Trends in Australian Political Opinion
Results from the Australian Election Study
1987–2016
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1987–2016

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Political opinion polls are an inescapable part of everyday life. Government or opposition policies rarely see the light of day without some poll evidence to gauge the public’s response to them. Party leaders are constantly evaluated against their poll ratings, not least by their colleagues, and consistently low ratings can often spell a leader’s demise. And not least, Prime Ministers call elections when they consider the polls to be most favourable to them.

Interpreting political opinion polls is sometimes difficult. On particular issues or with regard to particular personalities, opinions may change significantly in a short period of time as a result of an event or a changed circumstance. Small changes in question wordings or in sample design may cause what appear to be significant changes in public opinion when such changes are, in fact, an artefact of the survey’s methodology. The most reliable way in which to monitor trends in public opinion is to examine responses over an extended period of time, using questions asked in the same way and included in surveys that use the same methodology.

This monograph presents trends in Australian public opinion on politics over an extended period of time. In most cases, our trends run from 1987 until 2016; in some cases, the same questions have been asked in surveys conducted in 1967, 1969 and 1979, allowing us to extend the time series back another two decades. The 1987 to 2016 trends are based on the Australian Election Study (AES) surveys, comprehensive post-election surveys of political opinion that have asked the same questions and used the same methodology. The 1967, 1969 and 1979 surveys are also comprehensive academic surveys of political opinion; all three surveys were conducted by Don Aitkin, who pioneered the use of the mass public opinion survey in the academic study of politics in Australia.

The AES provides the most sophisticated and exhaustive set of data ever collected in Australia on the dynamics of political behaviour. Each of the AES surveys contains questions relating to the role of media and media exposure; general political interest and knowledge; perceptions of the election campaign; party identification and prior voting history; parents’ and partner partisanship; vote in the election and the explanations given for it; party images; perceptions of the major party leaders and the content of their public images; election issues; social policy issues; and a range of socio-demographic measures including education, occupation, religious behaviour, family circumstances, and income.

In this monograph, we draw on the main recurring themes of the AES to trace long-term changes in the political opinion of the electorate. The appendix provides a detailed overview of the methodology used in each survey. The exact question wordings and response categories, and the complete sets of responses to the questions, appear in a full online appendix at australianelectionstudy.org.

The AES is also a founding member of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems project, details of which can be found at www.cses.org.

Sarah M. Cameron
Ian McAllister
Canberra
December 2016
The election campaign
Voting and partisanship
Election issues
The economy
Politics and political parties
The left-right dimension
The political leaders
Democracy and institutions
Trade unions, business and wealth
Social issues
Defence and foreign affairs
Appendix: Methodology
Followed the election in the mass media

- Television
- Radio
- Newspapers
- Internet

Watched the leaders' debates

- Watched debate
- Did not watch debate

The election campaign
Interest in the election

- Care a good deal who wins the election
- A good deal of interest in the election

Contacted by candidate or political party

- Contacted by a party during the campaign
Discussing the election campaign with others

- Discuss politics
- Persuade others how to vote

Involvement in the election campaign

- Attend meeting
- Work for party or candidate
- Contribute money to a political party or election candidate

The election campaign
Websites accessed during the election campaign

Online activity during the election campaign
Notes

Followed the election in the mass media

Contacted by candidate or political party

Discussing the election campaign with others
For 2001–2016 estimates combine ‘frequently’ and ‘occasionally’.

Involvement in the election campaign
For attend meeting, the response categories are (1969) ‘yes’; (1993–2016) ‘go to any political meetings or rallies’. For work for a party or candidate, the response categories are (1969) ‘yes’; (1993–1998) ‘do any work for a political party or election candidate’; (2001–2016) ‘show your support for a particular party or candidate by, for example, attending a meeting, putting up a poster, or in some other way’.

