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A Big Australia: why it may all be over

Drawing on the November 2019 TAPRI survey

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Executive Summary

Until Covid-19 a Big Australia seemed impregnable. It represented a commitment to an open, globalised economy, featuring progressive cultural values and high immigration. The concept of a Big Australia had achieved the bipartisan support of the major Australian political parties. In the case of Labor the focus was on the cultural values, strongly and sincerely held by Labor's leaders and its supporters, especially among university graduates. High immigration was interwoven with progressive values because of the diverse ethnic and cultural streams of migrants that it was delivering.

In the case of the Coalition, the cultural values aspect scarcely received lip service. However, the immigration component has, or had, become central to the party's economic objectives. These emphasised maximum growth in the economy and in jobs. Migration was understood to have helped deliver 29 years of uninterrupted growth in GDP.

Prior to Covid-19 population growth in Australia had been around 1.5 per cent a year, of which net overseas migration (NOM) comprised about one percentage point. By contrast, NOM is currently adding 0.3 percent a year to the population of the US, and 0.4 percent a year in the UK.

Australia appears to be an outlier. In the UK and the US, previous government commitments to a similar globalising, high immigration agenda have been successfully challenged by protest movements, represented by Brexit in the UK and Trump's presidential victory in the US.

The story we tell in this report is that Australia, too, is vulnerable to a similar reaction.

Survey data collected by The Australian Population Research Institute (TAPRI), and by other pollsters, show that around half the Australian electorate want a reduction in immigration. A majority of all voters think Australia does not need more people and believe that high immigration is responsible for the deterioration of the quality of life in Australia's big cities, as well as stressing its natural environment. Moreover, at least half the electorate do not support the progressive cultural values that left elites (including Labor's leaders) regard as legitimating high immigration. Nor do they support the economic arguments advanced to justify it.

Most of the voters who take this stance are not university graduates. On the other hand most graduate voters support progressive values and a significant minority of them say that immigration should be increased still further.

Non-graduates swing right and graduates swing left

Since the 1990s a majority of Australia's non-graduates voters have moved from supporting left-leaning parties (mainly Labor) to supporting right-leaning parties (mainly the Coalition). Over the same period many graduate voters started to move in the other direction. On average, from 2001 to 2019, 55 percent of non-graduates have voted for right-leaning parties and 54 percent of graduates have voted for Labor or the Greens. This crossover in political alignments represents a fundamental realignment of Australian voters' preferences. And as we show, it mirrors what has happened in both the UK and the US.

An important factor in this realignment is that the Coalition has clearly and openly rejected Labor's progressive cultural agenda. Nevertheless, it has maintained a Big Australia immigration commitment, despite the fact that most of its non-graduate supporters do not concur with this. In effect, Labor, having driven much of its former working-class support base into the Coalition ranks, has left these voters with nowhere else to go. Bipartisan support for

high immigration means that these voters are homeless as far as this question is concerned, but at least they have a refuge within the Coalition to shelter from progressive cultural values.

The Coalition has clearly been the winner in this crossover because, currently, non-graduates make up around 75 per cent of the electorate. Labor has been left behind, unable to attract a majority of non-graduate voters and vying for graduate voters with the Greens.

We outline the historical background to this transition. This starts with the Hawke/Keating Governments' commitments in the 1980s and early 1990s to a globalising economic agenda and to a high immigration program, welcoming Asian migrants and the cultural diversity that they and others brought with them.

This emphasis on diversity was challenged by the Coalition, especially at the time of the 1996 election, a challenge leading to a strong Coalition victory fuelled, in part, by support from non-graduate voters.

The vulnerability of a Big Australia

Most Australian commentators think that the immigration component of a Big Australia is impregnable. First, it has the bipartisan support of the major parties. Second, it has accumulated a swag of vested interests in the city building and service industries supplying Australia's rapidly growing population. These include the construction and property industries and the state governments who see their economies as tied to population growth.

There are critics, including us, who think that it is unwise to pursue this policy in a context where Australia's international trade has become reliant on exports of mineral, energy and rural commodities. Population growth in these circumstances creates an ever-larger workforce dependent on jobs in people servicing and city building industries. Critics also worry about pressure on Australia's natural resources and on the supply of water. But such assessments have made little headway.

Supporters of a Big Australia think that Australia's relatively stable record of economic growth has limited the number of voters who have been 'left behind' in an economic sense. Thus there is little fuel to feed the fire of insurrection. Moreover, Australia has not experienced the challenges Europe has endured — one and a half million undocumented migrants in 2015 alone, added to the long and severe repercussions of the global financial crisis. These differences, they believe, mean that any voter concern about immigration in Australia will be muted compared to events overseas.

Some analysts also think a movement against a Big Australia will never catch on here because of the march of progressive values through the population. This is the thrust of the post-materialism thesis put by Ronald Inglehart and his colleagues. According to this argument young people have embraced these values, including support for immigration, and will carry this support on into their adult years. We test this hypothesis for Australian voters and find that it is not correct. Older voters, especially non-graduates, largely reject progressive values, including support for immigration.

Another factor thought by some to consolidate a Big Australia is the size of the migrant vote. This vote is crucial to the Democratic Party in the US, in part because of migrant voters' support for a substantial immigration policy. Our research shows that this does not apply in Australia. Migrant voters are almost as likely as non-migrants to favour lower immigration.

We disagree with the claim that Australia is indeed an outlier. A Big Australia is vulnerable for the same reasons as high immigration was in the UK and the US. There is a large disaffected voter base in Australia, just as there is in these two countries. The difference is that there has been no open fissuring within Australian conservative leadership ranks such as occurred in the

UK and the US. There, political dissidents from within conservative or right-leaning parties have mobilised voters' concerns on immigration.

Most Australian commentators think no fissuring on this scale is likely in Australia. We argue that there have been similar stress lines here. They were an important part of the challenge to Malcolm Turnbull's leadership in August 2018.

Turnbull led the progressive, Big-Australia wing within the Coalition. But he was challenged by the faction led by Peter Dutton which encompassed most of the Coalition politicians sceptical or hostile towards this agenda. Indeed, it would be surprising if there were no such tensions within the Coalition's leadership ranks given the party's embrace of a critical, nationalistic position in response to the Hawke/Keating diversity agenda in the 1990s.

Dutton, who was well known as a nationalist, got enough support (35 votes) to prompt Turnbull to resign. In the subsequent leadership ballot he was only narrowly defeated by Morrison, by 45 votes to 40.

What is less well known is that, while Minister for Immigration from December 2014 to December 2018, Dutton initiated a series of tough reforms. These encompassed more meticulous migrant selection and criteria for citizenship together with advocacy for an overall reduction in the permanent immigration program. The emergence of public debate on immigration levels at the time, and the strength of Dutton's faction, helps explain why the Morrison government reduced the permanent immigration program from 190,000 to 160,000 at the time of the May 2019 budget.

The post-Covid situation

The immigration issue was already volatile when the pandemic hit. It has become more so as public concerns have mounted about job losses and migrant competition for available work, and about the risks to health if immigration should be revived. Australians have been asked to sacrifice their freedoms in order to quell the virus, and many have suffered severe personal and financial losses. The evidence currently available shows that they are hostile to any resuscitation of a Big Australia. Such a move would amount to telling voters that their sacrifices had counted for nothing.

In this more volatile situation voters' concerns about a Big Australia are likely to be more readily mobilised, as they had been in the UK and the US.

This hypothesis has already been tested, from an unexpected quarter. It came from Kristina Keneally, Labor's spokesperson for Immigration. In May 2020, she proposed lower immigration and an 'Australia first' hiring policy. This may have reflected recognition within Labor's leadership that their parlous electoral situation required a search for a greater share of non-graduate voters.

There is no need to speculate on the response. Polling in the aftermath of Keneally's proposal showed that a big majority supported this hiring policy. This was especially the case amongst Coalition voters, 75 per cent of whom agreed with the proposal.

Should pressure grow to revive a Big Australia, and with it public unease, it is unlikely that the Coalition would be united in support. This is why the Dutton faction is important. It would probably mobilise to oppose such a move, especially if Labor follows Keneally's example and took a stand.

Most commentators do not appear to understand the situation. The assumption seems to be that a Big Australia will be rapidly revived. We question this assumption.

A Big Australia: why it may all be over

Introduction

The phrase ‘a Big Australia’ refers to Australia’s distinctively high and sustained rate of population growth. This is around 1.5 percent year, about one percentage point of which is due to net overseas migration (NOM).¹ This is way above the rate experienced by almost all Western European nations and the US. (In the US net migration is adding to the population by about 0.3 percent a year.² In the UK in 2018-19 it added 0.4 percent.)³

From June 2007 to June 2018 Australia’s NOM averaged 227,300 per year (up from 78,600 from 1991 to 2000).⁴ In the May 2019 Budget the current Coalition led-government, led by Scott Morrison, stated that Australia’s NOM was expected to reach 271,000 in June 2019 and a similar level in June 2020.⁵

This commitment to high population growth is accompanied by a bipartisan embrace of globalist economic policies by political and other elites. (These policies include free trade and open borders for goods, finance, and other services.)

For the business and economic elites population growth is at the core of their strategy to keep economic growth expanding. It is central to their claims about Australia’s miracle economy, its achievement of sustained economic growth in GDP over 29 years.

There are a few critics of a Big Australia. Some argue that the investment needed to provide the housing and city building to accommodate it has created a Ponzi economy, dependent on ever rising debt and ever more people. Others, that population growth has caused a deterioration Australians’ quality of life.

But this criticism, at least prior to Covid-19, has barely dented elite support. Part of the reason is that streams of new people need more housing and more infrastructure. All this continuous city building has created a powerful set of interests dependent on a Big Australia being maintained. Key figures in government and business circles are also well aware that population growth is the main factor explaining Australia’s ability to sustain its fabled years of unbroken growth in GDP.⁶

Strong support for the cause of high immigration also comes from the progressive, or left-leaning, side of politics. This too is important. It can be traced back to the economic reforms of the Hawke/Keating era which launched Australia along the globalising pathway. These reforms were accompanied by commitments to a more culturally diverse society embracing, rather than fearing, greater engagement with Asia. Commitments to cultural diversity and closer involvement with Asia are central to progressives’ support for a Big Australia.

To date, support for a Big Australia from progressives and political and business elites has not met with sustained resistance. Here Australia’s experience contrasts sharply with what has happened in the US and Western Europe, especially the UK. There, elites who share similar globalist and cosmopolitan values have been successfully challenged by populist movements. These have mobilised voters (especially those who are not university graduates) around support for more self-reliant, nationalistic economic policies. Voters labelled as populists⁷ have also opposed high rates of international immigration, especially from countries with ethnic identities quite different from those of the host society.

This different experience presents an interpretative challenge. This is because, as we detail shortly, around half of the voting public in Australia hold beliefs and values similar to those that have been mobilised in Western Europe and the US. In particular, by November 2019

around half of the Australian electorate considered that immigration levels in Australia were too high.

Yet, a Big Australia, at least prior to Covid-19, has not been challenged.

Our hypothesis is that Australia's experience does in fact have much in common with that of the UK and the US. In Australia, just as in these countries, many voters, most of whom are not university graduates, have opposed the globalising agenda. Again, as in the UK and the US, one result of this opposition is that, from the early 1990s to 2019, over half of the Australian non-graduate electorate have supported right-leaning political parties (except for 2007 and 2010 when their vote was split 50/50 between right and left).

In our view, the early 1990s represents a crucial turning point in Australian politics when unease about the Hawke/Keating globalising agenda among non-graduate voters helped the Liberal/National Party Coalition (henceforth the Coalition) win the 1996 Federal election.

Up until 1990 the proportion of graduates in the electorate was low. While data on the graduate vote prior to then are valid, data on the earlier non-graduate vote is more representative of the electorate as a whole. In 1966 76 percent of graduates voted for parties of the right. Later, the graduate vote moved towards parties of the left, shifting sporadically in the 1980s but solidified with a majority pro-left in the 2000s. Thus, after the 1990s a majority of non-graduates voted for parties of the right while, after 2001 a majority of graduates usually voted for parties of the left.

We draw on successive Australian Election Study post-elections surveys to document this change, a change that amounts to a crossover in voting behaviour. It has had immense consequences for Australian politics, depleting Labor's electoral strength and strengthening the Coalition's grip on federal office.

The Coalition (together with other small right-leaning parties) has maintained the support of non-graduate voters in part through its continuing critique of progressive social and cultural values. But, at the same time, it has maintained a Big Australia immigration policy; indeed, it has shared this policy on a bipartisan basis with Labor. The result is that most of the voters concerned about a Big Australia have been left with nowhere to go.

Where Australia differs from the UK and the US is that the dominant grouping of the right, the Coalition, has not experienced a split in its ranks similar to those that occurred within the Conservative party in the UK and the Republican party in the US. As a result there has been no comparable leadership group capable of mobilising disaffected non-graduates behind an anti-globalising, anti-immigration movement.

We explore this outcome closely. There have been factional tensions on the issue within the Coalition, tensions which still exist. These could be influential should immigration become a focus of federal politics in the post-Covid environment.

This possibility is canvassed at the end of this report.

Our argument differs sharply from those of analysts who assert that the political transformation among non-graduates is a consequence of their being contaminated by capitalist values. From this perspective such voters become aspirational as they enjoy some of the fruits of economic growth. It also differs from the theory that many non-graduate voters have moved to the right because they have been 'left behind' in an economic sense, suffering from a loss of income or employment as globalisation has intensified.

The survey findings

In order to set the scene we begin with our findings on Australian voters' attitudes towards the Big Australia agenda. These are based on the 2019 TAPRI survey, which was administered in October/November 2019. This is the third such annual survey.⁸ (See Appendix B for method.)

Given the support for a Big Australia from the major political parties and most mainstream commentators, and the paucity of challenges to it, one might expect that most voters would also have accepted it. In fact they have not.

Most voters do not think Australia needs more people

We start with the electorate's views about population growth.

Respondents were asked whether they think Australia needs more people. Seventy-two percent say 'no', it does not. Most voters from across the age and education spectrum share this opinion.

Table 1 sets out the results. It shows that majorities of both graduates and non-graduates think that Australia does not need more people. The proportion of graduates who hold this opinion is lower than that of non-graduates, but it is still a clear majority.

Table 1: Attitudes to population growth by education %

<i>Do you think Australia needs more people?</i>	Graduates	Non-graduates	Total
Yes	42	24	28
No	58	76	72
Total %	100	100	100
Total N	530	1684	2214

Note: A copy of the questionnaire is included in *Appendix B*.

It might be expected that voters who think Australia does not need more people would also think that immigration is too high, since few could be unaware that immigration is a major component of Australia's population growth.

This expectation is only partially correct. As Table 2 shows, the share of voters who think immigration levels are too high is 50 per cent. This is well short of the 72 per cent who think Australia does not need more people.

Table 2: Attitudes to immigration by education %

<i>Do you think the number of immigrants allowed into Australia nowadays should be reduced or increased?</i>	Graduates	Non-graduates	Total
Increased a lot	11	8	8
Increased a little	16	11	12
Increased a lot or a little	27	18	20
<i>Remain about the same as it is</i>	33	28	30
Reduced a little	19	19	19
Reduced a lot	21	34	31
Reduced a little or a lot	40	53	50
Total %	100	100	100
Total N	530	1684	2214

Half of the Australian electorate think immigration is too high

Nonetheless, half the electorate say that immigration is too high and should be reduced. This is a key finding, since it shows that there is only luke-warm support for the core Big Australia strategy of high immigration. This is especially true of non-graduates, 53 percent of whom think it is too high.

The finding that 50 per cent of voters want a reduction in immigration levels is not a polling outlier. Other surveys record similar results. Essential (Jan 2019) recorded 56 percent saying that immigration was ‘too high’,⁹ the Australian Election Study (May/December 2019) 49 percent said it ‘should be reduced a little or a lot’,¹⁰ Lowy found 47 percent saying it was ‘too high’ (June 2019),¹¹ and Scanlon 41 per cent.¹² The Scanlon finding is atypical, possibly due to its being a survey of the population aged 18 plus rather than of voters.¹³

What are the factors shaping opinion on population growth and immigration? We begin by exploring the puzzle of why opinion on reducing immigration is lower than might be expected given the strong majority saying that Australia does not need more people.

Table 3 provides a starting point. It cross-tabulates respondents’ attitudes to immigration levels by their views on whether Australia needs more people.

Table 3: Attitudes to immigration by attitudes to population growth

<i>Do you think Australia needs more people?</i>			
<i>Do you think the number of immigrants allowed into Australia nowadays should be reduced or increased? –</i>	Yes	No	Total
Increased a lot	18	4	8
Increased a little	27	6	12
Increased a lot or a little	46	11	20
<i>Remain about the same as it is</i>	43	24	30
Reduced a little	8	23	19
Reduced a lot	4	42	31
Reduced a little or a lot	12	65	50
Total %	100	100	100
Total N	619	1594	2214

Table 3 indicates that most (65 per cent) of those who think that Australia does not need more people also consider that immigration levels are too high. These 65 per cent amount to 1037 of the total respondents, or 94 percent of the 1109 who said immigration should be reduced. On the other hand only 12 per cent of those who thought Australia needed more people wanted immigration to be reduced. These results are consistent with the proposition that those wanting less immigration are concerned about the consequences of high population growth.

We can’t say definitively what these voters had in mind when drawing the link between concern about population growth and negative views on the levels of immigration. But to explore this issue respondents were asked about aspects of quality of life that are said to be reasons for preferring lower immigration. As Table 4 indicates, large majorities agree that it would be sensible to prefer lower immigration on these quality of life issues. Big majorities agree that immigration is linked to overcrowding and excess traffic in our cities, and to the facts that the cost of housing is too high and to threats to the natural environments and water

availability. These findings provide a plausible explanation for why half the electorate do not support current levels of immigration.

