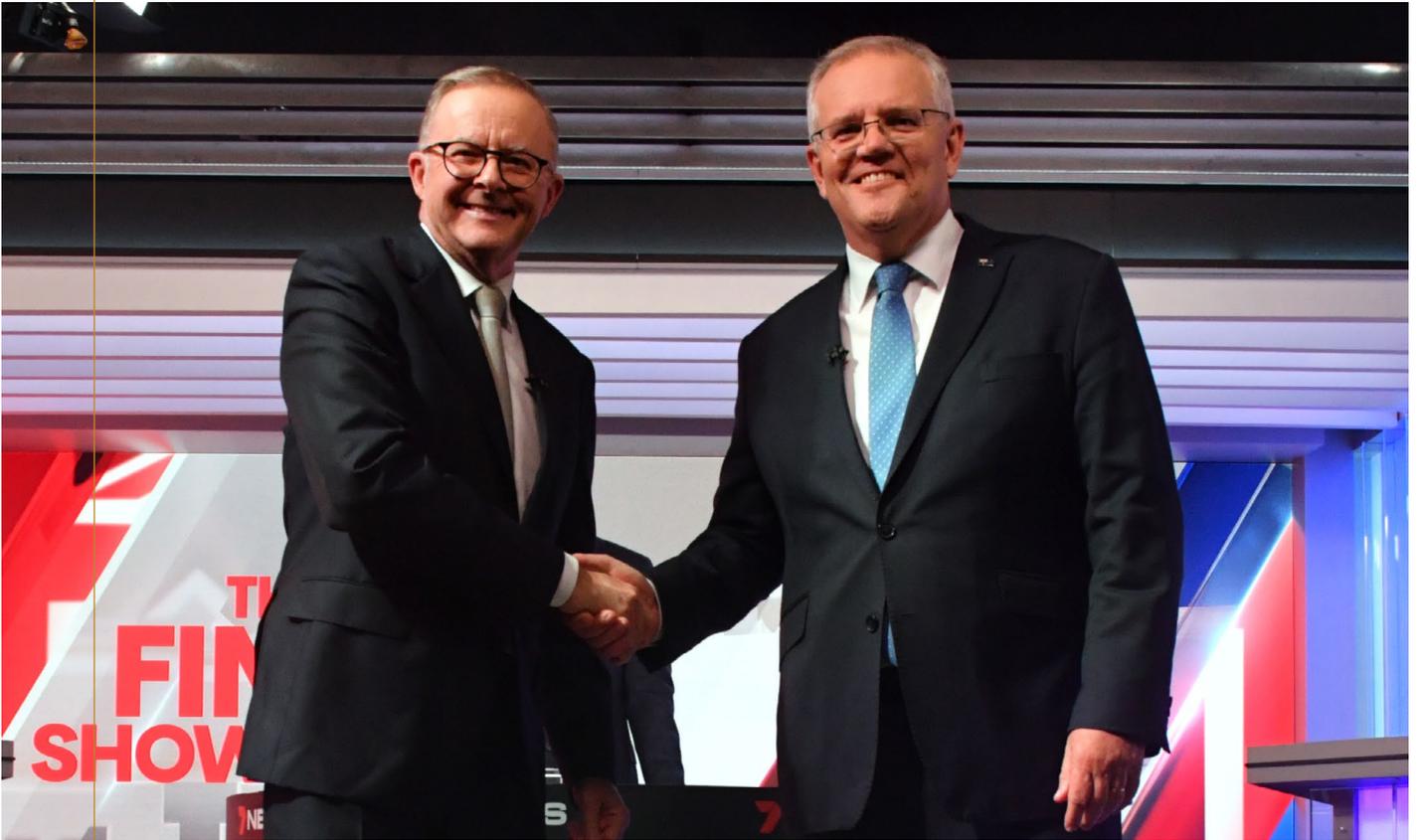




Australian
National
University



THE 2022 AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL ELECTION

Results from the Australian Election Study

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In partnership with



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December, 2022



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Cover image: AAP, Mick Tsikas. Anthony Albanese and Scott Morrison at the third leaders' debate May 11, 2022.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings from the 2022 Australian Election Study (AES). The AES surveyed a nationally representative sample of 2,508 voters after the 2022 Australian federal election to find out what shaped their choices in the election. The AES has fielded representative surveys after every federal election since 1987, which allows these results to be placed in a long-term context. This report provides insights into what informed voting behaviour in the election and voters' attitudes towards policy issues, the political leaders, and the functioning of Australian democracy generally. The main findings are as follows:

Public policy and the economy

- A majority of voters (53 percent) cast their ballots based on policy issues, down from 66 percent in 2019.
- The most important issues in the election identified by voters included the cost of living (32 percent), environmental issues (17 percent), management of the economy (15 percent), and health (14 percent).
- Voters preferred Labor's policies on the cost of living, education, health, and the environment.
- Voters preferred the Coalition's policies on management of the economy, taxation, and national security. The Coalition's advantage in economic policy areas was significantly reduced since 2019.
- Evaluations of the national economy were worse in 2022 than in any election since 1990. Two thirds of voters reported that the national economy became worse over the past year.

Leaders

- Anthony Albanese was evaluated more favourably than any political party leader since Kevin Rudd in 2007, scoring 5.3 on a zero to 10 popularity scale.
- With Anthony Albanese as party leader, Labor attracted more votes based on leadership than in the 2016 and 2019 elections.
- Scott Morrison became the least popular major party leader in the history of the AES, scoring 3.8 on a zero to 10 popularity scale, down from 5.1 in the 2019 election.
- Anthony Albanese was evaluated more favourably than Scott Morrison in eight of nine leader characteristics, with the biggest differences in perceptions of honesty, trustworthiness, and compassion.

The 'Teal' independents

- Political partisanship for the major parties reached record lows in 2022. The proportion of voters that always vote the same way is also at a record low (37 percent). This growing detachment from the major political parties provided the conditions that supported the Teals' success.

- Most Teal voters were not 'disaffected Liberals', but tactical Labor and Greens voters. Less than one in five Teal voters previously voted for the Coalition.
- On average, Teal voters are ideologically close to Labor voters – placing themselves just left of centre on a zero to 10 left-right scale (Teal mean: 4.4; Labor mean: 4.3).

Socio-demographic influences on the vote

- Men were more likely to vote for the Coalition than women (men: 38 percent; women: 32 percent). Women were more likely than men to vote for Labor and the Greens. This represents a longer-term reversal of the gender gap in voter behaviour, since the 1990s women have shifted to the left and men to the right in their party preferences.
- Since 2019, the Coalition lost support from both men and women.
- There are major generational differences in voter behaviour. The Coalition has very little support among Millennials and Generation Z. The Coalition's share of the vote fell in almost every age group, but especially among the youngest cohorts of voters.
- The self-identified working class remain more likely to vote Labor (38 percent) than the Coalition (33 percent).
- Since 2019 the Coalition has lost support among university-educated and higher income voters.

Attitudes towards democracy

- After reaching record lows in 2019, there has been a slight improvement in political trust and satisfaction with democracy. While 70 percent of Australians are satisfied with how democracy is working, just 30 percent of Australians believe people in government can be trusted.
- A majority of Australians (54 percent) believe that the government is run for 'a few big interests', while just 12 percent believe the government is run for 'all the people'.
- Four in five Australians support recognition of Indigenous Australians in the Constitution. This high level of support has been consistent over the past three elections.

- Since 2019, there has been a 5 percent increase in support for Australia becoming a republic, with 54 percent in favour.
- Australians express strong support for potential reforms to improve Australian politics, including a national anti-corruption body, limiting donations to political parties, and parties selecting more women candidates.

The COVID-19 pandemic

- Overall, Australians evaluated the performance of the federal government's handling the pandemic more negatively than their state government. Around half (51 percent) thought their state government handled the pandemic well, compared to 30 percent who thought the Commonwealth government handled the pandemic well.
- There are major differences across states – in Tasmania and Western Australia 75 percent thought the state government handled the pandemic well, compared to just 36 percent in Victoria.
- Among those who thought the federal government handled the pandemic badly, only 12 percent voted for the Coalition, while 42 percent voted Labor and almost one third voted for a minor party or independent.
- A majority of Australians thought the pandemic had negative impacts on social cohesion or inclusiveness (64 percent) and individual rights and freedoms (54 percent). One third of Australians reported that the pandemic had negatively affected their personal economic circumstances. Only a small minority of Australians believed the pandemic had positive impacts for Australian society.

This report highlights just a few of the main findings from the 2022 Australian Election Study. Further information on the long-term trends is available in an accompanying report *Trends in Australian Political Opinion: Results from the Australian Election Study 1987-2022*. The Australian Election Study website provides the data for researchers to conduct their own analysis, and interactive charts to explore the data online: www.australianelectionstudy.org

INTRODUCTION

The 2022 Australian federal election was distinctive on several grounds. The election was the first in many decades to be held in the wake of a major crisis, in this case the COVID-19 pandemic. While by the time the election was held the salience of the pandemic as a policy issue had subsided, voters' assessments of the Liberal-National Coalition government's performance on the pandemic proved to be a major factor in their voting decision. Alongside the pandemic, the 2022 election was held amidst a cost of living crisis which impacted voters' evaluations of the national economy.

Second, the election saw a large-scale abandonment of major party voting. The combined major party primary vote was 68.3 percent, the lowest since the 1930s. Of the two major parties, the Liberals fared worst, winning their lowest seat share since 1946, the first election the party contested. However, Labor did not reap the benefits of this Liberal decline, with the party recording its lowest primary vote since the 1930s.

The beneficiaries of this seismic shift in voting behaviour were the Greens and independent candidates. The Greens increased their share of seats in the House of Representatives from one to four, holding their seat in Melbourne and winning three additional inner city Brisbane seats. 'Teal' independents – so-called because they blend green and blue policies – won six seats standing in safe Liberal electorates. Indeed, one independent defeated the deputy Liberal leader and heir apparent, Josh Frydenberg, in what was previously considered an ultra-safe Liberal seat. The cross-bench in the House of Representatives swelled from six to 16.

Using the 2022 Australian Election Study, a major national post-election survey which has been conducted at each federal election since 1987, this report traces and explains these trends. The report proceeds in six sections to unpack the survey findings across the following areas: public policy and the economy; leaders; the 'Teal' independents; socio-demographic influences on the vote; attitudes towards democracy; and the COVID-19 pandemic. The final section discusses the implications of these findings for democratic politics in Australia. This section draws together overall themes from the 2022 AES to understand the election result and situate it in longer-term perspective. Details on the survey methodology are provided in the appendix.

In addition to this report on the 2022 election, further details on the long-term trends in Australian political attitudes are provided in our accompanying report, *Trends in Australian Political Opinion: Results from the Australian Election Study 1987-2022*. These reports and a range of other resources including data, codebooks, and an interactive tool to explore the data online are available on the AES website:

www.australianelectionstudy.org

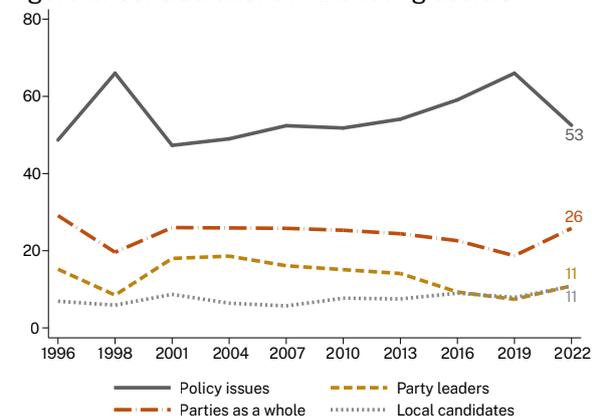
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December 2022

PUBLIC POLICY AND THE ECONOMY

Policy issues were the major factor affecting voting decisions in the 2022 election as they have been in most previous elections (Figure 1.1). A total of 53 percent mentioned the parties' policy positions as being most important to them, followed by 26 percent who mentioned the parties as a whole, and about one in 10 who each mentioned the party leaders and their local candidate. The importance of policy is a slight decrease compared to 2019 when it was mentioned by 66 percent of voters and represents a change in the long term trend in policy issues becoming more important for voters. The previous 2019 election saw major differences between the parties on taxation, with Labor proposing to introduce a range of tax changes if they won government; by contrast, the 2022 election saw very few differences between the parties on economic policy. The similarity in major party policies accounts for the decrease in the proportion of voters mentioning policy issues as the most important factor in their decision.

Figure 1.1 Considerations in the voting decision



Note: Estimates are percentages.

Most important election issues

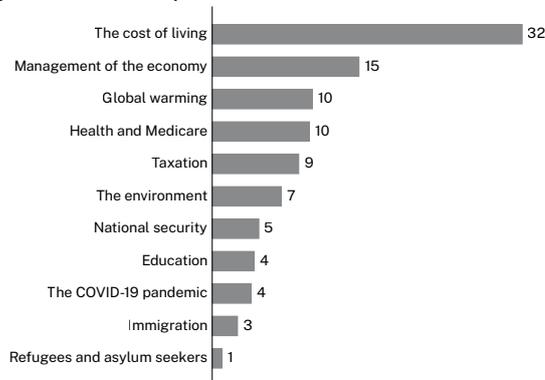
Which policy issues did voters consider to be most important in deciding how to vote in the 2022 election? AES respondents were given a list of 11 election issues and asked to identify which was the most important. Their responses are presented in Figure 1.2.