For contribute money to a political party or election candidate, the response categories are (1969) ‘yes’; (1993–2007, 2013–2016) ‘contribute money to a political party or election candidate’; (2010) combined responses to ‘contribute money to a political party or election candidate by mail or phone’ and ‘contribute money to a political party or election candidate using the internet’. For 2001–2016 all estimates combine ‘frequently’ and ‘occasionally’.

Websites accessed during the election campaign
For party or candidate campaign sites estimates (2004–2007) combine ‘party site’, ‘your own MP’s site’, ‘individual candidate site in your electorate’ and ‘other candidate/MPs sites outside your electorate’, for (2010–2013) the response category is ‘party or candidate campaign sites’, and for (2016) ‘official party or candidate campaign sites’. For unofficial online videos, the response categories are (2007) ‘YouTube; (2010–2013) ‘unofficial online videos’; (2016) ‘unofficial online content (i.e. non-party produced campaign material (e.g. YouTube))’.

Online activity during the election campaign
For ‘signed up to receive information from a party or candidate’ this includes registering as their follower/friend/supporter on social media.

Appendix: Methodology
Timing of the voting decision

A long time ago
During the election campaign

The use of voter prompts on polling day

Followed 'How to Vote' card for House of Representatives
Voted above the line for Senate
Split ticket voting — cast different vote in House of Representatives and Senate

The extent of voting volatility

 Always voted for same party
 Considered voting for another party
Considered changing vote during campaign

- Liberal-National voters
- Labor voters

Lifetime voting

- Stable Liberal-National
- Stable Labor

Voting and partisanship
Considerations in the voting decision

- Party leaders
- Policy issues
- Candidates in your electorate
- Parties taken as a whole

Destination of minor party votes in the House of Representatives

- Liberal-National
- Labor
- Not sure / don’t know
Destination of minor party votes in the Senate

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<th>Labor</th>
<th>Not sure / don't know</th>
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<td>2016</td>
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Difference between the parties

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<th>Some difference</th>
<th>Not much / no difference</th>
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<td>2013</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Notes

Timing of the voting decision
For 1990–2016 during the election campaign combines ‘in the first few weeks of the campaign’, ‘a few days before election day’ and ‘on election day’.

Split ticket voting
Estimates are based on voters preferring a different party in the House of Representatives and the Senate. The Liberal and National parties are treated as a single group.

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Appendix: Methodology
**Most important economic election issues**

- Education
- Taxation
- Industrial relations
- Unemployment
- Management of the economy

**Most important non-economic election issues**

- Health
- Environment
- Global Warming
- Refugees and asylum seekers

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32 Election issues

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33 Election issues
Preferred party policy on immigration

Preferred party policy on refugees and asylum seekers

40 Election issues

41 Election issues
Notes

Most important economic election issues
‘Taxation’ was not included in 1993.

Most important non-economic election issues
In 1996–2016 estimates for health are for ‘Health and Medicare’. ‘Refugees and asylum seekers’ was not included in 2007.

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Financial situation of household in a year’s time

- Will be better
- Will be worse
- About the same

Financial situation of country in a year’s time

- Will be better
- Will be worse
- About the same
Government effect on household finances in a year’s time

- **Good effect**
- **Bad effect**
- **No difference**

Government effect on country’s economy in a year’s time

- **Good effect**
- **Bad effect**
- **No difference**
Notes

Financial situation of household over past year
For become better, estimates combine ‘a lot better’ and ‘a little better’. For become worse, estimates combine ‘a little worse’ and ‘a lot worse’.

Financial situation of country over past year
For become better, estimates combine ‘a lot better’ and ‘a little better’. For become worse, estimates combine ‘a little worse’ and ‘a lot worse’.

Financial situation of household in a year’s time
For will be better, estimates combine ‘a lot better’ and ‘a little better’. For will be worse, estimates combine ‘a little worse’ and ‘a lot worse’.

Financial situation of country in a year’s time
For will be better, estimates combine ‘a lot better’ and ‘a little better’. For will be worse, estimates combine ‘a little worse’ and ‘a lot worse’.

