Email was also flagged as a very important tool, because the parties could provide information directly to their members and supporters, and then ask them to disseminate this through their own networks and mailing lists. This not only amplified the reach of their messages, but also lent them greater weight because they were coming from a trusted person or group:

'We used a lot of e-newsletters, that was a cheap option just for keeping people informed...communicating with our support base is the key. And then through that, we're reliant on them, and encouraging them then, to forward on the information...to me, that beats any advertising. Word of mouth is huge in this game.'

—WA-HQ-AC

While most of the other parties in this data set also used email to connect with supporters and encourage this kind of ‘endorsement by forwarding’, this appears to have been the most important tool for many of the parties in this group because it offered broad reach at minimal cost. Interestingly, only some of these parties made use of social media in their campaigns, which is surprising given that it has many of the same qualities as email in terms of both cost and reach. However, the interviews suggest that decisions about the use of social media often came down to expertise. Where parties had staff or members who were comfortable with social media tools and aware of how to leverage these for campaigning, then they were incorporated into the campaign mix.142 However, in many cases this expertise was simply not available, and so the parties either did not employ, or made very limited use of, social media tools.143

142 WA-HQ-AC; VIC-HQ-ASP; VIC-HQ-FF; SA-HQ-D4D
143 QLD-HQ-ONP; NSW-HQ-CDP; NSW-PL-FF; NSW-HQ-SA; VIC-HQ-CA; VIC-HQ-SA; SA-PL-NAT

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Finally, the parties in this group demonstrated an interesting divergence of views on the value of the news media, with four of the policy-seeking parties indicating that this had been a major focus for them. Their perspective is best summed up by the following quote from the Dignity 4 Disability interviewee:

'The whole game is basically won by who can get the most media and the best part of that media. Being a minority party, [we] focused on the emotion of caring for a child with disability, or a person with disability who can't get services... our aim was to get [those] stories into the media to generally capture the attention of the mainstream.'

—SA-HQ-D4D

For this group, which also included the VIC Australian Sex Party, the NSW Christian Democratic Party and NSW Family First, securing coverage in the mainstream media was seen as a way to reach new audiences that the parties did not otherwise engage with on a regular basis. But for the remaining parties, pursuing media coverage was seen as having limited value at best, and being downright dangerous at worst, as the following quotes illustrate:

'The chances of actually getting in the media are negligible. We put out press release after press release, and sometimes they'll get published in some minor regional press... but by and large, you're crying in the wilderness... you get far more value in going to those small interest groups, getting a chance to get up on stage and speak to a collection of fishermen, speak to a collection of irrigators, speak to some local timber industry blokes. Far more value than you do from an article in The Age!'

—VIC-HQ-CA

'Our politics doesn't lend itself to sound bites.'

—VIC-HQ-SA

'We've been absolutely vilified and demonised by the media for 15 years now, and they're not letting up.'

—QLD-HQ-ONP

'I mean, everyone would like more airtime in the mainstream media, but for us that can be a risk/reward discussion. If we get too much airtime and we have inexperienced people in front of hard-nosed, hardline media, that can work against you as well... just in terms of their experience at being boxed in and led down a path by the media that they don't see coming.'

—VIC-SC-FF

For these parties, their ambivalence about the news media appeared to be driven partly by frustration at their general exclusion by major news outlets, and partly by observation of how media gaffes or negative publicity had harmed other parties in the past. Interestingly, all of these

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Parties still reported attempting some engagement with the media—such as distributing media releases or responding to candidate profile requests from local papers. But they did not see this as an important tool in their overall communications approach, for the reasons discussed above.

Considering the communications repertoires of this group collectively, it is evident that the policy-seeking parties differed from those in the previous three chapters primarily in areas of paid communication such as advertising and direct mail. However, these parties also made little use of tools requiring the mobilisation of many volunteers, such as doorknocking and phone canvassing, and had a vexed relationship with the mainstream media. In prioritising internal direct and indirect channels such as email and community meetings then, these parties appear to have simply chosen the few tools left to them after all these restrictions were factored in. That is not to suggest that there was no strategic element to their use of these tools—after all, the Australian Christians party sent its representatives to church meetings rather than swinger’s clubs, and the Country Alliance visited shooters’ groups rather than local environmental activists. But such choices represent an effort to make the best use of the few tools available, within a context of severely constrained options. This suggests that for these very small parties, decisions about communications repertoires cannot be considered fully strategic choices, as they are for the parties in the other three groups.

Conclusions

Having explored the policy-seeking parties’ choices across each of the three focus areas, two things are apparent. Wherever these parties were free to choose their preferred course of action, they consistently and commonly displayed a single-minded focus on advocating for their core ideas and values, and appeared to give little heed to the electoral implications of this. This was particularly observed in relation to the parties’ issue positioning and their exclusive focus on representing policy over chasing votes.

However, it was also clear that very often, these parties were not free to choose—or at least, that the range of choices available to them was severely limited by their access to financial and human resources, as well as institutional and structural factors. It has been argued that these issues exerted a greater influence over their choices in areas such as their communications repertoires and choice of seat targets than was the case for the other parties in this data set. In line with the findings in previous chapters, their use of research and the role afforded to members were also

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determined more by internal factors than any specific considerations of how to best advance their policy goal.

Returning to the thesis' core question about the relationship between goals and strategy, the above discussion does indicate that the policy-seeking parties made strategic decisions which were more similar to each other in some respects than either the influence-seeking parties in Chapter Seven or the major parties in chapters Five and Six. The results summary table (p.202) lays out the major distinctions between these four groups, and these comparisons will be drawn more directly in the concluding pages of Part Three. However, responding briefly to an issue raised at the end of Chapter Seven, these results particularly show that minor parties with different goals pursue strategies which are different from each other, as well as being different from the major parties. This is an important point, because one (often unspoken) assumption about campaigning is that differences in strategy and approach divide along major/minor party lines (for example, Simms and Wanna, 2012; Simms, 2009; Farrell and Webb, 2000). As has been seen, a party's size and access to resources clearly play a significant role in driving strategic decision-making, however these are not the only factors that seem to matter. Rather, it has now been demonstrated that there are a range of decisions which appear to be influenced specifically or primarily by a party's goals, leading to differences in strategy amongst Australia's minor parties, as well as between them and the major ones.
Tying it all together

In drawing together the many themes and findings of these past four chapters, it is helpful to return to the second of the two core research expectations stated in Chapter One. Does the evidence presented here indicate that parties with similar goals pursue similar campaign strategies, and ones which are substantively different from parties holding different goals? The short answer would appear to be yes, but the commonalities are not always straightforward or easy to spot using the current set of analytical frameworks.

Table 29 summarises the findings of this research to make clear the main points of similarity and difference identified in the preceding four chapters. This reflects the overall trends observed across each of the goal categories, smoothing out the minutiae of individual cases and outliers.

Distilled down to the essence of the parties’ strategic thinking like this, it is evident that there were clear differences of approach in their choice of focus issues, target audiences, emphasis on different party constituencies and priority communication tools and channels.

When selecting the key issues to focus on in their campaigns, the government-seeking parties commonly aimed to emphasise a well-rounded mix of issues which were both favourable to them at that specific point in time, and highly salient to their target audiences. By contrast, the preservation-seeking parties favoured local and process issues, while the influence-seeking parties...
sought out issues where they could paint the major parties as alike and offer a point of difference. Furthermore, the policy-seeking parties took an entirely different tack in emphasising issues which were seen to be neglected or unaddressed within the political debate. While this divergent strategic thinking was clearly communicated through the interviews with party representatives, it was not always so evident when looking at the parties’ chosen topics through the lens of issue ownership. For example, the influence-seeking parties ranged variously across unclaimed, contested, process and opponent-owned issue space in their search for topics where the two major parties had adopted a similar stance. If content analysis had not been combined with the direct insights of these parties’ representatives, it simply would not have been possible to pick out the common thread in their strategic thinking. Furthermore, the interviews suggest that the notional ownership status of an issue has only limited relevance for many parties when making decisions about what to highlight in their campaigns. This was seen both in relation to the government- and preservation-seeking parties—who relied instead on research and polling to tell them which issues were currently ‘good’ for them; and the policy-seeking parties—who took up their chosen issues because they believed these needed action and attention. Only the influence-seeking parties appeared to pay much heed to the ownership status of issues, in the context of attracting defectors from particular parties. This point, and its implications for the issue ownership concept, will be expanded on in Chapter Nine. But the important point to note here is that there were clear commonalities in the parties’ strategic thinking about their choice of focus issues within each of the four goal categories, albeit not ones that were immediately visible when translated into the language of issue ownership. Furthermore, the parties with common goals displayed more similarity to each other in their approach to issue choice than they did to parties with different goals.

Turning to Rohrschneider’s five trade-offs, an important conclusion to emerge from the past four chapters is that only some of the strategic choices he outlined should really be considered as such in the Australian context. In terms of how extensively the parties pursued votes or represented policy, the government-seeking parties were seen to engage in a reasonable level of attempted vote-buying, but this was well eclipsed by the preservation-seeking parties’ efforts. The influence-seeking parties were observed to give a higher priority to policy representation than either of these former two groups, while the policy-seeking parties, unsurprisingly, did not appear to engage in any vote-seeking at all. Such decisions clearly are strategic choices, as it is possible to draw a direct link between the parties’ chosen course of action and their stated goals.

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Similarly, in making decisions about which seats (and therefore which audiences) to focus special campaigning effort on, it was evident that each group of parties made conscious and distinct choices about what would best serve their goals. This led the government-seeking parties to target unaligned voters and either their past supporters or defecting non-supporters, depending on whether they were in or out of government and the favourability of the political environment. Similarly, it led the preservation-seeking parties to focus their resources on retaining core supporters, while the influence-seeking parties apparently sought to mobilise both their core and new supporters from across the different voter categories. In a completely different approach, the policy-seeking parties directed their campaigns towards whichever seats presented the lowest barriers to entry, while also orienting themselves towards larger parties in the hope of having their policies or agendas taken up.

Finally, it appears that—for major parties at least—decisions about how extensively to rely on leaders or other party constituencies to engage voters are also highly strategic ones. It was noted that the government-seeking parties adopted a strongly leader-centric approach which emphatically leveraged their party leaders as the primary spokesperson, figurehead and public face. The preservation-seeking parties chose exactly the opposite approach, by amplifying the role of local candidates and party members while making only limited use of their leaders.

However, the great diversity in how minor parties structure their campaigns—and their organisations more generally—makes it difficult to pick out any clear commonality of approach amongst the parties in the influence- and policy-seeking groups. Interviews suggest that some level of strategising went on within these parties, as evidenced by the varying use of leaders such as The Nationals' Brendon Grylls, Family First's Dennis Hood and the Christian Democratic Party's Fred Nile. Similarly, the fact that many other parties designated spokespeople or lead candidates to provide them with a public face (or, often, group of faces) also points to deliberate strategic thinking about how to engage voters. However, because analysing these influence- or policy-seeking parties rarely involved comparing like with like, it was not possible to discern a common approach within either group, if indeed there was one. This analysis was complicated further by the practical reality that campaign materials for many of these smaller parties were either no longer available, or had never existed.
Part Three—Conclusions

The project’s findings across these three areas lend further support to the idea that parties with common goals make strategic decisions which are more similar to each other than they are to those made by parties holding different goals. However, while it was possible to trace a clear connection between party goals and the chosen course of action in each of these areas, no such relationship was apparent in relation to Rohrschneider’s other two trade-offs. In examining how extensively parties relied on their own policies or modern research technologies such as polling to design their election appeals, it was found that decisions about this appeared to be driven primarily—if not exclusively—by access to resources. Across both the government- and preservation-seeking groups, these parties made extensive use of quantitative and qualitative research, and the clear impression arising from the interviews is that they did so because research has become deeply embedded into their decision-making processes. That is, major parties have reached the point where they do not feel comfortable making strategic decisions without reference to research, regardless of whether they are seeking to win office or simply protect the furniture. This should not be interpreted as reinforcing the view of these parties as being entirely ‘poll-driven’ and incapable of deciding their values or priorities for themselves. Rather, it is simply to acknowledge that election campaigning is an expensive and serious undertaking with grave repercussions for the community as a whole. Understandably then, major parties have integrated a broad suite of professional information inputs into their strategy and planning processes, and these are not ‘unplugged’ simply because a party expects either an easy win or a major defeat. As the major party interviews highlight however, these inputs are scaled back when the funds to pay for them are needed elsewhere, suggesting that it is money that determines the extent of research use rather than strategy.

This argument is reinforced by the patterns of research use observed within the influence- and policy-seeking groups. In each of these groups, all of the parties who could afford to do so used commissioned research, albeit on a smaller scale than the major parties. This included highly principled and policy-oriented parties such as the Christian Democratic Party and the Australian Sex Party, as well as more pragmatic political operators such as The Greens and The Nationals. Furthermore, most of the parties who did not use research reported that they would have done so if they could have afforded it, or highlighted cost as a specific reason for not doing so. The fact that these patterns were common across both the influence- and policy-seeking groups again reinforces the idea that decisions about research use are not strategic ones, but rather driven primarily by resources.

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In a similar vein, it was observed that the major parties in the government- and preservation-seeking groups viewed their members exclusively as instruments to contact voters, while the minor parties in the influence- and policy-seeking categories saw them both as instruments and participants in the broader internal work of their parties. Interviews indicate that this had little to do with any particular campaign strategising, and much more to do with these parties’ established structures and histories, as well as their differing access to paid staff and other resources. To put it more bluntly, Australia’s major parties today have become extremely centralised and hierarchical, are dominated by paid, professional staff, and offer few opportunities for meaningful participation by members at any stage of the political cycle. While there has been much talk of ‘democratisation’ and ‘organisational reform’ in recent years—particularly within the Australian Labor Party—this is only just beginning to translate into actual change in party structures or processes (Shorten, 2014; Rudd, 2013). By contrast, Australian minor parties generally have flatter and more open structures, rely on volunteers to fill most party roles, and view active participation by members as both a strength and a core part of their mission (Smith, 2006; Jaensch and Mathieson, 1998). The planning and delivery of election campaigns takes place within these entrenched party structures, and this research found no evidence that parties change or adjust these fundamental frameworks for strategic electoral reasons. It was noted in Chapter Six that the decline in party members and resulting loss of campaign messengers had apparently led both the NSW and QLD Labor parties to reconsider some of their structures and look to increase internal participation. However, it remains to be seen whether this actually results in meaningful change, and whether the parties promote this as part of their future electoral appeals. Returning to the core point, the role of members and party organisations in election campaigns appears to be determined primarily by the pre-existing structures and resources of parties. Furthermore, because these two items are related to the pre-existing structures and capabilities of parties, it makes sense that similarities would be observed across the different goal categories. In other words, there is evidence of convergence across categories on the use of research and the role afforded to party members because these are linked to things the parties have in common with each other—their structures and access to resources, rather than what divides them—their goals. Because of this, it is argued that these should not be considered strategic choices of the same order as decisions about issues, target audiences and the pursuit of votes or policy.

144 At least, this is the picture of minor parties detailed in the Australian literature to date, which tends to focus on left-of-centre movements such as The Greens and the Australian Democrats. It would be interesting to examine whether the newer, right-of-centre parties which have risen to prominence in recent years share this open and participatory ethos, but this is a question awaiting further research.
Part Three—Conclusions

Turning finally to the question of communications repertoires, it was evident that all of the parties in this data set drew from a common set of internal and external communication channels, and generally used a diverse mix of tools to reach voters. However, where the government-seeking parties prioritised centralised, impersonal and mass-broadcast tools such as television advertising and direct mail, the preservation-seeking parties put their emphasis on personalised, one-to-one communication as well as blanketing the electorate with television ads. The influence-seeking parties attempted to match this emphasis on television but were unable to do so financially and so pursued other opportunities to engage voters through community events as well as digital and social media. Finally, the government-seeking parties primarily leveraged email, mailing lists and contact with small interest groups who could then spread the word on their behalf. Therefore, although these parties were drawing from a common communications toolkit, the resulting campaigns would have looked and felt very different to voters.

Importantly, this research also found that although decisions about which communication tools and channels to prioritise clearly were strategic ones, parties' choices became more and more constrained as the size of their budgets decreased. This meant that the influence-seeking parties did not have as much freedom to choose their preferred communications mix as the major parties in either the government- or influence-seeking groups, and the policy-seeking parties were more constrained again. While all of these parties were able to make decisions about how to communicate, some parties' decisions appear to have been more consciously strategic than others because of their relative lack of constraints.

In summary then, the parties within each of the four goal categories were seen to make similar strategic decisions in relation to their choice of focus issues, the extent to which they actively chased votes, their target audiences, communications repertoires and—possibly—the emphasis placed on leaders versus other party constituencies. Their decisions in these areas had more in common with each other than they did with parties in the other goal categories, and seemed consciously directed towards the achievement of their identified goals. The overarching research expectations that a) parties hold different goals when campaigning, and b) that those goals exert an important influence on party campaign strategies, therefore appear to be validated by the results discussed here and in Part Two.