The economy predominated among the individual issues that were mentioned as being most important to voters. Rampant inflation matched to slow wage growth following the pandemic meant that there was widespread concern about the rise in the cost of living. This was mentioned by nearly one in three voters as being the most important issue, followed by management of the economy which was mentioned by 15 percent of voters. Global warming and health and Medicare came joint third and were mentioned by one in 10 voters.

The remaining issues attracted far fewer mentions, reflecting which issues were (and were not) debated during the campaign. For example, the pandemic was mentioned as being most important by just 4 percent. Despite concerns about China's growing military strength and the war in Ukraine, national security was

mentioned by only 5 percent as the most important issue, reflecting the largely bipartisan approach of the major parties to foreign and defence policy.

Figure 1.2 Most important election issues

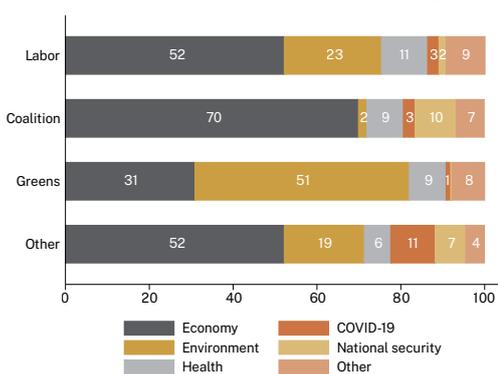


Note: Estimates are percentages.

The most important election issue varied considerably between voters for the different parties as we would expect. Figure 1.3 groups together economic issues (cost of living, management of the economy and taxation) and environmental issues (environment and global warming) to investigate the issue priorities driving different voter groups. Seven out of 10 Coalition voters identified an economic issue as their top concern in the election. A further 9 percent of Coalition voters identified health as the top issue. Labor voters also saw the economy as most important (52 percent) followed by the environment (23 percent). One half of Greens voters considered environmental issues to be the top consideration in the election (51 percent), with just under a third mentioning the economy.

Although national security and COVID-19 were minor issues overall, the results in Figure 1.3 show that these issues were nevertheless important for certain groups of voters. One in ten Coalition voters were influenced by national security, more so than any other voter group. Among the amorphous group of 'other' voters, 11 percent identified the COVID-19 pandemic as their top election concern. This reflects the focus of some minor parties, particularly Pauline Hanson's One Nation and the United Australia Party, who campaigned on freedom from COVID-19 restrictions, even if most of these restrictions had lifted by the time of the election.

Figure 1.3 Most important election issues by vote



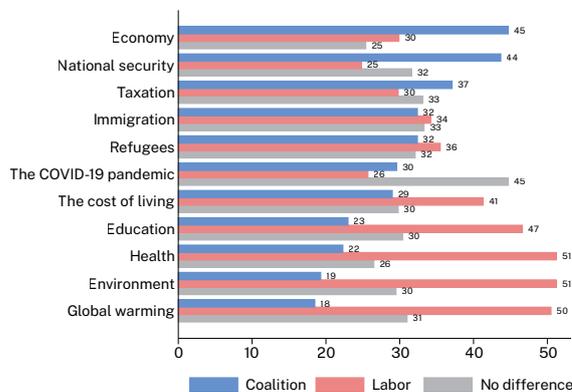
Note: Estimates are percentages.

Preferred party policies

The major parties have long-term electoral advantages in different policy areas (see Figure 1.4). The AES asked voters for the same 11 issues, “whose policies – the Labor Party’s or the Liberal-National Coalition’s – would you say come closer to your own views on each of these issues?” The Coalition holds an advantage as the preferred party on management of the economy, national security, and taxation. Labor, on the other hand, is well ahead as the preferred party on global warming, the environment, health, education, and the cost of living. As nearly one-third of the electorate considered the cost of living to be the most important issue in the 2022 election, in principle this benefitted Labor. The management of the economy benefitted the Coalition.

Although there are fluctuations from election to election, overall voters’ preferences for one party over the other on these policy areas have remained constant over time. Of note in 2022 compared to 2019 is the larger proportion of voters who said there was ‘no difference’ between the parties on salient issues in the campaign. In 2022 an average of 25 percent of voters said there was ‘no difference’ between the parties compared to 19 percent in 2019. Voting in the 2022 election was clearly less policy-driven than in recent elections. Another notable shift is that the Coalition has lost their advantage over Labor on immigration and refugees, and their advantage on management of the economy and taxation is much reduced since 2019.¹

Figure 1.4 Preferred party policies

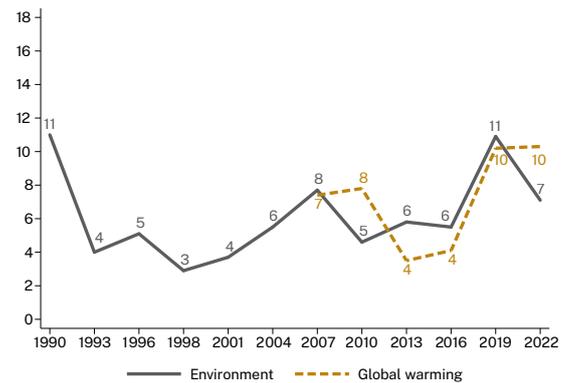


Note: Estimates are percentages.

Climate change

The 2019-2020 bushfires and the 2021-2022 floods affected significant proportions of the population and brought home to voters in the most dramatic way the effects of climate change. This is reflected in the significant increase in the proportions of voters mentioning global warming as the most important election issue (see Figure 1.5). In 2019 and 2022, 10 percent mentioned global warming as the most important election issue compared to 4 percent in 2013 and 2016. Mentions of the environment show a long-term increase, albeit with a slight decline from 11 percent in 2019 to 7 percent in 2022.

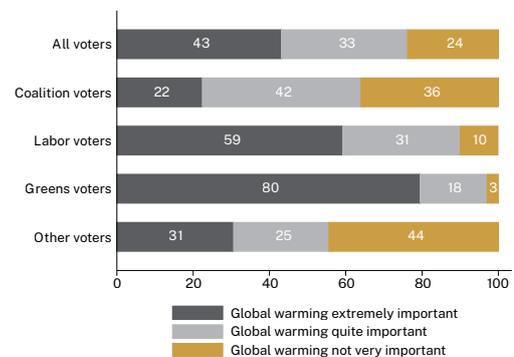
Figure 1.5 The environment and global warming as most important election issues



Note: Estimates are percentages.

While not everyone sees the environment as their top election concern, there is a broad group who are concerned about climate change. Nearly half of all voters see global warming as ‘extremely important’, with only around one in four seeing it as ‘not very important’ (see Figure 1.6). However, there are substantial party differences in these views. Almost six in 10 Labor voters see global warming as ‘extremely important’ compared to less than one in four Coalition voters. As we would expect, the vast majority of Greens voters – 80 percent – see global warming as ‘extremely important’. A large majority of all voters see global warming as being either ‘extremely important’ or ‘quite important’.

Figure 1.6 Importance of global warming

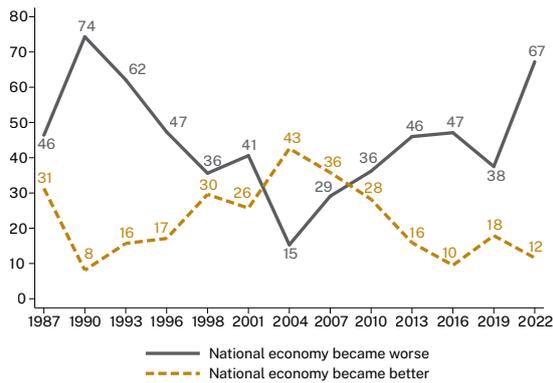


Note: Estimates are percentages.

The economy

Following the lockdowns related to the pandemic and the associated decline in economic activity, the Australian economy recovered in 2021-2022, with unemployment declining to historic lows and a significant increase in economic growth.² However, the government was left with major debt because of the economic subsidies put in place to shield businesses and individuals from the pandemic, and inflation has jumped to levels not seen in decades. As a result, voters took a very pessimistic view of the performance of the national economy in 2022, with two-thirds saying that it had become worse over the previous year (Figure 1.7), a figure only surpassed in 1990 during the recession of the early 1990s.

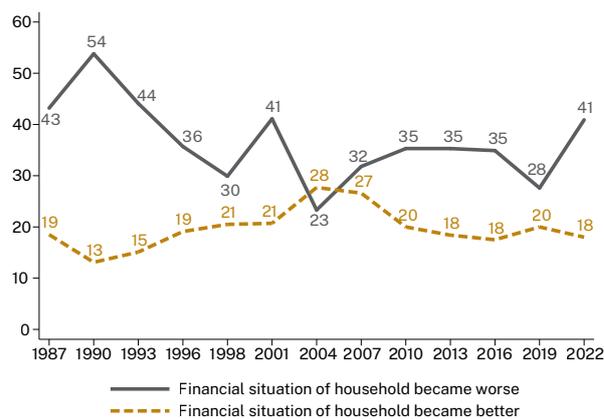
Figure 1.7 Evaluations of the national economy over the past 12 months



Note: Estimates are percentages.

In contrast to their pessimistic evaluations of the performance of the national economy, voters were more positive about their own household economic situation (see Figure 1.8). Just 41 percent thought their household finances had become worse over the previous year, compared to 28 percent in 2019, prior to the pandemic. The 2022 figure is in line with those recorded in the AES surveys conducted from the late 1980s through to 2001. The government's programs to prevent businesses from failing and to retain workers during the pandemic clearly gave voters a more optimistic view of their own economic situation compared to the national one. That said, this still represents the most pessimistic evaluation of household finances in two decades. While on the one hand unemployment reached historic lows in 2022, on the other hand Australians are facing increasing pressure on household budgets from inflation and rising interest rates.³

Figure 1.8 Evaluations of the financial situation of household over the past 12 months



Note: Estimates are percentages.

Notes

Figure 1.1: Considerations in the voting decision

Question wording: "In deciding how you would vote in the election, which was most important to you?"

Figure 1.2: Most important election issues

Estimates show the percentage of respondents who indicated each issue was the most important in the 2019 election. Question wording: "...which of these issues was the most important to you and your family during the election campaign?"

Figure 1.3: Most important election issues by vote

Estimates show the percentage of respondents who indicated each issue was the most important in the 2019 election by first preference vote in the House of Representatives. Environment combines 'the environment' and 'global warming'. Economy combines 'management of the economy', 'taxation', and 'the cost of living'.

Figure 1.4: Preferred party policies

Estimates are percentages. Question wording: "... whose policies – the Labor Party's or the Liberal-National Coalition's – would you say come closer to your own views on each of these issues?"

Figure 1.5: The environment and global warming as most important election issues

Estimates show the percentage of respondents who indicated the environment or global warming was the most important election issue. Question wording: "... which of these issues was the most important to you and your family during the election campaign?"

Figure 1.6: Importance of global warming

Estimates show the percentage of respondents who indicated global warming was important when they decided how to vote, by respondent first preference vote in the House of Representatives. Question wording: "Here is a list of important issues that were discussed during the election campaign. When you were deciding how to vote, how important was each of these issues to you personally?... Global warming"

Figure 1.7 Evaluations of the national economy over the past 12 months' and Figure 1.8 Evaluations of the financial situation of household over the past 12 months

Estimates for 'became worse' combine 'a little worse' and 'a lot worse'. Estimates for 'became better' combine 'a little better' and 'a lot better'. Question wording: "How does the financial situation of your household now compare with what it was 12 months ago? And how do you think the general economic situation in Australia now compares with what it was 12 months ago?"

LEADERS

The popularity of the party leaders is an important factor shaping voters' choices. Scott Morrison was the first prime minister since John Howard to complete a full term in office, giving people an opportunity to form a comprehensive evaluation of his leadership. However, this did not advantage the Coalition, as Morrison's popularity declined considerably after the 2019 election.

Two issues came to define Morrison's prime ministership: his handling of the major bushfires over the summer of 2019 to 2022, and the COVID-19 pandemic. During the bushfires Morrison was criticised for taking a family holiday in Hawaii and more broadly for not taking sufficient responsibility for the crisis. His comment at the time, "I don't hold a hose, mate", was heavily criticised and featured years later in memes and in Labor's 2022 election campaign.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began within a year of the 2019 election, also had a major impact on people's evaluations of Morrison. Morrison received a huge boost in approval ratings at the beginning of the pandemic as a result of the 'rally round the flag' effect, whereby people give greater support to leaders at a time of crisis.⁴ Morrison's approval rating shot up from 41 percent in March 2020 to 64 percent in May 2020.⁵ This effect lasted longer in Australia than elsewhere around the world as a result of Australia's success in the early stages of the pandemic.⁶ However, approval of Morrison declined as Australia's COVID-zero era came to an end in the latter half of 2021, with lengthy lockdowns in New South Wales, Victoria, and the Australian Capital Territory. By the time of the 2022 election, Morrison's approval rating had returned to its pre-COVID lows.⁷

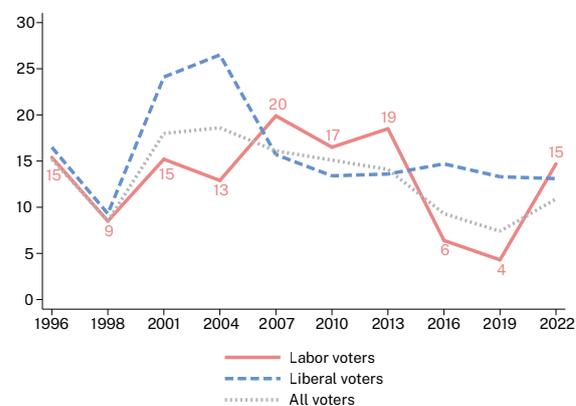
As well as the public's changing views of Morrison, Labor went into the election in a stronger position with Anthony Albanese as leader, following two losses with Bill Shorten as leader in 2016 and 2019. Although Albanese was not exceptionally popular or inspiring, voters had much more favourable views of him than his predecessor Shorten, who was one of the least popular political leaders in the history of the AES. Furthermore, Albanese and Labor benefitted from the negative views that many had formed of Morrison and the Coalition government he led.