Table 4: ‘Here are some of the reasons people give for preferring lower levels of immigration. How do you feel about these reasons?’ %

	<i>Q12 Our cities are too crowded already and there is too much traffic.</i>	<i>Q13 [It] increases the cost of housing for everyone.</i>	<i>Q14 Bringing in more migrants keeps wages down.</i>	<i>Q15 The natural environment is under stress with the number of people we have already.</i>	<i>Q16 We may not have enough water for more people.</i>	<i>Q17 A larger population could make it harder for Australia to reduce total greenhouse gas emissions.</i>
Agree strongly & agree	71	58	37	65	64	61
Neither agree nor disagree	17	25	30	21	21	23
Disagree & strongly disagree	12	17	33	14	15	17
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total N	2214	2214	2214	2214	2214	2214

This association is particularly strong for respondents who think immigration should be reduced. This finding is detailed in Table A9 in Appendix A. From 75 to 88 per cent of this group agree that immigration is part of the problem for these quality of life issues (except for the notion that bringing in more migrants keeps wages down).

Most voters don’t agree with elite justifications for high immigration

What about voters’ attitudes to the elite view that immigration is a crucial part of Australia’s agenda on economic growth, defence and on modifying the age structure? (These three questions are part of a group of seven offering reasons for preferring higher levels of immigration. See Table A1 in Appendix A.)

Respondents were told that these three policy objectives are some of reasons people give for preferring high immigration and asked: ‘How do you feel about these reasons?’

Table 5 sets out the results. Overall, voters do not share the elite views commonly offered as the rationale for high migration. Thirty percent or fewer agree that we need to continually increase population growth for economic growth, or to defend Australia, or to ameliorate the impact of demographic ageing. Most of the minority who did agree with the three justifications are concentrated among the small group who want an increase in immigration. On the other hand, very few of those who support lower immigration endorse these justifications.

Table 5: Attitudes to claims that immigration-fuelled population growth boosts economic growth (Q5), strengthens defence (Q7) and ameliorates ageing (Q8), by attitudes to immigration %

		Agree strongly or agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree or disagree strongly	Total %	Total N
<i>Q5 We need to continually increase the population for economic growth.</i>	<i>Immigration should be:</i> • increased a lot or a little	70	18	12	100	450
	• remain about the same as it is	37	45	17	100	655
	• reduced a little or a lot	9	22	69	100	1109
	Total for Q5	30	28	42	100	2214
<i>Q7 A larger population makes it easier to defend Australia.</i>	<i>Immigration should be:</i> • increased a lot or a little	54	27	19	100	450
	• remain about the same as it is	22	45	33	100	655
	• reduced a little or a lot	8	25	67	100	1109
	Total for Q7	22	31	47	100	2214
<i>Q8 Having more migrants will offset the ageing of the population.</i>	<i>Immigration should be:</i> • increased a lot or a little	63	22	15	100	450
	• remain about the same as it is	36	39	24	100	655
	• reduced a little or a lot	11	24	65	100	1109
	Total for Q8	29	28	43	100	2214

Note: The questions began with: ‘Here are some reasons that people give for preferring high immigration. How do you feel about these reasons?’ This was followed by: Q5 ‘We need to continually increase the population for economic growth’, Q7 ‘A larger population will make it easier to defend Australia’, and Q8 ‘Having more migrants will offset the ageing of the population’. The response categories were: agree strongly, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and disagree strongly. Four other reasons were offered. For the full list of reasons see Table A1 in Appendix A.

Thus most of those who favour a reduction in immigration do not accept the main economic and defence arguments for high immigration put forward by politicians and businesspeople.

What about voter attitudes to the cultural implications of the Big Australia agenda? Australia’s progressive elites have long asserted that the greater ethnic and cultural diversity brought by immigration is a huge gain for Australia.

We remind readers just how great these changes have been. From 2004-04 to 2018-19 the proportion of net migration to Australia coming from the UK, Ireland and Europe fell from 21 percent to five percent. At the same time the proportion coming from Asia rose from 45 percent to 72 percent. Indeed in 2018-19 85 percent of net migration was from Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁴ (Back in 1980 42 percent came from the UK, Ireland and Europe and 33 percent from Asia, the Middle East and North Africa; by 1990 the proportions had shifted to 28 percent and 71 percent.)¹⁵

Respondents were asked several questions designed to explore their attitudes to this diversity.

The first, shown in Table 6, asked them to agree or disagree with the statement that we need more people to increase our cultural diversity. The results are striking. Overall, only 29 per cent agree with this core element of progressive views about Australia’s future. As with the economic issues, dissent from this proposition was particularly strong amongst those favouring lower immigration. Only eight per cent of this group agree. On the other hand, 70 per cent of the minority who want an increase in immigration agree.

Table 6: ‘We need more people to increase our cultural diversity’ by attitudes to immigration %

<i>We need more people to increase our cultural diversity.</i>	<i>Immigration should be:</i>			Total %
	Increased a lot or a little	Remain about the same as it is	Reduced a little or a lot	
Agree strongly and agree	70	38	8	29
Neither agree nor disagree	17	41	21	26
Disagree and disagree strongly	13	21	71	44
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total N	450	655	1109	2214

From a progressive perspective it is even more startling that a majority (53 per cent) of voters think that cultural diversity is a threat to Australia’s own culture and identity. This opinion is endorsed by 71 per cent of those who want a reduction in immigration and, interestingly, by 44 per cent of those who say that immigration should be increased (see Table 7).

Table 7: Attitudes to cultural diversity attitudes to immigration %

<i>Some people say that today Australia is danger of losing its culture and identity. Do you agree or disagree?</i>	<i>Immigration should be:</i>			Total %
	Increased a lot or a little	Remain about the same as it is	Reduced a little or a lot	
Agree strongly & agree	44	29	71	53
Neither agree nor disagree	16	29	13	18
Disagree & disagree strongly	29	31	10	20
Not applicable— Australia never had a distinctive culture and identity	11	11	6	8
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total N	451	655	1109	2214

We asked a further question on attitudes to asylum seekers arriving by boat. For most of Australia’s progressive elites this is a prime marker of Australia’s ethical maturity. Yet 58 per cent of voters favour turning the boats back. Voters who prefer a cut to immigration are even more likely to favour this policy: 79 per cent of this group endorse turning back the boats (Table 8).

Table 8: ‘All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back’ by attitudes to immigration %

<i>All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back:</i>	<i>Immigration should be:</i>			<i>Total %</i>
	<i>Increased a lot or a little</i>	<i>Remain about the same as it is</i>	<i>Reduced a little or a lot</i>	
Agree strongly and agree	40	35	79	58
Neither agree nor disagree	19	36	13	21
Disagree and disagree strongly	41	29	8	21
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total N	450	655	1109	2214

The conclusion? Despite elite solidarity on the economic benefits of a Big Australia and, at least amongst progressive elites, that Australia benefits from cultural diversity, half or more of Australian voters disagree on both counts.

Do accusations of racism deter voters from expressing dissenting views on ethnic diversity?

When discordant views on the cultural issues were voiced after One Nation’s electoral successes in the late 1990s the consequences were sharp. Politicians, progressives, and the mainstream media agreed that such scepticism about immigration and its cultural sequels was a symptom of racism. They expressed their disapprobation strongly. The not so subtle message was that people holding these views are immoral, and on this account, must be dismissed, and this condemnation can be carried over to those who simply argue for a lower intake.

Towards the end of the survey TAPRI asked: ‘Do you think that people who raise questions about immigration being too high are sometimes thought of as racist?’ Fifty-six percent said ‘yes’. (Thirty-one percent said ‘no’ and 14 percent said ‘don’t know’.)

The 56 percent who said ‘yes’ had a follow-up question with two alternatives: ‘This is because they usually are racist’ or ‘This is unfair because very few of them are racist’. Eighteen percent of the sample said ‘yes’, they are thought of as racist and that ‘this is because they usually are racist’ while 37 percent said ‘yes’ but ‘this is unfair because very few of them are racist’.

This shows that a majority of voters are aware of elite condemnation of those who question high immigration. Whether knowledge of this proscription influences their opinions or behaviour is another matter. It may not, since most of those who are aware of it think the disapproval is ‘unfair’.

We can say with confidence based on our and other surveys that half the electorate are prepared to say, within the safety of an anonymous survey, that immigration should be reduced. This suggests that, while elite disapproval may mute overt expressions of this preference,¹⁶ as far as private opinions are concerned it is not having a strong impact.

Table 9 shows that nearly half of those who want an increase in immigration say that cutting it is racist, while 88 percent of those who want it reduced say that it is not.

Table 9: ‘It’s racist cut immigration’ by attitudes to immigration %

<i>It’s racist cut immigration.</i>	<i>Immigration should be:</i>			
	Increased a lot or a little	Remain about the same as it is	Reduced a little or a lot	Total %
Agree strongly and agree	49	22	3	18
Neither agree nor disagree	25	34	9	20
Disagree and disagree strongly	26	45	88	63
Total %	100	100	100	100
Total N	450	655	1109	2214

Conclusions about electoral support for a Big Australia

Half or more of the Australian electorate do not support the outcomes of Big Australia immigration, nor do they support the reasons advocates advance to justify these outcomes. Agreement with the three reasons for immigration based on economics and defence is higher among the 20 percent who want an increase. But overall agreement with them is low, ranging from 30 to 22 percent for the sample as a whole. Agreement with progressive reasons for high immigration (increasing cultural diversity and avoiding accusations of racism) is also low overall (29 percent and 18 percent, Tables 6 and 9). Among those wanting an increase in immigration, the goal of increasing cultural diversity ranks highly (70 percent support it). However, this proportion drops to just eight percent among the much larger group of voters who want a reduction.

Also, Table 4 (and Table A9 in Appendix A) show that a majority of voters are well aware of the costs of immigration-fuelled population growth (congestion, housing costs, environmental stress, water scarcity and barriers to reducing greenhouse gas). All but one of these costs (pressure on wages) are endorsed by clear majorities, particularly among those wanting a reduction in the numbers.

Yet, at least over the past two decades, there has been no serious political challenge to a Big Australia. This is remarkable because over the same two decades immigration has become a huge public issue elsewhere, with major political consequences, especially in the UK and the US.

Why is Australia different?

The standard explanation for Australia’s difference is that immigration does not have the same salience here as in the UK and the US. In a sense this is to argue that there is no challenge because most voters accept the continuing inflow. But the survey data show that this is not so. Around half do not accept it.

The difference is then a puzzle. Australia has experienced much faster growth from immigration than has the UK and the US, and as noted earlier, most of these migrants derive from non-European countries. By 2016 44 percent per cent of the population of Sydney was foreign-born with more than half (22.7 percent) originating from non-European sources, mainly in Asia, but also the Middle East and North Africa.¹⁷ This foreign-born share is above the level in any major UK or US city (in 2016 38 percent of the population of London was overseas born).¹⁸

When Australian voters are asked to rank issues according to their relative significance, immigration does rate lower in importance than some other issues. In April 2019 the Essential Research survey found that 25 percent of voters rated it as a most important issue. This meant that they gave it 10 out of 10 on a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 stands for the highest level of importance. This suggests a relatively high level of concern, though not as high as health care (40 percent gave this 10 out of 10), national security and terrorism (35 percent), or management of the economy (33 percent).¹⁹

By contrast, as we will see, immigration is a higher threshold issue in the UK and the US. This has made it easier for right-leaning political elites to mobilise voters on the question.

One possible explanation for the difference between Australia and the other two countries is that in the UK and the US the challenges presented by immigration have been more abrupt and threatening than has been the case here. There has been nothing in Australia to match the Northern hemisphere spectacle of 2015 when 1.5 million asylum seekers marched across Europe in search of new homes. Nor have there been any terrorist events on the scale of those in Western Europe. These may or may not have been carried out by asylum seekers. Nonetheless the mainstream view has been that the two are connected.

Moreover, voters in Australia have not experienced the economic challenges of the post-GFC era on the same scale as has Europe (with their accompanying austerity policies). It is only in the last few years that the rate of growth in Australian wage levels has declined significantly.

This is the end of the story for most Australian commentators.

We think they are wrong. Despite the lack of extreme challenges, around half the electorate are concerned about immigration and its consequences. Their concerns have not been mobilised because no faction on either the left or the right among political elites has sought to provide leadership of this kind.

Readers sceptical about this proposition might care to consider events of the late 1980s when one such mobilisation did occur.

This was in the late 1980s after the Hawke Government lifted the immigration intake and concurrently announced its support for a more multicultural Australia. John Howard, then leader of the Coalition opposition, said he was unhappy with the emphasis on family reunion in the intake and that a focus on skills would be more sensible. He also signalled that he shared some of the public's concern about the scale of the Asian component in the intake. He said that it would help social cohesion if Asian immigration 'were slowed down a little'.²⁰ Opinion poll data at the time found widespread support for Howard's stance among voters.²¹

This support did not matter. Howard's intervention generated a ferocious progressive reaction, a furore that led to him losing his position as leader of the Coalition in 1989. (Other public figures including Professor Geoffrey Blainey in 1984 have been caught up in this condemnation too.)²² After Paul Keating took over the leadership of the Labor party in December 1991, his government did cut the permanent immigration intake sharply.²³ This partly reflected the onset of a severe recession. Keating, however, continued to pursue Labor's globalist policies, including greater engagement with Asia.

We provide detail later on Keating's agenda and the subsequent mobilisation of voter unease about it at the time of the 1996 federal election. This mobilisation was led by John Howard, by then restored as Coalition leader, and it helped him to win that election.

In order to appreciate how Australian immigration politics have differed from other Western countries we need to examine the overseas experience more closely. The focus is on the UK and the USA. In both countries a segment of right-leaning party elites broke with the prevailing

consensus on immigration and succeeded in attracting strong electoral support, mainly from voters who were not university graduates. There is now a rich theoretical literature seeking to explain these outcomes, the most important of which we apply to the Australian experience later in this report.

The international experience

The UK

Over the period 1997 to 2010 the New Labour governments in the UK were framed around a progressive agenda, which rejected much of Labour's previous focus on class-based interests.

New Labour redefined itself as representative of the UK's new 'cool' youth culture with its embrace of cultural innovation, diversity and internationalism. This redefinition included support for the transformation of the UK economy towards internationally competitive industries, including developing London's role as a centre of global finance.

Part of this openness to the world was a welcoming attitude to migrants. New Labour's signature policy on this issue was its decision in 2004 to allow unrestricted movement of residents of the new Eastern European members of the EU, including Poland, to the UK. In the aftermath of this decision the migrant flow from this source soon matched the flow from non-EU sources – thus doubling the UK's annual immigration intake in just a few years. By the mid-2010s net migration was running at nearly 400,000 a year.

New Labour was defeated in the 2010 UK general election. The Conservative party victors, led by David Cameron, formed government in alliance with the minority Liberal Democratic party (a strongly progressive group). The new government shared much of the prevailing progressive/globalist agenda.

However, since the early 2000s, there had been evidence of widespread electoral concern about the outcomes, particularly those stemming from the rise in immigration.

Nonetheless, given that the progressive agenda was shared by the Labour party, any serious challenge seemed improbable. Third party challengers were regarded as fringe players and, where they opposed immigration, as morally suspect (at least in elite circles). This was certainly the case for the main challenge in the 2000s, which came from the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). David Cameron, after taking over the leadership of the Conservative party in 2005, dismissed UKIP as 'Fruitcakes, loonies and closet racists'.²⁴

Yet, by 2014 UKIP was attracting some ten percent of the vote in local and EU elections. And its policies on immigration and leaving the EU were embraced by an influential faction of Conservative politicians. These were predominantly traditionalist patriots who had never warmed to the New Labour agenda. To appease this faction, Cameron promised a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU (a referendum which he believed was highly likely to support the case for Remain). This was held in July 2016.

UKIP led the Leave, or Brexit, case to a 52 to 48 percent victory. The party was still striving for respectability at the time. So how did they do it? It took years for UKIP to build up its legitimacy and find a message that resonated with much of the electorate. The party founded this message not just on hostility to Britain's loss of sovereignty as a result of membership of the EU, but also on criticism of the immigration flows from the EU.

There were large numbers of British voters who favoured withdrawal from the EU, but only a fraction of them switched their support to UKIP. Those who did were primarily drawn from the ranks of voters repelled by the immigration influx.²⁵ Many of them were drawn from a source

that was quite new to UKIP: working class voters who had previously supported Labour. By 2010, Labour was reaping barely 30 percent of this vote, down from 55 percent in mid-1990s.²⁶

There is no doubt about the extent of disquiet about immigration. By the early 2010s nearly half of British voters were saying that immigration was the main issue that concerned them.

UKIP built its message around a populist appeal in which it claimed that elites were imposing their progressive vision upon Britain, regardless of voters' opinion. It framed this message as being in the name of 'the people'. That audience, they said, constituted the core of the British nation and thus were fully entitled to press their concerns.

The appeal was two-fold, first to those who felt that membership of the EU undermined British sovereignty and second to those who opposed Britain's immigration policies. The main attraction of the latter was to voters worried about the impact of immigration on the nation's identity caused by the changing ethnic make-up of the UK population. They were reacting to the cultural challenges presented by the rapid increase in both East European and Asian communities in Britain. Yet they were being told by elites that their concerns were morally reprehensible: they should learn to appreciate the benefits that this diversity was generating.