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Part Three—Conclusions

However, this research has also clearly demonstrated that goals are not the only thing that matter. The importance of resources and party structures in guiding some campaign decisions have already been discussed; these clearly must be factored into any discussion of why parties behave the way they do on the campaign trail. But the discussion over the past four chapters has also demonstrated that every election—even those held close together in time and contested by the same range of parties—represents an essentially unique set of circumstances. As a result, parties face a different set of opportunities and constraints each time, including those discussed throughout these pages: the favourability or otherwise of the public mood; the popularity and profile of leaders and candidates; individual seat dynamics such as the retirement of sitting members; and institutional factors including the threshold for election and the presence or absence of an upper house. Because of this, parties’ common strategic thinking about how to achieve their goals does not always lead to identical campaign behaviour. The influence-seeking parties provide the best illustration of this, as although it was possible to identify a common strategic calculus underpinning many of their actions, the actions themselves often differed depending on the specific opportunities available to each party.

This is an important point, and it goes to the heart of what this thesis is actually arguing. This work does not claim that the parties in each of the four goal categories ran identical campaigns, in the sense of closely mirroring each other’s tactics and day-to-day activity. It should be clear by now that this was not the case, and that every campaign in the data set had its own unique quirks and characteristics. What this thesis does suggest is that the parties within each of the four goal categories made similar strategic choices to each other, that is, decisions about how to get from where they were at the start of the campaign to where they wanted to be. Environmental and institutional factors played a critical role in setting the parameters for that strategising, and also influenced how their strategies were translated into on-the-ground campaigning. That is why the parties were not always observed to do the same things, even when it is evident from this project’s interviews and analysis that they were thinking the same way.

In Chapter One it was suggested that if parties’ shared strategies could be laid bare, then it might be possible to provide some guidelines for predicting future campaign behaviour and helping voters make better sense of the electoral whirlwind that goes on around them. While the previous few pages offer some general guidance, the influence of environmental and institutional factors clearly militates against more specific prediction. So although it has been demonstrated

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that this project’s basic research expectations were correct, this does not necessarily clarify campaigning to the extent that was hoped. If anything, what this research actually demonstrates is how monumentally complicated designing and delivering election campaigns really is, given the multitude of actors, influences, opportunities and constraints that must be factored in. This complexity is rarely conveyed in media reportage of elections, or even in academic studies which zero in on specific aspects of the process. So while this thesis may not have delivered a detailed set of directions for predicting or interpreting future campaigns, it has provided a very useful survey of the complicated topography of the campaign landscape.

On a different note, having delved so deeply into Australian campaign strategies using a range of frameworks drawn from the academic research on electioneering, this project has generated a number of broader observations which are relevant to those two literatures. The fourth and final part of this thesis therefore explores the implications of this research for the concepts of issue ownership, the mobilising-chasing continuum and the communications repertoire of campaigning, as well as how this project’s findings add to current understanding of the Australian political scene.
Implications

The following section zooms out from the detail of the case study campaigns and takes a bigger-picture look at what the project's overall findings contribute to the international and Australian literatures on election campaigning.

Chapter Nine discusses how the project's findings expand and alter the existing international literatures on issue ownership, the mobilising-chasing continuum and the communications repertoire of campaigning. Importantly, it is argued that the core premise of issue ownership theory is not supported by the findings presented here, or, indeed, by a number of the previous works which have employed this same framework. This discussion suggests that past proponents of the theory have been hampered by their exclusive reliance on textual analysis of party campaign activity rather than active engagement with live political actors. On this basis, the chapter strongly recommends that these actors be given greater voice in any future research on issue ownership and positioning.

In discussing the idea of a mobilising-chasing continuum, some of the theoretical and methodological challenges which arose during the empirical application of this framework are explored, and a range of possible revisions are suggested to address these. In particular, it is argued that rather than mobilising or chasing, it is more accurate to describe parties as combining a mix of mobilising and chasing approaches throughout their campaigns. Furthermore, this chapter suggests that it is neither practical, nor actually very useful, to map parties to any single point on a continuum based on their choices in a range of independent areas.

Finally, it is noted that Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli's (2009) division of communications repertoires into internal and external, direct and indirect channels provides a very useful framework for dissecting campaign communications. It is also acknowledged that their point about the evolving nature of these repertoires was clearly reflected in this project's findings. However, the chapter argues that party goals should be added to their framework alongside finances when it comes to explaining why any given party chose a particular communications repertoires.

Chapter Ten then explores where this research fits into the longer narrative about Australian politics, parties and elections. This discussion ranges across political institutions, party

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organisations, campaigning financing and professionalisation, the distinction between parliamentary and non-parliamentary minor parties and the engagement of political actors in academic research. In the process, a number of interesting research questions arising from this project's findings are identified, demonstrating that there is still a good deal which remains to be learned about the Australian political scene.
Implications for the literature

In the course of applying the chosen analytical frameworks to 32 party campaigns across five Australian state elections, a range of issues were encountered which challenge, alter or give cause for questioning the underlying premises of these. Although the primary focus in undertaking this research was to shed fresh light on how and why Australian parties campaign the way they do, this thesis has also engaged with aspects of the wider international literature on elections and campaigning. The following chapter reflects on how its findings refine or alter ideas about issue ownership, the mobilising-chasing continuum and the communications repertoire of campaigning, and reflect on how these add to the overall picture of campaigning contained in international works.

Issue positioning and ownership

The concept of issue ownership is a well-established one in the literature on elections and campaigning. As outlined in Chapter One, its basic premise is that parties gain an electoral advantage when voters use issues they are favourably associated with as the basis of their vote choice. In one of the earliest iterations of the concept, Budge and Farlie (1983b: 150) argued that ‘party leaders will emphasise issue types which produce favourable net switches of support’ when campaigning for elected office. Later authors developed on this relatively uncontroversial idea and arrived at the conclusion that campaigning should thus be understood ‘as a marketing effort: the goal is to achieve a strategic advantage by making problems which reflect owned issues the programmatic meaning of the election and the criteria by which voters make their choice’ (Petrocik, 1996: 828).

This conclusion provides the underlying premise for a large body of research exploring how issue ownership is achieved and maintained (for example, Walgrave, Lefevere and Nuytemans, 2009; Walgrave and De Swert, 2007; Belanger, 2003) and how success or failure in emphasising owned issues has affected electoral outcomes in different contexts (for example, Druckman, Jacobs and Ostermeier, 2004; Petrocik, Benoit and Hansen, 2003; Alvarez and Nagler, 1998; 1995). But is this premise correct? The findings of this research give real cause for questioning it, for as forecast in Chapter One, the parties in this data set were actually seen to range across their own, opponent-owned, contested, unclaimed and process issues in pursuit of their particular goals. Furthermore, in discussing their reasons for doing so, these parties identified a range of strategic motivations which are only hinted at in the existing literature. There are several reasons...
Chapter Nine—Implications for the literature

why the findings of this research may not align with the prevailing picture of issue ownership; these will briefly be canvassed here while also pointing out the avenues they open up for further research.

Firstly, a common assumption made by authors in this field is that issues which are advantageous for parties (in the sense of producing 'favourable net switches of support') are automatically ones that they are seen to own. Budge and Farlie did not explicitly state as much in their seminal 1983 book on issue effects, although their empirical analysis indicated that over a series of elections different types of parties tended to emphasise issues which were their traditional strengths, and that they generally performed better electorally when they were successfully able to move these issues to the forefront of the electoral agenda (Budge and Farlie, 1983b). Petrocik appears to have taken this observed tendency and elevated it to the status of a natural law: that parties will 'argue along lines that play to [their] issue strength' in an effort to gain the electoral upper hand (1996: 830). He offers no particular explanation for why issues that are advantageous for parties must be ones that they already own, beyond pointing out that focusing the electoral contest on such issues allows parties and candidates to leverage established perceptions of their competence, initiative and commitment. Petrocik's conflation of advantageous issues with owned ones has gone largely unquestioned by many subsequent authors (for example Belanger and Meguid, 2008; Hayes, 2008; Konstantinidis, 2008; Soubeyran and Gautier, 2008), although as shall shortly be discussed, work by authors such as Kaufmann (2004), and Blomqvist and Green-Pedersen (2004) has gone some way towards disentangling these two concepts.

By contrast, this research strongly suggests that parties—or at least, Australian state parties—do not see their choice of advantageous issues as beginning and ending with ones they already own. Chapter Five demonstrated that the government-seeking parties regularly incorporated issues which were traditionally owned by their opponents into their campaigns, because they believed that they could derive advantage from presenting well-rounded governing capacity across a range of key policy areas. Similarly, the influence-seeking parties emphasised issues where common policy choices by the major parties created space for advantageous differentiation, regardless of the notional ownership status of those issues. The policy-seeking parties also confounded Petrocik's formulation, in that case because they almost exclusively emphasised issues which were outside of mainstream political debate and therefore did not carry specific ownership associations. Only the preservation-seeking parties appeared to see advantage in emphasising

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their owned issues more often than others, and even then, only two of the three parties in this small group did so consistently (see p.94).

In other words, a majority of the parties in this data set saw that advantage could be gained by sometimes emphasising issues other than those they already owned, and designed their campaigns accordingly. This observation is consistent with several of the studies highlighted in Chapter One, which similarly demonstrated that advantage can be gained either through pursuing opponent-owned issues or unclaimed ones. For example, Kaufmann (2004) demonstrated that Democrat and Republican candidates increased the number of voters defecting to them when they demonstrated competence in, or attention to, issue areas traditionally owned by the opposing party. Similarly, Blomqvist and Green-Pederson (2004) observed that the electoral performance of right-of-centre parties in several Scandinavian countries improved in parallel with their new emphasis on unclaimed issues such as immigration and European integration. These authors were not specifically concerned with testing the premise of issue ownership theory, and so their discussions did not tease out the broader implications of these findings. However, taken in combination with the findings of this study, they would appear to provide a basis for separating the idea of ‘advantage’ from that of ‘ownership’ when discussing parties’ issue choices, or at least questioning what advantage is actually based on, as Sides (2006) explores. It seems clear that parties do try to emphasise ‘issues on which they are advantaged’ in their campaigns, as Petrocik suggested, but it is much less clear that this always—or even generally—means issues that they are already seen to own. To further disentangle these concepts and explore the interplay between them, it would be useful to question party representatives in more detail about their motivations for choosing campaign focus issues, and how they conceptualised advantage when surveying the electoral landscape in front of them.

Secondly, although Petrocik and others theorised that parties and candidates will focus primarily on their own issues when campaigning, a range of empirical studies from the US have found that in practice, they spend a lot of time talking about issues other than ones they already own. For example, in studying campaign advertising and candidate speeches for 11 US Presidential elections between 1960 and 2000, Sigelman and Buell (2004) found that Democrat and Republican candidates emphasised the same issues much of the time. After coding the frequency with which the candidates discussed a range of issues such as social security, tax and national security in each campaign, these authors calculated an average score of 75 on a 100-point
convergence scale where 0 signified no discussion of common issues and 100 indicated total mirroring of issue choice (Sigelman and Buell, 2004). Extending this analysis to US state Senate races, Kaplan, Park and Ridout (2006) calculated that on average in the state elections between 1998 and 2002, the Democrats and Republicans converged on the same issues 44 per cent of the time. This meant that one or other party was often focusing on issues owned by their opponent in these campaigns. Even one of Petrocik’s later studies found that in US Presidential campaign ads across the period 1952–2000, Democrat candidates talked about Democrat-owned issues 52 per cent of the time, while Republicans talked about Republican-owned issues 67 per cent of the time (Petrocik, Benoit and Hansen, 2003). By logical extension, this means that fully 48 per cent of the issues raised in Democrat ads and 33 per cent of issues in GOP ads were issues other than those the parties owned. All of these findings are consistent with this project’s own, in that they indicate parties spend a significant amount of campaign time talking about issues owned by other parties.

The common explanation offered for this by issue ownership scholars is that parties sometimes cannot avoid talking about issues they do not own, whether because their opponents have successfully drawn those issues to media and public attention—as Petrocik, Bennoit and Hansen suggest; or because those issues are ones which the public has a particular concern about due to external events—the explanation favoured by Sigelman and Buell. The clear implication is that any emphasis on issues other than those a party already owns must be somewhat begrudging and involuntary, rather than representing a calculated strategic choice. But this project’s interviews with senior party figures indicate that they chose each of their campaign issues deliberately and for specific strategic reasons; none of these party representatives indicated that they had been forced or corralled into emphasising some issues because of the political environment or their opponents. That is not to suggest that this never happens—the Howard Government’s success in making asylum seekers a defining issue of the 2001 Australian federal election, and therefore forcing Labor to address this, is one example which immediately springs to mind (McAllister, 2003b). It is simply to point out that parties may also deliberately choose to emphasise issues they do not own, if they perceive that some advantage can be gained by doing so. This possibility has not been explored in depth by any issue ownership studies identified during this project, but in light of the findings presented here, it is certainly worth investigating further. Again, the best way to do this would be through direct consultation with party representatives; possibly in a two-
stage process which involved identifying the issues their parties emphasised, and then questioning them directly about why they chose those particular ones.

It is perhaps not surprising that this research has shed different light on why parties might emphasise issues they do not own, as its findings have been informed by direct discussion with the party representatives responsible for choosing campaign issues. By contrast, no other studies were identified within the issue ownership literature which drew on the actual insights of party representatives or sought to incorporate their views when explaining party issue choice. It appears that this literature has been constructed entirely through analysis of media coverage, campaign materials, manifestos and speeches, and that party representatives have simply never been asked how well the conclusions drawn from this fit with their actual decision processes. As with the party goals literature, this would appear to be something of an oversight, given that this research is seeking to explain the way parties behave in the real-world context of election campaigning.

The fact that this research did include the perspectives of flesh-and-blood campaigners leads to the third possible reason for the lack of alignment between its findings and the basic assumptions of issue ownership theory. As discussed in chapters Five to Eight, there was little evidence that the parties in this data set actually conceptualised their choice of focus issues in terms of their notional ownership. Instead, the government-, preservation- and influence-seeking parties demonstrated a largely binary conception of issues as being either ‘good’ or ‘bad’ for them to campaign on because of factors such as their recent performance record, the presence or absence of new policy offerings, the actions of other parties, and the current interests and preferences of their target audiences (see p.95; 124; 147). Furthermore, and in a slightly different vein, the policy-seeking parties did not appear to give any thought to whether emphasising their chosen issues would help or hinder them electorally—they were simply pursuing their own internal agendas (see p.178).

Putting aside the policy-seeking parties for a moment, the project’s findings in relation to the other three groups suggest that the notional or traditional ownership status of any given issue carries much less weight in party decision-making than the factors mentioned above. As highlighted in Chapter Five, the WA Liberal Party’s decision to make health a focus of its 2013 campaign provides a clear example of this. After avoiding the issue at the 2008 election because
it had little new policy to offer and did not want to draw attention to an area where the then-Labor Government was seen as performing strongly, the party reversed this position in 2013 and ran hard on health because it believed it had a ‘good story to tell’ after its first term in government. Opinion surveys show that health remained a Labor-owned issue in the eyes of voters throughout the entire 2008–2013 period (Newspoll, 2013b). Despite this it moved from being a ‘bad’ issue to a ‘good’ one in the eyes of Liberal strategists because of the factors mentioned above. To borrow from the work of Walgrave, Lefevere and Nuytemans (2009), the WA example and this project’s wider findings suggest that parties are primarily—if not exclusively—concerned with the ‘competence’ dimension of issues, rather than their ‘associative’ component. That is, these parties care less about whether voters ‘automatically and spontaneously start thinking about them’ in connection with an issue, and more about whether or not they are able to present themselves as ‘best placed to deal with that issue’ at a particular point in time (Walgrave, Lefevere and Nuytemans, 2009: 156). As those authors note, the traditional model of issue ownership tends to conflate these associative and competence dimensions, but it seems clear from interviews that party strategists do not. This point is relevant to the project’s wider results because if parties are not concerned about abstract associations, and instead select focus issues primarily on the basis of their current competence strengths, then it makes sense that they would trespass into issue space which is notionally owned by other parties. To put it more directly, if ownership status is not the relevant criteria for parties when making their issue choices, then there is no reason why they should not range across what is theoretically their own, opponent, contested or unclaimed issue space. The lack of concern for broader public perceptions of issue ownership amongst the interviewees is one of the more interesting findings to emerge from this research, because it is so at odds with how the literature suggests parties choose campaign issues. Given this, it would be well worth conducting further research in this area, particularly to explore why the competence dimension of issues appears to carry so much more weight than the associative one.

Returning to the policy-seeking parties, their presence in the data set raises a different set of questions about the applicability of the issue ownership concept to very minor parties. It was found that all of these parties emphasised issues which were unclaimed by other political actors, and ones that were often outside of mainstream political debate (see p.180). Budge and Farlie’s original work acknowledged that some parties may choose their focus issues for reasons of

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ideology rather than electoral attractiveness (1983b), and this would appear to match the policy-seeking parties' motivations. However, Budge and Farlie's discussion focused on why large political parties might emphasise opponent-owned issues, rather than addressing minor parties seeking to put entirely new ones on the agenda. Subsequent authors, including all those listed above, have similarly tended to focus on parties which are large enough to have representation in parliament and—in Europe's multi-party context—be included in negotiations about coalition government formation. There is therefore a tendency to assume that parties already own some issues for themselves, and are engaged in give and take with other parties over the ownership of others. To put it bluntly, the minor parties in the policy-seeking group did not fit this picture at all. Firstly, there is little evidence that they had any established issue ownerships, which meant that the option of campaigning on their own issues simply did not exist. Secondly, they were reportedly emphasising particular issues in the active hope that one or more of the larger political actors might 'steal' these and incorporate them into their own policy agendas. In other words, they displayed a completely different set of motivations and behaviours than are envisaged by existing studies of issue ownership. Given this, should it simply be acknowledged that these parties represent a sub-group to which the concept does not apply? Or is there some way to integrate them into the existing framework? As this chapter has already identified a range of areas where the issue ownership concept seems ill-fitting with the real strategic thinking behind campaigns, it does not seem particularly useful to try and force these policy-seeking parties into also matching that model. But it would certainly be worth exploring their issue choices and the calculations behind these in more detail, as they do appear to be driven by quite a different set of motivations than the parties in the other three groups.