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Interest in politics

- A good deal
- Some
- Not much
- None

Compulsory voting and likelihood of voting if voluntary

- Supports compulsory voting
- Would have voted if voluntary
**Political participation in the past five years**

- **Contacted official via email**
- **Contacted official in person or in writing**
- **Worked together with others**

**Political participation in the past five years**

- **Taken part in a protest**
- **Signed a written petition**
- **Signed an online petition**
Feelings about political parties

Liberal  
Labor  
National

Feelings about political parties (continued)

Greens  
Democrat  
One Nation

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

Estimates are means
The scale runs from 0 (strongly dislike party) to 10 (strongly like party) with a designated midpoint of 5 (neither like nor dislike).
Perceptions of the role of political parties

- Good deal of difference between parties
- Parties care what people think
- Parties necessary to make political system work
Political participation in the past five years (continued)

Perceptions of the role of political parties
For parties care what people think and parties necessary to make political system work, estimates combine ‘1’ and ‘2’ on the five point scale.
Voters’ left-right position

Estimates are means
The political left-right scale runs from 0 (far left) to 10 (far right) with a designated midpoint of 5 (neither left nor right).

Where voters place the parties on the left-right scale

Estimates are means
The political left-right scale runs from 0 (far left) to 10 (far right) with a designated midpoint of 5 (neither left nor right).
The political leaders
### How politicians were rated

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

- **Election winners**
- **Main party leaders**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Politician</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<td>Bob Hawke*</td>
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<td>John Howard*</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Janine Haines</td>
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<td>Paul Keating</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ian Sinclair</td>
<td>3.58</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joh Bjelke-Petersen</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>Bob Hawke*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Andrew Peacock*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>John Howard</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Charles Blunt</td>
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<td>Paul Keating*</td>
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<td>John Hewson*</td>
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<td>Tim Fischer</td>
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### How politicians were rated (continued)

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**Democracy and institutions**

Trade unions, business and wealth
Social issues
Defence and foreign affairs

Appendix: Methodology
Satisfaction with democracy

- Satisfied with democracy
- Not satisfied with democracy

Trust in government

- People in government look after themselves
- People in government can be trusted

People in government look after themselves

- People in government can be trusted
Who the government is run for

- Few big interests
- All the people

Political efficacy and the use of the vote

- Who people vote for can make a big difference
- Who people vote for won’t make any difference

Who people vote for can make a big difference

Who people vote for won’t make any difference
Makes a difference who is in power

- It makes a big difference who is in power
- It doesn’t make any difference who is in power

Politicians know what ordinary people think

- Politicians know what ordinary people think
- Politicians don’t know what ordinary people think

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The Queen, the flag and republicanism

Government control of parliament

The Queen, important Favours republic Favour flag change

Better when government does not control Senate Better when government controls both houses

80 Democracy and Institutions

81 Democracy and Institutions
Notes

Satisfaction with democracy

Trust in government
For people in government look after themselves, the response categories are (1969, 1979) look after self; (1993–2016) ‘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’; (1993–2016) ‘sometimes can be trusted to do the right thing’ and ‘usually can be trusted to do the right thing’.

Who the government is run for
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’.

Political efficacy and the use of the vote
For who people vote for can make a big difference, estimates combine codes ‘1’ and ‘2’. For who people vote for won’t make any difference, estimates combine codes ‘4’ and ‘5’.

Makes a difference who is in power
For it makes a big difference who is in power, estimates combine codes ‘1’ and ‘2’. For it doesn’t make any difference who is in power, estimates combine codes ‘4’ and ‘5’.

Politicians know what ordinary people think
For politicians know what ordinary people think, estimates combine codes ‘1’ and ‘2’. For politicians don’t know what ordinary people think estimates combine codes ‘4’ and ‘5’.

The Queen, the flag and republicanism
For Queen important, estimates combine ‘very important’ and ‘fairly important’. For favour republic, estimates combine (1993–2016) ‘strongly favour becoming republic’ and ‘favour becoming republic’. For favour flag change, estimates combine ‘strongly for flag change’ and ‘for flag change’.