The impact of leadership on the vote

Voters choose a party for many reasons. Responses to the AES show that in 2022, while 53 percent of voters cast their ballots based on policy issues, just 11 percent did so based on the party leaders. Although party leadership is not the most important factor shaping the vote, people who vote based on party leaders are more likely to be swing voters,⁸ so leadership can make a difference to electoral outcomes. This is particularly the case in close contests, or when there is a leader who is particularly popular or unpopular.

Over the past three decades, an average of 13 percent of voters have cast their ballots based on party leadership. This can fluctuate depending on leader popularity (see Figure 2.1). In the 2022 election a similar proportion of Liberal and Labor voters cast their ballots based on leadership – 13 percent of Liberal voters and 15 percent of Labor voters. This represents a significant departure from the previous election in 2019, when the Liberals attracted 9 percent more votes than Labor based on leadership. As Figure 2.1 shows, voting based on leadership has been consistent for the Liberals from 2007 to 2022, averaging 14 percent. For Labor, Albanese's leadership marks a recovery from the previous two elections when the party was led by an exceptionally unpopular Bill Shorten, when between 4 and 6 percent of Labor voters were motivated by leadership.

Figure 2.1 Voting based on the party leaders



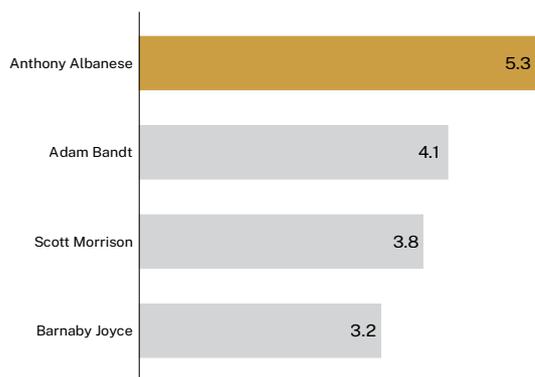
Note: Estimates are percentages.

Leader popularity

The AES asked voters to evaluate how much they liked the party leaders on a scale from 0 (strongly dislike) to 10 (strongly like), with 5 as a designated midpoint for those who said that they did not know much about the leader. The 2022 results are presented in Figure 2.2. Anthony Albanese was the most popular leader in 2022, with an average evaluation of 5.3. By contrast, Scott Morrison's evaluations were mostly unfavourable, with an average score of 3.8. After Albanese, Greens leader Adam Bandt was the second most popular leader scoring 4.1, although 45 percent of voters gave him a neutral evaluation of 5, indicating they did not know much about him. Barnaby Joyce, leader of the Nationals and the deputy prime minister from 2016 to 2018, and from 2021 to 2022, was the least popular, scoring 3.2 on the ten-point scale. This is the second year in a row that the Greens leader has been evaluated more favourably than one of the major party leaders. In 2019 Richard Di Natale was more popular than Bill Shorten, and in 2022 Adam Bandt was more popular than Scott Morrison.

As in most previous elections, the leaders of the four main political parties, Labor, Liberal, National and the Greens, were men. Despite the proportion of women in Australia's parliament increasing significantly over time, reaching 38 percent in the House of Representatives and 57 percent of the Senate after the 2022 contest,⁹ women remain underrepresented in the leadership of the main political parties. There have only been two women that have led these four main parties to date: Julia Gillard as Labor leader and prime minister from 2010 to 2013 and Christine Milne as leader of the Greens from 2012 to 2015.

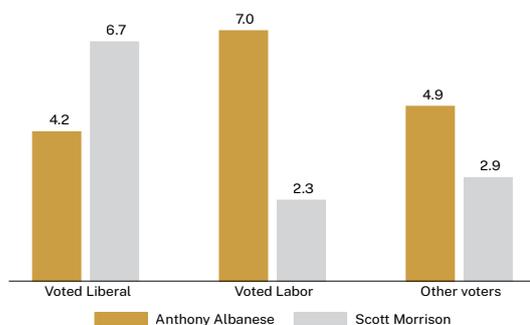
Figure 2.2 Leader popularity



Note: Estimates are means. Scale 0 (strongly dislike) to 10 (strongly like).

There is considerable variation in voters' evaluations of the leaders, as shown in Figure 2.3. Both major party leaders had similar levels of popularity among their own voters; Labor voters evaluated Anthony Albanese at 7.0 on average on the ten-point scale, while Morrison's equivalent score was 6.7. The differences emerge when the evaluations from other voters are examined. Albanese had reasonable levels of appeal among voters for other parties, whereas those who did not vote Liberal had formed strong negative views of Morrison. Liberal voters evaluated Albanese at 4.2 on the scale, while Morrison scored only 2.3 among Labor voters. Those who did not vote Labor or Liberal had much more favourable views of Albanese than Morrison.

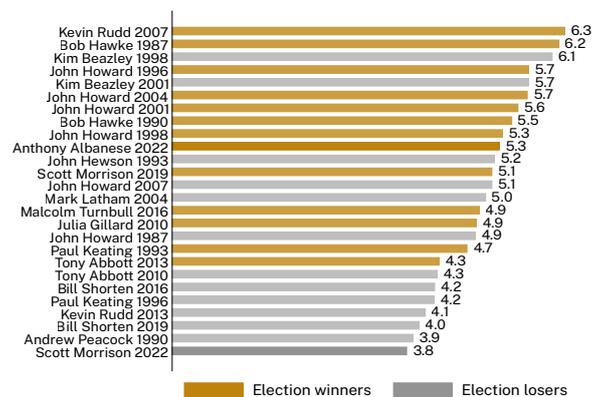
Figure 2.3 Vote choice and leader popularity



Note: Estimates are means. Scale 0 (strongly dislike) to 10 (strongly like).

The AES question on leader popularity has been asked consistently since 1987, enabling long term comparisons to be made on the main party leaders spanning 35 years (see Figure 2.4). Anthony Albanese's popularity rating places him as the most popular leader to win an election since Kevin Rudd's 2007 win. Albanese ranks as the tenth most popular leader out of the 26 main party leaders that have contested elections since 1987 (the list of 26 includes some leaders contesting multiple elections), and the eighth most popular election winner out of 13. Scott Morrison's evaluations place him as the least popular main party leader in the history of the AES. This represents a substantial decline from the 2019 election, when Morrison had an average score of 5.1 out of 10.

Figure 2.4 Leader popularity 1987-2022



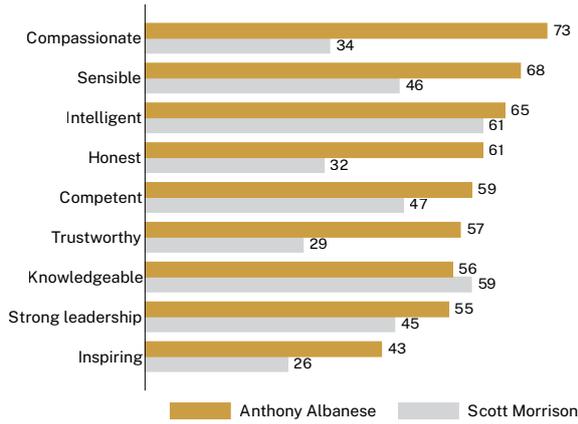
Note: Estimates are means. Scale 0 (strongly dislike) to 10 (strongly like).

Leader characteristics

Since 1993 the AES has asked voters to evaluate the party leaders in terms of leadership characteristics, including factors such as strong leadership, trustworthiness, honesty, intelligence, competence, knowledge, and the ability to be inspiring, compassionate, and sensible.

The percentage of voters who believe the various characteristics described the leader either 'extremely well' or 'quite well' are presented in Figure 2.5. Across all but one of these factors Albanese was viewed more favourably than Morrison. Morrison had a three-point advantage on being considered knowledgeable. Albanese had the strongest lead over Morrison on perceptions of compassion (+39 percent), honesty (+29 percent), and trustworthiness (+28 percent). Further analysis of the AES data shows that the two most important factors influencing leaders' overall popularity are honesty and trustworthiness. Perceptions that Morrison was dishonest and untrustworthy therefore disadvantaged him and the Liberals in the 2022 election. The weakest characteristic for both leaders was that they were not considered 'inspiring'. Kevin Rudd in 2007 was the only leader a majority of voters considered to be inspiring, otherwise Australians have been largely uninspired by Australia's political leaders over the past few decades.¹⁰

Figure 2.5 Leader characteristics



Note: Estimates are percentages, combining describes the leader 'extremely well' and 'quite well'.

Notes

Figure 2.1: Voting based on the party leaders

Estimates show the percentage of different voter groups who indicated that party leadership was the most important factor in deciding how they would vote. Question wording: "In deciding how you would vote in the election, which was most important to you?" [The party leaders / The policy issues / The candidates in your electorate / The parties taken as a whole]

Figure 2.2: Leader popularity

Estimates are means. The scale runs from 0 (strongly dislike politician) to 10 (strongly like politician) with a designated midpoint of 5 (neither like nor dislike).

Figure 2.3: Vote choice and leader popularity

Estimates show the average level of leader popularity, for each category of voters. The scale runs from 0 (strongly dislike politician) to 10 (strongly like politician) with a designated midpoint of 5 (neither like nor dislike).

Figure 2.4: Leader popularity 1987-2022

Estimates are means. The scale runs from 0 (strongly dislike politician) to 10 (strongly like politician) with a designated midpoint of 5 (neither like nor dislike).

Figure 2.5: Leader characteristics

Question wording: "[Thinking first about Scott Morrison / Now thinking about Anthony Albanese], in your opinion how well does each of these describe him –extremely well, quite well, not too well or not well at all?" Estimates combine the percentage who responded that the characteristic described the leader 'extremely well' or 'quite well'.

THE ‘TEAL’ INDEPENDENTS

The vote for the two major parties fell to historic lows in the 2022 election and the number of minor party and independent candidates who were elected in the House of Representatives rose from six in 2019 to 16 in 2022. Among these independents, the seven Teal candidates who were elected were by far the most significant, six of them defeating incumbent Liberals.¹¹ Small numbers of independents have been elected in House of Representatives elections before, but they have often been first elected as major party candidates and later left or been expelled from their party. The Senate election also resulted in the first ever independent Senator for the Australian Capital Territory. The 2022 election was distinctive not just by the large number of independents who were elected, but by the fact that they had little or no prior party involvement.

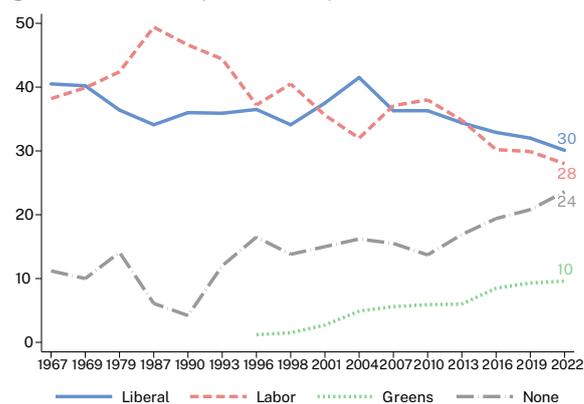
Partisan dealignment and voter volatility

While the 2022 election might be heralded as a ‘breakthrough’ for the independents, the conditions for their election have been building over several decades. Many of these changes are associated with voters being ‘less rusted on’ to the major political parties and becoming more independently minded in their political choices. This change, in turn, has been driven by wider societal changes, such as the huge expansion of higher education, the turnover of generations, the rise of social media, and shifting issue priorities.

An emotional connection to a political party — which is called ‘partisanship’ — has been at the core of voting across the advanced democracies for at least a century. Voters take their cue from the party that they have felt attached to since they entered the active electorate; for the most part this partisanship is inherited from parents.¹² To the extent that a voter will cast a ballot ‘against’ their partisanship — perhaps because they dislike a particular leader or policy — it previously would have occurred maybe once or twice during a lifetime. However, starting in the 1980s, surveys have shown that partisanship has been weakening across almost all the advanced democracies.¹³

Australia has not been immune to this worldwide trend. Figure 3.1 shows that in the 1960s and 1970s, around eight out of every 10 voters considered themselves to be a partisan of one or other major party. That figure has declined consistently since then, and in 2022 just 58 percent considered themselves to be close to one or other of the major parties. Almost one in four said they had no partisanship, the highest figure the AES has ever recorded, and one in 10 identified themselves as Greens.

Figure 3.1 Political partisanship



Note: Estimates are percentages.