UKIP also campaigned on the impact of high immigration on competition for housing and services. They focussed particularly on health services and the difficulties the National Health Service was experiencing in coping with the extra demand.

And Leave won. This victory shocked British elites. The Leave option had been vigorously opposed by progressives as well as by business interests and almost all economic commentators and advisors. The latter could legitimately claim that Leave would bring massive costs, since the EU was the leading outlet for Britain's exports both of manufactured goods and of services, particularly financial services.

Events since Brexit have delivered further shocks to the globalising elite. After David Cameron resigned, Theresa May became prime minister. She tacked further in the populist direction, including rhetorical endorsement of the nationalist cause. This was exemplified in her statement in October 2016 that, 'If you believe you are a citizen of the world, you are a citizen of nowhere'. She also staked her leadership on getting Brexit done.

After she failed on this commitment, Boris Johnson took over the Conservative leadership and, following opposition in the British parliament to any progress on Brexit, called for a new election to be held in December 2019.

Johnson went to the election behind a platform based on achieving British sovereignty by leaving the EU. He claimed that, in doing so, Britain would regain control and reduce its intake. His pitch was that Britain's Remain elites were willing to ignore voters' preferences and were not to be trusted. The 2019 election saw the Conservative Party win a large number of former working class (and Labour voting) industrial constituencies – enough to ensure a huge Conservative majority. Johnson won despite strong opposition from governing class elites. The Labour vote was reduced to just 32.2 percent. Most of the seats that Labour won were located in and around London and a few other major cities, as well as in university towns.

True, Johnson has still to signal where the UK will end up with its newfound autonomy from the EU. He may well seek to create a 'global Britain' in which the nation looks for a new international role. But even if he does, he has already rejected much of the previous Conservative neo-liberal agenda. This includes ditching the Coalition's longstanding austerity policies as well as its hands-off response to the regions where the loss of manufacturing industry has been most acute. Johnson has flagged massive public investment in these regions. Any 'global Britain' response will also be free of much of the progressive agenda, including support for high immigration and the active celebration of diversity.

This is an astounding outcome from the point of view of Australian supporters of a Big Australia. If it could happen in the UK, why not here?

The triumph of America First in the US

Donald Trump's success in the US Republican Primaries in 2016 and then in the 2016 Presidential election, was also a shock to US elites on both the right and the left. Just as in the UK, prior to Trump's emergence, a progressive, globalist agenda dominated opinion making and policy circles in both the Democrat and Republican camps.

In order to succeed, Trump first had to win the Republican primary election at a time when the party was dominated by business interests committed to the globalist agenda. These interests were reflected in the policies pursued by President George W. Bush between 2000 and 2008. They included free trade, an internationalist foreign policy and high immigration. Bush also supported a generous amnesty for the millions of (mostly Hispanic) illegals resident in the US and worked hard to attract the growing Hispanic community to the Republican cause.

Then, to win the Presidential election, Trump had to persuade around half of all voters to support his candidacy. He did so despite opposing the elite agenda that had prevailed during the eight years of the Obama administration to 2016. This agenda was also at the core of the campaign of his Democratic opponent, Hilary Clinton.

Trump framed his campaign around a populist appeal to the people. He claimed they were being hoodwinked by elites who were imposing their self-interested objectives upon them. This appeal was pitched in nationalist terms, in which they, the people, would recapture their nation from the elites.

Trump's platform was not just window dressing pitched to attract voters. In his first three years of office he has tried to implement it. He has withdrawn the US from a raft of multilateral treaties including the Paris climate accord and the World Trade Organisation. He has also withdrawn the US from participation in the Trans-Pacific-Partnership (TPP). The TPP was endorsed and pursued by President Obama during his second term to 2016. It was a free trade agreement intended to involve most Asian nations (except China) as well as Australia.

Trump also reversed Obama's immigration policies, including by opposing any amnesty to illegal residents. He also attempted to blockade further illegal movements across the Mexico/US border by pressing for the construction of a wall along this border.

Explanations for the populist uprisings in the UK and the US

One explanation for the populist uprisings focuses on the divergence of graduate-class values from those of non-graduates and the resentments among non-graduates that this has generated.

Another explanation is that graduate class interests differ from those of non-graduates. The former are more likely to benefit from job opportunities generated by engagement in the global economy. Non-graduates, by contrast, tend to be the losers from such engagements.

Graduate class values

Graduate class values are founded on a core progressive agenda. This favours the abolition of restraints on personal freedom and a commitment to post-materialist social, cultural and environmental causes.

One school of thought, most clearly articulated by Ronald Inglehart, argues that, at least since the late 1960s, youth cohorts have reflected the lasting influence of Western affluence. This has

led to their embrace of post-materialistic values. He also argues that these values will permeate entire societies as younger cohorts mature.

The latest and most thorough expression of this argument and the evidence supporting it is provided in Norris and Inglehart's massive 2019 study, entitled *Cultural Backlash*.²⁷

It is a thesis that has been taken up by scholars like Niall Ferguson. He argues that the recent British surge in populism is likely to be short-lived. Why? Because 'national conservatism (a more accurate term than populism) appeals most to older and less educated voters. Over the next ten years, their electoral importance is bound to decline, while the influence of millennials and Generation Z – who are "woke", to the point of preferring socialism to capitalism – is certain to grow'.²⁸

In the Brexit referendum it was the case that a majority of young people did not support the 'Leave' campaign. Why? Because the 'Leave' appeal to national identity implied an accompanying emphasis on loyalty, duty and obligations to the nation, all of which are contrary to the progressive agenda. Any revival of nationalist sentiment which emphasises what residents have in common and prioritises national loyalties and obligations is likely to be read as imposing restraints on individual behaviour.

By contrast, non-graduates, especially older non-graduates, tend to find attractive the very patriotic values that young people, especially young graduates resist.

Graduate class interests

There is another, less flattering explanation, for this graduate/non-graduate divide. This is exhaustively explored in Thomas Piketty's recently published volume, *Capital and Ideology*.²⁹

Piketty acknowledges the significance of the split on values. However, he argues that there is another source of division which is based on the divergent interests of graduates and non-graduates.

This divergence, so Piketty argues, has manifested in a remarkable make-over of political parties on the left and the right in Western Europe and the US over the past few decades. He documents that, over the past few decades, the majority of graduates have switched from being voters for right-leaning parties to being voters for left-leaning parties. Meanwhile, over the same period, many non-graduate voters have switched from majority support for parties of the left to majority support for parties of the right.³⁰ His research shows that this crossover (as we label it) has occurred across Western Europe and the US.

Where the crossover has occurred, the result is that parties of the left tend to prioritise graduate-class values and interests. What are these interests? Piketty dubs the graduate class 'Brahmins'. Their priorities reflect their status as an educated elite. They endorse progressive values which include support for globalisation, open borders and cultural diversity.

In addition, their interests as graduates mean that they are comfortable with the internationalisation of their national economy. This is because their education gives them the best opportunity to compete for employment in a competitive global environment. They also prioritise the educational interests of their class.

As to their globalising priorities, Piketty argues that it is the graduate class that has provided crucial support for the neo-liberal reforms in the UK and the US. These reforms have led to the regimes favouring open borders for people, capital and goods and services. Tony Blair's New Labour governments were party to them, as were Bill Clinton's Democratic administrations in the 1990s and the Obama administration from 2008 to 2016 in the US. Upholders of these

Brahmin-led movements, so Piketty claims, were comfortable with ‘less redistributive’ policies.³¹

Non-graduates have been the losers, in two crucial respects.

First, they have had to cope with the job losses flowing from import competition and the offshoring of tasks. In Piketty’s words:

The 1980s and 1990s were the crucial years when many key measures were decided, beginning with the complete liberalization of capital flows (without regulation). This effort was to a large extent led by social-democratic governments, and social-democratic parties remain unable even today to perceive alternatives to the situation they themselves created.³²

Second, non-graduates have experienced a lowering of priority towards their educational needs. Resources have been poured into university training while secondary training and particularly vocational training have been relatively neglected.³³ This, he thinks, has generated wide-spread resentment.

Piketty does not deny that non-graduate class hostility towards the increased immigration stemming from half-open borders has been a factor in their move from left to right. He sees this as prejudice, and deplors it, but thinks it an insufficient explanation for non-graduate voting behaviour.

The US and the graduate/non-graduate divide

A divide based on the diverging economic interests of graduates and non-graduates is vividly illustrated by the American experience. It is centred around the different interests of the black minority together with other people of colour and non-graduate whites. The former have benefited from progressive, civil-rights informed reforms while the latter have been the losers.

The transformation of US politics around the question of civil rights was initiated in the 1960s in the aftermath of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. His successor, President Lyndon Johnson, succeeded in giving legislative form to the abolition of discrimination against blacks and other minority groups. This legislation empowered the courts and the police to enforce anti-discrimination measures. Enforcement included a raft of affirmative action rules. Among these were quotas for minority workers in the construction industry, quotas for minorities in the commencing classes of higher education institutions, and the bussing of students between school districts in order to achieve a balance of minorities to whites in each district.

This legislation has since been incorporated into a social justice framework, involving the human rights of the minorities in question. It has left voters opposing these developments with little option but to submit, at least prior to the Trump insurrection.

Christopher Caldwell, in his new book, *The Age of Entitlement*, has argued plausibly that this outcome helps explain the virulence of the political divide in the US. The Democrats have become the party of the winners, that is, the minorities who have gained rights and entitlements under the new regime, and the Republicans the political home of the losers. The minority vote is of enormous significance to the Democratic party. Blacks, and other ‘people of colour’ (mainly Hispanics) make up around 30 percent of the electorate. They vote overwhelmingly for Democratic candidates.

The losers were the whites who missed out on the employment and university places allocated to minorities as a result of affirmative action. They also saw their status in America as being diminished in order to enhance the standing of non-white communities. As Caldwell puts it: ‘Those who lost most from the new rights-based politics were white men. The laws of the 1960s may not have been designed explicitly to harm them, but they were gradually altered to

help everyone *but* them, which is the same thing'.³⁴ These concerns help explain why this voting constituency has migrated from the Democrat to the Republican camp and why it was so responsive to Trump's message.

The Trump insurrection opened a political space for the expression of this constituency's grievances. The outcome was an unprecedented mobilisation of voters from it, enough to put Trump over the line in the 2016 Electoral College.

The transference of allegiance of non-graduates from the left to the right has also been documented by Abrajano and Hajnal, and by Alan Abramowitz.³⁵ Their evidence is consistent with the crossover detailed for the US by Piketty. However, for Abrajano and Hajnal, and Abramowitz, the driving force for the crossover is said to be these voters' concerns about challenges to their identity and interests generated by America's immigration flows. These authors argue that these voters' concerns are based on this flow and on the changes to the ethnic make-up of US society that have resulted from them.

This does not mean that the economic 'left behind' interpretation of this re-alignment has no merit. Its effect has been obvious, especially in the mid-west of the US where manufacturing employment losses have been severe. Grievances about globalisation have added extra bite to these voters' rejection of progressive economic, social and cultural policies.

Is the populist challenge from the right in the UK and the US relevant to Australia?

This is the core question addressed in this report. As stressed above, it stems from the obvious contrast between the Australian experience vis-à-vis that of the UK and US. We showed at the outset that there is strong, even majority, voter disagreement with the thrust of Big Australia. However, this has not manifested in any serious political challenge from the right as has happened in the UK and the US.

Piketty and other scholars provide a convincing argument that the base of the challenge in the UK and the US is non-graduate voters, people who have switched their allegiance from parties of the left to parties of the right.

This raises the question: has there been any parallel crossover in Australia? As we show shortly, yes there has. Australia, like the UK and the US has experienced a profound realignment in electoral preferences, with graduates moving to the left and non-graduates to the right. This raises a further question. Why has this crossover not laid the foundation for a mobilisation of non-graduate voters such as has occurred in the UK and the US?

Before exploring these questions, we consider two plausible alternative explanations as to why there has been no political challenge to immigration in Australia from the grouping that includes many non-graduates.

The first is that perhaps Inglehart is right. As Figures 1 and 2 set out below show, young voters in Australia, whether graduates or not, do tend to support an increase in immigration. If successive cohorts of young people as they age are bringing newly acquired progressive attitudes with them, perhaps they are contributing to a transformed, predominantly progressive electorate.

A second possibility stems from Australia's very high immigration intake. Perhaps this has led to the emergence of a migrant vote hostile to any challenge to progressive values from the right, especially where such challenges involve constraints on immigration and celebration of cultural diversity. If so, this could explain why there has not been a voter rebellion against the Big Australia agenda.

The continuing influence of post-materialist values?

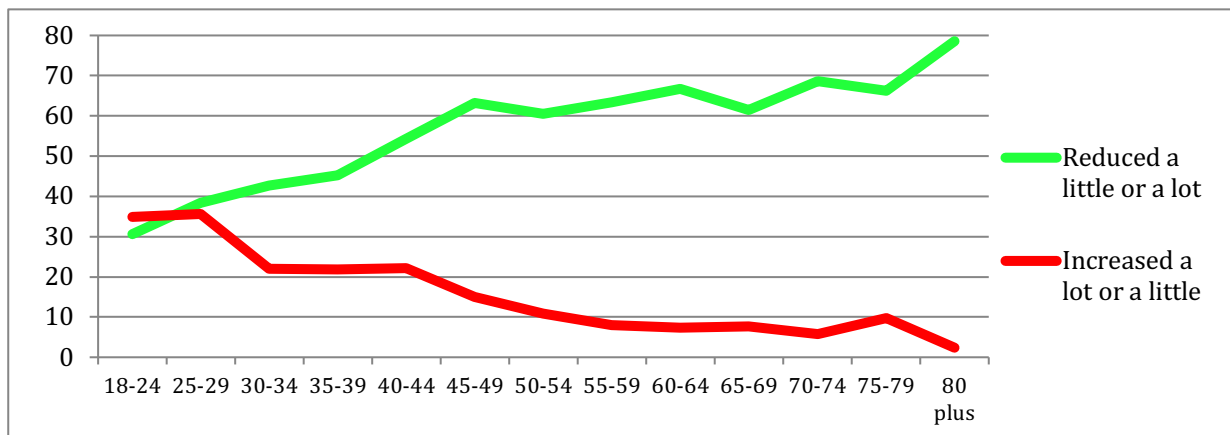
Inglehart and his colleagues argue that it is not just graduates who embrace progressive/internationalist policies, but also young people in general. They argue that most young people not only embrace these values but that they retain them as they age. This implies that, over time, left-leaning parties can expect to enjoy the support of an increasing share of voters who are sympathetic to their cause, as well as the support of a majority of graduates.

Our analysis does not support this thesis. The 2019 TAPRI survey shows that, as young people age, whether graduates or not, they move towards less progressive positions and thus become more open to moving from parties of the left to parties of the right.

Given our focus on immigration, we explore Inglehart’s hypothesis with reference to it. Support for immigration is intimately linked to the overall globalising, progressive agenda. Voters supporting immigration are usually also signalling their approval of cultural and ethnic diversity.

Young people in Europe and the US do, in the main, show this support. Majorities of young voters in Australia, whether graduates or not, also exhibit similar attitudes, as the following two Figures (1 and 2) indicate. For example, a slight plurality of young non-graduate voters (in the 18-24 year age group) think that immigration should be increased. A clear majority of young graduate voters share this view.

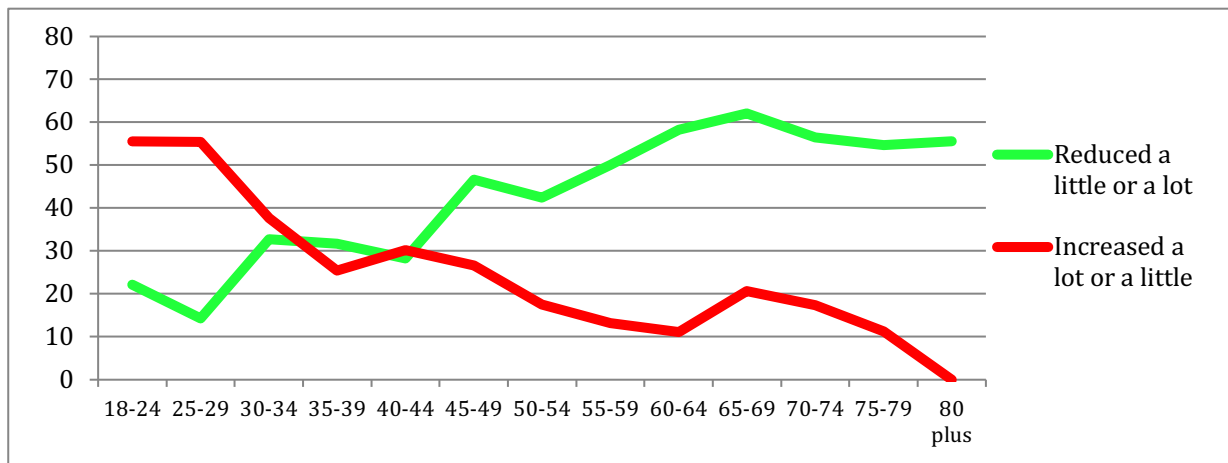
Figure 1: ‘Immigration should be ...’ by age group, non-graduates only %



Source: Table A2 in Appendix A

Note: The question was ‘Do you think the number of immigrants allowed into Australia nowadays should be reduced or increased?’ The response category ‘Remain about the same as it is’ is not shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 2: ‘Immigration should be ...’ by age group, graduates only %



Source: Table A3 in Appendix A

However, Figure 1 shows that by the time non-graduates reach their late thirties, most think immigration should be reduced a little or a lot. Similarly Figure 2 shows that, by the time graduates reach their mid-40s, some 50 to 60 percent favour a reduction in the level of immigration. These are voters who would have attended university around the end of the 20th century when progressive values were indeed prevalent on campus.