Government control of parliament
The question was not asked in 1996.
The power of trade unions and big business

- **Unions have too much power**
- **Big business has too much power**

Class self-image

- **Upper**
- **Middle**
- **Working**

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84 Trade unions, business and wealth

85 Trade unions, business and wealth
Trade union membership and support for industrial action

- Belong to union
- Stricter laws for unions

Government spending: less tax or more social services

- Favours less tax
- Favours spending more on social services

86 Trade unions, business and wealth
87 Trade unions, business and wealth
Income and wealth should be redistributed

Income and wealth should not be redistributed

Redistribution of income and wealth

High tax makes people unwilling to work

Agree

Disagree

High tax makes people unwilling to work
Notes

The power of trade unions and big business
For unions have too much power, estimates for 1990–2016 combine ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’. For big business has too much power, estimates for 1990–2016 combine ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’.

Class self-image
From 2010–2016 ‘None’ was included in the list of responses and percentages adjusted accordingly.

Trade union membership and support for industrial action
Estimates for stricter laws for unions combine ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’.

Government spending:
less tax or more social services
For favours less tax, the response categories are (1987–2016) ‘strongly favour reducing taxes’ and ‘mildly favour reducing taxes’. For favours spending more on social services, the response categories are (1987–2016) ‘mildly favour spending more on social services’ and ‘strongly favour spending more on social services’.

Redistribution of income and wealth
For income and wealth should be redistributed, estimates combine ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’. For income and wealth should not be redistributed, estimates combine ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’.

High tax makes people unwilling to work
‘Agree’ combines ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’. ‘Disagree’ combines ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘disagree’.

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Attitudes towards sex and nudity in films and magazines

- **Gone too far**
- **Not gone far enough**
- **About right**

Obtain readily

Special circumstances

Banned

Attitudes towards abortion

Obtain readily

Special circumstances

Banned

92 Social issues

93 Social issues
Attitudes towards the legal status of marijuana

Marijuana should be a criminal offence
Marijuana should not be a criminal offence

Attitudes towards jail sentences and capital punishment

Stiffer sentences for criminals
Reintroduce death penalty for murder
Attitudes towards policies on Indigenous Australians

Government help for Indigenous Australians gone too far
Transfer of land rights to Indigenous Australians gone too far

Attitudes towards gender equality

Equal opportunity for women gone too far
Women should be given preferential treatment
Should increase business opportunities for women
Attitudes towards asylum seeker arrivals by boat

- Boats should be turned back
- Boats should not be turned back

Attitudes towards immigrants and immigration

- Equal opportunity for migrants gone too far
- Number of migrants allowed into Australia gone too far
Attitudes towards the level of immigration into Australia

The consequences of immigration
Attitudes towards policies on Indigenous Australians
For government help for Indigenous Australians gone too far, the estimates for 1993–2016 combine ‘much too far’ and ‘too far’. For transfer of land rights to Indigenous Australians gone too far, the estimates for 1990–2016 combine ‘much too far’ and ‘too far’. Transfer of land rights to Indigenous Australians was not included in 1993.

Attitudes towards gender equality
For equal opportunity for women gone too far, estimates combine ‘much too far’ and ‘too far’. For women should be given preferential treatment, estimates combine ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’. For women should be given equal opportunity, estimates combine ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’.

Attitudes towards asylum seeker arrivals by boat
For boats should be turned back, estimates combine ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’. For boats should not be turned back, estimates combine ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘disagree’. This question was not included in 2007.

Attitudes towards immigrants and immigration
For equal opportunity for migrants gone too far, the response categories are (1990–2016) ‘much too far’ and ‘too far’. For number of migrants allowed into Australia gone too far, the response categories are (1990–2016) ‘much too far’ and ‘too far’.

Attitudes towards the level of immigration into Australia
For increase immigration, estimates combine ‘increased a lot’ and ‘increased a little’. For keep immigration levels the same, estimates are for ‘remain about the same’. For reduce immigration, estimates combine ‘reduced a little’ and ‘reduced a lot’.