Distilling this discussion down to its core points, this research shows that the parties in this data set variously emphasised their own, opponent-owned, contested, unclaimed and process issues when campaigning, and this runs counter to the basic premise of Petrocik's issue ownership concept. Based on the discussions with party strategists, it appears that this mismatch has arisen because i) strategically advantageous issues are not limited to ones parties already own; ii) parties may therefore choose to emphasise issues other than their own because they perceive some strategic advantage will be gained; and iii) the notional or long-term ownership status of issues is not, in fact, the relevant criteria for parties when making decisions about which to emphasise. Given the size of the data set and its confinement to a single country context, it is obviously difficult to generalise about the broader applicability of this project's findings. However, they are
consistent with a range of recent empirical studies demonstrating both that advantage can be achieved by pursuing different issue strategies, and that parties do spend a significant proportion of campaigns talking about issues other than those they already own.

Importantly though, this study departs from previous ones by raising questions about the fundamental relevance of the issue ownership concept to party strategists, and therefore also about how well this framework explains what parties really do. To further explore this challenge, it is strongly suggested that future research on issue ownership incorporate the views and voices of actual campaign practitioners, rather than relying exclusively on textual analysis as has been the case to date. As Ekengren and Oscarsson (2011: 101) neatly put it, the perceptions of party elites would seem to be ‘essential for explaining the strategic actions taken by party elites.’

**Rohrschneider’s mobilising—chasing continuum**

In the course of carrying out the literature review for this study, dozens of articles were identified which referred to Rohrschneider’s (2002) concept of a continuum between mobilising partisans and chasing unaligned voters. Although his framework is little more than a decade old, it appears to have been very influential in the literature on elections and campaigning, and a great many authors now highlight this mobilising/chasing choice as one of the core strategic decisions parties must make. The widespread acceptance of Rohrschneider’s model is somewhat surprising, as despite his own assertion that ‘the dimensionality of party campaigns must be assessed empirically and cannot be ascertained based on an analytical framework alone’ (Rohrschneider, 2002: 378), only two prior studies appear to have actually applied this to real campaigns (Koellner, 2009; Albright, 2008). What’s more, the findings of both these studies raise questions about how well Rohrschneider’s prescriptions actually fit with the reality of party targeting strategies. For example, after interviewing representatives from a range of parties contesting the 2004 Spanish General Election, Albright (2008: 711) concluded that: ‘all parties rely on a combination of mobilising partisans and chasing after non-aligned voters’, rather than emphasising one strategy over the other. Koellner (2009: 139) similarly described party campaigns for the Japanese Diet as employing a ‘hybrid’ of mobilising and chasing strategies at different times and in different places across the country, making it difficult to identify a primary orientation towards either approach. These findings closely reflect the observations in this thesis about the varied and cross-cutting nature of party targeting strategies. However, this project has

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146 Our survey was limited to articles published in English-language journals, so it is possible that other empirical studies exist in the broader literature.

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gone further than either of these authors by seeking to develop a specific set of indicators for analysing party behaviour under each of Rohrschneider's five trade-offs, and also by combining observational analysis with elite interviews.\textsuperscript{147} This unique approach has informed the following observations about the utility of the framework for analysing real-world party targeting strategies; previous works have generally overlooked such practical considerations.

The first observation to make is that when comparing party strategies, Rohrschneider's five questions are clearly interesting and useful ones to ask. If appropriate indicators can be identified for measuring the extent to which parties maximise votes or represent policy; mobilise their core constituency or other types of voters; rely on ideology or polling; emphasise leaders or other constituencies; and make use of their party organisations, then much can be discovered about how different parties approach the task of campaigning and valuable comparisons can be made between those approaches. The issue of 'appropriate indicators' will be addressed momentarily, but this research clearly demonstrates that there is plenty to be gained by comparing party activity across the areas Rohrschneider has highlighted. Furthermore, in the specific context of targeting, the research did not identify any major areas of campaign decision-making which were not captured by his five headline questions.

Analysing party behaviour in each of these five areas is one thing. But translating that activity into an overall strategic approach which can then be mapped onto a theoretical continuum between mobilising and chasing is clearly another thing altogether. A major finding of this research is that it is extremely difficult to locate parties at any particular point along this notional continuum on the basis of their choices in the areas listed above, for two key reasons.

Firstly, it was observed that parties often pursue a mix of mobilising and chasing approaches, but do so in different areas. If one party emphasises core voters (mobilising) but also uses market research (chasing), and another makes instrumental use of their members (mobilising) while emphasising their leader (chasing), how can a distinction be made between their strategies on a single continuum? As highlighted by chapters Seven and Eight, both parties could only be placed in some ill-defined grey area near the centre, however this placement would then obscure real and meaningful differences in their strategic approach by making it appear that they were closely aligned with each other. This problem was encountered particularly when attempting to map the

\textsuperscript{147} Albright's study relied exclusively on interviews with party representatives to inform its conclusions, while Koellner's work was informed only by external observation of party behaviour.
strategies adopted by the influence- and policy-seeking parties, as each combined mobilising and chasing approaches but did so in different areas. As a result, it was not possible to identify a position on the continuum which could reflect their mixed strategies, while at the same time clearly demarcating the observed differences between these two groups.

This issue relates to a second identified problem: because each of Rohrschneider’s five areas appear to be basically independent of each other, there is no reason why parties should make choices which consistently locate them towards one or other of the continuum’s poles. As this research has demonstrated, a party can be both highly reliant on its leader as the public face and take an entirely instrumental view of its members and supporters, because one decision relates to high-level campaign messaging and the other to practical campaign delivery. Similarly, a party may strongly prioritise votes while also publicising its candidates and members more than the leader, because the former relates to policy-development processes and the latter to on-the-ground campaigning. In other words, the five trade-offs represent distinct categories of decisions which are not necessarily related to each other, and this fundamentally compromises the capacity to assign parties an overall targeting approach in Rohrschneider’s terms. In mapping out his ideal-type mobilising and chasing strategies, Rohrschneider appears to assume that these areas are somehow interrelated, such that a party which is highly reliant on polling will also naturally choose to be highly leader-centric and chase unaligned voters. Such correlations might often occur in campaigning, but that does not necessarily mean that there is a real relationship between these choices. In fact, this project’s findings suggest that it would be rare to see parties make entirely consistent choices across these five trade-offs, because choices about the use of research and the role of party organisations appear to be qualitatively different from choices in the other three areas. That point is discussed in more detail below, but the question of how interrelated these trade-offs really are clearly has implications both for Rohrschneider’s specific predictions about what fully mobilising and chasing strategies should look like, and for the applicability of the continuum concept more broadly. This is therefore one issue that would be well worth addressing through further research.

As highlighted in Chapter Seven, Rohrschneider himself suggested that it may be necessary to map parties’ choices in multiple dimensions—rather than along a single continuum—to account for divergence across each of the five areas and accurately capture differences in strategy. While there are no doubt plenty of political scientists who would leap at the challenge posed by this,
there is a fundamental question that must be asked about what mapping parties to theoretical
space (in any number of dimensions) actually adds to understanding of their behaviour. If
differences of strategy have already been identified by comparing parties' choices in each of
Rohrschneider's five areas, what more is gained by then attempting to aggregate those choices
and locate the parties on a notional continuum or multi-dimensional map? Even if the analysis
did allow location parties at specific and distinctive points along that continuum (which it
apparently does not), what more does that reveal? The knowledge that one party chased voters
or mobilised supporters more than some other is of limited use without the context of how and
why they did so, and would presumably be of little interest to anyone other than academics
seeking to test the predictions of Rohrschneider's model. Because of this, it is argued that such
mapping is actually superfluous to the otherwise-useful analysis facilitated by this framework.
The value of Rohrschneider's work lies first in his recognition that mobilising and chasing
represent distinct modes of campaigning, and then in his identification of key areas where it is
possible to observe parties making choices which reflect one or other of those modes. His model
becomes less useful when it seeks to extrapolate a specific, categorisable targeting approach from
that broader analysis, and appears to part company with relevance entirely when it comes to
mapping that approach in theoretical space. Because of this, future researchers might do well to
disregard the artificial construct of a continuum, and instead focus on exploring how parties
combine mobilising and chasing across each of the five individual trade-offs. Given that all three
of the empirical studies using Rohrschneider's model have now found that parties employ a mix
of these approaches, there are clearly more interesting questions to be asked about why they do
so, and how their goals combine with institutional, environmental and resource factors to
determine the specific mix in any given campaign.

In addition to challenging the usefulness of the continuum concept, two other observations
about Rohrschneider's framework arise from this research. Firstly, it has been demonstrated that
decisions in some of his key areas should not be considered 'strategic' choices of the same order
as those in others. Specifically, it appeared that when making decisions about the use of market
research and their party organisations in campaigns, the parties in this data set were guided
primarily by pre-existing institutional and resource factors. By contrast, when making decisions
about the relative emphasis to place on policy or vote maximisation, the specific target audiences
to engage and the priority afforded to leaders versus other constituencies, the parties appeared to
be influenced far more by calculations about what would best support their goals in the political

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environment then facing them. Rohrschneider himself acknowledged that empirical analysis might identify some split in his list of critical trade-offs, although he suggested that this would probably fall between the first three (votes/policy; core/unaligned; ideology/research) and the final two (leader/intraparty constituencies; symbolic/instrumental role for parties) (Rohrschneider, 2002: 377). His rationale for this was that the latter two are essentially organisational decisions, while the former three are more open to strategic ‘gaming’ by party leaders. This research indicates that Rohrschneider was right in this rationale, but wrong about which decisions actually fall into what categories.

In particular, his implied suggestion that use of market research is a question of strategy rather than an organisational and resource issue displays a limited understanding of how extensively this has been integrated into party decision-making processes, and how this has been embraced even by relatively small and new political parties. As highlighted in the conclusion to Chapter Eight, market research is a fundamental input for decision-making in many parties today—both during election campaigns and throughout the political cycle. This project’s findings suggest that parties increase the scale and scope of their research use as their access to money increases; this results in a gradual embedding of research into decision-making processes which is then not easily undone. Nor is it clear why parties would actually want to turn off the research tap once they’ve had a taste of its outpourings, given that even small and highly ideological parties acknowledge this can help them communicate and engage with voters more effectively (see p.157 and p.188). If research use was genuinely linked to strategic considerations, then the parties in this data set should have made variable use of this in line with their differing goals. But as previously shown, the crucial determinant of research use actually appeared to be money, with parties engaging in as much (or as little) of this as their budgets allowed across each of the four goal categories. This strongly suggests that decisions about the use of research do not fall solely into the realm of strategy, as Rohrschneider suggests.

On the other hand, in suggesting that decisions about whether to emphasise a leader or other sections of the party are primarily organisational, Rohrschneider has overlooked the strategic potential of different party constituencies. As this research demonstrates, there are times when parties may see advantage in presenting a unified and consistent ‘brand’ with a single public face, as with the government-seeking parties. But there are also times when their strongest electoral assets are their local members, as with the preservation-seeking parties; or well-known lead

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candidates, as was often the case amongst the influence- and preservation-seeking parties. Emphasising different constituencies allows parties to present themselves to the electorate in different ways—whether as a Presidential-style party of government, a collection of strong local advocates, feisty challengers to the status quo, or something else besides. This research suggests that parties are well aware of these opportunities and make conscious use of them when designing their campaign approach, bringing this aspect of their decision-making strongly into the strategic realm.

Interestingly, neither Koellner (2009) nor Albright (2008) touched on this apparent bifurcation within Rohrschneider’s list of trade-offs. Based on the findings of this project however, it appears that decisions about policy or vote maximisation, target audiences and use of the leader versus other constituencies should be acknowledged as *strategic choices*—areas where parties deliberately engage in actions supporting their goals. By contrast, decisions about the use of research and the role of party organisations should best be understood as more *fixed choices*—areas where a party’s actions are determined primarily by resources, the force of habit, pre-existing organisational structures and other related factors. Drawing this distinction between strategic and fixed campaign choices has some implications for Rohrschneider’s model, in that it requires researchers to look in different places to explain why parties made particular decisions across each of his five trade-offs. It also further undermines the concept of a single mobilising-chasing continuum, as the strategic choices would presumably need to occupy a separate dimension to the more fixed ones when mapping parties’ campaign approach. This chapter has argued against the necessity of mapping parties in notional space at all, and so there does not appear to be any particular problem with dividing the aspects of party choice in this way.

However scholars who are still interested to pursue Rohrschneider’s formal model would need to factor these findings and recommendations in when considering whether to map parties in single- or multi-dimensional space.

A second observation arising from this research is that Rohrschneider’s framework is not equally well-suited to analysing major and minor party behaviour. This project encountered significant difficulty in comparing the choices of influence- and policy-seeking parties with those of the government- and preservation-seeking groups, particularly in the areas of audience targeting and the relative emphasis given to different party constituencies. As shall shortly be discussed, some of this difficulty may have arisen because of the particular indicators selected to gauge party

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Looking first at the question of target audiences, it was relatively easy to determine whether the major parties in chapters Five and Six were targeting core, unaligned or defecting non-supporters, because the distribution of these parties’ support was clearly manifested in their electoral histories. By looking at which parties held what seats—both historically and at the time of the elections in the case set—it was possible to clearly identify where their core supporters were, as well as where unaligned voters and past non-supporters could be found. From there, it was a relatively simple matter to compare this information against the parties’ intensive campaigning efforts, and gain an understanding of their target audiences. This process was not so simple for the minor parties in the influence- and policy-seeking groups. Firstly, few had any particular history of winning seats, or had only won upper house ones, making it difficult to determine who or where their core supporters may have been. It is easy to make broad claims about who a party’s core supporters are—for example, the popular stereotype is that Greens voters are either rabid environmentalists or inner-city hipsters, while Nationals voters are dusty-booted farmers and Christian Democratic Party or Family First supporters are outer suburban happy-clappers. Leaving aside the question of how accurate these stereotypes are, it is much harder to match such broad categories to specific electoral regions or seats for the purpose of making firm observations about a party’s targeting approach. Secondly (and relatedly), the simple fact is that most minor parties do not have enough core voters to win seats in their own right. As a result, even if they choose to target areas where their core support is highest, they will still have to chase other voters as well to have any chance of winning there. In other words, unless a minor party has no desire to get elected, it will always be targeting both its core and other types of voters. Both of these factors make it difficult to fit minor party choices about target audiences into defined core, unaligned or non-supporter categories, and therefore compare them directly with the choices made by other (major) parties. In suggesting that this comparison be made, Rohrschneider appears to have assumed that it is somehow self-evident who a party’s core supporters are, or at least, that there is some standard way of assessing this across all parties. This research suggests that this is not necessarily the case, and that this therefore compromises any capacity to make direct comparisons between the strategic choices of major and minor parties.
Similarly, in considering how parties make use of their leaders and other party constituencies, this research has shown that it is only really feasible to compare parties who are structured alike. If a group of parties each has a formal leader, sitting MPs, local candidates and members—as major parties generally do—and each is observed to make these constituencies more or less visible in their campaigns, then it is possible to draw some reasonable conclusions about their differing strategic calculations. But if some of the parties in that group lack a leader, have no sitting MPs or are otherwise structured differently from the standard major party model, how can their choices reasonably be compared with other parties? As discussed in chapters Seven and Eight, it is difficult to do so because their range of strategic options is quite different. For example, a party which does not have a leader cannot run a leader-centric campaign; this is simply not an option that is open to them. They may instead choose to emphasise a single lead candidate, a group of senior candidates or a parliamentary spokesperson, depending both on the profile of those individuals and the institutional context in which they are operating (for example, single district upper houses versus multi-region ones—see p.162). Alternatively, they may adopt a more democratic approach by making every local candidate the focus in their own electorate (see p.191). Of course, these are also options which are open to major parties, but their adoption can signify very different things. The clearest example of this was the preservation-seeking parties’ decision to minimise the role of their leaders and emphasise local candidates instead. For these parties—who did have well-known, formal leaders—the decision not to rely on them as the primary campaign messenger was a direct reflection of their desperation regarding the decline in their electoral fortunes. By contrast, the emphasis that some of the influence- and policy-seeking parties placed upon their local candidates did not signify anything so significant as that. These parties were not deliberately hiding their leaders; they just did not have them, and so chose the best approach from a smaller range of strategic options. In other words, major and minor party choices in this area—and even choices between some minor parties—do not appear to be directly comparable because they are influenced by, and signify, different things. Rohrschneider makes no mention of this in laying out his framework and instead appears to have assumed that all parties will be structured roughly alike, such that choices in this area will signify common strategic considerations.