We have looked at whether attitudes to other progressive issues show the same pattern. However limitations in the size of the sub-samples by five-year age groups, especially among older graduates, blur the outcome. Data on voters’ attitudes to the question of whether Australia is or is not in danger of losing its culture and identity are provided in Appendix A by age and education. See Tables A10 and A11 and Figures A1 and A2. They show a similar pattern to that displayed by the immigration question, though not as pronounced.

The conclusion is that voters in Australia do not carry their youthful commitments to progressive values with them as they age. Young people who start with commitments to post-materialist values do not appear to be transforming the Australian electorate in a progressive direction as they age. Thus the Inglehart thesis is not a competing explanation for the puzzle as to why the Australian electorate has not challenged the Big Australia globalising agenda.

The migrant vote in Australia

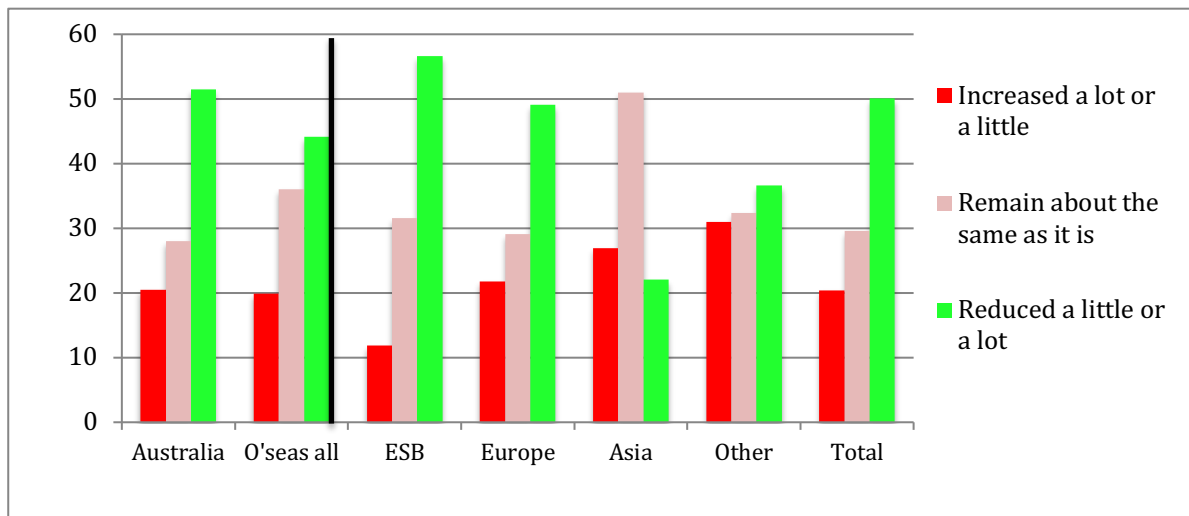
In the United States many immigrants support further immigration and this has been a strong influence on the policies adopted by the major parties, particularly the Democrats.

Readers familiar with the US experience may have concluded that the even larger presence of migrants in the Australian electorate might be the explanation as to why the major political parties here have not offered voters a lower immigration policy. In the light of the American experience, to do so might be to risk electoral defeat should migrant voters be antagonised.

However, the data in Figure 3 on attitudes to immigration by county of birth suggest that differences in attitudes to immigration by country of birth here are not strong.

Voters born overseas in English-speaking-background countries are more in favour of lower immigration than are the Australian-born while those born in Europe are only marginally less in favour. Asia-born voters do take a different position with a slight majority (52 percent) preferring to see the then current high levels of immigration maintained, while the group classified as ‘other’ are equivocal.

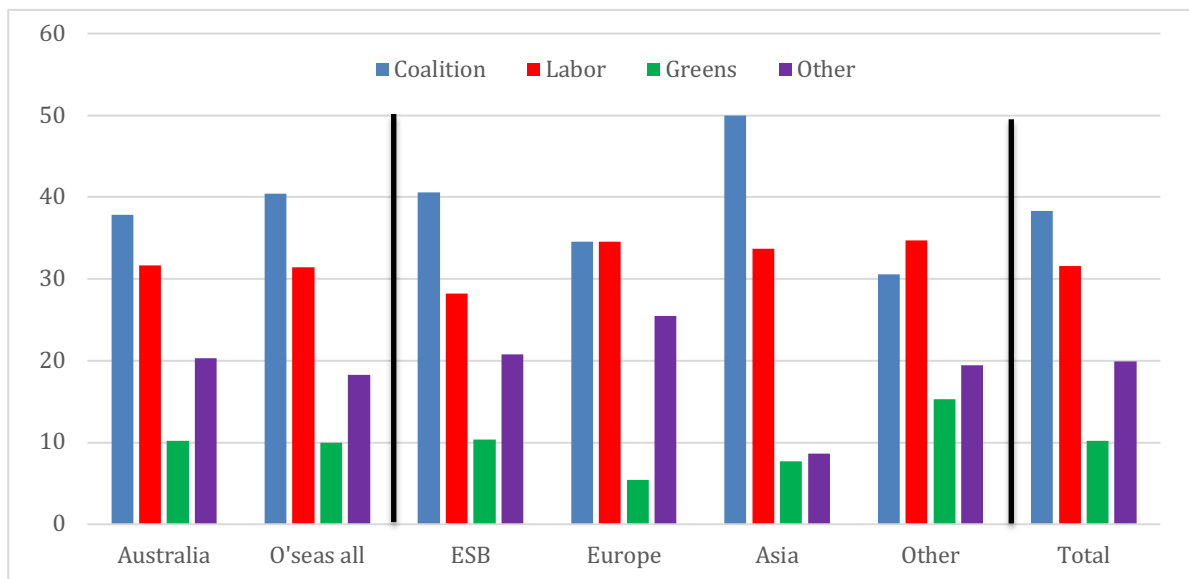
Figure 3: ‘Immigration should be ...’ by country of birth %



Source: Table A4 in Appendix A

Note: ESB stands for English-speaking-background country.

Figure 4: Voting intention by country of birth %



Source: Table A5 in Appendix A

The question was: ‘If a federal election for the House of Representatives were held today, which one of the following would you vote for? If “uncommitted” to which one of these do you have a leaning? Liberals, Nationals, Liberal National Party, Country Liberals (NT) [here grouped as Coalition], Labor, Greens, One Nation, Other [here One nation is included in ‘other’].

Note: ESB stands for English-speaking-background country.

Figure 4 makes it clear that, overall, voters born overseas are slightly more inclined to prefer the Coalition to Labor. This preference is particularly marked for those born in Asian countries. Voters born in Europe are evenly divided between the two major groupings, though with a strong tendency to prefer the minor parties grouped here as ‘other’ (a category which includes One Nation).

Figure 3 shows that no birthplace grouping has a majority supporting a further increase, and Figure 4 shows that in most of the birthplace groupings voters prefer the Coalition to Labor, including voters born in Asia.

There is no doubt that the major political parties, with their extensive private polling, are aware of these findings. The point of presenting our findings here is to explain to readers who think that the migrant vote might help explain the political strength of a Big Australia that this is not the case.

Having rejected these two alternative explanations we return to exploring the crossover phenomenon and its implications for a Big Australia. But first, has Australia really experienced a crossover similar to that of the UK and the US?

Australia's crossover experience

Piketty claims that Australia, too, has experienced a crossover comparable with that of the UK and the US and provides some data to support this.³⁶ He shows that, by the 2000s, a larger proportion of the highly educated in Australia voted for parties of the left than did all the other voters. He is talking here about the top 10 percent of voters by education vis-à-vis the bottom 90 percent, not about graduates per se vis-à-vis non-graduates.

For our purposes, we need a more closely grained evidence base than Piketty provides. There are also problems in interpreting Piketty's Australian data because his source unclear.³⁷ It is almost certainly the Australian Election Studies (AES) series since this comprises the main set of surveys from which such data could be obtained.

We have revisited the AES data for each election since 1987, together with a number of earlier surveys which take the series back to 1966. We did this in order to construct an historical account of the crossover phenomenon for both graduates and non-graduates. The findings are summarized in Table 10 and in the two figures that follow.

Following Piketty's approach, we did not base the analysis just on support for the Coalition and for Labor. In order to assess the strength of support for parties of the right, we have included support for 'other' parties in the right-leaning group of parties. This is a rough approximation. But an analysis of the 2019 data shows that a high proportion of these votes went to nominally conservative parties or to independents. (See Table A8 in Appendix A.) It has not proved feasible to do this for all of the election years so, in order to roughly gauge electoral support for parties more likely to lean to the right than the left, the 'other' vote has been added to the Coalition's. Similarly, in order to gauge support for the left, we have added the Greens' vote to Labor's.

Table 10: votes for parties of the right and the left by educational status,1966 to 2019

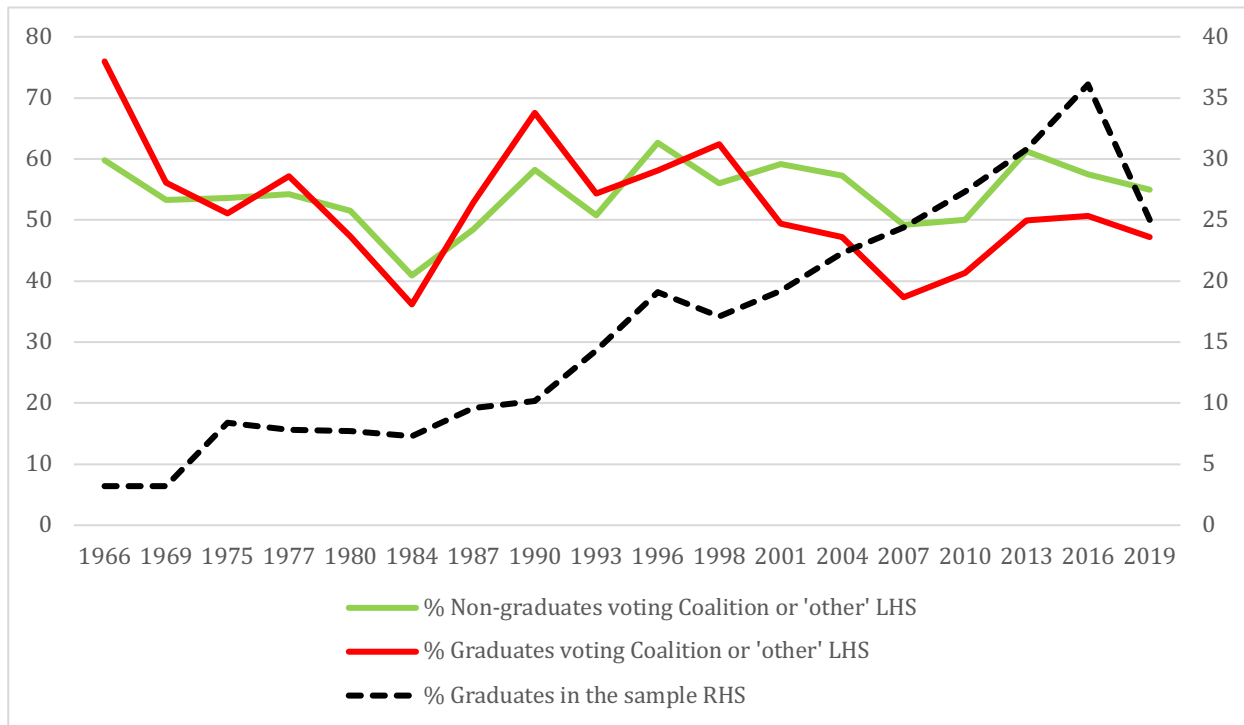
Year	% <i>Graduates in each sample</i>	% Non- graduates voting Coalition or 'other'	% Graduates voting Coalition or 'other'	% Non-graduates voting Labor or Greens (1996 on)	% Graduates voting Labor or Greens (1996 on)
1966	3.2	60	76	40	24
1969	3.2	53	56	47	35
1975	8.4	54	51	46	49
1977	7.8	54	57	46	43
1980	7.7	52	47	48	53
1984	7.3	41	36	60	64
1987	9.6	48	53	51	47
1990	10.2	58	68	42	33
1993	14.3	51	54	50	46
1996	19.1	63	58	38	42
1998	17.1	56	62	44	38
2001	19.2	59	49	41	51
2004	22.3	57	47	43	53
2007	24.4	49	37	50	62
2010	27.3	50	41	50	59
2013	30.8	61	50	39	50
2016	36.1	58	51	42	49
2019	25.0	55	47	45	53

Source: See Tables A6 and A7 in Appendix A.

For an overview of the data on the changing proportion of graduates in each survey see *Note to Tables A6 and A7 (and Table 10)* in Appendix A.

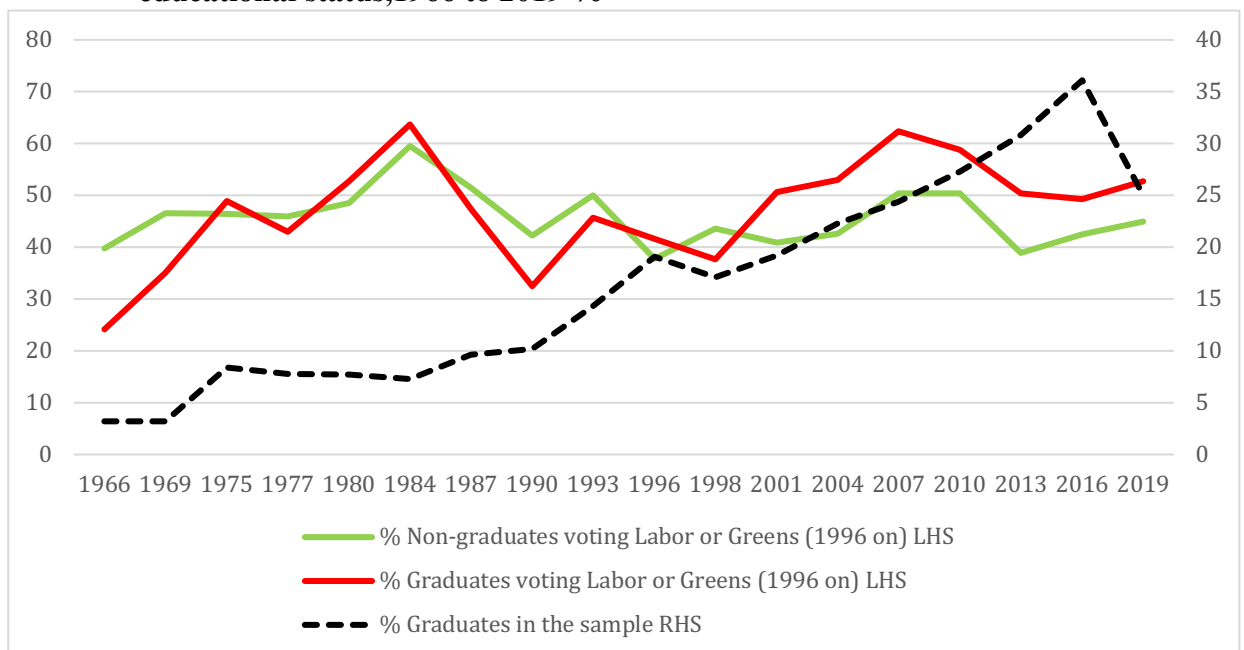
Note: The 2019 data for voting 'other' refined to include only those minor parties that appear to be right-leaning or conservative are set out Table A8 in Appendix A.

Figure 5: Votes for parties of the right (Coalition and ‘other’) by educational status,1966 to 2019 %



Source: Tables A6 and A7 in Appendix A

Figure 6: Votes for parties of the left (Labor and Greens [Greens from 1996 on]) by educational status,1966 to 2019 %



Source: Tables A6 and A7 in Appendix A

Table 10 and Figure 5 show that, while the tide was turning in 1990, by the 1996 election the Coalition plus ‘other’ had secured a clear majority (63 percent) of the non-graduate vote. Table A7 in Appendix A shows that this was made up of 54 percent for the Coalition and nine percent

for 'other' parties. In that year seven of the nine percentage points for 'other' went to the Australian Democrats, a figure that was split fairly evenly between the non-graduates and the graduates (six percentage points for the former and eight for the latter). The Democrats were more a party of the centre than of either the left or the right but, nonetheless, the total of 63 percent of non-graduates voting non-left in 1996 is striking. The implication is that the crossover of non-graduate voters from the left to the right was firmly in place by this election.

Conversely, by the 1996 election Labor's share of the non-graduate vote fell to just 36 percent plus two percent voting Greens meaning that 38 percent of non-graduates voted for left-leaning parties. As we will see the contraction in the non-graduate vote for Labor was linked to voter unease about the party's progressive agenda at the time.

The 2001 election coincided with the Tampa incident and thus was influenced by voters' concerns about border management. It also saw another thumping majority of non-graduate voters (59 per cent) supporting parties of the right.³⁸ This crossover has since been repeated for all subsequent elections since 2001 except for 2007 and 2010 when the non-graduate vote was split more or less 50/50 between right and left.

The Coalition's success with the non-graduate constituency is evident for the latest, 2019, election. Here they got 44 per cent of the non-graduate vote, while a further 6 percent voted for 'other' parties (that is non-Labor and non-Green parties).