The consequences of immigration
For immigrants increase crime rate, immigrants good for economy, immigrants take jobs away from Australian born, immigrants make Australia more open to ideas and cultures, the response categories are (1996–2016) ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’.

Threat of global warming
Question asks: ‘How serious a threat do you think global warming will pose to you or your way of life in your lifetime?’ ‘Serious threat’ combines ‘very serious’ and ‘fairly serious’. ‘Not a serious threat’ combines ‘not very serious’ and ‘not at all serious’.

Notes
Attitudes towards nudity and sex in films and magazines
For nudity and sex in films and magazines gone too far, estimates for 1990–2016 combine ‘gone much too far’ and ‘gone too far’. For nudity and sex in films and magazines not gone far enough, estimates for 1990–2016 combine ‘not gone far enough’ and ‘not gone nearly far enough’.

Attitudes towards abortion
From 2010–2016 ‘Don’t know’ was included in the list of responses and percentages adjusted accordingly.

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For marijuana should not be a criminal offence, estimates combine ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’. For marijuana should be a criminal offence, estimates combine ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’.

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Attitudes towards Australia’s defence capability

- Australia able to defend itself if attacked
- Australia’s defence stronger than 10 years ago

Support for war on terrorism

- Agree
- Disagree

15. Australia able to defend itself if attacked

16. Australia’s defence stronger than 10 years ago


0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70%


0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80%

106 Defence and foreign affairs

107 Defence and foreign affairs
Indonesia as a security threat to Australia

China as a security threat to Australia

Very likely
Fairly likely
Not very likely

Very likely
Fairly likely
Not very likely


0 10 20 30 40 50 60%

0 10 20 30 40 50 60%

0 10 20 30 40 50 60%

0 10 20 30 40 50 60%


0 10 20 30 40 50 60%
Japan as a security threat to Australia


0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 100%

Very likely
Fairly likely
Not very likely

Malaysia as a security threat to Australia


0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80%

Very likely
Fairly likely
Not very likely
Vietnam as a security threat to Australia

- Very likely
- Fairly likely
- Not very likely

The United States as a security threat to Australia

- Very likely
- Fairly likely
- Not very likely
Attitudes towards defence links with the United States

- United States alliance under ANZUS important
- Trust in the United States to come to Australia’s defence

Attitudes towards closer relations with Asia

- Relations with Asia gone too far
- Relations with Asia about right
- Relations with Asia not gone far enough
Attitudes towards more trade relations with Asia

- **Agree**
- **Not sure**
- **Disagree**

![Graph showing attitudes towards more trade relations with Asia over time.](image-url)
Notes

Attitudes towards Australia’s defence capability
For Australia able to defend itself if attacked and Australia’s defence stronger than 10 years ago, estimates combine ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’.

Support for war on terrorism
Question asks whether ‘Australia should provide military assistance for the war on terrorism?’ ‘Agree’ combines ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’. ‘Disagree’ combines ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘disagree’.

Attitudes towards defence links with the United States
For United States alliance under ANZUS important, estimates combine ‘very important’ and ‘fairly important’. For trust in the United States to come to Australia’s defence, estimates combine ‘a great deal’ and ‘a fair amount’.

Attitudes towards closer relations with Asia
For relations with Asia gone too far, estimates combine ‘gone much too far’ and ‘gone too far’. For relations with Asia not gone far enough, estimates combine ‘not gone far enough’ and ‘not gone nearly far enough’.

Attitudes towards more trade relations with Asia
Question asks whether ‘Australia’s trading future lies in Asia’. For agree, estimates combine ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’. For disagree, estimates combine ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’.
The Australian Election Study (AES) surveys are designed to collect data during federal elections for academic research on Australian electoral behaviour and public opinion. Since 1998 the AES has been a member of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) group (see www.cses.org). The AES commenced operation in 1987 (although three academic surveys of political behaviour were collected in 1967, 1969 and 1979, respectively, but they are not strictly speaking election surveys).