This decline in partisanship is reflected in various aspects of the election campaign and in how voters decide on their party choice. In 2022 just 31 percent said that they had followed a ‘how to vote’ card handed out by the parties at the polling booth, with the large majority saying that they decided their own preferences. This compares with 56 percent who used a ‘how to vote’ card in 1996 when the question was first asked in an AES survey. Voters are now much more likely to make up their minds how to vote during the election campaign, suggesting that they are evaluating the parties, the leaders, and their policies, rather than following a party label. Perhaps most importantly of all, voting volatility has increased. In 1967, 72 percent of respondents reported that they had always voted for the same political party during their lifetime. In 2022 the same figure was almost half that — 37 percent — suggesting that voters are much more likely to change their vote from election to election, rather than to remain loyal to one party.

Rising voter detachment from the major parties set the conditions for the unusual result in the 2022 election. Until 2022, single member electorates in the House of Representatives have largely masked this growing disaffection with the major political parties. Through the design of the electoral system, Liberal and Labor typically receive a much greater proportion of seats in the House of Representatives than votes. For example, in 2022 Labor won 51 percent of the seats based on 33 percent of first preference votes. In 2019 the Coalition won 51 percent of the seats in parliament, based on 41 percent of first preference votes. In 2022 the success of independents and the Greens in previously safe Coalition seats resulted in much more proportional outcomes for the Coalition — they received 36 percent of the first preference votes and 38 percent of the seats. It takes a major campaign effort for minor party or independent candidates to break through the dominance of the two major parties supported by the design of Australia’s electoral system.

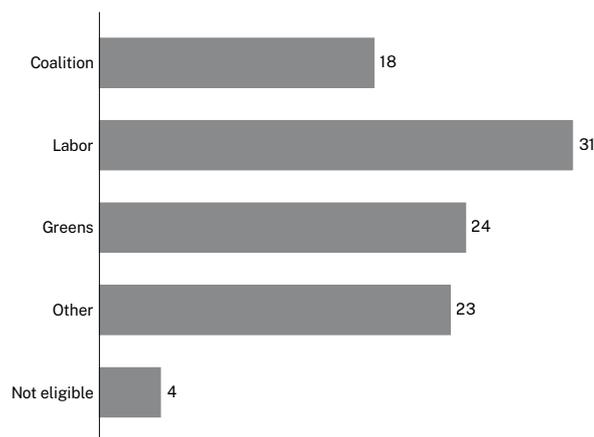
The ‘Teal’ independent vote

The conditions for the rise of alternative actors in Australian politics have been brewing for some time. However, voter disenchantment with the major political parties alone is not enough to see a change in outcomes; there also needs to be a viable alternative for these disenchanted voters to support. The 2022 election combined several factors which supported the success of the Teal independents, including demand factors from voters and supply factors from the Teals. Voters were dissatisfied with the major parties generally, and the incumbent Coalition government and prime minister in particular. On the supply side, the Teals ran well-funded, well-organised campaigns, that were widely covered in the media –with funding from Climate 200’s Simon Holmes à Court. The Teal campaigns tapped into frustrations with the incumbent Coalition government on issues where they were perceived as weak, including climate change, political integrity, and gender equality.

Who are the Teal voters? Are they ‘frustrated urban voters’ or ‘disaffected Liberals’ registering a short-term protest vote, or do they represent a long-term change in the political behaviour of progressive conservatives? Making any assessment about the future electoral prospects of the Teals is hampered by the relatively small number of these voters in the surveys. It also assumes that the strategies of the major parties will remain unchanged, an assumption that we know will be incorrect. We can, however, make some evaluations based on the prior voting and ideological placement of Teal voters.

Based on their recalled vote in the 2019 election,¹⁴ a majority of Teal supporters in 2022 were tactical voters intent on unseating the incumbent Liberal. Figure 3.2 shows that 31 percent of Teal voters had supported Labor in 2019 and a further 24 percent had supported the Greens. Just 18 percent said that they had voted for the Coalition. The view that Teal voters are ‘disaffected Liberals’ protesting the policies of their party therefore applies to less than one in five Teal voters. In contrast, by far the largest group are tactical voters who see their preferred party as nonviable in the electorate and use this information to defeat the most viable party – the Liberals. This is a level of tactical voting which far exceeds that found in most international studies.

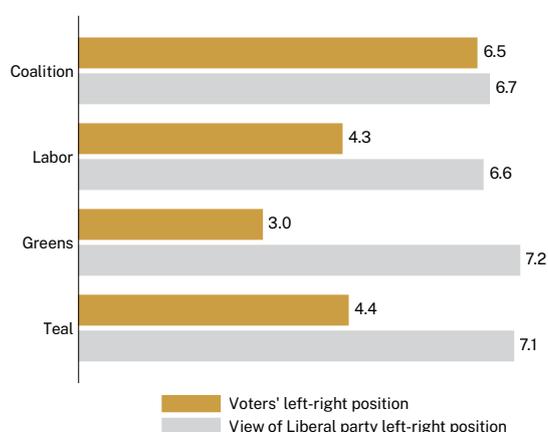
Figure 3.2 Prior voting among 2022 Teal voters



Note: Estimates are percentages of 2019 vote among 2022 Teal voters.

How do Teal voters see themselves (and the other parties) in terms of their views about the political world? Using the zero to 10 left-right scale, Figure 3.3 shows the mean position of the various party voters on the scale. Coalition voters are, as we would expect, most likely to place themselves on the political right, with a mean of 6.7 on the scale, while Greens voters are most likely to place themselves on the political left (mean of 3.0). Teal voters are almost the same as Labor voters in their ideological position with a mean of 4.4 compared to Labor voters’ mean of 4.3. Perhaps more importantly, Teal voters are more likely to see the Liberal Party as further to the right than any other party group, except for Greens voters. For example, Labor voters place the Liberals at 6.6 on the scale, compared to 7.1 for Teal voters. These findings counter the narrative of Teal voters as disaffected Liberals, showing that for the most part, they see themselves as left-of-centre.

Figure 3.3 Voters’ ideology



Note: Estimates are means on left-right scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means the left and 10 means the right.

Notes

Figure 3.1: Political partisanship

Estimates are percentages. 1967, 1969 and 1979 data is from the Australian National Political Attitudes Survey; 1987-2019 data is from the AES. AES question wording: “Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as Liberal, Labor, National or what?”

Figure 3.2: Prior voting among 2022 Teal voters

Estimates are the percentage of first preference votes in the House of Representatives in 2019. Source: 2022 Comparative Study of Electoral Systems Australian survey.

Figure 3.3: Voters’ ideology

Estimates are percentages. Question wording: “Where would you place yourself on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means the left and 10 means the right?” “Using the same scale, where would you place each of the federal political parties? Liberal Party?” Source: 2022 Comparative Study of Electoral Systems Australian survey.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFLUENCES ON THE VOTE

To understand election results, as well as considering the policy issues, the leaders, and parties, we must also examine the characteristics of voters themselves. Do women vote differently from men? Are Millennials and Generation Z shifting the dynamics of Australian politics? And is social class still relevant to explain how people vote today? The AES surveys include many questions on the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. This section examines whether there are differences in how population sub-groups vote and the degree to which these trends have changed over time.

Gender and the vote

Gender was a big part of the conversation around the 2022 election. In 2021, an allegation of sexual assault in Parliament House put the spotlight on women's treatment in politics, leading to major women's protests in cities around Australia.¹⁵ The new political force in 2022, the Teal independents, were mostly well-educated women, campaigning on a range of issues that tapped into weaknesses of the Liberal-National Coalition, including gender equality. Indeed, of the 10 Independents elected to the House of Representatives in 2022, nine were women. The Coalition has long been perceived as having a 'women problem', a criticism that has come not only from political opponents but also from Liberal party figures including the former prime minister, Malcolm Turnbull.¹⁶ Media coverage on the Coalition loss in the election emphasised the role of women in this defeat.¹⁷

To what extent are these claims that women cost the Coalition the election supported by the evidence? In the 2022 election there were considerable gender differences in voting, as shown in Figure 4.1. While 38 percent of men gave their first preference vote in the House of Representatives to the Liberal-National Coalition, just 32 percent of women did so. For Labor we see the opposite trend, with Labor candidates attracting 36 percent of women's votes, compared to 32 percent of men. There are also gender differences in voting for minor parties. Almost twice as many women (16 percent) voted for the Greens compared to men (9 percent). More men (22 percent) than women (16 percent) voted in the 'other' category, a difference that is driven by more men voting for minor populist parties including Pauline Hanson's One Nation and the United Australia Party.

Figure 4.1 Gender and vote choice

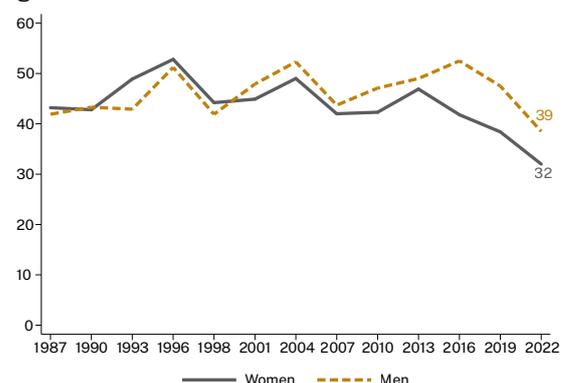


Note: Estimates are percentages.

Placing the 2022 results in longer term comparison shows that the gender gap in voting has reversed over the past 30 years (Figures 4.2 and 4.3). In the 1990s women were slightly more likely to vote for the Coalition, and men were more likely to vote Labor. This has gradually switched, so more men now prefer the Coalition and more women prefer Labor. This reversal of the gender gap in voting behaviour has also been observed in other democracies including in Europe and North America.¹⁸ Women increasingly prefer parties on the left, and men parties on the right.

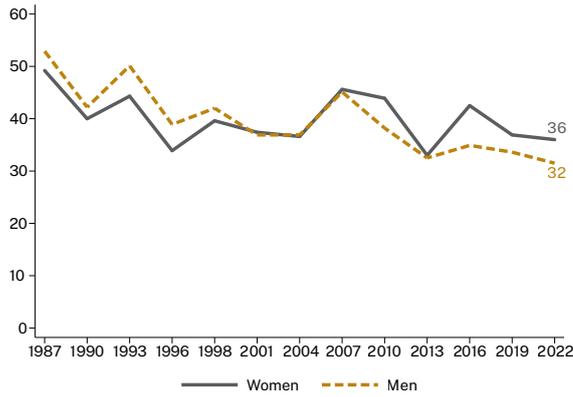
The gender gap in voting for the Coalition peaked in 2016 and 2019, with 10 percent more men than women voting for the Coalition. In 2022 the gap narrowed slightly, not because the Coalition did better among women, but because they lost votes from both men and women. The Coalition vote among men dropped 9 points from 48 percent in 2019 to 39 percent in 2022, while the Labor vote among women dropped 6 points from 38 percent to 32 percent. A small gender gap in the Labor vote has persisted from 2016 to 2022 of up to 4 percent, with slightly more women voting Labor.

Figure 4.2 Gender differences in the Coalition vote



Note: Estimates are percentages

Figure 4.3 Gender differences in the Labor Party vote



Note: Estimates are percentages

Several factors explain this transformation of gender and voting in Australia over the past few decades. Partly this reflects changes in society, including women's increased participation in higher education and in the labour force, as well as secularisation.¹⁹ Women also make up a growing proportion of union members.²⁰ In addition, there have been major changes in the political parties over this time. In the 1990s, women were similarly underrepresented in Parliament across both the major parties.²¹ Since then, Labor has increased its proportion of women in parliament using quotas, reaching 52 percent women across both Houses of Parliament after the 2022 election. Women's representation has remained low in the Liberal-National Coalition, at 27 percent across both Houses following the 2022 election.²²

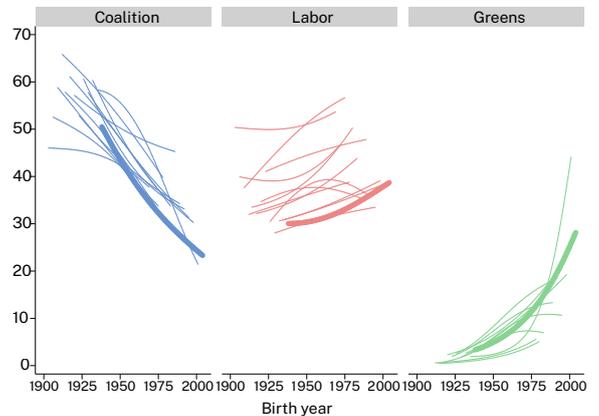
The gender gap in voting reflects other political differences between men and women. One question in the AES asks voters to place themselves on a scale from left to right, where zero is left and 10 is right. In 2022 the average position for men was 5.4, whereas for women it was 4.7, the largest gender gap in left-right placement on record. In the mid-1990s there were minimal gender differences in left-right ideology and since then women have shifted left. There are also some gender differences in election issue priorities, with women more concerned about health and the environment, while men prioritize management of the economy and taxation.

Generational change

Across the democratic world younger voters tend to prefer parties and candidates of the left and centre-left more so than older voters.²³ Each Australian Election Study from 1987 onwards finds this to be the case: as age increases, so too does Coalition support, while support for Labor modestly declines.

But as Figure 4.4 shows, the 2022 election is distinctive. The Coalition's share of the House of Representatives vote fell in almost every age group, but especially among the youngest cohorts of voters. Only about one in four voters under the age of 40 reported voting for the Coalition in 2022. At no time in the 35-year history of the AES have we observed such a low level of support for either major party in so large a segment of the electorate. By contrast, support for Labor remained virtually unchanged from 2019 to 2022, with about 38 percent of voters under the age of 40 supporting Labor.