How might these challenges be addressed to better facilitate side-by-side analysis of major and minor party strategies? Some might argue that their strategies simply are not comparable, because as has been shown, the objectives, structures, opportunities and constraints of major and minor...
parties are so different. But that is a somewhat unsatisfying answer, since it would presumably result in the continued relegation of minor parties to a small and distant corner of the literature on elections and campaigning. Instead, the answer may lie in the selection or development of different indicators for gauging party decision-making, although this thesis does not claim to have arrived at firm conclusions about what those indicators may be.

In undertaking this research, one of the major challenges was to operationalise Rohrschneider's broad questions by attaching specific indicators to each. His original article gives no guidance on how to actually measure party decision-making or activity in each of his five key areas. It does not appear that any other authors have done so either, as Koellner and Albright's studies relied on general observations about tendencies in party decision-making, rather than specific data. This meant that it fell to the researcher to select benchmarks for applying the model empirically. This was done on the basis of both practical experience of how parties make campaign decisions (for example, in linking seat targets to target audiences and policy announcements to vote-seeking) as well as by borrowing from common approaches in the literature (for example, those used to assess issue ownership and leader-centrism). The chosen indicators seemed like feasible ones at the commencement of the project, but having now put them to work in undertaking comparative analysis of over a dozen big and small parties, it is clear that some refinement is necessary. Before discussing those refinements however, it is worth pointing out those indicators which seemed to work well, as this information will also be of use to future researchers.

Analysing policy documents and election promises proved to be a useful way of assessing the extent to which parties chased votes or emphasised policy. By looking particularly at how often these documents contained targeted benefits for specific communities, it was possible to gain a good sense of which parties were out to woo voters, and which had the greater policy good in mind. Similarly, by combining the insights from interviews with analysis of party spending, a clear understanding could be gained of how extensively different parties used market research and what role this played in their strategic decision-making. As mentioned in Chapter Five, it is always going to be difficult to objectively measure party research use, both because Australia's minimal campaign reporting requirements mean there is little public trace of it, and because parties have a strong incentive to downplay or hide this. It was pleasantly surprising however to find that the interviewees were relatively candid about their use of market research, and that their responses generally aligned with the few disclosure reports which were available. Finally, in terms

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of assessing whether the parties used their organisations as symbols to increase their electoral appeal or instruments to contact voters, combining content analysis of campaign materials with insights from the interviewees also seemed to provide a clear understanding of these parties’ different approaches.

As has been discussed however, greater difficulty was encountered when applying the chosen indicators for assessing target audiences and reliance on a leader versus other party constituencies. To determine whether the parties were mobilising their core supporters or chasing other types of voters, this project opted to look at where parties directed their most intensive campaign efforts—their specific seat targets. This choice demonstrated a rather naive disregard for the two issues discussed above (see pp.225–226) as well as the broader possibility that parties might target seats for reasons other than the type of voters living in them. In fact, this was evidence of the researcher’s own big party chauvinism, as the assumption was that a measure which worked for assessing Labor and Liberal campaign behaviour would work equally well for all other parties. This research suggests that conflating target audiences with seat targets like this may not be the best approach for combined analysis of major and minor parties, which then leads to the question of how else this might be assessed. One alternative would be to ask party strategists a number of specific, survey-style questions with fixed answers—first about who they consider to be their core constituencies, and then about which audiences or demographics they aimed to connect with in their campaigns. By comparing responses to the first group of questions to those for the second, it might then be possible to arrive at some conclusions about whether the parties were mobilising their core or chasing other types of voters. Alternatively, a purely qualitative approach such as that adopted by Albright (2008) might suffice, in which party representatives are simply asked to nominate whether they paid more attention to their past supporters or potential new voters. Both of these approaches seem feasible, but would need to be put to work in further empirical studies to determine if they are a better means of assessing party audience targets than the seat-based indicators relied on here.

Finding appropriate indicators to gauge leader emphasis versus emphasis on other party constituencies is somewhat trickier, because the issue lies in the inherent differences between parties rather than the yardstick used to measure their behaviour. It is argued that undertaking content analysis of campaign materials provides a good sense of how extensively parties rely on their leader versus other representatives for engaging voters, particularly when checked against

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the information provided by party strategists. The problem lies in separating out the strategic
implications of this from the more practical ones, given that party choices in this area can signify
quite different things. One solution to this might be to stratify parties before examining this area
of their decision-making, so that like can be compared with like. For example, parties could be
divided first according to whether or not they had a formal leader. They might then also be
divided according to whether or not they held seats in parliament, because parliamentarians often
assume as quasi-leadership or spokesperson role by virtue of their position—particularly in small
parties with limited representation. Having done this, it would then be possible to compare any
one party's choices with others who shared basic structural similarities, and therefore understand
them better. The problem with this approach is that it would presumably make some
comparison groups quite small. For example, if the parties in the influence-seeking group were
divided this way, the set with leaders would contain four parties, while the one without would
contain five. However, within both these groups only one party did not have any sitting MPs, so
it would not be feasible to further sub-divide according to that criterion. Similarly, dividing the
policy-seeking group up this way would create a small group of just two parties with a leader, and
a larger set of nine parties without one. Both of the parties in the former group held seats in
parliament but only one did in the latter set, again making it impractical to sub-divide on that
basis. That is not to suggest that this approach could not work with a larger number of cases.
However it does imply that it would be impractical for analysing single elections, which may be
contested by only a small number of parties with different structures. It may be the case that
when using Rohrschneider's framework to analyse a small number of parties, it is simply
necessary to acknowledge that structural differences limit the capacity to make meaningful
comparisons in this area of campaign decision-making.

By applying Rohrschneider's framework as one of its key analytical tools, this project has tested
out the mobilising–chasing continuum in ways which do not appear to have been attempted
previously. To summarise the conclusions drawn from this: it is clear that the framework offers a
useful way to conceptualise different modes of party campaigning and break these down into
their component parts. However, on the basis that parties tend to combine mobilising and chasing
approaches rather than favouring one to the exclusion of the other, it has been argued that the
idea of mapping parties to a particular position on a notional continuum is neither feasible, nor
particularly useful analytically. Furthermore, this section has made the case that Rohrschneider's
five trade-offs represent independent aspects of campaign decision-making, and are not
interrelated as his formal predictions about ideal-type mobilising and chasing strategies would seem to suggest. It has also been suggested that it is worth distinguishing between strategic and fixed choices within that list of trade-offs because of their different influences, and a range of possible indicators have been identified to operationalise these. Although this thesis did not deliberately set out to do so, it has therefore made a substantial contribution to refining Rohrschneider’s concept of the mobilising-chasing continuum.

The communications repertoire of campaigning
Turning finally to the communications repertoire of campaigning, at a practical level there is not a great deal that this project’s findings add or alter in relation to Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli’s (2009) framework. Their classification of communication tools into internal and external, direct and indirect channels was found to be a helpful way of analysing parties’ communication strategies, particularly as this allowed examination of the extent to which they relied on paid and unpaid channels for getting the message out. Furthermore, this research clearly confirmed the authors’ assertion that there is a common toolkit which parties draw from when designing their communications approach, as it identified regular and recurring use of the same tools and channels.

Interestingly, while this research also confirmed that the toolkit contains both very old mediums and far newer ones, it observed that the addition of new tools can happen relatively quickly if they prove to be an effective means to reach voters. This was particularly evident in the increasing prevalence and use of both social media and phone canvassing over just the three year period covered by this project’s case studies. It was also noted that parties are fairly unsentimental about dropping certain tools from their communications repertoires if these cease to be as effective as they once were. This was apparent from the decreased use of radio and print advertising reported by many of the parties in this data set; in Australia, the use of these media for campaigning seems to be on a distinct downwards trend which is likely to accelerate as audiences further abandon them. Based on both these observations, it is clear that Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli were right to describe the communications repertoire of campaigning as something that is constantly evolving, rather than comprising a static set of tools.

At a more theoretical level, this project’s findings do support some modification of these authors’ explanation of why parties chose to use particular communication tools and channels in

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their campaigns. As canvassed in chapters One and Four, Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli suggested that their choices are primarily driven by access to resources and regulatory constraints. The findings in this thesis indicate that financial and human resources do matter a great deal for many parties when choosing their communications repertoires, particularly the smaller parties in the influence- and policy-seeking groups. It was clearly demonstrated that resources can broaden or narrow the range of ways different parties communicate, and also force them into making hard decisions about which audiences or channels to prioritise. On their second point, this project’s case studies did not reveal any particular evidence of regulatory effects. However this may be because Australia’s electoral communications are amongst the least-regulated in the world (Plasser and Plasser, 2002) and so local parties do not face any particular constraints in this area.

Something which was observed was that—to the extent they were able—the parties in this case set consciously tailored their communications repertoires to support their identified goals. This meant giving more weight to some tools than others in different contexts, such as the preservation-seeking parties’ emphasis on one-on-one communication compared with the government-seeking group’s preference for broadcast channels. It also meant matching tools to potential supporters, as all of the parties did through things like social media, direct mail and email lists. Only the most financially-constrained amongst these parties indicated that resources were the primary driver of their communications approach (see pp.195–196); far more commonly the interviewees drew a direct link between their campaign goals and the tools or channels they prioritised for communicating with the public (see pp.116–117; 141–142; 169–170). This finding is consistent with Gibson and Rommele’s (2009; 2001) research on why parties differ in their uptake of professional tools and techniques when campaigning, as well as with Rommele’s (2003) observation that different communication technologies assume differing significance for parties in light of their different goals and objectives. In short, this research highlights that when seeking to explain parties’ choices about campaign communication repertoires, the discussion should include reference to their goals as a significant component of that account.
Chapter Nine—Implications for the literature

**Conclusions**

The thoughts offered here about the further development and refinement of these frameworks are a by-product of having applied them empirically in the specific context of Australian election campaigns. It must therefore be acknowledge that some of the issues encountered—and the conclusions reached about these frameworks as a result—may be specific to Australia and not generalisable to other contexts. That is an open question which can only be answered with further research, and so future researchers are strongly invited to test the modifications and arguments proposed here to determine their broader applicability. In the meantime, this thesis has yet to explore how the key findings change or alter the picture of campaigning presented in the specifically *Australian* literature, and so it is to that task that the final chapter now turns.
Chapter Ten—Implications for Australia

Implications for Australia

The study of Australian politics is somewhat out of vogue in local universities at present. However, this research shows that there is a fascinating world of activity to explore if one is prepared to buck the prevailing internationalist trends. As Australians, it will always be important to understand the Australian political milieu, and to track significant trends and developments to see where today’s events fit in a longer national narrative. This research contributes to both these valuable tasks, particularly by including the direct perspectives of significant political actors and giving minor parties equal attention to major ones.

With this in mind, this chapter highlights some of the key things this research adds to existing knowledge about Australian electioneering and party behaviour. In Chapter Two it was noted that past scholarship has revealed much about what Australian campaigning involves, but has paid less attention to why this might be the case. Some of the factors behind party decision-making have already been canvassed in the discussion of party goals in Part Two; this chapter extends that conversation by highlighting the significant organisational, institutional and financial factors which were also found to shape their decision-making. In drilling down into the detail of party campaign strategies, this project has also unearthed further insights into the practical delivery of campaigns (the ‘what’) and these findings are discussed here in the context of past Australian research.

Not just goals

The purpose of this project was to explore the influence that party goals exert over campaign decision-making, and how the holding of different goals might lead parties to pursue different strategies. Although it has clearly been demonstrated that goals matter a good deal, along the way a range of other factors were identified which also appeared to influence parties’ campaign strategising. Chief amongst these were institutional, organisational and environmental factors; access to money was also a very significant issue, and is discussed further in the following section.

The institutional factors that seemed to matter most for the parties in this case set were those relating to the structure of Australia’s state parliaments, as well as how members are elected to them. For example, the presence or absence of an upper house clearly influenced party decision-making about where to focus campaigning effort and resources, particularly amongst the minor
parties in the influence- and policy-seeking groups (see pp.152–153 and pp.183–184). Similarly, the question of whether upper house seats were distributed on a statewide basis or within specific electoral regions also had an impact on party strategising, as campaigning across an entire state requires a very different approach from campaigning for a specific segment of it (see p.184). Other institutional arrangements which might also affect party strategising would presumably include fixed versus floating election dates, rules relating to the costing or publication of election policies, and restrictions on the production or distribution of different campaign materials, amongst other things (although no particular impacts from these were noted in this project’s case study campaigns).

The observation that institutions shape both actions and outcomes is not a new one. In fact, there is an extensive Australian literature documenting the influence of institutions on electoral practices and results at the federal level (for example, Solomon, 2007; Farrell and McAllister, 2006; Hughes and Costar, 2006; Orr, 2004; Sawer, 2001; Mackerras and McAllister, 1999). A range of authors have also produced in-depth case studies on the electoral implications of specific institutional arrangements in individual states (for example, Newton-Farrelly, 2013; Economou, 2008; Simms, 2006). However, it does not appear that any previous study has compared the impact of institutions on campaigning and elections across Australian states in depth, and this would seem to be an interesting gap to interrogate further. In particular, it would be useful to try and identify which state’s institutional arrangements are most favourable to minor parties and candidates from outside the major Labor and Liberal parties when campaigning for office, as well as which do most to exclude them. A quick survey would seem to suggest that New South Wales offers the most favourable electoral playing field, as that state has an extensive history of minor and micro party representation in its upper house and independent members in its lower ones (Lovelock, 2009). Similarly, Queensland seems to stand out as the most difficult field for minor parties to compete on (particularly left-of-centre ones) as only a handful of non-major parties have ever succeeded in placing members there (Queensland Parliament, 2014). But are such differences a result of these states’ institutional arrangements, or other causes such as population size, diversity and distribution, socio-economic factors and political cultures? This is an issue which has implications well beyond this thesis’ focus area of election campaigning, as it goes to the question of whether Australia’s state political institutions are functioning to suppress or support challenges to the two-party status quo.

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Turning to the question of organisations, this research has demonstrated that the presence and number of paid, professional campaign staff, the availability of volunteers, the nature of internal decision-making structures and the overall tendency towards either participation or centralisation all exerted further influences over parties’ strategic decision-making. This is consistent with research both from Australia and overseas which has highlighted the importance of organisational structures in shaping party choices and actions (for example, Gauja, 2012 and 2004; Samuels and Shugart, 2010; Carty, 2004; Hopkin, 2003; Janda and Coleman, 1998).

However, in canvassing the Australian literature on party organisations, it was notable how little has been written about a range of the political actors who are currently occupying state and federal parliaments. A good deal of research has addressed the organisational structures of the Labor, Liberal, National and Greens parties, but there is next to no literature available exploring the internal workings of the Australian Sex Party, the Christian Democratic Party (and its offshoot, Australian Christians), Country Alliance, Dignity 4 Disability, Family First or Katter’s Australian Party, nor any recent work on the Democratic Labour Party. With the exception of the Katter and Sex parties, all of these political organisations have been around for a decade or more, and have contested multiple elections at both the federal and state levels—often winning seats. It is therefore surprising that there is still quite little known about them or how they operate, beyond the insights gained through this project and intermittent media reportage. Again, understanding the internal workings of these parties has significance beyond the study of campaigns and elections. In particular, knowing more about them would seem to be a necessary precondition for exploring the differences between parliamentary minor parties and non-parliamentary ones—an issue which is discussed further below.

Finally, the discussion in chapters Five to Nine highlighted a broad range of environmental factors which influenced party decision-making. These included the popularity (or lack thereof) of a party’s leader, the public’s wider sentiment towards a party, the presence of star candidates and the retirement of popular MPs, the strength of the candidate field in any given electorate, external events which increased or decreased the saliency of specific issues, and much else besides. This is one area where it certainly could not be said that the Australian literature is lacking, as several of the field’s most prominent authors strongly prioritise environmental factors when exploring and explaining elections (for example, McAllister and Bean, 2006; Simms and Warhurst, 2005; McAllister, 2003a; Warhurst and Simms, 2002; McAllister and Bean, 2000). The main contribution this project makes to that literature is to observe that while the political
environment matters a lot, it cannot explain everything about why parties make the decisions they do. Rather, it has been argued that any explanation must start by acknowledging party goals, and then address environmental factors as one amongst the broader range of influences discussed here.

**Money, money, money**

This thesis did not set out to specifically explore campaign spending patterns or dynamics, and nor has it done so in any particularly systematic way. But as should be clear from the discussion in chapters Five to Nine, it was difficult to ignore the question of money as the interviewees consistently cited this as an important factor when designing and delivering their campaigns. This research shows that the size of a party’s budget is a major determinant of how widely and frequently it can convey its messages to voters as well as which channels it chooses for this task; how many seats it can run in and the nature of on-the-ground campaigning within these; how much professional help it can engage to guide its strategising, and much else besides. In light of this, money clearly must form a further part of the explanation about why Australian parties campaign the way they do. Discussion of money and budgets often forms part of the explanatory story in campaign memoirs and books written by journalists (for example, Hawker, 2013; Jackman, 2008; Williams, 1997) but is not always given the prominence it deserves in more academic studies of Australian campaigning. For example, the various contributors to the long-running Australian Federal Election book series (Simms and Wanna, 2012; Simms, 2009; Simms and Warhurst, 2005; Warhurst and Simms, 2002) rarely touch on campaign budgets or how they may have affected the dynamics of each contest.