There has been an almost equally striking crossover of graduates from a majority supporting right-leaning parties (mainly the Coalition) in the 1980s and 1990s to a majority supporting parties of the left. There was a flash of this new trend in 1984 (the second election won by Bob Hawke) but this faded. However the trend was consolidated in 2001 and thereafter. In more recent times, as the Greens have emerged as a significant electoral force, the share of graduate voters supporting Labor or the Greens exceeds the share voting Coalition or 'other' parties. In the 2019 election, the AES data show that 53 percent of graduates voted Labor or Green.

Why the crossover?

The crossover occurred for the same reasons as in the UK and the US. That is, it reflects the increasing divide between progressive and non-progressive views on social and cultural issues in Australia. The parties of the left in Australia now focus on the advance of progressive causes. Traditional class interests are a second-order concern and, in any case, the class interests of graduates are often contrary to those of non-graduates.

Immigration, softer borders, cultural diversity, generosity to asylum seekers, are all top priorities for many graduates and all these causes have been embraced by the Labor Party and the Greens. This is the key to explaining the change of heart that many non-graduate voters have experienced as they have moved towards the Coalition and 'other' parties. As we have seen, majorities of non-graduates do not support key progressive causes and are likely to feel more at home with right-leaning parties where support for such causes is luke-warm at best.

A clear indicator of differing political commitments among both candidates and voters can be found in the 2019 AES surveys of these two groups, in this case on attitudes towards immigration.³⁹ See Table 11.

Table 11: Attitudes to immigration by political party, Australian Election Study 2019, voters and candidates, 2019 %

<i>The number of migrants allowed into Australia at the present time [has] ...</i>	Gone much too far or gone too far	[is] about right	Not gone far enough or nearly far enough	Total %	Total N
Coalition voters	51	40	9	100	812
Coalition candidates	31	69	0	100	32
Labor voters	38	43	19	100	664
Labor candidates	2	73	24	100	41
Greens voters	20	35	45	100	228
Greens candidates	6	41	52	100	63
'Other' voters	58	32	10	100	302
'Other' candidates	48	27	25	100	234
All voters	44	39	17	100	2006
All candidates	34	38	28	100	370

Sources: Drawn from McAllister, I., Sheppard, J., Bean, C., Gibson, R., Makkai, T. (2019). *Australian Election Study 2019* [computer file], December 2019 and McAllister, Ian; Bean, Clive; Gibson, Rachel; Makkai, Toni; Sheppard, Jill; Cameron, Sarah, *Australian Candidate Study, 2019*, doi:10.26193/HBYHL2, ADA Dataverse, V2
 Notes: Candidates missing on one or both variables (n=112) and voters missing on one or both variables (n=173) are not shown in Table 11.

Table 11 shows that in 2019 the opinions of Coalition candidates on immigration were close to the opinions of Coalition voters. Fifty-one percent of Coalition voters thought that the numbers had gone too far, as did 31 percent of Candidates. By contrast only two percent of Labor candidates thought the numbers had gone too far while 38 percent of Labor voters were of that opinion. Candidates for 'other' parties, while a miscellaneous collection, are overall much more sceptical of immigration than are the candidates for the main parties, and are closer to their voters than are Coalition candidates to theirs. Greens candidates stand out, with more than half wanting an increase in the numbers.

Australia's globalising transition and its impact on voters

As most readers will be aware, successive Hawke/Keating governments (from 1983 to 1996) challenged (and vanquished) Australia's hitherto dominant settlement institutions, together with values that had dated back to Federation and before. These institutions and values had hinged on prioritising national self-reliance. This focus was expressed in policies supporting high protection for Australian manufacturing and a defensive orientation towards the global economy. They included strict controls over immigration from low-wage non-European countries, controls which were intended to protect Australian wages and working conditions.

The new Labor governments put an end to these arrangements. Hawke and Keating wanted the Australian economy to be open to global competition. But, in the process, they threatened the interests of Australia's established manufacturing industries and the workers they employed.

This was a profound challenge to Australia's trade union leaders and their members. For almost the entire period since Federation the Labor Party, its union leader constituents and, not least, the rank and file members of unions had valued the security that Australia's protectionist policies provided. These included the firm controls over immigration, controls which, among other restrictions, effectively debarred entry by non-whites.

Despite this history Hawke and Keating succeeded, not just in removing tariff protection but also in reversing the long-standing policy of keeping Asia at bay. Instead, especially when Keating was Prime Minister, they moved to make Australia a part of Asia by incorporating Australia into cross-Asia trading and diplomatic alliances.

Partly to this end, they abolished the remnants of restrictive immigration policies and proscribed all discrimination on the basis of race or culture.

Hawke and Keating achieved this transformation in large part because they secured the strong support of Australia's elites in the fields of culture, education, economic policy and media. This consensus helped to persuade most of Australia's union leaders to support the cause.⁴⁰

Another major factor was that, at the same time as Hawke and Keating were implementing their reforms, they accompanied them with additions to the social wage, including Medicare, Pharmaceutical Benefits, compulsory superannuation and family benefits.

Members of the graduate class were particularly attracted to the promise of Australia becoming a multicultural, globalist nation. Commentators in elite circles had widely condemned Australia's allegedly racist and isolationist past. Given this, the new promise strongly appealed to them.

It is true that Hawke and Keating did not originate this revision. The racial elements of immigration policy had begun to be eliminated in the 1960s in the latter years of the Liberal/Country Party rule⁴¹ and there was a further strong movement in this direction when Whitlam was Prime-Minister. This was followed by a firm endorsement of Australia as a multicultural nation during the Fraser era between 1975 and early 1983.

But Fraser did not tie his government's embrace of multiculturalism to a radical attack on Australia's protectionist settlement institutions. These largely stayed in place during the years of his Government.

Not so under Hawke and Keating. They embraced a radical global agenda in which Australian enterprises were expected to fend for themselves in the open global marketplace. With the support of most economic policy elites at the time (and since) they both believed that the shock of competition and Australia's alleged status as a 'clever country' (or a well-educated one) would enable Australian enterprises to compete in this marketplace.

But Hawke and Keating took this commitment a step further. They claimed that their policies of integrating Australia into Asia, and relabelling Australia as a multicultural nation, featuring rather than fearing a significant Asian minority, would help remove Asian barriers to trade.

By the time of the final Keating Government (1993 to 1996) Labor had established multiculturalism as a foundation for policy within Australian administrative programs. They began implementing rules requiring ethnic quotas in the Commonwealth bureaucracy, the ABC and semi-government authorities. Labor was also cautiously embracing a new definition of Australia as a multicultural nation consisting of semi-autonomous ethnic communities – in effect a nation of nations.⁴²

These arrangements did not last. The sharpness of the Hawke/Keating challenge to Australia's cultural and economic traditions prompted a vigorous political response in the 1990s, led by the Coalition under John Howard's leadership. By this time Howard had regained the Liberal Party leadership, which, as detailed earlier, he had lost in 1989.

Howard's Coalition won a resounding victory at the March 1996 federal election. It was a victory partly based on an explicit rejection of the multicultural policies and other culturally progressive priorities of the Hawke and Keating Governments.

They won, in part, by attracting a large share of the working-class vote. It was the first time that a majority of this vote did not support the Labor Party.⁴³ And, as shown in Tables A6 and A7, it was the first time since 1975 that the Coalition won a majority of non-graduate voters (exclusive of the vote for ‘other’ parties).

After 1996 the new Coalition government effectively banished the word multiculturalism from its vocabulary.⁴⁴ The Labor commitment to formal quotas for members of ethnic communities was abandoned. The Coalition also took up the ‘culture wars’, directly challenging some of the core beliefs of Labor’s progressive support base, including its commitment to an open-ended asylum-seeker intake. The electoral potency of this challenge was further illustrated in the late 1990s by the strong voter response to the explicit anti-Asian immigration agenda pursued by Pauline Hanson’s One Nation movement.⁴⁵

These events provoked a vigorous backlash from a range of cultural elites, many of whom challenged and derided them.⁴⁶ But through all the repercussions the Coalition presented itself as the custodian of Australian nationalism. In this way they offered a home for those voters worried about challenges to their identity as Australians and who bristled at what they thought were multicultural threats to the salience of Australia’s culture and sovereignty. The Coalition has also been especially vigilant in embracing voter concerns about border protection.

Yet, at the same time, the Coalition has embraced much of the Hawke/Keating globalist and free-trade economic agenda, including high immigration—in other words, the core of the Big Australia package.

The Coalition initially cut the permanent migration program from 98,750 (including humanitarian entrants) in 1995-96 to 85,760 in 1996-97, and then to 79,150 and 79,290 in the subsequent financial years.⁴⁷ The rhetoric at the time was that the program had got out of hand under Keating, especially in its family reunion components. For a few years the Coalition focussed on reforms relevant to this. It was thought that the program could only be revived once public faith in its probity had been restored.⁴⁸

This revival occurred, starting at the end of the 1990s. The Coalition’s key move was to promote the overseas student industry, as well as migrants selected on the basis of skills. The change in direction from minor cuts to large increases reflected business pressure to provide a greater supply of skilled workers as well as a larger population.⁴⁹

By the early 2000s overseas students were being encouraged to stay on in Australia. Previous restrictions, including that they had to apply for permanent residence from their home country and that they must possess relevant occupational experience if they were to obtain a skilled permanent visa, were abolished. These changes set off a dramatic expansion in overseas student enrolments. It was an expansion abetted by the speed with which universities and private trade colleges set up courses meeting the requirements for onshore permanent resident visas.

By the time the Coalition lost office in 2007 the level of NOM for 2007-08 had reached 277,200⁵⁰ with overseas students being a major component. This was because of their high annual influx and their propensity to stay on in Australia after completing their studies. Ever since this time overseas students and other temporary visa holders have constituted the main source of NOM.⁵¹

Since the Coalition returned to power in 2013 it has relied on high immigration to boost Australia’s growth in GDP. It has, until recently, sustained a high permanent entry program of 190,000 a year and facilitated a rapid increase in the number of temporary entrants. The stock of these temporaries in Australia as of December 2019 was 2.4 million.⁵²

The difference between the Coalition’s strategies for achieving a Big Australia and those of Labor in the Hawke/Keating era, is that the Coalition has done it by stealth. It does not

proclaim that it is working to create a Big Australia. Rather, it is content to let it appear that this has simply occurred as a by-product of Australia's attractiveness to temporary migrants.

In particular, the Coalition's migration policies have been shorn of the associations with the progressive expressions of enthusiasm for cultural and ethnic diversity that have marked Labor's policies since the Hawke/Keating era.

The result has been a bipartisan commitment between the major parties to a Big Australia. Voters concerned about high immigration or globalising economic policies have had nowhere to go except to minor parties. Nevertheless, the Coalition has offered a home to those among them who are repelled by Labor's progressive social and cultural agenda.

Divisions within the right in Australia

Given the divisions in the ranks of the right in the UK and the US it is remarkable that there do not appear to be any comparable divisions in Australia. It is remarkable because there is clearly a substantial voting constituency who could provide a following should any faction of the right seek to appeal to them.

Most of the media commentary around the question of high immigration and a Big Australia seems to presume that elite opinion on the issues accords with these policies and that this accordance is stable.

We think that these presumptions are mistaken.

It would be surprising if there were no tensions on immigration within the Coalition. This follows from the party's embrace of a critical, nationalistic position on the Hawke/Keating diversity agenda. The Coalition has attracted political aspirants as well as voters concerned to press this nationalistic stance towards the question of immigration. (Table 11 shows that while just over half of Coalition voters in 2019 thought that immigration had gone too far or much too far, so too did nearly a third of the Coalition candidates.)⁵³

Such aspirants have a sizeable potential following given that half of the electorate favours a lower immigration. For conservative politicians, the presence of a voter constituency open to criticism of high migration is an obvious invitation to build a following around the cause.

A Lowy Institute booklet entitled *Our very own Brexit*, by Sam Roggeveen explores the potential for an Australian split on the question.⁵⁴

Roggeveen argues that an Australian Brexit (in the sense of a political upheaval over immigration) is conceivable. He writes that it might bring 'a future in which one of the two major parties overturns Australia's bipartisan compact on immigration by advocating for an indefinite stop to Australia's immigration program and then takes that position to an election'.⁵⁵

He thinks this is a possibility because Australian political parties have been hollowed out to the point that they are dominated by career politicians, people with little but their own interests at heart. Such politicians, he thinks, are willing, in association with a faction of their colleagues, to mobilise any voter dissent in order to advance their careers. He fears that the scale of Australia's immigration might attract opportunists of this kind.

He has Tony Abbott in mind. He notes that Abbott argued in 2018 that the Coalition should support substantial cuts to immigration in order to distinguish itself from the Labor Party which, Abbott asserted, was 'in the grip of ethnic activists'.⁵⁶

However, Roggeveen does not think that any such factional mobilisation is imminent.

We disagree. It has already happened. It was one contributing factor to Peter Dutton's leadership challenge against Malcolm Turnbull in August 2018.

When Turnbull displaced Tony Abbott as leader in 2015 he brought to the leadership an outspoken embrace of high immigration and his belief in the linkage between this policy and Australia's globalist economic agenda. In his maiden speech to the parliament he put it as follows:

Our immigration programme is essentially a recruiting exercise conducted in the national interest of Australia. It is a competitive world and we want as many of the world's enterprising and energetic to join and strengthen our Australian family.⁵⁷

As to the links between Turnbull's globalist economic priorities and immigration he put it as follows:

We were perfectly positioned to take advantage of the rapid economic growth in Asia. I often commented on how our multicultural society and its diversity was a source of strength. I imagine more than a few cynics thought those were just warm words, but they were not only heartfelt but hard-headed.⁵⁸

In embracing this stance Turnbull moved away from John Howard's rejection of the progressive ethos of the Hawke/Keating era. In so doing he left himself open to challenge from a factional leader willing to use the questions of immigration and multiculturalism to help mobilise an assault on his leadership.

Over the years 2015 to 2018 while Turnbull was Prime Minister, the Liberal caucus solidified into two hostile camps. One, a majority of the caucus, was composed of moderates who supported Turnbull's progressive, globalist agenda. The other was an increasingly outspoken minority of conservatives who dissented from some parts of it.

In his memoir he documents the hostility ('loathing' is the expression he often uses) between the two camps. As the Coalition's political situation deteriorated through 2018 (indicated by successive Newspolls showing Labor ahead on a two-party preferred basis) this division created fertile ground for a conservative challenge to Turnbull's leadership. Peter Dutton led the charge.

The challenge is sometimes interpreted as one between two giant egos. David Crowe, in his valuable account of these events, supports this interpretation. He argues that Dutton had presented no alternative agenda to Turnbull. Crowe writes that: 'As for political vision, his manifesto required only five words. *I can beat Bill Shorten*'.⁵⁹ (Italics in the original).

This is not how Turnbull saw it. Yes, Dutton's faction wanted Turnbull's head, but it was also hostile to some of his policy commitments. Turnbull thought Dutton's supporters (including Tony Abbott) were a bunch of racists and 'right wing wreckers'.⁶⁰ As for Dutton, Turnbull believed that if he were to become Prime Minister, he 'would run off to the right with a divisive, dog-whistling anti-immigration agenda... designed to "throw red meat to the base"'.⁶¹

In our view, Turnbull was right. Dutton represented a conservative faction, opposed to some of the progressive elements of Turnbull's policy. These included Turnbull's endorsement of high immigration and the increasing ethnic diversity that accompanied it.

Dutton was a longstanding member of the conservative faction, with close personal ties to its leading members, including Tony Abbott and Mathias Cormann.

His stance on the issues was no secret. He had taken a highly nationalist position on the protection of Australia's border sovereignty, which included a tough stand on keeping asylum seekers contained in offshore locations. He had also taken a strong law and order stance on containing the activities of African gangs.⁶² This was interpreted in progressive circles as a serious breach of their commitments to diversity.

Dutton was Minister for Immigration from December 2014 to August 2018. From 2016 he pursued a strong line on citizenship eligibility, which included a serious assessment of applicants' competence in English.⁶³ This was the antithesis of progressive views on such eligibility which prioritised inclusiveness and thus few impediments to naturalisation.

Dutton's immigration reforms are less well known to the wider public. They cohere into a recognisable pattern in which Dutton showed a keenness to revise both the permanent and temporary migration programs. These revisions implied a reduction in numbers as well as a sensitivity to voters' concerns about the implications of the numbers for their quality of life.

He initiated a stringent reform of the temporary-entry work visa program, which has subsequently led to a sharp fall in the number of these visas being issued.⁶⁴ He also revised the way the permanent immigration program was managed. The practice had been to declare an annual permanent entry number for the program at the time of the May budget. This was then treated by the Immigration Department as a high priority target, with the precise number of visas stipulated at the time of the Budget always being delivered.

This changed in 2016-17. Dutton instructed the Department to prioritise the bona-fides of applications, even if this meant that the target was not achieved. These changes were not the result of a Cabinet directive, though they were given bureaucratic endorsement by the Prime Minister's Department. Yet his administrative actions amounted to a de facto reduction in the immigration program.

From 2016-17 on, the program numbers were treated as a ceiling rather than a target. In 2016-17, 183,600 visas were issued rather than the 190,000 'target'. In 2017-18 the shortfall was far greater: 162,417 visas issued, way short of the 190,000 target. Later, when Morrison led the Coalition, the immigration program for 2019-20 was explicitly lowered to 160,000, and the number was still treated as a ceiling rather than a target. As we show later, the actual visas-issued outcome for 2019-20 was 140,000.

Dutton made his priorities clear when he appeared in public just before the leadership ballot in August 2018. Speaking in response to 3AW's Neil Mitchell's demand that he state what policies he stood for, he said: 'I think we do have to cut the numbers [of immigrants] back... We have huge issues with congestion, and we need to allow our infrastructure to catch up'.⁶⁵

The implications of Morrison's party-room victory

Dutton succeeded in bringing on a challenge to Turnbull's position in August 2018; though he was defeated, he mobilised 35 votes in his support. This was enough for Turnbull to acknowledge that his leadership was no longer viable. In the subsequent party room ballot, contested by Morrison and Dutton, Morrison emerged as the victor, though by the bare margin of 45 votes to 40.