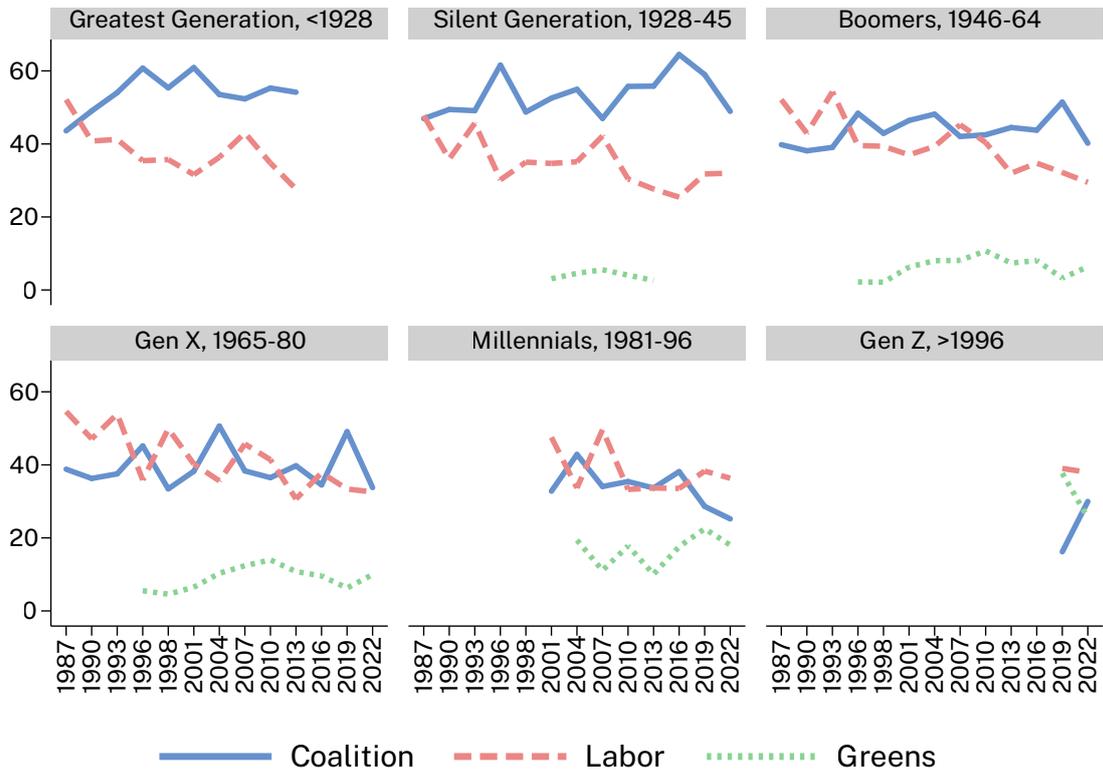
Figure 4.4 Birth year and vote choice, 1987-2022



Note: Estimates are percentages. 2022 results are highlighted by bold line.

The Coalition's historic low levels of support among younger voters is of relevance not just for our understanding of the 2022 election, but for what it portends about Australian politics in the years and decades to come. Will younger voters trend back towards the Coalition over the life cycle, as new leaders and issues replace those of 2022? AES data from 1987 to the present suggests that these kinds of maturation effects are at best mild drivers of political preferences. Figure 4.5 shows that large, enduring changes in levels of political support over the life course are unusual in Australian politics. In the main, generational 'imprinting' and election or leader-specific 'period' effects account for the trajectories of voting preferences within the six generations shown in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5 Vote choice by generation and election year



Note: Estimates are percentages.

These patterns provide important context for the fall in Coalition support observed in 2022. Between 2016 and 2022, Millennials record a large decline in Coalition support, falling from 38 percent to 25 percent in just two election cycles. Changes of this magnitude and this pace are rare in Australian electoral history, perhaps rivalled only by the Greatest Generation’s drift to the Coalition between 1987 and 1996 (top-left panel, Figure 4.5).

Generation Z, born after 1996, generate meaningful quantities of data for just the 2019 and 2022 elections. But in these two elections just 26 percent of this group reported voting for the Coalition, and 67 percent voted either for the Greens or Labor. No other generation records such skewed preferences at similarly early stages of the life course.

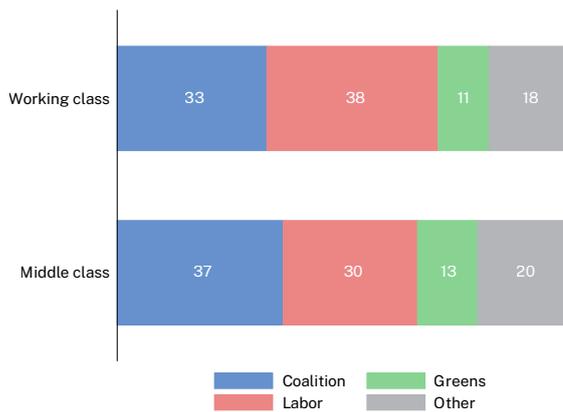
Millennials entered the electorate in the early 2000s with about 35 percent of this generation supporting the Coalition, a level which has now fallen to 25 percent. Generation X first appear in the AES in 1987, with 40 percent reporting support for the Coalition, with a slight trend away from this level in the 35 years since. Labor’s vote has waned somewhat among Generation X but is almost entirely made up for in two-party preferred terms by Generation X’s turn towards the Greens.

How the Coalition addresses this overwhelming deficit of support among younger generations is perhaps the single biggest question confronting Australian politics. Why is it that so many younger Australians have decided to support other parties and candidates? These changes in vote support reflect changes in policy preferences and changes in the mix of issues of concern to the electorate, shaping not just political parties and elections in Australia, but the policy direction of the nation.

Social class

Social class remains an important influence on voting, despite having declined from its peak in the 1950s. The modern expression of class is how people identify themselves, in the economic assets that they own, and the social capital they possess.²⁴ The Australian Election Study question asks voters, “Which social class would you say you belong to?” In 2022, 2 percent considered themselves to be upper class, 48 percent middle class, and 41 percent working class. The remaining 9 percent did not choose a social class. Voting patterns among these self-identified groups in the 2022 election are presented in Figure 4.6. The results show that working class voters remain much more likely to vote Labor than middle class voters, who are more likely to vote for the Coalition.

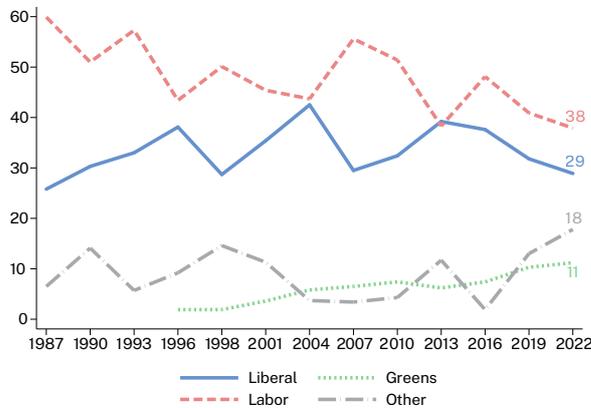
Figure 4.6 Social class and vote choice



Note: Estimates are percentages.

Although working class voters remain more likely to vote Labor than Liberal, their support for Labor has diminished over time. Figure 4.7 shows the voting patterns over time for those who identify as working class. These results indicate that since the 2016 election, both the Labor and Liberal parties have lost support from working class voters in favour of minor parties. While 48 percent of the working class voted Labor in 2016, this dropped to 38 percent in 2022. The Liberal vote declined to a similar degree.

Figure 4.7 Working class vote choice



Note: Estimates are percentages.

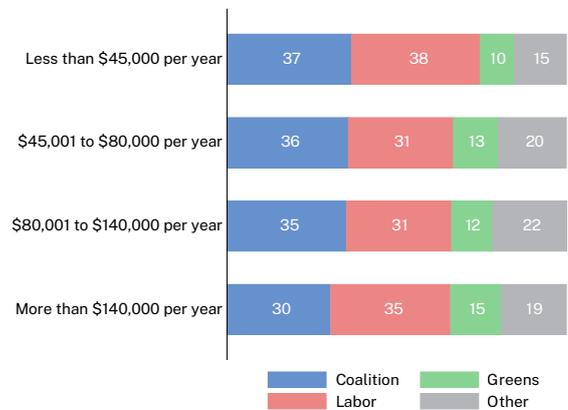
Self-identified class is just one way of looking at respondents' socio-economic status and how that intersects with their voting behavior. Figures 4.8 and 4.9 show the relationship between income and education, respectively, and voting behaviour. The results in Figure 4.8 show very little difference in voting for the Coalition among the first three income groups. Voting for the Coalition is lowest among the highest income group, those households earning over \$140,000 a year. This represents a reversal of what was observed in 2019, where over 50 percent of high-income households voted for the Coalition.²⁵ Voting for Labor is highest among the lowest income households, those earning less than \$45,000 a year.

The findings on education in Figure 4.9 show that the Coalition lost votes from those with higher levels of education, when compared against 2019.²⁶

The proportion with no qualification voting for the Coalition was consistent over 2019 to 2022. However, the Coalition lost 8 percent of those with a non-tertiary education, and 12 percent of those with a tertiary education. These results also show that university-educated voters are the most likely to vote for the Greens.

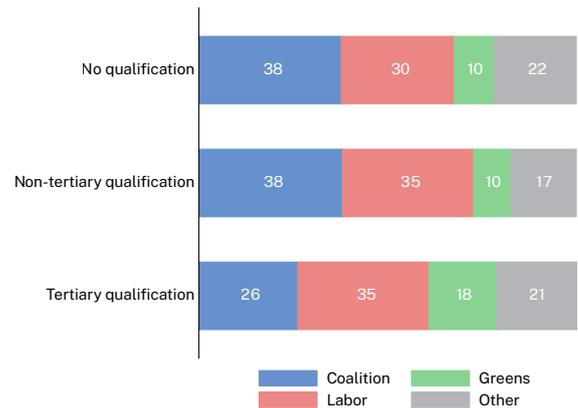
These results present a nuanced picture of the dynamics of class and voting in modern Australia. It remains the case that those who identify as working class are more likely to vote Labor, even if this voter base has eroded over time. We also see evidence that the Coalition has lost support from high-income and university-educated voters. Traditional class-based voting patterns have eroded, and parties can no longer rely on their traditional base for support.

Figure 4.8 Income and vote choice



Note: Estimates are percentages.

Figure 4.9 Education and vote choice



Note: Estimates are percentages.

Asset ownership

Asset ownership is an increasingly important influence on voting behaviour. Labor’s proposals in the 2019 election to tax assets such as investment properties and shares were controversial and a major factor in their election defeat. In the 2022 election both major parties avoided policies that would introduce extra taxes on assets and, for the most part, adopted similar policies to encourage home ownership. As in previous elections, homeowners were more likely to vote for the Coalition in 2022, while renters were more likely to vote Labor (Figure 4.10). The voting gap between homeowners and renters has reduced significantly since 2019. The proportion of homeowners voting for the Coalition declined from 50 to 38 percent, in favour of minor parties and independents, while the voting behaviour of renters was similar across the two elections. These differences for the most part are confounded by the differing socioeconomic backgrounds of homeowners and renters, particularly as young people are more likely to be renters.

Figure 4.10 Property ownership and vote choice



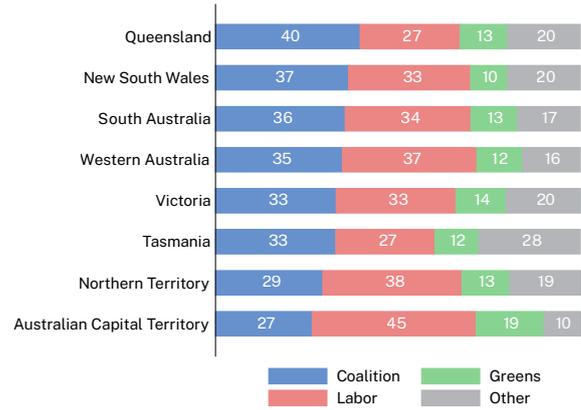
Note: Estimates are percentages.

State differences

State differences in support for the major political parties have traditionally been important factors in determining election outcomes in Australia. These differences usually reflect variations in the socioeconomic characteristics of the various states, rather than differences related to the state itself. For example, the Liberals and the Nationals have traditionally attracted more votes in Queensland and Western Australia than in the other states because of their larger rural base.

State differences were again prominent in the 2022 election. Figure 4.11 shows the first preference vote between the states and territories, with Queensland attracting the largest Coalition vote, and the ACT and the Northern Territory the largest Labor vote. Unusually, Western Australia did not record a high Coalition vote, and in fact there was a 10.6 percent swing against the Coalition in that state, the largest of any state or territory. This unusual result reflects Western Australians critical views of how the federal government handled the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 4.11 State and vote choice



Note: Estimates are percentages.

Notes

Figures 4.1-4.5

Estimates are the percentage of first preference votes in the House of Representatives.

Figure 4.6: Social class and vote choice and Figure 4.7: Working class vote choice

Estimates are the percentage of first preference votes in the House of Representatives. Question wording on class: “Which social class would you say you belong to?” [Upper class / Middle class / Working class / None]

Figure 4.8: Income and vote choice

Estimates are the percentage of first preference votes in the House of Representatives. Question wording on income: “What is the gross annual income, before tax or other deductions, for you and your family living with you from all sources? Please include any pensions and allowances, and income from interest or dividends.”