In countries such as Canada, the US and UK, discussions of money occupy a much more prominent place in the conversation about electioneering. What’s more, in-depth studies of campaign spending are very common, and this has led to the development of a huge literature exploring such questions as the relationship between spending and vote share, and how spending is distributed across marginal and safe seats (for example, Erickson and Palfrey, 2000; Carty and Eagles, 1999; Gerber, 1998; Johnson and Pattie, 1997; Pattie, Johnson and Fieldhouse, 1995; Eagles, 1993; Green and Krasno, 1990; Johnson, 1987). In Australia, legislative changes in the 1980s removed the requirement for parties to release details of their campaign spending at the federal level (Kelly, 2012), and as a result local researchers have not had the same opportunity to explore in-depth what national campaigns cost or how this money is used. However, as has been
demonstrated with this research, there is a reasonable amount of financial data now available at the state level thanks to legislative reforms over the past decade. Information on party and candidate campaign spending in New South Wales is available online from 1999 onwards (Election Funding Authority, 2011c); from 2001 for Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory (Western Australian Electoral Commission, 2013; Elections ACT, 2012); and from 2009 for Queensland (Electoral Commission Queensland, 2012). South Australia is currently in the process of introducing an electoral funding and disclosure scheme which will require parties to report spending for elections in that state, so this data will also be available in the future. In speaking with various academics and researchers during the course of this project, it seemed that many were unaware of the availability of this state-based data, and so had not thought it was possible to conduct in-depth research on Australian campaign spending. Some notable exceptions to this are Forrest’s useful studies of New South Wales spending patterns in the 1990s (Forrest, Johnston and Pattie, 1999; Forrest, 1997) as well as Anderson and Tham’s (2014) very recent work addressing the ‘arms race’ of campaign spending in that state.

This thesis has drawn heavily on the available financial disclosure data, and the inclusion of specific spending figures sets this work apart from most other Australian studies in this field. Therefore, in addition to highlighting the significance of money as an influence on party decision-making, there are a number of more specific things this research adds to the ongoing discussion about campaign financing in Australia.

Firstly, this research clearly and unambiguously shows that Australian major and minor parties do not compete on anything like a level playing field when contesting elections. The disparity in financial resources between parties is often raised in discussions about how fair and equitable Australia’s electoral system is (for example, Mills, 2009; Ghazarian, 2006; Young and Tham, 2006) but this research provides specific evidence of just how stark that disparity is (see p.77; 157; 188). Furthermore, it confirms that instead of there being a simple division between the wealthy major parties and poor minor ones, the Australian system is better conceptualised as a three-tiered one. That is, for state election campaigning, the Labor and Liberal parties represent a top tier in which budgets are counted in multiples of millions. Beneath them sit parties such as The Greens and The Nationals, with budgets that occasionally climb as high as $1–2 million, but which are more commonly counted by the hundred thousand. Interestingly, a number of smaller parties which are backed by particular sectoral interests also appear to belong in this category,

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including the Australian Sex Party, Christian Democratic Party and Katter's Australian Party. Finally, far beneath these two tiers sit the rest of the minor parties, with budgets that are counted in tens of thousands of dollars. Reviewing the annual disclosures for the federal arms of these parties suggests that this three-tiered system is very much in place at the national level as well, although in this case the budgets are counted in tens of millions, millions and hundreds of thousands respectively (Australian Electoral Commission, 2014b). Interestingly, a survey of the literature failed to locate any other studies which specifically demonstrate this point, although discussions with other Australian researchers suggest that it is widely acknowledged and accepted.

The question of whether or not this financial disparity represents a problem for Australia’s democratic system is essentially a normative one, and as such, is beyond the scope of this research to answer. Some of the possible implications of this are dealt with in a separate work (Rayner, 2013a) and authors such as Norton (2011) and Orr, Tham and Costar (2011) also offer interesting viewpoints. This project’s particular contribution is to provide hard evidence of how much the electoral playing field is skewed in favour of some teams, and so provide some useful empirical grounding for the ongoing normative debate.

Moving on to this project’s second contribution, it is a well-known fact that campaigning is expensive, but this research demonstrates that just how expensive it is varies significantly around Australia. As detailed in Table 8 (p.77), the major Labor and Liberal parties spent just over $11 million each on their campaigns for the 2011 New South Wales state election, and just over $7 million each for their 2012 Queensland campaigns. In both cases, this was the maximum spend allowed under the newly-introduced spending caps; analysis of earlier elections shows that the parties often spent much more before these restrictions were introduced (Rayner, 2014a). By contrast, the Western Australian Labor and Liberal parties spent just $5.1 million and $2.7 million respectively, despite an absence of caps. Minor party spending was similarly variable—for example, The Greens spent $1.6 million in New South Wales, compared with almost $750,000 in Queensland and just $440,000 in Western Australia. The question of why campaign budgets vary so much between states is clearly an interesting one deserving further exploration. Based on the discussions with party representatives, it seems likely that contributing factors would likely

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148 By comparing the declared expenditure of federal parties in election years with that in non-election years, it is possible to gain a rough indication of federal campaign spending. However, these figures are not comparable with the specific election spending figures reported at the state level because they cover an entire 12-month period.

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include institutional constraints (such as spending caps), the party's capacity to attract donations (based on its current standing with the electorate), the nature and distribution of target seats (whether regional or metropolitan) and demographic/geographic factors (including the state's population and dispersal). However, further research would be needed to determine whether some of these factors are more influential than others, and whether their influence is consistent over time or varies from campaign to campaign. In particular, the question of how spending caps influence party budgets is an important one, as the introduction of such caps is often proposed as a means of 'levelling the playing field' between major and minor parties (for example, newDemocracy Foundation, 2011; Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2008). On the early evidence presented here, caps do not appear to achieve that objective as major party budgets remain orders of magnitude larger than minor party ones in states where these are in place. Work is already underway to test this finding further by tracking spending trends before and after the introduction of the caps in New South Wales and Queensland (Rayner, 2014a).

Finally, this research has revealed much of interest about the price of individual components of campaigns. While references to the 'huge cost' of advertising and market research are common in both academic and media articles, it is rare to see specific, verifiable dollar figures quoted to the extent that this thesis has. Furthermore, few authors give a sense of how funds may be divvied up within party budgets. Based on this project's review of spending disclosures for the five case study campaigns, it appears that advertising consistently occupies the largest single component of party budgets. For example, at the 2012 Queensland election the ALP allocated just over $5 million—or 70 per cent of its total campaign budget—to television, radio and other forms of advertising. Individual components of that spend ranged from $363,000 for online advertising and $466,000 radio ads, to just over $3.5 million for television air time (Electoral Commission Queensland, 2012). While the Queensland Greens spent a smaller share of their budget on ads—allocating just over $360,000 or 48 per cent of all declared campaign funds—this still represented the party's single greatest expense. Again, this spending ranged from $33,800 for print advertising, up to just over $258,000 for television ads (Electoral Commission Queensland, 2012). Interestingly, for major parties market research appears to occupy the next-largest segment of campaign funds, while for minor parties this tends to be taken up by the production and distribution of printed materials such as leaflets, flyers and corflutes. The Queensland Labor and Greens disclosures are again illustrative of this trend, as Labor spent over $1.3 million (19 per cent of its budget) on research compared with around $663,000 (9 per cent) on printed

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materials, while the Greens spent just over $45,000 (6 per cent) on research but more than
$135,000 (18 per cent) on printed materials. These spending observations—and others made
throughout the thesis—are necessarily limited at present, as they are based on a small number of
campaigns. This makes it difficult to draw any conclusions about how representative they may be
of broader trends. However, as discussed above there is a trove of state spending data available
and awaiting quantitative analysis, and this could build on the work presented here to further
illuminate Australian campaign spending patterns.

Professionalisation of Australian campaigns

Turning now to some of the wider Australian observations facilitated by this research, Chapter
One sketched out the extensive literature on campaign professionalisation and highlighted the
many ways in which this is believed to have changed electioneering in recent decades. In
particular, this chapter discussed the international rise of paid campaign professionals with
specialist expertise in research, messaging and targeting, in place of enthusiastic amateur
volunteers. It also explored how parties have evolved from simply sharing their ideas and values
to marketing themselves as products, using branding, advertising, audience segmentation and
much else besides (see pp.11–14). In Australia, authors such as Mills (2013; 1986) and Young
(2008; 2006; 2004) have done much to document these same trends at the national level and in
relation to the major parties. The findings presented in this thesis both validate and add to their
work by demonstrating that the state branches of the Labor and Coalition parties are just as
professionalised as their federal counterparts. Particular evidence of this was seen through the
extensive centralisation of campaign decision-making and the complete dominance of paid
campaign professionals over this; the parties’ heavy reliance on market research to guide strategic
decision-making; and the use of diverse and targeted communications channels to engage
specific audiences (see chapters Five and Six). The high degree of professionalisation attained by
the major state parties would not come as a surprise to anyone who has had contact with them in
recent campaigns, but is worth noting as these parties are rarely the focus of detailed study in
their own right.

While some attention has been paid to changes in the mode and method of Australian major
party campaigning, the professionalisation of local minor parties has gone largely undокументed.
The Greens are a possible exception here as authors such as Vromen and Gauja (2009),
Miragliotta (2006) and Turnbull and Vromen (2006) have tracked the changing profile of the

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party's staff and MPs, as well as its increasing centralisation of policy and strategy more generally. However, this project clearly demonstrates that The Greens are not the only ones to have made significant progress in professionalising their campaign efforts. Rather, it was shown that 60 per cent of the minor parties in this data set employed paid campaign staff, 40 per cent commissioned market research and 75 per cent used some form of paid advertising. As discussed in Chapter One, these are seen as key indicators of professionalisation, and even parties which the media and academics treat as entirely niche were found to have adopted them. This included the Australian Sex Party, the Christian Democratic Party and Family First, as well as more established minor parties such as The Greens and The Nationals in non-Coalition states (see chapters Seven and Eight). Importantly too, many of the minor party representatives interviewed for this project indicated that they saw increased professionalisation as a goal and were consciously working towards this—whether or not they could currently afford market research, advertising or other professional inputs.

This finding is significant for wider understanding of Australian electoral politics for two reasons. Firstly, it provides strong counter evidence to the standard media narrative that Australia has two-and-a-half 'serious' political parties, with the rest being an amateur rabble of ideologues or kooks with no hope of ever making a serious political impact. This may have been the case at some point in the past, but on the evidence presented here it is certainly not true today. Rather, this research suggests that many minor parties are consciously and deliberately adopting the methods of their major counterparts, in an effort to achieve their political goals and have more of an impact. What's more, a number of minor parties are surprisingly well-resourced for this task, as discussed in chapters Seven and Eight.

Secondly, in considering the performance of these minor parties at the state level, this increasing professionalisation appears to be paying electoral dividends for some. For example, the past decade has seen The Greens double that party's number of upper house members in states such as South Australia and Victoria, while also breaking into the lower houses for the first time in New South Wales and Western Australia. The Christian Democratic Party has built a small but stable electoral base which has allowed it to consistently hold seats in the New South Wales

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149 The various Socialist Alliance branches and Victorian Country Labour Party were notable exceptions here, as the representatives of these parties revealed an ideological objection to professionalisation on the grounds that it represents a further take-over of politics by capitalist economic interests and excludes real people from the electoral process.

150 Or possibly three-and-a-half, if generous commentators include The Greens.

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Legislative Council, while the South Australian branch of the Family First party (the most professionally advanced) has gone from having no seats to securely holding two in that state’s upper house in the space of just a decade. Similarly, the Australian Sex Party polled higher than any party other than Labor, the Liberals and the Greens in its target seats during the Victorian 2010 election—its first contest in that state. This is not to suggest that professionalisation was the sole factor contributing to these parties’ improved electoral performance, as other well-noted factors such as declining support for the major parties and institutional reforms undoubtedly also played some role (for example, Economou, 2012; Phillips, 2012; Costar, 2003; Bennett, 1999). However, it certainly seems plausible that this has had some impact by helping parties communicate and engage with voters more effectively. Exploring the relationship between professionalisation and electoral performance within Australian minor parties would be a fascinating research undertaking, and would provide further insights into how these parties both converge and diverge with their major counterparts. This project has laid some groundwork for that by demonstrating that many minor parties are already quite professionalised in their approach to campaigning, suggesting their electoral activities warrant closer attention than has been paid to date.

More generally, this research provides a useful benchmark of the professionalisation of Australian campaigning in the second decade of the 21st century. Not only will this facilitate new comparative research on how current Australian practices compare with those internationally, but this project’s findings also provide a basis for future comparison here at home as Australian campaign technologies and practices continue to evolve. For example, one interesting development to watch will be the parties’ uptake of phone canvassing and other methods of grassroots, one-to-one voter engagement. This project’s interviews suggest that at the same time as many minor parties are actively embracing professionalisation, the major parties may actually be turning away from this and looking for ways to ‘unprofessionalise’ their campaigns as part of reviving public engagement with politics (see p.116 and p.143). While it is not possible to do much more than observe the emergence of this trend at present, this project’s findings provide a point of comparison for assessing developments in this area in future.

151 A task we are already engaged in—see Rayner, 2014b

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Major minor, minor minor

With the exception of the Australian Sex Party, the minor parties who exhibited the greatest levels of professionalisation were those with past experience of holding seats in parliament. This research also identified a range of other significant and important differences between the parliamentary and non-parliamentary minor parties in the data set, and indications are that these extend well beyond their election campaigns. For example, parts Two and Three revealed that parliamentary minor parties primarily saw exerting influence over the entire political process as their goal, while the non-parliamentary minor parties were more focused on advocating for policy and breaking into parliament in the first place. The parliamentary minor parties also possessed human, financial and knowledge resources which completely dwarfed most of the non-parliamentary parties, although they were themselves dwarfed by the major parties. More anecdotally, the parliamentary minor party interviewees generally displayed a very focused sense of their parties’ role in the Australian political system and a sophisticated understanding of how that system works. By contrast, the interviewees from non-parliamentary parties often seemed optimistic but unfocused in relation to the contribution they aimed to make, and displayed a much shallower knowledge of the processes underpinning modern-day politics and governance (Author interviews, 2013).

All of this suggests that minor parties with seats in parliament are tangibly and importantly different from those who have yet to reach that threshold. Yet as was flagged in Chapter Eight, it does not appear that any previous Australian studies have specifically explored this difference or its causes. It was noted on p.240 that authors such as Vromen and Gauja (2009) Miragliotta (2006) and Turnbull and Vromen (2006) have explored changes within the Australian Greens after that party’s transition into parliament. Others, including Economou and Ghazarian (2008) and Reynolds (2000) have provided detailed case studies of the fortunes of minor parties such as One Nation and the Australian Democrats after they too became parliamentary players. These works are useful in their illumination of how entree to parliament professionalises, moderates and potentially even homogenises minor parties. However, they explain little about what it takes for minor parties to get there in the first place, and why some make it while others do not.

In this project’s specific focus area of campaigning, there are a range of questions worth asking about this. For example, does professionalisation follow the election of members to parliament, or is it a necessary pre-condition for electoral success these days? Are parliamentary minor...
parties wealthier than non-parliamentary ones because they have crossed this threshold, or was it their superior financial resources compared with other parties which helped them get there in the first place? And what of campaign policies and messages? Are the minor parties which win seats those who do most to moderate their views and appeal to the median voter, or are they ones whose more extreme views suddenly come into favour due to external events? These are not questions which can be answered with the present data, but exploring them further would make for a very interesting series of future research projects.

More broadly, there are a host of fascinating organisational questions which arise once this distinction between parliamentary and non-parliamentary minor parties is acknowledged. Given that there was significant variance in how the minor parties in this case set were structured, how might organisational structures help or hinder the transition into parliament? Do parties which have (or adopt) the standard, hierarchical major party model fare better than those which retain flatter and more dispersed power structures? More fundamentally, it might also be asked whether representation in parliament is something that all parties will eventually achieve as they grow and develop, or whether there are some who are simply not suited to that particular mode of political engagement, regardless of how many members they have or how large the donations they attract.

These may well be questions which have been explored in past Doctoral theses and Masters projects, as they would seem particularly well-suited to that kind of detailed scholarly analysis. However the published Australian literature appears to be mostly silent on these points, presumably because of the past lack of interest in minor parties more generally. There are a range of researchers in Europe who have addressed these kinds of issues (for example, Weeks, 2010; Lucardie, 2000; Pedersen, 1982), but it is difficult to apply their conclusions to Australia because the two-party dominant system creates an entirely different set of opportunities and constraints for minor parties. Researchers in more comparable systems such as the UK and USA have rarely addressed minor parties in any systematic way either, so that party literature provides similarly little guidance. It seems that by highlighting the distinctiveness of parliamentary and non-parliamentary minor parties, this project has therefore opened up a broad new avenue of enquiry for future Australian researchers to traverse.
Other observations

In addition to the above observations stemming from this project's formal findings, there are two other points which are worth briefly raising because they add something to the picture of the political scene in Australia today. These are issues which have only been incidentally touched on in the preceding chapters, but each has relevance for the wider study of parties and campaigning.