Turnbull interprets these events as a consequence of a right-wing conspiracy. He saw this as having been led by the Murdoch press and its partly owned subsidiary, Sky News, where Andrew Bolt and Peta Credlin, amongst others, were prominent Dutton supporters. He also includes in this conspiracy the high rating 2GB radio talk-back hosts, Alan Jones and Ray Hadley.

Maybe it was a conspiracy, but nonetheless the Murdoch papers directly addressed the majority of newspaper readers in Australia and the talk-back hosts spoke to a very large voter constituency. This was a constituency much like the one that had contributed to the Brexit success in the UK and the Trump campaign in the US.

To repeat, the challenge to Turnbull was not just about the spoils of office. If Dutton had succeeded, as his colleagues were well aware, he would have delivered a sharp reduction in immigration numbers, among other breaches of the Big Australia orthodoxy.

It was not to be. Turnbull writes that he regarded Morrison as his natural successor, a man who, ‘while more conservative than me on social issues, was, I believed, a responsible, safe pair of hands’.⁶⁶ Morrison was certainly far more conservative. He was one of the few federal politicians who did not support gay marriage. While Minister for Immigration he had taken a tough line on keeping asylum seekers out of Australia. But he has also been a forthright supporter of high population growth, deregulation of the labour and product markets, and free trade, all policies central to a Big Australia.

Under Morrison’s leadership the Coalition went on to score an against-the-odds victory at the May 2019 federal election. They ran on a ‘jobs and growth’ platform in which Morrison and leading Cabinet members made it clear that in their view jobs and growth depended on continued high immigration. The Coalition also maintained its commitment to a globalising economic platform built around micro economic reform. At the same time, they wedged Labor by highlighting that party’s embrace of the rights of minorities, gender diversity and their alleged support for an open borders policy on refugees.⁶⁷

This strategy appears to have worked. Labor lost the election. According to the 2019 AES, its primary vote fell to nearly its lowest level ever of just 35 percent (see Table 10). The Australian Electoral Commission reports it as 33.34 percent.⁶⁸ Based on the data from the 2019 AES survey, the main reason was that Labor’s share of the non-graduate vote was, similarly, only 35 percent.

Labor’s electoral dilemma

According to the Census, in 2016 non-graduate voters comprised 77 percent of the electorate in.⁶⁹ Subsequent graduations may have reduced that proportion by one or two percent but, even so, non-graduates would still account for at least 75 percent of voters. It would take a massive swing to the left on the part of graduate voters to compensate for the situation that, by 2019, more than half of the non-graduate electorate was voting for parties of the right.

Labor’s electoral dilemma is acute. To the extent that they rely on the graduate vote they have to compete with the Greens. This means that they have to highlight their progressive policy positions. Yet in so doing, they are helping sustain the Coalition’s attractions for the non-graduate vote.

Labor’s internal review of the 2019 election results reached a similar conclusion. Though there is no reference to the crossover phenomenon, the report notes that ‘Labor has become a natural home ... for diverse interests and concerns, including gender equality the LGBTQI community, racial equality and environmentalism’.⁷⁰ It acknowledges the possibility that Labor’s embrace of these values might turn off support from ‘traditional Labor voters’. The report says that:

Working people experiencing the dislocation caused by new technologies and globalisation could lose faith in Labor if they do not believe Labor is responding to their issues... Care needs to be taken to avoid Labor becoming a grievance-focussed organisation.⁷¹

Elsewhere, it provides data showing that this division is already harming Labor’s electoral prospects. The report states that:

The average swing to Labor in 2019 in the 20 seats with the highest representation of university graduates was +3.78 per cent. This contrasts with an average swing of -4.22 per cent against Labor in the 20 seats with the lowest representation of university graduates. Since university graduates, on average, earn higher incomes and have more secure jobs than those without tertiary qualifications,

they are more readily able to think about issues such as climate change, refugees, marriage equality and the rights of the LGBTQI+ community.⁷²

The report has little to say about immigration, except to acknowledge that the Coalition has been able to wedge Labor on the question of refugee movements with measurable consequences in terms of the non-graduate voter swing away from Labor.⁷³

Prior to Covid-19 it would have been sensible to conclude that a Big Australia was invulnerable. The Coalition had made it central to its economic policies and has the strong backing of business interests to sustain this focus.⁷⁴ Labor, meanwhile, had dealt itself out of appealing to the half of the electorate that opposed the Big Australia agenda.

Covid-19 changes everything

The virus has put a temporary end to a Big Australia. The Coalition government decreed on March 15 that travel from China direct to Australia must stop, then on March 20 that all travel to Australia, regardless of country of origin must cease, except for Australian citizens returning home and those holding permanent residence visas.

At the time of the October 2020-21 Budget the government indicated that NOM will fall from 239,700 in 2018-19 and 154,100 in 2019-20 and then to minus 71,600 in 2020-21 and minus 21,600 2021-22.⁷⁵

Covid-19 has done the work in Australia that the mobilisation of right-leaning voters in the UK and the US had achieved. It has also undermined the conditions that allowed Australia to be an outlier on immigration policy in the developed world.⁷⁶ In the new circumstances, a Big Australia is highly unlikely to be revived in the near future.

Why? One reason is that by mid-2020 the number of unemployed or underemployed had exploded as a result of Covid-19 lockdowns. Apart from the 1.4 million receiving Job Seeker benefits as of June 2020 there were another 800,352 recipients of Job Keeper payments.⁷⁷ Many of these would have been unemployed in the absence of these payments. Job creation has slowed markedly, meaning that the unemployed plus new entrants into the labour market face a highly competitive contest for jobs. They will be doing so in a context where there are some two million temporary migrants still in Australia (2.03 million as of June 2020 – the latest figures available at the time of writing).⁷⁸

True, business interests and most private sector economists are advocating a rapid return to pre-Covid immigration numbers. They say this is vital for economic recovery. Special interests, including the horticultural industry want more agricultural workers in time for the spring harvest. The education industry is desperate for a revival of the overseas student inflow.⁷⁹

In the past politicians on both the left and the right have yielded, willingly, to advocacy of this kind. Not now. In the present circumstances any policy directed at a rapid recovery of permanent and temporary immigration would arouse voter resentment, particularly at a time when so many resident workers are competing for jobs. Likewise, any policy to open Australia's borders to migrants in order to bring in overseas students or seasonal agricultural workers would be met with cries of hypocrisy. It is, and would be, asked, how could this action be taken when residents have been locked up in order to keep the virus from spreading? Such a reaction would be doubly likely now that there is abundant evidence that the quarantining of overseas travellers has proved the weak link in containing the virus. Thus a second reason for a Big Australia to remain on hold would be the almost certain outrage from voters fearing that their health would be put at risk and the many sacrifices they had made during the lockdowns set at naught.

Post-Covid reactions to a Big Australia

We have not had to wait long for these propositions to be tested.

In what seemed unthinkable in the pre-Covid environment it was the Labor Party that first dipped its toes in the water in search of voters hostile to a Big Australia.

This initiative was driven by Federal Labor's spokesperson on immigration and home affairs, Kristina Keneally. In a May 2020 *Sydney Morning Herald* opinion piece, she argued for an 'Australia First' hiring policy. Keneally put the question: in the post-Covid-19 situation, 'do we want migrants to return to Australia in the same numbers and in the same composition as before the crisis'? Her answer was: 'No. Our economic recovery must help all Australians get back on their feet, and to do that we need a migration program that puts Australian workers first'.⁸⁰

This intervention was not an aberration. In December 2019 Keneally had successfully moved a motion in the Senate to set up a Select Committee on temporary migration. She cited our findings from the 2016 census on the impact of temporary migration on the resident labour force.⁸¹ Her motion stated that 'according to [the] Australian Population Research Institute, almost a fifth of the nation's cleaners, store packers, and food and hospitality workers are on Temporary migrant visas'. This initiative implies that Labor's leaders must have given her the green light to test the waters.

As we have seen, Labor's leaders have every reason to do so given the party's parlous electoral situation. Nevertheless, it is easy to see why they have been slow to act, given the condemnation Keneally's initiative evoked, both from outside and inside the party.

As to the former, Keneally scored a rebuke from the *Economist*, the leading intellectual proponent of open borders and high migration policies. In a global review of the post-Covid migration situation the *Economist* laments the extent of border closures. It slams Keneally for saying 'the country [Australia] should move away from its "lazy" reliance on "cheap" foreign workers who take "jobs Australian could do".'⁸²

Nearer to home, Troy Bramston, one of *The Australian's* senior writers, had this to say about the statement:

To call it a dog whistle would ascribe a degree of intelligent strategy to it. Labor's home affairs spokeswoman has used the same degenerate language that Trump does by aping his 'America First' mantra. It is demeaning and disrespectful to all migrants.⁸³

Critics within the Labor Caucus included Julian Hill, the member for Bruce in south-east Melbourne. Hill argued that far from putting limits on immigration, the pandemic should be used as a trigger to kickstart the program, especially its permanent entry components.⁸⁴ The Premier of Victoria, Daniel Andrews, among others, has endorsed this position.⁸⁵

Labor's progressive elites embraced high immigration and increased cultural and ethnic diversity during and after the Hawke/Keating era as they and the Party saw these changes as core aspects of their vision for Australia. One component of the Party's strategy to achieve this vision has been to recruit ethnic communities into its ranks.

This strategy was highlighted in the recent exposé of systematic branch stacking in Labor electorates, a practice based on recruiting bulk groups of new members, usually from ethnic communities. The stacker pays their membership fees and the new recruits vote in preselections for the candidates of the stacker's choice. (The practice is not illegal but it is in breach of the party's rules.)⁸⁶ It turned out that Julian Hill was a central figure in this chicanery. This was revealed following a sting on Adem Somyurek, a leading architect of Labor's ethnic branch stacking strategies in Victoria. Hill was an active ethnic branch stacker himself.⁸⁷ He appears to

have fallen out with Somyurek over who was to benefit from the political spoils (notably in the preselection of electoral candidates).

Hill’s condemnation of Keneally appears to reflect his concern that any criticism of immigration implies disrespect for ethnic communities, communities that he and his colleagues regard as an important part of the Party’s electoral constituency and vision for Australia.

Keneally has since backed off to a degree. She has claimed that her criticism was mainly directed at the huge flows of temporary migrants, and that she supports a return to migration as a part of the post-Covid economic revival, as long as the focus is on permanent migration.⁸⁸

This cautious stance has been enshrined in Labor’s Draft Policy Platform, released (leaked) in mid-September 2020. This states that:

Labor will restore public confidence in Australia’s temporary migration program and ensure that temporary migration does not adversely affect the employment and training opportunities for Australians.⁸⁹

Given that temporary migration is the main driver of Australia’s NOM, if implemented, this commitment would in itself constitute a real threat to a Big Australia.

To judge by the public response to Keneally’s May statement, if Labor did run on this policy it would attract significant voter support.

This response can be gauged from a recent independent poll. The Essential poll, published on 12 May 2020, informed respondents of Keneally’s statement and then asked: ‘To what extent, do you support or oppose this idea of “Australia first” hiring?’ As Table 12, shows 67 percent supported it.

Table 12: ‘Do you support or oppose this idea of “Australia first” hiring?’ by age and intended vote %

	Total	Age group			Voting intention			
		18-34	35-54	55 plus	Coalition	Labor	Greens	Other
Strongly support & support	67	52	68	78	75	63	50	82
Neither	21	30	24	10	15	24	34	12
Oppose & strongly oppose	12	18	8	12	10	13	17	7
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total N	1,067	341	341	385	418	306	86	143

Source: The Essential Report, 11 May 2020, p. 17

From Labor’s perspective, if it is to ever escape its current status of minority support among voters, one possible route would be for Labor to bite into the Coalition’s base on immigration. The Essential poll shows that 75 percent of Coalition supporters favour the ‘Australia first’ proposal.

Then there are concerns about health. In May 2020 an Australia Institute poll found that the closure of state borders was extremely popular; 77 percent of respondents across Australia supported the policy with only 18 percent opposed.⁹⁰ And in September 2020 a Newspoll found that 66 percent of Queenslanders supported the continued closure of their border: 58 percent said the border controls were ‘about right’ and eight percent said they were ‘too lenient’ giving

66 percent in favour or strongly in favour. The views of other Australians were also supportive of Queensland's policy: 52 percent saying the controls were 'about right' and seven percent 'too lenient'.⁹¹

How would the Coalition respond?

The Coalition has made a Big Australia central to its economic strategy.

However, as we have seen, the pursuit of this strategy has generated tensions within the Coalition, with the Dutton faction pushing for, and achieving, some modifications.

In the post-Covid situation the Coalition has been under great pressure from its business constituency to revive a Big Australia. However it has proceeded with caution, mindful of the reservations of the Dutton faction. It has not promised any quick return to the former status-quo. It has also been far tougher than Labor in insisting that people on temporary visas should leave Australia if they cannot provide for themselves.

It is less well known that, in July 2020, the Coalition Government announced that the outcome of the 2019-20 permanent entry immigration program was 140,000. This is the lowest number for over a decade.

The government could have easily achieved the 160,000 program number given the large stock of potential applicants already in Australia on temporary visas. Instead, it continued the procedure in place since 2016-17 of treating the program number as a ceiling rather than a target. In so doing it chose to issue 140,000 visas rather than 160,000. The Acting Minister for Immigration, Alan Tudge, justified this by saying that the government had to take into account the relative absence of skill shortages in the post-Covid labour market. As he put it on the ABC Insiders program:

You've got to remember the immigration system is a complex system, but a lot of it is what we call demand driven. That is that you can only come into the country if, for example, you can't find an Australian to do the job. If you have high unemployment, inevitably, that demand is going to be lower because there will be Australians to do the work.⁹²

In our view should Labor persist with its 'Australia first' hiring policy the Coalition is unlikely to watch passively while it loses some of the large majority of its constituency who agree with this hiring policy.

Conclusion

Australian governments have pursued a high immigration policy for nearly twenty years, and have done this immune from electoral challenge. In so doing they have become an outlier in the Western world.

This is unlikely to continue.

At least half the electorate is concerned about the effects of rapid immigration-fuelled population growth on their quality of life. The conditions that made it possible to sustain a Big Australia and ignore this concern no longer exist in the post-Covid environment.

The stock of voters at risk in a labour market deep in a Covid-induced recession is large. So is the number of those fearful of the health consequences of further high immigration, and potentially deeply resentful of actions that would mock the sacrifices they have made.

If the Coalition, or Labor, does try to revive a Big Australia many of these voters would respond readily to any attempt to mobilise them. In such circumstances immigration would become a public issue, far more salient to the electorate than was the case before the virus.

If this should happen it is likely that numbers would have to moderate, as they have done in the UK, the US and in much of Western Europe.

Appendix A

Table A1 ‘Here are some of the reasons people give for preferring high levels of immigration. How do you feel about these reasons?’ %

	Q5 We need to continually increase the population for economic growth.	Q6 We need more people to increase our cultural diversity.	Q7 A larger population will make it easier to defend Australia.	Q8 Having more migrants will offset the ageing of the population.	Q9 We need to increase immigration so we can take in more refugees.	Q10 It’s racist cut immigration.	Q11 We should be opening our borders not closing them.
Agree strongly and agree	30	29	22	29	22	18	22
Neither agree nor disagree	28	26	31	28	22	20	23
Disagree and disagree strongly	42	44	47	43	57	63	55
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total N	2214	2214	2214	2214	2214	2214	2214

Source: TAPRI Survey November 2019

Table A2: ‘Immigration should be ...’ by age group, non-graduates only %

Age groups	Increased a lot or a little	Remain about the same as it is	Reduced a little or a lot	Total %	Total N
18-24	35	34	31	100	232
25-29	36	26	38	100	146
30-34	22	35	43	100	145
35-39	22	33	45	100	128
40-44	22	24	54	100	140
45-49	15	22	63	100	147
50-54	11	29	61	100	147
55-59	8	29	63	100	139
60-64	7	26	67	100	123
65-69	8	31	62	100	117
70-74	6	26	69	100	86
75-79	10	24	66	100	92
80 plus	2	19	79	100	42
Total non-graduates	18	28	53	100	1684
Total sample	20	30	50	100	2214

Source: TAPRI survey November 2019

Table A3: ‘Immigration should be ...’ by age group, graduates only %

Age groups	Increased a lot or a little	Remain about the same as it is	Reduced a little or a lot	Total %	Total N
18-24	56	22	22	100	27
25-29	55	30	14	100	56
30-34	38	30	33	100	61
35-39	25	43	32	100	63
40-44	30	42	28	100	53
45-49	27	27	47	100	45
50-54	18	40	43	100	40
55-59	13	37	50	100	38
60-64	11	31	58	100	36
65-69	21	17	62	100	29
70-74	17	26	57	100	23
75-79	11	34	55	100	53
80 plus	0	44	56	100	9
Total graduates	27	33	40	100	533
Total sample	20	30	50	100	2214

Source: TAPRI survey November 2019

Table A4: ‘Immigration should be ...’ by country of birth

	Australia	O’s seas all	ESB	Europe	Asia	Other	Total
Increased a lot or a little	20	20	12	22	27	31	20
Remain about the same as it is	28	36	32	29	51	32	30
Reduced a little or a lot	51	44	57	49	22	37	50
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total N	1781	433	203	55	104	71	2214

Source: TAPRI survey November 2019

Note: ESB stands for English-speaking-background

Table A5: Voting intention by country of birth

Q26 vote grouped	Australia	O’s seas all	ESB	Europe	Asia	Other	Total
Coalition	38	40	41	35	50	31	38
Labor	32	31	28	35	34	35	32
Greens	10	10	10	5	8	15	10
Other	20	18	21	25	9	19	20
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total N	1780	433	202	55	104	72	2213

Source: TAPRI survey November 2019

Note: ESB stands for English-speaking-background

The question was: ‘If a federal election for the House of Representatives were held today, which one of the following would you vote for? If “uncommitted” to which one of these do you have a leaning?