Figure 4.9: Education and vote choice

Estimates are the percentage of first preference votes in the House of Representatives. Question wording on education, “Have you obtained a trade qualification, a degree or a diploma, or any other qualification since leaving school? What is your highest qualification?” The response categories are as follows: No qualification = ‘No qualification since leaving school’; Nontertiary qualification = ‘Undergraduate Diploma’, ‘Associate Diploma’, ‘Trade qualification’, and ‘Non-trade qualification’; Tertiary qualification = ‘Postgraduate Degree or Postgraduate Diploma’, and ‘Bachelor Degree (including Honours).’

Figure 4.10: Property ownership and vote choice

Estimates are the percentage of first preference votes in the House of Representatives. Question wording on property ownership: “Do you own outright, or are you buying or renting the dwelling in which you now live?” The response categories are as follows: Home owners = ‘Own outright’, and ‘Own, paying off mortgage’; Renters = ‘Rent from private landlord or real estate agent’, and ‘Rent from public housing authority’.

Figure 4.11: State and vote choice

Estimates are the percentage of first preference votes in the House of Representatives. State results sourced from the Australian Electoral Commission.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

Attitudes towards democracy reached record lows in Australia in 2019, with just one in four voters believing that people in government could be trusted. Since 2019, Australia has faced a series of major crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, major bushfires, and floods. Moreover, in 2022 there has been the first change in government since 2013. Following these major upheavals, how do citizens evaluate democracy and politics in Australia in 2022?

The AES results show that there has been a slight recovery from the record low levels of political trust in 2019. This is consistent with a long-term pattern whereby political trust and satisfaction with democracy increase when there is a change in government.²⁷ This uptick in citizen attitudes has been seen previously in 1996 when there was a change in government from Labor to the Coalition, and in 2007 when there was a change from the Coalition back to Labor. The only exception to this trend was in 2013 when the Coalition won government, led by Tony Abbott. This exception can be explained by Abbott's low level of popularity (p. 14), and the impacts of several years of Labor infighting which negatively impacted citizen attitudes towards government.²⁸ The slight improvement in citizen attitudes towards government in 2022 falls short of the positive voter sentiments recorded following the 1996 and 2007 changes of government, and levels of trust are still low, at 30 percent.

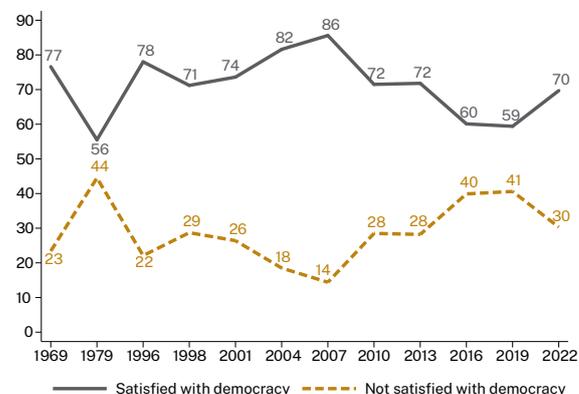
The long-term decline of political trust in Australia raises the question of what be done to improve the standard of democratic politics. There are many proposals for reform, including recognising Indigenous Australians in the Constitution, the question of whether Australia becomes a republic, and the introduction of a national anti-corruption commission. This section unpacks citizen attitudes towards government and proposals for reform.

Satisfaction with democracy

Measures of satisfaction with democracy provide an indication of how well voters perceive democracy to be working in practice. The AES surveys have asked, "On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in Australia?" In 2022, 70 percent of Australians are satisfied with the way democracy is working. This is an 11 percent increase from the low point in 2019 (see Figure 5.1). This is not particularly high judged against long-term trends, but marks a reversal of a consistent period of decline in satisfaction with democracy from 2007 to 2019. Government performance played a major role in the decline in satisfaction with democracy over the 2010s, including frequent changes of prime minister arising from internal party leadership spills, which the public disapproved of.²⁹ Of the six changes in prime minister that took place between 2010 to 2022, the transition from Scott Morrison to Anthony Albanese in 2022 is only the second that has come about as a result of a national election (the first being Tony Abbott's 2013

election win). Voters are more satisfied with democracy when they bring about a change in prime minister through their votes in an election, and this is reflected in the AES trends.

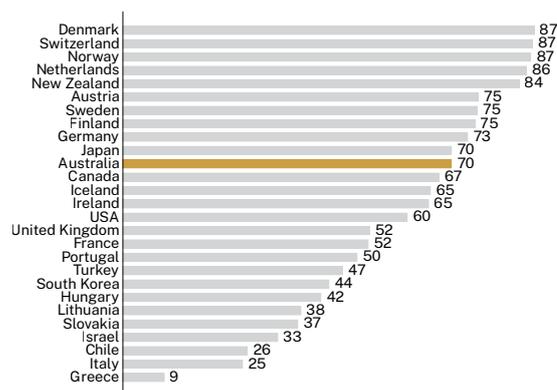
Figure 5.1 Satisfaction with democracy



Note: Estimates are percentages.

Satisfaction with democracy in Australia can be compared to other OECD countries around the world, with data from Module 5 of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (fielded between 2016 and 2021). Surveys in each country asked the same question "On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in [country]?" Figure 5.2 shows the percentage in each country who were either 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied'. Satisfaction with democracy in Australia ranks 11th in this group of 27 OECD countries, behind many countries in Western Europe, as well as New Zealand and Japan. Australia in 2022 ranks higher than the United States, following the contentious 2020 presidential election, the UK in 2017 following the Brexit referendum, as well as many countries in southern and eastern Europe. When satisfaction with democracy in Australia was at its peak in 2007, Australia was ranked towards the top of this list, alongside Denmark, Switzerland, Norway and the Netherlands.

Figure 5.2 Satisfaction with democracy in OECD countries

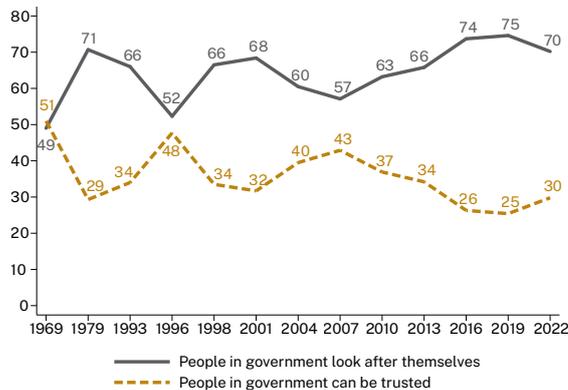


Note: Estimates are percentages.

Trust in government

Trust in government is another indicator of citizen sentiments towards democracy and their elected representatives. The AES asks voters, “In general, do you feel that the people in government are too often interested in looking after themselves, or do you feel that they can be trusted to do the right thing nearly all the time?” Voter responses show that after political trust reached an all-time low in 2019 of 25 percent, there has been a slight improvement in 2022 with 30 percent of Australians expressing trust in government (Figure 5.3). Seven in 10 Australians believe that politicians are more interested in looking after themselves. Despite the slight improvement, political trust remains low, at a similar level to the late-1970s following the dismissal of the Whitlam government. Political trust was higher following other changes of government, including John Howard’s initial win in 1996, Kevin Rudd’s election win in 2007 and, to a lesser extent, Tony Abbott’s win in 2013.

Figure 5.3 Trust in government

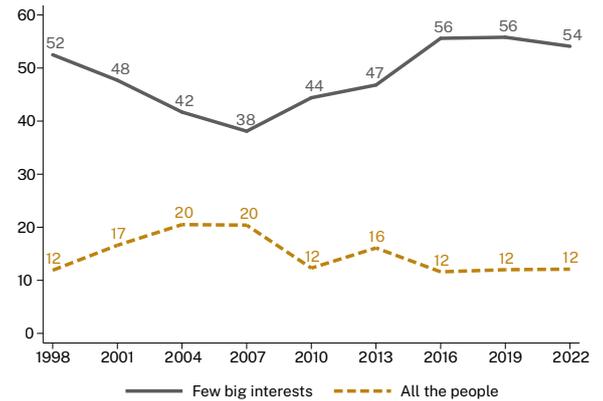


Note: Estimates are percentages.

Who the government is run for

The Australian Election Study also asks voters a question on who they believe the government is run for, “Would you say the government is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves, or that it is run for the benefit of all the people?” The responses to this question present a similar picture of distrust in the political system, although in this case without improvement since 2019 (Figure 5.4). A narrow majority of Australians (54 percent) believe that the government is run for a few big interests while just 12 percent believe the government is run for all the people, a figure that has remained reasonably stable over the past 12 years. That so few people believe the government is run for the Australian people presents a serious challenge for a representative democracy.

Figure 5.4 Who the government is run for

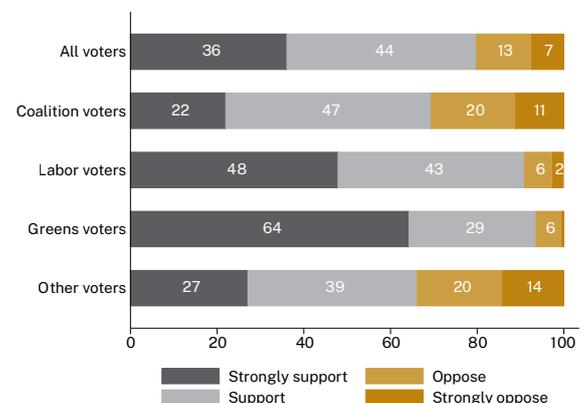


Note: Estimates are percentages.

Recognition of Indigenous Australians in the Constitution

Over the last decade, discussion on reconciliation has centred on amending the Constitution to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and to create a Voice to Parliament. Public opinion towards reconciliation has become progressively more liberal, driven by underlying societal changes in values and attitudes. Since 2016, the AES has asked respondents, “If a referendum were held to recognise Indigenous Australians in the Constitution would you support or oppose such a change to the Constitution?” When the question was first asked in the 2016 AES, four in five Australians supported a change and that proportion has remained virtually unchanged since then. Moreover, there is majority support for a constitutional change to recognise Indigenous Australians in each state – ranging from 76 percent in Queensland to 86 percent in Tasmania – suggesting that the planned referendum on an Indigenous Voice to Parliament would have a strong chance of success. While there are some partisan differences in the degree of support, a majority of all voter types indicated that they would support a change to the Constitution to recognise Indigenous Australians (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5 Support for recognition of Indigenous Australians in the Constitution



Note: Estimates are percentages.

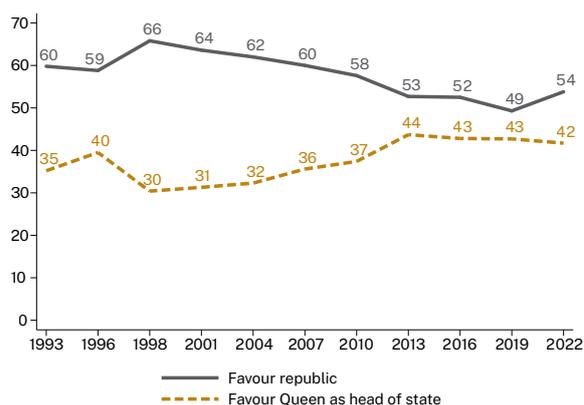
Support for Australia becoming a republic

While there has always been popular support for a republic in Australia, changing the constitutional position of the head of state did not gain any traction until the Keating Labor government of the early 1990s, when national identity began to be widely debated. When the referendum on the republic was held in 1999, a majority of voters supported a republic but there was disagreement on the method by which the head of state would be chosen. This disagreement caused the referendum to fail.

Since 1999 the constitutional position has been, at best, a second order issue and public support for a republic has declined consistently at each election, declining to 49 percent in 2019. In 2022 support for a republic increased slightly, to 54 percent (Figure 5.6). Support for the monarchy has remained constant over the past decade, at 42 percent in 2022. Barring any dramatic short-term change in public opinion, these results suggest that a referendum on the republic would have difficulty in meeting the twin thresholds of support from a majority of the vote and a majority of the states.

The 2022 AES survey was fielded before the death of Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September 2022.³⁰ The republic conversation in Australia has long centred on the idea that the republic question would be revisited after the Queen's death. Polls fielded shortly after the Queen's death suggested very little change in public opinion in the very short term.³¹ The Albanese Labor government has signalled that they will first call a referendum on an Indigenous Voice to Parliament, delaying the republic question until a second term should they win the next election.

Figure 5.6 Support for Australia becoming a republic



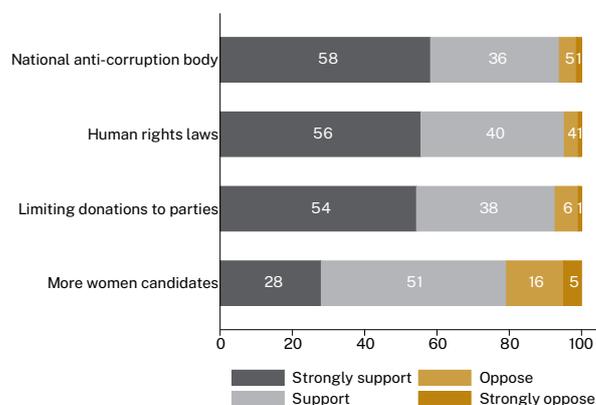
Note: Estimates are percentages.