The AES routinely collects data among a nationally representative sample of voters and among major party candidates standing for election. Both the voter and candidate instruments combine a common set of questions. 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. Each of the eleven surveys conducted to date has had a central theme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Principal Investigators</th>
<th>Funder</th>
<th>Study number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Ian McAllister, Anthony Mughan</td>
<td>University of NSW, ANU</td>
<td>ASSDA 445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Ian McAllister, Roger Jones, David Gow</td>
<td>University of NSW, ANU</td>
<td>ASSDA 570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Roger Jones, Ian McAllister, David Denemark, David Gow</td>
<td>ARC/ A79131512</td>
<td>ASSDA 763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Roger Jones, Ian McAllister, David Gow</td>
<td>ARC/ A79530652</td>
<td>ASSDA 943</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Clive Bean, David Gow, Ian McAllister</td>
<td>ARC/ A79804144</td>
<td>ASSDA 1001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>David Gow, Clive Bean, Ian McAllister</td>
<td>ARC/ A79997265</td>
<td>ASSDA 1018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Clive Bean, David Gow, Ian McAllister</td>
<td>ARC/ A00106341</td>
<td>ASSDA 1048</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Clive Bean, Ian McAllister, Rachel Gibson, David Gow</td>
<td>ARC/ DP0452898</td>
<td>ASSDA 1079</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Clive Bean, Ian McAllister, Rachel Gibson, David Gow</td>
<td>ACPS/RI/ACSR</td>
<td>ASSDA 1120</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Clive Bean, Ian McAllister, Rachel Gibson, Juliet Pietsch</td>
<td>ARC/ DP1094626</td>
<td>ASSDA 1228</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Clive Bean, Ian McAllister, Juliet Pietsch, Rachel Gibson</td>
<td>ARC/ DP120103941</td>
<td>ADA 1259</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Ian McAllister, Clive Bean, Toni Makkai, Rachel Gibson</td>
<td>ARC/ DP160101501</td>
<td>ADA 01365</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the data are publicly available from australianelectionstudy.org as well as from the Australian Data Archive (ada.edu.au). In the case of the candidate data, demographic variables are removed so that individual respondents cannot be identified.
Candidates

The Australian Candidates Study (ACS) surveys are conducted in parallel with the surveys of voters. In 1987 all candidates for the House of Representatives and Senate were sampled. Since 1990 the surveys have been restricted to samples of all major party candidates, plus identifiable Greens and other environmental candidates. This restriction was designed to cut costs, since about half of the total number of candidates were minor party or independent candidates, almost all of whom lost their deposits. In 1993 the criteria were broadened to include other candidates whom it was anticipated would obtain more than 10 per cent of the first preference vote.

Australian Candidate Survey response rates, 1987 – 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total contacted</th>
<th>Valid response</th>
<th>Effective response (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>868</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>70.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>672</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>63.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>591</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 1987 and 2016 elections were double dissolution elections for the Senate. Other elections are half-Senate. The response rate is estimated as valid responses / total contacted.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total sample</th>
<th>Valid response</th>
<th>Effective response (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>3,061</td>
<td>1,825</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3,606</td>
<td>2,020</td>
<td>58.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>4,950</td>
<td>3,023</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>1,795</td>
<td>61.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>3,502</td>
<td>1,896</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>2,010</td>
<td>55.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4,250</td>
<td>1,769</td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>1,873</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5,200</td>
<td>2,061</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>12,200</td>
<td>3,955</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>12,497</td>
<td>2,818</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The response rate is estimated as: valid responses / (total sample−moved or gone away). The 2010 response rate is the figure for the initial self-completion sample.

Voters

All the studies 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 using the Geo-Coded National Address File (G-NAP). 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 have varied, and 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, and in 2013 an additional sample was collected online in order to correct for an under-representation of younger voters. The 1993, 2010, 2013 and 2016 surveys are weighted to reflect the characteristics of the national electorate.

Full technical details of the sampling methodology is available in the survey codebooks, available at www.australianelectionstudy.org.
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