Liberals, Nationals, Liberal National Party, Country Liberals (NT) [here grouped as Coalition], Labor, Greens, One Nation, other [One Nation and other are here grouped as ‘other’].

TableA6: votes for parties of the right and the left by educational status, 1966 to 1993

Year	1966	1969	1975	1977	1980	1984	1987	1990	1993
% Graduates in the sample	3.2	3.2	8.4	7.8	7.7	7.3	9.6	10.2	14.3
% Non-grads voting Coalition	57	46	52	50	49	38	42	43	45
% Non-grads voting 'other'	3	7	1	4	3	3	6	15	6
% Non-grads voting Labor	40	47	46	46	48	60	51	42	50
% Graduates voting Coalition	69	49	49	47	41	29	44	41	42
% Graduates voting 'other'	7	7	2	10	6	7	9	27	12
% Graduates voting Labor	24	35	49	43	53	64	47	33	46
% Total voting Coalition	57	46	52	50	48	37	43	43	44
% Total voting 'other'	4	16	2	4	3	3	6	16	5
% Total voting Labor	39	46	47	46	49	60	51	41	49
% Total voting Australian Democrats (AD) as part of 'other'				3.2	1.8	2.8	5.2	12.6	3.0
% Total voting for the DLP as part of 'other'	3.0	5.0	0.4						

Sources

- 1966: Australian National Political Attitudes Survey (conducted in 1967), Aitkin, D., Kahan, M. and Stokes, D. Australian National Political Attitudes, 1967 [computer file]. Canberra: Social Science Data Archives, The Australian National University, 2003
- 1969: Australian National Political Attitudes Survey: Aitkin, D., Kahan, M. and Stokes, D. Australian National Political Attitudes, 1969 [computer file]. Canberra: Australian Social Science Data Archive, The Australian National University, 2003
- 1975: Australian National Political Attitudes Survey (conducted in 1979) Citation: Aitkin, D. Macquarie University Australian political attitudes survey, 1979 [computer file]. Canberra: Australian Social Science Data Archive, The Australian National University, 1981
- 1977: Australian National Political Attitudes Survey (conducted in 1979): Aitkin, D. Macquarie University Australian political attitudes survey, 1979 [computer file]. Canberra: Australian Social Science Data Archive, The Australian National University, 1981
- 1980: Australian National Social Science Survey (conducted in 1984), : Kelley, J., Cushing, R.G. & Headey, B. Australian National Social Science Survey, 1984 [computer file]. Canberra: Australian Social Science Data Archive, The Australian National University.
- 1984: Kelley, J., Cushing, R.G. & Headey, B. Australian National Social Science Survey, 1984 [computer file]. Canberra: Australian Social Science Data Archive, The Australian National University.
- 1987: McAllister, I., Mughan, A. (1987). *Australian Election Study 1987* [computer file], November 1987.
- 1990: McAllister, I., Jones, R., Gow, D. (1990). *Australian Election Study 1990* [computer file], November 1990.
- 1993: Jones, R., McAllister, I., Denmark, D., Gow, D. (1993). *Australian Election Study 1993* [computer file]. August 1993

Table A7: votes for parties of the right and the left by educational status, 1996 to 2019

Year	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019
% Graduates in the sample	19.1	17.1	19.2	22.3	24.4	27.3	30.8	36.1	25.0
% Non-grads voting Coalition	54	42	48	53	46	48	48	43	44
% Non-grads voting 'other'	9	14	11	4	3	2	13	14	11
% Non-grads voting Labor	36	42	37	37	45	41	33	35	35
% Non-grads voting Greens	2	2	4	5	6	9	6	7	10
% Graduates voting Coalition	46	48	37	42	33	39	39	40	38
% Graduates voting 'other'	12	14	12	5	4	2	11	11	9
% Graduates voting Labor	38	34	38	35	47	39	35	34	36
% Graduates voting Greens	3	3	12	18	16	20	16	15	17
% Total voting Coalition	52	43	46	51	43	46	45	42	42
% Total voting 'other'	9	14	11	4	4	2	12	13	11
% Total voting Labor	36	40	38	37	45	40	34	35	35
% Total voting Greens	2	2	5	8	8	13	9	10	12
% Total voting AD as part of 'other'	6.9	5.6	6.0	1.1					

Sources

1996: Jones, R., Gow, D., McAllister, I. (1996). *Australian Election Study 1996* [computer file], June 1996

1998: Bean, C., Gow, D., McAllister, I. (1999). *Australian Election Study 1998* [computer file], January 1999

2001: Bean, C., Gow, D., McAllister, I. (2002). *Australian Election Study 2001* [computer file], April 2002.

2004: Bean, C., McAllister, I., Gibson, R., Gow, D. (2005). *Australian Election Study 2004* [computer file], March 2005

2007: Bean, C., McAllister, I., Gow, D. (2008). *Australian Election Study 2007* [computer file], May 2008.

2010: McAllister, I., Bean, C., Gibson, R., Pietsch, J., (2011). *Australian Election Study 2010* [computer file], May 2011

2013: McAllister, I., Pietsch, J., Bean, C., Gibson, R. (2014). *Australian Election Study 2013* [computer file], January 2014

2016: McAllister, I., Pietsch, J., Bean, C., Gibson, R., Makkai, T. (2017). *Australian Election Study 2016* [computer file], February 2017

2019: McAllister, I., Sheppard, J., Bean, C., Gibson, R., Makkai, T. (2019). *Australian Election Study 2019* [computer file], December 2019

Note: The data on voting 'other' in 2019 has been refined to include only those parties that appear to be right-leaning or conservative. See Table A8 in Appendix A.

Notes to Tables A6 and A7 (and to Table 10 in the text)

In interpreting Tables A6 and A7 (and Table 10 and Figures 1 and 2 in the text) it's important to bear in mind that very few voters were graduates in 1966. (While 3.2 percent of those surveyed for 1966 were graduates, only 1.5 percent of the population aged 15 plus at the 1996 Census shared this status. The proportion as measured by the census had grown to 5.04 percent at the 1986 census. By the 2001 census it was 10.4 percent and 21.6 by 2016.)⁹³

From a historical point of view this means that, in the 1960s, the non-graduate vote was almost coterminous with that of the electorate as a whole.

All of the surveys drawn on for Table 10 sample Australian voters aged 18 plus (or 21 plus before 1973), that is people who are citizens entitled to vote. This is necessarily a smaller group than all residents aged 15 or 18 plus. At the 2016 census 22.9 percent of citizens aged 18 plus were graduates. Clearly many if not most of the surveys shown in Table 10 (especially the one for 2016) have tended to oversample graduates. Nevertheless, the underlying trend of a growing proportion of the electorate with university degrees reflects a real social trend. The data also show that this trend is reflected in a shift in electoral behaviour.

Table A8: Vote for parties labelled 'other' in 2019 %

	Non-graduate	Graduate	Total voting 'other'
Group 1 (right leaning)	63	40	57
Group 2 (centrist)	11	22	14
Group 3 (left leaning)	15	9	14
Independent	12	29	16
Total %	100	100	100
Total N	139	45	184

Source: McAllister, I., Sheppard, J., Bean, C., Gibson, R., Makkai, T. (2019). *Australian Election Study 2019* [computer file], December 2019

Note: Three respondents who did not state their highest qualification and 17 who did not answer the question on how they voted are excluded from this table.

The parties listed in Group 1 (right-leaning) are: The Christian Democratic Party, Pauline Hanson's One Nation, Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, United Australia Party (formerly Palmer's United Party), Katter's Australia Party, Rise Up Australia, Australian Conservatives, Fraser Anning's Conservative National Party, Christian, Conservative, Conservatives, 4WD party, Other conservative party.

The parties listed in Group 2 (centrist), are: Liberal Democrats, Reason Party (formerly The Australian Sex Party), Derryn Hinch's Justice Party, Centre Alliance (formerly Nick Xenophon Team), Science Party, Pirate Party, Sustainable Australia, Western Australia Party, Swing Voter.

The parties listed in Group 3 (left-leaning) are: Animal Justice Party, Help End Marijuana Prohibition (HEMP) Party, Socialist Alliance, Aust Brotherhood of St Laurence, Keep Australia, Socialist Party.

Table A9: ‘Here are some reasons that people give for preferring lower levels of immigration. How do you feel about these reasons?’ By attitudes to immigration %

		Agree strongly and agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree and disagree strongly	Total %	Total N
<i>Q12 Our cities are too crowded already and there is too much traffic.</i>	<i>Immigration should be:</i>					
	• increased a lot or a little	58	18	24	100	450
	• remain about the same as it is	52	31	17	100	655
	• reduced a little or a lot	88	9	4	100	1109
	Total for Q12	71	17	12	100	2214
<i>Q13 Immigration increases the cost of housing for everyone.</i>	<i>Immigration should be:</i>					
	• increased a lot or a little	44	26	30	100	450
	• remain about the same as it is	39	37	24	100	655
	• reduced a little or a lot	75	18	7	100	1109
	Total for Q13	58	25	17	100	2214
<i>Q14 Bringing in more migrants keeps wages down.</i>	<i>Immigration should be:</i>					
	• increased a lot or a little	39	25	37	100	450
	• remain about the same as it is	22	40	37	100	654
	• reduced a little or a lot	45	27	29	100	1109
	Total for Q14	37	30	33	100	2214
<i>Q15 The natural environment is under stress with the number of people we have already.</i>	<i>Immigration should be:</i>					
	• increased a lot or a little	52	22	26	100	450
	• remain about the same as it is	45	36	20	100	655
	• reduced a little or a lot	82	13	6	100	1109
	Total for Q15	65	21	14	100	2214

Table A9: Continued

		Agree strongly and agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree and disagree strongly	Total %	Total N
<i>Q16 We may not have enough water for more people.</i>	<i>Immigration should be:</i> • increased a lot or a little	51	19	30	100	450
	• remain about the same as it is	49	33	18	100	655
	• reduced a little or a lot	78	14	8	100	1109
	Total for Q16	64	21	15	100	2214
<i>Q17 A larger population could make it harder for Australia to reduce total greenhouse gas emissions.</i>	<i>Immigration should be:</i> • increased a lot or a little	50	21	28	100	450
	• remain about the same as it is	46	31	23	100	655
	• reduced a little or a lot	73	19	8	100	1109
	Total for Q17	60	23	16	100	2214

Source: TAPRI survey November 2019

Table A10: ‘Some people say that today Australia is in danger of losing its culture and identity. Do you agree or disagree?’ By age group, non-graduates only %

	Agree strongly & agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree & disagree strongly	Not applicable - Australia never had a distinctive culture and identity	Total %	Total N
18-24	42	27	19	12	100	232
25-29	58	12	21	9	100	146
30-34	49	18	23	10	100	146
35-39	45	20	21	14	100	128
40-44	55	24	17	4	100	139
45-49	56	16	19	9	100	147
50-54	63	19	14	5	100	147
55-59	56	14	27	4	100	140
60-64	71	16	11	2	100	123
65-69	58	18	15	9	100	117
70-74	75	15	7	2	100	85
75-79	73	13	13	1	100	91
80 plus	71	17	10	2	100	42
Total non-graduates	57	18	18	7	100	1683
Total sample	53	18	20	8	100	2214

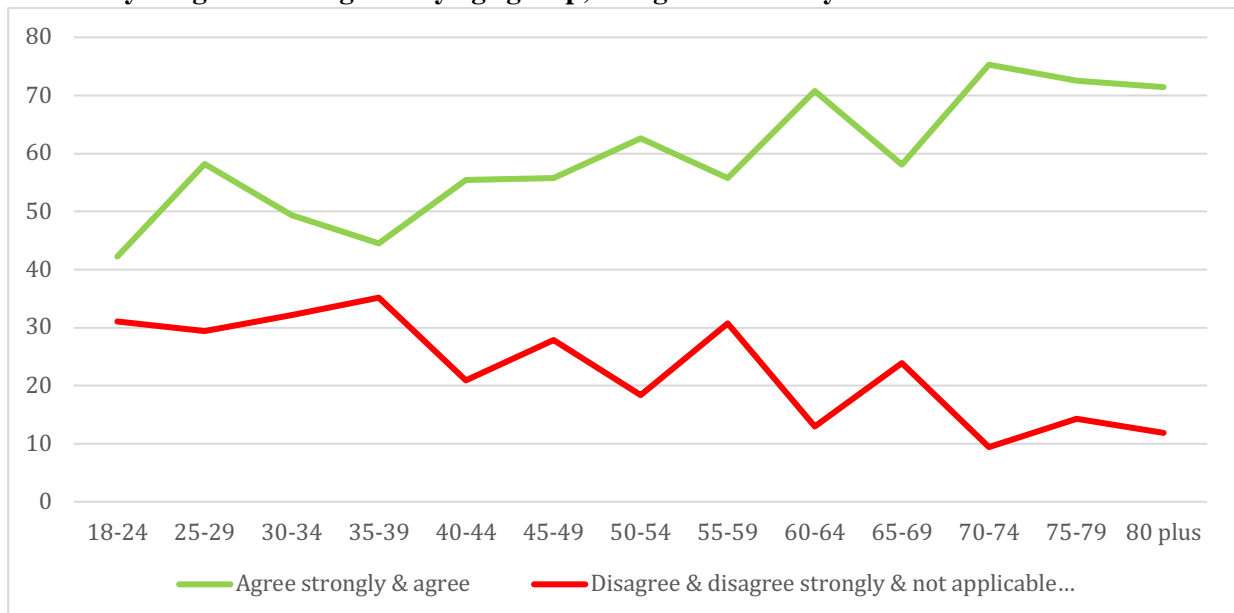
Source: TAPRI survey November 2019

**Table A11: Some people say that today Australia is in danger of losing its culture and identity.
Do you agree or disagree? By age group, graduates only %**

Q19 grouped	Agree strongly & agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree & disagree strongly	Not applicable - Australia never had a distinctive culture and identity	Total %	Total N
18-24	37	26	22	15	100	27
25-29	39	16	29	16	100	56
30-34	44	19	29	8	100	62
35-39	38	27	22	13	100	63
40-44	33	13	35	20	100	55
45-49	48	20	24	9	100	46
50-54	31	13	46	10	100	39
55-59	49	13	33	5	100	39
60-64	51	11	31	6	100	35
65-69	55	21	17	7	100	29
70-74	57	13	22	9	100	23
75-79	41	22	28	9	100	54
80 plus	63	13	0	25	100	8
Total graduates	43	18	28	11	100	536
Total sample	53	18	20	8	100	2214

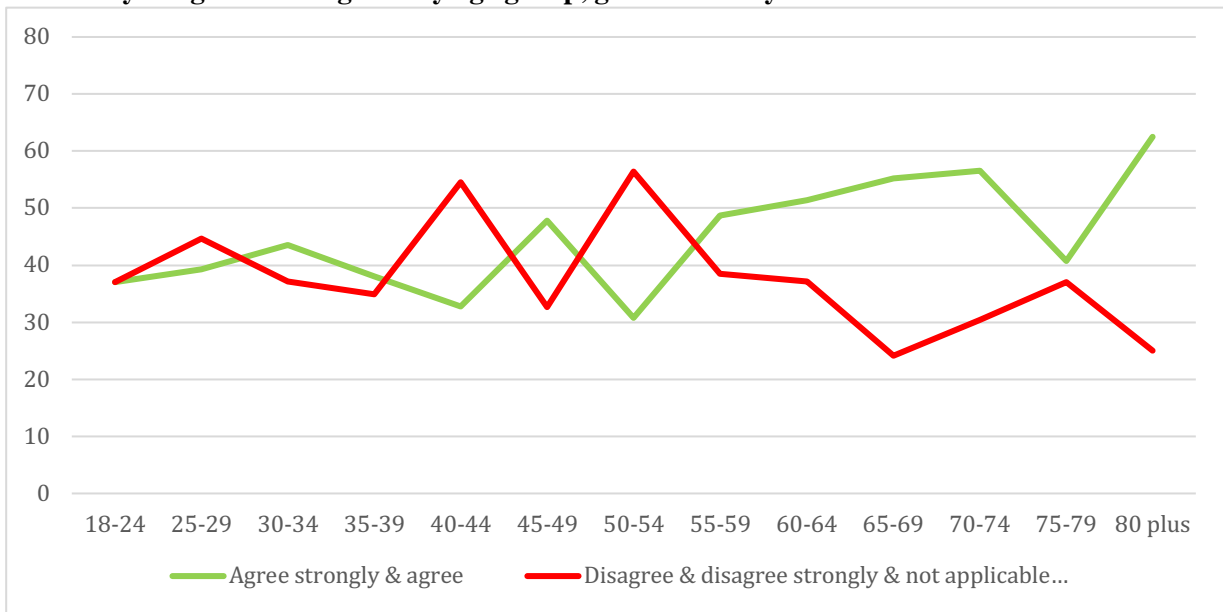
Source: TAPRI survey November 2019

**Figure A1: Some people say that today Australia is in danger of losing its culture and identity.
Do you agree or disagree? By age group, non-graduates only %**



Source: Table A10

Figure A2: Some people say that today Australia is in danger of losing its culture and identity. Do you agree or disagree? By age group, graduates only %



Source: Table A11

Appendix B

Method

The survey ran from 21 October 2019 to 11 November 2019. Questions were chosen, and the analysis done, by TAPRI: the fieldwork was organised and carried out by Qualtrics. They collected data from a random national sample of 2029 people drawn from an online panel of 300,000. The survey was restricted to voters. Quotas were set with a 10 percent leeway in line with the ABS distribution for age, gender, and location. The final data were then weighted to the actual age, gender, location and graduate/non-graduate status distribution according to the ABS Census. Participants were offered points as token rewards (these could be used to gain access to a cash raffle, or taken as a \$1 payment, or donated to charity). The survey took them approximately ten minutes to complete.