Homogeneity in the campaign community

In conducting the interviews for this research, it was striking how often this involved speaking with people whose gender, age, ethnicity and professional background fell within a specific, narrow band. A total of 64 party representatives from across the entire Australian political spectrum were interviewed over the life of this project, and almost every individual was a white, Anglo-European man between the age of 30 and 60. Of the 64 senior parliamentary and party office figures who fit the selection criteria and were willing to be interviewed, just 10 were women. Only one of those women represented a major party, although there were a small number of other women from major parties on the initial target list who declined to be interviewed. What's more, only three of the interviewees came from migrant or non-English-speaking backgrounds, and none of them were women. Without exception, the major party interviewees had all occupied past roles as lawyers, political staffers, trade unionists or consultants to one of those former three professions. The minor party representatives were more diverse professionally—incorporating people with past experience in environmental science, IT consulting, farming and small business ownership, amongst other things—but still had a significant skew towards white collar professionals and former political staffers.

The notable homogeneity of these interview participants is entirely consistent with broader studies of the composition of Australia’s political class. Research by Miragliotta and Errington (2008), Hollander (2003), Sawer and Zappala (2001) and Pickering (1998) indicates that Australian politics has long been disproportionately dominated by Anglo-European men from a narrow range of professional backgrounds. Miragliotta and Errington’s (2012) most recent work also shows that in terms of past careers at least, the predominance of party staffers and lawyers is becoming greater over time rather than lessening off.

152 This figure includes the 52 representatives of the parties in our five case study campaigns, plus the initial five scoping interviews and the seven representatives from our excluded Tasmanian case study.

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There are a number of interesting questions which arise from this. For example, how does the fact that campaigns are run by people with a specific set of characteristics and experiences shape their design and delivery? Is past political experience an advantage or a constraint when it comes to creating campaigns which can effectively engage the average voter? Are parties aware of the limited range of backgrounds and viewpoints around the planning table? And if so, where do they look for alternative inputs to counteract this? This project’s interviews suggest that the major parties are aware of these issues to some extent, and that this is one reason for their extensive reliance on market research.

A further series of questions relates to why the campaign community appears to be such a closed shop in the first place. Is it the long hours and aggressive competition which keeps women away? Or might it simply be due to ‘good old-fashioned sexism, darlin’!’ as was suggested during one of this project’s scoping interviews? Is the lack of ethnic diversity at the top of parties reflective of a wider mono-culturalism within their rank and file, or are there particular obstacles which prevent people from non-Anglo European backgrounds moving from ordinary member to oligarch? These are clearly important issues warranting further research, as they go to the heart of how inclusive and representative Australian political parties are.

Another related point worth noting in that in analysing party campaign returns, it was observed that the same handful of individuals and consultancy firms were repeatedly employed to provide advice and professional support to parties around Australia. Observers of politics would no doubt be familiar with firms such as the Liberal-aligned pollsters Crosby Textor and Labor research house UMR, but companies like Visibility Consulting, Essential Media Communications, CPI Strategic and the Greens-aligned researcher Alex Frankel have lower public profiles. There is limited public information available about the individuals who work for these firms or their professional backgrounds, but what little is known suggests that these often mirror those of the parties themselves (for example, Crosby Textor founders Lynton Crosby and Mark Textor are both former Liberal staffers, while one of CPI Strategic’s founding partners, Stephen Newnham, is a former Victorian ALP State Secretary). In recognition of their central role in modern electioneering, many international researchers have specifically focused on the backgrounds, expertise and perspectives of campaign consultants (for example, Plasser and Plasser, 2002; Farrell, Kolodny and Medvic, 2001; Thurber and Nelson, 2000), however it does

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153 It should be noted that this comment was offered in jest.

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not appear that any Australian scholars have done so. This may be partly due to the fact that Australia has traditionally had a culture of secrecy surrounding the use of political consultants, particularly compared with a country like the US where many consultants are celebrities in their own right (Mills, 1986). However as noted below, there does appear to be a new spirit of openness sweeping through the Australian campaign community. It remains to be seen whether this extends to external consultants, but if they could be convinced to participate in future research, this would undoubtedly unlock fascinating new perspectives and voices which have not yet been heard.

Newfound openness

As should be evident from the selected quotes included throughout this thesis, the party representatives who were interviewed offered intelligent, thoughtful and surprisingly frank perspectives on the process of designing and delivering election campaigns in Australia today. In setting out to interview such a broad cross-section of party representatives, there was a good deal of apprehension about both the willingness of these key actors to participate, and also about how much they would actually be prepared to say. This apprehension was fed in part by the experiences of authors such as Mills (1986) and Young (2006; 2004), who appeared to encounter an attitude of secrecy and obstruction when carrying out their research in the past. But it was also fuelled by more senior academics in the field who, in consultations about this project, suggested that there was little point even trying to interview party representatives—firstly because they would give away very little, and secondly because anything they did say would be shamelessly biased and partisan.

In the course of conducting this research it was found that neither of these concerns were particularly well-founded. Instead, it appeared that many party representatives were actively keen to talk, and to correct what they saw as misunderstandings or misperceptions about election campaigning within the general community. Many displayed a strong sense of pride at how professional and responsive Australian campaigns have become, and seemed to quite enjoy discussing their achievements with a researcher who shared their (rather niche) interests. Furthermore, most were quick to highlight shortcomings or failings in their own approach and acknowledge areas of strong performance by their political opponents, in a process that was reminiscent of professional athletes coolly appraising each others' game. It is argued that this indicates a degree of a cultural change within the campaign community compared with attitudes.
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in the past, which is reflective of changing attitudes to information and privacy in society more generally. One of the interviewees addressed this point directly when reflecting on changes he had observed in the campaigning world during his professional career:

"There's now a generation of people who are so comfortable being open and transparent in everything they do. Sharing everything. I mean, people who are about 10 years younger than me have basically gone their whole adult lives with Facebook. And so the cultural change—as one of the 'designated old people' in the party—has been immense. The impact of having those people in increasingly senior positions is that they bring that [openness] to their profession. So basically, the internet happened. If the internet hadn't happened, we'd be just as secretive as we were back in '96!"

—WA-HQ-ALP

This cultural change is a welcome one for researchers because it creates new and further opportunities to include the voices of party representatives in Australian scholarly works, where they have often been more notable by their absence.

However, some caveats are necessary here. A great deal of persistence was required to get through to the target participants, and there were a number of individuals from the initial list who simply refused to take part in this project. That was not particularly surprising, given that this list included a number of serving state premiers and party secretaries who were engaged in the 2013 Federal Election campaign during the research timeframe. As noted in Chapter Two, it was sometimes necessary to contact potential participants upwards of six times before finally securing their agreement to be interviewed; making repeated contact with more than 60 participants added significantly to the project's workload. However, this lack of responsiveness did not appear to indicate a lack of interest or willingness in most cases. It is simply that people who work in politics are extremely busy, and so responding to emails or phone calls from an unknown researcher is generally a fairly low priority. Furthermore, many of them are constantly asked to do things which are additional to, or outside the scope of, their paid roles; this is particularly true for ex-politicians and party staffers who have moved on to positions in business or academia. Given this, they want to know that the person approaching them is serious about the activity being proposed, and persisting through multiple contacts and follow-ups is how researchers can demonstrate this.

It seems likely that the manner in which the interviews were approached also contributed to the richness of material shared during them. Having previously worked in and around federal

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politics, this researcher has a great deal of sympathy for the challenging nature of the work that the interviewees do, and also for how hostile their work environment can be on a day-to-day basis. Because of this, every interview was approached on a basis of openness and friendliness, and it was made clear to all participants that the project was not looking for a ‘gotcha!’ moment or seeking to hold them accountable for any particular decision taken on their watch. Instead, the participants were informed that it was their views and perspectives on specific aspects of the campaign process which were of primary interest, and that they were free to say as much or as little as they felt comfortable with. In almost all cases this resulted in a free, friendly and frank discussion which generated valuable research insights. While researchers such as Lees-Marshment also favour this approach (pers. comms., 2013), conversations with other academics reveal a pervasive view that it is necessary to ‘go hard’ with politicians and party figures to break through the defences of spin and obfuscation that it is assumed they will erect. In fact, these defences come up as a direct result of that more journalistic approach, and so researchers who are interested in gaining useful insights would do well to avoid it.

In short, interviewing party representatives was found to be a rewarding and beneficial experience, and one which contributed significantly to the overall research project. As has been highlighted throughout this thesis, it would often have been difficult to identify significant patterns or themes in the other data without the insights provided by the interviewees, and this would have made the project’s overall findings much the poorer. Other Australian politics researchers are therefore strongly encouraged to involve these party representatives in future research projects, as formal models and external observations seem to be an incomplete substitute for their insights.

**Conclusions**

The discussion throughout this chapter boils down to two key points: Australian politics matters, and there is still plenty that remains to be studied about how it all works. This chapter has identified a broad range of further research questions which stem from the findings of this project—questions which address ongoing local and international conversations in diverse fields including electoral studies, party organisations, political institutions and democratic governance. What’s more, it has pointed out that there seems to be an emerging generation of Australian political actors who stand ready and willing to engage with academic research in these fields. It is therefore hoped that more emerging researchers will ignore advice to the contrary and make the

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study of Australian politics their primary focus in the future. Those wishing to do so are more than welcome to take up any of unanswered questions and intriguing topics identified throughout this chapter.
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Circling back to the questions posed at the beginning of this thesis, why do some parties pour their energies into dominating the nightly news, while others aim to colonise the online space or do battle in the suburbs with traditional grassroots tactics? What makes policy the primary focus for some political campaigns, and a relative after-thought for others? Why do some parties target voters in their traditional heartlands, while others range further afield in pursuit of new support? And what lies behind the varying use of leaders, party members and other public advocates when engaging voters?

In the introduction it was noted that the standard answer to all these questions is that parties make calculated decisions about what will help and hinder them when campaigning for office, and pursue the strategies that will provide them with the greatest advantage. While nothing in this thesis contradicts that broad answer, the discussion in the preceding chapters has revealed a series of more nuanced and complex answers to these interesting questions. By addressing the fundamental issue of what Australian parties are trying to achieve by competing in elections, and linking this to the strategies adopted in a set of case study campaigns, this research has provided a fresh way to think about the inputs of party strategic decision-making and the diverse criteria they might employ when choosing between policy positions, communications channels, outreach tactics and more. Importantly too, it has delivered new insights into how parties with different resources, constraints and opportunities navigate the Australian political terrain in pursuit of their political goals.

The benefits of identifying and understanding party goals in order to make sense of campaign strategies has been a core theme of this thesis. It has clearly been shown that winning—in the traditional sense of gaining more votes than any other—is not the only goal that matters for parties, despite the near-total focus on this objective in past studies of elections and campaigning. To be sure, political actors such as the Australian Labor Party and the Liberal Party of Australia do aim to dominate the ballot box as a means of gaining control of government most of the time. However, it has been shown that even these major players view this goal as unachievable in some political contexts, and so set themselves the more modest goal of preserving a viable political and parliamentary presence instead. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that far from toiling fruitlessly towards some long-distant goal of taking government, Australia’s minor parties actually have more focused and attainable objectives in

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mind: securing critical influence over political outcomes in parliament, and putting neglected or fringe policy issues onto the mainstream political agenda. By identifying and exploring these objectives, this thesis contributes to a long-running international conversation about party goals, and particularly adds to understanding about the goals parties set themselves in the specific and time-constrained context of elections. Importantly too, it clarifies the benchmarks Australian parties use when making strategic decisions, and so provides new insights into their campaign behaviour.

As explored in Chapter Three, the goals that the parties participating in this research professed to hold did not line up neatly with those identified in the existing literature. Because of that, this thesis’ own hypotheses about major parties pursuing votes, minor parties aiming for office and micro parties favouring policy were also found to be somewhat off the mark. Where authors such as Harmel and Janda (1994) argue that parties may seek votes, office, policy or intra-party democracy, this thesis makes the case that those first two categories warrant more specific classification, while the final one does not exist as a distinct goal. On the basis of the evidence presented here, it is argued that government, preservation, influence and policy are better categories for defining party goals, at least in the Australian context. International researchers are encouraged to take up this framework and explore whether it also provides a better fit with the goals of their national parties than the existing goals literature.

While it was beyond the scope of this thesis to examine why the goals of Australian parties diverged from the categories in the literature, three possible explanations were proposed in Chapter Three and warrant further exploration. Firstly, it was suggested that this literature might simply not be applicable to two-party dominant systems such as Australia’s, given that it has primarily been developed in the multi-party systems of Western Europe. The opportunities and constraints facing major and minor parties in multi-party democracies are very different from those presented to Australian political actors, and it is therefore understandable that local parties might set their goals differently.

However, it was also suggested that the past scholarly work might simply have failed to adequately capture how parties themselves define their goals because their voices and views have not been included in this literature. Chapter Three notes that all of the main works on party goals draw their insights from external analysis of party behaviour, and no effort appears to have been
made to cross-check this with political actors themselves. This observation links to a broader point that has been made throughout this thesis: researchers wishing to explain the behaviour of political actors would do well to involve them in this research.

Finally, it was suggested that the goals identified by the parties in this project might represent short-term election goals that are distinct from their broader, long-term goals. After all, the parties were asked about their goals upon entering a specific election and the focus of the interviews was very much within an electoral frame. It is possible that Australian parties do see their broader goals over the political cycle as aligning with the vote, office or policy categories outlined in the existing literature, with these then narrowing to more specific goals during election campaigns. To determine whether this is the case, it would be necessary to question these same parties about their goals outside of the campaign context and compare their responses with those detailed here.

This thesis did not set out to make a contribution to the international debate about party goals, but the findings and discussion presented here clearly do so. In the process of proving the core contention that parties hold different goals when entering elections, this research has also demonstrated that the question of what these goals really are remains far from settled.

Of course, the primary focus of this research was campaign strategies, and viewed in the context of their goals Australian party strategies take on a new transparency. It becomes clear that some parties emphasise the nightly news and mainstream media because their government objective necessitates engaging a broad cross-section of the (often disinterested) voting public, while others pursue personal and direct contact as a means of convincing disgruntled supporters to stay true, or leverage public forums to demonstrate their status as important political players. We can see that parties with different goals need policy for different things: as a way to demonstrate vision and governing capacity, an electoral bribe, a point of differentiation or a core crusade, and so explain variance in the significance afforded this across different campaigns. We can further understand that swing voters in typically marginal seats are rarely the most beneficial targets for unpopular major parties or minor ones with aims apart from taking government. And we can acknowledge that emphasising leaders is a smart choice for parties on the march to government but a disaster for those who have been there too long, as well as representing a more complex choice for parties with alternative structures and goals. In short, once goals form part of the

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explanation, the questions posed at the start of this chapter can start to be answered in specifics rather than the generalities that seem to have dominated past discussions of political campaigning.

This thesis has catalogued a broad range of those ‘specifics’—the ways in which holding particular goals led Australian parties to make certain strategic decisions. These ranged from high-level choices about a campaign’s overall themes and targets, to practical decisions about which tools and channels to employ in getting campaign messages to their intended recipients.

In comparing these strategic decisions across and within goal categories, this research was guided by a series of influential frameworks from the existing literature. But in the process of applying these empirically to the chosen case study campaigns, it became clear that some were — at best — an incomplete fit with the reality of electioneering. Many of the hypotheses posed in Chapter One about which strategic choices the parties would make were also found to be incorrect or incomplete, having been informed by these theoretical frameworks.

For example, the existing issue ownership literature is premised on the idea that parties will seek to fight elections on their most favourable issue territory. As discussed in Chapter Nine, the underlying assumption is that this will generally entail emphasising issues they are already perceived to own. But as this thesis has demonstrated, parties have a more complex range of criteria for deciding whether an issue is favourable to them or not. This includes their own — and their opponents’ — recent record of activity on it; whether it engages — or alienates — key constituencies whose support they need; whether they have something new or different to offer; whether it adds to overall perceptions of their competence and capability; and, in the case of smaller parties, how it allows them to position themselves relative to other competitor parties. In fact, it was only in the case of the influence-seeking parties that questions of issue ownership even appeared to come into their decision-making. This thesis has argued that the existing literature is right in suggesting parties will attempt to fight elections on their most advantageous issues, but also suggests past authors have tended to conceptualised what these may be far too narrowly.

Based on this past literature, this thesis had hypothesised that vote-seeking parties would emphasise their own issue space but also seek to colonise some of their opponents’, office-
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seeking parties would stick firmly to their own issue niche and policy-seeking parties would strike out into unclaimed issue space. Putting aside the fact that these goal categories did not ultimately turn out to be the best terms for describing the parties' goals, these hypotheses were generally not supported. This research has shown that parties within each of the goal categories ranged across the available issue territory in different ways, for the simple reason that the 'ownership status' of an issue was not their abiding consideration when making decisions on what to talk about.

Similarly, through operationalising and applying Rohrschneider's mobilising-chasing continuum to a set of real-world campaigns, this thesis identified a range of conceptual problems with this influential framework. First and foremost, it has been shown that all parties use elements of both mobilising and chasing strategies, and do so in different combinations across Rohrschneider's five trade-offs. That means that it is nearly impossible to map parties to any single point on a continuum between mobilising and chasing which reflects their specific choices while distinguishing these from other parties also on the continuum. As was noted in Chapter Nine, it may be theoretically possible to achieve this mapping in multi-dimensional space. However, to do so would be to entirely part company with any sense that Rohrschneider's framework can provide useful, practical insights on campaign strategy.