Support for democratic reforms

The exceptionally low levels of political trust in recent years have ignited a debate about what can be done to improve the integrity of Australia's political system and restore trust in politics. There are a wide range of proposals for improving democratic politics.³² The 2022 AES asked voters whether they would support or oppose four possible changes to the political system: a national body to investigate claims of government corruption; limiting financial donations to political parties; requiring all political parties to select more women candidates; and laws to protect Australians' human rights. This selection was based on areas that have formed part of public debate. For example, there has been a long-running policy discussion about the introduction of a national integrity commission following countless examples of government corruption.³³ Similarly, Clive Palmer's multi-million dollar election advertising spends on the United Australia Party were widely reported on in the media raising questions about political finance.³⁴

Public support for each of these four reforms are presented in Figure 5.7, and show that a significant majority of voters supported each of the four reform ideas. Support is strongest for the national anti-corruption body, human rights laws, and donation limits. While more detailed proposals may elicit stronger views for or against these broad reform areas, these results suggest an electorate that is open to changes that may bring about improvements in the performance of Australia's democracy.

Figure 5.7 Support for political reforms



Note: Estimates are percentages.

Notes

Figure 5.1: Satisfaction with democracy

Estimates are percentages. 1969 and 1979 data is from the Australian National Political Attitudes Survey (ANPAS); 1996-2022 data is from the AES. ANPAS question wording: “On the whole, how do you feel about the state of government and politics in Australia? Would you say that you were very satisfied, fairly satisfied, or not satisfied?” AES question wording: “On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in Australia?” For satisfied with democracy, the response categories are: (1969-1979, 1998-2022) ‘very satisfied’ and ‘fairly satisfied’; (1996) ‘satisfied’ and ‘fairly satisfied’. For not satisfied with democracy, the response categories are: (1969-1979) ‘not satisfied’; (1996-2022) ‘not very satisfied’ and ‘not at all satisfied’.

Figure 5.2: Satisfaction with democracy in OECD countries

Bars show the percentage in each country who responded that they were ‘very satisfied’ or ‘fairly satisfied’ in response to the question “On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in [country]?” Data is from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems Module 5 (2016-2021), supplemented with the 2022 Australian Election Study data.

Figure 5.3: Trust in government

Estimates are percentages. 1969 and 1979 data is from the Australian National Political Attitudes Survey (ANPAS); 1993-2022 data is from the AES. Question wording: “In general, do you feel that the people in government are too often interested in looking after themselves, or do you feel that they can be trusted to do the right thing nearly all the time?” For people in government look after themselves, the response categories are: (1969, 1979) ‘look after self’; (1993-2022) ‘usually look after themselves’ and ‘sometimes look after themselves’. For people in government can be trusted, the response categories are: (1969, 1979) ‘do the right thing’; (1993-2022) ‘sometimes can be trusted to do the right thing’ and ‘usually can be trusted to do the right thing’ combined.

Figure 5.4: Who the government is run for

Estimates are percentages. Question wording: “Would you say the government is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves, or that it is run for the benefit of all the people?” For ‘few big interests’, estimates combine ‘entirely run for the big interests’ and ‘mostly run for the big interests’. For ‘all the people’, estimates combine ‘mostly run for the benefit of all’ and ‘entirely run for the benefit of all’.

Figure 5.5 Support for recognition of Indigenous Australians in the Constitution

Estimates are percentages. Question wording: “If a referendum were held to recognise Indigenous Australians in the Constitution would you support or oppose such a change to the Constitution?”

Figure 5.6 Support for Australia becoming a republic

Estimates for ‘favour republic’ combine ‘strongly favour becoming republic’ and ‘favour becoming republic’. Estimates for ‘favour Queen as head of state’ combine ‘strongly favour retaining the Queen as head of state’ and ‘favour retaining the Queen as head of state’. Question wording: “Do you think that Australia should become a republic with an Australian head of state, or should the Queen be retained as head of state?” Survey was fielded before the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

Figure 5.7 Support for political reforms

Estimates are percentages. Question wording: “Some people say that the following suggestions would improve Australian democracy. Others say they would not. To what extent do you support or oppose each suggestion? a national body to investigate claims of government corruption; limiting financial donations to political parties; all political parties to select more women candidates; and laws to protect Australians’ human rights.”

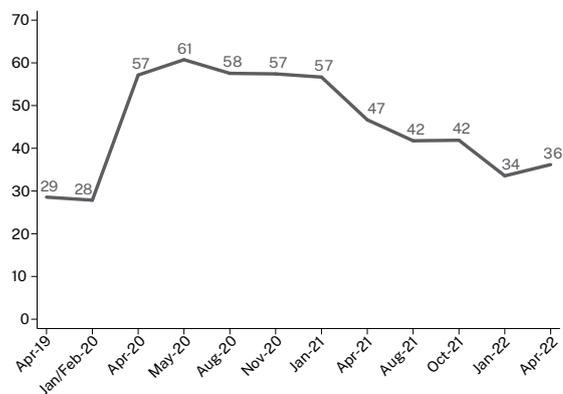
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic which began in early 2020 represented the most serious health crisis in Australia for a century. In March 2020 the government declared a human biosecurity emergency in response to the pandemic and introduced a series of legal and political measures to counter it. The border was closed to non-residents and most of the states and territories introduced restrictions on cross-border movements. Social distancing was introduced and many non-essential services where people gathered were either closed or curtailed. There were periodic lockdowns of residents to reduce community transmission, with some parts of the country affected more than others. The pandemic also affected individuals in different ways. While some transitioned to working from home during lockdowns, others lost their jobs or had to close their businesses. Women in particular took on greater care responsibilities during the pandemic.³⁵ Moreover, some Australians were more vulnerable to the health impacts of COVID-19 than others. The severity of this major crisis presents questions regarding the political repercussions. How did Australians view the government response? And what are the broader implications for Australian society?

Performance of state and federal governments

The early stages of the pandemic produced a ‘rally-round-the-flag’ effect, by which public opinion rallied in support of the government in the face of an existential threat.³⁶ Moreover, Australia had a very low death rate compared to other countries during the first year of the pandemic. Consequently, the federal government, together with most state and territory governments, were viewed as having performed well in response to the crisis.³⁷ But as the pandemic dragged on and government performance on policies such as the national vaccination program came under scrutiny, public support weakened. Attitudes further deteriorated during the latter half of 2021, when many states found themselves in lengthy lockdowns over a year after the pandemic started. This pattern of attitudes can be seen through ANUpoll’s tracking of confidence in the federal government at regular intervals from 2019 to 2022 in Figure 6.1. At the beginning of the pandemic confidence in government jumped almost 30 points to 57 percent and remained high until early 2021.

Figure 6.1 COVID-19 and confidence in the federal government

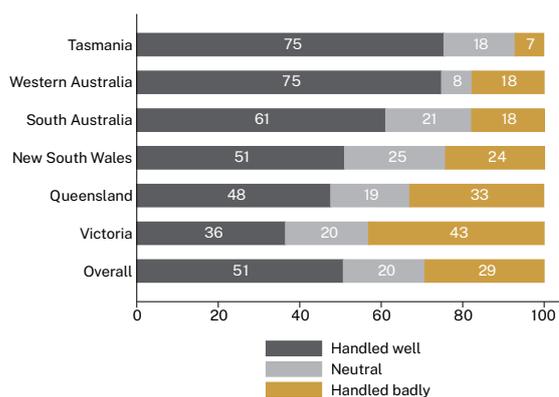


Note: Estimates are percentages. Source: ANU Poll.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its response put the spotlight on the federal design of Australia’s political institutions. The public profiles of state premiers were elevated as they provided daily press conferences on case numbers and any COVID-19 restrictions. Many Australians developed a better understanding of the differing responsibilities of state and federal governments, at least when it came to the pandemic response.

The AES asked respondents how well they thought both the Commonwealth government and their own state or territory government had handled the pandemic. Figure 6.2 shows the responses for the respondent’s own state government.³⁸ Tasmanian and Western Australian respondents were most positive about the performances of their respective state governments, with three in every four saying that the government had handled the pandemic well. Both states benefitted from their geographical isolation and quickly closed their borders to the rest of Australia, thus drastically reducing their exposure to the pandemic. At the other end of the scale, Victorian respondents were much more negative about their state government’s response, with 43 percent saying that the pandemic had been handled badly, compared to 36 percent who said it had been handled well. Indeed, Melbourne holds the dubious record of being the most locked-down city in the world.

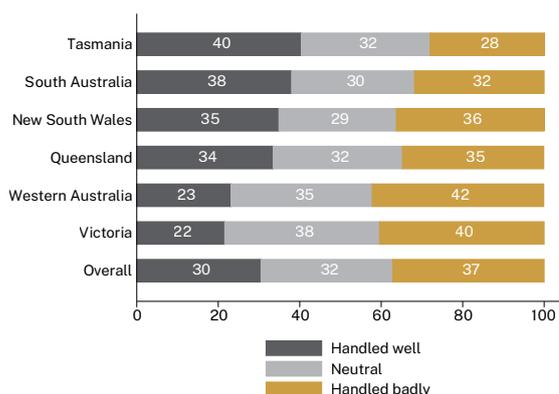
Figure 6.2 How well state government handled the pandemic



Note: Estimates are percentages.

The public's views about the federal government's handling of the pandemic are coloured in part by their own state experience (Figure 6.3). Overall, the respondents were much more negative about the federal government's handling of the crisis than about their own state government, with just 30 percent saying that the federal government had handled it well. The disparity between opinions about the state and federal government's handling of the pandemic is greatest in Western Australia, where just 23 percent thought the federal government had handled the crisis well compared to 75 percent who took the same view about their state government. The smallest differences are in Queensland and Victoria, where the difference between views about the federal and state government's handling of the pandemic is 14 percent.

Figure 6.3 How well Commonwealth government handled the pandemic

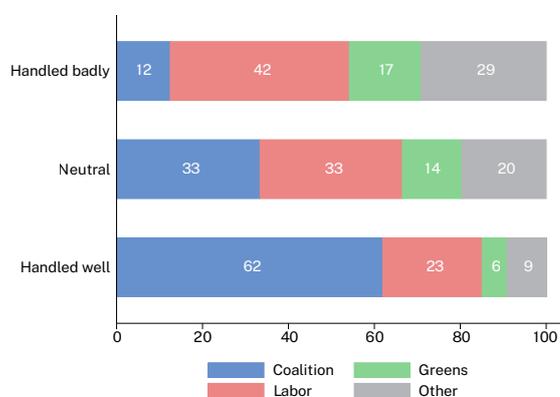


Note: Estimates are percentages.

Did these negative perceptions of the Commonwealth government's handling of the pandemic shape voting in the election? Figure 6.4 shows distinct voting patterns between those with differing evaluations of how the government handled the pandemic. Among those who thought

the Commonwealth government handled the pandemic badly, only 12 percent voted for the Coalition, compared to 62 percent who thought the government handled the crisis well. Almost a third of those who thought the government handled the crisis badly voted for either a minor party or an independent – more than three times those who thought the government handled the crisis well. Of course, existing Coalition supporters would be likely to have more favourable views of how their party handled the crisis. Nevertheless, this data shows a strong association, and further analysis of the AES data shows a much stronger relationship between evaluations of the pandemic response and voter behaviour than evaluations of the national economy and voter behaviour.

Figure 6.4 How well Commonwealth government handled the pandemic and the vote



Note: Estimates are percentages.

Impacts of the pandemic on Australian society

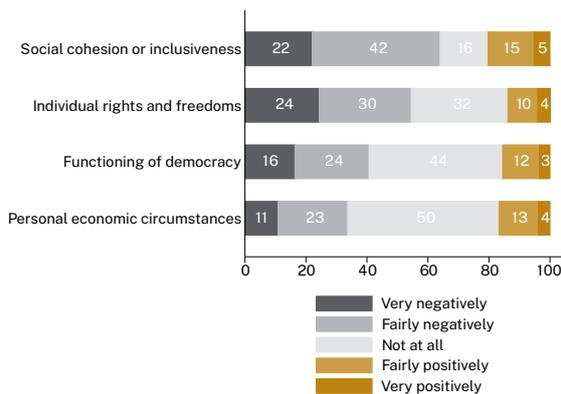
The major impacts of the pandemic on people's lives raises questions about broader implications for Australian society. Particularly in the early stages of the pandemic, "we're all in this together" was a frequently heard phrase, encouraging the community to stay home and socially distance for the common good. As the pandemic progressed, however, the atmosphere became more divisive.³⁹ While some thought government restrictions had gone too far, others thought they had not gone far enough. Protest demonstrations erupted against some of the COVID-19 restrictions, including lockdowns and vaccination mandates applying to certain occupations. The pandemic brought into focus issues around the inclusion of vulnerable members of society as well as individual rights and freedoms amidst a major crisis.

To investigate what Australians saw as the consequences of the pandemic, the AES asked if four aspects of life had become more positive or negative or had not changed due to the pandemic: social cohesion or inclusiveness; individual rights and freedoms; the functioning of democracy; and the respondent's personal economic circumstances.

The results are presented in Figure 6.5. Public opinion was most negative about the effect on social cohesion and inclusiveness, with 22 percent saying that it had been affected ‘very negatively’ and 42 percent that it had been affected ‘fairly negatively’. A majority of 54 percent also thought that individual rights and freedoms had been negatively affected. Just under half believed the pandemic negatively impacted the functioning of democracy. Due to the government’s economic schemes to keep people in work and reduce the impact on private businesses, the respondents were more neutral in their views about how the pandemic had affected their personal economic circumstances, with half saying it had made no difference and about one in three saying the impact had been negative. Across all four of these items only a small minority of 20 percent or less thought the pandemic had resulted in positive impacts.