The Questionnaire

TAPRI questionnaire October/November 2019

[As a preliminary Qualtrics asked if the respondent is entitled to vote or not – this was a screening question - and also asked age, sex and region.]

1 Some people say that the world is becoming a more dangerous place for Australia and we should strengthen our defence forces. Do you agree or disagree?

- (1) agree strongly (2) agree (3) neither agree nor disagree (4) disagree (5) disagree strongly
[] [] [] [] []

2 How do you view Australia's economic prospects?

- (1) Now that the mining boom is over, the job situation is tougher for ordinary people.
[]
(2) The government has promised an economic recovery and the good times will return.
[]
(3) Don't know []

3 The share of manufacturing in Australia's economy is less than half of what it was forty years ago. Do you think—

- (1) We should protect Australia's manufacturing, using tariffs if necessary. []
(2) We should get rid of all tariffs so we can buy goods more cheaply from overseas. []
(3) Don't know []

4 From 2007 to 2018 Australia's population grew from 20.8 million to just under 25 million. As of October 2019 it was 25.5 million. Sixty per cent of this growth has been due to net overseas migration

Do you think the number of immigrants allowed into Australia nowadays should be reduced or increased?

- (1) increased a lot (2) increased a little (3) remain about the same as it is (4) reduced a little (5) reduced a lot
[] [] [] [] []

Here are some reasons that people give for preferring high immigration. How do you feel about these reasons?

5 We need to continually increase the population for economic growth.

	(3) neither agree			
(1) agree strongly	(2) agree	nor disagree	(4) disagree	(5) disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6 We need more people to increase our cultural diversity.

	(3) neither agree			
(1) agree strongly	(2) agree	nor disagree	(4) disagree	(5) disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7 A larger population will make it easier to defend Australia.

	(3) neither agree			
(1) agree strongly	(2) agree	nor disagree	(4) disagree	(5) disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8 Having more migrants will offset the ageing of the population.

	(3) neither agree			
(1) agree strongly	(2) agree	nor disagree	(4) disagree	(5) disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9 We need to increase immigration so we can take in more refugees.

	(3) neither agree			
(1) agree strongly	(2) agree	nor disagree	(4) disagree	(5) disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10 It's racist cut immigration.

	(3) neither agree			
(1) agree strongly	(2) agree	nor disagree	(4) disagree	(5) disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11 We should be opening our borders not closing them.

	(3) neither agree			
(1) agree strongly	(2) agree	nor disagree	(4) disagree	(5) disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Here are some of the reasons people give for preferring lower levels of immigration. How do you feel about these reasons?

12 Our cities are too crowded already and there is too much traffic.

	(3) neither agree			
(1) agree strongly	(2) agree	nor disagree	(4) disagree	(5) disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13 Immigration increases the cost of housing for everyone.

	(3) neither agree			
(1) agree strongly	(2) agree	nor disagree	(4) disagree	(5) disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14 Bringing in more migrants keeps wages down.

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| (1) agree strongly | (2) agree | (3) neither agree
nor disagree | (4) disagree | (5) disagree strongly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

15 The natural environment is under stress with the number of people we have already.

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| (1) agree strongly | (2) agree | (3) neither agree
nor disagree | (4) disagree | (5) disagree strongly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

16 We may not have enough water for more people.

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| (1) agree strongly | (2) agree | (3) neither agree
nor disagree | (4) disagree | (5) disagree strongly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

17 A larger population could make it harder for Australia to reduce total greenhouse gas emissions.

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| (1) agree strongly | (2) agree | (3) neither agree
nor disagree | (4) disagree | (5) disagree strongly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

18 Some people say that it is more important for new migrants to learn what it is to be Australian than to cling to their old ways. Do you agree or disagree?

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| (1) agree strongly | (2) agree | (3) neither agree
nor disagree | (4) disagree | (5) disagree strongly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

19 Some people say that today Australia is in danger of losing its culture and identity. Do you agree or disagree?

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| (1) agree strongly | (2) agree | (3) neither agree
nor disagree | (4) disagree | (5) disagree strongly | (6) not applicable –
Australia never had a
distinctive culture and
identity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

20 Do you think Australia needs more people?

- | | |
|---------|--------------------------|
| (1) Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (2) No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

21 Do think that people who raise questions about immigration being too high are sometimes thought of as racist?

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| (1) Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>[Go to question 22]</i> |
| (2) No | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>[Go to question 23]</i> |
| (3) Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>[Go to question 23]</i> |

22 This is—

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| (1) Because they usually are racist | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (2) Unfair because very few of them are racist | <input type="checkbox"/> |

23 Have you yourself ever felt uncomfortable about raising questions about immigration, for example with friends or workmates?

- (1) Yes, people can get the wrong idea about you if you do.
- (2) I haven't wanted to question it; I'm okay with things as they are.
- (3) I'm happy to speak against it, even if others don't agree
- (4) I'm happy to speak in favour of it, even if others don't agree.
- (5) I don't know enough about immigration to discuss it.

24 Would you support or oppose a partial ban on Muslim immigration to Australia?

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| (1) strongly support | (2) support | (3) neither support not oppose | (4) oppose | (5) strongly oppose |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

25 All boats carrying asylum seekers should be turned back.

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| (1) agree strongly | (2) agree | (3) neither agree nor disagree | (4) disagree | (5) disagree strongly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

26 If a federal election for the House of Representatives were held today, which one of the following would you vote for? If "uncommitted" to which one of these do you have a leaning?

- (1) Liberals
- (2) Nationals
- (3) Liberal National Party
- (4) Country Liberals (NT)
- (5) Labor
- (6) Greens
- (7) One Nation
- (8) Other

And now some questions about yourself.

27 Which of the following best describes your current work situation, as far as paid work is concerned?

- (1) employed full-time
- (2) employed part-time
- (3) homemaker
- (4) student
- (5) unemployed and looking for paid work
- (6) unemployed and not looking for paid work
- (7) retired

28 Suppose that you had an emergency expense that cost \$400. Based on your current financial situation, how difficult would it be for you to pay for this expense?

- (1) Not too difficult
- (2) Somewhat difficult
- (3) Very difficult

- (4) Nearly impossible
- (5) Don't know

29 What is the highest qualification you have gained since leaving school?

- (1) No qualification since leaving school, and not currently studying for one
- (2) No qualification since leaving school, but currently studying for one at a university
- (3) No qualification since leaving school, but currently studying for one at a TAFE or other vocational college

Your qualification—check the box for your highest qualification only

- (4) University degree, bachelor or post grad
- (5) Vocational college diploma
- (6) Other vocational diploma
- (7) Trade qualification

[Questions 30 to 32]

In which country or region were you, your mother and your father born?

(Please write the appropriate number in the spaces below)

Australia	1	Vietnam	14
New Zealand	2	The Philippines	15
Other Oceania	3	Other Asia	16
United Kingdom	4	Israel	17
Republic of Ireland	5	Other Middle East	18
Italy	6	North Africa	19
Germany	7	South Africa	20
Greece	8	Other Africa	21
Netherlands	9	North America	22
Yugoslavia (former)	10	Central America	23
Other Europe	11	South America	24
China	12	Other	25
India	13	Don't know	26

Q30 Yourself

Q31 Your mother

Q32 Your father

Thank you

References

- ¹ There is a distinction between net overseas migration (NOM) and the permanent immigration program that is often misunderstood.
- The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) defines NOM in the following way: ‘It is the difference between the number of incoming travellers who stay in Australia for 12 months or more and are added to the population (NOM arrivals) and the number of outgoing travellers who leave Australia for 12 months or more and are subtracted from the population (NOM departures)’. Thus, it includes Australians leaving for long periods abroad, or returning from them, as well as foreigners such as international students, temporary workers, and other long-stay visitors. The permanent immigration program is a part of this but only a part. It comprises people who have been issued with a visa that gives them permanent residence in Australia. The plans for the permanent program are announced in the budget and constitute a ceiling or cap on the numbers who will be given these visas. There is no cap on people granted temporary visas. While the permanent program is a gross figure and NOM is a net figure, the scale of temporary migration is such that for many years the net has been larger than the gross.
- ² US Census Population Estimates, released 19 December 2018
- ³ NOM to the UK in 2018-19 was 270,000 and the estimated population in 2018 was 66,390,000. Data from www.populationof.net/united-kingdom/ and <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/long-term-international-migration-flows-to-and-from-the-uk/>.
- ⁴ Calculated from: ABS, 3101.0 Australian Demographic Statistics, various issues
- ⁵ Treasury, 2018-19, Budget Paper no. 3, Appendix A
- ⁶ Per capita GDP has flatlined since March 2018 and ‘real average compensation [per employee] has fallen by 2.2% since March 2012’, Leith van. Onselen, ‘GDP in Detail: Calm before the storm’, MacroBusiness, 4 March 2020.
- ⁷ Many speakers who use the term ‘populist’ intend it to be pejorative. We do not. Here it is a neutral term describing people who are not members of the political, business and media elites, and who are not attracted to progressive causes. See Roger Kimball, ‘Populism, X: The imperative of freedom’, *The New Criterion*, June 2017, p. 4, and Octavia Bryant and Benjamin Moffitt, ‘What actually is populism? And why does it have a bad reputation?’ *The Conversation*, 6 February 2019.
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- ⁹ The Essential Report, 14 January 2019, p. 11. 1000 people were interviewed online. The report does not make it clear whether these were voters, or all Australian adults.
- ¹⁰ I. McAllister, J. Sheppard, C. Bean, R. Gibson and T. Makkai, *Australian Election Study 2019* [computer file], December 2019. The survey was administered soon after the May 2019 election. December 2019 is the date of publication.
- ¹¹ Natasha Kassim, Lowy Institute Poll: Understanding Australian Attitudes to the World, June 2019, Sydney, p. 17. The survey was not restricted to voters: 2130 Australian adults were interviewed, online
- ¹² Andrew Markus, *Mapping Social Cohesion: The Scanlon Foundation Survey 2019*, p. 47. The survey used both telephone interviews and an online sample. These produced similar results. They are however drawn from all adults aged 18 plus, not all voters.
- ¹³ See Katharine Betts and Bob Birrell, ‘How do Australian voters’ view the level of immigration? TAPRI and Scanlon compared’, *Pearls and Irritations*, johnmenadue.com 8 December 2017.
- ¹⁴ Calculated from ABS 34120DO003_201819 Migration, Australia 2018-19
- ¹⁵ The figures are for net permanent and long-term migration. They are calculated from data in the *Demography Bulletin* published by the Bureau of Census and Statistics, various issues.
- ¹⁶ See Katharine Betts, ‘Immigration and public opinion in Australia: how public concerns about high migration are suppressed’, TAPRI, May 2018 (on results for these questions in the 2017 TAPRI survey).

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- ¹⁷ At the 2016 Census 21.7 percent of the population of Greater Sydney had been born in Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, 1.1 percent in South and Central America, and 1.1 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa. Data from TableBuilder Pro, ABS web site.
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- ¹⁹ Essential Report, 30 April 2019
- ²⁰ Quoted in Paul Kelly, 'Howard and the political game of ...Asian roulette', *The Australian*, 6 August 1988
- ²¹ See Katharine Betts, *The Great Divide: Immigration Politics in Australia*, Duffy and Snellgrove, Sydney, 1999, pp. 286-300. A Newspoll published on 9 August 1988 found that 77 percent agreed with Howard's statement that 'Asian immigration to Australia should be slowed down' including 86 percent of Coalition voters.
- ²² The events leading up to Howard's leadership loss are described in Betts, 1999, op. cit., pp. 286-296. The treatment accorded to Geoffrey Blainey in 1984 is described in pp. 256-259, and to Pauline Hanson on pp. 302-303, 312-314, 316-320.
- ²³ See note 1 for the distinction between NOM and the permanent immigration program.
- ²⁴ Eric Kaufmann, *White Shift*, Allen Lane, 2018, p. 177
- ²⁵ Robert Ford and Mathew Goodwin, *Revolt On The Right*, Routledge, 2014, pp. 193-194
- ²⁶ Kaufman, op. cit., p. 189
- ²⁷ Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Cultural Backlash*, Cambridge, 2019
- ²⁸ Niall Ferguson, 'The People's Decade: How will history define the 2010's?' *The Spectator*, 18 January, 2020, p.20
- ²⁹ Thomas Piketty, *Capital and Ideology*, Harvard, 2019
- ³⁰ Ibid., p. 867
- ³¹ Ibid., p. 35
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- ³³ Ibid., p. 760
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- ³⁵ Marisa Abrajano and Soltan Hajnal, *White Backlash*, Princeton, 2015; Alan Abramowitz, *The Great Alignment*, Yale, 2018
- ³⁶ Piketty 2019, op. cit., p. 867
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- ³⁸ See Katharine Betts, 'Boat people and the 2001 election', *People and Place*, 2002, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 36-54.
- ³⁹ The question analysed in Table 11 was a part of a bank of questions that shared a common introduction. This read: 'Do you think the following change that has been happening in Australia over the years has gone too far, not gone far enough, or is it about right?' Fifth on the list of seven changes was: 'The number of migrants allowed into Australia at the present time'. Forty-three percent of all voters said it had 'gone too far or much too far'. This question is used in Table 11 because it was the only immigration question asked of both voters and candidates. The voters' study included another, stand-alone question: 'Do you think the number of immigrants allowed into Australia nowadays should be reduced or increased?' This was introduced in 1996, but only for voters, and it is the question used in the TAPRI surveys. In 2019 the AES found that 49 percent of voters wanted the numbers reduced a little or a lot.
- ⁴⁰ Elizabeth Humphrys, *How Labor Built Neoliberalism*, Haymarket Books, 2018
- ⁴¹ A. T. Yarwood, 'The White Australia policy', in James Jupp, *The Australian People: An Encyclopedia of the Nation, its People and their Origins*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1988, pp. 82-83
- ⁴² Bob Birrell, 'Our Nation: the vision and practice of multiculturalism under Labor', *People and Place*, vol. 4 no. 1, 1996
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- ⁴⁸ Peter Hartcher writes that Howard was tough on boat people. 'Australians concluded [from this] that Howard was tough on immigrants. This restored Australians' battered faith in immigration. Polled acceptance of the immigration program soared. Few realised Howard was the most pro-immigration prime minister in Australian history'. Peter Hartcher, 'Howard's ghost still haunting those left behind', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 October 2009
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- ⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 3
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 59
- ⁵⁷ Malcolm Turnbull, *A Bigger Picture*, Hardie Grant, 2020, p. 123
- ⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 284
- ⁵⁹ David Crowe, *Venom*, Harper Collins, 2019, p. 238
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 635
- ⁶¹ Ibid., p. 637
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- ⁶³ Joe Kelly, 'Migration Council slams Dutton call for souped-up citizenship tests', *The Australian*, 4 January 2017, p. 2; Rosie Lewis, 'Tougher citizenship test at risk', *The Australian*, 14 June 2017, p. 4
- ⁶⁴ Bob Birrell, *The Coalition's 457 Visa Reset: Tougher Than You Think*, TAPRI Research Report, August 2017

- ⁶⁵ Aaron Patrick, *The Surprise Party*, Black Inc, 2019, p. 34
- ⁶⁶ Malcolm Turnbull, op. cit., p. 637
- ⁶⁷ Paul Kelly, 'Recast right has a better read on class and culture' *The Australian*, 18 December 2019
- ⁶⁸ The first preference vote in 2019 was 41.44% Coalition, 33.34 percent Labor, 10.4% Greens and 14.82% 'other'. From the Australian Electoral Commission <https://results.aec.gov.au/24310/Website/HouseDownloadsMenu-24310-Csv.htm>
- ⁶⁹ Calculated from the 2016 Census data using TableBuilder Pro.
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- ⁷¹ Ibid.
- ⁷² Ibid., p. 63
- ⁷³ Ibid., p. 30
- ⁷⁴ See Clancy Yeates, Cole Latimer and Patrick Hatch, 'CEOs back migration as cuts loom', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 March 2019, p. 26; Richard Wakelin, 'Focus for property investors should be population growth', *The Financial Review*, 15 April 2019; Ingrid Fuary-Wagner, 'Congestion "spurious" case for migrant curbs', *The Australian Financial Review*, 24 April 2019.
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- ⁹¹ Simon Benson, 'Newspoll: Majority support strict Qld border lockdowns', *The Australian-online*, 21 September 2020. It is also worth noting an informal poll run by *The Adelaide Advertiser* on Facebook in August 2020. This asked respondents if they supported idea a policy of flying international students into Adelaide. The question was put after the idea of a pilot scheme to fly in 300 students in a controlled fashion had been mooted. Fifteen thousand people replied and 80 percent of them did not support the scheme. See Elizabeth Henson, 'Most say "no" to flying in international students', *The Adelaide Advertiser online*, 16 August 2020
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