Secondly, this research calls into question Rohrschneider's assertion that all five of his trade-offs represent real strategic choices. Based on the evidence presented in chapters Five to Eight, it has been argued that decisions about policy or vote maximisation, target audiences and use of the leader versus other constituencies can feasibly be viewed as areas where parties deliberately engage in actions supporting their goals. By contrast, decisions about the use of research and the role of party organisations should best be understood as areas where a party's actions are determined primarily by resources, the force of habit, pre-existing organisational structures and other related factors.

Finally, it has been shown that the mobilising-chasing continuum model is not equally well suited to analysing major and minor parties. This problem emerged in the course of attempts to identify suitable indicators for operationalising the model. For example, it is easy to identify major parties' core supporters and make judgements about their use of leaders, but often much harder to do so in the case of minor parties. As Chapter Nine notes, some of this difficulty may have

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arisen because of the specific indicators chosen by the author for use throughout this project. However, there remains a real question about what alternative indicators could be used to operationalise this framework in a way that easily accommodates both major and minor parties.

In Chapter One it was proposed that vote-seeking parties would chase new voters, office-seeking ones would mobilise their core supporters and policy-seeking parties would attempt some combination of this. In fact, the primary finding of this research is that all campaigns are a combination of mobilising and chasing strategies, with parties in each of the goal categories combining elements of these strategies in ways that were common to each other, but divergent from parties holding different goals. This research may therefore have disproved its own hypotheses, but in the process it has made a substantial contribution to refining Rohrschneider's concept of the mobilising-chasing continuum.

Finally, this research has firmly reinforced the idea that there is a common communications toolkit for campaigning that parties then pick and choose from. It has also provided a practical demonstration of Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli's (2009) suggestion that this toolkit is constantly evolving, through the decline of print and radio advertising and increasing uptake of online channels over just the three-year span of this study. In Chapter One it was suggested that the availability of resources alone was not enough to explain parties' choices about which tools and channels to use, and that their campaign goals should also form part of this explanation. The discussion in chapters Five to Eight has clearly demonstrated that this is the case, as only the most financially-constrained of parties indicated that resources were the primary driver of their communications approach. More commonly, the parties drew a direct link between their campaign goals and the tools or channels they prioritised for communicating with the public, reinforcing the goal-centred view of Gibson and Rommele (2009; 2001).

Again, however, because the parties in this data set divided themselves into goal categories which differed from those originally hypothesised in Chapter One, this thesis' predictions about their choices were found to be somewhat wide of the mark. In particular, the preservation-seeking parties displayed far more emphasis on direct communication through party activists, and the influence-seeking parties made far greater use of advertising, than had been predicted at the outset.

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Conclusion

As with the debates surrounding party goals, it was not this project's original intention to provide such an extensive critique of the frameworks that informed it. However, it seems clear that these could benefit from more frequent application to real-world campaigns as this process appears to have revealed a series of conceptual challenges to them – particularly the concepts of issue ownership and the mobilising-chasing continuum.

Moving beyond these frameworks to the broader themes of this thesis, it has also been demonstrated that parties set and pursue their campaign strategies in environmental, institutional and organisational contexts which offer them very different opportunities and constraints. For this reason, it is important to also look beyond their goals in seeking to understand why parties behave as they do when campaigning for office.

These additional factors can be encapsulated under the heading of campaign context, and the clear influence that this exerts over party strategies makes it difficult to gauge how applicable this project's findings may be outside of Australia. As outlined in Chapter One, it was initially hoped that this research might generate a broad framework for explaining and predicting campaign strategies. However, the findings presented here have clearly demonstrated that context matters too much for any 'universal' framework to accurately map and predict party behaviour on the campaign trail. So while this thesis has demonstrated that Australian parties holding common goals made similar and specific strategic choices, it remains an open question whether parties in other countries do likewise. It seems conceivable and reasonable that parties in other contexts would make parallel choices when they hold common goals, however the specifics of those choices may well diverge greatly from the ones outlined here because of differences in the campaign context. Further research will be needed to explore these interesting issues, but this thesis has laid the groundwork for that by cataloguing the Australian case.

It is fitting to conclude by emphasising the Australian slant of this project's findings, as the importance of continuing to map and explore the local political landscape has been a recurrent theme throughout this thesis. It has frequently been noted throughout the previous chapters that a good deal remains to be learned about Australia's political actors and their motivations, objectives and activities—especially those outside the Labor/Liberal sphere of dominance. Furthermore, in recent times there have been relatively few studies comparing differences in political and party activity amongst and between Australia's states, particularly when compared...
Conclusion

with the number of studies contrasting federal political practice with that in other countries. This thesis does not claim to have filled in all those gaps; in truth, it has only barely scratched the surface. But it does add a good deal to current knowledge about the Australian political ecosystem by highlighting what a range of significant political actors want, how they go about getting it, and what resources they call upon for that task. The depth of this Australian content means that this thesis makes a contribution well beyond the specific field of campaign studies; it also contributes to a broader conversation about how Australian actors and institutions interact with each other in their political environment. As a result, its findings and insights have significant value even to those with little interest in the mechanics of political campaigning.

For those who are interested in such mechanics however, this thesis demonstrates that it is possible to gain a fresh and highly nuanced picture of party campaign strategies by exploring and understanding party goals. In short, to look beyond winning is to gain a new way of seeing and making sense of political campaigns.
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Appendix One—Semi-structured interview standard question list

Australian campaign strategy study

- Thinking first about the focus of your election campaign: did you feel this was primarily aimed at existing supporters of your party, undecided voters, or people who had primarily supported other parties in the past?
- Within that broad category, were there specific groups of people you were particularly keen to engage? For example, young people, people from particular socio-economic backgrounds, migrant communities?
- How did the campaign team decide which tools or communication channels would be most appropriate to reach your target audiences? What factors did you weigh up in making those decisions?
- Were there things you wanted to do but weren't able to because of resource issues – either in terms of money, volunteers or other resources?
- Looking now at the content of the campaign, what role did your party's policies play in the strategic planning for the campaign? For example, did you build the campaign around them, or did they come later once you had worked out your major themes and messages?
- How do you read the mood of the public and come up with campaign messages or themes that would respond to that mood? How big a role do polling and focus groups play in helping you do this? How influential is your own 'gut instinct', feedback from elected members and party members about the mood in their communities?
- What did you, as the leader/lead candidate, see as your primary task in the campaign? For example, was your role to engage the media, attract new supporters, excite existing supporters, or something else?
- What did you see as the primary role of your party membership and grassroots? For example, did you see them as an active part of the overall campaign infrastructure, or the responsibility of individual candidates to mobilise and manage?
- What, if any, opportunities did party members or grassroots supporters have to be involved in the campaign planning?
- Without needing to go into details about specific dollar amounts, how influential do you think money was in this campaign? Did the size of your budget relative to other parties' play a role in the outcome?
- What was your party's primary goal going into the campaign? In other words, what would success have looked like to you?
- How do you think your primary goal influenced your party's strategic choices throughout the campaign?
- Do you think that the way your party campaigns says something to voters about the kind of party you are and the kind of government you would lead?
- What do you think the most important ingredient for a successful campaign is?
Appendix Two—List of campaign ephemera sources and collections consulted

<table>
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<th>Institution</th>
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<td>March–April 2013</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Queensland State Election 2012</td>
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<td>Western Australian State Election 2013</td>
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<td>Mitchell Ephemera Collection</td>
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<td>State Library of Queensland</td>
<td>John Oxley Ephemera Collection</td>
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Appendix Three—Strategy mapping process

This appendix provides a detailed discussion of the individual indicators and methods used to arrive at the findings detailed in chapters Five to Eight.

For the content analysis, the unit of analysis was ‘mentions of individual issues’ within the parties’ campaign flyers, leaflets, advertising, leader speeches and other available ephemera. That is, the researcher reviewed each campaign item to identify what the primary focus issue was (e.g. transport, health, education) and whether there were any additional or secondary issues featured. Each item of campaign ephemera was then assigned a series of codes in line with the project’s codebook (see Appendices Five and Six).

As discussed in Chapter Two, the content analysis method relies heavily on the judgement of the coder in making assessments about what the primary focus issue was compared with secondary or additional issues. However, in the case of the campaign materials reviewed as part of this research, most had been explicitly and clearly designed to make their key issue as obvious as possible. This is because political parties aim to minimise the amount of time and intellectual energy required from voters in understanding the messages they are trying to convey. Furthermore, because all materials in this project were coded by a single researcher – the author of this thesis – judgements about which issues were featured in these materials would be expected to be fairly consistent.

Once the full set of available materials for each party had been coded in this way, a computer-aided count was then conducted to identify which issues each talked about most frequently during their respective campaigns.

A sample party strategy map created through the process described here is provided as Appendix Four. A copy of the project codebook used while undertaking aspects of this analysis is provided as Appendix Five and a sample of the coding for these materials is included as Appendix Six.

**Issue ownership**

The majority of past studies into issue ownership have been concerned with the theoretical range of issue positions that parties may adopt, or have sought to identify which parties own what issue territory and what happens when they change their issue positioning (see chapters One and Nine). For this research, it was instead necessary to establish which of the identified issue
positions each of the parties chose to stake out—whether their own issue territory, their opponent’s issue turf or unclaimed issue space. To do this, it was necessary to identify which issues already belonged to what parties in the Australian political context. It was not possible to locate any scholarly research which has explored this issue in great depth, however aggregate public polling from Newspoll provided a useful proxy.

Newspoll regularly asks Australian voters questions about which party is best to handle different policy issues, ranging from climate change and water resources, to cost of living, healthcare and economic management. Aggregating these findings over time indicates that—despite fluctuations throughout the electoral cycle—each of Australia’s political parties are regularly rated as better managers of different policy areas. For example, over the period 2010 to 2013, the ALP was consistently rated as the better manager of issues such as health and Medicare, education and industrial relations, while the Liberal National Coalition was consistently viewed as the better manager of asylum seekers, national security and the economy, amongst other things (Newspoll, 2013b).

This ‘party best to handle’ data gives practical expression to the concept of issue ownership, which rests upon a party being strongly and favourably associated with a topic. For this reason, the researcher relied upon the Newspoll reports to determine which parties currently own what issue space in the Australian political context. However, some additional ownership designations were also allocated, in recognition of the fact that Newspoll does not specifically ask voters about minor parties such as The Greens and The Nationals. Reflecting their long advocacy on, and association with, two particular issues, it was determined that the environment is a Greens-owned issue, and regional affairs is a Nationals-owned one. This allowed the researcher to more accurately describe the issue choices of these parties than would have been the case using Newspoll data alone.

In identifying the focus issues for each campaign then, the researcher relied both on content analysis of campaign materials and the self-reporting of our interviewees. After coding all available ephemera produced by each party in line with the project’s codebook (see Appendix Five), a computer-aided count was then conducted to identify the issues each talked about most frequently during their respective campaigns. This information was then cross-checked with the focus issues reported by the interviewees in response to a specific question about this.

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Interestingly, most of the interview participants highlighted only one or two focus issues, while analysis of the materials suggested that their parties addressed a broader set of issues. However, there were no instances where a party’s campaign materials were focused on an entirely different set of issues to those reported by its representatives.

Having identified each party’s focus issues, these were then translated into issue ownership categories using Newspoll and Essential Media’s ‘party best to manage’ aggregate reports. For example, the West Australian Liberal Party’s top focus issues included law and order and education—the former was categorised as an issue it owned, while the latter was classed as opponent-owned issue. An additional ‘process’ category was created to encompass commonly-discussed themes such as ‘risk’, ‘mismanagement’, ‘transparency’ and ‘competence’, which appeared to refer to the process of governing rather than to specific policy issues. A ‘contested’ category was also created to cover issues which the Newspoll data showed two or more parties were rated very closely on, or issues where the title of ‘party best to manage’ had changed hands during the period 2010 to 2013.

Finally, each party was assigned one of four overall issue positions, based on how frequently they discussed their own, opponent-owned, contested and process issues. These positions were:

- **own issue space**—party primarily or exclusively focuses on issues it owns
- **opponent issue space**—party primarily or exclusively focuses on issues owned by its opponent
- **unclaimed issue space**—party primarily or exclusively focuses on issues which are not currently own by any party
- **mixed issue space**—party focuses on a mix of own, opponent and unclaimed issues

We created the ‘mixed issue space’ category when it became clear that a significant number of the parties in this data set did not restrict themselves to a single issue position, but rather ranged across the other three in a way which defied accurate classification within any one of these.

**Mobilising-chasing continuum**

In describing the mobilising-chasing continuum, Rohrschneider (2002:376) identified five critical trade-offs that parties must make, including:

- to what extent do they maximise votes or emphasise the representation of policies?

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- to what extent do they aim at mobilising their core constituency or unaligned voters?
- to what extent do they rely on ideological programs (policies) or modern technologies (polling) in designing an election appeal?
- to what extent do they rely on a leader or (intra-party) constituencies in targeting voters?
- to what extent do they view intra-party democracies as a symbolic component of the campaign message or a mechanical means to reach voters?

To answer these questions, each was assigned a set of indicators which could be used to analyse the observed campaign behaviour of the parties in our data set, and the details provided by our interviewees.

**Votes versus policy**

In exploring the question of vote maximisation versus policy maximisation, all available policy documents and promises released by the parties in the lead-up to each election were collected and analysed to determine a) what the nature of the policy or promise was; b) whether it was targeted to a specific electorate or had statewide benefits and outcomes; and c) whether the policy included specific funding and implementation details.

A party was categorised as pursuing votes if the policy or promise delivered a specific and tangible outcome to a particular segment of the community or set of electorates, such as a new school or family tax concessions. A party was categorised as pursuing policy representation if the policy or promise delivered benefits and outcomes which were not specific to any location or community segment, such as law reform or an overall upgrade to public transport networks.

Of course, this is a fairly subjective standard as a party may sincerely wish to pursue a policy which just happens to benefit particular communities or regions and so win votes. However, our standard interview questionnaire included questions about each party’s target audiences and the role of policy in designing their overall electoral appeal, which allowed the researcher to make reasonably informed decisions about how to categorise campaign policies and promises. For example, the Victorian ALP interviewees specifically indicated that regional electorates were a strategic priority as part of their strategy to retain office, and a large number of the party’s policies and promises were observed to deliver particular benefits to regional communities. In such cases, it was possible to confidently categorise these promises as being driven by vote considerations rather than policy representation.

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Appendix Three—Strategy mapping process

Having categorised each individual policy or promise, an overall count was then conducted to determine the ratio of policy announcements aimed at winning votes, to those which served to represent and disseminate broader policy ideas. It is acknowledged that this is a fairly crude measure of vote and policy maximisation, however it did allow the researcher to draw some broad conclusions about each party’s approach, particularly when ratios from different parties and the four overall goal groups were compared with each other.

**Core, unaligned or non-supporters**

To determine whether each party aimed to mobilise its core constituency, unaligned voters or non-supporters, the researcher analysed patterns in the distribution of campaign materials to individual electorates. The aim was to identify which electorates were the focus of the most intensive campaign activity, for as many of the interviewees explained, parties categorise seats in order of priority and assign different levels of resourcing to each depending on their significance to the overall campaign (see p.68). A ‘Priority A’ seat will receive a far greater share of the overall campaign budget than a ‘Priority B’ or ‘C’ seat, and this was clearly evident when coding the campaign ephemera as some seats were observed to receive 10 or more individual items from a single party, while others within the same state received just two or three.

To look for patterns in where the parties were targeting their resources, the researcher identified the seats to which they distributed the most materials, and then compared this information with the results from the previous election. Parties were considered to be mobilising their core if they directed most of their energies towards non-marginal seats they already held; pursuing unaligned voters if they targeted a mix of own- and opponent-held low margin seats; and chasing non-supporters if they focused their resources on higher margin, opponent-held seats.

Each of the interviewees were also asked to identify their target audiences, and this information provided additional insight into whether they were mobilising their core supporters or chasing new ones. In response to this question, many of the interviewees specifically nominated key electorates or regions within their states; this was particularly useful in the case of minor parties as it was sometimes difficult to identify their target seats on the basis of a small collection of campaign ephemera.

**Polling versus policy**
Appendix Three—Strategy mapping process

It was not possible to determine the extent of any party's reliance on ideological programs or modern technologies through external observation, because there is little public information available about parties' research inputs. For this indicator, the researcher was therefore forced to rely on the interviewee's responses to direct questions about the role that policy occupied in their campaigns, and how much they were guided by polling and research. While it was initially expected that parties would downplay their research use, most were surprisingly forthcoming about how much they allowed polling and focus groups to guide the presentation and content of their campaigns.

After completing the interviews and reviewing the range of responses provided by our participants, four categories were developed which reflected a span from least polling use to most. These categories were also informed by Rohrschneider's predictions of how parties would employ research and policy in purely mobilising and chasing strategies (2002: 376–377). Each party in our data set was then assigned to one of these four categories, based on the self-reported extent and nature of their research use:

- **exclusively policy**—the party did not use any polling or market research
- **primarily policy**—the party used polling and research to guide how policy and key messages were communicated through its campaign, but relied on other inputs to guide selection of focus issues, key policies and strategic approach
- **primarily polling**—the party used polling and research to guide the selection of focus issues, key policies, target audiences, messaging and other major aspects of its campaign approach
- **exclusively polling**—the party used polling and research to determine all aspects of its campaign approach.