The years in between the 2019 and 2022 elections were highly unusual because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The AES data on election issue priorities (Figure 1.2) showed that the salience of COVID-19 as an issue had largely dissipated by the time of the 2022 election, even if case numbers were higher than they had been in previous years. Nevertheless, the election was held in the shadow of this major crisis, and people’s views of how it was handled formed part of the 2022 election context.

Figure 6.5 Impacts of the pandemic on Australian society



Note: Estimates are percentages.

Notes

Figure 6.1 COVID-19 and confidence in the federal government

These estimates are based on ANUpoll surveys fielded at regular intervals to provide insights on dynamics in between the 2019 and 2022 elections. Question wording: “How much confidence do you have in the following institutions...? The Federal Government in Canberra” Estimates combine ‘a great deal of confidence’ and ‘quite a lot of confidence’.

Figure 6.2 How well state government handled the pandemic and Figure 6.3 How well Commonwealth government handled the pandemic

Estimates are percentages. Question wording: “How well has your state government and the Commonwealth government handled the pandemic?” [State or territory government / Commonwealth government] Responses are on a scale from 1 (Very badly) to 5 (Very well). ‘Handled badly’ combines 1 and 2 on the scale, ‘neutral’ is for the midpoint of 3, ‘handled well’ combines 4 and 5.

Figure 6.4 How well Commonwealth government handled the pandemic and the vote

Estimates are the percentage of first preference votes in the House of Representatives among those who thought the Commonwealth government handled the pandemic badly / neutral / well, respectively.

Figure 6.5 Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Australian society

Estimates are percentages. Question wording: “How has the coronavirus pandemic affected Australia in the following areas: Social cohesion or inclusiveness; Individual rights and freedoms; The functioning of democracy; Your personal economic circumstances.”

IMPLICATIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC POLITICS IN AUSTRALIA

Drawing together the findings from the 2022 Australian Election Study, four main themes emerge to understand the result and the broader implications for democratic politics in Australia. The first theme is the importance of government performance, with the economy, the pandemic, and Scott Morrison's unpopularity all disadvantaging the Coalition in the 2022 contest. Second, the election represented a unique win for Labor given the party's low primary vote. While the Coalition lost the election through poor government performance, Labor won through a 'small target strategy' with reduced policy differences between the major parties. Third, the 2022 election highlights major socio-demographic shifts in voter behaviour with implications for the future of the major parties. Finally, the 2022 AES results show that the electorate is open to change, in terms of who they vote for and in how democratic politics works in Australia.

Government performance and the Coalition loss

Government performance played a major role in the Liberal-National Coalition loss in the 2022 election. It is well established that voters reward governments for good performance with re-election and punish them for poor performance by voting them out.⁴⁰ This pertains to economic performance in particular but can extend to the performance of government and leaders more broadly. In 2022 there were three distinct performance dimensions which harmed the Coalition – the economy, the pandemic, and Scott Morrison's leadership.

With rising inflation and an associated cost of living crisis, two thirds of Australians thought the national economy had gotten worse in the year leading up to the election. This was the most pessimistic view of the economy in over 30 years. Research on economic voting shows that economic performance is one of the most significant influences on voter behaviour.⁴¹ In previous elections voters consistently preferred the Coalition over Labor on economic issues. In 2022 however, voters preferred Labor over the Coalition on the cost of living – the single biggest issue priority in the election. Poor economic performance combined with voters' greater confidence in Labor's ability to handle the cost of living crisis contributed to the Coalition loss.

The second performance dimension that harmed the Coalition was the pandemic. As the years between the 2019 Coalition win and the 2022 election were dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic, people's evaluations of the Morrison government's performance were inextricably linked to the pandemic. Only 30 percent of Australians thought that the federal government had handled the pandemic well, and overall people had much more favourable views of state than federal government performance.

The third dimension was the negative views many voters formed of Morrison's leadership. While Morrison was moderately popular when he won the election in 2019, by 2022 he had become the least popular major party leader on record scoring 3.8 on average on a popularity scale from zero to 10. In particular, Morrison was not considered honest and trustworthy, the two traits most closely associated with leaders' overall favourability.

These three performance factors were fatal to the Coalition's chances in the 2022 election. This is reflected in the result, with a 5.7 percent swing against the Coalition, alongside the loss of 18 seats including several seats previously considered 'safe'.

Labor's win by default

Labor won the election with a primary vote of 32.6 percent, the lowest since the 1930s, and a 0.8 percent swing against Labor since the 2019 election that they lost. Nevertheless, they won in a context where the Coalition vote share also reached a historic low, with a much greater swing against the Coalition since 2019 (5.7 percent). This was described in *The Australian* as a "victory by default".⁴² When people are dissatisfied with the two major parties, in the absence of a major shake-up in the party system or a redesign of Australia's electoral system, either Labor or the Coalition will always win.

In the lead up to the election, there was much discussion on Labor's small target strategy.⁴³ While Labor went into the 2019 election with ambitious proposals on taxation reform, in the 2022 election they avoided putting forward policies that would deter voters and emphasised their similarity to the Coalition in several policy areas. Labor abandoned its 2019 tax policies and promised to keep the Coalition government's stage three income tax cuts. In the first leaders' debate, Anthony Albanese emphasised that Labor now shared the Coalition's policy to turn back boats carrying asylum seekers.⁴⁴ The effects of this change in Labor strategy can be seen in the AES data. Fewer voters cast their ballots based on policy issues than in 2019, and the proportion of voters who saw 'a good deal of difference' between the parties declined from 40 percent in 2019 to 28 percent in 2022. The Coalition's advantage in several policy areas was reduced or eliminated, as more voters saw no difference between the parties on public policy.

Combined with this small target strategy on policy, Labor entered the election with Anthony Albanese as a leader who was more popular than both Scott Morrison and Labor's predecessor, Bill Shorten. The previous majority government win for Labor in 2007 was one that inspired voters. Kevin Rudd (in 2007) was the most popular prime minister in the history of the AES, and at that time satisfaction with democracy reached its highest point on record. By contrast, the Labor win in 2022 was more

about directing attention to the Coalition's poor performance rather than putting forward a policy agenda that would attract voters.

Socio-demographic trends

Situating the 2022 election in long-term perspective shows major socio-demographic shifts in voting patterns based on gender, generation and social class with significant implications for the future of the major parties.

There is a significant gender gap in voter behaviour, with fewer women voting for the Coalition. Labor has the opposite gender voting gap, attracting more votes from women than men, but to a lesser degree. Across the past three elections the gender gap in voting has been greater than in all previous elections covered by the AES. The Coalition has never attracted such a low share of the vote overall, but from women in particular. As women make up half of the electorate, this is a group no major party can afford to lose. The Coalition emerges from the 2022 election in a weaker position to address their diminishing support among women. Although the proportion of women in parliament increased overall following the 2022 election, the Coalition has fewer women representatives than in 2019.⁴⁵

The divide between how younger and older generations of Australians vote is even more pronounced than the gender gap. Millennials, the oldest of whom are now in their 40s, and Generation Z, make up an increasing proportion of the electorate, outnumbering Baby Boomers.⁴⁶ These younger generations have very different voting patterns to previous generations at the same stage of life, and are much further to the left in their party preferences. Only about one in four voters under the age of 40 reported voting for the Coalition in 2022. At no time in the 35-year history of the AES has there been such a low level of support for either major party in so large a segment of the electorate.

The assumption that Millennials will shift to the right as they age has thus far not been borne out by the evidence, with generational effects much more significant than life cycle effects in understanding voter behaviour in Australia. The implication is that through processes of generational replacement, the electorate is moving to the left and becoming more progressive in a range of policy areas. The 2022 election saw one impact of this generational shift with the success of the Greens in four of the nation's youngest electorates, increasing the Greens' representation from one to four seats in the House of Representatives.⁴⁷

The AES data also presents a complex picture as to how social class intersects with the vote. On the one hand, Labor still attracts more working class votes than the Coalition, although Labor's share of the working class vote has diminished to just 38 percent in 2022. The Coalition lost votes from university-educated voters, high-income voters, and homeowners – groups which gave reasonably strong

support to the Coalition in the previous election. These shifting dynamics indicate that neither major party can rely on the support of their traditional voter base.

Voters open to change

The final major theme emerging from the 2022 AES is that voters are open to change in how Australia's political system works. Political partisanship for the major parties has reached record lows. Voters are more likely to switch their votes from election to election than ever before, with only 37 percent of voters supporting the same party at each election. The proportion of voters who considered voting for another party during the campaign, at 36 percent, has never been higher. Voter volatility has been increasing for some time, but in 2022 we saw this volatility reflected in the election result, with the success of independents and the Greens. The growing disaffection with the major parties was matched, in some seats, with well-funded independent campaigns targeted at areas of Coalition weakness. This result shows that voters who are dissatisfied with the major parties are willing to support change when presented with viable alternatives.

After political trust reached record lows in 2019, Australian voters have also shown that they are open to reforms that would change the trajectory of democratic politics in Australia. An overwhelming majority (80 percent) of voters support a change in the Constitution to recognise Indigenous Australians. Support for a republic has grown since 2019 (to 54 percent). Most Australians indicate that they would support a national body to investigate claims of government corruption. These results suggest many Australians will get behind constructive efforts to change how democratic politics works in Australia.

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APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

The Australian Election Study (AES) surveys are designed to collect data following federal elections for academic research on Australian electoral behaviour and public opinion. The AES commenced operation in 1987 and has fielded surveys after every federal election since. The AES is mounted as a collaborative exercise between several Australian universities. The 1987 and 1990 surveys were funded by a consortium of universities and the 2007 survey by ANU; all of the intervening and subsequent surveys have been funded by the Australian Research Council as detailed in the table below.

Australian Election Study Overview, 1987–2022

Year	Principal investigators	Funder	Study number
1987	Ian McAllister, Anthony Mughan	University of NSW, ANU	ASSDA 445
1990	Ian McAllister, Roger Jones, David Gow	University of NSW, ANU	ASSDA 570
1993	Roger Jones, Ian McAllister, David Denemark, David Gow	ARC/ A79131812	ASSDA 763
1996	Roger Jones, David Gow, Ian McAllister	ARC/ A79530652	ASSDA 943
1998	Clive Bean, David Gow, Ian McAllister	ARC/A79804144	ASSDA 1001
1999	David Gow, Clive Bean, Ian McAllister	ARC/ A79937265	ASSDA 1018
2001	Clive Bean, David Gow, Ian McAllister	ARC/ A00106341	ASSDA 1048
2004	Clive Bean, Ian McAllister, Rachel Gibson, David Gow	ARC/ DP0452898	ASSDA 1079
2007	Clive Bean, Ian McAllister, David Gow	ACPSPRI/ACSR	ASSDA 1120
2010	Ian McAllister, Clive Bean, Rachel Gibson, Juliet Pietsch	ARC/DP1094626	ASSDA 1228
2013	Ian McAllister, Juliet Pietsch, Clive Bean, Rachel Gibson	ARC/ DP120103941	ADA 1259
2016	Ian McAllister, Juliet Pietsch, Clive Bean, Rachel Gibson, Toni Makkai	ARC/ DP160101501	ADA 01365
2019	Ian McAllister, Jill Sheppard, Clive Bean, Rachel Gibson, Toni Makkai	ARC/ DP160101501	ADA01446
2022	Ian McAllister, Jill Sheppard, Sarah Cameron, Simon Jackman	ARC/ DP210101517	ADA 100114

All the AES surveys are national, post-election self-completion surveys. The 1987–2013 surveys were based on samples drawn randomly from the electoral register. The 2016 survey used a split sample method, with half of the sample coming from the electoral register, and half from the Geo-Coded National Address File (G-NAF). The 2019 and 2022 surveys were based solely on samples drawn from the G-NAF. The 1993 AES oversampled in some of the smaller states and because of this the sample was weighted down to a national sample of 2,388 respondents. The overall response rates are listed below. In 2001 and 2004 an online survey was conducted in parallel with the regular AES. In 2010, 2013, and 2016 an online option was available to the survey respondents. In 2013 and 2022 an additional sample was collected online in order to correct for an under-representation of younger voters. In 2019 and 2022 a ‘push-to-web’ methodology was used, with a hard copy completion being available to respondents who opted for it. The 1993 and post 2010 surveys are weighted to reflect the characteristics of the national electorate. The 2022 AES also included a panel component, based on respondents who were interviewed in both 2016, 2019 and 2022. The response rate for the 2022 survey is 43.1 percent, with 2,508 survey responses.

Prior to the AES, three academic surveys of political behaviour were collected by Don Aitkin in 1967, 1969 and 1979, respectively, but they are not strictly speaking election surveys. Where comparable measures exist from these earlier studies, they have been incorporated in this report in graphs showing long-term trends. Details on the earlier surveys are available on the Australian National Political Attitudes Survey Dataverse: dataverse.ada.edu.au/dataverse/australian-national-political-attitudes-survey

The Australian Election Study data are available from the Australian Election Study website (australianelectionstudy.org) and from Dataverse (dataverse.ada.edu.au/dataverse/aes). The AES website also includes further details on methodology and question wording, with questionnaires, codebooks and technical reports provided for each survey. Since 1998 the AES has been a member of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) group (see www.cses.org).

Any results cited from the AES should credit the Australian Election Study or this report.

Further information: www.australianelectionstudy.org

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