**Leaders versus intra-party constituencies**

To explore the extent to which parties relied on their leader versus intra-party constituencies, it was first necessary to determine who constituted the latter group, as Rohrschneider's original article provided no particular guidance on this. After reviewing a selection of campaign materials and noting the range of groups featured within these, it was identified that parties emphasised senior candidates (or spokespeople), local candidates and party members, in addition to focusing on leaders. As part of the broader content analysis, the researcher therefore coded for the presence or absence of these four constituencies in each item of campaign ephemera. Where a
party did not have a leader, or conversely, where a party had a leader and therefore did not make use of senior candidates and spokespeople, this was coded as 'N/A'.

Having completed this analysis, percentage figures were then calculated to find the relative visibility of the four party constituencies within each party’s campaign. Based on these percentages, parties were allocated to one of three overall categories:

- **leader focused**—the party focused mainly on its leader in its appeal to voters
- **senior candidate focused**—the party focused mainly on one or more senior candidates in its appeal to voters
- **local candidate focused**—the party focused mainly on individual local candidates in its appeal to voters.

Both the overall designations and the individual percentage figures were then used when comparing differences of approach amongst and between the four goal groups.

**Symbolic versus mechanistic role for members**

Finally, to determine whether our parties viewed intra-party democracies (members and member participation) as a symbolic component of their campaign message or simply as a mechanical means to reach voters, the researcher relied on two indicators. Firstly, references were sought to intra-party democracy, opportunities for member participation, calls to contribute to policy or strategy, and other related appeals within the party’s public campaign materials. These were coded on a binary basis as being either present or absent; no attempt was made to account for the frequency or prominence of these within the item as a whole.

At the same time, the interview participants were specifically asked about the role of their party’s grassroots membership and what, if any, opportunities existed for them to be involved in the campaign’s design and delivery. Again using the range of responses provided and Rohrschneider’s description of fully mobilising and chasing strategies, three categories were developed which encapsulated the parties’ different approaches:

- **symbolic**—party offers many opportunities for member participation and promotes this as part of its electoral appeal
- **internally participatory**—party offers many opportunities for member participation but does not promote this as a core part of its electoral appeal.

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- **mechanistic**—members and supporters have few, if any, opportunities for participation beyond the practical delivery of campaigns on the ground.

Parties were then allocated to one of these three categories depending on how frequently their materials included reference to intra-party democracy, and how great a role the interviewees reported for their membership.

It should be clear from this discussion that operationalising the mobilising-chasing continuum involved a significant amount of work in its own right, even before this was actually used to arrive at the findings reported in this thesis. To our knowledge, this represents the first attempt to turn Rohrschneider’s theoretical continuum into a more focused investigative tool, and it is clear that some of the indicators adopted are, at best, broad proxies for the items of analytical interest. Having proposed this initial set of indicators, it is our hope that other researchers may test and refine these through further work on party campaign strategy.

**Communications repertoires**

In addition to coding the content of the collected campaign ephemera from our case study campaigns, the researcher also coded the format of these items to allow for analysis of the parties’ chosen communications repertoires. Individual codes were assigned to different types of advertising—such as television, radio and print—as well as more personalised formats such as flyers, direct mail and social media (see Appendix Five for full coding details). This allowed the researcher to gain an understanding of how extensively different parties relied on each of the available communications tools and channels, as well as the specific mix employed in each of their campaigns.

However, the problem with relying on this approach alone is that it over-represents the significance of tools or channels which leave an archive trail, such as direct mail and social media. At the same time, it under-represents those formats which do not leave behind lasting public evidence—a category which includes most forms of advertising. To ensure that our findings were not skewed by this issue, a series of questions were also included in our standard interview questionnaire asking the party representatives to identify which tools and channels they saw as most important, valuable or significant for their campaigns.

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The findings from these interviews were then combined with the content analysis of campaign materials to develop a list of all the tools and channels used by each party in their respective campaigns. For ease of comparison, these were sorted into the internal/external, direct/indirect categories identified by Kriesi, Bernhard and Hanggli (2009), allowing the researcher to gain an understanding of how extensively the parties had relied on their own structures and organisations to communicate with voters, versus other channels such as the media.

Mapping and comparing strategies

The processes outlined above represented a first stage of analysis, in which the aim was to gain as much insight as possible about the diverse activities of the parties in this data set, and classify this according to a common set of categories and indicators. The end goal was to generate an individual strategy map for each party, which could then be used to make direct comparisons between the strategic approaches adopted by all the parties in our data set.

A sample strategy map generated through this process is included as Appendix Four. Having developed one of these maps for all 32 of the parties in our data set, the second stage of our analysis involved grouping the parties into the four identified goal categories and examining the similarities and differences which emerged from side-by-side comparison. This allowed the researcher to pick out the main points of in-goal commonality discussed in chapters Five to Eight, as well as identify areas of convergence across the four goal categories. In seeking to understand or contextualise the strategic choices reflected in these maps, the researcher also frequently returned to the raw interview transcripts. Interestingly, it was found that the material contained within these often took on new significance or relevance when reviewed after the strategy mapping process had been completed, as it was possible to see practical evidence of how particular strategic choices or actions had been implemented on the ground.

This second stage of analysis was considerably quicker and easier than the first stage, but would not have been possible without the in-depth analysis and categorisation of our parties’ campaign activity conducted in that first stage. As has been highlighted throughout this thesis, every campaign presents a unique set of opportunities, constraints and challenges, and so it is extremely difficult to compare the raw, day-to-day activity of one party with any other. However, by translating this activity into a common language of strategic choices, it is possible to see patterns and trends across parties and political contexts. So although this two-stage approach is
time consuming and requires the processing of a large amount of material, this project suggests that the quality of insights gained makes this more than worth the trouble.
Queensland Labor Party – Queensland 2012

Interviewees:
[Redacted]

Strategy summary:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Issue position</th>
<th>Vote/policy ratio</th>
<th>Target audiences</th>
<th>Policy/polling</th>
<th>Leader/party</th>
<th>Symbolic/mechanistic</th>
<th>Communications repertoire - internal</th>
<th>Communications repertoire - external</th>
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<td>Mixed – but more emphasis on own issue territory</td>
<td>50/50 votes and policy split</td>
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Queensland Labor Party – Queensland 2012

Strategy notes:

Issue positioning:

- Key issues identified by interviewees: education; risk
- Content of HTVs: 414; 412

- Positive/negative split of ALL materials: N=422 (312 positive/ 83 negative/ 27 comparative) – 74 per cent positive; 20 per cent negative; 6 per cent comparative
- Positive/negative split of non-HTV materials: N=340 (230 positive/ 83 negative/ 27 comparative) – 68 per cent positive; 24 per cent negative; 8 per cent comparative

- In total, 60 non-HTV items mentioned 404; 60 mentioned 411; 47 mentioned 426; 39 mentioned 418.
- In total, 185 mentioned 414 (54 per cent) – of these, 76 (41 per cent) referenced no other content.
- In total, 3 mentioned 412 (0.9 per cent)

Vote/policy ratio:

- Total number of election-specific policies identified: 46
- Number linked to stated policy objectives or statewide services: 23 (50 per cent)
- Number which deliver tangible or specific benefits to a distinct electorate: 23 (50 per cent)
- Number of policies which did not come with specific implementation details or costings: 12 (26 per cent)

Target audience:

- Fielded candidates in 89/89 lower house seats (no upper house)
- Seats with most material:
  - Ashgrove (29 individual items) – ALP held with 57.10 of 2009 TPP (seat not won on first preferences)
  - Greenslopes (22 individual items) – ALP held with 56.94 of 2009 TPP (seat not won on first preferences)
  - Mount Coot-tha (21 individual items) – ALP held with 77.21 per cent of 2009 TPP (seat not won on first preferences)
  - Yeerongpilly (15 individual items) – ALP held with 58.73 per cent of 2009 TPP (seat not won on first preferences)
Appendix Four—Sample strategy map

- Bulimba (12 individual items) – ALP held with 57.77 per cent of 2009 TPP (seat not won on first preferences)
- Toowoomba North (11 individual items) – ALP held with 66.52 per cent of 2009 TPP (seat not won on first preferences)
- Everton (10 individual items) – ALP held with 70.51 per cent of 2009 TPP (seat not won on first preferences)
- Brisbane Central (9 individual items) – ALP held with 77.01 per cent of 2009 TPP (seat not won on first preferences)
- Stafford (9 individual items) – ALP held with 57.29 per cent of 2009 TPP (seat not won on first preferences)
- Thuringowa (8 individual items) – ALP held with 58.47 per cent of 2009 TPP (seat not won on first preferences)


- 9/23 promises targeting particular seats went to LNP held seats – 39 per cent; remaining 14 went to ALP held seats – 61 per cent

Policy/polling:
- Primarily polling – see interview transcripts

Leader/party:
- Electorate materials:
  - Anna Bligh included in 127/273 (46% of items)
- Media materials:
  - Anna Bligh included in 31/68 (45% of items)

- Electorate materials:
  - Local candidate only in 130/273 (48% of items)
- Media materials:
  - Local candidate only in 0/68 (0% of items)

- Electorate materials:
  - Party members included in 58/273 (22% of items)
- Media materials:
  - Party members included in 0/68 (0% of items)

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Democracy/mechanistic:

- Primarily mechanistic – see interview transcripts
- 0 references to party democracy or participation in campaign materials.

Further notes:
Total reported spend: $7,118,139 – see original expenditure return for details:
Appendix Five—Project Codebook

Campaign materials—content analysis codebook  
PhD thesis project

**Item number**

File naming convention:  
STATE/PARTY/FORMAT/ORDER REVIEWED = Item QLDALP102-01

**Format**

101—Advertisement, ambient: material carrying an AEC-mandated authorising statement from a political party, candidate or third-party organisation, displayed in ambient location (e.g. billboard, bus shelter, roadside signage)

102—Advertisement, print: material carrying an AEC-mandated authorising statement from a political party, candidate or third-party organisation, formatted for print media (newspaper or magazine)

103—Advertisement, radio: material carrying an AEC-mandated authorising statement from a political party, candidate or third-party organisation, formatted for radio broadcast

104—Advertisement, television: material carrying an AEC-mandated authorising statement from a political party, candidate or third-party organisation, formatted for broadcast on television

105—Advertisement, web: material carrying an AEC-mandated authorising statement from a political party, candidate or third-party organisation, formatted for web placement

106—Campaign leaflet: non-addressed material left in letterboxes and/or distributed during doorknocking, shopping centre stalls and candidate events by a party/candidate

107—Direct mail item: material addressed and delivered to a specific elector/household by a party/candidate

108—Email: material sent to voter email addresses by a party/candidate

109—Media release: published statement released by party/candidate to media and through other public channels (e.g. website). NOTE: Where a media release is uploaded to a website but is identified as a media statement, it is to be coded ‘109’ not ‘114’.

110—SMS: text of message sent to voter phone numbers by party/candidate

111—Social media: item published by party/candidate in any of the following social media formats: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest

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Appendix Five—Project Codebook

112—Speech: public address delivered by authorised party spokesperson/leader/candidate

113—Telemarketing: text or recording of scripted call made by party/candidate to electors or supporters

114—Web: material published to authorised party/campaign website by approved party/candidate content manager

Orientation

201—Self focused: content primarily addresses record, achievements, policies or promises of candidate/party which produced the material

202—Opponent focused: content primarily addresses record, failures, policies or promises of a party/candidate other than the party/candidate which produced the material

203—Issue focused: content primarily addresses specific issue or policy and highlights responses from issuing party/candidate AND/OR their opponents

204—Anonymous: content does not identify party/candidate responsible for the material

Tone

301—Positive: content primarily focuses on demonstrating advantages, achievements or benefits of a party/candidate or policy

302—Negative: content primarily focuses on demonstrating disadvantages, failures or costs of a party/candidate or policy

303—Contrast: content offers a side-by-side comparison of party policies, promises or people

304—Demand: makes a claim for specific policy or outcome from other parties/groups

Content

FEATURES LEADER
Y/N or N/A

FEATURES PARTY MEMBERS/ENDORSEMENTS
Y/N

FEATURES CANDIDATE ONLY
Y/N

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FEATURES SPOKESPERSON
Y/N or N/A

STANDARD BRANDING
Y/N

STANDARD TEXT
Y/N/CUSTOMISED (Some standard elements, customised candidate biography or local commitments)

DEMOCRACY APPEAL
Y/N

DIRECT APPEAL
Y/N

Examples of direct appeal to voters:
- Vote 1 for X
- Only candidate X can...
- Let's keep X
- Together, let's...
- With your support...
- Don't let...

NOTE: All How-to-Vote cards must be coded as containing a direct appeal to voters.

401—BUDGET
References condition of state's finances, deficits, government spending, management of budgetary issues, economic growth, tax (except Land Tax)

402—COST OF LIVING
References price of everyday goods, household budgets, petrol prices, grocery prices, mortgage pressures, declining value of incomes, electricity and utility prices.

403—DEVELOPMENT
References major projects, residential and commercial developments, approvals, 'red tape', 'green tape', council processes, development master plans, city-wide design visions, specific projects or development proposals; planning.

404—EDUCATION
References public and/or private schools, access issues, costs, building and development, resources, pre-school availability, curriculum, educational attainment, standardised testing and scores, trades training, vocational, tertiary sector.

405—ENVIRONMENT
References environmental issues such as global warming, carbon footprint, carbon pricing, emissions reduction, water restrictions, water use, Murray Darling Basin Plan, national parks, air quality and pollution, recycling, personal environmental
initiatives, conservation, green spaces, logging, home energy ratings, green building, animal welfare.

406—HEALTH AND HOSPITALS
References public and/or private hospitals, GP availability, health costs, health insurance, Medicare, bulk-billing, elective surgery wait lists, emergency department clearance rates, malpractice, accessibility, government spending on.

407—HOUSING
References supply and availability, land taxes, development costs, development ‘red’ and ‘green tape’, greenfields development areas, residential master planning, house prices, government support for homeowners.

408—JOBS
References supply and availability, job security, workplace health and safety, wages, industrial relations.

409—FAMILIES
References family payments and benefits, supports for families, childcare costs and accessibility, women in the workplace, facilities and resources, marriage equality.

410—FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
References federal/state relations, impact of federal activities on the state, federal taxes and programs, GST allocation, royalties, environmental regulation, bureaucracy.

411—INFRASTRUCTURE
References road, rail and transport projects and/or needs, community infrastructure (e.g. parks, playgrounds), sports facilities, funding allocations, upgrades, congestion, traffic, public transport, road safety, airports, broadband, waste management, ‘services’, public assets.

412—LEADER
References biography, promises, achievements, failures, activities of the party leader.

413—TEAM
References experience, past contribution, talents, knowledge, expertise, commitment or other benefits of party team/candidate list.

414—LOCAL ACHIEVEMENTS
References achievements or benefits specific to a local area, e.g. funding for community organisations, public facilities, ‘local heroes’. Also to be used where material focuses exclusively on the history/achievements/story of the individual candidate.

415—PUBLIC SECTOR
References public service jobs, services, staff numbers, costs, ‘frontline’ versus ‘back office’ staff, responsiveness, accessibility, local government.

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416—REGIONAL
References issues specific to rural and regional areas e.g. service accessibility, water, animal regulation, regional development.

417—RESOURCES
References mineral resources, mining projects, state royalties and revenues, access to resources, ownership of resources, support for/opposition to resource companies.

418—SCANDALS
References allegations of corruption, misappropriation of funds or resources, improper dealings or relationships, nepotism, incompetence, waste.

419—SOCIAL SERVICES
References availability and adequacy of child and family services, supports for the homeless, migrants, elderly people, the disabled and those with mental illnesses, specific facilities or initiatives to support these groups, allocation of funding for such supports, human rights, youth, Indigenous services.

420—TAX
References government fees and charges such as stamp duty, rates, carbon pricing, development application and approval fees.

421—FEDERAL PARTIES/LEADERS
References federal party counterparts or leaders; draws links or associations with federal party agenda.

422—EQUIVALENCY
References idea of a vote for x being a vote for something/someone else. NOTE: Record object of comparison as secondary content using codes above. E.g. ‘A vote for Zed Seselja is a vote for Tony Abbott’ = 422 primary/421 secondary

423—JUSTICE
References crime, policing, law and order, drugs, prisons, prisoners, CCTV, community safety, ‘hoons’, vandalism.

425—TRANSPARENCY
References transparency, accountability, need for costings, ‘telling the truth’, ‘coming clean’, ‘secret plans’, political donations, public accountability, honest government, integrity.

426—PARLIAMENT
References coalition deals, preference flows, voting patterns, number of policies proposed, activity in Parliament, major party dominance, balance of power.

427—CAMPAIGN
References polling, tactics, research, ‘spin’, dirty tricks, meta-analysis of strategy, overpromising, spending tallies, policy ideas, ‘me too-ism’.

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428—SMALL BUSINESS
References small business, importance of developing and supporting small business, number of new businesses created, small business jobs, easing small business burdens, small business innovation and creativity, 'understanding small business'.

429—WATER
References water resources, infrastructure, allocations, regional water needs, Murray Darling Basin plan, restoring waterways and wetlands.

430—OTHER
References single issues not otherwise classified in categories above.

431—ARTS and HERITAGE
References arts organisations, festivals, cultural institutions, indigenous sites, venues, live music, heritage sites and buildings, sports, memorials.
### Sample taken from Queensland 2012 content analysis data set

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